

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of Points from the Rebbe's  
Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל

ד"ה יום טוב של ראש השנה תשל"ג מוגה

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## ROSH HASHANAH ON SHABBAT

**T**HE MISHNAH<sup>2</sup> STATES THAT WHEN ROSH HASHANAH FALLS ON SHABBAT, THE SHOFAR WOULD BE BLOWN in the Temple, but not elsewhere. The Gemara<sup>3</sup> explains that this is because of a decree of the Sages, who were concerned that people might come to carry the Shofar in the street on Shabbat. Chassidic teachings<sup>4</sup> ask: how could such an important Mitzva as the blowing of the Shofar be suspended because of such a seemingly unlikely concern? Surely most people would simply be careful not to carry the Shofar in the street.

The basic explanation is that the blowing of the Shofar is intended to arouse the Divine delight in the Creation of the Worlds. Since Shabbat in itself is an expression of 'delight', there is less need for the Shofar. Hence the Sages could suspend the blowing of the Shofar on Shabbat on account of a relatively minor concern. The fact that the Shofar would be blown in the Temple, even on Shabbat, is because 'delight' has many levels, and the degree of delight manifested by blowing the Shofar in the Temple was even greater than the delight of Shabbat.

But this raises a question. A central issue in Chabad Chassidic thought is a focus on the service of Man (and Woman) as opposed to simply the infinite

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<sup>1</sup> *Yom Tov she Rosh Hashanah 573*, published in Dvartalchut week of Rosh Hashanah Elul 5783. The Hebrew text was edited by the Rebbe and published as *Kuntres 29 Elul 5749*.

<sup>2</sup> Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:1 (29b). On account of the same rationale, one does not shake the Lulav on Shabbat.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See Likkutei Torah 'Lehavin Hamishnah' 56a.

power of G-d. At the beginning of Creation, G-d acted from Himself. By contrast now, in an ordinary year, we blow the Shofar and pray to G-d with our own human effort, and thus we reveal the Divine delight for the renewal of existence. But when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat, the major part of the 'delight' is on account of the Shabbat: as we know, human beings have no role in the incidence of Shabbat, it simply takes place every seventh day.

This means, that when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, the role of Man seems to be minimized. It is true, that each person says the ten special verses about the Shofar in the Musaf (Additional) Amidah Prayer<sup>5</sup>, even when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat. However it is explained in Chassidic teachings that the saying of these verses brings about the *revelation* of the flow of delight which was achieved by the blowing of the Shofar. The Mitzva of blowing the Shofar has the effect of drawing down the flow of delight, but saying verses of Torah<sup>6</sup> has the further more powerful effect of revealing that flow.

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat the Shofar is not sounded but the 'delight' is nonetheless manifested, because of Shabbat itself. The saying of the verses during Musaf then has the effect of revealing that delight. However this still seems to mean that the human role is lessened, since Shabbat takes place without human intervention, every seventh day.

The discourse explains that in fact there *is* a very important role for the Jewish man and woman on Rosh Hashanah, even when it falls on Shabbat. This is manifested through saying the verses in the Musaf Amidah prayer, which help achieve the central purpose for which all existence was created: to make a dwelling for the Divine in the lower world.

The first example of this was when Adam and Eve were created, on the first Rosh Hashanah, the sixth day of Creation, and they beckoned to all creatures in existence and called on them to recognize G-d, their King.

This continues to be the role of the Jew through the generations. Since each person has a spark of Adam's soul, Rosh Hashanah is in a sense the birthday of every individual. As we learn in Tanya<sup>7</sup>, quoting the Talmud, when a soul comes into the world to be born it is made to take an oath: be a Tzaddik, be righteous! This oath bonds it to the Essence of the Divine, and empowers it to fulfil this task.

On every Rosh Hashanah this is fulfilled again, through the process of the Jewish people and each individual recognizing G-d as King, and the blowing of

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<sup>5</sup> The Musaf Amidah prayer on Rosh Hashanah includes three sets of ten verses, concerning the Kingship of the Divine, His remembering the merit of the Jewish people, and the theme of the Shofar. See Talmud Rosh Hashanah 32a ff.

<sup>6</sup> Since *Torah Or*, 'Torah is radiance', ie causes revelation.

<sup>7</sup> Part 1, beginning of chapter 1. See Talmud Niddah 30b

the Shofar, manifesting Divine delight at the renewing of the cycle of existence from an ever higher level of holiness every single year, higher and higher.

The verses recited in the Musaf Amidah reveal that delight in the world, and establish again that vision of a dwelling for the Divine.

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, the Shofar is not blown, and the delight is there already, manifested by Shabbat itself. But the effect of the prayer, the reciting of the verses of Kingship, of G-d's remembering the Jewish people, and the verses about the Shofar, these powerful teachings of Torah, again establish this world as the true dwelling for the Divine. The words said by each individual, and his or her feelings within the words, are crucial.

This revelation of delight and of peace affects the entire year ahead. And the ultimate fulfilment of this process will be with the coming of Moshiach when that delight and peace will pervade all existence, and all will be 'Shabbat'.

**Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care**