

## The Great Rabbi of Ruzhin's Amazing Revelation:

# HKB"ח Established Rosh HaShonoh on Rosh Chodesh because He Too Requires Atonement for Diminishing the Moon!

With fear and trepidation, we tremble as we near the two auspicious days of Rosh HaShonoh. These are days on which all of creation pass like sheep before their Maker and are held accountable for their actions. It is only fitting, therefore, that we should examine the purpose of the mitzvah of blowing the shofor. It is well known from the teachings of our blessed sages that this mitzvah is designed to mitigate and sweeten the harsh attribute of justice and transforms it into mercy. The Midrash explains this phenomenon as follows (V.R. 29, 3):

**“יהודה ברבי נחמן פתח, (תהלים מז-ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה ה' בקול שופר, בשעה שהקב"ה יושב ועולה על כסא דין בדין הוא עולה, מאי טעם, עלה אלקים בתרועה [אלקים הוא דין], ובשעה שישראל נוטלין את שופריהן ותוקעין לפני הקב"ה, עומד מכסא הדין ויושב בכסא רחמים, דכתיב ה' בקול שופר [הוי"ה הוא רחמים], ומתמלא עליהם רחמים ומרחם עליהם, והופך עליהם מדת הדין לרחמים, אימתי בחודש השביעי.”**

Initially HKB"ח occupies His throne of justice; hence the possuk (Tehillim 47, 6) first employs the name “Elokim” — indicating justice. Yet, when Yisroel take their shofors in hand and blow, He vacates the throne of justice and moves over to the throne of mercy; hence, the possuk changes to the name Havaya — the name of mercy. Full of mercy, He treats them mercifully, transforming the attribute of justice to the attribute of mercy — during the seventh month.

Further on in the Midrash we find (ibid. 29, 4):

**“כתיב (תהלים פט-טז) אשרי העם יודעי תרועה, וכי אין אומות העולם יודעים להריע... אלא שהן מכירין לפתות את בוראם בתרועה, והוא עומד מכסא הדין לכסא רחמים ומתמלא עליהם רחמים, והופך להם מדת הדין למדת רחמים, אימתי בחודש השביעי.”**

Here the Midrash questions the meaning of the possuk (Tehillim 89, 16): “Praiseworthy is the people who know the shofor's cry.” Do the other nations of the world not know how to sound the shofor? Rather, Yisroel know how to utilize the cry of the shofor — the “teruoh” — to influence HKB"ח. By means of the shofor, we persuade Him to vacate the throne of justice and occupy the throne of mercy. This transpires during the seventh month.

Our sacred sources are replete with explanations as to how the shofor accomplishes this feat — the transformation of the attribute of justice to the attribute of mercy. The practical and simple understanding of this phenomenon seems to be that provided by the Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvoh 3, 4): **“אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזירת הכתוב, רמז יש בו, כלומר עורו ישנים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם, וחפשו במעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם.”** Although the Torah dictates that we blow the shofor on Rosh HaShonoh, nevertheless it conveys a significant message. It alerts us to wake up from our spiritual slumber, to scrutinize our actions, to repent and to recall our Creator.

Thus we see that the shofor is meant to stimulate us to perform Teshuvoh. Another Midrash states (Pesikta Rabbosi 44): **“שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך - עד שנתון במדת רחמים עשו תשובה, כי הקב"ה רחום וחנון ורוצה בתשובה עד שלא ימתח עליכם מדת הדין.”** Here the Midrash cites the possuk in Hoshea (14, 2): “Return Yisroel unto Hashem, your G-d.” Hashem desires and prefers that we perform Teshuvoh. We are encouraged to take advantage of His mercy and benevolence rather than subject ourselves to the attribute of justice. In summary, the shofor alerts a person to perform Teshuvoh; his Teshuvoh transforms heavenly justice into heavenly mercy.

## Bring an Atonement for Me for Diminishing the Moon

As Rosh HaShonoh approaches auspiciously, I was struck with a wonderful idea based on the teachings of the great Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzhin, zy" a. He enlightens us with regard to why HKB" H chose to establish the Day of Judgment on Rosh HaShonoh. We pray that Hashem will guide us along the path of "emes" and enable us to properly comprehend and appreciate his remarkable words.

The sefer Irin Kadishin cites the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy" a, and begins with a question. Why did HKB" H deviate from the norm by establishing Rosh HaShonoh at the very beginning of the month? Normally, the dates established for holidays and festivals fall in the middle of the month. For instance, Pesach and Succos are celebrated at mid-month on the fifteenth days of their respective months, while Shavuos is celebrated on the sixth of Sivan. He refers to what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Chullin 60b) concerning the diminution of the moon:

**"רבי שמעון בן פזי רמי, כתיב (בראשית א-טז) ויעש אלקים את שני המאורות הגדולים, [משמע ששניהם נבראו שוים], וכתוב (שם) את המאור הגדול ואת המאור הקטן, [משמע שאין שניהם שוים], אמרה ירח לפני הקב"ה, רבונו של עולם אפשר לשני מלכים שישתמשו בכתר אחד, אמר לה לכי ומעטי את עצמך. אמרה לפניו רבונו של עולם, הואיל ואמרת לי דבר הגון אמעיט את עצמי.**

**אמר לה לכי ומשול ביום ובלילה... לימנו כן ישראל ימים ושנים... ליקרו צדיקי בשמך, יעקב הקטן, שמואל הקטן, דוד הקטן. חזייה דלא קא מיתבא דעתה, אמר הקב"ה הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח, והיינו דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש מה נשתנה שער של ראש חודש שנאמר בו (במדבר כח-טו) לה' [ושעיר עזים אחד לחטאת לה'], אמר הקב"ה שער זה יהא כפרה על שמיעטתי את הירח."**

The Torah initially states (Bereishis 1, 16) that G-d created two great lights — suggesting that they were created of equal size and stature. Subsequently (ibid.), it refers to the greater light and to the lesser light — indicating that they were no longer equal. The moon addresses HKB" H: "Master of the Universe, can two kings utilize the same crown?" He responded to the moon: "Go and diminish yourself." The moon replies: "Master of the Universe, since I presented a valid and proper argument, is it appropriate that I diminish myself?"

To console her He says: "Go and rule by day and by night . . . let Yisroel count the days and years in accordance with the moon . . . tzaddikim will be called by your name, such as Yaakov the Small, Shmuel the Small and Dovid the Small. Seeing that she was not consoled, HKB" H said to Yisroel: "Bring an atonement on my behalf for having diminished the moon." Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish points out that this is why the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh differs from all of the other Mussaf he-goats; only regarding the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh does the Torah employ the description "for Hashem." HKB" H is stating that this he-goat represents His atonement for diminishing the size and stature of the moon.

### HKB" H's Advice to the Sinner: "Perform Teshuvoh and It Will Serve as Your Atonement"

Let us explain why HKB" H commanded us to bring this atonement for diminishing the moon specifically at the beginning of the month — on Rosh Chodesh. Initially, the moon possessed her own magnificent light just like the sun. After being diminished, her only light is that which she receives from the sun. As a result, toward the end of the month she stops receiving light from the sun, while at the beginning of the month she receives the sun's light anew. Thus, on Rosh Chodesh, when the moon receives the sun's light anew, the matter of the moon's diminution is most apparent. Hence, Rosh Chodesh is the most fitting time to bring a korban to atone for the diminution of the moon.

It is quite clear that if not for HKB" H's mercy and kindness, a sinner would have no recourse or form of rectification — not even by means of Teshuvoh. The Yerushalmi (Makkos 2, 6) depicts a conversation among the heavenly advisors as to how to deal with sinners. Wisdom advises strict punishment; Prophecy advises death. HKB" H advises that the sinner make amends by performing Teshuvoh.

According to the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy" a, it is for precisely this reason that HKB" H established the Day of Judgment — Rosh HaShonoh — at the beginning of the month. Rosh Chodesh is the time that HKB" H designated for Yisroel: "הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח" — to bring an atonement for diminishing the moon. For, HKB" H is a merciful father wishing to accept his children's Teshuvoh and to forgive them for their transgressions.

The heavenly prosecutors, however, argue (Mishlei 29, 4): **“מלך במשפט יעמיד ארץ”** — through justice a king establishes a land. Therefore, HKB”H established the Day of Judgment on Rosh Chodesh — on a day that He Himself, seemingly, requires atonement. Thus, He has a strong argument with which to counter the prosecutors. How can you withhold atonement from Yisroel when I too require atonement? If they are denied atonement then I too must be denied atonement. Thus, the matter of the new moon constitutes a compelling argument in favor of Yisroel.

To embellish the point, the great Rabbi of Ruzhin interprets the powerful words of Yisroel’s sweet psalmist as follows (Tehillim 130, 2): **“אם עוונות תשמר יה’ מי יעמוד, כי עמך הסליחה”** — **“למען תורא”** — if iniquities you preserve, O G-d; O Lord, who could survive? For with You is forgiveness, so that You may be feared. In other words, if You stand steadfast in Your judgment and are unwilling to forgive, then: **“O Lord, who could survive?”** For, the words of the wisest of men are well-known (Kohel 7, 20): **“כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא”** — no man on earth is so righteous that he is free of sin. Hence, Dovid HaMelech concludes his argument in Yisroel’s defense: **“כי עמך הסליחה”** -- for with You is forgiveness — because You also require atonement, it is appropriate to forgive us if we perform Teshuvoh. This is the gist of the remarkable words of the great Rabbi of Ruzhin.

How beautifully this explains our custom to recite throughout the **“aseret yemei Teshuvoh”** — from Rosh HaShonoh to Yom HaKippurim — the psalm (130): **“שיר המעלות ממעמקים”** **“קראתיך יה’”** — a song of ascents: From the depths I called You, Hashem. Seeing as these are days of repentance — Teshuvoh — starting on Rosh HaShonoh — which is Rosh Chodesh, the day on which HKB”H requested that we bring an atonement on His behalf, as it were, for diminishing the moon — we recite Dovid HaMelech’s argument in defense of Yisroel: **“אם עוונות תשמר יה’ מי יעמוד, כי עמך הסליחה למען תורא”** — if iniquities you preserve, O G-d; O Lord, who could survive? For with You is forgiveness, so that You may be feared.

### Diminution of the Moon Empowered the Yetzer Hora

It appears that this remarkable idea from the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy”a, coincides wonderfully with the words of two of our great luminaries — the great Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa, the author of Chavas Da’as, in Nachalas Yaakov (Pinchas) and the great

Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the author of the Noda B’Yehudah, in Drushei HaTzlach (12). They both address HKB”H’s statement: **“הביאו כפרה עלי שמייעטני את הירח”** — bring an atonement on my behalf for having diminished the moon. Their comments are founded on the kabbalistic concept that as a result of the diminution of the moon, the evil forces of the yetzer Hora were strengthened.

The source for this concept is found in the writings of the Sheloh hakadosh (Shemos Shovevim T”T):

**“עוד נודע ונתפרסם בספריהם (פרדס רמונים להרמ”ק שער יח פרק א) כי מכח ענין קטרוג הזה [שגורם למיעוט הירח] נמשך למטה קטרוג הקליפה, הוא היצר הרע הוא השטן היורד ומחטיא ועולה ומקטרג, ולעתיד יהיה אור הלבנה כאור החמה, ויתבטלו הקליפות ויהיו כולם יודעים את ה’ ולא יהיה יצר הרע.”**

He adds that in the future, the light of the moon will be on a par with the light of the sun and the negative forces will be nullified; all will recognize Hashem and the yetzer Hora will cease to exist.

This explains why HKB”H commanded Yisroel to bring a he-goat on Rosh Chodesh stating: **“שעיר זה יהא כפרה על שמייעטני את הירח”** — this he-goat will serve as My atonement for having diminished the moon. For, where HKB”H’s greatness is apparent, His humility is apparent. HKB”H expressed regret over having reduced the light and stature of the moon and, consequently, having empowered the yetzer Hora and its forces. In fact, this point is made explicitly in the Gemoreh (Berochos 32a):

**“אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא, אלמלא שלש מקראות הללו נתמוטטו רגליהם של שונאי ישראל חד דכתיב (מיכה ד ו) ואשר הרעותי, וחד דכתיב (ירמיה יח ו) הנה כחומר ביד היוצר כן אתם בידי ישראל, וחד דכתיב (יחזקאל לו כו) והסירותי את לב האבן מבשרכם ונתתי לכם לב בשר.”**

Rashi comments: **“ואשר הרעותי אני גרמתי להם שבראתי יצר הרע”** — HKB”H declares that by implanting the yetzer Hora in man, He is in part culpable for their sins and transgressions. In the third possuk quoted in this passage, HKB”H promises to remove the yetzer Hora in the future.

The Tzlach makes precisely the same point as the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy”a. HKB”H intentionally established the Day of Judgment on Rosh HaShonoh — which is Rosh Chodesh — from the very outset. For, that is the day on which HKB”H

requests of Yisroel: **“הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח”** -- bring an atonement on my behalf for having diminished the moon. Since His actions seemingly led to a strengthening of the force of the yetzer Hora, it is only fitting that He accepts Yisroel in the merit of their Teshuvoh and forgives them for their transgressions.

### Someone Who Is Obligated in a Matter Can Cause the Public to Fulfill Their Obligation

Like a servant before his master, I would like to grab hold of the great Rabbi of Ruzhin's coattails and expand on his remarkable words. I would like to refer to what the Sheeiris Yisroel, authored by the great Rabbi of Vilendik, zy”a, writes in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. He explains by way of allusion the statement in the Mishnah (R.H. 29a): **“זה הכלל כל שאינו מחוייב בדבר אינו מוציא את הרבים ידי חובתן”** — this is the general rule: Anyone who is not himself obligated in a particular matter, cannot cause the public to fulfill their obligation. Here is what he writes:

**“כידוע מאמר הבעש”ט נשמתו בגנזי מרומים, כל שאינו מחוייב בדבר אינו מוציא את הרבים ידי חובתו, ואמר הוא ז”ל הפירוש, הצדיק שאינו מחוייב בעצמו, שאין לו שום השתתפות עם המון עם, פירוש שאינו נופל ממדרגתו, אינו יכול להוציא את הרבים, פירוש הכלל ישראל, מידי חובתו ולתקנם. כמו למשל מי שמונח ברפש ורוצה חבירו להוציאו, מוכרח הוא לכללך את עצמו מעט ולהתקרב אליו ויוכל להוציאו, אבל כשעומד במקומו לא יוציאנו בשום אופן, וכידוע זה בכל ספרים הקדושים.”**

In order for a tzaddik to assist the public and correct their errant ways, he must fall to some degree from his elevated position. This is analogous to someone trying to help his friend out of the mud. It is impossible for him to do so without getting somewhat dirty himself. This is alluded to by the statement in the Mishnah.

Applying this concept, the Noam Elimelech (Nosso) explains the Gemoreh's statement (Yume 22b): **“מפני מה לא נמשכה — מלכות בית שאול, מפני שלא היה בו שום דופי”** — why did the monarchy of the house of Shaul not endure? Because it had no flaws. Shaul was a great tzaddik and did not possess any flaws; therefore, he was incapable of committing an “aveirah lishmoh” — a transgression with good intent — and was incapable of rectifying Yisroel. This is reflected by the following possuk's description of Shaul (Shmuel I 9, 2): **“בחור וטוב ואין — איש מבני ישראל טוב ממנו, משכמו ומעלה גבוה מכל העם”**

who was exceptional and goodly; no one in Yisroel was better than he. From his shoulders up, he was taller than any of the people. Due to his extreme righteousness and sanctity, he could not relate to the people; consequently, he could not rectify them.

Now, according to the Yerushalmi (R.H. 7b), HKB”H observes all the precepts of the Torah. Hence, it stands to reason that HKB”H must also fulfill the halachah: **“כל שאינו מחוייב בדבר אינו מוציא את הרבים ידי חובתן”** -- anyone who is not himself obligated in a particular matter, cannot cause the public to fulfill their obligation.

HKB”H certainly knew in advance that man would sin and would require atonement. Wishing to afford Yisroel atonement and rectify His holy nation, he also had to be obligated in this matter. It is plausible, therefore, that HKB”H arranged to commit an “aveirah lishmoh” himself — by diminishing the moon — so that he would share in Yisroel's obligation. Thus, He declared: **“שעיר זה יהא כפרה על שמיעטתי את הירח”** — this he-goat shall serve as My atonement for having diminished the moon. As a consequence, He was able to cause the people to fulfill their obligation, ridding Yisroel of their transgressions, by means of Teshuvoh and atonement.

### The Moon Complained for Yisroel's Benefit

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to appreciate the moon's argument: **“רבנו של עולם אפשר לשני מלכים — להשתמש בכתר אחד”** — Master of the Universe, is it possible for two kings to use one crown? The commentaries find the moon's argument problematic. After all, the moon does not possess a yetzer Hora. So, what would prompt it to complain in such a manner to the King of Kings?

Furthermore, how did the moon have the audacity to deny HKB”H's attempts at consolation? Her refusal to be consoled ultimately led to the following: **“חזייה דלא קא מיתבא דעתה, אמר — הקב”ה הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח”** — seeing that the moon was not placated, HKB”H commanded that Yisroel bring an atonement on His behalf. Lastly, she argued with HKB”H incredulously: **“רבנו של עולם הואיל ואמרתי לפניך דבר הגון — אמעיט את עצמי”** — Master of the Universe, since I presented You with a sound argument, why should I be forced to diminish myself? What is the significance of the moon's contention that two kings cannot share the same crown?

Based on what we have learned from the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, we can suggest that the moon's actions were prompted by a consideration for Yisroel's future benefit. She perceived that man was destined to sin and would require rectification and atonement on Rosh HaShonoh. The moon also understood that achieving rectification and thwarting the prosecutors was only possible if HKB"H, so to speak, also required atonement — so that he would have the status of one who share's in their obligation. Therefore, she wisely voiced her complaint: **“רבנו של עולם אפשר לשני מלכים להשתמש בכתר אחד — Master of the Universe, is it possible for two kings to use one crown? Under those circumstances, Yisroel will not merit atonement on the Day of Judgment.**

Following this line of reasoning, she continued to protest before HKB"H: **“רבנו של עולם הואיל ואמרתי לפניך דבר הגון — אמעית את עצמי — Master of the Universe, since I presented You with a sound argument, why should I be forced to diminish myself? In other words, I only had Yisroel's best interests in mind. So, if I were to agree to be placated, it would not benefit Yisroel whatsoever. Accepting her point, HKB"H proclaimed: “הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח” — in the merit of bringing an atonement on My behalf, Yisroel will merit atonement on Rosh HaShonoh.**

This provides us with a very nice interpretation of what we have learned in the Gemoreh (R.H. 25a): **“אמר ליה רבי לרבי חייא זיל לעין טב וקדשיה לירחא, ושלח לי סימנא דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים” — Rabbi said to Rabbi Chiya, “Go to the place known as ‘Ayin Tovah’ and sanctify the new month.” Tosafos (D”H “zil”) explain that a permanent Beis Din sat there to sanctify the new month. Then he was to relay the following message signifying that he had accomplished this task: **“דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים” — Dovid, the King of Yisroel, lives and endures. Rashi explains that Dovid's kingdom was compared to the moon.****

We can suggest, based on our discussion above that Ayin Tovah was specifically chosen as the ideal place to sanctify the new month. For, its name implies a vindication of the moon lest we erroneously misconstrue her protest — it is impossible for two kings to share the same crown — as being motivated by envy — “tzorus ayin.” On the contrary, the moon demonstrated the quality of “ayin tovah” acting selflessly to insure rectification and atonement for all of Yisroel.

## Dovid Was Not Suited for That Deed Other than to Teach the Ways of Teshuvoh

What gave Dovid HaMelech the courage to say to HKB"H, the King of the World: **“כי עמך הסליחה”** — insinuating that He also required atonement? We have seen that Dovid's kingdom is compared to the moon as indicated by the possuk (Tehillim 89, 38): **“כירח יכון עולם”** — like the moon it shall be established forever. Just as the moon's protests were for the sake of heaven — representing an “aveirah lishmoh” — we find that Dovid HaMelech, who is compared to the moon, acted in a similar fashion. We have learned in the Gemoreh (A.Z. 4b):

**“לא דוד ראוי לאותו מעשה [דבת שבע] דכתיב (תהלים קט-כב) ולבי חלל בקרבי... אלא לומר לך שאם חטא יחיד אומרים לו כלך אצל יחיד... והיינו דרבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן, מאי דכתיב (שמואל ב כג-א) נאום דוד בן ישי ונאום הגבר הוקם על, נאום דוד בן ישי שהקים עולה של תשובה.”**

Left to his own devices, Dovid HaMelech would not have performed that deed. It was arranged from above that Dovid would fail in the matter involving Bas Sheva. As a result, he established the pathway of Teshuvoh — repentance — for all of Yisroel to emulate. He thus provided Yisroel with a form of atonement and rectification.

We can even suggest a reason as to why HKB"H specifically chose Dovid HaMelech to teach Yisroel the ways of Teshuvoh. The Gemoreh teaches us (Kiddushin 32b): **“מלך שמחל על כבודו אין כבודו מחול”** — a king is not permitted to renounce or forego his honor. The Maharsho in Chidushei Aggodes provides us with an explanation. A human king is not merely a king down on earth but is a model of the Heavenly King. Thus, his sovereignty is established from above and his not truly his own. For, the possuk states (Tehillim 22, 29): **“כי לה' המלוכה”** — for the kingship belongs to Hashem. This being the case, a human king does not have the right to renounce or forego the honor of Hashem's sovereignty.

If this holds true for all kings, all the more so for Dovid HaMelech who was a bearer of the heavenly throne — as indicated by the possuk (Divrei HaYamim I 29, 23): **“וישב שלמה על כסא ה' למלך תחת דוד אביו”** — Shlomo sat upon the throne of Hashem as king in place of his father Dovid. So, it is reasonable to suggest that Dovid HaMelech emulated HKB"H's action. HKB"H intentionally diminished the moon, so that He would require atonement, so to speak. Thus, He became obligated in the matter and paved the way for all of

Yisroel to perform Teshuvoh. So, too, Dovid HaMelech who sat on Hashem's throne was not suited for that misdeed; his deed was necessary to teach Yisroel the ways of Teshuvoh.

Now, HKB"H chose Dovid to fail in this matter — and to be the one to teach Yisroel the process of Teshuvoh — because he was the King of Yisroel. Thus, he realized that he merited following in HKB"H's footsteps. For, HKB"H diminished the moon and requested of Yisroel: **"הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח"** — bring an atonement on My behalf for having diminished the moon. This gave Dovid the power of kedushah to advocate that HKB"H accept Yisroel's Teshuvoh arguing: **"כי עמך הסליחה"** — HKB"H, You, too, require forgiveness, merely for the sake of accepting Yisroel's Teshuvoh and forgiving them for their sins.

Thus, we find three events that are all interconnected: (1) the moon protested that it is not possible for two kings to share the same crown, (2) HKB"H reduced the light and stature of the moon and subsequently requested: **"הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח"** — bring an atonement on My behalf for having diminished the moon, and (3) it was arranged from above that Dovid HaMelech would fail in the matter of Bas Sheva. All three events were aimed at paving the way for Yisroel's rectification and atonement by means of Teshuvoh.

### The Shofor Has the Shape of a Semicircle Like the New Moon

Continuing along this exalted path, let us endeavor to explain the awesome power of blowing the shofor — the power to transform the attribute of justice to mercy. The esteemed Rabbi Yosef Engel, ztz"l, writes in Otzrot Yosef that the shape of the shofor resembles the shape of the moon when it is first visible on Rosh Chodesh. He cites a reference from Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 7).

We can now propose a novel idea in honor of Rosh HaShonoh. AlBeis the purpose of sounding the shofor is to arouse the performance of Teshuvoh — as suggested by the Rambam. Nevertheless, in addition, HKB"H, in His infinite

mercy, concealed a powerful argument in defense of Yisroel in this mitzvah. By blowing the shofor — which resembles the shape of the new moon — we remind HKB"H that He diminished the moon and requested of us: **"הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח"** — bring an atonement on My behalf for having diminished the moon. This allows HKB"H to stifle the attempts of the prosecutors and to tell them: I must accept Yisroel's atonement and Teshuvoh, seeing as they have also brought a korban on My behalf, as it were, for diminishing the moon.

In this manner, we can provide a very nice interpretation of the following possuk concerning the blowing of the shofor (Tehillim 81, 4): **"תקעו בחודש שופר בכסא ליום חגינו כי חוק לישראל הוא משפט לאלקי יעקב"** — blow a shofor at the moon's renewal, when the moon is veiled on our festive day. For it is a statute for Yisroel — a judgment day for the G-d of Yaakov. Elucidating this possuk, the Gemoreh states (R.H. 8a): **"תקעו בחודש שופר בכסא ליום חגינו, איזהו חג שהחודש מתכסה בו, הוי אומר זה ראש השנה"** — what festival is referred to by the possuk, on which the moon is veiled? It is a reference to Rosh HaShonoh. Rashi explains: **"שהחדש מתכסה בו לרחוקים, כגון שחרית לבני מערב וערבית לבני מזרח, לפי שקטנה היא סמוך לחידושה"** — at the beginning of the lunar month, the visible part of the moon is so small that it is not visible worldwide; in the morning, it is not visible in the west; in the evening, it is not visible in the east.

Thus, we can interpret the possuk as follows: **"תקעו בחודש שופר בכסא ליום חגינו"** — on Rosh HaShonoh, when the moon is veiled, sound the shofor whose shape resembles the new moon. The possuk proceeds to explain the reason for this command: **"כי חוק לישראל הוא"** — HKB"H gave us this statute, the mitzvah of shofor -- **"משפט לאלקי יעקב"** — to remind us by means of the shofor that this judgment day is also, so to speak, a day of judgment for HKB"H for having diminished the moon. By bringing a he-goat on His behalf for atonement, we also merit atonement.

Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb  
For the Refua shelema of Gavriel Simcha Chaim Ben shulamit