



Rosh Hashanah Shofar

The Torah refers to Rosh Hashana as “Yom Teruah”,¹ a day of sounding the Shofar. The Talmud discusses what sound the Teruah of Rosh Hashana represents: a groan, a sigh or a combination of both.² Clearly the Teruah symbolizes the nature of the day - that of fear and trepidation.

In his second blessing, Bilaam declares, “(G-d) didn’t perceive iniquity in Israel... - ‘U’Seruas Melech Bo’ - and the ‘Teruah’ of the King is within him.”³ Rashi explains Teruah as meaning dearness and friendship; “and the friendship of the King is within him.” How can Teruah create a sense of awe yet also convey a sense of friendship?

One may compare this to a doctor-patient relationship. A patient in need of a health examination enters the doctor’s office in trepidation of the possible negative results. Nevertheless, he is comforted by his trust in the physician who he recognizes as having his best interest in mind.

Similarly, at this time of year, we are subjected to a spiritual examination by our Heavenly Father - one that may in fact bear fearsome results. But we find solace in the knowledge that Hashem loves us - that he seeks to help us ascertain and arrest the spread of any spiritual maladies.

The sound of the Shofar does in fact instill fear, but nevertheless represents a call of friendship as well.

¹ במדבר כט, א

² ראש השנה לג. - לג.

³ במדבר כג, כא