

100 SOUNDS OF THE SHOFAR

Vav VeNikudot

On *Rosh Hashana* we blow the shofar 100 sounds during the prayer service.

The 100 sounds of the shofar are associated with 100 aspects of love within ourselves. The pattern of the sounds is discussed in great detail in the Kabbalah, and is rooted in spiritual aspects of our inner consciousness called *sefirot*.

In a simple understanding, the 1st sound of the shofar represents the lowest level of having love only for oneself. Each progressive sound of the shofar represents deeper levels of spiritual development of having more and more love for everyone. The final extra long sound of the *tekia gedola* represents attaining the spiritual consciousness of complete unconditional love.

In one of the many *kavanot* (meditations) of the shofar blowing, the sounding of the shofar is associated with the aspects of right, left, center, and oneness. In Kabbalistic spiritual language, the aspects of right, left, and center are not directions in space, but rather represent spiritual states of consciousness.

Right corresponds metaphorically to our experience of thankfulness and our aspect of giving.

Left corresponds metaphorically to our experience of lack and our aspect of receiving.

Center is the balance and harmony of right and left.

Oneness is the spiritual realization of unconditional love and infinite goodness.

These 4 stages of consciousness correspond to the 4 letters of the Divine Name ו-י-ו-ה .

The *kavanot* of the shofar blowing breaks down on one simple level into the 4 aspects as follows:

tekia-----long sound-----right/giving-----ו
shevarim-----3 sounds-----left/receiving-----י
terua-----9 sounds-----center/harmony-----ו
tekia gedola-----extra long sound-----oneness-----ו

When we count 100 sounds, *tekia*, *shevarim*, *terua*, and *tekia gedola* each count as 1 sound.

On *Rosh Hashanah* the 100 sounds are sounded in 4 sets of sounds: 30 sounds, 30 sounds, 30 sounds, and 10 sounds. These 4 sets also correspond to the 4 letters of the Divine Name.

In this painting the 100 sounds of the shofar are depicted with the Hebrew letter ו *vav* . A *vav* with a dot on top represents the sound of *tekia*. A *vav* with a dot in the middle represents the sound of *shevarim*. A *vav* with a dot on the bottom represents the sound of *terua*. This notation is rooted in the Kabbalah's description of Hebrew vowels sounds in association with particular states of spiritual consciousness.

The sounds are depicted from top to bottom in 4 sets. The mapping starts from the top right of the painting and works its way downwards until about 1/4 of the way down the painting. The next sounds are the left column of this set, beginning again from the top of the painting and working their way down. Then come the sounds working their way down from the top center column of this set. The 30th sound is the larger letter VAV at the end of this set representing the extra long sound of the *tekiah gedola*, which is sounded as the 30th sound.

The mapping of the shofar blowing continues down the right, left, and center of the 2nd set, until about 1/2 way down the painting.

The sequence then continues down the right, left and center of the 3rd set.

The final set of 10 sounds is then depicted, ending with the extra large VAV at the bottom of the painting, representing the extra long sound of the final *tekiah gedolah*.

The right column is discussed in the Kabbalah as the consciousness of our hearts overflowing with thankfulness. This corresponds to the sound of the *tekia*, which is a whole sound.

The left column corresponds to the sound of the *shevarim* which is the 3 broken cries of the shofar, our feelings of brokenness and lack.

The center column corresponds to the *terua*, whose sound is so broken that it is whole. The central column is associated with faith and prayer.

It is taught in the Kabbalah that when we reach our truest prayer of the heart, all our brokenness is brought to wholeness in the realization of complete oneness and unconditional love at the root of all creation.

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