

The Sounds of the *Shofar*

As we approach *Rosh Hashana*, a beautiful teaching comes to mind. In the *Sefer Sifsei Chaim* written by *Horav* Chaim Friedlander zt"l he poses the following question. Why are there three different sounds to the *shofar*? There is a *tekiah* (a long blast), a *shevarim* (a series of small blasts) and a *teruah* (a choppy blast). Is there any significance to the different sounds?

He explains that the *shofar* blowing and the order of its sounds parallels the process of *teshuvah* (repentance). Each set of *shofar* blowing begins with a *tekiah*. This long blast represents our current status, a level representing our complacency. However, no one is perfect. Everyone has an area in one's life which needs improvement. Therefore, the middle sound changes to a *shevarim* or a *teruah*, the broken and choppy blasts, or both, representing our need to scrutinize our behavior, the awareness that a change in one's behavior needs to be done. The final blast of the set is another *tekiah*. This long blast represents our resolve to change course and focus on a new direction for the coming year.

As we listen to the *shofar* this year, let us keep this message in mind. If all of us look into ourselves and accept just one area of our lives to improve, we will have understood the message of the *shofar*, a call to change and constantly grow in life.