The Mitzvah of Shofar

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This shiur focuses on the question of whether the mitzvah of shofar on Rosh HaShana is to blow or to hear the shofar. In addition to addressing some of the halakhic aspects of that question, it attempts to see how the טעמי המצוה interact with its halakhic formulation, and how this enables a fuller way of resolving some of the halakhic tensions between hearing and blowing.

Is the Mitzvah to blow the shofar, or to hear it? What is the text of the blessing? Does the issue end there?

The Blessing

1. Shulkhan Arukh, Orah Hayim, 585: 2

Before one blows he must say the blesing: "To Listen To the Sound of the Shofar."

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים, תקפ"ה:ב'

קודם שיתקע יברך: לשמוע קול שופר

2. Mishna Brurah, 585:4

However, *post facto*, if one blessed: "To Blow the Shofar" or "On the Blowing of the Shofar," he has fulfilled his obligation.

משנה ברורה סימן תקפ"ה, ס"ק ד'

ובדיעבד אם בירך לתקוע בשופר או על תקיעת שופר או לשמוע בקול שופר יצא.

Given the text of the blessing, it would seem that the mitzvah is to hear. On the other hand, the text "To Blow" is valid, post facto*, so perhaps the issue is debated.*

Moreover, it is possible that the text of the blessing doesn't exactly reflect the essence of the mitzvah. It is worth distinguishing, as Rav Soloveitchik has done in other cases, between the act of the mitzvah, the ma'aseh mitzvah, and its fulfillment, or the kiyum mitzvah. Do our blessings reflect the ma'aseh or the kiyum? Consider the blessing for bedikat chametz – the act is bedikah, but the blessing is על ביעור חמץ – the destruction of chametz, which is the purpose, or the kiyum of the mitzvah. Consider, on the other hand, the blessing for wearing a talit. The blessing is להתעטף בציצית – to wrap oneself with tzitzit. Now, in fact, there is not obligation to put on a talit. Thus, this blessing reflects the act, wrapping oneself with a tallit, and not the actual kiyum, which is having tzitzit on a four-cornered garment that one is wearing.

Once we recognize that blessings may reflect the kiyum or the ma'aseh – although it appears that there is no general consistency – it is hard to jump from the blessing to the mitzvah. Perhaps the mitzvah is hearing, but the blessing "to blow" is legitimate since it reflects the more concrete action. Alternatively, perhaps the mitzvah is blowing, but the blessing is "to hear" since it is what each individual is doing (only the ba'al tokeia is actually blowing).

Let us now turn to the Rishonim and see how they address this question of hearing versus blowing the shofar.

The Mitzvah

A. Listening - Rambam

A question was raised to Rambam about the text of the blessing. Notice that Rambam's answer - as opposed to our analysis above – assumes that the text of the blessing should reflect the essence of the mitzvah. Rambam is consistent with his definition of the mitzvah in his Sefer HaMitzvot and his Mishne Torah.

1. Responsa of Rambam, 142 (ed. Blau)

Question: What is the difference between "to hear the sound of the shofar" and "on the blowing of the shofar"?

Answer: The difference between them is very great. For the obligated mitzvah is not the blowing, but rather listening to the blowing. For were the mitzvah the blowing, each and every male would be obligated to blow himself, just as each individual is obligated to dwell in a succah and to take a lulav. And one who heard but did not blow, would not fulfill his obligation. And one who blew but did not hear would fulfill his obligation, for example, if he stopped up his ears completely and blew the shofar, he would fulfill his obligation, because he blew.

But this is not the case. Rather, the mitzvah is listening, not blowing, and we only blow so that we may hear, just like the mitzvah is dwelling in the succah, not building it, and we only build it in order that we may dwell in it. Thus, we bless "To sit [in a succah]" and we do not bless "To make [a succah]." And we will bless "To hear the sound of the shofar" and we will not bless "On the blowing of the shofar."

תשובות הרמב"ם, ס' קמ"ב (הוצ' בלאו)

שאלה מה ההבדל בין לשמוע קול שופר ובין על תקיעת שופר?

התשובה ההבדל ביניהם גדול מאד. וזה שהמצוה המחוייבת אינה התקיעה, אלא שמיעת התקיעה, והיוצא מזה, שאלו היתה המצוה המחוייבת היא התקיעה, היה חייב כל אדם ואדם מן הזכרים לתקוע, כמו שחייב כל אדם ואדם לישב בסוכה וליטול לולב, והשומע, שלא תקע, לא היה יוצא ידי חובתו, והיה גם כן התוקע, שלא שמע, יוצא ידי חובתו, כגון אם סתם אזניו תכלית הסתימה ותקע, היה יוצא, משום שתקע.

ואין הדבר כן, אלא המצוה היא השמיעה, לא התקיעה, ואין אנו תוקעין, אלא כדי לשמוע, כמו שהמצוה היא ישיבת הסוכה, לא עשייתה, ואין אנו עושין, אלא כדי לישב, ולכן נברך לישב ולא נברך לעשות, ונברך לשמוע קול שופר, ולא נברך על תקיעת שופר.

2. Rambam, Book of Mitzvot, Positive Commandment 170

It is that we are commanded to listen to the sound of the shofar on the first day of Tishrei, and that is His statement: "A day of blasts you shall have for you" (Num. 29:1).

רמב"ם ספר המצוות, מצות עשה ק"ע

הוא שציונו לשמוע קול שופר ביום ראשון מתשרי והוא אמרו יתעלה יום תרועה יהיה לכם

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4. Rambam, Laws of Shofar, Opening List of Mitzvot

To listen to the sound of the shofar on the first of Tishrei.

רמב"ם, הלכות שופר, הכותרת

לשמוע קול שופר באחד בתשרי

5. Rambam, Laws of Shofar, 1:1

There is a positive Biblical commandment to listen to the blasting of the shofar on Rosh Hashana as it says, "A day of blasts you shall have for you." (Num. 29:1).

רמב"ם, הלכות שופר, א:א

מצות עשה של תורה לשמוע תרועת השופר בראש השנה שנאמר יום תרועה יהיה לכם

According to Rambam, the mitzvah is unequivocally to hear the shofar, not to blow it. His proof that the mitzvah is to hear is twofold:

(1) It is sufficient to hear, and one need not blow himself.
(2) It is not sufficient to blow, if one did not hear.

While not stating it, the proof that (2) is the case is based on the following passage from Rosh Hashana (28a), that even the one blowing must hear the pure blasts, and if an echo overlaps the sound, he does not fulfill his obligation.

6. Babyloian Talmud, Rosh HaShana, 28a

Come and hear: 'If one blows into a pit or a cistern or a barrel, if he hears the sound of the shofar he fulfilled his obligation, but if he hears (only) the echo he has not performed his religious duty'. Why should this be? Let him have performed his religious duty with the beginning of the blast, before the sound is overlapped [with the echo?] — Rabbah (who said that the person blowing in the pit fulfills his obligation) was speaking of one who blows [for himself] and as he blows steps out of the pit (and thus hears the sound without any overlapping echo).

בבלי, ראש השנה, (כח.)

תא שמע: התוקע לתוך הבור או לתוך הדות או לתוך הפיטס, אם קול שופר שמע - יצא, ואם קול הברה שמע - לא יצא. ואמאי? ליפוק בתחילת תקיעה מקמי דליערבב קלא! כי קאמר רבה - בתוקע ועולה לנפשיה.

Is, then, the matter settled? Is there any way one could reject Rambam's proofs? Regarding his first point, how could one fulfill his obligation to blow without blowing himself? The most obvious answer is the principle of שומע כעונה, hearing is like responding, or, in this case, like blowing. We will see later whether this principle can be extended to shofar, but it seems clearly that this is the approach that Minchat Chinukh takes, below, and even uses it to raise an objection to Rambam's approach.

7. Minchat Chinukh, Mitzvah 405, *s.v.* Mah shekatav harav hamichaber mitzvah litkoa

See what the later commentators have written regarding this mitzvah, that both the hearing and the blowing are part of the mitzvah, and one without the other is insufficient. For one who hears from someone who is not obligated, like from women and the like, does not fulfill his obligation. Thus, the mitzvah is not only hearing but one must also blow, and thus *he can fulfill his obligation only via someone who is obligated*. Similarly, blowing without hearing is not sufficient, as is explicit in Tractate Rosh Hashana (27b): one who blows in a pit, etc.

מנחת חינוך, מצוה ת"ה, ד"ה מה שכתב הרב המחבר מצוה לתקוע

ועיין מה שכתבו האחרונים, דשניהם הן השמיעה והן התקיעה היא המצוה ואחד בלא חברו לא מהני, דהשומע מאינו חייב כגון מנשים ודומה אינו יוצא, אלמא דהמצוה לאו בשומע לחוד רק צריך להיות תוקע ואז הוא יוצא דוקא מחבירו המחוייב. וכן תקיעה בלא שמיעה לא מהניא, כמבואר בראש השנה (כז:) התוקע לתוך הבור וכו'.

While not explicitly quoting the principle of שומע כעונה, Minchat Chinukh clearly sees it operative here (יוצא דווקא מחבירו), and has no problem understanding why a person can fulfill his obligation of blowing only by hearing.

We are now left with questions according to both approaches. For an approach that emphasizes blowing – one, we will see, which becomes identified with Rabbeinu Tam - we must first assert that שומע כעונה can extend to blowing a shofar. As to the need to hear the blasts, if the one hearing is not the תוקע, he needs to hear the blasts so he can be a שומע and the principle of שומע כעונה can apply. As to why the תוקע needs to hear the blasts, we would have to argue that a תקיעה is only meaningful, and hence only valid, for him if he can hear it. [Note that this is a very subjective definition – if others hear, they fulfill their obligation even if he does not, for example, if he is deaf. Hence, for others it is a valid תקיעה even if it is inaudible to the תוקע. For himself, however, it is considered as if he has not done a תקיעה.]

Rambam would have to answer Minchat Chinukh's objection as to why must only an obligated person blow? Why would any blast not suffice? To this, we would have to respond that one of the defining characters of a shofar blast is not only what instrument it came from and its length, etc. but also who the person was who blew the shofar. For Rambam, the mitzvah is to hear a תקיעת מצוה, a blast done by someone obligated in the mitzvah. This might also entail the need for the תוקע to have with the intention to fulfill the mitzvah and to discharge the hearers of their obligation (see Rosh HaShana 29a and Rambam, Laws of Shofar2:4-5), a point which we will not be addressing in this shiur.

Minchat Chinukh asserts (quoting other achronim) that both elements are present, without exactly explaining the logic of this dual-nature mitzvah. We will return to this point later on.

For now, let us focus on the reasons given for the mitzvah of shofar, and see to what degree they correspond with the mitzvah's halakhic definition.

8. Rambam, Laws of Repentance, 3:4

Although the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana is a divine decree, there is a hint to its purpose, that is to say, "Wake up you sleepers from your sleep, and those that slumber awaken from your slumber, and investigate your acts and return in repentance and remember your Creator." These are those that forget the truth due to the trivialities of time, and waste all their years on vacuity and emptiness which will not help and not save – look into your souls and improve your ways and your deeds and each one of you should abandon his evil way and thought which is not good.

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה, ג:ד'

אע"פ שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזירת הכתוב רמז יש בו כלומר עורו ישינים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם וחפשו במעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם, אלו השוכחים את האמת בהבלי הזמן ושוגים כל שנתם בהבל וריק אשר לא יועיל ולא יציל הביטו לנפשותיכם והטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם ויעזוב כל אחד מכם דרכו הרעה ומחשבתו אשר לא טובה

9. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed, III:43 (University of Chicago edition)

New Year lasts similarly for one day. For it is a day of repentance in which the attention of the people is called to their negligence. Therefor the *shophar* is blown on it, as we have explained in *Mishneh Torah*. It is, as it were, a preparation for, and introduction to, *the Day of the Fast*.

(See also *Sefer Hinukh, Mitzvah* 405).

If the purpose of shofar is to serve as a wake up call, it is totally understandable why the mitzvah is to hear, and not to blow. We must hear the shofar and respond to its call to action. What other reasons are given for the mitzvah of shofar? Would they indicate a mitzvah of blowing or of hearing?

Let us see how Rambam deals with another mitzvah of shofar – the blowing of shofar on Yom Kippur of the Yovel. How does he articulate the nature of this mitzvah? Are the halakhic ramifications consistent with his articulation?

10. Rambam, Book of Mitzvot, Positive Commandment 137

That we are commanded to blow the shofar on the tenth of Tishrei of this year [the Jubilee year] to proclaim freedom to the slaves and that every Hebrew slave should be sent to freedom on the tenth of Tishrei, and that is His statement, "And you shall blow a shofar of blasts…" (Lev. 25:9). And it says, "And you shall proclaim liberty" (Lev. 25:10)….

And it is known that the blasts of the Jubilee year are to publicize the freedom and it is a type of an announcement, and such is the statement "And you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." And the purpose is not the same as the purpose of the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana, for the latter is a remembrance before God, and the former is to free the slaves.

רמב"ם ספר המצוות, מצות עשה קל"ג

היא שציונו לתקוע בשופר בעשרה מתשרי משנה זו לקרא דרור לעבדים ולצאת כל עבד עברי לחרות ביום העשירי מתשרי והוא אמרו יתעלה והעברת שופר תרועה וגו' ואמר וקראתם דרור…

וידוע כי התקיעה ההיא ביובל אמנם לפרסם החרות והוא מין הכרזה והוא אמרו וקראתם דרור בארץ לכל יושביה בארץ הנזכרת ואין ענינה כענין תקיעת ראש השנה כי היא זכרון לפני ה' וזה להוציא את העבדים.

The mitzvah here is to blow, not to hear. This is how the mitzvah is articulated in the Torah ("And you shall proclaim..", "And you shall blow…") and is consistent with its purpose – to serve as a proclamation of freedom.

In contrast to the sources we saw above, Rambam here states that the purpose of the shofar on Rosh HaShana is to serve as a remembrance before God. It is unclear how this is consistent with the idea of hearing. If anything, this suggests the idea of shofar as a type of prayer, a way of bringing our memory before God. If it is a prayer to God, then God should be the One listening, and we should be the ones blowing. This is probably the idea that underlies those who argue with Rambam and see the mitzvah of shofar as a mitzvah of blowing.

We will try reconcile Rambam later. For now, let us see how his concept of the nature of shofar on Yovel is reflected in halakha.

11. Rambam, Laws of Shmita and Yovel, 10:10

It is a positive commandment to blow the shofar on the tenth of Tishrei of the Jubilee year, and this mitzvah is first directed towards the court, as it states "And you shall blow a shofar of blasts", and each individual is obligated to blow, as it states, "And you shall blow the shofar."

רמב"ם, הל' שמיטה ויובל, י:י'

מצות עשה לתקוע בשופר בעשירי לתשרי בשנת היובל, ומצוה זו מסורה לבית דין תחלה (שנאמר והעברת שופר תרועה) וכל יחיד ויחיד חייב לתקוע שנאמר תעבירו שופר…

Rambam here in Mishne Torah repeats that the mitzvah of the shofar of Yovel is to blow it, and then states that every individual is obligated to blow! This is perfectly consisten with Rambam's claim that if the mitzvah were to blow one could not fulfill his obligation by listening. Here, where the mitzvah is to blow, each individual must do so.

Maharam Elshakar and R. Eliyahu Mizrachi debated, in a series of responsa, the issue of blowing versus hearing the shofar. In the following selection, Maharam Elshakar addresses both the case of the shofar on Rosh Hashana and the shofar on Yovel. He attempts to tie up the loose ends, connecting the purpose of each mitzvah with its definition, hearing or blowing.

12. Responsa of Maharam Elshakar, 10

I wrote to you (R. Eliyahu Mizrachi) earlier regarding Rambam's statement in his Sefer HaMitzvot that "the nature of the mitzvah of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana differs from the nature of blowing shofar on the Jubilee year. For the purpose of the latter blowing is to publicize the freedom etc." And I stated that because of this difference, Rambam writes regarding the Jubilee that the mitzvah is to blow and regarding Rosh HaShana that the mitzvah is to hear.

You found difficulty with my words, stating "I am astounded! To the contrary! The opposite is the case. If regarding the Jubilee the purpose is to publicize the freedom, a blowing that is not heard will not make the slave masters aware that they are to free their slaves… And the obvious conclusion is that regarding the Jubilee the focus is the hearing.

Now, I (Maharam Elshakar) must admit that, given how simple and obvious my statements were, it never occurred to me that any person would have any reason to doubt them. And now I find it necessary to clarify my claims at length. Who is it to whom the thought could enter his head that the mitzvah of blowing on the Jubilee is only about hearing the blasts? Consider: (1) the Torah screeches and says: "And you shall trumpet…", which means blowing, as you yourself admit, (2) The braitta states explicitly that every individual is required to blow on the Jubilee, which is not the case on Rosh HaShana, as stated above, (3) Rambam states that the Jubilee blowing is a proclamation and publicizing and that the root of the mitzvah is to proclaim and publicize the matter (the freedom), not that we were commanded to hear the proclamation itself. And that is what is written "And you shall trumpet" and not "A day of blasts" as it says regarding Rosh Hashana. And similarly it says "And you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land" and not "And you shall hear liberty proclaimed". It is thus clear that the hearing in this case is a fact that derives from the performance of the mitzvah, and it is not the mitzvah itself.

And it is known that the blasts on *Rosh Hashana* are for a remembrance and a prayer, and in order that a person should hear them and subjugate his evil inclination, and his limbs will tremble, and he will be bestirred to repent. There is even a statement in the Talmud that the shofar blasts are in order to confuse the Satan, and by "Satan" is meant one's evil inclination. Thus, the evil inclination dies when it hears the shofar blasts, as the verse states "Shall a shofar be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" (Amos 3:6). Then their uncircumcised hearts will be humbled and their inclinations will not have mastery over them, and they will repent with a complete heart. This, however, is not the purpose of the blasts of Yovel. For those blasts are only to proclaim freedom and to publicize it to the slaves and their masters. And to achieve this end,

שו"ת מהר"ם אלשקר, ס' י'

עוד כתב מר על מה שכתבתי כי כבר נתעורר הרמב"ם ז"ל אל הקושי שנתקשה בו כ"ת גבי יובל וכתב בספר המצות הקצר שלו שאין ענין תקיעת ראש השנה כענין תקיעה של יובל שזאת התקיעה אמנם היא לפרסם החירו' וכולי עד הילכך גבי יובל דבתקיעה תליא מילת' כתב לתקוע ר"ה דתליא בשמיעה כתב לשמוע ע"כ דברי

ותמה מר עליהן וכתב נפלאתי מאד אדרבה איפכ' מסתברא דכיון דביובל התקיעה בו אינה רק לפרסם החירות ובתקיעה בלא שמיעה אין האדונים יודעים עיקר החירות וכו' עד ויחוייב מזה דתקיעה של יובל בשמיעה תליא ע"כ דבריך דברי פי חכם:

העבוד' דלעולם לא עלה על לבי דדברים פשוטים כאלו יסתפק שום אדם בהם עד שצריך להרחיב הביאור בהם יותר ומי הוא שיעלה על דעתו או יכנס במוחו דתקיעת יובל אין המצוה אלא בשמיעה אחר שהכתוב צווח ואומר והעברת דהיינו ותקעת כדקאמרת: ואחר מה שאמר בברייתא בהדיא דחייב כל אחד ואחד לתקוע מה שאין כן בראש השנה כדאמרן לעיל: ואחר מה שכתב הרמב"ם ז"ל בבירור שהיא מין ממיני ההכרזה והפרסום ועיקר המצוה היא ההכרזה והפרסום שצונו להכריז על העבדים ולפרסם הדבר לא שצונו לשמוע הכרוז בעצמו והיינו דכתיב והעברת שופר תרועה ולא אמר יום תרועה כדכתיב גבי ר"ה וכן כתיב וקראתם דרור בארץ ולא אמר ושמעתם דרור דהשמיעה בכאן הוא דבר הנמשך מהמצוה לא גוף המצוה:

וידוע הוא כי תקיעת ראש השנה היא לזכרון ולתפלה וכדי שישמע אותה האדם ויכניע את יצרו ויזדעזעו איבריו ויתעורר לשוב בתשובה עד דאיכא מאן דמפרש דזה הוא כדי לערבב את השטן דקי"ל הוא שטן הוא יצר הרע: והיצר מת בשמעו קול שופר כענין שנאמר אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו ואז יכנע לבבם הערל ואל יתגבר יצרם עליהם ויעשו תשובה בלבב שלם ע"כ: מה שאין כן ביובל דאין התקיעה אלא להכריז על החירות ולפרסמו לעבדים ולאדוניהם ובכיוצא בזה היה מספיק לידע הדבר מפי אחרים אע"פ שלא ישמע הכרוז באזניו: וכ"ש שאין לנו לילך אלא

it is sufficient to know of the proclamation through the report of others, even if he did not hear the proclamation with his own ears. …

אחר הכתוב שכתב והעברת ותלה המצוה בתקיעה והלא משום דג"ש חשיבא כקרא כתב כ"ת דקאמר הסמ"ג לתקוע וכ"ש במקום הכתוב בעצמו.

Yes, says Maharam Elshakar, a proclamation on the Yovel will not do any good if no one is listening. Nevertheless, the mitzvah is to proclaim, and it is assumed that this will lead to people hearing, at least second hand, which would suffice. As to Rosh Hashana, he attempts to conflate the two reasons present in Rambam – to awaken people to teshuva, and to be a remembrance before God. He does this by stating that the shofar is not itself the remembrance before God, but it serves that goal. He seems to be saying that since a person is bestirred to repent, his prayers will be accepted before God. Alternatively, he may be saying that the repentance itself is a type of a prayer, or that by repenting, God remembers us. Regardless, he downplays the idea of the shofar being a prayer itself, since this is more consistent with the idea of blowing, and emphasizes its role as a spur for repentance.

Let us now turn to the opposing camp – those who say the mitzvah is to blow the shofar.

B. Blowing – Sheiltot and Rabbeinu Tam

1. Shi'iltot of Rav Ahai Gaon, 171

That the Jewish People are obligated to blow a shofar on the first of Tishrei as it states "In the seventh month…" And now, how should one act? Before one prays Mussaf, the *shaliach tzibbur* must arise on his feet and everyone else is sitting, and he shall take a shofar in his hand and make the blessing: "Blessed are You.. and have commanded us to blow the shofar" and "That you have kept us alive [until this time] and then he shall blow.

שאילתות, ס' קע"א

דמחייבין דבית ישראל למיתקע בחצוצרתא בחד בתשרי דכתיב בחדש השביעי… השתא היכי בעי ליעבד מיקמי דמצלי דמוסף בעי למיקם שליחא דציבורא אכרעיה וכולי עלמא יתיב ונשקול חצוצרתא בידיה ומברך בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו לתקוע בשופר ואשר החיינו ונתקע

2. Rosh, Rosh Hashana, 4:10

And Rabbeinu Tam writes that one should make a blessing on the blowing of the shofar [or "On the Blowing of the Shofar"] because its doing is the completion of the mitzvah. And the Ravyah quotes a Yerushalmi that the blower of the shofar must bless "That you have commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar"… and so writes the author of Hilkhot Gedolot… that the reason is because one fulfills his obligation with hearing the sound of the shofar not with blowing it…

רא"ש, ראש השנה, ד:'

ור"ת כתב שיש לברך על תקיעת שופר משום דעשייתה היא גמר מצוותה. וראביה הביא הירושלמי תוקע שופר צריך לברך אקב"ו לשמוע בקול שופר… וכן כתב בה"ג הא דמברכים לשמוע בקול שופר ולא מברכים לתקוע בשופר או על תקיעת שופר כמו על מקרא מגילה משום דבשמיעת קול שופר הוא יוצא ולא בתקיעת שופר…

3. Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Positive Mitzvah 42

There is a positive commandment to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana as it states "A day of blasts you shall have for you" … and when one makes the blessing one should bless "On the blowing of the shofar" and "You have kept us alive".

ספר מצוות הגדול, מצות עשה מ"ב

מצות עשה לתקוע בשופר בראש השנה שנאמר יום תרועה יהיה לכם… וכי מברך מברך על תקיעת שופר ושהחיינו…

Sheiltot and Smag state that the mitzvah is to blow, and the blessing is "To blow…" Rabbeinu Tam also states that the blessing is "To blow…" and gives as his reason that the act of the mitzvah is completed with the blowing (and not conceptually and chronologically later, with the hearing). Like Rambam, they connect the text of the blessing with the mitzvah, only they formulate the mitzvah differently. For them, the mitzvah is to blow.

We have now seen both approaches to the mitzvah. We have seen how the text of the blessing is, for each camp, connected to the nature of the mitzvah. We have also seen how the purpose of the mitzvah – teshuva or prayer – might be connected to its definition. Finally, we have seen some difficulties working out all the halakhot with any one approach. Is there a way to bring these two approaches together? It is to this question we now turn.

C. A Resolution?

1. Responsa of Rebbe Eliyahu Mizrachi, 41

שו"ת ר' אליהו מזרחי, ס' מ"א

אבל אלו היתה הגזירה שוה כקרא שאז היה נחשב קרא דוהעברת דכתיב ביובל כאלו הוא כתוב בראש השנה שוב לא היינו חוששים על מצות השופר אם היא התקיעה או השמיעה מכיון דבפירוש כתוב בתורה והעברת שפירושו ותקעת שאז לא היינו מברכים אלא לתקוע כמו שכתוב בפירוש בתורה ואף על גב דבשמיעה תלייא מילתא ועל כורחך לפרושי קרא דוהעברת שופר ותקיעת שופר שישמע ממנו תרועה מכל מקום אין לנו לברך אלא וצונו לתקוע כלשון התורה

Now, were a *gezaira shava* (that links the verses regarding the Jubilee to the verses regarding Rosh HhaShana) like the verse itself, it would be as if the verse "You shall blast a shofar" that is written regarding the Jubilee was written regarding Rosh HaShana. In such a case, we would not care (regarding the blessing) whether the real mitzvah were to blow or to hear, since the verse specifically states "And you shall blast," and we would only make the blessing "To Blow the Shofar," since this is how the Torah articulates it. Even if in its essence the mitzvah is to hear and the meaning of "You shall blast" is "You shall hear the blast," we would only make the blessing "You commanded us to blow," as is the wording in the Torah.

אבל השתא דגזירה שוה אינה כקרא ואין לנו בראש השנה שום פסוק מורה על תקיעה אזלינן בתר עיקר המצוה שהיא השמיעה ומברכינן לשמוע ולא לתקוע...

But seeing as a *gezaira shava* is not like a verse itself, we do not have any verse in the case of Rosh HaShana that speaks about a blowing. Thus, we follow the essence of the mitzvah, which is hearing, and make the blessing "To Hear" and not "To Blow."…

ואין זה אלא משום דלא מצינן לברוכי אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו אלא בלשון התורה ... וכן כל המצות הקוליות כתבו כל הגדולים עליהם מצות עשה לקרוא קריאת שמע מצות עשה לספר ביציאת מצרים ואף על פי שהשומעים קריאת שמע ולא קראו והשומעים ספור יציאת מצרים ולא ספרו אותם יוצאים בשמיעתן כאלו קראו וספרו.

The reason is that we cannot make the blessing "that You have sanctified us with Your mitzvot and commanded us" without using the language of the Torah… And the same is the case with all the sound-related mitzvot, regarding which the great rabbis have written, "It is a positive mitzvah to recite the Shema," "It is a positive mitzvah to tell the story of the Exodus," even though those that hear the recitation of Shema without reciting it and those that hear the story of the Exodus without telling it fulfill with their listening as if they have recited and told.

R. Eliyahu Mizrachi reconciles the debate by denying that the other side actually exists. He claims that all opinions agree that the essence of the mitzvah is to hear the shofar, not to blow it. Those who state that the blessing is "To blow…" or that "There is a mitzvah to blow…" are only reflecting the Biblical language (by Yovel, to which shofar on Rosh HaShana is linked). This should not be taken as an indication of the true essence of the mitzvah.

While it is certainly possible that the text of the blessing does not correspond to the definition of the mitzvah – a point we made at the very beginning of the shiur – this read seems misplaced here. There do seem to be two opposing camps, and each camp consistently ties the text of the blessing to the nature of the mitzvah.

Maharam Elshakar rejects R. Eliyahu Mizrachi's assertions, and goes on to make a number of important statements for our understanding of the mitzvah and its mechanics.

2. Responsa of Maharam Elshakar, 10

שו"ת מהר"ם אלשקר, ס' י'

The only ones who write that the blessing is "To Blow the Shofar" are Rabbeinu Tam and those French rabbis who follow his approach, and this was their practice, as I have written.

ואין מי שכתב שמברכין על התקיעה אלא ר"ת ז"ל והנמשכים אחריו מחכמי צרפת וכן היה מנהגם כדכתיבנא:

And what you arbitrarily stated that all opinions agree that the mitzvah is hearing, I do not agree with this. For those that state there is a mitzvah to blow, and we make the blessing "on the blowing", they reject the idea that the mitzvah is hearing, and for them the core of the mitzvah is only the act of blowing. Nevertheless, one must blow in a way that the sound reaches his ears, as we find by the Recitation of Shema and similar mitzvot, that although the mitzvah is reading, it must be a reading that is audible. However, the following distinction obtains, that regarding other such mitzvot, if one does not hear his recitation he nevertheless fulfils his obligation, and here if one does not hear the shofar, he does not fulfill his obligation.

ומה שגזר מר אומר וכתב דכולהו סבירא להו דבשמיעה תליא מילתא לא מודינא ליה למר בהכי דלהנך שכתבו מצות עשה לתקוע ומברכין על התקיעה לא אית להו דבשמיעה תליא מילתא דאין עיקר המצוה אצלם אלא התקיעה אלא שצריך להשמיע לאזנו דומיא דק"ש והדומה לה דאעפ"י שהמצוה הקריאה צריך להשמיע לאזנו אלא דהכא אם לא שמע יצא והכא לא יצא

Maharam Elshakar notes the correspondence of how the mitzvah is defined by the Rishonim and the text of the blessing that they state should be used. There are thus genuinely two camps. If this is so, he must defend the camp of "blowing" from the two standard objections: (1) Why must the one who blows hear his own blasts and (2) How does one blow if he only heard?

As we suggested earlier, he states that if the mitzvah is to blow, the need to hear can be explained by analogy to the need to hear one's own recitation of the Shema (see the mishna in Berakhot 15a). In both places the mitzvah is not hearing, but blowing or reciting, and yet hearing is a component of the mitzvah. The analogy is not complete, as he notes, since by Shema hearing is not strictly necessary, while by shofar it is so. Nevertheless, we can focus on the blowing and make the hearing a secondary aspect of the blowing.

Now that the need to hear is understood according to this camp, he turns to the question of how one is considered to have blown if he only heard. Why, in other words, is hearing not only necessary but also sufficient?

You further wrote: "The same applies to all sound-related mitzvot (that hearing fulfills ones obligation, regardless of how it is phrased). For all the Geonim write that "It is a positive mitzvah to recite the Shema," "It is a positive mitzvah to tell of the Exodus from Egypt" and nevertheless those who hear Shema and did not recite it, and those who hear the story of the Exodus fulfill their obligation by hearing, as if they recited (Shema) and told (of the Exodus) themselves." And you further wrote: "Why regarding these mitzvot did they not state "It is a positive mitzvah to hear Shema", but rather they wrote "It is a positive mitzvah to recite the Shema"? [And you took this as proof that the phrasing of the mitzvah and the blessing made on it don't reflect the actual

עוד כתב מר וכן כל המצות הקוליות כתבו כל הגדולים ז"ל מצות עשה לקרוא ק"ש מצות עשה לספר ביציאת מצרים אעפ"י שהשומעים ק"ש ולא קראו והשומעים ספור יציאת מצרים יוצאין בשמיעתן כאלו קראו וספרו ע"כ: גם בספרו כתב נמי מר בהאי מילתא למה לא אמרו בהם מצות עשה לשמוע ק"ש וכו' אבל אמרו מצות עשה לקרוא וכו':

nature of the mitzvah, just the way it is phrased in the Torah].

מאריה דאברהם מה לתבן את הבר: ומה לנשמע את המדובר: והנה ק"ש המצוה היא הקריאה לא השמיעה דכתיב ודברת בם ואם קרא ולא השמיע לאזנו כתבו ז"ל שיצא והיכי שייך למימר מצות עשה לשמוע ק"ש והמצוה בקריאה: ואיך יעלה דבר זה על הדעת: וכן ספור יציאת מצרים נמי המצוה היא ההגדה בפה דכתיב והגדת לבנך וגו':

God of Abraham! What does the straw want with the bread / And what do things heard want with what is said? Behold, regarding the Recitation of the Shema, the mitzvah is the recitation, not hearing it, as it says, "And you shall speak about them" and if one recited without hearing what he was saying, he fulfills his obligation. How, then, is it possible to say "There is a mitzvah to hear Shema", when the mitzvah is its recitation?! And how could anyone think such a thing? And similarly regarding the telling of the Exodus, the mitzvah is the telling of the story with one's own mouth, as it says, "And you shall tell your children…"

ומאי דכתב מר בחתימת דבריו אף על פי שהשומעים קריאת שמע ולא קראו יוצאין כאילו קראו וספרו וכו' ודאי דמלבד דדברים אלו נראין כסותרין את עצמן דיוצאין לחוד וכאלו קראו לחוד הנה אין להם עיקר כלל דלעולם לא אשכחן מאן דקאמר דהשומע קרית שמע כאלו קרא אותה ואי אפשר למימר הכי כיון שהמצוה בקריאה ולא בשמיעה כדאמרן:

You further wrote at the end of your responsum that those who hear Shema without reciting fulfill their obligation as if they recited etc. Now, first of all, these words seem self contradictory, for to "fulfill" (directly through hearing) is distinct from "as if they recited". But beyond that, they are totally incorrect. For we have never found anyone who says that one who hears the Recitation of Shema it is as if he has recited it. And indeed, it is impossible to say this, inasmuch as the mitzvah is the recitation and not the hearing, as we have said.

Here we have two mitzvot – Shema and Sippur Yitziat Mitzrayim – that are not mitzvot of hearing, but of doing: reciting and telling. Does hearing suffice for these mitzvot? R. Eliyahu Mizrachi, assuming at some level that the mitzvah always is about hearing, said' yes'. Maharam Elshakar, says 'no'.

ובהדיא כתב הרשב"א ז"ל בתשובה וז"ל דגרסינן בירושלמי כל הברכות אפי' שיצא מוציא חוץ מן התפלה וקריאת שמע וברכת המזון: תפלה שאין שליחו' ליחיד: קריאת שמע לפי שכל אחד צריך לשנן בפיו: ברכת המזון דכתיב ואכלת ושבעת וברכת מי שאכל יברך וכו' ע"כ.

And Rashba writes explicitly in a responsum: "The Jerusalem Talmud states: 'Regarding all blessings, a person, even if he has fulfilled his obligation, may discharge another's obligation (make the blessing for the other person), with the exception of Prayer (*shmoneh esrei*) and the recitation of Shema and the Grace after Meals. Prayer [one may not] because there is no agency for an individual. Recitation of the Shema [one may not] because each individual must articulate with his one lips. And Grace after Meals [one may not] for it states 'And you shall eat, and be sated, and bless' (Deut. 8:10) – only the one who eats may make the blessing.' (PT, Berakhot, 3:3)." (Responsa of Rashba 1:126).

וכן כתב הריטב"א ז"ל פרק ראוהו ב"ד וז"ל גם בברכות ק"ש ששליח צבור מוציא ידי חובה מהן אפילו את הבקי וכו' אבל ק"ש ותפלה אינו מוציא את הבקי כדאמרי' טעמא בירושלמי בדין שיהיה כל אחד ואחד משנן בפיו וכו'

And similarly Ritva writes in his commentary to chapter 3 of Rosh Hashana: "Although the *shaliach tzibbur* discharges the congregants of their obligations regarding the blessings of Shema, when it comes to Shema proper and to Prayer, he does not discharge the obligations of the *baki* (one who is versed), as we state in the Jerusalem Talmud, 'It is only appropriate that each individual articulate with his own lips, etc.'"

וכן כתבו מן המפרשים ז"ל וכן כתוב בספר אבודרהם ז"ל ובק"ש ובתפלה אם הוא ש"צ מוציא את שאינו בקי

The other commentators have written similarly, and so writes the Abudraham: 'Regarding Shema and Prayer – if he is the *shaliach tzibbur* he discharges the obligation of those who are not *baki*

even though he has already fulfilled his own obligation. This, however, is only true in the presence of a *minyan*, but when there is no *minyan* – even if an individual has not yet fulfilled his obligation, he cannot discharge the obligation of another.'

אע"פ שיצא ודוקא בעשרה אבל ביחיד אע"פ שלא יצא אינו מוציא ע"כ.

Some commentators have taken this even further and written that those who have the practice to recite the Shema with the *shaliach tzibbur* out loud are not acting properly, for there are times that they will rely on the *shaliach tzibbur* for the recitation of some of the words, and will not articulate those words themselves [and thus not fulfill their obligation]. This, however, would not occur were they reciting the Shema to themselves. Rav Hai Gaon wrote similarly in a responsum regarding those who recite Shema in a raised voice: "It is best to recite it silently so that a person does not miss even one word, for each word must be recited, and they all need an exact accounting, and all must be recited daily. And a person who fails to recite even one word, it is as if he has lost an entire world. However, when Shema is recited out loud, there are times an individual might be silent and the congregation will read ahead, and he will then continue from that point that the congregation has reached onward, thereby skipping over a word or two or even more. Whereas, if it is recited silently, each individual will read it entirely and not miss any words."…

וגדולה מזאת יש מן המפרשים ז"ל שכתבו כי אלו שנוהגין לקרוא ק"ש עם ש"צ בקול רם לא יפה הם עושים כי לפעמים יסמוך על שליח ציבור בקריאת קצת מלות ולא יוציא אותן בפה מה שאין כן כשקורא לבדו: וכן כתב רבי' האיי גאון ז"ל בתשובה על הקורין ק"ש בקול רם וז"ל אבל מעליא איהו בלחש דלא יתאביד מבר נש תיבה חדא או תרין דהא כל חד חייב בקריאתה: וכלהו חייבין בחשבונא ואצטריך לאשלמא לון בכל יומא ומאן דגרע חדא מינייהו כאלו גרע חדא עלמא ועל דא בקריאת' בקול רם זמנין דשתיק פורתא וצבורא יקראו להלא ויקרא בהו מההוא תיבה דאינון אמרין וידלג תיבה או תרין ויתיר: ועל דא בלחש כל חד יקרא ולא יגרע כלומע"כ.

And similarly writes Rashba in a responusm: "And it is fit to say Shema silently so that each person should enunciate with his own lips. For were people to say it out loud, perhaps a person would rely on what he had heard when it was being read by the congregation (and not read it himself)."

וכן נמי כתב הרשב"א ז"ל בתשובה וזה לשונו וראוי לאומרו כולו בלחש כדי שיהא כל אחד ואחד משנן בפיו שאלו אומרים אותו בקול רם אולי יבטח האחד על השמיעה כשקורא אותו הצבור ע"כ:

And I do not understand what comparison you are making between the recitation of Shema and similar mitzvot whose obligation is in their recitation to the mitzvah of shofar, whose obligation is in its hearing, according to Rambam. And even [if by the Recitation of Shema one] were to fulfill his recitation obligation by hearing, as you claim, [the comparison to shofar, where the mitzvah is hearing, would be specious]. And such a comparison is truly incomprehensible.

ואיני יודע מה דמו' תערכו מק"ש וכיוצא בה דמצותן בקריאה לשופר דעיקר מצותו השמיעה להר"ם במז"ל ואפילו אם היה השומע יוצא כדברי כ"ת אין אלו אלא דברים של תימה

Maharam Elshakar introduces a critical point – שומע כעונה is not a universal principle! According to the ירושלמי and the many Rishonim who follow it, שומע כעונה does not apply by Shema, Prayer, or birkhat hamazon, each for its own reason. Now, he does not state that it would not apply to shofar, and, according to Rabbeinu Tam we must of course assume that it does. But this certainly gives us pause. Should שומע כעונה apply to shofar? Does it apply it to all auditory מצות?

How are we to understand the mechanics of שומע כעונה? The most logical explanation is that by hearing words, I connect to them, and it is as if I said them. I don't need to actually say a brakha, just relate to the spoken words of the brakha. Since words have meaning, and I connect to their meaning, and they have been given a concrete form, this suffices. It is, if you will, one step beyond הרהור כדיבור דמי. Not only did I think the words, I connected to their concrete expression. If this is the mechanics, then it would be inapplicable by shofar. There, there are no words there is no meaning. I have to blast – to create a sound

with a shofar. Just as הרהור כדיבור is a totally irrelevant concept there, so is שומע כעונה. In no ways can it be considered as if I put the shofar to my lips.

[It should be noted, that according to this it is also difficult to understand how שומע כעונה can be applied to reading the megillah, since the mitzvah there is to do the physical act of reading from a scroll. Given that the mitzvah is learned from the idea of remembering – והימים האלו נזכרים ונעשים – perhaps the formulation of the mitzvah needs to be more nuanced than just "to read from a scroll," ואכמ"ל.]

An alternative understanding of שומע כעונה is necessary. We could say that one who hears is as if he said it not directly through the hearing, but indirectly through the one who is actually speaking. By connecting to the speaker by being his audience, by participating in his act, at least at the receiving end, it is as if one did the action of the speaker as well. If this is the understanding, it could be applied to תקיעת שופר without a problem.

Nevertheless, we still have the limitations of the ירושלמי. According to the ירושלמי, this principle cannot extend to prayer which should be personal and self-originating, not something responding to the prayers of another. If the mitzvah of shofar is to blow, and if this is understood as a type of prayer, then how could one fulfill this through hearing someone else?

Here it is important to introduce another concept – that of the corporate unit, either the זימון or the ציבור. While שומע כעונה does not apply to prayer or ברכת המזון, a ציבור can fulfill its obligation through the שליח ציבור and a זימון through the מזמן. The Rav, זצ"ל, explains that this works not by one individual discharging another's obligation, but by focusing on the corporate entity as a unit. True, every individual must pray for himself, but here the individual, the unit, is the ציבור, and that ציבור has prayed as a unit through the mouthpiece of the שליח ציבור. [The Rav has been know to say that silent prayer with a minyan is תפילה בציבור – prayer in the presence of a ציבור, but that the repetition of the Shmoneh Esrei is תפילת הציבור, the prayer of the ציבור as a unit.] The same would obtain for the unit of the זימון – I am not fulfilling my obligation through the מזמן, rather the whole group, as a unit, is saying ברכת המזון through the mouthpiece of the מזמן.

This perhaps is the key to תקיעת שופר as well. Let us admit that there is a problem – either because it is not words, or because it is a type of a prayer – of applying שומע כעונה to תקיעת שופר. This is certainly true for the תקיעות before שמונה עשרה. Those we would have to admit are תקועות of שמיעה. But as to the תקיעות during שמונה עשרה, those are part of a the repetition of the שליח ציבור, those are part of the prayer that is done not by individuals but by the ציבור as a corporate entity. Just as the ציבור fulfills its prayer obligation this way, it fulfills its obligation to ***blow*** *shofar this way as well. The entity of the ציבור blows shofar during the שמונה עשרה of מוסף.*

According to this, the תקיעות during שמונה עשרה would require a ציבור, since without this the listener would not be considered to have blown. And this is indeed what we find in the next source.

3. Bavli, Rosh Hashana, 34b

בבלי ראש השנה (לד:)

Mishna. If one has said the [nine] blessings and then procures a shofar, he sounds a teki'ah, teru'ah, teki'ah.

מתנ'. מי שבירך ואחר כך נתמנה לו שופר תוקע ומריע ותוקע.

Gemara. The reason is that he had no shofar to begin with. This shows that if he had a shofar to begin with, when he hears the blasts he must hear them during the recital of the blessings [the *malkiyot, zikronot,* and *shofrot*]. R. Papa b. Samuel rose to say his prayer, and at the same time said to

גמ'. טעמא דלא הוה ליה שופר מעיקרא, הא הוה ליה שופר מעיקרא, כי שמע להו - אסדר ברכות שמע להו. רב פפא בר שמואל קם לצלויי, אמר ליה לשמעיה: כי נהירנא

his attendant, When I give you a sign, blow the shofar for me. Said Raba to him: This rule was laid down only for a congregation. It has been taught to the same effect: 'When he hears the blasts, he must hear them in order, and during the recital of the blessings. When does this hold good? In a congregation; but when not praying with the congregation he must hear them in order but not necessarily during the recital of the blessings. If an individual has not blown [the shofar], another may blow it for him, but if an individual has not said the blessings another may not say them for him.

לך - תקע לי. אמר ליה רבא: לא אמרו אלא בחבר עיר. תניא נמי הכי: כשהוא שומען - שומען על הסדר, ועל סדר ברכות, במה דברים אמורים - בחבר עיר, אבל שלא בחבר עיר - שומען על הסדר, ושלא על סדר ברכות. ויחיד שלא תקע - חבירו תוקע לו, ויחיד שלא בירך - אין חבירו מברך עליו.

4. Shulkhan Arukh, Orah Hayim, 592:1-2

1. The *shaliach tzibbur* repeats Shmoneh Esrei, and they blow according to the order of the special brakhot, for *malkiut* they blow one set, for *zikhronot* one set, and for *shofrot* one set…

2. An individual does not interrupt his Shmoneh Esrei to blow during these special brakhot, even if he has someone to blow for him.

Rema: Rather, they blow for him before he prays the Mussaf, and he does not have to blow a second time.

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תקצב:א'-ב'

א. מחזיר שליח צבור התפלה, ותוקעין על סדר הברכות למלכיות תשר"ת פעם אחת, ולזכרונות תש"ת, ולשופרות תר"ת...

ב. יחיד אינו מפסיק לתקוע בברכות, ואפילו יש לו מי שיתקע לו.

הגה: אלא תוקעים לו קודם שיתפלל מוסף, ואין צריכין לתקוע לו שנית (כל בו וב"י בשם א"ח).

One does not do the tekiot during Shmoneh Esrei – the תקיעות דמעומד – without a ציבור! These are the תקיעות of blowing, and a listener can only be considered to blow if he is part of a ציבור. [This works particularly well according the Ashkenazic practice that the tekiot are only blown during the repetition of the Shmoneh Esrei. According to Sephardic practice there is also a set blown during the silent Shmoneh Esrei. If we assume like the Rav that this is not תפילת הציבור, we would have to assume that this set is also one which focuses on hearing, not blowing.] We would also have to explain why an individual who knows how to blow does not blow for himself during the repetition of Shmoneh Esrei. Perhaps this has to do with the issue of הפסק, interruption, or perhaps the tekiot during Shmoneh Esrei was only instituted in the ציבור where everyone would have the opportunity of participating them.

We have seen how the issue of שומע כעונה can be addressed by distinguishing between the two sets of תקיעות. Those done before Shmoneh Esrei are ones that we "hear," and those done during are ones that we "blow." If we return to the issue of the purpose of the shofar, this fits perfectly. The purpose of ***hearing*** *the shofar is to serve as a wake up call, as a spur to repentance. This is most appropriate before we stand to pray [see Maharam Elshakar, source #12, above]. These are the תקיעות דמיושב, the ones we do by ourselves, without the need of a ציבור; these are the ones we hear. The purpose of* ***blowing,*** *on the other hand, is to serve as a prayer. These are best timed during prayer, not before prayer. And, indeed, these are the תקיעות דמעומד, the ones we do during Shmoneh Esrei, the ones that need a ציבור to overcome the problems of שומע כעונה and to make the shofar blasts, as the Shmoneh Esrei itself, a prayer of the ציבור.*

The source below emphasizes the role of shofar as a vehicle for prayer, particularly emphasizing the integral connection between the shofar and the malkiot, zikronot, and shofrot. That is, focusing on the shofar ***during*** *Shmoneh Esrei as being a type of prayer.*

5. Bavli, Rosh Hashana, 34b

On New Year and the Day of Atonement the omission of one blast or one blessing is a bar to the others'. What is the reason? — Rabbah said: God proclaimed: Recite before Me on New Year kingship, remembrance and shofar verses; kingship verses to declare Me king over you; remembrance verses, that the remembrance of you may come before Me for good; and through what? Through the shofar.

בבלי, ראש השנה, (לד:)

תקיעות וברכות של ראש השנה ושל יום הכפורים מעכבות. מאי טעמא? - אמר רבה, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אמרו לפני בראש השנה מלכיות זכרונות ושופרות. מלכיות - כדי שתמליכוני עליכם, זכרונות - כדי שיבא לפני זכרוניכם לטובה, ובמה - בשופר.

Let us conclude by returning to the issue of the ברכה. Does not the fact that we say "to hear" indicate that there are not two types of shofar, but only one – a shofar that we are to hear, not to blow? But, in fact, there is not just one brakha that we make on shofar, but two, or rather, two sets. The blessing "to hear" is the one we say prior to the תקיעות דמיושב, prior to the shofar we are to ***hear****. However, the shofar we are to* ***blow*** *also has its brakhot. As the source above makes clear, the brakhot of the shofar during Shmoneh Esrei are the malkiot, zikhronot, and shofrot [in fact, these are the only brakhot that the Gemara is aware of. The אשר קדשנו במצותיו brakha of shofar came later]. These brakhot are the most appropriate for the shofar of blowing – they themselves are a type of prayer, and they become incorporated with the prayer of the shofar blasts.*

In fact, hearing does come up in one of those brakot. The blessing of shofarot is שומע קול תרועת עמו ישראל ברחמים. ***God, You*** *listen – you listen, because we are the ones blowing – You listen to the blasts of your nation Israel with compassion. What is listened to with compassion? Prayer. This shofar is a blast, a prayer, and we pray that God hears it, as we pray that he hears all our prayers for this coming year, with love and compassion.*