



## **Kol Demama: The Voice Within**

### **Prompt & Origin Text**

**Prompt:** *Lish'moah Kol Shofar*- To listen to the sound of the shofar...

**Core Text:** Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer 46 [~8<sup>th</sup> century, Israel, exegesis on the Torah]

בראש חדש אלול אמר לו הקב"ה (שמות כד, יב): "עֲלֵה אֵלַי הַהָרָה" וְהַעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּמַחֲנֵה שְׁהָרִי מִשָּׁה עֵלָה לְהָר שֶׁלֹּא יִטְעוּ עוֹד אַחַר עֲבוּמִ"ז וְהַקֶּב"ה נִתְעַלָּה אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּאוֹתוֹ שׁוֹפָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תְּהִלִּים מִז, ו:): "עֲלֵה אֱלֹהִים בְּתְרוּעָה" וְעַל כֵּן הִתְקִינוּ חַכְמֵי שִׁיחַי תּוֹקְעִים בְּשׁוֹפָר בְּרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל בְּכָל שָׁנָה וּשְׁנָה

On the New Moon of Elul the Holy One said to Moses: "Come up to me on the mountain" (Exodus 24:12),<sup>1</sup> and they sounded a shofar throughout the camp<sup>2</sup>, for behold, Moses has ascended the mountain, so that they do not go astray again after the worship of idols. The Holy One was exalted that day with that shofar, as it is said, "God is exalted with a blast (*tr'uah*), the Lord with the sound of a shofar (*b'kol shofar*)" (Psalms 47:5). Therefore, the sages instituted that the Shofar should be sounded on the New Moon of Elul every year.<sup>3</sup>

### **Questions:**

1. What was the role of the shofar in this narrative?
2. What are the connections between the shofar, *t'shuvah*, staying on the right track after having mess up, God's exaltation, and receiving the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of Tablets?
3. What might be different about the shofar of Elul vs. the shofar of Tishrei?

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<sup>1</sup> Important context: This is Moses' **second trip** up to the mountain. 40 days ago (the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz), Moses descended the mountain with the first set of Tablets (10 commandments) and shattered them upon seeing the Israelites worshipping the Golden Calf. 40 days later, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Elul, Moses is summoned back up to the mountain to receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of Tablets.

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Exodus 19:16-19 for the use of the shofar in the giving of the first set of Tablets.

<sup>3</sup> In later *halakhic* texts, the *minhag* gets extended to the full month of Elul. The *minhag* is ubiquitous in *Ashkenazi* communities, where the shofar is blown every morning at the conclusion of *shacharit*. There's much more variance in *Sephardi* communities, including but not limited to blowing the shofar during *selichot* (recited the whole month), during the repetition of the *shacharit Amidah*, or not at all.