

Dvar Torah Outline — Rosh Hashanah on Shabbat: תקיעת שופר, בלבול השטן, and the Nature of אסמכתא

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman analyzes the Gemara's warning that a year in which "we do not blow at its beginning" may end "with teru'ah," focusing on the purpose of shofar as "מַעֲרֵב אֶת הַשָּׁטָן" and how that interacts with shofar's absence on shabbat. He contrasts the Ritva and the ג"ה on whether the Gemara refers to intentional neglect of extra blasts or an אונס that prevented shofar entirely. From there, Rabbi Shulman opens the larger sugya: why shofar is not blown on shabbat, how Rava reframes earlier Amoraic readings, and how later Acharonim (notably the מרום שדה) understand the "פסוקים" as אסמכתא rather than a true דאורייתא exclusion.

I. The Gemara of רבי יצחק: a year without "tekiah at the beginning" ends with "teru'ah"

A. The statement and its meaning

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara רבי יצחק בשם רבי:
 - "כל שנה שאין תוקעין לה בתחילתה, מריעין לה בסופה."
- Explanation of terms:
 - מריעין = later "תרועות" of distress: fasting, crisis, public crying-out.

B. "מאי טעמא? דלא יערבב שטן" — shofar's added function

- Beyond the basic מצוה קיום, Rabbi Shulman emphasizes an additional spiritual effect:
 - The shofar serves as a סגולה of "מַעֲרֵב אֶת הַשָּׁטָן" (confounding the prosecutor).
 - Framing:
 - Judgment operates with דין, but also "מהלכים של רחמים," including structured "rules" about prosecution and advocacy in the Heavenly court.
-

II. The ריטב"א: the Gemara cannot be about “Rosh Hashanah on shabbat” (2:02)

A. Why it cannot mean “we didn’t blow because it was shabbat”

- Rabbi Shulman explains the Ritva’s reading:
 - If it’s shabbat, not blowing is **doing the right thing**, so it cannot be punished as “bad year.”

B. Why it also cannot mean outright negligence (פשיעה)

- If the community simply refused to blow:
 - The problem would be far bigger than “not confusing the Satan”:
 - You lose the **mitzvah itself** plus its **s’gulah**.
 - Therefore the Gemara’s “מאי טעמא” would be unnecessary.

C. The Ritva’s chiddush: it refers to skipping the extra early blasts

- Rabbi Shulman presents the Ritva’s דיוק:
 - “אין תוקעין לה בתחילתה” = not doing the **תקיעות דמיושב** (the earlier “extra set” before the main סדר).
- Practical takeaway:
 - :is effectively warning יצחק **don’t be מבטל the minhag** of those extra blasts, because they are specifically tied to **בלבול השטן**.

III. Tosafot בה"ג: the case is (5:30) אונס

A. Tosafot’s alignment with “not shabbat”

- Rabbi Shulman notes Tosafot brings the בה"ג:
 - Like the Ritva, it **cannot** be shabbat (since then you acted correctly).

B. The בה"ג’s scenario: something prevented shofar despite intent

- The case is **אונס**:
 - The shofar broke, the בעל תוקע couldn’t arrive, a communal disruption (Rabbi Shulman gives contemporary-style examples).

C. A conceptual difference vs. the Ritva

- Rabbi Shulman frames an apparent מחלוקת:
 - **בה"ג** even with אונס (no fault), the consequence occurs—מעשה, shofar didn't happen, so the s'gulah is absent.
 - **ריטב"א** focuses on **intentional ביטול of the extra תקיעות דמיושב** even though the core shofar was blown.
 - Emerging question:
 - How much is “מערבב את השטן” tied to the **primary shofar** vs. specifically the **additional early set**?
-

IV. Pastoral/psychological reassurance—and then a challenge from the ערוך לנר (8:00)

A. Reassurance for a fearful person entering Rosh Hashanah

- Rabbi Shulman suggests a calming point:
 - The Rishonim read the Gemara as referring to unusual failure of shofar (or skipping תקיעות), **not** the standard shabbat-based non-blowing.

B. The ערוך לנר's historical observation

- Rabbi Shulman cites the ערוך לנר:
 - Based on חז"ל chronologies, **both the First and Second Temples were destroyed in years when shofar was not blown.**
- Yet:
 - There were also major positive events (e.g., **הקמת המשכן**) in years shofar wasn't blown.
- The question the ערוך לנר raises:
 - Why do “non-shofar years” seem to correlate with the **best** or **worst** outcomes?

C. The ערוך לנר's proposed answer: shabbat can “stand in” for shofar—if shabbat is strong

- Rabbi Shulman presents his thesis:
 - **Shabbat can substitute** as a spiritual defense in place of shofar.
 - But that only works if the person/people are truly **careful with shabbat**; otherwise shabbat is “muzzled” and cannot advocate.

D. Rabbi Shulman's critique and discussion questions

- Tension with Rishonim:
 - Rabbi Shulman notes this seems to run against the Rishonim's framing.
 - Logical difficulties he raises:
 1. If on shabbat we refrain from shofar out of **כבוד/שמירת שבת**, why should prior חילול שבת negate the present נכון-מעשה?
 2. It remains unclear **how** shabbat substitutes for shofar.
 3. It feels "statistically" questionable to draw such causal conclusions from history alone.
 - He pauses the debate, saying that with Divine help the earlier sages will open a clearer path.
-

V. The Mishnah: not blowing shofar on shabbat—source and parameters (16:30)

A. The baseline halachah

- Rabbi Shulman quotes/ summarizes the Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 29b):
 - If Rosh Hashanah falls on **shabbat**:
 - In the **מקדש** they blow,
 - In the **מדינה** they do not.

B. Immediate question

- Why is shofar suspended on shabbat everywhere except the Mikdash?
-

VI. The Bavli's first approach (רבי חמא בר חנינא): two Torah-descriptions of Rosh Hashanah (17:30)

A. רבי חמא's answer as Rabbi Shulman presents it

- The Torah describes two modes:
 - A "זכרון תרועה" type day (remembrance),
 - And a "יום תרועה" type day (actual blowing).
- רבי חמא's conclusion:
 - When it is shabbat, it is the "remembrance" mode—no blowing.

B. Rava's two questions on this approach

1. If the Torah itself forbids blowing on shabbat, **why is the Mikdash different** (why blow there)?
2. If shofar is not a מלאכה, why would a pasuk be excluding it at all?

C. The reinforcement from תנא דבי שמואל

- Rabbi Shulman explains the key support:
 - From "כל מלאכת עבודה לא תעשו" we infer:
 - Only מלאכה is forbidden,
 - Shofar is a חכמה (not a מלאכה), therefore intrinsically it should be permitted on shabbat.
-

VII. Rava's reframing: מדאורייתא it is permitted; the non-blowing is a rabbinic gezeirah (20:00)

A. Rava's core claim

- Rabbi Shulman emphasizes Rava's language:
 - "מדאורייתא מישרא שרי" — Biblically, blowing is permitted.

B. The reason for the rabbinic decree (Rabbah's famous principle)

- Rava invokes Rabbah:
 - "גזירה שמא יטלנו בידו וילך אצל בקי ללמדו ויעבירו ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים."
- Parallel:
 - Same conceptual gezeirah appears by lulav in Sukkah.

C. Rabbi Shulman's "who said what?" question

- He highlights a textual/structural issue:
 - If this is already "דאמר רבה," what is Rava adding beyond raising the questions?
 - Why does the sugya frame it as Rava's "אלא אמר רבא" if Rabbah already taught the core gezeirah?
-

VIII. The Yerushalmi's contribution and the Mikdash exception (24:00)

A. A striking picture: early Amoraim vs. a late Amora (Rava)

- Rabbi Shulman notes how unusual it is that:
 - Major early Amoraim (Bavli and Yerushalmi lineups) seem set aside by Rava's conclusion.

B. The Yerushalmi answers the “why Mikdash?” question

- Rabbi Shulman cites a Yerushalmi-style drash attributed (in some girsasot) to רבי שמעון בר יוחאי:
 - A pasuk linking avodah/korbanot and shofar implies:
 - Just as korbanot are in the Mikdash, **shofar blowing persists there**.

C. Yet one question remains powerful

- Even if the Mikdash is explained, the “מלאכה not חכמה” point (תנא דבי שמואל) still drives Rava's broader stance.
-

IX. Questioning the gezeirah itself: why ban a mitzvah because of a likely-patur outcome? (26:30)

A. The problem Rabbi Shulman raises

- If someone carried a shofar while “busy with the mitzvah,” there is a view (Rabbi Yosi, and halachah follows) that they may be פטור due to טרוד במצוה.
- So why suspend shofar on shabbat based on a concern that would (often) yield no חיוב?

B. Practical frequency intensifies the question

- Rabbi Shulman notes the non-blowing on shabbat affects a significant portion of years (discussion of percentages), making the decree feel even more weighty.
-

X. The **מרום שדה** and the nature of **אסמכתא**: reconciling Rava with earlier readings (28:30)

A. A major harmonization

- Rabbi Shulman brings the **מרום שדה**:
 - Even **רבי חמא** (and by extension the other early Amoraim) may have meant the pasuk-reading only as **אסמכתא**, not as literal **דאורייתא** exclusion.

B. So what is Rava “fighting”?

- Rabbi Shulman proposes:
 - Rava is rejecting the idea that an **אסמכתא** could justify **bittul of a דאורייתא mitzvah**.
 - If shofar is not a **מלאכה**, an **אסמכתא** cannot itself uproot the Torah’s command.

C. Two models of **אסמכתא** (as Rabbi Shulman explains via Ritva/Maharal)

1. “**Whisper model**”: Hashem hints a preferred practice (not a strict command).
2. “**Forecast model**”: Torah hints that circumstances may arise where Chazal will need to legislate a future safeguard.

D. Application to shofar-on-shabbat

- Rabbi Shulman frames Rava’s move:
 - The Torah’s language functions as an **אסמכתא** of the “forecast” type:
 - signaling that there will be times Chazal must prohibit shofar (due to carrying risk),
 - even though **מדאורייתא** shofar would be permitted on shabbat.

E. The unresolved question Rabbi Shulman leaves for continuation

- How did the earlier Amoraim conceptualize:
 - extra “**שביתה**” concerns overriding a Torah **עשה**,
 - when shofar is not a **מלאכה**?
- Rabbi Shulman ends by saying this will be continued in the next session.

In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman explains that the Gemara’s “bad year” warning is understood by Rishonim as referring to missing shofar due to **אונס** or skipping (**בה"ג דמיושב**) not the **ריטב"א** (,not the

standard shabbat case.

- The ערוך לנר links “non-blowing years” to historic highs and lows and suggests shabbat can substitute for shofar—an idea Rabbi Shulman probes and challenges.
- The Mishnah’s rule (no shofar on shabbat outside the Mikdash) launches a sugya where Rava argues that **מדאורייתא** shofar is permitted (it’s חכמה, not מלאכה) and the suspension is a **rabbinic gezeirah** against carrying.
- s approach: earlier Amoraim may have been speaking in מרום שדה’ Shulman ends with the רבי terms of **אסמכתא**, and Rava reframes what an אסמכתא can and cannot do—setting up the next installment.