

What do we have to do or think when we are listening to the Shofar?

There are many times during Tefila when we are encouraged to ask HaShem for our needs and wishes: every day, 13 of the 19 Berachot we say in the Amida are dedicated to **request** for our personal and national needs. During Shabbat and Chagim, when we open the Hekhal to take out the Sefer Torah, we ask haShem for good health, (Refuah Shelema); we also **ask** haShem to protect our brothers and sisters in Medinat Israel, and those who lead it and defend it. We also **ask** haShem Almighty several times for our Parnasa (livelihood). There are other prayers in which we don't focus on asking haShem but in **praising** haShem, like Bircot haShachar or the first 3 Berachot of the Amida. Praising God, trains us to appreciate how much He cares about us and how much He does for us. And finally, there are also Tefilot in which we **thank** HaShem (Mode Ani, Modim, Bircat haMazon, etc) for all He gives us!

When we listen the Shofar we should not be praying. When we are listening to the Shofar we should not thank, praise let alone **ask** haShem Almighty for anything: the Shofar voice is an alarm for the soul. Its powerful sounds remind us that haShem is our King and we **owe** Him obedience. The Shofar, as Maimonides says, helps us to redirect our thoughts to the real goals of our lives. It is a moment to **reflect** on our own performance in life: where should we be and where we really are. *It is actually the ONLY moment of the year that, in a sense, haShem is asking us and we have to answer to Him.* He is demanding us to stop for a moment, wake up and reflect on what we are we doing with the life He granted us.

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