



## THE SHOFAROT AND THE COSMOLOGY OF RABBI ISAAC LURIA

As the sounds of the shofar reverberated in my body this Rosh Hashanah, my thoughts spun into the framework of the story of Creation by Rabbi Isaac Luria, one of the world's greatest kabbalists. Rabbi Luria lived in 16<sup>th</sup> century Tsfat in the Galilee region of Israel that became a center for kabbalistic study. Rabbi Luria taught after the expulsion from Spain and wove a cosmology that tried to explain to the people of the time the purpose of creation and their role in it.

Rabbi Luria, the 'Ari', explained that before the world was created, G-d wanted to have a relationship with us and share G-d's goodness with us. But everything was filled with G-d's energy. To make a space for creation, G-d had to withdraw, create a 'tzimtzum', a space for Creation. As I heard the 'tekiyah', it reminded me to open and make a space within me to have a conversation with G-d, to stop the steady stream of thoughts and be present to listening to and speaking to G-d.

Then as the 'Ari' continued the story, G-d sent a beam of light into the space and there were vessels what were supposed to contain the energy, but they shattered. *Shevirat Hakelim*, *Shevarim*, the staccato sound of the shofar that indicates brokenness. It reverberates inside us and things feel like they are shaken loose. Can we take this as an opportunity to see what needs to be shifted or corrected?

Many time in our lives there is a *sheverat hakelim*, a shattering of our vessel, sometimes in major ways such as the loss of a relationship, or in smaller ways such as when a project does not go as intended.

Then, says the 'Ari', we need to mend, to heal. We need to bring *tikkun* to ourselves to become more whole again. We bring *tikkun hanefesh*, healing of the soul and *tikkun olam*, healing of the world. We pray to be written in the Book of Life for a good and sweet New Year.

Then the *tekiyah gedolah*, the long, haunting sound that continues to reverberate in our body for the rest of the year beckoning us to wake up, to see what may need to be changed and to bring healing to those parts of us that we can. The work is ongoing. What will shake loose next Rosh Hashanah when we listen to the sounds of the shofar? And what will we do differently because of it?

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