

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: Fwd: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 8.21.20
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 1:00:52 PM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 8.21.20
Date: August 21, 2020 at 8:33:38 AM EDT
To: "mojo210al@gmail.com" <mojo210al@gmail.com>

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 6 People Fishing 4 Cars 2 Trucks 2 Walkers 2 Dog Walkers

There is a direct correlation to what I write and the amount of time I have to write it. I need to leave my house in 42 minutes and so today's writing will be succinct—at least for my standards. Of course, I am reminded of my classic pulpit joke told whenever I was invited to another community to speak. "People always ask me how long I speak for. I tell them that I speak for 15 minutes, because that is the amount of time it takes me to walk from my house to shul on a Shabbat morning. So it's great to be in Baltimore [this morning](#) and be speaking to you." Subtle and not everyone got it at first. By the end, they understood perfectly. In any event, here is what I want to say today. Today marks the start of the month when Jews will sound the Shofar daily at the end of morning services. (Save for Shabbat and the day immediately preceding the start of the New Year). It also marks the day when I would make the first of what would be many calls to my friend Michael S., one of America's most skilled and thoughtful practitioners of the rabbinic craft.

"Michael, I got nothing. What am I gonna do this year for yontiff(the festivals)?" Michael could set his watch pretty much for that phone call, [around 10:30 AM on the 1st day](#) of Elul 57..... The fact that he always kindly took the call and we began the process of distilling a year's worth of notes for "what we really had to address this year on the New Year and Yom Kippur" was a gift that I miss receiving in my new life. Of course, I still have to prepare for my visiting responsibility in Ohio for the Holydays this year, but the phone call to distill a year's worth of rabbinic notes about the issues we need to address is no longer there. (not to worry the friendship still is). But here is what I do know about that sounding of the shofar and what I really want to say about the daily ritual of hearing it. It is a wake-up call for anyone who listens. Like the modern alarm clock itself with a snooze button on it, you can keep pausing the wake up call as long as you want. But on a regular basis—it will still go off—every 8 minutes, every ten minutes, maybe even every 12 minutes. However long you push the snooze button for, unless you turn it off, the alarm will still sound. That is the function of the daily shofar blast itself. You may not hear its piercing sound on day one, you may

ignore it at first, you may roll over and try to imagine a long stretch without it sounding and waking you up—only to discover that it the days of accounting are staring us all in the face.

I doubt the planners of the political conventions noted the intersection between their dates and the Jewish calendar and the start of Elul—the month which precedes the New Year. But both were scheduled to coincide and touch this month completely. As the fireworks went off outside a hall in Wilmington, Delaware last night, it seemed to me to be as if it were a final marking before the call of the Shofar would be sounded. [This morning](#) the fireworks are over, but the work is only now beginning. Indeed on Rosh Hashana morning, (this year only on the Second day since the first day falls on the Sabbath and the Shofar is not sounded) we Jews will read the following before the sounds pierce our screens. ***“Heed the call of shofar, awake from your lethargy, from your slumber. Examine your deeds and turn in repentance. You sleepers who forgot the truth while caught up in the fads and the follies of the time, frittering away your years in vanity and emptiness which cannot help. Take a good look at yourselves. Improve your ways. Abandon your bad deeds , your wicked thoughts.”*** That my friends has never been more true for me than this very year—not for me as an individual—but for my people and for all of us as a country. For me, I will sound the shofar daily leading up to the start of a new Jewish Year(5781). For us as American’s, we might also need to sound it a bit longer—[until November 3rd](#) and the brutality associated with vain leadership comes to an end. It will only happen if we don’t try to pause the sound or ignore its shrill warning. Morris

Sent by my iPad