

The *Mix*

72 OF FELINES, FENCES,
AND FEARS
75 SECOND THOUGHTS
78 CACHE



A Potpourri of Encounters and Impressions

FULL PAGE



The Shofar Sounds

David Nentzinsky –
The Shofar Macher

1. Around the World: Just twenty minutes from Jerusalem, Reb David Nentzinsky welcomes us into his home in the rapidly growing chareidi city of Beitar. "My parents fled the Communist revolution in Russia and settled in Shanghai, China, where I was born. We were forced to flee again, this time to Brazil, after the 1949 Communist takeover in China."

2. Changing Direction: Sitting in his living room, surrounded by his beloved shofaros, Reb David reminisces about life in Rio de Janeiro. "My life in Brazil was filled with material comfort. I married and had a good job heading El Al's Brazilian office. Sadly, my daughter became seriously ill, and surprisingly insisted that I learn to blow the shofar."



3. The Shofar's Soul: Although Daniella a"h departed from this world at the tender age of ten years old, her words heralded the Nentzinsky family's future destiny in Jerusalem. "Baruch Hashem, I have been a *baal tokeia* here for Rabbi Zilber z"l, and my shofaros are used all over the world because of her prophetic words."

4. Critical Difference: "In our modern world, no one seems to have the time, care, or wisdom to perfect the shofar's sound," Reb David insists, "and here's where I can make a real difference. Being a *baal tokeia*, I know what a good shofar should sound like. I just had to develop the right tools to enable those sounds to resonate."

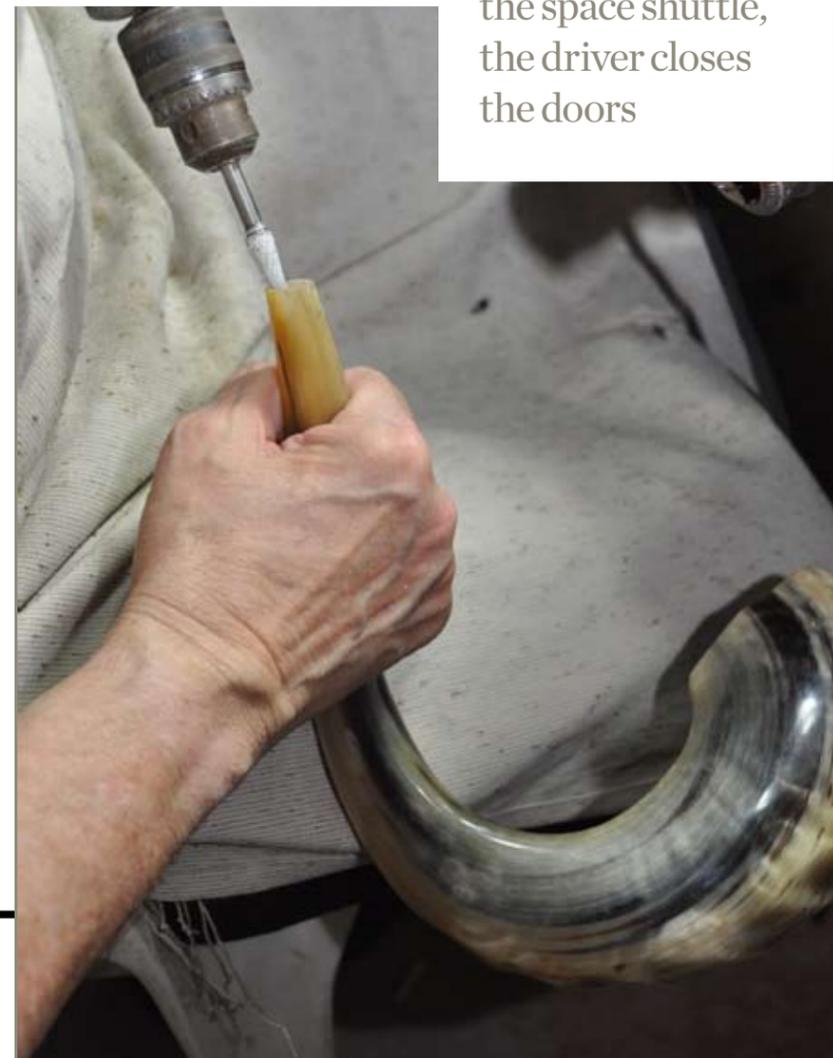
5. Out of the Fire: After the horn's tip is submerged in burning coals to remove the outer layer and soften the bone, the *shofar macher* stretches the rounded horn into the long, flat mouthpiece that we are all accustomed to seeing. The internal marrow is then removed and the mouthpiece drilled and formed.

6. As Good as His Tools: “My love of shofar blowing soon led me into the art of shofar making,” Reb David tells us, “for the sound one makes can only go as far as the quality of his instrument allows. Most unprocessed shofaros are shipped from Morocco. They are all too quickly transformed into commercial shofaros here.”

7. Cleaner Sound: “People don’t realize how much of the shofar’s sound is affected by the small pieces of marrow left over from the original cleaning,” Reb David points out. “I developed my own tools to thoroughly clean the horn, as you can see from these before-and-after pictures of the mouthpiece.”



Seated inside an enclosed glass cabin that looks like it came from the space shuttle, the driver closes the doors



8. Nature’s Way: “The Pri Megadim writes that the mouthpiece should not be expanded, since it didn’t grow that way naturally,” Reb David explains. “I reheat the shofar’s mouthpiece so that it returns to its original shape. I cut it perfectly straight so that the *baal tokeia*’s lips will form a tight seal.”

9. Traditions: “Every Jewish community has its own traditions,” Reb David relates. “Ashkenazim prefer the highly processed and polished ram’s horn [photo 6], while the Teimani tradition is to blow a completely unprocessed ram’s horn. According to the tradition of *mekubalim* and *chassidim*, the short, unprocessed Bavli horn is used [photo 4].”

10. No Pride Allowed: “A day before Rosh HaShanah, a young man asked me to teach him to blow the shofar. I told him if we start now, he might be ready to blow by next Rosh HaShanah. I personally blow 300 blasts a day, starting from Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, in preparation for that great day. The shofar demands constant practice, acute skill, and most of all, it hates *gaavah* [pride].”

