

'Fire! Fire!'

A story from the Dubno maggid

Long, long, ago, before fire engines were invented, when a fire broke out in the town someone would raise the alarm by blowing loudly on a trumpet. Then all the people would form a human chain from the nearest well to the scene of the fire. They would pass buckets of water to each other and try to put out the fire.

One day a young boy from a tiny village came to town. All of a sudden he heard the sound of a trumpet blaring through the village.

'Why is someone blowing so loudly on a trumpet?' he asked a passer-by.

'It's to tell everyone there is a fire in the town so that it can be put out quickly'.

'That's wonderful', thought the boy. 'I will buy a trumpet and take it back to the village'.

Not long after his return a fire broke out in the village. The young boy ran to the scene of the fire and called out 'Don't panic. I will put the fire out. Listen!' He put the trumpet to his lips and started to blow loudly. But the flames just leapt from one roof to another and soon half the village was burnt to the ground.

'You stupid boy', yelled the villagers. 'Do you think that just blowing a trumpet will put out the fire? The trumpet is just an alarm to warn everyone that there is a fire in the village. Then everyone can run to the well to help carry water to put out the fire'.

The trumpet is just like the shofar. The shofar is just an alarm signal to warn us the Hashem will only forgive us if we do teshuvah, if we are sorry for the bad things we have done and if we try to do mitzvot and kind deeds.