

For Whom Shofar Sounds

by RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

Some years ago a Christian clergyman suggested that his people join the Jews in the observance of the High Holidays.

After all, he argued, there is nothing exclusively Jewish in the review of one's misdeeds. So why shouldn't Christians repair to their sanctuaries, perhaps listen to the Shofar and engage in the kind of reflection and spiritual regeneration highlighted by Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Actually, during the past year, the one we call 5733 in the Jewish calendar, the emphases in the High Holyday process were indeed reflected in the world at large.

The holydays stress man's proneness to make mistakes and then regret them. Watergate is almost a text-book case of that tendency.

The holydays tell us that we must regard proper behavior as something for us to pursue, not just others. Not so long ago hundreds of New York policemen were ticketing parking laws violators. Whilst doing that, their own cars were being ticketed. The howl they set up was most instructive to all of us.

The holydays tell us that man is not fastened to his present outlook; that they can be broadened. Well, sir, look at how the president of our country pursues that truth. He built his reputation and career on the thesis that being "soft on Communism" was reprehensible. Now look at the way he extends the hand of cordiality to Moscow and Peking!

The holydays call upon us to establish a society built on moral law and order. The need for moral law and order was never more strikingly dramatized than they were last year.

The holydays urge us to end feuds with other people. And in Israel the Israelis and the Arabs are living amiably and amicably together, proof that opponents may achieve reconciliation.

The holydays appeal to the Jewishness in us, and remind us that the flame of devoutness can be re-ignited no matter how low it has become. The new-found Zionism and interest in Judaism on the part of Russian Jews, whose Yiddishkeit had become drastically attenuated, vindicate this affirmation.

So much for the public sphere. What about the private sector, that is the relationship that each of us has with his relatives and friends? What about our own attachment to our religious legacy? What about our own ability to declare to our faults and bad habits, "I will overcome?"

All of these matters are also involved in the holyday, syndrome.

The majestic holyday liturgy can overcome our spiritual lethargy.

We should enthusiastically welcome the New Year not only because it means we have "made it," but because we know that it is the reap-

eutic and salutary to air our errors.

May the world -- and we, be successful in achieving regeneration.

May the Christian world -- and all mankind -- join the Jews in the courageous act of admitting our mistakes and resolving to make amends for them.

May 5734 bring wholesomeness and holiness to the world at large.

And when you hear the Shofar, you may feel that it sounds for Washington and Moscow and Uganda and Jerusalem. But it also sounds for you.

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