

after the seventh Sabbath, it means the day after the [end of the] seventh week. But our sages argue against them that the word *mohorath*, “the morrow,” is never used to refer to the end of a week, or the end of a month, or the end of a year, but only the end of the previous day; that is, when the previous day is over, the next day is called its morrow. Therefore, we always observe the Festival of Shavu’oth on Sunday, whereas for them it can fall on any day of the week.⁵¹ Our early [sages] waged wars against them regarding this commandment; they wanted to make us submit, but God did not give us into their hands.

19 Further on in chapter 23, it is written: *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a day of rest, a remembrance of teru’a, a holy convocation* (Leviticus 23:24). Our sages, of blessed memory, explain the word *teru’a* as meaning praise and words of glory, as is written in Psalms 95: *O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us sing out praise [nari’a] to the rock of our salvation* (Psalms 95:1). And in Psalms 100: *Sing out praise [hari’u] to the Lord, all ye lands* (Psalms 100:1). But the Talmudites say that this *teru’a* must be performed specifically with a shofar [ram’s horn]. And indeed, in many places in Scripture, it uses the word *teru’a* to refer to blasts of a shofar or a trumpet; but wherever that is the case, it never uses [the word on its own] without specifically mentioning the shofar or the trumpet. And since here it does not mention either shofar or

⁵¹ It was certainly the case historically, for the Rabbanites and their Temple-era predecessors, that Shavu’oth could fall on any day of the week. However, the Rabbanites today use a calendar, in which the Festival of Mazzoth cannot begin on Sunday, Tuesday or Wednesday nights. As mentioned by our author, the Rabbanites start counting the fifty days leading up to Shavu’oth on the second day of the Festival of Mazzoth. Accordingly, under the current rabbinic calendar, Shavu’oth can only fall on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, or Friday.

trumpet, it is understood that Scripture is not talking about *teru'a* with a shofar, but with a voice.^{xvii}

But [the Talmudites], in accordance with their interpretation, state an obligation to blow the shofar before this festival and on the festival itself, and also after it.⁵² They invented commandments regarding the ways of blowing, which are not written [in Scripture]. And they say that, on this day, Isaac was bound to be a burnt offering, and the Satan brought a bier to Sarah, and said: "See, ^{49} your son is dead." And our mother Sarah cried out, wailing; and in memory of this, they blow a ram's horn, to remember the ram [that was substituted as a sacrifice instead of Isaac], and to confuse the Satan, so that he will not prosecute the Jewish people [in the divine courtroom]. And they say that the sound of the shofar blasts is like the cry of Sarah, our mother. Who can hear this [argument], and not mock it? For how is it that the sounds that Sarah cried were not forgotten for all the 374 years until the Torah was given? For according to the opinion that Isaac was 26 at the time of the *Aqeda* [the binding on the altar], that would be year 2074 since Creation, and the Torah was given in the year 2448; if so, from the *Aqeda* through the giving of the Torah was 374 years. But [in fact, the Rabbanites] invented all this [about Sarah's cries and the shofar] in accordance with the custom of false prophets, who say that God has spoken, though [in fact] He has not.

20 Further, in chapter 23, in the commandment of the Festival of Sukkoth, it is written: *And ye shall take you on the first day the*

⁵² In fact, Rabbanite Judaism considers the blowing of the shofar to be a commandment only on the holiday itself, and only this is mentioned in the Talmud. A later tradition, attested in the work *Pirqé De-ribbi Eli'ezer* (chapter 46), of approximately the eighth century, mentions a custom of blowing the shofar starting from the first day of Elul, a month before the holiday; this is widely practiced among Rabbanite communities today, but is by no means universal, and certainly not viewed as an obligation.