

Ki Taytzay 5772

BS"D Ki Taytzay 5772

The Gemara (Rosh Hashana 18:a) poses the question: What method does HaShem employ when surveying the actions of man on Rosh Hashana? It quotes two opinions:

"Reish Lakish (Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish) said, 'like the ascent to Beit Maron (a narrow, steep incline which can be traversed by one person at a time).' Rabbi Yehuda in the name of Sh'muel said, 'like the legions of the House (the army) of David'."

Reish Lakish opines that people are judged individually, just as one crosses the pass to Beit Maron in single file; while Sh'muel states that Hashem judges mankind as a king who examines his military divisions passing in review.

On the surface, it would appear that the rabbis are debating what, in fact, happens on Rosh Hashana. However, I suggest that there is no difference of opinion, but rather they were referring to two different levels of judgment.

HaShem assesses the actions of each distinct individual within the framework of that person's situation, as in the metaphor of *the ascent to Bet Maron* – one by one. Each individual has within him or herself a realistic spiritual potential, and the ultimate Judge assesses to what degree that potential was or was not realized. Whereas, Sh'muel describes how HaShem evaluates the collective actions performed by the nation as a whole. Which nation acted unjustly and in opposition to the natural instincts placed by God into every man, and hence deserves to undergo harsh treatment at the hands of nature, and which nation used its gifts and wealth for the benefit of the less fortunate of humanity in fulfilling HaShem's will.

We know that in His Torah, HaShem commanded us to perform “wake-up” calls when the time for *t’shuva* draws near. The Shofar is the “wake-up” call for the individual to cease angering his Maker, in order to commence on a way of life that will justify his being created. By Torah law, it is sounded on the day of Rosh HaShana (the second day is a rabbinic enactment); and by custom, it is sounded daily during the entire month of Elul. It is meant to remind us of our individual sins, which we would prefer to forget – sins against God, such as forbidden foods or prayer without proper intent, and sins against our fellow man. At times, we mask our negative behavior by convincing ourselves that the act was justified – for example, we convince ourselves that it was even a mitzva to embarrass that man in public for talking in shul. And at times, we sublimate the painful thoughts of our sins into the deep recesses of our subconscious, as if they never had happened.

The *tekiya-sh’varim-teru’ah* blasts of the shofar are the spiritual equivalent of the physical search for chametz before Pesach.

But how are we to understand that HaShem views our entire nation, composed of millions of different people, as an entity unto itself to be judged? And how does this entity do collective *t’shuva*? And where is the “shofar” which is meant to arouse the entire nation of Israel to return to HaShem? Serious questions!

Our collective, national sin: The nation of Israel was sent into galut, because we did not act in accordance with the sanctity demanded of people living in Eretz Yisrael. The cumulative sins of our fathers were the cause – galut was the punishment. But the nation, as such, became guilty of a more severe sin than that which caused the galut in the first place– we began to view the punishment as the norm of Jewish life. We called Vilna the “Jerusalem of Lithuania.” We assimilated to any degree that the nations would permit. We

forgot the holy tongue and studied Torah in a dialect of German and called it "Yiddish." And much more.

The act of repentance for the Jewish nation is the return en masse to the land which HaShem decreed to be for the Children of Israel.

Now the question is: We are aware of the shofar intended to awaken the individual Jew, but where is the shofar of Am Yisrael?

The seventh of the thirteen intermediate blessings in the *sh'moneh esrei* is

Sound the great shofar for our freedom. And raise high the banner to bring back, together, our exiled (people) from the four corners of the earth to our land. Blessed are You who restores the disbursed of His Nation Israel

The great shofar blasts intended to awaken the Jewish people from our apathy, despair and hopelessness is not an acoustic experience. It is the events of history through which HaShem directs His messages to Am Yisrael.

The destruction of the Temple was HaShem's shofar to inform the nation of His intense anger at our violations of the holy covenant and ingratiating attitude in the face of all that He had done for His people.

Our generation has merited to hear HaShem's great shofar again. In 5708 (1948), the first "**tekiya**" was sounded when HaShem opened the gates of Eretz Yisrael after 2000 years of galut to announce that now Rachel's prayer can be answered:

And the children will return to their land (Jer. 31)

The "**shevarim**" was sounded in 1967 when Yerushalayim was restored to Jewish sovereignty after 2000 years in captive

hands.

The “**teru’ah**” was sounded recently upon the aliya to Eretz Yisrael of the – unknown to us – man or woman, or baby born here who tipped the scales and brought the majority of the world’s Jewry to be in Eretz Yisrael for the first time in over 2000 years.

And now we await the final “**tekiya gedola**” – the great single blast of the shofar announcing the final stage of our redemption.

And to my brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael: May HaShem grant us absolute victory over our enemies. May we have the military strength to cleanse the land of all who do not belong here, and the religious will to renew the holy covenant between ourselves and the God of our forefathers – Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, through the restoration of the Torah as the law of the land.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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