



RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS NITZAVIM ROSH HASHANAH תשפ"ו

SOUNDS OF THE SHOFAR – HAKARAS TOV AND MIKVEH

Rosh Hashanah was the day that *Adam Harishon* was created, he sinned by eating from the *Aitz Hadaas* and was punished. He also sinned by being an ingrate to Hashem's *chesed* of creating him in a beautiful world with all his needs being fulfilled. When Hashem asked him if he ate from the prohibited fruit he answered ungratefully that it was his wife whom you gave to me that caused my downfall. Had Adam admitted immediately his full responsibility for his travesty he could have received forgiveness. Instead by failing to do so by responding with ungratefulness to his benefactor, he was punished with a death sentence and banished into *Galus*.

Every anniversary of this cataclysmic event we must attempt to further repair this downfall of Man through the mitzvah of blowing Shofar. A King is not a King if we don't keep and fulfill his decrees. The *Shira* of the sixth day of creation is ה' מלך because as soon as Man was created he accepted Hashem as the King of the universe. Because he sinned on that very same day it is deemed as if he dethroned Hashem. Whenever a new king was coronated in *Am Yisrael* they would blow shofars. Our *avodah* on *Rosh Hashana* is to repair Man's dethroning of Hashem's Kingship by coronating Him with the blowing of the Shofar.

A second message of the Shofar is to rectify *Adam Harishon's* lack of gratitude to Hashem so we blow shofar to show our thankfulness for his benevolence upon us especially that on this very day when He blew into Man's nostrils and gave him a *neshama*. We symbolize this by also blowing in a shofar as if to say on this day hopefully Hashem will blow into me a *neshama* for another year. We have to *daven* and do teshuva in order to make sure we receive a high quality *neshama* that will push us to grow to work on and develop our *middos* and to fulfill our *tachlis* on earth.

This is the second aspect of the shofar *Hallel* and thank you to Hashem. As the *passuk* says הללוהו שופר בתקע שופר bring praise to Hashem with the blowing of the Shofar. The *Imrei Emes* writes that this answers the question why don't we say *Hallel* on *Rosh Hashana* it is a *Yom Tov*? He answers that blowing of the shofar in itself is considered the *Hallel* just as we find that the *gemarah Megillah* answers to the question why *Hallel* is not recited on Purim because the reading of the *Megillah* serves as the *Hallel* in its place.

Without the *middah* of gratitude which we will call זמר to sing with praises to Hashem, we will erroneously think that it's not Hashem who does everything but rather me and my intelligence can come up with great deals as well that can make for me loads of money. This is *Nachash* Thinking as it did in *Gan Eden* seducing Adam and Chava to eat from the *Aitz Hadaas* and be independent from Hashem. This can be seen in the *gematriah* of עץ הדעת (with two words and kollel) which is *gematriah* הכרת טוב. The evil part of the *Aitz Hadaas* will make you forget that Hashem is the creator of the universe and therefore you must constantly praise Him for life itself כי טוב חסדך מהיים Your *chesed* Hashem is infinite just for the mere fact that You gifted me with life. This is portrayed in the



gematriah of רע with its inner letters ריש עין including its two outside letters which also possesses the *gematriah* of הכרת טוב.

נחש and זמר share letters that are neighbors to each other. After the letter ט comes ח, after the מ comes נ and after the letter ר comes ש spells נחש. The *Nachash* strives very hard to make an individual haughty enough to think that he doesn't need Hashem for most things. When he gets accustomed in this mode he will depart from the Torah altogether slowly but surely. With this explanation we can now understand the *midah keneged midah* of the *Nachash's* curse of eating from the dust of the earth. Every creature has some relationship with Hashem for it must *daven* to Him to receive its sustenance. The exception to the rule is the *Nachash*. Dust is found everywhere so there is no need to *daven* and connect to Hashem. The *Nachash* enticed Man to eat from the *Aitz Hadaas* which lessened his *Hakaras Tov* and connection to Hashem. So too the *Nachash's* relationship was cut off from Hashem and the opportunity to *daven* was cut off from him.

Note that the *perek* of Tehillim 47 that is recited seven times before Shofar blowing repeats the word זמר song, five times. This introduces to us the concept that singing praises to Hashem is included in the sounds of the shofar. The *passuk* says כשופר הרם קולך (Yeshaya 48,1) like a shofar one should lift up his voice. The voice of the shofar represents your voice. The shofar sounds of thank you for blowing into me a *neshamah* is as if you yourself are saying praises of thank you to Hashem. הללוהו when the sounds of the shofar are heard it is considered you are praising Hashem with your mouths if you concentrate and focus your imagination. The five times the word זמר was mentioned represents the places in the mouth from where the varying sounds of letters are produced: throat, pallet, tongue, teeth, and lips. We sing praises to Hashem for Hashem's gift of our *neshamos* with every possible sound in our mouths.

When one hears the shofar he should feel gratitude that Hashem is blowing in him a *neshamah* for the new year as we say in every morning in the *beracha* of אלקי נשמה שנתת בי אתה נפחת בי. Note clearly that the *gematriah* of אתה נפחת בי equals ראש שנה with 100 sounds of the shofar 956. This conveys that during the blowing of the 100 sounds of the shofar one must imagine as if he is thanking Hashem for blowing within him a new *neshamah* for the coming year.

We can go deeper and say that the actual act of blowing the shofar is equal to the experience of one submerging in a *mikveh* where he totally nullifies his existence to Hashem for one cannot live under water. This can also be seen from the *gematriah* of אתה נפחת בי which (together with these three words and the kollel) equals 960. This number reflects the amount of *Lugin* of water to make the *mikveh* kosher. So the shofar experience which symbolizes Hashem blowing a new *neshamah* into you is the same experience of submerging in a *mikveh* where it removes all impurities and *tumah* from the individual. However one must have the correct *kavannah* and feel totally negated to Hashem for granting him a *neshamah*. Another proof that the אתה נפחת בי serves as a cleansing of the body and soul from their impurities is from the *passuk* ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים which equals 960.

That is why we immediately recite after the blowing, the *passuk* אשרי העם יודעי תרועה ה' באור פניך. Happy are the people who "know" and connect to the deeper meaning of the shofar sound. By doing so, after the experience they will walk in the light of Hashem who will direct them.

PARSHA WITH

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Rav Sternbach shilta writes that over time *Am Yisrael* have become increasingly stricter in blowing the sounds of the Shofar according to differing opinions. The reason being that the power of this mitzvah is that it can break and crush all the prosecutions and *kitrugim* from the Satan. As the generations get spiritually weaker, we have to ensure more that we leave no space for *kitrug* to enter. He states that therefore it was *paskined* by Rav Kreuzer ztl with the agreement of other *gedolim* the importance of blowing 150 sounds which includes all the varying opinions, for our generation surely needs the extra protection.

We suggest that the 150 sounds correspond to the total amount of water of 150 *mikvaos* in one massive copper basin that *Shlomo Hamelech* built for a reservoir and *mikveh* called the *Yam of Shlomo* (Melachim 1,7,23). The *Imrei Emes* writes that *Shlomo* built this to parallel his father's composition of *Tehillim* which contains 150 *perakim*. In *Medrash Tehillim* 1 it says that by saying *Tehillim* one brings upon himself *tahara* purity as in a *mikveh*. Noach's *Taivah* also is described as having rooms קנים which also is rooted in 150 and the *Medrash* says on this *Taivah* that just like we find by the nest of birds which is called קן that the *metzarah* brings as a *korban* to purify himself, so too the *Taiva* will purify you. Again we see that קן purifies like a *mikveh* submersion. Another allusion to this concept is the *gematriah* of קן לתבה equals שופר.

Likewise the ultimate shofar blowing has 150 sounds for it too is a *mikveh* experience of אתה נפחת בי. This might be the reason why the *minhag* *Yisrael* on *Rosh Hashanah* is to go to a body of water (*Tashlich*). The blowing of the shofar is like submerging in a *mikveh* of water. By understanding the deeper meaning of the sounds of the shofar in accepting Hashem's kinship upon ourselves, and thanking with gratitude that He bestows upon us with the ultimate *chesed* of אתה נפחת בי, not only do we repair the *chait* of the *Aitz Hadaas* but we also purify ourselves to become the *ovaid* Hashem that He desires with the *neshama* He gave us to work with and fulfill our mission.

Rav Brazil,
Gut Shabbos