בס"ד

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Mark Mietkiewicz in loving memory of his late father Mike Mietkiewicz, Melech ben Moshe Dovid z"l, whose 30th yahrzeit is on Erev Rosh HaShanah

Our Shofar, or G-d's?

Rabbi Adam Friedmann

Of the three sections that comprise the Musaf prayer of Rosh HaShanah, the final one, *Shofarot*, is peculiar in its composition. Each section begins with a description of its major theme, then includes selections of texts from the Torah, Neviim, and Tehillim before moving to a summarizing statement followed by the section's conclusion with a blessing. In the first two sections, *Malchuyot* and *Zichronot*, the selections of texts are all relatively consistent, evoking a general theme. *Shofarot*, by contrast, highlights three distinct depictions of the shofar.

The section opens with the giving of the Torah at Sinai. It describes the overwhelming and even terrifying nature of the event. Special emphasis is placed on the auditory experience. The word "voice" (*kol*) appears ten times in the opening paragraph. Together with the thunder and other noises, the "voice" of the shofar is highlighted.

The second paragraph, which presents text from Tehillim, changes course and describes the shofar which the Jewish people blow at times of celebration. The shofar is grouped together with a list of musical instruments used to praise G-d.

The final paragraph collects descriptions from the prophets about the shofar of redemption which will call the scattered Jewish people back to their homeland. G-d is explicitly described as blowing this shofar.

The shifting focus in these paragraphs is confusing. Which, if any, of these shofarot is related to Rosh HaShanah? Even the identity of the blower and listener are unclear, as this seems to shift between us and G-d. This latter point is underlined by the blessings surrounding the shofar on Rosh HaShanah. The blessing over the mitzvah of blowing is "to hear the sound of the shofar" indicating that we are on the receiving end. In Musaf, however, the summary at the end of *Shofarot* refers both to G-d's shofar of redemption, and our celebratory blowing over sacrifices. The blessing concludes by referring to G-d who "hears the shofar sound (*kol*) of His nation Israel with mercy", which seems to emphasize G-d listening to our shofar.

Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezovsky, better known as the Netivot Shalom, explains the nature of shofar blowing with a parable (*Netivot Shalom*, Speeches for Yamim Noraim). A king sends his son far away on a dangerous mission. The king sends his son letters regularly, but most of these are intercepted by enemies and never reach their destination. So the king resolves that once a year he and his son will speak directly to one another. This will be in a language that only the two of them understand, thus thwarting any attempts to scuttle the communication. Viewing the shofar as a language explains the variety of contexts in which it appears, and its bi-directional nature. The shofar is a dialogue between G-d and the Jewish people, His beloved son, which occurs at the deepest levels of communication. What is the content of this exchange?

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook (*Midbar Shur*, Lecture 8) explains that even as Rosh HaShanah is a day of judgment it is just as much a day of creating anew. Not only man's failings are remembered, but also his potential; what he was created for, and can still become. G-d's shofar blast cuts through the confusions of this world, and penetrates the layers of our personality to call to our highest selves. At times this call is the overpowering demand of Har Sinai. At times it is a beckoning to awaken from the long, deep sleep of exile.

Conversely, our own shofar blasts express our response to G-d's call, emanating from the deepest parts of ourselves. These responses may reflect longing or trepidation, but in the Musaf prayer Chazal chose to emphasize expressions of joy. The joy of a people who, despite the chaos around it, and despite the interference of its own failings, has heard the coded message of its father, and is ready to respond to His loving call to greatness.

This Rosh HaShanah, we desperately need to hear our Father's voice. May we be open to hearing His call, and have the strength to respond in kind.

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כתיבה וחתימה טובה!

May we be inscribed and sealed
for a year of health and shalom,
happiness and nachat,
here and in Israel
and all over the world.

OUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash	Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
Sgan Rosh Beit Midrash	Rabbi Sammy Bergman
Avreichim	Rabbi Alex Hecht, Netanel Klein, Rabbi Chaim Metzger
Seder Boker Director	Rabbi Moshe Yeres
Women's Beit Midrash	Mrs. Shira Metzger
Correspondents	Ezer Diena, Rabbi Adam Friedmann, Rabbi Baruch Weintraub, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring
Chaverim	Shaul Harris, Yehuda Levi, Shimmy Nauenberg, Natan Snowbell, Akiva Weitz, Eli Weltman

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Journey Through Tanach: Shemuel II, Chapter 4

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Summary

Following the murder of Avner, Ishboshet, Shaul's son, was petrified. Lacking his chief general, he also lost control of his army, which fell into disarray. (4:1-3)

As defeat seemed all but inevitable, two Benjaminite brothers, mid-level commanders, decided to take advantage of the situation for their own benefit. Disguising themselves as wheat traders, they infiltrated Ishboshet's house, and murdered him while he was taking a midday nap. Moreover, they took Ishboshet's head, planning to show it to King David as their proof of loyalty. Apparently, they hoped to be highly rewarded by David for their act, as now the only descendant of Shaul worthy of kingship was the disabled Mefiboshet, son of Shaul's son Yehonatan. In other words, their murder of Ishboshet opened an easy path for David to be accepted as king over the entire nation. (4:4-7)

After travelling through the night, the brothers were in for a bitter disappointment. David told them how he killed the Amalekite who had claimed to have murdered Shaul. Clearly, he would not let the murderers of Ishboshet escape unpunished, let alone reward them. David commanded his soldiers to execute Ishboshet's assassins, and to bury Ishboshet's severed head together with the body of his slain general, Avner. (4:8-12)

Analysis

As this chapter marks the end of the monarchy of the house of Shaul, it seems appropriate to try and analyze the reasons for its downfall. Granted, Shaul himself was punished in losing his monarchy for his incompetence in leading the people according to G-d's will (see Shemuel I, chapters 13-15). Yet, the scope of annihilation of his descendants seems to go far beyond that prophesied punishment, and its reasons seem to be even more fundamental.

It seems that the fault lies not with Shaul's initial sin, but rather with the refusal of Shaul – and his successor, Ishboshet – to accept its consequences. While losing the monarchy to someone else is obviously a difficult and painful punishment, Shaul could have accepted it. After all, the throne was not sought by Shaul, but imposed on him, and he is described as very shy and humble. (Shemuel I, 9-10) Even if creating a search committee to find a new king was too much to expect, at least when David showed up as a possible candidate, and even married into the king's family, Shaul could have declared him as the next king, in full agreement with Yehonatan. That way, the transition between the houses would have been seamless, and through his daughter, Shaul's seed would have remained on the throne. United, maybe David and Shaul would have been able to block the Philistines' attack!

However, human nature stood in the way - Shaul clung to power and tried to defy his verdict, a defiance that cost him his honour, his decency, and in the end, his very life. His son, Ishboshet, could not change his father's course, paying not only with his own life, but also dragging the whole nation into a bitter civil war.

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The Israeli Farmer: Greenhouse Plants and Shemitah

Rabbi Sammy Bergman

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, *Masa Ovadia*
from *Kinus Torah Shebaal Peh* 5760

Question: Is produce cultivated in a greenhouse subject to the restrictions that normally apply to shemitah produce?

The Jerusalem Talmud (Orlah 1:2) analyzes the halachic status of a tree planted inside a house. The Talmud states that one is exempt from tithing produce that grows on such a tree, because the Torah clarifies that one must only tithe produce that "emanates from the field." (Devarim 14:22) However, the Talmud is unsure about whether fruit from a tree planted inside a house is governed by the laws of shemitah. Rabbi Yisroel ben Shemuel Ashkenazi (*Pe'at HaShulchan* 20:52) rules, based on this talmudic passage, that nowadays one may dispose of these fruits normally, unlike consecrated shemitah produce. Today, the laws of shemitah are only rabbinic, and one may be lenient when faced with an unresolved question of rabbinic law.

However, Rabbi Avraham Yeshayah Karelitz (*Chazon Ish* on Sheviit 22:1) questions the ruling of the *Pe'at HaShulchan*. First, he notes that despite that talmudic passage, the Rambam (Laws of Maaser 1:10) rules that one has a rabbinic obligation to tithe fruit from a tree planted inside a house. Second, he argues that although the laws of shemitah are currently rabbinic, when the Temple stood, there was a biblical obligation to observe the laws of shemitah. Therefore, in a case of doubt, one should be stringent.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef defends the *Pe'at HaShulchan*'s leniency. He rejects the argument that one must be strict because the laws of shemitah were once, and one day again will be, biblical obligations. He notes that Rabbi Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 331:11) rules that nowadays, one doesn't have to tithe from a field that is owned in partnership with a non-Jew if a non-Jew processed the produce. The Shulchan Aruch rules that even though separating tithes was a biblical obligation during the Temple period, since this law is unresolved in the Talmud (Chullin 135b), and the obligation to tithe is only rabbinic nowadays, one may be lenient. Rabbi Yosef adds that Rabbi Avraham ben David argues against the Rambam (ibid.), and one could also contend that the Rambam's stringency in regard to tithing, might not apply to shemitah, in which stringency interferes with people's livelihood.

Rabbi Yosef then quotes Rabbi Shlomo Amar, who raises the possibility that we should treat the produce cultivated in greenhouses today like normal produce. The talmudic leniency may only apply when planting indoors is abnormal. However, since using greenhouses is now a common agricultural technique, and greenhouses are specifically designed for agricultural purposes, greenhouses may have the same status as fields. However, Rabbi Yosef quotes Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Har Tzvi*, Zeraim 2:34) who argues that the exemption from tithing for produce cultivated indoors isn't based on logic, but rather on Divine decree. Therefore, it makes no difference how common planting indoors has become. Rabbi Yosef concludes that produce grown inside a house or a greenhouse is not subject to the laws of shemitah.

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Biography
Rabbi Ovadia Yosef
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was born in Baghdad, to a working-class family, on the eleventh of Tishrei, 1920. At the age of four, he moved to Israel with his family; due to their penury, young Ovadia alternated time between studies and work. He studied at the Porat Yosef yeshiva in Jerusalem under Syrian sage Rav Ezra Atiyeh, and was ordained by Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ben Zion Uziel at the age of 20. Beginning in 1945, he served as a judge on rabbinic courts in Jerusalem.

In 1947, at Rabbi Uziel's request, Rabbi Yosef moved to Cairo to serve as Chief Rabbi. The arrangement did not last, though; Rabbi Yosef found himself at odds with the communal leadership regarding halachic matters, particularly kashrut. He returned to Israel in 1950, becoming a judge in Petah Tikvah, and then Jerusalem; in 1965, Rabbi Yosef joined Israel's Supreme Rabbinical Court.

During this time, Rabbi Yosef's responsa and other writings became immensely popular. In 1954 Rabbi Yosef won the Rav Kook Prize for Torah literature, and in 1970 he received the Israel Prize. He became Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv in 1968, and then Sephardic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel in 1973.

Rabbi Yosef's responsa address contemporary issues of all kinds, and stand out for the breadth of the works cited in these encyclopedic writings. Rabbi Yosef is also known for political involvement, as the founder and spiritual leader of Israel's highly successful Shas party; he retired from the bench in 1986 because of legal limits on the political activity of the judiciary. His style of public address is that of the study hall, interweaving biblical passages and rabbinic teachings with caustic rebuke and hyperbolic rhetoric; the result sparks frequent controversy, particularly because Rabbi Yosef is one of the leading authorities in Jewish law today. On June 13, 2012, Forbes Israel ranked Rabbi Yosef as the "most influential rabbi in Israel". Rabbi Yosef passed away on the 3rd of Cheshvan, 5774 (2013).

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Torah and Translation
Crying on Rosh Hashanah
R' Ovadia Yosef, Yechaveh Daat 2:69
Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

אמנם רבינו חיים ויטאל בשער הכוונות (דף צ ע"א), העיד בגדלו על רבינו האר"י שהיה נוהג לבכות הרבה בתפלות ראש השנה, אף על פי שהוא יום טוב, ומכל שכן בתפלות יום הכפורים, והיה אומר כי מי שאין בכיה נופלת עליו בימים אלה, היא הוראה שאין נשמתו שלימה והגונה. ע"כ. וכן הובא בכף החיים (סימן תקפב ס"ק ס).

However, Rabbi Chaim Vital (Sha'ar HaKavanot 90a), testified in his greatness about our Rabbi, the Ari, who used to cry a lot during Rosh Hashanah prayers, even though it is a holiday, and even more so during Yom Kippur prayers, and he would say that he upon whom weeping doesn't fall during these days, it shows that his soul is neither complete nor proper. This is also brought in Kaf HaChaim (582:60).

אולם במעשה רב (סימן רז) נאמר בשם רבינו הגר"א מוילנא, שאין לבכות ביום ראש השנה, וכמבואר בנחמיה (פרק ח' פסוק ט') אל תתאבלו ואל תבכו כי בוכים כל העם כשמעם את דברי התורה, ויאמרו להם עזרא הסופר ונחמיה התרשתא לכו אכלו משמנים ושתו ממתקים ואל תעצבו כי חדות ד' היא מעוזכם.

However, in Maaseh Rav (207) it is cited in the name of the our Rabbi, the Gr"a of Vilna that one should not cry on Rosh Hashanah, as it says in Nechemiah (8:9), "Do not mourn and do not weep, for the people were weeping when they heard the words of the Torah." Instead, Ezra the Scribe and Nechemiah Hatirshata told them (8:10) "Go eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks and do not be saddened, for the joy of Hashem is your strength." And therefore the Gr"a insisted that the Reader sing Kaddish with a [festive] tune, in honour of the holiday.

ולכן הקפיד הגר"א שהשליח צבור יאמר הקדיש בניגון לכבוד יום טוב. ע"כ. ונראה שאין סתירה לדברי האר"י ממקרא מפורש בנחמיה הנ"ל, שאף שאין לאדם להביא עצמו לידי בכיה ועצבות, מפני קדושת החג, אבל המתעורר מעצמו לבכות בתפלותיו מחמת התלהבות דקדושה, לרוב דביקותו וכוונתו בתפלות הימים הנוראים, אין בזה שום איסור כלל.

And it seems that there is no contradiction [from this] to the words of the Ari from the explicit verse mentioned above from Nechemiah, for although a person should not bring himself to weeping and sadness, because of the sanctity of the holiday, one who is inspired on his own to cry during his prayers due to the excitement of the holiness, because of his great clinging [to G-d] and his intent in the prayers of the Days of Awe, there is no prohibition in this.

וכמו שכתב כיוצא בזה הטורי זהב באורח חיים (סימן רפח סק"ב), שמצינו באגדה, שתלמידיו של רבי עקיבא מצאוהו שהיה קורא שיר השירים ובוכה בשבת, ואמר להם שאף על פי שאסור לבכות בשבת, שנאמר "וקראת לשבת עונג," מכל מקום כיון שעונג הוא לו בבכיתו, מותר. והסביר הטורי זהב, שנראה שמרוב דבקותו של רבי עקיבא בהשי"ת, וכשהיה אומר שיר השירים היה מבין בעומק דעתו הגדולה והקדושה עד היכן הדברים מגיעים, לכן היו עיניו זולגות דמעות, וכן מצוי הדבר בתלמידי חכמים צדיקים שמתפללים בכוונה. ע"כ. והוא הדין למתפללים בכוונה בראש השנה, ועיניהם זולגות דמעות מרוב התרגשותם והתלהבותם, דשפיר עבדי.

This is similar to what the Taz wrote (Orach Chaim 288:2) that we find in the Aggadah, that Rabbi Akiva's disciples found him reading the Song of Songs and crying on Shabbat, and he told them that although it is forbidden to cry on Shabbat, as it says (Yeshayah 58:13), "And you shall call the Shabbat a pleasure", nevertheless, since it was a pleasure for him to weep, it was permitted. The Taz explained that it seems that from Rabbi Akiva's great clinging to the Holy One Blessed be He, when he said the Song of Songs he would understand with the depths of his great and holy mind how far the words extended, an so his eyes would shed tears, and this is common among righteous sages [when they] pray with intent. The same is true for those who pray with intent on Rosh Hashanah, and their eyes shed tears from their great excitement and passion, that this is proper.

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All classes are free and open to all, unless otherwise noted
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Download our Rosh HaShanah Reader at http://tiny.cc/h2zusz

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

1:30 PM Tuesday September 22
Yom Kippur: When Mistakes Are Good
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, with *Mekorot* and Shaarei Shomayim
There is no fee; all are welcome; register at mekorot18@gmail.com

8:00 PM Tuesday September 22
Confession: The Psychological War Against Sin
Rabbi Sammy Bergman, in person at Yeshivat Or Chaim
For University Women

7:30 PM Wednesday September 23
The Book of Jonah, Week 5 of 5
Rabbi Alex Hecht, with Shaarei Tefillah

DAILY
7:30 AM Sun-Fri Rabbi Chaim Metzger, Daf Yomi with BAYT (men), via ZOOM

Adult Seder Boker, Mon-Thu 10 AM to Noon, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres, via ZOOM (men)
Mondays and Wednesdays: Gemara Taanit, Orot haTeshuvah
Tuesdays and Thursdays: Parshah, Tanach: Shoftim

WEEKLY
Sunday Sept. 20 Rosh HaShanah
7:30 PM, Rabbi Sammy Bergman, in person at Shaarei Shomayim
What does Gedalyah have to do with Teshuvah?

Monday Sept. 21 Tzom Gedalyah
8:30 PM Gemara Shabbat, Chap. 15, with Rabbi Moshe Yeres

Tuesday September 22
8:00 PM Shoftim, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men) Note Special Time This Week

Thursday September 24
1:30 PM, Shemuel, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (women)

8:15 PM Gemara Bava Metzia, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman
Opening Shiur of the year! For university women

8:30 PM Gemara Beitzah, with Ezer Diena (men) (not this week)

Friday September 25
8:30 AM, Parshah, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman (university) (not this week)

11:30 AM Shemitah!, with Rabbi Sammy Bergman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

The following classes do not meet this week, due to Rosh HaShanah

Shabbat at 8 PM at Shaarei Shomayim, Pirkei Avot, Rabbi Sammy Bergman
Sunday at 9:15 AM, Contemporary Halachah with Netanel Klein
Sunday at10:00 AM, Gemara Shabbat, with Rabbi Aaron Greenberg (University, pwd 613613)
Sunday at 7:30 PM Gemara Ketuvot with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner (men)

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