We try our best to accurately present to you the Rav's words. Accuracy can sometimes get lost in the transition from spoken to written word. We would like to thank HaRav Nebenzahl for allowing us to send you this sicha without his first reviewing it. Although it does expedite matters in getting this sicha out to you, it does mean that if there is anything in the sicha that may not be understood, the fault is with us and not with HaRav Nebenzahl.

The Rav asks that his and other Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

Shabbat Shalom,
Nehemiah Klein

The Yeshiva would like to express its gratitude to Richard and Anita Grossman for their ongoing support for the Yeshiva in general and specifically our computer center. This enables us to communicate this sicha to you each week - "lehagdil Torah ulehaadira".

HaRav Nebenzahl on Rosh Hashana

PARSHAT NITZAVIM 5775

The Meaning Behind the Bracha of Shofaros

We have discussed in the past that the bracha of malchuyos declares that Hashem is King, He decides, He is all-powerful and no one can tell Him what to do. However, in zichronos we learn that the way Hashem runs the world is to let the people determine how the world should be run - the tzaddikim can determine that the world will take a direction for the good, while a preponderance of evil people can determine otherwise. The bracha of shofaros comes to teach us that while man is given power to determine the course of the world, this power is not unlimited. The Kingdom of Heaven in all its glory will remain, as we see from the psukim recited in this section: "it will be on that day that a great shofar will be blown, and then will come those lost in the land of Ashur and those cast away in the land of Egypt, and they shall prostrate themselves to Hashem on the holy mountain in Jerusalem" (Yeshayahu 27:13), and "all inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth - you shall see that Israel has been ingathered as if a banner were raised on mountaintops and you shall hear it as if a shofar were sounded" (ibid. 18:3).
There will always be those who will attempt to stand in the way of the redemption. We must be among those who follow in the footsteps of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov or other tzaddikim such as Moshe and Aharon and not work against the will of Hashem.

The prophet Yechezkel describes Kohanim who have sinned in their service and what will be with them at the time of Moshiach: 'venasu klimatam' which means they shall bear their shame (Yechezkel 44:13). There is a version of the text which omits the aleph in venasu (vav, nun, shin, alef, vav) and it therefore reads venashu - they will forget their misbehavior. We see two seemingly opposite approaches. Perhaps we can reconcile the differences as follows: we can compare this to a great warrior. The king sends him out to war, he brings back a great victory and there is great celebration. The king is so elated that he releases the prisoners guilty of certain crimes from prison. The warrior is happy and the thief who had been imprisoned is happy - but what a difference. The thief is ashamed to show his face in public while the warrior is proud to be at the center of attention.

This is how it will be at the time of Moshiach - there will be those in whose merit Moshiach has arrived, they will forget all the troubles of before. Then there will be those who will celebrate and may be pardoned but will walk around in shame. We must strive to be among those who build the Beit HaMikdash. Every deed is significant, every word of Torah we learn, every act of gemillus chassadim is of major significance.

The Beit Hamikdash which we are promised Hashem will build will be constructed not only of physical stones, but will involve tzaddikim such as Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon and many more. We must ask ourselves whether we wish to be associated with them.

The lesson here is that every act has significance, everything we do influences our future and that of the world. The Beit HaMikdash, may it be built speedily in our day, will be built from mitzvoth. The larger stones will be from the mitzvot of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, prophets, tanaaim, amoraim, rishonim, achronim, and the many great gedolim and tzaddikim throughout the generations. Many will be built by those who died al Kiddush Hashem, others by simple Jews - perhaps they won't have the largest stones but they too have the opportunity with their acts to be a part of the restoration.

The sounds of the Shofar allude to this as well. We begin with a tekia - a simple sound. We then sound a shvarim or trua - referred to by Chazal as "genuchei ganach, vilulei yailil" "moaning or sobbing" (Rosh Hashana 34a). This is followed by another tekia. The "pshuta shelefaneha" - the simple sound that we open with refers to the Kingdom of Heaven in all its glory as it was in its original state prior to the creation of the world: "Master of the universe Who reigned before any form was created". This total governance of Hashem also existed at the beginning of our history as a nation, when we all declared at Har Sinai "naase venishma" "we will do and we will obey" (Shmot 24:7). This period, however, was followed by many years of "moaning and sobbing", beginning with Adam HaRishon who ate from the tree of knowledge, and then the great flood, and much more. Regarding the Jewish nation itself, the great gathering at Har Sinai was followed by the chet haegel, the chet hameraglim, and other manifestations of moaning and sobbing which continued with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and onward until the Holocaust. We are promised, however, that the "genuchei ganach, vilulei yailil" will eventually come to an end, at which time we will once again hear the simple and calm tekia - the "pshuta shele-achareha" - "After all has ceased to be, He, the Awesome One, will reign alone"! The culmination of the Divine Plan will be the rule of Heaven with all its glory manifested by the return of the Davidic dynasty and the great Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim.

The final redemption will come about in any event - despite the actions of the wicked people who will try to prevent it and despite the fact that Hashem limits His Dominion by linking it to man's actions. Each and every one of us must ask ourselves, how we act within the framework of Hashem's Divine plan. Do we wish to be counted among those who hasten the redemption, alongside Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, and many other tzaddikim throughout the generations who are bringing the building of the third Beit Hamikdash that much closer, or do we wish to join the group that includes Pharaoh, Titus, and Haman? The Beit Hamikdash will be rebuilt regardless, and when that happens we will see not only the physical stones that make up the Temple, but the spiritual
bricks as well. Many giant stones have been laid by our forefathers, by Moshe and Aharon, by Rashi, the Rambam, R'i"f, Ra"n and all the other tzaddikim throughout the generations. If only we could add a tiny pebble to this great edifice. The choice is ours: Do we wish to "assist" Hashem in carrying out His plan or do we wish to be among those who, G-d forbid, attempt to thwart this plan. The fact is that none of the world's evil people will succeed in preventing Hashem's plan from taking place.

How can we cause the Divine Plan to take effect at an earlier time? We can begin with the "moaning and sobbing" on Rosh Hashana. We are told that during the time of Ezra the people began to cry on Rosh Hashana "and the Levites quieted all the people saying: 'be silent, for this day is sacred'' (Nehemiah 8:11). In addition, the poskim dispute whether or not crying is appropriate while davening on Rosh Hashana. All of this refers to external crying. An inner cry, a cry from the heart, is always appropriate and even recommended "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (Yoel 2:13). On Yom Kippur we outwardly display our discomfort - we do not wear shoes, we do not eat, drink, wash, nor anoint. On Rosh Hashana, however, these external displays of discomfort are not demanded of us. It is for this reason that on Rosh Hashana the Jewish people were told: "go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages" (Nehemiah 8:10). What is required of us on Rosh Hashana is that our hearts are broken, that we have deep regret for all that we may have done that would be classified as an affront to the Kingdom of Heaven. On Rosh Hashana we must desire that His Kingdom be revealed to the world.

Of course the primary reason for blowing the shofar is because Hashem commanded us, in the words of the Gemara "Rachmana amar tiku". The first day is Torah-ordained and we must have in mind to fulfill the Torah's command, the second day there is a Rabbinic commandment to blow the shofar. Our primary concern must be to fulfill the wishes of our Creator.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Kesiva Vechasima Tova, the same goes for the Jewish people throughout the world. May this be the year that we witness a revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven. We are taught that the descendant of David will arrive following the Sabbatical year, may this be that post-Sabbatical year. Shana Tova to all of Klal Yisrael.

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