



Holy Horn

It is written **ובחרת בחיים**, choose life (Devarim 30:19). Who would choose death? Continues the Pasuk- **למען תחיה**, so that you will live. These words seem to be unnecessary?

Authentic life is that which contains spirituality. Just as we need food to satiate our physical body, we need spirituality to satiate our soul.

The Shofar awakens us to this reality as the Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 3:4) writes **ראש ולענה פרה**, awaken those who are sleeping. In fact, the word **שופר** is related to **שפיר**, improve, beautify (See Vayikra Rabba 29:6. **שפרה** was the name given to Yocheved because she beautified the child—Shemos 1:15, Rashi.). It therefore comes as no surprise that the first letters of the words **פרה** **ראש ולענה פרה** (Mayana Shel Torah, Devarim 29:17.), a root flourishing with gall and wormwood, spell **שופר** because the Shofar helps us rid ourselves of impurity. Indeed, the initials of **שופר** **שטן ואין פגע רע** no adversary and no misfortune (Melachim 1, 5:18), form the word **שופר** (Tur, Orach Chaim, 585:5).

The Shem Mishmuel (Ki Savo, תר"פ, s.v. **ולפי מה**) tells us a deeper significance regarding the names of the sounds of the Shofar - **תקיעה** - **תקיעה** can be understood as to hang as in **הוקענום** **לה**, hang them (Shmuel 2, 21:6). **שבר** can be translated as to smash as in **תשבר** (Shemos 23:24). **תרועה** also means to smash as in **תרעם שבת ברזל**, you will smash them with an iron rod (Tehillim 2:9). These three remove the three shells of impurity (klipos) of the heart

A man named Yaakov that was doing Kiruv in Kfar Vardim brought his Shofar on the morning of Rosh Hashana there. Seeing one walking his dog, he approached

and asked if he would like to hear the Shofar blown. He agreed and it was blown. Fast forward 15 years when Yaakov was now the rabbi in Kfar Vardim after having built a Shul and Mikva in this area. A man approaches and thanks him for who he is today. The rabbi asked if he is new in town since he didn't recognize him. He told the rabbi that he owns a house here but he has been away for 15 years as he became a Baal Teshuva. The rabbi exclaimed, "you are the one with the dog that I blew Shofar for." The man told him, "that wasn't me, rather I was sitting on my porch with my coffee that Rosh Hashana morning when you blew the Shofar. I was completely unaware that it was Rosh Hashana. I was stuck and confused in life. When you blew the Shofar, I decided to discover my roots which eventually led me to become a Baal Teshuva."

Rosh Hashana is called **יום תרועה**, the day of the Shofar (Bamidbar 29:1). **תרועה** is a term that means friendship- **רעות** (as in Bamidbar 23:21). This is because the purpose of the Shofar is to improve our relationship with Hashem who is called **רוע**, friend (Mishlei 27:10, Shabbos 31a, Rashi s.v. **דעלך**). In fact, if we break up the word **תרועה** we get **ה** **רעות** in heaven.

On Rosh Hashana during the Seuda when we eat the Simanim, we say **יהי רצון... להראש ולא לזנב**, to be as the head and not the tail. Taking a closer look at the word **להראש**, we notice it is the first letters of **לעשות רצון אבינו שבשמים**, to do the will of our father in heaven.

The Pasuk states **ה' לפני המלך הריעו וקול שופר**, with the Shofar, call out before Hashem (Tehillim 98:6). This can be understood to mean the blowing of the Shofar is to get us close to Hashem. In fact, the initials of **הנשא** and **ראשיכם**

raise up your heads...so that the King of Glory may enter (Tehillim 24:7. Also 24:9.), spell **שופר**. After the Shofar is sounded at Shacharis we recite **אורי** (Tehillim 27). What does it speak of? Closeness to

Hashem (Among the Pesukim there is **שבתי בבית ה' אחת שאלתי**... I ask that I dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life...).

The **תרועה** is a broken sound. The Sefer Hachinuch tells us this alludes to breaking the Yetzer Hara (Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzva 311. Also 405.). Rosh Hashana is referred to as **יום תרועה** (Bamidbar 29:1. See Tur 591.), a day to break the Yetzer Hara, Satan.

The Satan is known as the **סס**. Adding up these two letters we arrive at a total of 100. On Rosh Hashana we blow 100 Shofar blasts (Rosh Hashana, Tosafos, 33b. Tur, 592.). In fact, before Tekias Shofar we say **תקעו כף**, sound the Shofar (Tehillim 47:2). This alludes to the 100 Shofar blasts, as **כף** has a Gematria of 100. Another hint is found in **תקעו בחדש שופר**, blow the Shofar... (Tehillim 81:4), as the sum of **תקעו** - 576 - is the same as 100, **מאה קלת**, 100 Shofar blasts. These 100 are to overcome the power of Satan. In this way we can understand **לערבב השטן**, in order to confuse the Satan (Rosh Hashana 16b).

The purpose of the 100 Shofar blasts is to get us closer to Hashem, to live a more spiritual life. The Gematria of **שופר** is 586. Tallying another 100 to this (for the 100 Shofar blasts), we arrive at 686, the precise sum of **ובחרת בחיים**! This is telling us that through the Shofar, we are empowered to choose real life- spirituality. In this light we can grasp the continuation of the Pasuk- **למען תחיה**, in order to live a true existence.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

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