
TEHILLIM 81: THE SOUND OF SHOFAR

R' Yair Lichtman



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CONGREGATION KINS

פרשת ויחי תשפ"ג

TEXT OF THE MIZMOR

(1) TEHILLIM 81

(1) For the leader, upon the Gittith. Of Asaph.

(2) Sing aloud to God our strength; shout to the God of Jacob.

(3) Take up the melody, and sound the timbrel, the sweet harp with the psaltery.

(4) Blow the horn at the new moon, at the full moon for our feast-day.

(5) For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob.

(6) He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony, when He went forth against the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know.

(7) I removed his shoulder from the burden; His hands were freed from the basket.

(8) You called in trouble, and I rescued you. I answered you in the secret place of thunder; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

(9) Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me!

(10) There shall be no strange god in you; you shall not worship any foreign god.

(11) I am Hashem your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

(12) But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel would have none of Me.

(13) So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels.

(14) Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!

(15) I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries.

(16) The haters of Hashem should dwindle away before Him; and their punishment should endure forever.

(17) They should also be fed with the fat of wheat; and with honey out of the rock I shall satisfy you.

Intro (1)

Create Music for Hashem (2-5)

Rebuke of the Nation (6-17)

(א) למנצח על הגתית לאסף.

(ב) הרנינו לאלהים עוננו הריעו לאלהי יעקב.

(ג) שאו זמרה ותנו תף כנור נעים עם נבל.

(ד) תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו.

(ה) כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב.

(ו) עדות ביהוסף שמו בצאתו על ארץ מצרים שפת לא ידעתי אשמע.

(ז) הסירותי מסבל שכמו כפיו מדוד מעברנה.

(ח) בצרה קראת ואחלצך אענה בסתר רעם אבחנו על מי מריבה סלה.

(ט) שמע עמי ואעידה בך ישראל אם תשמע לי.

(י) לא יתנה בך אל זר ולא תשתחנה לאל נכר.

(יא) אנכי יי אלהיך המעלה מארץ מצרים הרחב פיה ואמלאהו.

(יב) לא שמע עמי לקולי וישראל לא אבה לי.

(יג) ואשקוהו בשרירות לבם ולכו במועצותיהם.

(יד) לו עמי שמע לי ישראל בדרךי והלכו.

(טו) פמעט אויביהם אכניע ועל צריהם אשיב ידי.

(טז) משנאי יי יכחשו לו ויהי עתם לעולם.

(יז) ונאכילהו מחלב חטה ומצור דבש אשביעה.

SHIR SHEL YOM FOR THURSDAY

(2) ROSH HASHANAH 31A

בְּחַמִּישֵׁי הַיּוֹם אֲזָמְרִים: "הִרְנִינוּ לֵאלֹהִים עִזָּנוּ", עַל שֶׁם שֶׁבְּרָא עוֹפוֹת וְדָגִים לְשִׁבַח לְשִׁמּוֹ.

On the fifth day of the week the Levites would recite the psalm beginning: **“Sing aloud to God our strength”** (Psalms 81:2), because on the fifth day of Creation He created birds and fish to praise His name.

(3) RASHI ROSH HASHANAH 31A

שְׁבַרְא עוֹפוֹת וְדָגִים לְשִׁבַח לְשִׁמּוֹ - כְּשֶׁאָדָם רוֹאֵה עוֹפוֹת מְשׁוּנִים זֶה מִזֶּה נוֹתֵן שִׁבַח לְמִי שֶׁבְּרָאָם:

Since he created birds and fish to praise His name – when a person sees birds which differ from each other, he gives praise to their Creator.

COMMENTARY

(4) MOSHE SOKOLOW, TANAKH 929 WEBSITE

Se`adyah's Arabic translation reads: “Blow the [ram’s] horn on the first days of the months, on the [sacrificial] offerings of national holidays,” and his commentary notes that this is in fulfillment of a Torah prescription: “And on your joyous occasions—your fixed festivals and new moon days—you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being” (Numbers 10:10). The Aramaic Targum of Yonatan, however, encapsulates a different rabbinic tradition that associates this verse with Rosh Hashanah: “Blow the horn in the month of Tishri, in the month in which the day of our festivals is concealed.” As the Talmud explains: “On which holiday is the moon concealed? On Rosh Hashanah” (Rosh Hashanah 8a-b).

(5) ROSH HASHANAH 11A-B

בְּרֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה יֵצֵא יוֹסֵף מִבֵּית הָאֲסוּרִין, מִנְלָן — דְּכָתִיב: "תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בְּכֶסֶף לְיוֹם חֲגֹנוּ. כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא נְגוּן. עֵדוּת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוֹ בְּצִאתוֹ נְגוּן".

It was further taught in the *baraita*: **On Rosh HaShana Joseph came out of prison.** The Gemara asks: **From where do we derive this? As it is written: “Sound a shofar at the New Moon, at the covered time of our Festival day. For this is a statute for Israel, a judgment of the God of Jacob”** (Psalms 81:4–5). This is a reference to Rosh HaShana, the only Festival that occurs at the time of the New Moon, when the moon is covered and cannot be seen.

And immediately afterward it is written: **“This He ordained in Joseph for testimony, when he went out over the land of Egypt”** (Psalms 81:6), implying that Joseph’s release from prison took place on Rosh HaShana.

בראש השנה בטלה עבודה מאבותינו במצרים — פתיב הקא: “והוצאתי אתכם ממצרים” ופתיב הקא: “הסירותי מסבל שכמו”.

It was also taught in the *baraita*: **On Rosh HaShana our forefathers’ slavery in Egypt ceased.** From where is this known? **It is written here: “And I will bring you out from under the burdens of Egypt”** (Exodus 6:6); **and it is written there,** with regard to Joseph: **“I removed his shoulder from the burden”** (Psalms 81:7). From here it is derived by verbal analogy between the two instances of the word “burden” that just as Joseph was released from prison in Tishrei, so too, the slavery of our forefathers in Egypt ended in Tishrei.

בניסן נגאלו — פדאיתא. פתשרי עתידין ליגאל — אתיא “שופר” “שופר”. פתיב הקא: “תקעו בחודש שופר”, ופתיב הקא: “ביום ההוא תקע בשופר גדול”.

It was taught in the *baraita*: **In Nisan our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt, as it is explicitly stated in the Torah.** The *baraita* continues: **In Tishrei in the future the Jewish people will be redeemed** in the final redemption. **This is derived** by means of a verbal analogy between one instance of the word *shofar* and another instance of the word *shofar*. **It is written here,** with regard to Rosh HaShana: **“Sound a shofar at the New Moon”** (Psalms 81:4), **and it is written there,** with regard to the final redemption: **“And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great shofar shall be blown”** (Isaiah 27:13).

(6) BI'UR, TEHILLIM 81, CITED IN NETIV BINAH V. 1 P. 392

ונראה שזה טעם מצות תרועה בראש השנה, שהתרועה הוא סימן לשלוח עבדים כמו שצוה הקב"ה תקיעת שופר ביום הכפורים של יובל שהיה סימן לשלוח עבדים וצאתם מרשות אדוניהם. כן צוה לתקוע בראש השנה לזכר כי ביום הזה בטלה העבודה והיתה תחלת חירותינו, וזה טעם "זכרון תרועה" ... אמנם עתה אחר שכבר נתבטלה הדרור הזה ונשתעבדנו בין העמים יהיה הזכרון הזה להיפך על הטובה הגדולה שעשה לנו ה'. ואנחנו באולתנו גרמנו שהוא נוטלה ממנו וזה טעם "גנחתי גנח ילולי לילי"...

It appears that this is the reason for the *mitzvah* of *teru'ah* on Rosh HaShanah, as the *teruah* is a sign of freeing slaves, like how Hashem commanded blowing the *shofar* on Yom Kippur of a *yovel* year, which was a sign for freeing slaves and their departure from their masters’ domains. Similarly, He commanded to blow on Rosh HaShanah as a remembrance that on this day, the work was nullified and it was the beginning of our freedom. This is the meaning of “remembrance of *teruah*”... However, now that this freedom has been nullified and we have become subservient to the nations, this remembrance has been inverted from the original, great good that Hashem did for us, as we in our crookedness have caused that it should be taken from us. This is why [the Gemara describes the sound of the *shofar* as] “wailing and crying”...

(7) SHEMOT 12:1-2

(א) ויאמר יהוה אל משה ואל אהרן בארץ מצרים לאמר. (ב) החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה.

(1) Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt, saying, (2) "This month shall be for you the head of months, the first of the months of the year for you.

(8) SHEMOT 20:1-4

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאֹמֶר. (ב) אֲנִכִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים. לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי. (ג) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ. (ד) לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנִכִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ...

(1) God spoke all of these words saying, (2) "I am Hashem your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from a house of slaves. Do not have any other gods beside me. (3) Do not make for yourself an idol or any image of that which is in the heavens above, and that which is on the earth below, and that which is in the waters below the earth. (4) Do not bow down to them and do not serve them for I am Hashem your God...

(9) IBN EZRA TEHILLIM 81:17

והטעם היה ראוי שישמעו לו ויזכרו החסד שגמל לאבותם, והוא אכילת המן, שהוא מתוק ונכבד יותר מחלב חטה והשביעם מים מצור מתוק מדבש. ותהיה מ"ם מצור משרת אחר, כדרך: מאל אביך ויעזרך (בראשית מ"ט:כ"ה).

The import of our verse is that it is fitting for Israel to hearken to the Lord and remember the loving-kindness that He showed to their fathers, namely by feeding them manna, which is sweeter and more precious than the fat of the wheat. Furthermore, God satisfied their fathers with water from the rock. This water was sweeter than honey. In this case, the mem of mi-tzur (out of the rock) also applies to devash (honey). It is like Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee (Gen. 49:25).

ויש אומרים: כי ומצור דבש אשביעך – ידבר לנכח ישראל לעתיד.

Some say that And with honey out of the rock would I satisfy thee speaks of Israel in the future.

(10) RADAK TEHILLIM 81:17

ומצור דבש אשביעך – ודבש היה משביעך מן הצור. והדבש הוא משל למעדני הארץ, וכן אמר ויניקהו דבש מסלע ושמן מחלמיש צור (דברים ל"ב:י"ג), ופירוש מסלע ומצור – ממקום חזק. כלומר שלל גדולים ומעדני מלכי אומות העולם שהיה מכניעם לפניהם.

From the rock, I will sate you with honey – he would satiate you with honey from a rock. "Honey" is a metaphor for the delicacies of the land, as it says "I satisfied you with honey from a rock, and oil from a flinty stone." The meaning of "from rock" and "from stone" is "from a strong place," meaning the plunder of the mighty and the delicacies of foreign kings, who were subdued before them.