

are derived from two simple words “תרועה” and “יבבה”. The first word “teruoh” appears in the possuk: “יום תרועה יהיה לכם” — **it shall be a day of “teruoh”** (Shofer-blowing) **for you**. The second word, “yevoveh,” appears in the translation of this possuk referred to as Targum Unkeles: “יום יבבא יהא לכון” — **it shall be a day of “yevoveh” for you**. [Common translations for the word “yevoveh” include howl, wail, moan, sob and whimper.] It is known that Targum Unkeles is considered part of the Oral Law, Torah she’b’al peh, as we find in the Gemoreh (Megillah 3a): “תרגום של תורה — אונקלוס הגר אמרו מפי רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע” — the translation of the Torah composed by Unkeles the proselyte was learned from Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua.

Hence, our blessed sages took these two words — “תרועה” from the written Torah and “יבבה” from the oral Torah — pondered them, investigated their deeper significance, applied the thirteen methods of elucidation to them, and thereby developed a concrete foundation upon which they established the protocol for the magnificent mitzvoh of blowing-Shofer. These two words, “תרועה” and “יבבה”, gave rise to the one hundred blasts of the Shofer that we sound today.

Through the Window She Gazed and Sisro’s Mother Wailed

To serve this purpose, let us briefly review together how Chazal derived the protocol for all the sounds of the Shofer that we sound. We learned in the Mishnah (Rosh HaShonoh 33b): “שיעור תרועה כשלש יבבות” — **the length of a “teruoh” is like three sobs**; in other words, the length of three sounds that we commonly refer to as “שברים”, “shevorim.”

The Gemoreh, there, raises a question on the Mishnah from what we have learned in a Beraise: “והתניא שיעור תרועה כשלשה שברים” — **but it was taught in a Beraise that the length of a “teruoh” is equivalent to three “shevorim”?** — in other words, nine sounds that we commonly refer to as “teruoh.”

The Gemoreh concludes that that there is, in fact, a dispute between the Mishnah and the Beraise: אמר “אביי בהא ודאי פליגי, דכתיב יום תרועה יהיה לכם,

ומתרגמינן יום יבבא יהא לכון, וכתיב באימיה דסיסרא (שופטים ה כח) בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם סיסרא, מר (שופטים ה כח) — סבר גנוחי גנח, ומר סבר ולולי וליל” — Abayei asserts that the dispute concerns the nature of a “yevoveh.” We have already learned that “teruoh” is translated as “yevoveh”; but what exactly is a “yevoveh”? We find this term employed by Scriptures regarding Sisro’s mother: “ויתבב אם סיסרא” — it is a term expressing this mother’s distress upon realizing that her infamous son had failed to return from battle. The entire possuk reads (Shoftim 5, 28): “בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם סיסרא בעד האשנב, מדוע בושש רכבו לבוא, מדוע אחרו — פעמי מרכבותיו — through the window she gazed; the mother of Sisro sobbed by the window, wondering why his chariot was delayed in returning and why the sound of its horses’ hoof beats was late.

The Tannoim disagree, however, as to the nature of this expression of distress, this “yevoveh.” The Tanna of the Mishnah interprets it as: “ולולי וליל” — the sound of a person whimpering in short bursts, very close to one another — what we refer to as “teruoh,” nine short bursts. The Tanna of the Beraise, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the term “yevoveh” is: “גנוחי גנח” — the sound of a person sobbing and sighing heavily in more prolonged bursts; thus, he considers a “teruoh” to be what we refer to as “shevorim” — three longer bursts.

Rabbi Abahu’s Institution in Keisariyah

Since the matter remained unsettled for halachic purposes — whether the “teruoh” is to be sounded like the Tanna of the Mishnah, like our “shevorim,” or like the Tanna of the Beraise, like our “teruoh” — we find in the Gemoreh (Rosh HaShonoh 34a): “אתקין רבי אבהו — בקסרי” — Rabbi Abahu instituted in Keisariyah that we should sound all of the following combinations with the Shofer: תשר”ת תש”ת תר”ת — thereby satisfying all of the various opinions.

The pattern of blowing a triad consisting of a “tekioh, teruoh (concerning which there exists uncertainty), tekioh” is derived from the possuk concerning the “Yovel” (Vayikro 25, 9): “והעברת שופר תרועה בחודש — השביעי... תעבירו שופר בכל ארצכם” — you shall sound

the Shofer with a teruoh in the seventh month . . . you shall sound the Shofer throughout your land. The verbs “והעברת” and “תעבירו” are from the same Hebrew root and connote a plain, passing sound — a “tekioh.” In the possuk, these verbs appear before and after the word “teruoh”; this teaches us that a “tekioh” is sounded before and after the “teruoh.” Consequently, we are obliged to produce three sounds — a “tekioh,” a “teruoh” and another “tekioh.”

From the fact that the Torah mentions the blowing of the Shofer three times, we derive that the triad of: “תקיעה תרועה תקיעה” is to be sounded three times — corresponding to the three parts of the Mussef service on Rosh HaShonoh — Malchiyos, Zichronos and Shoferos. The three places where the blowing of the Shofer is mentioned are: (1) “והעברת שופר תרועה” — relating to the Yovel year, (2) “שבתון זכרון תרועה” — referring to Rosh HaShonoh and (3) “יום תרועה יהיה לכם” — once again with relation to Rosh HaShonoh.

Now, since we are uncertain as to the true nature of the “teruoh” — whether it is a series of short, whimpers, “לילולי לילולי”, or prolonged sobs, “גנוחי” — Rabbi Abahu instituted in Keisariyah that they should blow “תקיעה שברים תרועה תקיעה” three times, “תקיעה שברים תרועה” three times and “תקיעה תקיעה תרועה” three times. In other words, due to our uncertainty, he was forced to take into account three different possibilities. (1) If the “teruoh” represents prolonged sobs, then we must blow the triad “תש”ת, “tekioh-shevorim-tekioh,” three times. (2) If the “teruoh,” however, is supposed to represent a series of short whimpers, then we are obligated to sound the triad of “תרת”, “tekioh-teruoh-tekioh,” three times. (3) Yet, one more possibility exists. Maybe, both opinions contain an element of truth; the “teruoh” might be a combination of “גנוחי גנח” and “לילולי לילולי” — as seen when a sorrowful person first moans and sobs and then cries in short whimpers.

To account for all of these opinions and possibilities, Rabbi Abahu instituted the formula above totaling thirty sounds. Add to these the blasts that are sounded during the silent Mussef and the chazen’s repetition

of the Mussef, and we now have ninety sounds. Finally, with the additional ten blasts that are sounded during the kaddish after Mussef, we arrive at our total of one hundred sounds.

Notwithstanding, the Bnei Yissoschor (Tishrei 3, 8) reveals that according to the Zoher hakodosh (Pinches 232a), deep secrets and mystical significance are contained in these sounds. In fact, he asserts that it would have been necessary to sound all one hundred blasts even if we were not in doubt as to the true nature of the “teruoh.” It was all part of HKB”H’s divine scheme that uncertainties would arise concerning halachic decisions and we would necessarily sound all one hundred blasts — even those of us not well-versed in the mystical aspects of the Torah.

Addressing the Perplexing Matter of Why We Derive the Nature of the Shofer Blasts from Sisro’s Mother

It turns out that all of the sounds of the Shofer that we blast on Rosh HaShonoh — which prompt HKB”H to vacate His Throne of judgment and sit down on His Throne of mercy — are derived from the distressful wailing of Sisro’s mother. Her wailing gave rise to the uncertainty of whether the “teruoh” is best represented by long sobs or by short whimpers.

Hence, it is worthwhile to examine the pesukim and gain a better appreciation of who Sisro was — the man whose mother moaned when he failed to return home in a timely fashion. Scriptures depict the manner in which he went out to wage battle against Yisroel as follows (Shoftim 4, 13):

”ויוזעק סיסרא את כל רכבו תשע מאות רכב ברזל ואת כל העם אשר אתו... ותאמר דבורה אל ברק, קום כי זה היום אשר נתן ה' את סיסרא בידך, הלא ה' יצא לפניך. וירד ברק מהר תבור ועשרת אלפים איש אחריו. ויהם ה' את סיסרא ואת כל הרכב ואת כל המחנה לפי חרב לפני ברק, וירד סיסרא מעל המרכבה וינס ברגליו... ויפול כל מחנה סיסרא לפי חרב לא נשאר עד אחד.

וסיסרא נס ברגליו אל אהל יעל אשת חבר הקיני... ותצא יעל לקראת סיסרא ותאמר אליו, סורה אדני סורה אלי אל תירא, ויסר אליה האהלה ותכסהו בשמיכה.

ויאמר אליה השקיני נא מעט מים כי צמאתי, ותפתח את נאוד החלב ותשקהו ותכסהו... ותקח יעל אשת חבר את יתד האהל ותשם את המקבת בידה, ותבוא אליו בלאט ותתקע את היתד ברקתו, ותצנח בארץ והוא נרדם ויעף וימת.

Sisro mustered all his chariots — nine hundred iron chariots — and all the people who were with him . . . Devoreh said to Barak, "Arise! For this is the day when Hashem has delivered Sisro into your hand — behold, Hashem has gone forth before you!" So Barak descended from Har Tavor with ten thousand men behind him. Hashem confounded Sisro and all the chariots and the entire camp by the edge of the sword before Barak; Sisro dismounted from his chariot and fled on his feet . . . and the entire camp of Sisro fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.

Sisro fled on his feet to the tent of Yael, the wife of Chever the Kenite . . . Yael went out to greet Sisro and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me, do not fear." So he turned aside to her to the tent, and she covered him with a blanket. He said to her, "Give me now a bit of water to drink, because I am thirsty." She opened a skin of milk, gave him to drink, and covered him . . . Yael, wife of Chever, took a tent peg, placed a hammer in her hand, came to him stealthily, and drove the peg into his temple and it went through into the ground — while he was sleeping deeply and exhausted — and he died.

Devoreh the prophetess and Barak ben Avinoam sang a song of praise to Hashem in response to this amazing miracle. Within their song, the possuk depicting the sorrowful moaning of Sisro's mother is found — the source of our derivation of the Shofer's "yevoveh." Let us cite a few pesukim from their sacred song, beginning with the possuk describing how difficult the battle was between Sisro and Yisroel (ibid. 5, 20):

"מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים, מִמְּסִילוֹתֵם נִלְחָמוּ עִם סִיסְרָא... תְּבוֹרֵךְ מְנַשִּׁים יַעֲלֵ אֵשֶׁת חֶבֶר הַקִּינִי מְנַשִּׁים בְּאֵהֶל תְּבוֹרֵךְ, מִיָּמִים שָׂאֵל, חֶלֶב נִתְּנָה, בַּסֶּפֶל אֲדִירִים הַקְּרִיבָה חֲמָאָה. יָדָה לִיתֵד תְּשַׁלְּחָנָה, וַיִּמְיֵנָה לְהִלְמוֹת עֲמָלִים, וְהִלְמָה סִיסְרָא, מִחֻקָּה רָאשׁוּ, וּמִחֻצָּה וְחִלְפָה רִקְתּוֹ."

From heaven they fought, the very stars from their orbits did battle with Sisro . . . Blessed by women is Yael, wife of Chever the Kenite; by women in the tent will she be blessed. He asked for water, she gave him milk; in a stately saucer she presented cream. She stretched her hand to the peg and her right hand to the laborer's hammer. She hammered Sisro, severed his head, smashed and pierced his temple.

Alas, as we approach the conclusion of this divine song, we find the possuk describing Sisro's mother's "yevoveh," her cry of distress (ibid., ibid. 28): "בְּעֵד הַחֲלוֹן נִשְׁקָפָה וְתִיבֵב אִם סִיסְרָא בְּעֵד הָאֲשֵׁנָב, מִדּוּעַ — בּוֹשֵׁשׁ רָכְבוֹ לְבוֹא, מִדּוּעַ אַחֲרוֹ פְּעָמַי מְרַכְבוֹתַי" — through the window she gazed; the mother of Sisro sobbed by the window — wondering why his chariot was delayed in returning and why the sound of its horses' hoof beats was late. This sobbing, this "yevoveh," was already alluded to by HKB"H at Matan Torah, when he commanded us: "יּוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם", which is translated into Aramaic as: "יּוֹם יִבְבֵּא יֵהָא — לְכוּן" — you shall celebrate a day characterized by the "yevoveh."

The commentaries all express their incredulity over the surprising fact that HKB"H chose to teach us the sounds necessary for the Shofer-blasts, specifically from the reaction of Sisro's mother. What is the connection between her wailing and the blowing of the Shofer?

The Dove Could Not Find a Resting Place for the Sole of Her Foot

Let us begin to shed some light on the matter by explaining that the main thrust of our prayers on the High Holidays must be directed toward the issue of the exile of HKB"H and the Shechinoh. The source for this idea is the Tikunei Zoher (Tikun 6 22a). The glory and majesty of Heaven are desecrated amongst the goyim; since the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the Shechinoh knows no rest, for she is exiled from one place to another. According to the Tikunei Zoher (Introduction 1b), this is alluded to by the possuk (Bereishit 8, 9): "וְלֹא מִצֵּאָה הַיּוֹנָה מְנוּחַ לְכַף רַגְלָהּ" —

but the dove could not find a resting place for the sole of her foot.

It is well-known that the Shechinoh is in exile as a result of our multitudinous sins. We acknowledge this fact in our Mussef prayers on the festivals: **”ומפני”** **”because of our sins, we have been exiled from our land and have been sent far away from our soil.** Additionally, we have learned in the Gemoreh (Megillah 29a): **”תניא רבי שמעון בן יוחי אומר, בוא וראה כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב”ה, שבכל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהן”** — **It was taught in a Beraise: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says: come and see how beloved are Yisroel before HKB”H! — for wherever they were exiled, the Shechinoh is with them.** The way to correct this aberrant situation is for us to perform total and sincere Teshuvoh for all of our transgressions — fulfilling the dictum (Yoma 86b): **”גדולה תשובה שמקרבת את הגאולה”** — **the power of Teshuvoh is so great that it hastens the redemption.**

Clearly, it is incumbent upon us, during the High Holidays, to return to Hashem by repenting wholeheartedly, in order to extricate HKB”H and His holy Shechinoh from exile. To this end, we recite in our prayers: **”ותמלוך אתה הוא ה’ אלקינו מהרה לבדך על כל מעשיך... מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך... וידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלתו, ויבין כל יצור כי אתה יצרתו, ויאמר כל אשר נשמה באפו ה’ אלקי ישראל מלך”** — **then, you, Hashem, our G-d, will reign, soon, alone over all of your creations . . . reign over the entire universe in Your glory. . . let everything that has been made know that You are its Maker, let everything that has been molded understand that You are its Molder, and let everything with a life’s breath in its nostrils proclaim: “Hashem, the G-d of Yisroel, is King.**

How powerful and yet worrisome are the words of the Tikunei Zoher (Tikun 6 22a) in his elucidation of the possuk concerning the exile from Egypt (Shemot 2, 12): **”ויפן כה וכה וירא כי אין איש”** — **He looked both ways and saw that there was no man.** This possuk is seen as an allusion to the “ten days of repentance,”

aseret yemei Teshuvoh — from Rosh HaShonoh to Yom Kippur. During these days, HKB”H, as it were, looks all around in search of a man whose concern and prayers are not only for himself but for the Shechinoh and Yisroel who are in exile, as well.

Sadly, though, due to our innumerable sins: **”וירא”** **”כי אין איש”** — no such person is to be found, whose heartfelt prayers are on behalf of the Shechinoh in exile. Nearly everyone prays for his own concerns — his livelihood, his well-being, his health, and forgiveness for his sins to avoid punishment. On Yom Kippur, they resemble dogs, barking “give me, give me” — give me livelihood, give me health, etc. The Gemoreh states (Berochos 5b): **”אין חבוש מתיר את עצמו מבית האסורים”** — **a prisoner does not free himself from the dungeon. HKB”H and the Shechinoh are in prison; their release and salvation depends on Yisroel’s Teshuvoh.**

The Purpose of Blowing the Shofer Is to Stimulate a Person to Repent

Now, we stand enlightened, able to better appreciate the depth of HKB”H’s devices. He revealed to us the sounds that are to be blasted with the Shofer through the moaning and whimpering of Sisro’s mother. Let us recall the famous words of the Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvoh 3, 4): **”אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזירת הכתוב, רמז יש בו, כלומר עורו ישנים ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם, וחפשו במעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה — וזכרו בוראכם”** — **although the blowing of the Shofer on Rosh HaShonoh is biblically-ordained, it possesses an inherent allusion; in other words, awaken from your deep sleep, inspect your deeds, repent and remember your Creator.**

Meanwhile, we are well aware of the lesson taught by the wisest of all men (Koheles 7, 14): **”גם את זה — לעומת זה עשה האלקים”** — **G-d has made the one as well as the other.** All things in this world were created by HKB”H with equal and opposite counterparts — establishing a form of balance in the universe. So, just as a kingship and kingdom of kedusheh exist — manifested by the revelation of the divine Presence on earth — a parallel kingdom ruled by the negative forces of the universe, the klipoh, also exists; these

two domains are constantly at war with one another. It stands to reason, therefore, that the mother of Sisro, the infamous warrior who rose to annihilate Yisroel, represents the kingdom of the klipoh that is in constant battle with the Shechinoh and the realm of kedusheh.

Consequently, when she realized that her son — the heroic military leader who went to war against Yisroel with nine hundred iron chariots — was delayed in returning home, she understood that he had certainly fallen captive to the forces of kedusheh. At that point, she let out a wail, a “yevoveh,” expressing her extreme pain over the defeat and elimination of the forces of the klipoh: **“בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם סיסרא בעד האשנב, מדוע בושש רכבו לבוא, מדוע אחרו פעמי מרכבותיו — through the window she gazed; the mother of Sisro wailed by the window — wondering why his chariot was delayed in returning and why the sound of its horses’ hoof beats was late.**

This then is the reason that HKB”H arranged that we derive the sounds of the Shofer from Sisro’s mother’s form of crying. He wanted us to understand that He created the world with equal and opposite counterparts — **“זה לעומת זה עשה האלקים”**. So, when the Kingdom of Heaven and the forces of kedusheh overcome the negative forces of impurity and defilement, the kingdom of the klipoh, the mother of Sisro, stands by the window and wails: **“מדוע בושש מרכבותיו — רכבו לבוא, מדוע אחרו פעמי מרכבותיו”** — why is my son delayed, why can I not hear the sound of his forces and his chariots returning home?

In a similar fashion, when the kingdom and forces of the klipoh overwhelm the realm of kedusheh, chas v’sholem, then the holy Shechinoh, the mother of the children, gazes out the window and wails from the domain of kedusheh: **“מדוע בושש רכבו לבוא, מדוע אחרו פעמי מרכבותיו”** — why are my children taking so long to return home to me? Why, my children, are you procrastinating and not returning promptly to HKB”H by performing wholehearted Teshuvoh? Why

do I not hear the hoof beats of your carriages leaving this bitter exile and returning home to the place of the Beis HaMikdosh in the rebuilt Yerushalayim? This should awaken us to perform Teshuvoh, by means of the Shofer, to quiet the sobs and whimpers of the holy Shechinoh.

How happy I was to find substantiation for this tremendous idea in the words of the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 6 22a) cited above. He addresses the possuk (Shir HaShirim 2, 9): **“הנה זה עומד אחר בתלנו משגיח — Behold! He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.** This possuk is alluding to HKB”H and His Shechinoh, His divine Presence down on earth. Behold! HKB”H is observing through the windows. The Hebrew word for window is חלו”ץ; with the addition of the letter aleph (which is silent), חלו”ץ can be broken down to spell **“חלו נא”** — a reference to the possuk (Malachi 1, 9): **“חלו נא פני א”ל: — if you will entreat G-d, He will be gracious unto us.**

In other words, HKB”H is requesting of us: **“חלו נא פני אל”** — have consideration for the Shechinoh, the mother of the children, that she may come out of exile and the Glory of Heaven shall be manifest throughout the world. The Tikunim draws the comparison between this possuk and the possuk depicting Sisro’s mother: **“בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם סיסרא”** — **through the window she gazed; the mother of Sisro wailed by the window** — from which we derive the true nature of the “teruoh.” Here is a loose translation of the Tikunei Zohar: Woe is to them, mankind, since both HKB”H and the Shechinoh are held prisoner along with them in exile. . . Her redemption is in your hands; it depends on Yisroel’s Teshuvoh . . . HKB”H observes through the window to see if they are praying on behalf of the Shechinoh; for He is ready and waiting to receive and heal all that repent . . . just as Sisro’s mother stood gazing through the window, waiting patiently, and, finally, wailing in the manner of the “teruoh.”