



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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נצבים-וילך

Happy Thirsty People

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Parshas Netzavim-Vayeilech

Happy Thirsty People

Rabbi Cohen closed his Mishna Berura and looked up at the class: “And so boys, all of you should make sure to be in the shul on time because the most important part of Tekias Shofar is the first thirty kolos that the ba'al tokeia blows,” he said. “That’s when we fulfill the mitzvah d’oraisah of blowing shofar.”

Shimmy raised his hand. “But Rebbi,” he asked, “why do we end up blowing so many more kolos in shul? We blow again during mussaf and then again after mussaf. Why do we blow a hundred times if according to the gemara the most we have to do is thirty?”

“Yeah,” said Zev. “And in my shul a lot of people stay even longer after davening and the baal tokeia blows like a gazillion more times to be yotzei every shitah. Because some opinions say it should be tuu-tuu-tuu, and some say it’s tuuu-tuuuu-tuuuu, and others say it should be ti’uuu-ti’uuu-ti’uuu. We do **everything** in my shul!”

Rabbi Cohen smiled at the boys. “Actually that’s a question that our chachomim ask in Mesichta Rosh Hashana. And the answer is that there’s a malach Hashem created to have the job of bringing all of the aveiros we do all year long in front of the Beis Din in shomayim. And by blowing the shofar so many times, we confuse that malach and he stops complaining to the Beis Din about our aveiros. “

“Confusing a malach?!” said Shimmy after raising his hand and being called on by Rabbi Cohen. “Malachim are smarter than the smartest people! They don’t just get confused from extra tekios! What does that mean?”

Rabbi Cohen smiled. “Shimmy is asking a very important question. And the answer is right in this week’s parsha.”

Shimmy and Zev looked at each other. They had already done shnayim mikra on Nitzavim-Vayeilech and they didn’t remember any pesukim about tekias shofar – and for sure not about confused malachim!

Rabbi Cohen continued. “In Parshas Nitzavim the Torah says something quite scary. It talks about someone who does such a big aveirah that Hashem will never want to forgive him! Yikes! We know that

Hashem is always waiting for us to do teshuva; He always wants to forgive us so it must be a pretty bad aveirah if Hashem is not even interested in forgiving us.

“So what could this person be doing that is so bad? Bowing down to avodah zarah? Or maybe driving a car on Shabbos? ‘Oh no,’ says the Torah. ‘It’s the person who joins together those who are not thirsty with those who are still thirsty.’

“What does that mean?!” asked Zev. “What’s wrong with putting thirsty people together with people who aren’t thirsty? Maybe it’s even a good thing because the people with the extra water bottles will give the thirsty people some water to drink.”

“Exactly,” said Rabbi Cohen. “It’s a very difficult possuk to understand. That’s why we always have to look into the Gemara for help in understanding difficult pesukim. And Chazal tell us that the thirsty people are us, the Am Yisroel! Because we are thirsty for Mitzvos! We **want** to serve Hashem as much as we can. There’s no nation in the world that is thirsty to serve Hashem as much as we are. We’re busy all day doing mitzvos and we’re still thirsty for more; we’re always trying do more.

“Tekias shofar is just one example. Really all we need is nine kolos, nine toots. But we want to make sure we get it right, so we do thirty. And



then just to be very sure we do it this way and that way and another way, until we do 100 kolos. Some shuls want to be very very very sure so they even do more. And that's why the malach gets "confused" when we do the extra kolos. It means that all of his accusations against us fall apart. He looks at the Am Yisroel and he just says, "Forget about it! I give up! These people are too good; they're too thirsty for me!" He has nothing bad to say about us anymore because how can anyone make any accusations about a nation that is thirsty for mitzvos like the Am Yisroel.

"And that's why the possuk in our parsha says that it's a terrible aveirah to join together the thirsty, that's the Am Yisroel, together with those who are not thirsty, that's the rest of the world. Of course, we are always polite and kind to anyone we meet – it doesn't matter if it's a Jew or a gentile, we treat everyone with respect – but in our minds we can never put the Jews who are thirsty to serve Hashem on the same level as those who are not thirsty.

"And that's why when we stand in shul listening to the sounds of the shofar – all of those extra shofar blasts – we are the happiest people in the world because we know that just because of that, just because we try to do more and more and more, that makes us the most special people in the whole wide world."

Shimmy and Zev smiled. After hearing this, they were definitely even more thirsty for Mitzvos. This year they would enjoy every second of Tekias Shofar!

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