

אושר החיים

לע"נ ר' חיים יוסף ליב בן ר' שאול יצחק ז"ל

The *Shofar* and the Banner

In the *brocha* of *kibutz galios* in *Shemone Esrei*, we implore Hashem, '*T'ka bishofar gadol licheiruseinu, v'sa neis likabeitz goluyoseinu* - blow the great *shofar* for our freedom and lift up a banner to gather in our exiles.' What do these two expressions of the 'blowing of the *shofar*' and the 'lifting of the banner' signify?

The *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabah* 56:10) relates that two great men gave names to the place where the *Bais Hamikdash* would eventually be built. *Avraham* called it, "*Yir'ah*" and *Sheim* named it "*Shaleim*". Not wanting to encroach upon the honor of either one of these *tzadikim*, Hashem amalgamated these two names into one, calling it "*Yerushalayim*." Here too, we must try to understand what is the meaning behind calling *Yerushalayim* by these two names?

We may explain that both *Sheim* and *Avraham* understood that the *Bais Hamikdash* which would later be built in *Yerushalayim*, would be the epicenter of spirituality for the entire world. As the commentary *Eitz Yosef* says, *Avraham* lived with a profound level of *yir'ah* throughout his life. Therefore, when giving a name to this great place, he chose "*Yir'ah*", to underscore the unparalleled levels of awareness of Hashem that would be present there. On the other hand, *Sheim* was known for his outstanding perfection of character. Therefore, he wanted to highlight the *shleimus hamidos* and *hanhagos* that would be conspicuous from those that emerged from the holy *Beis Hamikdash*.

These two areas, are in fact, mainstays of the servant of Hashem. To gain great levels of awareness of Hashem while serving Him, and the *avodah* of perfecting one's character.

Rav Yisroel Salanter (*Ohr Yisroel*, letter 14) writes, while one may serve Hashem on a very exalted level even without the study of *mussar*, he will need *mussar* in order to succeed in changing any evil traits into good ones.

פרשת פנחס
בין המצרים, תשפ"ד

The very presence of the *Bais Hamikdash*, uplifted the entire world to a very great spiritual level.

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Indeed, the *Bais Hamikdash* brought *Klal Yisroel* to accomplish both of these areas of *avodas Hashem*. The *Bais Hamikdash* was a center for *yir'ah*. As the *Rambam (Hilchos Bais Habechira 7:1 and 7:5)* tells us, the *mitzvas asef* of *yir'as haMikdash* is for one to have a sensory awareness of standing before Hashem with trepidation and awe during one's stay in the *Bais Hamikdash*. The *Maharal (Nesivos Olam, Nesiv HaTorah, 14)* states, that the *Bais Hamikdash* elevated this world from a physical level to a very exalted level of spirituality. The very presence of the *Bais Hamikdash*, uplifted the entire world to a very great spiritual level.

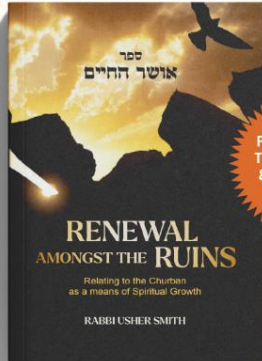
The *Bais Hamikdash* also served as a living embodiment of *mussar*, where those who came were surely able to acquire greater levels of perfection of character. We can only imagine the thoughts of a Jew bringing his *korban*, and how this sacrifice took the place of himself. How he would truly want to give of his own flesh and blood to Hashem! He undoubtedly grew in his humility and submissiveness while standing before Hashem in this holiest of places.

This, may be to what *Chazal* were alluding in the *brocha* of the ingathering of exiles. Not only are we asking in this *brocha* to gather us quantitatively, but also, in a qualitative sense. The blowing of the *shofar* represents the trepidation that one feels through its reverberating sound. Thus, we are asking Hashem to awaken us with the '*mussar*' of the *shofar* through which we can acquire a *shleimus* of character. The lifting up a banner, represents what the eye sees and the mind processes. This is on a completely spiritual level, thus alluding to the great amount of *yir'ah* which we want to acquire.

We therefore ask Hashem, please bring us together not only in a physical sense, but also that our entire beings should come together to serve you both in *yir'ah* as well as with *shleimus* in our conduct.

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