



5784 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Shemot/פרשת שמות

The Great Shofar and Its Call to Jerusalem

In this week's *haftorah*, *Yishayahu HaNavi* describes a glorious day in which the great *shofar* will be sounded (27:13). When this *shofar* will sound, the lost ones in the land of Assyria and those who have been rejected in Egypt will gather together and prostrate before God in Jerusalem. *Yeshayahu* describes the exiles in Assyria as אבדִים, lost ones, in contrast to the exiles in Egypt referred to as נדחים, those who have been rejected or pushed away.

Rav Tzadok HaKohen from Lublin (*Resisei Layla* 35) wonders why these two different terms are employed by the *navi*. What is the difference between the *oveid* and the *nidach*? Rav Tzadok explains that the *oveid* is a person consumed by ambitious pursuit of worldly accomplishments. He is driven, passionate, and purposeful. It just so happens that his goals in life are misaligned and leading him in the wrong direction. This is why he is found in Assyria, the land *Hazal* associate with greed and hunger for power. The *oveid* is like a car with a powerful engine racing down the highway...with the wrong destination in the GPS. He is lost searching for the wrong target. When the great *shofar* sounds, calling all Jews back to their spiritual destiny, these "lost" souls will race back to Jerusalem.

In contrast, the *nidach* is mired in his own desires for base physical satisfaction in this world. He is fully aware of the truth he should be pursuing; he is simply too obsessed with the silly transient pleasures in his life to do anything about it. This is why he is metaphorically found in *Mitzrayim*, the land identified most with vulgar physical obsession, the *ervat ha'aretz*. He is so obsessed with physicality that even though he is geographically closer to *Eretz Yisrael*, he will enter Jerusalem long after the *ovied* has already arrived. Once the *oveid* finds truth, he will speedily pursue it. The *nidach* needs more time to free himself from his prison of vice.

But both the *oveid* and *nidach* share the same ultimate destination: Jerusalem. The final stage in healing their spiritual woes is the ascension to the city that is the antithesis of Assyria and Egypt. Anyone who has experienced Jerusalem knows that the city always packs a double spiritual punch. On the one hand, it brings clarity and sharpened spiritual focus. Even those who have ambitiously pursued all kinds of vanity-laced goals begin to profoundly question their priorities after learning Torah or praying in Jerusalem. The *oveid* cannot maintain his false sense of priority when exposed to the spiritual clarity of the holy city.

On the other hand, Jerusalem is also capable of extricating the most "hopeless" *nidach* from his preoccupation with physicality. The city, which saturates physical existence with sublime spirituality, casts away the senseless craving to simply derive pleasure from this world and replaces it with a burning desire for spiritual ascension.



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Too long have we awaited the sounding of the great shofar. May we merit to witness the ascending of the nidach and oveid to the rebuilt Beit HaMikdash, speedily in our days.

