

**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

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Shiur #5: Blowing Chatzotzrot During a Ta'anit

The past few weeks have seen much violence and hostilities visited upon the Jewish people and their homeland. This week's Methodology shiur will discuss issues relating to "Ta'anit." May Am Yisrael be zocheh to perform 'teshuva shleima,' and may the Ribono shel Olam redeem His people.

The mishna in Rosh Hashana (26b) determines that in Beit Hamikdash a shofar was blown along with chatzotzrot, based upon the pasuk. "Bachatzotzrot ve-kol shofar hariyu lifnei Hamelekh Hashem." This exercise was performed on both Rosh Hashana (when the primary mitzva applies to shofar) and ta'anit (when the primary mitzva requires chatzotzrot). Outside the Mikdash, however, the gemara claims, "If there are chatzotzrot there is no shofar, and if there is a shofar there is no chatzotzrot" The simple reading of the gemara suggests that outside the Mikdash a shofar and only a shofar was blown on Rosh Hashana, while chatzotzrot and only chatzotzrot were blown during a Ta'anit. This is indeed how Rashi interpreted the gemara and how the Rambam rules (see Ta'anit 1:4 and shofar 1:2).

Many Rishonim however, question this ruling based upon a gemara in Masekhet Ta'anit that implies otherwise. The gemara (14a) comments upon a statement in the mishna (12b) that "during severe ta'anivot they cried out (matriyin)." According to one opinion in the gemara, they cried out with their mouth (adopting additional and unique tefilot). According to a dissenting opinion, however, they cried out with a shofar!!! Ultimately, the gemara decides that everyone holds that they cried out with a shofar; the only debate surrounds whether they also cried out with their mouths. Doesn't this gemara suggest that a shofar (and not chatzotzrot) is blown during a ta'anit outside of Mikdash??

The Ba'al Hama'or, in his comments to Rosh Hashana, poses a second question based upon the minhag that many Geonim had to actually blow a shofar during ta'anit. How does this jive with the gemara in Rosh Hashana??

Three primary answers are posed by the Rishonim; each will be analyzed separately. The Ra'avad claims that there are different stages during the ta'anit when sounds were blown. The mishna in Ta'anit (15a) describes the six extra berakhot added to shemoneh esrei during a ta'anit. These berakhot were accompanied by the sound of chatzotzrot and only chatzotzrot (no shofar) outside of Mikdash. By contrast, the gemara in Ta'anit (that mentions shofar) refers to a shofar that was blown during other parts of the davening (extra prayers which were added throughout the day), or even after the conclusion of davening during later stages of the ta'anit.

A crucial point emerges from the Ra'avad. The unique and exclusionary mitzva of chatzotzrot doesn't apply to the day proper. At different stages of the day a shofar may be blown, as well. Rather, the Torah conditions a specific form of tefilla during a ta'anit to be accompanied by chatzotzrot (and, according to the mishna, by extra berakhot, as well). Though the Torah doesn't mention these extra berachot (and presumably they are 'deRabanan' in nature), the Torah does mention chatzotzrot. According to the Ra'avad, these chatzotzrot must be manifest during tefilla. Hence, according to the Ra'avad, the Torah mandates tefilla as part of the experience of ta'anit.

This famous question - whether the Torah legislates tefilla as part of the mitzva of ta'anit - is first discussed by the Behag when he lists the section in Ki Tisa (containing the 13 'attributes of Hashem' and read on a ta'anit) as part of his list of "public mitzvot." According to the Ramban (in his commentary to shoresh 3 of the Rambam's 'Sefer Ha-mitzvot'), this suggests that tefilla on this day has Biblical roots. (Recall that the Ramban disagrees with the Rambam, who claimed that tefilla constitutes a Biblical requirement on a daily basis).

A similar notion emerges from the Rambam in his formulation of the mitzva of ta'anit. Reading the section in Behaalotekha which defines ta'anit, we confront the action of blowing chatzotzrot – "Ve-hareiotem." Yet, when the Rambam defines the experience of ta'anit, he stresses two ideas: blowing (le-hariya) and praying (lizok). The Rambam effectively broadens the mitzva of ta'anit beyond formal blowing to include tefilla. Many suggest that this expansion is based upon the term "ve-nizkartem lifnei Hashem," a term which

evokes the concept of tefilla. Whatever the Rambam's source, he, like the Ra'avad, recognizes a tefilla element within a ta'anit.

SUMMARY :

The Ra'avad's answer indicates that tefilla (and especially the added berakhot) comprises the primary framework for the blowing of chatzotzrot. This is reminiscent of the positions of both the Behag and the Rambam, each of whom incorporated tefilla as part of the Biblical mitzva of ta'anit.

The Ramban (in his commentary to Ta'anit, his sefer 'Milchamot Hashem' to Rosh Hashana and his derasha to Rosh Hashana) establishes a different idea. The mandate of chatzotzrot doesn't apply to ta'anit in general. Rather, it applies to Mikdash as well as ta'anivot based upon war. The experience of chatzotzrot applies to wartime situations (and, according to the Ramban in Ta'anit, maybe only wars fought in Eretz Yisrael proper), since these conditions are defined as 'kinufiya' – moments of assembly and gathering. As the Ran to Rosh Hashana elaborates, the chatzotzrot are aligned with the process of assembly by the pesukim themselves, which assign to chatzotzrot the task of 'le-mikra ha-eidah u'le-massa ha-machanot.' Outside the Mikdash, during fast days in response to other forms of crisis, a shofar - and only a shofar - is blown (hence the gemara in ta'anit).

This analysis of the Ramban highlights a crucial feature of ta'anit. The mishna in ta'anit (15a) describes the process of everyone gathering in the street during a ta'anit for tefilla. In addition, the gemara cites a pasuk from Yo'el, "Kadeshu Tzom Kiru atzara" – "declare a fast and call an assembly," as a source for the issur melakha during a 'severe' fast. Tzom is referred to as atzeret (assembly), and the prohibition of work facilitates the gathering. In fact, the gemara insists that work can only be forbidden during the day – when people would actually gather, and not during the evening (as is the case regarding the issur melakha of Yom Tov). The same gemara describes the phenomenon of "mitzafra kinufiya": during the morning hours of a ta'anit the people would gather for personal interviews with their city's religious leaders to help pinpoint areas for improvement. All these sources point to a salient element of a tzom: the gathering of the entire people to experience the fast together. According to the Ramban, the chatzotzrot were meant to underscore this assembly playing, as the Ran says, their classic roll in organizing the assembly. This classic form of assembly, though, can only

occur in one of two settings: the Mikdash, which is the natural site of assembly, and the setting of war, which demands the formation of a 'machaneh' unifying the Jewish people. Outside these circumstances, the ideal form of assembly does not exist, and hence chatzotzrot are not blown.

May we be zocheh to true Jewish unity, and may the Ribono shel Olam grant us a speedy yeshua.