



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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תקע בשופר גדול

תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו, ושא נס לקבץ גליותינו, וקבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ. ברוך אתה ה', מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל.

Sound the great Shofar for our freedom and raise a banner to gather in our dispersed exiles. Gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you Hashem who gathers in the dispersed people of His nation Israel.

A century ago, there were only about 56,000 Jews total living in Israel...today, we are almost at 7 million! Jews from around the world are making Aliya! The ingathering of the exiles is beginning to take place before our very eyes! We are so privileged to be living at a time when the words of our daily Tefilla of תקע בשופר גדול, are in fact a reality.

But this wasn't always the case. For thousands of years after the second Exile, those handful of Jews who remained in Israel were constantly persecuted. It was almost impossible to live in the Jewish homeland. Jews around the world constantly davened for the day that they would be able

to return to Eretz Yisrael but it was a far-off dream, and over time, many began to despair. In fact, in the 1800's, the leaders of the Reform movement wrote a statement declaring that the return of Israel to its land is an impossible dream. They explained that throughout history there has never been a nation that has succeeded in returning to its original homeland. They claimed that even if a Jewish state would be created, it wouldn't be able to protect itself and only a few hundred thousand Jews would ever settle there. They even proceeded to delete the words וקבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ from the Tefilla of תקע בשופר גדול.

So when we say this Tefilla, we should remind ourselves of the tremendous zechut we have to witness the "impossible" come true. We need to ask Hashem to continue this process. Yes, many of us have made Aliya, but there are so many more who haven't. We ask Hashem to bring every single person around the world back to Eretz Yisrael.

Before looking at some of the words inside, it's important to mention structurally that this bracha begins the section of national requests. The requests until this point were all personal in nature (teshuva, wisdom, health, livelihood etc). With תקע בשופר, we begin the section of requests for the nation as a whole. Rabbi Eliyahu Munk in his book Olam HaTefillot explains that it is



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very fitting that this bracha should be the transition between the personal requests to the national requests. In this bracha of קבוץ גלויות, we are in essence saying, let us take all of the individuals and bring them together to form a nation. Once a nation is formed, we can begin to ask for things that are needed for the nation as a whole.

Let's look at the words inside-

תקע בשופר גדול לקרואנו - We begin the request with תקע בשופר גדול, *sound the great Shofar for our freedom*. What Shofar are we referring to here? This is based on a pasuk in Sefer Yishayah (27:13) where it says והיה גדול ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול *And on that day (the onset of the Geula) a great Shofar will be blown*. This may very well be a literal shofar, some extremely loud sound which will be blasted to let the world know that the Geula is here. Rabbi Shimon Schwab writes that it can also be understood metaphorically. The time of קבוץ גלויות will be a time where, as if by loud proclamation, the entire world will recognize HaKadosh Baruch Hu!

וּשָׂא נֵס לְקַבֵּץ גְּלוּיֵינוּ - *raise a banner to gather our exiles* – This can probably be understood metaphorically as well. We request

from Hashem that all of the nations of the world will see clearly (as if a banner was in front of them) that it is Hashem who is bringing in all of the exiles.

וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאֶרֶצֵּי כְּנָפֹת הָאָרֶץ - *Gather us together* – Here we daven to Hashem not only that we be brought together physically to Eretz Yisrael, but that we be brought together in *achdut* (unity). It's not enough for us all to live together in the same country, but that we should feel that we are one nation, living together in unity, as one big family.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל - Rashi on Devarim 30:3, in discussing the Geula, writes that גדול יום קבוץ גלויות ובקושי כאילו הוא עצמו צריך להיות אוחד בידי ממש איש איש ממקומו During the day of the ingathering of the exiles, Hashem himself will hold each family by the hand and bring them back from wherever they are. We today are living in the times of the ingathering of the exiles and we can testify personally to the amazing Aliya stories, where we can see clearly Hashem's hashgacha in bringing each and every family back to Eretz Yisrael. May we be zocheh to see a complete ingathering of the exiles and the גאולה שלמה speedily in our days! ■



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