

"Because of the enemy that beseiges you you shall sound the trumpets." (10:9)

The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Taanios* (1:1-3) states that it is a positive *mitzvah* to cry out to Hashem and sound trumpets in response to any disaster which befalls a community. He cites the above *pasuk* as the source for this *mitzvah*. This reaction to tragedies is, in fact, one of the first steps leading to effective *teshuvah*, repentance. We are enjoined to contemplate our troubles, since they are a vehicle by which Hashem communicates His message to us.

In his famous thesis on the Holocaust, *Horav Y. Schwartz, Shlita*, states that this command to search our ways renders it incumbent upon us to explore the recent annihilation of a third of our nation. This terrible tragedy was by no means just another disaster!

He writes that the *mitzvah* of contemplation is a fundamental one, which is one of the *Yesodos Ha'Emunah*, foundations of our faith. He cites the *Rambam* in *Perush Ha'mishnayos*, introduction to *Perek Chelek*, who teaches that Hashem not only knows our deeds, but He is also intimately involved in our affairs. To contemplate our daily events means to delve into the way Hashem involves Himself and interacts with us. This deliberation into *Hashgachas Ha'Boreh*, Divine Providence, strengthens our faith in Him.

In matters of *emunah* it is not sufficient to simply acquire intellectual awareness which may be incompatible with the logistics of life. In matters of faith, abstract knowledge is not sufficient. Rather, one's faith must permeate every facet of his daily perspective. Complacency can drain the lifeblood of our faith. A Jew must believe wholeheartedly that every occurrence of his life is ordained and controlled completely by Hashem. Nothing is coincidental or attributable merely as a part of the natural order of the world. This perception is developed through a total immersion in Hashem's *Torah*, through which one becomes intimately aware of Hashem's Divine Providence.

Since it is our obligation to seek out a rationale for every harsh decree which befalls us, it certainly behooves us to contemplate the Divine decree of the Holocaust. To deny its significance is a *chillul Hashem*, desecration of Hashem's Name. It is not within the scope of this thesis even to attempt to reflect upon this travesty. The purpose is only to emphasize our obligation to come to grips with the tragedy -- not to ignore its message because of the drastic ramifications. We can only study the narrative of the unspeakable events that occurred. By viewing them through the perspective of Divine Providence, we will begin to grapple with their implications. Thus, we will be able to internalize this realization into our psyche, so that our trust in Hashem will be strengthened.