

## Teka b'shofar gadol l'cheiruseinu. Sound the great shofar for our freedom.

In referencing the return of the exiles to our Holy Land, we underscore that our homeland has maintained its overwhelming loyalty to us. When we were gone from the Land and it was overrun with our conquerors, the Land did not produce for our enemies. *Eretz Yisrael* is in mourning over the loss of its children. It is only when we will return, with the advent of the Final Redemption, that the blessings which relate to *Eretz Yisrael's* fertility and sustenance-giving nature will be fulfilled. Thus, we petition Hashem thrice daily that He return His children to His Land. This will be heralded by the clarion call of the great shofar.

Why great shofar? We think also of the *shofar* blast that heralds the great Judgment Day, the *Yom HaDin* when we will all be judged. When the Torah was given to us, we trembled to the sound of the *shofar* that accompanied it. Thus, when we think of *shofar*, we think of two *shofros*, two purposes of the *shofar* – judgment and freedom. The *shofar* blast engenders excitement when it heralds the *Yovel*, Jubilee Year, the excitement mounting as we think about the ingathering of the exiles; it is then tempered when we realize that the *shofar* call is also a reminder of the Day of Judgment from which no one escapes. We think about all of this as we recite the tenth *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esrai*.