

B'S'D'

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHMINI ATZERES & V'ZOS HABRACHA - 5763

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2002 To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject: Shemini Atseres and Simchas Torah: One Simcha

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RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER

SHEMINI ATSERES AND SIMCHAS TORAH: ONE SIMCHA

The prohibition against getting married on Shabbos is rabbinic in origin. It was part of the gezeirah against mekach u'memkar (buying and selling) shemo yichtov (lest one write by mistake). However the prohibition against marrying on yom tov or even on chol hamoed is Biblical based on the principle of ein mearvin simcha besimcha. On yom tov, and even on chol hamoed, there is a mitzvah to rejoice, and one who marries is engaged in a different form of simcha, which detracts from the simcha of Yom Tov. (On Shabbos there is no mitzvah of simcha, hence no problem of contradiction.)

In Talmudic times there were several differences between the practices of the Jewish community in Babylonia and the practices of the communities in Eretz Yisrael. One of these differences was regarding krias haTorah. In Babylonia they would complete the reading of the entire Torah every year on the last day of Sukkos, hence the name Simchas Torah. In Eretz Yisrael each sedra (read each Shabbos) was only about one third the length of the sedros read in Babylonia, hence it would take about three years to complete the entire Torah. Simchas Torah would only be celebrated once every three years, upon the completion of the entire Torah. Already in the times of the Rambam the practice all over the world had followed that of Bavel, to celebrate Simchas Torah every year, on the last day of Sukkos.

The Achronim raise a problem regarding this practice: why is this celebration not in violation of the principle of ein mearvim simcha besimcha? On Sukkos there is clearly a mitzvah of simcha, and the celebration of the siyum of the Torah also certainly involves an element of simcha. Why should we not insist on observing Simchas Torah only on a Shabbos or a weekday, as opposed to having the celebration on a yom tov?

Perhaps the answer to that question lies in the nature of the yom tov of Shemini Atseres. Each of the yomim tovim has its own theme. The theme of Pesach is the redemption from Egypt, on Shavuot it is Mattan Torah and the theme on Sukkos is the ability of the Jewish people to have survived miraculously throughout the years of the galus. For seven days we leave our permanent home and dwell in the shaky sukkah, with very little protection. We rely on the Divine protection, which has maintained the Jewish people throughout the years, despite all odds against survival. In the language of Rav Kook zt"l, the continued existence of the Jewish people is a, "halacha leMoshe miSinai" (i.e., there is no rational way to explain it).

What is the theme of Shemini Atseres? The halacha declares Shemini Atseres as a separate yom tov, and is not merely the last two days of Sukkos. (This is the reason that the brocho "shehechyanu" is recited at the end of the Kiddush on the evening of Shemini Atseres but not on the evening of the last days of Pesach. Shemini Atseres is a separate Yom Tov, and has not been celebrated since a year ago). What is the special theme of the new Yom Tov?

Rashi, in his commentary on the Torah (Vayikra 23:36), quotes from the tanaim that after the seven days of Sukkos are all over, and the millions of Jews have spent their yom tov in Jerusalem (fulfilling aliya laregel), HaKadosh Baruch Hu exclaims, "I love you so much; I find it difficult to say goodbye; please stay on another day". Shemini Atseres does not come to commemorate any particular historical event, but rather to emphasize bechiras Yisrael, the uniqueness of Am Yisrael. From all the nations of the world, the Jews alone were chosen to be designated as "bonim lamakom", as "bni bechori Yisroel".

The entire uniqueness of the Jewish people lies in the fact that the malach (angel) teaches every baby the entire Torah before he or she is born. The simcha of the completion of the entire Torah is not something separate from the simcha of the yom tov. The whole essence of the yom tov of Shemini Atseres is interconnected with Torah study. Only through Torah study did we become the Am Hanivchar, and hence our minhag of celebrating the simcha of completing the learning of the entire Torah not only does not compete with the simcha of the yom tov of Shemini Atseres, it rather complements it and enhances it.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/1999/moadim/rneu_sim.html
Torahweb [from 3 years ago]

RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER

SIMCHAS TORAH: IN ANTICIPATION

The excitement generated by the successful completion of studying the entire Torah Shebichsav - as individuals preparing the text with targum and meforshim and as a community listening to the leining and participating in public study - has its roots in several sources. The Ramban in his commentary to Parshas Mishpatim (24:11) relates our annual dancing and perhaps any siyum to the recorded celebration of our leaders upon receiving the Torah at Sinai. He writes, "... and they [the nobility] ate and drank - they celebrated and made a Yom Tov for one is obligated to celebrate the receiving of Torah." The Ramban parallels these occasions to the feast that Shlomo Hamelech feted in Yerushalayim after being granted unsurpassed intellectual gifts (Divrei Hayamim 2, 21:12) and to Dovid Hamelech's great feast marking the preparations to establish the first Beis Hamikdash (Divrei Hayamim 1, 29:21).

At first blush these events and seeming precedents for our Simchas Torah are not similar at all. The festivities of Matan Torah and of Dovid and Shlomo HaMelech celebrated the anticipation of horizons of spirituality and knowledge that had just been unlocked and laid out for them. They correctly perceived that they had been catapulted beyond the boundaries that hemmed in the most talented people of all times, and what a passionate simcha they must have experienced. Isn't the annual completion of V'zos Habrocho quite different? Are we not expressing our happiness and gratitude for the privilege of accomplishing the understanding of part of Hashem's instruction?

Perhaps the Ramban wants us to understand that every siyum, be it of a mesechta or the entire Torah Shebichsav, is celebrating not the accomplishment but rather the anticipation of applying all of one's knowledge to future studies and situations. Indeed that is why at every siyum we focus on the "Hadrans", praying and promising that we will return to the mesechata at hand and that the mesechta has become an active and alive part of our consciousness. Thus the simcha has its roots in kabolos Hatorah and the joy of Shlomo Hamelech upon his receiving the gates of all knowledge.

In similar fashion we can appreciate the explanation offered by the Avudraham for our rush to start Breishis as soon as we have completed Sefer Devarim. He refers us to a challenge that the Satan throws in an attempt to deride Klal Yisrael. He claims that now that we have completed the study of the entire Torah we will be putting it away and presumably go on to other masterpieces, lehavdil. Upon hearing the beginning of Bereishis immediately after chazak chazak, Hashem's confidence in us and our knowledge of the absolute singularity of Torah and its place in our lives, is vindicated. Perhaps the medrash is also pointing out that Klal Yisrael sees the successful completion of one cycle not as an end but rather as a new rung in the ladder on

which to penetrate the texts ever so more deeply on the next way around. Our simcha on this Yom Tov celebrates our well founded expectation that we will always find new insights in the Torah and the blessing that we have as Torah and life continuously illuminate each other.

From: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Parsha List [SMTP: parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] To: Shabbat_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il
Subject: Shabbat Shalom: SHEMINI ATZERET-SIMCHAT TORAH BY RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom: Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - There are three distinct celebrations of G-d's revelation of the Torah: the Festival of Shavuot, just seven weeks after the re-experiencing of our exodus from Egypt, referred to in our liturgy as the "Festival of the Giving of the Torah; the white fast of purity and forgiveness, Yom HaKippurim, which is the anniversary of the second set of Tablets of the Covenant which the Almighty gave to Moses; and Simchat Torah, the Joy of Torah, which we celebrate this Sabbath of Shemini Atzeret.

Why three Festivals surrounding the Revelation of the Torah? What is the unique message of Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah, and which historical event does it commemorate?

Let us explore each of these three celebrations - and attempt to analyze their respective messages. From a certain perspective the first of the three, the Festival of Shavuot, is the most problematic of all, since it is defined as the Festival of the Revelation by the Sages who composed our liturgy, but not by the Bible itself. Is it not strange that our Sacred Scriptures do not see fit to identify the exact day of the Revelation, to eternalize the supernatural event which forged us into a nation more than any other historical experience and bequeathed the immortal Ten Commandments which established absolute and universal moral standards until this very day?

The probable answer, as suggested by the Rivash (Rav Yitzchak Bar Sheshet), is that the Bible is "ashamed" to reveal the date; after all, only forty-nine days after the awe-inspiring, supernatural revelation, the Israelites stoop to the lowest level of impurity by engaging in immoral licentiousness in their worship of the golden calf. Shavuot is therefore Biblically known as the Festival of the First Fruits, the date of the Revelation only to be revealed by the Sages of the Talmud and the prayers of our liturgy.

The tenth day of Tishrei, the date declared by the Bible as "the day on which the Almighty will forgive you of all your sins," is identified by our Sages as the day when G-d forgave Israel for their sin of worshipping the golden calf. Moses had smashed the first Tablets of Stone when he saw the perversion of Israel as they danced around the golden calf; the Almighty commanded Moses to "hew out two tablets of stone like the first ones" after the greatest of prophets prayed for forty days and forty nights for Israel's exoneration.

My revered teacher and mentor, Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l, notes two fundamental differences between the first and second sets of tablets: the first Revelation took place amidst thunder, lightning and an awesome Divine voice communicating to an entire nation; the second Revelation took place in the silence of the cleft of a rock in the Sinai desert, an intimate communication between G-d and Moses alone. The first set of tablets were produced by the Almighty Himself, as it were, "the handiwork of G-d and the writing of G-d," whereas the second set of tablets were hewn out by Moses. Rav Soloveitchik goes one step further, based upon the midrash: the first set of tablets were to be a Divine Torah, limited to the written Torah, whereas the second tablets included the basis for the Oral Torah, expressive of a partnership between G-d and Israel throughout the generations in the interpretive development of Torah. In effect, G-d understood that a Torah devoid of Israel's participation would ultimately lose Israel's allegiance; only if Israel could take "ownership" of Torah would Israel remain committed to Torah! Thus, Yom Kippur may well be considered the day of the Revelation of our second chance, or the day of the Revelation of the Oral Law.

And finally, the Festival of the Rejoicing of the Torah on Shemini Atzeret - Simchat Torah. Shemini Atzeret is the climax of the Rosh Hashanah - Yom Kippur- Sukkot period, whose major message is Israel's task to "repair the world in the Kingship of G-d," to teach the ethical monotheism of a G-d of life, justice and peace to the nations at large. The Festival of Shavuot, the anniversary of the First Revelation of the Torah to Israel, came on the fiftieth day after the exodus, on the day following seven times seven days, with the beginning of the eighth week being the time of the Revelation. According to the Maharal of Prague, the number seven symbolizes the perfection of the natural, and eight symbolizes the supernatural; seven representing the physical world and eight the metaphysical, supernal world. Similarly, seven days comprise a week, and the eighth day is the circumcision, the divine sign of the human ability to repair and sanctify the natural, physical instinct of the organ of propagation.

Sukkot is our nature festival, wherein we give thanks to G-d for the bounty of the produce of the land of Israel. The eighth day is a separate festival, the day when we pray for Divine rain and Divine grace, the day when we invoke in our prophetic reading (Haftarah Kings 1:8) the City of Jerusalem, the City of the Holy Temple, the City of G-d. And the prophets (Isaiah 2, Micha 4) speak of a time, in the end of the days, when the Temple of G-d will be secure on the Temple Mount, when the Gentiles will rush to learn our laws and walk in our ways, when the Torah will come forth (to the world) from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, when nation will not lift up sword against nation and humanity will not learn war anymore.

On the Festival of the Rejoicing of the Torah, we take the Torah out of the ark, even into the streets, and dance in circuits with sacred abandon. This third Festival celebrates the third Revelation, when the Torah - at least the seven Noahide commands of morality - will be accepted by the nations of the world.

Just as Rosh Hashanah celebrates the perfection of the world which has not yet arrived (Malkhuyot: "on that day G-d will be One and His Name will be one"), so does Shemini Atzeret Simchat Torah celebrate the Gentiles acceptance of our Torah, which has not yet occurred. "When will the Messiah come? When the well-springs of Divine waters, life-giving waters of Divine grace and Divine Torah, spread round about, to Gentile as well as to Jew."

Shabbat Shalom and Hag Sameach!

Shmini Atzeret - Simchat Torah 22-23 Tishrei 5763 September 28-29, 2002 Sanhedrin 17-18

Guest Rabbi: RABBI NAPHTALI BURNSTEIN Young Israel of Greater Cleveland, OH

Shimni Atzeret marks the end of the season of our Yomim Tovim. The season began with the Yimai HaSlichot, Rosh Hashanah, the Ateret Yimai Teshuva and Yom Kippur. It continued with Sukkot and Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. The literal meaning of Atzeret is "restraint." There are various interpretations as to why this term, implying restraint was chosen here.

One possibility behind using the term Atzeret or restraint here refers to holding on to the spiritual joy and holiness achieved during the past month. There is a great risk that, once the holidays are behind us and we return to our daily lives, we may become so absorbed in those activities that we dissipate all the spiritual wealth we had acquired during the Yomim Tovim.

If one tightly seals a bottle of expensive wine, it will save the aroma and the quality will be preserved. So, too, when taking in the end of Yom Tov, we should make these last days of Yom Tov into Atzeret, a tight seal that will retain all that we have accomplished during Tishrei. Just as it is foolish to earn and not to conserve, so too it would be foolish to achieve spirituality and not to retain it.

The truth is, however, that Shimini Atzeret isn't just the end of the Tishrei season of Yomim Tovim. It actually concludes an entire year of the Yomim Tovim. Pesach actually begins the cycle, followed by Shavuot. Sukkot and Shmini Atzeret (Simchat Torah) complete the year's cycle of Yomim Tovim.

There is a well-known story in the Gemorah in Shabbat (31a) regarding the potential Ger who came to Hillel and asked him to convert him while he stood "al regel achat" -- on one foot. There have been several interpretations to this story in the Gemorah. The Sfat Emet suggests an interpretation as follows:

This searching individual understood and appreciated that each and every Yom Tov experience is part of a process of growth that we are offered each and every year. It would also seem that the highlight of that process would come at the very end, at the final leg of the journey. This being so, the Ger sought a way to skip the earlier Yomim Tovim and attempted to achieve all the spiritual greatness found in Shmini Atzeret without the aid of the other Yomim Tovim. Try to teach me "al regel achat" while standing on one regel. One holiday should suffice, if we go right to the top. Hillel responded that it was a process that necessitated each step in the process in order to conserve it and retain it.

Trying to achieve the dveikut (attachment) that comes with Simchat Torah, without first building the foundation of that relationship, will often end in great failure. "Al regel achat" is not how one achieves success and growth in spirit and commitment.

Now, as Yom Tov comes to an end, we all would like to hold on to a little of the aroma of Yom Tov. Each of us has to find the right formula that works for us.

One possible way to achieve some level of continuity from Yom Tov is to try to enhance our homes with something new and meaningful. Beginning Sefer Bereishit again allows us the opportunity to learn together, particularly on Shabbat. How about assigning different members of the family, at their particular level, to bring to the Shabbat meal, an interesting question, insight, medresh or story. What about trying to study the Parasha each week, Shnayim Mikra V'Echud Targum, which gives a great connection and appreciation to each Parasha.

As winter creeps up on us, let's prepare to hold on to some of the warmth of Yom Tov and to re-ignite Limud HaTorah in our homes, both individually and collectively.

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From: Machon Zomet[SMTP:zomet@NETVISION.NET.IL]
Subject: Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Simchat Torah 5763
Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Simchat Torah No 928: 22 Tishrei 5763 (28 September 2002)

TO START THE TORAH PORTION: "All the Tribes of Yisrael Together" [Devarim 33:5]

by RABBI DAVID LAU, Chief Rabbi of Modi'in

It is clear from the Torah portion of "Vezot Haberachah," the last portion of the Torah, that the nation was divided into different groups and tribes before entering Eretz Yisrael. Every tribe received its own blessing, one that emphasized its unique traits, expanding on the blessings given by Yaacov. One might have the impression that there is no hope of ever seeing the people gathered into a single unified nation.

However, a look in depth will show that this is not the case. As an example, take the relationship between Yehuda and Binyamin. Yehuda is the tribe of monarchy, while Binyamin was privileged to have the Temple built on its land ("He will dwell between his shoulders" [Devarim 33:12]). There can be no government without a Temple. This was understood by Yeravam Ben Nevat, the king of the kingdom of Yisrael, who closed the border and did not allow his subjects to travel to Jerusalem. His authority, and the kingdom of Yisrael as a whole, did not continue for very long.

The opposite is also true - The Temple cannot stand for long without a government. Bnei Yisrael were told that the Temple should be constructed by a king they would appoint when they enter the land, who would provide the authority for its operation. Yehuda cannot prevail without Binyamin, just as Binyamin cannot last for long without Yehuda.

Intermingled with the tribe of Yehuda is that of Shimon ("G-d, listen to the voice of Yehuda" [33:7] - see Rashi). The tribe of authority takes responsibility for the tribe that teaches young children (the issue of education takes top priority!). Shimon is known for fanaticism, but when it is controlled by the authority of a king, it can be channeled to a good purpose.

With the combined strength of these three tribes, the kingdom of Yehuda has managed to survive. Today, we are the remnants of this nation, after all the other tribes were sent into exile.

Yissachar and Zevulun are also mentioned together: "Zevulun, be happy in your travels, and Yissachar in your tents" [33:18]. Yissachar can dwell in the tent of Torah only when Zevulun travels to take care of his merchandise, in order to help his brother's economic situation. One without the other will not be able to continue. When they cooperate, they will be able to survive.

Tribal loyalty is a good thing if each tribe knows how to maximize its own potential for the benefit of all. If every tribe can learn to fulfill its potential and combine this with the traits of the others, there is some advantage to having separate tribes. If, on the other hand, every tribe remains in its own small niche and cares only about its own needs, there is no benefit at all. In fact, in such a case every individual loses, since he cannot achieve his maximum potential if he remains isolated.

As the year comes to an end and a new one starts, let us hope and pray that we will all understand that an individual will be blessed only when he expresses himself by his contribution to the community as a whole. Let us all join together in cooperative giving, with the hope that this will lead to "Vezot Haberachah," a blessing for all, starting anew from "Bereishit," from the beginning.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [SMTP:shemalists@shemayisrael.com] To: Peninim Parsha Subject: PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
PARSHAS ZOS HABRACHA

He (Moshe) carried out Hashem's justice and His ordinances with Yisrael. (33:21)

In Pirkei Avos, 5:18, Chazal teach us, "Whoever makes a multitude meritorious; no sin shall come through him" Moshe Rabbeinu attained virtue and brought the multitude to virtue; therefore, the merit of the multitude is attributed to him, as it is stated, "He carried out Hashem's righteousness and His ordinances with Yisrael." We live in a complex world, in an environment that is not necessarily conducive to spiritual growth. While whether or not to sin consciously is based upon a person's individual discretion, it is often difficult to avoid an inadvertent sin. When we act in haste without forethought, we might suffer unfortunate consequences. A thoughtless word can sometimes cut cruelly, producing severe repercussions. Indeed, even an innocuous statement can be misconstrued, so that it influences others in a negative manner. The Mishnah conveys to us its prescription for protection against sin: lead others to virtue and righteousness; be concerned with the spiritual welfare of others; and you will earn Hashem's special concern. Circumstances will be so ordained that the mezakeh es ho'rabim will not lead others astray by his needless word or action. His hand will not cause others to sin. Chazal explain that one who leads others to merit will never be the cause of transgression, because it would cast him in a negative light to his disciples; the beneficiaries of his good work should merit Olam Habah, the eternal merit, and he should merit perdition. His destiny remains eternally linked with that of his beneficiaries.

The Mishnah cites Moshe Rabbeinu as an example of the mezakeh es horabim. He was a master at leadership, bringing his people to spiritual and moral growth through forty years of difficulty. Never did he

flinch or falter. How did he do it? His portrait in Midrashic literature indicates one sterling quality as the primary factor in his success: he was able to bear the people patiently to the utmost limits of human endurance. They turned against him time and again out of fear, anxiety and hysteria. Their suspicions, resentments and other critiques were the outgrowth of hundreds of years of cruel servitude. Their complaints against Moshe were beyond ludicrous.

Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu, the consummate leader, the quintessential manhig Yisrael, rarely retorted with impatience or anger. Moshe serves as the paradigm for all leaders. Who today is not the subject of petty, carping criticism? The frustration and irritation which a leader experiences certainly takes its toll. Yet, we are not to condemn, but rather to defend our constituents, realizing that they are human and, therefore, subject to human frailties.

While Moshe did entreat Hashem to overlook Klal Yisrael's behavior, when he spoke to them, it was altogether different. He was stern and demanding, exacting and unrelenting. He taught them middos, character refinement; he imbued them with hope and reverence. He also taught them the Torah. His teachings were tempered with love, even when he upbraided them for their stubbornness and insolence and took them to task for their ingratitude. Yes, he was demanding, but he was also thoughtful. He did not merely seek to discipline; rather, his goal was to inculcate values, inspire virtues, and imbue their lives with spiritual meaning.

This principle holds true for every principal, teacher and guide. Teaching, mentoring, instructing are all terms referring to a role in preparing the next generation. It is not easy, but then nothing of value comes without effort. It can, at times, be demeaning, frustrating, thankless to name just a few of the "negatives." There is no endeavor, however, that provides greater and more enduring satisfaction than the knowledge that we have played a role in shaping the life of another Jew. We might not receive our "thanks" in this world, but we will receive our appreciation with the ultimate reward from Hashem. We will be repaid not only for those that we have helped directly, but we will also receive reward for all those in generations yet to come who will learn Torah or become finer Jews as a result of our toil. Indeed, to teach is to achieve immortality.

We have to add one more point. Immortality is achieved when one teaches that way. Let me explain with the following story: Horav Shlomo Heiman, zl, the distinguished Rosh HaYeshiva of Torah Vodaath, was an individual of incredible depth and breadth. His shiurim, lectures, were brilliant masterpieces which were presented in a manner unlike many of his peers. When he taught, the shiur came alive; in fact, the room came alive as he would shout with almost breathless ecstasy as he explained the words of Chazal and their commentaries. His eyes gleamed, his hands waved to and fro, while his entire body gyrated as he expounded on Chazal. When the shiur was over, Rav Shlomo would collapse from the physical exertion.

It was one particular cold, snowy day in the early 1940's when New York was blanketed with snow. Only four talmidim, students, showed up for shiur. Undaunted, Rav Shlomo delivered his shiur as if the room were packed with hundreds of students. Sweat rolled down his face as he passionately presented the finer points of Jewish law to the four skeptical students. As he paused to catch his breath, one of the four asked, "Rebbe, please, why are you getting so worked up? There are only four of us!"

Rav Shlomo looked back at the student and said, "You think that I am only giving a shiur to four students? You are not the only ones. I am giving this class to hundreds and hundreds of students. I am teaching you, your students, your students' students, and so on!"

In order to imbue generations, the lecture must be taught in such a manner. Rav Shlomo did not speak to the present - he spoke to the future - to a generation yet unborn. When one works with the future in mind, his preparation takes on a whole new meaning. The Chafetz Chaim's son, Rav Leib, zl, once asked his father if he really thought that the future readers of his magnum opus, the Mishnah Berurah, would ever have an inkling of the indescribable effort that he had expended in producing this masterpiece. Every halachah, every Chazal, every source -- Rishon, Acharon, anywhere in Talmudic and

Halachic literature -- was painstakingly checked and rechecked. The Chafetz Chaim responded that the only reason future generations would even be able to read the halachos with lucidity and accuracy is that he had expended so much time in ensuring the verity and intelligibility of the sefer. The Chafetz Chaim wrote for the future. Indeed, everything we do should be able to withstand the test of time.

And the days of tearful mourning for Moshe ended. (34:8)

In the Talmud Shabbos, 106a, Chazal say, "Whoever lets down/ weeps over the passing of an adam kasher -- upright, virtuous man -- Hashem counts his tears and puts them aside in His treasury." What is the meaning of "counting tears," and what is its significance? Olas Shlomo on Seder Kedoshim, cited by Shai LaTorah, explains that it is human nature to weep for a person who passes from this world, regardless of the level of his virtue. We are an emotional people. Therefore, when someone dies, our first reaction is to express our emotion - an emotion that may have little to do with the individual. Perhaps he is a relative, or a friend; perhaps we simply cry because when we hear of a death, we cry. Who does not shed a tear upon reading about a tragedy that has occurred? How are we to discern between the individual who cries for an adam kasher, and one who simply cries as an expression of emotion?

The duration of the weeping determines for whom and why we are weeping. An expression of emotion does not last long, unless it is for someone whose loss has left a tremendous void, someone who has inspired others with his behavior, with his brilliance, with his virtue. Indeed, for such an individual, as time goes by, the loss becomes more pronounced. Consequently, the original expression of grief is no indication of its focus. We could be crying for anyone. Only after a substantial amount of time has passed and one is still grief-stricken, do we have a clear intimation that this is not typical weeping for an ordinary person. These tears have special meaning, and they are valued by Hashem to the point that He counts and saves them.

Perhaps we may suggest a somewhat different approach. Adam kasher is a reference to a "good" Jew - not necessarily a brilliant Torah scholar, a great Torah luminary - just a simple Jew: a man of sterling character, impeccable behavior, devout and virtuous. This person does not make any "waves." In fact, most people do not even know him. His picture is not in the paper every other week. His passing might be noted with a small obituary in the local paper. Instead of learning folios of Talmud, he recited Tehillim whenever he had the opportunity. He is what David Hamelech in Sefer Tehillim 15 describes as "one who walks in perfect innocence, does what is right, and speaks the truth from his heart. He does not slander, nor does he do evil or disgrace his fellowman." He neither takes advantage of others, nor can his integrity be compromised with special gifts. This is an adam kasher.

Regrettably, we do not often cry for such people, because in today's society they remain unnoticed. We do not realize that their loss creates an irreplaceable void in the Jewish community. When they are taken, the Shechinah feels the loss much more than we do. The Shechinah knows their contribution to Klal Yisrael, while we conveniently ignore it. When we weep over the passing of a great man, we cry over our loss. When we cry over the death of an adam kasher, we grieve over the Shechinah's loss. Hashem counts those tears, because they are altruistic; they are real.

Perhaps this is the underlying meaning of Chazal's statement when they say, "Kol ha'morid dema'os," "Anyone who lets down tears." Why did they not say, "Kol ha'bocheh," "Anyone who weeps?" I think that "bocheh" is spontaneous weeping. When we hear of a death, a sad occurrence, a tragedy - we cry. That is our first reaction as human beings. To "let down" tears, however, is an expression which denotes thought, an intelligent appreciation of a situation, a cogent understanding of who it was that has passed away, as well as his contribution to the community and the consequent loss produced by his demise. When an "ordinary" man leaves this world, it takes a "thoughtful" and caring person to express his grief. Hashem values those tears because they have special meaning.

Never again has there arisen in Yisrael a prophet like Moshe. And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Yisrael. (34:11,12)

"Asher asah Moshe," "Which Moshe performed." Did Moshe perform, or did Hashem perform? In his commentary to the Hagaddah, the Gra, zl, m'Viilna writes that Hashem took us out of Egypt - not through the medium of an agent or an angel, but Hashem Himself. The revelation of Hashem during the Exodus was apparent to all, especially since Moshe took no honor whatsoever for himself. Moshe's humility was readily manifest as he indicated to all that Hashem was acting alone without any agents. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu's name is mentioned nowhere in the Hagaddah. Everything that occurred was through Hashem levado, alone.

Now that we have a clear statement that forbids us from associating any medium with Hashem in regard to the Exodus, why does the Torah write the words, "asher asah Moshe?" Hashem performed the redemption; why is it attributed here to Moshe? Horav Yitzchak Goldwasser, Shlita, explains that whenever one attributes an endeavor solely to Hashem and takes no credit whatsoever for himself, Hashem rewards him by crediting it to the individual. Hence, since Moshe took no credit for the Exodus, ascribing every facet of it to Hashem, he was rewarded by having the geulah, liberation, attributed to him. The purpose of the geulah was that every Jew should see clearly that "I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of Egypt." This belief is mandatory and unequivocal. Moshe Rabbeinu downplayed his part in the Exodus so that no one would err in acknowledging the true source of our redemption. Thus, the redemption was in his merit and should, therefore, be ascribed to him.

Rav Goldwasser supplements this thought with another example. Chazal tell us that Rabbi Eliezer HaGadol was meticulous throughout his life never to say a halachah which he did not hear from his rebbeim. He did not say his own chidushim, novellae. In reward for this exemplary humility, the first Mishnah in Meseches Berachos, the opening words of the Oral Law, begins with a statement from Rabbi Eliezer. The question glares at us: If he never said anything of his own, how does the first Mishnah begin with his statement of halachah? Is it his, or is it not his?

We must say that Rabbi Eliezer demurred himself, never calling attention to himself, always attributing his Torah to his rebbeim. Therefore, Hashem rewarded him by ascribing the halachah at the beginning of Shas to him. In other words, when we defer what we have to Hashem, He rewards us by giving it back.

Dear Readers,

It was twelve years ago that the first copy of Peninim appeared in the greater Cleveland community. Since that day, this endeavor has been blessed with incredible Siyata Dishmaya. Peninim has been welcomed as a refreshing and enriching weekly compendium on the Parsha in thousands of homes and shuls throughout the world. I am, indeed, humbled by this z'chus haTorah and fervently pray that I be able to continue to be a medium for harbotzas Torah.

Twelve years is a long time, especially when keeping in mind that a serious attempt has been made never to repeat a d'var Torah. The sea of Torah is endless, however, and there is so much to convey that there is never a shortage for Torah true thought. The number twelve is symbolic of the Shivtei Kah, Twelve Tribes, each one an individual, but yet, part of a collective and integrated unit. Each year has presented its own individual challenges and unique approach to writing. The style may change, but the imprimatur stays the same. This year, l"YH, we hope to publish Volume Nine of the Peninim series. The success of Peninim did not just happen. It is through the tireless efforts of some very special and dedicated people that Peninim is produced weekly and distributed world-wide. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Sharon Weimer and Mrs. Chantal Modes for preparing the weekly manuscript; to Mrs. Marilyn Berger for editing and making it presentable; to Rabbi Malkiel Hefter, a friend and colleague, for always being there to assist in every manner. Without their pleasant demeanor and willingness to help, Peninim would be but a dream.

Over the years Peninim has developed its own distribution network. While there is no room to mention each and every person in the various communities that Peninim serves, I will highlight a few. It all began with Baruch Berger of Brooklyn, N.Y. May the Ribono Shel Olam grant him a complete refuah shelaimah and arichas yamim v'shanim b'soch shaar cholei Yisrael. Avi Hershkowitz of Queens, N.Y., Asher Groundlin of Detroit, MI and Meir Bedziner of Baltimore, MD, provide their respective communities. Fishel Todd of Shema Yisrael network provides the internet edition for worldwide distribution. A number of years ago, Eliyahu Goldberg began the European edition. Through his efforts and the mesiras nefesh of Menachem Hommel of London and Pinchas Brandeis of Manchester, Peninim has extensive coverage in England, Paris, France, Zurich, Switzerland, and Johannesburg, South Africa as well as Eretz Yisrael. May the mitzvah of harbotzas Torah be a z'echus for them to be blessed "b'chol mili d'meitav."

The last paragraph is always the most difficult one to write. It acknowledges the individual least recognized, but most critical for the success of this endeavor - the woman behind the scene. To this end, I recognize the efforts of my wife, Neny, on behalf of this publication. Aside from being the "last word" in the editing process, she has been a pillar of support and encouragement for this and other projects. May she be blessed with good health, and may we together merit to see Torah nachas from our children and grandchildren.

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2002 9:41 PM To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject:

RABBI YONASAN SACKS –
SUKKOS AND HAKHAIL: THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATION
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Rabbi Yonasan Sacks

Sukkos and Hakhail: The Challenge of Integration

Once every seven years, on the second day of Sukkos following the shemita year, all of Klal Yisrael would assemble to hear the melech read from Sefer Devarim. The Rambam explains (Hilchos Chagigah, 3:1) that the very purpose of this mitzvah known as hakhail is to inspire the nation and to instill in each individual a passionate commitment to Torah.

The timing of the mitzvah of hakhail, however, is somewhat surprising. During the shemita year, one must refrain from guarding and working his fields. In an agricultural society, the shemita year is an opportunity to put aside the daily routine and devote oneself to spiritual growth. Hopefully, as the year concludes, one emerges spiritually rejuvenated and energized, well equipped to face the challenges of the coming year. Yet, as the new year begins the Torah commands us to ascend to the Beis Hamikdash to experience hakhail. Why is it so crucial to hear the inspiring message of the melech particularly at this time?

The Meshech Chochma explains the lesson of hakhail: "L'maan yeidun derech Hashem ba'asosam m'leches sodeh v'kerem" ? to recognize the ways of Hashem as one works in his field and vineyard. Hakhail challenges each individual to integrate the experience of shemita into his daily routine. Therefore, as the farmer returns to his field, he is called upon to ascend to Yerushalayim.

The message and challenge of integration and synthesis is not limited to hakhail, but extends to Chag HaSukkos. If the very purpose of Sukkos is to commemorate the manner in which Bnai Yisrael traveled as they left Mitzrayim, why do we celebrate Sukkos at this time of year instead of during Chidesh Nissan?

The Midrash and the Maharal underscore the apparent connection between Yom HaKippurim and Sukkos. Perhaps this link can be understood based on the lesson of hakhail.

Yom HaKippurim is a day of taharah, during which we devote ourselves to spiritual growth and perfection. We strive to meet the challenge of "Lifnei hashem titaharu." Unfortunately, when the day comes to an end, and we return to our daily routine, the impact of Yom

HaKippurim diminishes. We find ourselves preoccupied with the challenges of daily life without realizing the need to integrate Yom HaKippurim into the other days of the year. Perhaps for this very reason, the Torah insists that soon after Yom HaKippurim we leave our home, our diras kevah, and dwell in the succah. Both succos and hakhail underscore the need to incorporate true kedushah into each day of our life.

From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online[SMTP:feedback@kby.org] Subject: Parshat Vezot Haberacha Parshat Vezot Haberacha Yissachar and Zevulun RAV ZION LUZ SHLITA

To Zevulun he said: Rejoice, O Zevulun, in your excursions, and Yissachar in your tents. (Devarim 33:18)

Chazal explain: Rejoice Yissachar in your excursions for business, because of Yissachar in [their] tents, who sit and delve in Torah. This is the source of the well-known idea that Zevulun and Yissachar made an agreement: Zevulun would go out for business and sustain Yissachar, who would learn Torah, and the merit of the learning would be attributed also to Zevulun. However, how did Chazal derive this from the verse?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains the blessing, Rejoice, O Yissachar, in two ways:

1. Although, in general, one should not rejoice in worldly matters, as it says, Of joy, [I said], "what does it accomplish?" ? here, where Zevulun's success in his business is for the purpose of supporting Yissachar, certainly joy is worthy even in worldly matters. 2. Rejoice, O Zevulun, in your excursions. When a person sets out on his business, he does not know whether he will succeed or not, and he is not happy. Just the opposite, he is concerned and worried that perhaps he will not succeed! However, Zevulun, whose business is for the purpose of Yissachar's success in learning, can rejoice already upon setting out, because he is guaranteed that Hashem will grant him success.

The blessing and promise of joy to Zevulun already on his way out to business, leads to the conclusion that we are not dealing with regular business, but rather with one that allows the involvement of Torah of Yissachar. For this reason Moshe juxtaposed them in the pasuk. However, this partnership requires explanation. Do we find with other mitzvot this kind of partnership, that one should wear Tefilin, take the lulav or sit in a succah, and his partner should support him?! Each and every person is obligated to perform mitzvot, including the mitzvah of learning Torah, which is comparable to them all, so why can this mitzvah alone be fulfilled through such a partnership?

There are two parts to learning Torah:

The goal knowing Torah and its beliefs; to know Hashem's will in this world, and the way of G-d that one should follow. The means ? to make every attempt to know G-d's will and his Torah, which includes unceasing involvement in Torah day and night. (Some explain with this the concept of Torah lishma, to learn in order to know G-d's will through the learning.) Even so, If a person will live thousands of years, he cannot count your greatness.

In this mitzvah, the means are also a great and important mitzvah, and they are not only a preparation (hechsher) for the mitzvah. It seems that Zevulun is exempt only from the second aspect, the means.

Despite Zevulun's involvement in business he is not exempt from the mitzvah of knowing Torah. Moreover, all of Yissachar's conclusions, Zevulun learned and knew, just as with all other mitzvot, that one person cannot exempt another. Yissachar dealt with learning and Zevulun with the halacha

The second aspect of the mitzvah ? involvement in the give and take of Torah with toil and effort, in order to clarify the Creator's will ? Zevulun accomplished through his business. He toiled in his business with the goal that G-d's will should be clarified through Yissachar, who would be free to learn Torah, and he would support him. It is nearly possible that one who does this with the pure intention of revealing G-d's will in this world, like Zevulun, is considered as involved in Torah itself. Thus, as the Ohr Hachaim writes, he can be happy with his

worldly matters and he is guaranteed success in all his business, which is G-d's will itself.

[Torah] is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and its supporters are happy. (Mishlei 3:18) Both for those who learn Torah and for those who support it, Torah is literally a tree of life, and everything depends on one's intentions. When the goal is for Torah's sake ? whether through the means of business or through the means of involvement in learning Torah - happiness, blessing and satisfaction are guaranteed.

It appears that there is a great lesson here. A person take part in the experience of learning and elevate his soul even when he is outside of the Beit Midrash, when he is involved in his business, in settling the Land, or protecting it. He can feel that he is involved in Torah itself, if his goal is like that of Yissachar.

The Rambam concludes his Mishneh Torah in the following manner:

The prophets and Sages desired the days of Mashiach not so that they should rule over the entire world ... and not so that the nations should exalt them, and not in order to eat, drink and be happy, but rather so that they should be free to [learn] Torah and its wisdom, with no overseer to disrupt them ... The involvement of the entire world will be in order to know Hashem alone.

May this happen speedily in our days, Amen.

From: RABBI MORDECHAI KORNFELD Kollel Iyun Hadaf[SMTP:kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Subject: Insights to the Daf: Sanhedrin 11 INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF THE MORDECAI (MARCUS) BEN ELIMELECH SHMUEL KORNFELD MASECHES SANHEDRIN brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il> WE NEED YOUR HELP - PLEASE DONATE NOW TO KEEP D.A.F. ONLINE! *** Online donations: <http://www.dafyomi.co.il/sponsors.htm> *** U.S. contributions to: D.A.F., 140-32 69 Ave., Flushing NY 11367 ***

Sanhedrin 11 THE STORY OF SHMUEL HA'KATAN QUESTION: The Beraisa states that the leap year is instituted only by those invited to participate as judges. The Gemara relates that it happened once that Raban Gamliel ordered that seven judges meet him in the designated place of judgement in order to establish a leap year. When he arrived, he saw that eight judges had come. He declared, "Who came here without permission?" Shmuel ha'Katan arose and confessed that it was he who had come without permission, and that he had come because we wanted to learn the Halachah. Raban Gamliel responded that he may sit down and judge the case of the leap year, "for all of the years are fit to be judged as leap years by you." The Gemara says that it was actually a different person who had come without permission, and Shmuel ha'Katan said that it was he who had come without permission in order to save the guilty party from embarrassment.

This story is difficult to understand. If Raban Gamliel indeed invited them to come, as the Gemara says, then why did he not recognize who had come uninvited?

ANSWERS: (a) It seems from the words of RABEINU CHANANEL that it is not necessary to actually invite the judges personally in order for them to be able to judge the case of the leap year. Rather, it suffices to invite them ambiguously, such as the way Raban Gamliel said, "Let seven judges come up." Hence, once seven had arrived, no more were included in the invitation, and the last one who came in -- the eighth -- was the one who was uninvited. Raban Gamliel did not know which judges were the seven who entered first, and which one was the eighth who had entered uninvited.

(b) The RAN cites an explanation which says that even though Raban Gamliel knew who the guilty party was, he did not want to embarrass him by directly accusing him, and therefore he asked who had come uninvited. Shmuel ha'Katan stood up to save that person from the embarrassment of having to leave.

(c) The RAN himself suggests that Raban Gamliel did not know who was invited, as he had simply told his messenger to invite seven expert judges. This is apparent from the words of the Gemara which

quote Raban Gamliel as saying, "Hashkimu Li," which implies that he was telling someone else to invite the judges for him.

(d) The MAHARSHA asks additional questions on this incident. First, why was Raban Gamliel himself not one of the seven judges? Second, why indeed did someone come without permission? Third, how could Raban Gamliel tell Shmuel ha'Katan to remain seated there as a judge if no one else left, thus leaving eight judges there, plus an uninvited person involved in establishing the leap year?

The Maharsha explains, therefore, that this was a case of miscommunication (similar to the famous incident of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza). Raban Gamliel told his messenger to summon seven expert judges, meaning six others and himself (since he, too, must be invited in order to participate). The messenger did not realize that Raban Gamliel meant to include himself, and therefore he summoned seven other judges, besides Raban Gamliel. When Raban Gamliel saw that there was a total of eight judges (including himself), he thought that someone had come uninvited. Shmuel ha'Katan, though, realized what had occurred, and he offered to leave in order to enable the leap year to be established by seven invited judges.

The Maharsha explains that when the Gemara says that it was not Shmuel ha'Katan who was uninvited, it does not mean that someone else there was uninvited whom Shmuel ha'Katan wanted to protect from embarrassment. Rather, it means that when there is an extra judge present, it is appropriate for the lowest-ranking member of Sanhedrin to leave. In order to prevent the lowest-ranking person from being singled out (and embarrassed), Shmuel ha'Katan stood up and offered to leave.

(e) The YAD RAMAH answers that Raban Gamliel himself said that seven available judges should come. When Shmuel ha'Katan said that he had come not to judge but to learn, he was saying that he did not want to be counted among the judges. Consequently, the appropriate number of judges were there. (This also answers the Maharsha's question regarding how could Raban Gamliel permit an uninvited person to establish the leap year.) (Y. Montrose)

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