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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **SHMINI ATZERES / SIMCHAS TORAH**
/ **VZOS HABRACHA** - 5776

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<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/in-memory-of-rabbi-eitam-and-naama-henkin/>
In memory of Rabbi Eitam and Naama Henkin
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
OCTOBER 2, 2015, 3:33 PM

The brutal murder of Rabbi Eitam and Naama Henkin in the presence of their four young children has shocked us all. It is hard to enter the spirit of zeman simchatenu, our festival of joy, in the midst of such lacerating grief. Our thoughts are with their children, and with their parents, Chanan and Hila Armony and Rabbi Yehudah and Rebbanit Chana Henkin, two of the great Jewish role models of our time. We ask, Zu Torah vezu sechorah, is this the Torah and this its reward? But we know better than to wait for an answer. In the end all we can do is to join the bereaved in our prayers. These words are dedicated to the memory of those who were killed.

At the end of his life Moses set out the great choice faced not just by Jews but by humanity as a whole: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life so that you and your children may live."

Why did Moses need to say such a thing? Did we not know, without his telling us, to choose life? Is it not obvious that, given the choice, we would choose the blessing, not the curse? The answer is given in the book we will read tomorrow, Kohelet (Ecclesiastes), one of the most profound of all reflections on the nature of life and death.

The keyword of Kohelet is hevel. It appears no less than thirty-eight times, five times in a single sentence: "Vanity of vanities, says Kohelet, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Hevel has been variously translated as "meaningless, pointless, futile," as well as "vanity" in the seventeenth century sense, when it meant, not excessive self-regard but rather, "worthless." Yet none of these is the primary meaning of the word.

Hevel means "a shallow breath." The Hebrew words for soul – nefesh, ruach, neshamah – all have to do with the act of breathing. Hevel is a short, fleeting breath. What obsessed Kohelet was how fragile and vulnerable life is. We are biological beings of bewildering complexity, yet what separates being from non-being, life from death, is not complex at all. It is mere breath. When I read Kohelet I think of King Lear at the end of Shakespeare's

play, holding in his arms the lifeless body of his daughter Cordelia, weeping and saying, "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life / and thou no breath at all."

Kohelet is, among other things, a midrash on the first two human children, whose story has become terribly relevant in our time. It is no accident that the victim of the first murder in the Torah was called Hevel (Abel). Hevel represents the fragility of life. All that separates us from the grave is the breath God breathed into us: "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." That is all we are: hevel, mere breath. But it is God's breath.

What eventually killed Hevel was Kayin (Cain). The Torah says explicitly why he was given this name. Chavah said, "I have acquired [kaniti] a man with God." Kayin means "to acquire, to possess, to own." In the end, unavoidably, this leads to conflict. Ownership is, in the short term, a zero sum game. The more you have, the less I have. Since we all want more, not less, the result will inevitably be violence, what Hobbes called "the war of every man against every man" in which life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." It is this scenario that is currently being played out in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, Libya, and other bloodstained arenas throughout the world. It was just such a state that led God, before the flood, to "regret He had created man on earth, and He was pained to His very core."

That is why, fundamental to the vision set forth in the Torah, is the principle that we own nothing. Everything – the land, its produce, power, sovereignty, children, life itself – belongs to God. We are mere trustees, guardians, on His behalf. We possess but we do not own. That is the basis of the infrastructure of social justice that made the Torah unique in its time and still transformative today.

Kayin means: I am what I own, and what I own gives me power. Cain was the first Nietzschean. His religion was the will to power. That is why God rejected his offering. The sacrifice God accepts, that of Abel/Hevel, is one that comes from the humility of mortality. "Ribono shel Olam, I am mere breath. But it is Your breath I breathe, not mine." When religion becomes the pursuit of power, the result is bloodshed. To this, God says, "Your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground."

Even the great Kohelet – Shlomo, whose name means peace – at first sought happiness in what he owned: palaces, gardens, servants, wealth. None of these brought what he hoped for, since none makes us immortal, none defeats death. We remain mere breath. That is why Kohelet in the end finds meaning in the very fact of life itself. He finds joy in simple things: eating, drinking, work, and "seeing life with the woman you love."

Joy comes not from what we own but from what we are. It comes from the fact that we are alive at all. We serve God by celebrating life, sanctifying life, choosing life. That is why Sukkot follows immediately from the days in which we pray to be written in the book of life. The Sukkah, exposed to the elements, the rain, the wind, the cold, the storm, is the symbol of the vulnerability of life. Yet even so, it is where we celebrate the festival of joy.

The great choice faced by humanity in every age is between the will to power and the will to life. No country in the world today is more eloquent testimony to the will to life than the State of Israel. It represents the collective affirmation of the Jewish people after the Holocaust, "I will not die, but live," and thus give testimony to the God of life. Almost everything in which Israel has excelled, from agriculture to medicine to life-saving technologies, has been dedicated to enhancing, protecting or defending life.

Surrounding Israel, however, have been countries and cultures willing to sacrifice life to the pursuit of power. The result has been nothing short of devastation for all those caught in its vortex be they Jews, Christians, Muslims, Yazidis, Kurds, or other innocent human beings. The end result will be, as described by Shakespeare:

Then every thing includes itself in power, Power into will, will into appetite; And appetite, an universal wolf, So doubly seconded with will and power,

Must make perform an universal prey, And last eat up himself. Those who worship at the altar of power, in the end destroy themselves.

Sukkot tells us that life is vulnerable, yet it is all we have. We may be mere breath but it is God's breath and it is sacred. The day will come when the world will see that the will to life must defeat the will to power if we are to survive at all, our humanity intact. Only when this happens will there be peace in the Middle East. Only when this happens will the children of the world have a future of hope.

Until then, we cherish the memory of two beautiful human beings who lived and taught the sanctity of life. May their example live in all our hearts.

From: Mordechai Tzion toratravaviner@gmail.com [ravaviner]
ravaviner-owner@yahogroups.com to: ravaviner@yahogroups.com date:
Sat, Oct 3, 2015 at 5:57 PM www.ravaviner.com

[ravaviner] In the Name of Ha-Rav Nechemia Lavi: This Time We Will Also Overcome

Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva **Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a**
Prepared by **Rabbi Mordechai Tzion**

Visit our blog: with profound grief we mourn Ha-Rav Nechemia Lavi HY"D Ra"m in our Yeshiva, Ateret Yerushalayim who was murdered in the heart of the Old City of Yerushalayim while attempting to stop a terrorist attack In the Name of Ha-Rav Nechemia Lavi: This Time We Will Also Overcome

During the joy of the holiday of Sukkot, tragedy has struck: Thursday night, young parents, Ha-Rav Eitam and Na'ama Henkin, were murdered before their children's eyes. Good and righteous people. And on Motzaei Shabbat, good people were again murdered as they walked innocently in the Old City. One of them is Ha-Rav Nechemia Lavi, Ra"m in our Yeshiva, Ateret Yerushalayim. A man with a gentle soul, a sweet and good man, who never wronged another person – whether Jew or Arab. The Midrash relates that before his death, King Darius requested: Do not mourn me until a person comes and speaks ill of me. And no one came. Likewise, we can say with confidence, that although there will be much pain over his death, no one will come and speak ill of Rav Nechemia. Rav Nechemia was an exalted person, girded with Midot Tovot (sterling character traits). He was completely kind. A person who never spoke ill of others. He was a person who delved into the depths of Torah, who learned Torah day and night, out of a love of Hashem and a love of toiling in Torah learning. To our great distress, we must acknowledge that these difficult events, these tragedies, are not surprising. Since the appearance of Islam, Muslims have persecuted us, hated us, forced us to convert to Islam, expelled us and murdered us. Although they have done so less than Christians, this is of no comfort. We all remember how the Mufti of Yerushalayim, Haj Amin al-Husseini worked hand-in-hand with Hitler and cooperated with him, on condition that in the Arab countries, Arabs could freely murder Jews. Nothing has changed, except for one thing: With the kindness of Hashem, we now have an army, a courageous army, a capable army, a devoted army. An agent of Hashem. Not a conquering army – but as its name indicates: The Israel Defense Force. It is true that since the beginning of the return to Zion and the establishment of the State of Israel, we have endured many tragedies. But we must view things in proportion: The light is inestimably greater than the darkness. Obviously, the pain of every Jew who is murdered rends the heart, and all the more so if that person is your close friend, someone who has been close to your soul for so many years. At the same time, this does not erase our joy for all of the goodness we have received. After all, terror does not have any actual power. It cannot determine political events. It is purely psychological warfare whose goal is to break the spirit, and weaken the citizens' trust in the State, its leaders and its army. We declare here in our name and in the name of Ha-Rav Nechemia Lavi, who has arisen on high, that we go hand-in-hand with our Nation, with our State and with our army.

We have experienced much greater hardships and we have overcome them, and with the help of Hashem, this time we will also overcome.

From: Naomi Ragen <nragen@naomiragen.com> Date: Fri, Oct 2, 2015 at 8:00 AM Subject: Above Tragedy

From one of my favorite, and most respected, Rabbinical mentors, Rabbi Marc D. Angel, a beautiful reflection on being mortal.

Above Tragedy: Thoughts for Simchat Torah

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

(This is the first sermon I delivered from the pulpit of Congregation Shearith Israel, Simchat Torah 1969. Many years have passed since that first sermon, and yet the ideas within it continue to ring true.)

We have spent many months reading about the life of Moses. Today, in one of the most dramatic episodes of the Torah, we read about his death—a very agonizing scene. Moses, the great leader, teacher, and prophet, climbs to the summit of Mount Nebo and looks out over the horizon at the Promised Land.

As he stands silent and alone, God tells him: “You are beholding the land that I have promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saying, ‘I shall give it to your descendants.’ See it with your eyes. You shall not cross into the land.” What thoughts must then have tortured Moses! What anguish must have filled his soul! To dream, to work a whole lifetime for something and then to be told in final terms that your hopes would never be realized... Is this not the heart of tragedy?

Most commentators seek a reason for such a tragic ending to Moses' life. They look for a sin committed by Moses to explain his punishment. Some say it was the breaking the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Others suggest that it was his striking the stone with his staff, rather than speaking to it.

I could never understand these commentators. Certainly, Moses sinned; but which human being has never sinned? Moreover, his sins were really not serious. He had good reason to be enraged when he found his people worshiping the golden calf. And the difference between striking the stone and speaking to it is, after all, insignificant. The event was still miraculous. Certainly, Moses did so many great things for which he deserved reward. He was the only human being to see God “face to face.” He was the greatest prophet, the greatest teacher, the most dedicated leader. Certainly, he was worthy of entering the Promised Land.

Moses was not being punished for a sin. Rather, the Torah is describing in a very vivid way something about the human predicament. Death is a built-in part of human existence. Though we may have noble ideals, though we may work hard, we cannot expect to fulfill all of our ambitions. Moses, perhaps the most ideal character in the Bible, was plagued by being mortal; and great mortals simply cannot realize all of their hopes. This is a profound truth of the nature of humankind.

Today, we are also introduced to another biblical character, Adam. I think it is very ironic that the birth of Adam and the death of Moses are juxtaposed in today's Torah readings. Adam was given paradise. He was a man who had no dreams or ambitions, for he had everything he wanted. He was complacent, satisfied, and untroubled by ideals.

Existing in such a state, though, is problematic, because there is no motivation for living. If there is no place for one to advance, he must fall back. And so, Adam fell. But whereas Moses was a tragic hero, Adam was just plain tragic. Whereas Moses had lived his life working toward a dream so that when death came it tragically cut off a living force, Adam never knew the value of life, and hence his fall from paradise is far less climactic.

Ultimately, being mortals, we each have the choice of being either tragic heroes or simply tragic. In which category do we belong? Unfortunately, many of us are satisfied with ourselves, with our wealth, with our social position. We are especially complacent in the realm of our religious attainments. We think that we understand the truths of Judaism, the profundities of the Torah. We think we practice our religion properly and do enough mitzvot. For the most part, we are stagnant.

Today, on Simhat Torah, we completed the reading of the Torah. We could have said that we have finished our study, we are content. But we did not do these things. We began immediately to read Bereishith. We started the Torah all over again. We know that we will never fully comprehend the Torah or fully realize its sacred dreams—but we move forward and onward. We cannot rest from the Torah, for to rest is to become tragic.

As Jews, therefore, we are part of a tradition that not only thrives on noble ideals, but which loves noble actions. Like Moses, we should seek to keep our religious ideals and practices on fire within us, so that they give light not only to ourselves but to all who come near us. We should devote our lives to attaining religious perfection for ourselves and for our society; and though we may never enter the Promised Land, we will be able to stand on a summit and see our dreams realized in the future through our children. We may never walk into the land, but we will have led an entire generation to the point where they can enter.

from: Rabbi Asher Brander <link@linkla.org> reply-to: link@linkla.org
date: Fri, Oct 2, 2015 at 1:17 PM subject: A note about Thursday's Horror Dear Chaverim,

I can't stop thinking about the indescribably horrific events in Eretz Yisrael Thursday. On the Holiday of Gathering, beautiful families gather in the remains of their incredible children Rav Eitan and Naama Henkin - two special ovdei Hashem, neither separated in life nor death - gunned down in cold blooded murder (by perehs masquerading as adams), four traumatized yesomim.... so seemingly senseless.

We are numb; let us take some time to connect with klal yisroel. Don't let today be regular - stop and think about grieving parents and children whose lives have been forever changed. Connect to the Klal. Wake up.

On the same day, Bibi stares down our enemies with epic silence in perhaps the most hypocritical institution known to man; On the holiday where we pray for the welfare of the nations of the world - we feel so isolated - as our hubris-filled President (28 self references in yesterdays post shooting address) orders the Secretary of State and Ambassador to walk out of Bibi's drasha.

On this holiday of Sukkos, we feel our flimsiness and vulnerability - we see the beautiful Henkin faces and we wonder why on the days that we don't say tachanun we still are a la'ag vakeles bagoyim (a mockery and scorn amongst the nations).

Sukkos is a chag of conflicting themes - of lulav and sukkah, temporal and permanence, exile and redemption, wealth and impoverishment - and ultimately of joy; for [in Chovos Halevavos classic formulation] there is no greater serenity of soul than the one who places his ultimate faith in Hashem.

As the countries who pretend to wear the mantle of the loyal slowly disappear - may our waxing faith bring us to the great Sukkos where all nations of the world will speak with clarity about the greatness of Hashem and the loyalty of His people.

Bvracha Asher Brander

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – Shabbos Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5776

1. The theme of **Hashana Rabbah, Simchas Torah, and Shemini Atzeres** is a theme of Malchus Hashem. Just as we start Tishrei with Malchus Hashem, so too, as we start every Hakafa we say (שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) and (ד' יְמִלְךָ) (לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד).

I would like to share with you an insight into Shacharis which we Daven every day and we say something fascinating. We say that (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) is a new song, a (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה). We say (שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) and then (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) and then (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) which is the last part of the (אָז יִשִּׁיר) as the (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה) a new song. Don't think that the whole Shira is a new song because a few minutes earlier we said (מִי מְכַהֵם בְּאֵלִים) and then (מִי מְכַהֵם בְּאֵלִים) (כְּמִכָּה בְּאֵלִים) We call (מִי מְכַהֵם) a plain Shir. A Shira is not plain, it is very

Chashuv, but it is not a (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה). Then we say (שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) with (לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד). Why is that a Shira Chadasha as opposed to an ordinary Shir?

The answer is an important one and it has to do with the theme of these days. You see (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) is always a Shira Chadasha. Whenever you say (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) you are being Mekabeil Malchus Hashem going forward. It talks about the Asidus of Malchus Hashem. It is always a Shira Chadasha. Therefore, (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה שֶׁבָּחָו גְּאוּלִּים), after everything that happened in Mitzrayim and the whole (אָז יִשִּׁיר), the last sentence of (אָז יִשִּׁיר) is (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד), it is a new song. It is a song pledging in the future to recognize Malchus Hashem. That is why it is the theme. As we finish the Yomim Nora'im and we head into the winter (אֶלְהֵינוּ ד' אֶתְּחַד) (שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ד' אֶלְהֵינוּ ד' אֶתְּחַד). We say it at every Hakafah (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד).

2. I would like to share with you a second thought regarding Simchas Torah. As you well know, one of the most famous Kashas regarding Simchas Torah is why is the Simchas Torah Yom Tov not on Shavuot. If Shavuot is the Yom Tov of Kabbalas Hatorah shouldn't Simchas Torah the joy of the Torah be on Shavuot. Why is it on the other end of the year?

I once saw from Rav Moshe who says Farkert. There is no time of the year that is especially dedicated to Torah. Torah is all year round and therefore, Shavuot is on one side of the year and Simchas Torah is on the other side of the year to show that there is no special time for Torah, there is no special Makom for Torah as Har Sinai is not known to us. That is a beautiful Teretz.

I would like to share with you another Teretz. Recently, my wife and I had the Zechus, a rare occasion, of successfully Redding a Shidduch. Naturally, after the Shidduch was completed we received Shadchanus which was very nice, very generous, and we were very happy. A few months later right before the Chasuna we received Shadchanus again. Why did we receive Shadchanus again? The parents of the Kallah said when they got engaged we were very happy but now that we know the Chosson for three months we are even happier, we are much more joyful. We have a different measure by which to say thank you.

The same thing is true about Simchas Torah. On Shavuot we got the Torah, we received the Torah and we are thankful for the Torah, we know that it comes from the Ribbono Shel Olam. But months later we say to the Ribbono Shel Olam, now that we have been able to learn the Torah and live the Torah, we have a second opportunity to say thank you.

In life in general we have to remember to do that. A baby is born we thank the Ribbono Shel Olam. IY"Y when you are Zoche years later to have Nachas from the child, you have to thank the Ribbono Shel Olam once again for the gift of the child. Many of the gifts that HKB"Y gives us are that way. And so, that will be an explanation of why Simchas Torah is after Shavuot.

Based on this, perhaps we can have another insight on (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה שֶׁבָּחָו גְּאוּלִּים) (לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) (שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) When Klal Yisrael was in Mitzrayim they also thanked the Ribbono Shel Olam. There was a constant thanking of the Ribbono Shel Olam. But after Kriyas Yam Suf when Klal Yisrael saw Kavayochel the Ribbono Shel Olam (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד) that which they had already acknowledged in Mitzrayim was a (שִׁירָה הַחֲדָשָׁה) of (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד). It was a new song of (ד' יְמִלְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד). The same word. As life goes on and we have the maturity to see how Hashem orchestrates everything, you need then to see, to recognize, to acknowledge the Chesed of HKB"Y.

Wishing one and all a meaningful Yom Tov, a wonderful Shabbos, a Simchas Torah that is true joy and IY"Y like they say a preparation for a good winter of serving Hashem. A Gutten Moed to one and all.

<http://www.vosizneias.com/>

Halachic Analysis: In Light Of The Hurricane Can We Take Down The Sukkah On Chol HaMoed?

Published on: Yesterday 12:30 PM By: **Rabbi Yair Hoffman** Five Towns Jewish Times

New York - Hurricanes can do a lot of damage. They can damage expensive Sukkah panels as well as precious schach mats. In light of the current trajectory of Hurricane Joaquin, the question is probably being posed throughout the east coast. May I take down my Sukkah now? Especially if my minhag is not to eat it in it on Shmini Atzeres? Of course each person should consult with his own Rav or Posaik, but here are the underlying views.

FOUR ISSUES The Gemorah in Sukkah 48a actually discusses the general prohibition in taking apart a Sukkah on Chol HaMoed. Believe it or not there are four underlying issues involved here. We will briefly discuss all four of the underlying problems.

STIRAH – DESTROYING The first issue is the prohibition of Stirah, destroying. This is a prohibited malacha on Chol HaMoed. There is a debate among the Rishonim whether this prohibition is Biblical or Rabbinic. The Ran's view is that it is indeed, biblical. Other Rishonim seem to imply that it is a Rabbinic prohibition. Either way it is not considered Tzorech haMoed – the needs of the holiday.

NOT SET ASIDE FOR LOSS This prohibition is, generally, not set aside for the loss of a Sukkah, as we see that it is not set aside out of a concern for theft (See Mogain Avrohom 540:3). There are some Poskim who write, however, that saving a Sukkah for another year is not tantamount to Stirah and disagree with the aforementioned Mogain Avrohom (See Emek Yehoshua Siman 32, by Rabbi Yehoshua Mamon, a contemporary Sephardic Posaik). Nonetheless, it would seem that the Mogain Avrohom's view would be more authoritative for Ashkenazim.

WHEN THERE EXISTS A DANGER A second issue is if there is a danger in leaving it up. The Shulchan Aruch (540:1) permits taking the Sukkah down if there is a danger. To apply this to our case, if the Sukkah is situated in a location where it could cause damage to the house and people in it or other passers-by, then it would seem to be permitted. This is not an issue that should be easily dismissed. A Sukkah in the front of a house or situated next to glass can be quite dangerous.

DISRESPECTING A MITZVAH A third issue is that of Bizui HaMitzvah. The Sukkah and its parts are sanctified on this Yom Tov no different than the Korban Chagigah. Taking it apart to make it no longer a functioning Sukkah is a negation of the Sukkah and is prohibited by a number of Poskim (See Orchos Chaim 638:1 Spinka and Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky Kovetz Halachos page 135). It is a Bizayon to the Mitzvah to take it apart while the Mitzvah is still applicable. As mentioned earlier, however, a danger would allow one to do so. There is also the view of Rabbi Chaim Dovid HaLevi (Assei Lecha Rav Vol. VII #43 that a vandalized Sukkah is a Bizayon to the Mitzvah of Sukkah too. Perhaps one might wish to compare a vandalized Sukkah with a hurricane-destroyed Sukkah. Once again, though, this is the view of a Sephardic Posaik. The aforementioned Mogain Avrohom might disagree.

THE MITZVAH OF SUKKAH STILL APPLIES A fourth issue, of course, is that there is still a Mitzvah of Sukkah – even on Shmini Atzeres, notwithstanding any Minhag otherwise. It could very well be that the weather conditions would not be bad and we would have taken apart our means of fulfilling the beautiful Mitzvah of Sukkah. What heter do we have in denying ourselves the opportunity for this Mitzvah?

FURTHER DEBATES Rabbi Shaul Nathanson in his Shoel UMaish (MD Vol. III #28) forbids taking it apart under all circumstances other than danger. The Ikrei HaDat of Rav Daniel Tournay (OC 2:68), an early Acharon from Amsterdam also forbids it comparing it to ripping a Begeg of Tzitzis. Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky as cited in Kovetz Halachos page 135 also seems to forbid it. On the other hand, the Tzitz Eliezer (Volume XIII #68) permits taking it apart when there is a concern or a need to do so. Surprisingly, Rabbi Nosson Gestetner z"l in his Lehoros Nosson (Vol. VII responsum #48 and #49) also rules that it is permitted to take it apart if there is a great need, provided, of course, that one does not use any part of the Sukkah for another use. Some Poskim try to make an inference from the Mishna Brurah in 666:1 that there is no prohibition of Stirah involved here, because he only mentions

the idea of the Sukkah still being of use (fourth reason to be mentioned later). The inference, however, is not compelling.

CONCLUSION Clearly, Sephardim may take the Sukkah down if there is a genuine concern of damage on account of the hurricane, and everyone may take it down if the Sukkah is situated in a place that could lead to danger. For Ashkenazim it is a debate among the Poskim. It is this author's view that since it may not even be an issue in regard to the upcoming storm that one should not take the Sukkah apart prematurely unless it would be dangerous, but if someone wishes to do so, he certainly does have whom to rely upon. Regarding a pop-up Sukkah that was put up on Chol HaMoed in the first place – one can certainly take it down. Of course one should consult one's own Rav or Posaik and not necessarily rely upon what is written here. May we all have a safe and enjoyable end of the Yom Tov.

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> reply-to: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> date: Fri, Oct 2, 2015 at 10:19 AM subject: Torah Musings

Hakhel

18 Tishrei: **R. Ovadya Yosef on Hakhel**

by **R. Gidon Rothstein**

Truth is, I cheated with this one. I was looking for a responsum written on the eighteenth of Tishrei, and forgot that respondents would date it to the second or third day of Chol HaMoed (depending on whether they were inside or outside Israel). I had another responsum, and then encountered Shu"t Yabia Omer 10, Yoreh Deah 22, which was too good to pass up.

It's not dated, but it makes reference to a Hakhel commemoration that occurred on 18 Tishrei, 5741 (1980). Since this is again a Hakhel year, I thought we'd enjoy R. Ovadya Yosef's review of some of the central issues in the commandment.

The Basic Mitzvah

He starts with a long quote of Rambam's Laws of Chagigah 3;1, which lays out the obligation to gather the people in Jerusalem on the Sukkot after the shemittah year, to read them sections of the Torah that stimulate observance and strengthen connection to the true dat.

We often translate that Hebrew word as religion; I think Rambam was more focused on the belief aspect than on the set of practices and rituals many of us see as the definition of religion.

The reading took place, Rambam says, on the first day of Chol HaMoed. The king read the Torah, in the part of the Beit HaMikdash all could enter, the Ezrat Nashim. Davidic kings had the right to read sitting down, but it was considered more praiseworthy to stand. The reading (preceded and followed by birchot haTorah), started with the beginning of Devarim, went to Shema, VeHaya Im Shamo'a, skipped to Aser Te'aser (a portion we read on major holidays), and read straight through to the end of the tochacha in Ki Tavo.

Trumpets were blown throughout Jerusalem to gather people, and a large wooden stage was set up, so that the king's voice would carry and be heard by all.

Our Version

Today, R. Ovadya says, since shemittah is not Biblically obligated, there is no Temple to which to make a holiday pilgrimage, and the majority of Jews do not yet live in Israel (which may change in the next ten to twenty years), there is no way to have a Biblical Hakhel.

In other situations, we institute ceremonies zekher leMikdash, in memory of the Temple, such as when we wave the Arba Minim, the Four Species all the days of Sukkot, instead of just the one day mandated by the Torah (only in the Beit HaMikdash itself was lulav shaken for seven days). We eat maror despite the Biblical obligation applying only in the context of a korban Pesach, a Paschal sacrifice, and we donate money annually in memory of the half-shekel.

All of these examples led Aderet, R. Elyahu-David Rabinowitz-Teomim, to argue that we should have a commemoration of Hakhel as well, as he wrote

in a pamphlet titled *Zekher leMikdash*. A significant source for his claim is a *Sifrei* at the end of *Ekev*, which says that even in exile, we should be marked by our observance of mitzvot, so that they not be new to us when we return (this *Sifrei* led Ramban, I think famously and surprisingly, to say that our observance of mitzvot outside of Israel is to keep us in practice for when we return to Israel.).

Does It Have To Be the King?

If the king must be the one to read, we couldn't have any such ceremony today. Ha'amek Davar argues (and others but not all agree), that if the king cannot, or there is no king, some other leader of the entire people could, such as the High Priest. R. Yerucham Perla, in his edition of R. Saaday Gaon's *Sefer HaMitzvot*, and Tiferet Yisrael to the seventh chapter of *Sotah* held that the king's reading was a rabbinic enactment, not essential to the original ceremony.

All of this is why R. Ovadya writes of a custom (relatively new) to have a *Hakhel* celebration in the courtyard of the Kotel, near enough to where the *Beit HaMikdash* stood that the Divine Presence also never left (but with no risk of going where we are not allowed). In 2001 (*Chol haMoed Sukkot 5762*), more than 60,000 Jews came (including my family), in a ceremony capped by declarations of Hashem's rule (the ones that close *Yom Kippur* davening, *Shema*, *Hashem Hu HaElokim*, and *Hashem Melech*).

Struggling With a Bracha

It's not clear that one about to read the Torah as part of a commemorative practice can make a bracha. R. Herzog in *Heichal Yitzchak* suggested the person review Rambam's *Hilchot Tefillah* where he records the blessings on reading the Torah, and read the blessing with Hashem's Name. This was based on R. Yaakov Emden's view that one who is reading any traditional text can read any mentions of Hashem's Name in its full form. Since the prohibition against unnecessary brachot is Rabbinic, R. Herzog reasoned, R. Emden's view is enough to rely on to allow making this bracha in this way. *Derech Pikudecha*, an earlier work, had a similar idea. He ruled that if the moon was not visible until too late in the month to say *Kiddush Levana*, one could study the page in *Sanhedrin* that mentions it (42a), then read the bracha with Hashem's Name. While our version of the *Gemara* does not write Hashem's Name, *Rif*, *Rambam*, and *Rosh's* version did have it, which is enough.

But *Otzar HaGeonim* records the view of R. Nachshon Gaon that since these texts were written at a time other than when enacting the ceremony, they did not indicate an actual recitation—to read them with the full Name, then, is saying it purposelessly. R. Ovadya sees R. Nachshon Gaon as so authoritative, he is confident R. Yaakov Emden would have withdrawn his claim had he known of it. *Tashbetz*, also earlier and presumptively more authoritative than R. Yaakov Emden, said that it was only Scriptural verses that appear in Rabbinic literature that we can read with Hashem's Name, not blessings.

After rejecting another suggestion of R. Herzog's (that any public Torah reading can include a bracha), R. Ovadya writes that no blessings were recited at the *Hakhel* ceremony enacted on the 18th of *Tishrei 5741* (1980)—this date being my excuse for using this responsum—which had about 50,000 people present.

Who Blew?

Even kohanim who had physical blemishes that disqualified them from Temple service could blow the trumpets to call people to *Hakhel*. In this regard, R. Ovadya quotes the *Yerushalmi's* story of R. Akiva citing a verse to show that only kohanim who could perform Temple service could blow trumpets. Disagreeing, R. Tarfon asserts having himself seen physically blemished kohanim blow. R. Akiva suggests that that was for *Hakhel*, which reminds R. Tarfon that that is what had happened.

The older rabbi then praises R. Akiva for his ability to derive ideas textually yet arrive at the correct halachic conclusion. It's a reminder of halachah's devotion to the use of the human intellect, but in the name of reaching conclusions whose correctness or lack of it is previously decided. We're not

finding new truths, we're (we hope) discovering old, pre-existing but hitherto unknown (or forgotten) truths. Doing that well is the highest goal of Torah study.

We allow these kohanim because actually anyone could blow for this occasion, R. Ovadya assumes, just that priests laid claim to this mitzvah—as they did with the slaughter of sacrifices, which can also be performed by non-kohanim.

R. Ovadya adds that in our times, any media for announcing the event is fine.

How Young?

Hagigah 3a reports R. Elazar b. Azaryah's teaching that little children are to be brought to the event, to earn their parents reward for bringing them. *Maharsha* takes that to mean children who are not yet in school, similar to a tradition of *Sefer Hasidim's*, that we don't bring such small children to shul, since they distract their parents and the community (a currently relevant topic we will not take up here). Another sefer, *Bereich Yitzchak*, thought the youngest would be children already six or seven, who are close enough to being educable that, depending on each one's development, might find the event productive.

Other sources, such as *Ramban* and *Rashi*, indicate that even the smallest should be brought (*Rashi* explains *Megillah 5a's* ruling that we delay a *Hakhel* that falls on *Shabbat* as being so that parents can carry their small children without an *eruv*). R. Ovadya suggests there's a value even at that young an age, in that their ears get used to hearing Torah, as well as the benefit from being at an event where the Divine Presence is particularly present (*Yevamot 64a* tells us that any gathering of over 22,000 Jews has an added element of the Divine Presence).

On the other hand, *Aderet* wondered how hundreds or thousands of crying babies (and perhaps wet or soiled ones) could not but detract, a question R. Ovadya leaves for another time, seemingly confident that it doesn't change the conclusion, but not sure why.

Adults Who Can/Should Attend

Hakhel readings are in Hebrew, which might imply that those who don't understand (or can't hear) need not come. R. Ovadya disagrees, based on *Rambam's* specifically requiring converts to attend and pay attention, like at *Sinai*, despite their not knowing Hebrew. R. Ovadya adds that those who know these texts well still need to focus, because we all need the fortification of our faith that is the focus of this mitzvah.

The verse includes *Gercha Asher Bishiarecha* the stranger in your gates among the attendees. *Ibn Ezra* thought such a person might then become Jewish, showing that this stranger is a non-Jew, a *ger toshav*, because full converts are referred to as "in the midst of your camp. We'd expect conversions, R. Ovadya says, because only the hardhearted could see the wonders of such a large gathering, declaring Hashem's Presence and power, and not want to join that people.

Hakhel: a once in seven years' chance to be with tens of thousands of Jews, in the more direct Presence of God than usual, fortifying our own faith and others', by listening to our leaders read crucial portions of the Torah. One of which, 35 years ago, took place on the 18th of *Tishrei*.

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Simhat-Torah-Abundance-and-the-joy-of-the-Torah-419722>

By **Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz** 10/01/2015 23:13

Simhat Torah: Abundance and the joy of the Torah

When *Succot* ends, we celebrate another holiday that has a unique and independent facet, but also fits in with the continuum of the *Tishrei* holidays – *Rosh Hashana*, *Yom Kippur* and *Succot*. This holiday is called *Shmini Atzeret*, but nowadays is more commonly known as "Simhat Torah."

In Israel, *Shmini Atzeret* and *Simhat Torah* are on the same day; outside of Israel, *Simhat Torah* is the day after *Shmini Atzeret*.

It seems as though these two names – the biblical name of *Shmini Atzeret* and the more commonly used *Simhat Torah* – express two separate

celebrations with no clear connection. Shmini Atzeret is actually the eighth day of Succot, but is not an integral part of it, as is evidenced by the fact that we do not sit in the succa on this eighth day. The name Simhat Torah came about due to the fact that the yearly cycle of reading Torah portions, comes to an end – and a new beginning – on this day. The completion of reading the Torah is a reason for great celebration that takes place in synagogues everywhere.

But when we examine these two holidays that have become one holiday in Israel, we discover that the connection between them is not coincidental. Shmini Atzeret completes the holiday of Succot.

Since the great celebration of Succot should not end with a whimper, it gets another holiday, separate but connected, that lets us start the long winter with a happy and festive heart.

Why are we happy on Succot? The joy is for the completion of another year, as expressed by one of the names of the holiday – Chag Ha'asif, or the Festival of Harvest.

The farmer celebrates last year's harvest, which brings financial security for the upcoming year. We go into the succa to remember the abundance we have been privileged with; a gift of love from G-d. When we sit in the succa we try to relive our forefathers' experience, when they sat in the desert protected by the "Ananei Kavod" (Clouds of Glory). This experience of a Divine, protective and promising embrace is the central experience of Succot.

And still, the joy cannot be complete.

It is a rule of thumb in understanding a man's soul that every feeling of happiness, every satisfaction, and every joy must have a purpose. When a person invests his energies for a lofty goal, then he enjoys deep satisfaction and joy.

However, when his resources are not used for a purpose that the man considers worthy, they can lead him to the opposite feelings of sadness and depression.

This important message can be summarized as: What makes a person happy is not having money but rather what he does with it.

And so, we were privileged with a successful year. The farmer collects his harvest and his heart is filled with joy, but what is the purpose of all this? How can we reap the best of this past year for the upcoming year? This is where Simhat Torah comes in to make the joy complete.

When man knows that he is walking on a paved path, when man conducts himself by the light and wise ways of the Torah, he knows that all of the abundance he is privileged to receive will be used for beneficial purposes for himself and for the entire world.

Simhat Torah joins Shmini Atzeret and provides the detail which is so necessary for completing the happiness: a purpose for life, a goal for the blessing so that the abundance leads to happy and blessed year.

Hag sameach!

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and holy sites.

Judaism: The Meaning of Shmini Atzeret

Let us not let Simchat Torah overshadow this holiday.

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Author.aspx/1250>

Shemini Atzeret presents a unique conundrum to the Jewish celebrator. On Pesach, we commemorate the exodus, Shavuot the giving of the Torah, Sukkot the security given to us in the desert. The pattern is clear – our holidays have themes and, more often than not, halakhic representations of these themes.

Rabbi Dr. Darrell Ginsberg

Rabbi Ginsberg is the Dean of Yeshivat Migdal HaTorah, a unique post high school yeshiva program located in Modiin

This brings us to Shemini Atzeret, a holiday, yom tov that, for all intents and purposes, lacks any celebratory theme. Yes, this author is aware that in Israel, it is joined with Simchat Torah. Indeed, a visit to any shul on this day,

which marks the completion of the yearly cycle of Torah reading, would be to enter a party in full blast.

If we look to the Torah, it is clear there is no Biblical commandment, or even reference, to such a celebration of Simchat Torah; after all, the very institution of weekly readings, Kriyat HaTorah, was the brainchild of Moshe. At the very least, the blueprint of the day is Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah somehow emerges from this. Before throwing down this article in disgust – is he trying to ruin our Simchat Torah??? – let's try and determine what we are actually celebrating on Shemini Atzeret.

The format of this yom tov is summed up in the term "atzeret", loosely translated as a stop. The Torah (Bamidbar 29:35), when discussing Shemini Atzeret, offers both the standard prohibition of types of work, melachot, and the unique set of Temple offerings, korbanot, to be brought. When discussing the holidays in a more thematic manner (Vayikra 23:36), the term "atzeret" appears as well, easily overlooked among the various verses listed there concerning the holiday of Sukkot. That is about all the detail we get – there is no theme or specific halakhic requirements mentioned. We know as well from the Oral Law, Torah Shebeal Peh, that Shemini Atzeret is its own yom tov, not related to Sukkot except for its immediate proximity (exemplified in the prohibition to sit in the Sukkah because one is not allowed to add to the mitzvot).

Rashi (ibid) offers a Midrashic explanation, comparing our celebration of the holidays to a king who invites his sons to eat meals with him over a series of days. Once the time comes for the sons to exit, the king asks for them to stay just one more day, as it is difficult for the king to have his sons leave. According to Rashi, this is the meaning of atzeret. What point is Rashi trying to express?

Another reference of this holiday can be found in the story of the dedication of the Holy Temple, the Beit Hamikdash by King Solomon, Shlomo Hamelech (Melachim I 9:66). After an intense, 14 day celebration, Shlomo sends the Jewish people home. The day of their dismissal was Shemini Atzeret. The people, in response to Shlomo's dictate, offer a special blessing, bracha, to Shlomo. However, in the other version of this story (Divrei Hayamim II 7:10), the people are dismissed on the 23rd of the month, which would be the day after Shemini Atzeret. The Malbim, among others, explains that they stayed around on Shemini Atzeret to offer this bracha, and then returned home on the 23rd.

One common theme found in both of the above explanations is the avoidance of an abrupt exit. According to Rashi, we cannot simply leave the experience of yom tov. God "requests" one more day, a chance for the Jewish people to further their worship. Moreover, the Jewish people linger for one more day after the dedication of the Beit Hamikdash.

What was the purpose of this "extra day"? As we know, the holiday of Sukkot brings an end to the festive cycle of the Shalosh Regalim. Each of the holidays in this cycle has its own theme which reflects the unique relationship God has with the Jewish people. However, it would appear that a separate holiday to celebrate the institution of these Shalosh Regalim was needed. On this day, no specific theme exists, no unique commandment. It is simply a day of simcha, of happiness, at the opportunity we have to serve and thank God through the various Shalosh Regalim.

Sukkot is defined by simcha as well, as we say (in Kiddush and prayers) the holiday of our joy, "chag simchateinu", on both Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret. However, Sukkot depends on various vehicles to assist in producing this state of mind, such as the Drawing of the Waters Festival, Simchat Beit Hashoeva.

Shemini Atzeret is simply simcha in and of itself. It could be that the intense nature of simcha that defines this day serves as the stepping stone for the celebration of Simchat Torah, known for its sheer joy and happiness. Regardless, the idea of staying just a bit longer in this state of simcha is the core concept of Shemini Atzeret. So yes, we should be excited to bring out the sfirei Torah, to dance with them and read from them. But let's not forget

why this unique day exists to begin with, bringing our simcha to an even higher level. Chag Sameach.

<http://unitedwithisrael.org/sukkot-2015-blood-moon-over-jerusalem/>

Rabbi Ari Enkin

Early morning on the first day of Sukkot, Jerusalem experienced the highly unusual appearance of the “Blood Moon”. Amazingly, the last 4 sightings were on major Jewish holidays – Passover and Sukkot. This is no coincidence!

For those who were fortunate to be up in the early morning hours on the first day of Sukkot (Sept 28, 2015), the experience of witnessing the Blood moon over Jerusalem is simply indescribable.

The total lunar eclipse that we witnessed makes the moon appears reddish in color, the result of the moon passing through the earth’s shadow and reflecting the sun’s “red” rays.

Within the past of a year and a half, there have been four blood moons. Amazingly, each one fell on a major Jewish holiday – Passover and Sukkot. This close interval frequency is a very rare event. In fact, before the 20th century, there was a 300-year period when there were no such eclipses.

What does the Torah and Jewish tradition have to say about blood moons? Well, for starters, the first blood moon eclipse coincided with the Jewish holiday of Passover, a pivotal event that commemorates the ancient Israelites’ Exodus from slavery in Egypt. We all know that first of the ten plagues was BLOOD...

The 10th and final plague was Death of the Firstborn (at which time the Egyptians literally kicked the Jews out of Egypt!). Death is always associated with blood. Not only that, but the Israelites were commanded by God to paint lamb’s blood on their doorways so that the plague of the Firstborn would pass over their homes...

All Four Blood Moons Coincide with Major Jewish Holidays

But there’s more! ALL four blood moons will occur on major Jewish holidays! Passover 2014, followed by the holiday of Sukkot 2014, then again on Passover 2015 and then again on Sukkot 2015. This has happened only eight times in all of history!

And there’s even more! Major events of significance to the Jewish people happened on each of the last three recorded times that these rare blood moons occurred. They were events that changed the course and direction of Jewish history for all time.

A blood moon coincided with the Six Day War in 1967, when Israel liberated Jerusalem; Jews were able to return to Jerusalem after 2000 years of Exile. Sadly, Jewish blood was spilled during this war.

There was also a blood moon on the eve of Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948, following a bloody war that took place only a few years after the Holocaust, when Six Million Jews were murdered!

And finally, there was a blood moon in 1493, when Tomas de Torquemada, the first Spanish Inquisitor, began slaughtering Jews. Here too, Jewish blood was spilled.

Is the Blood Moon a Sign from Heaven?

Believers around the world of diverse faiths are attributing the blood moon phenomenon to the teaching of the prophet Joel, who had preached:

“I will set wonders in the heavens and the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke; the sun will turn to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and awesome Day of God” (Joel 3:3).

Inspired by the concluding words of Joel, some are suggesting that the blood moons are a sign from God that we are one step closer to the coming of the Messiah.

Is something wild or miraculous going to happen during the course of the upcoming series of blood moons? Nobody knows for sure. But perhaps the words of the Talmud can give us some insight on how we should relate to all possibilities and speculations:

“When the Jews perform the will of God, they need not worry about omens [or celestial phenomenon]. Thus says the Lord ‘Do not be frightened by the signs of the heavens.’” (Talmud Sukkah 29a)

Author: Rabbi Ari Enkin, United with Israel

<http://rabbikaganoff.com/tag/shmittah/>

The Torah Writings of Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

WHAT DO I DO WITH MY ESROG?

For the most part, those living in North America are concerned less about whether they may import esrogim from Eretz Yisroel [after Shmita], and more about what to do with such an esrog after Sukkos. The esrog keeps its kedushas shvi’is until it becomes inedible, and one may not actively facilitate its decay process nor ruin it in any way.

According to one approach suggested by the Tzitz HaKodesh, one may be required to **ship the esrog back to Eretz Yisroel** after Sukkos. However, most authorities do not require this.

Assuming that return shipping is not required, one still may not destroy the esrog after Sukkos, but one is not required to preserve it. Therefore, the **simplest solution is to remember not to wrap up the esrog on Hoshanah Rabbah. Without wrapping or refrigeration, the esrog will soon dry out and become inedible. At that point, one may dispose of it.**

When we look around the shul on Sukkos and see everyone holding his own set of arba’ah minim, we should sing praises to Hashem for helping us fulfill these mitzvos so easily in comparison to earlier times, when it was common for an entire community to share one set. At the same time, we should remember the modern farmer in Israel who observed shmittah with true mesiras nefesh, thereby attesting to the message of shmittah — that the Ribbono Shel Olam created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

<http://bethisraelmalden.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/annual-halacha-guide-5776.pdf>

Beth Israel - Malden - Annual Halacha Guidebook -

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Rabinowitz

Important Notice Regarding Your Etrog - This year has been the Shmitta year in Israel and its produce has a special sanctity. If your Esrog is from Israel you may not dispose of it after Sukkot as you normally would, it must be dried out completely before you may dispose of it. Therefore, **at the conclusion of using your etrog, leave it open to the air which will help it dry out. It should take a couple of weeks for it to dry out.**