

BS"D

real thing . (Rav Soloveitchik did NOT write these notes.) [Thanks to David Isaac for typing these notes]

**Informal remarks delivered by Rabbi Soloveitchik at Maimonides Succah on Shemini Atzeres between Mincha and Maariv, October 13, 1979**

Today, I shall deviate from my custom of the previous years and shall speak of the Succah and Shemini Atzeres from the historical rather than the halachic aspect.

The question arises, "Should one sit in the Succah on Shemini Atzeres or should one not?" After all, the Torah directs us that "Shivah Yomim" etc., sthall you sit in the Succah and Shemini Atzeres is the eighth day. Perhaps, the difficulty arises from the stance adopted by Gemorrah itself in resolving this issue. The halacha from Gemorrah is taht we should sit in the Succah but not to pronounce the "brocho," "Layshav Basuccah" as we do the previous seven days. The division in compliance occurs between the Chassidim and the Misnagdim. The Chassidim do not sit in the Succah on Shemini Atzeres; the Misnagdim do. This is not to minimize the Chassidim. From the inception of Chassidism, they have had a share of great teachers, talmider Chachamim. Certainly, they have many very "Ehrliche Yidden" who observe the Mitzvos very carefully. We, therefore, must analyze why we, the Misnagdim, do sit in the Succah and why the Chassidim do not.

We believe that during Succoth there are two days during which it is completely obligatory to sit in the Succah; on the first night and on Shemini Atzeres. During the intermediary days, we are excused from the Succah if conditions are such as to make it uncomfortable and unfavorable. But on the first night, even if it rains or snows, if it is raw cold or we are plagued with mosquitoes, we must make the brocho therein. The same applies to Shemini Atzeres. Of such great importance do we attach to sitting in the Succh on Shemini Atzeres. The fact that a brocho is not pronounced, in actuality should also apply to the second seder of Pesach. Here we make a brocho "Shehechiyonu," a brocho over eating matzo and morer, quite the same as the first evening. The reason that we do it is because the Rabbanan feared that if these obligation were removed, the second seder would become light in the eyes of the populace and that in time, Chutz L'oretz (out of Israel) it would become abolished altogether. Therefore, it was enacted that it should be observed exactly as the first night, in no way less.

I have given this matter much thought and I believe that I have resolved the problem for the difference of opinion.

If we are asked the question, "which is the very greatest holiday," we would have to answer that it is Shemini Atzeres. Despite the fact that Yom Kippur is called, "the great day". Shemini Atzeres is even greater. We are reminded of the story of a king who became separated from his son through fate and they had no contact for years, not knowing if either was alive. The king sent out emissaries to search for his son and after much effort both father and son were informed that the other is alive and ready to be reunited. The question asked is, "which is the greater moment? Is it the moment when they are simultaneously



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**Rav Soloveitchik ZT'L Notes ( Volume 3)**

Notice These are unapproved unedited notes [of R.Y.?] of classes given by Rav Soloveitchik. We do not know who wrote the notes. However we offer this to the world that maybe someone can get some use out of these notes. A member of the family has looked at the notes and said that look like the

informed that the other is alive or is it the moment when the two are ultimately reunited and meet for the initial time?"

We have the classic example of Jacob and Joseph. Was it a greater moment for the old Jacob when he learned that Joseph lives or was it when they made contact? Each occasion is described in Torah as a momentous event. There are those who maintain that learning the other still exists is greater. (Others maintain it is the actual contact.)

What is Yom Kippur? It is the day when the Jewish people are told, "The old father is still alive! He waits with love for you to return to him!" Not so Rosh Hashanah! Rosh Hashanah is a day of "Din", of "Pachad" - judgment and fear. Yom Kippur is a day of great love. Father waits for you to come back to him. His arms are wide open. "Just come back!"

Therefore, so is it with Succoth and Shemini Atzeres. Those factions who believe that the joy is greatest at the moment of inception, at the moment of hearing the good news, have chosen not to sit in the Succah on Shemini Atzeres because Gemorrah does not specify a "brocho". The others feel that although the esrog and lulav have been stripped away and we are left with the least significant Haddassim, the joy is greater on Shemini Atzeres for at the moment we are truly united with our Father.

What basis do we have for the assumption? The fact is that during the seven days of Succoth in the Bais Hamikdash, a total of 70 bullocks were sacrificed, thirteen the first day, twelve the second, eleven the third, etc., until a total of 70 was reached. This was an atonement for the 70 recognized nations that existed. The fact is that Succoth is not a holiday for Jews alone but for the entire world. Therefore, the Haftorah of the first day of Succoth speaks that the shame of Egypt will be that it will fail to come to Jerusalem to observe the holiday of Succoth. Likewise, one of the chief reasons why we read Megillah Koheleth on Succoth is because it is addressed to the world. We do not find the "Shem Havayah" was just given to the Jews. "Elokim" is for all people.

However, on Shemini Atzeres suddenly it speaks of "Par Echod, Ayil Echod" - one bullock, one ram. The Alm-ghty declares, "Finally, my people, we are together alone. We have celebrated for all the nations. Now, let us sit down together, Father and son. If is a private affair for no one but us." This, then, Misnagdim feel is the great moment of togetherness -- of meeting with Father. This is why it is of such paramount importance to go into the Succah on Shemini Atzeres even without the "brocho".

There is also an halachic approach on which the Chassidim base their decision. A "Chasan and Kalah" (groom and bride) are exempted by law from the Succah and must celebrate the Yom Tov in their "Chupah". Therefore, if we have just become reunited with our long lost Father, it is as if it were a reunion of bride with her bridegroom and she is exempted from the Succah.

Also, there is no comparison between the celebrating of Simchas Torah of Misnagdim and Chassidim. I remember that as a youngster in Europe, I could observe the different celebrations for I lived in a small community which was equally

divided between Chassidim and Misnagdim. Those people from either faction would come to take my father to their shul to celebrate. In our Misnagdische shul 20 people could enter the Succah and dance with the Torah with plenty of reserve space. For Chassidim, their joy was so great that the world was not big enough as is evidenced today. This, therefore, is my evaluation of the issue of sitting in the Succah on this holiday between Chassidic and Misnagdic Jews.

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From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** [[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)]  
Sent: October 11, 2006 To: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)  
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The Torah Is Not Yerusha - Only Morasha

The Torah reading on Simchas Torah contains the well known pasuk [verse]: "The Torah was commanded to us by Moshe, a Morasha [inheritance] to the Congregation of Yaakov." [Devorim 33:4] There is an interesting teaching in the Talmud Yerushalmi: Everywhere we find the word morasha, it connotes a weakening of the idea of inheritance (lashon deeha) [Bava Basra 8:2].

Morasha is a peculiar word. It is not easy to translate. It is significantly different than the word yerusha [inheritance]. The connotation is that one has less ownership in an object that has come to him as a "morasha" than he does in an item that comes to him as a "yerusha."

The Jerusalem Talmud is not referring to the source in our pasuk in Zos HaBracha but rather to a pasuk in Parshas VaEira: "And I will give it (referring to the Land of Israel) to you as a morasha." [Shmos 6:8] The Yerushalmi points out that the people who were given this promise never made it to the Land of Israel. Virtually the entire generation who left Egypt died out in the Wilderness. How then can the Torah make the statement that it will be given to them as a morasha? The Yerushalmi thus cites this as proof for the difference in nuance between yerusha and morasha.

Had the Torah promised Eretz Yisrael to those who left Egypt as a yerusha, it would have belonged to them with no ifs, ands, or buts. However, the Torah used the weaker form -- morasha, meaning that it will not necessarily be yours. In truth, it never became theirs.

It only became theirs to the extent that they gave it to their children. This in fact is the major connotation of the word morasha. The word implies "it is yours - sometimes literally and sometimes only to the extent that you pass it on to your children without ever having taken possession."

The Yerushalmi then questions this explanation by citing our pasuk regarding the Torah being a "morasha for the Congregation of Yaakov." The Yerushalmi answers that in fact this translation of 'morasha' applies to Torah as well!

Torah is NOT a yerusha. Just because my father had the Torah does not mean that I will have the Torah. Sometimes a person only has the Torah as a 'morasha'. This means that if a person sweats over Torah and makes the effort to understand Torah and puts in the hours required to master Torah, then

Torah actually becomes his. But there is no guarantee. Torah is not a no-strings-attached inheritance (yerusha). Without the sweat and the hours, Torah will only be something that the person can potentially pass on to the next generation (morasha).

Chazal teach a tradition based on the pasuk, "This Torah will not depart from your mouth or the mouths of you children or the mouths of your grandchildren forever" [Yehoshua 1:8]: If three generations are committed to learning Torah, then the Torah will never leave that person's family. The Talmud [Bava Metzia 85a] summarizes this idea with the expression "The Torah returns to its host" (Torah chozeres al achsania shelah).

Someone once asked the Chofetz Chaim the very obvious and pointed question that we know people who descend from many generations of Torah scholars who are themselves ignorant of Torah. Unfortunately, we see millions of Jews that fit into this category. There are families that bear the name of prestigious Gedolim [Torah greats], who today may not even know what an Aleph looks like. What then does it mean "Torah chozeres al achsania shelah"?

The Chofetz Chaim explained that the Gemara's analogy is very precise. The Torah is like a guest seeking its host's home. Sometimes a guest knocks on one's door. If no one answers the door, the guest will not come in.

"Torah chozeres al achsania shelah" means that if Torah has been in a family for three generations, the Torah will come "knocking on that family's door" in future generations. But still, the younger generation must open the door for the guest. The guest must still be invited in by each new generation.

Unfortunately, this does occur. There is knocking. There are opportunities. But the door does not get opened. Torah is not a yerusha. It is only a morasha. The difference is that the former is automatic, while the latter requires effort. If a person does not make the effort, his relationship to Torah might only be to the extent that he will pass it on to subsequent generations.

#### The Value of an Unknown Burial Place

In Zos HaBracha, the Torah teaches that the burial place of Moshe Rabbeinu is not known. [Devorim 34:6]

I read an interesting story recently about someone who was driving in Eretz Yisrael in the Golan Heights. He came to an intersection and picked up two Israeli soldiers who were hitchhiking. The soldiers piled into the back seat with their M-16s and started up a conversation.

As it turned out, the soldiers were not Jews, they were Druze. The Druze are loyal citizens of the State of Israel and serve in the Israel Defense Forces. They also have a difficult history with the Arabs.

The Druze soldiers explained that they have their own religion. They are not Moslem. The "father" of their religion is Yisro. They had a nice discussion and as they got to their destination and started leaving the car, the soldiers left the Jewish driver with a parting thought: "Our religion has something over your religion. Not only do we have something over your religion, we have something over the Christians and the Moslems as well. We know where the

'father' of our religion is buried. (Yisro is buried in the area around Teverya.) You do not know where Moshe is buried. The Christians do not know where the founder of their religion is buried. The Moslems do not even know IF the founder of their religion is buried. (According to their tradition, he ascended to Heaven before dying.)"

However, the truth is that it is not necessarily good to know where a person is buried. The Torah makes a point of telling us that we do not know and we will not know where Moshe is buried. The Talmud describes an attempt to locate the grave of Moshe Rabbeinu on Mount Nebo [Sotah 13b]. The attempt was foiled supernaturally. Why?

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch explains that the Torah saw the potential that Moshe Rabbeinu's grave could become a deity. It is important for all of us to remember that when we visit the graves of the righteous, we do not pray TO the righteous people that they should bless us. We are forbidden to pray TO a human being - dead or alive! We visit the graves of Tzadikim to ask that they petition on our behalf to the Ribono shel Olam. We are not allowed to daven TO the Tzadik.

The Torah saw the potential of such a thing happening with Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was a person of such monumental stature that the Torah feared lest his burial place would become a shrine.

The Torah is also informing us that as monumental a person as Moshe Rabbeinu was, there needed to be a new leader once he died. No one could fill his shoes, but that was irrelevant. Life must go on. The Torah stresses this idea by emphasizing, "You will come to the Judge who will be present IN THOSE DAYS" [Devorim 17:9] and "You will come to the Priest who will be present IN THOSE DAYS." [Devorim 26:3]

The fact that this Judge or this Priest is not in the same league with his predecessor is irrelevant. We are told that Moshe's face was like the sun and Yehoshua's face was only like the moon. Yehoshua was not in the same league as Moshe. But Yehoshua was going to be the new leader.

Rabbi Wein always quotes the maxim: "No man is indispensable, yet no man is replaceable." This is very true. No man is indispensable to the extent that "we cannot continue onward." Yet no man is replaceable either. People have their own unique contributions that can never be replaced.

This is another explanation of why Moshe's burial place is not known. The Jewish people had to move forward. They had to continue with the next leader and the next generation. "A generation passes on and a new generation comes." [Koheles 1:4] We can only go to the leader who is present in our own generation. This is the way of the Torah and this is the way of the world.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington [DavidATwersky@aol.com](mailto:DavidATwersky@aol.com) Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD [dhoffman@torah.org](mailto:dhoffman@torah.org)

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**Rabbi Michael Rosensweig**

**Vehayita Ach Sameach: The Joy of Shemini Azeret**

The mishnah (Sukah 48a) determines that while one should not completely dismantle the sukah on the seventh day of Sukkot in advance of Shemini Azeret, one should begin transferring out the utensils that established the sukah as the primary residence during the week of Sukkot. The Rambam (Hilchos Sukah 6:11,14) codifies this halachah. The Ra'vad speculates that this preliminary evacuation of the sukah is limited to circumstances in which one will be eating in the structure on Shemini Azeret and is designed to preclude the prohibition of baal tosif. However, the mishnah and Rambam make no allusion to these conditions. It seems that departing from the sukah in anticipation of Shemini Azeret ("le-kevod yom tov ha-acharon") is an important element in the transition from Sukkot to Shemini Azeret! A brief analysis of some of the salient features of Shemini Azeret may serve to clarify this prerequisite.

It is evident from the pesukim in parshat Emor, and Pinchas that Shemini Azeret is both a continuation and culmination of Sukkot, as well as an independent hag. This dual status is reflected by the totally different configuration of the korbonot and by the unique halachot signified by the acronym "PZRKShV" (Sukah 48a) that govern this day. While Shemini Azeret is ideally referred to by its own designation- "ha-shemini chag ha-Azeret ha-zeh", many poskim conclude that the designation "chag ha-Sukkot" is

also effective, obviating the need to repeat the shemonah esrei or birkat ha-mazon. Shemini Azeret certainly serves as part of the extended period for the korban chagigah of Sukkot. It appears that Shemini Azeret precisely because of its singular character is the perfect conclusion to Sukkot!

The Seforno notes that the transition to Shemini Azeret is particularly striking as the holiday in which there are two distinct mitzvot - lulav and sukah is followed by or even concludes with a yom tov which focuses exclusively on tefilah and Talmud torah, the staples of year-round halachic observance. It is also significant that the keriat ha-Torah of Shemini Azeret (parshat Re'eh) only obliquely alludes to Shemini Azeret ("ve-hayita ach sameah", as understood by Sukah 48a). The reading concentrates on the mitzvot of zedakah etc. that apply all year. Only the 3 regalim are explicated in these sections. Perhaps it is precisely the concentration on year-round themes and the de-emphasis of particular festival themes on this unique day that qualifies Shemini Azeret as the perfect culmination of Sukkot and the entire period that begins with Rosh Hashanah.

After the intense religious experiences of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippurim it is inconceivable that one could simply revert to routine life. Moreover, the charged environment and process of introspection engendered by the Yomim Noraim provide an opportunity for further spiritual advancement that should be capitalized upon. And yet, the ultimate goal is to integrate the impact of the Yomim Noraim experience into an upgraded daily halachic life. (See, also, Maharsha, conclusion of massechet Megillah.) Thus, one ideally begins to build the sukah immediately after Yom Kippur. It is important to take the experience of the kodesh ha-kodoshim and to apply it to one's own dwelling, but this requires a more vulnerable and temporary structure that is evidently reliant upon Hashem's hashgachah (Divine Providence). Many of the dimensions of the Sukah are patterned on the Beit ha-Mikdash itself, and at least the sechach is muktzah le-mitzvato (used exclusively for the mitzvah) for the entire holiday.

The first halachah recorded in the Shulchan Aruch regarding Sukkot is the disqualification of a Sukah under the roof of one's home. The Taz explains that there should be nothing intervening between the Sukah and the heavens, undoubtedly symbolizing the direct relationship and reliance upon Hashem. The Magen Avraham emphasizes that the very objective of the sukah is the departure from one's permanent home. The fact that the sukah ideally is a 7-day structure meant to house all major activities of the week-eating, sleeping, social interactions etc.- reflects the importance of this total relocation. The Rama notes that one should conduct oneself in the sukah in a manner befitting a mitzvah, although the range of activities should parallel one's real home. The poskim explain that one should avoid anger or idle gossip and increase Torah study. The Sukah should be a real home, but one in which idealized standards are practiced, as befitting post-Yomim Noraim developments!

And yet, one must ultimately return to one's permanent abode and routine. Moreover, the goal of the holidays of Tishrei is not to escape and abandon daily life, but to inspire and secure its elevation. After 7 days of intense additional avodat Hashem highlighted by both the sukah and 4 minim, one is sufficiently fortified and spiritually revitalized for a triumphant reintegration with the challenges of daily life.

Shemini Azeret is the appropriate culmination to Sukkot precisely because it is finally time to relinquish the lulav and sukah and to give full concentration to the spiritual staples of Talmud torah and tefilah. Thus, this day is both an indispensable component of Sukkot and an independent hag. Anticipating the transition to Shemini Azeret, we already begin to dismantle parts of the environment of the sukah, declaring that we have successfully assimilated the idealized framework of that structure and are confidently poised to return to our more permanent structure having achieved spiritual renewal and reinforcement. The Torah reading only alludes to Shemini Azeret, instead focusing on tzedkah and other year-round challenges that are, ironically, more relevant to this decompression from Sukkot and significant transition to the rest of the year. The commemoration of Simchat Torah, in which we conclude and renew the Torah cycle accentuates this theme, as well. The theme and method of observance of Shemini Azeret is simple and straightforward. However, the significance of this day as the culmination of the Yomim Nora'im and Sukkot and as the transition to the rest of the year is profound and ambitious. For this reason, Shemini Azeret is a day of unvarnished simchah: "vehayitah ach sameach".

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**It's Never Too Late**  
by **Diane Faber Veitzer**

After 15 years of dating for marriage, I hit the jackpot in a most unexpected way.

I started bidding in the Simchat Torah auction years ago, when I was a young professional woman earning good money. But this year, after a career change, I didn't have any income, so I bid more cautiously and didn't win anything.

At the end of the auction, the shul president said, "We have four hagbas, \$200 each. First four hands." Perhaps instinctively, my hand went up. Hagba is a unique mitzvah where the Torah is lifted high, open to the portion which has just been read aloud, and shown it to the community. Even if I didn't have much money, \$200 for hagba was too good a deal to turn down. In an instant, it was mine.

The rest of the day was consumed with trying to determine who should be the recipient of the hagba honor. I wanted it to go to someone who would find the experience of lifting the Torah meaningful, and who also was not participating in the bidding. I wanted the honor to go to someone who would be uniquely touched by it.

As the day passed with no good idea, I asked a few women for suggestions. One of them pointed to a man I'd never met, who was sitting across the shul alone, and said, "That guy." I went to the rabbi and said, "I bought the hagba honor, and I'd like it to go to that guy." I described him, and I went home.

**Really Big Sign**

The next day, I got a call from the man who performed the hagba. He wanted to take me out for coffee to say thank you. "You really don't have to do that," I explained. But he insisted. A few days later, we sat in a coffee house reviewing the story of what happened and the next thing we knew, we were making plans to see each other again. I was up all night with my mind racing.

It turns out that this gentleman had recently decided to explore seriously the idea of getting married, and had spent the High Holidays praying about it. "If You want me to get married," he implored, "You're going to have to give me a Really Big Sign." Already overscheduled with personal and family obligations, he knew he wasn't going to be able to make the time-consuming effort of networking and dating many different women. At the Simchat Torah auction, his 10-year-old son had been urging him to bid on various honors. He told his son: "If G-d wants us to have an honor, He'll bring it to us."

As they were leaving the Simchat Torah celebration, the gabbai (organizer) approached him to say that he had the honor of hagba. "You must be mistaken," he responded. "No, someone bought it for you." They told him my name, but he'd never heard it before. He was so certain it wasn't for him that he went to the rabbi to confirm it. Ultimately, he reluctantly agreed to accept, so as not to hurt the feelings of the mystery donor.

As he stood holding the Torah in the air, he looked up at the eternal text scrolled all the way back to its starting point. He read "In the beginning, G-d created the heaven and the earth," and he thought, "G-d is renewing the world today. G-d created this moment and this situation. There is a reason that this unknown person gave me hagba. I don't know what the reason is, but I know there is a reason." Hence, the coffee date he so insisted on.

**Musician Without an Instrument**

I know that most people will not believe that we both suspected, after one coffee date, that G-d Himself had made the match and that we would wind up together forever, but that is indeed how it happened. And five months later, we were married under the tallis I bought with great hope... so many years ago.

When I called the woman who had said "that guy" to tell her the good news, she thought I had misdialed. "I don't know what you're talking about," she said. It turns out that with all the singing and shouting on Simchat Torah, she hadn't actually heard what I asked, and she didn't even know that I had won a hagba or that I was trying to give it away. She thought I said something

completely different, and when she said "that guy," she was responding to what she thought I was saying. "I don't know what you're talking about," she said.

It turns out that my (now-) husband had been living two blocks away, and it's amazing that we'd never met. There in the coffee shop, we discovered many objective reasons why we're a terrific match -- similar upbringings, similar educational backgrounds, similar paths to Jewish observance, the same rabbi and community, less than two years apart in age. Some people say we look alike; others say that we seem like an old married couple. Even our stuff fits together: I had an idle baby grand piano and he was a jazz pianist without an instrument, for example.

And there are moments when I feel that G-d is winking at me, like when I hear my husband in another room mindlessly humming my favorite melody, or when we each use the same obscure word in conversation (recently, "fisticuffs").

But we still might not have ever met or married, if my husband had not been open to the idea that when he lifted the Torah for hagba, that the words actually meant something to him -- i.e., that it could be a Really Big Sign. Or if we had not both been open to the possibility that just maybe, whatever life presents you with is actually the answers to your prayers.

#### Kind and Generous

On our wedding day, I saw that G-d had indeed heard every detail of my prayers, when my friends surrounded my husband and joined him as he kneeled before me to sing Aishes Chayil, King Solomon's praise of Jewish women. They who have known me for so many years, and seen me standing alone at their weddings, their children's brides and bar mitzvahs, and their shivas, encircled my husband and me, sang along with him, and embraced him as a brother.

In my more than 15 years of seriously dating for marriage, I had a pretty general idea of what I was looking for in a man. Like other women, I wanted a man of good character, who was kind and generous, but also smart and accomplished. In my vision, I was the first great love of his life, and he was mine, and together we would build a beautiful family. It seemed like I met just about every man in America who'd never been married. I saw a lot of finely tailored suits, and learned a lot about how smart and accomplished they all were, but I didn't see a lot of the kind and generous part.

When I met my husband for the first time at the coffee shop, he wasn't wearing a suit and didn't look anything like anyone I'd dated before. But in our conversation, I heard him say three things in passing which really struck me.

The first was that when his family needed better health insurance, he had back-burnered a "creative" career and taken a less glamorous "day job."

The second was that when his son's teacher suggested he would benefit from being read to, he read him the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy, which took more than a year.

The third was that when his wife became ill, he did absolutely everything on earth possible to help her get well, even though it financially devastated the family.

When asked how married life is, I always say the same thing: I feel like I woke up from an endless nightmare, in which I was growing older and had no husband or family, only to find that I do have a loving husband and a beautiful family. My life changed completely in an instant, from the time (and the manner in which) I wake up, to the books I read, to the decor of the house, what is in the refrigerator, and how I make decisions (i.e., in conjunction with another person!). And most of the time it feels completely familiar, and gloriously happy.

Through all the lonely years, I had clung to the belief that G-d makes a match for every person. How wonderful to be proved right! It truly is never too late.

Our marriage works because the qualities I saw in my husband on that first coffee date are his true nature. He is willing to do the hard thing rather than the comfortable thing. He sticks through with a task until it is completed. And he is willing to do anything for his family, no matter what the cost. He is now the chief operating officer of the "less glamorous day job," and I'm on Book 4 in my own reading aloud to the kids -- of the Harry Potter series.

And to think it was all possible because I raised my hand on Simchat Torah. For 200 bucks, a pretty good deal.

Published: Sunday, August 13, 2006

#58 of 57 in the Aish.com Dating Wisdom Series

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From: [ZeitlinShelley@aol.com](mailto:ZeitlinShelley@aol.com) Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2005 11:35 PM To: [ZeitlinShelley@aol.com](mailto:ZeitlinShelley@aol.com) Subject: Simchas Torah: The Ultimate Joy By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss [From last year]

#### **Simchas Torah: The Ultimate Joy By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**

We are informed that Hashem created the world for kindness, as it says "Olam chesed Yiboneh." Avraham Avinu arrived at the conclusion when he meditated over the purpose of the rose. He pondered its function. On nibbling from it, he saw that it wasn't edible. He further observed that animals would not eat from it either. When he smelled it and was exhilarated by its wonderful fragrance, he concluded that it is the obvious will of the Creator to bring happiness to mankind.

We also know that Hashem commanded us to learn Torah at every available time, as it says, "V'hagisah bah, yomam v'laila." It is therefore quite clear that Hashem, our Manufacturer, is letting us know that there is no better way to attain happiness than through Torah study since this is what He recommends (and indeed demands) that we do whenever possible.

It is this fundamental realization that we celebrate on Simchas Torah.

Annually, we reiterate this theme of, "Ein simcha k'Simchas haTorah - That there is no joy like the Joy of Torah." We do this in unison with all of Klal Yisroel, emphasizing that Torah is our national pastime. Americans can make an interesting parallel, and learn some important lessons, by comparing Torah to the American national pastime of baseball. Across the country, fathers eagerly await the time when their children

will be old enough to bring to a game, to share with them the excitement of a pennant race, the edge-of-the-seat drama of a ninth inning comeback, and a gritty pitcher's duel. How they enjoy arguing with their friends the respective merits of Mays and Mantle or to quibble for hours over the respective merits of their team's players!

This is what Hashem expects from the true Ben Torah. He should, from a very young age, excitedly introduce his children to, "Torah tziva lanu Moshe;" to eagerly await the day comes when he can introduce his child to Abaya and Rava. He should experience the same excitement of taking his children to Torah shiurim and introduce them to the wonders of a Reb Chaim's pshat in a Rambam.

In Krias Shema, we say, "V'dibarta Bam," which literally means that our talk should be 'Them;' namely, words of Torah. Much like others speak about the latest prowess of Sosa or Bond, we should be sharing new thoughts about Kaiyen and Hevel, the wonders of Noach's Ark and the fascinating complexities of the Seven Days of Creation.

On Simchas Torah, Jews all over the world embrace the Torah and dance with it with much celebration and joy. But we must be concerned that the Torah shouldn't look at us and 'say,' "Who are you?! Am I supposed to know you - that you are dancing with Me with such enthusiasm?! I don't think I recognize you." So, if we want to meaningfully rejoice with the Torah, we must make a new commitment to spend more time this year with this 'dance partner.' We should make up our minds that we will review the Parsha weekly as we are supposed to. We will try to prepare some Torah food-for-thought to bring to the Shabbos tisch, thereby elevating it substantially. Perhaps, we will consider getting on the Daf Yomi bandwagon, or learning a daily regimen of Mishna Brurah or Kitzur Shulchan Oruch. With this commitment in mind, we could then warmly embrace the Torah and say, "Come, let's dance! We're going to have a great year together!"

Let's get back to our baseball analogy. Many fans are ablaze with excitement as their team's head into the post-season. The true fan doesn't let a day go by without keeping abreast of his team's latest accomplishments. In the same way, a true Torah devotee should never let twelve hours go by without learning some Torah. Indeed, we are taught that when we get to the Next World, every aspect of our lives will be weighed and considered. But, from the vast array of pursuits of a lifetime, we will first be judged about our Torah study. As the Gemora in Shabbos tells us, we will be asked, "Kovatah ittim b'Torah?" Did you make regular set times, both day and night, to learn Torah?

This is the stuff we should be thinking about as we dance and sing on this very special day.

On Simchas Torah, we do something else unique - something not done any other time of the year. Every Jewish adult gets his own aliya at the Torah. This is our opportunity to first realize that it our belief that the true aliya, namely upgrade and advancement of life, is through Torah study. It also offers everyone the opportunity to voice the blessings over the Torah that thank Hashem for bequeathing us, His special Nation, with our national treasure, the Torah, and in the second blessing expressing appreciation for

allowing us to experience and prepare for the Afterlife in this world through Torah study. This is what we express when we thank Hashem, "V'chayei olam nota b'socheinu - That the everlasting world You planted with us now in our midst."

Unfortunately for all too many, the Simchas Torah celebration is a wearisome and trying day which they watch with a mixture of tiredness and frustration, feeling that they are going through the motions of joviality without feeling any real sense of happiness. To the contrary, they are looking at their watches, wondering when it will finally be over.

With renewed commitment to Torah study and Torah life, may we all merit to have great inner joy this Simchas Torah and be blessed by Hashem with many Torah blessings.

To receive a weekly cassette tape or CD directly from Rabbi Weiss, please send a check to Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, P.O. Box 140726, Staten Island, NY 10314 or contact him at [RMMWSI@aol.com](mailto:RMMWSI@aol.com).

Attend Rabbi Weiss's weekly shiur at the Landau Shul, Avenue L and East 9th in Flatbush, Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. Rabbi Weiss's Daf Yomi shiurim can be heard LIVE on Kol Haloshon at (718) 906-6400. Write to [KolHaloshon@gmail.com](mailto:KolHaloshon@gmail.com) for details.

(Sheldon Zeitlin transcribes Rabbi Weiss' articles. If you wish to receive Rabbi Weiss' articles by email, please send a note to [ZeitlinShelley@aol.com](mailto:ZeitlinShelley@aol.com) )

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Young Israel Weekly Dvar TorahFrom: National Council of Young Israel [[YI\\_Torah@lb.bcentral.com](mailto:YI_Torah@lb.bcentral.com)]  
Sent: October 05, 2006 Subject: **NCYI Dvar Torah: Shemini Atzeret - Simchat Torah**

Guest Rabbi: **Rabbi Naphtuli Burnstein**  
Young Israel of Greater Cleveland, OH

Shimini Atzeret marks the end of the season of our Yomim Tovim. The season began with the Yimai HaSlichot, Rosh HaShanah, the Aseret Yimai Teshuva and Yom Kippur. It continued with Succot 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 an 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 Shavout. Succot and Shmini Atzeret (Simchat Torah) complete the years' cycle of Yomim Tovim. There is a well known story in the Gemorah in Shabbos (31a) regarding the potential ger (convert) who came to Hillel and asked him to convert him while he stood "al regel achas" - on one foot. There have been several interpretations to this story in the Gemorah. The Sfas Emes 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 achas" 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 dveikus (attachment) that comes with Simchas Torah, without first building the foundation of that relationship will often end in great failure. "Al regel achas" 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 and every one 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 an interesting question, insight, medresh or story, at their particular level, to bring to the Shabbat meal? What about trying to study the Parsha each week, Shnayim Mikra V'Echud Targum, which gives a great connection and appreciation to each parsha. As the winter creeps up on us, let's prepare to hold on to some of the warmth of Yom Tov, and to reignite Limud HaTorah in our homes, both individually and collectively.

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From: [peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com](mailto:peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com) on behalf of Shema Yisrael Torah Network [[shemalist@shemayisrael.com](mailto:shemalist@shemayisrael.com)] Sent: Thursday, October 05, 2006 7:36 PM To: Peninim Parsha  
**Peninim on the Torah**  
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum  
- Parshas V'ZosHaBracha

He also showed love to peoples, all its holy ones are in Your hands; and they were brought in at Your feet, He would bear Your utterances. (33:3) In an alternative exposition of this pasuk, Rashi says that the love that Hashem demonstrated is a reference to a time in which

Hashem manifests endearment to the nations of the world. He shows them a smiling countenance when He delivers Klal Yisrael into their hands. Nonetheless, "All its Holy ones are in Your hands." Despite this g'zar din, difficult decree, against the Jewish People, its righteous ones and its good ones have cleaved to Hashem, never once doubting Him. Hashem, therefore, guards them. These deeply committed Jews accept Your decree with love and joy, declaring: Torah tzivah lanu Moshe morashah kehillas Yaakov, "The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov." We held on to it, and we will not abandon it!"

These powerful words have been uttered by Jews throughout the millennia as they accepted Hashem's edict and went to their deaths amid pain and affliction - but with joy and song on their lips. In a letter to his son, Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, describes the last moments of the kedoshei Kelm, martyrs of Kelm. He vividly portrays their acceptance of the decree that their executioners would be the Nazis, but, despite the bitterness of this terrible g'zar din, they swallowed it as a sweet elixir. He writes, "How did these giants of the spirit, strong of heart, and symbols of truth, leave this world? I remember from days gone by, how on Simchas Torah all of the rabbis would parade out into the main square and dance through the streets with all of their strength. They would raise their voices in song, and, with passion and fervor, they would sing the words, Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu, "How fortunate are we and how good is our portion!"

"Forty years later, the destruction of European Jewry took place. When the Nazis entered Kelm, the rabbis and their families gathered in the Bais HaTalmud, the Yeshivah which was the focal point of this Torah community. They began to pray and pour out their hearts to their Heavenly Father. They supplicated Him for mercy, but, regrettably, the Gates of Mercy were closed. The decree had been given. They must accept it. Outside, the evil murderers were waiting to perform their task. They brought every man, woman and child into the center of town and proceeded to march them through the city to its outskirts. They cursed and beat them. Expecting to witness a group of broken, distraught, wretched people, the Nazi fiends were shocked and angered by the Jews' response to their terror.

"Who can imagine the reaction of those noble souls at that fateful moment? With fortitude-filled hearts, emboldened spirits and impassioned joy in being able to fulfill the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying Hashem's Name, they went forward, heads upright with pride, singing and dancing - just like on Simchas Torah - only with greater fervor. They sang, Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu, "How fortunate are we, how fortunate are we to be Jews." This is how they went to their deaths: singing with joy, proud to be Jews, exalted with the opportunity to give up their lives to sanctify Hashem's Name."

Rav Dessler then addresses a question that gnaws away at the individual who does not understand the depth of their mesiras nefesh, self sacrifice. What was gained by their act of self-sacrifice? Had they died as a result of gezeiras ha'shmad, decrees made for the specific purpose of



apostatizing Jews, there would have been benefit from their deaths. They would have been defiant, refusing to become baptized, demonstrating that they would rather die than convert. Thus, they would have manifested their unyielding commitment to Hashem. In this circumstance, however, the Nazis could care less about them. In fact, even if they had wanted to convert, it would have made no difference. The Nazis wanted the Jews dead - subject closed. There was no room for discussion or negotiation. The Jews were not granted any choice. They were to die, regardless of their commitment.

Men of integrity, people who comprehend the truth, understand that the challenge is not to be able to triumph over forced baptism or to choose death over life as a gentile. The true challenge is much more difficult. It is not before whom one sanctifies himself, it is how one goes to his death. If in his heart there is a sense of peace and calm, an exalted feeling of rapture and ecstasy in the knowledge that he is uniting with the Almighty, then he has achieved the ultimate plateau of mesiras nefesh. This is an achievement of the highest order, because it is emes bilvavo, truth in one's heart, absolute truth without embellishment. As we live through the chevlei Moshiach, birth pangs of the advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, we strive to achieve such a level of personal integrity whereby each of us sanctifies Hashem's Name - in his heart.

For they planted themselves at Your feet, bearing (the yoke) of Your utterances. (33:3)

In the Talmud Bava Basra 8A, Chazal interpret this pasuk as a reference to talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, who cut their feet going from town to town and country to country to learn Torah. Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates the story of a certain gadol, Torah leader, who grew up in abject poverty. He was able to continue his Torah studies unimpeded due to his mother's singular devotion to Torah. Winter cold and frost presented a unique problem for his mother. She had three sons that attended cheder and their shoes were not fit for walking in the cold and wet snow. Worn-out and tattered, they leaked from all sides. What should she do? Sending them in torn shoes meant subjecting them to the elements and the almost certainty that they would become sick. Not sending them meant depriving them of Torah study. If this went on for a few months, who knew what would become of her sons? She decided upon a plan of action. Only one pair of shoes in the house was whole. She would take one son to cheder wearing this pair of shoes, then return home with the shoes to pick up his brother. She would do the same for the third son. This procedure would take place once again for their return trip home.

Every day-- during the cold, miserable, wet winter-- this woman walked to cheder six times, so that her sons would continue to study uninterrupted. This is commitment! This is devotion! This is a Jewish mother! Her reward was seeing her sons become prominent Torah scholars. It was all worth the investment.

The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov. (33:4)

The Midrash in Sefer Vayikra cites the following story. An illiterate Jew approached

Rabbi Yanai with a complaint, "Why are you holding on to my rightful inheritance?" Rabbi Yanai immediately countered, "What are you talking about? I am not aware of anything of yours that is in my possession." The man did not budge. "You have something of mine!" he screamed. The Tanna had no idea who this man was, let alone that he had anything in his possession that belonged to him.

"Do you think that simply because I am illiterate you can take advantage of me?" the man asked.

"Please tell me why you feel I have something of yours," Rabbi Yanai pleaded.

"Well, yesterday I passed by the cheder for young boys, and I heard them reciting a pasuk from the Torah. Since I did not understand its meaning, I asked one of the boys to translate it for me. The pasuk was, The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov. This means that the Torah belongs as much to me as it does to you. Why, then, do you know so much more than I do? Why are you so bright, while I have limited intelligence? Why have you been blessed with a lofty soul and an ability to grasp spiritual profundities, while I simply cannot compete in any way? Obviously, there can only be one explanation. You have been entrusted with a very large bequest, and it is your responsibility to see to it that it is made available to all of the inheritors.

"Furthermore, had I been consigned a large sum of money to be shared with a number of people, I would have searched everywhere to locate the rightful owners. Why do you deprive me of my deserved share in the Torah? You should have seen to it that I study and become knowledgeable in the Torah!"

A powerful and legitimate complaint. Indeed, this is a large-scale condemnation of all those who have the opportunity to reach out to others and ignore their responsibility. In the preface to his Nefesh HaChaim, Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl, writes that man is created for one purpose: l'ho'il l'achrinei, "to assist others." Ki adam l'amal yulad, "For man is born to weariness." (Iyov 5:7)

In a departure from the common translation, the Meshech Chochmah writes in Sefer Devarim 28:61, that the word l'amal, lamed, ayin, mem, lamed, is a mnemonic for lilmud al menas l'lamed, "to learn for the purpose of teaching." The Torah is an inheritance for all Jews. Those of us in the "know" should see to it that the ranks of knowledgeable Torah Jews begin to grow.

Of Levi he said: Your Tumim and your Urim befit Your devout one. (33:8)

Moshe Rabbeinu begins his blessing by addressing the Kohanim. Then, he speaks to the rest of the tribe. The praises that he sings are truly impressive and certainly warranted. Are we to ignore the fact, however, that the greatest controversy in the history of the nascent Jewish nation was initiated by a member of the tribe of Levi? The machlokes Korach, controversy of Korach, is one of the saddest moments in our history. Moshe Rabbeinu, also a member of the tribe of Levi, seems to have glossed over it. Why? Surely it must have pained him to recall that bitter dispute and its ramifications. To laud Shevet Levi with such unparalleled praise, while ignoring

Korach's rebellion, appears to be a bit questionable.

We must deduce that Korach's dispute, while certainly a black mark on Shevet Levi and our history, is not as nefarious as it seems. The mere fact that a parsha in the Torah is named after Korach is an indication of this verity. Let us analyze what Korach wanted. He sought Kehunah Gedolah, the High Priesthood. Is that so bad? Moshe Rabbeinu also wanted to be Kohen Gadol. What was Korach's error?

Korach manifested an insatiable desire to be the Kohen Gadol. That in its own right is laudable. After all, Moshe also had this desire. The difference was that Korach acted on his desire. He went beyond the parameters of right and wrong. Moshe was acutely aware that Kehunah Gedolah was not destined to be in his domain. He accepted Hashem's decision with equanimity. Korach was not as quiescent. If he wanted something, he had to have it. He acted on his desires, defying Moshe and rebelling against Hashem. He abused the lofty attributes that characterize the tribe of Levi. Zealousness, spirited devotion to an ideal, and outstanding commitment are all terms that describe the members of this shevet. Korach had it - he just went too far in pursuing his goals.

Thus, Korach's rebellion was an error that was founded in overzealous commitment, unbridled desire over which he had no control. Wanting something beyond our grasp is not sinful; acting upon this desire is. ....

Dear Readers,

Peninim first appeared sixteen years ago as a weekly parsha publication for the city of Cleveland. Over the years, it has evolved into a staple in Jewish homes and shuls throughout the world. I am humbled by its success and am ever grateful to Hashem for having been granted an incredible dose of Siyata Dishmaya. I pray that I will be worthy of the privilege of disseminating Torah for many years to come.

My heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Tova Scheinerman and Mrs. Sharon Weimer, who prepare the weekly manuscript; to Mrs. Marilyn Berger, who edits the copy, making sure that it is presentable to the wide spectrum of readership; to Rabbi Malkiel Hefter, a friend and colleague, who sees to it that the final copy is completed and prepared for print and electronic distribution. Without their pleasant demeanors and willingness to help, Peninim would be but a dream.

Over the years, Peninim has developed its own network of distribution. While the constraints of space do not permit me to mention each and every person who sees to it that Peninim is distributed in his or her individual community, I will highlight a few. It was Baruch Berger of Brooklyn, New York, who came to me originally, requesting that he be able to distribute Peninim in his community. At the time, Baruch became ill and sought a zchus. As his illness progressed, Baruch was compelled to halt his activities, but the zchus is all his. May Hashem grant him a refuah shleimah b'soch shaar cholei Yisrael. Avi Hershkowitz of Queens, New York, and Asher Groundland of Detroit, Michigan, distribute in their respective communities. For years, Meir Bedziner distributed Peninim throughout the Baltimore, Maryland area. He was niftar three years ago. His wife continues the labor of love to disseminate Torah in her community. Shema Yisrael network provides the electronic edition for worldwide distribution. A number of years ago, Eliyahu Goldberg of London, England, began a European edition. Through his efforts and those of Menachem Hommel of London and Pinchas Brandeis of Manchester, Peninim receives extensive coverage in England, France, and South

Africa, as well as in Eretz Yisrael. May the mitzvah of harbotzas Torah serve as a zchus for them to be blessed b'chol mili d'meitav.

It would be wrong of me to say that I alone bear the brunt of the responsibility of publishing Peninim weekly. As long as one has a partner in life, he carries nothing alone. To this end, I acknowledge and offer my heartfelt gratitude to my wife, Neny, for the support she has given me in the past and continues to give me on a daily basis. She is the "last word" in the editing process, making sure that the reader is provided with an error-free copy. I pray that she shall be blessed with good health; and that together we may merit that Torah and chesed will always be the hallmarks of our home; and that we continue to derive much nachas from our children and grandchildren.

Rabbi Leib Scheinbaum, Hebrew Academy of Cleveland  
Peninim mailing list [Peninim@shemayisrael.com](mailto:Peninim@shemayisrael.com)  
[http://www.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim\\_shemayisrael.com](http://www.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim_shemayisrael.com)

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<http://www.anshe.org/parsha.htm#parsha>

**Parsha Page**

**by Fred Toczek -**

A Service of Anshe Emes Synagogue (Los Angeles)

V'ZOS HA'BROCHAH 5757

I. Summary

A. Moshe's blessing. Before his death, Moshe issued a blessing to Israel. In very stylistic and formal language, he described the good fortunes that would be granted to each of the tribes. He concluded with praise of Hashem whose protection of and love for the people are everlasting, provided the people reciprocate with recognition and acceptance of Hashem's L-rdship.

B. Moshe's death. Moshe's life was nearing its end. He ascended from the plains of Moav to reach the heights of Mt. Nevo, the summit of Pisgah. There, alone with G-d, he was shown all the land of Gilad, until Dan, all of Naftoli, Ephraim, Menassheh and Yehudah, until the sea, the Negev in the South, and the Valley of Jericho, as far as Zoar. This, Hashem promised him, was the land that would be given to the Children of Israel, as their forefathers had been told. Then Moshe, in the land of Moav, went to his everlasting peace. He was buried in the valley, but, to this day, no one knows the exact site of his burial. Although Moshe had been 120 years old when he died, he had remained physically, spiritually and intellectually vital until the very end.

C. The Jews mourn the loss of Moshe. The Bnei Yisroel mourned the great loss of their leader for thirty full days. Then they turned toward Yehoshua, their new leader, who would guide them towards the conquest of the land of Canaan under Hashem's supervision. The Torah concludes with the statement that "There has not arisen a prophet since, in Israel, like Moshe, whom the L-rd knew face to face. . . ."

II. Divrei Torah

A. Lilmode U'lilamed (**Rabbi Mordechai Katz**)

The importance of a congregation. "Torah tziva lonu Moshe, Morasha Kehillas Yaakov." This verse, which means, "Moshe commanded us the law, the inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov," is a most important one in the framework of the Jewish religion. The Talmud states that it is a verse

which must be taught to each child. A child who appreciates this will develop into a loyal Jew. The inclusion of the word "congregation" in this passage teaches us that the Jewish people can thrive only if it remains a congregation, a unified whole.

**B. Living Each Week (Rabbi Abraham Twerski)**

1. Refining one's character. Rashi quotes Sifri that prior to the Revelation of the Torah to the Israelites, G-d had offered it to other nations, who rejected it when they were, respectively, informed that it prohibited killing, theft and adultery. The Midrash explains that G-d offered the Torah to all other nations first so that when the day of reckoning comes, they will be unable to claim that Hashem's choice of Israel was unfair. The Rabbi of Gur comments that the nations might still have a legitimate complaint. They were introduced to such rigid demands as abstaining from murder, theft and adultery, whereas the Israelites were told that the Torah demands belief in G-d, since the first commandment given to them was "I am the L-rd your G-d." They will say, "Had You approached us as You did the Israelites, we would have accepted the Torah." The Rabbi of Gur explains that the purpose of Torah is to refine one's character, as the Midrash says, "the sole reason for the mitzvos is to purify the person." The acceptance of Torah is therefore contingent upon one's willingness to modify one's character traits. Each nation was therefore approached with the commandment pertaining to the character defect unique to its people. With the Israelites, the defect was skepticism. What other nation, having witnessed countless miracles (the plagues in Egypt, splitting of the Red Sea, Revelation at Sinai, manna, etc.) would remain skeptical and revert to idolatry? Our national weakness is an obstinate refusal to believe, and that is why we were challenged with "I am the L-rd your G-d." Our ancestors struggled with belief, and the prophets repeatedly warned us what would befall us if we abandoned our trust and belief in G-d. Each day of our lives we must reaffirm our belief when we recite the Shema. Let us reflect on our testifying to our belief in G-d, and be on our guard against what is our inherent weakness.

2. The endless cycle. When we complete the annual reading of the Torah on Simchas Torah, we immediately begin reading the first portion of Genesis, to indicate that there is no end point in Torah, but that it is similar to a circle which has no beginning and no end. Thus, the last verse of the Torah is contiguous with its first verse.

**C. Parsha Parables (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)**

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Parting words. What were Moshe's last words spoken to the Jews? Moshe stood on a mountain, surveying the Land of Israel from a distance. His great dream of entering Israel had faded away, for he was not allowed to enter the land; he could only look from afar. Why? Provoked by a weary and thirsty nation, he disobeyed Hashem's command to

speak to a rock. Instead, Moshe hit the rock while shouting, "listen, you rebels." Moshe appealed the verdict 515 times -- all to no avail. Finally, he stood alone, while more than a million people -- those he cared for, fed and guided -- were about to cross the Jordan River and enter the Land of Israel. He must say goodbye to the nation that caused his solitary and eternal confinement near the barren sands of Mt. Nevo. What should he tell them? Moshe had every excuse to gaze at his nation and say, "you know had it not been for your impatience, I would be joining you." Yet he didn't. Moshe's last recorded words were only those of high praise. Moshe only saw the greatest attributes in the Jewish people. At a time when the pain of their inconsistencies should have been most biting, he only had high regard and blessings for them. As such, Moshe had attained a great level of love for his fellow man. It isn't easy, but it is something to which we should all aspire.

Chazak, Chazak, Vinischazaik

**A Personal Epilogue:**

While outlining the Chumash over the past few years has been a true "labor of love," I did want to mention a few thank you's:

First to my wife Susie, who has supported me in my learning. Susie has taught me a lot not only about Judaism, but about life. Her insights and ability to see and appreciate G-dliness in everyone and everything has been and continues to be a tremendous source of inspiration to me. She is a true Aishes Chayil.

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