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Rabbi Michael Rosensweig

**Simchat Sukkot: An Expression of Avodah and
Hashra'at HaShechinah**

The Torah presents the holiday of sukkot in parshat Emor in a most singular fashion. The Torah first (23:33-36) delineates sukkot in typical fashion (mikra kodesh etc.) as the chronological conclusion of the festival cycle. The comprehensive survey then (37-38) appears to terminate with an appropriate (albeit not necessarily anticipated) references to the musaf korbonot (detailed in parshat Pinchas) that are brought on every chag. However, the Torah then (39-44) surprisingly returns to

the subject of Sukkot, initiating this supplementary section with the jarring word "ach" (used in parallel only with respect to Yom Kippur, the other equally exceptional presentation in the Emor survey), introducing the obligation of the four minim that was omitted in the previous section, and expanding on the obligation of simchah in the mikdash during this seven-day holiday: "u-semachtem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem shivat yamim". The striking omission of the ubiquitous "mikra kodesh" phrase that unifies the wide-ranging presentation of all the moadim in the main exposition reinforces the impression that this supplement is intended to accentuate a dimension that is unique to this holiday. The fact that Sukkot is the only one of the moadim that warrants a double treatment, sufficiently commands our attention. The other facets in this second rendition need to be accounted for as well.

Previously (Chag haSukkot: Avodat Hashem in the Aftermath of the Yamim Noraim and The Link Between Yom Kippur and Sukkot), we have addressed the link between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, and have proposed that this additional emphasis on Sukkot is related to the contrast-complement that Sukkot embodies in the aftermath of the inimitable, all-consuming Yom Kippur experience. We may further develop and apply this theme particularly in light of the Chatam Sofer's (parshat Haazinu, "le-chag ha-Sukkot") explication of the "ach" that introduces this section. He suggests that this exclusionary usage qualifies the previous verse which identifies avodot-korbonot beyond the festival musaf as only matanot, nedarim or nedavot. The Torah qualifies this characterization by declaring that the four minim, which registers as a central theme on Sukkot only in these added verses, is an exception to this rule, as it constitutes a kind of korbon-avodah celebrating the successful attainment of kapparah on Yom Kippur. He further proposes that the coveted teshuvah me-ahavah (Yyoma 85b) that transforms sins into merits, is actually attained in conjunction with the mitzvah-avodah of the four minim!

The notion that the mitzvah of lulav-four minim evokes avodah and korban is articulated by the midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Emor) and by the Talmud. The gemara (Sukkah 45a) interprets the verse (Tehillim 118:27), "isru chag bavotim ad karnot ha-mizbeach" as a reference to the mitzvah of the four minim, which is equated with the

construction of the mizbeach and the bringing of a korban: "kol ha-notel lulav ba-agudo ve-hadas ba-avuto maalah alav ha-katuv keilu banah mizbeach ve-hikriv alav korban".

This perspective certainly accounts for the additional dimension and experience of joy on Sukkot (u-semachtem), particularly in the mikdash (lifnei Hashem Elokeichem), and especially for the unusual 7-day celebration of the four minim specifically in the mikdash. Moreover, the fact that the mitzvah of four minim applies on the first day of sukkot even outside the precincts of the mikdash, even in the diaspora, assumes great significance.

In this respect, as well, Yom Kippur and Sukkot constitute an important-contrast-complement. It is evident that Yom Kippur is an extremely mikdash and avodah-centric moed. Although the kohen gadol is the almost exclusive participant in the intricate avodah, the gripping drama of the kohen gadol's odyssey into the kodesh ha-kadoshim (lifnai ve-lifnim) as the representative of Klal Yisrael dominates not only our musaf prayers, but actually embodies and crystalizes the central themes of this shabbat shabbaton, the most singular, most relevant ("achat ba-shanah", Vayikra 16:34, Shemot 30:10), and most sanctified day of the year. Indeed, the Rambam (Hilchos Avodat Yom haKippurim 1:1, Hilchos Klei haMikdash 5:10) feels the need to integrate the universal obligation to fast on this singular day into the avodah-mikdash structure by repeatedly referring to the day as "yom ha-zom". Certainly, the aspirations and attainments of the kohen gadol as the vehicle for Klal Yisrael are difficult to match, seemingly impossible to supersede.

Yet, sukkot is emphatically no spiritual derogation or compression. It is an authentic and spiritually ambitious successor to Yom haKippurim, as numerous meforshim discern from the otherwise superfluous emphasis of, "la-chodesh hashvii hazeh" (23:34). Indeed, some propose that Sukkot was integrated into the Tishrei cycle although it naturally should have been celebrated in the aftermath of yeziat Mitzrayim, not only because the miracle was more discernable during Tishrei, but because it is the appropriate continuation and complement to Yom Kippur and the yemei teshuvah of Tishrei.

This certainly is acutely manifest in the yirah-simchah dialectic (see The Link Between Yom Kippur and Sukkot)), but it also is exhibited in the respective

manifestations of avodah-mikdash. In the aftermath of structured and kohen-gadol-focused avodat ha-yom, Sukkot involves all of Klal Yisrael, and even simulates a quasi-avodah in the form of the simchah of the four-minim obligation. It is noteworthy that some tosafists (see Tosafot Rabbeinu Peretz and Ramban, Pesachim 36a; Ritva Sukkah 9a, 30a) argue that the Talmud Bavli disqualifies only the mitzvot of lulav and korban on the basis of mizvah ha-baah be-aveirah (mitzvah enabled by an illegal transgression), as ritzui, an idealistic korbon-esque requirement that is indispensable to both, cannot abide this offensive taint. While the Talmud Bavli (Arachin 10a) identifies ribui korbonot (distinctive korbonot configurations each day of the festival) as the basis for an independent obligation to recite hallel each day of Sukkot (in contrast to Pesach), it is interesting that the Yerushalmi (Sukkot 5:1) attributes this phenomenon to the obligation to rejoice with the four-minim in the mikdash each of the seven days. Numerous other sources reinforce the notion that the mitzvah of lulav parallels or is perceived as a dimension of avodah-korban.

The korbon-avodah-mikdash motif is equally evident with respect to the other prominent mitzvah that defines this chag, sukkah. The dimensions of the sukkah are linked to the dimensions of the mishkan in the first chapter of tractate sukkah. The sukkah is designated and defined in the Sifrei as an entity that is consequentially invested and suffused with the stature of Hashem's Divine name (sheim shamayim chal alehah) stemming from the sanctity and hashraat haShechinah that models the mikdash. Indeed, the geonim discuss whether the prohibition of kapandarya (use as a short-cut) that originates in the sanctified status of the mikdash applies also to the sukkah. Poskim debate the parameters of appropriate conduct in the sukkah in light of the dialectic of sanctity, on the one hand, and ubiquitous presence and familiar use based on the principle of teishvu ke-ein taduru, on the other.

It is perhaps consistent with this perspective on the symmetrical relationship between Yom Kippur and Sukkot that the Rambam, who was impelled to reiterate the tzom motif in the avodat Yom haKippurim, also strikingly identifies and projects the mikdash experience as an integral part of Hilchot Lulav and Sukkah. In the koteret to Hilchot Lulav and in his Sefer haMitzvot he emphasizes the seven day mikdash obligation of lulav,

although most of the Jewish world only fulfill this biblical obligation on the first day! It is evident that he perceives the extended obligation not as an independent kiyum in the mikdash, but as the most ideal expression of the core one-day mitzvah, as well. [This may be the case notwithstanding some differences in the details of implementation, an issue that is debated by the rishonim, I hope to address this in an expanded treatment of these topics.] This position underscores the singular character of sukkot as a manifestation of hashraat haShechinah, and an outpost of the mikdash and avodah. The very existence of a form of ritzui and avodah outside of the typical formal confines and structures is a remarkable phenomenon and reflection of the singular character this mitzvah, albeit one that is even more powerfully expressed in the mikdash itself.

Toward the conclusion of Hilchot Lulav (8:12), the Rambam invokes the verse that is the focal point of the second presentation of Sukkot and the source of the mikdash extension of the mitzvah of lulav (that he cites as relevant in the koteret and Sefer haMizvot, as noted) - "usemachtem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem shivat yamim"- to support his view that the nightly mikdash celebrations of simchat beit ha-shoeivah distinguish Sukkot as a unique festival of "simchah yeteirah". Rav Soloveitchik zt"l (Kovetz Chidushei Torah) notes that the Rambam evidently does not associate simchat beit hashoevah as a special mikdash manifestation of nisuch ha-mayim. Had this been the case, he would have codified these halachot in Sefer Avodah in that alternative context. He concludes that the Rambam believed that simchat beit ha-shoevah, and the charge of "usmahtem" was a singular expression of simchat yom tov that was reserved for and confined to the celebration of yom tov in the mikdash.

However, the fact is that the Rambam formulates this position in Hilchot Lulav. Moreover, he cites simchat beit ha-shoeivah in his Sefer haMizvot (aseh 55) in a broader discussion of simchat yom tov. In light of his integration of the mikdash celebration of lulav, based on the same verse, as a more intense application of the more universal lulav obligation, we might modify this conclusion. Near the conclusion of his discussion of sukkot, the Rambam articulated the idea that the Torah itself subtly formulated by adding a supplementary treatment of this remarkable hag, the idea that unique among the chagim, and possibly against the backdrop of the Yom Kippur experience, the

intense mikdash motifs of Sukkot highlight the capacity to bring even some dimensions of ritzui, avodah and hashraat haShechinah into our sukkot-homes. This capacity and its expression within the framework of yom tov is, indeed, worthy of "simchah yeteirah".

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The Arc of the Moral Universe
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l
Ha'azinu

In majestic language, Moses breaks into song, investing his final testament to the Israelites with all the power and passion at his command. He begins dramatically but gently, calling heaven and earth to witness what he is about to say, sounding ironically very much like “The quality of mercy is not strained”, Portia’s speech in The Merchant of Venice.

Listen, heavens, and I will speak;
Let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

May my teaching pour down like rain

Let my speech fall like the dew;

Like gentle rain on tender plants,

Like showers upon the grasses. Deut. 32:1-2

But this is a mere prelude to the core message Moses wants to convey. It is the idea known as tzidduk haDin, vindicating God’s justice. The way Moses puts it is this:

The Rock, His work is whole,

And all His ways are justice.

A God of faith who does no wrong,

Just is He, and upright. Deut. 32:4

This is a doctrine fundamental to Judaism and its understanding of evil and suffering in the world – a difficult but necessary doctrine. God is just. Why then do bad things happen?

Did He act ruinously? No, with His children lies the fault,

A warped and twisted generation. Deut. 32:5

God requites good with good, evil with evil. When bad things happen to us it is because we have been guilty of doing bad things ourselves. The fault lies not in our stars but ourselves.

Moving into the prophetic mode, Moses foresees what he has already predicted, even before they have crossed the

Jordan and entered the land. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy he has been warning of the danger that, in their land, once the hardships of the desert and the struggles of battle have been forgotten, the people will become comfortable and complacent. They will attribute their achievements to themselves and they will drift from their faith. When this happens they will bring disaster on themselves:

Yeshurun grew fat and kicked –
You became bloated, gross, coarse –
They abandoned God who made them
And rejected the Rock of their rescue...
You deserted the Rock that bore you;
You forgot the God who gave you birth. Deut. 32:15-18
This, the first use of the word Yeshurun in the Torah – from the root yashar, upright – is deliberately ironic. It underlines its prophecy that Israel, who once knew what it was to be upright, will be led astray by a combination of affluence, security and assimilation to the ways of its neighbours. It will betray the terms of the covenant, and when that happens it will find that God is no longer with it. It will discover that history is a ravaging wolf. Separated from the source of its strength, it will be overpowered by its enemies. All that the nation once enjoyed will be lost. It is a stark and terrifying message. Yet Moses is here bringing the Torah to a close with a theme that has been there from the beginning. God, Creator of the universe, made a world that is fundamentally good: the word that echoes seven times in the first chapter of Genesis. It is humans, granted freewill as God's image and likeness, who introduce evil into the world, and then suffer its consequences. Hence Moses' insistence that when trouble and tragedy appear, we should search for the cause within ourselves, and not blame God. God is upright and just. The defect is in us, His children.

This is perhaps the most difficult idea in the whole of Judaism. It is open to the simplest of objections, one that has sounded in almost every generation. If God is just, why do bad things happen to good people? This is the question asked not by sceptics and doubters, but by the very heroes of faith. We hear it in Abraham's plea, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" We hear it in Moses' challenge "Why have you done evil to this people?" It sounds again in Jeremiah:

"Lord, you are always right when I dispute with You. Yet I must plead my case before You: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy?" Jer. 12:1

It is an argument that never ceased. It continued through the rabbinic literature. It was heard again in the kinot, the laments, prompted by the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages. It sounds in the literature produced in the wake of the Spanish expulsion, and echoes still when we recall the Holocaust.

The Talmud says that of all the questions Moses asked God, this was the one to which God did not give an answer.[1] The simplest, deepest interpretation is given in Psalm 92, "The song of the Sabbath day." Though "the wicked spring up like grass," (Ps. 92:7) they will eventually be destroyed. The righteous, by contrast, "flourish like a palm tree and grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon." (Ps. 92:13) Evil wins in the short term but never in the long. The wicked are like grass, the righteous like a tree. Grass grows overnight but it takes years for a tree to reach its full height. In the long run, tyrannies are defeated. Empires decline and fall. Goodness and rightness win the final battle. As Martin Luther King Jr. said in the spirit of the Psalm: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." [2]

It is a difficult belief, this commitment to seeing justice in history under the sovereignty of God. Yet consider the alternatives. They are three. The first option is to say that there is no meaning in history whatsoever. Homo hominis lupus est, "Man is wolf to man". As Thucydides said in the name of the Athenians: "The strong do as they want, the weak suffer what they must." History is a Darwinian struggle to survive, and justice is no more than the name given to the will of the stronger party.

The second, about which I write in my book *Not in God's Name*, is dualism, the idea that evil comes not from God but from an independent force: Satan, the Devil, the Antichrist, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness, and the many other names given to the force that is not God but is opposed to Him and those who worship Him. This idea, which has surfaced in sectarian forms in each of the Abrahamic monotheisms, as well as in modern, secular totalitarianisms, is one of the most dangerous in all of history. It divides humanity into the unshakeably good and the irredeemably evil, giving rise to a long history of bloodshed and barbarism of the kind we see being enacted today in many parts of the world in the name of

holy war against the greater and lesser Satan. This is dualism, not monotheism, and the Sages, who called it shtei reshuyot, “two powers” or “domains”[3], were right to reject it utterly.

The third, debated extensively in the rabbinic literature, is to say that justice ultimately exists in the world to come, in life after death. Yet though this is an essential element of Judaism, it is striking how relatively little Judaism had recourse to it, recognising that the central thrust of Tanach is on this world, and life before death. For it is here that we must work for justice, fairness, compassion, decency, the alleviation of poverty, and the perfection, as far as lies within our power, of society and our individual lives. Tanach almost never takes this option. God does not say to Jeremiah or Job that the answer to their question exists in heaven and they will see it as soon as they end their stay on earth. The passion for justice so characteristic of Judaism would dissipate entirely were this the only answer.

Difficult though Jewish faith is, it has had the effect throughout history of leading us to say: if bad things have happened, let us blame no one but ourselves, and let us labour to make them better. It was this that led Jews, time and again, to emerge from tragedy, shaken, scarred, limping like Jacob after his encounter with the angel, yet resolved to begin again, to rededicate ourselves to our mission and faith, to ascribe our achievements to God and our defeats to ourselves.

I believe that out of such humility, a momentous strength is born.

[1] The full discussion can be found in Brachot 7a.

[2] “Out of the Long Night,” The Gospel Messenger, February 8, 1958, p. 14.

[3] Brachot 33b.

from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> date: Oct 6, 2022, 7:00 PM subject: Tidbits for Parashas Haazinu
In memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz zt"l

“וַיְדַבֵּר ד' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר”

“Hashem spoke to Moshe in the middle of that day, saying” (Devarim 32:48)

Rashi says that the Torah mentions the phrase, “b’etzem hayom hazeh” in three places. First, regarding Noach when evildoers schemed to prevent him from entering the Teivah. Hashem declared in response that He will have Noach enter the Teiva “in the middle of that day”, in

broad daylight, and no one will stop him. The second time occurred when the Egyptians swore that they would prevent Klal Yisrael from departing Mitzrayim; Hashem similarly countered that He will have B’nei Yisrael depart in the middle of the day, and no one will prevent their redemption. The third occurrence is in our Parashah; Klal Yisrael, out of tremendous love for their leader Moshe, attempted to prevent Moshe from ascending the mountain that was to be his final resting place. To their dismay, Hashem insisted that he would bring Moshe up in broad daylight. Rav Yitzchok Feigelstock zt”l asks: How can we possibly equate Klal Yisrael cleaving to their leader out of tremendous desire for ruchniyus with the other two occurrences of evildoers?

The Sefer Tomer Devorah writes that one of Hashem’s great middos is that of savlanus, tolerance and patience. Every moment of the day Hashem provides us with strength and with all of our needs, which means that even when a person is in the midst of a sinful act, Hashem is sustaining him and his evildoing! Amongst His many attributes of mercy, Hashem is tolerant and patient and does not withdraw His sustenance from Man, always anticipating that the sinner will repent in the future. Rav Feigelstock zt”l explains that in these three instances Hashem sought to demonstrate that He is the source of all strength, and He simply withheld His ‘supply’ of power from those who would go against His will. While the situations differed tremendously, the comparison is not to equate these circumstances. Rather, in these special circumstances Hashem chose to make known that it is He who is the source of all power. Thus, Hashem interceded in this manner by ceasing to grant those who sought to act contrary to His desired outcome.

<https://outorah.org/p/3052/>

Rabbi Weinreb’s Torah Column, Vayera

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

HOSPITALITY BEFORE HEAVEN

He was an old man, frail, tired, and bereaved. News of Hitler's advancing army preoccupied him, and he was overwhelmed, if not broken, by the requests for advice he was receiving from hundreds of troubled Jews. Indeed, he may have already sensed that he had only months to live.

His name was **Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski**, and he was universally acknowledged to be the world's leading Talmudic scholar. He lived in the city of Vilna, and the

time was late 1939. The person who told me the story was then a young man, barely twenty years old. He was himself a refugee, along with his fellow yeshiva students. He found himself in the neighborhood of Rabbi Grodzinski's residence during the Sukkot holiday. He decided he would attempt to visit the Rabbi, although he knew that he might not be granted an audience.

How surprised he was to find the Rabbi alone, studying and writing. The rabbi welcomed him, inquired about his welfare, and invited the visitor to join him in a light lunch. The Rabbi told him that because of his age and physical weakness he deemed himself to be exempt from the requirement to eat in the sukkah. He considered himself a mitzta'er, one whose physical discomfort freed him from the sukkah requirement.

"But you," the Rabbi continued, "are a young man and reasonably healthy. Therefore, take this plate of food down to the sukkah in the courtyard, and excuse me for not being able to join you." The young man did so, but soon, sitting in the sukkah by himself, was surprised to hear the old Rabbi slowly making his way down the many steps from his apartment to join him in the sukkah.

"You may wonder why I am joining you," exclaimed the old Rabbi. "It is because although a mitzta'er, one who is in great discomfort, is exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah, he is not exempt from the mitzvah of hospitality, of hachnasat orchim."

This anecdote underscores the importance of the mitzvah of hospitality and illustrates the fact that even great physical discomfort does not excuse a person from properly receiving and entertaining his guests.

Of course, the biblical basis for Rabbi Grodzinski teaching is to be found in this week's Torah portion, Vayera. In the opening verses, we find that Abraham, despite the fact that he was recovering from his recent circumcision, exerts himself to welcome a small group of wayfarers and tends to their needs with exquisite care. ...

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Haazinu Shema Yisrael Torah Network
Peninim PARSHAS HAAZINU

Give ears, O' Heavens, and I will speak... Remember the days of yore... when Hashem will have judged His People, He shall relent regarding His servants. (32:1,7,36)

Two themes seem to stand out throughout Shiras Ha'azinu, The Song of Ha'azinu. First, Chazal refer to this sketch of history as a song. Horav Gedalyah Schorr, zl, explains the concept of song with regard to Jewish history. A song implies the concept of harmony. This means that all elements of an orchestra, a musical score with its high and low notes, all the voices of a choir work together in total harmony, creating a perfect and pleasant sound. Likewise, we recognize that all of the elements of the universe fuse together in carrying out G-d's Will. From a historical perspective, we look back and recognize how all of the aspects of the past, present and future meld together into a harmonious blend. What did not make sense in the past is only too clear in the present and must be prevented in the future. The more spiritually elevated one is, the clearer is his perspective. He sees the larger picture.

Second, we see that history has a pattern. Nothing occurs in a vacuum. Hashem presents reward and punishment, but, above all, He never rejects us. Regardless of our ingratitude, our flirting with secularism, and our dabbling in the morally bankrupt society in which we live, Hashem always takes us back. While our ultimate redemption is not contingent upon repentance - it helps. Shiras Ha'azinu guarantees our survival and the downfall of our enemies.

The song represents the spirit of the Torah which connects us to Hashem. A song is the expression of one's inner self. While there are those who, in their way of life, have rejected the Torah, its song continues to resonate within them. As long as one has a Yiddishe Neshamah, Jewish Soul, he is inextricably connected to Hashem. I believe it was the Baal Shem Tov who said, "Man can say he is with G-d; he can say he is against G-d; but he can never say that he is without G-d." Hashem never turns Himself away from us. He merely conceals His Countenance when we sin, but He is always present - waiting for our return.

The following vignettes demonstrate Jewish spiritual resilience even under the most difficult duress and how, regardless one's distance from Hashem, the connection endures. Horav Ezriel Tauber, Shlita, relates how a heinous act of cruelty became a springboard for increased faith in Hashem, inspiring even the most assimilated Jews to experience an unparalleled spiritual revelation, allowing them to achieve Kiddush Shem Shomayim as they left this world.

The Nazis were not satisfied with destroying the Jews physically; they sought also to devastate the Jewish spirit, to utterly abase it. Their diabolical plan involved a curtain - a curtain that had once been the Paroches, Curtain, hanging over an Aron HaKodesh, Holy Ark, in which the Torah scrolls had been stored. Embroidered on the front of this curtain were the words: Zeh ha'Shaar l'Hashem tzaddikim yavo'u bah, "This is the Gate of G-d, the righteous shall enter therein."

Their goal was to provoke utter shock and despair, to break the spirit within the condemned Jews, hoping thereby that the hapless Jews would renounce their faith at the last moment and turn against their Creator.

They were wrong. On the contrary, the opposite occurred. The sight of these holy words had an unprecedented spiritual impact upon the condemned who were destined to enter the "Gate of G-d." Some of them were individuals whose souls were dormant during a lifetime of alienation from Torah and mitzvos. Yet they suddenly came alive within them. They felt a new strength of spirit, as they went to their final mortal destination amid song and dance. They understood - indeed, they knew - clearly and without a doubt that this gate, the gate to the gas chambers, truly led to Hashem.

Horav Yisrael Meir Lau, Shlita, was asked to speak at a conference sponsored by and held at Tel Aviv University. He would be sharing the podium with a guest of honor from France: Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger. The conference was to take place on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day. The Cardinal was going to address the topic: "The place of G-d in the Holocaust." Rav Lau was asked to debate the Cardinal. The Rav flatly refused.

He refused because it was a chillul Hashem, a desecration of Hashem's Name. Cardinal Lustiger had been born a Jew, apostatized himself and converted to Catholicism. His mother had perished in Auschwitz. As a lad of fourteen, the young Jean-Marie knowingly and willingly baptized himself. Thus, the Jewish boy, born Ahron Lustiger, became the Catholic Jean-Marie Lustiger.

One can imagine that the Chief Rabbi's decision caused a furor in a country not unused to political commotion. The Rav felt that a university, albeit secular, but yet under Jewish auspices, in a Jewish state, could do better than select an apostate guest of honor to commemorate the

Holocaust. Yet, the secularists felt the Rav owed the country an explanation.

The next day, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Chief Rabbi spoke at the Great Synagogue shortly prior to reciting the Yizkor memorial service. He said, "Hitler gave us six-million reasons to recite Kaddish, but following Lustiger's path would mean that there would be no descendants left to recite Kaddish for those who perished. At their darkest hour in history, Lustiger turned away and defected from his people. At a time when they needed maximum encouragement, he cowered under a cross. He went as far as to choose a lifestyle that would not permit him to raise a family, insuring that no one would remain to recite Kaddish for him."

Now that I have presented how far astray this man had swerved from the Judaism of his ancestors, I will share with the readers a little secret about this apostate. On those days of the year when Cardinal Lustiger has Yahrzeit for his father and mother, he removes his Catholic cloak, dons an ordinary suit and hat, and goes to a synagogue in Paris to recite Kaddish! This may scream of hypocrisy, but I think it indicates once again what is part and parcel of our glorious history: A Jew is inextricably bound with Judaism. There is no exit strategy. We are one with Hashem. We cannot and may not judge those who have left the fold, become alienated or assimilated, or are just plain lost. Hashem does that. He is the Judge. Our purpose is to never give up on a Jew - because Hashem never does.

Throughout the generations, from father to son, we have passed on the torch of Torah tradition. The Shiras Ha'azinu guarantees that we will endure as a nation, due to our connection to the Torah. During the most bitter times, Jews have continued to study the Torah. When times were troublesome and persecution reigned, we held back, but as soon as we were able, we immediately planted the seeds of the next generation. Rebbetzin Tzila Sorotzkin, a"h, was one of the leading mechanchos, educators, of the nascent Bais Yaakov movement. She was also a Holocaust survivor whose exploits during those tragic years were legendary. She remarked, "In all of the six years of the war, I cried only once. I was in the most horrible camps. I lost my entire family. I was left all alone in the world, bereft of family, broken in body and spirit - but I did not cry. I returned to my hometown and

found a ghost town - not a living soul remained - yet, I still did not cry."

She was told to go to Lodz where the refugees were gathered. Perhaps she would find someone there, a relative, an acquaintance. With her last bit of strength, she traveled to Lodz, in the hope of finding someone she knew. Walking through the streets as twilight approached, she suddenly heard sounds which she recognized - coming from one of the windows. She followed the sounds up to a second-floor ancient apartment. In the darkness she made out a group of young boys with payos, all sitting around a table. At the head of the table sat an elderly Jew, wearing a baseball cap. The children were chanting the Aleph Bais to the familiar niggun, tune, which she remembered from her youth! She immediately began to cry, and then she passed out. A few moments later, she was revived.

"What happened to you?" they asked. "Can we help you? Who are you? Perhaps we can give you something to eat." Slowly she recovered and replied, "This is the first time I have cried in six years, but I am not crying from pain. I cry from joy. I wandered far and wide until I reached Lodz; finally I see Poland as it once was, I see it in its original glory. And if, after all that we have endured, after all of our suffering, little boys with payos are sitting around a table with an elderly teacher teaching them the Aleph Bais - then no one can defeat us. Let me catch my breath. Let me savor the moment. I feel fine. These are tears of joy - not of pain."

The Rock! - Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; A G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He. (32:4)

The term tamim, perfect, is a reference to the totality of Hashem's work - the big picture. Individual life is part of a large puzzle with countless pieces of all shapes and sizes, representing good fortune, failure, joy and sadness, tragedy and celebration. When these are all factored together by Hashem, everything fits in perfectly. Human cognition is limited; thus, we are able to grasp very little. If it makes sense to the human mind, it is good. If it does not make sense, it is not good. This is the human way of understanding a situation. It sees the here and now - not the yesterday or the tomorrow. Hashem sees it all and knows how to put it all together - perfectly. Accepting Divine Judgment is one of the primary Articles of Faith.

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, explains the middah, character trait, of nosei b'ol im chaveiro, sharing in a friend's burden. We are not here for ourselves, but rather, to share with others - in both their joy and sadness. The Mashgiach suggests that following the formula of nosei b'ol im chaveiro, one has the opportunity to help his friend, to the point that he could actually be the reason that his friend's life is spared. Imagine, a Heavenly decree is issued against Reuven that his life on this world will be halted abruptly. Hashem factors in the pain that Reuven's premature demise will cause others, including his relatives and friends. If one of them is not deserving of this pain, that person could be an advocate on behalf of Reuven. In the interim, Reuven might repent and be spared the decree's realization.

Earthly justice does not take the feelings of others into consideration. The larger picture does not apply to them. In a court of law, the judge or jury renders a decision. No one else has any bearing on their decision. Only one who is perfect can render a perfect decision. He can punish the defendant in such a manner that others will not be affected.

Furthermore, if a good friend is taken ill and it troubles us, we should introspect and wonder what it is that we did to warrant this pain. Hashem is not merely speaking to the stricken patient; He is conveying a message to all those who are affected by his troubles. Indeed, Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl, would remark that one should see to it that he has many friends who care about him. Who knows? They might become the reason that he is spared from misfortune.

The Chafetz Chaim, quoted by Rav Yerachmiel Chasid, addresses the fact that upon occasion - probably more often than we care to acknowledge- one will complain about his health, financial status and lack of good fortune. He wonders, "Why is this happening to me? To the best of my knowledge, I have been pretty good. I certainly do not warrant such punishment."

The Chafetz Chaim explains that we often ignore the fact that Yom Kippur serves as atonement only for those sins which one commits against Heaven. Hashem doesn't forgive the individual for sins against his fellow man - such as slander, humiliation, cheating in finances, loan repayment - without the victim's forgiveness. The person leaves this world and, when he arrives at his eternal rest, he is informed that he is returning to this world until that

time that he appeases his victim. When the person hears that he must return, he begins to weep bitterly, begging for mercy, claiming that the reason he acted so inappropriately to others was arrogance born of wealth, power and success. He was blessed with an attractive and healthy physical countenance which catalyzed within him a sense of superiority. At least this time, if he must be sent back, will the Almighty please not grant him such success, such good health, such incredible good fortune, such wealth? He could do with the bare minimum - even ill-health is something with which he could live. The fewer reasons for feeling superior to others, for inducing arrogance - the better. Therefore, without realizing it, it is quite possible that what we are going through now is a fulfillment of our own request.

Yeshurun waxed fat, and rebelled. (32:15)

The pasuk implies that wealth is the source of Klal Yisrael's rebellion, indicating that prosperity may not contribute to a strong spiritual balance. It is almost as if wealth is a curse, not a blessing. Yet, two pesukim earlier the Torah tells us that we will be blessed with material abundance: Yarkiveihu al bamesei aretz, va'yochal tenuvos sadai, "He shall cause them to ride the high places of the Land and eat the produce of its fields" (ibid. 32:13). Klal Yisrael will enter the land and be greeted with incredible prosperity. Apparently, here prosperity comes across as a blessing.

On the one hand, we pray for material bounty, so that we may better serve Hashem and help others. We ask for Chaim shel osher v'kavod, "A life of wealth and honor." Yet, we see from the above pasuk, that gashmius, materialism, can lead us to turn away from Hashem. We are ironically praying for the very trait that can cause us to fall into the abyss of sin.

Perhaps, the Torah's use of the word va'yishman, "Yeshurun waxed fat," indicates a change within the person, much like one who eats excessively, causing him to put on weight. He is different from the person who is carrying excessive baggage. When they stand on a scale, they both weigh the same - only one is himself overweight, while the other is weighed down by his baggage. There are those who, upon striking it rich, allow the newly-found wealth to change them. The wealth becomes assimilated into their psyche, such that their whole perspective on life, people and G-d becomes altered. For them, prosperity can be a curse. There are

others for whom wealth is like an extra suitcase. They have not changed; they just have more baggage to manage.

In addressing the question of whether prosperity is a blessing or a curse, Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, comments that it very well depends on how-- and at what rate-- one becomes wealthy. Parashas Ha'azinu, which decries the Jewish People's insubordination due to their excess materialism, is warning of the hazards of sudden wealth. Such prosperity presents a new set of nisyonos, challenges and trials. One who has become accustomed to watching the balance in his checkbook scrupulously after he shops at the grocery, might become overwhelmed when he has more credit cards than he knows how to manage. Newfound wealth can confound a person if he is not prepared for it gradually.

We see it all of the time with the lottery winners who spend their winnings almost overnight on frivolities and foolishness. The temptations which were once out of reach are suddenly available for the picking. How often do we hear of a lottery winner donating a portion of his winnings to charity - or sharing with friends and family?

Those who accumulate wealth slowly and moderately become gradually accustomed to wealth. They learn to save, to guard their assets, to invest wisely, to purchase astutely. They are still challenged by wealth, but now they are not overwhelmed by it. It is something with which they can cope. Wealth and material abundance are truly blessings, since they allow one to expand his horizons, to achieve more, to help a greater number of people. The danger is in how quickly he becomes wealthy. He should not want to "strike it rich," but rather, to amass wealth gradually, by installments, establishing a stronger foundation to overcome the eventual challenges which present themselves as his portfolio grows.

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that wealth poses another challenge: it is addictive. Mi she'yeish lo manah rotzeh masayim, "One who has a hundred (coins) wants two hundred." A person is not satisfied with his bounty. It is never enough. It has nothing to do with how quickly one ascends the ladder of affluence. Suddenly, what used to be considered a luxury becomes a necessity. The "once in ten-year" vacation becomes a bi-annual requirement. People who had been accustomed to a simple lifestyle are now exposed; they suddenly indulge in extravagant and exorbitant diversions.

At the end of the day, such a person had been much better off when he was not wealthy. The simple life presented fewer challenges - or, at least, challenges that he was able to handle. Now, he cannot seem to cope with all of the added requirements placed on him by virtue of his prosperous circumstances. More is expected of him. His home is inundated with people seeking his help; his privacy is invaded; his "advice" is sought - day and night. While all of these are really a good thing - one must be ready and willing to accept it. A "rich" wallet with a "poor" mind does not balance very well.

Rav Belsky adds another practical malady from which people who achieve wealth may suffer. They become preoccupied with the fear of uncertainty. "What will be if my wealth comes to an end? What will I do if I make a bad investment and lose my money? How do I know the market will produce this year?" There is no guarantee to prosperity - regardless of its size. People make mistakes; natural disasters can wipe out a portfolio overnight. When one does not have something, he does not worry about losing it. When one is heavily invested in many areas of commercial trade, the newspaper's business section becomes his Bible.

After all is said and done, I think the answer to our original question-- whether prosperity is a blessing or a curse -- depends on one factor: Does the individual acknowledge and never forget the Source of his wealth? When a person realizes that whatever he has is derived directly from Hashem and that this gift comes along with responsibility, the wealth then becomes a blessing. The person who foolishly believes that his affluence is the result of his own doing, however, his acumen - even his good fortune - is far from blessed. He had better prepare a contingency plan for himself.

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Rabbi YY Jacobson
My Love Will Be Stronger than Your Defiance
We Can All Use a Hug: The Power of the Sukkah
A Gift to a Mother

Three sons left home, went out on their own, and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts

they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our mother."

The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver."

The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You know how Mom enjoys the Bible, and you know she can't see very well. I sent her a brown parrot that can recite the entire Bible. It took 12 years to teach him. I had to spend \$100,000 a year for 10 years, but it was worth it. Mom just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot will recite it."

Soon thereafter, Mom sent out her letters of thanks:

"Milton," she wrote, to her first son, "The house you built is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house."

"Marvin," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel. I stay home all the time, so I never use the Mercedes. And the driver is so boring!"

"Dearest Melvin," she wrote to her third son, "You were the only son to have the good sense to know what your mother likes. That chicken was delicious."

Anatomy of a Sukkah

For the past three millennia, during the seven days of the joyous festival of Sukkos, we eat, drink, feast, schmuez, relax, read and sleep in a temporary structure, or hut, known as a Sukkah. This structure consists of walls and a roof composed of material that grew from the ground, like bamboo, straw, or branches.

How many walls does the Sukkah require? Jewish law states that a Sukkah must have two complete walls plus a third wall that may even be one handbreadth long (1). If your Sukkah has three or four complete walls, that's wonderful; but the minimum requirement is two walls and a tiny piece of a third wall.

Why does the law dictate this exact requirement for the Sukkah walls (2)? And what really is the spiritual and psychological significance of spending seven days in a hut on your porch or backyard?

Anatomy of an Embrace

Two extraordinary Jewish thinkers, the Arizal, Rabbi Isaac Luria (3) and Rabbi Schnuer Zalman of Liadi (4) turn our attention to the affectionate words uttered by the Bride in the Song of Songs (5), "His left arm lay under my head and His right arm embraces me." These words address (6), in metaphorical prose, two distinct moments in the relationship between G-d the Groom and His people, the bride. During the "days of awe," Rosh

Hashanah and Yom Kippur, G-d's "left arm," as it were, lay under the head of the Jewish people. The left side represents in Kabbalah introspection, awe, discipline, and discernment, and this is the primary theme of the days of awe.

Sukkos, on the other hand, described in the Torah as "the time of our joy," constitutes the point during the year when "G-d's right arm embraces me." The right arm represents, in Kabbalah, love, and kindness.

Take a look at any of your arms, says Rabbi Isaac Luria, and you will notice its division into three distinct sections, each one usually extending in a different direction. The first is the arm itself, from the shoulder to the elbow; the second is the forearm, from the elbow to the wrist; and the third section is from the wrist to the edge of the fingers.

Now, take a good look at your Sukkah and you will notice a "right arm's embrace." The first complete wall represents a Divine embrace from the "shoulder" to the "elbow"; the second wall reflects the embrace of the "forearm" and the third tiny wall symbolizes the palm embrace.

Rabbi Isaac Luria takes this a step further. He explains that these three dimensions of an arm's embrace encompass three distinct parts of the body being embraced. When you embrace another person, explains Rabbi Chaim Vital (7) quoting his teacher Rabbi Isaac Luria, the highest part of the arm (between the shoulder and the elbow) encompasses the entire left waist of the one being embraced. The middle part of the person's arm, the forearm, expands over the entire width of the embraced person's back. Finally, the palm and the fingers extend even further and cover only a small part of the face of the embraced one, a handbreadth of the face.

The same is true concerning the Sukkah "embrace." The first two walls represent G-d's light embracing the left waist and the back of the human being dwelling in the Sukkah. The third wall of the Sukkah symbolizes the Divine energy embracing a small part of the Jew's face. (If you have a Sukkah of three or four complete walls, the hug is, of course, an all-embracing one, encircling your back and your face.)

This is the language of Kabbalah, written in codes and metaphors. But how can we apply these anthropomorphic descriptions in a visceral and practical way?

I will present the explanation presented by Chabad Chassidus into this insight by the Arizal.

How Do You Express Love?

There are different ways we express love (8). The first is through words of affection. The three simple words "I love you," when uttered sincerely, may have a transforming impact on another life. Words of affection express our inner emotive experience.

A second, more powerful expression of love is a kiss. A genuine kiss captures an intense feeling that may not be grasped in words. Words can state, "I love you," while a kiss declares, "I love you more than I will ever be able to tell you how much I love you."

A third, perhaps even more powerful expression of love comes in the form of a gaze. Two people in love can gaze at each other for long periods of time without uttering a sound. The sound of a silent gaze is sometimes louder than a thundering outpouring of love. There is something of your soul that you can communicate to another human being exclusively through your eyes (9).

A fourth universally accepted method of expressing love is by means of an embrace. A genuine hug embodies a profound bond existing between the two people embracing each other.

Dissecting the Hug

In Jewish mysticism, the diverse methods of communicating love represent different qualities of love. In the former three methods, the love is toward the face of the beloved one. You speak to one's face, you kiss one's cheeks or lips, and you gaze at one's eyes. In contrast, an embrace defines as its target the nape and back of the one being embraced.

That is not a coincidence. There are two forms of love, reciprocal and unconditional. The first is directed to the face of the beloved one; the second is directed to the back of the beloved.

I may love you because of what I receive in return for my relationship with you. Your wisdom, passion, depth, empathy, sensitivity, candidness, humor, beauty, talents, humor, values, etc. -- qualities expressed in and through your face, your eyes, ears, mouth, and general look -- enrich me. I love you because of these or other tremendous qualities that you bring to my life.

This is the type of love primarily communicated in words of affection, in a kiss, or in a silent, romantic gaze, all of them directed toward the face of the beloved one, the

primary location of reciprocity. When I express my attachment to you in these three or other forms, I am essentially stating that I cherish you because of your face, because of your qualities and virtues that enrich the caliber of my life. Without you, life for me is that much more empty, boring, and directionless.

This love is deep and powerful, but it is conditional. As long as you are here for me, I am here for you. In essence, I love you because I love myself, and you make my "self" so much deeper and happier.

Yet there is a love demonstrated in an embrace, in which my arms encircle your back. You may turn your back on me, but I won't stop hugging you. You may not give me anything in return for my love; you may even want me out of your life, but I still love you with all my heart, because my soul loves your soul. My core is one with your core.

We see it with parents and children. All healthy parents love their children but sometimes the love (at least on a conscious level) is dependent upon "nachas," the delight and pleasure my child gives me in return for my nurture. What happens in those situations when your child turns his or her back on you (usually because of trauma and emotional neglect)? It becomes very difficult for many parents to maintain the same level of intense love and connection. "He's spitting in the face of all my values, how can I show love? She is showing such disdain for her upbringing, how can I accept her?"

That's the secret of the hug. It is the freedom and the courage to transcend the need for reciprocity. I can show my child, or another child, that affection knows no limits. I love not only your face but also your back. Even as you turn your back on me, I will hold you tightly in my grip and not let go. You may not be interested in me, but I am forever connected to you.

That is why the hug is the only form of love that does not allow the beloved one to escape your embrace. When I utter words of love to you, when I gaze at you, even when I kiss you, I am not holding on to you; if you want to move away from me, it's your choice. But when I embrace you, even if you wish to escape my embrace, you remain "gripped" in my embrace; I won't let you tear yourself away from me.

This is not a coincidence. According to the Chassidic masters, this is the essence of a hug: You may want to run

away from me, but I will never run away from you. My love will prove stronger than your defiance.

In a way, it is only when my child defies me that I can prove to him or her that my love is more powerful than his or her defiance and it is then that I can heal his or her attachment wounds. When your loved one turns his back on you, you are being given a gift: the opportunity to embrace them with their defiance and their emotional wounds. This can become the greatest source of healing for both of you.

Hugging Your Child

That is why children appreciate so profoundly the embrace of their primary caregivers.

Children enjoy being spoken to. They certainly take pleasure from being kissed (at least sometimes) and being looked upon with tender affection. Children need to be seen and noticed. Yet, more than anything, most children, especially infants, cherish being hugged. When our children hurt themselves or break out in tears, they come running to their parents for a big and long hug to calm them down and restore their confidence.

When children contract a "booboo" of any form, they need to be soothed and made to feel safe, and secure, The hug, when done genuinely, makes a statement: "Your value is not dependent upon being perfect and impeccable. I love you unconditionally because of who you are and not because of what you achieve."

The Holiday of Talking, Kissing, Gazing, and Hugging
All of the Jewish holidays are about the expression of love.

Pesach is the holiday focused on speech (Peh Sach, means a speaking mouth. The mitzvah of Passover is to tell the story to your child verbally). G-d shows His love through words. Shavuot is the Divine kiss, communicated through the Torah, his inner breath. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur represent the Divine gaze (they are known as the time of "Yirah," awe, the same letters as the word "Reiyah," gazing). That is why they are days of awe and introspection: When the Kings of Kings gazes right at your soul, your soul feels it, and it is stirred.

But on Sukkos, G-d embraces us. It is time for the Infinite hug.

What exactly is the Mitzvah of Sukkah? What do you do in the Sukkah? Whatever you do at home, you do in the Sukkah for seven days, and it becomes a Mitzvah. So you eat, drink, chat, relax, hang out, read, meet people, nap,

and sleep in your Sukkah -- all mundane endeavors. The core of the mitzvah is that whenever you do at home, when you do the same thing on Sukkos inside the Sukkah it is a Mitzvah, a holy act, a Divine connection. I'm reading the paper, chatting with a friend, taking a stroll, or drinking orange juice in the Sukkah, and it is a Mitzvah. It's not about what you are doing, but where you are doing it. The most physically mundane act performed inside the walls of the Sukkah is defined in Judaism as a medium through which we craft a relationship with the Creator.

G-d is whispering this message via the walls of the Sukkah: I love you in the totality of your being. I am crazy about every part and aspect of your life. Like a mom who kvels as she watches her infant eating or taking a nap, just because this is her beloved child, so too does G-d cherish us eating, relaxing, or resting in the Sukkah. The walls of the Sukkah capture the love that has no conditions, no qualifications, and no boundaries. As you enter the walls of G-d's embrace, your back is as cherished as your face. G-d says: I love you the way you are and in every facet of your being.

This is the Divine whisper shared by the walls of the Sukkah: My child, you are in my grip of love. Never ever will I let go of you. Even if you do not believe in Me, and even if you do not believe in yourself, I will never stop believing in you.

Sustaining the Embrace

The purpose of each Jewish holiday is to create an awareness that endures throughout the entire year. The "hug" displayed to us by G-d on Sukkos is meant to carry us through the entire year, to recall how meaningful and powerful every moment and experience of our lives is.

"In all your ways know Him," says King Solomon in Proverbs (10). Because really, there is no mundane aspect in your life. G-d takes it all in. He loves it all. (11)

1) Sukkah 6b; Rambam Hilchos Sukkah 4:2; Tur and Schulchan Aruch Orach Chaim section 630. 2) The Talmud *ibid.* derives this law from a biblical source. Here we will present the spiritual and psychological dimension of the law, based on the ancient axiom that each law and Mitzvah in the Torah and in the Talmud contains many layers of understanding. Not only are these multitude of interpretations not contradictory to each other, they actually evolve from each other and enrich each other. 3) Known as the Arizal. He is considered one of the greatest

mystics in Jewish history, he lived in Jerusalem, Egypt, and finally passed away in Sefad in 1572, after teaching kabbalah for two years and revolutionizing the landscape of Jewish mysticism. 4) Known as the "Elder Rebbe," The Rav, or the Baal Hatanya. The founder of Chabad Chassidus, he was considered one of the greatest Jewish leaders and personalities of his day. He passed away on 24 Teves, 1812 while escaping Napoleon's army. 5) 2:6. 6) Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Chag Hasukkos chapter 4. Likkutei Torah Derushim LeSukkos pp. 78-79; 82d; 84a-b; 87a. Cf. Or Hatorah Derushim LeSukkos pp. 1762-3. 7) Pri Eitz Chaim *ibid.* 8) See Likkutei Diburim (from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch) vol. 1, opening discourse. 9) See Midrash Rabah Song of Song 1:15, explaining the words "Your eyes are like those of a dove." 10) Proverbs 3:6 11) This essay is based on the works of Rabbi Schnuer Zalman of Liadi (Likkutei Torah and Or Hatorah *ibid.* Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 418 and other sources). Cf. essay by Rabbi Yoel Kahn in Beor Hachasidus (published by Heichal Menachem, Brooklyn, NY) issue of Tishrei 5755.

from: **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**

<ravadlerstein@torah.org> to: targumim@torah.org date: Oct 6, 2022, 6:46 PM subject: Reb Yeruchem - **It's All About Him**

Based on Daas Torah by Rav Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l

Parshas Haazinu

The Rock – perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice.[2]

This is certainly an important statement about Hashem's ways, but what is it doing here? Parshas Haazinu at its essence is a section of tochecha/rebuke – not of theodicy. Why do we heap praise upon His exquisite sense of justice in the process of dwelling on our misconduct?

There is a parallel to this in our davening. "A person should first order his praise of Hashem and only then pray." [3] This should not be understood as sweetening the deal by offering a bribe before making requests. We have nothing to "give" to Hashem.

Rather, praise precedes our petitions because it subsumes all that we ask of Him. All of our needs that we lay before Him are but details, ramifications of the midos with which we describe Him. In the shemonah esrei that is the center of our prayer thrice daily, all the requests we make

are simply expansions and explanations of what we say about Him in the first berachah. (This is why kavanah during the first berachah is the minimum requirement for fulfilling the mitzvah. All the berachos that follow are already implied by that first berachah.)

For example: the Gra says that the berachah for teshuvah grows out of our description of Hashem in the first berachah as One who is gomel chassadim. It is that aspect of Hashem's nature that created the concept of teshuvah, and our ability to use it. Our later prayer for teshuvah, therefore, has already been implied in our recitation of the first berachah.

The same can be said for all the berachos in the middle section of the shemonah esrei. They have all been said – albeit in not quite so many words – from the beginning.

We can point to another instance of inclusion-by-implication. “You shall be holy, because I am holy.”[4] This is not just a restatement of the mitzvah of imitating His ways. Rather, it informs us about an identity. Hashem says, “Because I am holy, your need to be holy is implied.” The Sifra says this directly. “If you do not make yourselves holy, it is as if you failed to make Me holy.” Hashem's kedushah and ours are one; our kedushah is implied by, and included in, His. If we fail to recognize our kedushah, we impugn His!

We are not incorrect in sizing up Haazinu as tochechah. Nonetheless, we praise Hashem's perfect justice, because that praise includes and implies our rebuke! The madregah of Klal Yisrael is fixed and implied by Hashem's praiseworthy attributes. So is our rebuke. What greater rebuke can there be than contemplating Hashem's greatness and praise?

1. Based on Daas Torah by Rav Yeruchem Levovitz zt”l, Devarim vol.2 pgs 124-125 ↑ 2. Devarim 32:4 ↑ 3. Berachos 32a ↑ 4. Vayikra 19:2 ↑

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SUKKOT The Mitzvah of Building a Sukkah

By OU Staff June 29, 2006

In general, a mitzva consists of performing a certain action with a particular object. For example eating matza, donning tefillin, “taking” a lulav, and blowing a shofar

are all considered mitzvot. The mitzva consists of a precise action performed with a specific item known as the “cheftza” of the mitzva. In general, the “manufacture” of the item is not part of the essential mitzva. Instead, this preparatory stage is known as “hekhsher mitzva” – preparations which are necessary for the fulfillment of the mitzva but which do not constitute its essence. One would assume the same principle regarding sukka. The mitzva consists primarily in using a particular item (a sukka) as a residence, with the construction of the sukka being purely within the realm of hekhsher mitzva. A statement found in the Yerushalmi, however, alters this impression. The exact nature of the activity of building a sukka will form the subject of this article.

The mishna (9a) cites a machloket between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel regarding an “old” sukka. Suppose, instead of building a sukka for the purposes of Chag Sukkot, a person employs an old hut, which just happens to be built according to the halakhic blueprint of a sukka. Beit Shammai invalidates this sukka, requiring a “sukka lishma” – one built specifically for yom tov. Beit Hillel (whose opinion is accepted as halakha) permits any hut as long as it was built according to the proper specifications. The Yerushalmi, however, adds one stipulation according to Beit Hillel. When using an “old” sukka a person must build one small part anew – “vetzarikh lechadesh bah davar.” Many commentators interpret the Yerushalmi as defining a new mitzva – “construction of the sukka.” Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai argue about the texture of the sukka and whether an old hut will suffice. They each agree, however, that a person himself has a mitzva to actually ERECT the sukka. Thus, even though Beit Hillel tolerates the use of an existing structure, they require a small act of NEW construction so that the person will fulfill his obligation to build a sukka. Indeed the Ran (1a in the pages of the Rif) refers to this obligation of the Yerushalmi as “mitzva min ha-muvchar” while the Me’iri in his comments (to 9a) applies the label “hiddur mitzva.” The impression given is that this mitzva of constructing a sukka is not absolutely obligatory (it isn't me'akev be-dieved – if one doesn't actually build he has still fulfilled the principal mitzva); however, it still is preferable and enhances the quality of the mitzva.

SUMMARY:

The comment of the Yerushalmi – that when using an old sukka a person must at least add some new element – presents the impression that unlike other mitzvot, the mitzva of sukka actually involves manufacturing the cheftza of the mitzva.

The question remains as to whether this concept has any grounding in the Bavli. The gemara in Makkot (8a) discusses the fate of one who is chopping wood and subsequently kills a person when his ax blade dislodges. The gemara rules that such an inadvertent killer goes to exile only if his chopping was for mundane reasons, as opposed to chopping performed in the context of a mitzva. The gemara rules, however, that one who chops wood for a sukka is not chopping for a mitzva – since he is not required to chop; had he found chopped wood he could have utilized that wood. Rashi elaborates: “**THE ACTUAL CHOPPING IS NOT PART OF THE MITZVA, RATHER THE CONSTRUCTION IS THE MITZVA.**” Rashi declares construction of the sukka to be an integrated part of the actual mitzva of sukka. An additional gemara which might imply some sort of role for actual construction is the gemara in Sukka (46a) which examines a berakha recited on “sukka.” In order to fully appreciate this gemara, however, we must first glance at a parallel gemara in the Yerushalmi. In two locations (Sukka 1:2 and Berakhot 9:3) the Yerushalmi obligates one who builds a sukka to recite a specific birkat ha-mitzva – “la’asot sukka.” This reiterates the position of the Yerushalmi that the actual construction of a sukkah is a separate mitzva and therefore deserves its own berakha. There is of course no identical gemara in the Bavli requiring a berakha on building a sukka. However, the aforementioned gemara in Sukkah discusses a berakha – “shehechyanu.” The gemara initially rules that the she-hechyanu is recited when building the sukka. In fact the gemara asserts that if one uses a ready-made sukka, one should at least build some part anew to allow the berakha of she-hechyanu to be recited. Does this not indicate that some sort of mitzva DOES apply when actually building the sukka? In truth, to determine whether this gemara indeed implies a mitzva we must first examine the exact nature of this berakha of shehechyanu recited during construction of the sukka. One might claim (as earlier stated) that the she-hechyanu is being recited on the mitzva of building the sukka. Alternatively, one might assert that this she-

hechyanu is being recited for the yom tov of Sukkot. Instead of waiting until kiddush, the she-hechyanu for yom tov is recited during the first interface with the yom tov – during construction of the sukka, which heralds the arrival of yom tov. Ultimately, the gemara accepts the position of Rav Kahana who schedules this berakha of she-hechyanu during kiddush. According to Rav Kahana, the she-hechyanu on the yom tov cannot be recited prior to its actual arrival. But what underlies the first position of the gemara which mandates a she-hechyanu during construction of the sukka? It becomes necessary to determine the identity of this she-hechyanu: Does it address the mitzva of building a sukka (if indeed it is a mitzva) or does it mark instead the actual yom tov of Sukkot?

Tosafot in Sukka (46a – s.v. Ha-oseh) question why we recite a she-hechyanu on sukka and not on other mitzvot such as tefillin and tzitzit. Tosafot answer that the mitzva of sukka is a mitzva which relates to simcha (the special happiness of the festivals which involve a journey to Jerusalem, facilitated by the mitzvot of yom tov) and hence warrants a she-hechyanu. Tosafot definitely view the she-hechyanu as relating to the actual sukka and hence formulated their question: Why is this MITZVA different from others? Had the she-hechyanu addressed the yom tov of Sukkot the question would be meaningless. A second question which might help us determine the nature of this she-hechyanu is addressed by the Ritva. After reciting a she-hechyanu during construction of the sukka, must we recite a second one during kiddush? The Ritva rules that we must. Does this not indicate that the original she-hechyanu related to the mitzva of construction and not the actual yom tov; hence when the day arrives we must recite a second berakha on the yom tov? Of course we must refine our interpretation of the Bavli. If, according to the Bavli as well, building a sukka is a mitzva, why does it only receive a she-hechyanu and not a standard berakha like those recited on every mitzva [such as “la’asot sukka”] as mandated by the Yerushalmi? To answer this question we must consider the gemara in Menachot (42b) which rules that a “birkat ha-mitzva” is only recited when the mitzva is completed. Performing mila completes that mitzva and hence deserves a distinct berakha [“al ha-mila”] while manufacturing tefillin is merely a prelude to donning them and hence does not warrant a berakha. Since

building the sukka ultimately leads to the actual residence in it during Sukkot, according to the Bavli its berakha might be deferred. However, the construction is part of the mitzva and deserves a berakha – she-hechyanu. Possibly, the initial position cited in the gemara requiring a she-hechyanu during construction of the sukka highlights an independent mitzva of building the sukka – even according to the Bavli. Ultimately, we reject this position and rule that a she-hechyanu is only recited at the onset of yom tov during kiddush. According to this ruling, must our overall thesis (that construction is part of the mitzva) be likewise rejected? By reciting the she-hechyanu during kiddush was Rav Kahana rejecting any mitzva of building a sukka? Or is it possible that Rav Kahana was merely combining two separate she-hechyanus into one berakha – preferring that the she-hechyanu upon the sukka and the she-hechyanu upon Sukkot be collapsed into a berakha recited at the onset of yom tov when one first enters the sukka and recites kiddush? If we adopt the latter alternative, the concept of a separate mitzva to build a sukka might remain even according to Rav Kahana’s final position. The only point he questions is the necessity of an INDEPENDENT she-hechyanu to mark this mitzva.

SUMMARY:

Two statements in the Yerushalmi confirm the status of manufacturing a sukka as a mitzva. Moreover, the Bavli in Sukka which proposes a shehechyanu at the time of construction might further reflect this position. Even according to the final halakha, that shehechyanu is said only in kiddush, this concept – of construction as a mitzva – might remain.

METHODOLOGICAL POINTS:

1. Oftentimes, a Bavli and a Yerushalmi will dispute a particular halakha. The machloket itself is useful for crystallizing two distinct views of this halakha. 2. Sometimes the CONCEPT, most apparent in the Yerushalmi will hold water in the Bavli as well. The actual halakha of the Yerushalmi (which best reflects the PRINCIPLE or the CONCEPT) might be rejected by the Bavli for peripheral concerns. The Bavli might concede a mitzva in building the sukka but reject a distinct berakha because it isn’t the completion of the mitzva. According to the Bavli a berakha is only recited at the consummation of a mitzva.

AFTERWORD: 1. See the Netziv (commentary to the She’iltot 179) who addresses this question amidst a more general backdrop. He discusses additional instances in which acts of preparation (such as baking matza) constitute part of the actual mitzva. 2. The Bavli in Sukka which mandates a shehechyanu when building the sukka also requires one when binding the four minim. What does this demonstrate about the binding process? 3. Tosafot (s.v. Ha-oseh – the first one) claims that according to the initial position a shehechyanu is recited only when building a sukka for oneself – not when building for others. How can this position be defended in light of the above?

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Sukkah: A State of Mind

Rabbi Ron-Ami Meir, Yeshivat Darche Noam

“Mitz’ta’er”: A Definition

Comparing Sukkah to Tefilin

A Second Approach

Tying it All Together

“Mitz’ta’er”: A Definition The Talmud in Tractate Sukkah 25a cites the Amora, Rav, as declaring that a mourner is fully obligated in all of the mitzvot of the Torah (with the exception of one, based on a special verse.) Next, Rav states that a mourner must dwell in the Sukkah during the Festival of Sukkot. This second halacha prompts the Gemara to exclaim: “That’s obvious!” In other words – after Rav’s initial statement – obligating a mourner in all the mitzvot – why would we have thought that he would be exempt from the mitzvah of Sukkah?

Had Rav not stated this second halacha, answers the Gemara, we may have actually thought that a mourner is exempt from Sukkah. Why? A fundamental principle in Hilchot Sukkah is that one who is suffering from being in the Sukkah – a “mitz’ta’er” – is exempt from the mitzvah; we may have thus thought that a mourner, in his grief, falls into this category. According to the Gemara, Rav’s special stress on the mourner’s obligation to dwell in the Sukkah clarifies that the exemption of mitz’ta’er only applies to suffering that develops “on its own”. The discomfort of the mourner in the Sukkah does not develop “on its own”; rather, the mourner, says the Gemara, “is bringing the suffering on himself, and he

therefore has the obligation to place his mind at ease and calm down [to allow himself to live in the Sukkah.]”

Rashi explains that suffering that “develops on its own” relates to discomfort stemming from the Sukkah itself. Typical examples include: discomfort from the heat of the sun beating down on the Sukkah, the cold temperature in the Sukkah, or a bad odor emitted by the structure’s leafy “schach” roof. Since a mourner’s sensitivity is not directly related to the Sukkah’s temperature or odor, he must put himself at ease so that he can perform the mitzvah.

Why should a mourner find the Sukkah so difficult to tolerate? Rabbeinu Asher (“Rosh”) explains that such a person prefers the dark, secluded atmosphere of a house rather than the pleasant-open air atmosphere of the Sukkah. Far from being objectively unpleasant – the Sukkah is “too pleasant” an environment for the mourner! In other words, it’s the mourner’s delicate and unique emotional state that transforms the Sukkah into a troubling place.

Comparing Sukkah to Tefilin Sukkah is not the only mitzvah in which the halacha stresses the mental/emotional situation of the Jew. The Gemara in Menachot (36b) rules that a person donning Tefilin must not take his mind off the mitzvah, and proves this by learning a “Kal V’chomer” from the requirement of the High Priest (Kohen Gadol) to mentally focus on his “Tzitz” headdress. Rambam codifies this ruling in his Mishna Torah, stating that a person in discomfort, or one whose mind is not at ease, is exempt from the mitzvah of Tefilin – since it is forbidden to become distracted from the Tefilin while donning them.

In response to the above halacha, Rabbeinu Manoach (cited by Kesef Mishna) states: Even though with all other mitzvot, we require a person to put his mind at ease and perform the mitzvah, Tefilin are different: it’s forbidden to wear them while mentally distracted. Kesef Mishna understands this comment as an implicit challenge on the Rambam: How can Rambam exempt a “mitz’ta’er” from Tefilin, if, after all, the Gemara in Sukkah states that such a person must calm down with the aim of fulfilling the mitzvah of Sukkah?!

To this challenge, Rabbeinu Manoach responds: The mitzvah of Tefilin is different: Since it is characterized by a special “distraction” prohibition, we don’t insist that he put his mind at ease. Why? As much as he calms himself

down, he won’t escape the fact that there is a special prohibition of being distracted while donning Tefilin.

In other words, we cannot simply say in the case of Tefilin: “Let him calm down and perform the mitzvah.” Once a Jew has become preoccupied and distracted, the halacha is wary of permitting him to don the Tefilin ; the very real possibility exists that he will again lose his concentration. No such halachic prohibition – and therefore no such cautious approach – exists in the law of Sukkah.

A Second Approach Another prominent scholar – R. Joel Sirkes in his work “Bayit Chadash” (Bach) – also grapples with the apparent contradiction in the halacha. In contrast to Rabbeinu Manoach’s approach, Bach understands the person in Rambam’s Tefilin scenario as being in a different mental state than the one in the Sukkah scenario: Rambam, notes Bach, is dealing with a person who is simply unable to put his mind at ease. Even if he succeeds at doing so for a moment, he quickly reverts to being a “mitz’ta’er”. He therefore never escapes the status of someone who is distracted and therefore exempt from Tefilin. In contrast, the “mitz’ta’er” of the Gemara in Sukkah is someone – whom – with sufficient effort, can calm down.

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg (Responsa “Tzitz Eliezer”) notes that according to Bach – were the person in Rambam’s Tefilin scenario to ask whether he is obligated in Sukkah – we would tell him that he is not. This would be our answer to him, despite the fact that his discomfort does not stem from the heat of the Sukkah, nor the odor emitted by the schach.

At first glance, Bach’s approach seems to contradict the Gemara Sukkah (27a): “You must dwell in Sukkot for seven days” says the Torah. Given the principle that we must treat the Sukkah like our home for a week, we need only live in it as long as the it allows us similar conditions we are accustomed to in our homes. Since we would not live in a house that has a leaky roof, or an apartment that is uncomfortably cold – we are not expected to live in a Sukkah under cold or rainy conditions. A person whose discomfort stems mainly from his own mental or emotional state, and not from the Sukkah, however, is not exempt from the mitzvah to dwell in the Sukkah. (The Gemara quoted earlier, as explained by Rashi reinforces this.) How could Bach, then, suggest that a person unable to put his mind at ease – is exempt from both Tefilin and

Sukkah? It is not the Sukkah, but his own mental state, that is standing in the way!

Tying it All Together In order to understand Bach's ruling, Rabbi Waldenberg notes that the question of what exempts a "mitz'ta'er" from Sukkah is a major disagreement between the Rishonim. Rashi, Rosh, and Mordechai all rule that a person is exempt from Sukkah only when the discomfort stems from the Sukkah itself. This is the view accepted by Remah in the Shulchan Aruch. The Maharik, in contrast, states that a "mitz'ta'er" is exempt from Sukkah even if the discomfort is mainly a product of his emotional state. Maharik cites our Gemara Sukkah (25a) – and notes that it was prepared to exempt the mourner as a "mitz'ta'er" – but required him instead to put his mind at ease and dwell in the Sukkah.

In other words, Maharik reads that Gemara differently than we suggested earlier: That "sugyah" did not intend to definitively rule out a mourner's state of mind as a relevant factor in defining "mitz'ta'er": It simply concluded that when the discomfort derives from the Sukkah itself, there's not much the halacha can demand of the Jew: if the Sukkah is too hot or wet, then the conditions do not allow for the mitzvah of dwelling in the Sukkah to be fulfilled. If however, the mourner's state of mind is the issue, the halacha asks him to try to "get a hold of himself" before availing himself of the exemption of "mitz'ta'er." It follows, therefore, that both Maharik and Bach – confronted with a person who is unable to relax, would rule that that he is exempt from Sukkah in the same way as such a person is exempt from – and even forbidden to wear – Tefilin.

Rabbi Waldenberg suggests that underlying the contrasting approaches towards the Gemara – are two contrasting views of the source of the exemption of "mitz'ta'er". The mainstream view – Rashi, Rosh, Mordechai, Remah – understands the verse "You must dwell in Sukkot for seven days" as the basis of the exemption; we must treat the Sukkah like our home for a week, we need only live in the Sukkah as long as it allows us similar conditions as a regular home. As noted earlier, one whose discomfort stems mainly from his own mental or emotional state, and not from the Sukkah, is not exempt from the mitzvah to dwell in the Sukkah.

The opposing view – that of Bach and Maharik – bases itself on the verse in Vayikra Chapter 23, which states that we must dwell in Sukkot "So that your generations

[after you] know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in Sukkot when I took them out of the Land of Egypt." This, says Bach explicitly – indicates that the Torah wants us to experience a special religious/historical awareness while dwelling in the Sukkah. A severe "mitz'ta'er" simply cannot attain this consciousness, and is therefore exempt. It's irrelevant, according to this view, whether the unsettled state of mind is a result of the heat of the Sukkah, etc, or a personal state of anxiety not rooted in the Sukkah. This explanation helps explain, as well, why Bach equated between the two issues of Sukkah and of Tefilin. In Shmot Ch. 13, the Torah states that we must wear Tefilin "so that the Torah of God should remain on your lips." Here, as in the mitzvah of Sukkah, a special awareness is required while performing the mitzvah. It is this special state of mind that exempts the "mitz'ta'er."

from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein**

<ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com> date: Oct 6, 2022, 6:59 AM subject: Dimensions in Ha'azinu

DIMENSIONS IN CHUMASH Ha'azinu The Song of Ha'azinu

The Parshas of Ha'azinu is undoubtedly one of the lesser learned, and hence lesser understood, parshiyos of the Torah. The fact that it is written as a shira (song or poem), coupled with the fact that it is normally read around the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with their own dominant themes, results in the effect of hearing it read being often more atmospheric than educational.

In truth, of course, every verse of this song needs to be unraveled and understood.

The general sweep of Haazinu is provided by the Ramban in verse 40, for indeed, it encompasses our entire history, from its early inception until the ultimate future redemption. It contains both great intensity and harsh extremes. On the one hand, some of the calamitous verses are, in their own way, more devastating than any mentioned in the Torah so far, including the tochachah. However, at the same time, the unwavering vision of the ultimate endurance of the Jewish people and fulfillment of their historic role is likewise emphatically set forth. Indeed, perhaps the full measure and intensity of these themes, which are at once castigating and elevating,

devastating and comforting, could only really be captured in a song.

A major theme of Haazinu that the Ramban points out, as expressed in verses 26-27, is the twinning of two concepts: 1) Hashem's name and 2) the Jewish people.

Hashem's Name: Many times throughout the Chumash and Tanach, Hashem says He will act "for the sake of His name." The meaning behind this is that Hashem created the world so that people could enjoy His goodness and attain an elevated level of existence. This involves awareness of Hashem's name, i.e. of Him as Creator, as well as the values that He embodies and that He expects of people. Should this awareness fade from people's consciousness, the goal of creation could not be realized and creation itself would be in vain.[1]

The Jewish People: Part of choosing the People of Israel as His people is that they become intimately bound up with awareness of Him and His message. As such the destinies of the Jewish People and Hashem's name are now intertwined. If they thrive and succeed, Hashem's name becomes recognized and valued. If they should suffer and dwindle, Hashem's name likewise becomes subject to lack of recognition. Moreover, this relationship is also expressed in the fact that the antagonism of many peoples toward Israel is on account of the very notion that they bear Hashem's name and His message. Since their actions against the Jewish people are ultimately against Hashem Himself, they thereby render themselves fully deserving of His retribution, and forfeit any claim of immunity on the basis of their being instruments of Divine wrath.

The enduring message of Parshas Haazinu, therefore, is that the Jewish people represent Hashem's name and message not only through the things that they say and do, but also by the things they experience. In choosing them as His nation, Hashem entrusted them not only as His Divine subjects with the performance of the commandments of the Torah, but also as a Divine object through which His role as Creator and Controller of the world could be manifest.

Indeed, looked at in this way, the theme of Haazinu and that of the Days of Awe are not so disparate after all. Numerous times over the period of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we base our petitions both for success and for forgiveness on Hashem "acting for the His name": Already beginning with the recitation of selichos, we

invoke this idea by saying, "ה' עשה למען שמך, בנו נקרא שמך, – Your name is called upon us, Hashem, act for the sake of Your name." Likewise, in the Avinu Malkeinu prayer, we say, "עשה למען שמך הגדול הגבור והנורא שנקרא עלינו" – act for the sake of Your great, mighty and awesome name that is called upon us."

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur themselves, this idea is highlighted in the Amidah prayer: The third blessing begins with the plea: "ובכן תן פחדך על כל מעשיך" – and so, too, place Your awe upon all of Your handiwork," and then moves on to ask, "ובכן תן כבוד לעמך" – And so, too, give honor to Your people." Interestingly, the next blessing echoes the connection between these two themes in reverse. It begins by proclaiming, "אתה בחרתנו מכל" – You chose us from among all the nations... and Your great and holy name You called upon us," and then concludes by beseeching Hashem, "מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך... וידע כל פעול כי אתה" – reign over the entire world in Your glory... let each creation know that You created it."

This dual "backwards and forwards sweep" underscores the intimate connection between the ideas of Israel as Hashem's nation and the nations of the world's recognition of Him as its Creator and Guide.

And thus, the the Yamim Noraim form the seasonal backdrop for the song of Haazinu, whose culmination and realization we longingly await:

הַרְבֵּינוּ גוֹיִם עָמוּ כִּי דַם עֶבְדֶּיךָ יִקָּח וְנִקָּם לְצַרְיֶיךָ וְכַפֵּר אֶדְמָתוֹ עָמוּ
O nations, sing the praises of His people, for He will
avenge the blood of His servants; He will bring
retribution upon His foes, and He will appease His land
and His people.

May we merit to see it, speedily in our days!

[1] Ramban to verse 26.

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8 years of Points to Ponder on Parashas Haazinu Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Schwartz

הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה (32:1) - The Midrash (Devorim Rabbah 10:1) asks whether it is permissible to treat somebody who is suffering from an earache on Shabbos. The answer provided is that the Sages have taught that saving a person's life takes precedence over the desecration of Shabbos. Why is this the opening Midrash to Haazinu? Chasam Sofer explains that there is a Machlokes as to

whether a person is permitted to confess his sins on Shabbos. Some maintain that it is permissible since it gives him pleasure to repent and atone for his transgressions, while others forbid it because the focus and emphasis on his misdeeds causes him anguish. However, on the Shabbos preceding Yom Kippur, which has the power to rectify all of the Shabbosim of the previous year (Mishnah Berurah 603:2), the confession is classified as Pikuach Nefesh (life-saving) and permissible according to all opinions. Moshe died on Shabbos. He spoke out Haazinu the same day. Ergo, Haazinu was said on Shabbos. The Midrash is noting that in the same way one might hear painful rebuke causing him ear pain of a spiritual type on Shabbos, one may also confess on Shabbos.

הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה Listen Heavens and I Shall Speak (32:1) – Rav Elchanan Wasserman ztl. once began a Shabbos Shuva Derasha with the question of How could Moshe, the great Anav speak with such seeming arrogance? He explained that the answer is in the next Possuk – Ki Shem Hashem Ekra – when I offer Dvar Hashem it is not my words but rather those of Hashem – and therefore worthy of being heeded to even by Shomayim and Aretz.

הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה Listen O Heaven (32:1) – R Mordechai Kreiger z"l suggested that this Possuk was Moshe's way of speaking about the Torah. When he spoke of Shomayim, he was referring to Torah Sh'B'Ksav which is straight from Shomayim. When he spoke of HaAretz he referred to Torah Sh'Baal Peh which is studied and plowed through by the Chachamim to derive the proper learning method. Even critical Berachos for daily living all have their source from the Torah.

יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְהֵל תִּגַּל כִּטְל אֲמַרְתִּי Dew and rain (32:2) - Rashi notes that like the rain that never stops Torah too will never cease. However, the comparison to rain seems misplaced. Isn't it the DEW that never stops? Why bother with the rain comparison? Rav Eliyahu of Izmir (Minchas Eliyahu) explained that since Torah goes with the person when s/he passes it remains with him/her forever. If Torah would only be compared to dew, the person would think that like dew, Torah is always around and there is no urgency to study and observe it. Thus, the double reference, we need to go at Torah life hard like rain and know that it is with us forever like the dew.

יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְהֵל My lesson will drip like rain (32:2) - The Midrash (Pesikta) notes that those who study Torah are like the fish who rush to catch the new drops of rain all while being surrounded by water. Talmidei Chachamim rush to learn a new insight despite their immense knowledge too. Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl. added that the comparison is even deeper. Like the fish who keep seeking newness even in the water that is already in the sea, Talmidei Chachamim use the new ideas to add a freshness into the Torah that they have already acquired and mastered.

יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְהֵל תִּגַּל כִּטְל אֲמַרְתִּי May my teaching drip down like the rain ..like storm winds on vegetation (32:2) – The Sifrei deduces the responsibility for us to assemble our words of Torah into principles and details instead of seeing Torah as a bunch of minute details. Travellers do not take small bills with them on trips. They take large bills which can be exchanged for smaller bills as needed. Ramchal adds that when something is organized it helps make each detail more pleasant to learn.

כִּי שָׁם הָאֶקְרָא When I call Hashem's name (32:3) – Rav Schachter Shlita would note to us that this is the source of the responsibility to recite Birchos HaTorah before one learns. The Maharsha explains that the reason for this is that all the names of Hashem are found in the Torah and it is really a description of Godliness. If so, we can also understand why it is so that the Gemara (Nedarim) notes that the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because they did not make Birchos Hatorah. Why was this such an Avaira? The Ran explains that they didn't make a Beracha means that they treated Torah like a secular discipline. Rav Schachter added that although one finds many descriptions of Hashem's sovereignty in the secular study of His world, there is a difference in the attitude toward secular study versus that of the study of Torah which is our life and the basis of our existence.

הַצּוּר תְּמִים פְּעֻלוֹ The deeds of the mighty rock are perfect and just (32:4) – what does this mean? Rav Schachter Shlita pointed out that usually when one metes out justice, it cannot take society and the collateral damage into account. However, when it comes to Hashem, he is able to take everything into consideration and Ein Avel - it never ruins His plan.

הַצּוּר תְּמִים פְּעֻלוֹ His works are perfect (32:4) - Rav Shimon of Yaroslav noted that the reason he merited a long life was that when people complain about unfairness

in the world, Hashem takes them into Shomayim and shows them how and why things happen and why it is just. He added that he never complained so he didn't need to be shown why it was just. Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl. added that this is a great story but it also contains a tremendous amount of truth within it. The danger of stress and tension often lead people to be on tranquilizing medication. These meds often depress the brain and make it less sensitive to reality. Tranquility from Bitachon is far superior to that which is accomplished by medication and promotes longer life.

קל אמונה ואין עול The god of faith (32:4) - The Sifrei notes that Hashem believed in this world and created it. Rav Aharon Kotler ztl. added that by nature, creations have an inclination to sin and deserve destruction. Here Hashem did the world a favor and created the concept of Teshuva before the creation of the world on faith that the world deserves to continue despite its errant actions. Hence the wording -- He is the Hashem of faith without evil -- meaning that he sees beyond the evil having prepared for prior to the creation of the world. (Maybe that's why when we recite the Avodas Yom HaKippurim we begin with the creation of the world as it is the start of the Teshuvah process which includes the Avodas Yom HaKippurim <JS>).

עם נבל ולא חכם A nation that is defiled and not wise (32:6) - Onkelos noted that Moshe called us a nation that received the Torah but was not wise enough to listen to it. Where did he get this idea from? Rav Schachter Shlita quoted Rav Kalmanovitz ztl. who noted that like a Neveila that held onto life and lost it, a person or nation that gets life through the Toah should not lose it due to negligence. זכר ימות עולם Recall the days of old (32:7) -- When we read of the Yimos Olam the recollection is in the singular language. However in the years of each generation it is in the plural. Why? Rav Yehonasan David Shlita suggested that when it comes to the beginning of time, the Mishna suggests that you can only explain it to a single student. But the history of generation to generations can be studied by the masses together.

שאל אביך ויגידך Ask your father and he will tell you (32:7) - Rav Schachter Shlita would regularly remind us that the Midrash notes that Yitzchak began his Beracha with the same word that Avraham ended his. Yaakov did the same with the words Yitzchak ended. Moshe began with the words that Yaakov ended and Dovid began with the

words that Moshe ended. Rav Schachter explained that the Midrash is teaching us that each generation learns from and emulates the practices of the previous generations. It does not mean that we use the exact expressions but that modern practices of each generation should be connected with those of the earlier generation. ימצאהו בארץ מדבר He will be found in the desert (32:10) - The Lomza Mashgiach, Rav Moshe Rosenstein HY"D noted that one really tends to find Hashem in those trying moments in life when he has no one else to rely upon or trust except Hashem. He added that this is why the Torah was specifically given in the desert -- in order to demonstrate that Bitachon in Hashem is strongest in these times and is the key to success in life.

ה בךד יתנו Hashem guides us alone (32:12)- The Gemara (Chagigah 3a) notes that when we say Shema, we note the Echad -- unique nature of Hashem. Similarly, when we declare Mi K'Amcha Yisrael Goy Echad, we are noting that we too, are a unique nation. While we live in isolation, it is precisely BECAUSE of our uniqueness. Rav Schachter Shlita would often comment that while the nations of the world are created in the image of Hashem, only Bnei Yisrael are referred to as Banim. It is the reason our take on world events is often different than those of the rest of the world. We are Badad -- unique.

ישורון וישמן וישמון וישמון וישמון Yeshurun got fat and he rebelled (32:15) - Sforno comments that even the Torah dedicated, who delve into the depths of Torah, can unfortunately become swayed by the riches of this world and rebel against our real purpose in this world. After this happens, Hashem hides his face in order to get us to see what the real point of everything is. Rav Elya Svei ztl. noted that when Hashem gives us economic prosperity after Tzaros -- we might think that we are entitled to it. However, economic downturns get us to see that either we turn to Him and move to act in the way He would want us to, or we will have no one to blame for the destruction except ourselves. Either way, the goal is to get us to turn back to Hashem. צור ילדה תשי ותשכח קאל מהלךך You are unmindful of the Rock that fathered you, and have forgotten God who formed you (32:18) - Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl. noted that there seem to be 2 separate issues with the one who serves Avoda Zara -- that he forgets Hashem and that he serves foreign Gods. While the latter seems to be missing in modern society on the whole, the forgetting of Hashem -- the lack of awareness of His presence in our daily lives

is a serious matter. The Achilles' heel of the modern religious person is this existential awareness of God's Presence in his daily life. We know the answers to the questions, and we know that He is there. But we need to make sure that we never forget that.

צוֹר יִלְדֶה תִשִּׁי You were unmindful of the Rock Who bore you, and forgot God Who created you (32:18) - What type of forgetting is the big Avaira here? Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl. explained that the forgetfulness described here comes from the awareness of God's existence, but without influence on his lifestyle or his day-to-day activities. In a certain sense, modern man is faced with the problem of the forgetfulness of *Ha'azinu*. A modern person may be aware of God's existence in the general sense, and if prodded indications of His existence he might be able to shake layers of dust off his faith and answer. However, this shallow knowledge has no impact on his life or his behavior. Although he knows that God exists, he does not act accordingly. He ignores the Torah lifestyle and observance that this knowledge is meant to bring with it.

צוֹר יִלְדֶה תִשִּׁי You were unmindful of the rock who bore you and forgot Hashem who sustains you (32:18) – Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl. explained that there are 2 processes of forgetfulness that lead to sin. In Parshas Eikev the forgetfulness is active as the person tries to select a different Avodah Zara instead of Hashem. The forgetfulness described in Parshat Ha'azinu is of a different type. Here, the forgetfulness comes from awareness of God's existence, but not follow through with the ramifications of this knowledge. The person does not allow his knowledge of God's existence to influence his lifestyle or his day-to-day activities. "And Yeshurun grew fat." This draws his attention away from any sort of spiritual reality – "and he kicked." This person knows that God exists – perhaps he would even profess to believe in Him – but his life is nevertheless considered one of "sacrificing to demons, non-gods." He serves success and prosperity, setting aside no time for developing a spiritual personality. In short, this is modern man's Avodah Zara. Hashem saw and turned away in disdain from the anger of his children (32:19) – Later it says Harninu Goyim Amo Kee Dam AVADAV Yikom. Yet, the Talmud notes that when we follow the words of Hashem, we are called Banim and when we do not, we are called Avadim. Why here does it seem to be the

opposite? Rav Asher Weiss Shlita explains that there is a powerful lesson here – when Hashem gets angry with us, he is doubly hurt in that we are also his children (so how could we sin so terribly). At the same time, while moving back into the position of strength, Hashem remembers even the Eved and will avenge even the distance between us.

כִּי דוֹר תְּהִיפְכֹת הָמָּה (32:20) – Although the simple meaning of the possuk is in the negative, Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita told the story of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ztl. who responded to an insolent comment toward Rav Kook ztl. about Shmittah by explaining that there will be a generation in the future whose upbringing is not to be the rejection of Torah and Mitzvos which was the cornerstone of the secularist movement. Sure enough, it came to be – the movement to be Shomer Shmittah K'Halacha is a proud declaration throughout Eretz Yisrael.

הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא-אֱלֹהִים They have caused me to seem jealous [as they pursue] non-gods, they have angered me with their nonsense, and I will make them jealous with a non-people, I will make them angry with a foolish nation (32:21) – Ramban explains that the reference to the nation is the Kasdim. What gave them the unique opportunity to ruin the Jewish people? Rav Zevulun Charlop Shlita explained that they were a rootless people whose style was to steal the style of the people in whose midst they lived. Rav Yaakov Neuberger Shlita added that this nation and its style were created by Hashem specifically to go after a nation that is uninterested in its own grand legacy.

אֲנִי אָמַיִת וְאַחֲזֶה I put to death and I bring life (32:39) – Hashem is the source of Refuah. Rav Yechezkel Abramsky ztl. noted that when we have the opportunity to attribute our recovery to someone other than Hashem – like doctors and hospitals and medications, it is especially incumbent to recognize that He is the one in charge. Hence, when we daven we note that Hashem should heal us, "because He is our praise" – that here in particular, it is important to praise Hashem.

כִּי-אֶשָּׂא אֶל-שָׁמַיִם יָדִי For I shall raise my hand to heaven (32:40) - Rav Moshe Hager, Viznitzer Rebbe ztl. noted that when one raises his hands is a reference to Tefillah. In this section, we are told that our Tefillah should be primarily motivated by a desire to seek to increase Kavod Hashem (the Anochi in the world) We learn that the

Shechina shares our pain and if we daven for the Shechina's pain to end, our pain will end as well.

בְּעֶצְמֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the middle of his day saying (32:48) - Rashi comments that this is one of the three verses in the Torah employing the term in the middle of the day, in this case to highlight that Bnei Yisrael would not be able to stop it. Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl. Points out that this is how we are to respond to the death of a Gadol. The intensity of the pain needs to make us lose our senses and cry out that if we could have done something about it we would have.

בְּעֶצְמֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה In the midst of this day (32:48) – Rashi notes that the phrase B'Etzem HaYom appears three times in the Torah. Each time it was to show that no one could stop it. This time it would be the Bnei Yisrael who might try to stop the death of Moshe. How would they think to be successful? Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl. opines that it would be through their Tefillos that they would try to stop the decree. The Brisker Rav ztl. suggested that by simply blocking his ascent up the mountain, they could thwart death since Moshe was to ascend the mountain in order to pass.

וּמָת בְּהָרַי אֲשֶׁר אֲתָהּ עֹלֶה תָּשָׂמָה And die on the mountain you are ascending (32:50) – Rashi comments that this death would be similar to the death of Aharon which Moshe so desired. What was so special about the death? Rav Nebenzahl Shlita explained that the actual entire death was a fulfillment of Mitzvos. Aharon was commanded to stretch his hands, close his eyes etc. Moshe too, would fulfill the words in his death by ascending the mountain and following the words. (A similar thought is expressed in the name of the Ponovezher Rav)

כָּאֲשֶׁר-לָמַת אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ You will die on the mountain as Aharon your brother did (32:50) - Why the reference to Aharon? Rav Gifter ztl. explains that Aharon's death was done with his awareness that he was fulfilling the will of Hashem until the last moment. Moshe wanted the same type of death -- with the awareness that he too, was fulfilling the will of Hashem in his death. Rav Gifter adds that most people are not granted that opportunity.

Haftorah

On the surface, the song of the Haftorah which is a song of praise is wildly different from the song of prophesy that is Haazinu. Why then is it chosen as the appropriate one for the Haftorah this week? Rav Gideon Weitzman Shlita suggested that the song of praise and the song of

prophesy need each other. Mundane praise is raised as a result of the prophesy. Yet prophesy is connected to the people who use it to direct their awareness and sing praise. The prophesy takes the word of Hashem to us, the praise song, allows us to reconnect to Him. נְהַלְי בְּלִיַעַל Torrents of godless men (Shmuel Bet 22:5) - Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl. noted that Bliyal is a contraction of the words Bli and Ol or without a yoke. People without any scruples and no connection to Hashem are often the ones who wreak destruction on the Jewish people hardest.