

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHMINI ATZERES SIMCHAS TORAH - 5760

B'S'D'

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From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom List :parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il]
Shabbat Shalom: Sukkot (Hoshana Rabbah) By Shlomo Riskin
Efrat, Israel -- Think of the different sounds that we've been hearing over the course of the last two months. Starting with the plaintive blasts of the shofar at the start of Elul calling each of us to repentance and merging into the powerful hundred blasts on Rosh Hashanah which punctuates G-d's Kingships, Remembrances and Shofar ; Redemptions intoned with their unique Cantorial melodies, we become uplifted into a much higher and more exalted sphere. Yom Kippur mutes the words, which become much more inwardly directed as the thuds of breast-beating are palpably heard; we hear even these more silent sounds because of the silence all around us, streets virtually trafficless in Israel and even TV and radio networks shut down for the entire Day of Atonement. And if there is a day in Jewish calendar when we can hear the 'sounds of silence,' then Yom Kippur of Israel is that unique day. And then, no sooner is the fast day over, that we begin to hear the sounds of the hammers and the saws and the nails building sukkot, temporary huts, across the land. The singing of the Hallel of Sukkot is like no other Hallel of the year because of the Four Species that we hold together, linking David's words with G-d's commandments. Each night of the festival of Sukkot, when we invite one of the special guests, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, Joseph, our voices rise to greet our ancestors, not dusty characters in a forgotten history but living personalities whose names we give our children and whose presence we can virtually feel. For seven days we've been discovering the special spiritual joy that the sukkah creates, a spiritual nectar that embraces us with its own ethereal music. And so this day, Hoshana Rabbah, the seventh day of Sukkot, marks the culmination of this incredible part of the year, when we take the willow (hoshana-arava) branch, which only grows near water, as a symbol of rejuvenation and reawakening through rain and redemption. Clearly, the last sound of this period should serve as a sign or symbol of what must be achieved immediately prior to the singing and dancing with the Torah on Shmini Atzeret, when all veils are pulled away and there is nothing left except us and the Torah.

Understandably, if Torah is the ultimate goal of our entire existence, Hoshana Rabbah is the last doorway that we have to pass through on the way toward this destination. But if we listen to the final sound in the synagogue on this day of culmination, we are surprised and disappointed to find that it is the ritual of taking a bunch of five willow twigs, hitting the ground with them five times; this hardly yields the crowning moment prior to the majesty of the Torah waiting for us on Shmini Atzeret. If anything, the willow twigs sound like the slap of rubber against a pavement, or somebody shuffling across the room in slippers. The festival period is exiting not with a bang but with a whimpery thud! How then have we moved from the majestic shofar to the dull resonance of twigs hitting earth? If Hoshana Rabbah constitutes the culmination of this entire period --Shmini Atzeret being a festival unto itself-- we have to understand the transformation from shofar to willow branch, and then from willow branch back to the joyous sounds of singing and dancing with the Torah on Simchat Torah. We begin our Amidah prayer on the eve of Rosh Hashanah by requesting universal acceptance of ethical monotheism, "And may everyone be made into one bond (agudah achat) to do thy will with a complete heart," a petition which is repeated in every Amidah of the Days of Awe.

The Four Species of Sukkot must likewise be tied together in a bond, what the Talmud in Sukkah (34b) similarly calls an 'agudah achat.' The palm frond, the myrtle and the willow are tied together and held in the right hand,

with the etrog held in the left and with all four brought together when we make the blessing, as well as whenever we participate in the wavings (naanim) during Hallel. Everyone is familiar with the classic midrash that compares the qualities of the Four Species, (taste and smell), to the qualities of four types of Jews. The etrog is blessed with a good smell and good taste, like those Sages blessed with Torah and good deeds. The palm frond is blessed with good taste (dates) but no scent to speak of, like those Sages who have Torah but lack good deeds. The myrtle has an exquisite scent, but provides no fruit, and so too there are many Jews whose good deeds can be detected from a distance (like smell), but alas they fall short in Torah knowledge. And finally we have the willow, no taste and no smell, which is compared to the Jew who has neither Torah nor good deeds to his credit.

And yet the moral message of the 'agudah achat' (one bundle, group, society, amalgamation) in the Talmud, and which is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, Section 651), is that just as the mitzvah of the Four Species requires four different kinds of vegetation, so too we need all four different kinds of Jews, covering the entire range of people. Whoever thinks that we can ignore those Jews devoid of Torah and good deeds is wrong! Lacking the aravah, the willow branch, makes the entire 'agudah' worthless. We haven't fulfilled the commandment until we have all 'four species.'

The significance of the willow branch on Hoshana Rabbah is not only that without it the other three species are in serious trouble; the truth is that the entire focus of Hoshana Rabbah is exclusively on the willow branch, and our striking it upon the earth. What is the significance of this strange thud?

Kabbalistically, the striking of the aravah against the earth symbolizes the confrontation between the 'chesed' (a loving-kindness) symbolized by the aravah, which grows along the river's edge (and water is the consummate symbol of loving-kindness), and the earth, which symbolizes 'din,' strict justice, exact measures that which places limits on the water flow. Our intent is not merely to act out our prayer for rain, our desire for many willows to be able to grow. The Kabbalistic significance of this rite is our expression of the mastery of the willow over the earth, of G-d's loving-kindness over His strict justice ; because only on the basis of loving-kindness will redemption arrive.

At moments like this, the 'aravah' or willow is the witness that can sway G-d's gaze. If we want G-d's benevolence, His only question is how have we acted toward the 'aravot' (the willow branches) of His world, how have we treated the Jew who lacks both Torah and good deeds? It's easy to honor a great sage or a benefactor, but how many of us know how to honor those that no one else honors, the forgotten 'willows.' The Hassidic revolution that began some 250 years ago is traced back to an event that took place when Rav Yisrael Baal Shem Tov's elderly parents, who were childless, opened their door to a flagrant Sabbath desecrator. One Sabbath day a man came into their town of Medzibezh, on horseback ; and was therefore shunned by all of the townspeople. But R. Eliezer, the gabbai of the Synagogue, invited him for the Sabbath meal, provided him a place to rest, and didn't say a word when he left as he had come on the Sabbath. Afterwards a voice came down from heaven and announced that just as Eliezer loved a Jew who was far from the Jewish tradition, he would be blessed with a son who would open his heart to every single Jew and thereby return the masses of errant Jews to their loving Parent-in-Heaven. What happened that day in Medzibezh in the late 1600's is brought down by the faithful of the Baal Shem Tov; but in our own century, one of the leading figures of Jewry, the great first chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, expresses the same view in a published text that is available to all to ponder. In his Iggerot Hareiah, Letter number 555, Rav Kook stresses that each Jew, even if he doesn't keep the Torah and commandments, is born with a segulah, a special aura of holiness, that is part of his essence, and nothing in the world can remove it. We must learn from every Jew, even from the seemingly aravah Jew, for every Jew is sacred and special. For Rav Kook, just as for the Baal Shem Tov, there was no such a thing as a sinner that had to be thrown out of the 'agudah achat', the eternal and single bond. His entire approach was to include, not exclude. On Shevuot night we learn Torah until dawn, and those of us who do not really know how to learn the classical texts, feel left out. But on Simchat

Torah we dance with the Torah ; and dancing is something every Jew can learn how to do, the etrog Jew, the lulav Jew, the hadas Jew and even the aravah Jew. The Midrash teaches: "The commandments were only given in order to unite all of the creatures [Midrash Tanchuma, Parashat Shemini 8]." When we learn the importance of the unified bond of Israel, when we utilize the willow-aravah Jew to express Divine loving-kindness, then our Torah will no longer divide but will begin to unify, and we will truly be on the road to purification and redemption.

Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at: <http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm> Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Dean Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean

From: Ohr Somayach ohr@virtual.co.il :Torah Weekly - V'zot Haberacha Buried Treasure

"So Moshe, servant of Hashem, died there, in the land of Moav, opposite Bet Peor, and no one knows his burial place to this day." (31:4)

Many years ago, there was a small Jewish community somewhere in Poland which had very little to recommend it. Its people were not scholars nor interested in being so. It was a backwater of a backwater. Nothing ever happened there, nor was likely to. It happened that the position of rabbi fell vacant in this town. The president of the synagogue advertised in the newspaper in Lublin "dynamic rabbi needed for important town." Not long afterwards, a young enthusiastic rabbi who had just received his semicha (rabbinical ordination) came for an interview. After looking around the town he was rather disappointed. He mentioned to the president that it didn't seem that much could be done in this town. Nobody seemed to be interested in studying the Torah. He implied that this wasn't really a very important town. The president said to him "What do you mean, this isn't an important town? Do you realize who is buried here?"

"No. Who?"

"The Rambam is buried in this town! Rashi is buried in this town!"

When faced with the possibility of having such illustrious antecedents, the rabbi started to look at the position in a new light. "Okay." He said. "I'll take it."

Some months later, the rabbi was passing by the town's graveyard. On the spot, he decided to pay a visit to the graves of the Rambam and Rashi. The graveyard was not a big place. After half an hour of searching, he was convinced neither the Rambam nor Rashi were present amongst those who rested there. And then he thought to himself "Hang on a minute! The Rambam is buried in Teveria in Eretz Yisrael! Rashi's buried somewhere in France!"

Livid, he demanded to see the president of the synagogue. "You lied to me!" he said, his face quivering from betrayal. "You said that the Rambam is buried in this town; that Rashi is buried in this town. That's not true! The Rambam is buried in Teveria." "No, he isn't." replied the president calmly. "He's buried here." "But that's simply not true!" replied the rabbi.

The president explained himself. "The Rambam isn't buried in Teveria, because in Teveria everyone studies him. The Rambam is buried in this town because here nobody learns him. Rashi is buried in this town because here nobody learns him. I was hoping that you could 'resurrect' them."

"So Moshe, servant of Hashem, died there, in the land of Moav, opposite Bet Peor, and no one knows his burial place to this day."

If the Torah specifies that Moshe died "there in the land of Moav, opposite Bet Peor," how can it immediately say that "no one knows his burial place?"

The righteous are "alive" even when they are dead. It's true that Moshe's body died "in the land of Moav opposite Bet Peor." However, "no one knows his burial place" because everywhere that Jews study Torah, Moshe is alive and well in the land of the living.

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From: Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky[SMTP:rmk@torah.org]
Drasha Parshas Zos Habracha ---Making It by Breaking It
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

The last verses of the Torah encapsulate a glorious career of leadership of the father of all prophets, Moshe, into a few brief sentences. "Never has there risen in Israel a prophet as Moses whom Hashem had known face to face: as apparent by all the signs and wonders that Hashem had sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and all his land. And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). Powerful descriptive. But it is as cryptic as it is powerful. What is the strong hand and that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel? Does it refer to the horrific plagues brought on Egypt? Perhaps it refers to the splitting of the sea or the opening of the earth to swallow Korach and his rebellious cohorts? Rashi tells us that the words "Moshe performed before the eyes of Israel" refers to something totally different, perhaps very mortal. Rashi explains that the posuk (verse) refers to the smashing of the tablets upon descending Mount Sinai and seeing the nation frolic before the Golden Calf. He quotes the verse "and I smashed the tablets before your eyes" (Deuteronomy 9). Rashi's comment evokes many questions. Why is smashing the Luchos counted as an awe-inspiring feat? And more important, is this the final way to remember Moshe the man who smashed the Luchos? Is that the parting descriptive of Judaism's greatest leader?

Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant, was Rav in a city when a typhus epidemic erupted. Despite the peril of the contagious disease, Rabbi Lipkin went together with a group of his students to aid the sick, making sure they had food and clothing. The roving first-aid committee imposed strict restrictions upon the townsfolk, imploring them to eat properly every day in order to ward off immunological deficiencies. Yom Kippur was fast approaching, and Rabbi Lipkin decreed that due to the menacing disease, absolutely no one was to fast on Yom Kippur despite it being the holiest day of the year. The town's elders were skeptical. They felt that Rabbi Salanter had no right to impose such a ruling on those who were not afflicted. Despite their protestations, Rabbi Salanter was unfazed. In fact he made his point in a very dramatic way. On Yom Kippur morning, immediately after the shacharis services, he went up to the bimah, made kiddush, drank the wine, and ate a piece of cake! Immediately, the townsfolk were relieved. They went to their homes and followed suit. The elders in the town were outraged at this seemingly blatant violation of Jewish tradition. They approached Rabbi Lipkin to protest his disregard for the sanctity of the day, but Rabbi Lipkin remained adamant. "I have taken a group of students for the last month, and together we have attended to scores of typhus victims. I guaranteed every mother that each of their children will return home healthy. On my guarantee not one of those students became ill!" He turned to the elders and declared. "When you are able to make such guarantees then you can tell me the laws against eating on Yom Kippur!"

The Torah ends with the greatness of Moshe. It refers to his great accomplishments as his Yad haChazaka, his strong hand before the eyes of Israel -- the breaking of the two Tablets Of Law. Moshe's greatness was not only knowing how to accept the Ten Commandments, but when to smash them as well. And though not every one of us is equipped with the ability to overrule a practice or tradition, Klall Yisrael knows that when the time to act is called for the great ones will arise to build and cure by smashing what needs to be broken. Because whether it is breaking a fast or breaking the tablets, it takes a great man to understand the time to build and an even greater man to know when it is time to tear down.

Chag Sameach Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

In honor of the birth of Max Handelman on July 8 to our children Carol

& Stephen Handelman of Toronto, Canada Dedicated by Mr. & Mrs. Lionel Fisch

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From: Kenneth Block [SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net]
Rabbi Naphtali Burnstein YI of Cleveland, OH Shimini Atzeret-Simchat Torah

22-23 Tishrei 5760 October 2-3, 1999 Daf Yomi: Megillah 26-27

Shimini Atzeres marks the end of the season of our Yomim Tovim. The season began with the Yimai HaSlichos, Rosh Hashanah, the Aseres Yimai Teshuva and Yom Kippur. It continued with Succos and Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

The literal meaning of Atzeres is "restraint." There are various interpretations as to why this term, implying restraint was chosen here.

One possibility behind using the term Atzeres or restraint here, refers to holding on to the spiritual joy and holiness achieved during the past month.

There is a great risk that once the holidays are behind us and we return to our daily lives, we may become so absorbed in those activities that we dissipate all the spiritual wealth we had acquired during the Yomim Tovim.

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

The truth is, however, that Shimini Atzeres isn't just the end of the Tishrei season of Yomim Tovim. It actually concludes an entire year of the Yomim Tovim. Pesach - actually begins the cycle, followed by Shavous. Succos and Shmini Atzeres (Simchas Torah) complete the years' cycle of Yomim Tovim.

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

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

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

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

One possible way to achieve some level of continuity from Yom Tov is to try to enhance our homes with something new and meaningful. Beginning Sefer Bereishit again, allows us the opportunity to learn together, particularly on Shabbos. How about assigning different members of the

family, at their particular level, to bring to the Shabbos meal, an interesting question, insight, medresh or story. What about trying to study the Parsha each week, Shnayim Mikra V'Echud Targum, which gives a great connection and appreciation to each parsha.

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

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From: Rabbi Yehudah Prero [SMTP:prero@torah.org]
Week of Shemini Atzeres Topic: May I Have This Dance?

The what appears to be the final day of the Sukkos holiday is, outside of Israel, called Simchas Torah (and in Israel, is Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah). On this day, we read the last portion of the Torah, V'zos HaB'racha. We celebrate this completion of the past year's cycle of Torah reading and the beginning of this year's Torah reading cycle. We sing, dance and express our joy over having the Torah and being able to learn the Torah. We dance seven circuits around the Bimah, from where we read the Torah. Traditionally, all are given an opportunity to dance with the Torah during the festivities. There is a firm basis for this custom.

The Mishkan, the Tabernacle, was the center of spiritual life before the Bais HaMikdosh, the Holy Temple was constructed in Yerushalayim. Hashem gave Moshe the instructions on how the Mishkon and the vessels used within were to be constructed. Among these instructions, we find a change in language in one instance. By the construction of the Shulchan (Shmos 25:23), we find the following: "_You_ shall also make a table." By the Menorah, we find (Shmos 25:31) "And _you_ shall make a Menorah of pure gold." However, but by the Aron, the ark, we find a change (Shmos 25:10): "And _they_ shall make an ark." The command for the ark was directed towards the entire nation of Israel, as opposed to the commands for the other vessels, which were directed at Moshe. Why was the instruction for the ark specifically given to the nation?

The Medrash Rabbah (Shmos 34:2) states: "AND THEY SHALL MAKE AN ARK." Why is it that in reference to all the other vessels we read 'And you shall make', but in reference to the Ark it says, AND THEY SHALL MAKE? Said R. Yehudah ben R. Shalom: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let all come and occupy themselves with the Ark in order that they may all merit the Torah."

What makes the Aron so special, that those who "occupy themselves with the Ark . . . may all merit the Torah?" In general, the large vessels used in the Mishkan were constructed with rings attached. In these rings, poles were placed, so that when the Mishkan had to be moved and therefore the vessels had to be moved as well, they could be carried with the poles. When the vessels were at rest, the poles were removed. This, however, was not the case with the Aron. The Torah writes (Shmos 25:15) "In the rings of the ark shall be the poles, they should not be removed from it." Even when the Aron was at rest, the poles had to stay within the rings.

The Sefer HaChinuch (96) writes that at the root of this commandment is the fact that the Aron, which contains the original Luchos, the tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, is the dwelling place, the sanctuary of the Torah. The Torah, embodied by the Aron, is at our core, it is our glory. We must treat it with every form of respect and honor that is within our ability. We therefore were commanded not to remove the poles, for fear that we might need to move the Aron quickly, and in our haste we will not check to see that the poles will support the weight of the Aron, and it could fall. Because we must show the utmost respect for the Aron, we must make sure that it never falls, and we therefore keep the poles affixed at all times.

The construction of the Aron, the object which symbolizes the holy Torah, was given to the entire nation of Israel. Because the entire nation

would be occupied with the construction of the Aron, they would all have a part in the Aron, and in turn, the Torah. Hence, the nation would all have a stake in the Torah, and would merit to delve into it and study it. However, this gift which we all have a part of must be respected and revered. We must be able to take it with us where ever we may go, without any fear that our travel will cause the Torah any disrespect. We must ensure that the Torah is always cherished and protected, no matter where we are or what we do. On Simchas Torah, everyone gets an opportunity to dance with the Torah scroll. Everyone gets an opportunity to be occupied with the Torah, just as the entire nation was occupied with the construction of the Aron. All are given the opportunity to embrace the Torah, to hold it dearly and tightly, to take it with them on a dance, in a fitting display of love and respect for the Torah. It is a dance for eternity. Have a joyous Simchas Torah!

(BASED ON HEGYONAI HALACHA)

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Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Simchat Torah
RETURN TO NATURE AND TO JOY

by Rabbi David Simchon, Rabbi of Kiryat Yovel, Jerusalem

As soon as Yom Kippur ended, we were commanded to take a hammer and nails, and connect the panels to begin building a succa, "in order to move from one mitzva to the next" [Rama, Orach Chaim 624]. This leaves one wondering, if after reaching spiritual heights comparable to the angels themselves, it might not have been appropriate to look for a mitzva on a higher plane. For example, why not continue with Torah study, which in itself is equivalent to all the other mitzvot? In fact, Succot, with its return to nature and its obligation of joy ("and you shall be especially happy" [Devarim 16:15]) appears at first glance to be the opposite of the elevated spiritual level which we reached during the Days of Awe. This is a serious atmosphere, detached from the physical world around us.

On further thought, we must admit that this is a reasonable mitzva after all. The great heights we reached allow us to return to our inherent nature, including the joy of holiness. From the privilege of our spiritual height, we attempt to influence the "seventy nations" of the world, as is written, "One who has a good eye will be blessed" [Mishlei 22:9].

We reach the epitome of happiness and joy on Simchat Torah. This is a day of holy amusement, when our entire soul has been mended. Each and every one of Bnei Yisrael is called to celebrate, and even the oldest people are expected to dance in honor of the Torah (Mishna Berura 669:11). Anybody who refrains from participating in the dancing is considered a sinner. "Anyone who keeps himself away from this joy deserves a punishment" [Rambam, Hilchot Lulav 8:15].

On this day, the bounds of happiness reach beyond the limits of the mitzva. This is the high point of the month's holidays, after every person has succeeded in adjusting his feelings, his thoughts, and his desires, to correspond to the will of G-d. But the Torah doesn't want robots who perform by rote, "G-d wants the heart to participate" [Rashi, Sanhedrin 106b], and that is what is achieved on this day of Simchat Torah.

I would suggest that the highest point may be reached at the end of Simchat Torah, when we have the opportunity in Israel to see the enthusiasm of thousands of our people, who participate in a second round of "Hakafot." This custom is not found at all in the halacha. We have not been commanded to do this ritual, it was only mentioned in the Kabbala. However, it is this spontaneous eruption of the heart, dancing and jumping - not because of a halachic command, but in response to a personal and national elevation of the soul - which shows a link to the Torah, to its words, and to its holiness.

If we have achieved the goal of having all the different sectors of the nation participate in the joy of dancing with the Torah, out of a true inner

urge, let us pray that we will quickly, in our time, be privileged to experience the full redemption of Bnei Yisrael.

A MITZVA IN THE TORAH PORTION: "Moshe Commanded us Torah, a Heritage for the Community of Yaacov" [Devarim 33:4]
by Rabbi Binyamin Tabory

The above passage has been used as the first verse taught to a young child, as is written, "When he can understand, his father should teach him Torah ... What is the first thing to teach? 'Moshe commanded us Torah'" [Succa 42a]. The importance of this verse is also clear from what is told in Bava Batra (14a). When Rabbi Hammuna was told that Rabbi Ami wrote 400 Torah scrolls, he suggested that what he in fact did was to write this verse 400 times. The Torah Temima explains that Rabbi Ami wrote it on different pieces of paper, and gave them to children, so that they should study the verse.

In addition to the privilege and the challenge of this verse, our sages saw it as a source for the law that a Gentile is forbidden to study Torah. The Torah was given as a heritage to Bnei Yisrael, and it is not meant for the other nations. This prohibition is not in addition to the seven mitzvot of Bnei Noach, for it is included in the prohibition of stealing, since the Torah belongs to Bnei Yisrael as a "heritage." In line with the Midrash, that the word isn't "heritage" but "me'orasa," betrothed, a Gentile who studies Torah might be considered as liable for a punishment of stoning, just as one who attacks a betrothed girl. When Rabbi Meir said that a Gentile who studies Torah can be compared to the High Priest, he was referring to the study of the seven mitzvot of the Bnei Noach, and not to Torah in general.

Not only is the Gentile forbidden to study, it is also forbidden for a Jew to teach a non-Jew. "The words of the Torah should not be transferred to a Gentile, as is written, 'He did not do this to all the nations, and they didn't know the laws' [Tehillim 147:20]" [Chagiga 13a]. The Tosafot added that this is in addition to the prohibition, "Do not place a stumbling block before a blind man" [Vayikra 19:14], because it is relevant even if there is no "stumbling block" (for example, if someone else is ready to teach the Gentile anyway).

Rabbi Zevin found an apparent paradox in the fact that the words "they don't know" in the above verse specifically refer to "the laws." Similarly, it is written in the beginning of the portion of Mishpatim, "These are the laws which you should place before them" [Shemot 21:1], which the sages explained as, "before them, but not before the Gentiles." However, these very laws of Mishpatim are included in the seven mitzvot of Bnei Noach, and as we wrote above, a Gentile who studies them can be compared to the High Priest. His explanation is that when a Gentile studies these matters he does not link them to any Divine source. On this day, when all of Bnei Yisrael are dancing and are happy with the Torah, we can truly feel the principle that the Torah is our own heritage.

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THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [<http://www.tanach.org/>] In Memory of
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FROM SEVEN TO EIGHT / FROM SUCCOT TO SHMINI ATZERET
[Rabbi Menechem Leibtag]

Is 'eight' a magic number in Chumash? Or, is it only coincidental that: *
In Sefer Breishit - specifically the 'eighth day' is chosen when God commands Avraham Avinu concerning Brit Milah; * In Parshat Shmini - the 'eighth day' is chosen for the dedication of the Mishkan; * In Parshat Metzora - the 'eighth day' is chosen for the day on which the cleansed Metzora, Zav, and Zavah bring their special korbanot; * In Parshat Emor - the final holiday is "SHMINI atzeret" - the 'eighth day' of Succot!

In last week's shiur, we discussed the special relationship between the number SEVEN and the "shalosh regalim", noting that is not by chance that the Torah commands us to: * celebrate specifically SEVEN days of Chag

Ha'matzot in the spring; and then - * to count SEVEN weeks until the grain harvest holiday of Shavuot; and finally - * to celebrate our fruit harvest during the SEVEN days of Succot.

We suggested that by emphasizing SEVEN, the Torah reminds us of the connection between these agricultural holidays and our belief that 'nature' is indeed God's creation. [In our shiur on Parshat Breishit we explain how the Torah's story of Creation in SEVEN days emphasizes this very point that nature is a willful act of the One God (as opposed to an act of a pantheon of many gods). In the following shiur, we return to Sefer Breishit in search of the biblical significance of the number 'eight'.

INTRODUCTION From the above examples in Sefer Vayikra, 'eight' appears to be significant simply because it follows 'seven'. For example: * "Yom Ha'shmini" follows the SEVEN days of the "miluim"; * The korbanot on the eighth day of the Metzora and Zav follow their minimum SEVEN day "tahara" period; * "Shmini Atzeret" follows the SEVEN days of Succot.

Brit Milah, however, appears to be an exception. Even though we are told in Parshat Tazria that the mother is "tamey" (unclean) for the first seven days after her son's birth (see Vayikra 12:2), there does not appear to be any logical connection between these seven days and the commandment to perform "milah" on the eighth day. In fact, the original commandment to Avraham Avinu circumcise his offspring on the 'eighth day' (see Breishit 17:7-14) is not connected in any manner to the laws of "tumah" or "tahara". In that parsha, there doesn't seem to be any obvious reason why specifically the eighth day is chosen. Nonetheless, when we take a closer look at the mitzvah of Brit Milah in the 'wider' context of Sefer Breishit, we will uncover a very interesting relationship between the mitzvah to perform "milah" on the 'eighth day' - and the 'seven days' of Creation. To show how, we'll need to start with a quick review of the first seventeen chapters of Sefer Breishit, noting a pattern in the stories where God speaks to man using "shem Elokim". Let's explain:

IN WHAT 'NAME' DOES GOD SPEAK TO MAN? Recall from our study of Sefer Breishit that God's creation of the universe is presented in Chumash from two perspectives: 1) "b'shem ELOKIM" (1:1 -2:4) - which focused on God's creation of NATURE, i.e. a structured universe, in SEVEN days [what we call 'perek aleph']; and 2) "b'shem HAVAYA" (2:5-4:26) - which focused on God's special relationship with Man, i.e. the creation of Gan Eden, and man's banishment from that environment after he sinned [what we call 'perek bet'].

Without going into the complex details of this 'double presentation', we will just posit that God's relationship with man develops along the lines of each of these two perspectives. In other words, we will find that at times God may talk to man b'shem Elokim, while other times He may speak to him b'shem Havaya - each Name reflecting a different perspective of that developing relationship. For example, in perek aleph, God - b'shem Elokim - blesses man that he be fruitful & multiply, master the earth and rule over all other living creatures (see 1:26-28). In contrast to this perspective of man as ruler, in perek bet - b'shem Havaya - man is created in order to become God's servant, whose job is to tend and watch over His Garden (see 2:15-17). This double perspective continues in the Torah's account of the Flood. Because of the sinful behavior of "dor ha'Mabul" (the generation of the Flood), God decides to destroy His creation, saving only Noach and his family. The explanation for this punishment is presented according to both of these perspectives: 1) b'shem Elokim - see 6:9-6:22. 2) b'shem Havaya - see 6:5-8 & 7:1-5.

Likewise, in the aftermath of the MABUL, God redefines His relationship with man, again from both perspectives: 1) b'shem Elokim - see 9:1-17 2) b'shem Havaya - see 8:18-21

After the flood, the children of Noach disperse into seventy nations (10:1-32). Note how in each of these major events, God speaks to man both b'shem Elokim and also b'shem Havaya. This same pattern continues in the Torah's account of God's relationship with Avraham Avinu. Note however, that in all of the early stories concerning Avraham Avinu,

beginning with chapter 12 in Parshat Lech L'cha, God only speaks to Avraham Avinu b'shem Havaya. To our surprise, the first time we find that God speaks to Avraham b'shem Elokim is in the story of "brit Milah" (i.e. in chapter 17)! For example, God's punishment of the builders of the Tower of Babel is described b'shem Havaya (see 11:1-10). Similarly, God's choice of Avraham Avinu to become the forefather of His special nation is also described b'shem Havaya (see 12:1-16:16). In fact, God - b'shem Havaya - makes several promises to Avraham concerning the future of his offspring and the Promised Land (see chapter 13). This promise is formalized, again b'shem Havaya, at Brit Bein Ha'Btarim (see 15:1-20) - a covenant which not only foresees the conquest of the Land of Israel by Avraham's offspring, but also foresees the forging of this nation through bondage in a foreign Land.

Thus we find that from chapter 11 until chapter 16 in Sefer Breishit, God speaks to man exclusively b'shem Havaya. In chapter 17, when God commands Avraham to perform Brit Milah, this pattern suddenly changes! Let's take a closer look at that perek. In this narrative, God first introduces Himself as "kel sha- dai" and then, for the FIRST time, He speaks to Avraham Avinu b'shem ELOKIM: "When Avram was ninety-nine years, God [HAVAYA] appeared to Avram and said to him: "ANI KEL SHA-DAI", walk before Me and be blameless. And I will establish My COVENANT between Me and you... Avram fell on his face, and God [ELOKIM] spoke to him saying... This is my COVENANT with you..." (17:1-4)

Note how in this covenant, given b'shem Elokim, God: a) changes Avram's name to Avraham; b) blesses him that he will multiply ("pru u'rvu"); c) promises that he will become a great nation; d) promises him and his future generations Eretz Canaan; e) promises to be his God ("le'hiyot l'cha l'ELOKIM"); f) commands him to circumcise his male children, etc.

To better appreciate the significance of this special covenant of "brit milah", we must compare it to the only two earlier instances in Chumash where God had spoken to man b'shem Elokim: (I) After the creation of man on the sixth day (1:27-30); (II) After the Flood (9:1-17).

I) On the sixth day, when man is created b'tzelem ELOKIM, God (b'shem ELOKIM) blesses him that he should: a) be fruitful and multiply ("pru u'rvu"); b) be master and ruler of the living kingdom; c) eat from the plants and fruit of the trees.

II) Some ten generations later, after the Flood, God (b'shem ELOKIM) blesses Noach and his children in a very similar fashion (9:1-7), including: a) to be fruitful and multiply ("pru u'rvu"); b) to be master of the living kingdom; c) permission to eat living creatures (not only plants);

This divine blessing to Noach is followed by a special covenant, also given b'shem Elokim. This covenant, better known as "brit ha'keshet" (the rainbow covenant), reflects the establishment of a special relationship between God and mankind, i.e. God's promise that He will never again bring about the total destruction of His creation (see 9:11-15). [See Ramban on 6:18, especially his final explanation of the word "brit", based on the word "briya"!]

As we explained above, the next time that God speaks to man b'shem Elokim is only some ten generations later - at Brit Milah, and it's not by chance! At Brit Milah, we find once again that God speaks to man in order to establish a special covenant. However, note the striking textual similarities between these two covenants: - "brit Milah" / "brit ha'keshet": a) to be fruitful and multiply 9:1 / 17:2,6; b) "va'ani hi'nei... briti itach(em)..." 9:9 / 17:4; c) "v'hakimoti et briti..." 9:11 / 17:7; d) "ha'aterz" // "eretz canaan" 9:13,16,17 / 17:8 e) "ot brit": "ha'milah // ha'keshet" 9:13,17 / 17:12; [to verify this, open your Tanach & compare them yourself]

However, in addition to these similarities, in "brit Milah" we find an important promise - "I'hiyot lachem l'Elokim" [to be a God to you] - which reflects a much CLOSER relationship with God. In fact, this key phrase is repeated twice, for it emphasizes and defines the purpose of Brit Milah (read 17:7-8 carefully!).

ONE STEP 'ABOVE' NATURE This background can help us understand the commandment that "brit milah" is to be performed

specifically on the eighth day. Note the progression that we have been following of God's relationship with man from the perspective of 'shem Elokim': STAGE 1) The Creation of NATURE in SEVEN days (1:1-2:4); STAGE 2) The covenant with Noach after the Flood (9:1-17); STAGE 3) The "Brit Milah" covenant with Avraham Avinu to be performed on the EIGHTH day (17:1-14).

One could suggest that circumcision on the EIGHTH day relates to this elevation of man's spiritual level, ONE step above the level of his original creation in SEVEN days. Let's explain this statement, based on these three stages of this progression b'shem Elokim:

(1) During the first seven days, God brought the universe to a stage of development where it appears to 'take care of itself'. Be it vegetation, animal, or man, all species of life secure their existence by their ability to reproduce; they become fruitful and multiply (e.g. "zo'ray'ah zerah", "zachar u'nekevah", "pru u'rvu", etc.). Man's mastery of this creation, his desire to conquer and his ability to harness it, are all part of this phenomenon which we call NATURE. The first chapter of Breishit teaches us that, what we call nature, is not simply an act of chance, rather a willful act of God. [By resting on Shabbat, once every seven days, we remind ourselves of this point.]

(2) After the "mabul", God (b'shem Elokim) 'starts over' by re-establishing His relationship with mankind in a covenant with Noach, known as "brit ha'keshet". This covenant reflects a relationship very similar to that in God's original creation in seven days, with some 'minor' changes: Man remains master of His universe (9:2), with a 'small change' in his diet (9:3-5), and a commandment that it is forbidden to murder a fellow human (9:6-7). However, the basic laws of nature remain the same (see 9:8).

(3) Up until Brit Milah, man's relationship with God b'shem Elokim remained distant. Although Man was the pinnacle of God's creation with certain minimal expectations of moral behavior, he was basically just part of nature. Man was given power; he acted LIKE God (b'tzelem Elokim), but was not CLOSE to Him. At Brit Milah, Avraham is raised to a higher level. He and his offspring are chosen to represent God as His special nation, and towards that purpose, they are awarded a special relationship - "li'hiyot lachem l'Elokim". As an "ot", a sign, of this relationship, they are commanded to circumcise their children on the 'eighth day'.

Thus, the EIGHTH day represents yet one more level of progression in the creation process, which first took place in SEVEN days. [What the Maharal calls "m'al ha'teva - above nature!"]

Just as there is a progression within the first seven days of creation b'shem Elokim, from "domem" (inanimate / "shmayim v'aretz"), to "tzomayach" (vegetation), to "chai" (animal kingdom), to "adam" (man), so too on the 'eighth day'. The offspring of Avraham has been chosen to take God's creation and elevate it to a higher level.

This interpretation could reflect a statement made by Reish Lakish, explaining the meaning of God's name "kel sha-dai" which is first introduced at Brit Milah (17:1-2): What's the meaning of "ani kel-sha'dai"? God said: I am the One who said to the world "dai" - [enough, or stop]." (Yalkut Shimoni siman 81, Chagiga 12a) [See also the pirush of the "Torah Tmima" on this pasuk.]

This explanation may help us understand the complex opening of the Brit Milah narrative: God, b'shem Havaya - the Name of God which Avraham is familiar with up until this point - informs Avraham that He is "kel sha-dai", the God who had 'stopped' His process of creation after seven days (17:1-2). Now, b'shem Elokim, the Name of God that orchestrated the creation in seven days, intervenes yet one more time. He establishes a covenant with Avraham, to command him with the mitzvah of "brit milah", to raise him ONE level higher, i.e. closer to God.. Thus, God's commandment that we perform Brit Milah on the eighth day is not incidental. Rather, it reflects the very nature of our special relationship with God.

BACK TO VAYIKRA Milah on the eighth day was only one example of this '7/8' relationship in Sefer Vayikra. Based on our shiur, we can now explain the other examples:

SEVEN DAYS "MILUIM" / "YOM HA'SHMINI": As explained in last week's shiur, the seven days necessary to dedicate the Mishkan reflects the parallel between our construction of the Mishkan to serve God, to God's creation of nature in seven days, to serve Him. [See Tehillim 104 - "borchi nafshi..."] On the 'eighth day', the "shchinah" descends upon the Mishkan, allowing it to become the focal point for the development of the special relationship between God and Bnei Yisrael.

SEVEN DAYS "TAHARA" / EIGHTH DAY "KORBANOT" (Metzora, Zav, Zava): Different types of "tumah" are caused by some abnormal behavior of the body. Seven days of "tahara" are required to return the "tamei" person back to the 'camp' - to his normal existence, his natural habitat. Then on the eighth day, he must bring a special korban to allow his entry into the Mishkan. [Note the parallel between this process, and its korbanot, to that of the kohanim during the seven day miluim and Yom ha'Shmini.] SEVEN DAYS OF SUCCOT / SHMINI ATZERET: As agriculture and nature go hand in hand, all of the agricultural holidays follow cycles of seven (see Vayikra chapter 23). In the spring (chag ha'aviv), as the grain harvest begins, we bring "korban ha'omer" and celebrate chag ha'matzot for SEVEN days. Then we count SEVEN WEEKS until the completion of the wheat harvest, bring "korban shte ha'lechem", and celebrate chag ha'SHAVUOT. On succot, "chag ha'asif", at the end of the agricultural year ("b'tzeit ha'shana / see Shmot 23:16), we thank God for our fruit harvest by celebrating for seven days and bringing the "arba minim" to the Mikdash. At the very end of this cycle of agricultural holidays, we add SHMINI ATZERET, a special gathering with no special agricultural mitzvah. It is simply a time to stop and reflect on the holiday season and year that has passed. On this 'eighth day', we focus on the special relationship between God and Bnei Yisrael. This special relationship between God and Bnei Yisrael which begins with Brit Milah, reaches its fullest expression with Matan Torah at Brit Har Sinai. Based on this interpretation, it is understandable why Chazal chose this holiday to celebrate as SIMCHAT TORAH, and to conclude on this day the yearly 'cycle' of reading the Torah.

chag samayach, menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN A. In what way could Shavuot be considered the 'eighth', after seven cycles of seven. Compare this to the din of the Yovel year in parshat B'har. Why do you think that Chazal refer to Shavuot as "chag ha'atzeret". In what way is it similar to "Shmini Atzeret".

B. Based on the above shiur, why do you think that prior to Brit Milah, God changes both Avraham's and Sarah's names by adding a "hey"? Relate your answer to Hashem's name and His introduction in 17:1-4.

C. Based on the parallels between creation and brit milah, why do you think God chose to make the "ot" of this covenant on the part of the body which performs "pru u'rvu". Explain why we thank God in birchat ha'mazon for the "aretz", then "britcha asher chatamta bi'bsareinu", and then toratcha sh'limad'tanu"

D. Note in Sefer Yirmiyahu that even the Creation itself is considered a covenant: see 33:25-26, and relate these psukim to the above shiur.

E. Relate the above shiur to the minhag of "sheva brachot" at a wedding, and the seven days of mourning after death.

F. See Rambam Hilchot M'lachim chapter nine [the laws concerning the SEVEN mitzvot of Bnei Noach]. Relate this Rambam to the above shiur.

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Megilah 21 HALACHAH: ADDING "ALIYOS" ON SHABBOS AND YOM TOV OPINIONS: The Mishnah lists the number of Aliyos on the different days when the Torah is read. The Mishnah states that "on Yom Tov, there are five Aliyos, on Yom Kipur there are six, and on Shabbos there are seven -- we may not subtract from that number, but we may add to it, and we read a Haftarah from the Nevi'im." When the Mishnah says that we may add to the number of Aliyos, to which day or days is it referring? Is it referring to all three days -- Yom Tov, Yom Kipur, and Shabbos -- and on all three of those days we may add Aliyos? Or is it referring only to the last day mentioned -- Shabbos, while on Yom Tov and Yom Kipur we may *not* add Aliyos?

(a) RASHI says that the reason why Aliyos may not be added when the Torah is read on weekdays, such as on Rosh Chodesh and Chol ha'Mo'ed, is because people work on those days and they do not have time to stay in the synagogue for extra Aliyos. This implies that on days that people abstain from work, such as Yom Tov, Yom Kipur, and Shabbos, it is permitted to add Aliyos. This is also the opinion of TOSFOS (23a DH Chad) and the RAMBAM (Hilchos Tefilah 12:16). The HAGAHOS MAIMONI there adds that for this reason one may add Aliyos even on weekdays for Chasanim if there are many Chasanim who are getting married on that day and need Aliyos, because the Mishnah in Nega'im (3:2) implies that the day of one's Chupah is considered like a day of a Regel!

(b) The RAN cites "Yesh Mefarshim" who say that the Mishnah is referring only to the last day mentioned -- Shabbos. Only on Shabbos is it permitted to add Aliyos, but not on any other day. He explains that we do not add Aliyos on weekdays because we want to show the importance and superiority of the days that have more Kedushah. Therefore, each day has a specific number of Aliyos, corresponding to the degree of Kedushah of that day. If we were to add to the Aliyos, it would diminish the honor of the day which has more Aliyos. However, on Shabbos, which already has more Aliyos than any other day, we may add Aliyos. REBBI AKIVA EIGER (in Mishnayos) points out that this opinion is contradicted by the Beraisa later (23a), in which Rabbi Akiva states that "on Yom Kipur there are *seven* Aliyos, and on Shabbos there are *six*, and we may not subtract for that number, but we made add to it." That opinion maintains that on Shabbos there are *less* Aliyos than on Yom Kipur, and yet it still permits adding Aliyos on Shabbos! (See OR GADOL) RABEINU YEHONASAN MI'LUNIL also suggests that only on Shabbos may we add Aliyos, but he gives a different reason than that of the Ran. He says that Yom Tov and Yom Kipur are like Rosh Chodesh and Chol ha'Mo'ed in that it would be too cumbersome to add Aliyos, because on Yom Tov the people need to rush home to do the Melachos of Ochel Nefesh, and on Yom Kipur, adding Aliyos would prolong the stay in synagogue and make the fast more difficult for the people. According to this explanation, the Beraisa later (23a) poses no contradiction, because even if there are only six Aliyos on Shabbos, it is still permitted to add Aliyos, since there is no reason for the people to want to leave the synagogue sooner. (The text of the Mishnah is slightly difficult according to both of these explanations. The Mishnah says that "... we may not subtract from that number, but we may add to it, and we read a Haftarah from the Nevi'im." The first statement ("we may not subtract") and the third statement ("we read a Haftarah from the Nevi'im") are clearly referring to all three days, while the middle statement ("we may add to it") is only referring to Shabbos! The Mishnah must mean that we may add to the number of Aliyos on *some* of days listed in the Mishnah. If so, the Beraisa cited by Rabbi Akiva Eiger may also mean that we may add to the number of Aliyos on *some* of the days listed in the Beraisa -- i.e. on Yom Kipur, which has the most Aliyos, but not on Shabbos, which was mentioned last. This, too, answers Rabbi Akiva Eiger's question -- it is only on Yom Kipur that Aliyos may be added according to Rabbi Akiva of the Beraisa. [Y.

Shaw])

HALACHAH: The SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 282:1 rules like the Rambam, that we may add to the Aliyos on Yom Tov, Yom Kipur, and Shabbos. The REMA agrees with that as the Halachah m'Ikar ha'Din, but writes that we are stringent not to add Aliyos on Yom Tov and Yom Kipur, in order to fulfill the Ran's opinion. The only exception is the Yom Tov of Simchas Torah, when we rely on the Rambam, whose opinion is the Halachah m'Ikar ha'Din, and we add Aliyos in order that everyone have an opportunity to read from the Torah.

Megilah 23 BOWING DOWN ON A STONE FLOOR OPINIONS: Rav Chiya bar Avin said that he saw Rava and Abaye turning to their sides as they bent down and not fully bowing down. Why were they particular not to bow down?

(a) RASHI explains that they did not fully bow down, because they were following Rabbi Elazar's ruling (22b) that an Adam Chashuv, a person of importance, should not bow down.

(b) TOSFOS (22b, DH v'Iy Ba'is Eima) and the ROSH explain in the name of RAV HAI GA'ON that they leaned to their sides because of the prohibition of bowing down on a stone floor. Why, though, did they lean to their sides? If they were concerned with the prohibition of bowing on a stone floor, they could have bowed down without stretching out their hands and feet (Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim) -- a manner of bowing which is permitted on a stone floor, as the Gemara earlier (22b) says? The answer is that although the Isur d'Oraisa forbids only Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim on a stone floor, nevertheless they maintained that it is Asur *mid'Rabanan* to bow down on a stone floor even without Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim.

HALACHAH: The REMA (OC 131:8) rules that it is Asur mid'Rabanan to bow down even when there is only one thing wrong -- either if one is bowing with Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim on a floor that is not made of stone, or bowing on a stone floor without Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim (bowing without Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim is when one brings his face to the floor, not just when he prostrates himself upon his knees -- Mishnah Berurah 181:41). This is why, when we bow down on Yom Kipur, we place something upon the floor, even though we do not bow down with Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim.

Bowing while leaning to one's side is permitted on a stone floor. If, however, the floor is made of stone and one bows down with Pishut Yadayim v'Raglayim, then it is prohibited even if he leans to the side.

Megilah 24 HALACHAH: AT WHAT AGE CAN A KOHEN BE "NOSEI KAPAYIM?" QUESTION: The Mishnah states that a Katan may not do Nesi'as Kapayim. TOSFOS (DH v'Ein) points out that the Mishnah implies that only a *Katan* (that is, a minor under the age of Bar Mitzvah) may not do Nesi'as Kapayim, but if he is no longer a Katan (i.e. he has reached the age of Bar Mitzvah, or he has physical signs of maturity), then he may do Nesi'as Kapayim. However, asks Tosfos, this contradicts the Gemara in Chulin (24b) which says that "when a man's beard becomes full, he may be Nosei Kapayim," implying that it is not enough to have the barest signs of maturity. Moreover, asks Tosfos, the Gemara in Sukah (42a) implies that *even* a minor can be Nosei Kapayim!

ANSWER: TOSFOS suggests that the three apparently contradictory Gemaras are referring to three separate Halachos. There are Halachic differences between the various age groups, as follows:

(a) A minor may only do Nesi'as Kapayim together with adults, but not by himself.

(b) A person who is no longer a minor but whose beard has not filled out may do Nesi'as Kapayim by himself occasionally, but not on a regular basis. (TOSFOS in Sukah (42a-b, DH ha'Yodei'a) adds that on days of prayer, such as Yom Kipur, a Kohen whose beard has not filled out should not be Nosei Kapayim.)

(c) Once the Kohen's beard is full, he may be Nosei Kapayim on a regular basis even by himself.

HALACHAH: The SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 128:34) rules in accordance with the three different age groups set forth by Tosfos. However, the Shulchan Aruch does not cite Tosfos' ruling in Sukah, that a Kohen whose beard has not filled out should not be Nosei Kapayim on days of prayer like Yom Kipur. The BI'UR HALACHA (DH v'Lo) questions why this is not quoted by the Poskim.

The YESHU'AS YAKOV (OC 128) maintains that the practice of Ashkenazic communities is that a minor does not do Nesi'as Kapayim at all. This is based on the opinion of RASHI (Sukah 42a), who seems to discount Tosfos' first age group (a). Nevertheless, in many places in Eretz Yisrael even minors do Nesi'as Kapayim together with adult Kohanim. (Such was indeed the custom in the Beis Midrash of Moreinu Ha'Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman, zt'l -M. Kornfeld).
