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Rabbi Benjamin Yudin Success Is In the Palm of Your Hand

The Rambam often closes specific sections of Halacha with an aggadic or moral teaching. Thus it is not surprising that at the conclusion of Hilchos Lulav (8:15) he does the same. What is surprising, however, is the specific teaching he chooses. The last halachic topic he deals with there is the special simcha that was present at the Simchas Beis Hashoeva celebrations in the Beis Hamikdash during Succos. The Rambam then teaches that the emotion with which one performs mitzvos is so significant that if the performance lacks happiness and joy, one is fit for Divine retribution, as it says, "because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart" (Devarim 28:47). One would have expected that his final teaching would be related to kabbolas pnei haShechina (greeting the Divine presence, as was done at the Simchas Beis Hashoeva), perhaps throughout the year in our synagogues and study halls, and we would have placed this lesson regarding the importance of performing mitzvos with enthusiasm earlier in Hilchos De'os where Rambam discusses the overall character of man.

I heard from one of my teachers a fascinating explanation as to why the Rambam ends Hilchos Lulav with the concept of simcha shel mitzvah. The Yalkut Shimoni (Tehillim 102:19) cites the verse "Let this be recorded for a later generation, so that the newborn people will praise G-d."

Commenting on "v'am nivrah yehallel Kah - so that the newborn people will praise G-d" the rabbis ask: is there a nation yet to be reborn? Rather the verse refers to the generations that are "as dead" in their actions and mitzvos, and they pray and beseech Hashem on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and G-d recreates them, giving them another opportunity. What is this am nivrah - this newly created nation - to do? They are to "yehallel Kah" - to take their Lulav and Esrog and praise Hashem therewith. Why specifically with the four species?

Rabbeinu Bachaya in his commentary on Parshas Emor and in his Kad Hamkemach explains why these four minim were singled out for the mitzvah on Succos. The essence of the fruit, he notes, is its moisture, as the text states (Devorim 12:25) "ki hadam hu hanefesh - for the blood, it is the life". Similarly, in the world of vegetation the moisture contained within comprises its life and freshness. These four species reflect the freshness endowed within them, and they are taken as a symbol of vibrancy

and life, with which to praise Hashem for His renewing us and giving us a second chance to serve Him.

The halacha is that a dry lulav is pasul (may not be used) for the mitzvah. Though it is clearly recognizable as a lulav, the Raavad (Hilchos Lulav, 8:9) explains that a dried out, i.e. dead, lulav can not be used for serving Hashem, as the passuk (Tehillim 115:12) says, "lo hameisim yehalelu Kah - the dead can not praise G-d." Thus, the lulav and its components were chosen as the medium to thank Hashem for the opportunity to serve Him with excitement and enthusiasm, as they themselves bespeak life.

Regarding man, in Parshas Breishis (2:7) we are taught, "vayipach b'apav nishmas chaim - He blew into his nostrils the soul of life." There is man with a soul, alive, energetic, with great and unlimited potential, and there is man without a soul, lifeless. Similarly, there are the mitzvos of man with and without a soul. A mitzvah performed with simcha - happiness and joy - is a mitzvah possessing a soul, and the same mitzvah performed perfunctorily, out of habit and routine, is literally lifeless.

Many have the practice, based on the Ari z"l and Shalah Hakadosh, to fulfill the mitzvah of picking up the four minim in the Succah. Perhaps the message is that one needs the environment of the Succah, which reminds the dweller that he has left his permanent residence to dwell in a temporary one, literally in Hashem's home and presence, to enable him to perform mitzvos with excitement and the realization that one is in Hashem's presence. Too often throughout the year we are so distracted that we fail to be cognizant of our performing mitzvos in the presence of, and praying literally to, Hashem. The Chofetz Chain zt"l in his Shem Olam writes "tell me truthfully my brothers - do you consider the closeness and potential of man to G-d on a daily basis, weekly basis, monthly or even annual basis?" The Rambam writes that the simcha accompanying our mitzvos is to be there all the time, but we learn it from lulav, hence he teaches this lesson here in Hilchos Lulav and not in Hilchos De'os.

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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY • SUKKOT TO-GO • TISHREI 5769Arba
Minim and Sukkah: Is There a Connection?

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The many mitzvot associated with Pesach are clearly interconnected. The Torah links in the same verse the prohibition of eating chametz with the obligation of eating matzah. Maror, matzah, and the korban pesach are all integrated into the seder. In contrast there is no apparent connection between the mitzvot of Sukkot - between the obligation of eating and sleeping in the sukkah, which applies night and day throughout Sukkot, and the obligation to pick up the arba minim and shake them which can only be performed during the day. In fact, biblically this latter requirement exists outside of the Beit Hamikdash only on the first day of the holiday.

Although Hassidic custom advocates lifting the arba minim each morning in one's sukkah, thereby providing a connection between these otherwise disparate mitzvot, some opine that this may not be the optimal way of doing the mitzvah since it severs the connection between shaking the four minim at appropriate places during Hallel and saying the brakhah on the mitzvah.

The symbolism associated with the sukkah is related to Hashem's protection of the Jews during their forty year sojourn in the wilderness prior to reaching the land of Israel. Both Tannaitic views - that the sukkah reflects the clouds of glory or actual sukkot - interpret the Jew's living in this temporary abode for a week as reflecting trust that Hashem watches over him. We remain vulnerable wherever we live, whether in our own land of Israel or in America. In contrast, the lulav, etrog, hadassim, and aravot are all agricultural. Sukkot is also called Chag Ha'asif, the festival of gathering of the crops. There was no agriculture in the wilderness when the Jews ate manna. The Sefer haChinuch associates all four minim with manifestations of joy. Other midrashic interpretations see the four minim as representing the unification of different bodily limbs or different types of

people. Joy and unity do not mesh naturally with vulnerability and the need for Divine protection.

Let us examine other aspects of Sukkot besides the mitzvah of sukkah and arba minim. According to the mishna in Rosh Hashana (1;2) the world is judged on Sukkot about water. The ordinary libations of wine are accompanied on Sukkot by the pouring of water (nisukh hamayim). In addition, there was a special manifestation of joy in the temple (simchat beit hashoeva) which is related to the pouring of water (see Talmud Bavli Succah 51a-51b and Rashi on the mishna). Water is both the source of life and the resource whose availability is most questionable. The world today knows too well the dangers resulting from scarcity of water. Israel, which has a short rainy season, is most vulnerable to a lack of rain. Halakha mandates an elaborate series of fasts of increasing severity exists as a response to a lack of rainfall. Without water, none of the four species will grow. Strikingly, when it does rain on Sukkot we are freed from the obligation of eating in the sukkah. The absence of water is a tragedy; its abundance produces a bumper crop and great joy. Humans cannot make it rain. We can only pray that Hashem will make it rain. Hence, water signifies human dependence on Hashem's protection and the joy of a successful harvest. A farmer works hard planting, plowing, nurturing, and harvesting to provide food. At the conclusion of this long process he has the right to enjoy the fruits of his labor. Historically this has led to forgetting that all his efforts would have been in vain if not for the rain that came from heaven. Celebrating the harvest and acknowledging our vulnerability and dependence on Hashem's protection are complementary themes. We express our joy fully only in the temple, where we take the arba minim all seven days. The Rambam stresses that this extreme expression of joy is performed only by the scholars and the righteous who truly understand that it should reflect joy in serving Hashem. The symbolism of the mitzvah of the Sukkah and of the arba minim remain different. However the combination of the two creates the proper balance between recognizing our vulnerability and dependence, and joy that we have merited Hashem's protection.

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Happiness to Go: A

Spiritual Plan

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Every holiday taps into a certain power that is relevant throughout the year—not just relevant to the days of the holiday itself. In this article we will see that there are five components to the joy of the holiday of Sukkos 5. These are really 5 distinct steps of joy. The pattern is reminiscent of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs⁶ where each step builds upon the next, and the pinnacle is a spiritual component of self actualization. Once internalized over the holiday of Sukkos, these lessons may be helpful in the cold winter months ahead as well. Step 1: Thoughtful Joy At first glance, the Talmud's dictate to fulfill the obligation to be joyous on Yom Tov seems simplistic. A person is required to make his children and the members of his household happy on the Regal, as it says "You shall rejoice on your festival" (Devarim 16:14). With what should you make them happy? With wine. R. Yehuda says, with men (you should make happy) with what is appropriate for them and with women with what is appropriate for them. Pesachim 109a

Were Chazal simply presenting a fact that has not changed in the last 2,000 years that men like to eat meat, women like to shop and kids like candy? The greater one's sensitivity to nuance in Rabbinic literature, the more one realizes that there is more than meets the eye. In order to glean a little more insight, it is appropriate to examine a basic issue discussed by the Gemarah. Gemara Moed Katan (14b) relates that if (G-d forbid) an individual is in mourning when yom tov arrives, the aveilus is "broken". "The positive commandment which applies to all the Jewish people (to

celebrate yom tov) pushes away the private commandment (the mourning of a relative)." Rav Soloveitchik noted that the Gemara's rationale seems strange. After all, the two precepts don't really contradict each other. According to Torah law, an individual in mourning can eat meat and drink wine. Why does aveilus have to be pushed away altogether? Despite the fact that the mitzvah is presented as an obligation of action, in this case that men should eat meat and drink wine, that is only the technical component of the mitzvah. Its primary fulfillment, however, is achieved when the appropriate emotion is experienced. At times, the Rav referred to this primary emotional component as the soul of the mitzvah. (For example, see Al haTeshuvah where Rav Soloveitchik explains that the Rambam codifies confession as the mitzvah of repentance, but the "soul" of the mitzvah is the emotion of repentance.) In the case of Yom Tov, the crude requirement is the action, but the actual fulfillment is the state of being joyous. Similarly, although during shiva the aveil has certain physical prohibitions (not to bathe or shave), the actual fulfillment is the emotional state of mourning. This explains why Gemara Moed Katan assumes that Simchas Yom Tov and aveilus are mutually exclusive halakhic states - not based on the religious obligations, but on their emotional states. (shiurim l'zekher Aba Mori, vol. 2)7. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch extends the thought in an interesting manner. The Raavad (Hil. Chagiga 1:1), based on Abaye (Kiddushin 34b) writes that the obligation of joy for women is actually an obligation of the husband to provide for her the things that make her happy. Rav Shternbuch points out that if we would take this to its logical extreme, all single women would not be included in the mitzvah. This position does not seem tenable because it is hard to understand why single women would be different than married women, and there is no source that differentiates between the obligation of joy for married and single women. Therefore, Rav Shternbuch concludes that there are two distinct components to the mitzvah. Firstly, the action that precipitates the mitzvah, and secondly, the emotional state that is experienced⁸. Of course single women have the mitzvah of joy. However, the Raavad assumes that the responsibility of action is incumbent only on the man of the home to provide the necessary tools, while the "soul" of the mitzvah is fulfilled by all when they are happy on Yom Tov.

Practically Speaking If one is to make an attempt at true happiness, it cannot be done by simply following mechanical rules. Time and effort must be invested in thinking about what makes ourselves, our wives, and our children content. The first step requires a basic level of self understanding. "What do I truly enjoy that creates a spiritual context of joy for me on Yom Tov"? Just as significantly, it is the responsibility of men, before every Yom Tov to spend a significant amount of time and effort thinking about what will bring their wives and children joy. It is not always so easy, as John Gray writes in his book, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus. "We expect the opposite gender to be more like ourselves ... we desire them to want what we want." Chazal seem to be emphasizing that there are differences in what make men and women happy, and men have a responsibility to think like "Venusians" and not only as "Martians". Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach met a student of his who was holding a very expensive etrog on sukkos. He asked the student if he also fulfilled the mitzvah of buying his wife something for yom tov with the same hiddur. Halichos Shlomo, Moadim, pg. 26 Step 2: Sharing Joy with Others Even if one has fulfilled the above, according to the Rambam, one has not necessarily fulfilled the mitzvah of Simchas Yom Tov at all.

And when you eat and drink, you are required to give food to (Devarim 16:11) the stranger, orphan, and widow among the other poor and unfortunate ones. However, one who locks the doors to his courtyard and eats and drinks with his wife and children, and does not give food or drink to the poor and indigent this is not the joy of a mitzvah, but rather it is the joy of his stomach. Rambam Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18

Rambam's words speak for themselves. Even religious joy can be self-serving. How is one assured that the entire religious experience is not a selfish one which ultimately becomes nothing more than "the joy of his

stomach?" Rambam answers that if we link our joy with the joy of others less fortunate than us, then our joy is elevated to a truly religious experience. Along with Step 2 emerges a fundamental difference between these steps and the similar secular model of Maslow. While the initial stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs focuses on personal physical needs, the spiritual sphere of joy almost immediately focuses on sharing with others because without it, spirituality would be self-serving.

Practically Speaking A person who is honest about their self growth often struggles with the question, "How can I become more sensitive to the feelings of others?" Anyone who is part of a family structure constantly has the opportunity to empathize, sympathize, and help others. Chessed begins at home, and home is the training ground for how to behave in the world-at-large. At the same time, Rambam teaches us that if one's energy is entirely focused at home, then ultimately the chessed at home can be self-serving. Are we truly helping for the sake of being merciful or do we just want our families and homes to be perfect?

Step 3: Joy in Front of G-d The first 2 steps of joy on Sukkos involve sharing spiritual joy with others. Every holiday, and indeed every moment throughout the year, also has a unique angle of man's relationship with Hashem. The spiritual theme of joy for Sukkos is expressed in the pasuk, "And you shall rejoice in front of Hashem, your G-d, for seven days." Halakhically, the expression refers to the celebration of Simchas Beis Hashoevah which took place throughout Sukkos (Succah 41a).

The Sages of Israel, heads of the Yeshivos and the Sanhedrin, Chassidim, Elders and virtuous people were the ones that danced, clapped, sang and were joyous in the Beis Hamikdash during the days of Sukkos, but the rest of the nation would come to see and hear. Rambam Hilchos Lulav 8:14

Of all holidays, only Sukkos has this added dimension of dancing in the Beis Hamikdash. Why does Sukkos specifically have this extra component of dancing, and why is it specifically referred to as an expression of being "in front of Hashem?" Before dealing with these basic questions lets examine a common theme that surrounds Sukkos.

Wrapped in the Ananei Hakavod

Generally, a mitzvah requires a reasonable amount of exertion and effort or demands a certain spiritual context. The mitzvah of sukkah seems different in this regard. Simply by eating, drinking and sleeping inside a sukkah, one easily fulfills the commandment. How can such a mundane experience be spiritual? With closer examination, we see that the mitzvah of sukkah does demand something of the individual in a subtle yet large way. The walls and roof of the sukkah represent the clouds that protected us in the desert (see Sukkah 2a) and the Divine Providence that we have had as a nation throughout the generations.¹⁰ When we dwell in the sukkah we are reenacting and reinforcing the idea that G-d is with us in every part of our existence - even when we simply eat, drink, and sleep.

When it Rains, the Sukkah Falls Apart There is a fascinating halakha which exemplifies the idea that the sukkah represents Divine Providence. The Vilna Gaon (O.C. 639:5), based on Rashba, writes that when it rains on Sukkos, the sukkah loses its identity as a sukkah. For this reason, on the first night of Sukkos when there is an obligation to eat in the sukkah, the Vilna Gaon argues that it cannot be fulfilled when it is raining. The source behind the Vilna Gaon's approach is the vivid description of the Mishna.

When it begins to rain, at what point can you leave (the Sukkah)? When the makpneh gets ruined. To what can this be compared to? To a servant that tries to dilute a cup of wine for his master, and he throws the pitcher in his face. Mishna Sukkah 28b

The Mishna seems to suggest that rain is an absolute rejection of our attempt to fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah. The Vilna Gaon¹¹ explains the symbolic meaning behind the analogy of the servant having the flask of water poured back in his face. Vilna Gaon explains that wine represents absolute judgment, and water represents mercy. In the times of the Talmud, wine was very heavy and dense. It was made more "merciful" by adding water. In our analogy, the servant came to mix water with wine. The master poured the water back in his face, indicating that he was not

interested in accepting the water – the mercy – to mitigate the heavy wine – the harsh judgment¹². This may explain why the sukkah, although physically standing, does not halakhically exist when it rains. It is not simply because one is uncomfortable sitting in the sukkah during the rain. Rather, the rain represents a distancing of Klal Yisroel from Hashem, which is the antithesis of the divine protection exemplified by the sukkah. One year, when Rav Soloveitchik was a child, it rained on the first night of Sukkos in Chaslovitch. In the middle of the night he felt his father nudging him awake. "Berel, Berel, get up. It stopped raining. We can go eat in the succah." Already a child prodigy, Rav Soloveitchik asked his father, "Father, I don't understand. Isn't the reason we assume that we didn't fulfill the mitzvah of eating in the succah earlier this evening is that we were mitzta'er when we were sitting in the rain? But it is also uncomfortable now to get out of bed and go outside." Rav Moshe then explained to his son that initially they did not fulfill the mitzvah (according to the Gra) because when it rains, the succah loses its identity as a succah. Hararei Kedem vol.1 chap. 115

A New Paradigm of Lifnei Hashem: Sukkos Following Yom Kippur The notion of sukkah, as developed above, embodies the notion of surrounding every part of our corporeal existence with Divine presence – "in front of G-d." The month of Tishrei has a gradual process of service "in front of G-d." On Yom Kippur the Torah also uses a similar expression, "in front of G-d you shall be purified," indicating that on Yom Kippur as well the whole body is purified "in front of G-d." All corporeal desires are denied and the entire body subjugates itself by bowing and falling in front of the Master of the Universe. On Sukkos a similar subjugation of the entire body to the service of G-d takes place. However, on this occasion, after the process of negating the adverse impulses of man during Yom Kippur, those same impulses can now be raised to be used and enjoyed in front of G-d¹³. Often joy is associated with asceticism. Some believe that a truly spiritual and joyous person is one who encounters G-d in the upper spheres. Sukkos, however, emphasizes that we can elevate all components of the corporeal condition in the service of Hashem. This may also explain the unique role of dancing on Sukkos. Dancing is a spiritual activity that involves the use of every limb of the body. It is unique to Sukkos because the theme of "joy in front of G-d" is about elevating every part of our physical bodies to be used in the service of Hashem. **Practically Speaking** Recognizing that mundane activities can be a joyous experience with the Divine can transform many of our daily activities into spiritually uplifting ones. Often people who leave the Beis Hamedrash and head off to the workplace resign themselves to a life of spiritual mediocrity. Sukkos emphasizes that this reality is not inevitable. Every component of the human condition can be elevated in the service of Hashem. This idea is not meant to be taken homiletically. Rav Soloveitchik explained that one who goes to work in the morning and returns to learn at night does not need repeat Birchas Hatorah even if he did not learn the entire day because the entire human condition for an observant Jew, including one's work day, is constantly being examined from the perspective of Torah. A person who lives according to this ideal is Lifnei Hashem even when he is in Midtown Manhattan. **Step 4: Joy With Hashem** After seven days of rejoicing "in front of Hashem", another layer of simcha can be added. A higher level of joy can be attained on Shmini Atzeres, which is joy with Hashem. Once the seven days of Sukkos have finished, Hashem says to the Jewish nation, "Now you and I shall rejoice together, and I will not burden you with more than one cow and one ram". Yalkut Shimoni Pinchas 782

A person can be cognizant that he is in front of Hashem but not necessarily with Him. The first seven days of Sukkos emphasize and highlight Divine providence. However, Shmini Atzeres represents joy expressed in a personal relationship with G-d. "Let us rejoice together" indicates that the quality of the relationship has changed. Until this moment, G-d, the king, is recognized as having a direct impact on our lives, but he has not initiated a desire to have a personal relationship. On Shmini Atzeres a bi-directional

relationship is reaffirmed. A bi-directional relationship is one that involves true communication. Therefore, a person who truly feels a strong connection to G-d will feel that G-d is rejoicing along with him. Since the joy is no longer simply in front of G-d but with G-d, we reach a higher level of simcha. After all, Hashem is rejoicing with us, too! Practically Speaking According to Rabbi Abraham Twerski, MD, the most common psychological malady which troubles many people in our generation is lack of self-esteem. I often find that talmidim come up short, both in regards to their academic capabilities of excelling in Torah study as well as excellence in middos, because they are entirely unaware of their potential. One reason for this is the lack of awareness that G-d rejoices with us in every step of our growth. Many of us are conscious that Hashem is in front of us, and we even attain some level of mastery over the first 3 levels. However, we often focus on our shortcomings. If we believe that Hashem also focuses on our shortcomings, we will find it hard to mobilize our energy toward improvement. After all, whatever the improvement, there will always be so much more that is lacking. Having the ability to realize that Hashem rejoices with us and revels in our joy of being close to him despite our shortcomings is an extremely powerful emotional and religious tool. "Where can G-d be found?" asked Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. "Anywhere people let him in" he answered. Step 5: Rejoicing with an Internal G-dliness Maaseh Rav records the Vilna Gaon's behavior on Simchas Torah. He (the Vilna Gaon) would dance in front of the sefer Torah, clapping his hands and dancing with all his might...and when the sefer Torah was returned to the Aron, (his enthusiasm diminished a little) and he rejoiced as if it was a regular Yom Tov. According to Maaseh Rav, it seems that Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah constitute 2 different forms of joy. Rejoicing with the Torah, for the Vilna Gaon, had a higher dimension of joy than the joy of Shmini Atzeres. What is this joy? According to Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, the joy of Simchas Torah is the greatest level of joy because it is celebration of G-d within us.

This notion of internal G-dliness can be best understood as based on an idea developed by Rav Chaim of Volozhin¹⁴. All of us have a G-dly component to us - "in the image of G-d He created them." Rav Chaim explained that this G-dliness is the capacity to join our Divine Image with G-d himself through the internalization of Torah. G-d allows us to become G-dly when we work hard to have his Torah become part of our beings. This is the most intimate celebration of joy with Gd since it is entirely internal. Simchas Torah is not actually a celebration of the Torah, but a celebration of the Torah that we have made a part of us. Hence, when rejoicing on Simchas Torah, we are rejoicing with our internal G-dliness¹⁵. All human beings have struggles that affect them adversely, whether they are deep traumas or small issues that impede happiness. In many modern cultures today, people think that they will achieve happiness if they successfully cope with those traumas or negative components of existence. However, coping simply removes the negative. How is internal happiness achieved? Rejoicing with the Torah that we've learned and accomplished is rejoicing with the G-dly component within us. That is internal happiness.

Practically Speaking Many people get discouraged when they look over their shoulders and see others who have accomplished more in terms of Torah study, and they feel inadequate. The highest state of joy is accessible to all because it is rejoicing in our own internal G-dliness that is accessed through our unique spiritual talents and accomplishments. Rejoicing in the learning of Torah is not uniform. Every individual has his own G-d-given talents. If one has tapped into his internal strengths through analysis of Torah and the passion for mitzvos, then the pinnacle of Simcha can be achieved by rejoicing with our personal internal G-dliness. The 5 steps of joy begin with the most basic form of happiness - personal contentment in the context of G-d's spiritual calendar - and return to the personal plane in a much loftier manner. After one has shared joy with others, rejoiced in Divine providence, and celebrated his personal relationship with Hashem, complete happiness is achieved at the final stage when we access the Gdliness inside ourselves. Spiritual happiness reaches its zenith when there

is an inner happiness. Sukkos, in particular, and Avodas Hashem as a whole, emphasize that inner happiness is not simply a sense of inner peace, of accepting who we are within our social context, but rather involves reuniting our G-dly component to its source. To achieve inner happiness, each individual with his unique capabilities should revel in their toil and accomplishments in Torah. These accomplishments transform the individual into a more caring and more pure person - a true manifestation of G-dliness in our corporeal and turbulent world.

5 The structure of this article was inspired by a dramatic Sicha delivered by Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro z"l (circa 2002 and recorded by his students in Zehav Mishva). R. Shapiro delineated 4 stages of joy (I have added a fifth) in broad Halakahic terms. This approach is unique because it sheds light on emotional categories of Avodas Hashem. I find R. Shapiro's methodology very attractive because I also have been inspired by my great teachers in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas and RIETS to analyze a sugya systematically in the tradition of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik z"l, and this is how I study with my students. At the same time, learning with students does not take place in a vacuum. Every talmid, especially in the post adolescent period, is also emotionally growing and changing. Rav Shapiro's approach is very valuable because it is consistent with the rigorous method of the Beis Hamedrash of Rav Chaim z"l but can be used by people of all ages as a tool for religious and emotional growth.

6 "Abraham Maslow described ... a hierarchy of needs. As its base are our physiological needs, such as those for food and water. Only if these needs are met are we prompted to meet our need for safety, and then to meet our uniquely human needs to give and receive love and to enjoy self-esteem. Beyond this, said Maslow, lies the highest of human needs: to actualize one's full potential." (David Myers, Psychology 6th ed., Worth Publishers, NY, 2001)

7 According to many contemporary authorities, this concept goes so far as to say that as long as one is experiencing joy on Yom Tov that is associated with Yom Tov (see step 2) one need not fulfill it through the action described by Chazal. (see Moadim uZmanim vol. 1, and Contemporary Halakic Problems, vol. 3, pg. 248.

8 For both methodological and philosophical reasons it is interesting to note that Rav Soloveitchik was much more interested in emphasizing what is the soul of the mitzvah. Rav Shternbuch seems content in simply presenting the 2 dinim or categories.

9 Why the Torah, according to the Raavad, places responsibility of action specifically on the man of the house is beyond the scope of this article.

10 It is not a coincidence that the holiday of Sukkos immediately follows Yom Kippur. After Yom Kippur and true repentance, G-d shows that we reestablish our closeness to Him. We manifest this physically through the sukkah which represents the clouds of glory that protected us in the desert.

11 Sefer Kol Eliyahu. See also Zman Simchaseinu by Rabbi Dovid Cohen, who finds this idea in other writings of the Vilna Gaon, and applies it to other contexts as well.

12 This also explains the symbolic significance of water on Sukkos, as exemplified by the water libations that took place in front of the altar on Sukkos.

13 It is interesting to note that 7 days in Kabbalah represents the totality of time (since the entire universe was created in seven days) while a day represents a particular component of universal existence. Yom Kippur may represent a particular component (the ascetic form) of avodas hashem and is the holiest day of the year but it does not encapsulate the essence of the challenge of the human condition in the way that Sukkos does.

14 Nefesh Hachaim ch. 1.

15 There is a distinction between the way joy was expressed during the Simchat Beit haShoeiva and the way it was expressed in the customs of Simchat Torah. The Rambam writes that the dancing of Simchat Beit haShoeiva was done only by the leading Torah scholars of the time. Everyone else just watched. However Simchat Torah is a holiday that encourages the involvement of the masses. Everyone dances, and everyone

gets an aliyah (including the children). Although there may be other explanations as well, it could be suggested that this reflects the distinction between the particularistic joy of Simchat Beit haShoeiva which is assessed in objective terms and the pluralistic component of joy of Simchat Torah which is actualized in subjective terms.

From: William Kolbrener <kolbrew@mail.biu.ac.il>
Shades of Faith: My Sukka is not Insured by AIG!
Professor William Kolbrener
www.openmindedtorah.blogspot.com

When I was growing up in Long Island, there was always full attendance in Temple for the high holiday services; Sukkos, however, was the forgotten holiday. True, there was the hut - just next to the library - with all the greenery and what looked like an unripe lemon, but it was more like part of a display from the Museum of Judaism, not something lived or real. But Sukkos is making a come back; and it's just in time! After Yom Kippur, with the confidence that our prayers have been answered, we move from mitzvah to mitzvah and start to build our sukkos. More than any of the other holidays, Sukkos is associated with joy: three times the Torah mentions simcha in relationship to Sukkos. But we express our joy in a strange way - not, after Yom Kippur, in the contented satisfaction of our spiritual and material wealth, but by leaving the security of our homes for seven days to dwell in the sukka. All we have between us and the starry night sky is the s'chach - the branches, the palm fronds, the twigs - the covering of the sukka. Our Sages tell us that though the holiday is one that comes during the harvest festival - chag ha'asif, one of the Torah's names for the holiday, is literally the 'festival of gathering' - the sukka itself is made from the by-products of the harvest. Not the corn and wine, but what is left on the threshing floor, and on the side of the vineyard. We don't focus on the whole fruits, but on the remnants - and this is the paradoxical joy of Sukkos: the knowledge that our strength and our protection comes from recognizing the vulnerability of everything we had once thought was solid! A strange joy: 'vanity of vanity' we read in Kohelet (or Ecclesiastes) on Sukkos, the joy of understanding that what others trust, and that in which we ourselves once had placed our faith, are mere vanities.

Going into the sukka, our Sages say, is like going into exile. Only in exile do I realize what really sustains me; only in exile do I realize that what I thought had sustained me - what looked to be the most solid - is the most fleeting. After finishing a meal in the sukka, in the blessings that follow the meal we call out: 'May the Compassionate One raise up the fallen sukka of David!' The eternal kingdom of David is compared not to great towers or monuments of strength, but to a fallen sukka, a bunch of wooden planks and some old branches! For malchus Dovid, David's Kingdom, is eternal even in apparent defeat. In the vulnerability of David's sukka lies its triumph. Though defeated and fallen, to the eye dispersed, the sukka is still ready to be re-built. Our Sages tell us that after a house falls, when it is rebuilt it is considered a new house, no longer the same entity. A sukka, however, is different: though the sukka may fall, when we re-build it, it is still the very same sukka. For the s'chach - what the Maharal calls the keshet shel ma'alah, the connection to the Above - defines its very essence. Acknowledging the transience of what appears to be most solid - the external structures, conventional signs of wealth and power - turns us inward to find our keshet shel ma'alah, our own connection to the divine. Even if our sukka is fallen, our s'chach scattered, we can always gather it again, and reclaim that eternal connection. So the fallen sukka of David is eternal! S'chach, according to Jewish Law, cannot be composed of materials made by human hands. For the sukka provides an architectural nullification of those forces which detract from our trust in G-d and faith in His guidance. Not by the strength of my hands! It's a hard lesson to internalize - though it comes at a time when the security (and securities!) upon which we had built our trust seems to be failing. Houses have fallen: ones in which we once placed our trust - Lehman, Merrill, Bear Stearns.

Housing prices have fallen. The Dow Jones falls and keeps falling - and falling. This is the time to go into our sukkos - into what the Sages call the tzila d'hemenusa - the shade of faith. Peering it at from the library window - with the jaded and skeptical eye of the cultural anthropologist - is not enough. Like all the Jewish holidays, Sukkos is an exercise in consciousness-changing enacted through experience - of eating, drinking and sleeping in our sukkos for seven days. By the end of the holiday, we may not only understand but internalize as well, that, though not insured by AIG, the sukka is still the most secure place to be. Our policy is with another Agent.

Rabbi Jachter's Halacha Files
(and other Halachic compositions)

Parshat VaYeLech
5 Tishrei 5769
October 4, 2008
Vol.18 No.4

Showering on Yom Tov - Part 1 of 1
by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction

Those who reside in relatively affluent communities are accustomed to showering on a regular basis, something that was unheard of in pre-modern times. For many years there has been discussion whether showering is permitted on Yom Tov nowadays in light of this change in hygiene habits. We shall examine the traditional prohibition to bathe on Yom Tov and see whether this prohibition still applies even in contemporary times.

Background Information – MiToch, Shaveh LeChol Nefesh and Gezeirat Balanim

Three basic concepts must be clarified at first. The first is the debate between Beit Shamai and Beit Hillel regarding the law of "MiToch." The Torah (Shemot 12:16) permits certain work on Yom Tov such as cooking, transferring fire and carrying in a public domain for the sake of Ochel Nefesh (food preparation). Beit Shamai limits this permission to food preparation while Beit Hillel expands it to any Yom Tov need.

For example, the Mishnah (Beitzah 1:5) records that Beit Shamai does not permit carrying a child, Lulav or Sefer Torah (Torah scroll) in a public domain on Yom Tov while Beit Hillel does permit such carrying on holidays. The Gemara (Beitzah 12a) explains that Beit Hillel believes that "MiToch Shehutrah Hotza'ah LeTzorech Hutrah Nami Shelo LeTzorech", "just as the Torah permits carrying for the sake of food preparation it permits carrying for any Yom Tov need", while Beit Shamai rejects this expansion. This concept is commonly referred to as "MiToch" and applies to other labors permitted on Yom Tov. The Halachah follows the opinion of Beit Hillel (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 518:1).

Even Beit Hillel agree, however, that the Torah permits labor on Yom Tov only for activities that are "Shaveh LeChol Nefesh," something that is enjoyed by most people and not something that's exotic used by only a small minority of individuals. An example of such "exotic" behavior presented by the Gemara (Ketubot 7a) is making incense, which is prohibited on Yom Tov (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 511:4). There occasionally arises some debate whether to define an activity as Shaveh LeChol Nefesh. For example, the Acharonim discussed whether smoking is Shaveh LeChol Nefesh (see Biur Halacha 511:4 s.v. Ein Osin and the chapter in the forthcoming third volume of Gray Matter where it is explained that today smoking is prohibited due to health concerns).

The third background concept is the Gezeirat HaBalanim, the "bathhouse decree." Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 22:2) presents the issue succinctly:

"Why did the Rabbis forbid entering a bathhouse on Shabbat? Because of the bathhouse attendants who would heat water on Shabbat and claim it was heated before Shabbat (if the water was heated on Shabbat one can not benefit from the heated water as one cannot benefit from work done on his behalf on Shabbat)."

Heating Water for Bathing Purposes on Yom Tov

The Mishnah (Beitzah 2:5) presents a debate between Beit Hillel and Beit Shamai as to whether one may heat water for washing one's hands, face, and feet on Yom Tov. Predictably, Beit Shamai forbids this due to its rejection of the idea of "MiToch" and Beit Hillel permits this activity since they subscribe to the idea of "MiToch."

Interestingly, even Beit Hillel agrees that one may not heat water for one's entire body on Yom Tov. Rishonim debate the reason for this. Tosafot (Beitzah 21b s.v. Lo Yeicham) explain that bathing one's entire body is not Shaveh LeChol Nefesh as it is "fit for only finicky individuals." Rambam (Hilchot Yom Tov 1:16) believes that it is included in the Gezeirat HaBalanim, though it appears unusual to extend this edict to Yom Tov where one is permitted to engage in many labors necessary for Yom Tov. Ramban (Shabbat 40a s.v. Ha Ditnan), however, explains that since some Halachic concerns apply to bathing on Yom Tov as well, such as the worry that one may come to squeeze water (Sechitah) from one's hair or towel, the edict applies to Yom Tov as well.

There are two major differences between these two approaches. According to Tosafot, heating water for bathing on Yom Tov constitutes a Torah level prohibition whereas according to the Rambam it is only a rabbinic prohibition. Moreover, according to Tosafot this prohibition is subject to change as the category of Shaveh L'chol Nefesh varies in accordance with the habits of each particular generation, whereas the Gezeirat Habalanim is not subject to change, as the edicts of Chazal apply even when their reasons do not (Beitzah 5a).

This is quite ironic as normally we are stricter regarding a Torah law than a rabbinic requirement. However, it emerges in this case that there is more room for leniency with a Torah law than a rabbinic law. Thus, according to Tosafot it would appear to be permitted to bathe one's entire body on Yom Tov since such bathing has become Shaveh L'chol Nefesh in our times. According to the Rambam, however, the prohibition remains in effect.

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 511:1-2) clearly considers the Rambam's approach. Rav Yosef Karo permits bathing one's entire body on Yom Tov if the water was heated before Yom Tov, if the bathing is not done in a bathhouse. The Rama forbids bathing even outside the bathhouse. Mishnah Berurah (511:18) explains that the Gezeirat Habalanim forbids bathing on Yom Tov to the full extent as Shabbat, whether or not the bathing occurs in a bathhouse.

Accordingly, the prohibition to bathe one's entire on Yom Tov applies even today, since both the Shulchan Aruch and Rama consider the Rambam's opinion. Indeed, most Rabbanim today forbid bathing one's entire body on Yom Tov. For example, Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 14:7, does not permit bathing on Yom Tov even though in footnote 21 he considers the fact that bathing today has become Shaveh Lechol Nefesh. Similarly, Yalkut Yosef (5:Moadim p.482) does not offer blanket permission to bathe nowadays despite the greatly increased frequency of bathing.

Moreover, bathing is problematic today even for Sephardic Jews who follow Rav Karo, as one's insures that the water used for bathing was heated before Yom Tov by shutting off the boiler before Yom Tov. Most families would not want to do this, since hot water available for washing one's hands and face would not be available for the entire Yom Tov if the valve is turned off before Yom Tov.

Possible Exceptions to the Prohibition

There is, though, possible flexibility regarding the application of the Gezeirat Habalanim. The primary area of leniency is presented in the context of women immersing in a Mikveh on Shabbat and Yom Tov evenings. Two major eighteenth century Poskim, Teshuvot Noda Bi'yehudah (O.C. 24) and Teshuvot Chacham Tzvi (number 11) forbid immersing in a Mikveh whose water is heated even before Shabbat or Yom Tov. They permitted immersion only in lukewarm water, which the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 326:3) defines as water that people do not commonly regard as warm, even though the water is still a bit warm (for further

discussion, see Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 14:1 footnote 3). These authorities believe that the edict was issued only in regard to hot water and not lukewarm water (although Beit Meir to Yoreh Deah 197 who believes it applies even if the water is only lukewarm).

Nonetheless, by the nineteenth century Teshuvot Divrei Chaim (O.C. 2:26) notes common practice is for women to immerse even on Shabbat and Yom Tov evenings in fully heated Mikva'ot, as approved by the leading rabbinical authorities. Two reasons are offered to justify this practice. Rav Akiva Eiger (commenting on Shulchan Aruch 307:5 and cited in Bi'ur Halacha 326:1 s.v. B'mayim) permits bathing in hot water even on Shabbat (if the water was heated prior to Shabbat) in case of great discomfort. He believes that the edict was not intended to apply in such circumstances. Since women find it very difficult to immerse even in lukewarm water, the edict does not apply. A second reason is that since the immersion is for the sake of Mitzvah, the Gezeirah was not issued in case of Mitzvah.

Application to Showering on Yom Tov

One may combine the three lenient approaches regarding Mikveh, to showering on Yom Tov. If one is bathed in sweat on Yom Tov (such as from dancing in a hot room on Simchat Torah) then it is permitted to shower in lukewarm water. In such a situation one is in great discomfort which interferes with the Mitzvah of rejoicing on Yom Tov and therefore is justified in bathing in lukewarm water on Yom Tov. Indeed, Rav Yosef Adler reports that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik permits showering on Yom Tov in at least such circumstances even if the water is heated on Yom Tov, since today bathing has become Shaveh L'chol Nefesh. Rav Hershel Schachter told me that he would also permit showers in at least such circumstances on Yom Tov.

However, in such a situation one must take care to avoid squeezing water from one's hair or towel. One must also avoid using bar soap (Mishnah Berurah 326:30) and removing hair or loose nails or skin.

Yom Tov Sheini

One should not distinguish between the first day of Yom Tov and the second day of Yom Tov (for those who do not merit living in Eretz Yisrael) in this regard and rule more leniently for the second day since it is only a rabbinic obligation. The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 511:11) rejects such an approach as degrading to Yom Tov Sheini, a day whose dignity Chazal strove mightily to preserve (Shabbat 23a).

Conclusion

Showering and bathing on Yom Tov remains forbidden except for exceptional circumstances.

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Sun, Oct 12, 2008 at 8:26 PM subject InnerNet - "Lulava"

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"LULAVA"

by Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn

* * *

Rabbi Shammai Parnes is one of the principal rabbis of the Israeli army. He is a deeply religious man who descends from a long line of Jerusalem families.

This story took place during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, when the Israelis were caught by surprise and attacked by Arabs on all fronts. One of the critical points of battle was near the Suez Canal. For days after Yom Kippur and throughout Sukkos, Rabbi Shammai and his assistants traveled throughout the Sinai desert and southward towards Suez, where they cautiously and caringly gathered the bodies of those who had fallen in battle.

Throughout the days of Sukkos, Rabbi Shammai traveled in his jeep, taking with him his prayer book, Tehillim (Book of Psalms), tallis (prayer shawl), and lulav and esrog (used to celebrate the festival of Succos). In every army camp where he stopped, soldiers approached him, asking for permission to use his lulav and esrog.

Infantrymen who were otherwise irreligious would pick up his siddur and say, "Rabbi Shammai, let us pray from your siddur ... Rabbi Shammai, let us say the Shema ... Rabbi Shammai, could we say some Psalms." He would help as many as he could, and at times he was detained from his work for more than an hour. Much to his regret, though, he eventually had to say to the young men, "I can't stay any longer. I've been summoned elsewhere."

* * *

On Hoshana Rabbah (the last day of Sukkos), Rabbi Shammai and his assistants were near the Suez. It was late morning, and as he drove towards a newly constructed army base in the wide open desert, the thought occurred to him that because he had already used his lulav and esrog for the last time this Yom Tov, he could leave them in the army base.

Shortly after Rabbi Shammai's arrival at the base, a long line of soldiers began to form, waiting to use his lulav and esrog. As a crowd began to assemble, a young non-religious soldier, Arik Shuali, driving an ammunition truck, was making his way southward. Looking through his powerful binoculars he noticed a large crowd of fellow servicemen gathered in one area. Curious, he got out of his truck and made his way on foot to where the soldiers had assembled.

As he came closer, he asked someone, "What is all the commotion about?" They explained to him that Rabbi Shammai had come, and people were waiting for an opportunity to use his lulav and esrog. Arik was not interested in waiting around. However, when one of his friends mentioned that it was the last day to do this mitzvah, he agreed to wait his turn.

Eventually Arik's turn arrived. Just as he received the lulav and esrog, a bomb hit his truck. The vehicle exploded and set off multiple explosions of the ammunition on board. The blasts were so intense that a crater was formed in the ground where the truck had been parked. When they later examined the spot where the truck had been, the soldiers couldn't find even a shard of metal remaining from the shattered vehicle.

* * *

Three months later, Rabbi Shammai read a short notice in the Israeli army newspaper. It was an announcement stating that the wife of serviceman Arik Shuali had given birth to a little girl. The announcement included a statement by the new father. "I believe with every fiber of my being, that I am alive today and that I merited to see my new daughter only because of the mitzvah that I was doing at the time my truck was bombed."

To remember God's goodness, he named his daughter Lulava.

(Names have been changed.)

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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY • SUKKOT TO-GO • TISHREI 5769

The Requirement to Sleep in the Sukkah Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky
Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

We are commanded during the week of Sukkot to dwell in the Sukkah just as we dwell in our homes during the course of the year.

You shall dwell in booths [sukkot] seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths. Vayikra 23:42

"You shall dwell" similar to your living-dwelling. Hence, all seven days one should make the Sukkah a permanent dwelling and the home a temporary one. How is this done? If one has nice utensils... nice bedding, they should be brought to the Sukkah. One should eat, drink, walk around, and learn in the Sukkah. Sukkah 28b

Included in this requirement to dwell in the Sukkah as if it were our year-round home are the acts of eating and sleeping. Just as all year one eats and sleeps in one's house, during Sukkot these activities must take place in the

Sukkah. Sleeping in the Sukkah has a dimension of stringency that even eating does not have:

One can eat a snack (achilat arai) outside the Sukkah, but not take a quick nap outside the Sukkah. Why is this? Rav Ashi says: because one may fall into a deep sleep. Sukkah 26a

Chazal distinguish between achilat kevah, a significant meal, in contrast to achilat arai, an insignificant snack. Only achilat kevah must absolutely be performed in the Sukkah. Concerning sleep, there is no distinction between kevah and arai. One is obligated to sleep in the Sukkah regardless of the length of the sleep.

Nevertheless, there are many people who do not sleep in the Sukkah. Let us carefully analyze the obligation to sleep in the Sukkah in order to understand why so many people do not fulfill what appears to be an absolute requirement:

Regarding the contemporary leniency regarding sleep, i.e. that people do not sleep in the Sukkah except those that are careful about mitzvos:

- Some say it is because of the extreme cold, since it is uncomfortable to sleep in cold places.
- I say it is because the mitzvah is for a man to sleep together with his wife the way he does the rest of the year, and in a situation where that is not possible, since they do not have a private Sukkah, he is exempt. Rama OC 639:2

The Rama suggests that a married man is only obligated to sleep in the Sukkah if it is feasible for his wife to join him. Historically, it was not practical for men and their wives to sleep in sukkot because Sukkot were built in public areas and hence generated tzniut concerns; therefore, many married men did not sleep in the Sukkah. The Rama bases his suggestion that married men must only sleep in the Sukkah if their wives can join them on the phrase "teshvu k'ein taduru," that Sukkah-dwelling should be the same as year-round dwelling. A married man who always sleeps in the same room as his wife is not obligated to sleep alone in the Sukkah. Although the Rama was referring to a specific situation in which it wasn't practical for a woman to sleep in the Sukkah for reasons of modesty, presumably the reasoning of the Rama would apply if there are other reasons one's wife will not join him in the Sukkah.

The Vilna Gaon and the Magen Avraham, (ibid.) however, question the Rama's assumption that the halachic principle of teshvu k'ein taduru exempts one who cannot fulfill yeshiva b'Sukkah with his wife. They claim that this innovative application of teshvu k'ein taduru has no source in Chazal.

Although the Magen Avraham disagrees with the reasoning of the Rama, he concedes that sometime a married man may be exempt based on another consideration. A mitztaer, one who is uncomfortable, is exempt from the mitzvah of Sukkah. Tosafot (Sukkah 26a s.v. holchei) explain that the exemption of mitztaer is derived from teshvu k'ein taduru, since during the year one does not live in a place where one is uncomfortable. For married men, sleeping alone is uncomfortable, and hence married men are exempt from sleeping in the Sukkah because they are mitztaer. In contrast to the reasoning of the Rama, which would exempt a married man at all times, the suggestion of the Magen Avraham would only apply when one's wife is muteret, and the issue of mitztaer is relevant.

The Rama suggests a second reason to exempt one from sleeping in the Sukkah. If one lives in a cold climate, one will be mitztaer, physically uncomfortable, sleeping outside. This leniency could potentially cause another problem concerning the fulfillment of the mitzvah of Sukkah.

- If one made [the Sukkah] in a place that one would be uncomfortable to eat, drink or sleep;
- or where he cannot perform one of the above acts because of the fear of robbers, one does not fulfill [the mitzvah] with that Sukkah at all, even with those actions that are not uncomfortable, because it is not similar to living-dwelling [in a house] where one can perform all his needs. Rama O"C 660:4

Only a Sukkah which is fit for all aspects of living can qualify as a place of living. If the Sukkah is not fit for one aspect of living, halacha disqualifies

it. Thus, if the Sukkah is too cold to sleep in, and hence is disqualified, how can one fulfill the mitzvah of eating in such a Sukkah?

The Mishna Brurah quotes two reasons to distinguish between a Sukkah that is too cold to comfortably sleep in and a Sukkah that is too dangerous to sleep in.

In the cold places, one fulfills his obligation with eating even though he is unable to sleep there: • since it is impossible [to sleep warmly] anyhow; • and also since [a Sukkah in a cold place] is considered fit for sleeping if one has sufficient blankets and sheets. Mishna Brurah 640:18

A Sukkah that is specifically built in an area that is dangerous but an option existed to build it in a safe location cannot be considered a place of dwelling. Nobody would build a house in a way that it cannot be slept in if an alternative exists. A Sukkah in a cold climate is still considered fit for living (at least concerning eating) since any Sukkah built in such a climate will be unfit for sleeping. If one has no other option, one would construct a home in a way that enables him at least to eat in comfort.

Moreover, a Sukkah that is too dangerous to sleep in cannot be rectified. In contrast, a Sukkah that is too cold could theoretically be made comfortable if one had sufficient blankets. Because the discomfort due to cold can be rectified, the Sukkah itself is still considered a place of dwelling. The person is exempt from sleeping in such a Sukkah because of his discomfort, yet he still can fulfill the mitzvah of eating in such a Sukkah. In contrast, a Sukkah that is too dangerous is no longer considered a place fit for living and as such is disqualified entirely for use as a Sukkah.

One must assess in each situation whether the two exemptions of the Rama apply. If it is not uncomfortable because of cold, and one's wife can join him in the Sukkah, and safety is not a concern, according to all opinions one would be obligated to sleep in the Sukkah. Similarly, if one wants to take a nap during the day, these reasons often don't apply. The dissimilarity to living-dwelling and the discomfort of sleeping alone presumably don't apply during the day. The issues of cold and safety have to be evaluated in each case.

Many of the halachot of Sukkah revolve around the halacha of teshuv k'Ein Taduru. The correct application of this principle will determine practically how we may and must perform the mitzvah of yeshiva b'Sukkah

m: Jewish Media Resources <jmrlst@jewishmediaresources.org> Date: Sun, 12 Oct 2008 13:01:37 +0200 To:

<jmrlst@jewishmediaresources.org> Subject: Re: Rosenblum in the Jerusalem Post "Sukkot and the Great Meltdown" Sukkot and the Great Meltdown

by Jonathan Rosenblum Jerusalem Post October 17, 2008

All the Jewish holidays are times of rejoicing, but only Sukkos is specifically known as "the time of our rejoicing." The special joy of Sukkos is connected to the extra measure of closeness to G-d we feel as we leave our fixed, permanent dwellings to spend a week in an impermanent structure, with no fixed roof over our heads.

That miniature exile, explains Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, leads to a negation of the material world (bitul hayesh) and paves the way for a greater closeness to God. The sukka is a reminder of the Clouds of Glory that protected our ancestors in a howling wilderness, and helps us feel God's enveloping love.

THE ENTIRE WORLD is currently experiencing its own form of negation of the material, though few have been heard expressing much rejoicing. World stock exchanges are crashing, and the retirement nests that millions had squirreled away in "safe" pension plans are disappearing. The only question according to many economists is whether we are on the cusp of a worldwide recession or depression.

Already the meltdown in financial markets has had major consequences. Two of the world's leading investment banks have bit the dust, and the rest are being reorganized on a completely new footing. The American

presidential election, which was a dead heat three weeks ago, increasingly looks like it will end in an Obama rout, though he has given no indication of any economic understanding and even though one of the causes of the crisis was the pressure placed on banks by Democratic legislators to offer mortgages to non-creditworthy home purchasers. (By speaking more frequently and impulsively, McCain has removed any doubts about his own grasp of economics.)

Whatever slim chance remained that President Bush might act to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions prior to leaving office have been reduced to zero. The global economy could not bear another such shock at present.

In my own community, the social safety net based on private philanthropy from abroad has been removed from under thousands of families, as much of the massive wealth which supported thousands of chesed organizations has disappeared.

ECONOMISTS WILL STUDY and debate the causes of the meltdown for years. But one thing is clear: part of the crisis has a moral component - in particular a severing of the relationship between productive activity and wealth. Decades ago, I read that the economic future of a society could be judged by the ratio of engineers to lawyers (and, we might add, financiers.) For the last fifteen years, too many of America's brightest have been drawn not just to the big law firms but to Wall Street and affiliated hedge funds. Rather than to inventing better widgets or finding a cure for cancer, they opted for the quickest way to earn millions.

Financial institutions play an indispensable part of the grease that makes a global economy possible and play an indispensable role in wealth production. But the only thing that the twenty somethings in big Wall Street firms could take pride in was the size of their annual bonuses, which were often in the millions and based almost entirely on short-term profits. Money became the measure of all things.

No wonder the young hotshots ended up, in the prescient words of a 2007 British comedy skit, amalgamating thousands of mortgages pushed upon "unemployed . . . men in string vests" sitting on the porches of tumbledown shanties, into investment packages sold to other investment firms around the world, in which neither buyer or seller had any idea of the value of the mortgages comprising the package. If the underlying real estate turned out to be worthless, well, the bonuses would have already been paid and someone else left holding the bag.

As long as these young men and women were pulling down million dollar bonuses, they were sure that their success owed directly to their superior brains and talents. "They were infused," writes David Brooks in the New York Times, "with a sense that they had it all figured out." But the complex risk-allocation instruments and swaps they developed, failed to take into account the markets' heard psychology, and their risk-sharing swaps only served only to link financial institutions around the world in one death grip, like a drowning swimmer pulling down his would be rescuer.

Hundreds of thousands who viewed their million dollar bonuses as the just measure of their talents are now out of jobs. And the fingers of blame are pointed elsewhere - at dim-witted politicians, failed bosses, and all manner of forces beyond their control.

Not only on Wall Street and other world financial centers was the relationship between productive activity and the enjoyment of the fruits of such activity severed. Americans have been living well beyond their means, unwilling to postpone enjoyment of those things money can buy until that money was earned. Credit card debt swelled to 100% of GNP in 2006 from 50% in 1980.

In the midst of the worldwide depression beginning in 1929, Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, who would be martyred in the Kovno ghetto, wrote a piece that applies no less to today's crisis. The problem, he wrote, was not that there was no more money, but that all trust had broken down. The credit upon which any modern economy is based had dried up. Those with money refuse to lend it (check the current interbank overnight lending rates), suppliers will not sell on credit.

Reb Elchonon saw a Divine lesson in that loss of trust. He attributed the loss of trust between people to a loss of emunah (belief) in God.

The sukkah beckons us to leave behind our false sense of security in the physical world and to enter into a different realm, a realm described in the Shemoneh Esrai of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, filled with awareness of God. The move from our fixed abode to the sukkah allows us to contemplate the world of Spirit, a world without limitation, in which men are not set against one another in competition over a limited pie.

The Talmud interprets the verse, "I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths (sukkot) when I took them out of Egypt," to mean that only by throwing off our bondage to the physical world do we escape the spiritual depravity of Egypt.

Sukkos will not return to all the trillions that have been lost. But it can help us recognize that true joy does not come from the things money can buy and that our ultimate security does not rest in the size of our retirement fund.

Chag Sameach.

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<internetparshasheet@gmail.com> date Sun, Oct 12, 2008 at 9:31 AM
subject May I Smell my Esrog and Hadasim on Sukkos?

May I Smell my Esrog and Hadasim on Sukkos?

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Shiur was given on 5769 Written by the rabbi

Dedicated to the memory of R' Meir b'r Yechezkel Shraga Brachfeld zt"l

Although this question may seem trivial, it is indeed a serious shaylah that requires explanation. Sometimes one may smell an esrog, while at other times one may not. Why is this true? Also, when it is permitted to smell an esrog, do I recite a bracha beforehand, and if I do, what bracha do I recite? We may ask similar questions regarding the hadasim, although the answers are not always the same. May I smell my hadasim, and what bracha do I recite before smelling them? In order to explain the background to these questions, I first need to explain two very different areas of halacha, one concerning the laws of brachos on fragrances and the other concerning the laws of muktzah.

MUKTZAH The Gemara teaches us the following: One may not smell (during Sukkos) the hadas set aside for the mitzvah, but one may smell the esrog. The Gemara asks, "Why is there a difference between the hadas and the esrog?" The Gemara replies that since the main use of a hadas is for fragrance, it becomes muktzah and one may not smell it. But since the main "use" of an esrog is for food, one may not eat it, but one may smell it (Sukkah 37b). This Gemara teaches that an item used for a mitzvah becomes muktzah machmas mitzvah, that is, designated solely for its specific mitzvah and not for a different use. This category of muktzah is different from the more familiar types of muktzah in several ways: 1. As the Gemara teaches elsewhere (Sukkah 9a) this type of muktzah is prohibited min Hatorah, where other forms of muktzah are prohibited only midirabbanan.

2. These items are only muktzah to the extent that one may not use them, but one may both touch and move them. This is different from most types of muktzah which one may not move on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

3. These items are muktzah to use for their primary normal purpose; for example, one may not smell a muktzah hadas. However one may use them for a secondary use, and that is why, according to the Gemara, one may smell the esrog. (Someone looking to purchase a fragrant item would purchase hadasim but would not purchase an esrog for this purpose.)

4. This type of muktzah is prohibited even on Chol HaMoed, whereas other types of muktzah are prohibited only on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

5. It appears that this type of muktzah is limited to items used for a mitzvah that is temporary in nature, such as sukkah and esrog. Thus, it would seem that we may begin to answer the original question I asked: May I smell my esrog and hadas on Sukkos? And the answer is that I may smell

my esrog under any circumstances, but I may not deliberately try to smell my hadas because it is muktzah for its mitzvah. However, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 653:1) rules that I should avoid smelling my esrog on Sukkos. Why does the Shulchan Aruch prohibit something that the Gemara explicitly permits? The answer to this question takes us to the other topic - when does one recite a bracha before smelling a fragrance? Although the Gemara explicitly permits smelling an esrog on Sukkos, the Gemara does not mention whether one recites a bracha before smelling it. Indeed the Rishonim dispute whether or not one is required to recite a bracha before smelling an esrog. Rabbeinu Simcha, one of the late baalei Tosafos, rules that one may not recite a bracha before smelling an esrog being used for the mitzvah, whereas the Ravyah, an early Ashkenazi posek, rules that one must recite a bracha. The later poskim conclude that this dispute is unresolved and that therefore one may not smell an esrog whenever it is questionable whether one should recite a bracha or not. This topic requires some explanation: Why should an esrog on Sukkos be any different from an esrog any other time of the year?

FRAGRANCES WHOSE PURPOSE IS NOT TO PROVIDE THE PLEASURE OF SMELLING One only recites a bracha on a fragrance that is avida lireicha, literally, "made for fragrance" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 217:2). In the words of the Chazon Ish (Orach Chayim 35:1), "Anything whose current purpose is not for aroma, is not considered a fragrance" (for the purposes of reciting a bracha). Therefore one does not recite a bracha before smelling a deodorizer even if it has an extremely pleasant fragrance, since its purpose is not aroma, but to mask foul odor. Similarly, smelling the tantalizing aroma of a food or food flavoring does not warrant a bracha, since these fragrances are not primarily for people to enjoy their aroma. (I have actually written several other articles germane to the brachos on fragrances, which I will gladly send if you like.) Furthermore, when the halacha rules that one is not required to recite a bracha, one is not permitted to recite the bracha, and doing so constitutes a bracha l'vatalah, a bracha recited in vain.

EXAMPLE: When showing a house that is for sale, some people toast cinnamon in the oven or open essential oils and other fragrances around the house to make the house more appealing. Since the purpose of these fragrances is to give the house a pleasant aroma and not to entice people to smell or purchase the fragrance, one does not recite a bracha. Based on the above introduction, we can now explain the above-quoted dispute whether to recite a bracha before smelling an esrog on Sukkos. Rabbeinu Simcha contends that although one may smell an esrog and it is not prohibited because of the prohibition of muktzah, this does not make it into a fragrance that warrants a bracha. The esrog on Sukkos is still primarily intended for the mitzvah and not for fragrance and therefore smelling it one does not require a bracha. In Rabbeinu Simcha's opinion, one may not recite a bracha before smelling an esrog on Sukkos, and reciting a bracha constitutes a bracha l'vatalah. The Ravyah disagrees, maintaining that since one may smell an esrog, it is considered as meant for fragrance and one is required to recite a bracha before smelling it (Mordechai, Sukkah #751; Tur Orach Chayim 653). This dispute now places us in a predicament. The halacha is that one may not benefit from something in this world without first reciting a bracha, and if indeed one is required to recite a bracha before smelling an esrog than one may not smell it without reciting a bracha (Gemara Brachos 35a; Hagahos Smaq 193:11). On the other hand, if one is not required to recite a bracha before smelling it, one may not recite the bracha and doing so involves reciting a bracha in vain, a bracha l'vatalah. Since there is no method of resolving this dispute, the poskim contend that one should avoid smelling the esrog used for the mitzvah during Sukkos (Shulchan Aruch 653), even though there is no muktzah violation in smelling it. Furthermore, one may smell the esrog if he first recited a bracha on a different fragrant fruit.

ESROG ON SHABBOS As I mentioned above, Rabbeinu Simcha contends that an esrog is not considered avida lireicha, meant for fragrance, and therefore one does not recite a bracha before smelling it. Does this

halacha apply the entire week of Sukkos or only when I pick up the esrog to fulfill the mitzvah? What if I smell the esrog on Shabbos when there is no mitzvah to perform, or I pick it up on a different day of Sukkos after I have already fulfilled the mitzvah? Do I recite a bracha before smelling it according to his opinion? Let us compare this shaylah to the following case -- The halacha is that someone who enters a spice merchant's store recites a bracha because the owner wants customers to smell his wares so that they will purchase them (Gemara Berachos 53a). If these items are in his warehouse where he is not soliciting customers, one does not make a bracha (Magen Avraham 217:1). Why do you recite a bracha on the spices in his store but not those that are in his warehouse? This is because the fragrances in the store are there to be smelled and enjoyed, and are therefore *avida lireicha*. However, the fragrances in the warehouse are not meant to be smelled - therefore they are not *avida lireicha*. Note that we are discussing the same fragrances and the only difference is whether they are in his warehouse or in his store.

PUTTING INTO YOUR HAND Let's assume you are back in the spice merchant's warehouse or in a flavor factory and you know that you do not make a bracha on the incredible fragrance that is wafting through the air. What happens if you approach some of the spices to take a pleasant whiff or you lift some of the fragrance in order to smell it? Do you recite a bracha? The poskim dispute what to do in this case. The Mishnah Berurah (217:1) contends that whenever you do something to smell the fragrance, such as moving towards the fragrance in order to smell it, picking it up, or putting some into your hand, you should recite a bracha. Any act makes the fragrance *avida lireicha*. However the Chazon Ish disagrees, maintaining that if you will return the fragrance afterwards to the storage bin in the warehouse it is not *avida lireicha* and you do not recite a bracha (Chazon Ish, Orach Chayim 35:1). The Chazon Ish agrees that if the manufacturer has samples available that he wants people to smell and buy, then one does recite a bracha on them, and he also agrees that if you remove some of the spices to smell and will not return them, that you do recite a bracha on these fragrances.

SPICES IN THE KITCHEN There is a common practical difference in halacha between the approaches of these two Gedolim -- regarding kitchen spices. Suppose you want to enjoy the smell of the cinnamon or the oregano on your kitchen shelf. According to the Mishnah Berurah, if you remove a container to smell it, you recite a bracha on the spice even though you intend to return the spice to the shelf after smelling it and it will eventually be added to food. (By the way, the poskim dispute what bracha one recites before smelling cinnamon. The accepted practice is to recite *borei minei besamim*.) However according to the Chazon Ish, you do not recite a bracha on this fragrance unless you no longer intend to cook with it. Someone who wants to avoid the dispute should sprinkle a little bit of spice into his hand and make a bracha on that. Since you are now not going to use this small amount of spice for cooking, it is *besamim* and one recites a bracha before smelling it according to all opinions. Some poskim explain that this opinion of the Chazon Ish is the reason for the widespread minhag to set aside special *besamim* for *havdalah* on Motzei Shabbos (Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah, Vol. 2 pg. 262).

WHAT ABOUT MY ESROG ON SHABBOS? A similar dispute to the above quoted dispute exists concerning smelling my esrog on Shabbos or if I pick up the esrog to smell it after I have fulfilled the mitzvah for the day? The Magen Avraham rules that I recite a bracha before smelling the esrog under these circumstances even according to Rabbeinu Simcha. Therefore in his opinion, one may pick up the esrog specifically to smell it and recite the bracha before smelling it. However, the Taz implies that one may not smell the esrog anytime during Sukkos. According to the Chazon Ish's analysis of the subject, one can explain the Taz's approach as follows: Since the esrog is meant for the mitzvah, it is not considered *avida lireicha* that warrants a bracha unless you permanently make it into a fragrance. Thus, if an esrog became *pasul*, or for some other reason you will no longer use it for the mitzvah, it will be called *avida lireicha* and warrant a bracha. Under

any other circumstance, it remains a *safek bracha* and one should not smell it until Yom Tov is over. One may smell it after reciting a bracha on *Shmini Atzeres* or *Simchas Torah* since it no longer serves any mitzvah purpose. Thus it appears that the dispute between the Magen Avraham and the Taz is identical to the dispute between the Mishnah Berurah and the Chazon Ish.

WHAT BRACHA DO I RECITE ON AN ESROG? Everyone agrees that one may smell an esrog that will no longer be used for the mitzvah and that one must recite a bracha before smelling it. In such a case, what bracha do I recite before smelling it? Chazal established five different brachos that relate to scent, each for a different category of fragrance. 1. *Borei shemen areiv*, "The Creator of pleasant oil" is recited only on the fragrant oil extracted from the balsam tree (Mishnah Berurah 216:22). Because this tree was important and grew in Eretz Yisroel, Chazal established this special bracha (Rabbeinu Yonah, Berachos 43a). 2. *Hanosein rei'ach tov ba'peiros* "He who bestows pleasant fragrances in fruits" (Shulchan Aruch 216:2). We recite this bracha before smelling fragrant edible fruits and other foods (Rama 216:14). Some poskim rule that the proper text for this bracha should be in past tense: *Asher nasan rei'ach tov ba'peiros*, "He who bestowed pleasant fragrances in fruits" (Mishnah Berurah 216:9). This is the bracha one recites before smelling an esrog. Many poskim state that the custom today is to not make a bracha on smelling a fruit unless it has a pronounced aroma (see *VeZos Haberacha* pg. 174). For this reason one should be certain that the esrog one holds has a strong pleasant fragrance before reciting a bracha. If one is uncertain, one may smell the esrog first to see that it is fragrant, and then recite the bracha *hanosein rei'ach tov ba'peiros* and then smell it again. 3. *Borei atzei besamim*, "The Creator of fragrant wood (or trees)." One recites this bracha before smelling fragrant woody plants and trees or their leaves, flowers, wood, or oils. *Hadasim* are certainly in this category. Although we mentioned above that it is prohibited because of *muktzah* to smell a *hadas* that was used for the mitzvah on Sukkos, if someone has extra *hadasim* that he is not intending to use or he has *pasul hadasim* that were not used, he may smell them on Sukkos, and he should recite this bracha before smelling them. Incidentally, the correct bracha to recite before smelling citrus blossoms or flowers is *Borei atzei besamim*, since the flower is not edible. 4. *Borei isvei besamim*, "The Creator of fragrant grasses." We recite this bracha before smelling non-woody plants, their parts and extracts. Before smelling a fragrant hyacinth, narcissus, or lily one recites this bracha. The custom among Sefardim is to recite this bracha before smelling mint, although Ashkenazim recite *borei minei besamim* for reasons beyond the scope of this article. 5. *Borei minei besamim*, "The Creator of different types of fragrances." This is the "catch-all" bracha for all fragrances, the equivalent of reciting a *shehakol* on food. Sometimes it is the preferred bracha, and sometimes it is the bracha used to resolve uncertain cases. Although I have not seen poskim discuss this case, it would seem to be permitted to recite a bracha on an item whose bracha is *borei minei besamim* and have in mind to include the esrog and then be able to smell the esrog. This would provide another method whereby one could smell one's esrog on Yom Tov according to all opinions. Question: Why did Chazal create a unique bracha for aromatic fruits? Answer: Whenever one benefits from this world one must recite a bracha. Thus, Chazal instituted brachos that are appropriate for fragrances. However, all the other brachos on fragrance are not appropriate for smelling fragrant foods, since the other brachos praise Hashem for creating fragrances, whereas fruits not usually described as fragrances, but as foods that are fragrant. Therefore, Chazal needed to establish a special bracha for aromatic fruits (see *Beis Yosef*, Orach Chayim end of Chapter 297). As a side point, one should be cautious about eating an esrog today, because esrog is not regulated as a food crop and it is therefore legal to spray its trees with toxic pesticides. Because of the rule of *chamira sakanta mi'surah* (the halachos of danger are stricter than that of *kashrus*), I would paskin that it is prohibited to eat esrogim today unless the owner of the orchard vouches for their safety. Thus, although Aunt Zelda may have a great recipe for making esrog

jam, substitute lemon or lime instead. The Gemara (Berachos 43b) teaches "How do we know that one must recite a bracha on a fragrance, because the pasuk (Tehillim 150:6) says, 'Every neshamah praises Hashem,' - What exists in the world that the soul benefits from, but not the body? Only fragrance." Because fragrance provides some physical pleasure but no nutritional benefit, the sense of smell represents an interface of the spiritual with the physical. Similarly, we find that we offer korbanos as rei'ach nicho'ach, a fragrance demonstrating one's desire to be close to Hashem. We should always utilize our abilities to smell fragrant items as a stepping stone towards greater mitzvah observance and spirituality.

from Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
to Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date Sun, Oct 12,
2008 at 8:43 PM subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib
Scheinbaum - Parshas V'zos Habracha
PARSHAS VZOS HABRACHA

Hearken, O'Hashem, to Yehudah's voice. (33:7)

Shimon did not receive an individual blessing. This was the result of the involvement of the tribe in the Shittim tragedy, when their Nasi, Prince, Zimri, had illicit relations with Kosbi, the Midyanite princess, and they supported him. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu concealed Shimon's within the blessing of Yehudah. Moshe used the word shema, listen, in Yehudah's blessing. The root of the name Shimon is also shema, hearing, as Leah Imeinu said when she named Shimon: Shama Hashem b'anyi, "Hashem heard my affliction." (Bereishis 29:33)

Shimon's tribe received a portion in Eretz Yisrael, but the Torah does not refer to it as "Shimon's portion." Instead, it is absorbed within Yehudah's portion, to the point that the two tribes could hardly be distinguished one from another. The pasuk above alludes to this absorption, just as Shimon's blessing is included within Yehudah's blessing.

Let us analyze Shimon's "punishment." Are the members of the tribe of Shimon to be forever censured because they defended their Nasi? Clearly, they should have known that Moshe was right and Zimri was wrong. Zimri, however, was their Nasi. They were defending him. Were they that wrong? Furthermore, the idea that Moshe was exacting "revenge" is atypical of Moshe's character.

In his Haamek Davar, the Netziv, zl, explains that Moshe's unusual actions were actually his way of addressing Shimon's natural character and tendencies, thereby enabling him to achieve the greatest benefit in life.

Our first exposure to Shimon is when he and his brother, Levi, acting in defense of the honor of Dinah, their violated sister, destroyed an entire city. They both were incensed and, with great intensity, together they exacted their revenge. Superficially, their actions and intentions seem to parallel one another. The Netziv explains, however, that this was only an external facade. Actually, Shimon's purpose in attacking Shechem did not coincide with that of Levi. Levi was defending Hashem's honor, for if people would lose respect for the house of Yaakov, who represented Hashem, it would, by extension, be a disgrace to the Almighty's Name. Dinah was a member of Yaakov's family. To violate her was to besmirch the family name. This was, in effect, a desecration of Hashem's Name. To defend Dinah was to defend Hashem.

Shimon's motives, however, were to preserve the family's reputation. He had strong feelings of loyalty to the family name - not because they represented Hashem, but because they were his family. For Shimon, avenging Dinah was defending his family's honor.

Both brothers fought for their family: Both demonstrated intense fidelity to their family, albeit for diverse intentions. Levi fought for Hashem's honor; the family was the medium. Shimon fought for the family's honor; the family was the ultimate target of his actions. These divergent attitudes played out several generations later when a member of Shimon's family had an encounter with a representative of Levi's. It was Pinchas, scion of the tribe of Levi, who came up against Zimri, a descendant of Shimon. Pinchas'

intense loyalty was linked to Hashem, while Zimri's supporters identified intensely with the preservation of family honor. Levi's characteristic came out "on top," his actions ratified by Hashem, in whose honor Pinchas acted. Shimon's actions engendered disaster, since this was a time in which family honor was not to be supported, because it was counter to the honor of Hashem.

Shimon's intensity on behalf of family is a characteristic that required moderation. It is a wonderful trait, but it must be balanced in accordance with time and place. If family honor does not coincide with Hashem's honor, then one must prioritize Hashem's honor and allow his fidelity to dissipate. This was the error of the tribe of Shimon. Their support of Zimri was misplaced. Therefore, their blessing came in the form of a curse. Shimon should have been able to control his intensity in order to use it only for noble and productive purposes.

Shimon's absorption in Yehudah's land benefited both of them. Yehudah's power is in his mouth. The very name, Yehudah, means "admission," which is the recognition of the truth. To confess is to concede to the truth. This is Yehudah's unique quality: never fearing to express the truth. It is the only way to live. As the Netziv explains, however, truthfulness is only one component in the amalgam required to compose Sefer Tehillim. Its praises are lofty and true, and they also reflect extreme intensity. This was a quality that Yehudah had to "borrow" from Shimon. The tribe of Shimon was so integrated in Yehudah's land that the two tribes had become one and the same. It was Shimon's power of intensity concealed within Yehudah that enabled David HaMelech, scion of Yehudah, to create this paradigm of truth with acuteness, passion and veracity, the sefer that has been the handbook of the Jew as he has wandered throughout his exile.

Sefer Tehillim expresses a Jew's most heartfelt emotions, feelings that are pent-up within him, which pour forth from the inner recesses of his soul. It is the Jew's personal conversation with the Almighty, in which he uncovers his truthful feelings of love for his Creator. They are offered with passion and longing, ardor and hope for his Father in Heaven. Just as David HaMelech, its author, expressed himself to Hashem, so do we today, just as we have throughout the millennia. These Psalms incorporate the character of Shimon integrated with Yehudah, creating a symbiosis of intensity and truth.

This is the significance of Shimon's blessing being concealed within the "Shema Hashem" of Yehudah's blessing. Hashem listens to Yehudah's pleas because of the hidden power of Shimon. Hashem does not listen to a prayer, regardless of its veracity, if there is no passion. Likewise, passion and emotion without integrity are worthless. An effective prayer must combine both: intensity and truth. Shema Hashem kol Yehudah: Shimon gave Yehudah's prayer the capacity to be listened to, as David HaMelech composed the most effective prayers known to mankind.

And Moshe, the servant of G-d, died there. (34:5)

In the Talmud Sotah 13b, Chazal describe Moshe Rabbeinu's funeral. Moshe lay within the Kanfei ha'Shechinah, folds of the raiment of the splendor of the Divine Presence...The angels lamented his loss. Hashem's "eulogy" for His trusted servant began with the pasuk in Tehillim 94:16, "Who will rise up for Me against the doers of iniquity?" This seems enigmatic. A eulogy begins with and revolves around the most significant virtue, the primary aspect of his character, or his most prominent contribution to society. Was this Moshe's greatest quality? We find Moshe lauded as the most humble of men, the greatest prophet, one who is "trusted throughout Hashem's house," the quintessential leader who spoke to Hashem, serving as the medium for transmitting the Torah to Klal Yisrael. Yet, when Hashem eulogizes him, He seems to disregard all of the above to focus on Moshe's ability to stand up to evil. Why? Obviously, those praises were the ultimate ones. Hashem waited until after Moshe had passed from this world before He expressed Moshe's distinctive quality. Furthermore, is Moshe's zeal to confront iniquity that significant? Unquestionably, it is a necessary quality for successful leadership, but was it the most illustrious of Moshe's qualities?

The Maharasha presents an alternative interpretation of this eulogy, which seems to be the version accepted in the Tanchuma. Hashem was saying, "Who will stand up to Me - when I am about to punish the wicked, when I am prepared to wipe out iniquity? Who will entreat Me on their behalf? Who will seek compassion and forgiveness for them when they sin against Me?" This idea reflects an entirely new perspective on Moshe. It presents him as the great defender, one who seeks to provide sanctuary for those who have sinned, to sort out anything positive about them, to find a way to have them exonerated, to give them a second chance. Yes, that was Moshe. It was his greatest quality.

The next time any of us looks for an opportunity to denounce, condemn, or simply "do a number" on someone who has acted inappropriately or worse, perhaps we should patiently review the situation, examine it from a positive perspective, and judge the individual reasonably. Taking into account mitigating and extenuating circumstances might make a world of difference. Apparently, it worked for Moshe Rabbeinu.

He (Hashem) buried him in the depression. (34:6)

In Sotah 14A, the Talmud notes that the Torah begins with an act of chesed, kindness, and likewise concludes with an act of chesed. The Torah begins with Hashem fashioning kosnos or, garments of skin, for Adam and Chavah. It ends with Hashem burying Moshe Rabbeinu's mortal remains. It is noteworthy that Chazal select the kosnos or to serve as the example of Hashem's chesed. What is there about these garments or the act of clothing Adam and Chavah, that stands out, making it more prominent than even the entire universe? Olam chesed yibaneh. "The world is built upon chesed." (Tehillim 89:3) Do the garments have greater significance?

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Shlita, posits that the garments indicate personal attention, sensitivity, caring about one's individual needs. Adam and Chavah were unclothed, but they were not embarrassed. Afterwards, they covered themselves with fig leaves. Hashem would not permit His creations, the first human beings, to be clothed in such an unseemly manner. He made for them garments of distinction, clothing that was appropriate for Adam and Chavah. Hashem was not satisfied with just any clothing. It had to be appropriate and "b'kavodik," honorable.

The Midrash goes on a bit further in defining the essence of these garments. Chazal define them as a kosnos or, garments of light, with Rabbi Meir comparing these garments to a lantern which, like human beings, is wider on the bottom than it is on top. This indicates another aspect of the garments. Their purpose was not just there to cover the individual, but to fit him or her like a glove. This is kindness with aforethought. Hashem was concerned with providing Adam and Chavah with garments that fit, were appropriate, and were in "style." It was this unique concern for another's sensitivities that made this chesed stand out. It was not just chesed; it was tzedakah and chesed combined.

When Moshe Rabbeinu died, Hashem did not allow anyone else to arrange for his burial. Hashem wanted to do so personally. This was a lesson in chesed. Do not delegate; do it yourself. The Torah begins and concludes with chesed. The Torah is not demonstrating ordinary chesed to us. We are not learning about saving someone from disaster or raising untold sums of money for some serious financial straits. No, this is not about the exotic acts of kindness. It is about responding to the individual needs of each person. This is chesed at its zenith.

Putting chesed into action is to take the time to notice people, to look at their faces, to look into their eyes, to appreciate each and every one with sensitivity to their individual needs. Sometimes it takes a big heart, the heart of a gadol b'Yisrael, Torah leader, whose heart encompasses the hearts and lives of so many, or it might be the innocent sensitivity of a young child that teaches us how to act with kindness.

A well-known rabbi went to visit a wealthy philanthropist for a donation. This was a man who, albeit not personally observant, supported the Torah study of many institutions. Curious, the rabbi asked him why he did this. Where did he develop such sensitivity towards yeshivos?

He gave the following explanation: "I was a wild teenager, going from trouble to trouble. My parents sent me to Radin to the yeshivah of the saintly Chafetz Chaim. Perhaps there I would be inspired to calm down. Regrettably, I was not accepted. I just was not considered yeshivah material. I was not granted permission even to sleep overnight in the yeshivah. Where would I spend the night? The Chafetz Chaim said, 'You can stay at my home.' So, I went home with the Chafetz Chaim.

"The Chafetz Chaim's idea of home was a two room shack. He gave me his own bed. The room had no light and no heat. Apparently, the great Torah leader was a very poor man.

"I was a young boy, accustomed to a hot meal and a warm bed. Laying there at night, I was shivering from cold, tossing and turning, trying to fall asleep. The Chafetz Chaim walked in and noticed the frigid air in the room. Thinking to himself, 'It is too cold in here for such a young boy,' the sage took off his long frock, which was probably going to be his protective clothing for the night, and placed it on me, over the covers.

"Years later, I became a wealthy Jew. Although I had never become observant, I have never forgotten that incident, how the Chafetz Chaim took off his coat and covered me. I was a total stranger and he owed me nothing. Yet, he felt my pain and showed his love for me. I never forgot that feeling of being cared for and loved by a total stranger. I was so moved by that act of unsolicited kindness that whenever a representative of a Torah institution approaches me for a donation, I give it to him gladly. I will never forget that cold night in that little house, and the elderly man with the giant heart."

The Chafetz Chaim saw a need and acted. He did not say, "I have already done enough." He saw that more was needed for this individual situation, and he immediately responded in turn. His act of chesed lived on in the beneficiary's reciprocity.

In another story, we learn from a young boy how true chesed should be performed. Chazal teach us that the great Tanna, Rabbi Tanchuma, would always purchase two portions of food: one for himself, and one for the poor. Deriving an important lesson from here and seeking to impart it to his children, a father taught his family to act similarly. Every time they would go to the supermarket, they would purchase one extra item: a container of milk; a can of tuna fish; a bag of potato chips, etc. They would store the items, and every few weeks they would go to the local food gemach, pantry, which distributed food to the poor, to drop off a bag of food items.

One day, in the supermarket, the father took a box of Cheerios from the shelf and said, "This will be our gift today."

His six-year-old son picked up the box from the cart and placed it back on the shelf. Instead, he reached for a box of Cocoa Puffs. His father looked at him and asked, "What are you doing? What is wrong with Cheerios?"

The young boy looked at his father through his big innocent eyes and said, "Because there are hungry kids out there too, and kids like Cocoa Puffs better than Cheerios."

The young boy had seen the faces of his beneficiaries. He sensed their need and responded. Chesed is to see, to feel, and to respond immediately.

And no prophet has arisen in Yisrael like Moshe...and in all of the mighty hand...that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Yisrael. (34:12)

Moshe Rabbeinu was the quintessential leader of the Jewish People. His epitaph is stated in the last pasuk, as he is lauded as the greatest Prophet in Yisrael who was the conduit for Hashem's miraculous signs and wonders, which revealed Hashem in His Almighty power. Moshe displayed his "mighty hand," the hand that would not brook any impudence from within, any form of deviation that would alienate his people from the truth. Moshe received the Torah from Hashem with his own hands. His hands were unique, representing an individual who had reached the epitome of service to the Almighty.

When the Jewish nation was defending itself against Amalek's treachery, it was Moshe's hands that served as a symbol of encouragement. When he held them straight, the people triumphed, as "his hands remained an expression of trust until the sun went down." (Shemos 17:12) The Mechilta

explains the "hands" of Moshe. With one hand (he was lauded), because he never accepted anything from the people. With the other hand, he said to Hashem, "With/through 'this' hand You took the people out of Egypt; You split the Red Sea; You performed all the wondrous miracles, and with/through these hands You will continue to act for Klal Yisrael."

Moshe's hands represented purity and total virtue, faultless in all ways. He never personally benefited in any way from the Jewish people. He was a leader who served and was totally dedicated to his flock. In his commentary to Bamidbar 16:15, Sforno writes, concerning Moshe's declaration to Hashem regarding Korach's accusation that his leadership was motivated for personal benefit and advancement: "I have not taken a donkey from them, I did not benefit from them even as a common man would benefit from his friend, for I did not even borrow a donkey from them. Hence, any rulership over them was totally for their benefit and to attend to their affairs."

To do things purely for the sake of others - not for personal self-aggrandizement; to serve Hashem unequivocally l'shem Shomayim, purely for the sake of Heaven - not for any other motives, that is the summit of Jewish service. We are here for one purpose: to serve Hashem and to serve others. Service defines Jewish existence. Moshe exemplified this quality. He was the consummate eved, servant of Hashem.

Malchuscha malchus kol olamim u'memshaltecha b'chol dor vador Your kingdom is a kingdom spanning all eternities, and Your dominion is throughout every generation.

What is the difference between malchus and memshalah, and why is malchus followed with the appellation of kol olamim, that it endures forever and ever, while memshalah is sustained only throughout the generations? Siach Yitzchak cites the Gaon, zl, m'Vilna who distinguishes between malchus, which is b'ratzon, willingly accepted, and memshalah, a dominion which is against the will of its subjects. We say, Ki l'Hashem ha'meluchah, u'mosheil ba'goyim, "For the sovereignty is Hashem's and He rules over nations. (Tehillim 22:29) Concerning Klal Yisrael, Hashem is our melech. He is accepted willingly, as we say in Tefillas Maariv, U'malchuso b'ratzon kiblu aleihem, "And His kingship they accepted upon themselves willingly." Regarding the nations of the world, Hashem is a mosheil, dominating over them regardless of their acceptance. In the End of Days, Hashem will be a melech, "king," al kol ha'aretz - "over all of the land," when His monarchy will be accepted by all the nations.

Thus, we say malchuscha, Your Kingdom, which is willingly for all eternity, memshaltecha, which is Your reign over the nations. This will change after the generations of mankind end, after which it will become malchuscha, Your accepted monarchy over everyone.

Dear Readers,

As we conclude this year's reading of the Torah, we declare with great fervor, trepidation and joy: Chazak, Chazak, V'nischazek! "Be strong, Be strong, And may we be strengthened!" One who completes the Torah is to be blessed with strength, because now he must begin to study the Torah with renewed vigor, with greater enthusiasm, and increased dedication. It is so much more difficult to start immediately that which one has just concluded.

Eighteen years is a milestone which I have been privileged to achieve. I thank Hashem for His boundless kindness, for His siyata d'Shmaya in enabling me to prepare and disseminate Torah-true thought to a responsive and appreciative audience. I pray that I will continue to merit His constant favor, and that He will continue to guide me in every endeavor.

At this point in past issues of VZos HaBrachah, I have thanked those individuals who have been instrumental in seeing to it that Peninim are produced from concept to reality. As usual, the list has not changed, because the people have not changed, both in their contribution and in their commitment. I once again have the privilege of thanking: Mrs. Sharon Weimer and Mrs. Tova Scheinerman who prepare the manuscript on a weekly basis; Mrs. Marilyn Berger continues to edit the copy in an effort to make it presentable and readable to the wider spectrum of the Jewish

community; Rabbi Malkiel Hefter sees to it that the final copy is completed, printed and distributed in a timely and orderly fashion.

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

My wife, Neny, has supported me in more ways than I can enumerate. Peninim is no different. She avails me the opportunity and peace of mind to write, regardless of the time and place, whether convenient or not; and her weekly "early morning" last word editing of the manuscript prior to its printing is the final word. She has been-and always is-there. To this end, and for so many other favors too numerous to mention, I offer her my heartfelt gratitude. I pray that: we are both blessed with good health; we merit that Torah and chesed continue to be the hallmarks of our home; and we continue to derive much nachas from our children and grandchildren.

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