





Shemini Atzeres | Tishrei 20 - 26 | October 5 - 11









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### **Weekday Zmanim**

Zmanim for the week of Oct 8 - 14

Shacharis - 20 min. before Neitz

Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and 12 min. before Shkia

#### NEITZ

S 7:01 | M 7:02 | T 7:03 | W 7:04 T 7:05 | F 7:06 | SH 7:07

#### SHEMA- Magen Avraham

S 9:11 | M 9:11 | T 9:11 | W 9:12 T 9:12 | F 9:13 | SH 9:13

#### SHEMA- GRA

S 9:51 | M 9:52 | T 9:52 | W 9:53 T 9:53 | F 9:53 | SH 9:54

#### **TEFILA- GRA**

S 10:49 | M 10:49 | T 10:49 | W 10:49 T 10:49 | F 10:49 | SH 10:50

#### **CHATZOS**

S 12:43 | M 12:43 | T 12:42 | W 12:42 T 12:42 | F 12:42 | SH 12:42

#### **PLAG**

S 5:15 | M 5:14 | T 5:12 | W 5:11 T 5:10 | F 5:08 | SH 5:07

#### SHKIA

S 6:26 | M 6:25 | T 6:23 | W 6:22 T 6:20 | F 6:19 | SH 6:17

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# Simchat Torah - Time to Celebrate

A Parable: Years ago, there lived a king who had a wonderful daughter, a girl of refined character and spectacular beauty. The king grew worried that she would be taken advantage of and marry someone who would not fully appreciate her. Musing over the best method of finding her a husband, the king finally came up with an idea. He would hang up signs announcing that his daughter was looking for a husband, yet on one condition: the man who would marry her could not see her before the wedding.

Following through with his idea, the king went about posting signs in every town announcing his daughter's availability for marriage, albeit with one condition. While the talk of the town turned to who would step forward and grab this opportunity, within days, rumor had it that something was amiss. Why else would the king remain so adamant that his daughter not be seen before getting married if nothing was wrong with her? Everyone thought she must have some serious flaw that the king is hiding. And so, no one accepted the offer.

All except for one young man, who stepped forward. Ready to marry the king's daughter, he put on his best suit and headed straight to the palace. Knocking on the large, ornate door, he was greeted by one of the guards. "I am here to marry the king's daughter." Without further delay, he was ushered into the king's private quarters, at which point he reiterated, "I love you, Your Highness. I love your country and everything that you stand for. With your permission, I would like to receive your daughter's hand in marriage."

Hearing the boy's enthusiasm and sincerity, the king could tell that he would most perfectly suit his daughter. And so, the date was set in three months' time for the grand wedding to take place.

Three months later... the long-awaited day finally arrived. Leading the boy down to the wedding canopy, for the first time he saw his bride. And to his utter astonishment, she was absolutely stunning. Her appearance was breathtaking.

After concluding the ceremony, the bride and groom were finally allowed a few moments to speak to one another and enjoy each other's company. As the boy began to engage his bride in conversation, he noticed that she was quite intelligent. And not only that, but she could speak seven languages and read and write poetry. Quite quickly, all of his original doubts disappeared.

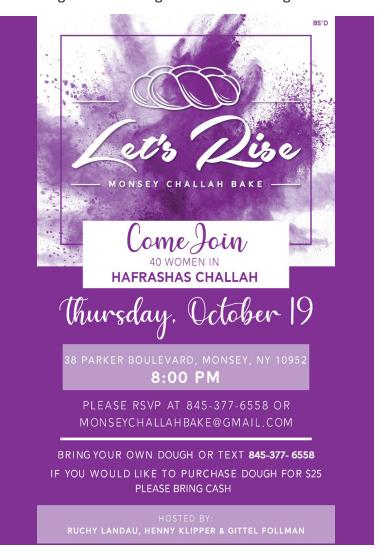
As the weeks went by, the boy's love for his wife only continued to increase. She was much smarter, more beautiful, and more benevolent than he could ever have imagined. And so, he approached the king with a request. "Your majesty, now it is my turn. I would like to celebrate.

Six months ago when we got married, you celebrated the marriage of your daughter. But now, after getting to know how special she is for the past number of months, I would like to have my own special party celebrating my wonderful marriage."

And true to his word, an exquisite, lavish celebration was held in the king's palace.

The same scenario plays itself out on Simchat Torah. As we received the Torah on Shavuot, we readily exclaimed, "Naaseh v'nishmah — We will do and we will hear." We expressed our readiness to embrace the Torah and enter into an eternal covenant with it and Hashem. But at the time, we perhaps did not fully appreciate its beauty and vastness. Only Hashem, the One Who granted us this gift in marriage, knew what beauty it truly possessed. It is only after spending six months delving into its wisdom and seeing its brilliance that we have arrived at a genuine appreciation of its profundity and depth of meaning.

And now, at this time of Sukkot, we are finally ready. Turning to our Father, the King, we say, "Now it is our turn to celebrate. We have spent months with the Torah at our side, gleaning from its pearls of wisdom and insights, and now we know what beauty it has to offer. With Your permission, we would like to celebrate..." That is what Simchat Torah offers us: a day to bask in the beauty of our marriage to the Torah. And without question, its beauty is something worth dancing for late into the night.





# True Joy

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

In the past, we have quoted the very powerful words from the Pele Yoetz and the Abarbanel on the pasuk והיית אך שמח telling us that besides the simple meaning of these words which state that we are obligated to be happy during Sukkos, there are hints in these words to a promise (see Rashi) that if we fulfil this obligation, we will have a good year. The Pele Yoetz quotes from the students of the Ari z"/ that we will be happy forever. Sounds like a great idea but this is not so easily accomplished. It is said that the Gra z"l once described how the hardest mitzva in the Torah is to be happy for all seven days of Sukkos. The Gra, of course, was on a very high level; he was living with Hashem way beyond what we are able to imagine and still it was not a simple task. We must look deeper in order to uncover what exactly is included in this mitzva of "simcha" and what the fundamentals are that we must have in order to receive this amazing blessing.

I think the first step is to define the term *simcha*. What does happiness mean? What are our obligations? Is happiness an emotion which we can control? How do we do this?

The Mishna in *Pirkei Avos* already set the tone of what real *simcha* is: "Who is rich? Someone who is happy with what he has." It is noteworthy that the word עשיר Indeed, we are all millionaires and we should be dancing as if we had just won the lottery. Unfortunately, we are spoiled by the largesse we possess and constantly yearn for more. Rav Noach gave an English definition to happiness: Happiness is the emotional pleasure one experiences when focusing on what one has. Indeed, we are commanded by Hashem to physically feel this emotion and it might sound simple to achieve. I think, however, that we must delve deeper into the reasons for this command.

Rabbeinu Yona on the Mishna adds another element to the concept of happiness when he defines a happy person as one that is not only happy by focusing on what he has, but one who is connected to Torah. Why does Rabbeinu Yonah turn the Mishna into a "frum" Mishna? The answer is that a person and especially a Jew who has a *neshama* that craves connection to Hashem will only reach true *simcha* when he or she has true meaning in his or her life. Only when our lives are dictated by Torah, when the learning of the Torah is being internalized and becomes life changing so we are living our purpose in this world, can there be true *simcha*.

What exactly do I mean by actualizing the Torah? The answer is explained by the Gra and Rav Salanter

and others (see also Rambam Hilchos Deos and Chovos Halevavos, especially the gate of hachnaa) that the main goal of the Torah is to change us into greater human beings, to make us super human (the real superman). The greatest accomplishment that we can achieve is to change our nature and the greatest trait that we can acquire is humility. The Chovos Halevavos explains in Shaar Haknia that the foundation of all traits and middos is humility; without it there are no foundations for growth.

Let's end with the rest of the story of Sukkos, the joy of Shimi Atzeres and Simchat Torah. Based on all of the above especially Rabbeinu Yona's comment on happiness, we can understand why an essential part of the holiday of these holidays is the Torah and our connection to it. In truth, everyone needs the connection to Torah on their own level because the relationship to Hashem is through the Torah. In order to change ourselves we need the learning of Torah. I saw beautifully written in one of the Simchat Torah booklets about the Satmar Rebbe, describing his incredible angelic dancing, that explains that the word רוקד which simply means dancing, is connected to the word מרקד – to sift. When we dance on Simchat Torah, we're sifting and getting rid of the bad middos and negativity that we've accumulated. Now is the time to throw them away and begin a new life of humility and trust in Hashem, a life of appreciating the good that Hashem gives us.

Chag Sameach

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan



# The Cantonist Saga

One of the most tragic and horrific narratives in the history of Russian Jewry is the story of the Cantonists.

On August 26, 1827, Tsar Nicholas I published the Recruitment Decree calling for the conscription of Jewish boys between the ages of twelve and twenty-five into the Russian army. These boys were known as Cantonists; derived from the term 'Canton' referring to the 'districts' they were sent, and the 'barracks' in which they were kept. Conscripts under the age of eighteen were assigned to live in preparatory institutions until they were old enough to formally join the army. The twenty-five years of service required that these recruits be counted from age eighteen, even if they had already spent many years in military institutions before reaching that age.

During the reign of Nicholas I, approximately seventy thousand Jews, some fifty thousand of whom were children, were taken by force from their homes and families and inducted into the Russian army. The boys, raised in the traditional world of the shtetl, were pressured through every possible means, including torture, to accept baptism. Many resisted and some managed to maintain their Jewish identity. The magnitude of their struggle is difficult to conceive.

#### **Cantonist Shuls**

The brave few survivors who maintained their faith and managed to return to their families 25 years later, found it hard to integrate into the regular community. They were illiterate, uneducated, and had lived among Russian gentiles for a quarter century. So they build their own shuls (synagogues) in order to do things in their own way. These came to be known as the Cantonist Shuls.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein related the following story, that he heard from a Jew who heard it from his grandfather.

This man's grandfather once attended a Cantonist Shul on Simchat Torah, the joyous holiday when we dance with Torah scrolls in the synagogue. Now the cantonists could dance like Cossacks. They were tall, strong, muscular men, and the heavy Torah scrolls would seem like toothpicks in their arms. They effortlessly danced on for hours on end. Many Jews from different synagogues came to see them dance. Truth be Rabbi YY Jacobson told, some of these Jews sadly and



foolishly down on these soldiers. They looked like Cossacks, and were crass and uncultured. It was not their fault, they had no education, they grew up without family or community; and they were drafted into a hostile army at such a young age. But people are often judgmental: "he is just not my type..."

#### With Bare Skin

Then for the final hakafah (circuit around the synagogue's central lectern), the cantonists, as if on cue, suddenly in unison removed their shirts from their bodies. With the Torahs held tightly to their bare skin which was covered with the most horrible welts and scars, they danced around even more energetically. Their smiles and joy were now giving way to streams of tears flowing from the cheeks of the learned and educated Jews who came to watch them dance.

The learned Jews were now filled with deep shame. They were all thinking the same thoughts: We may have studied and observed this Torah, but these holy Jews gave their bodies and lives for it. We are holding the Torah scrolls, but their bodies are Torah scrolls. For them, Torah and their bare skin had become one. Theirs was not a Torah of sermons and words; it was a Torah of life, of self-sacrifice, of absolute and unwavering commitment.

Living today in freedom, few of us have been beaten for our Judaism. Yet as we will once again this year hold on to the sacred scrolls and dance with the Torah, we ought to ask ourselves how we can make the Torah part of our own flesh, allowing its words to be transcribed on the tablets of our heart not just on the parchment of our synagogues. For this is the Torah that really matters – the one that ignites a fire in our souls.

Womens Shiur Tuesday 9:30am (18 Main) Chassidus Shiur Monday & Thursday 7:45am (18 Main) **Shabbos**: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs) After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

# DANCING WITH THE TORAH

**UFARATZTA** 

Although we read from the Torah and we have our

Shiurim on Simchas Torah, why is the main celebration on Simchas Torah by dancing with the Torah while the Torah is covered, and we cannot even read from it while dancing? The Torah is greater and deeper than any intelligence in the world, as it was given to us by Hashem. Would it not be more appropriate if we celebrated by delving deep into the Torah study, thereby bringing us joy?

The truth of the matter is that the way to acquire Torah is through learning and understanding a law or concept thoroughly. But what you're really getting when you learn is something much greater: you're getting Hashem Himself, Who is within the Torah. As it says Osi atem lokchim - Hashem says that by learning Torah, you are taking Me.

Therefore, we celebrate by dancing with our feet, holding a closed Sefer Torah, to show that we are celebrating the holiness of Hashem that is within our Torah, which is far greater than our intellect.

==== based on Lekuti Sichos V4 P1167/8.





# ליל הושענה רבה **Minyan Tehillim**

*Led by Rav Daniel Coren Shlita* 12:45am Tent א

### ליל הושענה רבה Thursday Oct 5th MISHNA TORAH

7:15 Tent א | 8:00 Tent ב | 9:00 Tent א 10:00 Tent ב | 11:00 Tent א 12:00am Tent ב | 1:00 Tent ד 11:30

11:45

12:00

12:15

Tent T

Tent א

Tent a

20 Upstairs

### הושענה רבה **Early Mincha**

18 Main

1:14 pm | 1:30 | 1:45 | 2:00 | 2:15 | 2:30 | 2:45 | 3:00 | 3:15 | 3:30 | 3:45 | 4:00 | 4:15 | 4:30 | 4:45 | 5:00

### מוצאי שמחת תורה Late Maariv

18 Main

8:00pm | 8:15 | 8:30 | 8:45 | 9:00 9:15 | 9:30 | 9:45 | 10:00 | 10:15 10:30



0.13411	Tentra						
6:25 Vasil	in 20 Upstairs	Mincha 18 Main			DI 5:24		
6:25 <sup>Sefard</sup>	i vasikin 18 Main	<u> </u>			Plag 5:24		
7:00	Tent א	1:16pm Mincha Gedola	Shkia 6:36				
7:15	Tent 2	1:30 – 5:00pm Mincha every 15 Minutes					
7:30	Tent ג	545					
7:45	Tent T	5:15 Tent א plag Minyan 5:20	6:00	6:30 Tent a			
8:00	20 Upstairs	5:30	6:10	6:35 Tent a shkia miny	an		
8:15	Tent א	5:45	6:15 6:20 Tent א	6:40 Tent T	Repeat קריאת שמע		
8:30	Tent 2				after צאת		
8:45	Tent a	Mincha follow	<u>ed by Ma</u>	<u>aariv</u>			
9:00	Tent T	5:15 פלג Minyan	Tent א	17:00 25 min after שקיעה	Tent ユ		
9:15	20 Upstairs	6:20 שקיעה 6:20 שקיעה	Tent א	7:05 30 min after שקיעה			
9:30	Tent א	6:30 g min before שקיעה	Tent 2	י 7:10 איעה 7:10 שקיעה	Tent T		
9:45	Tent 2	6:35 שקיעה	Tent a	7:15 40 min after שקיעה	Tent 20 upstairs		
10:00	Tent ג	6:40 5 min after שקיעה		7:20 45 min after שקיעה			
10:15	Tent T	6:45 שקיעה after שקיעה		שקיעה 7:25   50 min after שקיעה			
10:30	20 Upstairs	שקיעה 15 min after שקיעה		שקיעה 7:30 55 min after שקיעה			
10:45	Tent א	שקיעה 20 min after שקיעה	Tent א	שקיעה 7:35 60 min after	ر Tent د		
11:00	Tent ユ						
11:15	Tent a						



7:00pm-2am

**Maariv Every 15 minutes** 

18 Main

6:00 A	M Vasikin/אדון עולם (Neitz 6:5	9:20	ג Tent	
6:15	Quick Minyan	ב Tent	9:40	Tent T
6:20	Vasikin Sefardi Minyan	18 Main	10:00	ב Tent
6:30	Vasikin- Led by Rabbi Coren	Tent א	10:20	18 Main
7:00		Tent ג	10:40	20 ↑
7:30		Tent T	11:00	Tent א
8:00		ב Tent	11:20	ג Tent ג
8:20		18 Main	11:40	Tent T
8:40		20 ↑	12:00	ב Tent
9:00		Tent א	1	

EARLY MINCHA

1:14 - 5:00pm EVERY 15 MINUTES

18 Main



Shacharis

Vasikin (Neitz 7:00) 6:30AM TENT X Early Minyan 8:00 With Fast Hakafos TENT T Main Minyan 9:15 TENT X Second Minyan 10:00 TENT ג 18 UPSTAIRS Youth Minyan 9:15 Childrens Program (Ages 3-9) 9:15-11:45 Kiddush 9:30 and on TENT 1

• Laining Aliyos for all Aliyos for kids

 Hakafos Kol HaNaarim, Chassanim & Mussaf 12:15pm Mincha after Mussaf Mincha

Shkia MAARIV

10:00 - 12:00 18 Main & Backroom 10:00 - 12:00 18 UPSTAIRS

TENT **X** 10:15 TENT X TENT X 2:00 6:10PM 18 Main

6:26





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For more information Call: Rabbi Zevi Hammelburger 845-587-3462 Ext 7



Rav Yaakov Kapelner Shlita Magid Shiur Igra DePirka Monsey בעניו יום טוב שחל בשבת

Tues Oct 3 - י"ח תשרי

Rabbi Daniel Coren Shlita

Maggid Shiur Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim בענין שמחת בית השואבה ושמחת תורה

ב' תשרי - Thur Oct 5

12:15pm-1:00pm 18 Forshay- Main Bais Medrash

#### ערבות

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#### הושענות

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#### ליל הושענה רבה Learn throughout the night ar our Shul

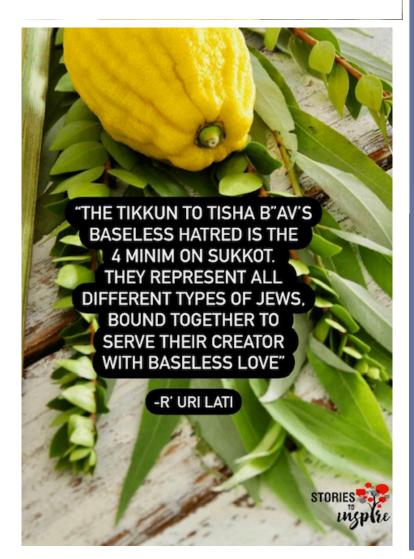
18 Forshay - Main Bais Medrash Come and join us on this auspicious night!

Refreshments will be served

Schedule:

Learn 5 hours betweem 12am-6:00am Matan Schara B'tzida

> For more information call Rabbi Zevi Hammelberger 845-587-3462 ext 7



# Shnayim Mikra - How and When?



by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

In regards to the *mitzvah* of *Shnayim Mikra*, the term used by the Gemara and the Shulchan Aruch is to complete the *Parsha*, which sounds like one should read the entire parsha at one time. The Mishna Berura writes that there are two basic options in the poskim: to read each *pasuk* twice and then the *targum* of that *pasuk*, or to read from a "parsha," which means from one paragraph — either *psucha* or *stuma* until the next.

According to the second opinion — that one reads from a *psucha* or *stuma* — there is a question as to the correct way to read a pasuk that has a *psucha* in the middle of the *pasuk*. Many *poskim* rule that one should actually stop in the middle of the *pasuk*. Others maintain that one should not stop in the middle of a *pasuk*, rather one should finish the *pasuk*.

Most poskim write that the correct way is to read the pasuk or parsha twice and then the targum, not to do targum first. This is how the Mishna Berura rules. He does add, in Shaar Hatziun, that if one read the targum after reading the chumash only once it is also good. This was in fact, the custom of the Chazon Ish. He explained that since the targum is here to explain the pasuk, this way, the second time reading the pasuk will be with an understanding of the pasuk.

#### When to do it

When is the earliest time that one is allowed to start? *Tosfos* points out that although in regards to some *halachos* the beginning of the week is still connected to the previous week, here the expression "im hatzibur — along with community" means the whole week. Since we start leining the next *parsha* at Shabbos mincha, it is considered along with everyone. This ruling of *Tosfos* is quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*. But it is interesting that *Tosfos* writes that the entire week is allowed, which sounds like one can only begin on Sunday, and not on Shabbos. The *Shulchan Aruch* also writes that one can start on Sunday. However, the *Mishna Berura* writes that it really means from Shabbos afternoon, since that is when we start leining the next *parsha*.

#### When is the best time?

Although, as mentioned one can start in the beginning of the week, there is a discussion as to the most opportune time to do this *mitzvah*:

- **1.** The Magen Avraham quotes the Arizal, who writes that the best is to do the whole parsha on Friday. According to some that means on Friday morning, and according to others it means Friday afternoon.
- **2.** He also quotes others that say that one should start on Friday, but one can finish by Shabbos morning.
- **3.** The Gra would do a little bit each day either until a psucha or stuma, or until the end of the topic.

#### By when should one try to finish?

Tosfos quotes a Midrash that Rebbi told his children not to eat bread on Shabbos – which is referring to the *seuda* by day – until one has finished *shnayim mikra*. In other words, one should finish before the Shabbos day meal. But the *poskim* add that this is only *lichatchila*, the ideal way, but one should not push off the meal past chatzos because he has not yet finished *shnayim mikra*.

#### Until When?

If one missed this deadline, until when can he still finish?

There are three shitos:

- Rabbi Nachum Scheiner מוהל מומחה cell: 845-499-6354
- Shabbos Minchawhen we start the next parsha.
- **2.** The end of Tuesday which for some halachos is still connected to the previous week.
- 3. Simchas Torah when we finish the entire Torah.

#### **Summary**

There are different ways how to do *Shnayim Mikra*, either *pasuk* by *pasuk* or each section. Most say to read the *chumash* twice and then the *targum*.

The best time is either Friday or a little bit each day. One should finish before the Shabbos morning meal. If one missed this deadline, one can still finish until Shabbos *Mincha*, Tuesday or Simchas Torah.

# Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

• Chavrusa learning - Gemara

מסכת סוכה פרק הלולב הגזול :Currently

• Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

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SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

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- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm
- **ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR** | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

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#### Our Kallah, The Torah Hakdoshah

"פרשת וזאת הברכה - 33:4 "תורה צוה לנו משה, מורשה קהלת יעקב"
"The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov." This is declared before Moshe gives the final *Brachos* of his life to *Klal Yisroel*, right before his death. What is the connection between this and the forthcoming *Brachos*?

Avos 2:12 "והתקן עצמך ללמוד תורה שאינה ירשה לך" – Niddah 30b – A fetus is taught the entire Torah in its mother's womb, and when it comes out into this world, a Malach hits it on the lips and causes it to forget all of the Torah it learned. What is the purpose of the Malach teaching the fetus the Torah if it will forget it when it comes out into this world? There is a great lesson to be learned from this. While in the mother's womb, it is not possible to fulfill the words of the Torah with actions. The fetus is taught the entire Torah in the mother's womb and then forgets it, to teach us that Torah that one does not learn in order to be Mekayeim it, is not called Limud, is not called learning Torah. One will have nothing from such Torah. (יד יחזקאל)

Pesachim 49b – "אל תקרי מורשה אלא מאורסה" – "Do not read the word as an inheritance, rather read it as Eirusin. (This is the first part of a two-step process to become married,

known as *Eirusin* and *Kiddushin*)." Just as by *Eirusin*, the man is connected to the woman, yet is not fully married and does not live with her, so too with the Torah, we receive it as *Eirusin*, which is the preamble to the complete marriage. It makes it easier to get to the next stage, that of complete marriage, yet one still must accomplish that part and perform *Nissu'in*. The Torah was given to us as *Eirusin*, and we must toil in it to completely marry it. (יוטף)

Brachos of Olam Hazeh are all for the purpose of Olam Habah. The Torah was given to us as an inheritance, and we need to work on it in order for us to receive our individual inheritance. If we toil in the Torah Hakdoshah, and show Hakodosh Boruch Hu that we want to have a Kinyan in the Torah, then Hakodosh Boruch Hu will give us *Brocha*, so that we do not need to busy with mundane matters and will be able to completely focus upon our Ruchniyos. We are to look at the *Torah* as our *Kallah*, an engagement, where our love for the Torah Hakdoshah must grow each and every day. Shemini Atzeres is the culmination of the holy days of the month of Tishrei, a month in which we strive to come close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. A month where we must put our lives in perspective, to take stock of what we have done previously, and what we seek to do in the future. What is this world all about? It is about the *Torah Hakdoshah*. May we be *Zoche* to have a true Simchas Hachaim through true Simchas Hatorah on the holy days of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

# As The World Turns

It's the end of a whirlwind cycle. *Shemini Atzeres* comes after a month of mitzvos - *Shofar, Slichos, Lulav, Sukkah,* Honey and *Teshuvah*. But what are the *mitzvos* of *Shemini Atzeres*? The answer is, the only mitzvah we have on this Yomtov is to love and come close to Hashem. It's not easy, having become accustomed to showing our devotion to Hashem through specific mitzvos.

Devotion is a function of the heart and neshama. No need for outside trappings. On this Yomtov, Hashem has given us a chance to recharge our connection with Him, directly. It's the closest of all possible relationships. He asks us - "right before you leave the Bais Hamikdash, please spend one little day alone with Me, one final celebration before you go back to your lives."

It's clear that nothing gives Hashem more joy than being together with us! But wait, there is one mitzvah on this dual day (Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah are celebrated together in Eretz Yisroel) that might signal our devotion more than any other mitzvah. That mitzvah is *Limud Hatorah*. By demonstrating the love we have for His Torah, we are showing the world the love we have for Hashem Himself. This love is in the DNA of every Jew – it's our inheritance from Sinai.

The Gemara tells us that at the end of days the nations of the world will complain when they see the reward we'll get for keeping the mitzvos. "If Hashem would have given us mitzvos, we too would have complied!" they will claim. Hashem then gives them the mitzvah of *sukkah*, but because of the weather (Hashem makes it way too hot to sit) in the *sukkah* they cannot

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH keep it properly. *Oy vey*.

As they exit the *sukkah*, the nation of the world they kick it's walls – "This is the joy of mitzvos?"

This is a cryptic story, with many obvious questions, but the fact that they kick the *sukkah* shows us that their hearts were definitely in the wrong place. Theirs is not a relationship of unconditional love. There may be times we cannot sit in the *sukkah* because of rain, for example, but we would never think of belittling the *sukkah* or *chas veshalom* kicking its walls as we exit.

Our hearts are connected to Hashem at the very deepest level. This story reveals just how far the nations of the world are from a close and loving relationship with G-d. On Simchas Torah when we dance and celebrate our unbridled happiness with the Torah, we once again merit closeness a special closeness this coming year! *Taamu U'Reu*...We have all learnt the entire Torah with an angel in utero - let's relearn the Torah's words, words that are truly imprinted on our souls.

Even if you have only 5 minutes a day in your busy schedule (maybe even consider learning with a spouse or a child, creating a bond of closeness) take the time to learn something! You will feel a sense of happiness and accomplishment as you come even closer to Hashem!
Gut Yomtov!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita





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# Living With Hashem

- Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, zt"l -

Once, Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l came to a yeshiva to speak, and in middle, he said the following: "I can talk and explain a lot, but believe me: If you would only know what it



is to feel like when a person lives with Hashem in his life, you would run after it, after I explain to you how you can get there. You don't understand how much darkness you are in, what you are missing in life, and how far you are from the truth, from "taste and see that Hashem is good."

He continued: "And you should also know that even if you would ask me how you can taste that feeling, I wouldn't be able to give it to you. Hashem did not give me the power to be able to give over what it tastes like – the taste of true d'veykus with Hashem."

Everyone has special times in which they feel themselves growing spiritually and enjoying this. However, people come to imagine that such elation is supposed to be every second, and that this is what it means to be close to Hashem all the time. This is a mistake! Being close to Hashem is unlike anything you recognize from until now. A person can live all the time with closeness to Hashem, or chas v'shalom, the opposite. A person has to decide, with total conviction, with clarity, if he truly wants to let Hashem enter his heart.

This is the meaning of, "Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh" — "In my heart, I will build a sanctuary." It is to truly live with Hashem. It is not merely about thinking about how Hashem is next to us, or to put the four-letter Name of Hashem in front of us all the time. These are superficial methods, as they does not define being close to Hashem. Being close to Hashem means that Hashem is found within one's heart. We cannot really explain what it is to anyone who hasn't reached it yet. But what we can all do is to firmly believe that it is possible to attain, just as all the other tzaddikim in the past reached — and lived — closeness with Hashem.

The way to get our inward reality is through emunah. Part of emunah is to have faith in the many leaders throughout all the generations, faith in their students and in their students who came after them. With faith in our leaders, we can believe the words of the Chazon Ish who wrote that it's possible for a person at times to temporarily resemble an angel even as one stands on this physical earth, and that such a feeling cannot be expressed to anyone. This is the true feeling of being close to Hashem.

If a person believes in this, he will then be able to truly feel, in a very real way and not in his imagination, a simple feeling no less than how one can feel a table or a chair: that there is a Creator of the world. If a person believes that there is such a feeling he can experience, and he decides to live his life for this goal, closeness to Hashem – he leaves this world of darkness, and enters into a world that is radiant.



# NO FAVORITISM

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

"...he did not give recognition to his brothers he did not know and his children ..." (Deuteronomy 33:9)

The Mishna in *Pirkei Avos* records that Avraham was subjected to ten trials of faith. According to most of the commentaries, the final and most difficult of these trials was the "akeida", the binding of his son Yitzchak. Avraham was called upon to offer his beloved son as a sacrifice to his Creator. Although his actions reflected a monumental expression of faith, they were not, by any means, unprecedented. Throughout the ages, until the present day, many religions have required their adherents to prove their faith by sacrificing their kin. In this week's parsha we find that the tribe of Levi slaughtered its family members who partook in the sin of the golden calf. What then, is the unequaled feat accomplished by our Patriarch Avraham?

Analyzing the juxtaposition of the verses in *parshas Vzos Habracha* sheds light upon the aforementioned question. The verse states that Levi showed no favoritism to his father and mother, no recognition of his brothers, and did not know who his children were. Rashi explains that this refers to the response shown by the tribe of Levi when Moshe summoned assistance to eradicate those individuals who worshiped the golden calf; without regard to family ties, the tribe of Levi slew the idolaters. The verse then states that Levi preserved Hashem's covenant. Rashi explains that this is a reference to "Bris Milah" – "circumcision".

The Talmud teaches that for the entire duration of their stay in the desert, Bnei Yisroel abstained from performing circumcision for they feared that the climatic conditions in the desert would not allow the wounds to heal. The only tribe that continued to circumcise their children was the Levites. Hence, they preserved the covenant. The verse immediately following begins "Yoru mishpatecha l'Yaakov" – "They shall be the teachers of the Law and dispensers of justice to Yaakov". Rashi comments "for they have shown their worthiness". What is the connection between the three above-mentioned concepts, Levi's actions after the golden calf, their commitment to circumcise their children and their becoming teachers and judges?

The Ohr HaChaim explains that by displaying steadfastness and objectivity in the performance of their duty without bias, they proved that they were worthy of being the teachers and judges of Bnei Yisroel. The Torah praises Levi for their ability to disconnect themselves from those emotional frailties that blur an individual's ability to make dispassionate and impartial decisions. It is this same quality that allowed them to overcome the natural fear that a parent may have when a child undergoes circumcision. By emotionally detaching themselves from their children they were able to behave in a manner which would otherwise have been impossible for a parent. This is the psychological technique employed by those adherents to other religions when sacrificing their children.

The Torah stresses that when Avraham was called upon to sacrifice his child, his compliance was not accompanied by any indication of his severing that relationship; on the contrary, he professed his great love for Yitzchak. The greatness of our Patriarch is manifest in his ability to perform an act that controverted the very nature of a parent-child relationship, without emotionally detaching himself from his son. The ability to fulfill the wishes of his Creator without conflict is what makes Avraham's actions unparalleled.

# Never-ending Jorah

Rabbi Dr. Avraham Twersky, zt"l

"And by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel" (Deut. 34:12).

"In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

On Simchas Torah we conclude the cycle of the annual reading of the Torah and promptly read the first portion of Genesis, initiating the cycle for the coming year. There is no break in the Torah. Torah is like a circle, without beginning, and without end.

Torah is the wisdom of G-d. Rambam states that in contrast to man, whose wisdom is acquired, G-d's wisdom is one with G-d Himself (Hilchos Teshuvah 5:5). Just as G-d is infinite, with no beginning and no end, so Torah is without beginning or end.

The uninterrupted continuity of Torah also means that there can be no part of life that is separated from Torah. We observe Torah not only when we study Torah and perform mitzvot, but also when we eat, sleep, engage in commerce or in any other activity. Not only are there guidelines in Torah for every facet of human behavior, but everything we do should be directed toward the goal of observance of Torah.

Torah is the heart of a Jew and is the heart of Judaism. There

is no Jewish life without Torah.

The last letter in the Torah is *lamed*. The first letter of the Torah is *beit*. The continuity of

Torah juxtaposes these two letters, *lamed* and *beit*, to form the word *lev* (heart). The continuity of Torah teaches us that Torah is our heart, individually and collectively.

Not only is the heart indispensable to life, but the heart also distributes nourishment to the entire body. Torah provides the spiritual nourishment that enables us to be spiritual beings rather than simply homo sapiens, hominoids with some intellect. It is the Torah that gives us the distinction and the dignity of being truly human.

Inasmuch as the Torah is a reflection of G-d, when one absorbs Torah, one absorbs, as it were, G-d. Moses, whose entire existence was Torah, earned the title "the man of G-d" (Deuteronomy 33:1). When Rambam says that "every person can be like Moses," he means that every person can become G-dly to the extent that one integrates Torah into himself.

In the blessing for the reading of the Torah, we say, "He implanted eternal life within us." How can mortal man become eternal? By learning Torah.

# Simehat Torah: In Anticipation

Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger

The excitement generated by the successful completion of studying the entire Torah Shebichsav — as individuals preparing the text with targum and meforshim, and as a community listening to the leining and participating in public study — has its roots in several sources. The Ramban in his commentary to Parshas Mishpatim (24:11) relates our annual dancing and perhaps any siyum to the recorded celebration of our leaders upon receiving the Torah at Sinai. He writes, "... and they [the nobility] ate and — they celebrated and made a Yom Tov for light of the celebrate the receiving of Torah "

one is obligated to celebrate the receiving of Torah." The Ramban parallels these occasions to the feast that Shlomo Hamelech feted in Yerushalayim after being granted unsurpassed intellectual gifts (Divrei Hayamim 2, 21:12) and to Dovid Hamelech's great feast marking the preparations to establish the first Beis Hamikdosh (Divrei Hayamim 1, 29:21).

drank

At first blush, these events and seeming precedents for our Simchas Torah are not similar at all. The festivities of Matan Torah and of Dovid and Shlomo HaMelech celebrated the anticipation of horizons of spirituality and knowledge that had just been unlocked and laid out for them. They correctly perceived that they had been catapulted beyond the boundaries that hemmed in the most talented people of all times, and what a passionate simcha they must have experienced. Isn't the annual compilation of V'zos Habrocho quite different? Are we not expressing our happiness and

gratitude for the privilege of accomplishing the understanding of part of Hashem's instruction?

Perhaps the Ramban wants us to understand that every siyum, be it of a mesechta or the entire Torah Shebichsav, is celebrating not the accomplishment, but rather the anticipation of applying all of one's knowledge to future studies and situations. Indeed, that is why at every siyum we focus on the "hadrans", praying and promising that we will return to the mesechata at hand, and that the mesechta has become an active and alive part of our consciousness. Thus the simcha has its roots in kabolas hatorah and the joy of Shlomo Hamelech upon his receiving the gates of all knowledge.

In similar fashion, we can appreciate the explanation offered by the Avudraham for our rush to start Breishis as soon as we have completed Sefer Devarim. He refers to a challenge that the Satan makes in an attempt to deride Klal Yisrael. He claims that now that we have completed the study of the entire Torah we will be putting it away and presumably go on to other masterpieces, lehavdil. Upon hearing the beginning of Bereishis immediately after chazak chazak, Hashem's confidence in us and our knowledge of the absolute singularity of Torah and its place in our lives, is vindicated. Perhaps the medrash is also pointing out that Klal YIsrael sees the successful completion of one cycle not as an end, but rather as a new rung in the ladder on which to penetrate the texts ever so more deeply on the next way around. Our simcha on this Yom Tov celebrates our well-founded expectation that we will always find new insights in the Torah, and the blessing that we have as Torah and life continuously illuminate each other.

# JOUES

#### **Talking Dog for Sale**

A guy sees a sign in front of a house: "Talking Dog for Sale." He rings the bell and the owner tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the backyard and sees a black mutt just sitting there.

"You talk?" he asks.

"Yep," the mutt replies.

"So, what's your story?"

The mutt looks up and says, "Well, I discovered my gift of talking pretty young and I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA about my gift, and in no time they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one of their most valuable spies eight years running.

The jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger and I wanted to settle down. So I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security work, mostly wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings there and was awarded a batch of medals. Had a wife, a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

The owner says, "Ten dollars."

The guy says, "This dog is amazing. Why on earth are you selling him, so cheap?"

The owner replies, "He's just a big liar. He didn't do any of that stuff.

#### Reasonable doubt...

Scene: A court room in Oklahoma where a person is on trial for murder.

There is strong evidence indicating guilt; however, there is no corpse. In the defense's closing statement the lawyer, knowing that his client is guilty and that it looks like he'll probably be convicted, resorts to a clever trick. "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I have a surprise for you all," the lawyer says as he looks at his watch. "Within 1 minute, the person presumed dead in this case will walk into this court room," he says and he looks toward the courtroom door. The jury, somewhat stunned, all look on eagerly. A minute passes. Nothing happens. Finally the lawyer says: 'Actually, I made up the previous statement. But you all looked on with anticipation. I, therefore, put it to you that there is reasonable doubt in this case as to whether anyone was killed and insist that you return a verdict of not guilty." The jury, clearly confused, retires to deliberate. A very few minutes later, the jury returns and the foreman pronounces a verdict of quilty.

"But how?" inquires the lawyer. "You must have had some doubt; I saw all of you stare at the door."

Answers the foreman: "Oh, we did look. But

your client didn't."







#### מנהג זריקת תפוחים ואגוזים בשמחת תורה

דער מדרש זאגט, אז דאס האט המן געזאגט אויף די אידן פארן מלך, און אלס זכר צו דעם ווארפט מען טאקע אין שמחת תורה, עפל מיט ניס. (משנה ברורה סי' תרס"ט. באר היטב ס"ק ב')

שרייבט דער באר היטב אז דאס איז אן אלטן מנהג, און טראץ וואס פארן רבינו בחיי האט דאס נישט נושא חן געווען – ווארשיינליך צוליב איינצע־ לנע פעלער פון צעלאזענקייט וואס דאס האט גורם געווען – איז דאס נאך אלם אן אַנגענומענער מנהג וועלכע איז נתפשט געווארן בתפוצות ישראל, און ווערט נאך אנגעהאלטן אין טייל קהילות ביזן היינטיגן טאג.

איבער דעם מנהג ווערט דערציילט אן אינטערעסאטן עפיזאד וואס האט פאסירט ביים הייליגן דברי חיים פון צאנז זי"ע.

אזוי ווי עס איז געווען איינגעפירט אין צאנז, האט דער הייליגער דברי חיים זי"ע מקיים געווען דעם מנהג, און נאך די הקפות שמחת תורה האט ער געווארפן עפל. פאר די חסידים, וועלכע האבן דאס געזען אלס נאך א מקור השפעות פון זייער גרויסן רבי'ן, איז דאס א געלעגענהייט וועלכע איז נישט צום פארפאסן, און דערפאר איז שוין פארשטענדליך די הריגות צו וועלכע דאם איז צוגעקומען.

איין מאל האט פאסירט אז עס האט דערגרייכט צו פיקוח נפש, און כדי צו שטילן די מהומות, האט דער רבי הויך אויסגערופן: "צען יאר עניות

פאר דער וואס כאפט דעם קומענדיגן עפל!" א שטילקייט האט זאפארט ארומגענומען דעם ציבור, און די עפל איז געפאלן אויף דער ערד אומבא־ רירט. פלוצלינג הערט זיך א געשטופעריי; איינער שארט זיך אדורך, און כאפט דעם פאר'יתומ'טן פרוכט מיט ביידע הענט. דער רבי, זעענדיג דאס, האט זיך שארף אנגערופן: "אינגערמאן, דו ווייסט דאך זיכער אז ווען איך ואג עפעס מיין איך עס ערנסט..."

"יא יא, איך האף טאקע אז דעם רבי'נס רייד זאל מקוים ווערן!"

הערענדיג דאס, זענען אלע געשטאנען געפלעפט. 'זיכער נישט בדעת, אדער א חסיד שוטה,' האבן טייל געמורמעלט, 'פארוואס זאל א איד זיך צוכאפן צו צען הונגער יאר?' ער לאזט זיי נישט ווארטן: "לעצטענס בין איך געווען ביים דאקטער איבער געוויסע שמערצן," פארציילט ער מיט ווייטאג פארן רבי'ן, "און דער דאקטער מעלדט מיר מיט מיטלייד אז איך פארמאג א שטערבליכע קרענק, און איך האב נישט קיין אויסזוכטן געהיילט צו ווערן," געבט דער איד א קרעכץ, "ער זאגט איך האב בלויז געציילטע חדשים צו לעבן..." אויפאמאל האבן אלע שוין פארשטייען זיין חשק פאר דעם פאר־ שאלטענעם עפל פון צען ארעמע יאר.

"אויב אזוי," זאגט אים דער רבי מיט ווארעמקייט, "וועל איך דיר וואונטשן נישט צען - נאר צוואנציג יאר, און נישט פון עניות - נאר פון עשירות און געזונט!" וכך הוה, זי"ע. (י"ג אורות)



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