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OUR BELOVED RABBI  
SOKAVA REBBE



# בשביל התורה שנקרא ראשית

Shabbos Mevorchim  
*Cheshvan*

Rosh Chodesh : Wednesday & Thursday  
(Oct.6 & 7)

Molad: Wednesday afternoon 11 minutes  
and 12 Chalakim after 12 PM

# חול המועד סוכות תשפ"ב

## Minyanim Schedule

6:15am Tent ב

6:20 Vasikin 20↑

6:20 Vasikin 18 Main - Sefadi minyan with Birchas Kohanim

6:30 Tent ג

7:00 Tent א

7:20 Tent ב

7:40 Tent ד

8:00 Tent ג

8:20 Tent א

8:40 Tent ב

9:00 Tent ד

9:20 Tent ג

9:40 Tent א

10:00 Tent ב

10:20 Tent ד

10:40 Tent ג

11:00 Tent א

11:20 Tent ב

11:40 Tent ד

12:00 Tent ג

### Mincha 18 Main

1:18pm	2:45	4:15	5:20 Tent א plag Minyan
1:30	3:00	4:30	5:30
1:45	3:15	4:45	5:45
2:00	3:30	4:53	6:00
2:15	3:45	5:00	6:15
2:30	4:00	5:15	6:30

### Mincha followed by Maariv

5:20 12 min before פלג	5:31 pm* At פלג	Tent א
6:35 12 min before שקיעה	6:48* At שקיעה	Tent א
6:45 At שקיעה	6:55* 10 min after שקיעה	18 Main
6:55 10 min after שקיעה	7:05 20 min after שקיעה	Tent ב
7:05 20 min after שקיעה	7:15 30 min after שקיעה	Tent א
7:15 30 min after שקיעה	7:25 40 min after שקיעה	18 Main
7:25 40 min after שקיעה	7:35 50 min after שקיעה	Tent ב
	7:45 60 min after שקיעה	Tent א

**7:30pm-1am Maariv Every 15 minutes - 18 Main**

Please Note:

↑ Upstairs

↓ Downstairs

Plag 5:31

Shkia 6:45

# הושענא רבה תשפ"ב

## Monday Sept 27

### MISHNA TORAH

7:00pm	Tent א
8:00pm	Tent ב
9:00pm	Tent א
10:00pm	Tent ב
11:00pm	Tent א

### MINYAN TEHILLIM

led by Rabbi Coren starting at 12:45am upstairs in Tent א

### YESHIVA BEIN HAZMANIM

Learning throughout the Night 12:00am-6:00am, Refreshments & Breakfast  
 COME JOIN US FOR LEARNING ON THIS AUSPICIOUS NIGHT

### Shachris

5:50AM Vasikin שלם/אדון (Neitz 6:49)	20 ↑	8:40	20 ↑
6:15AM Vasikin- Led by Rabbi Coren	Tent א	9:00	Tent ג
6:30 Vasikin (No Frills)	Tent ב	9:20	Tent ד
7:00	Tent ג	9:40	18 Main
7:20	Tent ד	10:00	Tent ב
7:40	18 Main	10:20	Tent א
8:00	Tent ב	10:40	20 ↑
8:20	Tent א	11:00	Tent ג

### Daf Yomi

Rabbi Y Model 6:00am

Rabbi S Stern 7:00am

### Early Mincha

1:17, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00



# Yeshivas BEIN HAZMANIM

ישיבת בין הזמנים

שליט"א נחום שיינר

## ליל הושענא רבה

*Learning Throughout The Night At Our Shul*

**18 Upstairs**

COME JOIN US ON THIS AUSPICIOUS NIGHT!

Refreshments

**SCHEDULE**

Learning – 12:00am-6:00am

There will be Matan Schara B'tzida

For more information

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Email: [Kolleladministrator@18forshay.com](mailto:Kolleladministrator@18forshay.com)



# Yeshivas BEIN HAZMANIM

ישיבת בין הזמנים סוכות תשפ"ב



## SHIUR

**Rabbi Aaron Lankry**

מרא דאתרא

כ"ד תשרי

Thursday, Sept 30

12:15pm - 1:00pm

**18 FORSHAY - MAIN BAIS MEDRASH**

Ohr Chaim's learning programs include:



# ערבות

**Will be Available:**

Sunday & Monday Erev Yom Tov  
Throughout Chol Hamoed

**In the Sukkah behind 18 Main Bais Medrash**

# הושעות

From Sunday Morning

**Also Available Tall Hoshanis**

**All Major CC Accepted**

**Let's Rise**  
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*Thursday, October 7*

2 ELYISE ROAD • 8:00 PM

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**Neitz Minyan begins 20 minutes before Neitz Plag Minyan begins 12 minutes before Plag Shkia Minyan begins 12 minutes before Shkia**

English date	weekday	11 deg	Yakir 45	Neitz	Shma 1	Shma 2	Tefilla	Chatzos	Min Ged	Pelag Gro	Shkia	R' Tam	Hebrew date
September 19, 2021	Sunday	5:47	5:56	6:41:05 AM	9:09	9:45	10:47	12:50 PM	1:21	5:41:24 PM	6:58:11 PM	8:10	יג תשרי תשפ"ב
September 20, 2021	Monday	5:48	5:57	6:42:05 AM	9:10	9:46	10:47	12:50 PM	1:20	5:39:59 PM	6:56:29 PM	8:08	יד תשרי תשפ"ב
September 21, 2021	Tuesday	5:49	5:58	6:43:06 AM	9:10	9:46	10:47	12:49 PM	1:20	5:38:33 PM	6:54:46 PM	8:07	טו תשרי תשפ"ב
September 22, 2021	Wednesday	5:50	5:59	6:44:06 AM	9:10	9:46	10:47	12:49 PM	1:19	5:37:07 PM	6:53:03 PM	8:05	טז תשרי תשפ"ב
September 23, 2021	Thursday	5:51	6:00	6:45:07 AM	9:11	9:47	10:47	12:49 PM	1:19	5:35:42 PM	6:51:21 PM	8:03	יז תשרי תשפ"ב
September 24, 2021	Friday	5:52	6:01	6:46:07 AM	9:11	9:47	10:47	12:48 PM	1:18	5:34:16 PM	6:49:38 PM	8:02	יח תשרי תשפ"ב
September 25, 2021	Shabbos	5:53	6:02	6:47:08 AM	9:11	9:47	10:47	12:48 PM	1:18	5:32:51 PM	6:47:56 PM	8:00	יט תשרי תשפ"ב
September 26, 2021	Sunday	5:54	6:03	6:48:09 AM	9:12	9:48	10:48	12:48 PM	1:18	5:31:26 PM	6:46:14 PM	7:58	כ תשרי תשפ"ב
September 27, 2021	Monday	5:55	6:04	6:49:10 AM	9:12	9:48	10:48	12:47 PM	1:17	5:30:01 PM	6:44:32 PM	7:57	כא תשרי תשפ"ב
September 28, 2021	Tuesday	5:56	6:05	6:50:12 AM	9:12	9:48	10:48	12:47 PM	1:17	5:28:36 PM	6:42:50 PM	7:55	כב תשרי תשפ"ב
September 29, 2021	Wednesday	5:57	6:06	6:51:13 AM	9:13	9:49	10:48	12:47 PM	1:17	5:27:12 PM	6:41:09 PM	7:53	כג תשרי תשפ"ב
September 30, 2021	Thursday	5:58	6:07	6:52:15 AM	9:13	9:49	10:48	12:46 PM	1:16	5:25:48 PM	6:39:28 PM	7:51	כד תשרי תשפ"ב

# SIMCHAS TORAH

תשפ"ב

## TUESDAY

### Shmini Atzeres

כ"ב תשרי / SEPT 28

Vasikin (neitz 6:50)	6:20 AM
<b>Shachris</b> Ashkinaz	8:00 AM
Tent א	9:15 AM
Childrens Program (ages 3-9)	9:15AM-12 PM
Bais Chabad 20 Forshay	10:00 AM
<b>Mincha</b>	1:45 PM
Daf Yomi	5:30 PM
Mincha 2	6:25 PM
Shkiya	6:42 PM

**Maariv and Hakafos** 7:00PM-9:30 PM

Light refreshments will be served.

**Candle Lighting** Not before 7:32pm

Candle lighting	Not before 7:32pm	
• Maariv and Hakafos	7:00-9:30	
• Shacharis		
Vasikin (Neitz 6:51)	6:20AM	20 ↑
Early Minyan	8:00 <i>With Fast Hakafos</i>	18 ↓
Main Minyan	9:15	TENT א
Second Minyan	9:45	18 MAIN
<i>Youth Minyan</i>	9:15	18 ↑
<i>Childrens Program (Ages 3-9)</i>	9:15-11:45	20 ↓
Kiddush	9:30 and on	TENT ב
• Hakafos	<b>10:15</b>	TENT א
• Laining <i>Aliyos for all</i>	11:30	18 MAIN
Kol HaNaarim, Chassanim & Mussaf	<b>12:15pm</b>	TENT א
Mussaf	12:45	
<b>Mincha</b>	1:45	18 MAIN
• Daf Yomi	5:45PM	20 ↑
Mincha	6:30PM	18 ↓
Shkia	6:41	
MAARIV	7:31	

Please Note:

↑ Upstairs

↓ Downstairs



### UNIFIED AND BEAUTIFIED

The Four Species... a mitzvah we all immensely enjoy. Yet, as you can probably imagine, to any outsider, it seems quite strange to be carrying around and waving what seemingly looks like a bundle of branches and a lemon. The Lulav is not, as may be thought of, an instrument to play with or used as a spear, nor is the Esrog a hand grenade. The custom of waving the Arba Minim, as well, is not simply the Hokey Pokey dance either. But what then is it all about? What depth lies behind this beautiful mitzvah which we all so dearly love?

Our Sages (Vayikrah Rabbah 30:12) teach that the Four Species represent four types of Jews. Like the Esrog, which both tastes and smells pleasant, there are those who possess both Torah knowledge and good deeds. On the other hand, like the Lulav, the branch of a date palm, which has taste but no smell, there are those who have Torah knowledge but lack good deeds. There are also those, like the Hadassim, who have fragrance but no taste. They perform good deeds but are ignorant of Torah. And lastly, the Aravos have neither taste nor fragrance. They represent those who have neither Torah knowledge nor good deeds.

Yet what does Hashem command us to do? Bind the four species together and atone for each other. By unifying all types of Jews, everyone is spiritually uplifted, despite each one's respective background. Whether they are knowledgeable in Torah or have good deeds, we all join together and rejoice, elevating ourselves to new heights in dedication to Hashem and Torah.

While you may be familiar with the above dictum relating to the Four Species, there is another custom performed on the last day of Sukkos, Hashanah Rabbah, enacted during the days of

the Neviim, Prophets (ibid., 44a). After shaking our Lulav for the last time, we bundle together five new Aravos and bang them on the ground. While various reasons are offered in explaining the meaning behind this practice, in light of the above Midrash, a beautiful idea emerges.

The Aravah represents the individual who lacks both Torah knowledge and good deeds. Yet, after an entire Yom Tov of Sukkos in which the Aravah enjoys company alongside the Lulav, Esrog and Hadassim, he becomes an entirely different person. He develops into someone so great and someone so special, due to having spent time with such great company. In order to bring this reality to the fore, we gather together five Aravos, four representing the previous Four Species used over Sukkos and an additional one signifying a new entity we have just created. And then we give a light bang on the floor, after which we take the bundle and place it above on the Aron Kodesh to remain. The lowly Aravah, who over Sukkos was "shaken up" and came to realize what potential he has and what he can achieve, is elevated and placed up high atop the Ark. After a week of associating with such great "friends," the simplistic Aravah reaches the highest level of perfection.

Sukkos is a time when our unified interaction with all fellow Jews of all differing backgrounds breathes new life into all of us, and elevates us up high. When we come together in perfect harmony and share our wisdom and extend our care to others, we are all positively affected, even the Aravah who was far from any connection to Torah and mitzvos. Sukkos is the time when every one of us becomes positioned to reach the pinnacle of perfection. Such is beauty of this Yom Tov. When we are unified, we are beautified.

**NEW MINYANIM ADDED:**

**EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY**  
1:16, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00

## SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	6:19PM
MINCHA 18 TENT	7:00PM
MINCHA TENT ALEPH	6:29PM
MINCHA BAIS CHABAD	6:29PM
SHKIYA	6:37PM
SHACHRIS VASIKIN- DAF YOMI SHIUR	6:15AM
SHACHRIS ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN	8:00AM
BUCHRIM MINYAN 20	9:00AM
SHACHRIS - YOUTH 18 UPSTAIRS	9:30AM
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN 18 TENT	9:15AM
SHACHRIS 20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD	10:00AM
<b>NEW SHACHRIS 18 MAIN</b>	<b>NEW 10:15AM</b>
MINCHA	1:45PM
PIRCHEI	2:00PM
DAF YOMI	5:30PM
MINCHA SHALOSH SEUDOS	6:15PM
SHKIYA	6:36PM
MARRIV	7:16PM 18 TENT, 7:21PM

## WEEKDAY ZMANIM

### SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ 30 ON YOM TOV

S 6:35 M 6:36 T 6:37 W 6:39 T 6:39 F 6:40

### MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG

S 5:09 M 5:08 T 5:06 W 5:05 T 5:04

### MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA

S 6:22 M 6:20 T 6:19 W 6:17 T 6:15

### OCTOBER 3 – OCTOBER 8

NEITZ IS 6:55– 7:00  
 PELAG IS 5:21– 5:16  
 SHKIA IS 6:34 – 6:26  
 MAGEN AVRAHAM  
 9:14 AM - 9:16 AM  
 GRA- BAAL HATANYA  
 9:50 AM- 9:52 AM

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi

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Tzvi Blech : Gabbai Sheini



Summer 2021

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קיץ תש"א

## WEEKDAY MINYANIM

שחרית 20 Forshay T  
6:15AM Tent 1  
6:30 Tent 1  
6:45 Tent 1  
7:00 Tent 1  
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מנחה ומערב  
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מערב  
At 10:15 Tent 1  
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50 MIN Tent 1  
60 MIN Tent 1  
72 MIN Tent 1

מנחה 18  
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12:30 Tent 1  
12:45 Tent 1

FOR MORE INFO: www.s8forshay.com // Secretary@s8forshay.com

## BLUEBERRY HILL ZMANIM

EREV SHABBOS PLAG MINYAN 30 Dr. Frank Rd. Entrance on Humbert

MINCHA	5:45	PLAG	6:04
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Rabbi Coren

## SUKKOS AND SIMCHAS

### TORAH: THE GREATEST JOY

We began the Yom Tov with very powerful words from the Pele Yoetz and the Abbarbanel 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"l 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 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 Pirkai 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 also stands for רגלים. עניים שינים דינים רגלים. 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 G-d 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 in order to reach our goal.

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 הנכונה) 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.

Moving into the four simple walls of the Sukka for seven days is the ultimate humbling experience. You can be the richest man with the largest house in the neighbourhood and now you are no different than anyone else, entering into Hashem's dwelling and living in this temporary shelter for seven days as the Jews did in the midbar, putting our total faith in Hashem. The four species that we shake also have this element of humility each representing one of the main parts of our body-- the eyes, lips spine, brain and heart which are being subjugated to Hashem. This is the idea of

waving and shaking ourselves in each direction three times (maybe the idea being to create a chazaka), recognizing as the Gemara tells us that Hashem is pushing away negative influences including negative traits and energies and bringing in good traits and positive energies. We bend ourselves in every direction that Hashem leads us.

There is still much more to add to what was mentioned above including some great stories of humility such as the story of Rav Michel from Zlotshov who was quite poor and lived a very humble life with his wife and kids. The only exception was his very dear and expensive Tefilin that he inherited from his father. In fact, he had been offered 50 Zlotys which was a large sum of money in those days but he refused it even to the dismay of his wife. One year there was difficulty purchasing an esrog as happened often in those days. A merchant showed up with one esrog but was asking for an exuberant amount 50 Zlotys. No one was able to afford it except for Reb Michel who in his excitement to do this precious mitzva decided it was worth selling his father's Tefilin which he did and he purchased the esrog. Reb Michel couldn't contain his joy and he eventually spilled the truth to his wife. Upon hearing it his wife was in total shock. She couldn't believe her husband would spend so much money when she and her kids had barely enough food to eat. She couldn't contain her anger and she grabbed the esrog that Reb Michel had been holding and she bit off the pitom (see Tamai Minhagin about the custom for a pregnant lady to bite the pitom of the esrog after Sukkos). Reb Michel stood silently and his wife, shocked at what she did and the significance of her actions, worried how her husband would react. Reb Michel thought to himself: I sold my valuable Tefilin, I lost my costly esrog. Should I also lose my self and get angry? Should I squander my most precious commodities-- control and humility? So he simply shrugged his shoulders, accepted his fate and went to the Bais Midrash to immerse himself in Torah and Tefila and return home with joy. The task is never easy but if Hashem tells us that we are commanded to be happy then we are able to do it.

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 Sukkos is the Torah and our connection to it. (There is a great story about a simple Jew that joined the Rabbi in dancing. The Rabbi asked him, "What connection do you have to the Torah?" The simple Jew responded with his own question. "What connection do I have with the תפילין לניך . בכפת שודר . Rabbis take bribes, not simple Jews like me and yet I confess and bang on my heart because we're all connected. So your learning is connected to me too.) 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 where he explains that the word מרקד which simply means dancing has another meaning as well-- 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 חג שמחה

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Where? 18 Forshay Rd. Upstairs in Rabbi Coren office

When? Monday nights 8:00 pm Starting after Sukkos

Given by: Rabbi Daniel Aron Coren

Contact info: WhatsApp or text Rabbi Coren 914 645 4199

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Secretariat's Chaver Program (SCP) founded by Rav Elyade Goldwint

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Rabbi Nachum Scheiner  
Rosh Kolleim  
Rabbinic Coordinator



Rabbi Aaron Lankry  
ראש דארה



Rabbi Daniel A. Coren  
Maggid Shiur

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Uri Follman  
Manager  
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# CARPE DIEM!

## What Can We Accomplish After Millenia of Great People Doing Great Things?

*"I do not expect from you to refrain from sin because of a lack of interest in sin; I want you to abstain from sin because of a lack of time for it."*

– Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kutzk, to his disciples.

"The world says, 'Time is money.' I say, 'Time is life.'"

–Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, to my father, Gershon Jacobson, in 1985.

### Cheating on the Shabbos?

The marvelous invention of the Shabbos, a day in which we put our stressful lives on hold and dedicate a day to our souls, loved ones, and spiritual growth, is introduced in this week's portion, the opening section of the Torah.

"And G-d saw all that He had made [during the six days of creation], and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus, the heaven and the earth were completed, and all their array. G-d completed, on the seventh day, His work, which He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He ceased from all His work."

The contradiction is striking. On the one hand the Torah states that G-d "abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done; G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He ceased from all His work." This would mean that G-d completed His work on the sixth day, followed by a day of rest. Yet the very same verse declares that "G-d completed His work on the seventh day," meaning that He completed the work on the seventh, not on the sixth, day.

### Divine Punctuality

The Midrash and Rashi offer the following explanation:

A human being, incapable of determining the precise moment of nightfall, can't establish the exact moment when Friday ends and Saturday begins. Therefore,

Jewish law obligates us to begin observing the Shabbos a short while before it begins. G-d, on the other hand, knows the exact moment when Friday merges into Shabbos, and therefore, on the first Friday of creation, He continued His work throughout the entire day, until the end of the very last moment before the Shabbos began. Since G-d would not cease building His world until the moment that Shabbos began, it appeared as if He completed His work on the Shabbos day itself. Because of this appearance, the verse states that G-d completed His work "on the seventh day," since that is how it looked from a human vantage point.

But why? What was the purpose of G-d working all the way till Shabbos and making it appear that He is "violating" the holy day? What compelled G-d to give off this false impression that He was laboring on the Shabbos? And why would the Torah be interested in relating this detail to us?

### Cherish the Moment

It is here that we are presented with one of the important contributions of Judaism to civilization: the value of time.

For six full days G-d created a universe that is extraordinary in its magnitude and grandeur. During this week, the Creator fashioned a cosmos of endless mystery and limitless depth. One could not conceive of a more accomplished and successful week. Following such a fruitful and productive work week, as the sixth day was winding down, G-d had the full right to sit back and enjoy His grand achievement.

Comes the Torah and declares—no! As long as there was even one moment remaining during which the building of a world can continue, G-d would not stop.

How to Manage Your Time

We, too, are builders of the world, in the lovely Talmudic phrase, "partners of the Divine in the work of creation." G-d built a physical world out of Divine energy; our job is to build spiritual energy out of a physical world; to transform the universe into a moral and sacred space, saturated with light and goodness.

Comes the Torah and teaches that even if you have already employed your strengths to build a beautiful world; even if you have affected many people, ignited many hearts, and touched many souls, as long as you have the capacity to construct one more heart, inspire one more soul, empower one

more mind, and transform one more individual—do no cease from the sacred work.

G-d continues to fashion His world up to, and including, the last possible moment, in order to teach us: Carpe Diem! Every moment of life contains infinite value. If there is still one human being you can touch, do not desist.

Sometimes, you may have accomplished so much during your life, and you feel that it is time to slow down. Comes the Torah and says: If you still have life in your bones, and there is one soul for whom you can make a difference—do not stop.

### The Final Blow

What is more, the Torah emphasizes that "On the seventh day G-d completed His work." The work G-d had done during the final moments of the sixth day brought to completion all the amazing work of the six preceding days.

The same is true in our individual lives. The work you do in the final moments of your "week," may seem small and insignificant, relative to all the great things you did earlier. But in actuality, these final acts may be the ones that complete your life's mission. You never know the full significance of a singular act.

Just as this is true in each of our personal lives, it also holds true about all of history. Our generation, as the sixth millennium is winding down, has been compared in Jewish texts to the "Friday" afternoon of history, moments before the Shabbos of history arrives. We may often view our daily involvement in acts of kindness, in the study of Torah and observance of Mitzvos as inconsequential in the big picture. After millennia of great people doing great things, what can I, a small person, already accomplish?

In truth, however, it is the small and ordinary things that we do in our lives today that grant completion to 6,000 years of love, commitment, and sacrifice. It is our "final touch" that will turn the world into a G-dly place and bring redemption to our turbulent planet.

We are the fortunate ones to bring it all to completion.

**The forty-eight hours of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah should be cherished, for at each moment one can draw buckets full and**

**barrels full of treasures, both material and spiritual. This is accomplished by dancing.**

==== Admur Shalom DovBer

## UFARATZTA







## Emunah- It is the Begging

Emunah has been deemed the panacea for our generation (and rightfully so!). We are a generation that has been accused of being "spiritually empty" .. "overly concerned with externals" and so on and so forth..

Mechanchim and Menahalim everywhere have been rewriting curricula introducing Emunah based subjects where there were few or none. But we still have a long way to go.

בראשית ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ

In the very beginning, G-d created the heavens and the Earth.

Our sages tell us that contemplating the wonder of creation is a segulah for strengthening our Emunah.

Philosophy and science have become virtually indistinguishable- their shared vocabulary has many interesting descriptions- black holes, black and white dwarfs and primordial soup- sounds like a fairy tale but millions are taking this ungodly account as their religion!

Throughout the ages we Jews have a strong tradition inherited from our forefathers.

A simple yet enduring belief in our Creator.

The king summoned his faithful Jewish adviser to his chambers ." Tell me who created the world?"

The adviser replied - "Our G-d the master of the universe.

"How do you know?" the king asked.

The adviser responded immediately, "Your majesty, it is our pure faith in the miracle of Creation that has kept us alive throughout the generations!

The king replied- "Emunah; blind faith?... Ridiculous!

You have three days to come up with a better proof otherwise I will force you to renounce this silly faith of yours!"

The adviser returned three days later.

"Your Majesty- I would like sing to your praises in a most beautiful song."

His loyal adviser played the most beautiful composition.

It was a veritable masterpiece.. a work of art!

The Kings curiosity was piqued- "Who is responsible for this, who is the composer?"

The adviser answered, "Your Majesty- ask me no questions.. And you would not believe me if I told you."

But the King persisted ...

"If you must know, your Majesty.. I have a pet monkey at home. Just yesterday he approached my writing table and swinging his arm towards my inkwell, spilled ink on the paper and this song was created...

Before the adviser could finish, the King interrupted, "Utter nonsense, a creation like this cannot just "happen".

The adviser was ready with a clever and convincing comeback-

"If your majesty can believe that this poem cannot happen randomly- then how can you even entertain the fact that our wondrous and complex world was simply created by chance without a Creator!

"Surely it is the work of a most masterful composer!

From that moment on, this servant became the Kings most trusted adviser.

Rabbi Chaim Sonnenfeld Ztz"l of the old Yishuv in Yerushalayim once entered a shop where the owner had stepped out for a moment. A well known Maskil whose religion was atheism, walked in, inquiring where the owner was. Rabbi Sonnenfeld chided him- "Don't you know this store has no owner- it runs itself!"

The Maskil was perturbed by Rabbi Sonnenfeld's reply and suggested that perhaps the Rabbi was out of touch with reality-

Rabbi Sonnenfeld replied-"Listen to what you are saying! I have only said this one small store has no owner, but you on the other hand believe that the entire world has no Creator and no one responsible for it.. and I am the one who is out of touch ?"

השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע" (תהילים יט' פסוק ב')

Dovid Hamelech tells us that the world itself is the greatest testament to our Creators greatness!

Let us all take the time to notice our surroundings, the beautiful colors on display for us this time of year. Take a walk and enjoy the wondrous gift of natures beauty that we have been given. Gazing upon all of G-ds beautiful creations will surely strengthen our Emunah.

Good Shabbos !

## APPRECIATION IS MORE PRONOUNCED WHEN THERE IS FEAR OF LOSING SOMETHING

As we begin Laining once again from the beginning of the Sefer Torah. I would like to begin with a thought regarding the Beracha of Borei M'orei Ha'aish. As you all know, this is a Beracha that we make in Havdala every Motzoei Shabbos which is based on a Medrash in this week's Parsha that on Motzoei Shabbos when the world grew dark for the first time Adam Harishon rubbed stones together and for the very first time discovered that he can create fire. In praise to the Ribbono Shel Olam he said the Beracha of Borei M'orei Ha'aish and we do that as well because it took place on Motzoei Shabbos.

The question we would like to ask is why is this in middle of Havdala. It seems to be a Hefsek to Havdala. It has nothing to do with Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol, it is just coincidental that the first time the world grew dark was on a Motzoei Shabbos and on that day Adam discovered that he could create fire and therefore, it happened on Motzoei Shabbos. What in the world does this have to do with Havdala? This is something which needs explanation, why isn't it considered a Hefsek in Havdala, why is it part of Havdala. Let us try to understand.

Let's ask ourselves another question. Adam was created on Friday, on the 6th day of creation. The first Shabbos there was no darkness. This means that Adam experienced close to 36 hours of light before the world turned dark. Why didn't Adam Harishon say a Beracha of praise for light during those 36 hours? After all, the light that lights up the world, certainly the Ohr of Gan Eden and even after Adam was banished from Gan Eden, the Ohr of the world is certainly greater than the light that can come from two stones that are rubbed together. Why didn't Adam Harishon praise the Ohr earlier?

The answer is a very simple Yesod in life. A person doesn't appreciate anything unless he feels a danger of losing it. Only then does he see the great gift that he had. It is that way in life in general. Only a person who had to have surgery and was threatened with an inability to walk properly can later appreciate the gift of walking. Only a person Lo Aleinu who was in danger of losing his sight will then appreciate

sight. For everyone else people take it for granted. And so, Adam was created in a world that had light, no Beracha. It got dark. After it got dark Adam was able to create fire and then he appreciated and said Borei M'orei Ha'aish, now I appreciate light. And so, the Borei M'orei Ha'aish is something of significance. It is telling us that something as beautiful as light, as essential as light is not appreciated until one is in danger of G-d forbid losing it. Then Adam appreciated even the small amount of light he was able to create himself.

This idea is really the Yesod of Motzoei Shabbos. The holiness of Shabbos is going away. A person who experiences the Kedusha of Shabbos and sees it leaving, such a person can try to sense that he needs the Shabbos. He can sense the Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol, the loss of Shabbos. A person like that can try to rub stones together and bring back light or bring back Kedusha, whatever it is that he needs. That is the idea of Havdala.

On the Posuk in Shir Hashirim that is found in 7:2 (מה-יפו פעמירי בנעלים), (בת-נדיב), the Baalei Drush say that this refers to Neilah, the end of the Yomim Noraim, (מה-יפו פעמירי בנעלים). (בת-נדיב). How beautiful are your steps when you walk away from Neilah. Or (בנעלים) when you put on your shoes after Yom Kippur. How do you walk away from Yom Kippur. How do you walk away from the Yomim Hakedoshim. That sense, that ability, that is the whole idea of Havdala, of recognizing something on Motzoei Shabbos.

I heard of a beautiful Minhag in Belz that at Mincha on Simchas Torah the Gabbai gives a Klap and announces that it is the last Shemoneh Esrei of the Heilige Teg. The last opportunity to Daven Shemoneh Esrei on the holy days of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Yom Tov. The Baalei Mussar had a different Minhag. In the Mussar Yeshivos they would give a Klap at Maariv on Motzoei Simchas Torah. They would announce that it is the first Shemoneh Esrei after the Yomim Noraim, it is the first Shemoneh Esrei Shel Chol. (מה-יפו). (פעמירי בנעלים, בת-נדיב). Appreciate while it is slipping away, appreciate that which you have had for these number of weeks and try to make it stick.

So it is a beautiful idea in the Borei M'orei Ha'aish of every Motzoei Shabbos. The idea of a human being appreciating something only when he is in danger of losing it.

*These shiurim have been transcribed from an actual drasha. As speed is of the essence, spelling and grammar may be compromised*

# YOUR STRUGGLE MUSCLE

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

## AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

(Bereishit 4:9)

Everyone struggles in life. It is not a question of if, but when and how. The list is endless.

Emotional, physical, mental, spiritual. Why it is sent our way is Hashem's department; what we do with it though is ours.

So what can we do with the struggles we go through in life? Once they have been sent our way, where do they leave us?

A number of years ago, Ohr Naava planned on having a dinner to honor a number of special and dedicated individuals. We booked Prospect Hall, a large Victorian banquet hall in Brooklyn, secured a caterer and prepared all the necessary arrangements. We expected between seven to eight hundred people. But it merely remained an expectation.

Two weeks before the dinner, my secretary came into the office. "We have a problem," she said panicking. "The dinner is in two weeks and we have seventy reservations. Not seventy couples; seventy people. Thirty-five couples." She didn't need to explain why this was the case; I knew why. The dinner was pushed off until the month of June for various reasons, yet there could not have been a worse time to make a dinner. With Shavuot over and the summer months just around the corner, it was prime time for weddings, sheva berachos, bar mitzvah celebrations and everything in between to be scheduled every night of the week.

Now I was stuck. What should I do? Were I to cancel the dinner, it would be shameful and embarrassing to the honorees. But, that being said, no dinner could be made with only a handful of people. I was torn as to how to proceed.

Heading off to Mincha, I figured that I would ask Hashem to guide and help me. I would daven for insight and direction, and the confidence and conviction to move forward with it.

It was one of the lengthiest Shemonah Esrei I ever had. But nothing crossed my mind. I left exactly where I was when I entered inside. Now walking back to the office, I continued mulling over the different options. All of a sudden, though, I heard my name being called. "Wallerstein! Shalom Aleichem!" That was the last thing I wanted to hear. Looking back, I noticed that it was Rav Simcha Soloveitchik, a well-respected Rav in Brooklyn. "Wallerstein! What's going on? You always look happy..." "Look," I said, "I have a major problem. I have a dinner in two weeks with a hall reserved for eight hundred people, but only seventy people are coming as of now. I don't know if I should cancel the dinner or go ahead with it." Before I could say anything more, Rav Simcha said, "Let me tell you a story and then you can decide what you want to do.

"Yankel was a peasant farmer who lived a simple yet happy life. Strangely enough, he had a fifteen-ton boulder positioned right in front of his house, the likes of which few people had seen elsewhere. One morning, Yankel headed outside and was met by a booming voice. "Yankel..."

"Who is it?" Yankel asked, his heart fluttering and mind flustered. "It is G-d..." Now even more off kilter, Yankel stood still in his place. "Yankel, push the boulder... push the boulder...! For the next half-hour, push the boulder as hard as you can..."

Yankel, following the given instructions, spent the next half-hour pushing and pushing, after which he tiringly shuffled home to rest for some time. But no later than the very next day, Yankel heard the same echoing voice calling him again. "Yankel, push the boulder...!" Knowing that it was

G-d bidding him to this task once again, Yankel complied.

The same scenario played itself out for days, which turned into months, which turned into a year. Without fail, Yaakov was found every day pushing the fifteen-ton boulder which stood in front of his house.

One morning, out walked Yankel as he did every day, though this time he was met by a new face. Leaning against the boulder was none other than the Satan. Yankel was stunned. "Listen Yankel," began the Satan, "I know I don't have a good reputation, but let me tell you a little secret.

"Has G-d been telling you to push this boulder every day?" Yankel, confused by the way the conversation was progressing, hesitatingly replied that He had been. "Yankel," said the Satan, "let me ask you. Has this boulder ever moved?" "No," Yankel said. "Why then would G-d tell you to push something every day for a year if it doesn't move?" Yankel was stumped.

"I'll tell you!" piped up the Satan. "It's because we angels in Heaven work 24/7. All day and night we are busy working. Every day, though, G-d gives us a half-hour break where we get to enjoy some comedy relief. We look down at earth and see you foolishly trying to push a fifteen-ton boulder. It's hysterical; you've been pushing and pushing every single day for a year, and yet the boulder has not moved an inch..." Yankel was shocked. "You mean G-d has been using me as a joke? I can't believe it! Just wait until tomorrow.... You'll see what will happen..."

The next morning, sure enough, as G-d customarily summoned Yankel to push the boulder, Yankel was prepared with a response. "G-d," Yankel called out, "am I really being used as comedy relief in Heaven? You know that no one can move the boulder! I've been wasting my time every day!" A moment of silence settled in between G-d and Yankel.

"Yankel," G-d said gently, "did I ever tell you to move the boulder? I told you to push the boulder. That has been your job every day, and you have done a marvelous job."

From one second to the next, Yankel's perspective and attitude changed. All of a sudden, Yankel never felt so good before in his life. He was in fact the greatest boulder pusher ever, and had been following G-d's command all this time.

The next morning, as Yankel walked out to the boulder, he straightened himself out, remembering the praise that was directed at him the other day. But, soon enough, he was met by his old friend, Satan. "Yankel, what did I tell you? Why are you here again? I know what G-d told you... but just think about it logically. Why would G-d want you to push a boulder? Nothing happens as a result; all you are doing is wasting your time."

Now Yankel was even more confused. Why in fact would G-d want him to push something that was unmovable? And so, exasperated and faced with mixed messages, Yankel decided to take a walk into town in an attempt to sort out his thoughts.

No more than a few minutes later, Yankel turned a corner and came across a frantic and panicking woman. "Help! Help!" she yelled. "My husband is stuck underneath a car! Please, run to the town and ask people to help lift the car!" "Ma'am," replied Yankel, "there's no time to call people from the town! But this is what we can do. I'll lift up the car and you pull your husband out from underneath." "You can't do that! The truck weighs a ton, and besides, there are five hundred pounds of cement in the back!" But with little time to argue, the woman went along with Yankel who headed off towards the truck.

Yankel stepped up to the truck, positioned his arms and legs and began lifting. Now, all those bulging muscles he gained from pushing the boulder for a year came into play. Muscles in his arms, legs and shoulders strengthened and flexed and, despite all odds, Yankel incredibly lifted the heavy truck. The woman quickly grabbed her husband out from underneath, and Yankel let go.

The woman looked at Yankel, a look of astonishment on her face. "You are superman," she said, tears now streaming down her face. "You saved

my husband. I can't thank you enough." "Don't thank me," Yankel said, "thank the fifteen-ton boulder in front of my house."

Now staring back at me was Rav Simcha Soloveitchik. "Your job is to push the boulder; G-d's job is to move the boulder. Your job is to make the dinner; G-d's job is to make it successful." I now had my answer.

It was the biggest dinner Ohr Naava ever had – 980 people. The siyata dishmaya seen over the course of the next two weeks which pulled so many people in was beyond words. Word got out that so few people planned on attending the dinner, prompting hundreds of other couples to rearrange their schedule and find the time to attend the dinner so as not to disappoint the honorees and Ohr Naava. It was simply incredible.

That was one life-changing message Hashem sent me through the words of Rav Simcha Soloveitchik. "You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it" (Pirkei Avos 2:21). Our job in life is to push, work hard, and put in effort; G-d's job is to make it successful. But there was something additional, and perhaps even more empowering, that I learned that day.

While Hashem's request for Yankel to push the boulder could have been motivated by more than one reason, one purpose it unquestionably accomplished was putting him in perfect position to later help that man stuck under the truck. His tireless efforts of pushing the boulder gave him what could be called "struggle muscle" and enabled him to save the endangered man.

The same is true of us all. Every one of us experience our own package of trials and tribulations. We find ourselves facing a fifteen-ton boulder, a challenge that seems unmovable and insurmountable. We still haven't found our shidduch and we've lost count how many tears we shed and chapters of Tehillim we recited. We've been waiting for a child for years and years, beseeching Hashem to have mercy on us and our spouse and entrust us with a beautiful neshama to care for. Our child is failing and floundering, and we've been endlessly seeking ways to help him or her. The boulder in our lives, full of pain and suffering, doesn't seem like it will ever move.

What then happens? It isn't always happily ever after, but just sometimes, our prayers for Hashem to lift us out of our pit of sadness and sorrow pierce the Heavens. We've been pushing, pushing and pushing. We're sweating, crying, and hoping. "Please Hashem, please... Tatty, Abba, please, please..."

The boulder moves. We find our shidduch, we give birth to a healthy baby and our child realizes it is time to get his or her life back in order. After we have fallen and failed again and again, we get back on our feet. Now finally, we are back in shape. We pushed and pushed the boulder, and Hashem finally moved it.

Where does that now leave us? We can still feel the residual pain, disappointment and deep-seated feelings of frustration and agony. We remember our aching, perhaps even years later.

It leaves us with an unbelievable struggle muscle. We may not realize it, but we are in an incredible position that is so ever powerful and influential. And that is a position to uplift, inspire, guide, mentor and heal others. Take your experience, full of aching and countless tefillos, and change people's lives. Reach out to those who, just like you once did, are undergoing a hard time finding a shidduch, having a baby, dealing with a child who is not doing well, managing with being bullied, or overcoming a debilitating illness. You have pushed that same boulder, and you know what it feels like.

Those individuals who are now pushing their boulder and cannot move it, help them. Help a friend, a roommate, a sibling or a student. Lend them care, succor and hope. Hashem gave you your own challenging life experiences, however big or small, and you have that struggle muscle. Take it and change the lives around you. Because if you flex that struggle muscle of yours, you can be sure, you can lift the world.

GAN

## HATORAH

Rabbi Yakov Yosef Schechter

## Parshas Bereishis: Be Fruitful First – Then Multiply

“ויברך אתם אלקים ויאמר להם אלקים פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ” 1:28

“Hashem blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’” The Ribbono Shel Olam gave the first commandment to man, to be fruitful and to multiply and fill the earth. What is the difference between being fruitful and multiplying?

The Ribbono Shel Olam created this world, and the first commandment that He gave is the Mitzvah of Piryah V'rivyah (to be fruitful and multiply). When we learn what Chazal have to say about this Mitzvah, we can see the great importance of this Mitzvah. As it says in Yevomos that the Zechus of this Mitzvah sustains the heaven and earth, Shomayim Va'oretz. This world is a place to be Mesaken Neshomos. The Mitzvah of Piryah V'rivyah is our opportunity to participate in this Tikun Gadol. Bereishis – Because of the Raishis, the first Mitzvah in the Torah (Piryah V'rivyah), Bara Elokim Shomayim Va'oretz, Hashem created the Heavens and the earth. Through learning the Torah Hakdosha and following its commandments, we are Mesaken our Neshamos. There is a strong connection between the beginning of the Torah and the end. Devorim 31:19 “ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת”. The last Mitzvah in the Torah is writing a Sefer Torah. One should write a Sefer Torah in order to study from it. This is the purpose of creation - Piryah V'rivyah and learning the Torah. With this P'shat we can now understand the Gemara in Yevomos 63b. Ben Azai said that anyone who is not Osek in the Mitzvah of Piryah V'rivyah, it is like he is spilling blood. The Chachomim asked Ben Azai, if this is so, then why didn't he get married? Ben Azai answered because his Nefesh craves the Torah. How does his craving for Torah exempt him from the Mitzvah of Piryah V'rivyah? Ben Azai was answering the Chachamim that through his learning of the Torah, he was accomplishing the purpose of Piryah V'rivyah and therefore did not have to perform that Mitzvah. Through his learning, he was Mesaken Nefoshos, as does the Mitzvah of Piryah V'rivyah. (בן איש חי)

It says in Noach 6:9 “אלה תולדת נח, נח איש צדיק” - These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a righteous man, complete in his generation. What does the Posuk mean that the offspring of Noach was himself, Noach? The Torah is teaching us that the primary “offspring” of a Tzaddik are his Ma'asim Tovim, his good deeds. (רש"י)

Rashi says that because Avrohom Avinu had a Shliach get water for his guests, the Ribbono Shel Olam repaid Klal Yisroel in the Midbar through a Shliach. Bereishis 18:7 “ויתן אל הנער” - Rashi says that Na'ar is referring to Yishmael his son. Avrohom Avinu had Yishmael serve the guests to be Mechanech him. Why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu repay Avrohom through a Shliach? Avrohom only had Yishmael do it for Chinuch purposes, not because he did not want to do the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim himself. We learn a very powerful lesson from this. The best way to be Mechanech your children is by showing them, not by telling them. Avrohom Avinu should have shown his son Yishmael how the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim is done rather than telling him. (דרש משה)

פרו means to be fruitful. That means a person himself should lead a fruitful life. He should be busy doing Mitzvos, and learning the Torah Hakdosha. As it says regarding Noach, a person's main offspring are his Ma'asim Tovim. The main point of this world is to be Mesaken Neshomos through learning Torah and spreading the name of the Ribbono Shel Olam. ורבו, multiply and have children. One must hope and Daven that his children should also follow in the ways of Hashem. By having children, one can have a continuation of his job on this world of being Mesaken more Neshomos. How is one to try to have children who will follow the will of Hashem? פרו, you yourself should be fruitful. One should show by example how an Ehrlicha Yid is supposed to conduct himself to be Mesaken his Neshama. Don't just tell your children what to do; show them, and they will follow your example. ורבו, follow this formula and you will be Zoche to have children who will continue to be Mesaken Shomayim Va'aretz and bring about more Kovod Shomayim.



# "FEELING SHAME IN A SHAMELESS WORLD"

Ashlyn Blocker was 8 months old when her parents took her to the eye doctor because they noticed her eye was red. "When they put the dye in her eye, everyone kind of gasped," John Blocker said. "She had a big corneal abrasion across her eye. They were just astonished that she wasn't in pain." Other babies cried from hunger or a diaper rash, but Ashlyn never cried.

Their friends were envious and thought, "what a good baby, why can't our baby be more like Ashlyn," but her parents knew something was wrong. Ashlyn has a rare genetic disorder called congenital insensitivity to pain with anhidrosis (CIPA). She is one of about 100 cases of individuals who simply cannot and do not feel any pain at all. While an inability to pain might sound attractive, consider that many people with the disorder suffer terribly because they have no alert system that something is wrong. Some pass away from undetected appendicitis, others have bone infections or internal bleeding and never know anything is wrong before it is too late.

Ashlyn is now 12 years old and she has learned to live with her disorder, but her toddler years were very difficult for her parents. She burned her hand, bit her lip, bruised her body and all the while didn't stop what she was doing because she didn't feel the pain and therefore didn't know anything was wrong. While parents desperately want to protect their children from pain, the capacity to feel pain may just be what our children need most.

In the seventh chapter of Hilchos Teshuva, the Rambam writes:

The manner of Baalei Teshuvah is to be very humble and modest. If fools shame them because of their previous deeds, saying to them: "Yesterday, you would commit such and such. Yesterday, you would commit this and that," they are not bothered by them. On the contrary, they will hear this abuse and rejoice, knowing that it is a merit for them. Whenever they are embarrassed for the deeds they committed and ashamed because of them, their merit increases and their level is raised.

In this halacha, the Rambam suggests something remarkable. If a true ba'al teshuva is inappropriately reminded of their past indiscretion or lifestyle, they will not feel angry or upset. The ba'al teshuva, the individual who has undergone an authentic process of change and improvement, will embrace the feelings of shame and embarrassment and recognize them as virtues.

The Rambam makes one other reference to shame in the very beginning of Hilchos Teshuva. He writes -

How does one confess? He proclaims, "Behold, I regret and am embarrassed for my deeds. I promise never to repeat this act again."

For the Rambam, busha, feeling ashamed is a necessary component of teshuva. Shame is a prerequisite to real change and without it, change is inauthentic, counterfeit and short-lived.

The question I would like to ask you today is what virtue is there in shame? In fact, don't we see shame as a negative attribute? Shame paralyzes, it incapacitates. Shame makes people feel despondent or defeatist. Shame can undermine self-esteem and self-worth. Indeed, every Shab-

bos mevorchim ha'chodesh we daven that we be spared shame as we ask for "chaim she'ein bahem busha u'chlima, a life that has no shame or humiliation." Friday nights we sing "lo seivoshi v'lo sikalmi, feel not ashamed and be not humiliated."

So why does the Rambam celebrate shame as a positive quality? The truth is our question is not on the Rambam, it is on the Talmud itself which goes even further when it says in Berachos 12b: "kol ha'oseh dvar aveira u'misbayeish bo mochlin lo al kol avonosav. Whoever violates an aveira and is ashamed and embarrassed by it, is forgiven for all of his transgressions." Now, I understand if reacting with shame atones for the particular indiscretion or mistake one is ashamed of. But, why should someone who feels shame for one act become forgiven for all of his or her past mistakes?

It seems to me that in truth there are two types of shame. Unhealthy shame, in which we beat ourselves up over that we cannot control or be responsible for, is indeed incapacitating and destructive. But does that mean that we don't need shame at all? Would we really want to live in a society that is shameless? Would we want to be around people living shamelessly?

Steven Pressfield is an author of historical fiction who has published many books, some of which you undoubtedly have heard of. To be honest, I haven't read any, but I did read an article he wrote about shame that I believe eloquently articulates and captures exactly what makes shame such a virtue in our lives. He writes:

Shame is good. Shame is a tremendous weapon against resistance...What is shame? Shame is the emotion we feel when we are guilty of acts that are unworthy of us... When the threshold of shame has been crossed, self-respect kicks in. Self-respect is good. We want self-respect. When we feel self-respect, we say to ourselves, "This act is unworthy of me. I'm better than this." Shame steps up and slaps us across the face...

Reality TV shows are all about shamelessness. The spectacle of contestants eating worms and bugs to gain their fifteen minutes of fame is like a car crash that we can't look away from. The producers contrive situations whose aim is to produce from real people, not actors, acts of shamelessness-lying, cheating, back-stabbing another contestant-which can be taped and broadcast for our delectation. It's nauseating, isn't it? Real work, of course, is the opposite of a reality show. Real work is not a stunt. It's not a cheap shot or a shortcut. Shamelessness gets us nowhere in the world of real work. We need real, old-fashioned shame.

Teshuva is the world of real work, perhaps the hardest work we ever do and that is the work of change. We cannot hope to change and we cannot begin to change if we don't acknowledge that what we did was beneath us, unworthy of us and deserving of feeling ashamed. Our parents and grandparents had an expression - "pas nisht" - to describe behavior, conduct, an appearance or a personal choice that is unworthy and unacceptable.

If we don't feel at least a tinge of shame, if we don't sense at least a hint of personal embarrassment for mistakes we have made and errors in judgment we have displayed, how can we know that we truly regret the misdeeds? Shame is the affirmation that a line has been crossed, a boundary has been violated, and that such conduct was simply unworthy of me.

But shame goes even further. Shame means knowing that some things are out of bounds and when we do them, or they are done in our presence, we are uncomfortable, agitated, and perhaps even embarrassed.

Chazal tell us seichel hu ha'busha v'habusha hu ha'seichel. Discernment and embarrassment

go hand in hand. A discerning individual feels a natural sense of discomfort and disgrace when a boundary of appropriateness has been violated.

In her book, "A Return to Modesty," Wendy Shalit writes, "Embarrassment is actually a wonderful thing, signaling that something very strange or very significant is going on, that some boundary is being threatened - either by you or by others." "Without embarrassment," she writes, "kids are weaker, more vulnerable to pregnancy, disease and heartbreak."

Just as pain, while unwelcome and unappreciated, is a necessary component of protecting the body, so too shame and the capacity to blush are necessary components of protecting the spirit and the soul. Shame is the pain of the neshama, alerting us to something being wrong, a line being crossed, a boundary being violated. Ashlyn's life is in danger because her pain sensors are broken and she doesn't know if something is wrong or threatening her well-being. Our lives are in danger if our spiritual pain sensors are malfunctioning and failing to alert us to something morally wrong, behavior that is indecent that threatens our spiritual well-being.

Perhaps when we exhibit embarrassment about an indiscretion, when we feel a sense of shame in having committed an error in judgment, we are forgiven for all our sins because we proclaim that our spiritual nervous system is intact and working. Shame is the acknowledgment of boundaries in our lives and the recognition of the danger that arises when they are crossed.

My friends, we are living in what to a large degree could be described as a shameless society. Salacious and humiliating scandals don't prevent a shameless politician from running for mayor. A formerly beloved, supposedly pure child actress behaves disgracefully on stage at an award show shamelessly. But shamelessness is not reserved for politicians, celebrities, and athletes alone.

I fear shamelessness has crept into our lives and our sensitivities have become frayed and dulled. When we post to Facebook with a link we should be embarrassed to have seen, let alone to share publicly, we are acting shamelessly. When we forward emails that contain inappropriate images, or an offensive joke, or language that we should not use or be associated with, we are acting shamelessly.

Shame is something we should feel, even for something we ourselves are not doing. The Torah's commitment to innocence and purity are designed to refine us to the point that we should recoil if we hear explicit curses we would never say, and we are to be repulsed by images of licentiousness or people acting lewdly. Once upon a time, we actually blushed just by being in the presence of behavior that was indecent.

Today, we must ask ourselves, if we are in the presence of someone speaking lewdly or cursing explicitly, do we react with antipathy and indifference? Does it even faze us? If we don't recoil with disgust we must be concerned with our sense of shame. What has become of our sense of decency?

When is the last time we have seen or heard something so disturbing, so indecent that it made us blush? Shame and embarrassment are not qualities we should run away from or try to avoid. They are virtues that we should embrace and recognize as healthy for us and for our children.

New research from the University of California, Berkeley found that people who are easily embarrassed are more trustworthy and more generous. Dr. Matthew Feinberg, the author of the study, writes, "Moderate levels of embarrassment are signs of virtue. Our data suggests embarrassment is a good thing, not something you should fight."

The world we live in embraces and promotes

# One More Day

by Barbara Kessel

***When hellos are so sweet, good-byes are all the more difficult.***

There is a poignant midrash that offers an explanation for why the holiday of Sukkot is extended one more day by the addition of Shmini Atzeret, a holiday with no specific mitzvot attached to it. The midrash imagines G-d as a king whose children are about to depart after a pleasurable visit. He implores them to stay one more day, saying, "Your departure is hard on me." This midrash always strikes me as the Jewish equivalent of an email that's going around these days: "If G-d had a refrigerator, your photo would be on the door."

I had my own "Your departure is hard on me" this summer. My kids and little grandkids came in from Israel for a visit that was too brief. We planned a major but manageable activity for each day, and on the two Shabbats of their stay, we invited extended family. It was a boisterous, chaotic, joyful time -- which made the contrast of their departure all the more dismal.

The three younger grandkids waved us a cheerful goodbye at the airport, but the six-year-old got teary and lowered his head, unable to look us in the eye. He understood that this leave-taking was no "See you later." The "later" this time was going to be Passover, eight months hence. By that time, the baby won't remember us, and the two-year-old, who didn't let go my hand for two weeks, will need a little re-acquainting.

**The pain of parting is a commensurate measure of the pleasure of reuniting.**

I guess if we didn't get along so well, their departure would be more cavalier. The pain of parting is a commensurate measure of the pleasure of reuniting.

During our separations the phone conversations go like this... Me: "Hi, Sweetie, It's Mom. How was Shabbat?" My daughter: "Hi, Mom. It was -- OMIGOSH. I gotta go! Binyomin, put down that hammer right NOW!!!"

The webcam is no better. My daughter: "Who wants to see Savta on the webcam? OMIGOSH. Shlomo, a carpet tack is not a dessert!" As a result, our conversations are not very long, but we are in constant contact. My husband and I feel that they are reminded weekly of who we are, and occasionally, when the kids are asleep, my daughter and I have lengthy heart-to-hearts.

In a way, those conversations parallel my prayers. They are a tad rushed during the week, but on Shabbat and holidays I have a chance to slow down. I thank G-d for all the good things in my life and implore Him to keep everyone safe and sound. I have little points of contact all week long and on special occasions I get to have a real talk with my Heavenly Father.

But Sukkot is even better than a phone call. It's an actual visit. During the holiday of Sukkot we get to sit with G-d in the Sukkah. The closeness is akin to when my family comes to visit me in my home. And the end of Sukkot is similar to that trip to the airport to send my children and the grandkids back to their home in Israel.

**The good times together are soooo good that the separations are almost unbearable.**

The good times together are soooo good that the separations are almost unbearable. So that midrash resonates with me, especially as the holiday ends. Sukkot is no different from those family visits. After all, G-d misses us the way we miss distant loved ones.

Maimonides describes how we should long for G-d's presence as we do for a loved one. And the feeling is mutual. If we spend Sukkot sharing meals with family, talking and singing together in the Sukkah we can create indelible memories that carry us -- and our Heavenly Father -- over until the next time we can get together.

Shmini HaAtzeret -- the "hold-over" holiday -- is devoted entirely to our encounter with G-d, with no mediating mitzvot. It's pure connectivity. Your departure is hard on me. But that's because our time together is so very, very precious.

shamelessness. Countless websites and even mental health professionals today endorse a shameless lifestyle: Never be ashamed - dress as you want, live as you want, behave as you want, appear as you want, do what you want, with whom you want, anywhere you want and never, ever feel ashamed. Shamelessness, they say, is liberating and cathartic.

While the rest of the world moves towards shamelessness, we must remember that we, the Jewish people, are to distinguish ourselves specifically through the quality of shame and the capacity to feel ashamed. The Talmud in Yevamos 79a states: "ha'banim ha'kesheirim ha'busha nir'ah al pnei-heim ki mi she'hu byshan hu siman she'hu mizerah Avraham, Yitzchak v'Ya'akov.

We, the Jewish people can be identified by our natural inclination towards blushing when something is prust, inappropriate or improper. Let me be perfectly clear: a byshan is not a prude. Rather, he or she is one who has maintained a pristine quality, a natural alert system of when a boundary has been crossed and when a border has been violated.

On Rosh Hashana we celebrated the birthday of man, the anniversary of our creation. Human beings are unique in many ways, and one of them is that Homo sapiens are the only species on the planet that wear clothing. When anthropologists studied primitive tribes in even the warmest climates they saw that people covered their private areas in virtually every human society. Clothing is intrinsically connected to the concept of shame and of basic dignity. This is expressed by the very etymology of the Hebrew words for clothing.

The Hebrew word for garment is levush. This comes from the word bush which means to be ashamed. The very structure of the Hebrew language indicates that clothing is worn to protect us not only from the elements, but more importantly from the natural, God-given feeling of busha, of the shame of being uncovered. Levush protects us from feeling busha, the crossing of an inappropriate boundary like over-exposure. We would never walk around without our levush, uncovered or fully exposed, and we must not walk around with our neshamos fully exposed to every form of speech, every image, every joke, and everything the world throws our way.

The basic human qualities of decency and dignity as protected through busha - shame, are threatened in our society today. There is another Hebrew word for a garment and that is a beged. Begeg comes from the word bogeid - to rebel or revolt. Sometimes people, particularly children, instead of using clothing as levush to protect ourselves from the busha of crossing the line of decency, use clothing as a beged to rebel against boundaries and rules altogether.

We cannot and must not lose the trait that identifies us as the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, the trait of busha, of shame and of embarrassment. We must not become desensitized and numb to the distortion of levush into begeg and by a culture that assaults us with the message that we never have anything at all to feel embarrassed or ashamed about.

The culture today is to share the intimate details of your life with friends over coffee or with coworkers at the water cooler or in real time over Facebook. What happened to modesty, to privacy, and to a sense of shame that some things are not meant to be shared with the world?

If we become numb and oblivious to the distortion of decency, if we lose our busha, then we lose our seichel, our ability to discern between right and wrong, correct and incorrect, between appropriate and inappropriate.

Rav Nachman of Breslov explained that shame and teshuva are inextricably linked as evidenced through the letters of the two words. Boshes is spelled beis, shin, tav, which are the same letters that spell tashuv, to return. Said Rav Nachman, when the ba'al tokei is blowing the shofar, in the effort to produce the sound, his face turns red, like a person who is embarrassed or blushing. When we heard the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we were to be reminded of the capacity to feel shame, we are to be embarrassed by our past indiscretions and be inspired to teshuva, to grow and to change.

Let's repair and renew the feeling in our spiritual nerve endings. Let's recapture the capacity to blush and reinstate the very trait that makes us proud descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

# If He Couldn't Eat from the Tree, Why Was It There?

By Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The Torah says, “And Hashem Elokim commanded the man saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.’” [Bereishis 2:16-17] Hashem [G-d] places Adam in Gan Eden and makes everything accessible to him – with one exception: The fruit of the “Etz Ha’Daas.” The Torah immediately continues: “And Hashem Elokim said ‘It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.’” [Bereishis 2:18]. Thus, immediately after the warning to distance himself from the Tree of Knowledge, the Almighty establishes the institution of marriage as part of Creation.

What is the lesson of this juxtaposition?

We may answer this question by asking another question: If Hashem did not want Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, why did He put it in Gan Eden? If there needed to be a Tree of Knowledge, let the Almighty plant it somewhere on the other side of the world where it would not tempt man! Had He done that, Adam could have been given *carte blanche* – eat whatever you want from the Garden – no exceptions! What would have been wrong with that?

The answer is that the Hashem is teaching humanity a lesson. Every human being must learn that there are certain things in this world that are off limits. Man needs to confront limitations. Not everything in the world should be accessible. The Almighty knew exactly what he was doing. He wanted something to be placed within man’s reach that would be “off limits” precisely so that man would recognize that certain things are “off limits.”

The Tiferes Shlomo (Rav Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowicz [1801-1866], the first Rebbe of the Radomsk Hasidic dynasty) makes an interesting point. The pasuk cited above reads, “And Hashem Elokim commanded upon man saying (al ha’Adam leimor).” The Torah commonly uses a slightly different terminology, for example, “And Hashem spoke to Moshe (el Moshe)...” The Tiferes Shlo-

mo asks, why doesn’t the pasuk here also use the expression “And Hashem Elokim commanded to man (el ha’Adam leimor)?” The Tiferes Sholmo answers that al ha’Adam – upon man – means this defines humanity. This commandment (regarding limitations) is what makes a mensch! Humanity needs to recognize that there are moral borders in this world – up until this point and no further! Man cannot have everything he desires. There needs to be something that man cannot have, so that he can learn the concept of restraint.

This is why when we look at the world around us and we see sports stars or we see the menuvalim who populate Hollywood, etc., we notice that everything is accessible to them. Whether legal or illegal, moral or immoral, they feel they must have everything. Nothing is off limits. What happens to such people? They inevitably, invariably, sink to the depths. It is because they have no limits, and can get away with everything, that they self-destruct – morally and even physically. When you can say whatever you want to whomever you want and can do whatever you want anytime you want, you stop being a human being.

The sefer Milchamos Yehuda writes that this is why the pasuk introducing marriage comes immediately following the pasuk introducing limitations. After “Hashem Elokim commanded upon man...” then “Hashem Elokim stated, ‘It is not good for man to be alone...’” For a person to live with another human being, each party needs to know that there are limits. There are some things you can do and there are some things you cannot do. There are lines that you cannot cross. A person who learns that lesson easily and learns it early will have a successful marriage. A person who never learns **that and has no borders and has no restraints** – not in the way he talks, not in the way he acts, and not in the way he eats – is not going to have a successful marriage.

Only after the concept of limitations was established into the world, could the institution of living with another person and the concept of marriage be successfully implemented for man.

## THE RAMBAN & THE BIG BANG

In most translations, the first verse of Genesis reads something like this: “In the beginning G-d created heaven and earth, and the earth was astonishingly empty...” This translation, which alludes to G-d creating heaven and earth directly and as a complete entity as you mentioned, is a flawed translation.

The correct translation, as explained by Rashi, the most classical of commentaries, is “In the beginning of G-d’s creating of the heaven and the earth...” The difference is a great one; it is simply introducing the story, not referring to anything yet created.

The continuing statement, “and the earth was astonishingly empty,” also loses its meaning in translation. Another classical commentary, Nachmanides (13th century) points out the difficulty implicit in the words “tohu vavohu,” which do not literally form the phrase “astonishingly empty.” Tohu indeed means astonishing. Bohu, however, means “all is in it.” Nachmanides explains as follows:

G-d created all creatures from absolute nothingness (ex nihilo), which is described by the term, “Bara.” Not all creatures in the spiritual realm or below the heavens were created ex nihilo, rather G-d brought into being from absolute nothingness a very tiny basic material, which seemed as though it didn’t exist at all, but it had within it the power to bring forth other creations, prepared to receive shape, to develop from the potential to the actual... and all was created from it. This matter...is called in Hebrew “tohu”... because if we would attempt to assign it a name, we would be astonished... because it had no form to accept a name. The form, which cloaked this matter, is called in Hebrew “bohu,” meaning “all is in it.” In other words, G-d created from complete “Tohu” and made from nothing something.

We see from Nachmanides that the verse from Genesis is precisely in line with Big Bang! For the past 700 or more years, we were not able to understand the meaning of Nachmanides in physical terms. It defied human understanding to imagine all the vast mass of the universe compressed into an infinitesimally small speck of matter which could not even be observed. One could not even imagine compressing a cup of water into a smaller cup! Only after Einstein discovered relativity and the relationship between matter and energy, could we understand this in physical terms.

According to Stephen Hawking, this original, primordial speck is called a singularity, with infinite energy pulling in upon itself, not allowing any energy to escape. This was the ultimate “black hole.” This was considered a monumental discovery, but something that we have known, although not totally understood, from Torah literature for thousands of years!

One thing Hawking does not explain is how the Big Bang was possible. If there is an infinite amount of energy holding the singularity together, from whence is the even greater energy to pull it apart?!

He indeed does say that until after the point of the Big Bang, all science and mathematics breaks down, and time and science have their beginnings only after the Big Bang. Our answer to all this is that the Creator, who was the architect of the very concept of infinity, had the energy beyond infinity to bring about the Big Bang.

As science progresses, we see much more clearly how the physical world and the spiritual world of Torah are one.



## PECANS, WALNUTS, OR PEANUTS

I asked the three-year-old what he likes to eat.

"Nuts," he replied.

"Great," I said. "What kind, pecans? Walnuts? Peanuts?"

"No," he said with a smile, "donuts!"

## DISAPPOINTED AUNT

The rich aunt was disappointed and said to her nephew, "I'm sorry you don't like your gift. I asked you if you preferred a large check or a small check."

"I know, Auntie," the nephew said contritely, "but I didn't know you were talking about neckties."

## HEARING AID

A man was telling his neighbor, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."

"Really," answered the neighbor. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve thirty."

## ONE-UPMANSHIP

Three violin manufactures have all done business for years on the same block in the small town of Cremona, Italy. After years of peaceful co-existence, the Amati family decided to put a sign in their shop window saying: "We make the best violins in Italy." The Guarneri family soon put a sign in their window proclaiming: "We make the best violins in the world." Finally, the Stradivarius family posted this sign outside their shop: "We make the best violins on the block."

## LIFE CAN BE FUNNY

1. "I always take life with a

grain of salt. Plus, a slice of lemon. And a shot of tequila."

2. "I read recipes the same way I read science fiction. I get to the end and I think, 'Well, that's not going to happen.'"
3. "Money talks. But all mine ever says is goodbye."
4. "I'm skeptical of anyone who tells me they do yoga every day. That's a bit of a stretch."
5. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. But teach a man to fish, and you saved yourself a fish, haven't you?"
6. "We have enough youth. How about a Fountain of Smart?"
7. "I don't have an attitude problem. You have a perception problem."
8. "A positive attitude may not solve all your problems. But it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort."
9. "Knowledge is power, and power corrupts. So study hard and be evil."
10. "I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure."

## IRONY

I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.

I was born to be a pessimist - my blood type is B Negative.

Where do they get the seeds to plant seedless watermelons?

One good thing about being wrong is the joy it brings to the others.

## INCOMING PROJECTILES

I was walking past a farm and a sign said 'Duck, eggs!'

I thought, "That's an unnecessary comma..."

And then it hit me.

## SIMCHAS BAIS HASHOEVA AND SIMCHAS TORAH

The Gemara in Sukka 51b discusses the goings on of the Simchas Bais Hashoeva. Originally, the location for the women was inside and the men were located outside. This resulted in kalus rosh, so the Chachamim switched the women's location to the outside and the men inside. This location change did not help until they built a balcony to separate the men from women, the men were located on the bottom and the women were located on the balcony on top. Why weren't they mesaken that the women should not be there at all?

We celebrate Simchas Torah at the conclusion of Sukkos. Why don't we celebrate Simchas Torah during Shavuos when we received the Torah?

There are several answers to both questions. We will begin with the first question. The first answer is because Chazal felt that this would be a gezeira that the tzibbur could not withstand. The men would not be Oleh Regel without their spouses there, so they tried their best to make a takana which would allow both the men and women to attend. The second answer is that since we are "matriarch" the women to come to the Bais Hamikdash to bring their korbanos, it would not make sense for them not to be able to join in the simcha. The third answer is that since women have a din of Simchas Yom Tov, they had to be able to partake in Simchas Bais Hashoeva. The fourth answer is that since the Rabbanim would use the time of Simchas Bais Hashoeva to give mussar to Klal Yisroel, the women needed to be in attendance. The fifth answer is based on the Ritva that says that the inyan of Simchas Bais Hashoeva was an opportunity to thank Hashem, so it is extremely important that both the women and men partake in the thanksgiving to Hashem. The sixth answer is that we are happy that Yom Kippur was mechaper our sins, so we sing, "Praised is one who never sinned." However, if a person sinned and does teshuva Hashem forgives him, so the simcha of kaporas avonos had to be attended by the women too. The seventh answer is that a big deal was made regarding nissuch hamayim to show that we don't act like the

tzedokim. It was important that both men and women witness this so there should be no mistakes in the future. The eighth answer is that since women were obligated in the mitzvah of Hakhel, they had to be there. The ninth and final answer is that anyone attending the Simchas Bais Hashoeva received Ruach Hakodesh (which is where Yona Hanavi became a navi) so we would not want to take away the opportunity for receiving Ruach Hakodesh from anyone!

There are several answers to the second question. Although Bnei Yisroel received the Torah during Shavuos, they did not come to appreciate the sweetness of the Torah until much later, so we don't have the Simchas HaTorah until after Sukkos. It can be compared to a king who gave his daughter a commoner to wed with a beautiful house and lots of money. Everyone at the wedding was happy except for the groom. He was concerned that something must be wrong with the princess, otherwise why would the king be giving him to her as a wife? After a few months the groom realizes that there is nothing wrong with his wife, so he asks the king to renew their vows and make another party. The king, of course, acquiesces. Similarly, we waited until after Sukkos to be truly happy with the Torah that was given to us on Shavuos. A second reason is that only after the Yomim Noraim, when we are forgiven, and after Sukkos, when we have the Sho'eva, are we pure enough to be happy with the Torah. A third answer refers to the rule that it would have been better for a person not to have been created. Every day we must battle the Yetzer Hora. Chazal tell us that once we are created, we need to be mefashpesh bemaasim which is what we do during the Yomim Noraim; hence afterwards, we can truly be happy. The fourth and final answer is that we know that Shmini Atzeres is Hashem's way of telling us that he can't separate from us, so by showing a simcha for the Torah we are showing Hashem that we are staying connected via learning Torah. We show this by singing and saying that Yisroel Ve'oraysa Ve'kudash Brich Hu Chad Hu - we are truly happy to be connected! This is part of the reason we end with Ha'azinu and right away begin the Torah again. This is to show that we are connected, and we will never be detached.

May we all be zocheh to Simchas Bais Hashoeva and Simchas HaTorah bisheleimus!

# Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons

## TAPESTRY OF SEVENS

G-d adds a special day at the end of Sukkot, a day of great intimacy with our Creator, as He asks His Jewish children to remain with him for extra personal time together.

Imagine you throw a huge party and invite everyone you know. But this is no "regular" party: It's one solid week of food, music and fun. Eventually things wind down and people begin to leave. As the host, you quietly go over to a few of your best friends and whisper: "Stick around after everyone else leaves -- that's when I'm breaking out the good stuff."

Each year G-d has a weeklong celebration called "Sukkot." In ancient times in Jerusalem, the service in the Holy Temple during the week of Sukkot featured a total of 70 bull offerings. This, the Talmud explains, corresponds to each of the 70 nations of the world. The Temple was not just for Jews. When King Solomon built the Temple, he specifically asked G-d to heed the prayer of non-Jews who comes to the Temple (1-Kings 8:41-43). And the prophet Isaiah refers to the Temple as a "House for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7).

The Temple was the universal center of spirituality, a concentrated point where G-d-consciousness filtered down into the world. In fact, the Talmud says that if the Romans would have realized how much benefit they themselves were getting from the Temple, they never would have destroyed it!

And then, at the end of Sukkot, G-d added a special day. It's called Shmini Atzeret, literally the "Eighth Day of Assembly". On that day, only one bull was offered -- representing the Jewish people. It is a day of great intimacy with our Creator, as He asks His Jewish children to remain with him for extra personal time together. (Talmud - Sukkot 55b)

Shmini Atzeret is a full public holiday, as described in Leviticus 23:36. Even though it immediately follows the seven-day Sukkot festival and is often considered part of Sukkot, it is, in fact, a separate holiday. This means that the She'hechyanu blessing is recited, and the obligation to sit in the Sukkah does not apply.

Nachmanides (12th century Spain) explains a beautiful kabbalistic concept: Seven is the number of the natural world. There are seven days in the week, seven notes on the musical scale and seven directions (left, right, up, down, forward, back and center). "Seven" -- represented by the seven days of Sukkot -- is the world of nature. "Eight" -- represented by Shmini Atzeret -- is that which is beyond nature.

The Jewish people, says the Talmud, are beyond nature. We have survived every imaginable persecution, exile, hardship and expulsion. And still, we have achieved and thrived far beyond our numbers. As Mark Twain wrote: "All things remain mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

The "secret," as we know, is the special gift that G-d gave to the Jewish people: The Torah. As Rabbi Emanuel Feldman writes:

"Torah is the mysterious bridge which connects the Jew and

G-d, across which they interact and communicate, and by means of which G-d fulfills His covenant with His people to sustain them and protect them."

Therefore it is no coincidence that on Shmini Atzeret we also celebrate the completion of the yearly cycle of Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle. This event is lovingly referred to as "Simchat Torah," literally "Rejoicing of the Torah." (Outside of Israel, Simchat Torah is celebrated the day after Shmini Atzeret.)

Why are we accustomed to both finish and re-start the reading of the Torah on the same day? The Sages explain: "To show that the Torah is beloved to us like a new object and not like an old command which a person no longer treasures. Since it is brand new to us, we all run to greet it." We sing and dance for hours around the bima (the platform where the Torah is read), carry the Torah Scroll, and express our joy at having the opportunity to come so close to G-d.

On Shmini Atzeret, as we complete this holiday season, we offer a special prayer to G-d for rain. Rain represents the blessings of growth and abundance. Through all the hard work of Elul, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, we have come a long way. Our task now is to carry that energy throughout the year.





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## THREE CATEGORIES OF BROCHOS

## RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

ROSH KOLLEL

The Rambam spells out that there are three categories of brochos:

Birchos ha'nehenin – enjoyment, such as food or drink

Birchos hamitzvos – on mitzvah performance

Birchos hashvach – praising Hashem

All of these brochos are rabbinical. The only brocha which is a Scriptural mandate is bentching after eating bread, and according to some opinions, birchas hatorah. Let us explain these brochos:

### BIRCHOS HAMITZVOS

The Gemara in Pesachim (7b) tells us that before performing all mitzvos, one must recite a brocha. The Ritva gives a few reasons why we recite a brocha prior to mitzvah performance:

A brocha infuses a person with kedusha uplifting the mitzvah.

A brocha shows that the mitzvah is for the sake of Hashem.

A brocha performed with one's mouth is spiritual and should precede the mitzvah performed with one's body.

The Chasam Sofer wonders about the expression used by the Gemara: "before performing all mitzvos, one must recite a brocha. Why would I think it doesn't apply to all mitzvos?"

He answers, based on the words of the Kuzari, who writes that the reason for brochos is to infuse a person with kedusha, and thereby uplift the mitzvah performed afterward. If so, one may think that this would not apply to a mitzvah which is to remove the bad – such as getting rid of the chometz – and the brocha can be recited after the

mitzvah is performed. For this reason, the Gemara spells out that one should recite a brocha prior to all mitzvos – even a mitzvah which is to remove the bad.

### BIRCHOS HA'NEHENIN

The Gemara (Brochos 35a) tells us that the requirement to recite a brocha before enjoying food and drink is simply logical. One cannot partake of the enjoyments of this world without expressing thanks to the Creator.

The Pnei Yehoshua asks: The Gemara tells us that something which is so logical that it is self understood, and doesn't need a pasuk is considered equivalent to a Scriptural mandate. If so, every brocha on food should be considered equivalent to a Scriptural mandate. If that is the case, why when it comes to a case of a question if one is required the halacha is that "when in doubt, leave it out"? That is only true for a case of doubt in a rabbinical mandate. But when it comes to a case of doubt in a Scriptural obligation, the rule is that one must perform the mitzvah even when in doubt. That being the case, every time a person has a question if he is required to recite a brocha on his food, he should be required to recite the brocha. He answers that this may be a special rule when it comes to a question of a brocha: "when in doubt, leave it out," and not because it is a rabbinical mandate.

He raises another question. The Mishna (Brochos 20b) tells us that a baal keri cannot bentch without immersing in a mikvah, but he can recite the brocha before eating. Rashi explains that the distinction is that bentching is a Scriptural obligation, but the other brochos are a rabbinical mandate. That seems to prove that the brochos before eating are not considered a Scriptural obligation. The Pnei Yehoshua knocks off this proof, as well. Even if a logical requirement is like a Scriptural obligation, since

it is based on logic, in this case logic dictates that a baal keri does not recite the brocha, as it is not proper for him to recite the brocha when impure. On the other hand, when it comes to bentching, we will not take away an explicit requirement because logic dictates that a baal keri should not recite the brocha.

### SUMMARY

There are three categories of brochos:

Birchos ha'nehenin – enjoyment, such as food or drink

Birchos hamitzvos – on mitzvah performance

Birchos hashvach – praising Hashem

A brocha is recited prior to mitzvah performance:

To infuse a person with kedusha.

To show that the mitzvah is for the sake of Hashem.

The spiritual brocha comes before the physical mitzvah.

The requirement to recite a brocha before enjoying food and drink is simply logical: one cannot partake of the enjoyments of this world without expressing thanks to the Creator.

Comments and questions are welcome and can be sent to: [RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com](mailto:RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com).

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## THE SIMCHA OF SUKKOS AND SIMCHAS TORAH

I would like to share with you a thought on the great joy we experience on Simchas Torah.

The Sefer Hachinuch explains a reason for the mitzvah of daled minim is that since people are in a state of happiness, we must channel this happiness into connecting with Hashem and serving Him. As he explains in regards to many mitzvos, a person is influenced by his actions. Hence, in general, the actions one does when performing mitzvos will infuse a person with a deeper sensitivity to spirituality and a more profound connection to Hashem. This is specifically accomplished via the daled minim, which come at a time of the year when people are extremely joyful. The daled minim naturally bring happiness to a person and serve as a constant reminder of where our true happiness should lie: in our revitalizing out spiritual batteries and staying connected to the ultimate joy of serving Hashem. We should ensure that our happiness on yom tov is not just materialistic, but with a spiritual dimension of simcha as well.

This can also be connected to the mitzvah of sukah. We leave our homes and move into simple huts for seven days, to show that it is not from our riches or assets that we derive satisfaction. We are truly happy with

simplicity and by being a samei'ach b'chelko, happy with whatever we have, no matter how great or how little. We declare that is not our big homes that guarantee happiness, and we are happy even with a simple wooden hut. That can be a reason why we find



the mitzvah of beautifying the sukah with decorations – something we do not have in regards to other mitzvos, to show that we even the simple sukah can be beautiful.

The Sefer Hachinuch then adds something which is particularly appropriate as we approach the joyful days of Simchas Torah. He raises the following question: If we need the daled minim to help us remain connected, why don't we have them on the joyful days of Simchas Torah. He explains that since we rejoice



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with Hashem and His Torah, and the very essence of the joy

Sukkos. Breakfast and lunch is served, as well as Matan Schara B'tzida. After Yom Tov, we will have the opportunity to hear from our very own Rabbi Lankry, as well as Rabbi Viener.

## HOSHANA RABA

Once again we will also be having a Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim program scheduled for the night of Hoshanah Raba. The greatness of learning on this auspicious night cannot be overstated. Come join the learning through the night in an enjoyable atmosphere! There will be refreshments available throughout the night, and the learning will be followed by a Vasikin minyan!

There is a kuntres of shiurim on daled minim available, both in Hebrew and English, from the shiurim given in the kollel. If you would like a copy, please send a request to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com, or reach out to me: 845 372 6618.

Wishing you a Gut Yom Tov and a Wonderful Shabbos,

**RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER**

is one of a spiritual dimension, no other reminder is needed.

May we merit to connect to the true Simchas yom tov and rejoice with Hashem and His Torah, on these special days, a joy that will continue to grow throughout the year!

## YESHIVAS BEIN HAZMANIM

Another season of Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim at 18 Forshay is in full swing, which started after Yom Kippur, and will continue until the Monday after



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Rosh Yeshiva Torah Vadaas  
בעיני דיומא בהלכה ואגדה

Sunday Sept 19  
**Rabbi Shmuel Aba Olshin**  
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