



Parshat Haazinu/Yom Kippur/Sukkot 5769

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Due to the Yom Tov Season there will be no Newsletter next week. Please enjoy this double issue!!!

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### *Snapshot*

- **Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim:** YNA alumni gathered together for a seudat shlishit at the home of Isaac and Rachel Leibwohl on the upper west side, to hear Divrei Torah and Chizuk from HaRav Yoel Rackovsky shlita.

Over 40 alumni took part in the seudat shlishit and were inspired by Harav Rackovski's Divrei Torah, and helped create the warmth and the special atmosphere that is unique to Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh.

The Yeshiva would like to thank Isacc and Rachel Leibwohl for their gracious hospitality, Jason and Melissa Goldstoff, Chaim Laufer, and Yoni Wachpress for all their help.

**Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Haazinu****HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon****RETAINING YOM KIPPUR IN OUR HEARTS***APPLYING OUR HEARTS*

This Shabbat we will be reading the *shira* of Haazinu. Following its conclusion, Moshe Rabenu tells the Jewish nation: "apply your hearts to all the words that I testify ... today" (Devarim 32:46). It is not sufficient to simply listen to this song, even from a teacher as great as Moshe Rabenu, but its words must be taken to heart - otherwise they are of no value. This idea of taking things to heart is not limited to Haazinu but applies to every facet of *avodat Hashem*. Hashem provided us with many gifts which should be used as aides in helping us learn and understand His ways and to observe His commandments. None of these are of any value if they are not taken to heart.



Shabbat, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Yomim Tovim are all gifts from Hashem as are Eretz Yisrael, Yerushalayim, and the Beit HaMikdash. They were all given to us in order to help us come closer to Hashem. However if we do not apply our hearts there is little value to them. If a person does not take advantage of these gifts for spiritual gain not only will he not have gained from them but he will be punished for not taking advantage of them.

My esteemed teacher HaRav Dessler z"l used to quote in the name of HaGaon HaRav Yisrael Salanter zt"l that there may be a Mitzvah to eat chulent on Shabbat, but we must be careful not to put Shabbat itself into the chulent pot and to eat it up together (see Michtav M'Eliyahu volume 1, page 227). In other words, although *oneg Shabbat* is a means of serving Hashem, we must be careful that it does not manifest itself only with eating but that we achieve spiritual gain. In the Haftarah we read on Yom Kippur morning, the *pasuk* states regarding Shabbat, "then you shall be granted pleasure with Hashem" (Yeshayahu 58:14), it does not say: "then you shall be granted pleasure with chulent". The chulent is simply a means with which we can rejoice in Hashem

*KEEPING THE GATES OF OUR HEARTS OPEN TO CLOSENESS WITH HASHEM*

Yom Kippur, like Shabbat, is also *me-ein olam haba* - but not in the same manner. On Shabbat we rejoice by eating and drinking, on Yom Kippur we do not eat or drink at all - in this way it is much closer to *Olam Haba*. The Gemara informs us: "The Next World is not like this world, in the Next World there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the Divine Presence" (*Brachot* 17a). We are joyous on Yom Kippur because we feel Hashem's Presence. Certainly we must feel regret for our sins, but we must not forget that Yom Kippur is also a day of great *simcha* - it is a chance for us to feel close to Hashem.

In reference to the opening *pasuk* of the Haftarah we read on Tzom Gedaliah "'Seek Hashem when He can be found; call upon Him when He is near' (Yeshayahu 55:6), Chazal teach us that this refers to the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur" (Rosh Hashana 18a). What a great feeling of joy it is to be near Hashem - eating and drinking is not a prerequisite for rejoicing.

The concluding prayer of Yom Kippur is referred to as *Neilah*. The Yerushalmi cites a dispute whether this word refers to the closing of the gates of Heichal or the gates of Heaven (see Yerushalmi *Brachot perek 4*). The closing of the gates of the Heichal can be viewed in the context of the other prayers which correspond to activities in the Beit HaMikdash. For example, *Shacharit* corresponds to the morning Tamid offering while *Mincha* corresponds to the afternoon Tamid offering. By the same token, *Neilah* corresponds to the closing of the gates at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. What is important for us is that we not lock the gates of our hearts, they must remain open to a feeling a closeness to Hashem. We must do our utmost to absorb as much of His light of Yom Kippur as possible and have it remain with us for the rest of the year.

#### REFUELING WITH SPIRITUAL JOY FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK

Yom Kippur is not the only day we should try to retain what we have gained. On Yom Tov, for example, we are obligated to rejoice. The Shmone Esrei of Yom Tov contains the prayer "*vehasienu Hashem Elokenu et birkat moadecha lechayim uleshalom lesimcha ulesasson*" "Bestow upon us, O Hashem, our G-d, the blessing of Your appointed festivals for life and for peace, for gladness and for joy". Are we asking for joy only for Yom Tov or for the entire year? It would appear that this request is not limited to Yom Tov, for the request for joy is accompanied by a request "for life and peace" as well - no one would dare say that we are in need of life and peace only on Yom Tov! If we are praying for life and peace for the entire year, then the gladness and joy mentioned in the same sentence must refer to the entire year as well. We are asking Hashem that by virtue of this blessing that we are reciting on Yom Tov may we have life, peace, gladness, and joy after Yom Tov as well. What we mean is that through the strength of this festival, may we rejoice the entire year in Hashem G-d of Israel, and in His Torah and mitzvot. We can conclude from here that even on Yom Tov itself, the joy we must experience is in Hashem and His Torah. The Yomim Tovim are simply "gas stations" at which we refuel with spiritual joy for the entire year. Similarly, the *Simchat Beit HaShoeva* of Sukkot is where we *shoev* (draw) a vast amount of *Ruchniyut* which will have an effect on us after the conclusion of the festival as well.

Regarding Sukkot the Torah writes "*vesamachata bechagecha ... vehayita ach same-ach*" "You shall rejoice on your festival... and you will be completely joyous" (Devarim 16:14-15), the simcha attained on these eight days should bring a person to a state of complete joy. The best way to accomplish this is to take the joy of the festival to heart, to try to reach a state of joy which will remain with us following its conclusion as well.

The Gemara explains that there are four levels of repentance, each commensurate with the level of infraction (see Yoma 85b-86a):

1. Tshuva on its own atones only for *kalot* - light sins [i.e. one who neglected to fulfill a positive commandment such as reciting Birkat Hamazon, or one who violated a *lav hanitak laasei* (for example the Mitzvah of "*shiluach haken*" - the Torah commands us "you shall not take the mother with the young", yet if one transgressed and took the mother with the offspring present he will not be punished with "malkut" because the prohibition is detached (*nitak*) from the punishment of malkut and can be corrected via fulfillment of a positive commandment "you shall surely send away the mother")].
2. For violating negative prohibitions (excluding *lav hanitak laasei* mentioned

above, and those transgressions punishable by death or Karet), "*tshuva tolah*", repentance leaves atonement suspended, until the final atonement is granted on Yom Kippur.

3. For the more severe negative prohibitions (those punishable by kareit or death at the hands of Beit Din - e.g. one who ate on Yom Kippur or intentionally violated the Shabbat), in addition to *teshuvah* and Yom Kippur, one must undergo *yissurim*, afflictions in order to be fully atoned.
4. For *chillul Hashem* - *teshuvah*, Yom Kippur, and *yissurim* are not sufficient. One is not granted full atonement until he dies.

These four levels of atonement are also quoted by the Rambam (*Hilchot Tshuva* 1:4).

#### THE MORE SEVERE THE TRANSGRESSION THE MORE "HEART" IS REQUIRED TO ATONE

The Meiri, in his commentary on the Gemara, provides us with a different understanding of *Chazal's* words, "Yom Kippur atones." The very fact of the sun rising on Yom Kippur is sufficient to atone - there is no need for the special sacrifices associated with the day, nor for the service led by the *Kohen Gadol*. How can this be? Do we not know that Hashem does not forgive sins without sufficient reason (*Baba Kamma* 50a)? In what way then does this atonement take effect? Even if one were to answer that Yom Kippur alone is not what brings about atonement but that it must be accompanied by *teshuvah*, we still need to explain the unique role of the day itself in facilitating the atonement which *teshuvah* is unable to accomplish on its own. We now return full circle to our initial question: if *teshuvah* alone is not sufficient to effect total atonement, perhaps because the person did not have the requisite remorse, how will Yom Kippur "aid" a person in erasing his improper deeds?

The Meiri explains that for all levels of sin there is one sole factor which brings about atonement: ***teshuvah!*** *Teshuvah* and *teshuvah* alone - there can be no atonement without it. According to this view, the four categories outlined in the Gemara, some of which assign roles to Yom Kippur, *yissurim*, and death in the atonement process, do not imply that these factors grant the atonement. Rather, their role is to facilitate a person's attaining the appropriate level of *teshuvah* required to atone for the particular sin. Let us now outline the Meiri's understanding of the four levels of atonement:

1. For the *kalot* - the light transgressions (neglecting to fulfill a positive commandment or violating a *lav hanitak la'asei*) one can attain the requisite level of *teshuvah* without assistance. Once one has achieved that level, "*he does not move from there until he is forgiven*" (*Yoma* 86a).
2. For violation of negative commandments (with the exception of those punishable by *kareit* and death) a higher level of *teshuvah* is required. The Torah understands that man is incapable of reaching this level without some means of assistance. The greater the sin, the greater the awakening needed - and man can only achieve this type of awakening on Yom Kippur. The day itself provides a sort of illumination that opens up one's heart to *teshuvah*, purifies the soul, and imbues man with the power to succeed in reaching the level of *teshuvah* required to atone for these negative commandments.

3. Transgressions punishable by *kareit* or death are deemed so severe that one cannot achieve sufficient regret without the awakening provided by Yom Kippur with the addition of *yisurim*.
4. For the terrible sin of *chillul Hashem*, nothing short of death can arouse the proper feelings of *teshuvah*. Therefore, only during the final hours of one's life can one achieve atonement for this sin.

According to the Meiri, the Gemara's intention was not to say that there are factors other than *teshuvah* that atone. Indeed, if a person were to feel a sudden internal urge that would arouse him to proper repentance any other day of the year, he would truly have no need for Yom Kippur! *Teshuvah*, deep regret, is what atones - anything else only provides assistance in reaching that level. Do we not enlist any means at our disposal in our quest to create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to opening our hearts? Do our *rabbanim* not awaken us with their inspiring words of wisdom and *mussar*? Does each community not have its own special *niggunim* meant for just that purpose? Not one of us would entertain the notion that the *drashot* or the beautiful *niggunim* in themselves atone. These are only aids to facilitate our attaining authentic *teshuvah*.

The Meiri is teaching us that different levels of *teshuvah* can be attained based on the "amount of heart" that is used. The more severe the transgression, the more of a person's heart is required. If a person can reach a full level of *teshuvah* on his own, there is no need for Yom Kippur, *yissurim*, or even death.

Conversely, a person can spend the entire Yom Kippur fasting but still not attain any level of atonement if he does not repent.

#### RETAINING YOM KIPPUR IN OUR HEARTS

Our task on Yom Kippur is to reach a high level of *teshuvah* and remain on that level. The Alter of Slobodka, R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel z"l, explains that even Esav had moments of spiritual awakening but he was unable to retain them. The Torah describes Esav as one "who knows trapping" (Bereishit 25:27). Chazal interpret this to mean that he would "ensnare and deceive his father with his mouth, he would ask him 'Father, how do we tithe salt and straw?'" The true answer is that salt and straw do not require tithing. The Sabba M'Slobodka zt"l explains that Esav's question was not a mockery of the mitzvot, but was very sincere. Esav actually experienced moments of true spiritual elevation that placed him on a higher plane even than Yaakov. Esav yearned to be on such a spiritual level as to separate tithes even where it was not required. Esav's error was that he did not follow through and remain on that level. Rather, Esav fell from those incredible heights down to the depths of evil. Yaakov, on the other hand, was "a ladder set earthward and its top reaches heavenward" (Bereishit 28:12) - Yaakov was constantly climbing. Esav may have had moments of desire which surpassed the level of Yaakov, but "the heart of the wicked is minute" (Mishle 10:20). In just a short period of time he would backslide - not only did Esav not remove tithes from salt and straw he did not even do so where it was required. The power of the awakening he experienced was transformed into a life of deceit. He did not take these moments of spiritual awakening and elevation to heart.

In the words of Moshe Rabenu following the song of Haazinu, we must "apply our hearts" to Yom Kippur - not only on Yom Kippur but the entire year. With Hashem's

help we will then grow to love Torah, *Eretz Yisrael*, Shabbat and other mitzvot, and most of all will grow to love Hashem. If we are able to keep Yom Kippur in our hearts then we will merit seeing the light of Hashem, realizing that the feeling of joy may be attained without eating and drinking. Sukkot concludes with *Simchat Torah* where we dance with the *Sefer Torah* and celebrate how wonderful it is to learn Torah, how fortunate we are to be in Yeshiva. This will help us grow in *Yirat Shamayim*, and may Hashem grant us all a Shana Tova and a *Gmar Chatima Tova*.

**Sicha from Rav Yaakov Katz on Yom Kippur**

*The Yeshiva is proud to announce the publication of our Rosh Kollel HaGaon HaRav Yaakov Katz' sichot for Selichot and Rosh Hashana. In an effort for the English speaking public to get a taste and to help put them in the proper frame of mind for the Yomim Noraim, we have translated another one of these sichot into English. Gmar Chatima Tova.*

**COMPREHENDING SIN AND THE POWER OF REPENTANCE  
THROUGH STRENGTHENING OUR COMMITMENT TO TORAH  
AND STRENGTHENING OUR *EMUNAH***



The prophet Yechezkel relates an argument between Hashem and Am Yisrael:

"Now you, Son of Man, say to the House of Israel: 'Thus have you spoken, saying, since our sins and our iniquities are upon us and we are wasting away because of them how can we live?'

Say to them: 'As I live, the word of the L-rd Hashem/Elokim, I swear that I do not desire the death of the wicked one, but rather the wicked one's return from his way, that he may live. Repent, repent from your evil ways! Why should you die, O house of Israel?'" (Yechezkel 33:10-11).

Before analyzing the words of the prophet, let us take a look at the previous *psukim* to get a feel for the context in which these words were spoken:

Hashem spoke to Yechezkel: "Now you, Son of Man, I have made you a sentinel for the House of Israel; when you hear a matter from My mouth, you must warn them for Me. If I say of a wicked person, 'wicked one, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak up to warn the wicked one concerning his way - he is wicked and will die for his iniquity, but I will demand his blood from your hand. But you, if you did warn the wicked one concerning his way to repent from it, but he did not repent from his way, he will die for his iniquity, and you will have saved your soul." (Ibid. 7-9).

You, the prophet, are obligated to relate the prophecy and by doing so you will have saved yourself.

The prophet provides us with an interesting comparison:

"The word of Hashem came to me, saying: 'Son of Man, speak to the children of your people and say to them: 'when I bring the sword of war upon a land, the people of the land take one man from among them and set him as a sentinel for themselves. If, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the shofar and warns the people, and a listener hears the sound of the shofar but does not take heed and the sword comes and takes him, his blood will be upon his head. He heard the sound of the shofar but did not take

heed, so his blood will be upon him; had he taken heed, he would have saved his soul. But if the sentinel saw the sword coming and he did not blow the shofar and the people were not warned and a sword came and took a soul from among them, he was taken for his own iniquity, but I will seek his blood from the sentinel's hand."(Ibid. 1-6)

What sin is the prophet referring to and what are to learn from this comparison? The verses at first glance appear to refer to sins the Jewish people are unable to tear themselves away from, either due to their uncontrollable desires or their lack of faith in Hashem - perhaps sins the likes of the three cardinal sins of idolatry, illicit relations, and murder. A look at the next few *psukim*, however, reveals otherwise:

"And if I say to a wicked person, 'You shall surely die' and he repents from his sin and acts with justice and righteousness, the wicked person returns a pledge, repays for his theft, follows the life-giving decrees, without practicing corruption - he will surely live; he will not die. All his sins that he had committed will not be remembered for him; he has practiced justice and righteousness, he shall surely live. Now the members of your people say, '**the way of the L-rd is not proper**' but them, it is their ways that are not proper" (Ibid. 14-17).

It appears to be a wonderful message! All it takes is regret and confession and the past is totally erased. Why did the Jewish people have trouble accepting this? Furthermore - what is the meaning of the comparison to "a sword of war upon a land"?

Rashi explains on the *psbat* level: "You have said that you do not wish to return, for you believe that *tshuva* will be to no avail." The sword refers to a lack of faith in the possibility of repentance - believing that *tshuva* does not contain the power to erase the past, G-d forbid! Hashem responds: you, the sentinel, sound the shofar - you must relay my words - teach them that it is possible to repent and thereby erase the entire past, and thus be saved from punishment for sins. If they are not interested in saving themselves, if they insist on saying: "the way of the L-rd is not proper", then you have at least saved yourself.

These words leave us in shock and dismay! What a strange generation! How can they not believe in something so obvious? Does the Torah not teach us: "for this commandment that I command you today - it is not hidden from you and it is not distant. It is not in heaven ... nor is it across the sea ... Rather, the matter is very near to you - in your mouth and in your heart - to perform it." (*Devarim* 30:11-14). We certainly have no trouble believing this - of course we know that *tshuva* erases the sins of the past!

Our difficulty lies in putting our *tshuva* into practice, it is hard for us to implement the commitments to change we have taken upon ourselves. It is hard for us to internalize that: "All of a person's income is fixed from Rosh Hashana until Rosh Hashana" (*Beitza* 16a), and "a person cannot turn his finger downward without a directive from above" (*Chullin* 7b). We have difficulty living with the idea that "a person cannot encroach upon what is set aside for his fellow, by even a hairsbreadth" (*Yoma* 38b), and "illusory is the horse for salvation; despite its great strength it provides no escape" (*Tehillim* 31:17). But is there anyone among us who has any doubt regarding the power of *tshuva*? Of course not! What a strange and ignorant generation they must have been! What happened to them? We must obviously be on a much higher level than they were!

HaGaon HaRav Yitzchak Blazer zt"l explains: Our level of *emunah* is no greater than theirs! The difference between us and them is that they were fully aware of the meaning of sin and man's shortcomings. They lived during the period of prophecy, they observed the Kohen Gadol, they witnessed Kohanim serving and the Leviim singing, they felt the Divine Presence in the Beis HaMikdash. They were well aware of man's potential and realized how far they had fallen. They knew the meaning of greatness and understood the immensity of sin. Therefore, when they heard the words of the prophet they searched inwardly - they did not believe it was possible to erase everything as if it had never taken place ( See *Kochvei Or* siman 3).

Do we have any idea what it means to sin? Of course we believe sin can be easily erased, because we have no understanding of the tremendous damage it has caused! Yechezkel's generation understood full well how far they had sunk and therefore did not believe it possible to rise up from such depths.

"Let one who is like a wild donkey be reborn as a man" (*Iyov* 11:12). A small donkey who harms with his teeth and legs, does he know any better? Then he grows up to become an "adult" donkey, the symbol of materialism/physicality - for the word *chamoer* which means donkey is from the same root as *chomer* meaning the material.

You may respond by saying: "this was written over two thousand years ago, this certainly cannot apply to me!" Rabenu Yonah, who lived a mere seven hundred years ago, thought otherwise:

"The Days of Judgment are approaching... one who fears the word of Hashem trembles... if man were summoned to judgment before a human king, he would shake in great fear and do whatever he could to help his cause. Would he for a moment return to business as usual? Would he go back to plowing his land and planting his vineyards?" ( *Shaarei Teshuvah Shaar 2, Derech Hachamishit*)"

In the eyes of Rabenu Yonah, any person who does not stand in fear and trepidation before the upcoming Days of Judgment must be insane. We need not even go back as far as the days of Rabenu Yonah. What about the previous generation? Old timers recall the feeling of utmost tension as Rosh Hashana approached - the first night of *selichos* was like a pile of wood soaked with oil just waiting to be kindled. The moment the *chazzan* began the opening words of:

*"Lecha Hashem hatzdaka velanu boshet hapanim"*

"Yours, my L-rd, is the righteousness and ours is the shame-facedness"

people began to cry, it was an incredible awakening!

HaGaon HaRav Sholom Eisen zt"l once related to us his experiences as a young man in the old city of Yerushalayim on the opening night of *selichos*. There was no need for any *musar drashos* or *divrei chizuk*. The air was electrifying. The *shamash* announced that *selichos* were about to begin and all would make their way to the shul. He recalled one old man who would start crying the moment he opened the door. His crying was contagious, soon the entire neighborhood was following him, and everyone including the children - was crying bitterly.

What about us?



*"Lecha Hashem hatzdaka velanu boshet hapanim kedolim uchrashim dafaknu dlatecha"*

"Yours, my L-rd, is the righteousness and ours is the shame-facedness... as paupers and beggars do we knock on Your doors."

Not only do we not arrive as paupers and beggars, we stand tall as if we are rich and we do not bother knocking on the door - we ring with great self-confidence.

R' Leib Chasman used a passage from the *selichos* to describe our attitude: "You Who hears a prayer, to You all flesh will come" - the flesh come, what about the **heart?**

What can we do to feel in our hearts that we are standing in judgment? "Let us search and examine our ways" (Eicha 3:40). Confession has no meaning if we are not even aware of what is expected of us.

"The foundation of saintliness and the root of perfection in the service of Hashem lies in man's coming to see clearly and to recognize as a truth the nature of his duty in the world" (*Messilas Yesharim* - opening words). This is what we must strive for on Rosh Hashana. There is no *viduy* recited on Rosh Hashana. Many go so far as to omit the opening sentence of *Avinu Malkenu* - "we have sinned before you" (even those who do recite it explain that it refers to the sins of our forefathers - see Mishna Brura).

Man was created on the sixth day - Rosh Hashana (See Ran beginning of *Massechet Rosh Hashana*). It was on that first day of his being that he sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and it was on that same day that Hashem called out to him: "ayekah - "where are you?" Look at the high level you had attained and look at how far you have sunk. This call reverberates annually on the anniversary of man's creation: "**where are you?**" This is what we should be feeling on the opening night of *selichos* - Hashem is calling out to us: "where are you?" We must stop to think: "where are we?"

The *Messilas Yesharim* teaches us the essentiality of recognizing our duty in this world. To do this we must first understand the basics of our faith: Hashem's Sovereignty, Divine Providence, Reward and Punishment, Torah, and Moshiach, only then will we be able to truly comprehend "the end towards which man should direct his vision and his aspiration in all of his labors all the days of his life" (*Messilas Yesharim*). Each of these ideas is a world unto itself.

There is only one way to fulfill our obligation in this world: "this is what the Holy One Blessed Is He said to Israel: 'My son! I have created the evil inclination, and I have created Torah as its antidote'" (*Kiddushin* 30b). Learning Torah is the only way to rid ourselves of the *yetzer hara*. The *Messilas Yesharim* comments: "if the Creator has fashioned for this affliction only this remedy, it is impossible under any circumstances that a person be cured of it through any other means. One who thinks to save himself without it is mistaken and will recognize his mistake only in the end when he dies in sin... To what is this analogous? To the case of a sick man, who, consulting doctors and having his sickness correctly diagnosed and prescribed for, nevertheless, possessing no previous knowledge of medicine, abandons their prescription and takes instead whatever medicine he happens to think of. Is there any doubt that he will die?" (See Chapter 5)

We must examine our ways and internalize all we have just said. When we succeed in doing so, we will with Hashem's help see a fulfillment of Yechezkel's prophecy: "follow the life-giving decrees without practicing corruption, he will surely live" (Yechezkel 33:15).

**Staff Dvar Torah on Sukkot**  
by Rav Chaim Eisenstein, Shana Bet Rebbe

## Happiness To Go: A Spiritual Plan

*"V'Samachta B'Chagecha"- "You shall rejoice on your festival"*

Every holiday taps into a certain power that is relevant throughout the year-not just relevant to the days of the holiday itself. In this article we will see that there are five components to the joy of the holiday of *Sukkos*. These are really 5 distinct steps of joy. The pattern is reminiscent of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs where each step builds upon the next, and the pinnacle is a spiritual component of self actualization. Once internalized over the holiday of *Sukkos*, these lessons may be helpful in the cold winter months ahead as well.



### *Step 1: Thoughtful Joy*

At first glance, the Talmud's dictate to fulfill the obligation to be joyous on *Yom Tov* seems simplistic.

#### *Pesachim* (109a)

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita: A person is obligated to gladden his children and (other) members of his household on the Festivals, as it is stated (Deut. 16), "-And you shall rejoice in your festival-".

With what does one gladden them? With wine. Rabbi Yehuda says, "Men with what is suitable for them and women with what is suitable for them."

Were *Chazal* simply presenting a fact that has not changed in the last 2,000 years that men like to eat meat, women like to shop and kids like candy? The greater one's sensitivity to nuance in Rabbinic literature, the more one realizes that there is more than meets the eye. In order to glean a little more insight, it is appropriate to examine a basic issue discussed by the *Gemarah*.

*Gemara Moed Katan* (14b) relates that if (G-d forbid) an individual is in mourning when *yom tov* arrives, the *aveilus* is "broken". "The positive commandment which applies to all the Jewish people (to celebrate *yom tov*) pushes away the private commandment (the mourning of a relative)." Rav Soloveitchik noted that the *Gemara's* rationale seems strange. After all, the two precepts don't really contradict each other. According to Torah law, an individual in mourning can eat meat and drink wine. Why does *aveilus* have to be pushed away altogether?

One of the most important themes that Rav Soloveitchik used in understanding the dynamic between religious obligation and religious emotion was a concept that he also felt was helpful in understanding the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*. Despite the

fact that the *mitzvah* is presented as an obligation of action, in this case that men should eat meat and drink wine, that is only the technical component of the *mitzvah*. Its primary fulfillment, however, is achieved when the appropriate emotion is experienced. At times, the Rav referred to this primary emotional component as the soul of the *mitzvah*. (For example, see *Al HaTeshuva* where Rav Soloveitchik explains that the Rambam codifies confession as the *mitzvah* of repentance, but the "soul" of the *mitzvah* is the emotion of repentance.) In the case of *Yom Tov*, the crude requirement is the action, but the actual fulfillment is the state of being joyous. Similarly, although during shiva the *aveil* has certain physical prohibitions (not to bathe or shave), the actual fulfillment is the emotional state of mourning. This explains why Gemara Moed Katan assumes that *Simchas Yom Tov* and *aveilus* are mutually exclusive halakhic states--not based on the religious obligations, but on their emotional states. (shiurim l'zekher Aba Mori, vol. 2).

Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, one of today's leading *dayanim* of the *Edah Hachreidis* in Jerusalem, seemingly unaware that Rav Soloveitchik preceded him in developing this idea, extends the thought in an interesting manner. The Raavad (*Hil. Chagiga* 1:1), based on Abaye (*Kiddushin* 34b) writes that the obligation of joy for women is actually an obligation of the husband to provide for her the things that make her happy. Rav Shternbuch points out that if we would take this to its logical extreme, all single women would not be included in the *mitzvah*. This position does not seem tenable because it is hard to understand why single women would be different than married women, and there is no source that differentiates between the obligation of joy for married and single women. Therefore, Rav Shternbuch arrives at the same conclusion as Rav Soloveitchik; there are two distinct components to the *mitzvah*. Firstly, the action that precipitates the *mitzvah*, and secondly, the emotional state that is experienced. Of course single women have the *mitzvah* of joy. However, the Raavad assumes that the responsibility of action is incumbent on the man of the home to provide the necessary tools, while the "soul" of the *mitzvah* is fulfilled by all when they are happy on *Yom Tov*.

*Practically speaking: If one is to make an attempt at true happiness, it cannot be done by simply following mechanical rules. Time and effort must be invested in thinking about what makes ourselves, our wives, and our children content. The first step requires a basic level of self understanding. "What do I truly enjoy that creates a spiritual context of joy for me on Yom Tov"?*

*Just as significantly, is the responsibility of men, before every Yom Tov to extend a significant amount of time and effort thinking about what will bring their wives and children joy. It's not always so easy, as John Gray writes in his book, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus, " We expect the opposite sex to be more like ourselves... we desire them to want what we want." Chazal seem to be emphasizing that there are differences in what make men and women happy, and men have a responsibility to think like "Venusians" and not only as "Martians".*

### *Step 2: Sharing Joy With Others*

Even if one has fulfilled the above, according to the Rambam, one has not necessarily fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov* at all. The Rambam writes,

*Rambam Hilchos Yom Tov (Chapter 6)*

*How does a person fulfill the mitzvah of simchas Yom Tov? He provides his*

*children with treats, for his wife he must purchase beautiful clothing and jewelry in accordance with his means, men celebrate by eating meat and drinking wine, for "rejoicing is not fulfilled except with eating meat and rejoicing is not fulfilled except with drinking wine". When feasting, he must not forget "the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow" (Devarim 16:4), along with the other poor and unfortunate. A person who locks his gates and eats and drinks exclusively with his wife and children while ignoring the plight of the poor is not rejoicing in a manner associated with fulfillment of a mitzvah, but rather in order to fulfill his personal desires.*

Rambam's words speak for themselves. Even religious joy can be self-serving. How is one assured that the entire religious experience is not a selfish one which ultimately becomes nothing more than "the joy of one's stomach?" Rambam answers that if we link our joy with the joy of others less fortunate than us, then our joy is elevated to a truly religious experience. Along with Step 2 emerges a fundamental difference between these steps and the similar secular model of Maslow. While the initial stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs focuses on personal physical needs, the spiritual sphere of joy almost immediately focuses on sharing with others because without it, spirituality will be self-serving.

*Practically speaking A person who is honest about their self growth often struggles with the question, "How can I become more sensitive to the feelings of others?" Anyone who is part of a family structure constantly has the opportunity to empathize, sympathize, and help others. Chessed begins at home, and it is the training ground for how to behave in the world-at-large.*

*At the same time, Rambam teaches us that if one's energy is entirely focused at home then ultimately the chessed at home can be self-serving. Are we truly helping for the sake of being merciful or do we just want our our families and homes to be perfect?*

### *Step 3: Joy in Front of G-d - Simchas Beis Hashoevah*

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

The Rambam writes:

*Rambam Hilchos Lulav (Chapter 8)*

*The Sages of Israel, Roshei Yeshivot, the Sanhedrin, pious, elders, people of sterling character (Sukkah 51a), would dance, clap, play musical instruments, and rejoice in the Beit HaMidkash during the festival of Sukkos. The general population - men and women - would come to observe and listen.*

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

### *Wrapped in the Anani HaKavod*

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

### *When it Rains, the Sukkah Falls Apart*

There is a fascinating *halakha* which exemplifies the idea that the *sukkah* represents Divine Providence. The Gra (O.C. 639:5), based on Rashba, writes that when it rains on *Sukkos*, the *sukkah* loses its identity as a *sukkah*. For this reason, on the first night of *Sukkos* when there is an obligation to eat in the *sukkah*, the Gra argues that it cannot be fulfilled when it is raining (see adjoining story). The source behind the Gra's approach is the vivid description of the *Mishna* (*Sukkah*28b).

*If rain were falling (into the succah), from when is one permitted to leave (the succah)? When the porridge (they are eating) gets ruined. They illustrated thus with a parable: To what is this matter (i.e., rain on Sukkot) comparable? To a slave who comes to pour wine for his master and he (the master) poured a pitcher in his (the slave's) face.*

The *Mishna* seems to suggest that rain is an absolute rejection of the *mitzva* of *sukkah*. The Gra explains the symbolic meaning behind the analogy of the servant receiving the flask of water poured back in his face. Gra explains that wine represents absolute judgment, and water represents mercy. In the times of the Talmud, wine was very heavy and dense. It was made more "merciful" by adding water. In our analogy, the servant came to mix wine with water. The master poured the water back in his face, indicating that he was not interested in accepting the water - the mercy - to mitigate the heavy wine - the harsh judgment.

This may explain why the *sukkah*, although physically standing, does not halakhically exist when it rains. It is not simply because one is uncomfortable sitting in the *sukkah* during the rain. Rather, the rain represents a distancing of the relationship between *Klal Yisroel* and *Hashem*, which is the antithesis of the divine protection exemplified by the *sukkah*.

### *A New Paradigm of Lifnei Hashem: Sukkos Following Yom Kippur*

The notion of *sukkah*, as developed above, embodies the notion of surrounding every part of our corporeal existence with Divine presence - "*in front of G-d.*" Themonth of Tishrei has a gradual process of service "in front of G-d." On Yom Kippur the Torah also uses a similar expression, "*Lifnei Hashem Titharu*", "*in front of G-d you shall be purified*," indicating that on Yom Kippur as well the whole body is immersed, "in front of G-d." All corporeal desires are denied and the entire body subjugates itself by bowing and falling in front of the Master of the Universe. On *Sukkos* a similar immersion of the entire body to the service of G-d takes place.

However, on this occasion, after the process of negating the adverse impulses of man during Yom Kippur, those same impulses can now be raised to be used and enjoyed in front of G-d

Often joy is associated with asceticism. Some believe that a truly spiritual and joyous person is one who encounters G-d in the upper spheres. *Sukkos*, however, emphasizes that we can elevate all components of the corporeal condition in the service of Hashem.

This may also explain the unique role of dancing on *Sukkos*. Dancing is a spiritual activity that involves the use of every limb of the body. It is unique to *Sukkos* because the theme of "joy in front of G-d" is about elevating every part of our physical bodies to be used in the service of Hashem.

*Practically Speaking: Recognizing that mundane activities can be a joyous experience with the Divine can transform many of our daily activities into spiritually uplifting ones. Often people who leave the Beis Hamedrash and head off to the workplace resign themselves to a life of spiritual mediocrity. Sukkos emphasizes that this reality is not inevitable. Every component of the human condition can be elevated in the service of Hashem.*

*This idea is not meant to be taken homiletically. Rav Soloveitchik explained that one who goes to work in the morning and returns to learn at night does not need repeat Birchas Hatorah even if he did not learn the entire day because the entire human condition for an observant Jew, including one's work day, is constantly being examined from the perspective of Torah. A person who lives according to this ideal is Lifnei Hashem even when he is in Midtown Manhattan.*

#### *Step 4: Joy With Hashem*

After seven days of rejoicing "in front of Hashem", another layer of simcha can be added. A higher level of joy can be attained on *Shmini Atzeres*, that is joy with Hashem.

In describing the uniqueness of *Shmini Atzeres*, *Midrash* writes:

*Yalkut Shimoni Torah, Parshas Pinchas (Remez 782)*

*At the conclusion of the seven days of the festival (Sukkot), Hashem said to the Jewish people "now you and I, let us rejoice together, I will not ask much from you - only one bull and one ram."*

A person can be cognizant that he is in *front* of Hashem but not necessarily *with* Him. The first seven days of *Sukkos* emphasize and highlight Divine providence. However, *Shmini Atzeres* represents joy expressed in a personal relationship with G-d. The quality of the relationship changes, "*Let us rejoice together.*" Until this moment, G-d, the king, is recognized as having a direct impact on our lives, but he hasn't initiated a desire to have a personal relationship. On *Shmini Atzeres* a bi-directional relationship is reaffirmed. A bi-directional relationship is one that has true communication. Therefore, a person who truly feels a strong connection to G-d will feel that G-d is rejoicing along with him. Since the joy is no longer simply in *front* of G-d but *with* G-d, we reach a higher level of *simcha*. After all, Hashem is rejoicing with us, too!

*Practically speaking: According to Rabbi Abraham Twerski, MD, the most common psychological malady which troubles many people in our generation is lack of self-esteem. I often find that talmidim come up short, both in regards to their academic capabilities of excelling in Torah study as well as excellence in middos, because they are entirely unaware of their potential. One reason for this is the lack of awareness that G-d rejoices with us in every step of our growth. Many of us are conscious that Hashem is in front of us, and we even attain some level of mastery over the first 3 levels. However, we often focus on our shortcomings. If we believe that Hashem also focuses on our shortcomings, we will find it hard to mobilize our energy toward improvement. After all, whatever the improvement, there will always be so much more that is lacking. Having the ability to realize that Hashem rejoices with us and revels in our joy of being close to him despite our shortcomings is an extremely powerful emotional and religious tool.*

### *Step 5: Rejoicing with an Internal G-dliness*

*Maaseh Rav* records the Gra's behavior on *Simchas Torah*:

"He (the Gra) would dance in front of the *sefer Torah*, clapping his hands and dancing with all his might... and when the *sefer torah* was returned to the Aron, (his enthusiasm diminished a little) and he rejoiced as if it was a regular *Yom Tov*".

According to *Maaseh Rav*, it seems that *Shmini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah* constitute 2 different forms of joy. Rejoicing with the Torah, for the Gra, had a higher dimension of joy than the joy of *Shmini Atzeres*. What is this joy? As intimate and as close that the relationship of *Lifnei Hashem* is, it still reflects the relationship of 2 distinct beings According to Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, the joy of *Simchas Torah* is the greatest level of joy because it is celebration of G-d within us.

This notion of internal G-dliness can be best understood as based on a seminal idea developed by Rav Chaim of Volozhin. All of us have a G-dly component to us--"*B'tzelem Elokim Barah Otam,*" "*in the image of G-d He created them*". Rav Chaim explained that this G-dliness is the capacity to join our Divine Image with G-d himself through the internalization of Torah. G-d allows us to become G-dly when we work hard to have his Torah become part of our beings. This is the most intimate celebration of joy with G-d since it is entirely internal. . *Simchas Torah* is not actually a celebration of the Torah, but a celebration of the Torah that we have made a part of us. Hence, when rejoicing on *Simchas Torah*, we are rejoicing with our internal G-dliness.

All human beings have struggles that affect them adversely, whether they are deep traumas or small negativities that impede happiness. In many modern cultures today, the road to happiness is often presented as successfully coping with those traumas or negative components of existence. However, that simply removes the negative. How is internal happiness achieved? Rejoicing with the Torah that we've learned and accomplished is rejoicing with the G-dly component within us. *That* is internal happiness.

*Practically Speaking: Many people get discouraged when they look over their shoulders and see others who have accomplished more in terms of Torah study, and they feel inadequate. The highest state of joy is accessible to all because it is rejoicing in our own internal G-dliness that is accessed through*

*our unique spiritual talents and accomplishments. Rejoicing in the learning of Torah is not uniform. Every individual has his own G-d-given talents. If one has tapped into his internal strengths through analysis of Torah and the passion for mitzvos, then the pinnacle of Simcha can be achieved by rejoicing with our personal internal G-dliness.*

The 5 steps of joy begin with the most basic form of happiness - personal contentment in the context of G-d's spiritual calendar- and returns back to the individual in a much loftier manner. After one has shared joy with others, rejoiced in Divine providence, and celebrated our personal relationship with Hashem, complete happiness is achieved at the final stage when we access the G-dliness inside ourselves. Spiritual happiness reaches its zenith when there is an inner happiness. *Sukkos*, in particular, and *Avodas Hashem* as a whole, emphasizes that inner happiness is not simply a sense of inner peace of accepting who we are within our social context but reuniting our G-dly component to its source as each individual with their unique capabilities revel in their toil and accomplishments in Torah. This is internal happiness because those accomplishments, when real, transform the individual into a more caring and purer person-a true manifestation of G-dliness in our corporeal and turbulent world.

**Student Dvar Torah**  
by Rabbi Ben Packer (5760-61)

### **HaKaras HaTov**

Parshat Haazinu is certainly one of the more challenging parshiyot of the Torah. Its full of allegory, prophecy, and mussar arranged into a creative and often cryptic song. In many ways, it resembles many of Rav Bina's morning halacha shiurim.

In the beginning of the Parsha, the Torah refers to the Jewish People as an Am Naval. We are all too familiar with this word from the expression *Nivul Peh* - something we must all seek to eradicate from our daily life, especially this time of year. We would generally translate the word Naval as disgusting or unclean (Artsroll translates it as vile ).

However, Rashi explains that in this case the Torah is alluding specifically to a lack of gratitude on the part of the Jewish People for what Hashem has done for them. The Ramban supports this with examples from Nach in which the same expression is used in reference to those who lack gratitude.

But is the situation really so awful, so disgusting?

Did the people not thank Hashem after he split the Sea with song and joy? Did they not actively celebrate the Seder to commemorate Yetzias Mitzrayim every year? These are clear signs of gratitude! So then why does the Torah use such seemingly harsh language?

What's the problem? Every normal person knows to say thank you when someone does something for them. But what about a day later, or a week later, or a year later? Does that same level of gratitude remain? Often not. Maybe this is a somewhat inevitable process, but it is incumbent upon us to strive to maintain that original level of gratitude to the best of our abilities. Anything less than that, the



Torah tells us, is unacceptable, even disgusting.

Those of us fortunate enough to still be in Yeshiva have no excuse not to appreciate the Rosh Yeshiva, dedicated Rebbeim and tireless staff. But the Torah is telling us that those of us not fortunate enough to still be in Yeshiva have no excuse either. We all see on a daily basis how our experiences and learning at Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh formed the basis for our lives as Torah Jews. Since we continue to benefit tremendously from all that was done for us while we were in Yeshiva, we should feel compelled to have that same original level of gratitude.

On a personal note, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rosh Yeshiva and the entire Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh Family for all that they have done and continue to do for myself and my family. Being able to come back to the Old City and plug right back into the vibrancy and authenticity that is Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh is an amazing and unique opportunity for which we and all alumni should feel eternally grateful.

Shana Tova and Gmar Chatima Tova!

### **Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List Announcements from the Yeshiva**

#### **Photo Gallery**

[Chel Hayam Naval Base Trip](#)

#### **Mazal Tavs**

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- [Rav Yoel](#) and Shoshana Rackovsky on Bar Mitzvah of their son, Betachya.
- [Asher](#) Hoffman (5756-57) on his [engagement](#) to Dahlia Agatstein.
- [Robert](#) Charnoff (5765-66) on his marriage to Shoshana Shuman.



#### **Visitors**

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Alfie Fass (5735)
- Richard Grossman (5756)
- Benjamin Vago (5761-62)
- Jonathan Austein (5758-59)
- Daniel Bornstein (5763-65)
- Danny Bukingolts (5765-66)
- Adam Dachs (5755-56)
- Mikey Davis (5759-60)
- Ariel Edelstein (5761-62)
- Daniel Edelstein (5756-57, 63)
- Natan Farber (5765-66)
- Jonny Fruchter (5766-67)
- Jeremy Gaisin (5762-62)
- Josh Gelnick (5768)
- Josh Goldman (5759-60)

- Bradley Goldfstoff (5767-68)
- Jonathan (Yosef) Gomberg (5767-68)
- Zev Gontownik (5763-64)
- Josh Gruenbaum (5763-65)
- Ben Josephs (5762-63)
- Jordan Kestenbaum (5767-68)
- Brian Khunovich (5762-63)
- Adam (Avi ) Levie (5767-68)
- Avi Markiewicz (5766-68)
- Benjamin (Baruch) Merzel (5754)
- Moshe Neiman (5766-66)
- Paul Packer (5750)
- Jonathan Panitch (5765-65)
- Elie Pollak (5767-68)
- David Rabinowitz (5763-64)
- Jeremy Samuel Rauch (5766-67)
- Nachi Rauch (5767-68)
- Daniel Renna (5752)
- Yoram Roschwalb (5766-67)
- Josh Salmon (5763-63)
- Joseph Skydell (5767-68)
- Jonathan Stern (5767-68)
- Ari Strulowitz (5766-67)
- Jason Steinmetz (5767-68)
- Michael Weinblatt (5763-64)
- Omri Amar (5765-66)
- Jay (Sralli) Schwartz (5763-64)

### **Tehillim List**

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Toiby Yehudit bat Tama Gaisa
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah Bat Eidel
- Leah Bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe Ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel Bat Sarah Milcha
- Yosef ben Latife
- Lea bat Bracha
- Fraidel Aliza bat Chaya Myta
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah

**Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know](#)! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.**

**Shabbat Shalom,**

