

# Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

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פרשת האזינו יום כפור וסוכות

Parshas Haazinu Yom Kippur  
and Succos

תשרי תשפ"ד



## The Song of Jewish History

In his commentary on the *shira* of *Ha'azinu*, the Ramban writes that the song encapsulates all of Jewish history. It begins by describing all of the *chassadim* that *Hashem* did for us during *yetzias Mitzrayim*, in the *midbar*, and in giving us our bountiful land. It continues to describe how *Am Yisroel's* prosperity will lead them to rebel against Him, and *Hashem* will then punish them and send them into *galus*. As we know, that is indeed what happened. The *shira* goes on to inform us that *Hashem* will ultimately take revenge against the nations, who oppressed *Am Yisroel* purely out of hatred for *Hashem*. The Ramban notes that the future *geula* described in the *shira* is not dependent on *teshuva*. Instead, the *shira* records a guarantee of the future *geula*: "השירה הזאת הבטחה מוארת בגאולה העתידה."

The Ramban quotes a *midrash* that states, " גדולה שירה זו שיש בה עכשיו ויש בה לשעבר ויש בה לעתיד לבוא ויש בה בעולם " *Ha'azinu* refers to everything that happened and will ever happen in the future. The Ramban writes that this is hinted to in the *pasuk*, "ויבא משה וידבר את כל דברי השירה הזאת באזני העם," "Moshe came and spoke the words of this song in the hearing of the people" (*Devarim* 32:42). The word "כל" indicates that every detail of Jewish history is somehow alluded to in *Ha'azinu*.

The *sefer Seder HaDoros*, which was written at the end of the 1600s, records a story that was apparently a well-known tradition. The Ramban had a *talmid* named Avner who went off the *derech*. One Yom Kippur, he slaughtered a pig, cooked it, and ate it. He then asked his *rebbe*, the Ramban, "How many *chayevei kerisus* do I have?" The Ramban said there were four, while Avner argued there were five. He was clearly originally a great *talmid chacham* who, went **way** off the *derech*! The Ramban was angry at Avner and asked him why he had thrown everything away. Avner answered, "It's your fault! You once said in *shiur* that in *Parshas Ha'azinu* all of future Jewish history is included. Since that is clearly impossible, it must be everything that you taught me is wrong. It's all *sheker*."

The Ramban insisted that it is, in fact, true that everything is hinted to in *Ha'azinu*. Avner challenged him, "If so, show me where I am found in *Parshas Ha'azinu*!" The Ramban said a *tefilla* asking for *siyata dishmaya*, and he then showed Avner the *pasuk*, "אמרתי אפאיהם אשביתם מאנוש זכרם," "I said, 'I will scatter them; I will cause their memory to cease from man'" (32:26). This *pasuk* describes how *Hashem* will punish *Bnei Yisroel* when they do *aveiros*. The Ramban pointed out that the third letter of the words, "אפאיהם אשביתם מאנוש זכרם," spell אבנר! There are different versions of how the story ended and whether Avner did *teshuva* or not, but he was certainly shaken up by this story.

One message from this story is to take seriously what our *Rabbanim* teach us regarding the incredible depth of the Torah. The broader message is to be confident that *Am Yisroel* will last forever, as *Hashem* promises in *Parshas Ha'azinu*. It is our job to keep doing *mitzvos* and holding on to the *mesora* so that we reach that ultimate *geula*.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and Yom Tov and a Kesiva v'chasima Tova,

Chana Ginsburg

The Divrei Torah have been adapted from the seforim by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

## Eating Erev Yom Kippur

HoRav Nevenzahl, shlita writes that the *mitzva* of eating on *Erev Yom Kippur* reminds us of the great love that *Hashem* has for *Am Yisroel*. *Hashem* wants us to be successful in our *din*, and He helps us in every way possible to have a good judgment. How does this *mitzva* teach us this? Because all of us would be eating on *Erev Yom Kippur* anyway, even if there were no *mitzva*! *Hashem* took an activity that we all would have done anyway and made it a *mitzva*. He literally handed us a *mitzva* on a silver (dinner) platter!

This idea is implicit in the way that the Torah teaches us about the obligation to eat on *Erev Yom Kippur*. The *pasuk* instructs us to fast, and we derive from there that we are supposed to eat! Why does the Torah teach us the *mitzva* to eat in such a strange way? The *Mishna Berura* explains that *Hashem* wants to give us *sechar* for eating on *Erev Yom Kippur* as if we were fasting: "ולכן שינה הכתוב וכתב מצות אכילה בלשון תענית, שיהא "כי ליתן שכר כמקיים מצוה בצער עיניו". נחשב אכילה זו כאילו היה תענית, כדי לתן שכר כמקיים מצוה בצער עיניו." It's not just that *Hashem* gave us a "free *mitzva*" as *Yom Kippur* is about to start. He gave us a free *mitzva* with tremendous *sechar*!

This is a beautiful expression of *Hashem's* love for *Am Yisroel*! All we have to do is have *kavana* that we are eating for a *mitzva*.

This expression of *Hashem's* love for us can also help with the *teshuva* process. Let's say a person makes a mistake and hurts someone, and he knows he has to apologize. It's a lot easier to apologize to someone if you know that there is a good chance he will forgive you. If you try to apologize to someone who has a temper or bad *middos*, he might make it very difficult for you, which makes it harder to apologize. But if you know the person to whom you are apologizing loves you and has good *middos*, it is much easier to take the step to ask for forgiveness. On *Yom Kippur*, we have to say *viduy* and ask *Hashem* for forgiveness, and it's not easy to say a sincere *viduy*. But if we know *Hashem* loves us and He will be happy to accept our *teshuva*, it becomes easier.

Furthermore, the fact that we know that *Hashem* loves us helps us realize that even if we take a small step forward, *Hashem* will give us extra help to complete the process: "הבא לטהר מסייעין לו."

As *Yom Kippur* is about to start, *Hashem* declares His love for us through the *mitzva* of eating, which makes it easier for us to do *teshuva*.

The meal on *Erev Yom Kippur* also provides us with the opportunity to recite *Birkas HaMazon* one last time before *Yom Kippur* begins. The *Mateh Ephraim* writes that one should have extra *kavana* when he *bentches* at this meal, as it adds to the *kiyum hamitzva* of eating. Obviously, one should *bentch* with *kavana* in order to have added *zechuyos* going into *Yom Kippur*. But in addition, one should recite the many *bakashos* in *Birkas HaMazon* with "התעוררות רב," as these are the things we are asking *Hashem* for on *Yom Kippur* itself. *Birkas HaMazon* is not only about thanking *Hashem* for food. In *bentching*, we also ask for *binyan Yerushalayim*, for *parnassa*, and for the coming of *Moshiach*. Don't waste this last chance to make these *bakashos* before *Yom Kippur*!

These are some ideas to think about and talk about at the *seuda* as we are about to enter *Yom Kippur*.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and Yom Tov!

Gemar Chasima Tova,

Chana Ginsburg

The Divrei Torah have been adapted from the seforim by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

## Shemini Atzeres: Take it With You

At the end of *Parshas Pinchas*, the Torah discusses the *Yom Tov* of Shemini Atzeres, which is celebrated at the end of Sukkos: "ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם." What is the significance of the name "Atzeres"? Rav Hirsch explains that the root עצר means to stop, to retain, to maintain one's position. Based on this, Rav Hirsch writes:

We think the word *Atzeres* means to designate a day which is not fixed to bring new lessons and new truths for us to accept and assimilate, but which has the mission to keep us still before the presence of *Hashem*, to strengthen and solidify the impressions and knowledge we have already gained, so that they remain with us permanently and do not become lost in the hurley burley of life.

On *Yom Tov*, there are additional *mitzvos* and more *kedusha*, more *ruchniyus*. As a result, one naturally grows in his *avodas Hashem*. But then the special *Yom Tov* period ends. The challenge becomes to maintain and retain that which we have gained during *Yom Tov*. As Rav Hirsch writes, "Persistence, remaining with *Hashem* and holding fast to all the spiritual acquisitions obtained – that is the meaning of *Atzeres*." At the end of Sukkos, there is a day set aside for absorbing and solidifying everything we gained during Sukkos.

The seventh day of Pesach is also called *Atzeres*: "...". It is also experienced at the end of a span of time of *Yom Tov* – the seven days of Pesach – and it is also supposed to help us retain the lessons and messages of Pesach. It is striking that (outside of the *Beis HaMikdash*) there are no unique *mitzvos* for Shemini Atzeres or the seventh day of Pesach. Rosh Hashana has *shofar*, Yom Kippur is a *ta'anis*, and Sukkos and Pesach have many *mitzvos*. The *Yomim Tovim d'rabbanan*, Chanukah and Purim, have special *mitzvos* as well. Rav Hirsch explains that since the essential role of *Atzeres* is to maintain and retain that which we gained during the previous days of *Yom Tov*, days of *Atzeres* do not have any unique *mitzvos*. The message of the day is not to learn something "new," but rather to use the *kedushah* of *yom tov* to absorb and concretize previously achieved levels.

Nevertheless, Rav Hirsch notes, Shemini Atzeres has a broader message than the seventh day of Pesach. It is not only the closure of Sukkos, but also the closure of the cycle of festivals of Tishrei: Rosh Hashanah-Yom Kippur-Sukkos. On Shemini Atzeres, we are supposed to absorb the message of Sukkos, and at the same time absorb the inspiration of the entire Tishrei period. That is why Shemini Atzeres is a separate *Yom Tov* and not simply the last day of Sukkos. The role of Shemini Atzeres goes beyond Sukkos itself.

The month of Tishrei reflects the Torah's emphasis on *simcha* in our *avodas Hashem*. Rav Hirsch points out that there are unfortunately many Jews whose sole contact with Jewish institutions is limited to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and they therefore perceive a distorted view of *Yahadus*:

[They think that] it consists exclusively of thoughts of repentance and warnings of the coming grave. Then the poetry of Judaism consists only of *selichos* and *viduy*, and is reduced to eulogies and confessions of sin, and everything about Judaism becomes so bleak that we are unable to use it in our bright, fresh, happy, pulsating lives.

Of course, this is a mistake. Tishrei does not peak with Rosh Hashanah; Tishrei peaks with the joyous Sukkos festival. Rav Hirsch explains simply and powerfully:

There is only one day of Rosh Hashanah, one Yom Kippur day, but seven days of the joyous Sukkos festival. Rosh Hashanah is only a beginning, Yom Kippur is the mediator, but Sukkos is the fruition of life. The first of the month is a dim beginning, the mediating tenth is a growing beacon, but the fifteenth culminates in a profusion of radiant light.

Many *seforim* write that we are supposed to take the *simcha* and *ruchniyus* achievements of Sukkos with us, so that they remain with us the entire year. This is hinted to in the *pasuk*, “והגתם אתו חג לה' שבעת ימים בשנה.” The effect of the “seven days” should be “during the year.” Along these lines, the *Nesivos Shalom* cites a play on words from a famous *pasuk* regarding Sukkos: “חג האסיף תקופת השנה.” Literally, this means, “The festival of the harvest shall be at the changing of the year.” Sukkos comes at what is considered the beginning of the new year. However, Chassidische *seforim* write that “חג האסיף” refers to the time where we gather in the *ruchniyus* achievements and we then take with us “תקיפות לכל השנה” –strength for the whole year. What we gain during this week in *emuna* and *simcha* is supposed to stay with us for the rest of the year, and this is one goal of Shemini Atzeres.

On Shemini Atzeres, we are trying to bring the *ruchniyus* of the *sukka* back into our homes. We leave the temporary *sukka* and go back inside, but we take the *kedusha* and *simcha* back with us.

*Atzeres* teaches us to hold on and maintain everything we have gained during this time of year. We have to find a way to maintain the inspiration of the *Yomim Nora'im* period as we reenter our ordinary daily lives. This may be one explanation of the connection between Simchas Torah and Shemini Atzeres – the best way to maintain inspiration is by learning more Torah and cherishing the Torah more.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and yom tov!

Chana Ginsburg

The Divrei Torah have been adapted from the *seforim* by Rabbi Beinisch Ginsburg

## Peulat Tishrei Kitot Alef to Hey

The girls were treated to a lesson on the art of Japanese Kintzugi. This art takes broken shards of pottery and melds them together with gold to create a new and unique ceramic piece. The girls created a decorative background to start, and then discussed how we make mistakes in life, but can always 'put the pieces' back together, and grow and become even stronger. The classes put on skits of everyday mistakes, and if that happened to them they were told to rip their papers. The girls then glued the pieces together and used gold outline to mark the tears. The classes came away with an important message for the Aseret Yemei Teshuva as well as a beautiful piece of artwork.





Kita Alef played 'Chavila Overet' or pass the parcel, to reinforce the tzili 'Cha'.



Succot Decorations Preparation!

The girls in Ulpan learn together and play together!



Kita Chet enjoyed a special post-Selichos breakfast!



Tochnit Peleh is a program of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption. It is open to children that made Aliyah in the last 2-10 years. It offers language enrichment in fun and creative ways, encourages social skills, and assistance in testing preparation. This years Peleh program kickoff event featured a painting party and delicious pizza lunch!

