



## Appreciating Gifts of Heaven and Earth

*By David Schulhof ('23)*

Parashat Ha'azinu is a song that Moshe recites to the Jewish People. He warns Bnei Yisrael, now that they've made a covenant with Hashem, to be careful to listen to the words of the Torah. He begins with "הֲאִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָרָהּ" "Listen, heavens let me speak, let the earth hear my words." Rashi comments here that the Torah is referring to עדות, testimony – the sky and land should serve as witnesses for Bnei Yisrael. The reason Moshe chooses the sky and land as witnesses is because they are objects that will always be there, unlike man. Rashi points out that we are somewhat dependent on the sky and land, as we rely on rain from the sky and produce from the ground. When Bnei Yisrael act well, we will receive the necessities from the earth and heavens, but when we don't behave, the opposite will occur. Additionally, Moshe chooses heaven and earth as witnesses, for just as they are constant and unchanging, so too must our loyalty to Torah be constant and unchanging.

Sukkot is a time when we are judged on the timing of the rains to ensure that we have an abundance of produce. If we do the Ratzon of Hashem, the rain, in proper time, will reward us. We begin to say "Mashiv HaRu'ach" in Shemoneh Esreih to ask for rain to ensure our success. On Sukkot, we have the Mitzvah of the Arba'ah Minim. It's a time for us to appreciate the success of the physical world and recognize that it all comes from Hashem. The Shamayim and Aretz are witnesses to the covenant we have with Hashem: if we keep our agreement, we are promised an abundance from the land and the sky. We show happiness on Sukkot by recognizing that the fruits of our labor all come from our adherence to the covenant that we established at Har Sinai.

It's no accident that the Arba'ah Minim are all species of the land that depend on water. We want to reinforce that our existence and sustainability is dependent on natural forces that are beyond our control. That brings us to recognize and thank Hashem for providing our physical needs at the proper time throughout the year. And the timing of Parashat Ha'azinu at the onset of Sukkot is not a coincidence either – the Sukkah represents the Ananei HaKavod, where Hashem's presence dwells amongst us, which reflects our commitment to upholding a Torah lifestyle. Furthermore, we bring together the Arba'ah Minim that represents all different factions of Jews to show unity in our service of Hashem, which ultimately bolsters His presence among us. It is this commitment that grants us an abundant year of rain and produce and success.

## Teshuvah Mei'Ahavah

*By Rabbi Jake Berman*

In the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, the fear to involve ourselves with Aveirot does not stem from a fear of punishment, but rather because we want to stay on the holy level that we reached on Yom Kippur; the strong connection we built between HaKadosh Baruch Hu and us is something that we still feel and want to hold on to. This type of Teshuvah is called Teshuvah Mei'Ahavah, returning through love.

This concept answers an age-old question. Every year we finish a day of heartfelt Tefilot and Teshuvah. We don't eat, we don't drink, we barely sleep, and we spend our day in Shul striking our chests as a way of showing that we are sorry for what we've done. Immediately following a whole entire day of this, in Maariv, we once again strike our chests and say Selach Lanu... Hashiveinu Avinu... we just had a whole day of this, and Yom Kippur is over; we are clean! Why are we asking for forgiveness and beginning Teshuvah again?! The Beit Aharon (Rav

Aharon of Karlin) explains that the Teshuvah that was done on Yom Kippur was Teshuvah MeYirah, but we need to continue the Teshuvah after Yom Kippur to get close to HaKadosh Baruch Hu through Ahavah.

The first 10 days of the year, the Avodah is Yirah. Doing Teshuvah because we know the Yemei HaDin are approaching, we (re)accept HaKadosh Baruch Hu, but now in the second half, the Avodah becomes an Avodah of Ahavah. In fact, the Shelah HaKadosh (Mesechet Sukkah, Torah Ohr Ot Alef) writes that the 10 days between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah are also included in “Dirshu Hashem BeHimtzo...”. We see that the days that are approaching are of no less significance than the first 10 days of the year; we just need to approach them with Ahavah, not Yirah.

What is the Avodah of Ahavah? The Avodah of Ahavah is an extremely important one, and there are many ways and suggestions on how to approach and implement this Avodah in our lives. I will present just one. Perhaps one can say that just as the Teshuvah/Avodah of Yirah calls on us to focus on our shortcomings and failures, which helps us do Teshuvah, the Teshuvah/Avodah of Ahavah calls on us to focus on the things we actually do. When we pause and think about all the Mitzvot we do and are going to do, we can attain a level of Simchah. Simchah brings us closer to Hashem and encourages us to desire more. The Chofetz Chaim would often speak about the greatness of Limud HaTorah; every second of learning is a Mitzvah. If you pick up a Sefer, a Mishnyaot, for 5 minutes, that’s 300 seconds, that’s 300 Mitzvot. When you wear Tefilin, when you wear Tzitzit all day, think about the greatness you do, and contemplate that Hashem has given you the opportunity to perform these Mitzvot that are more precious than gold! Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin in Tzidkat HaTzadik (154) writes that just as we must believe in Hashem, we must believe in ourselves! We must believe in the power of our Mitzvot and that every Mitzvah we do, every Tefilah we pray, and every good thought, action, and spoken word has tremendous value to the world. This is just one pathway into the world of Ahavah. As we enter into the Sukkah, and days of Simchah, pause, reflect, and think about your day, how much Kedushah you bring, and how much more you can bring through doing good, this will bring you to Simcha,

and this will enable you to return to Hashem through Ahavah.

## Why Not Wave the Lulav During Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na?

*By Rabbi Chaim Jachter*

People often wonder why we do not wave the Lulav in Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na as we do during Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na. Let us try to set forth an explanation for our practice.

### **Beit Hillel vs. Beit Shamai**

This question is actually debated by Beit Hillel and Beit Shamai (Sukkah 3:8). Interestingly, the Mishnah records that the common practice accorded with Beit Shamai, who argue that we wave the Lulav during both Hoshi'ah and Hatzlichah.

This common practice is hardly surprising since this opinion makes eminent sense. On Sukkot, we are judged for water (Rosh HaShanah 1:2). Hence, we take the Arba'ah Minim and use them to reinforce our praise of Hashem during Hallel. The waving is a plea to Hashem – if you provide us with rain, we will use its produce in Your service.

We wave during Ana Hashem to place, so to speak, an exclamation point on our request. Accordingly, we should place the exclamation point not only on Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na but also on Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na.

### **Rabi Akiva, Rabban Gamliel, and Rabi Yehoshuah**

As we find quite a number of times in Chazal, Rabi Akiva was responsible for changing our mindset about this matter. The Mishnah (Sukkah, ad. loc.) records Rabi Akiva's report that he noticed that both Rabban Gamliel and Rabi Yehoshuah did not wave their Lulav during Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na, in accordance with the view of Beit Hillel. Why did these two great Rabbanim deviate from the common practice to follow Beit Shamai?

### **A Chassidic Story**

When we posed the question to Rav Abba Bronspigel, the great Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University in 1980, as to why we do not wave the Lulav during Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na, he explained with a Chassidic story:

A Chassid who was struggling financially was wondering whether he should move elsewhere sought his Rebbe's advice. The Rebbe asked him if he is financially

solvent. He answered yes but that he is not truly succeeding.

The Rebbe told him that we wave the Lulav during Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na to show we can move around for Yeshu'ah from being saved from financial ruin. However, we do not wave the Lulav during Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na since we do not move around for success if we are surviving.

I understand this story to be teaching the difference between financial survival and financial success. Economic survival is a necessity and therefore we must take extraordinary steps to avoid fiscal ruin. Financial success, on the other hand, is not a necessity and hence we do not turn our lives upside down in order to achieve such success.

### **Explaining Beit Hillel's Opinion**

I suggest that this is the logic underlying Beit Hillel's insistence not to wave during Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na. Beit Hillel believes that it is crucial we distinguish between monetary success and staying afloat monetarily.

Popular opinion rejected this distinction as we all desire great wealth. However, Beit Hillel insists that while wealth can be wonderful it is vital to always remember it is not a necessity.

Rabi Akiva reinforces this message by noting that he saw both Rabban Gamliel and Rabi Yehoshuah embracing Beit Hillel's credo. Both Rabban Gamliel, who was wealthy (as is clear from many places in Shas), and Rabi Yehoshua, who was poor (Berachot 28a) recognize that it is worth waving the Lulav to place an exclamation point on Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na but not on Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na.

### **Hoshanot and Simchat Torah**

Interestingly, throughout Hoshanot we ask Hashem Ana Hashem Hoshi'ah Na and Ani Ve'Hu (or Ve'Ho) Hoshi'ah Na. However, we do not say Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na. Again while we are taking our Lulav to add extra potency to our Tefillot we distinguish between Yeshu'a and Hatzlacha<sup>1</sup>.

Interestingly, on Simchat Torah during the Hakafot we do ask Hashem for Hatzlachah. Why do we add this plea on Simchat Torah and not during Sukkot?

An answer is that on Simchat Torah we are asking Hashem for Hatzlachah for our Torah learning and spirituality. On Sukkot we omit a plea for Hatzlachah during the Hakafot to stress that Hatzlacha in material matters is a luxury but not a necessity. However, when it comes to Torah, success is not a luxury. Ki Heim Chayeinu Ve'Orech Yameinu, the quality of our eternity hinges on our spiritual success.

The purpose of our temporary journey in this world is to earn a proper place in Eternity. We cannot afford to be delinquent in this effort, as the cost is astounding. If, on the other hand, we only to get by financially speaking during the time we spend in this world, it is not catastrophic.

### **A Perfect Message for Sukkot**

This message is perfect for Sukkot when we leave our permanent homes for the Sukkah which the Gemara (Sukkah 2a and elsewhere) refers to a Dirat Arai, temporary dwelling. Shifting from a Dirat Keva to a Dirat Arai teaches us that our permanent homes are nice but not a necessity. We can manage to survive in a Sukkah if we are forced to do so. We return to our homes after Sukkot, reminded that they are wonderful but we could live without it.

### **Conclusion – A Key to Successful Wealth Management**

On Sukkot many communities read Kohelet (5:13) which speaks of Osher Shamur LeBa'alav LeRa'a, wealth that harms its owners. Many of us have seen wealth that destroys its owners and its families. Often the route to success is to bear in mind that the wealth is wonderful but not something we could not live without. And that is exactly the powerful and very important message we believe is communicated by our not waving the Lulav when we recite Ana Hashem Hatzlichah Na.

**Editors-In-Chief:** Kivi Davis and Ariel Kryzman

**Chief Editor:** Micah Cyrulnik

**Business Manager:** Gavri Segal

**Communications:** Chanukah Tallis

**Rabbinic Advisor:** Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Questions, comments? Contact us at:

Phone: (201) 837-7696

[webmasters@koltorah.org](mailto:webmasters@koltorah.org)

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, in the Sephardic version of Hoshanot, a plea for Hatzlacha is added at the very end of the many Hoshanot of Hoshana Rabba. However, the plea for Hatzlacha does not appear in the Ashkenazic version of Hoshanot even on Hoshana Rabba.