

# A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

*This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of Northwood United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam*

## SUKKOT

### DVAR TORAH: INTENSE INNER EXPERIENCES

We crave intense inner experiences: a flash of joy; a bright insight; a strong emotion; but especially those that come from Above. When we experience them we feel alive and real. The Piasetzna Rebbe zt"l observes (Tzav Veziruz 9) that if people do not have intense experiences in their avodat Hashem, their service of God, they will seek them elsewhere – they'll see horror films or ride roller coasters. Perhaps – extending his thought – this is one component of sin: lust and rage, as bad and self-destructive as they are, feel intense. They are perhaps a warped way to fill the human need for inner intensity.

The Yerushalmi tells us how one man had an intense inner experience on Sukkot. Yonah ben Amitai, says the Yerushalmi (Sukkah 5:1, quoted by Tosafot Sukkah 50b Chad Tani Shoovah), was one of the olei regalim – those that regularly made the three pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem. He attended the Simchat Beit Hashoovah, the joyful festivities on the nights of Chol Hamoed Sukkot, and while there, Ruach Hakodesh – the Divine Spirit associated with prophecy – rested upon him. What can we draw from Yonah's experience? How can we, too, open ourselves up to something great and powerful from Above?

The Yerushalmi mentions two components of Yonah's experience: 1. that he was one of the olei regalim, and 2. that he attended the Simchat Beit Hashoovah.

Aliya Laregel – Coming to the Temple for Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot put him in the right place at the right time. Yonah sought the Divine Presence and made sure he was there when and where it would be revealed and felt. He was driven and put in the effort. Yonah was from Israel's far north, from the tribes of Asher and Zevulun (see Yerushalmi Sukkah 5:1), so it was a long (and perhaps dangerous) journey he made from the Northern Kingdom to the area of Yehudah and the Temple.

Simchat Beit Hashoovah – The environment created there on the Temple Mount ignited seekers like Yonah. They were primed for intense inner experiences. The celebrations those evenings of Sukkot combined music, singing, bright light, dancing, togetherness, and a focus on the Divine (see Sukkah 51). The nation's greatest, wisest, and most righteous set the tone of the festivities. One of the meanings of the name Simchat Beit Hashoovah is that people there would draw – shoev – Ruach Hakodesh, the Divine Spirit.

The Rambam teaches us (Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah 7:4-5) that prophecy is a Divine gift. Prophecy isn't necessarily built into nature; no person can – so to speak – force God to make him or her a prophet. But the bnei haneviim, the protégés of the prophets, would prepare themselves through pursuing wisdom, focusing on spiritual pursuits, and perfecting their character so they would be open to prophecy. Yonah was primed for prophecy and the Simchat Beit Hashoovah touched it off.

We cannot engineer spiritual experiences from Above, but we can, like Yonah, seek out places where the Divine presence rests – places of Torah, Tefillah, and in auspicious locations – and take advantage of times like Chagim, Shabbatot, and the Yamim Noraim. We can cultivate joy, learn the Torah's wisdom, and perfect our character. We can join together with the wise and saintly people in our midst, placing ourselves in the right setting. Then we open ourselves up to the Divinely ignited intense inner experiences we crave.

# SOURCE GUIDE: THE ISRU CHAG FACT SHEET

## What is Isru Chag?

The day following each of the three pilgrimage festivals – Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot – is referred to as *Isru Chag* and has a semi-festive status. We present here: 2 names for the day; 2 major sources; 5 reasons for celebrating; 3 practices that are universally kept; and another 3 that only some keep.

## 2 Names for the Day:

There are two ways of referring to the day following the holiday:

1. *Isru Chag* – roughly translated as “the day tied to the holiday”;
2. *Brei Demoada* – the “son” of the holiday.

The first appears (according to one direction in Rashi) in the Bavli, and the second in the Yerushalmi.

## 2 Major Sources:

*Isru Chag* in the Bavli: There is a verse near the end of Hallel that refers, at face value, to refer to bringing the holiday sacrifice to the altar, but was only applicable when sacrifices were offered. The Gemara brings a few derashot of Chazal on that verse. This, the last of them, is applicable even today when sacrifices are not yet offered.

<p><b>Sukkah 45b</b> Rabbi Yirmiyah said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, and Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Hamechozi and Rabbi Yochanan Hamakoti: Anyone who makes a ‘tie’ to the holiday through eating and drinking is considered by the Tanach as having built an altar and offering a sacrifice on it, as it says, “Tie the holiday (sacrifice) with thick rope [and bring it] until the corners of the altar” (Tehillim 118:27).</p> <p><b>Rashi there – “Through Eating and Drinking”</b> [The first approach:] To declare the holiday pleasurable through eating and drinking. [The second approach:] <b>There are those who interpret this as referring to the day after the holiday.</b></p>	<p><b>סוכה מה :</b> א”ר ירמיה משום ר”ש בן יוחי ור’ יוחנן משום ר”ש המחוזי משום ר’ יוחנן המכותי כל העושה איסור לחג באכילה ושתייה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו בנה מזבח והקריב עליו קרבת שנתאמר אסרו חג בעבותים עד קרנות המזבח</p> <p><b>רש”י שם ד”ה באכילה ושתייה</b> שקורא לחג עונג באכילה ושתייה ויש אומרים יום של אחר החג :</p>
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According to Rashi’s second approach, someone who ties an extra day of festivities to the holiday is considered as if he built an altar and offered a sacrifice.

*Brei Demoada* in the Yerushalmi:

The starting point of this Yerushalmi is explaining why Rabbi Yishmael holds that it is prohibited not only (like the Sages say) to do business with idolaters on their holidays (for fear that they will react by thanking their false gods) and 3 days before them, but even 3 days after them. The chevraya, the group of Amoraim, said that Rabbi Yishmael’s opinion was based on the *brei demoada*, the ‘son’ of the holiday, meaning the festive nature of the days following the holiday.

<p><b>Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah 1:1</b> Rabbi Yudan said: There is a verse supporting that which the group of rabbis (the <i>chevraya</i>) said: On the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month the Children of Israel gathered in fasting, crying, and placed sackcloth and dirt upon themselves (Nechemiah 9:1). Why does it not say ‘on the twenty-third’? This is because of the ‘son of the holiday’.</p>	<p><b>ירושלמי עבודה זרה א א :</b> א”ר יודן קרייא מסייע למה דאמרי חבריאי וביום עשרים וארבעה לחדש השביעי נאספו בני ישראל בצום ובכי ובשקים ואדמה עליהם. ולמה לא אמר בעשרים ושלושה משום בריה דמועדא :</p>
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Israel was going through a total revival in the times of Ezra and Nechemiah. They celebrated Sukkot from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Tishrei, but they only began their fasting and teshuvah gathering on the 24<sup>th</sup>. The Yerushalmi answered that Jewish holidays also celebrate a festive day immediately following the holiday when fasting would be inappropriate.

### 5 Reasons for Celebrating Isru Chag:

(based on sources collected by Rav Dovid Shpitzer in Zera Yaakov Volume 7)

1. *Shelamim* sacrifices, including the *shalmei simchah*, those specially offered on the holidays, are eaten two days and the night between them. If someone offered their *shelamim* on the last day of Yom Tov, the following day they can still eat the sacrifice and is therefore still partially festive (Sdei Chemed - Aleph Klalim 154, quoting the Responsa Beit Av, and Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 429).

2. Residents of Israel would, to empathize with their brethren in the exile and de-emphasize the divergent practices among Jews, treat the day after Yom Tov – the second day of Yom Tov in Chutz Laaretz – as a festive day (quoted by the Sdei Chemed). According to this theory the custom later spread to Chutz Laaretz. We find a similar phenomenon on Purim. Some Jews keep Purim on the fourteenth of Adar and others on the fifteenth, but all of Israel does not say *tachanun* on both days.

3. People who visited the Temple for the holiday would stay over in Jerusalem until the next morning, as the Torah says, *וּפְנִית בַּבֹּקֶר וְהִלַּכְתָּ לְאֹהֲלֶיךָ*, “You will turn in the morning and go to your tents” (Devarim 16:7). The day after the holiday was therefore a festive day for those returning back from Jerusalem (Chatam Sofer on the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 429).

4. Isru Chag is a day of rejoicing over fulfilling the mitzvot of the holiday, a day of *simchah shel mitzvah*. Joy itself merits a festive meal (Chatam Sofer on Bamidbar p. 132).

5. One of the challenges of high experiences is holding on to them and translating them into our lives. Chasidic sources say that through celebrating Isru Chag, the holiness of the Chag is drawn from the holiday period into the normal portion of the year. It is a way of holding on to all of the elevation gained during the chag (Chidushei Harim), and its semi-festive status makes it a middle ground between the chag and chol (Divrei Yechezkel).

### Practices that Are Universally Kept:

(This summary is for educational purposes only, and not intended as a source of halachic rulings.)

1. *Tachanun*, *Yehi Ratzon* (after *Keriat Hatorah*), and *Tzidkatecha Tzedek* (Shabbat Minchah) are all not recited.
2. One should not fast (though *poskim* discuss whether a *chatan* or one who had a difficult dream should fast).
3. One should have a festive meal, as the Gemara mentions.

### Practices Some Keep:

1. In Eretz Yisrael there are those who wear festive clothing.
2. There was a custom in Bagdad to refrain from some types of work.
3. There are different customs about whether to say *Lamenatzeiach* (following *Ashrei*), and *Kel Erech Apayim* (Monday and Thursday).

### Note:

A. Isru Chag following Shavuot might have special status. Because Shavuot is only a one day holiday, people would offer their personal festive sacrifices on the day after Yom Tov and the 6 days following it. The day immediately after the Chag was therefore referred to as *Yom Tevoach*, the day of slaughtering (sacrifices).

## THE VILLAIN AND THE HERO, BY RABBI YITZCHAK HIRSHFELD

The great villain of Parshas Bereishis is undoubtedly Adam Harishon. He sinned, he caused himself and subsequently all his progeny untold grief and suffering in the Great Exile from Gan Eden.

Who was the hero who was able to 'fix' that which Adam broke? The Arizal reveals that it was Avraham Avinu, who, through the test of the Akeidah, in every way reversed the reality created by Adam.

Adam saw Hashem as an antagonist. Hashem had really created Adam to be the 'other', precisely so that Adam, utilizing his free will, could find his way back to a complete reunification with the Source. But Adam was seduced by the thought that he might use his 'otherness' to take a further step back, to move towards autonomy which could make him less dependent on the One who created him. And Adam 'took' – he took to himself the forbidden fruit, only to discover that his taking set him on a path diametrically opposed to the path Hashem had intended for him.

The world Adam created was an unfriendly world – the earth could produce only thorns and thistles. Worse yet, people grew to be competitive. The 'taking' paradigm led people to be jealous of one another's successes, sensing that if you have something, then necessarily I don't have something. Hence, Kayin and Hevel, jealousy turning into fratricide.

And the 'insubordination' paradigm would lead to a world where the Divine word holds no sway, where the Divine command becomes an option among many for the autonomous self to consider. The one truth becomes shattered into many splinters.

Says the Arizal – that if Adam "sent forth his hand" to take, then Avraham Avinu "sent forth his hand" to slaughter Yitzchak, to obey, to give away his most precious son. Avraham is called a 'yedid' a friend, a partner, a companion. In Avraham's world conflict disappears as two would-be antagonists are subsumed in the One, each one looking to complete the other's needs and desires. In Avraham's world, the 'giving' paradigm, the 'obedience' paradigm prevail.

Some wise person famously said, "War is hell." And so too any conflict with a spouse, child, mother-in-law, neighbor, colleague, can easily spiral into a personal gehinnom which parallels the grief and suffering of the Great Exile from Gan Eden.

So what is Gan Eden? Gan Eden is kindness and peace and reconciliation. Gan Eden is there for us to reach for, by elevating our Earthly existence to understand that our only salvation lies in accepting "Hashem Echad" – God is one, and He includes all.

May each and every one of us merit to build personal 'Gan Edens' for himself, his family, his community, and, ultimately, the whole world.

**This issue is dedicated in loving memory of  
Reb Yerachmiel ben Yaakov Hachohen (Roy Katz), z"l, and  
Esther Gittel bat Shlomo Zelig, z"l**

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at [www.darchenoam.org](http://www.darchenoam.org) +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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