

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

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

PARSHAT HAAZINU

DVAR TORAH: MOSHE'S LAST WORDS TO ISRAEL

What were the very last words Moshe said to the People of Israel? Two sentences:

"וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים: שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְכָל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מַעֲיֵד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּצְוּם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת. כִּי לֹא דְבָר רַק הוּא מַכֶּם כִּי הוּא חַיִּיכֶם וּבְדִבְרֵי הַזֶּה תִּצְרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ" (דברים לב:מו-מז).

He said to them: Pay attention (literally, ‘place your hearts’) to all of the words that I testify before you today, that you should command them to your children, to make sure to do the words of this Torah. For it is not an empty thing for you, for it is your life; and through this thing you will have long days on the land that you are crossing the Yarden to inherit there” (Devarim 32:46-47).

In one of his talks on Parshat Haazinu, Harav Avigdor Nebenzahl, שליט"א (Rov of the Old City of Yerushalayim), dwelled on the two words, “שימו לבבכם – pay attention.” These two words, and the two sentences they are part of, are not just ‘another two verses of mussar given by Moshe,’ a little extra chizuk (encouragement). They are, rather, Moshe’s key message. If you do not “pay attention to all of the words ...” everything else will fall apart. What is “paying attention” and why is it so crucial?

Paying attention – שימת לב – means connecting ideas with practical life. Moshe’s last message to the People of Israel after forty years of teaching and guidance is that if the Torah they learned is not connected with their hearts and actions – it will not stick with them. Torah is practical wisdom, to be integrated with life. Thoughts must connect with feelings, speech, and action. Rav Nebenzahl uses two images to illustrate this. We have two pipes within us: one of intelligence and mind; another of will, feelings, and actions. These two pipes must not flow independently; they must merge. He goes further. Sophisticated knowledge that is not translated into action is like a sophisticated electronic instrument that is not connected to electricity – it does not function.

The master of “disconnect” was Bilam. He was “יודע דעת עליון – one who knew lofty knowledge” (Bamidbar 24:16), but lived a life of base immorality. Shortly after he uttered some of the finest sounding blessings and praises of Israel, the same Bilam advised Moav to send their daughters to entice the men of Israel to transgress immorality and idolatry. After six fatal plagues, Moshe warns Egypt to protect their animals and servants from the deadly hail that will fall on Egypt. “ואשר לא שמ לבו אל דבר ה' - Those who did not pay attention to G-d’s word” (Shemot 7:21) left their servants and animals outside. The Targum adds one word – “Bilam, who did not pay attention to G-d’s word.”

Connecting what we know with what we do does not always come easily. The Gemara (Ta’anit 25b) tells of a year plagued by drought, where the people, led by the great Tanna Rabbi Eliezer, observed a full set of thirteen fasts – but rain still did not come. As they were leaving the Beit Hakneset after the last prayers of the last fast, Rabbi Eliezer called out to them, “Did you prepare graves for yourselves?” The entire assembly “געו בבכיה - broke down crying”; and the rain fell. Rabbi Eliezer’s question brought about a moment of deep connectedness. In that last moment their prayers were not merely in their mouths; and their knowledge of why G-d kept the rain from falling was not only in their minds. It became part of their entire being and their prayers were answered.

This was Moshe’s message to Israel as they were poised to enter the Land of Israel. You will learn the Torah and you will live your lives. Connect the two. If you do not, Israel will not survive in the Land. If you do, you and the Land will flourish, and the Divine Presence will rest within Israel.

SOURCE GUIDE: I AND HE

We refer to G-d in unique way on Sukkot during the Hoshanot: “אני והו הושיעה נא – I and He, please save [us].” Rashi explains that this way of referring to G-d is rooted in three verses in the biblical account of the splitting of the Yam Suf. Wouldn’t it have been more appropriate to use this name on the seventh day of Pesach instead of Sukkot? This source guide draws on a small section of one of Harav Shlomo Fisher, שליט”א’s drashot on Sukkot (Drashot Beit Yishai #23). Based on this and a number of other observations, he develops one of the major themes of the holiday.

A. 3 Questions

a. The text of our Hoshanot is reminiscent of what our ancestors said during Sukkot in the Beit Hamikdash:

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| <p>1. Sukkah 45b On every day [of Sukkot] they surround the altar one time and say, “Please, Hashem, save us. Please, Hashem, give us success.” Rabbi Yehudah says: “I and He please save us.”</p> | <p>טובה מה: בכל יום מקיפין את המזבח פעם אחת ואומרים "אנא ה' הושיעה נא. אנא ה' הצליחה נא." רבי יהודה אומר: "אני והו הושיעה נא."</p> |
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Rashi explains that there are three verses in the splitting of the Yam Suf (Reed Sea) narrative that each have 72 letters (Shemot 14:19-21). The name והו is composed of the first letter of the first verse, the last of the second, and the first of the third. Asks Rav Shlomo Fisher: **Why is אני והו specifically mentioned on Sukkot?**

b. There are Tannaim who say that Israel was already obligated to offer the Pesach sacrifice in the desert (see Tosafot Kiddushin 37b, ד"ה הואיל). However, all agree that the obligation to live in Sukkot on the holiday of Sukkot only took effect once Israel entered the Land of Israel. **Why is Sukkot different than Pesach?**

c. The mitzvot of Pesach and Sukkah are tied together by a drashah (a גזירה שוה):

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| <p>2. Sukkah 27a Said Rabbi Yochanan quoting Rabbi Shimon son of Yehotzadak: It says “the fifteenth [of the month]” here (in conjunction with Sukkot) and it says “the fifteenth” in conjunction with Pesach. Just like there (Pesach), on the first night [matzah] is obligatory and the rest of the days it is optional; so here the first night [eating an olive’s size of bread in the sukkah] is obligatory and the rest of the days it is optional. What is the source that on Pesach it is obligatory? The verse says, “At night you should eat matzot” (Shemot 12:18) – the Torah set it down as an obligation.</p> | <p>טובה כזו: אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק: נאמר כאן "חמשה עשר" ונאמר "חמשה עשר" בחג המצות. מה להלן לילה הראשון חובה מכאן ואילך רשות, אף כאן לילה הראשון חובה מכאן ואילך רשות. והתם מנלן? אמר קרא "בערב תאכלו מצת" – הכתוב קבעו חובה.</p> |
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However, we find that on Pesach night women are obligated to eat matzah; yet they are not obligated in the mitzvah of sukkah on Sukkot. The Gemara acknowledges that based on the “fifteenth” Pesach-Sukkot connection one might have thought that women should be obligated in the mitzvah, yet it quotes a drashah absolving women (Vayikra 23:42). **Why, though, are women not obligated in the mitzvah of sukkah?**

B. 3 Answers

The answers to all three questions lie in a comment by the Rashbam on the following verse:

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| <p>3. Vayikra 23:42-43 (42) Dwell in sukkot seven days; every resident in Israel should dwell in sukkot.</p> | <p>ויקרא כג:מב-מג (מב) בספלת תישבו שבועת ימים כל האזרח בישׂראל יישבו בספלת.</p> |
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| (43) In order that you should know that I had Israel dwell in Sukkot when I took them out of the Land of Egypt – I am Hashem your G-d. | (מג) לַמַּעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם פִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הַוְּשֻׁבֹתַי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאֵי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. |
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Most interpret this verse as referring to G-d's special care for the Jewish People when He took them out of Egypt. But the Rashbam takes a different approach:

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| <p>3. Rashbam on Vayikra 23:43</p> <p>The simple understanding of the verse follows the approach that the sukkot of the desert were actual huts (Rabbi Akiva's approach on Sukkah 11b). This is the reason for the matter: "Make for yourself a holiday of Sukkot as you gather from your grain pile and wine press" (Devarim 16:13) – as you gather the produce of the Land and your homes are full of all good things: grain, wine, and oil. This is so you remember that I had the People of Israel dwell in the desert for forty years without normal habitation or inheritance. As a result of remembering this you will give thanks to He who gave you the inheritance and homes full of all good things. You will not say in your hearts, 'It is my strength and the might of my hand that made me all of this wealth.' "You should remember the entire way that Hashem your G-d led you these forty years ... and fed you the manna ... Why do I command you to do this? For Hashem your G-d brings you a good Land and you will eat and be satiated and your heart will become arrogant and you will forget Hashem ... And you will say in your heart, 'It is my strength and the might of my hand that made me all of this wealth'" (Devarim 8:11-17). Therefore you should leave your homes full of all good things at the time of the ingathering and dwell in sukkot as a remembrance that you had no inheritance in the desert and no homes within which to dwell. Because of this reason the Holy One, blessed be He, set the time for the holiday of Sukkot during the time of gathering the grain and wine, so people should not become haughty over their homes full of good things, lest they say, 'Our hands made us all of this wealth.'</p> | <p>רשב"ם על ויקרא כג:מג</p> <p>פשוטו כדברי האומרים במסכת סוכה סוכה ממש (סוכה יא:). וזה טעמו של דבר: "חג הסוכות תעשה לך באספך מגרנד ומיקבך" – באספך את תבואת הארץ ובתיכם מלאים כל טוב דגן ותירוש ויצהר. למען תזכרו כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל במדבר ארבעים שנה בלא יישוב ובלא נחלה ומתוך כך תתנו הודאה למי שנתן לכם נחלה ובתים מלאים כל טוב ואל תאמרו בלבבכם כחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה. וכסדר הזה נמצא בפרשת עקב תשמעון. וזכרת את כל הדרך אשר הוליכך ה' אליך זה ארבעים שנה וגו' ויאכילך את המן וגו'. ולמה אני מצוה לך לעשות זאת. כי ה' אליך מביאך אל ארץ טובה ואכלת ושבעת ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' וגו' ואמרת בלבבך כחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה וזכרת את ה' אליך כי הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל. ולכך יוצאים מבתים מלאים כל טוב בזמן אסיפה ויושבין בסוכות לזכרון שלא היה להם נחלה במדבר ולא בתים לשבת:</p> <p>ומפני הטעם הזה קבע הקב"ה את חג הסוכות בזמן אסיפת גורן ויקב לבלתי רום לבבו על בתיהם מלאים כל טוב פן יאמרו ידינו עשו לנו את החיל הזה.</p> |
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Sukkot, according to the Rashbam, is the holiday where we celebrate and give thanks to G-d for the gift of the Land of Israel. This explains why Sukkot was not obligatory in the desert. Sukkot only became meaningful as a mitzvah once the Jews settled in the Land of Israel and actually received the gift of the Land. This also explains why women are not obligated in Sukkot. The mitzvah of sukkah is only incumbent upon the men, who acquired a portion in the Land, and need the reminder to avoid saying, "It was my strength and power that acquired all of this wealth."

The Land of Israel centered approach to Sukkot also explains why a Name of G-d that was revealed at the splitting of the Sea resurfaces in the Beit Hamikdash during Sukkot. The process of entering the Land of Israel began when Israel crossed the Yam Suf. As the Song says, "You, in Your lovingkindness, led this nation that You redeemed; You led them with strength to Your holy place ... You brought them and planted them in the mountain of Your inheritance; the habitation that You made, Hashem; a sanctuary, Hashem, You founded with Your own hands" (Shemot 15:13, 17). Up until that point the Jews had been leaving Egypt; from that point on they began the entry to the Land of Israel. Sukkot celebrates even entering the gateway of the Land of Israel, crossing the Sea.

SUKKAH OF PEACE BY RABBI ELIE SILVERBERG

In השכיבו, the last of the berachot (blessings) following the evening Kriat Shema, we see a reference to “סוכת שלום – Your sukkah of peace,” and on Shabbat evening, we end the berachah with yet another reference to “סוכת שלום – the sukkah of peace.” What is the association between “sukkah” and “shalom”?

Harav Eliahu Dessler, זצ"ל (1892-1953), in his section on Sukkot in Michtav Me'Eliahu, discusses this point, and brings the following beautiful idea.

In the physical world there are limited resources; and hence, by definition, the more I have, the less you have, and vice versa. That leads to a situation in the physical world where there is a continual struggle amongst all beings to gain more for oneself and to prevent others from taking from them. This is a situation that is bound to lead to conflict between individuals, groups, and even countries. In the extreme situation this leads to war and destruction.

In the spiritual world the opposite is true. “קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה” – competition amongst scholars increases knowledge” (Bava Batra 21a). The more spirituality I gain the better it is for my fellow Jew, as I can now be a better role model. I can teach more to others. So, too, the more others grow in Torah the more I gain from them. Hence, here’s a situation where I want and encourage those around me to grow; and others want the same from me. This is an environment that is conducive to peace and harmony, and benefits everyone involved.

The mitzvah of sukkah represents the idea of going away from physicality, from our permanent home structure, and going into a temporary, flimsy dwelling, where we are directly under the protection of Heaven. In the sukkah, spirituality is emphasized and physicality is de-emphasized. We have gone from an environment of competition, struggle, and war, and have moved into a reality of mutual encouragement, harmony, and peace. Hence, the sukkah is truly a סוכת שלום – a sukkah of peace.

We mourn the tragic deaths of Levana Malichi, הי"ד, and Sergeant Major Yosef Kirma, הי"ד, murdered in a terrorist attack this week. We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.

שבת שלום ומבורך

*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 +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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