



Chol Hamoed Succot

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STARTING POINT

Comparing Moshe and Yosef - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

The Torah reading on Simchat Torah, the last day of Succot, consists of Moshe's blessings of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael. The blessings take up a total of 20 verses (Devarim 33:6-25), so that on the average every tribe receives one or two verses. However, two of the tribes are different from all the others: Levi receives four verses (33:8-11), while Yosef's is given five verses (33:13-17). The extra attention paid to Levi is understandable in view of the praise that Moshe gives them after the sin of the Golden Calf. However, this is not so clear with respect to Yosef: Why is Moshe's blessing of Yosef so long compared to the other blessings?

It may be that Moshe's attitude towards the tribe of Yosef is connected to his attitude towards Yosef himself. Moshe's tight link to Yosef can be seen in the way he feels obligated to bury him. "And Moshe took Yosef's bones with him, for Yosef had made Bnei Yisrael take an oath, saying: G-d will remember you, and you shall take my bones with you from here" [Shemot 13:19]. This special link might also be related to the similarity between Moshe and Yosef, as we note below.

Both Moshe and Yosef began their lives fighting with brothers who objected to their feelings of superiority. Yosef's brothers turned to him with the claim, "Will you rule over us or have authority over us?" [Bereishit 37:8]. With respect to Moshe, we are told, "Moshe grew up and he went out to his brothers... And two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the evil one, Why should you strike your colleague? And he replied, Who appointed you as a minister and a judge over us?" [Shemot 2:11-14]. (Note that the phrase "to his brothers" appears eleven times with respect to Yosef and his brothers. Aside from the verse quoted above in Shemot, this phrase appears only one more time in the Torah, at Bamidbar 25:6, related to the story of Pinchas.)

As a result of the antagonism by their "brothers," both Moshe and Yosef were forced into exile in foreign lands, one in Egypt and the other in Midyan. Both married daughters of priests. Yosef took "Osnat, daughter of Poti- Phera, Priest of On, as a wife" [Bereishit 41:45], while Moshe married Tzipora, the daughter of Yitro, the Priest of Midyan. They both had two sons, and their children's names reflected that they felt alienated in foreign lands. Yosef named his son Efraim, "Because G-d has taken care of me in the land of my paucity" [Bereishit 41:52], and Moshe gave the name Gershom "for he said, I was a stranger in a strange land" [Shemot 2:22]. Both Moshe and Yosef arrived in the palace of Pharaoh and were given a special status. At the highest point in their lives, they both led Bnei

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Yisrael, one within Egypt and the other when they left the land. And both Moshe and Yosef did not have the privilege of entering Eretz Yisrael in their lifetimes.

With all of these considerations, it is reasonable to assume that Moshe felt a special bond to Yosef. He saw in Yosef a man with vision who in spite of many problems in his life was able to fulfill his dreams and to act as a faithful servant in performing the task that the Almighty gave him. Moshe, who would never see the fulfillment of his greatest dream of entering Eretz Yisrael, blesses Yosef's descendants with a good heritage. This is where Yosef's children will bury their father: "And the bones of Yosef, which Bnei Yisrael brought from Egypt, were buried in Shechem... And it was given to the children of Yosef as a heritage" [Yehoshua 24:32]. Moshe, who did not have the privilege of being buried in the land, was able to console himself that at least the mission of burying Yosef had been fulfilled in the land given to his children as a heritage. This area was therefore eligible for special blessing: "G-d blesses his land, with the blessings of dew from heaven and with the waters in the depths below" [Bereishit 33:13].

POINT OF VIEW

"Reside in It As If You Dwell There" - by Prof. Shalom Rozenberg

The Chassidic approach looks at the concept of Succah in different ways. The main one is based on the concept that the Succah represents the Kabbalistic idea of "the surrounding intellect," an approach that was developed in a wonderful way by Rabbi Nachman of Breslev. This was expanded in a different way by the author of "Divrei Chaim," Rabbi Chaim Halberstat, the rabbi of Tzanz. He notes that we should remember that until Hoshanah Rabba we remain in a continuing process of repentance. And we ask: What is the point of repentance after Yom Kippur? What does it mean? The answer is that the deep understanding of repentance depends on the mitzva of Succah and on the fact that "within the Succah everything becomes holy, even material things such as eating and drinking." And we must repent for the fact that we do not observe this mitzva all year round.

I cannot guarantee that the Rabbi of Tzanz would agree with broadening the scope of his words, but I feel that the most general application of his idea to modern times means that we must learn to sanctify all areas of living and not leave them in the hands of evil, anarchy, and apostasy. This expansion of the concept should include not only such areas of activity as science and culture but also esthetics and art. The rabbi writes:

"We have been taught by true wisdom that the main obligation is to serve G-d in worldly matters, for in this way we will extract the precious from the common, publicizing the Divine nature of the Almighty... And now that on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we have repented... and all of the interfering walls have been taken down... by accepting from now on to observe all of His mitzvot truthfully and with love, the Torah has commanded us to sit in a Succah and link all our activities to G-d – including food and drink, sleeping, and everything else - we should reside in it as if we dwelt in it."

Is it possible to create a form of Judaism that does not isolate itself inside its own isolated Succah but rather fulfills the requirement, "reside in it as if you dwell there"? This is one of the main differences between the Chareidi sector and religious nationalism. There is no doubt that all of religious Jewry is represented in the different walks of life in Israel. In spite of this, before Hoshanah Rabba it is important for us to recognize and admit that we have had not only successes but failures too, and that we are far away from the fulfillment of our process of repentance. We cannot rightfully claim that we fully observe the mitzva of "dwelling in the Succah." In our defense, we might note that we are living in the midst of spiritual hurricanes, a cultural atmosphere that makes it uncomfortable for anybody who wants to add a spiritual and religious dimension to his life. We are living in an era when in spite of the great advances in science the atheism of the nineteenth century can still be found in academic corridors. Far too many attempts to synthesize religion with science and with art have failed.

This phenomenon has led many good and true people to an approach based on "dwelling" but not "living," an approach based on the "four amot" of halacha and nothing else. Years ago, I participated in a conference abroad organized by a group that is trying to develop a brand of religious Judaism that does not isolate itself but rather tries to tighten the links between the Torah and the state, science, and labor. At the time, I visited a colleague, an important and educated rabbi, who criticized many aspects of that movement, criticism that was undoubtedly correct in some aspects. As an illustration, he told a story of a Chassid from Munkatsh who studied medicine in the university. After spending hours at work, he would change his clothing and go to the Beit Midrash, where he studied as one of the regular Chassidim. But his rabbi told him, "I promise you that you will have a part in the next world if you leave Judaism." There is nothing to add to this story! The rabbi was worried that the "success" of this man in maintaining a position in two separate worlds would present an undesirable role model, so that in the end his personal success would lead to a general failure. It is clear that his fear was based on a wise premise. But our answer to such a proposal remains, "No, thank you!" We must emphasize again and again that Jewish life will be impossible in Israel, and that in fact there can be no healthy and complete Jewish life at all without taking a general approach to life and maintaining the dimension of "dwelling there."

This also corresponds to the spirit in which we welcome the "Ushpizin," the daily guests to our Succah. First is Avraham, who is described by the Rabbi of Tzanz as "a unique man who acted with kindness to all the other creatures in the world." Next is Yitzchak, who had the strength to fight against evil and

corruption in the world, but his strength was tempered by kindness. Yaacov symbolizes "separating good from evil" and sanctifying everything. Moshe and Aharon stand for "netzach" [eternity] and "hod" [glory], symbols of wisdom and understanding. We can expand this analysis in view of modern times, by adding Yosef, the trait of "yesod" [foundation] which stands for maintaining purity in the modern world of permissiveness, and David, "malchut" [royalty], symbolizing royal authority in an era of frustrating politics.

The Rabbi of Tzanz continues as follows: "We have been given the mitzva of Succah as a way to mend all of the sins that we did while sitting at home... by observing the mitzva of Succah we accept that we will improve our ways in all matters." The process of repentance should bring us to Shemini Atzeret. During the days of Succot, we hear the call of the Almighty, inviting us to celebrate the eighth day, to remain for one more day meant for Bnei Yisrael, who "do not have in mind the material traits of this world... but the real world, one of pleasure and truth." The Almighty calls out to us, "Please stay on for one more day... so that everything will be mended perfectly, in line with the hidden aspects of Simchat Torah."

SERMON BY A GUEST

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah - by Rabbi Rami Berachyahu, Rabbi of Talmon

In the Shulchan Aruch, the laws of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are divided into two separate chapters. Chapter 668 is devoted to Shemini Atzeret and 669 is devoted to the laws of Simchat Torah. However, as opposed to the custom abroad, in Eretz Yisrael both of these holidays take place on the same day.

In our community (Talmon), I noticed in recent years that because of the intensity of the events on the holiday, the obligation of happiness is disturbed. In addition, the joy of Simchat Torah is not fully expressed. For a variety of reasons – the long wait until everybody in the congregation is called to the Torah, the wasteful and disturbing Kiddush of the Gaba'im and those honored with special Torah portions, the dancing with the Torah that takes place late in the morning after a very long wait – it became clear that many people did not have the will to dance for a long time with the Torah scrolls. Many of the people found ways to "sneak away" to their homes, and the "unofficial" gatherings for the Musaf prayer had a bad effect on the few remaining dancers, who tried to maintain the happy holiday spirit in spite of the late hour and the heat. The weariness and heat were augmented by angry parents whose children had not been called to the Torah, anger at prominent members who did not participate in the dancing, women and children who were impatient to begin the holiday meal, and guests who were not able to enjoy the company of their hosts. All of these elements left me and many of the local inhabitants with a feeling of a sorely missed opportunity.

In recent years, we have decided to move the dancing of Simchat Torah to the afternoon, after Mincha. The first immediate result of this is that there is no longer any need for a public Kiddush. This arrangement has led to a much improved

atmosphere during the holiday. In our community, we are now privileged to have a calm morning service, where Hallel is sung in a pleasant way, just as on the other holidays. The morning prayers end at about 11:15, so that the holiday meal with guests and children takes place at a reasonable time. At Mincha, we are able to set aside the appropriate time for celebrating Simchat Torah, without pressure and with a true feeling of the joy of the Torah. In addition, other groups – the Sephardic minyan and the minyan in the nearby neighborhood of Neve Talmon – join in with the main synagogue, which also adds greatly to the holiday atmosphere. We time the last dance to take place after the end of the holiday, so that we can bring musical instruments to the festivities, after reciting the phrase, "He who separates between the holy and the weekday."

This procedure has a great effect on the members of the community, providing a tremendous experience at the end of all the events of the month of Tishrei. In this way, we are able to celebrate both Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah fully. Even though in general it is agreed that for community customs "something new is forbidden by the Torah," this innovation by our community seems to be a great success.

TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

Feeling Discomfort in a Succah - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

If you look at last year's article for Succot, you will find a discussion of the mitzva of Succah when there is a security danger, with the specific question of whether the settlers of Gush Katif could use a Succah in which they were not permitted to sleep because of the danger of falling mortar shells. (Do my readers remember old articles, or can I simply reprint them from one year to the next?) To our extreme sorrow, this question is no longer relevant for Gush Katif, since the entire area has been emptied of Jewish residents. When we return to the site, G-d willing, we can hope that the question will no longer matter, because there will no longer be mortars falling or enemies nearby.

In contrast with many other mitzvot, anybody who feels discomfort is freed of the mitzva of Succah. It is sometimes enough if two drops of rain fall to excuse someone from observing the mitzva and to allow him to eat and sleep in the house. In fact, one who continues to sit in a Succah when he is not obligated to do so is considered a "simpleton." However, this seems to imply that not many people are obligated to observe the mitzva of Succah. Who can honestly say that they are as comfortable in a Succah as at home, especially with respect to sleeping conditions?

Why does the mitzva of Succah have this special rule of excusing somebody because of "discomfort"? Some commentators explain that it is a result of the rule that one should "dwell in the Succah as if he lives there." That is, a person should approach a Succah as if it were his home. Another reason given is that on Succot there is a special mitzva, "You shall be especially happy" [Devarim 16:15], and it is impossible to observe the mitzva of Succah while one is not happy. These reasons have different halachic implications.

Dwell as if you live there: Even at home, a person does not always sit in the most comfortable place. Unless there is a very good reason, most people will not object to sleeping in a different room than usual, just as a person will often eat in the kitchen instead of in the formal dining room of his home. Another example is when a person takes a sandwich to the office and eats it next to his computer (but watch out for crumbs in the keyboard!).

You shall be happy: For some people, the fact that because of two drops of water they cannot sit in the Succah is itself a cause for being upset and unhappy.

A different reason for this rule has also been suggested, similar to the reason that somebody who is extremely upset is not obligated to wear Tefillin – because of his bad feeling, he may not be able to concentrate properly on the performance of the mitzva. If this reason is accepted, not every small irritation (such as an insect bite) will be sufficient to cancel the obligation of the mitzva.

In summary, not everybody who is "upset" is released from the obligation of Succah. However, it is clear that somebody should not build a Succah in a place which will cause him distress. The Succah should be built in such a way that the owner and his family will have enough room to eat and sleep in comfort.

Reference: Rabbis Daichovsky, Halevi, "Techumin," volume 20, pages 326-434; Rabbi Shavin, "Techumin," volume 21, pages 52-56

MOUNT MORIAH

Visiting Jerusalem On the Holidays: To See and to Be Seen - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion

We have been commanded, "Three times during the year, every man shall view the face of the master, G-d of Yisrael" [Shemot 34:23]. The Talmud adds, "Just as one comes to see, he also comes to be seen."

To Be Seen

The simple meaning of the mitzva is indeed to be seen – that is, in order for G-d to see every man. This began with the binding of Yitzchak, where it is written, "And G-d called that place 'G-d will see,' about which it is said today, 'at the mountain of G-d will he be seen.'" [Bereishit 22:14]. The site will be chosen by G-d, as is written, "the place which your G-d will choose" [Devarim 12:5], but perhaps in parallel to the Divine choice, every man in Yisrael has been commanded to travel to Jerusalem in order to be chosen by the Almighty. The nation travels to Jerusalem three times a year so that G-d is able at that time to renew His choice of Bnei Yisrael.

The main part of the mitzva is that man should show himself to the Almighty in the Temple courtyard. But this also includes a requirement of three related elements: ritual purity, appropriate actions, and bringing the proper sacrifices – an Olah, a Shelamim out of happiness and a Shelamim to celebrate the holiday.

The obligation, "Do not be seen before me empty-handed" [Shemot 23:15], is usually taken to mean that a man must bring sacrifices to the Temple, something that will give him the opportunity to become closer and to be seen by G-d. However, the sages saw in this a warning not to be "empty-handed" of the mitzva of charity. A man who comes to Jerusalem will be seen by G-d only if he fulfills his obligations and gives charity to the poor. The act of being seen by G-d takes place on the Temple Mount, which is intimately related to acts of kindness and charity.

To See

How can a man see the face of G-d? According to the Mishna, "Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai would sit in the shadow of the Temple," and "Rabban Gamliel would sit on the steps leading to the Temple Mount." Meeting the great men of the generation is a way to meet the words of the living G-d and to meet those who pass on the oral Torah from one generation to the next, all in close proximity to the ancient Torah scroll that was kept in the Holy of Holies.

The Kohanim would take the holy vessels into the outer courtyard so that the people could look at them, and after the holiday they would immerse them in a ritual bath out of fear that somebody had touched them and made them impure. Similarly, normally the Temple walls were covered with tablets of gold one Amma by one Amma and the thickness of a Dinar. On the holiday, the tablets were removed and placed on the side of the Temple Mount, so that those who came to Jerusalem could see the beautiful work. The curtain in front of the Holy of Holies would also be rolled up when the people came on the holidays, so that it was possible to show the people that the Keruvim were entwined with each other. The leaders would tell the people: See how fond the Almighty is of you, similar to the love between male and female.

That is, on the holidays the nation would be able to see the glory of the Temple and its vessels, the images drawn on the curtain, and the Keruvim. The vision of the Keruvim clearly demonstrated the mutual feelings, the fondness, and the love between the community of Bnei Yisrael and the Almighty.

Does Seeing and Being Seen Correspond to Fear and Love?

Perhaps the two aspects, to see and to be seen, represent two sides of our link to the Almighty in general, especially as it is revealed within the Temple.

A man who comes before G-d to be seen must be worthy of being seen. Assuming that because of practical considerations not everybody came to the Temple at every holiday, every trip of this type must have had special meaning for those who went. This includes the need for ritual purity, the spiritual preparations for a meeting with the Almighty, and the sacrifices that a man would have brought. An important element in this trip to the Temple would certainly have been the effect of the fear of G-d in coming to the Temple to be seen.

On the other hand, the holiday is an opportunity for showing the love between the community of Yisrael and the Almighty.

The obligation of going to the Temple demonstrates the close approach and the will to be with the Almighty and to meet Him. From this point of view, the view of the Keruvim and the comparison between the love between G-d for the nation and love of a man for a woman brought the relationship between G-d and the nation into sharp focus. This also enhanced the feeling that the Temple is the site where the relationship between G-d and the community of Yisrael is best illustrated by the concept that "a face to face meeting shows the contact between one heart and another." When Bnei Yisrael approach G-d out of love, they are best able to see the love that the Almighty has for them.

Thus, the Temple facilitates the meeting with the Almighty, from the two points of view, love and fear. The Temple is the site of royal authority of the Almighty, where a man can appear and show his fear of G-d. It is also a symbol of the tight link between Yisrael and the Almighty, where man can see the face of G-d and feel love.

Let us hope and pray that we will indeed soon be privileged to see and be seen in the Temple of G-d.

A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

The Fight Goes On - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

This is a story that took place during the Yom Kippur war, which happened 32 years ago. This was a very harsh war. Many soldiers were killed and many others were injured. There were some terrible scenes, and many soldiers fell into despair. At one point, a platoon commander came to Simcha, the deputy company commander. The platoon commander said, "My soldiers are incapable of going into their tank, because of their great fear. They all experienced difficult battles, and they were saved by miracles. Their colleagues fell right in front of their eyes. They cannot take any more of this..."

Simcha gathered the soldiers together, and looked them straight in the eye. "Look, men, I have no complaints against you. If you do not want to get into your tanks, you do not have to. I know what each and every one of you has experienced, and I know that you did the maximum that you could. Anybody who wants to go home can do so now, and I will really not be upset at him."

The soldiers responded with a heavy silence. I looked at the man on my right, the one that was closest to me, and I will never forget the look on his face. He tried to say something, but his words dissolved into weeping. He managed to say something garbled about his home, his wife, and his children, and he added a description of a burning tank with his friends caught inside, because they had not managed to jump free. He ended with a heart-rending cry.

"Look, man," Simcha said, "You can leave if you want to. Believe me that I understand you completely. You have certainly done all that is required of you."

The man stood, confused. Suddenly he stopped crying, but it was clear from his face that he was caught in the middle of an internal struggle in his heart. Would he turn away, walking down the path with his back to the tanks, and leave his friends behind, to return home?

He remained rooted in his place, as if he were frozen. Simcha sent his gaze out, far away. In the end, with his voice about to crack, he said, "Look, men, I am no longer very young. This is the fourth war in which I am participating in this country. I went through the War of Independence, the Sinai War, and the Six Day War, and now this war has begun. I started to fight before you were even born. That is four wars in this land, and before that I fought in the Second World War, in Europe. From my earliest days, all I can remember is being on leave between wars. When I think about it, I take hold of my head and say, G-d: How long will this go on? Perhaps that is the reason that I can understand you all so well now..."

And then Simcha continued quietly. "The worst time was in Europe. They took my parents and my whole family, and we had no way to defend ourselves, to lift up our hands, to protest. I have not seen them since. If you are wondering what a man my age is doing here, that is your answer. Men, I am fighting with all my strength, as a madman, so that what happened to my generation and my entire family in the Holocaust in Europe will not happen to your generation and to your children... This time we can defend ourselves – and I for one will not give up this privilege!"

"Sir!" a young man standing to my right, at the end of the line, said. "I am going to my tank!" He spoke quietly, as if the words were of no importance. But they were full of strength – a simple human strength.

"Me too!" said a second soldier, and then, "Me too!" a third one chimed in.

The deputy company commander returned to the tanks, and the men went with him in silence. Nobody opened his mouth to speak. They all went quietly, in deep thought. The man from the end of the line, on the right, led them all to the tanks that were waiting nearby.

The battle continued, and ended in a victory for our troops.

(Source: Yediot Abaronont, Heritage of Israel)

THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

Parting Words - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

"Rabbi Yochanan said, Why are idol worshippers contaminated? It is because they did not participate at Mount Sinai. When the serpent came to Chava, it contaminated her. When Bnei Yisrael stood at Mount Sinai, they were cleansed of their contamination. But the idol worshippers, who did not appear at Sinai, remain contaminated... And he disagrees with Rabbi Abba Bar Kahane, who said: it took three generations for the contamination to be removed from our ancestors. Avraham gave birth to Yishmael, Yitzchak gave birth to Esav, and then

Yaacov gave birth to the twelve tribes, which had no remaining blemishes." [Shabbat 145b].

Filth has contaminated man's soul from the time that he ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, when the concepts of good and evil within man were mixed up, and his ethical soul was damaged. When was this contamination removed, and by whom? According to Rabbi Yochanan, it happened to Bnei Yisrael when they received the Torah. The Torah is not only a tree of good knowledge, it also serves as a tree of life for those who fulfill it (this is different from the original tree of knowledge, which was linked to death).

Rabbi Abba, on the other hand, insists that the process of purification began many years before this, and that it was finished with the birth of the sons in Yaacov's house.

Taking both of these approaches together, we have a Divine Torah from heaven on one hand and a heritage passed down by our forefathers from generation to generation on the other hand. Both of these paths are symbols of a tree of knowledge of the good which is a basis for life.

The tractate of Avot, which we have spent several years studying together, is a combination of these two approaches. It is based on the Torah handed down at Sinai, as is clear from the opening sentence: "Moshe received the Torah at Sinai" [1:1]. The benefits of Torah and the ways to acquire it are discussed at the end, in chapter 6, and many passages throughout the tractate discuss how important it is to study Torah. In addition, Avot is full of sayings by the leaders of the nation and its wise men, who collected their human wisdom and their ethical approach into wonderful sayings and advice. These sayings, together with the guidance of the Torah, will not only purify the soul of those who study the tractate from the filth of the primeval serpent but also provide him with the scents of the Garden of Eden and show him how to follow its light.

And we would like to bless the faithful readers who stayed with us in our study of the tractate of Avot for the last three years with the following blessing: "Be happy... when you leave... and in your tents... Yisrael, you are blessed, who else is like you?" [Devarim 33:18,29].

HOLY AND SECULAR

A Baby's Feeling of Security - by Rabbi Amichai Gordin, Yeshivat Har Etzion and Shaalavim High School

The Yom Kippur War was a difficult trauma for the entire country. Life in the country after the war was different in every way from life beforehand. One of the most difficult problems that arose after this terrible war was the question of Divine faith. Everybody wondered, "How could the Almighty have abandoned us this way only six years after He led us to such a great and impressive victory in the Six Day War?"

In response to this crisis, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein gave a talk at the time on the subject of faith and security. This talk was summarized in writing thirty years ago, and now, in view of the

difficult events that recently took place, it has been reprinted by Yeshivat Har Etzion. Due to the importance of the matter, I feel that it is worthwhile to summarize the spirit of the rabbi's article. The following material was not seen by Rabbi Lichtenstein and I take sole responsibility for what is written below.

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The concept of a feeling of security – "bitachon" – includes two elements: faith ("emunah") and love ("ahavah"). Faith is the normal and more natural aspect.

"This is a generally optimistic outlook, full of hope and anticipation of the future. In a battlefield, it means that a person expects to be victorious. In a time of crisis, it holds promise of salvation. At a time of nightmares, it holds a promise of the approaching light of dawn. In brief, this is summed up in the feeling that 'with G-d's help, everything will turn out for the best.'"

However, in addition to this feeling of faith, there is another type of security, less well known, but nevertheless as important as can be. This is security out of love.

"What does a baby feel when he is being carried by his mother? Does he turn to her with a belief that she will protect him from any stress? ... He turns towards her because he wants to be close to her. At that moment, he is not thinking about future plans or the fulfillment of dreams. He only knows one thing: the external world is cold and somewhat cruel, but here, close to his mother, there is a feeling of immunity and protection. His mother caresses him and consoles him as only a mother can... The very fact that he is close to her gives him life and vitality, toughens him and gives him strength. He follows her wherever she goes and whatever happens, not necessarily out of a sense of dedication and willingness to sacrifice for her. Wherever she goes he will follow, holding on to her dress with his small fingers. This then is the essence of such love: 'As a baby next to his mother... Yisrael will pray to G-d, from now and forever' [Tehillim 131:2-3]."

Security based on love does not contradict the security of faith, in the same way that security of faith does not conflict with security based on love. However, there are times when one type should be emphasized more than the other. Security based on love is less popular, but it is very important, especially in times of crisis.

"It (security based on love) does not disperse the clouds of doubt, it does not encourage hope, it does not make the skies look pink. Its theme is not the phrase, 'all will be well'... Just the opposite: it can be expressed in the firm decision that even in the face of bad events we will remain attached to the Almighty. No matter what happens we will not turn to vain or false approaches, and we will not lose our faith. Whatever happens, we will remain faithful to G-d to the very end. We will never change or replace this faith.

"This approach does not imply that the Almighty will always stand at our side, rather it demands that we always remain at

His side. By its very nature, this approach is less popular than the other one. A demand for loyalty is harder to merchandise than a promise of good. However, this approach also offers consolation and strength, for it consists not only of a demand but also provides a message of hope. Separation from the Almighty is the worst possible disaster that can happen to mankind, and when the Torah demands 'you shall attach yourself to Him' [Devarim 10:20] it presents us not only with a demand but also with an opportunity."

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Rabbi Lichtenstein quoted a non-Jewish philosopher when he said, "There is a tremendous difference difficulties and doubts. No issue raises greater difficulties than the existence of the Creator, but there is no issue in which I have greater faith than in His existence." We are permitted to live with questions and difficulties. Our faith in the Almighty is not meant to transform the world into something that is simple. Our security based on belief in the Almighty gives us a reference point to support us in stormy and difficult times. Our security gives us the seed of true and eternal love. With love and faith, we will eventually triumph.

THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Faith, Art, Love, and Honor - by the Department of Education, World Mizrahi

In the coming school year, the religious grammar school "Usha" in Ramat Gan, led by the principal Mrs. Zahava Messinger, is starting a new program based on the policy of the Religious Education Authority in the Ministry of Education and Culture. This will be to establish a school that will serve as a source of education and study. This unique program includes types of activities and evaluation criteria at all levels, combining various subject areas, such as Hebrew, Judaism, art, and music.

The following subjects are included in the program: Faith and love of the Almighty; respect for parents, teachers, and friends; and love and respect for nature, the environment, the nation, and the land. The subject of faith and love of the Almighty will be a repeated theme during the entire year, with emphasis on the special prayers relevant to each month. Performing groups in the school include a choir, an oriental drummer group, and a percussion band. An art gallery devoted to the subject of synagogues and Torah scrolls has also been established in the school. Special studies will also be instituted on the subjects of art and music. The intention of the school is to fulfill the potential of the students using their intelligence together with their language capabilities.

This program was successfully started in the beginning of the school year. The school administration expects to have help from the Sheirut Leumi girls in the Chemdat Midrasha of Ramat Gan, operated by the National Council for Torah Education, Mischelet Lifshitz in Jerusalem, Mischelet Talpiot in Tel Aviv, and the Education Department of worldwide Mizrahi. The girls of Sheirut Leumi took a special course in the Emunah College in Jerusalem on the subject of art.

THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

What if There Are No Candles or Spices? - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

It is written, "Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rav: One does not search for a flame in the same way that he searches for a mitzva" [Berachot 53b]. Thus, not being able to recite the blessing on a candle does not prevent the recitation of Havdallah, and if one does not have a candle he should recite the Havdallah without it. It is best to try to find a candle and recite the blessing later, but it is not necessary to make a large effort (Shulchan Aruch 298:1).

According to the Rashba, quoting the Raavad, it is also not necessary to take the time to search for spices. The Shulchan Aruch accepts this ruling too: "One should recite a blessing for spices if he has some, but if he does not have any there is no need to search for them" [297:1]. (However, note that there are conflicting opinions.)

What Spices are Appropriate for Havdallah?

A Perfume that Has No Base: According to the TUR, the blessing for oil to which scented plants has been added is "He who creates scented trees" [216]. And if the plants have been removed, the blessing is "He who creates pleasant oil." Others claim that no blessing should be recited for this oil. The Shulchan Aruch rules that because of the doubt involved it is best not to smell such oil at all (216:5). (One who does smell the oil should not recite any blessing, since a doubtful blessing is not recited.) As a result, later commentators have ruled that a scent that does not have a base material should not be used for Havdallah. For example, the TAZ writes that one should not use an empty box for Havdallah that once had spices in it, and the Mishna Berura adds that if a small amount of the spice remains on the walls it can be used (297:7).

Nowadays, there are spices which are made of oil which had natural spices that were later removed. These spices should not be used for Havdallah (various responsa, such as Yashiv Moshe, page 18, in the name of Rabbi Elyashiv, Yalkut Yosef, Shabbat 1, page 466). However, if there remains plant material mixed into the spice it can be used for Havdallah (even if this cannot be seen by the naked eye, for example in the case of an extract).

Artificial Spice: Rabbi S.Z. Auerbach raised a question of whether artificial scents can be used for Havdallah, since the scent is manufactured and not natural. Therefore, it is best not to use an artificial scent. But if natural plants (or an extract) are also mixed in this can be used.

Deodorant: The Talmud writes that one should not make a blessing on spices used for a toilet or for treating the dead, and this is quoted in the Shulchan Aruch (297:2). The Mishna Berura notes that the reason no blessing is made is that these do not provide a pleasant odor but only mask a bad smell. This implies that a deodorant or a bathroom spray should not be used for Havdallah.

Perfume Used by Women: Even if a perfume has a plant extract, it should not be used for a blessing because it is used for lustful purposes. The Shulchan Aruch rules that a blessing should not be recited for "lustful spices... since it is forbidden to smell them lest one becomes used to kissing or sexual approach" [217:4]. According to the Mishna Berura, this applies only when the man knows whose perfume it is, even if it is lying on a table and has not been applied on a woman. On the other hand, perfume can be used if it is new or if the owner is not known (on condition that it contains a plant extract).



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