



שבת

12/10/2005

Parshat Ha'azinu

No 1087:

12 Tishrei 5766 (15 October 2005)

STARTING POINT

Atonement for the Land and Atonement for the People - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

The epic poem of Ha'azinu ends with the following verse: "Nations, praise His nation, for He will avenge the blood of His slaves. And He will avenge His enemies, and atone for His land, His people" [Devarim 32:43]. The last phrase, declaring that G-d will "atone for His land, His people," is difficult to understand and to put into a proper context. Many commentators have proposed different ways to understand it. For example, Rashi links the last two words as if they were connected by the word "and" – "He will compensate His land and His people for the troubles that they had, which were caused by the enemy." Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, implies that the "land" will serve as atonement for the "people" – "In my opinion, this means that the people will atone for the land, like in the verse, 'stones wore down the water' [Iyov 14:19] (that is, the real meaning is the reverse, the water has eroded the stones) ... What this means is that Yisrael will avenge the other nations, making atonement for Eretz Yisrael because of the blood that was spilled in the land." However, both of these commentaries leave an unanswered question. Why is this verse written in such a complicated way and not in simple and straightforward language?

Perhaps the phrase can be explained in a different way. We must remember that a link between blood and atonement appears in other places in the Torah, as has been noted by Ibn Ezra. For example, we are told, "The land will not be forgiven for the blood that was spilled on it, except for by the blood of the one who spilled it. And you shall not contaminate the land where you live, where I dwell." [Bamidbar 35:33-34]. This implies that blood spilled on the land causes it to be impure, and the contamination can only be removed by spilling the blood of the guilty person. The conclusion is that the land is harmed by the spilling of blood, since this is the land where the Almighty dwells.

A different point of view can be seen in another place. A calf is beheaded when there is an unidentified murder in an area, and the atonement is achieved by killing the calf, as a symbol of the blood of the anonymous killer. In that case, the atonement does not refer to the land but to the nation, as is noted in the prayer recited by the elders: "Forgive your nation, Yisrael, whom you redeemed, G-d, and do not let innocent blood be spilled among your nation, Yisrael. And the blood will be avenged." [Devarim 21:8]. Thus, in this case, we are taught that if innocent blood is

spilled the entire nation is in need of atonement, as part of the responsibility of the community for an unfortunate individual.

With this in mind, we can return to the problematic phrase, "He will atone for His land, His people." The atonement is a dual one, for the nation and for the land. But the word "and" was not written here on purpose, because that would have implied that one of the two elements is secondary to the other one. The way the phrase is written shows that each factor – the land and the nation – needs its own atonement for the spilling of blood. This will be achieved by the spilling of the blood of those who were responsible, as is written in the preceding verse, "I will make my arrows intoxicated with blood and my sword will devour flesh, from the blood of the killed and the captured, from the first wild actions of the enemy." [Devarim 32:42]. Spilling the blood of the enemies of Bnei Yisrael will thus be the basis for atonement for both the land and the nation.

POINT OF VIEW

Unmarried People and the Holidays - by Rabbi Yisrael Rozen

"A man must be happy on the holidays, together with his children, his wife, his household, and all those who depend on him, as is written, 'You shall be happy on your holiday, you and your son and daughter...' [Devarim 16:14]. This joy should include happiness for him, his children, and his household, each one as is appropriate. How is this to be accomplished? The young ones should be given nuts and candies. For the women he should buy as much pretty clothing and jewelry as he can afford... The court should appoint guards on the holidays that will watch over the roofs and orchards, and on the river banks, to prevent people from gathering, men and women together, in a way which might lead to sin." [Rambam, Hilchot Yom Tov, 6:17, 6:18, 6:21].

If all year round the single and divorced men and women have a difficult time with their fate, this must be even more relevant

This issue of Shabbat B'Shabbato is sponsored

לז"נ

מרת הנא בת ר' מרדכי מנדל אלינער

ר' עוזר בן ר' שאול אלינער

הרב שמעון בן ר' זכריה סמנער

גמר חתימה טובה

during the holiday season. The Jewish holidays are centered on the family, which is at the focus of the experience of the celebrations. The joy of the holiday is as defined above, meant for "you, your son, and your daughter..." And the laws quoted above show that there should be a family atmosphere, starting with gifts and leading on to a picnic "on the roofs and in the orchards, and on the river banks." The loneliness felt during the rest of the year grows strongest as the holidays approach and arrive, and it is now a fitting time to take note of this distressful situation in a compassionate way.

Forced or Voluntary Loneliness

It is a well known fact that the numbers of young unmarried people, and the phenomenon of delayed marriage, are both on the increase within Israeli society as a whole. As far as I am concerned, this has reached worrisome proportions. According to figures published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 30% of people between the ages of 30 and 35 are not married, and this figure is as high as 60% between the ages of 25 and 30. (This is for the year 2003, it can be assumed that the current figures are even higher.) There are no separate statistics for the national religious sector, but it is clear that the percentages are rising among this sector too. There are also problematic statistics with respect to divorce. The divorce rate in Israeli society is frightening – about one-third, as far as I know. The national religious sector is also quickly approaching this frightening proportion of divorce.

There can be no doubt that these phenomena are worldwide, and they are part of the characteristics of the enlightened and liberal western world, with its tendency for self destruction. This widespread loneliness is probably also related to the increased importance of individualism, to the detriment of the needs of the community. "Permissiveness" also is a large factor in the trend of shattering family values, with the internet providing its own alternatives in a virtual world. The result of all these phenomena is clear: souls full of pain and broken hearts.

My purpose in this article is not to criticize this phenomenon, to search for explanations, or to point out the factors which can be blamed for the increases. Rather, I recognize the facts, and they disturb me. The holiday season is the appropriate time to raise this issue, to note that the situation is undesirable, to feel empathy with unfortunate people, and to become involved. I am sure that every lonely person has his own good reasons, feelings, and a very good justification for his own particular status. I do not feel that I am obliged or that I have a right to give advice or to preach to these people. However, I will try to meet the challenge by noting a few things, with sensitivity and determination.

The Great Importance of the Family

Everybody has his own set of values, even if it is not codified in a formal list. The higher an item is on the list of values, the more it takes precedence over other things. Everybody is forced to compromise at times, relenting on some valued item when it conflicts with something that is more important. Some people forego the pleasures of good food in order to maintain a

good appearance. Others are willing to live under difficult circumstances in order to support the concept of settling the land. Some people are willing to give up a career in order to spend more time with their children. Many people are willing to volunteer their time and efforts for the good of society and other less fortunate people at a cost to their own personal comfort or economic good. We all give up on our desires and inclinations when they are opposed by religious demands, which are highest on our list of values. Do all of these concessions cause us pain? Certainly not! Just the opposite: the element of "sacrifice" raises the level of these actions and provides satisfaction for those higher values that drove our decisions. Our "scale of happiness" is subjective, and anybody who has the privilege of fulfilling what seems to him to be something of high value will be quite happy.

Where does the value of family appear in our scale of values? Anybody who has not experienced a taste of family living can never understand how important it is. What is there left for a person in his or her life aside from children and close relatives, after the quest for "desires, jealousy, and honor" has ended? A family means two parents who are attuned to each other, even if they do not always walk arm in arm. A family means the shouts of children and crowds of aunts and uncles, and respect for grandparents. A family means belonging, a small tribe. A family means a small campfire in the heart, worth a great many other values or gleaming personal interests.

And that is the essence of the message that I want to leave to the community of unmarried men and women, and to those who are considering separation. Give up a bit, or even a lot, for the benefit of the great value of "family." Do not be so choosy, relent on the dreams of perfection and the definite ideas, and lower the criteria of acceptance, no matter how justified they are. The entire world was created by an act of Divine "tzimtzum" – a minimized presence – when G-d as it were decreased His space, leaving room for the universe. A family is created, exists, and grows based on this "secret of minimization." It is the secret of the couple that form the nucleus of a family. The family is one of the most wonderful and most Divine of the creations of human society. Shape your dreams around it! Put your heart and soul into it! It is worth giving up other values, desires, and challenges, all of which are puny when compared to the family.

We can only hope that these words, straight from the heart, will have an affect on the hearts of our readers.

SERMON BY A GUEST

Days of Repentance and Days of Faith - by Rabbi Moshe Klein, Rabbi of the Neighborhood Kefar Ganin, Petach Tikvah, and Deputy Head of the Conversion Authority

Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Penitence, and Yom Kippur are over, and we are in the midst of the happy days of Succot. Thoughtful people have delved into the connection between the days of penitence and the days of happiness. Repentance and searching the soul remove some of the joy of life. Self reckoning leads to internal pain and less happiness. And then

the time of happiness arrives, and we are able to make up for what we lost during the beginning of the month.

However, the days of Succot also have an aspect of strengthening faith. The author of Sefat Emet discusses the link between faith and happiness. "The mitzva of Succah is the trait of faith in the Almighty. As our sage taught, 'Leave your permanent dwelling.' Do not trust your possessions, put your faith in G-d alone. That is why this is the time of our happiness, because there is no greater happiness than that of one who truly has faith in G-d." All year round it is necessary to teach faith, but this is especially needed at the beginning of a new year. Rosh Hashanah is called the time "when our holiday is hidden" [Tehillim 81:4], because the results of the judgment remain a secret. Secrecy is difficult for a person, as is written, "You hid your face, and I was frightened" [30:8]. In the beginning of the year, we do not know what will happen to us and how the future will develop, what was decided about us on Rosh Hashanah and sealed on Yom Kippur. We hope and pray that we were written down for a good life, but the Divine decision is hidden from us, and every day during the new year reveals more about what was decided at the beginning of the year. We leave the days of judgment with fear and trepidation: What will happen? Will we experience better days than in the past? And then the days of Succot arrive, days of joy and a showing of faith, when we reveal that we put our faith in G-d and anticipate His salvation.

This corresponds to the way Abarbanel explains the verse, "And Yaacov was very frightened, and he was upset" [Bereishit 32:8]. Yaacov was not afraid because of a lack of faith, rather "his fear was that of a true warrior, who fears death and is aware of danger when he enters battle." The fear, which is a natural reaction at this point, is what leads to great faith that the Almighty will help Yaacov in his meeting with his brother. Fear leads to faith, and the greater and more intense the fear the greater will be the faith that results in the heart of the believer. As a result of Yaacov's natural fear, his faith that the Almighty will rescue him grew.

The start of a new year is a time of optimism, since it brings a new beginning. We have the opportunity to wake up tomorrow morning and begin a new life, with a clean slate. However, there is also an element of natural fear, since we do not know where we are headed and what the coming days will contain. So we must also show an element of faith. When hope and faith are intermingled we can hope for better days. We are at a time of a beginning, we hope that we are headed for better times and we believe that this faith will give us the strength to fulfill our destiny of mending the world as part of the kingdom of G-d.

TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

The Unusual Etrog - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

In the western section of India, in the area of the Windia Mountains, there is a city name Ujin. At the time, the Jews who lived there grew a very unusual type of etrog. This fruit is neither smooth nor rough, like the typical etrog with which we are familiar. Rather it is divided on the outside into five "fingers," and it is therefore known as the "etrog with fingers."

At the time we are discussing, about a hundred years ago, etrogim would usually reach Baghdad from Egypt. Evidently even at that time Egypt had a reputation for exporting the four species for Succot (as we can see this year with the problems of obtaining lulavim from El Arish). One year, the Egyptian etrogim were late in arriving, or perhaps they were all spoiled on their long trip, and the Jews of Iraq wanted to import these unusual "finger etrogim" from Ujin.

A rabbi and his disciple disagreed over whether to accept the unusual fruits for the holiday. The teacher was Rabbi Ovadia Somech, author of the responsa Zivchei Tzedek, and the disciple was Rabbi Yosef Chaim, the Ben Ish Chai. Rabbi Ovadia was not upset by the unusual appearance of the etrog. An etrog with an unusual appearance is not acceptable if this is a result of physical interference – for example, if a tight string had been tied around it at an early stage, which led to a distorted form, like a belt around the fruit. But the Indian etrog grew the way it did naturally. Isn't a Yemenite etrog suitable for use on the holiday, in spite of its great size (sometimes as big as a watermelon)? The rabbi felt the same was true of this unusual etrog, which was similar to traditional etrogim, except for some differences (like the "fingers").

The Ben Ish Chai was not ready to base his ruling on the characteristics of the fruit but insisted that it be backed up by a long-lasting tradition that it could be used on Succot. In the absence of such a tradition, he feared that this etrog had been mixed with some other fruit. Even though they were very similar to a proper etrog, he would not allow them to be used.

Halachic literature has other examples of etrogim that looked different from the usual fruits. The Ben Ish Chai mentions a "dovdov" etrog, but it is not clear just what he means. In any case, he forbids using this fruit, in spite of how similar its appearance is to a normal etrog, "even if one year there is no regular etrog at all, this should not be used, even if no blessing is recited."

Reference: Rabbi Dr. Avraham Shemesh, "Techumin," volume 24, pages 343-347

A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

A Beautiful Etrog - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

This is a story about a rabbi who was extremely poor and found it very difficult to earn a living. He had a hard time providing food for himself and for his household, and he always lived "from hand to mouth" – any income that he obtained was immediately spent for urgent needs of the house. He was never able to keep a sum of money in his hands.

One time, as Succot approached, the rabbi decided to buy himself an etrog with which he would be able to celebrate the holiday in a proper way. However, he lived in Europe many years ago, and an etrog was very rare and could only be bought for a very high price. The rabbi did not even have enough money for his daily needs, where could he find the huge sum needed in order to buy an etrog?

What did the rabbi do? He said to himself, "For the next seven days, I do not need my Tefillin. It is therefore best that I observe the mitzva of the four species of Succot, and afterwards we will see what happens." So he sold his beautiful set of Tefillin, and with the money he bought a beautiful etrog.

When he came home, his face beamed as he showed the etrog to his wife and children. The wife saw her husband with such a beautiful etrog, and she was shocked. She knew very well that they did not have enough money to buy even a simple etrog, and they certainly could not afford such a beautiful one. If her husband had found some way to obtain the money, he should have taken into account that in the house there was barely anything to eat!

The woman did not hold back, and she asked her husband: Where did you get the money to buy such a beautiful etrog? And the rabbi replied, I sold my Tefillin and bought an etrog with the money.

The woman was quite angry with her husband, and she said (and rightly so!): "How could you do that, when in the house there is nothing at all to eat? First of all you must take care of your hungry children, and you must pay our rent and the teacher's salary, among other things. Have we paid off all our debts, so that we can afford to buy an etrog fit for a rich man?" In her anger, she took the etrog from her husband and threw it onto the floor. The etrog fell, and it broke into two.

The rabbi lifted up the etrog and saw that it could no longer be used for the holiday, and he in turn became very angry. Not only was his wife not happy that he would have been able to fulfill the mitzva as he wanted to, she had thrown the etrog down and spoiled it completely! What was the result of all this? For a moment or two he managed to hold his anger back, and then he thought: "I have no Tefillin, I have no etrog. Let me at least console myself by not being angry with my wife for what she did. She must have acted out of justified anger and suffering. I should have asked her advice before buying the etrog instead of just showing it to her afterwards."

So the rabbi consoled his wife and calmed her down. In this way he renewed the peaceful atmosphere of the house.

In the end, the rabbi spent Succot without an etrog and without Tefillin, but he was happy. At least he had not become angry and had not spoiled the peace in their home.

(If you have an interesting story to tell, you are invited to send it to us.)

THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

Chapter 2 Mishna 7 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

"He used to say: One who increased his flesh will increase the number of worms..."

Hillel's words criticizing negative extremes are reminiscent of prohibitions in the Torah with respect to increased numbers. "He shall not have too many horses... He shall not have too many wives... so that they will not turn his heart away. And he shall not have too much gold and silver." [Devarim 17:16-17]. Just as in the Torah having too many wives is considered bad, so is it criticized in the Mishna. Just as in the Torah having too many possessions (horses, silver, gold) is considered bad, so is it criticized in the Mishna. However, there is a difference. The Torah uses clear language, explicitly forbidding the act – "He shall not have too many..." – while the Mishna is written in more general terms. This bad action will lead to the following bad result. However, there is no explicit prohibition. In addition, the commandment in the Torah is directed at a king (or to the way the community relates to the king), while Hillel's words are meant for every individual. Perhaps the similarity of the two passages implies that everybody in Yisrael has some aspects of royalty (for example, "All Yisrael are royal children" [Shabbat 67a, Bava Metziya 113b; "All Yisrael are worthy of royalty" [Horayot 13a], implying that every individual of Yisrael is a potential king). Thus, even if we are not all included in a direct prohibition with respect to extremes, we should take the general recommendation into account.

Just as there is a parallelism in the negative, so is there a similarity in a positive sense. The king has been commanded to increase his study of Torah – "It shall remain with him and he shall read it all the days of his life" [Devarim 17:19]. In the same way it is written in the Mishna, "One who increases his Torah study increases his life." These declarations are very important to us, especially in view of the approach of the festival of the harvest.

LAND OF MY BIRTH

Succot 5709: Breakthrough into the Negev - by Zev Wallack

The following is the personal story of a soldier who fought in the Israeli War of Independence, who has written under the penname "Riaf."

It was Succot 5709 (1948). We could still hear the echoes of the brief and succinct words of our commander. A combat troupe, we sat around him in a circle and listened attentively to his words. It was pleasant for us to hear his authoritative and calming voice.

"Men, the route to the Negev is surrounded by enemies who have broken their commitment by attacking the routes towards the south during the time of the armistice. Settlements in the Negev have been cut off. It is our duty to rescue them, and to do it immediately. First the tanks will move and soften up the main enemy outpost, the one that prevents us from opening the road. We will follow, attacking and winning, with G-d's help. That is what we must do, we must conquer the enemy."

At that moment, I forgot all my thoughts about a chance for a home visit. The first day of Succot had passed, I had managed to make a blessing on the four species of the holiday at our base the day before. I thought, how lucky it is that it is not

necessary to put on Tefillin during the intermediate days of the holiday. However, what would I do about the mitzva of lulav and etrog for the rest of the holiday? But there was no time for more thinking, we had to finish our preparations for the coming battle, put on our helmets, take our weapons and equipment, and move forward.

As dawn approached, stars still showed in the sky, which was black with night, and gunfire and the sound of cannons by our side and the enemy continued without pause. The drone of airplanes could be heard all the time, but this time it was our planes on the way to Majdal (today Ashkelon), Falujah, El Arish, Beer Sheva, and Beit Govrin. Let the enemy get the taste of our bombs before they surrendered to the Israeli army...

I found my siddur, with the noise of the cannons in the background, and I began to pray at the time of "vatikin" – with the rising sun. When I reached Hallel, I thought of the multitudes of the Arab armies that wanted to destroy us, and I was filled with faith based on the verses:

"All the nations surround me... Let them turn round and round... They surround me like bees... And G-d will help me... He provided me with salvation... The right hand of G-d wages war... I will not die, I will live to tell of the actions of G-d... Please, G-d, help us. Please, G-d, give us success." [Tehillim 118].

I did not pray for long, since the softening up phase was nearing its end, and the time for attack approached. We heard about the advance of our soldiers at Beit Govrin and the failure of the Jordanian Legion with their armored division, which had replaced the Egyptians. This reminded me of what we had read in the Haftorah of Succot in the IDF synagogue, not more than twenty hours before:

"And G-d will come out and fight those nations, as He fights on the day of battle... And you will flee just as you fled from the earthquake... And this will be the plague with which G-d will afflict all of the nations... And if the family of Egypt will not rise up... They will be struck by the plague with which G-d will strike the nations..." [Zecharia 14].

The noise of the cannon and the firing of the machine guns did not stop for a moment. We were lying on the ground when we received the command to attack. We rose and jumped into the trucks, followed by a huge convoy with supplies for the blockaded settlements. On the other side of the road, we saw the Iraqi police, this time in silence... In a daring attack, we took the outposts of Kochava and Beit Teimah by surprise, capturing the Egyptian posts and digging in ourselves. The enemy did not surrender peacefully, rather they attacked us again and again with the help of armored troops and reinforcements. But we managed to repel them time and again, and each time they left behind dead and wounded, together with new and modern weapons...

One more outpost threatened the way to the south, the outpost of Chulikat (Cheletz). It was very well fortified and it had given us bitter losses. We did not have time to rest from the first battle, and we were immediately called upon to dash towards

Chulikat... The fighting was worse than anything we had encountered before. Was there anything we didn't use in the fight? We used cannons, mortars, rifles, bayonets, and our fingernails... the place passed from hand to hand, back and forth, until in the end we took control. Finally, the road to the Negev was completely secure, and the convoys of food continued on to the south, in order to bring salvation to the blockaded settlements.

When we returned to our base to rest from the battle, I took a siddur and prayed. I took a lulav and etrog in my hand, waved the four species in the four directions of the compass, and I said:

"By the privilege of the mitzva of the four species and by the privilege of the mitzva of war in which we have participated, we hope to take possession of our land from the four directions: west and east, north and south. Let us see the fulfillment of the prayer, 'Let the merciful one reestablish for us the fallen Succah of David.'"

(Source: "Riaf," Machanayim, volume 16 – with slight modifications)

THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

School as an Educational Institution - by the Department of Education, World Mizrahi

The Amit educational organization has established a website on the subject of "The House of Education – Home, Family, and Community." The site is involved in the identity and the obligations of the religious Zionist youth within the framework of Israel. This provides a new level of development in Amit's program, "The School as an Educational Institution," which operates in all of the Amit schools. The program was developed by Edna Tiktin, the director of the House of Education in Amit, in cooperation with Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Brandas, the principal of the "Beit Morashah" school in Jerusalem.

The website contains model lesson plans and social activities for grade school, junior high school, and high school. The program is built up as widening spirals, with appropriate modules for different ages, different levels of relevance, and depending on how close the student feels to the group. The spiral framework allows a choice of relevant contents for every age, in an effort to broaden the knowledge of the student on a continuing basis during the years.

The subject matter on the website is divided into five categories for each age level, including the mutual effect of various factors in the life cycles of the individuals: for myself alone, me and my family, me and my friends, my relationship to the community, and my relationship to my nation and my land. At each age, one level of the relationship is treated with special emphasis. The main theme that runs through the entire program as a single thread is a link to G-d, as a way of developing the mutual relationship between an individual and the Almighty, and by kindness and charity that one person gives another within the framework of the different life cycles that surround a person.

The website has links to educational activities, answers to halachic questions, interesting articles from other sites, and archives of lectures and presentations related to the subjects of education and society. The address of the website is: www.amit.org.il/bmk.

THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

The Blessing on the Perfume - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

According to the Mishna, it is clear that Havdallah at the end of Shabbat should include a blessing for a pleasant scent (Berachot 51b). The Rambam explains why this is necessary. "Why is a blessing on a pleasant scent recited at the end of Shabbat? It is because the soul is unhappy when Shabbat ends, so we make it happy and give it a good feeling with a pleasant scent." [Hilchot Shabbat 29:29]. The Tosafot added to this explanation, quoting from the Talmud, "Rish Lakish said: The Almighty gives an extra soul to man on the eve of Shabbat, and it is taken away at the end of Shabbat, as is written, 'He paused, and He rested – vayinafash' [Shemot 31:17] – once Shabbat has ended, the soul is upset." [Beitza 16a]. According to Tosafot, we recite a blessing over a pleasant scent at the end of Shabbat to console ourselves for the "extra soul" that was taken away from us.

At the end of a holiday, no blessing is made for a scent. The explanation for this was given by the Tosafot. "Why is there no blessing for a scent at the end of a holiday? ... It is because on a holiday there is no 'extra soul.'" [Beitza 33b; Pesachim 102b]. They add that this blessing is also not recited at the end of Shabbat during the intermediate days of a holiday, since a person is put at ease by the good food of the holiday. Similarly, a blessing for a scent is not recited at the end of Yom Kippur (even if it occurs on Shabbat), since the "extra soul" is not felt as strongly on Yom Kippur.

The Essence of the Blessing for Perfume

Can a man who has lost his sense of smell (for example, because of a bad cold) recite the blessing of a pleasant scent for the rest of his household? The early commentators do not agree about this, as noted by the TUR: "Rabbi Efraim wrote: Somebody who cannot smell and recites the blessing for a scent has made a blessing in vain. He is also not able to recite the blessing for other members of his household... But this is not clear (that is, the TUR does not agree with this ruling, but feels that one who cannot smell can recite the blessing)... And that is what I was taught by my father, the ROSH." [297]. What is the basis for this disagreement?

Evidently the basic question is the character of the blessing for the scent at the end of Shabbat. Is this a blessing for enjoying pleasure, and then one who cannot smell would not be able to recite it, or is it a blessing for a mitzva, which could then be recited for others? The Shulchan Aruch rules that a man who cannot smell can recite the blessing for others in his household or for somebody who does not know how to recite it, just as he can recite any blessing of a mitzva for others [297:5]. However,

the RADBAZ disagrees and writes that somebody who cannot derive pleasure from the scent cannot recite the blessing for others (Responsa, volume 5, 2321). Later rabbis have accepted the ruling of the RADBAZ (TAZ, Magen Avraham, Mishna Berura, Yavia Omer). Therefore, one who has a bad cold should let another person recite the blessing for a pleasant scent during Havdallah.

Smelling the Perfume

Since the purpose of the perfume is to calm the soul, everybody present should have the opportunity to smell the scent himself. On the other hand, those present are relieved of their obligation by hearing the blessing, and they should therefore not repeat the blessing themselves (Mishna Berura 297:13). They certainly should not repeat the blessing later, after the man reciting the Havdallah has continued further, because this would be an interruption.

A person who is standing far away and cannot reach the perfume should have in mind that he does not want to fulfill his obligation by hearing the blessing, and he can then recite it himself and smell the scent.

We have experienced a difficult year: Many people suffered, especially the inhabitants of Gush Katif; Jewish settlements in Eretz Yisrael were uprooted; synagogues were burned; and other sad events took place. Let us draw strength from the "extra soul" of Shabbat and from the special sanctity of the Holy Days, and let us pray that with G-d's help we will be privileged to a year of holiness and purity, filled with Torah and the fear of G-d, a year of happiness. Let it be a year when each and every one of us will see the good traits of our colleagues and be happy about them.



This publication is distributed by the **RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA - MIZRACHI** and by **THE ZOMET INSTITUTE OF ALON SHVUT**. It is an extract from SHABBAT B'SHABBATO, a weekly bulletin distributed in hundreds of synagogues in Israel and has been translated by Moshe Goldberg. If you are interested in sponsoring an issue of Shabbat B'Shabbato, contact the RZA Mizrachi office at 212-465-9234 or mizrachi@rza.org.



REGISTER NOW

<http://www.VoteTorah.org>