

# **Rosh Hashana in the Land of Israel: the Day of Judgment and Becoming One with the Collective in Eretz Yisrael**

## **A. Rosh Hashana in the Month of Etanim (Tishrei)**

On Rosh Hashana, the holy Day of Judgment, the new year begins and a new divine illumination enters the world. As its name indicates, Rosh Hashana is the “head” of the year<sup>1</sup> in the sense that just as the functioning of the body depends on the head, so too the functioning of the year depends on Rosh Hashana.<sup>2</sup> Just as the function of all limbs exists in the mind, in the head, as potential before being expressed kinetically in the limbs, so too the entire year and all of its festivals exist *in potentia* within Rosh Hashana before finding expression during the course of the year.

On Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgment, the fate of the entire year is determined. Our spiritual efforts leading up to Rosh Hashana and on the day itself shape the spiritual character of the coming year. This awareness ratchets up the tension in advance of the Day of Judgment, and so we spend that time trying to make the necessary spiritual preparations, to engage in repentance, and to make every effort to improve and to earn spiritual credit.

**The unique mode of study in the Land of Israel adds new**

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Sefat Emet* on Rosh Hashana 5664.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Shlomo of Radomsk's *Tiferet Shlomo al Ha-mo'adim* on Shemini Atzeret.

**dimensions to this understanding of Rosh Hashana, which we will consider presently.**

In Tanakh, the month of Tishrei is called “*Yerach Ha-Etanim*” – the Month of the Strong – reflecting the greatness, might, and power of this month in comparison with the rest of the year. The Talmud explains the link between the month’s name and the events that took place during it:

R. Eliezer said: Whence that the Patriarchs were born during Tishrei? Scripture states, “All the people of Israel assembled with King Shlomo during the month of Etanim, during the festival...” (I Melakhim 8:2). It is the month on which the world’s mightiest were born.<sup>3</sup>

According to R. Yehoshua’s position that the Patriarchs were born during Nisan, the seventh month draws its name from the festivals that it contains.

R. Yehoshua says: Whence that the Patriarchs were born during Nisan? ... But Scripture states “during the month of Etanim”! That is because it is robust with *mitzvot*.

The month is mighty, filled with the powerful *mitzvot* of its holidays, as Rashi comments:

“Robust with *mitzvot*” – shofar, Yom Kippur, *sukkah*, *lulav*, *arava*, and the water libation.

It is due to the power and force of the Tishrei festivals that the month is called *Yerach Ha-Etanim*:

The seventh month is *Yerach Ha-Etanim*. It is declared holy. In it are the day of the shofar blast (Rosh Hashana), the great

---

<sup>3</sup> BT *Rosh Hashana* 11a.

fast (Yom Kippur), *sukkah*, *lulav*, the water libation, the seven *hakafot*, and Shemini Atzeret – each of which has inner meanings.<sup>4</sup>

**Rosh Hashana is the first leg of the Month of Etanim**, and it embodies the spiritual potential of all the other festivals whose full power will find expression during this month.

### **B. Rosh Hashana: Kingship, Judgment, Shofar, and Prayer**

Rosh Hashana's power stems from the fact that it is the day of God's enthronement over the world. Consequently, it is a day of judgment on which we recite special prayers and are commanded to sound the shofar. The Sages fixed the prayers of Rosh Hashana in accordance with three themes: kingship (*Malkhuyot*), remembrances (*Zikhronot*), and *Shofarot*. The enthronement of God is one of the meanings behind blowing the shofar. As R. Saadya Gaon wrote:

The first reason: This day was the beginning of Creation, on which God created the world and reigned over it. Such is the manner of kings, that trumpets and horns are blown before them to announce and sound the beginning of his reign in all places. So too, we enthrone the Creator over us on this day. David similarly said: "With trumpets and the sound of the shofar, sound blasts before the King, God."<sup>5</sup>

Rosh Hashana as the day of God's enthronement corresponds to *Malkhuyot*.

---

<sup>4</sup> R. Yaakov Sakili, *Torat Ha-mincha* §57.

<sup>5</sup> R. Saadya Gaon's "Ten Reasons for Blowing the Shofar."

As the Day of Judgment and God's enthronement reaches its climax, the three books of remembrance are opened, as the Talmud recounts:

Three books are opened on Rosh Hashana... [The book of] the wholly righteous is written and inscribed for life immediately. [The book of] the wholly wicked is written and inscribed immediately for death. Those in the middle stand in suspense from Rosh Hashana until Yom Kippur. If they merit it, they are inscribed for life. If not, they are inscribed for death.<sup>6</sup>

*Zikhronot* corresponds to Rosh Hashana as the Day of Judgment.

At the very moment that the books are open and God begins to judge, we are commanded to perform the mitzva of the day – blowing the shofar – which transforms God's justice into mercy:

Yehuda b. R. Nachman began: "God (*Elokim*) ascends at the sound blast, the Lord (*YKVK*) at the voice of the shofar" (Tehillim 47:6). **When God ascends and sits on the throne of judgment, he ascends in justice.** What is the reason? "God ascends at the sound blast." **But when Israel takes their shofars and blows them before God, He rises from the throne of justice and sits in the throne of mercy,** as is written: "the Lord at the voice of the shofar." He is filled with compassion for them and shows them mercy; He transforms the attribute of justice into mercy. When is this? In the seventh month.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> BT *Rosh Hashana* 16b.

<sup>7</sup> *Vayikra Rabbah* 29:3. The name "Elokim" generally denotes God's attribute of justice, whereas YKVK denotes His attribute of mercy.

Blowing the shofar corresponds to *Shofarot* as well as to the kindness and compassion within justice.

R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto addressed the relationship between the three elements of Rosh Hashana – enthroning God, judgment, and the shofar – and the three unique parts of the Rosh Hashana prayer service, *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*. He explained that invoking these elements in prayer arouses and strengthens their actions in kind:

**We have previously stated that on this day God stands as king of His world... Furthermore, this day is the day of judgment and justice, and it is necessary to inspire Him to remember us for good.** There is another important matter on this day, namely, **the shofar about which we have been commanded. The power of the shofar, which is blown below but its strength originates above, is that it reinforces the good and suppresses evil... We were commanded to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to reinforce the *tikun* (rectification) that began with the giving of the Torah and to prepare for what will happen in the future. The prayer was arranged in an order that corresponds to this, in order to inspire us accordingly. Thus, there are three general ideas that must be evoked on this day: *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*. The *tikun* (reparative prayer) is to recite a set of ten verses within each arrangement, corresponding to the ten utterances [though which the world was created], which are also the secret of**

**the ten *sefirot* (divine emanations).<sup>8</sup>**

R. Nachman of Breslov connects the power of the Month of Etanim with the power of the sound of the shofar and the special power of the Rosh Hashana prayers:

**Holy boldness is a dimension of Tishrei, which is why it is called “*Yerach Ha-Etanim*” connoting power and boldness – for it is then that Israel cries out and sounds the shofar. All these sounds are aspects of this boldness.<sup>9</sup>**

Our prayers reach their crescendo with the recitation of the liturgical poem “*U-netaneh Tokef*,” which also powerfully invokes these three elements:

Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness, for it is awesome and frightening. On it Your Kingship will be exalted; Your throne will be firmed with kindness and You will sit upon it in truth. (Corresponding to *Malkhuyot*)

It is true that You alone are the One Who judges, proves, knows, and bears witness; Who writes and seals, [counts and calculates]; Who remembers all that was forgotten. You will open the Book of Chronicles—it will read itself, and everyone's signature is in it. (Corresponding to *Zikhronot*)

The great shofar will be sounded and a still, thin sound will be heard. (Corresponding to *Shofarot*)

Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them...  
all mankind will pass before You like a flock of sheep.

---

<sup>8</sup> Ramchal's “Ma'amar Ha-Chokhma” in *Sefer Ha-ma'amarim: Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, and Shofarot*. See also his discussion of the shofar in *Derekh Hashem* 4:8.

<sup>9</sup> ספר ליקוטי מוהר"ן - מהדורא קמא סימן כב.

### C. The Power to Stand Trial – Inclusion in the Collective

Our Sages have instructed us how to approach judgment on Rosh Hashana. We generally emphasize repentance, kindness, self-improvement, and accepting resolutions. **However, in the study halls of the Land of Israel**, another aspect is emphasized, as R. Kook explained in a sermon based on revealed and esoteric rabbinic works:

**But there seems to have another intention: to illustrate the powerful act required of us exactly at the beginning of the new year... We must know what is the unique form of worship on the night of Rosh Hashana – after all, are trials not held only during the day?...**

God gave us the night to prepare ourselves by perfecting unity... **we encourage ourselves to unite together with one heart, so that everyone is connected to God's people collectively.** Left to fend for himself, everyone would need abundant merits; although an individual's penitence is readily accepted during the Ten Days of Repentance, we want to be inscribed for immediately in the book of life. **For this we need communal merits.** The most effective means of accomplishing this, our Sages instructed us, is to become one with the community so that the next day we will be ready for the great and holy day of judgment and the merit of the community will already stand in our favor.<sup>10</sup>

The night of Rosh Hashana represents another phase of preparation, whose essence is the unification of each individual with the

---

<sup>10</sup> *Drashot Midbar Shur* §9, based on *Zohar* II:44a.

collective so that everyone feels that he is part of the whole, not just an individual.<sup>11</sup> Uniting with the whole also helps the self-improvement of each individual:

Although one does not discharge his obligations by joining the community alone, and each individual still needs to improve himself, [joining the community] is a substantial merit which is very effective for leading one toward self-improvement. (*ibid.*)

Uniting with the collective is expressed in the customary greetings and the “*simanim*” (symbolic foods) of the night of Rosh Hashana:

...therefore everyone greets his fellow with “*shana tova*” and “*ketiva ve-chatima tova*”. Similarly, the prayers recited over *simanim* for good all are directed toward the collective as a whole... he therefore merits to be inscribed in the book of life, for His name is called upon him and he is worthy of blessing... This all comes about because he makes himself like a pauper in order to join with the community. By doing so, he is ultimately enriched because it results in the improvement of the individual as well; the merit of the community helps him acquire hope and posterity. (*ibid.*)

Uniting with the collective in order to be vindicated corresponds to *Zikhronot*:

“You are standing today.” On Rosh Hashana we must be a single group. The “Day of Shofar Blasts” (“*Yom Teru’ah*”) denotes love and friendship (“*re’ut*”)... “You are standing today – all of you” means that just as you are standing here down below, so too all of you are standing before God

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Shem Mi-Shmuel – Mo’adim*, Rosh Hashana 5676.

above.<sup>12</sup>

Yet there is an aspect of unification that corresponds to *Shofarot*:

**“The sound of the shofar got increasingly much stronger” because the essence of the sound of the shofar is to gather and convene God’s creatures to Him, as it is written: “It shall come to pass on that day, the great shofar will be blown and those lost in Assyria shall come...” (Yeshayahu 27:13)<sup>13</sup>**

The unification of the community is expressed in the blowing of the shofar at Mount Sinai and every year on Rosh Hashana:

**Especially on Rosh Hashana, which is a main gathering time – this is a dimension of the shofar that gathers the dispersed on His people Israel as we pray: “Sound the great shofar for our freedom...”<sup>14</sup>**

The communal solidarity of Rosh Hashana corresponds to *Malkhuyot* since the community gathers to enthrone God and since God’s sovereignty is incomplete until all gather into one group, as we say in the Rosh Hashana Mussaf prayers:

**In every generation, enthrone God, for He alone is exalted and holy.**

**So too, may Your name be sanctified, Lord our God,**

---

<sup>12</sup> *Megaleh Amukot al Ha-Torah* – Nitzavim.

<sup>13</sup> *Derashat Maharal al Ha-Torah*. See the Sephardic *machzor* for Rosh Hashana, which includes the following exhortations and simple meditations prior to the shofar blowing: “Our Sages further said that the mitzva ‘love your friend as yourself’ is a mitzva on which the entire Torah depends... thus at that moment every person should feel solidarity with his brothers and be bound together by love. This shall give us comfort that our sins have been erased, our righteousness inscribed in a book, engraved with an iron pen...”

<sup>14</sup> *Alim Le-trufah* §409. See also *Likutei Halakhot, Orach Chaim*, Laws of Handwashing 6.

upon Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city, on Zion the dwelling place of Your glory, on the dynasty of David Your anointed, and on Your foundation and sanctuary.

So too, instill the fear of You, Lord our God, in all of Your works, and dread of You on all of Your creatures. All works will revere You; all creatures will bow to You; and **they will all become a single group to do Your will wholeheartedly.**

#### **D. Gathering the Entire People on Rosh Hashana in the Land of Israel**

No gathering of the entire people is complete unless it is in the Land of Israel; only in Israel are the Jewish people called a community:

**Because those who live in the Land of Israel are called a community,** and God called them the entire community even if there were only ten men. Their counterparts outside the land are not heeded...<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, *Zohar* states that Israel is only called “one” in the Land of Israel:

For it is written: **“One nation in the land”** (II Shmuel 7:23)... **They are not called “one” except in the land.**<sup>16</sup>

Only in the Land of Israel can we fully actualize the unification needed on Rosh Hashana. This is best illustrated in the writings of R. Kook:

---

<sup>15</sup> Rambam, *Commentary on the Mishna, Bekhorot* 4:3.

<sup>16</sup> *Zohar* III:93a.

Let us understand the straightforward meaning of the verse, which recounts the **greatness of the Land of Israel** and states that God cares about it constantly; God's eyes are upon it "from the beginning of the year until the end of the year," **meaning that at the beginning of the year it is decreed what will happen at its end. Why is the Land of Israel singled out in this way? How are other lands judged?** The main way in which Rosh Hashana prepares for the entire year is through the light of the soul's sanctity, which shines brightly like at the beginning of its formation... and thus there is ample light with which to see how one may improve his ways. Regarding this it is written: "Lord, they will walk in the light of Your countenance" (Tehilim 89:16)...

**Thus, the more one can include himself in the collective public, his acceptability is clearer and he can be judged favorably for the entire year...**

**The power of the holy unity of Israel is primarily in the Land of Israel.** Regarding the exile it is written: "And God will disperse you," and there can be no perfect unity. For this reason, Israel is called a "scattered lamb." But when we are in the Land of Israel, we are called "God's flock," collectively and with unity. **All this unity leads to confidence in the his acceptability...** and thus when he nullifies himself to the collective in every way, he is judged by the measure of the community, whose acceptance is secure. **Since his acceptance is secure, he is judged on Rosh Hashana until the end of the year, and there is no need for the judgment to be "sweetened" or for a new**

judgment...<sup>17</sup>

### E. The Special Illumination of Rosh Hashana in the Land of Israel

The Torah states that God's supervision of the Land of Israel is renewed on Rosh Hashana:

The land into which you are crossing to possess is a land of hills and valley; you will drink water from the rains of the heavens; **a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.** (Devarim 11:11-12)

This indicates that the special illumination of Rosh Hashana for the entire year is manifest specifically in the Land of Israel, whose residents benefit from it:

However, this matter will be understood by considering the verse, "The Lord founded the earth with wisdom (*chokhmah*)." That is, the foundation of the upper world, the aspect of God's immanence, **and of the lower (world), the desired land that corresponds to it and is called by its name – "eretz ha-chayim (land of the living),** issues from the extension and illumination of the supernal wisdom (*Chokhmah Elyonah*), the source of supernal life... **This illumination and extension is renewed annually by a truly new light,** for God and His wisdom are one, an absolute singularity called the "light of the En Sof" because there is

---

<sup>17</sup> *Midbar Shur* §9. See also R. Yonatan Eyebeschutz's *Ya 'arot Devash* II, §5.

no limit and no end to the quality and greatness of the light and the vitality that issue forth from Him and from His wisdom, with increasing sublimity, beyond any end or limit, to the peak of the highest levels.

**Every year there a new and renewed light that has never yet shone descends from the supernal wisdom and illuminates the upper world. For the light of every year withdraws to its source on the eve of every Rosh Hashana, when the new moon is covered, and afterwards, by means of the blowing of the shofar and of the prayers, a new, supernal light, of a yet higher level within the supernal wisdom, is drawn forth to shine for the upper world and those who dwell upon it, namely, all the upper and lower worlds that receive their vitality from it, i.e., from the light of the blessed En Sof, and His wisdom which is vested therein, as it is written: "For with You is the source of life; in Your light we see light." This refers to the light that radiates from the supernal wisdom, the source of life (as is known to mystics, every Rosh Hashana there is the removal [*nesira*] and the reception of new, more sublime intelligences [*mochin*]...)**

In a more detailed manner, this takes place every day: more sublime *mochin* are elicited by every morning-prayer, and these are not the original *mochin* that withdrew after the prayer, but more sublime ones... This occurs every *Rosh Hashana*.<sup>18</sup>

Thus we can understand the greatness of accepting the new year in

---

<sup>18</sup> *Tanya, Igeret Ha-Kodesh* §14.

the Land of Israel. In light of these and other words, we are left wondering why there are still those who prefer to usher in the new year and its illuminations in the Ukraine.

# The Yom Kippur Service as a Paradigm for a Life of Holiness and Mission

## A. Yom Kippur is the Holy Day for our Master

Yom Kippur is the day sanctified for our Master, the second holiday of the “Month of Etanim.” On this day we are elevated to the level of angels:

Alternatively: “The days were ordained before a single one had passed” (Tehilim 139:16) – this is Yom Kippur for the Jews, for it was a great joy to God to lovingly give it to Israel. A parable to what this can be compared – to a flesh-and-blood king whose slaves and household would take out their waste and throw it opposite the entrance to the royal palace. When the king went out and saw the waste, he rejoiced greatly. To this is compared Yom Kippur, which God gave with great love and joy. Not only that, but when he forgives Israel’s sins he is not inwardly sad, rather very happy.<sup>19</sup>

On this day we arrive at one of the most powerful climaxes of the Tishrei festivals, which lead to our perfection:

It seems that the seventh month is called *Yerach Ha-Etanim* because it contains the most powerful festivals that refine us and perfect us; in it are the day of shofar-blasts, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.<sup>20</sup>

Rambam writes in his Laws of Repentance:

---

<sup>19</sup> *Tanna de-Bei Eliyahu Rabba* 1. See also *Batei Midrashot II – Midrash Chaserot Ve-yeterot Tehilim* 231 (139:16) and *Imrei Emet* on *Ha’azinu*.

<sup>20</sup> Abarbanel’s commentary to I Melakhim 8:2.

**Yom Kippur is a time of repentance for all, individually and communally. It is the final pardon and forgiveness for Israel. Therefore, all are obligated to repent and confess on Yom Kippur.**<sup>21</sup>

Yom Kippur is called “*Shabbat Shabbaton*” because on it all bodily needs are ceased. **For an entire day, we congregate in synagogues and immerse ourselves in heartfelt and spirited prayer, in introspection, and in cathartic fasting.** As R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal) explains:

The idea of Yom Kippur is that God gave Israel one day on which repentance is easily accepted and sins are easily erased... **On this day, a light shines with the power to bring all this about,** but in order to receive this light one Israel must observe what they have been commanded on this day, **specifically, the afflictions through which they completely dissociate from physicality and are slightly elevated toward the status of angels...**<sup>22</sup>

## **B. Imitating Angels on Yom Kippur**

Ramchal’s statement is based on our Sages, who averred that on Yom Kippur Israel rises to a very high level, to the point that they are like angels in several ways:

Sammael saw that sin was not to be found among them on Yom Kippur. He said before the Holy One: Sovereign of the universe! You have a people **like the ministering angels who are in**

---

<sup>21</sup> 2:7.

<sup>22</sup> *Derekh Hashem* IV:8:5.

**heaven.** Just as the ministering angels **have neither food nor drink**, so the Israelites have neither food nor drink on Yom Kippur. Just as the ministering angels **have bare feet**, so have the Israelites bare feet on Yom Kippur. Just as the ministering angels have no joints, likewise the Israelites **stand upon their feet on Yom Kippur**. Just as the ministering angels have peace amongst them, so the Israelites have peace amongst them on Yom Kippur. Just as the ministering angels are **innocent of all sin**, so are the Israelites innocent of all sin on Yom Kippur. The Holy One hears the prayers of Israel instead of their accuser, and He makes atonement for the altar, for the sanctuary, for the *kohanim*, for all the people of the community both great and small, and for all the sins of Israel and all the people, as it is said, "And he shall make atonement for the holy place."<sup>23</sup>

**It is frequently asked: what is the point of the spiritual high of Yom Kippur if as soon as it is over, apparently, everything goes right back to the way it was?**

There is much truth in this question; things are not supposed to return to the way it was as soon as Yom Kippur is over, but those who ask the question sense that this is indeed the case.

It is necessary to preface the answer by noting that it would be preferable if after Yom Kippur everyone were to sense that something substantive had changed as a result of Yom Kippur's spiritual high. Yet even if one does not distinctly sense it, it does not mean that nothing has changed! In truth, there are areas in which what one senses does not fully reflect reality!

---

<sup>23</sup> *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* ch. 45.

To illustrate this, we must consider the words of our Sages as well as the Rishonim and Acharonim.

### **C. The Mitzva of Eating on the Day Before Yom Kippur**

The Talmud teaches that there is a mitzva to eat on the day before Yom Kippur.<sup>24</sup> This obligation begs for an explanation, as it is unclear why one must eat on the day before if there is a commandment to fast on the next day.

Rabbeinu Yonah of Gerondi offers three reasons for this mitzva.<sup>25</sup> The second reason is that eating strengthens the body in preparation for fasting. This is similar to Rashi's explanation on the Gemara (*ad loc.*). *Tur* explains similarly:

R. Chiya b. Rav of Difti taught: [The verse states:] “And you shall afflict yourselves on the ninth of the month.” But do we fast on the ninth? Do we not fast on the tenth? This teaches that anyone who eats and drinks on the ninth is considered to have fasted on both the ninth and the tenth. The verse thus instructs us: prepare yourselves on the ninth for the afflictions of the next day. However, since this eating is derived from the word for affliction, it is thus considered like affliction, as though one fasted on the ninth and tenth, that is, as though he was commanded to fast on both. Because of God's love for Israel, he did not command fasting except for one day a year, and for their own benefit – to atone for their sin. And he commanded them to

---

<sup>24</sup> *Yoma* 81b.

<sup>25</sup> *Sha'arei Teshuva* 4:8-10.

eat and drink first **so that they may fast without being injured by this affliction.**<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the need to eat on the day before Yom Kippur is to strengthen the body in advance, so that we do not spend the whole day thinking about food and instead reach the level of angels who have no need for eating.

There is another way that we imitate angels: during Shema (and other parts of the prayer) we say “*Barukh Shem Kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*” (“blessed is the Name of the Glory of His Kingship forever”) out loud. The rest of the year we whisper it because this praise of God is reserved for angels. Ramchal explains this in depth:

**Because of their state of rectification, the angels can properly praise God with the words “*Barukh Shem Kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*”.** Earthly beings, on the other hand, are not worthy of praising him in this manner. The Name does not rest on them, and the Glory is not increased through them. Only the Patriarch Yaakov merited this at the time of his death, when all of his holy sons, in whom there was no disqualification, surrounded him. They enveloped themselves in God’s unity and said, “*Shema Yisrael...*” The elderly patriarch responded, “*Barukh Shem...*”

Thus, we are not worthy of this matter on our own, but something of it has been bestowed on us by virtue of our Patriarch Yaakov. Therefore we recite it, but silently – **except on Yom Kippur, when Israel is elevated to the level of angels.**<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Tur, Orach Chaim* §604.

<sup>27</sup> *Derekh Hashem* IV:4:7.

### **D. Shaping our Angelic Consciousness**

The principle of imitating angels of Yom Kippur requires explanation lest it be understood as an illusory state of likeness based on the external acts of refraining from food and drink, going barefoot, uniting communally, and standing the whole day. This is not the case, as we have seen the Ramchal explain:

**On this day, a light shines with the power to bring all this about, but in order to receive this light one Israel must observe what they have been commanded on this day, specifically, the afflictions through which they completely dissociate from physicality and are slightly elevated toward the status of angels...**

Ramchal explains that the acts we perform on Yom Kippur, through which we imitate angels, generate a special illumination in the soul that operates within us and creates a substantive spiritual change, whether we are aware of it or not! Nevertheless, it is worth considering this transformation since it is no mere pretense but a reflection of the essence of our existence as Jews.

We have been endowed with a divine soul which is a sort of angelic entity. Something like a small angel resides within every Jew. Throughout the year, the mundane world in which we live darkens, hides, and blurs this fact, leaving us with the sense that our entire existence revolves around physical needs. On Yom Kippur, we disconnect from the world around us by refraining from work, and from the vital forces that influence us through the five afflictions of Yom Kippur. Consequently, our angelic aspect has the opportunity to break forth from behind its concealments. This should not dissipate

even as the holy day ends and we return to routine. The reclamation of our inner angel, and the process by which we rediscovered it, should leave a deep impression – subconscious and spiritual, but preferably in our conscious minds as well – even as Yom Kippur ends. Awareness of our angelic nature is the key to living a sanctified life even as we go about our daily routines.

### **E. Fostering a Sense of Mission**

One expression of holiness in daily existence is the transformation of life from egocentrism to a life of mission. The essence of the Yom Kippur confession is introspection, during which the penitent inspects the degree to which his actions and behavior match up to life's goals and objectives. While confessing, we recall the confession of R. Hamnuna Zuta, cited in the Talmud and recited daily by Rava:

Our rabbis taught: **The obligation of confession of sins comes on the eve of Yom Kippur as it grows dark...**

What is [the confession]?

Rav said...

R. Hamnuna said: **My God, before I was formed, I was of no worth, and now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed. I am dust in my life, how much more in my death. Behold I am before You like a vessel full of shame and reproach. May it be Your will that I sin no more, and what I have sinned wipe away in Your mercy, but not through suffering.**

**That was the confession used by Rava all the year round and by R. Hammuna Zuta on Yom Kippur.<sup>28</sup>**

R. Kook interpreted the content of this confession as introspection about man's fulfillment of his mission in the world:

“My God, before I was formed, I was of no worth, and now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed.” Before I was formed, for that infinite amount of time until my formation, there was certainly nothing in the world that needed me, for had I been needed for some purpose or completion, I would have been formed. Since I was not formed until that time, it signifies that I was not worthy of being created until then, and there was no need for me until the time I was created and the time had come that I was needed to fulfill some mission to perfect reality. Had I dedicated by actions to the purpose of my creation, I would now be worthy, but since my actions are not directed toward this good end, I have not reached the purpose of my creation, and I remain as unworthy as ever.<sup>29</sup>

R. Kook's approach is connected to his basic understanding of life and its sanctity, as fostered on Yom Kippur:

“The days of their lives are as mere breath (“*hevel*”) to You.” Life can be transformed from potential to actual through deeds. However, when people walk in the path of chaos and do not elevate themselves to cleave to God, Who binds all life, and connect themselves with the Source and Sustainer of life, life remains only *in potential*. It has not been actualized at all. This is the idea of “*hevel*” – it describes unrealized potential.

---

<sup>28</sup> *Yoma* 87b.

<sup>29</sup> *Olat Re'aya* vol. II p. 356. *Eyn Ayah* vol. I pp. 18-28.

Even if one accomplished things in life, since individual perfection, worthy of being considered true existence in the face of ultimate truth of the true God, was not thereby acquired, he remains “*hevel*” in the true, reliable, divine estimation. “The days of their lives are *hevel*.”<sup>30</sup>

R. Soloveitchik addressed at length the concept of mission as a basic concept in the Jewish worldview:

A mission-based worldview stems from faith that each person comes to the world to fulfill a unique mission of both personal and general value. This mission and its indispensability give human life worth and significance, filling his life with content and meaning. Within the web of actions and objectives that man has in his life, mission is the central point which gives his entire life direction. From this perspective, the talents and characteristics that man has been endowed with from heaven were given to him as tools to complete his mission. Thus, the tools are suited to the mission. In fulfilling his mission, man realizes his destiny (positive self-actualization) and transforms potential into actuality in the optimal manner.

He relates to R. Kook’s words as well:

We can only comprehend the fact that one lives at a particular time, in a singular era, and at a specific place and was not born in a different era and under other circumstances if we accept the idea of man’s mission. Providence knows where and how the particular individual, with all his inner strengths and weaknesses, can fulfill his mission. The Creator operates according to the *halakha* that states that one cannot appoint an

---

<sup>30</sup> *Olat Re’aya* vol. I p. 105.

agent, a *shali'ach*, to carry out a mission that is beyond the agent's capacity. It is impossible for such a mission to be completed, and therefore it is worthless. If a person is appointed to carry out a mission, it stands to reason that he be given the ability to act as an agent. For that reason, the individual was created in an era and at a place where he can act to complete his mission.<sup>31</sup>

On Yom Kippur, we forge a proper attitude toward a life of holiness and mission. In the Yom Kippur confession we undertake a penetrating examination of whether we are filling our lives with content and holiness and whether we are fulfilling our destinies by carrying out our mission.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Yemei Zikaron*, p. 11.

# The *Sukkah* and the *Lulav* as Paradigms for Jewish National Unity

Sukkot is third in the series of festivals that take place during Tishrei, the Month of Etanim. There are many powerful elements within Sukkot and its numerous laws. Leaving the house and entering the *sukkah* provides a joyous environment to those who dwell in it. Taking the *lulav* and the other species connects man to the holiness associated with earthly nature and plant life. However, instead of focusing on the festival's impact on the individual, we will address the collective facet of Sukkot and how it illuminates the condition of the Jewish people as a whole.

## A. Every Native Israelite shall Dwell in Sukkot

Can Sukkot teach us about the ideal model for bridging the gaps that polarize different sectors of Israeli society – religious and secular, right and left?

The Talmud cites the opinion of the Sages:

Even though it was stated that one does not fulfill his obligation on the first day of Sukkot with another's *lulav*, **one fulfills his obligation in another's *sukkah***, as it is stated: “**Every native Israelite shall dwell in *sukkot***” (Vayikra 23:42) – **this teaches that all of Israel is eligible to sit in a single *sukkah*.**<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> *Sukkah* 27b. *Sifrei* has :All of Israel shall sit in a single *sukkah*.”

The Talmud refers to the halakhic possibility of fulfilling one's obligation with a borrowed *sukkah*, though the derivation from the verse "every native Israelite..." gives it a more general and declarative style: "this teaches that all of Israel is eligible to sit in a single *sukkah*." That is, in principle it is possible to gather the entire people of Israel into the "big tent" of a single *sukkah*. This inference is thus not merely a theoretical halakhic possibility, but an indication of the *sukkah*'s unique essence, which has the potential to unite all of Israel and to bridge the gaps between its various sectors and streams!<sup>33</sup>

But how?

## **B. The Solution to Polarization in the Jewish Community**

The primary cause of polarization and lack of unity in the Jewish community is the lack of national consensus on subjects of dispute between various sectors: questions of faith, ideology, and identity, which touch on social, cultural, national, economic, and security-related issues. For most of the nation, these are fateful questions of life and death, and thus each sector and stream sees the rival approach as the root of all evil and the source of catastrophe.

Some believe that pluralism is the sole response to polarization. Only tolerance and liberalism – which believe that everyone has their own truth, that "everyone is right," that there is no "objective truth" – can soften each sector's pretension to a monopoly on truth.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Sefat Emet* 5651, s.v. "De-ita be-midrash" and "kinuso"; 5660, s.v. "Ita be-Yerushalmi"; 5662, s.v. "Kol ezrach"; R. Kook's *Ma'amarei Ha-Re'aya*, "Ha-sukkah Achat" p. 148; R. Nachman of Breslov's *Likutei Halakhot, Choshen Mishpat*, Laws of Deposits 5:39, s.v. "Ve-al kein ha-sukkah."

This approach dovetails with the postmodern trend that currently prevails.

According to this approach, if everyone would adopt it and behave according to it, there should be no tension between various sectors, because it is legitimate for everyone to adhere to his truth (as long as it does not harm anyone else)!

But does this approach pass the test of realism? Does it succeed in mitigating polarization and bridging gaps? Are those who praise the blurring of differences as a unifying force correct? Is it possible to ignore the diametrically opposed approaches of various sectors to some of the most fundamental questions?

On the other hand, some advocate reaching consensus based on a common denominator and maintaining the status quo. Each side would concede on the maximum number of differentiating and dividing principles, and thus a broad consensus would be achieved that would unify the various sectors! But is this a realistic solution? Should each stream be forced to give up the truth and faith that guides its life?

### **C. Sukkah and Lulav as Models for National Unity**

The “one *sukkah*” of “every native Israelite” is a model for Jewish national unity that does not blur differences!

**The *sukkah* commemorates the “clouds of glory” in which God sheltered the Israelites in the wilderness.<sup>34</sup> The clouds of glory formed a single, central *sukkah* that included all of Israel as one.**

---

<sup>34</sup> BT *Sukkah* 11b.

Everyone remained part of a tribe with a distinct banner and character, but all were gathered as one under the divine canopy, the “*tzila de-mehemnuta*.”<sup>35</sup> There was no blurring of the tribes’ singular identities, and in fact each tribe contributed an important aspect of the larger Israelite identity. Yet by living together the tribes could positively influence each other and complement each other. Mainly due to the tribes’ mutual openness, their uniqueness and singularity did not have to generate dispute and hostility. On the contrary, by living together in a “big tent” and not isolating themselves, the various tribes and streams were able to cooperate, balance each other out, and even enhance each other; this in turn dulled any tensions.

Yet the *sukkah*’s unifying influence remains incomplete unless the *lulav* is taken inside it. According to kabbalistic sources, it is preferable to shake the *lulav* inside the *sukkah* so as to connect and complete these two *mitzvot*.<sup>36</sup>

Our Sages viewed mitzva of *lulav* and the four species as symbolizing two main sets of objects: the limbs of the body and population groups within the Jewish community. These two interpretations seem to complement each other.

The Midrash compares the four species to limbs of the body:

The spine of the *lulav* resembles the human spine; the myrtle resembles the eye; the willow resembles the mouth; and the *etrog* resembles the heart.<sup>37</sup>

Elsewhere the Midrash compares the species to different

---

<sup>35</sup> See *Zohar* 3:103a.

<sup>36</sup> *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha’ar Ha-lulav* ch. 3; *Mishnat Chasidim, Yemei Mitzva Ve-sukkah*, ch. 5; *Shnei Luchot Ha-brit, Sukkah, Ner Mitzva* 15; *Toldot Yaakov Yosef, Ve-zot Ha-brakha* 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Vayikra Rabbah* 30:14.

components of the Jewish community:

“The fruit of the beautiful tree” (*etrog*) symbolizes Israel; just as the *etrog* has taste as well as fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess learning and good deeds. “Branches of palm trees” (*lulav*) too applies to Israel: as the palm tree has taste but not fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess learning but not good deeds. “And boughs of thick trees” (myrtle/*hadas*) likewise applies to Israel: just as the myrtle has fragrance but no taste, so Israel has among them those who possess good deeds but not learning. “And willows of the brook” also applies to Israel: just as the willow has no taste and no fragrance, so too Israel has among them those who possess neither learning nor good deeds. What then does the Holy One, do to them? To destroy them is impossible. Rather, says the Holy One, let them all be tied together in one band, and they will atone one for another. If you have done so (says God), then at that instant I am exalted... When is He exalted? When they are made into one band...<sup>38</sup>

The four species represent the full gamut of the Jewish community – the righteous, the wicked, and those somewhere in between (the Hebrew word for community, *tzibbur*, can be read as an acronym for *tzaddikim* [righteous], *beinonim* [middling], *resha'im* [wicked]). This mitzva enjoins us to bind all of these species together. If any element is missing, the mitzva has not been fulfilled. Each component is unique and contributes to the mitzva, using its uniqueness to influence the other species. Nothing can be missing.

It is interesting to note that although the symbolism of the myrtle

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 12. See also *Da'at Zekeinim Mi-ba'alei Ha-Tosafot* on Vayikra 23:40.

and willow are clear, with regard to the *lulav* and *etrog* there is some disagreement. In some sources (mostly from the Rishonim) the righteous are compared to the *etrog*, which has both taste and fragrance – Torah and *mitzvot*. In the *Zohar*, however, the righteous are compared to the *lulav* because of its resemblance to the spinal cord:

The *lulav* is the righteous man, as it resembles the spinal cord.<sup>39</sup>

The importance of the *lulav* within the four species is expressed in another context as well: the mitzva is called – even in its *berakha* – the “taking of the *lulav*,” not the taking of the *etrog* or the taking of the four species. The Talmud explains this:

R. Yirmiyah asked R. Zerika: Why is the blessing only “*al netilat lulav*”? Because it is higher than the rest. Why not lift the *etrog* and recite the blessing on it? He responded: It is the tallest of the species.<sup>40</sup>

Yet the commentators remain bothered by this rationale. What difference should it make that the *lulav* is taller and more prominent than the rest? Why is this the criterion for special mention in the *berakha*? No similar principle operates in any other area of *halakha*!<sup>41</sup>

#### **D. The Four Species and the Building Blocks of National Unity**

The midrashic symbolism behind the four species seems to offer an

---

<sup>39</sup> *Zohar* 3:255b.

<sup>40</sup> BT *Sukkah* 37b.

<sup>41</sup> See Rashi, *Tosafot*, and *Kapot Temarim ad loc.*; see also *Responsa Maharil* §161 [150].

approach for forging national unity out of the various sectors of the Jewish people. The midrash offers a recipe for unity that overcomes more than mere differences of “taste” – of attitudes toward Torah and *mitzvot*; it furnishes the necessary building blocks for forging the ideal Jewish unity. These building blocks must be combined as we enter the *sukkah* in order to create the longed-for unity. These building blocks are character traits and behavior patterns connected to particular limbs of the body: the heart, eye, mouth, and spine.

### A. A Good Heart

The *etrog* is compared to the heart. A “good heart” is a building block and a vital characteristic for forging unity and bridging gaps. Good-heartedness refers to the goodness embedded in the heart and aspires to treat everyone well, even those who are different and even if there is no utilitarian reason to bestow good. A good heart is thus the key to true brotherly love among the various sectors.

Good-heartedness is also the key to softening artificial tensions that emerge as a result of difference between the various population groups. A good-hearted person works to attain the good, the upright, the true, and the just – even if it does not always serve his narrow interest or the narrow interests of his sector.

R. Zvi Yehuda Kook taught us that a good heart is a virtue at which the Jewish people excel: “Israel is **compassionate**, possessing a good heart and love for all creatures.”<sup>42</sup>

When R. Yochanan b. Zakkai asked his students to find the best virtue for man to adhere to, R. Elazar b. Arakh answered: “A good

---

<sup>42</sup> See *Sichot Harav Zvi Yehuda al Ha-Torah, Kedoshim*, Series II – 5734.

heart.” And R. Yochanan “said to [all his students]: R. Elazar b. Arakh’s words appeal to me more than your words, for his words incorporate yours.”<sup>43</sup>

R. Menachem Meiri comments on this mishna:

R. Elazar b. Arakh said “a good heart,” meaning, that one should constantly do those actions that emerge from a good heart. The wise know that excellent and low character emerge from cognitive faculties, the power of self-inspiration. The seat of this power is the heart. When it is good and balanced, it incorporates all of the virtues and character traits mentioned. To wit: “his words incorporate yours.”<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, Rambam defines the trait of good-heartedness as the motivation to contribute and give assistance to others in different ways. He elaborates that this trait represents the moderate golden mean between the extremes of disinterest in the plight of the other and concern with the other to the point that it harms oneself:

**A good heart is one whose every intention is to bestow good on people with his body, advice, money, and all his ability** without incurring damage or shame – this is the middle [path]. A scoundrel is the opposite of this – he is one who does not wish to help others at all, even if it will not cost him any loss, effort, or harm. That is the last extreme. Excessive good-heartedness means that one does the things that a good-hearted person does, but even if it causes him great damage, shame, effort or loss. This is the first extreme.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the virtue of good-heartedness itself, the fact that it is

---

<sup>43</sup> *Avot* 2:13.

<sup>44</sup> Meiri *ad loc.* See also the commentary of R. Ovadia Mi-Bartenura *ad loc.*

<sup>45</sup> Rambam, *Shemona Perakim*, ch. 4.

a trait of balance and moderation is very important, since sectorial discourse tends to highlight and exaggerate differences between groups, using terms like “polarization” and “unbridgeable gaps.” This exaggeration makes it harder to overcome and bridge differences. For this reason, it is important to maintain proportion and refrain from bombast.

## B. A Good Eye

The myrtle symbolizes the eye. A “good eye” is also key virtue and building block for forging unity and bridging gaps. We have already mentioned R. Yohanan b. Zakkai’s request to his disciples; R. Eliezer b. Hyrkanos answered: “a good eye.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the Mishna characterizes the uniqueness of the Jewish people: as “disciples of the Patriarch Avraham,” as opposed to “disciples of the wicked Bilam,” they possess a “good eye.”<sup>47</sup> What is this virtue, and why is it so important?

R. Meiri explains that a “good eye” refers to one’s attitude toward other people and is the opposite of being jaded or “narrow of the eye”:

R. Eliezer said “a good eye,” meaning, that **one enjoys when something good happens to another**. Such a person will be beloved by all. All will welcome his interest, and he accepts everyone. Love for the world is the root of all virtue.<sup>48</sup>

R. Zvi Yehuda similarly taught us that a “good eye” is the virtue that makes one accustomed to taking a sympathetic and loving view

---

<sup>46</sup> *Avot* 2:13.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 5:19.

<sup>48</sup> Meiri on *Avot* 2:12.

toward all creatures:

“Anyone who possesses these three things is a disciple of the Patriarch Avraham.” The first of them is a “good eye.” The Patriarch Avraham **viewed everyone with a “good eye.” He had sympathy for all, he loved everyone**, and he even prayed for the wicked and corrupt people of Sodom.<sup>49</sup>

When love prevails, it is easier to mediate tensions between different groups. Indeed, “love covers up all transgressions” (Mishlei 10:11).

The senior R. Kook explained that viewing all people with a “good eye” allows one to see the positive in them and given them the benefit of the doubt:

**...one who looks with a good eye will truly find all of the good aspects that obligate him to recognize the good, acquire love for, and derive satisfaction from his fellows. Since he is of good spirit, he finds it proper to judge favorably... a wicked spirit can only imagine wickedness and will reflect on the world with an evil eye, despairing of all aspects of life that it can judge unfavorably and minimizing goodness to its smallest proportions... everything good comes from a good eye. The blessed virtue of tolerance, which restores the world and bring it toward completion, emerges from it and is returned to it.**<sup>50</sup>

Thus, a “good eye” is a building block for national unity and bridging difference. Differences should not be ignored or blurred; instead, the positive aspects of those who are different should be sought out. When each group concerns itself with reinforcing its

---

<sup>49</sup> Cited in *Sichot Harav Zvi Yehuda al Ha-Torah, Bereishit*, 1:17, “Yisrael Rachmanim.”

<sup>50</sup> *Eyn Ayah to Berakhhot* 58a (Vol. II, ch. 9, §287).

positions and demonstrating its correctness, it becomes jaded toward others, seeking only to highlight its rivals' shortcomings.

To prevent this, the virtue of a "good eye" must be cultivated. A rival's flaws should not be taken out of proportion; on the contrary, opposing views should be seen for their positives as well. Considering things with a "good eye" allows one to see the truly positive aspects of his rival and even the benefits that a rival approach can bring to the broader community. This, according to R. Kook, creates true tolerance.

### **C. A Mouth that Speaks Benevolently**

The willow is compared to the mouth. Clean and good speech, in contrast to "*lashon hara*," is another key virtue and building block for forging national unity and bridging gaps. True partnership is based on dialogue, not coercion; on national consensus, not the tyranny of a particular group. Language is a major element of creating a climate of unity and connection between different sectors. In order to forge unity, all sectors must adopt positive, non-provocative, soft-spoken, inclusive, forgiving, and non-polarizing dialogue. The music, tone, and moderation that accompany cross-sectoral dialogue have a tremendous impact. The willow represents the mouth, and it too is included in the *lulav* bundle to contribute its part to national unity. Its biblical name, "willows of the brook," has another meaning as well:

Our rabbis taught: "willows of the brook" – which grows along a brook. Alternatively, **"willows of the brook" – whose leaves are elongated like a brook.**<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> BT *Sukkah* 33b.

The willow's Hebrew name, *arava*, has a connotation of pleasantness and sweetness (*areiv*), characteristic of positive speech. Its comparison to a "babbling brook" is likewise an expression of pleasant speech. This outlines how benevolent speech constitutes a major element of national unity.

#### **D. The Spine of Good Leadership**

The *lulav* is compared to the spinal column. It is the most prominent of the four species, standing in the center, a full handbreadth higher than the rest of the species (*Sukkah* 32b). The mitzva itself is often called "taking the *lulav*," and the *berakha* mentions only the *lulav*.

The *lulav* thus represents high-quality leadership, the nation's backbone. This too constitutes a key building block for forging national unity and bridging gaps. The *lulav*, like the spine in the body, represents the role of the leader within a community: the leader's job is to consolidate unity by including each sector and giving it the opportunity to contribute to the nation as a whole. Occasionally we see "spineless" leaders who try to hide their weakness by inciting one sector against another through "divide and conquer" tactics. Such people are not only failed leaders; they have usurped and mismanaged the power to forge national unity, which is a first-rank national treasure.

When Moshe was about to die, He beseeched God that his successor be "a man of spirit" (*ish hasher ru'ach bo*). Rashi explains this to mean "one who can is capable of going against the spirit of everyone."<sup>52</sup> The simple meaning of a "man of spirit" is that a leader knows how to deal with different types and groups of people.

---

<sup>52</sup> Bamidbar 27:18 and Rashi *ad loc*.

Rashi's statement indicates that it must be someone who can go against the individual spirit of each and every one, but can harness each one to the national project, thus expressing its unique contributions and advantages.

According to the *halakha*, the *lulav* must be straight and upright. Similarly, honesty and integrity are prerequisites for leadership.

## **5. Unity Now**

**In the future, God will seat the righteous in a *sukkah* made from the skin of the Leviathan.**<sup>53</sup> Each righteous person, in his unique way, will connect to the others under the canopy of the divine presence.

At present, the *sukkah* is a paradigm for true Jewish unity. "Every native Israelite," everyone who is linked to the Jewish people, its destiny, and its fate, has a place in the *sukkah* of the entire people. Everyone enters the *sukkah* with his own ideology and its kernel of truth. This kernel remains even if, in order to highlight its difference and singularity, the approach is radicalized and diluted by extraneous impurities. And this kernel of truth is crucial to the completion of the full mosaic of ideas and opinions, a necessary element of Jewish people made whole.

Let us all enter the *sukkah* as brothers. Let us find a way to bridge differences and optimize the positives that each of us, by being different, brings to the table.

**Who is like Your people Israel, a single nation on earth!**

---

<sup>53</sup> *Psikta De-Rav Kanana* – Appendix B.

# Shemini Atzeret: The Conclusion of the *Yerach Ha-Etanim* Festivals and the Secret of Circular Progression

## A. Shemini Atzeret – a Separate Festival

Shemini Atzeret is a unique holiday. It is the last of the festivals of the Month of Etanim and completes the process that began on Rosh Hashana. The culmination of this process leads to rejoicing with the Torah:

The idea of *hakafot* on Simchat Torah is that **after completing all of the *tikunim* (rectifications) made during the Month of Etanim**, from Rosh Hashana until this day, through the *shofar*, the four species, and the *sukkah*, Israel has illuminated the letters of the Torah through the *mitzvot* they performed to bring out the joy in the holy Torah...<sup>54</sup>

Shemini Atzeret is not part of Sukkot, but rather is an independent festival:

**Shemini – is a festival on its own.** Just as the seven days of Sukkot require a [special] sacrifice, song, *berakha*, and overnight stay, so too Shemini [Atzeret] needs a [special] sacrifice, song, *berakha*, and overnight stay.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> *Tiferet Shlomo* on Simchat Torah.

<sup>55</sup> BT *Sukkah* 47a. On the contrary, it is forbidden to eat in the *sukkah* on Simchat Torah, and doing so violates the prohibition of adding on to the Torah (“*bal tosif*”).

The Talmud later notes that Shemini Atzeret is a separate holiday with regard to six elements:

**A teaching in support of R. Nachman: Shemini [Atzeret] is a festival on its own with regard to PZ”R KS”V:** a separate lottery (*Payis*); a separate season (*Zeman*); a separate festival (*Regel*); a separate sacrifice (*Korban*); a separate song (*Shira*); and a separate blessing (*Berakha*).<sup>56</sup>

Rashi elaborates (*ad loc.*):

“a separate lottery” – lots were cast to determine which shift would offer the sacrificial bulls on the holiday...

“season” – to recite the *berakha* of “*She-hecheyanu*”

“a separate pilgrimage” – on which one does not sit in the *sukkah*

“a separate sacrifice” – it does not follow the sequence of the sacrificial bulls of Sukkot, for if it did, six bulls would be offered on it.

“a separate blessing” – [in prayers the phrase] “the eighth day” [is inserted]. The *Tosefta* implies that the king is blessed...

Although Shemini Atzeret is a separate festival, it is unique among the Tishrei holidays in that it has no special *mitzvot*. Nevertheless, the absence of a special mitzva attests to the fact that this holiday has deeper roots, bordering on the esoteric, as shall be explained.

Another curious fact is that the Torah mentions only three

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 48a.

pilgrimage festivals (*regalim*), excluding Shemini Atzeret.<sup>57</sup> If it is indeed a separate *regel* and not part of Sukkot, why does the Torah list only three *regalim* instead of four?

Over the centuries, several customs developed on this holiday. It was observed as Simchat Torah, the day that the annual cycle of reading the Torah is completed and then started anew (outside of Israel, Simchat Torah is celebrated on the ninth day; in Israel, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah coincide). The kabbalists instituted the custom of seven circuits (*hakafot*) around the *bima* while holding the Torah scrolls. They also instituted calling everyone in the community up to the Torah for an *aliya*.

These customs reflect the unique essence of this holiday.

## **B. The Eighth Day: A Level Beyond Nature, Unique to Israel**

Although Shemini Atzeret is an independent festival, it nevertheless is connected to Sukkot – after all, it is called “Shemini” because it is the eighth day from the beginning of Sukkot. The Midrash explains this connection by contrasting the “large banquet” of Sukkot, to which all nations are invited, with the “small banquet” of Shemini Atzeret, to which the Jews alone are invited:

R. Eliezer said: To what do these 70 bulls correspond? To the 70 nations.

Why a lone bull? To correspond to the lone nation.

It is comparable to a flesh-and-blood king who said to his servants: “Make me a large feast.” On the last day he said

---

<sup>57</sup> Shemot 23:14 and elsewhere.

to his beloved: **“Make me a small feast so that I may enjoy you.”**<sup>58</sup>

The one bull sacrificed on Shemini Atzeret is understood as a king’s lover’s invitation to an intimate dinner, symbolizing that Israel alone spends the holiday with God, not the other nations.

Some have wondered why the king’s beloved did not merit a large banquet instead of a small one.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, what makes Shemini Atzeret so special, its independent status or its connection to Sukkot?

The Midrash explains that the name “Atzeret” connotes a sort of delay and special meeting after Sukkot, especially for the king’s confidants:

“It is an *atzeret*” – **I have held (*atzarti*) you with Me** like a king who summoned his sons to a **banquet** for a certain number of days. When the time came for them to depart, He said: **“My sons, please stay with Me one more day. Your departure is hard for Me.”**<sup>60</sup>

Thus, Shemini Atzeret expresses the special intimacy of God’s relationship with Israel. This holiday thus manifests a special sanctity that is absent from the other holidays of *Yerach Ha-ETanim*. As R. Kook explains:

**Natural sanctity**, the foundation of faith’s yearning based on its spiritual authenticity, **increases within us during the month of Tishrei. All of the nations draw their spiritual nourishment from this – “70 bulls corresponding to 70 nations.”** Yet we cultivate this

---

<sup>58</sup> BT *Sukkah* 55b.

<sup>59</sup> *Benei Yisaskhar, Ma’amarei Chodesh Tishrei* 13.

<sup>60</sup> This version of the *midrash* appears in Rashi to Vayikra 23:36, *Tanchuma Pinchas* 16, and *Bamidbar Rabbah* 21:24.

natural sanctity by making manifest the inner holiness of the light of *mitzvot*. Nature progresses toward its highest advancement, the secret of the effacement of Original Man's bifacetedness, **by Shemini Atzeret, when the unique light of Israel, in which foreigners have no share, is manifest – beyond nature. “Make me an intimate feast so that I may enjoy you.”**<sup>61</sup>

Shemini Atzeret expresses the special sanctity of the Jewish people. All of the other Tishrei holidays represent “**natural sanctity**, the foundation of faith's yearning based on its spiritual authenticity.” But on Shemini Atzeret there is manifestation of Israel's superior level, “beyond nature,” bordering on the esoteric world. The essence of Shemini Atzeret forges a perfect match between the “*atzeret*” and the eighth day of the festival – the number eight reflects a hidden, supernatural essence, as Maharal writes in several places:

**Seven is close to eight, in which Israel's existence begins, for the beginning of the eighth is devoted specifically to Israel**, as has been explained. This is known from the offerings of the seven days of Sukkot, during which they would sacrifice 70 bulls, corresponding to the nations (*Sukkah* 55b). The nations have no unity, only multiplicity, so for them 70 bulls are offered on the seven days of Sukkot – seven and seventy are similar and equivalent. This indicates that the nations have this world, which was created during the seven days of creation. **After the seven, one bull is offered** (Bamidbar 29:36), **corresponding to the singular nation of Israel.**<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> *Olat Re'aya* 2:384.

<sup>62</sup> Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael* 32.

It is precisely Shemini Atzeret, the day that expresses the supernatural and is uniquely suited to the Jewish people, that is also the day of Simchat Torah, the celebration of the Torah, which is itself beyond nature:

**There are seventy nations because the heathens are from the natural world** and the world was created during the seven days of creation; the seven days of the natural world correspond to the seventy nations, ten for each day. **The one nation that is above nature corresponds to eight, for eight is supernatural. Therefore Israel is worthy of the Torah, which itself is beyond the natural world.** The Torah was created before the natural world was created, and Israel was also created before the natural world was created. For this reason, the entire matter of the Torah is associated with eight, **for nature is subject to the number seven, and whatever is beyond nature is eight...**<sup>63</sup>

### **C. The “Fourth Festival” – The Culmination of the *Yerach Ha-Etanim* Holidays**

There is another meaning of the word “*atzeret*,” which sheds much light on the meaning of the festival. R. Samson Raphael Hirsch explained the term “*atzeret*” as the collection, gathering, and preservation of the spiritual charge accumulated during the previous days. This applies in context of both the seventh day of Pesach and Shemini Atzeret:

---

<sup>63</sup> *Idem, Tiferet Yisrael* 1.

**“Atzeret”** (the seventh day of Pesach) is not a day devoted to the recognition of new truths, but to keep us before God... to reinforce within us those things we have already realized, so that they stand the test of time. This suits the goals of the last day of a festival; for six days we soaked up all of the truths that the exodus from Egypt implants in the Jewish heart, but on the seventh, the *atzeret*, we gather in and preserve all of the spiritual treasures we collected throughout the holiday. Thus they will truly enrich us, and thus we will transfer them into routine life, which begins at the end of the seventh day. The role of the *atzeret* is fulfilled if we remember everything that we acquired, if we resolve not to let go of these assets during life’s struggles and travails. It is an “*atzeret*” in both senses – staying with God and preserving all of the achievements attained in His proximity. These two aspects are, in truth, only one. *Atzeret* preserves these assets for us, and we are in turn reserved to God. Had the seventh day of Sukkot been called “*atzeret*,” we would have said that this day’s task of consolidation and preservation applies only to the truths acquired on Sukkot. However, the eighth day that is called “*atzeret*” here, is an independent festival. Its purpose, to remain with God and preserve all these assets in His presence, warrants a separate holiday; this holiday does not merely culminate the festivals of the seventh month, but of the entire year. This, then, is the essence of Shemini Atzeret: it is a day for collecting all of the insights and resolutions reached during the

**festivals of the seventh month and the festivals of the entire year**; we resolve to remain in God’s presence and preserve everything we have acquired there. Thus we will not lose this enrichment during the routine life, which begins now. We will maintain it through the changing seasons that are upon us, and we will remain close to God...<sup>64</sup>

The uniqueness of Shemini Atzeret lies in the fact that it summarizes and consolidates the entire spiritual charge that was accumulated throughout the Month of Etanim. Its spiritual content is essentially the whole of all previous holidays. From this perspective, on Shemini Atzeret the holidays of Tishrei “come full circle”: they begin as the year begins on Rosh Hashana, and conclude as we complete the Torah on Shemini Atzeret. On one hand, Shemini Atzeret is indeed an independent festival, but on the other hand it draws its potency by integrating the three prior festivals; it has no separate or additional spiritual content. *Sefat Emet* similarly elaborates:

**Shemini Atzeret is a separate *regel*, and yet there are only three *regalim*. The idea is that when one properly absorbs the three festivals, he merits Shemini Atzeret...** when [the Torah] states “and you shall be only joyous,” [the seemingly superfluous word “only” (*akh*)] addresses Shemini Atzeret, which comes automatically when the *regalim* are properly upheld. **It is like an additional blessing – an additional, independent *regel* extends forth from the three *regalim*.**<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> R. Hirsch’s commentary Vayikra 23:36.

<sup>65</sup> *Sefat Emet* on Devarim, Sukkot 5637.

From this perspective, we can explain why Shemini Atzeret has no unique *mitzvot*; it incorporates everything that had already been included individually in the earlier festivals. “It has nothing of its own (*leit lei mi-garme klum*).”<sup>66</sup> The absence of special *mitzvot* should not be understood as “nothing” (*ayin*) because its substance (*yesh*) is collective, reflecting the Infinite, which cannot be expressed or defined in a particular, defined, and limited way, in the manner of the “surrounding light” (*ohr makif*):

The idea of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah...

Performance of all *mitzvot* brings (for man as well) “surrounding lights” into existence, but it is a specific “surrounding light,” a surrounding that restores. That is, the light not contained in the vessel will be restored to surrounding the vessel... this resembles the [part of the soul called the] *chaya*, which surrounds each level [of the soul] separately and independently... **But there is a general “surrounding light.” From the beginning of its illumination, it surrounds everything equally, like the *yechida* that surrounds [all levels of the soul, namely] the *nefesh*, *ru’ach*, and *neschama* together as one (and emerges from the joy of performing *mitzvot*). The idea of Simchat Torah is to become the most general *makif* of all *mitzva* performance and of the entire Torah...** This is the esoteric meaning of the *hakafot* of Simchat Torah – they allude to the aforementioned *makif*. Similarly, the *Zohar* states [about this day] that while he is with the king, he asks what he wants and it is given to him, for his requests are granted without any boundary or restriction, **like the**

---

<sup>66</sup> *Bi’ur Ha-Gra Le-Tikkunei Zohar* §70. *Kehilat Yaakov* s.v. “ger”.

general “surrounding light” that is completely unbound... From this we can infer the meaning of an ancient custom on this day; there is no number or tally of *aliyot* to the Torah since the day’s illumination reflects the general *ohr makif* of the entire Torah, and consequently there is no boundary or calculation. One may similarly understand the custom that immediately upon completing the Torah on this day, we start Bereishit, so that its end is embedded in the beginning and there is no completion or limit...<sup>67</sup>

#### **D. Shemini Atzeret – The Secret of Circular Progression**

The deep, esoteric aspect of Shemini Atzeret is connected to other connections between the number eight and the meaning of “*atzeret*” as a holiday that gathers and consolidates all the festivals of the Month of Etanim:

On Simchat Torah and the “small feast”: Jews everywhere celebrate Simchat Torah on Shemini Atzeret because there is no *atzeret* or *regel* on the eighth, except this.

We have already celebrated seven days at the beginning of the year, and completed them, and we have completed the cycle (*hekef*) of the seven days of creation. So on the eighth day, we enter to eat a “small feast,” which for us is very great.

It is called a “small feast” because the entire cycle of

---

<sup>67</sup> *Benei Yisaskhar, Ma'amarei Chodesh Tishrei* 13:2.

seven days has already been completed, yet we repeat the cycle from the beginning, from the first day when there was nothing but the creation of the first, pure, clear, refined light. The “small feast,” with no gluttony, corresponds to the refinement and clarity of the first light. Since [Shemini Atzeret] is the first day of a single and unified creation, its offerings are one – one bull, one ram, one he-goat – unlike the other seven days of the festival. Nevertheless, seven lambs are offered, **alluding to the constant repetition of the number seven forever.**<sup>68</sup>

The cyclical nature of our world is expressed by the number seven. These cycles are circular; whenever one cycle of seven is completed, a new one begins, *ad infinitum*. From this perspective, the number eight lies beyond the circularity of the number seven but also represents the beginning of the new cycle. The number eight thus stands on the threshold between the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next. This has an additional meaning as well: this number “comes full circle” by illuminating at the end the potential that exists at the beginning. This connecting point, which is *ayin* and is called a “small feast,” contains an awesome and infinite meaning: it expresses circularity. This is reflected in the festival’s customs:

**This is why our Sages instituted that the Torah is completed and immediately restarted on this day. Just as this day is the eighth, and it continues cycling, so too we continue to cycle through the Torah. It also shows that the end is the beginning and the beginning is the end, as stated in *Sefer Yetzira* that the end is embedded**

---

<sup>68</sup> R. Yaakov Sakili’s *Torah Ha-mincha* §86.

**in the beginning like a flame is connected to a coal.**<sup>69</sup>

The significance of this circularity is expressed through our completion and restarting of the Torah. This circularity expresses the infinitude of the supernatural Torah. It can never be completed, and every end is essentially the beginning of the next cycle:

**On Shemini Atzeret, which is Simchat Torah, he conclude the Torah with the letter lamed [of “*Yisrael*”] and begin with the letter bet [of “*Bereishit*”], so that this day is a complete union of the Holy One with the community of Israel [*Knesset Yisrael*]... On the day of complete unity *Knesset Yisrael* says, “though I will go here or there (especially during the days of exile), ‘place me as a seal on your heart (Shir Hashirim 8:6).’” To allude to this, when the Torah is “sealed” and completed with the letter lamed on this day of unification, it is immediately begun with the letter bet – this is the “seal” upon the “heart” (*lev* – spelled lamed-bet)... “Place me as a seal on your heart” in the straightforward and broader senses.**

**Thus, “praise Him with timbrel (*tof*) and dance (*machol*)” (Tehilim 150:5)... refers to the time of the circle (*machol*), the aforementioned general *makif*, which has no distinct beginning or end, like a *machol* that goes round and round. This idea is contained in the Sages’ parable that in the future God will make a *machol* for the righteous (*Ta’anit* 31a)...<sup>70</sup>**

The custom of *hakafot* with the Torah scrolls, instituted by

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Benei Yisaskhar, Ma’amarei Chodesh Tishrei* 13:3.

kabbalists, expresses the circularity of beginning at a certain point and returning to that point. It is not simply joyous dancing, but a circular and cyclical motion.

# The War of *Yerach Ha-Etanim*

## “The Revolving Sword of the Spirit”

### Victory and “Revolution” Rooted in the Spirit

#### **A. Introduction: “The War of the Month of Etanim”**

*Milchemet Yerach Ha-Etanim* is the name of R. Moshe Zvi Neriya’s book about the Yom Kippur War, published in its immediate aftermath. The war that broke out on Yom Kippur, 5734 (1973) was the most terrible that Israel has known, took a severe toll, and scarred and traumatized national consciousness. The war sent tremors that impacted and continue to impact spiritual, social, and political developments even now. Every year as Yom Kippur begins, many of our best and brightest, who still bear scars on their bodies and souls, recall the war.

It would be a mistake to relate to the war only from the political and military perspectives. The war and its operations have existential meanings and important spiritual aspects. In many respects, it was a watershed in the history of the State of Israel, the “first flowering of our redemption.”

It is for this reason that we have decided to include a chapter about the war in a booklet about the holidays of the Month of Etanim.

#### **B. Initial Failure and a Subsequent Turnabout**

Over the years, only the failures and breakdowns of the war were highlighted, and the perception of it was shaped accordingly. Yet

there was also an unprecedented transformation that is not emphasized. The Yom Kippur War ended in a great and unparalleled victory!

The war began suddenly, on two fronts simultaneously, and with numbers significantly favoring the Egyptians and the Syrians. In less than twenty-four hours, the Syrians managed to occupy most of the Golan Heights and the Egyptians occupied a wide strip of territory extending deep into the Sinai. One of the stunned and anxious military leaders even expressed concern that the “destruction of the Third Temple” was underway!

Nevertheless, the IDF was able to turn the tables, thank God, within a few days, and a battered army fighting defensively became an opportunistic force attacking deep within enemy territory, ending fighting 40 km from Damascus and 101 km from Cairo. This was the most unprecedented turnaround in the history of modern warfare!

### **C. What Caused the Transformation?**

A war of this magnitude demands that the relevant conclusions be drawn in all spheres. Over the years, there has been a tendency to focus mainly on analyzing the failures and the “conception” that brought about the terrible results. On the operative plane, much attention has been paid to the issue of intelligence warning. No doubt that this failure caused a shakeup within intelligence circles, but there is no absolute guarantee that there will be no surprises in the future and no more military threats like those we faced during the Yom Kippur War. With a bit of stealth, a surprise attack is always possible. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that if our enemies try to surprise us in the future, it will be in the same

way as they did in the past (besides, any relevant lessons apply to the intelligence community and have no operative ramifications for the general public). On the other hand, according to many who study the matter from within a variety of disciplines, too little attention has been devoted, over the years, to analyzing the most significant aspect of the war – the turnaround!

#### **D. Miracles and Natural Warfare**

The war was filled with miracles: for example, it began on Yom Kippur, when all Jews were in synagogues or at home and it was possible to expedite the mobilization of reserve units. Not as well known, the Egyptian demand to delay the start of the war from the morning until the afternoon caused the Syrians to cancel their plans to open the war by placing commandos on the bridges over the Jordan River! We can only imagine how the war would have looked had they executed this plan. In various incidents throughout the war it was possible to discern God's hand aiding the people of Israel while it fought for its life. Yet, as people of faith, we know that miracles are connected to natural human actions. Ramban teaches us this in several places, and R. Zvi Yehuda Kook often cited the *Drashot Ha-Ran* on human initiative and its limits. *Sefer Ha-chinukh* §546 (the mitzva to build a guard rail on one's roof) emphasizes this principle:

Our Sages said (*Torat Kohanim, Emor* 8) that no miracle will be performed for anyone who relies on a miracle. Most of Scripture fits this pattern; even when Israel fought obligatory wars at God's bidding, they would deploy, arm themselves,

and do everything as though relying on natural forces completely.

Thus, we must discern the human actions, working through “natural forces,” that prompted this turnaround.

### **E. Fighting Spirit as a Force Multiplier**

Current research on the war teaches that one of the main factors in its dramatic change lies in the realm of morale, fighting spirit, and the ethical behavioral patterns of most fighters. The fighting in the Yom Kippur War has been characterized by the soldiers’ continuing to fight fearlessly, courageously, and heroically even against slim odds and superior forces (under these circumstances, soldiers generally retreat). These were not exceptional events involving a small number of heroes, but the mode of conduct of thousands of soldiers in dozens of different battles on different fronts! Their way of fighting constituted a “force multiplier,” altering the balance of power on the battlefield. This teaches an important principle: contrary to conventional wisdom that wars are decided by a surplus of physical force, we see that this war, and indeed in other wars, was decided in favor of the side whose physical force was inferior at various stages, but whose spirit of faith and inner strength were more robust!

Though it could have, Israeli society did not lick its wounds by praising the actions of those who halted the Syrian and Egyptian attacks with their bodies and whose dedication and self-sacrifice sparked an unprecedented turnaround. It seems that as a result, the opportunity was missed to absorb one of the main lessons of the war: the importance of the moral dimension on the battlefield – morale,

motivation, inner strength stemming from belief in the justness of one's path, and awareness of one's responsibility for the fate and integrity of the state. On the battlefield, these multiply force and power.

### **F. The Torah's Attitude toward War According to Rav Kook – Let Faith and Spirit Win!**

In context of this “revolution in warfare,” it is worth mentioning a principle that R. Kook elaborates on in an essay on meaning in *mitzvot*. There R. Kook examines the reason for the prohibition against eating the sciatic nerve (*gid ha-nasheh*) in order to outline the Jewish attitude toward warfare. The Torah links the prohibition to eat the *gid ha-nasheh* to the famous “clash of the titans” between Yaakov and the angel:

When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his thigh, and Yaakov's thigh was wrenched as he fought with him. (Bereishit 32:25)

Although Yaakov won the fight, his leg was injured by the angel, and he left the battle with a limp. As a reminder of this battle, the Torah prohibits eating the *gid ha-nasheh*:

Therefore the Israelites do not eat the *gid ha-nasheh* which is on the hip socket until this day, because he injured Yaakov's hip socket at the *gid ha-nasheh*.

R. Kook explains the injury to the thigh and the *gid ha-nasheh* as an attempt to decide the conflict between two rivals by means of physical force and not truth and justice. The aggressor had the physical advantage over his rival and tried to end the conflict by

attacking him and knocking him down. The attack was directed at the thigh in order to destabilize him:

The “law of the jungle” begins to show its power to man in the most primal and straightforward manner: bare-knuckle wrestling with no weapons for either combatant.

The first stage of victory is knocking down the opponent in the common way – felling him by hitting his waist or cruelly striking his thigh socket, thereby weakening the nerve that keeps the body standing.<sup>71</sup>

The angel’s failure to defeat Yaakov by hitting his thigh, despite his advantages, teaches that **it is not right to grant victory to the mightier, whoever it may be, but to the side that is just:**

The first insight that will lead humanity to this recognition... **is that it is not right to recognize the advantage of the mightier, because total victory will not come from the stronger arm or fist, but from the greater morality and more refined spirit.**<sup>72</sup>

**The significance of the strike against the thigh is that it was an attempt to prevail through force alone. Against this stands the mitzva to refrain from eating the *gid ha-nasheh*, which inculcates within us the notion that spirit and justness must prevail. Might does not make right. Rather, moral uprightness determines who ought to be in control. Victory is rooted in the spirit: “not through valor or force, but through My spirit, say the Lord of Hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).**

---

<sup>71</sup> *Otzarot Ha-Re'ayah* 4:38.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

## **G. The Character of Conflict in the Era after the Yom Kippur War**

The failure of the joint surprise attack on Yom Kippur led our enemies to conclude that they cannot win this conflict through normal warfare, and so they diverted their efforts to other arenas where they think they may have a decisive advantage.

Our enemies “discovered” the international arena and public relations as venues where they can generate a clear advantage and strategic gains. Concomitantly, they developed the tools of asymmetric, painful, and lethal terrorism, as well as an arsenal of short-range rockets that harm the personal safety of the population and erode national morale and public stamina. This is how they hope to overcome their inferiority on the battlefield.

Over the years, our enemies have learned how to hurt us through operations that influence public consciousness and faith in the justice of our path! Instead of attempting to harm “Yaakov’s thigh,” they try to exploit our moral and spiritual weak points. They challenge Israeli society by raising moral and ethical claims of discrimination, occupation, and repression, the answers to which can only be rooted in faith and Jewish heritage.

## **H. National Security – A Double-Sided Coin**

In context of this conflict, the lessons of the Yom Kippur War obtain even greater validity. We ought to study that war and learn its lessons. It would present an opportunity to draw attention to the conduct of Israel’s soldiers in that war, and thereby learn lessons for

the present, too. This will lead Israeli society and the IDF to consider how to assign the right importance to the moral dimension on the battlefield. Large segments of the population still have not internalized that national security is not connected only to the physical dimensions of the military forces. The conflict has singular characteristics; it is no longer merely a clash of armed forces, but a test of the spirit. Such a conflict will be won by the side whose spirit is more formidable and whose faith in the justness of their cause is stronger. Regarding this conflict as well, we staunchly believe in God and are confident that we will prevail. Nevertheless, it remains clear that in addition to military exercises, we must engage in moral, spiritual, and faith-based exercises in order to boost the people's spirit.

**To that end, we must work to deepen the study of issues pertaining to our national and spiritual existence, and ensure that this engagement becomes part of the heritage of all parts of Israeli society.**

