

Sukkot- Service of the Heart

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

In *Shir Hashirim*, King Shlomo movingly depicts Hashem's profound love for the Jewish people. "B'tzilo chimaditi v'yashavti. I desired his shade and I have dwelt there, his fruits are sweet to my palate." According to the *Midrash*, this refers to the *mitzvot* of *sukka* and *lulav*, which are our central methods of connection to Hashem on *Sukkot*. Why did Hashem give us two *mitzvot* on this holiday? Why was one not adequate?

The Shem MiShmuel explains that man is a dual combination of mind and heart. This is reflected in the ten *sefirot*, which are expressed on both intellectual and emotional levels. Moshe, the paragon of intellect, and Aharon, the embodiment of emotion, were the founding fathers of the Jewish nation. Moshe's role was primarily *moach*, intellect, bringing Torah to Jewry, Aharon's purpose was *lev*, emotion, achieving harmony between man and Hashem. His prayers and service in the *Mishkan* were the focal point of *Yom*

Kippur. Additionally, he pursued peace and mended troubled relationships between people.

The *Torah* emphasizes, "Hu Aharon U'Moshe," the role of Aharon was equal to Moshe's. The Shem Mishmuel notes that perfection of intellect is intertwined with perfection of emotion. Both are needed to attain *sheleimut*. Indeed, when we examine the lives of our *Torah* giants we see this combination of wisdom of mind and heart.

The Gemara writes that the *mitzva* of *sukkah* serves as a remembrance to the Clouds of Glory, which were given in the merit of Aharon. The *sukkah* signifies the life and essence of Aharon. Aharon personified peace, fulfillment, humility, and total subservience to Hashem. This is the *sukkah* – modesty, harmony and completion. The *lulav* represents the teachings of Moshe. It is a straight line that corresponds to the direct intellectual logic of *Torah*. Both *mitzvot* help us tap into the dual essence of

the holiday.

Rosh Hashana is the head of the year. It signifies a new beginning and corresponds to the soul of Moshe, who personified intellect. It is a day to think about our past deeds, make a personal reckoning, and plan for the future. *Yom Kippur* is *lev*, emotion. It symbolizes Aharon *Hakohein*. The *Torah* writes, "B'zot yavo Aharon el hakodesh." It links Aharon specifically with the service in the *Mishkan*. Rav Soloveitchik notes that the essence of *Yom Kippur* was the *avodah* of Aharon, who was the paragon of *ahavat Hashem* and *ahavat Yisrael*.

On *Rosh Hashana* we rededicate our intellect to Hashem. On *Yom Kippur* we reignite our souls to *ahavat Hashem*. All this culminates with *Sukkot* – the pinnacle of joy and completion as we celebrate the melding of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual purification.

Tehillim 115

Hallel- Praise of the Living

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

This *mizmor*, part of the whole Hallel recited on *Sukkot*, seems to be a prayer being said for someone but it isn't clear at the start for what. The phrase, "Not for us," is repeated twice. It's a form of *shirshur* that we sometimes find in *Tehillim* where a phrase is repeated with a variation in the next line, bringing it a step higher. "Not for us Hashem, not for us but for your sake Hashem give honor." The commentators explain that this *mizmor* is linked to the previous one, chapter 114 which depicts the Exodus from Egypt when nature bowed to Hashem's will and all of the world saw Hashem's open hand. The *Redak* points out that we can explain the beginning of this *mizmor* as a prayer. We ask Hashem, just as He took our forefathers out of Egypt and wrought great miracles for them, so too do for us, although we don't deserve it. We say, not for our sake but for Your name's sake.

"Al chasdecha," do it because of your *chesed*, your unconditional love and if not, because of your faithfulness and truthfulness. We call up

the merit of our forefathers and the promises Hashem made to them. "... Hashem is in the heavens." That might imply He is far and yet despite the fact that he cannot be seen and seems distant, "whatever He wishes, He does."

"Their idols are man -made." Malbim explains the word *atzabehem* as the forms or the things they molded. The *Redak* and the Ibn Ezra say that it comes from the root word *etzuv* - sad. Rav Hirsh points out that the term *etzuv* is used when the *Torah* mentions the curse of Chava and it means dashed aspirations. Man is arrogant, but at the same time in His greatness tries to form things only to find that what he produces doesn't last, what he acquires is taken away, what he loves dies. Here it seems to imply that what a person idolizes will end up disappointing him.

It's not only about statues but about the idols that man relies on such as political power, weapons, and money. The *mizmor* then emphasizes, "Trust in Hashem." It calls on Israel and the House of Aaron. Then it calls on those who fear Hashem. This refers to the

nations that keep the seven Noachide laws. We are in exile not merely because we were punished but to serve as an example to the world.

Bracha means an increase in what we need. The root word *baruch* is composed of three letters, bet, reish, chof, which are multiples of two. It also comes from the root word *berech* – knee. When we kneel and submit to Hashem, He will bless us. "The heavens are heavens of Hashem..." In order to allow human beings to have free choice, He needed to withdraw. "...But the earth He gave to the children of men." Heaven signifies infinity while earth symbolizes finiteness. We're stuck down here. We need to make judgements about good and bad, about what to do, with a limited perspective in a limited amount of time.

"The dead will not praise Hashem nor those who descend to the grave." It's a plea where we ask Hashem, although we don't deserve it, give us life so we can continue to pray to You and serve You.

Kohelet-Solving the Complexities of Life: Part I

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

The tenth chapter of *Kohelet* discusses human complexity. The first angle King Shlomo looks at is that nobody is completely good or bad. He gives an allegory of a small fly that ruins a flask of expensive, fragrant oil. Although the fly is the minority and the oil is the majority, it still spoils the oil. So too, when a little bit of foolishness is mixed with wisdom, it can take an idea or person and corrupt it completely. The *Midrash* brings the example of Korach who lost everything for a bit of foolishness.

Chazal say three attributes remove a person from reality. They are *kinah* (jealousy), *taavah* (desire), and *kavod* (honor seeking). *Kinah* is the illusion that if someone has more than you, you must have less. The fact is that we are who we are and are not in competition with anyone else. There are no limitations to spirituality. You can be your absolute maximum self. Problems arise when we use the *gashmiyut* (physical) ruler and think that having and not having determines who we are. The physical world is limited. If we have two cookies and give away one, we're left with one. Taking that same model and applying it to the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual world and thinking that if someone else has more it means I have less, is a terrible tragedy. There are three principles we need to understand. The first is, I have exactly what I need to achieve what I need to in life and it's Hashem who moderates that. The second is, that what I have is totally disconnected with what someone else has. The third is, what I

have to achieve in life is as significant as what someone else needs to achieve.

The second illusion is *taavah*-letting your body take over and making no room for the mind. It could be food or money. It could cross over to anger. Lack of control is the voice of *taavah*. *Michtav M'Eliyahu* says that unlike *kinah*, you can't debate *taavah* with intellectual concepts. Since *taavah* is based on physical desire, imagery can help. At the moment that you feel desire overcoming you, try to conjure up either a negative or positive image of yourself. Depending on what works for you, imagine yourself looking like an out of control person and tell yourself that you don't want that. Or conversely, see yourself calm and in control and tell yourself you want that.

The third force is *kavod*. *Kavod* means acknowledgement, appreciation, and validation. Someone who runs after *kavod* doesn't trust who he is without someone acknowledging him. If you need *kavod* then you're the prisoner of others. Anyone can make you feel better or worse on the basis of what they tell you about what you are and what you've done.

Kavod takes people out of their intellectual reality, *taavah* out of their physical reality, and *kinah* out of their emotional reality. A fly is attracted to exposed places. The *yetzer hara* which is compared to a fly hones right into that empty space where the person is out of touch with reality. And from there everything can go awilder. "The heart of a wise person takes him

on the stronger right path while the desire of a fool takes him to the less clearly defined left path. Right symbolizes *chesed* while left signifies *gevurah*. *Chesed* is the most dominant spiritual attribute while *gevurah* is the most corruptible. A person's heart could take him towards bringing goodness to the world or towards restraining himself from giving at all. When a person realizes he is not in reality, he'll simultaneously recognize it as an emotional problem. The *tikkun* is finding the seat of your emotions and saying I want goodness. It's better to trust any emotion that comes from wanting to give and make things good, then that which stems from demanding justice, which is easily corruptible.

The *Baal Hatanya* takes this in a different direction. The heart has two ventricles, the left side which is full of blood and the right side which is empty. The left side is the animal soul, the part that pursues. The right side symbolizes the good part of the person, the part that can empty itself out and put the crown on Hashem's head. A fool doesn't know the difference between his right and left side. He'll abandon what he knows is the right path and do what feels right without thinking. He lets his emotions lead him to a point that people see that his speech and actions stem from misguidedness and lack of thought. A wise person knows to put his mind before his emotion and to always question, "What would Hashem want?"