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By the Hakham  
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פרשת האזינו 5780

## Haazinu: Why Bring Heaven and Earth into This?

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־י  
*Hear O Heaven and I shall speak, and the earth will hear the words of my mouth* (Debarim 32:1). The question is, why does Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h, call on Heaven and earth? Rabbenu Bahya, 'a"h, quoting the Midrash says that G-d instructed Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h, to tell the Children of Israel to look at the Heaven and earth as well as His other creations in order to learn a profound lesson from them.

G-d says, "Look at the Heavens, which I created to serve you, did they ever change their nature? Did the sun ever say that it would not rise in the east or give light to the entire world? Did it ever happen that you planted seeds which didn't grow in the earth? Did you ever plant wheat, but barley grew instead? Did the cow ever say that it would not plow the field today? Did the donkey refuse to move or carry its load?"

If these creations which receive no reward or punishment for their actions do not deviate from the path that is expected from them, "how much more so you, the Jewish people, who do receive reward and punishment based on your actions, should be exceptionally careful to do precisely that which is expected of you".

(See Rabbenu Bahya on the Torah,  
Parashath Haazinu)



מדרש בן איש חי  
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## Using the Four Species of the Synagogue

There were times when an entire community had no choice but to share one set of Lulab and Ethrogh. There was even a famous case once in the city of Baghdad, in the days when it was a place full of Torah, that there was only one set of the four species (Arba'ath Haminim) for the entire city and the Ben Ish Hai, Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, declared it to be Pasul (unfit for ritual use). That year there was no Lulab and Ethrogh to be used in the entire city.

Today, thank Heavens, times are substantially different. Everyone is in a position to procure a set for themselves. As such, everyone should purchase their own Lulab and Ethrogh and not rely on the one bought for the congregation.

In fact, if one has an Ethrogh which is Kasher but the one of the congregation is of a higher quality, it is preferable for him to use his own Ethrogh, rather than recite the blessing on the one of the congregation. Also, one who does not have his own Lulab and Ethrogh but has a choice of taking one from his friend or the one from the congregation, should use the one of his friend's. This is because the Lulab and Ethrogh on the first Yom Tob of Sukkoth must be given as an outright gift provided it is returned, and one can rely on the friend to give it wholeheartedly. One should not rely on the set of the congregation since not everyone understands how these acquisitions are made.

(See Maamar Mordekhai [Eliyahu], Hilkhoth Haggim, 52:1, 10, 11)

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## Over What Foods May We Recite Leesheb Basukkah?

There are different opinions concerning what food must be consumed in order to recite the Berakha (blessing) of Leesheb Basukkah. There are those who maintain that Leesheb Basukkah may only be said when eating at least a Kebeisah (egg's weight) of bread. Others are of the opinion that the blessing is recited even on Mezonoth.

There is a further opinion, by the Rambam and Gaon of Vilna, that each time one enters the Sukkah, even if one does not eat, one recites the Berakha of Leesheb Basukkah. Ashkenazim have various customs based on these three opinions.

According to the Ben Ish Hai, since there is a difference of opinion, we must be strict because of the risk of saying a blessing with G-d's name in vain. Therefore, one should only recite the blessing of Leesheb Basukkah when eating a meal with (a Kebeisah [2 oz.] of) bread. Sephardim, therefore, should not recite the Berakha of Leesheb Basukkah unless eating actual bread, because of the concept of Sefeq Berakhoth (not reciting a blessing if there is a doubt).

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Haazinu, Oth 8. Mishnah Berurah 639:13-16. Kaf HaChayim 639, Oth 33. Maamar Mordechai [Eliyahu], Hilkhoth Haggim, 51:15-16)

## Why We Take the Four Species During Hol Hamo'ed

The commandment from the Torah to take the four species applies only to the first day of Sukkoth, as it says: *And you shall take on the first day...* (Leviticus 23:40). In the Beth Hamiqdash (Temple) it was observed for all the seven days of Sukkoth, as it says further: *And you shall rejoice before the L-rd your G-d for seven days.*

After the destruction of the Beth Hamiqdash, Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakkai instituted that the Lulab and Ethrogh should be taken all seven days of the holiday, even outside the Temple, in memory of the Beth Hamiqdash. Since the commandment to take the four species on Hol Hamo'ed (during the intermediate days of the Festival) is Rabbinical in origin and not from the Torah, the Hakhamim were lenient and permitted one to use a Lulab and Ethrogh that were deficient or borrowed, and they do not need to belong to the person using it as is required on the first day.

(See Maamar Mordechai [Eliyahu], Hilkhoth Haggim, 52:7)

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"n

### Simḥoo Na: Can Women Rejoice on Simḥath Torah? Part 1

On Simḥath Torah, both men and women should rejoice and feel deep feelings of rejoicing and elation.

I have heard that some women, however, associate the Holiday of Simḥath Torah (the Rejoicing of the Torah) with standing in the 'Ezrath Nashim (women's gallery), excluded, unable to join the dancing and singing. Some even express resentment.

A woman can and should participate by celebrating by clapping and even singing and dancing where the men cannot see them behind the Meḥiṣṣa (partition). In Sephardi communities the women add to the atmosphere with the *Hilhil* (kilili rejoicing sounds).

Perhaps the Holiday of Simḥath Torah brings out, more than any other Holiday, the differences between the roles of men and women. I would like to attempt to explore one aspect of these differences.

Women are different to men, not only in the physical sense, but spiritually as well.

(To be continued next week, B'E"H).