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5780 פרשת וזאת הברכה - שמחת תורה

Wezoth Haberakha: Love of Torah Will Bring the Redemption

תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב: ויהי
בישרון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל:
*Moses commanded us the Torah, as an inheritance for the
Congregation of Jacob. And he was a king in
Jeshurun, when the heads of the people gathered
together with the tribes of Israel (Debarim
33:4-5).*

The Torah is likened to a bride and the Jewish to the groom. At the time when the bride and groom are under the Huppah, the groom shows significant love and affection towards his bride. In the same vein, we must love the Torah and study it with great affection.

Our Rabbis of memory tell us that the word Morasha (inheritance), in this verse, should not be read as Morasha, but Meorasa (betrothed). Just like the man's love for his betrothed grows stronger every day, so too his love for the Torah, which is his betrothed, should grow constantly together with his desire for it.

When that occurs, *And he was a king in Jeshurun* will occur, since the Melekh Hamashiyaḥ (Messiah) will come, as will the *heads of the people ... with the ten lost tribes of Israel.*

(See Hādrei Beṭen,
Parashath Wezoth Haberakha)



מדרש בן איש חי
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The 5 Willows on Hosha'na Rabba

Since the outer seal of our judgement is completed on Hosha'na Rabba (See A Torah Minute, vol. 2), it is a time when we increase our prayers and supplications. After the Shaḥrith prayer in the morning, a bunch of five 'Araboth (willow leaves) that are fit to be used on a Lulab, should be taken and beaten on the ground. They should be beaten on earth and not on tiles or wooden floors.

The Bikkurei Ya'aqob states that they should be beaten till some leaves fall off. The Ben Ish Hai disagrees, and states that the leaves should remain intact throughout the process. After use, they must be treated with the same respect accorded to the willows of the Lulab and must not be trodden underfoot or treated in any disrespectful manner.

The custom is to hide them away and burn them in the oven when baking the Maṣṣoth (מצות) for the Seder on Pesah. Those who do not bake their own Maṣṣoth can burn them with the Hameṣ (חמץ).

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Wezoth Haberakha, Oth 6-8)

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The End of Fifty One Days of Teshuba

We increase our prayers and our supplication on Hosha'na Rabba, because Hosha'na Rabba is the end of the fifty one days that were given to the Jewish people, through G-d's infinite mercy, in order to make Teshuba (repentance).

The breakdown of the fifty one days is as follows. There are thirty days of Elul – counting the first day of Rosh Hodesh, which is actually the last day of the month of Ab – plus twenty one days of the month of Tashri. Hosha'na Rabba is on the twenty first day of Tashri. $30 + 21 = 51$. Fifty one in Gematria is Nun Aleph. The term *Na* (Nun Aleph) is a request and supplication.

Therefore, fifty one days were given to the Jewish people to make requests and supplications. Hosha'na Rabba is the fifty first day. That is why the day is called Hosha'NA Rabba, as if to say, give salvation on the *Na*, the fifty first day which is Rabba" (great), because, we have a concept that everything depends on the ending.

(See Ben Ish Hai, Shana Aleph, Parashath We'Zoth Ha'Berakha, Oth Aleph)

Rejoicing on Simḥath Torah

The Holiday of Shemini Asereth/Simḥath Torah which falls at the end of Sukkoth is a Holiday unto itself. The Rama writes that the last day of this Holiday is called *Simḥath Torah* (the Rejoicing of the Law) because one rejoices on it and has a festive meal to celebrate the completion of the reading of the Torah.

Just as we celebrate when we complete a Maseketh (tractate), so too we celebrate when we finish reading the Torah. We must be careful to rejoice for the sake of Heaven and not to mix in with this celebration for the Torah, levity and lightheadedness.

When we complete the reading we sing and dance as did King David, 'a"ḥ, who clapped with all his might in front of G-d. When clapping, in Kabbalistic terms, it is appropriate to clap with the right hand over the left, to assist the forces of Ḥesed overcome the Geburah, and the forces of mercy to overcome the forces of judgement.

(See Rama 669:1. Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Wezoth Habberakha, Oth 18. Kaf Haḥayyim 668, Oth 15. Hilkhoth Haggim, 55:2)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"ḥ

Simḥoo Na: Can Women Rejoice on Simḥath Torah? Part 2

Some women 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.

Women are different to men, not only in the physical sense, but spiritually as well. . One of the reasons why women are exempt from "time-bound positive commandments" is because of their high spiritual level. Any Miṣwah (commandment) that we perform raises our spiritual level, as we say in the blessings *Asher Qiddeshanu BeMiṣwothaw...* (Who sanctified us through His commandments). We are exempt from performing certain commandments because they are not all required in order for us to reach that level of spirituality.

On the other hand, men are generally more involved in the outside world and its attractions and need more reminders to guard them, from falling into the traps of the lure of the outside world and to assist them in elevating their spirituality.

I hope this pours light, from a different perspective, on the different roles of men and women. On Simḥath Torah, when we stand in the 'Ezrath Nashim (women's gallery), let us proudly remind ourselves of our spiritual essence and develop true feelings of joy and happiness over being blessed with our holy Torah.