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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS BEREISHIS תשפ"ו (revised 2)

OUR HEART'S JOURNEY THROUGH TISHREI

The month of *Tishrei* is a journey for every Yid to straighten up his heart aligning it with the *ratzon* of Hashem. This journey commences on Rosh Hashanah when the mitzvah of the day is for one to accept upon himself the Kingdom of Hashem שתמליכני עליכם. This act requires not merely lip service but also an arousal of emotion in one's heart. Firstly, one's acceptance must be rooted in a "sincere desire" to place himself under His subjugation. The term מלך differs from מושל in that a מלך rules by one's willful acceptance of the King which is in contrast to the title מושל which is by coercion. Secondly, our acceptance of Hashem as our King, partners with the blowing of the shofar which arouses the heart to emotive feelings of awe towards this new relationship. In short, the first day of *Tishrei* we must already begin to refine our heart and its *middos* in order to correctly subjugate our lives to Hashem.

This concept is alluded to in the *gematriah* of לב with its inner letters למיד בית, which adds up to the word מלכות. The heart is the organ which rules over one's body which serve as its servants. That is why it is situated in the middle of the body as the king is the central figure of his country. However, this *gematriah* which includes even the hidden letters of לב, also demonstrate that a "full" heart with all its *middos* and desires are necessary for crowning Hashem as one's king.

However, not everyone is on the level to spiritually rehabilitate his heart to meet these requirements especially if he did not prepare himself for this goal during Elul. For every *aveirah* creates a *kelipah* which builds a wall separating one from getting closer to Hashem and from truly accepting His yoke upon himself. That is the reason why we are given a Yom Kippur to fix up any wrinkles in our hearts that are not on the same page that Hashem desires. The *avodah* of Yom Kippur is to recite ten times אשמו and אשמו על חטא confessing our shortcomings. Each time we recite an *aveirah* we hit our hearts with our fists.

If the shofar was not enough to accept Hashem's Kingdom with our full hearts because the *kellipos* are holding us back from doing so, we now go further and attempt to knock out those hindrances that do not allow us to straighten out our hearts. That is why we begin the Yom Kippur *avodah* with the *passuk* שמחה ולישרי לב. Yom Kippur is the continuation of our process to perfect our hearts to be aligned fully with the *ratzon* of our King. Just like during our acceptance of Hashem as our King on Rosh Hashana our verbal acceptance was accompanied with the sounds of the shofar in order to simultaneously arouse our emotions, so too when we bang our hearts which caused us to sin we sing the אשמו in order to stir our hearts to do teshuva and rid us from the tenacious grip of the *kelipos* which block our teshuva from becoming complete.

On Yom Kippur we strive to attain a similarity to *malachim* and therefore we recite then the ברוך שם out loud. Reaching the state of *malachim* means we possess a לב אחד without a *yetzer hara* to restrain us from straightening our hearts as Rashi says Bereishis 18,5. This was the state of אדם prior to his *chait* as the *gematriah* conveys, אדם לב אחד equals אדם.

Yet Hashem does not give up on any Yid and He gives us another chance to repair our hearts and accept Hashem whole heartedly on the Yom Tov of *Succos* שמחה ולישרי לב that after



Yom Kippur when we strive to straighten our hearts we are given another opportunity to complete the job – Succos זמן שמחתינו.

On Succos we read *Koheles* in which we mention the word הבל (vanity) many times as the theme throughout the *Megillah*. The word הבל is הלב. It is with the reading of the *Megillah* that we talk to our hearts with *mussar* to rid ourselves from any pollution that might have gone unnoticed during the *Yamim Noraim* part of the Heart's process towards perfection.

On Succos we take the *Four Minim* upon which *Chazal* comment that they correspond to the Four major organs, the *esrog* being the symbol of the heart. It is called in the Torah פרי עץ הדר beautiful. One must strive to make his heart beautiful by cleansing it from any impressions or form of אחר לאל. One must strive to make his heart beautiful by cleansing it from any impressions or form of אחר לא תשתחוה do not bow down before another deity, leaving the heart totally to אחד ה' the oneness of Hashem. This is hinted in the word הדר which equals אחר which teaches that one must transform his heart into being הצדיק which is also the same *gematriah*.

תניא רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר צדיקים יצר טוב שופטן שנאמר ולבי חלל בקרבי (Berachos 61b)

On Rosh Hashanah we thought about and even felt emotions from our hearts. On Yom Kippur we banged our hearts to rid of the *aveiros* and *kelipos*. On Succos we hold our hearts, symbolized by the *esrog*, physically in our hands checking and examining it carefully to be free from any flaws. By doing so, our examination of our heart's slightest blemish and flawed middos are processed objectively from the outside with a close up inspection instead of subjectively concealed in our bodies as we did during the *Yamim Noraim*.

Furthermore the *Lulav* which corresponds to the spine part of the body also spells לו לב to Him (Hashem) belongs my heart. The acronym of beseeching Hashem with וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת which spells לולב, sends the message that we טהרת הלב on Succos.

The *Lulav* in the Torah is described in the term כפות תמרים a date palm. Concerning this tree Chazal comment Succah 45b

רבי לוי אומר כתמר מה תמר זה אין לו אלא לב אחד אף ישראל אין להם אלא לב אחד לאביהם

This tree appears to have only one heart to Hashem. (there are no branches spreading The word כפות means to be bound like Yitzchak at the Akaidah. This conveys that one's heart should be bound and only desire what Hashem desires. No instinctive reactions or impulsivities.

One of the mitzvos of Succos is ניסוך המים the water libations on the exterior altar whose measurements were 32 x 32 cubits which is two times the word לב. Shlomo Hamelech describes the heart as "waters of counsel" (Mishlei 20,5)

deep waters of counsel dwell in the heart of man and one who possesses understanding will draw them up. When we achieve טהרת הלב then we should ידלנה draw them up with a bucket. The word ידלנה is *gematriah* 99 the age that Avraham circumcised himself. The age 99 for *Bris Milah* is not random. The *Bris Milah* is not merely a ceremony to remove the foreskin ערלה covering the limb of procreation but rather a lifetime journey of ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם (Devarim 10,17) to circumcise one's *orlah* that lies on his heart. The word לבבכם with its five letters add up to 99. This is only made possible through Hashem's gift to us by blowing into man's



nostrils the *neshamah* נשמת חיים. Without the influence of the *neshamah* this removal of the partition on one's heart would be impossible. The word **באפיו** is *gematriah* 99 in order to hint to this. The word **סנה** is the same *gematriah* of **מילה** which conveys that *Succos* is the time that gives one the *segulah* to remove the foreskin from one's heart.

The final *Yom Tov* of *Tishrei* is *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah* when we finish reading the Torah and immediately start once again. This *Yom Tov* is called *Atzeres* which means to gather together assembling all our *avodah* of bringing *shelaimus* to our hearts in its mission to accept Hashem's Kinship upon ourselves. ויהי בישראל מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל. On *Simchas Torah* we end reading the Torah with the letter **ל** and begin it again with the letter **ב** which together spell **לב**. The *Sfas Emes* writes סוכות תרלה

ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך כו' נפשך כו' מאדך והיו הדברים האלה כו'. לבבך הוא בר"ה ועשי"ת שבנ"י שבים וחפצים לשעבד גם מחשבות הרעות להשי"ת. וזהו בשני יצריך. נפשך הוא ביוכ"פ ועניתם את נפשותיכם. מאדך הוא בסוכות זמן האסיף באספך כו' ואעפ"כ מניחין כל מאודיהם לישב בדירת ארעי ולחסות בצל ית'. ואח"כ והיו הדברים האלה כו' על לבבך שאחר זה יכול אדם לקבל דברי תורה בלב. והוא שמיני עצרת לעצור ולקבל הארת התורה בעומק הלב.

Simchas Torah is the fulfillment of **לבבך** על האלה for the final deposit in the development of a pure heart will allow the Torah we learn to cling in our hearts.

Now let us see how the beginning of *Beraishis* continues with the developmental process of purifying one's heart

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ

The first word of the Torah is **בראשית** whose root word is **בראש**. As we mentioned earlier, the spelling of **הלב** together with the value of its inner letters **למיד בית** and the kollel equal **בראש**. This is testimony that (Tzidkas Hatzadik 132) בעולם העיקר טהרת הלב (Sanhedrin 106b) רחמנא ליבא בעי perfect the heart and remove its *orlah*.

The Torah begins with a **בית** an enlarged letter *Bais*. The *Bnei Yissachar* writes that the *gematriah* of **בית רבתי** is equal to **לולב אתרוג הדס ערבה** the Four Minim. According to what we said above this is to convey that the *shelaimus* of the heart is a priority as both the *Lulav* and *Esrog* specifically are associated with the **טהרת הלב**, and all four minim are connected to the *Yom Tov* of *Succos* which is the *Yom Tov* where this process starting from *Rosh Hashanah* hopefully sees its conclusion by reaching the goal.

The first *Rashi* in *Chumash* asks why begin the Torah with the creation of the world instead of *mitzvos* such as **החודש הזה לכם**. He answers to convey that since Hashem created the world and gave *Eretz Yisrael* to the Seven Nations who dwelled there at that time of history, He could nevertheless at any time remove it away from them and present it to *Am Yisrael*. The *Ari* writes that the Seven Nations of *Eretz Yisrael* symbolize the *Seven Middos* of the *Sitra Achra* the opposite of the *Seven Middos* of *Kedusha* which are explained in detail by the *Chozeh* from *Lublin*. *Rashi* is making us aware that when we finish the last word of the Torah **ישראל** and begin the first word of the Torah **בראשית** with the letter **ב**, the end goal is to fix and perfect one's heart in the service of Hashem, Torah, *Middos* and

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Mitzvos. That as long as we possess the seven *Middos of Kedusha* in our **hearts** we will remain and dwell in *Eretz Yisrael* together with the presence of the *Shechinah*.

The Seven Ushpizin who visit us in our Succahs symbolize the Seven Middos of Kedusha. They come to help us acquire the highest levels for the purity of our hearts.

The Bnei Yissaschor Lag Baomer writes that Rabbe Yochanan Ben Zakai asked his five *talmidim* to look in the Torah and discover which is the **דרך טובה** in the world that one should strive to acquire. The *middah* of Lev Tov was chosen by Rabbe Eliezer Arach to which Rabbe Yochanan agreed. The reason why it was chosen is because from the beginning of the Torah until the first time the word **טוב** was mentioned we find thirty two words and hence **לב טוב** is the winner. Here again we see that it is the *Middos Tovos* that are created and excelled upon in the heart of a person which are tantamount to fulfilling one's mission in the world that Hashem placed him in. That is why we find the number of 49 days of *Sefirah* as preparation to receive the Torah since 49 is *gematriah* **לב טוב**.

And now to end this *mamar* with a fascinating story. The Maharshah Rav Shlomo Luria Rosh Yeshiva in Lublin lived in the 1500's. He was once asked by a man whose wife was just *nifteres* that before she died he promised her not to remarry but now he wants to renege on the promise. The Maharshah granted permission and right after he remarried he died. Before burying him, his widow came to the Maharshah and claimed that he caused her husband's death because of a wrong ruling. The Maharshah went to the *Chevrah Kadisha* and asked the head to take him to the coffin in which the departed was in. When the Maharshah came to the cemetery his coffin was opened and the Maharshah placed inside a paper with a written *teshuva* proving that the deceased had every right to renege on the oath that he gave to his departed wife. Movement and noise were suddenly heard from the coffin and the deceased was revived from death.

Sooner than later the wife returned to the Maharshah with a further complaint that she cannot bear to live with someone who died. The Maharshah said to her I will take care of this problem as well and he *davened* to Hashem that she will forget that he even died. Her feelings were changed. It was said on the second episode that it was greater than the first miracle. For changing the heart of a person is greater than achieving a *Techiyas Hameisim*.

On *Succos* are hearts reached the final step in the changing of one's heart. With this we can understand why does *Succos* merit the *segulah* of *Teshuvah* from love which turns *aveiros* into *mitzvos*? The answer is drawn from this incredible story. An *aveirah* is a spiritual death. To turn the severe negative into holy *mitzvos* is a *techiyas hameisim* when all the departed will be resurrected with a completely rectified body better than it was ever. This *teshuva* from love comes from the process of purifying one's heart during *Tishrei* which is even greater than *Techiyas Hameisim*. So at least we deserve some manifestation of *Techiyas Hameisim* during *Chag HaSuccos* that of *Teshuva* from *Ahava*.

Secondly, we can now also understand why we *daven* for rain **על משיב ברוח ומוריד הגשם** *Shemini Atzeres*. The Vilna Gaon says the *Chazal* say (Taanis 7) the **גבורת גשמים** is equal to **תחיית המתים** because rain does not follow any logical pattern or law of nature and therefore it is equal to the unnatural miracle of *Techiyas Hameisim*. This is why beseeching rain is placed in the *beracha* of

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Techiyas Hamaisim. This can be the reason why we recite it on *Shemini Ateres* for when we complete changing and purifying our hearts it is even greater than *Techiyas Hamaisim* so surely we can ask for it.

This explains an ancient *minhag* of *Rishonim* that after the *Churban* since there was no more a *mizbaiach*, on הושענא רבה they would walk around *Har Hazaisim* with their *Four Minim*. The word *ישועה* and *הושענא* refer to תחיית המתים. We find this connection in *tefillah* such as ואין דומה למושיענו or בתחיית המתים or מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה or מחיה מתים אתה רב להושיע. So on the day when we begin to ask for rain we arouse in our *bakashos* that Hashem should bring on the awaited *Techiyas Hamaisim* as well, for after our hearts have changed we deserve *Techiyas Hamaisim* for sure. Happy journey!

Rav Brazil

Gut Shabbos