

A TORAH PUBLICATION BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

MO-ED

OF THE WEINBAUM YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

ROSH HASHANA, YOM KIPPUR, AND SUCCOT EDITION 5772



The Weinbaum
Yeshiva
High School
INSPIRE & CHALLENGE

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גמר חתימה טובה

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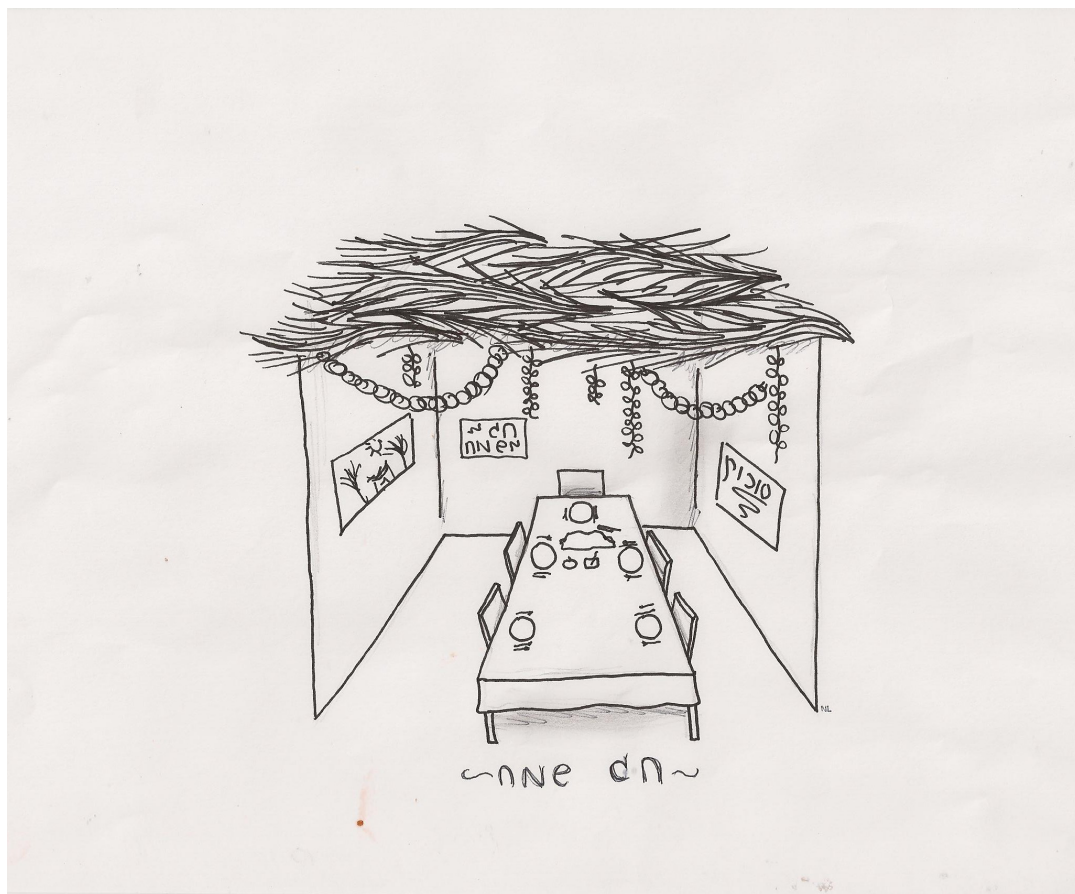
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South Florida Zmanim

Rosh Hashana: 7:06 PM

Yom Kippur: 6:56 PM

Sukkot: 6:50 PM



Nina Landa ('13)

IN THE MOMENT

Yisrael Weiss ('13)

On the first day of Rosh Hashana we read the Torah portion about Yishmael's exile from Avraham's house because of the bad influence Sarah was afraid he would have on Yitzchak. While in the desert, Yishmael becomes sick and is in dire need of water; just when all seems lost, an angel appears to Hagar, Yishmael's mother, and tells her, "אל תיראי כי שמע אלקים אל קול הנער באשר הוא שם", "Do not fear for Hashem has heard the call of the youth as he is, there".

Rashi comments on this pasuk that during this incident, a great debate went on in the Heavenly Court. The *malachim* (angels) were trying to convince Hashem not to save Yishmael, as they knew his descendants would become the worst enemies of בני ישראל. They cried out to Hashem asking, "Hashem, how could you provide a well for a child whose descendants will kill off your children by thirst?" Hashem responded: "What is he now – righteous or wicked?" The *malachim* agreed that Yishmael was righteous at that moment, and so Hashem said, "I will judge him as he is now, 'באשר הוא שם', in the current state that he's in".

From here the gemara teaches that Hashem judges people based solely on their current actions. The Rosh uses this Gemara to explain the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. The first two of the thirteen attributes ("Hashem, Hashem," referring to G-d's attribute of mercy) appear to be the same; however, the Rosh clarifies that they are indeed different. Whereas the word "Hashem" is used once to show His compassion after one sins, the other time is a reference to His compassion before one sins. The Rosh points out a seemingly obvious flaw in this explanation – why does Hashem need to have mercy before someone sins? If he has not yet done something wrong,

PENILESS YET WORTH SO MUCH

Hedva Tirschwell ('13)

The second mishna in *Gemara Rosh Hashana* states: "בראש השנה, כל באי עולם עוברין לפניו" כבני מרון, "On Rosh Hashana, all who enter the world pass before Him (for judgment) like Bnei Maron" (1:2). On this very same mishna, the gemara cites an opinion that Man is judged daily (*Rosh Hashana* 16a). Rabbi Frand notes this contradiction and asks: does judgment occur once a year, as found in the mishna, or on a daily basis, as the gemara explains?

Rav Eizele Charif, a prominent Talmudic scholar and author of the *Be'er Heitev*, explains that while at first glance there seems to be a discrepancy between the original mishna and the gemara's additional statement, in truth, there is no contradiction. He writes that there are two different types of judgment which Hashem performs: the first judgment, which takes place on Rosh Hashana, determines how one will use his or her abilities in the upcoming year and what the outcome will be. The second judgment, occurring daily, is the constant opportunity for one to change that first judgment and to alter his or her outcome for good or for bad.

Rav Pam explains that on Rosh Hashana, we appear before Hashem penniless. It is our time to start completely anew. We do get judged on a daily basis, but Rosh Hashana is a different, fresh judgment. It is not just another day of prayer — it is a time for us to contemplate what we need to do to become better people over the course of the upcoming year. We cannot make the mistake of thinking that what we did this past year was enough. We need to take action and make a difference, so that we can approach our daily judgments with joy and a sense of accomplishment. "*Im lo achshav eimatai*" — "If not now, when?"



PARTNER TRACK

Bracha Brauser ('13)

It's that time of year again. Davening is extra long because of selichot, and you are worried that it is going to cut into your breakfast time. (When else are you supposed to study for Bekius or do your math homework?) You sigh and reluctantly pick up the selichot book and, after glancing at the person next to you, you turn to the right page. Frustrated, you fumble through the pages, and you are pretty sure that you said the exact same thing yesterday and the day before that. How many times are you supposed to say "Ashamnu?" Does G-d not get that we are sorry? Does He really care about these small little sins? And isn't G-d supposed to be merciful? Shouldn't He forgive us the first time we say sorry?

Don't put down that selichot book just yet—there is an answer for you.

In the world of lawyers, the coveted position that all young lawyers work towards is that of partner. After long and arduous years as an associate, every lawyer dreams of becoming a partner. There was once a lawyer who worked for eight years as an associate and when the day finally came where the partners were picking their newest partner, he was not picked. Another young lawyer in the firm saw this and was dismayed. He could not believe this could have happened; this poor guy had been working for years, missing vacations and weekends just for this position. All along he thought he was on track, the partners were praising him, and then when the day came he was told, he just was not "partnership material." The younger lawyer, discouraged and disturbed, turned to an older friend at a different firm for advice. His friend told him that it is not the pats on the back that tell you if you are on the partner track, it's the criticism. If the partners like you, they will take you aside, point out your weaknesses,

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Yisrael Weiss, continued

Hashem's mercy shouldn't be necessary! The lesson that the Rosh teaches us is a very powerful concept, crucial to Rosh Hashana. While HaKadosh Baruch Hu knows that one will eventually return to sin and bad habits and temptations, He chooses to focus on the sincerity of an individual in that very moment — באשר הוא שם — and as long as the regret is sincere, Hashem will judge him as righteous in that moment.

This answer of the Rosh sheds a whole new light on Rosh Hashana. One should not enter Rosh Hashana depressed and upset because they know that they won't really change and that their "New Year's resolutions" will never last. The whole point of Rosh Hashana is to be affected by the mood of the day, and so even temporary change will affect how you are viewed in Hashem's eyes. The purpose is not to try and fool Hashem or one's self, but rather to experience just a single moment in which one truly regret one's sins and can make a resolution that they at least want to try to improve, even if the change will not last forever.

This is the reason behind the custom of adopting certain temporary stringencies during this time of year; even though one may not keep Cholov Yisrael, for example, during the whole year, many people take it on during the Ten Days of Repentance because when Hashem sees you, He judges not who you're going to be in a few years, months, or weeks, but who you are at that very moment.



THE ARBAH MINIM

Danielle Sobol ('13)

Starting around Rosh Hashana time, walk into any Judaica store and you will surely be met with the sight of tens of different kinds of succah decorations—posters, hanging decorations, mini chandeliers, chains of rings, and more. And walk into any given succah on Succot, especially one at a house where young children live, and you will be awed at the time and effort put into making sure the succah is beautifully decorated and adorned. These decorations are a beautiful example of *zrizut*, running to do a mitzvah, and *hiddur mitzvah*, beautifying a mitzvah, that we should all apply to every area of our Torah observance.

However, a lesser known but arguably more crucial form of *hiddur mitzvah* applies to the mitzvah of the *arba minim*, the four species. In fact, the *Gemara Bava Kama* tells us that one should spend up to one-third more than what one would normally spend on this mitzvah in order to *hiddur*, to beautify and enhance, this mitzvah. The basis for this is that the Torah tells us in regards to Succot that, “You shall rejoice for seven days.” Joy induces love, which does not promote inhibition and limits in fulfilling obligations, but means doing them to their maximum capacity.

A story is even told about R' Gamliel, R' Yehoshua, R' Elazar ben Azarya, and R' Akiva, who were travelling on a ship and therefore were not obligated to do the mitzvah of the *arba minim*. However, when a lulav was found, R' Gamliel bought it for the insanely expensive sum of 1,000 zuzim and shared it with his associates — proof that enhancing this mitzvah was so important to them!

Unlike other mitzvot, such as tzedaka, where a limit is put on the enhancement of the mitzvah, the mitzvah of *hiddur* for the *arba minim* is not limited—in fact, the *Gemara Bava Kama* says:

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THE COMMON MISCONCEPTION

Gabriella Sobol ('13)

A popular misconception is that after Yom Kippur the teshuva process is complete; we have said our selichot and worn our white clothing, and now it is time to move on... right?

Not so fast. Our teshuva is not quite finished until after Succot. Succot gives us an opportunity to strengthen our previous teshuva, or even get a second chance at it if we were not so successful during the High Holidays.

Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and the ten days between the two are famous for being the time during which we repent for our sins and beg Hashem to forgive us — but from where do we get this idea of teshuva during Succot?

An answer can be found in the main three mitzvot of the holiday: living in a Succah, shaking the *arba minim*, and reciting the hoshanot.

In *Gemara Succah* we learn that the succah represents the *ananei hakavod*, the “clouds of glory” that protected us during our forty years in the desert. These clouds protected us from both physical danger, such as the many perils of the desert, and spiritual danger, such as the attempts to attack our spirituality by Amalek. This is strengthened by the idea that when Yaakov goes to meet Esav (Amalek's grandfather) he “traveled to Succot”; in essence, this means that he took a spiritual journey to connect with G-d's protection, a journey of faith that we can all learn from.

When it comes to the *arba minim* the Zohar asks, “Who won the war?” and answers, “The one who is still holding the weapons.” R' Nosson explains that in an ordinary war, whoever is left standing holding their weapons at the end is the victor. However, with Amalek we see that even if we technically win a battle, they are such an intractable enemy that we can never truly defeat them without the help of Hashem, who will fight for us until the very end. However, we still must try our best, so we pick up these *arba minim*, our “weapons,” and wave them all around, showing that we know Hashem is watching us and helping us in this battle. This teaches us to be pro-

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THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS

Eliana Feldan ('13)

In his Letters to the Next Generation—Reflections for Yom Kippur, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of England, writes ten fictional letters from a father to his children, the last of which addresses finding true happiness.

Rabbi Sacks explains that while we cannot control what happens to us, we can control how we respond to our circumstances. Will we respond immediately with anger, or will we take a step back and look at the big picture? Will we, on instinct, blame others, or will we take responsibility for our failures?

The narrator of the book enumerates his “path to happiness,” a list of ten tricks to finding true happiness. They are: give thanks, praise, spend time with your family, discover meaning, live your values, forgive, keep growing, learn to listen, create moments of silence in the soul, and transform suffering.

While this list may seem a bit random, there is an underlying mission that can be found: taking a step back and understanding your role in this world. By giving thanks you are acknowledging that someone took the time to do something for you. Before you can live your values you must define what they are. Keeping growing is clear—you cannot set out on your path before defining where you currently are. Listening means the understanding that there are things you have yet to learn. And the final step: transforming suffering. Allowing yourself to grow through tragedy is possibly the hardest task you could face, yet the most admirable. Transforming suffering can bring true happiness because internalizing and overcoming the pain you face means understanding that there is a master plan, which is the ultimate comfort.

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Bracha Brauser, continued

and constructively criticize you, helping shape you to be the best. That means they believe in you.

So what is the point of this seemingly excessive confessing during selichot? The whole thing is only for our benefit. By making us focus on the negative details and confess over and over again, G-d is trying to show us that He does care about those small nuances and that He believes in us. We do not want to be the associate who kills himself for eight years, encouraged by pats on the back, only to find out that he was never even considered for partner. We want the criticism and the attention to detail—because that means that G-d believes in us.

G-d is trying to show us just how much those details mean to Him because He is invested in us. So the next time you're holding that selichot book in your hand and you feel déjà vu as you read through *Ashamnu*, just think about what it means: that G-d believes in you.

Danielle Sobol continued

“Until one-third the expense is his. From that amount on, it is Hashem’s. That is to say, one is reimbursed by the Holy One, blessed be He, for the amount that he spent in excess of one-third of the cost of performing the mitzvah.”

So, this Succot when you are choosing a lulav and etrog, keep in mind that choosing one that is perhaps more expensive, but also more beautiful and fitting for the mitzvah, is not only an act of love of mitzvot and Hashem, but will also earn you great reward and benefit—in this world and the next.



Gabriella Sobol continued

active in our mitzvot and to do our best to follow Hashem so he will keep fighting for us.

Finally, we have the hoshanot, a string of cries for help. Each one begins and ends with the word “*hoshana*,” and the words in the middle follow the aleph-bet. These hoshanot are associated with the aravot — the one species of the *arba minim* that has no fruit fragrance, representing a Jew devoid of mitzvot or Torah and the worst within each of us. The term “*hoshana*” is also used in relation to Yehoshua; as dedicated a Jew as he was, when he was with the other 11 spies who went into Eretz Yisrael, he was still in danger of their evil influence, and so Moshe prays for him, “*hoshana*,” “save him.” This teaches us that even the most righteous people need help from Hashem.

Clearly, we can learn many lessons from the holiday of Succot that will help us connect to Hashem and continue on the path of teshuva we began during the High Holidays.

Eliana Feldan continued

Both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are a time to take a step back, to create that moment of silence in our soul and view our lives through clear glasses. In defending ourselves to Hashem, apologizing and promising that we will become better in the future, we must first take a deep look into who we are now. While some find themselves dreading these holidays and the many hours spent in Shul, we must make sure to understand the true blessing with which they present us—the gift of happiness.

Rabbi Sacks finishes by saying, “Life’s too full of blessings to waste time and attention on artificial substitutes. Live, give, forgive, celebrate and praise: these are the best ways of making a blessing over life, thereby turning life into a blessing.”

GAME SECTION:

Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Succot Word search

- APPLES
- BEKURIM
- DECORATIONS
- HAKAFOT
- ESROG
- HONEY
- LULAV
- NEILAH
- NEW FRUIT
- SELICHOT
- SHOFAR
- SUCCAH
- TEFILA
- TESHUVA

S M F G J O S D T E F I L A R Q I U O S
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