

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Haazinu / Shuvah

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Mimi and Byron Shore
in honour of the birth of twin granddaughters, Temima and Ayala,
to their children, Rabbi Jonathan and Ora Ziring

The Simchah of Yom Kippur, The Simchah of Teshuvah

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Is rejoicing on Yom Kippur a mitzvah? The halachic way to express *simchah* (happiness) on our holidays is by eating meat and drinking wine. [See Rambam, Hilchot Yom Tov 6:18.] As these activities are strictly forbidden on Yom Kippur, and furthermore, there is an opposing mitzvah of affliction on Yom Kippur (Vayikra 23:37), it would seem self-evident that there is no mitzvah of rejoicing on Yom Kippur. So concluded Rabbi Eliezer of Metz (Yere'im 288).

Nonetheless, many authorities seem to disagree with Rabbi Eliezer of Metz's position, not least of them the Rambam, who specified that on Yom Kippur there should not be "excessive happiness". (Rambam, Hilchot Megilah v'Chanukah 3:6; but note Meiri to Bava Batra 121a who actually describes excessive happiness.) This clearly implies that some happiness could, and perhaps must, exist on Yom Kippur.

What are the roots of this dispute?

My Rabbi of blessed memory, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l, suggested that the disagreement regarding happiness on Yom Kippur may be traced back to a mishnah (Moed Katan 3:5), where the Sages held that Yom Kippur does not terminate the seven days of mourning, while Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel held that it does. The explanation, according to Rabbi Lichtenstein, is that the Sages believe that there is no mitzvah of happiness on Yom Kippur and so mourning continues, while Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel believed that such a mitzvah

does exist and brings an end to the mourning period, as other holidays do.

This analysis may be supported by the last mishnah in Taanit, in which the same Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel states that, "There were no days of joy [lit. 'good days'] in Israel greater than the fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur."

However, Rabbi Eliezer of Metz's question remains: how could Yom Kippur be a day of happiness, if a fundamental halachic way of expressing happiness – meat and wine – is blocked?

Rabbi Lichtenstein distinguished between two types of *simchah*:

- An act, like eating meat and drinking wine, which may be a part of the obligations of a certain day;
- The day's nature and constitution, by definition, without a particular act.

As an example of the latter: The Diaspora custom of having kohanim bless the people only on holidays may come from the nature of those days as days of happiness, and not from the fact that those days have a mitzvah of eating and drinking wine (which actually disqualifies the kohen from the blessing!). And perhaps this is the happiness of Yom Kippur, such that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says Yom Kippur terminates mourning.

However, this explanation seems to fly in the face of our Yom Kippur actual experience. How could we say that a day filled with fear and awe, on which we can only hope that perhaps G-d might forgive us and we might not

perish, is a day for which happiness is an integral part? Haven't we learned that only if the strip of crimson in the Beit haMikdash turned white did the people rejoice, but if it remained red, then they would be sad and ashamed? (Yoma 67a)

Perhaps the experience of Yom Kippur joy can co-exist with that feeling of disappointment. There is *simchah* which is triggered by a welcome outcome. However, there is also *simchah* which is generated by a state of being – and in particular, in being close to G-d.

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (*Shiurim LeZecher Abba Mari II*, pg. 209) developed the idea that the happiness of holidays in general is tied to the experience of being "in front of G-d". On other days, we engage with G-d by sacrifices and pilgrimage, but on Yom Kippur we do so via repentance and admission of sin. The mere act of confession which is "before G-d" [as specified in Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 1:1], even if G-d forbid it will not yield any atonement, is purifying, and draws us closer to G-d. This happiness of teshuvah is the integral happiness of Yom Kippur. As Rabbi Akiva said: "Happy are you, Israel! Who is He before whom you become pure? And who is it that purifies you? Your Father, who is in Heaven."

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Summary

After Ishboshet, the last descendant of Shaul worthy of kingship, was murdered (4:7), David, who previously ruled only over the tribe of Judah, had an unrivaled claim to the throne. The remaining tribes of Israel met David at Chevron. The tribes provided three arguments for David to become their king as well: 1) They were all blood relatives 2) He had already served as their military leader during the reign of King Shaul 3) G-d had told David to shepherd the entire nation of Israel. David accepted the offer, forged a covenant with the people, and was anointed as King over all of Israel. (5:1-3, Malbim *ibid.*)

King David then traveled to Jerusalem to establish the city as his capital. At the time, the Jebusite nation still occupied Jerusalem, and proclaimed to David that he would not be able enter the city. Nevertheless, King David conquered the Jebusite stronghold, re-fortified it, and renamed it "City of David". (5:6-9)

With Divine assistance, King David's

monarchy continued to increase in strength. Hiram, King of Tzor, sent workers to build King David a palace, demonstrating that David's reputation had spread beyond Israel (Malbim 5:11). David grew his family by taking both wives and concubines, and had many children. (5:10-16)

The Philistines learned of King David's increased prominence and waged war against him. David consulted G-d, who told him that he would indeed be successful in his battle against the Philistines. King David defeated the Philistines and burned the idols they left on the battlefield. (5:17-21, Rashi to 5:21) Undeterred, the Philistines attacked King David's army again, and again David consulted G-d. Instead of attacking the Philistine army head-on, G-d instructed David to circle the Philistine encampment and to ambush them from behind. David did so, and handily defeated the Philistines once again.

Insight

When waging war against Jerusalem, King David referred to destroying

"*ivrim and pischim*", literally translated as "blind and lame men," guardians of Jerusalem. Rashi (5:6, 5:8) explains that the Jebusites were descendants of Avimelech, the Philistine king who had forged a peace treaty with Avraham and his descendants. The Jebusites built idols modeled on Yitzchak, who became blind at the end in his life, and Yaakov, who limped after battling Esav's angelic representative. The Philistines said that these idols would protect the city; King David said to destroy the idols. [The treaty was only binding for three generations, which allowed David to attack the Jebusites.]

Alternatively, Ralbag suggests that the "*ivrim and pischim*" were mechanical statues of blind and lame men which worked as a defense mechanism protecting Jerusalem. Propelled by water which flowed from a channel, the statues rotated and spun iron rods clutched in their hands, thereby preventing infiltration into the city.

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Our next issue of Toronto Torah is scheduled for Shabbat Bereishit

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

2:00-4:00 PM Monday September 28, Yom Kippur

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, in the BAYT Parking Lot: King Chizkiyahu: A Study in Repentance

Tuesday September 29 through Tuesday October 14

A DAILY DOSE OF TORAH: Brief Video Torah Thoughts about Succot in Your Inbox!

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5:30 PM Wednesday September 30

Rabbi Chaim Metzger & BAYT, Origami Succah Decorating for Children! Zoom (pwd 711949)!

8:00 PM Wednesday September 30

R' Chaim Metzger & BAYT, Origami Succah Decorating for Teens/Adults! Zoom (pwd 711949)!

DAILY

7:30 AM Sun-Fri Rabbi Chaim Metzger, Daf Yomi with BAYT (men), via ZOOM

WEEKLY

Shabbat Sept. 26, between minchah and maariv at Shaarei Shomayim

Rabbi Sammy Bergman, "You Shall Afflict Yourself: But Why?"

Sunday Sept. 27 Erev Yom Kippur

9:15 AM, Contemporary Halachah: To Kneel or Not To Kneel? with Netanel Klein

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