

מתוקים מדבש



Dei'ah, Binah and Haskel on the weekly parashah

RABBI MICHA BERGER

Bemachashavah Techilah

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik frames his Jewish thought and his perspective on *mitzvos* as tensions between various dialectics inherent in the human condition. Conflicting truths about man that are somehow both true. For example, people construct a society in order to better serve their needs. And yet, man's highest calling is to serve the society, rather than himself.

Perhaps the most classical such dialectic is the distinction Rabbi Soloveitchik draws between Adam as he is portrayed in the creation story in Bereishis 1 and Adam as portrayed in Bereishis 2. Adam I is at the culmination of creation. All builds up to him. He is charged to "be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth and master it." Man the engineer and technologist, forming the world to serve his needs. Majestic Man.

In Bereishis 2, we are given a different view. From the time of his creation, Adam is in communication with G-d. "It is not good for man to be alone", so Hashem creates a woman "therefore man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife." This is a person relying on his relationships and bringing value to his life and the world through them. Adam II is Covenantal Man, who seeks redemption.

Succos is very much Adam II's holiday. The farmer, having just brought in his crop, has a propensity to credit himself for his success. *Succos* calls on him to re-address that, by

reminding him that it is not his mastery alone that brings food to the table. The *succah* teaches that it is not his fine house and the engineering it represents that bring security to his life.

There is a dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Akiva as to the nature of the *succos* in the desert that the *mitzvah* actually commemorates.¹

Simchas beis hasho'eivah is patterned after the step of our original creation because it is a celebration of man's ability to recreate himself.

According to R' Eliezer, the original *succos* were clouds of glory. According to R' Akiva, they were actual huts.²

Perhaps they are basing themselves on different ideas about the significance of the *succah*. In R' Eliezer's opinion, the *succah* is commemorating Hashem's gifts to us. It is to remind us that there is a Covenantal Partner in our efforts. R' Akiva has the original *succah* being the product of a partnership. Man builds, but it is Hashem who insures the success of that building. R' Eliezer focuses on our Partner; R' Akiva on our willingness to join the Covenantal relationship.³

Each position speaks to the farmer celebrating his harvest as he gathers it at the end of the year. One speaks of the role of *bitachon*, trust in G-d, which may otherwise be forgotten. The other speaks of the appropriate end-state, of the synthesis of *bitachon* and *hishtadlus*, personal effort.

In his work Pachad Yitzchak, R' Yitzchak Hutner notes the steps of creation of man, according to the second opinion given by Rashi. First, G-d adds water to the earth to make clay and then He forms man and breathes a soul into him.

"And a mist came up from the ground, and gave moisture to the whole face of the earth." (Bereishis 2:6)

"'And a mist came up from the ground': For the purpose of creating man. [Hashem] raised the tehom and gave moisture to clouds to wet the earth and to make man. Like someone who kneads bread, who adds water and after that kneads the dough. So too here, 'He gave moisture' and then 'He formed'." (Rashi ad loc.)

"And Hashem E-lokim formed the man, dust from the ground, and He breathed in his nose a living soul; and the man was a living spirit." (Bereishis, ibid v. 7)

"'Dust from the ground': [Hashem] collected dust from the whole earth, all four directions... Another opinion, He took his dust from the place about which it says

¹ Succah 11b

² This opinion is shared by Onkelos, Vayikra 23:42, as well as the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 625"1, Gr"a ad loc

³ See Aruch HaShulchan, Orach Chaim 625

'an altar of earth you shall make for Me.' He said, 'If only the dirt would be an atonement for him, and he would be able to stand.'" (Rashi ad loc)

R' Hutner writes that this is exactly what we recreate during the *nisuch hamayim* (water libation on the altar). The *kohen* pours water on the very spot Hashem did. This is accompanied by the *simchas beis hasho'eivah*, celebration and singing. Music is the most spiritual of the seven wisdoms. It speaks and moves the soul on a fundamental level. Through the *simchas beis hasho'eivah* we imitate G-d's breathing a soul into Adam.

We just came from Yom Kippur and *teshuvah*, when Hashem fulfills His promise "And I will give you a new heart, and place a new spirit within you" (Yechezkel 36:26). *Simchas beis hasho'eivah* is patterned after the step of our original creation because it is a celebration of man's ability to recreate himself.

To continue R' Hutner's thought with my own additions, in light of the above: Repentance too can be seen in both R' Eliezer's and R' Akiva's perspectives. One can seek atonement from Hashem, and thereby realize the need to have a partnership with Him. Or, one can seek atonement from the partnership itself. As the same R' Akiva says, "Praised are

you Israel. Before Whom do you atone, and Who atones you?" Atonement is both done by man through the Divine Presence, and is a gift from Him. A dialectic.

I would like to suggest one additional point. This description is from the second chapter of Bereishis; it is the telling of the creation of Adam II. *Simchas beis haho'eivah* is not merely the celebration of our recent re-creation, it is the celebration of our creation as beings in a covenantal partnership with the A-Imighty. And therefore, it is not only on Succos as a postscript to Yom Kippur; it is a fundamental part of the message of the holiday.

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Bakeish Shalom

“**A**nd you shall be happy on your holiday.”¹ “And you shall only be happy.”² Besides dwelling in a *suc-cah* and taking the *arba minim*, another *mitzvah* that the *Yom Tov* of *Succos* has is the obligation to be happy (*Simchas Yom Tov*, shared with the other holidays as well). This *mitzvah* is separate and distinct from the obligation to honor and “enjoy” the day (*oneg yom tov*), as evidenced by the former applying to all the days of *Succos*, while the latter is only on the first day of *Succos*.³ In addition, *Oneg Yom Tov* refers to having premium foods,⁴ while “*Simchas Yom Tov*” is limited (for men) to eating meat and drinking wine.⁵

Eating meat and drinking wine are not supposed to create the happiness, but assuage those detractors that prevent the already existing happiness from enveloping us.

While we can understand how serving higher-quality foods can add to one's enjoyment, why is “happiness” limited to consuming meat and wine? And why are we commanded

to “only” be happy? There are other *mitzvos*, so being happy isn't the “only” one. What is the Torah implying be excluded when we fulfill this commandment of “only being happy,” but nothing else? The notion of happiness coming through hedonism (meat and wine) itself seems strange. The Jewish concept of happiness usually refers to being happy that one is close to G-d, or that one can fulfill His commandments (*simchah shel mitzvah*). How can the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov* refer to

physical self-indulgence rather than spiritual satisfaction?

The Gemara⁶ tells us that the Divine Presence only rests on a person who is experiencing *simchah shel mitzvah* – happiness attained through the observance of a *mitzvah*⁷ or through spiritual achievement.⁸ To prove this point, a verse is quoted⁹ in which Elisha, in order to receive prophecy, has a musician play for him. A similar question can be asked here; namely, if the point is attaining happiness through spiritual accomplishment(s), what relevance does hearing music (no matter how enjoyable) have? The prerequisite for experiencing the Divine Presence is not the happiness that music brings, but the happiness that should have already been achieved by being attached to G-d!

¹ Devarim 16:14

² Ibid, 16:15

³ See Mishnah Berurah 529:15

⁴ See Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:7, referenced as applying to Yom Tov by the Rambam in his Hilchos Yom Tov 6:16

⁵ Ibid, Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18

⁶ Shabbos 30b

⁷ See Rashi on Shabbos 30b

⁸ See Rashi on Berachos 31a

⁹ Melachim II 3:15

The commentators on *Melachim* explain that the purpose of the music was not to bring about happiness, but to remove an obstacle that was affecting his *simchah shel mitzvah*. Rashi (and others) say that Elisha was angry (at the evil kings) and needed the music to calm his anger. Radak adds that Elisha was still mourning for his teacher and mentor, Eliyahu, and needed music to lift his spirits. The *simchah shel mitzvah* was already there, but was subdued by other factors. After the music removed those other factors, the latent *simchah* resurfaced, allowing Elisha to experience prophecy again.

This may be the purpose of the meat and wine as well.¹⁰ We should

¹⁰ And why women, and children, have a different “prescription.”

always be in a state of *simchah shel mitzvah*, but there are usually external factors that keep us from experiencing it. On *Yom Tov*, however, we are commanded to bring that *simchah* to the forefront. Eating meat and drinking wine are not supposed to create the happiness, but assuage those detractors that prevent the already existing happiness from enveloping us. The Gemara¹¹ learns about this quality of meat and wine from explicit verses, thereby limiting the “prescription” to just those things that can remove “happiness inhibitors”. We are told to “only be happy,” i.e. to remove all the negative emotions that hide this happiness.

¹¹ Pesachim 109a

Because the effect can be overdone, the *mitzvah* to become happy by eating meat and drinking wine is immediately followed by a warning to limit their amounts.¹² In the appropriate dosage, though, and with the proper intent, this slight physical indulgence can help bring out the spiritual contentment that is within us.

May this *Succos* be a happy and joyous one, and may the Source of all happiness remove all of our external worries, so that we can soon sit, *b’simchah*, in His *succas shalom*.

¹² Rambam, Hilchos Yom Tov 6:19-20, and Tur/Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 529

RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN **Sefesai Tiftach**

Hallel is recited on numerous occasions: on holidays and *Rosh Chodesh*, during the sacrifice of a *korban pesach*¹, during the wine libations of regular sacrifices², and when Jerusalem or the Temple was expanded³. What is the source for *Hallel*, and can differences be drawn between its various forms?

The Gemara in Arachin derives the obligation of singing *Hallel* while offering holiday sacrifices from several different verses. It is unquestionable that this form of *Hallel* is *de’oraisa* (of biblical authority). The Rambam, however, rules that saying *Hallel* on holidays outside the context of sacrifices is only a rabbinic obligation. Support for this position may be found in a Gemara in Berachos (14a), which explores the issue of interrupting the performance of

different mitzvot by talking. The Gemara wonders whether an interruption (*hefsek*) would invalidate the recitation *Hallel* and *megillah* - each of which is only a mitzvah derabanan (of rabbinic authority). Furthermore, as King David authored the psalms that comprise the *Hallel*, it would be difficult to envision them as *de’oraisa*. The Rambam asserts this position in Mishneh Torah⁴, and in his Sefer HaMitzvos⁵ he contests the Behag’s ruling that *Hallel* is indeed *de’oraisa*.

In truth, the issue he raises - that *Hallel* cannot be *de’oraisa* since King David authored these texts - can be easily resolved. As the Ramban notes⁶, it is quite possible that the concept of saying *Hallel* is a *mitzvah de’oraisa*, while the sages instituted the precise texts and timing of the

mitzvah. After all, the Rambam follows this strategy regarding the *mitzvah* of prayer, which he believes to be *de’oraisa* in origin (ironically, against the position of the Ramban), but concedes that the sages added the precise liturgy and timing only later. With regard to *Hallel*, however, the Rambam refuses to apply this reasoning and views the entire *mitzvah* as purely rabbinic.

The Ramban defends the position of the Behag that *Hallel* is *de’oraisa*. However, he lacks any direct verse obligating the recitation of *Hallel*. The only direct reference to such a practice is found in a verse in Yishayahu that predicts the victory over Sancheiriv by declaring, “The song [after the victory] will be equivalent to the type sung on a night sanctified as a holiday [presumably a reference to *yom tov*].” In fact, the Gemara in Arachin employs this verse to distinguish between days on which *Hallel* is recited and days which do not require *Hallel* because they have no

¹ Pesachim 64a

² Arachin 11a

³ Shevuos 14b

⁴ Hilchos Chanukah 3:6

⁵ Shoresch 1

⁶ In his *hasagos* to the Rambam’s Sefer HaMitzvos

sanctity (such as *Rosh Chodesh* which features no prohibition of work and hence does require a complete *Hallel*) or no status as a “festival” (such as Shabbos). In fact, the Ra’avad⁷ cites this verse in suggesting that *Hallel* is not a standard *de-rabanan*, and should be classified instead under the category of “*divrei sofrim*” (*mitzvot* which have a reference in Tanakh). The Ramban, however, cites no verse in the Torah to serve as the basis for the Biblical obligation of reciting *Hallel*.

The Ramban therefore claims that *Hallel* might indeed be a “*halakha lemoshe miSinai*” - a *mitzvah* which has *de’oraisa* status even though no specific verse refers to it. Subsequently, the Ramban generates a source for *Hallel*. Every festival obligates us in the *mitzvah* of *simchah* (rejoicing), based on the verse, “*Vesamachta bechagecha*, You shall rejoice in your festival.”⁸ Generally, this *simchah* is actualized through sacrificial offerings, meat and wine, and, according to the Ramban, any other personal enjoyment⁹. According to the Ramban, an additional expression of *simchah* is the recitation of *Hallel*. After all, the Gemara in Arachin¹⁰ had already determined that *Hallel* is the epitome of an “*avodah*” (service) which causes joy. If so, it stands to reason that this expression of joy should be incorporated into every *Yom Tov*.

We should note that the Gemara in Arachin that the Ramban adopts as his source merely establishes *Hallel* as a form of *avodah* which causes joy. Hence, when sacrifices are offered on a festival, *Hallel* is required (as stated above). The Ramban extrapolates from here that all forms of *Hallel* - even those recited outside the Temple and the context of sacrifices - constitute an expression of joy

and are obligatory on festivals. This is not necessarily the implication of the Gemara.

Another possible source appears in the Gemara in Pesachim¹¹, which suggests that Moshe and the Jewish people actually recited *Hallel* (in addition to the “Song of the Sea”) when they crossed the Red Sea. This would support the Ramban’s contention that *Hallel* traces back to Moshe Rabbeinu. An additional Gemara which supports the Ramban’s position is found in Ta’anis¹², claiming that *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* (on which there is no prohibition of labor) is only of rabbinic origin. This would imply that other forms of *Hallel* - namely, its recitation on sacred days of festivals - may be viewed as *de’oraisa*.

There is another form of *Hallel* that might have earlier roots, even according to the Rambam. The Gemara in Pesachim¹³ claims that during the Exodus, the prophets instituted the practice of reciting *Hallel* any time a grave danger facing the Jewish People was relieved. Thus, during the performance of a miracle (perhaps only a national one), we have an obligation to recite *Hallel*. In fact, the Brisker Rav claimed that the annual *Hallel* recited Pesach night stems from this requirement. Since the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* (recounting the Exodus) requires us to envision ourselves as if we are currently departing Egypt, we actually relive a miracle and must therefore recite *Hallel*.

The Brisker Rav assigns a different nature to the *Hallel* recitation of Pesach night. Whereas normally the *mitzvah* entails reading (*keri’ah*), in this instance it has the quality of song or poetry - “*shirah*.” Women would therefore be obligated in this specific *Hallel*, even though they might not be obligated in classic *Hallel*, as it is

a time-bound *mitzvah*. Since this special *Hallel* involves a direct and immediate response to the miracle, we would apply the principle of “*af hein hayu be’oso hanes*,” they too were part of the same miracle¹⁴. No blessing would be recited¹⁵, and an interruption might be tolerated (as we actually allow during *Hallel* on Pesach night). Clearly, this form of *Hallel* would constitute a *mitzvah de’oraisa*. Whether the sages can legislate this type of *Hallel* beyond the immediate moment in which the miracle was performed is itself debatable, and would greatly impact the status of *Hallel* on Chanukah, which is neither a festival (as defined by the Torah) nor sanctified by a prohibition on labor, yet obligates one to recite *Hallel* because of the miracle that occurred.

¹⁴ See Tosafos Sukka 38a s.v. “mi”

¹⁵ See the Ran in his comments to Arvei Pesachim

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⁷ In his *hasagos* to the Rambam, Hilchos Chanukah 3:6

⁸ Devarim 16:14

⁹ See Hilchos Yom Tov, ch. 6

¹⁰ 11a

¹¹ 117a

¹² 28b

¹³ 117a