



# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL SHABBOS

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



YOM KIPPUR

## A Time for Transformation

Since this edition of Torah Tidbits spans from Yom Kippur through Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and beyond, I thought it only appropriate to discuss the process we undergo throughout this time period. **Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** brings the following beautiful insight highlighting the amazing transformation we strive to undergo during this entire time period.

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year. It's the day we strive to be like *malachim*. We stand in shul all day long, dressed in our white clothing, living in a purely spiritual world. We daven and connect to Hashem without any breaks for eating or drinking, we have no material distractions. We focus and we cry and if we've done it right, when we reach Neila at the end of the Yom Kippur davening, we have reached the climax, the height of all spiritual experiences.

But where do we go from there? We're on a high because we just spent the whole day in tefilla, separated from all things physical. But the problem is - we aren't meant to live like that on a daily basis. We now need to figure out how to take that spiritual high and translate it into everyday life. How do we do that?

The answer is, we already have a system set in place. The coming Chagim form a slow progression from total spirituality to

regular everyday life. We begin with the holiday of Sukkot. If you think about it, the entire Sukkot experience is very physical – full of delicious Yom Tov meals and simcha. But the catch is - it's all done within the four walls of a mitzvah. We are learning to enjoy the material world within the confines of a mitzvah. Next, we move onto Shemini Atzeret. On Shemini Atzeret, we no longer sit in a Sukkah. In fact, there are no special Mitzvot at all on Shemini Atzeret. We are not surrounded anymore by mitzvot, by the spiritual world, but we are still basking in the glow of a Yom Tov. And finally we move onto Isru Chag, the day after Sukkot. No mitzvot, no chag, (this year Misrad HaChinuch even decided to send the kids back to school) and yet, we still have that fresh taste of chag in our mouths.

At each stage, we stop and we check ourselves - can we still hold onto the inspiration, to our focus and our goals, as we move farther and farther away from that purely spiritual existence? And then we get to days following Isru Chag and eventually to the month of Cheshvan, where we are really put to the test. A month of no holidays, no spiritual highs, no specific mitzvot, a month of the ordinary, a boring old month. What do we do now? Can we remain inspired and committed, can we

continue to grow in our Avodat Hasham without the external spiritual experiences?

As we prepare to enter into Cheshvan, Rav Hirsch explains that “the stem syllable חש itself indicates silence and quiet. This is the characteristic of the month of Cheshvan which directly follows the festive celebrations of the month of Tishrei. Cheshvan, in contrast to Tishrei, gives an impression of stillness and entrance into quiet, private life. **A Jew has to serve Hashem well in his quiet, private life.**” (Collected Writing of Rav Hirsch Volume 2, p.159)

In addition, it is brought down in Chasidut that another meaning for the word Marcheshvan is מרחשין את השפתים - we continue throughout the month of Cheshvan to hum the Tefillot of Tishrei, we are still chewing it over, digesting all we encountered in Tishrei.

It is the days following the Chagim that represent ordinary, daily life. As we re-enter into שגרה (routine), we find out how well we did during Tishrei. Tishrei is the time of inspiration, and the days following are the time of application. As we step back into our ‘quiet private lives’, we need to learn to grow in our Avodat Hashem not only through those bursts of inspirational moments but also in our ordinary day-to-day lives.

So as we experience the different Chagim over the next couple of weeks, let’s try and stop and ask ourselves along the way – “How can I apply this inspiration?” “How can I take all of these magnificent spiritual experiences and make them part of my daily life?”

IyH, may we all have an extremely impactful Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret, and then be able to take real steps to apply that inspiration into our lives. ■

## LOOKING TO BUILD A MORE MEANINGFUL SUKKOT EXPERIENCE?

### Read The Tripod: A New Perspective on the Shalosh Regalim

Just when you thought you had a pretty good handle on what the annual festivals are all about, this recently released book by **Neil Lauer** comes to uncover the fundamental lessons embedded within the Shalosh Regalim that you might have overlooked.



Available in bookstores and online.



MOSAICAPRESS.COM