

"Stay With Me [More Than] One Day"

"שְׁבַעַת יָמִים תִּקְרְבוּ אִשָּׁה לָהּ, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם, וְהִתְרַבְּתֶם אִשָּׁה לָהּ עֲצַרְתָּ הוּא" (ויקרא, כג, לו)
עצרת הוא - עצרתי אתכם אצלי כמלך שזימן את בניו גסעודה לכך וכך ימים, כיון שהגיע זמנו להפטר,
אמר: 'בני, בבקשה מכם, עכבו עמי עוד יום אחד, קשה עלי פרידתכם' (רש"י שם מדברי המדרש)

A team of professional photographers traveled to document the terrible massacre that took place on the October 7th in Kibbutz Be'eri. In an area where entire houses were burnt to the ground, one photographer noticed the white torn page just lying on the ground near a scarry knife. The page was from the *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, which speaks of halting life and taking stock! (In the entire sefer the word "halt" לעצור appears only in this section!)



The Rav's response: The events that took place on *Shemini Atzeres* (5784) in *Eretz Yisrael* were an "atzeres," a "halt" - to routine life in the Holy Land.

HALT WITH ME!

◆ Close to 500,000 Jews have joined the war and aren't at home. ◆ Close to 200,000 Jews have been uprooted from their homes in the South & North, and are living far away from their homes. ◆ Educational institutions in many places are only partially operating. ◆ Most construction projects all over the country have halted, due to lack of workers, which until now employed Arabs. ◆ Tourists from other countries aren't flying in now since foreign airlines cancelled all flights. ◆ Major entertainment centers aren't active now, while some of them are only partially functioning. ◆ Many stores are now only open for part of the day. ◆ Since close to 700,000 Jews aren't at home now, this has resulted in businesses slowing down or closing since they have no manpower to function. ◆ The mere fact that there is so much uncertainty about the immediate future and beyond has resulted in significant financial losses. There are many more examples of the ripple effects that resulted from what happened – and all of it is because Hashem is telling us:

"PUT A HALT ON ALL OF YOUR LIFE!"

And it happened precisely on *Shemini Atzeres*, the day of which Hashem says "Stay with Me one more day." This year, it was not only "one more day" as Hashem always asks us to stay with Him as in all previous years. Rather, this year was a plea from Hashem for us to halt all our life and re-think the entire way we have been living, to start over our lives again. We can go deep into ourselves and ask, "What am I living for? Am I clear about how to get to the purpose of my life? Am I actually going in that path?"

Everything that happened in Be'eri can be used by us to become stronger and improve ourselves. And although these words are so clear and do not need to be emphasized at all, still, it is human nature that people want to strengthen and improve themselves even more when tragic events happen.

בלבבי משכן אבנה
BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

"[In this world, a person running a business takes an inventory once a year. He closes the store for a day to take stock of what was sold and what wasn't and assess his progress.] A person must do the same with his life. This is not merely a brief self-accounting for fifteen minutes, a half hour, or even an hour. He must **halt** the whole course of his life and ask himself: Do I want to be attached to the Creator, or not? If I do, am I treading on the path that brings me closer to feeling this palpable closeness I seek? Or perhaps my path of learning Torah with the mind only and performing the *mitzvos* with minimal inspiration will not bring me to true closeness to Hashem. One should take as much time as he needs to reach this recognition, but he must emerge with an awareness and a clear will to live his life solely for the sake of closeness and *deveikus* to Hashem. Then, his task will be to identify a definite path that will bring him there. But again, first of all, it must be clear that this is the entire true purpose of life — closeness and *deveikus* to Hashem. "