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The Seal of the Decree on Hoshanah Rabbah

On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, the decree [for the new year] becomes sealed. It is well-known that the decree is written on Rosh HaShanah, and signed on Yom Kippur, but the *sefarim hakedoshim* [1] reveal that on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, another signing of the decree takes place; it is called a “signature within the [first] signature.”

We find this concept in the Gemara, [2] that normally one is not allowed to send certain foods with a non-Jew even if the foods are sealed, but if they are sealed within another seal, it is permissible. The Arizal borrows this concept with regards to *Hoshanah Rabbah*, that on *Hoshana Rabbah*, the decree is sealed within the first original seal of Yom Kippur.

There are many deep explanations of this concept, but we will use one approach to explain it.

Chazal say that “the seal of Hashem is truth.” [3] Chazal elsewhere say that there is a special merit to a judge who gives a truthful judgment; this is called “*emes l’amito*”, complete truth. [4] Many of the commentaries discuss what the difference between “truth” (*emes*) and “complete truth” (*emes l’amito*) is. If something is already the truth, then how can there be such a thing as a complete truth? And if only the complete truth is the truth, then how can the ordinary level of truth be called truth at all?

Along the lines of our discussion, the answer is as follows: the original signature of Yom Kippur is the truth, while the signature within that, which takes place on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, is called “the complete truth.” The two signatures complement each other [and thus they are not a contradiction. Soon this will be explained].

Spiritual Light Needs A Container To Maintain It

First we need to reflect into these concepts – what *ohr* (spiritual light) is, and what a *kli* (container) is. With the help of Hashem, may we merit to understand this.

In Creation, there are many spiritual lights (*ohros*) and containers (*keilim*) to hold the light. For example, a challah is a kind of spiritual light, *ohr*, that is contained in a plate, which is the *kli* that holds the *ohr*. The root light of Creation is the Infinite Light of Hashem (the *ohr Ein Sof*), and all of Creation is the root container which holds all the endless light.

Every person, at his beginning stage, needs to find his own private *ohr*, his own light, and put it into

his own *kli*, container. After that, the avodah is to reveal the Infinite Light of Hashem within that container. Containing the Infinite Light of Hashem is different than the first kind of container; the Infinite Light cannot go into a private kind of container, but rather a container that represents the collective whole of Creation.

In order to receive such a container, man has to come to the recognition that all of Creation are really one. The only thing that splits us apart are the many desires of mankind, our *retzonos*. So in order to see Creation as all one unit, man has to nullify his *retzonos*. If a person succeeds at that, he will be able to see how there are not “many” people in Creation, which reflects disparity, but rather, that all of Creation is one unit.

Reaching The Collective “I”

The way to nullify our *retzonos* is through removing the five garments of the soul [which was discussed in the previous chapter]. Here many people arrive at a concept which they find entirely new.

People think that one has to first find his true self and reveal it, and that this means finding your unique strengths which no one else has – to find your specialness and uniqueness. The Infinite Light of Hashem will not enter a person if he has this perspective. Each person is unique in his five soul garments, and in order to receive the Infinite Light of Hashem, these garments need to be removed; a person must learn how to not look at his uniqueness/soul garments.

This is because from the deeper perspective of reality, *havayah*, we are all one, and no one is “unique” and apart from others. If a person wants to reach *havayah* and he is still searching to find his true self, it’s like trying to touch the sun by touching the rays entering through the window. In order to reach *havayah*, a person must come to the realization that he has no private existence of his own. From the viewpoint of our soul’s garments, it appears that there is disparity in Creation, but from the viewpoint of *havayah*, there is no separateness whatsoever in Creation.

When a person removes his soul garments, beginning from improving his actions (then speech, thought and emotion) and then he finally removes his innermost garment – his *ratzon*\will – he will come to receive a new kind of container: one that represents the collective whole of Creation.

In the first stage, when a person is working with his soul’s garments to remove them, he needs to form a container for himself which enables him to find his true self. He cannot enter the perspective of *havayah* yet, because he is still found within a perspective disparity, because he is searching to find his private self. After he bypasses all the garments by removing them, he has nullified the garments, and now he can be a container that represents the collective whole of Creation [as opposed to a ‘private’ container]. He can now enter *havayah*.

When a person gets past all the soul garments, he comes to discover his true self, but what he will discover is that his “I” is not a private kind of existence, but rather, that his “I” is part of a collective whole. He will then be able to an Infinite Light of Hashem, for he now has the container that can hold something collective.

It is reminiscent of the statement in Chazal, “It is a way of a man to go after a woman [in marriage]”[\[5\]](#) – in other words, the spiritual light is drawn towards its container.

The Four Stages of Revelation

However, the revelation of Hashem's light in a person doesn't come to every person. To illustrate, it is man's nature to seek the woman for marriage, but not if she is already married. As long as a person is still found within his private "I", it is as if he is already "married" to another entity, and the spiritual light will not be drawn towards him.

But when a person reveals his "I" as being part of a collective whole, he has negated his private self, and he has emptied out his ego in order to make space in himself to receive the Infinite Light of Hashem (the light of the *Ein Sof*). That is his new "spouse".

Emptying oneself of his private "I" will enable one to become a container that can hold the all-inclusive light of Hashem. He will realize that any spirituality that he sought for his own private motives feels to him like dirty clothing, unsuitable for a prince to wear, now that he has unified his once "private" soul with "collective" soul, with the Creator.

So the steps of one's avodah are as follows. The first stage is for one to reveal his true self, which is by nullifying the five garments of the soul (action, then speech, then thought, then emotion, and then the will)[6]. After that, a person reveals his true "I", and what he discovers is that the real "I" is not his ego, but rather, that he has no private self of his own anymore [he has transcended the ego]. He is now a container to receive the Infinite Light of Hashem; he has emptied himself of any previous spiritual light, which were all narrowed to his egoistic concerns. Now that he has been emptied, he is a container that can receive the Infinite Light.

Naturally, a person will imagine that he can receive the Infinite Light even if he hasn't yet transcended the ego; but any attempts to get there will prove futile. Hashem says, "I am I who I am, and there is no God besides me." This is not the regular kind of "I" which we understand; it is not a private kind of "I." When Hashem says "I", it is referring to the collective "I", and not to the private "I" - and He is saying that there is no other "I" besides for "I", the "I" of Hashem - the collective "I."

A person who wishes to receive the light of the *Ein Sof* will naturally be afraid to let go of his ego. He is thinking, "What will happen to me if I do this? Will I lose my identity when I nullify myself?" This is because he does not identify himself beyond his five soul garments, so of course, he considers this to be a loss of his identity. He'll be prepared to forego his soul garments as long as he thinks he'll receive a new identity in its place, but he is not prepared to give his identity if he knows that he is not getting back a new identity in return, so he won't be willing to do it.

Meriting The Coming Of Moshiach

It is written, "*Behold, days are coming, so says my Master, Hashem; when I will throw away all hunger from the land, when there will be no hunger for bread and no thirst for water, nothing except to hear the word of Hashem.*" Is the prophet saying that there will come a time in the future when there will be no more physical hunger and thirst? No. The prophet is talking about something spiritual - that in the future, people will not be concerned with their own spiritual "bread" and "water", but instead people will want to hear the "word of Hashem" of the true reality, a dimension beyond any egoistic motivations.

When a person nullifies his soul garments, he will find that he desires a revelation of G-dliness upon the entire world, that it should fill every heart. This is the power to transcend our private "I" and enter into the collective.

Chazal say that "The son of David [a title for Moshiach] will not come until all coins (*peratiyos*) have been emptied from the wallet." There is a well-known Chassidic explanation of this matter, heard from

Eliyahu HaNavi, which understands the word “*peratiyos*” not as the simple context, which is “coins”, but rather as *peratiyos*, our “private” lives. In other words, Moshiach cannot come as long as there are people who only worry for their own selves. As long as there are people who only care about themselves and not about others, the great spiritual light of Moshiach will not be able to enter the world, because there is not yet a container that is fitting to hold it.

When a person’s “container” is too small, it cannot hold the great Infinite Light of Hashem. But when a person nullifies his private “I”, he becomes a container to hold the collective “I”, and then the Infinite Light can rest upon his container.

The Revelation of Moshiach

Thus, the avodah of a person is first to nullify the self and identify himself as part of the collective “I”, which can hold the light of the *Ein Sof*, and after that, to reveal the perspective of *havayah*.

On a deeper note, either of these stages cannot exist without each other; they must co-exist at the same time, or else they do not start. When the first stage is missing the second stage, then the first stage is still being done out of egoistic concerns. And although *havayah* exists, without revealing the true self, the understanding of *havayah* cannot shine.

Therefore, the correct approach is for one to remove himself from all movements, and then *havayah* is revealed as a direct result. When the movements are removed – and the root of all movement is *ratzon*\will – the reality of *havayah* is in turn revealed.

Many people do not get to their spiritual goals because they cannot identify themselves beyond their movements and soul garments. They aren’t aware of *havayah*, that there is a deeper layer of reality and existence that goes beyond their soul garments.

There are people who want to return every Jew to teshuvah, but they are trapped in their limited perspective of how they view themselves. Although it’s called “The *Baal Teshuvah* movement”, it is missing the awareness to *havayah*, and it instead is focused on causing a spiritual “movement”. The *Baal Teshuvah* movement cannot reveal *havayah*, because since it’s all about creating a movement, it is already a degree of disparity. The goal which we need to have is one goal alone, one *havayah*. It is not about causing any movement, not in the personal sense and not in the communal sense.

We can now understand a statement of the Baal HaTanya, in the name of *Tikkunei HaZohar*^[7]: “If there will be any *tzaddik* who succeeds in returning another Jew to complete repentance, Moshiach would immediately come.” There are explanations given to this matter, but along the lines of our discussion, it is as follows. If there is anyone in the world who arrives at an absolute understanding of *havayah*, that understanding would shine so strongly that the entire world would feel it, and then the world will be instantly ready for Moshiach. Throughout the generations, there were always righteous individuals who reached *havayah* – as much as they tried to reach it. There was never yet anyone who reached it absolutely. Therefore, no *tzaddik* until now has been able to influence the entire world.

The one *tzaddik* who will be able to do is Moshiach, and he is the only one who will bring everyone back to *teshuvah*. But it will not be done in the simple sense like we understand, that all Jews will become *frum* again and keep Torah and mitzvos. The return to keeping all the mitzvos will become self-understood; people will realize it on their own. What Moshiach will do is return everyone to the viewpoint of *havayah*; this will give people a true self-recognition, that people will see that there is more to who they are than their various movements. No one will think of sinning, as a direct result.

This is what it means that Moshiach will return everyone to *teshuvah*; it will be an inner kind of *teshuvah*, and there will be no *teshuvah* greater than it.

Beyond Choosing

The Sages revealed that if we merit it, Moshiach will come even before his time to come. If we don't merit, he will come at the time that he is destined to come at.[\[8\]](#)

The redemption will not come due to our *bechirah* free will. When Moshiach comes, he will then get everyone to do *teshuvah* [whereupon it will be coming from our free will to choose the correct decisions].

If, however, we merit the arrival of Moshiach before his destined time, then we will have to choose on our own to do *teshuvah*, and Moshiach will not have to return us, because we will already be returned by the time he comes. But if we don't merit the early arrival of Moshiach, then it will be Moshiach who returns us. How?

There are two perceptions - *bechirah*, to choose with our free will, and *yediah*, to "know" clearly the truth without having to choose. As we live right now, *bechirah* is in the forefront, while *yediah* remains in the background. In the future, this will be turned around, and the light of *yediah* will shine and prevail over the understanding of our *bechirah*. Right now, we think that something we gain due to making the right decision is more praiseworthy than something we don't have to struggle to get. That is why we think that whatever we gain through our *bechirah* is more commendable than something which comes directly from Hashem without having to struggle for it, which is *yediah*.

The *sefarim hakedoshim* reveal that *Pesach Sheini* is more prominent than Pesach itself, because the *Pesach Sheini* was brought by those who were originally exempt from having to bring the *korbon pesach*, due to being ritually contaminated. Although they didn't have to bring the *korbon pesach* in the first place, they still wished to bring it, and therefore they brought the *Pesach Sheini* a month after Pesach. They chose to do so even though they could have walked away exempt. Understandably, those who brought the *Pesach Sheini* seem more virtuous than those who brought the original *korbon Pesach* on Pesach itself, for they were commanded so by the Torah.

This understanding, though, is only due to our current perspective. In the future, we will understand that Pesach itself is more prominent than *Pesach Sheini*, because we will realize that it is more praiseworthy to do Hashem's will than to choose to do so. *Yediah* will be more of a virtue than *bechirah*. It is reminiscent of the concept of *emunah* which great *tzaddikim* had, in which they were willing to serve Hashem as long as they knew they were doing Hashem's will.

This is the truthful level of serving Hashem - when one reaches the understanding that he all wants to do is be connected to Hashem, and as a direct result, he has no desire to deviate in the smallest way from Hashem's will. He doesn't even think of veering from Hashem's will, and he doesn't even want to, because he is totally attached with Hashem.

Furthermore, by a *tzaddik*, doing Hashem's will is his very pleasure in life. All he wants to do is remain and bask in the pleasure of Hashem's light, and he has no interest to descend to this physical world. But Hashem commands us to be on this world, for that is His will. The *tzaddik* does so, submitting himself completely to Hashem's will, because he has *emunah*. He has *emunah* that if Hashem says to do it, I must do it, even though I have no pleasure in this.

This is the real praise of *tzaddikim*: they would rather remain in the spiritual realm and not have to deal with this world at all, but they descend from their pleasure in order to carry out Hashem's will. Moshe Rabbeinu is called "My servant"[\[9\]](#), because even though he was totally connected with Hashem, he was willing to descend from his perch and deal with the masses. He gave up his spiritual pleasure of basking with Hashem so that he can carry out Hashem's will and lead the people; that is

the epitome of a “servant” of Hashem.

Incorporating The Reality of Hashem Into Life

The perspective of *havayah* [the deeper meaning of reality], is when a person uncovers a deeper part to reality that goes beyond doing the *mitzvos*. The higher and deeper meaning of reality, *havayah*, is all about basking in the reality of Hashem’s existence, while the lower layer to reality, *adnus*, is about relating to Hashem as a Master, which requires us to do the *mitzvos*. So far, we have only explained what *adnus* is without *havayah* [when people are doing all the *mitzvos* and they are in touch with the various garments of the soul, but they are not connected to *havayah*].

[Now we will explain the other kind of problem – when there is *havayah* without *adnus*.] There are people who understand these concepts being described here, and they have worked on all of these concepts. They are connected to *havayah* – yet, they don’t want to do the *mitzvos*! Such a person is basking in the great spiritual pleasure of *havayah*, but he neglects his aspect of *adnus*.

What a person needs to understand is that although *adnus*\doing the *mitzvos* is a lower plane than *havayah*, and although he is descending from the pleasure of *havayah* when he has to engage in *adnus*, still, this is exactly how he must serve Hashem. Our avodah is to integrate *havayah* and *adnus* together; we cannot remain with only our *adnus* and never reach *havayah*, but nor can we neglect our *adnus* if we have reached *havayah*.

A gentile doesn’t understand that the two must be integrated. You can have a gentile who reaches an inner and spiritual kind of pleasure on this world, but then he wishes to totally disconnect from this world, and he cannot deal with reality on this world. The gentile is enjoying the spirituality so much that he won’t give it up for anything.

Chazal say, “Greeting a guest is greater than greeting the *Shechinah*.” This we learn from Avraham Avinu, who ran to go greet guests, even though Hashem was in middle of visiting him. The question on this is: How could Avraham Avinu leave the *Shechinah* and go greet these guests, who appeared to Avraham Avinu as lowly Arabs who served the dust of their feet? The *sefarim hakedoshim* answer that this act is precisely what revealed Avraham Avinu’s exalted level. Avraham Avinu was definitely giving up his enjoyment of being with the *Shechinah* to go and greet these guests; he was willing to descend back to the physical and lowly earth and do Hashem’s will and give up his great pleasure.

When a person sits in *hisbodedus*, he is surely more attached to Hashem than when he has to deal with the world. It is definitely more pleasurable to bask in closeness with Hashem than to have to go out to the world and do the *mitzvos*. This was Avraham’s greatness, that he was willing to forego his great pleasure of closeness with Hashem, because he had *emunah* that it is Hashem’s will to greet the guests.

Doing Hashem’s Will Even Though We Don’t Understand It

Thus, our avodah is to do whatever is required of us to do, for it is Hashem’s will, even though we would have much more pleasure if we would simply bask in the knowledge of Hashem’s existence all the time. Why does Hashem want it that way? For that, there is no answer. The *sefarim hakedoshim* write, “There is no reason for a *ratzon* (will).”

Even when we want things in our life, we don’t know why we want them. A child asks his parents for money. Why does he want the money? So he can buy himself a candy. And why does he want the candy? Because it tastes good. And why does he want it to be tasty? We can keep probing further and

further into why we want something, but there comes a certain point where we can't figure out what is causing us to want.

We don't know why it is that we want certain things. No reason can be given of why we want something. All we know is that if we get what we want, it is somehow good for us, because it will give us some pleasure. But we still don't know what is making us want certain things.

This is the meaning of "There is no meaning for a will." There are some desires we have in which we are of what is rooting them, but there is a root to all our desires which is unknown to us. How much more so does this apply to the *ratzon* of Hashem. Until a certain point, we can know what He wants, but at a certain point, we cannot know what His reason is. We have no comprehension of His root will.

Self-Awareness and Feeling Your Existence

We will now return to discussing how one can come too reach his inner self. It is clear that all people [and even some clever animals] can feel that they exist, and this can be done constantly. The only time that a person stops feeling his existence is if he goes through something stressful or if he's asleep. A person never feels another's existence as much as he feels himself as existing.

Feeling your existence, and being self-aware, are not the same thing. Sometimes a person is entire disconnected from self-awareness, such as if he's heavily involved with something that's noisy, or if he's in a very noisy place and he can't concentrate. There are always times in which we forget that we exist; either it is because a person is involved with others, which is a good reason, or it is because he's self-absorbed in an evil thought, a bad reason.

No matter what the reason is, either way, we all have times in which we forget we exist. However, even in these moments, we can still feel that we exist, even though we have temporarily lost self-awareness. The only issue is whether is aware and attentive to reality or not.

We explained at length that we do not see *havayah* - the depth of reality - but rather sparks of *havayah*. It is therefore possible for a person for many people to look at the same thing yet see it from different perspectives. To illustrate, two people taste the same wine, and one of them says that it's horribly tasting, while another person considers it to be a fine wine. There is nothing in which any two people always see the same thing.

Thus, the perception of reality also depends on each person. Not everyone sees reality in the same way! When a person first hears this concept, this might sound very strange, but that is only because we think we know what reality is. When we begin to understand that whatever we see is only sparks of a deeper reality, and not reality *itself*, (*havayah*), we can then understand that what we think of as reality really depends on each person's particular mental capacity.

To illustrate what we mean, if a person would lose his sense of taste, he would feel as if he has lost a part of himself. His "I" is a spark of reality, and thus when he loses part of his "I", he feels that his entire reality has undergone a major change. Similarly, the Gemara says that a blind person is considered like a dead person.^[10] This is because he has lost a certain part of his individuality if he cannot see. Of course, he knows that he hasn't lost his entire "I", even though he has never seen his "I" in the first place.

The truth is that now that he has become blind, he has a much greater chance of revealing his true self. But as far as the outer layers of his "I" goes, he has definitely lost a part of his "I".

Chazal state that sleep is a sixtieth of death^[11]; closing the eyes is a partial nullification of the “I”, and this is true even when a person isn’t actually asleep.

Reaching The Non-Ego State: Beginning With The “Yechidah” Level of The Soul

In the writings of the Arizal, it is brought that man [his soul] is comprised of five parts [beginning from highest to lowest]: *Yechidah*, *Chayah*, *Neshamah*, *Ruach*, and *Nefesh*. Below that are three layers [thought, speech and action], and below that is the physical body. When a person merits to reach his non-ego state and he identifies himself as part of a collective whole, he can only get there through accessing the deepest part of the soul, the “*Yechidah*.”

The lower levels of the soul cannot be used to get there, and therefore, Moshiach has not yet come. Moshiach can only come if there will be a *tzaddik* who reaches the non-ego state through all five layers of the soul – *Yechidah*, *Chayah*, *Neshamah*, *Ruach* and *Nefesh*; as well as the rest of the self, all the way down until the body. Even if a person reaches the collective *Yechidah*, if his body is still used only for his private purposes, he lives a contradiction. Just as the body and soul are opposites and they contradict each other, so does the private use of the body contradict the collective use of the soul.

In the current state of affairs, the *Yechidah* in each Jew is sustained from the one *tzaddik* in the generation who has reached the collective *Yechidah*. This *tzaddik* is affected in his entire being by the revelation of *Yechidah*, whereas the rest of the generation enjoys the rays of his *Yechidah*, but unlike that special *tzaddik*, they cannot enjoy it to its full extent, and therefore it doesn’t affect every layer of their existence.

Not only that, but the *tzaddik* as well is somewhat harmed by the rest of the world’s impurity, so his outer layers aren’t as purified as his *Yechidah*. As for the rest of the world, their outer layers of their self are totally unaffected by the *Yechidah* of the *tzaddik*; [only their *Yechidah* is being sustained by the *Yechidah* of the *tzaddik*]. This is because most people never come into contact with their own *Yechidah*, and not as well with their own *Chayah* and *Neshamah*; in fact, even the *Ruach* is never reached by most people!

When most people come into contact with any spirituality, it remains outside of them, like a surrounding light, but it usually doesn’t get absorbed into the person.

Therefore, even if a person reaches his non-ego state, the rest of his lower layers still feel ego-oriented, because the lower layers of a person’s existence aren’t able to have the perception of the *Yechidah*. So the *avodah* of a person is as follows.

First, a person should reveal his *Yechidah*. He should reach the point in which he feels himself as part of a collective whole, rather than as a private kind of existence [as explained previously in this chapter]. After that he can shine the light of that understanding onto the rest of his soul layers.

What we can notice from this is the following deep insight. It is impossible for a person to totally negate his sense of ego, because if he would, he wouldn’t be aware of the self at all, and he wouldn’t be able to begin becoming a part of the collective whole. When a person is working on himself to reach the collective state and leave his private state, there is obviously some attention being given to his private state, or else he would be perfect and there would be nothing to work with. So obviously, the collective aspect and the private aspect of a person must ultimately work together.

In summary: Man initially starts out by recognizing his private existence, and then he can transcend it by realizing that he is a part of a collective existence. If he gets to that point, he realizes that there is a higher part of himself that has reached a non-ego state, but there are still lower parts of himself

which haven't gotten there yet. Then his avodah is to shine the light of that understanding upon the rest of his private existence.

The Five Parts of The Soul Are All One Unit

We will explain this now with even more clarity.

We need to define the concept that the soul has "five parts." Don't think that this is like a machine that has five gears going on inside of it. The soul is one complete unit, and its five layers are to be viewed as five levels of **perception**, towards the same thing.

To illustrate, the halacha is that when a person is informed that his father has died, he must say "*Baruch Dayan Emes.*" Yet, if he will inherit his father, he is also required to make the blessing of *Shehechyanu*. If he will split the inheritance with other brothers, he makes a blessing of *HaTov V'Hamaitiv*.^[12] How are we to understand this irony? At the very moment that a person must express profound sadness over his father's death, he must also express a degree of joy over the fact that now he has inherited his father? How can our soul stand this contradiction?!

The answer is: There are different layers going on in the soul, and these "layers" are essentially different viewpoints on the same situation. The inner layers of the soul are less concerned about the ego and what it will gain, and it is the inner layers of the soul which express mourning over a deceased father. The outer layers of the soul, though, are thinking about the money, because the outer layers are ego-oriented. Because there is a part of his existence that is experiencing some joy, he must recite a blessing.

From this we can see the concept, that there can be one reality which is perceived through different viewpoints.

So if the *Yechidah* would be another "part" in the soul and it needs to be shined onto the other four lower "parts" of the soul, then it would mean that we have only have four parts to the soul, because the *Yechidah* nullifies itself to the Infinite Light, leaving us with the remaining four parts of the soul. But that is not the understanding, as we explained. The soul is one entity, and for this reason, the *Yechidah* is somewhat affected by the rest of the lower soul layers which haven't been purified yet, which hampers the *Yechidah* from nullifying itself to the Infinite Light.

Only in the future, when the world receives its rectification, will all the layers in our soul connect to our *Yechidah*. Then, all of Creation will become integrated with the Creator, and the absolute unity will be achieved.

Simchas Torah: Integrating Your "I" With Hashem

The purpose of Creation is essentially that we all reach an absolute unity with the Creator. This is the reason why *Shemini Atzeres* comes after all the spiritual light and containers we have gotten from *Rosh HaShanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkos*, and *Hoshanah Rabbah*. In Eretz Yisrael, *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah* are on the same day.

The depth behind this is because the essence of *Simchas Torah* is that a person forgets about his ego. He takes his mind off the fact that he exists. [Therefore, it comes after all that we have built from *Rosh HaShanah* through *Hoshanah Rabbah*, so that we can now take our "I" and nullify it to Hashem].

"Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world"; all of us are rooted in the Torah, because we were all hewn from there. On *Simchas Torah*, the depth of the joy is that on this day we can return our entire sense of existence to the original state of Before Creation, in which "I" did not exist at all.

So *Simchas Torah* is not merely a joy upon the fact that *learn* Torah; nor is it a joy upon the fact that we have *received* the Torah [that would be Shavuot]. It is a joy upon the fact that we have *finished* the Torah – and what does it mean to finish the Torah? It does not merely mean that someone finished the Torah from reading *Parshas Beraishis* until the end. It means that a person returns his existence to the Torah, that he identifies his point of origin in the *Torah*, from which he was indeed created from.

Everything was created from the Torah, and thus it is our *avodah* to return ourselves and to trace all of existence to the Torah. It is upon us to take our entire existence and return it to its root – the Torah that we are all created from.

That is how we “finish” the Torah – by returning our existence to the Torah, we “complete” the Torah.

The Torah begins with the letter *beis* and ends with the letter *lamed*, which forms the word *lev*, “heart.” This hints to us that the Torah is the heart of our existence. Just like the rest of the body is sustained by the heart and looks to the heart for support, so does our entire existence look to the Torah as the heart that sustains us.

[1] Shaar HaKavanos: Derushei Chag HaSukkos: Derush 6

[2] Avodah Zarah 39a

[3] Shabbos 55a

[4] Shabbos 10a

[5] Kiddushin 2b

[6] Editor’s Note: In the previous chapter, it was explained that the way to nullify the actions is by accepting upon oneself to better his actions. The way to nullify speech is by speaking with Hashem. The way to nullify thought is, for example, by refraining from Torah thoughts during davening. The way to nullify the emotions is by gaining control of our emotions (refer to *Getting To Know Your Feelings* [Chapter 16] of the author). The way to nullify the will is through getting rid of our various desires (for more specific guidance on how to do this, refer to the author’s *Getting To Know Your Soul* and *Getting To Know Your Soul*, and *Bilvavi Miskan Evneh, Part Four: Chapters 15-22*). Refer also to the author’s recent series on the topic of “*hisbodedus*” (meditation): *Getting To Know Your Individuality*, Chapters 10 and onward). Also refer to the author’s *Da Es Yichudecha (Getting To Know Your Inner World, Chapters 7-10)*.

[7] *Maamarei Admor HaZakein HaKetzarim*, p.403; *Tikkunei Zohar HaChadash: Noach*: 145 with *Peirush HaSulam*.

[8] Sanhedrin 98a

[9] Yehoshua 1:2

[10] Nedarim 64b

[11] Berachos 57b

[12] Orach Chaim 223:2

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