

THE YESHIVA PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 58

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The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson

58

The Three Festivals: Succos, Pesach and Shavuos

Hoshanas (continued)

THE FOLLOWING TWO HOSHANAH PRAYERS ARE RECITED DURING THE COURSE OF THE WEEK OF SUCCOS BUT NOT ON HOSHANAH RABBA

Keil Le'Mosha'os (O G-d! Bring about Salvations)

The stanza beseeches *Hashem*, our *G-d of salvations*, to redeem us from our exile.

We beseech *Hashem* to do so in the merit of adhering to the **four oaths** that are alluded to by the four references in *Shir Hashirim - Hisbbati Es'chem Bnos Yerushalayim*² (I adjured you, O daughters of Israel).

- I. These oaths represent our commitment of not rebelling against our host nations throughout our sojourn in exile.
- II. They also include a promise not to cause the delay of the Messiah through our sins.
- III. Another promise is not to reveal the depths of *Torah* knowledge to the nations.
- IV. The final promise is not to bring an end to our exile through armed force.

¹ Listed in order of occurrence starting with the first of the three festivals after *Rosh Hashanah*

² 2:7, 3:5, 5:8 and 8:4, and *Medrash Rabba* to *Shir HaShirim* 2:7 in name of R' Chelbo

An alternative interpretation is,

There are four references where G-d swore to redeem the *Bnei Yisrael* from their exile. They are:

נִשְׁבַּע הַשֵּׁם צָבָאוֹת בְּנִפְשׁוֹ כִּי אִם מִלְּאֲתֵיךָ אָדָם כִּיִּלְקַח וְעָנִו עֲלֶיךָ הַיָּדָד:

The Lord of Hosts has sworn by Himself; I have indeed filled you with men as with locusts, and they shall raise a battle-cry against you. *Yirmiyahu* 51:14

בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי יִצְאָ מִפִּי צְדָקָה דְבָר וְלֹא יָשׁוּב כִּי לִי תִכְרַע כָּל בָּרֶךְ תִּשְׁבַּע כָּל לְשׁוֹן:

I swear by Myself, righteousness emanated from My mouth, a word, and it shall not be retracted, that to Me shall every knee kneel, every tongue shall swear." *Yeshaya* 45:23

כִּי מִי נַח זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְרַי מִי נַח עוֹד עַל הָאָרֶץ כֹּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקְצָף עֲלֶיךָ וּמִגֶּרֶךְ בְּךָ:

For this is to Me [as] the waters of Noah, as I swore that the waters of Noah shall never again pass over the earth, so have I sworn neither to be wroth with you nor to rebuke you. *Yeshaya* 54:9

יָכַר יִשְׁתּוֹ בְּגִי דָגְגַךְ עוֹד מֵאֲכָל לֵאִיבֶיךָ וְאִם אֶתְּנֶנּוּ אֶת נִשְׁבַּע הַשֵּׁם בְּיָמֵינוּ וּבְזָרוּעַ עָזוֹ אִם תִּירוֹשֶׁךָ אֲשֶׁר יִגְעַת בּוֹ:

The Lord swore by His right hand and by the arm of His strength; I will no longer give your grain to your enemies, and foreigners shall no longer drink your wine for which you have toiled. *Yeshaya* 62:8

Alternatively,

It can also refer to the four references made in *I Divrei Hayamim* 16. Once to *Avraham*, once to *Yitzchok*, once to *Yaakov* and another time to the nation of Israel in general.

טז אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת אַבְרָהָם וּשְׁבֻעָתוֹ לְיִצְחָק: יז וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֶק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם: יח לְאֹמֵר לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנּוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן חֶבְל נַחֲלַתְכֶם:

16. [The covenant] which He had made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac.

17. And He set it up for Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

18. Saying: To you I shall give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.

There is a variant reading of this which reads,

B'Arba'ab Shavuos (in the four weeks). This alludes to the four weeks during the year in which *Hashem* sits in judgment of the world. Beginning with the week before *Rosh Hashanah* when we begin the *Selichos*³ and ending on *Hoshanah Rabba*, the third week into the month of *Tisbri*.

The stanza continues,

We plead to *Hashem* for our salvation in the merit of those who beseech *Hashem* with sincerity and devotion in prayer.

We ask *Hashem* to consider the merit of the *Torah* scholars and wise men who calculate the various calculations associated with setting the calendar (*Yodei Bin Sha'os*).

The “3 Hours”

In one of the stitches towards the end of this stanza we ask *Hashem* to save us during the “three hours.”

- I. This refers to the second three-hour time frame of each day that the *Gemara*⁴ relates is when *Hashem* sits in judgment.
- II. Should He see that the world deserves strict justice and punishment, we ask *Hashem* to have mercy and go from the Throne of Justice to the Throne of Mercy.

Alternatively,

This refers to the three hours when *Hashem* will exact punishment against *Esav's* (Esau's) descendants in the future when *Masbiach* will come. These three hours alludes to the amount of time *Hashem* will punish *Eisav* as told by the *Navi* (prophet) *Yeshayah*⁵. We pray that *Hashem* should hasten this period to take place soon in our days.

³ According to *Ashkenazic* custom

⁴ The *Gemara* in *Avodah Zara Daf 3b* describes that *Hashem's* daily schedule is divided into four three-hour portions. In the second three-hour time frame, *Hashem's* passes judgment on the world which He created.

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: שתיים עשרה שעות הוי היום, שלש הראשונות הקב"ה יושב ועוסק בתורה, שניות - יושב ודן את כל העולם כולו, כיון שרואה שנתחייב עולם כליה, עומד מכסא הדין ויושב על כסא רחמים, שלישיות - יושב וזן את כל העולם כולו מקרני ראמים עד ביצי כנים, רביעיות - יושב ומשחק עם לויתן, שנאמר: (תהלים קד) לויתן זה יצרת לשחק בו!

⁵ *Yeshayah* 33:10 עתה אקום יאמר השם עתה ארום עתה אגשא (Now I shall rise; Now I shall be exalted; Now I shall be elevated). The word עתה (now) can be read as עתה (time), and since it is written three times, it alludes to the three hours that *Hashem* will seek retribution against *Esav*.

A third interpretation of these three hours,

- a) Is that it refers to the custom of the righteous of a bygone era who would spend three hours at each prayer⁶.
- b) They would spend one hour beforehand in preparation and another hour afterwards in contemplation.

Each of the three *Shemoneh Esrei* prayers took them an hour; together totaling three hours of *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer. We pray for *Hashem's* salvation during these three hours of prayer.

E'eroch Shu'i (I will arrange my Prayer)

This stanza begins with a prefatory remark similar to that which we use to preface the daily *Shemoneh Esrei / Amidah* prayers. In *Shemoneh Esrei* we say *Hashem Sefasaye Tiftach* (G-d, Please open my lips). Here we say *E'eroch Shu'i* (I will arrange my Prayer). In each case, we place emphasis on preparing ourselves to pray (*daven*) with appropriateness.

It then continues with references to:

- ❖ The atonement processes of *Yom Kippur*,
- ❖ The *Mashiach*,
- ❖ The eradication of the Evil Inclination which will occur at that time,
- ❖ And with statements of penitence, prayer and salvation.

One stitch in this stanza reads: *Hakshivah Le'kol Shav'i* (Hearken to the sound of my outcry).

In the **Seder Hoshanas**⁷ it suggests that:

The word *Hakshivah* (Hearken is used here in contrast to the terminology of *Hazinah* (Listen).

⁶*Berachos Daf 32b*

תנו רבנן: חסידים הראשונים היו שוהין שעה אחת ומתפללין שעה אחת וחוזרין ושוהין שעה אחת. וכי מאחר ששוהין תשע שעות ביום בתפלה, תורתן היאך משתמרת, ומלאכתן היאך נעשית? אלא מתוך שחסידים הם - תורתם משתמרת ומלאכתן מתברכת.

⁷ Artscroll edition, authored by Rabbi Avie Gold

The Malbim⁸ explains that,

Hazinab is from the word *Ozen* (ear) which implies speaking to someone in close proximity as one does when speaking into someone's ear.

On the Other hand,

The word *Hakshivab* (Hearken) refers to someone listening from afar.

Accordingly, the meaning of this Stitch is that although we are now speaking to *Hashem* during the festival of *Succos* from afar, unlike during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* when *Hashem* is close by; we still have faith that *Hashem* will be attentive and respond to our prayers.

THE FOLLOWING HOSHANAH PRAYER IS RECITED ONLY ON SHABBOS OF
SUCCOS; NOT ON HOSHANAH RABBA

Ome Netzura - Kevovas (A Nation guarded - like the pupil of the eye)

This particular *Hoshanah* prayer is recited only on *Shabbos*. Therefore, it is devoted to the theme of *Shabbos* as one would expect.

In the opening Stitch we recite *Ome Netzura - Kevovas* (A Nation guarded - like the pupil of the eye).

We mention this on *Shabbos* because,

Shabbos is a special gift that *Hashem* shares specifically with the Jewish Nation as the *Pasuk* (verse) states *Beini U'vein Bnei Yisrael Os Hee Le'olam* (Between Me *Hashem*, and the *Children of Israel* it is an everlasting sign) this means that we share a special relationship with *Hashem* because of this *Mitzvah*.

In *Zemiros* (Songs) of *Shabbos* day there is a song that begins, *Ki Eshmara Shabbos Keil Yishmereini* (When I guard the Sabbath, G-d will protect me). As part of our devotion to *Hashem* in the *Mitzvah* of keeping *Shabbos*, we can expect that *Hashem* will reciprocate to us by placing us under His constant watchful eye.

⁸ *Tebillim* 5:3

⁹ *Vayikra* 31:17

THE FOLLOWING PRAYER IS RECITED DAILY DURING THE COURSE OF THE
WEEK OF SUCCOS AFTER EACH DAY'S HOSHANAH PRAYER

Kehoshata Eilim Be'Lud (As You Saved the Terebinths in Lud)

This stanza is read every day after reciting the daily *Hoshanah* prayers, except for *Shabbos* which has a distinct stanza but similar in its format to this prayer.

Eilim can be translated as Terebinths, which are oak-like trees. This is a reference used in *Yeshaya*¹⁰ that describes the *Bnei Yisrael's* staunch faith in *Hashem* during the difficult years of *Galus* (exile) in *Mitzrayim* (Egypt).

- a. *Eilim* also means the *powerful ones* which is a reference to the Patriarchs who were powerful in their faith and served as a merit to bring salvation to their progeny in Egypt.
- b. *Lud* refers to Egypt as the *Ludim* were the descendants of *Mitzrayim* (the patriarch of Egypt¹¹).

As You Saved the Terebinths along with Yourself when You went forth to save the nation - so save us now

This refers to G-d Himself, Who is **(so to speak)** in exile along with the Jewish people.

- a. The *Torah* depicts¹² allegorically that at the time of *Matan Torah* there was a pedestal of sapphire at G-d's feet, representing *Hashem's* content in the Jewish Nation's distinction.
- b. However, during the exile of the Jewish nation in Egypt, that pedestal was a brick. This is a sign that *Hashem* (so to speak), shares our plight with us.
- c. When G-d took the Jewish nation out of Egypt, He himself went out with them as well.

¹⁰ 61:3

¹¹ See *Bereishis* 10:13, *And Mitzrayim begot Ludim*

¹² *Shemos* 24:10

The above theme is reiterated in the Stitch by the Hebrew letters *Mem* and *Nun*. *Ma'amar Ve'Hotzeisi Es'chem, Nakuv Ve'Hutzeisi It'chem*¹³ (the declaration of "I shall bring you forth" which may be interpreted "I shall be brought forth with you.")

This means that according to the alternate vowelization of the verse in Shemos¹⁴ where G-d commands Moshe Rabbeinu to tell Pharaoh that He will take the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, it alludes to the concept that G-d will take Himself out of Egypt together with them as well.

THE FOLLOWING PRAYER IS RECITED AFTER THE
SHABBOS HOSHANAH PRAYER

Kehoshata Adam Yetzir Kapecha Legonnena (As You saved Adam Your handiwork to be his shield)

Unlike the other *Hoshanas* that were composed by *Rebbe Elazar HaKalir*, this one was composed by *Rebbe Menachem ben Rebbe Machir*. This piece follows the acrostic of the *Aleph Beis* then it follows the acrostic of the name of the author *Menachem ben R' Machir* and then it ends with the acrostic *Chazak La'abd* (may he be strengthened forever) *Amen*.

In this section we mention many things about the holy day of *Shabbos*. The following are some of these references:

- ☞ On this day *Hashem* gave grace and forgiveness to *Adam Harishon* after his sin of eating the fruit of the *Tree of Knowledge*
- ☞ We celebrated this day as our day of rest in Egypt even before we were commanded by *Hashem*
- ☞ *Hashem* commanded us to rest on this day in *Mara*; even before *Hashem* commanded us about it at *Har (Mt.) Sinai*
- ☞ The walls of the city of *Yericho* (Jericho) were miraculously brought down on the *Shabbos* day

Many of the remaining Stitches then focus on how the ceremony of standing up the *Aravah* branches leaning against the *Mizbeiyach* (altar) were performed in the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* and with our prayer that *Hashem* should allow us to merit doing so again in the near future in the new *Beis Hamikdash* when *Mashiach* will come, *Amen*.

¹³ "Ch" is pronounced softly like in the word *Chaim*

¹⁴ 6:6

The Order of the Hoshanas: Variant customs

The Custom of Chabad

The textual structure (*Nusach*) of the order *Hoshanah Rabba*, *Hoshanah prayers* according to the custom of *Chabad*,

- I. The first six days of *Succos* follow the same order of the seven *Hoshanah* stanzas recited on *Hoshanah Rabba* which contain an additional three stanzas, different than the ones enumerated in the chart above.
- II. Another interesting difference is that according to this custom, *Hoshanah* prayers are not recited on *Shabbos*. On Sunday, two sets of *Hoshanas* are recited; one for *Shabbos* and one for Sunday.

Customs followed by German Communities

There is yet another custom that is followed by German communities as brought in the *Siddur Avodas Yisrael*. According to this custom, each of the five festival days (excluding *Shabbos*) has a designated *Hoshanah* stanza. It is as follows:

Day 1 - E'eroch Shu'i (I will arrange my Prayer)

Day 2 - Keil Le'Mosha'os (O G-d! Bring about Salvations)

Day 3 - Ome Ani Choma (A nation that declares: "I am a Wall")

Day 4 - Eh'ven Shesiya (Foundation Stone)

Day 5 - Adamah Me'Errer (Ground from Accursedness)

On Shabbos - Ome Netzura Kevovas (A Nation that is guarded - like the pupil of the eye)

Customs pertaining to the Arba Minim and the Aravah Branches

On *Hoshanah Rabba* there is a custom to remove the rings that bind the *Lulav* at the top. There are various customs as to when these rings should be removed. Some remove them right before reciting the *Brocha* (blessing) for the *Lulav*. Others remove them before *Hallel*. Another custom is to remove them before reciting the *Hoshanas*.

- ✎ The *Mordechai*¹⁵ relates the reason for removing the rings on *Hoshanah Rabba* is because the *Torah* refers to the *Lulav* branch as *Kapos Temarim* (the word *Kapos* is read as if it contains the letter *Vav* which has a numerical value of six). Yet the spelling of the word is *Kapas* which denotes the singular, as if it is one single branch. This teaches us that the *Lulav* leaves should be bound into a single unit for six days. However, on the seventh day which is *Hoshanah Rabba*, we remove the binding and it no longer looks like one branch as all the leaves now are shaking around loosely.
- ✎ The *Lemsh* brings the above-mentioned reason but comments that the foremost reason to undo the binding is so that the leaves will shake freely engendering a more joyous atmosphere when shaking the *Lulav*.
- ✎ It appears that according to this reason, the rings should already be removed before *Hallel* when we shake the *Lulav* in all directions by the *Nanu'im*.

From the Hoshanah Circuits to the Beating of the Aravah Branches

After completing the first seven *Hakafas* we now turn our attention to the custom of taking the *Aravah* branches; the focal point in our *Hoshanah Rabba*, *Hoshanah prayers*. An entire new section of prayers are recited, pleading with *Hashem* to provide us this year with plentiful rain.

After completing the seven *Hakafas* while reciting the *Hoshanah* prayers (Ashkenazic version), we recite additional prayers in supplication to *Hashem* to provide us with plentiful rains in the coming year.

- ✎ It is customary to remain standing in one place for these prayers.
- ✎ The congregation recites these prayers in unison while still holding the *Arba Minim* in their hands.
- ✎ Some have the custom to simultaneously hold the five branches of *Aravos* (Willow branches).

¹⁵ *Mesechtah Succah Perak Lulav Hagazul* §751.

- ✎ The *Rama* writes that preferably one should put the *Arba Minim* aside after the seven *Hakafas* (circuits) and hold the *Aravos* by themselves.
- ✎ The *Maharam* would do this during the entire section of prayer that begins with the words *Taaneh Emunim* (answer the faithful), where the focus of our prayer for rain begins.
- ✎ According to the custom of the *Arizal*, the *Arba Minim* are held until the very end of the *Hoshanah Rabba*, *Hoshanah* prayers. At that point, the *Arba Minim* are put aside and the *Aravah* branches are picked up and beaten to the ground.

There is an interesting point made by the commentaries *Tefilla Yesharah* and *Shaar HaShamayim*. If one follows the custom of reciting the *Hoshanah Rabba*, *Hoshanah* prayers after *Mussaf* as the *Maharam* did, then one should put the *Arba Minim* aside before starting the prayer *Taaneh Emunim*. However, those who follow the custom of the *Arizal* and recite all the *Hoshanah Rabba*, *Hoshanah* prayers after *Hallel*, they should hold the *Arba Minim* for the entire prayers.

- ✎ After completing this section of prayer, the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Tiskabal*.
- ✎ Then according to the custom which was started by the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) many generations ago, we take the five *Aravah* branches and beat them to the ground. After doing this, we recite a short prayer personal prayer.
- ✎ Others wait to recite *Kaddish Tiskabal* after the ritual of beating the *Aravah* branches to the ground.

Questions:

- 1) What are the “*Four Shavuos*” (oaths) referring to? (according to the Medrash in *Shir HaShirim*)
- 2) What is the meaning of this phrase according to the variant reading of the “*Four Shevuos*” (weeks)
- 3) What does the phrase of the *Hoshanah* “*In the Three Hours*” mean?
a) according to the context of judgment, b) according to the context of retribution, c) according to the context of *Shemoneh Esrei*?
- 4) Why do we use the term *Hakshivah* instead of *Hazinab* when contrasting our prayers on *Succos* with our prayers of the *Yamim Nora'im* (Days of Awe)?
- 5) What is the meaning of the *Hoshanah* of *Keboshata Eilim Be’Lud*?
- 6) What are the two distinctive features of the *Chabad* custom for the order of the *Hoshanah* prayers during *Succos*?
- 7) What is the distinctive feature of the *German Community’s* custom for the order of the *Hoshanah* prayers during *Succos*?
- 8) Why do we remove the rings that bind the *Lulav* on *Hoshanah Rabba*? (according to the *Levush’s* commentary)?
- 9) What are the two opposing views regarding the taking of the *Hoshanah* branches on *Hoshanah Rabba*?

Answers:

- 1) They refer to the four oaths that *Hashem* made us promise regarding our conduct *vis a vis* our host nations in exile.
- 2) It refers to the four weeks that *Hashem* judges the people of the world.
- 3) a) It refers to being saved during the three hours that *Hashem* sits and judges the world daily. b) It refers to the three-hour period mentioned by the *Navi* (prophet) *Yeshayah*. c) It refers to the three-hours that the pious *Tzaddikim* of the past would spend *davening* (praying) the *Shemoneh Esrei* thrice daily.
- 4) *Hazinah* means to listen from up close which refers to the *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe) when *Hashem* is (so to speak) close by as opposed to *Hakshivah* which means listening from a distance which is after the ten days of the *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe) when *Hashem* is (so to speak) at a distance.
- 5) *Eilim* refers to an oak-like tree that stands steadfast. This is an allegory to *Bnei Yisrael's* steadfast stand amongst the nations of the world in their exile. *Lud* refers to the nation of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) as it states in *Bereishis* that *Ludim* was a child of *Mitzrayim*.
- 6) According to the custom of *Chabad* the first six days of *Succos* we recite the first six *Hoshanah* prayers that are recited on *Hoshanah Rabba*. Secondly, no *Hoshanah* prayer is recited on *Shabbos*. Two *Hoshanah* prayers are recited on *Sunday*.
- 7) According to the custom of the *German Communities*, each day of the week has its own designated *Hoshanah* prayer.
- 8) The *Levush* mentions that we remove the rings from the *Lulav* on *Hoshanah Rabba* to create more excitement and joy when shaking the *Lulav*.
- 9) According to the *Maharam* one should put the *Arba Minim* aside after concluding the seven *Hoshanah* prayers and take only the *Hoshanah* branches for the rest of the prayers. However, the *Arizal* writes that according to *Kabbalah* one should wait to take *Hoshanah* branches until the very end of this section of prayer.