

Shemini Atzeres- Shabbos Bereishis

It is known that Shemini Atzeres- is assigned special love by Hashem because we are culminating a month of 'sitting' with Hashem, and to keep us with Him just a little bit longer, we have this additional holiday; furthermore, on a year like ours, where in Diaspora we celebrate 3 days, as we roll right into Shabbos Bereishis- the celebrations and cherishing can be retained just a little longer.

We never actually end the reading of the Torah because as soon as we say Chazak for V'Zos Habrachah, we begin the first Aliya of Bereishis.

In V'Zos Habrachah, Rashi explains that Moshe's burial place was in Peor; even though it was sinful, this spot was created before it became wicked, and Moshe's grave would atone for it. Rashi explains further that this was one of the items created in the twilight before the first Shabbos.

This is important in that it links a few things. Firstly, it tells us that in this world, we have the power to use the physical realm to atone for sin; moreover, we have the power to find the spiritual in the physical realm.

Moshe's greatest gift to us was channeling the Torah to us, from Hashem, in a way that we can complete the purpose of all creation, which is to keep the Torah and Mitzvos to draw spirituality down to our physical realm and raise our

physical dimension to be vessels of spirituality.

This mission has been true since the beginning of time, which we read again at Bereishis- which is that by learning and knowing that Hashem created the heavens and the earth, all things are here because He wants them to be so (divine providence). Our entire purpose is to do what Hashem wants. In this case, Mevarer the Netzutzim (seeks and finds) all the sparks of spirituality in this world and brings them closer to Hashem. And every one of our actions is geared toward completing that mission, which will culminate ultimately with the coming of Mashiach.

This year, Simchas Torah marks the Jewish anniversary of the horrid atrocities that befell the Jews in Israel last year. The unspeakable horrors are only further pained by a world that is trying to revise good and evil and blame the Jews for the atrocities. In these moments of depravity, we are forced to try to reconcile them by doing better and washing out the evil- be it a physical mission-such as with war or a spiritual, by doing more and more good and Mitzvos.

May the merit of our good deed push forward and blot out the darkness and evil, and may we welcome Mashiach now. Good Yom Tov and good Shabbos.