



# DATA of Plano

Parshas Ha'azinu | 13 Tishrei 5779 | September 22, 2018

## Sermon

with Rabbi Zakon



The Secret Lulav and Etrog Connection

## Friday

Mincha: 7:00

Candle lighting: 7:06 (Earliest time: 6:08)

## Shabbos Day

Shacharis: 9:00

Latest time for shema: 10:17

Learners' Service: 10:30

Kiddush: 11:45

Mincha: 6:40

Shabbos ends: 8:10

## Learners' Service



Breaking the Cycle

From the desk of Rabbi Yogi

**Does the Torah Believe in Meaning?**



I find myself thinking, discussing and lecturing a lot about the meaning of life and the need to engage in the pursuit of meaningful living. This is, no doubt, a result of my own life experience which largely echos renowned psychotherapist Victor Frankl's sentiment that the striving to find a meaning in one's life, more so than the will to pleasure (on which Freudian psychoanalysis is centered) or the will to power (on which Adlerian psychology is focused), is the primary motivational force in man and must be reckoned with as such if we are to achieve any sort of inner peace and balance in our mental and emotional lives (see "Man's Search For Meaning" p. 98-

99). My years in the rabbinate and the exposure it has given me to all sorts of peoples and lives has only strengthened my conviction, sense confirmed in research literature, that those who make meaning a central tenet of their lives, are happier, more resilient and tend to, on the whole, be spared from many of the ills that plague broader society.

You can imagine my shock, then, when I realized that the Torah has no word for "meaning!" "Mashmah'ut," and "mamashut," the two modern Hebrew equivalent of the English word "meaning," are nowhere to be found in

the Torah - these words rooted in post-Biblical etymology.

I wondered about the reason behind “meaning’s” conspicuous absence from the Holy Book and whether there might be a lesson to be learned from its seemingly deliberate omission? It seemed to me that there just had to be! But, what?

“Meaning” is generally perceived as a subjective matter - that which is meaningful to one person isn’t necessarily meaningful to another. And people ascribe meaning to anything and everything under the sun, both the consequential and the mundane, both the noble along with the unholy.

We have sports fanatics who live and die with their teams successes and failures, and we have a seemingly endless interest in the private lives of the celebrities we worship. We are endlessly in pursuit of the perfect look, the fancy house, the newest car and the most “likes” on social media. We idolize money, honor and titles, and we turn our hobbies into primary pursuits - vintage collections of cars, cigars, model trains and memorabilia.

And just as we broadly ascribe meaning to the loftier things in life like family, values, commitments, faith, civic engagement and the like, we just as often argue about the meaning of those very terms, and often to disastrous ends (Has there ever been a terrorist, religious or political, who didn’t believe his actions to be imbued with great meaning?). And so, just as often as humanity gets meaning right, it misses the mark.

The Torah, it would seem, has no word for meaning because meaning, as an independent construct, is a universally mangled and misunderstood thing.

For the Torah, meaning can only mean one thing - that which is commanded by the Creator, and as such imbued and sanctified from above with inherent value and divine consequence. This should come as no surprise, as something can only be meaningful in the ultimate since if it is inherently, objectively so - something impossible without

the Almighty’s participation and impression. And while the Torah too can and has been mangled in the hands of man who would use its authoritative power to promote private agenda and personal gain, that is no reason to deny humanity its vehicle toward meaning.

The Torah’s word for meaning is thus ... “Torah!”

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your offspring. To love the Lord your God, to listen to His voice, and to cleave to Him. For that is your life and the length of your days...” (Devarim 30: 19-20).

The Torah’s word for meaning is similarly “life.” For only a life lived in consonance with the Torah’s teachings can truly be called a life of meaning.



And even as every Jew has two purposes in life - both a national obligation which demands personal adherence to the particular mandates of the Torah’s teachings and laws, as well as a personal “yi’ud” (purpose) and “tikkun” (that which he or she was singularly put on this Earth to fix”), something which is not spelled

out clearly in the Torah (precisely because it does vary from person to person), the “yiud” and “tikkun” obtain ultimate meaning precisely because they are inspired by Torah teachings and exist wholly within the prescribed guidelines of Torah law. They too are imbued with the meaning of Torah!

It is worth considering the related words of Carl Jung, a man not known to be a great lover of the Torah or the Jewish people, who nevertheless hit an authentic Jewish note when he wrote, “The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it.” How very true, and indeed, consequential!

Join us on

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## Sukkos 5778

Lulav Bundles should be made *before* Yom Tov

### Sunday Night, September 24<sup>th</sup> (1st Night of Succos)

Mincha	7:00
Candlelighting	7:04 P.M.
Make kiddush after	7:57
<i>One is obligated to make Kiddush and eat a kezayis (approx. 4 oz.) of bread in the Sukah, even if it is raining (although one should wait for midnight for the rain to stop before eating in the rain)</i>	

### Monday September 25<sup>th</sup> (1st Day of Succos)

Shacharis (Esrog and lulav are used)	9:00 A.M.
Sukkah Hop	5:00 P.M.
Mincha (followed by a class)	6:45 P.M.
Maariv	7:56 P.M.
Candlelighting (from a pre-existing flame) no earlier than	7:56 P.M.

## Tuesday September 26<sup>th</sup> (2nd Day of Succos)

Shacharis (Esrog and lulav are used):	9:00 A.M.
Sukkah Hop	5:00 P.M.
Mincha (followed by a class)	6:45 P.M.
Maariv:	7:35 P.M.

## Shabbos Chol Hamoed, September 28-29

Candlelighting / Mincha:	6:57 P.M.
Shacharis (Esrog and lulav are <u>NOT</u> used):	9:00 A.M.
Learners' Service:	10:45 A.M.
Mincha	6:30 P.M.
Maariv/ Shabbos ends:	8:01 P.M.

## Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> – Hoshana Rabbah

*Hoshana Rabbah* is the day of the final sealing. It is a day of *Teshuva* (repentance), and *tefillah* (prayer). Parts of Shacharis are done to the same tunes used on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. After *Mussaf*, we circle the *bima* with *lulav* and *esrog* seven times followed by several moving prayers asking Hashem to give us life and to redeem us. At the end of this service, the *aravos* (five willow branches) are broken on the ground. It is a service that one should say with a minyan.

Shacharis:	8:00 A.M.
Sukka Extravaganza	12:00- 3:00 P.M.
Candlelighting /Mincha:	6:54 A.M.

# Shemini Atzeres / Simchas Torah 5778

On Shemini Atzeres, meals are eaten in the Succah without the blessing of *Leishev Basukah*

## Monday, October 1st – Shemini Atzeres

Shacharis- ( <i>we begin saying “Mashiv haruach in mussaf”</i> )	9:00 A.M.
Yizkor not earlier than:	11:00 A.M.
Mincha	6:45 P.M.
Maariv/Hakafos	8:00 P.M.
Candle lighting (from a pre-existing flame) no earlier than:	7:58 P.M.

We will have a communal catered dinner during Hakafos-dancing. Please consider being a dinner sponsor for \$100. We are looking for 25 sponsors. To sponsor please contact Rabbi Zakon or Rabbi Yogi.

## Tuesday, October 2nd – Simchas Torah

Shacharis/ <i>Hakafos</i> :	9:30 A.M.
Kiddush and Hakafos	10:30 A.M.
Mussaf and Mincha:	Immediately following <i>Hakafos</i>
Maariv/ Yom Tov ends:	7:57 p.m.