



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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This coming *Motzai Shabbat*, we *Ashkenazim* begin to recite *Selichot* in preparation for *Rosh HaShana* and the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* (our *Sephardic* brethren have been reciting *Selichot* throughout this entire month of *Elul*). Traditionally this period of *Selichot* is filled with a real sense of community, of belonging to something bigger than ourselves, as we gather together to recite *Selichot* as a *tzibur*. Unfortunately, it seems that aspect of the *Selichot* experience will be absent this year. I'd like to focus on one short passage that we will recite many times during this period as part of the daily *Selichot*.

*V'Zacharti et Briti Yaakov, V'Af et Briti Yitzchak, V'Af et Briti Avraham Ezkor, V'Haaretz Ezkor- And I will remember my covenant with Yaakov, and also my covenant with Yitzchak, and also my covenant with Avraham, I will remember, and the Land I shall remember...*

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There are numerous questions to be asked about this verse. Why are the *Avot* listed in reverse chronology? What does it mean that Hashem will remember the covenant with each of the *Avot*? What does it mean that Hashem will remember the Land of Israel?

*Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, zt'l*, one of the *talmidei muvhakim* of *Rav Kook zt'l*, offers a beautiful explanation of our verse, about both its reverse chronology, and the reference to Hashem remembering the Land (*Sefer Mei Marom-chelek Nimukei Hamikraot*).

## For this reason alone Hashem will bestow upon us His compassion

*If Am Yisrael merits to personify the values of Yaakov Avinu, who represents the coming together of the legacies of all three generations of our illustrious Avot and Imahot, then they certainly will be deserving of redemption.*

*Even if we don't fully live up to this level*

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represented by Yaakov Avinu, but simply exhibit the character trait of mesirut nefesh-personified by Yitzchak Avinu, the willingness to risk everything to sanctify Hashem for the sake of Am Yisrael, we will also be recalled and deserving of redemption.

And if this character trait is not found among us, but we still personify the values of kindness and compassion for our fellow human being, emulating the ways of Avraham Avinu, then this too will be recalled, and we will be worthy of redemption.

And even if chas v'shalom none of these important character traits are present, and the only merit that we possess is that we have returned to live in the Land, and revive the ruins and build once again on our illustrious history, even if that is seemingly the only merit we possess, for this reason alone Hashem will bestow upon us His compassion and allow us to return to Him, and His Torah HaKedosha - V'Haaretz Ezkor.

As we prepare to recite these words each day throughout the Selichot period, may we be reminded of the many merits we each possess, the many fine character traits we have learned from the illustrious generations who came before us, and gain strength in reflecting on the past century of incredible growth and transformation for Am Yisrael, here in Eretz Yisrael - V'Haaretz Ezkor. May we indeed merit through each of these treasured legacies to continue to receive Hashem's unending compassion, and may we merit to finally experience the Geula Shleima we have been waiting for, for far too long....Ketiva V'Chatima Tova. ■



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