

## Potomac Torah Study Center

Vol. 10 #49-50, Sept. 29-Oct. 8, 2023; 14-23 Tishrei, 5784; Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah

**NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.**

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**Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from [www.PotomacTorah.org](http://www.PotomacTorah.org). Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.**

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**NOTE: As usual, I am posting one issue for all of Sukkot through Simchat Torah. Note: Vol 11 will start with Parshat Bereishis.**

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I had a great idea for a message for Sukkot – and then discovered that I used the same idea three years ago. I am running it again, with a few edits. This issue covers Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah. I plan to post again in two weeks.

The Torah instructs all Jews to travel to the place that God will designate (Jerusalem) three times per year (Shalosh Regalim, or three festivals): Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. We know that Pesach observes the Exodus from Egypt and Shavuot coincides with the presentation of the Luchot at Har Sinai. If Sukkot recalls a specific event in Jewish history, that event is more subtle. What exactly do we celebrate on Sukkot?

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag (shiur attached by E-mail) provides some background. In Emor, God instructs Moshe to tell the people to dwell in sukkot for seven days so they will KNOW that He causes B'Nai Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when He takes them out of Egypt (Vayikra 23:42-43). For Pesach, in contrast, God requires us to observe the korban Pesach and week of matzot so we will REMEMBER that God took us out of Egypt. In the Torah, “know” involves a much more intimate and deep relationship than “remember.”

The next hint comes from Pinchas, in the list of Musaf offerings (Bemidbar ch. 28-29). For the holy days during Tishrei (other than Sukkot), the Musaf offering consists of one par (bull), one ram, and seven male lambs. For Pesach and Shavuot, the Musaf offerings consist of two bulls, one ram, and seven lambs. For Sukkot, however, the Musaf offerings consist of a total of 70 bulls over the week (thirteen the first day, decreasing by one each day, ending with seven). Each day, there are two rams and fourteen lambs. The Sukkot offerings of rams and lambs are therefore doubled – the number for the Tishrei holy days plus the number for the other festivals. (The bulls explode to a total of 70, to show that all 70 nations will eventually observe Sukkot.) The message here, however, is that Sukkot has aspects of both the other festivals and of the Tishrei holy days.

Rabbi David Fohrman extends the connection between Pesach and Sukkot. When B'Nai Yisrael leave Egypt, they first journey from Rameses to Sukkot (Shemot 12:37). What is Sukkot? When Yaakov leaves Lavan, after he encounters his brother Esav, Yaakov and his family journey to Sukkot, where he builds a house and shelters for his livestock. He calls the place Sukkot, after the shelters that he builds for his animals (Bereshis 33:17). Sukkot therefore means shelters worthy of sheltering animals.

Rabbi Fohrman observes that the first night after the Exodus, B'Nai Yisrael find themselves in a place called Sukkot, where the only shelters are fit for animals. In that rugged location, the Jews bake matzot for their first meal on their journey (12:39), and they spend the night under the stars with the only shelter being primitive structures intended for

animals. Pesach and Sukkot therefore observe the same event – the first night of freedom after the Exodus from Egypt! Pesach focuses on God's love for B'Nai Yisrael in terms of providing food for millions of people in a barren desert. Sukkot focuses on God's love for the Jews in terms of protecting them from dangers, especially at night (something that must have been terrifying).

As Rabbi Leibtag observes, God takes the Jews out of Egypt with awesome miracles. Because God's presence is so obvious, it is only necessary for us to remember them. Sukkot, however, comes at the time of the fruit harvest, at the end of the growing season. Moshe warns the people of the danger of thinking that their success comes from their own efforts. The only way the people can succeed is with God's help – especially in providing rain at the proper times and enabling the land of Israel to be productive. (Indeed, no other people in history, except the Jews, have been able to make the land of Israel thrive.) We celebrate Sukkot when we most need to KNOW that our blessings come from God – exactly six months after Pesach, at the end of the harvest season, when we most need to remember God's role in nature. We especially need to recognize God's role when He hides his face (operating behind the scenes rather than with dramatic miracles).

Rabbi Fohrman's insight ties in with Rabbi Leibtag's message about Sukkot having aspects of both the Tishrei holy days and the Exodus from Egypt. One aspect of Yom Kippur is the kappara, or covering to protect the Jews from God's presence. (A human cannot survive in God's presence without this protection.) This covering reminds us of God's clouds of glory that protect the Jews in the Midbar and hover over the Jews as they live in their sukkot. In this sense, Sukkot is the culmination of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – as Shavuot is the culmination of the freedom we start to experience at Pesach. Even a week of Sukkot is not enough. God wants an extra day of rejoicing with His Jews – Shemini Atzeret -- and then we extend the rejoicing with Simchat Torah. This period is indeed Moedim l'simcha – the time of our rejoicing. (The Torah expresses in language that Shemini Atzeret is an extra day by omitting the vav ("and") at the beginning of the Musaf korban for that day – the only Musaf that lacks the vav (abd) connecting the day to the other holy days.)

The journey of our people from Egypt to their eventual entry into Israel also requires a learning process. During their 210 years in Egypt, the Jews declined from the level of Yaakov and his family to a much lower spiritual level while slaves. During their period in the Midbar, the former slaves must learn to trust in God, learn the mitzvot, and make the mitzvot a part of their nature. The Torah shows that this process is difficult and involves many steps back as well as forward. By placing Sukkot exactly six months after (and therefore six months before) Pesach, the Jewish calendar reinforces the message that freedom and living with God is an educational process that takes a significant amount of time and constant practice. While some religions involve an hour or two a week of prayer, our religion involves multiple services every day – plus daily study.

Our family always feels close to my beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, on Sukkot. We enjoyed many Sukkot meals and visits with Leonard and Elizabeth Cahan, and their family, over the years. Rabbi Cahan helped me build our first two Sukkot – plywood structures that were beautifully crafted, lasted for many years, but eventually were too difficult for us to put up and take down by ourselves. (We now have a "snap" Sukkah that I can put up or take down by myself in less than an hour.) Sukkot with the Cahan family always embodied the spirit and feeling of moedim l'simcha – one of the happiest times of the year. May it be a time of rejoicing for all of us.

Chag Samaich; Moadim l'simcha.

Hannah and Alan

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**Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at [www.alephbeta.org](http://www.alephbeta.org). Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.**

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**Please daven for a Refuah Shlema for Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Arye Don ben Tzivia, Reuven ben**

**Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Leah bas Gussie Tovah, Sarah Feige bat Chaya, Sharon bat Sarah, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers.** Please contact me for any additions or subtractions.

Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom; Moadim l'simcha,

Hannah & Alan

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## **Sukkos: Miraculously the Streak Continues**

By Rabbi Label Lam \* © 5768

*For a seven day period you shall dwell in booths. Every resident among the Israelites shall live in booths, in order that your generations should know that I had the Children of Israel live in booths when I took them out of the Land of Egypt. I am HASHEM, your G-d. (Vayikra 23:42-43)*

I proudly built a quaint little Sukkah for educational purposes at the Yeshiva this week. The kindly janitor, who assisted me, asked me what this whole Sukkah thing was about. Before explaining how real security does not come from the brick and mortar of our solidly build home, I told him in a whimsical fashion, “I don’t think I have time to explain because it’s a 3327 year old story.” That’s long time for a nation to survive and thrive.

When we consider Lou Gehrig’s streak of playing in 2,130 consecutive baseball games, a record that stood for 56 years, it is heralded as a remarkable accomplishment, and it is. That fete was enough to earn him the title “Iron Horse.” The sheer physical strength, endurance, resilience, and mental fortitude required are qualities worth marveling at and emulating in our own universe activity. There must have been plenty of fortuitous bounces and some good old fashioned luck at play as well to have lasted so long and remained so strong throughout. When he suddenly retired because of a sudden serious illness that would take his life in two years-time, he stood before an adoring crowd at Yankee Stadium and humbly and sincerely declared, “*Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth... So I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for.*”

Now, in contradistinction, when we study at the duration of the Jewish People as a Torah Nation, the disproportionality eclipses any faint comparison. Rabbi Yaakov Emden noted almost three hundred years ago, and a lot of water and blood too has traveled over the dam in that time:

*“Many have tried to injure us or wipe us out. While all the great ancient civilizations have disappeared and been forgotten – The Nation of Israel who clings to HASHEM is alive today! What will the wise historian answer when he examines this phenomenon without prejudice? Was this all purely by chance? By my soul, when I contemplated these great wonders of our continued existence, they took on greater significance than all the miracles and wonders that HASHEM, Blessed Be He, performed for our fathers in Egypt, in the desert, and when they entered the Land of Israel. And the longer this exile extends, the miracle of Jewish existence becomes more obvious to make known G-d’s mastery and supervision over nature and history.*

Somehow the Sukkah brings into focus the entirety of our history. How had we made it this far?! Under what conditions have we endured!? What are the logical odds of us having arrived at this point and time!?! How did it all happen and in spite of waves of tragedy? These are questions that beg persistently for answers as we repose under the flimsy covering of the Sukkah.

In a certain crude way we can reflect on the words of that “iron horse” of baseball when he emotionally delivered his farewell address, “Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth... So I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for.” Wow!

For the past two thousand years you’ve been reading about our bad breaks. Yet today, as we sit in our Sukkah, we can each say, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth..... So I close in saying that we may have had many tough breaks but we sure have an awful lot to live for- and miraculously the streak continues!

<https://torah.org/torah-portion/dvartorah-5775-sukkos/>

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## **Sukkot and the Lulav’s Lessons for Today: Sukkot Greetings from Rabbi Dov Linzer**

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2022

Sukkot is a holiday about homes – both the permanent and temporary sort – and homelessness. It commemorates how we wandered in the desert with no protection from the elements and no fixed place we could call home, and how God gave us immediate, temporary relief from the former through the Clouds of Glory and ultimate relief from the latter by bringing us into the land of Israel.

When we remember what God did for us, we will – it is hoped – give thanks to God. But Sukkot and what it stands for should prompt us to do more. The best way to show gratitude is through action, by paying it forward. If God has done this for us, how can we do it for others?

One way for certain is to do what we can for people without housing. The need for help is all around us, and it is urgent. The rate of homelessness in major cities is alarmingly high. On a global scale, there are 7.6 million refugees from Ukraine and over 80 million refugees worldwide. Beyond those large realities, which can be hard at times to connect to, we have current realities closer to home like Hurricane Ian, which has left hundreds dead and thousands without homes. It has devastated the dwellings of both the rich and poor alike.

Disasters such as Hurricane Ian present mass-scale devastation. In the face of so much loss it can be easy to feel helpless. I understand and empathize with that feeling. But this Sukkot, let’s all try to do something. Send some money to an organization that does this work. One outstanding organization is Masbia, a non-profit soup kitchen and food pantry. Whenever there is a hurricane or tornado, they are there to provide food and support for people whose homes and lives have been uprooted by the storm. And because Masbia representatives are so visibly Jewish and Torah-observant, when they go they send a clear and strong message: This is what Jewish values demand of us. This is what it means to be fully observant.

In further resonance with the weather-related concerns of many people right now, Sukkot is deeply interconnected with rain and wind. We begin to pray for both of those things immediately at the conclusion of Sukkot.

While rain can be a blessing, we know that it can also be a curse. Shaking the lulav, according to the Rabbis, is in fact intended to prevent “bad rains and bad winds” (Sukkah 37b).

Nowadays, we know that when we wave the lulav, we are also concerned with the rising temperatures in a changing climate, which cause storms to arrive with increasing frequency.

When we wave the lulav this Sukkot, let’s think about the bad, horrific storms, and ask what we can do to slow the warming of our planet. What lulav will we shake, what action will we take, to hold back those “evil winds” just a little bit? Much as Sukkot will hopefully encourage us to address homelessness in our own small ways, shaking the lulav can also

initiate positive action. This action won't come in the form of writing a check. This will instead involve real change in our lives. I believe we can do it.

<https://library.yctorah.org/2022/10/sukkot-and-the-lulavs-lessons-for-today-sukkot-greetings-from-rabbi-dov-linzer/>

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## **Thoughts for Succoth**

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel \*

Most of our religious observances are indoors – in our homes, in our synagogues. We generally do not like to create a public spectacle of our religious experiences, but we behave modestly and try not to call attention to ourselves as we perform mitzvoth.

There are some exceptions to this. On Hanukkah, it is a particular mitzvah to publicize the miracle by placing our hanukkiyot where they can be seen by the passers-by. Succoth also has some aspects of taking our religious observances into the public square. The Talmud records the custom in ancient Jerusalem where people carried their lulavim into the street when they went to synagogue, when they visited the sick, and when they went to comfort mourners. Even today, many Jews carry their lulavim in public. When it comes to the succah itself, this structure is generally in view of the public: it's built on a patio, or yard, or courtyard etc. i.e. where Jews and non-Jews can see it

Although so much of our religious life is indoors – in the private domain of family and friends – we are sometimes obligated to make a public demonstration of our religious commitments. On Hanukkah, we want to remind the entire world that the Jews heroically defended themselves against the Syrian Hellenists and won independence for the Jewish people. We want everyone to know that, with God's help, we were victorious against powerful and far more numerous enemies.

On Succoth, we also want to convey a message to the general public. The lulav and etrog are symbolic of weapons; they indicate that we are proud of our faith and we are prepared to fight for the honor of our Torah and for our people. The succah is a symbolic statement that although we wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, God's providence protected us, and we ultimately entered the Promised Land. The public demonstration of these mitzvoth indicates our pride and commitment in who we are and what we represent. If we have respect for ourselves and our traditions, we can expect that the nations of the world will also come to respect Judaism.

Sometimes it is necessary for us to stand up in public on behalf of our faith and our people. When Jews betray their faith and their people in public, this undermines the entire Jewish enterprise. If Jewish storekeepers open their shops on Shabbat and holidays, why should non-Jews respect our Sabbath and holy days? If Jews ignore the laws of kashruth, why should non-Jews respect our dietary laws? If Jews don't live up to the high standards of Torah ethics, why should non-Jews admire the Jewish way of life? If Jewish political figures hold press conferences and public meetings on Jewish holy days, why should non-Jews show any deference to our holy days?

Succoth is an important reminder that being Jewish also entails a public stance, the courage to be who we are and stand for our traditions without embarrassment or apology. We need to remind ourselves and others that our holy days and traditions cannot be trampled upon and cast aside in a rubbish bin. If we do not stand up for ourselves, who will stand up for us? And if we do stand up for ourselves, we will be worthy heirs of a great people who have given so much – and have so much more to give – to our world.

\* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals wishes you a happy Succoth festival. Moadim leSimha. Please share this Angel for Shabbat column with your family and friends, and please visit our website [jewishideas.org](http://jewishideas.org) for many articles that foster an intellectually vibrant, compassionate and inclusive Orthodox Judaism.

**The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website [jewishideas.org](http://jewishideas.org) or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals at this time.**

<https://www.jewishideas.org/thoughts-succoth-5770>

**Note: YCT has prepared a booklet of learning for Sukkot. It is available to download and print at:**

<https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/APcnTBITJguiZRRdSwKrmAX39m4>

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### **The Mehitsa and Yirat Shamayim**

By Dr. Dov S. Zakheim \*

The primary source for the requirements of a mehitsa is a Mishna in Middot, the tractate that deals with matters relating to the Temple parts, structure, and measurements. Middot literally means “specifications.” The fifth Mishna in the second chapter of Middot tells us that the women’s chamber in the Temple, the ezrat nashim, was quite large: 135 cubits in length and 135 cubits in breadth. The Mishna goes on to say that the chamber had originally been bare, but then a balcony was added so that women could look out on the proceedings from above while the men were below. The purpose of the balcony was to prevent the mixing of the sexes.

In the context of the Mishna’s discussion of Simhat Bet haShoeiva — the great evening rejoicing that began on the second night of the Sukkoth festival — Rabbi Elazar elaborates on the decision to make what was a major structural change to the Temple, and one that could have been the source of controversy (Sukkah 51b). The Temple’s measurements had been divinely ordained, and the original “spec’s” did not provide for a balcony. How then could its incorporation be justified?

The Talmud tells us that initially the women’s chamber had been inside that of the men’s area, but there was too much frivolity taking place. It was therefore decided to place the men in the interior chamber, and the women in the exterior area. Unfortunately, the frivolity continued.

So the structural alteration was made, women were placed in the balcony, and the frivolity ceased. Nevertheless, how could the change have been sanctioned? As was their wont, the rabbis found a scriptural source. Zekhariah 12:12 speaks of the mourning in Jerusalem, mourning that is interpreted to be for the death of the Messiah son of Joseph (who precedes the Davidic Messiah). Zekhariah states that in each family the men and women would mourn separately. And so, the Rabbis concluded, if the prophet decreed that men and women mourn separately at a time when there would be no yetzer hara/evil inclination — which will not exist in the days of the Messiah — certainly while the evil inclination continued to thrive, men and women should be separated in the Temple precincts.

The Rambam, in his great work, the *Yad haHazakah*, provides an additional sense of context in the eighth chapter of the laws of Lulav (halakha 12). He states that “*on the festival of Sukkoth there was a surfeit of joy, as it is written, ‘you shall be joyous before God your Lord seven days.’*” He then points out that on Erev Sukkoth a balcony was erected to prevent the mixing of the sexes, and then they began to rejoice.

It was therefore in the very special context of extreme rejoicing — and we know that in such circumstances many people can lose their self-control — that the mehitsa was called for. In other words, even as people rejoiced, dignity had to be maintained.

Why? Because the passage tells us *u’smahtem lifnei hashem Eloheikhem*. This was no ordinary party. This was a

rejoicing before God. And before Hashem, *yirat shamayim*, fear of Heaven, is paramount, and extreme behavior of any kind is discouraged.

A mehitsa is not meant to wall off women. It is not a sign that men and women cannot mix, any more than discouraging drinking in a Bet Midrash is a sign that people cannot drink. It is, however, a reminder that there are places where the sexes can mix, outside the Bet Midrash, in a Synagogue lobby for example, and other places where such mixing is inappropriate.

But a mehitsa is still more than that. We learn in Tehillim, Psalms, “*ivdu et Hashem beyirah, vegilu b’re’ada*,” “serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (2:11). That was what was behind the Temple balcony. The mehitsa is in fact the embodiment of the concept *veYareita meElohekha*, “and you shall fear your Lord.”

The Torah uses the phrase *veYareita meElohekha* in five passages, all in Leviticus. In every case the phrase relates to man’s behavior toward his fellow man, and warns man not to dissemble or dissimulate, because God is watching, and one must fear God.

Perhaps the most widely known example is that of “*lo tekalel heireish v’lifnei iver lo titein mikhshol*,” “do not curse the deaf and do not place a stumbling block before a blind man” (Lev. 19:14), the latter part of the verse meaning that one should not trick the guileless or the innocent. But the other verses involve the same principle: do not pretend not to see an older man standing or to ignore the presence of an elder (“*mipenei seivah takum*”); do not charge any form of interest, including that which is not clearly identified (“*al tikah me’ito neshekha v’tarbit*”); do not hurt one’s sensibilities and pretend not to realize what has been done (“*lo tonu ish et amito*”); do not overwork a slave and pretend your action was inadvertent (“*al tirdeh bo b’farekh*”).

When my parents, zikhronam livrakha, would praise someone, they would call him a *yerei shamayim*, one who fears Heaven. Not “*frum*,” not one who buys the biggest etrog, lights the most elaborate hannukiya, has the fanciest seder plate — but one who fears God. A *yerei shamayim* is one who is sincere, and respectful of time, of place, and of people.

The mehitsa does not separate the sexes, it separates the synagogue from other places. It tells us that our everyday business stops at the synagogue’s entrance. The mehitsa has become an outward sign of Orthodoxy. But it connotes far more. For a mehitsa does not merely regulate those behaviors that we term *bein adam laMakom*. Instead, and on the contrary, the mehitsa signifies the essence of *yirat shamayim*, the fear of Heaven, and reminds us whenever we see it that the fear of Heaven can only be realized when man is meticulous *bein adam leHaveiro*, and comports himself properly and ethically with his fellow man.

\* Under Secretary of Defense (2001–2004). Dr. Zakheim earned his doctorate from the University of Oxford and received semikha from Rav Shmuel Walkin. This article is a slightly revised version of remarks delivered at the dedication of the Bet Midrash Mehitsa, Kemp Mill Synagogue, Third Night of Hanukkah, December 23, 2008. This article appears in issue 5 of *Conversations*, the journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/article/mehitsa-and-yirat-shamayim-0>

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## Succah: A Temporary Structure

By Rabbi Mordechai Rhine \*

One of the interesting laws about a succah is that it isn’t allowed to be too high. How high is too high? The Mishnah tells us: 20 Amos, which is about 35 feet tall.

The Talmud explains that a succah must be a temporary structure. It is meant to represent the travels of the Jews in the desert after The Exodus from Egypt. Likewise, it is supposed to represent the transient nature of our material possessions in this world. “*If the succah is too high it is invalid, because it will have to be built in a more permanent way.*”

Interestingly, the Talmud maintains that a person is allowed to build a permanent succah, as long as it isn't too high. It is only when a person builds a succah in a way that it is so high that it must be permanent, that Halacha declares it invalid.

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I once read an article written by a woman who described a life altering odyssey that she had undergone. She described how at the age of eighteen she was engaged to a wonderful man. She considered him the best guy in the world, and he catered to her every desire. And then he broke off the engagement. He told her, "I really like you. But I see that with you everything must be 'just so' for you to be happy. I cannot live a life like that."

The writer explained how pained she was by the broken engagement. But she took his words to heart and realized that he was right. She was living a life where everything had to be just right for her to be happy. And she decided that she must change.

She began to challenge herself in every area of life to prove that she could survive in different circumstances. First, she skipped meals occasionally; then she fasted. Sometimes she went to sleep late, sometimes she woke up early, even though this deprived her of her normal sleep routine. She came to realize that life still worked even if things weren't the way she preferred.

We do not wish on anyone the challenging experiences that that woman went through. We certainly bless people with a life that is stable, permanent, and comfortable. But the message of the succah is that it doesn't have to be perfect for us to be able to function. Our living life correctly doesn't hinge on everything being "just right."

When you build your succah you may build it permanent and beautiful. But you may not build it at a height that requires that it must be permanent, because that symbolizes an attitude that everything must be "just right," otherwise it will not stand.

The Mishnah in Avos states that if a person wants to succeed in Torah he should, "*Eat bread, drink water, and sleep on the floor.*" Certainly, there are people who have succeeded in Torah even though their menu was more varied than the Mishnah describes, and their accommodations more comfortable than sleeping on the floor.

What the Mishnah seems to be conveying is that to succeed in Torah, you have to realize that amenities are not requirements. You can build your succah as permanent as you wish, as long as your succah is not built in such a way that it must be permanent.

This week, as I was talking to a client overseas via Whatsapp calling, there was a lapse in the connection. The interruptions repeated themselves over the next few minutes and it became a bit frustrating. After a particularly long pause, my client came back on and said, "Isn't it amazing that what could frustrate us is a lapse in a connection as we talk to each other from halfway around the world."

I was invigorated by his perspective. What he was telling me was, "It's okay." Even if it lapses a little, it's still okay.

So, as you build your succah of life, make sure to build it in a way that recognizes that it could be temporary. In that way you will ensure that yours will be a succah that will last forever.

With best wishes for a wonderful Yom Tov.

\* Rabbi Mordechai Rhine is a certified mediator and coach with Rabbinic experience of more than 20 years. Based in Maryland, he provides services internationally via Zoom. He is the Director of TEACH613: Building Torah Communities, One family at a Time, and the founder of CARE Mediation, focused on Marriage/ Shalom Bayis and personal coaching.

To reach Rabbi Rhine, his websites are [www.care-mediation.com](http://www.care-mediation.com) and [www.teach613.org](http://www.teach613.org); his email is [RMRhine@gmail.com](mailto:RMRhine@gmail.com). For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.

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## **Sukkos: Torah -- A Personal Guide**

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer \* © 2022

The first time that the festivals are mentioned in the Torah, they are presented as seasonal holidays. In Parshas Mishpatim, shortly after we accepted the Torah on Har Sinai, we are commanded to celebrate three festivals for G-d each year. The first is the Festival of Matzos "*at time of the spring month*," then the "*harvest festival at the ripening of your work*" and "*the harvest festival at the end of the year*." (Shemos 23:15-16)

The Ramban (ibid.) explains that the festivals are times to express gratitude to G-d for the continual and reliable rules of nature. We stop and thank G-d at the renewal of spring, when we begin the new cycle. We stop and thank G-d in the middle of the cycle, as we begin harvesting. Then we take time again at the end of the cycle, when we gather in the harvest. At each point, we stop and reflect on G-d's ongoing gift of maintaining the rules of nature and thereby providing us with our sustenance and nourishment year after year.

The Ramban notes that when we stop and recognize that G-d is giving us the gift of nourishment, we can bring ourselves to a much greater level of awareness of G-d's love and care for us. When we are recognizing that G-d is the Creator and Master of the world, then we can see ourselves as His subjects, living in His world. From this perspective, the gift of nourishment and sustenance is not simply one individual helping another in need. Rather, it is the commitment of the Master to care for His subjects. The rules of nature which G-d established and maintains, the yearly seasons and harvest, is G-d's commitment to nourish and sustain us.

The next verse speaks of the mitzvah of Pilgrimage, the obligation to travel to the Beis Hamikdash, the Temple, on each festival to "*appear before the Master, Hashem*." (Shemos 23:17) The Ramban explains that when a servant is given all his needs from a master, the servant will express his gratitude by appearing before the master to receive their instructions. When we recognize the depth of G-d's commitment to us as His subjects, it behooves us to come forward and appear before Him to hear what He wishes of us. This is the Pilgrimage mitzva -- to come to learn what G-d asks of us, as an expression of our gratitude for our sustenance.

This Ramban is rather puzzling. The servant has not yet been given his instructions, and therefore comes to his master to find out what he should do. We, on the other hand, were given our instructions long ago on Har Sinai. We received the Torah long before the festival occurs. Why do we need to go to find out what we should do to serve G-d? Rather than a pilgrimage, shouldn't we simply spend the day studying Torah?

Perhaps, this Ramban is teaching us the proper way to approach Torah study. Deepening my awareness and recognition of G-d is more than simply an inspiration to study and keep the Torah. When I see G-d in my life, then I recognize that Torah is a personal directive from G-d for my life. When I study Torah from this perspective, it opens my mind and inspires me to find insights and messages which are relevant for my life. Our rabbis teach us that the Beis Hamikdash had a unique holiness whereby a person was more capable of recognizing G-d's Presence in the world. The Pilgrimage Mitzvah is to appear before G-d so that we will be in a place where we can more deeply recognize and sense G-d's greatness. Only then can we truly hear the directives which G-d intends for each of us in our own lives.

While we don't have the Beis Hamikdash today, we still have the holidays and the many opportunities for inspiration that they provide -- the Sukkah representing the yearly harvest and the clouds of glory; the Four Species representing our closeness with G-d, the unity of the Jewish people, and so much more. Inspired by the holiday, we must also reflect on the unique personal blessings in our lives. The more we see G-d in our lives, the more we can understand that G-d has a personal interest in each of us. Then, we can begin to approach Torah properly as a personal directive for each of our lives, and find the messages meant for us today.

\* Savannah Kollel; Congregation B'nai Brith Jacob, Savannah, GA. Until recently, Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Rabbi Singer will become Rosh Kollel next year.

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## Why Aharon? Turning Our Flaws Into Virtues

By Rabbi Herzl Heftner \*

[Note: Rabbi Heftner sent me this Dvar Torah before Yom Kippur, but I had to hold it a week because I was unable to prepare an issue for Shabbat Shuvah and Yom Kippur.]

*The temple service of Yom Kippur is only valid if performed by the High Priest. )Yoma 32b(*

*And Moshe said to Aharon, "What did this people do to you, that you brought so great a sin upon them?" )Shmot 32:21(*

Aharon is the one who led the people to the brink of destruction in the episode of the golden calf. Does it really make sense to entrust him with the survival of the people on Yom Hakippurim? The answer is, well... yes.

The Talmud Sanhedrin 7a states:

*And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. What did he actually see? — R. Benjamin b. Japhet says, reporting R. Eleazar: He saw Hur lying slain before him and said ]to himself[ If I do not obey them, they will now do unto me as they did unto Hur, and so will be fulfilled ]the fear of[ the prophet, Shall the Priest and the Prophet be slain in the Sanctuary of God? and they will never find forgiveness. Better let them worship the golden calf, for which offence they may yet find forgiveness through repentance.*

The Talmud records an opinion which praises Aharon's involvement in the sin. He was willing to sacrifice himself. He was willing to stand with the people in their breach of God's covenant to save them from an even worse violation which would almost certainly have brought God's wrath and destruction upon them. For Aharon, love of the people trumps the Covenant with God.

According to the great Hassidic master, Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter )1847–1905(, the Sfat Emet, it is precisely this skeleton in Aharon's closet which makes him uniquely qualified to serve as High Priest.

*In Rashi: "Draw near to the altar" ]Moshe speaking to Aharon[ 'Why are you reluctant/ashamed? You were chosen **because** of this.' This is why the Shechina did not dwell in the mishkan by the merit of Moshe but only by the merit of Aharon, because Aharon was a penitent )Ba'al Teshuva(. .. I believe that this is the reason that it happened that Aharon was involved in the sin [of the golden calf] so that he could redeem the people's sins through his love. )Shemini 5641(*

It is precisely the shame and lack of worthiness which Aharon feels as a consequence of his complicity in the sin of the golden calf that qualifies him to be the chosen one to repair the broken relationship between the children of Israel and God.

The one who stands before God on Yom Kippur on behalf of the people, must be **of** the people; his fate bound to theirs, paradoxically, even at the expense of his own relationship with God.

\* Founder and dean of the Har'el Beit Midrash in Jerusalem. Rabbi Heftor is a graduate of Yeshiva University and was ordained at Yeshivat Har Etzion. For more of his writings, see [www.har-el.org](http://www.har-el.org). To support the Beit Midrash, as we do, send donations to America Friends of Beit Midrash Har'el, 66 Cherry Lane, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

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## **Sukkot Quick Guide: Building the Sukkah**

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia \*

]Note: Rabbi Ovadia reports Sephardic traditional Halacha. If your practice differs, consult your Orthodox Ashkenaz Rabbi.[

The sukkah should be built before the holiday, but it could also be built during Hol HaMoed.

A Sukkah built under a tree is kosher, as long as it has enough shade of its own.

- ▽ If the branches are very low and close to the Sukkah's roof, the sekhakh can be put on top of the branches, provided that there is more sekhakh than branches.
- ▽ If the sukkah is built under a sliding roof, that roof can be closed when the sukkah is not in use and reopened on Yom Tov and Shabbat.
- ▽ If the sukkah is built under an awning, the awning can be rolled in and out on Shabbat.
- ▽ The sukkah should be able to withstand a normal wind. That means that the common wind at the location of the sukkah should not be able to lift up the whole structure and tear it from the ground.
- ▽ If the walls of the sukkah are made of fabric and they are blowing back and forth with the wind, the sukkah is kosher.
- ▽ The minimal size of the sukkah is 70X70 cm, or 28X28 inches.
- ▽ Two perpendicular walls of the minimal length, plus one of at least 4 inches, constitute a kosher sukkah.
- ▽ A fence or a guardrail around a porch or balcony can be used as a wall for the sukkah if they are at least 40 inches tall.
- ▽ A tent shaped sukkah or one with walls leaning diagonally on a house's walls is kosher, provided that there is a minimal roof space at least 4 inches wide, and at the height of 40 inches the perimeter meets the minimal requirement of 28X28 inches.
- ▽ A round sukkah is kosher if it can contain a 28X28 inches square.

## **Sukkah on public property**

- ▽ Restaurants often build a sukkah on the sidewalk. This is also the practice of some synagogues in dense urban areas. It is forbidden to sit in such a sukkah, unless there is a permit provided by the city for its construction. Otherwise, it is considered a stolen sukkah, since it deprives the public from using the space it is built on.
- ▽ If one said a blessing in such a sukkah, it is considered mentioning God's name in vain.

## **Sekhakh and Decorations**

1. For the sekhakh one can use fresh branches, palm tree fronds, or bamboo mats sold at hardware and home improvement stores, including mats tied with a metal wire.
2. The rods supporting the sekhakh and the sukkah frame can be made of any material, including metal.
3. It is allowed to put a decorative sheet under the sekhakh, as long as it is within 16 inches of the sekhakh.
4. According to one opinion in the Shulhan Arukh, if the sheet is spread on top of the sekhakh or within 16 inches under it, to protect the dwellers from the sun or falling leaves, it is kosher.
5. Other decorations can hang at any length under the sekhakh.

## **Sukkah Activities**

- ✓ One should live in the Sukkah as if it were his home, as long as he feels comfortable.
- ✓ Where climate, safety, and comfort allow it, one should sleep in the Sukkah. Comfort includes being with the family, so if some family members do not feel comfortable in the Sukkah, the others should join them at home.
- ✓ The Sephardic custom is to require eating in the sukkah only when eating bread.
- ✓ If it is raining, one does not have to sit in the Sukkah. The Ashkenazi custom is to insist on sitting in the Sukkah on the first night even if it is raining, but it could cause great discomfort, so one can choose to follow the Sephardic custom.
- ✓ Another solution for a rainy day, if it is not too cold, and if water do not drip from other parts of the Sukkah, is to cover the Sukkah with a plastic cover. This solution is not mentioned in the Mishnah and Talmud because at the time there was no easily available impermeable material.
- ✓ Covering the Sukkah with plastic to protect from rain is exactly the same as covering it with a sheet to protect from the heat, and both are allowed.
- ✓ Travelers do not have to search for Sukkah in order to eat, though some people carry with them instant or inflatable Sukkah when going on a road trip. The reason is that one should eat in the Sukkah the way he does at home. Just as he eats at a restaurant, airport terminal, in the car, or at a picnic any other day of the year without going back home, so he does in Sukkot.

## **The Four Species**

1. The lulav is kosher even if the leaves are separated and open as a fan, as long as they are not drooping to the side.
2. There is no need to tie the leaves to make the lulav look like a spear, but it is customary to do so.
3. It often happens that the myrtle loses its leaves during Sukkot. As long as one branch of myrtle is left, with at least three leaves growing together, it is kosher.
4. If most of the leaves of the willow has fallen or dried out it needs to be replaced, but if only some leaves fell, or if

the willow has only withered, it is kosher.

5. Black dots on the Etrog do not render it non-kosher. The conditions mentioned in halakha which disqualify an Etrog are when it is covered with black blots, one in which large areas have dried up, became moldy, or one with an anomalous look.

\* Torah VeAhava. Rabbi, Beth Sholom Sephardic Minyan )Potomac, MD( and faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school. **New: Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria: <https://www.sefaria.org/profile/haim-ovadia?tab=sheets>**. The Sefaria articles usually include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats.

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## Shavuon Rosh Hashanah

by Rabbi Moshe Rube\*

At long last the moon has finally made its 12 (or 13) monthly cycles and it is time for the New Year.

The Jews, a people compared to the moon since Abraham, have gone through its cycles of joy and despair, highs and lows, and hills and valleys. And I bet there's not one person reading this who hasn't had a cycle themselves. No one always flies high and no one always stays low. If I may paraphrase the band Journey, the wheel in the sky keep on turning.

Even if you're standing in the sleet and rain and don't know if you'll make it home again, there's always the morning sun. It's rising to kiss the day. There's always the full moon. Guiding our journey through the night. So after all the adventures over the past year, I can't wait to celebrate the start of a new one and see what the year in front of us will bring.

Hopefully we'll have a few experiences that are as sweet as honey, simple as the shofar's cry, savoury as a steak sandwich, complex as the Unetaneh Tokef, and spicy as a curry.

Shanah Tovah to All!

\* Senior Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Remuera )Auckland(, New Zealand. Formerly Rabbi, Congregation Knesseth Israel )Birmingham, AL(.

**Special note:** The Auckland Holocaust Memorial Trust, chaired by Bob Narev, is initiating work on a Holocaust Memorial Garden near the Auckland Hebrew Congregation to create a beautiful Memorial and place for reflection. The design will incorporate more than 200 cobblestones from the Warsaw Ghetto that Auckland War Memorial Museum obtained as a gift to the Jewish community from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. The Trust will also move and reinstall the Holocaust Memorial sculpture completed in 1993 for the Greys Avenue site )former location of the Orthodox congregation(. After Yom Tov, the Trust will reach out to families who have a close connection to the Holocaust to discuss a legacy project that will memorialise those who lost their lives for generations to come.

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## Rav Kook Torah

### Succoth: The Role of the Lowly Willow

You have to feel sorry for the poor aravah, the willow branch waved together with the other three species of the arba'ah minim on Succoth. It lacks the fragrance of the etrog and the myrtle, and, unlike the date-palm, it has no fruit. The willow has come to represent the simple folk who are neither learned in Torah nor respected for numerous good deeds.

And yet, according to an ancient oral tradition, the aravah becomes the star of the show on Hoshanah Rabbah, the last

day of the Succoth holiday. When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the kohanim would raise tall willow boughs around the altar. In synagogues nowadays, after waving all four species, we set aside the other three species and raise the willow alone. And then, at the end of the Hoshanah prayers, the congregants beat the willow on the floor.

Why does the lowly willow merit this special attention? And what is the meaning of the age-old custom of striking the floor with willow branches?

### **Sabbath Desecration in Jaffa**

Rav Kook related the following story one holiday evening in his sukkah. The incident took place in Jaffa, where Rav Kook served as chief rabbi from 1904 to 1914. One Shabbat day, a secular photographer came and disturbed the Sabbath peace in a religious neighborhood. In total disregard for the local religious sensibilities, he set up his tripod and camera in the middle of the street and began taking pictures.

This public desecration of the Sabbath deeply angered the local residents. One man who was particularly incensed by the photographer's insensitivity took a pail of water and thoroughly soaked the Sabbath-desecrator. Naturally, the photographer was indignant. He was so confident in the justice of his cause that he registered a complaint against the water-douser — at the beit din (religious court) of the rabbi of Jaffa, Rav Kook.

Rav Kook told the photographer,

*"I see that you fail to understand the severity of desecrating the Sabbath in public, but you should realize that your action was a serious affront to the community. You entered a neighborhood of Sabbath-observers and offended them deeply."*

*"Of course, the correct course of action for the residents would have been to rebuke you verbally. Perhaps you would have understood the seriousness of your actions and stopped. Had that man consulted with me first, I would have advised him not to throw water on you."*

*"However, he didn't ask, but reacted spontaneously. You should know that on occasion, such impulsive reactions are justified. When people disregard societal norms and cross accepted boundaries, regardless of the implications for others, it is often the spontaneous reaction that most effectively prevents future abuse."*

*"Such an occasion took place when the Israelites were in the desert and Pinchas responded, not accordingly to the normative Halachah, but as a zealot: "Kena'im pogim bo" )'Zealots punish them' — Num. 25:6-8; Sanhedrin 82a(. If Pinchas had asked beforehand, he would have been instructed not to kill Zimri. But since his act was done sincerely and served to prevent future violations, his zealous deed was approved after the fact."*

### **The Boethusians and the Willow**

What about the willow and Succoth? Rav Kook continued his explanation that evening:

The lowly willow represents the common folk, unlearned and lacking exceptional deeds. Yet, these 'willows' are blessed with an abundance of common sense and are unencumbered by sophisticated calculations. As a result, they have filled important roles in the history of the Jewish people.

In Talmudic times, there was a sect called the Boethusians who disagreed with many of the rulings of the Sages. One disagreement concerned the willow ceremony. The Boethusians prohibited observing this ceremony on the Sabbath. One year, when Hoshanah Rabbah fell on the Sabbath, the Boethusians took the willows and covered them with stones. They knew the Rabbis would not permit moving the stones on the Sabbath since stones are muktze (various categories of

objects, such as stones, money, and work tools, that the Rabbis prohibited to be handled on the Sabbath in order to safeguard the sanctity of the day.

On Shabbat morning, however, some simple folk who were ignorant about the prohibition of muktze pulled out the willow boughs from under the stones. Then the kohanim were able to raise the willows alongside the altar )Sukkah 43b(.

Why does the Talmud emphasize that this praiseworthy act was performed by common folk? By covering the boughs with stones, the Boethusians had placed the Sages in a quandary. If the willow boughs were not used, the Boethusians could cite this as proof that the rabbis had conceded to their opinion that willows should not be raised on the Sabbath. On the other hand, if the rabbis decided to move the stones, the Boethusians could have announced that the rabbinic prohibition of muktze had been abolished.

Fortunately, the problem never materialized. The simple Jews resolved the dilemma in their own typical manner. They did not ask questions; rather, alarmed by the scandal, they responded by simply removing the willows from under the stones.

### **The Role of the Willow**

The custom to hit the floor with willows does not mean that we wish to 'punish' the willow, as is often thought, for its lack of Torah and good deeds. Rather, it is meant to demonstrate that the willow is also a force to be reckoned with — a natural, healthy power that is part of the arsenal of the Jewish people. We do not strike the willow. We strike with the willow.

)Silver from the Land of Israel. Adapted from *Mo'adei HaRe'iyah*, pp. 111-113.(

<https://ravkooktorah.org/SUKKOT59.htm>

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### **The Festival of Insecurity (5774) A message for Sukkot 5774 from Rabbi Sacks**

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.\*

What exactly is a sukkah? What is it supposed to represent?

The question is essential to the mitzvah itself. The Torah says: "Live in sukkot for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in sukkot so that your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in sukkot when I brought them out of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" )Lev. 23: 42-43(. In other words, knowing – reflecting, understanding, being aware – is an integral part of the mitzvah. For that reason, says Rabbah in the Talmud )Sukkah 2a(, a sukkah that is taller than twenty cubits )about thirty feet or nine metres high( is invalid because when the sechach, the "roof," is that far above your head, you are unaware of it. So what is a sukkah?

On this, two Mishnaic sages disagreed. Rabbi Eliezer held that the sukkah represents the clouds of glory that surrounded the Israelites during the wilderness years, protecting them from heat during the day, cold during the night, and bathing them with the radiance of the Divine presence. This view is reflected in a number of the Targumim. Rashi in his commentary takes it as the "plain sense" of the verse.

Rabbi Akiva on the other hand says sukkot mammash, meaning a sukkah is a sukkah, no more and no less: a hut, a booth, a temporary dwelling. It has no symbolism. It is what it is )Sukkah 11b(.

If we follow Rabbi Eliezer then it is obvious why we celebrate by making a sukkah. It is there to remind us of a miracle. All three pilgrimage festivals are about miracles. Pesach is about the miracle of the exodus when God brought us out of

Egypt with signs and wonders. Shavuot is, according to the oral Torah, about the miracle of the revelation at Mount Sinai when, for the only time in history, God appeared to an entire nation. Sukkot is about God's tender care of his people, mitigating the hardships of the journey across the desert by surrounding them with His protective cloud as a parent wraps a young child in a blanket. Long afterward, the sight of the blanket evokes memories of the warmth of parental love.

Rabbi Akiva's view, though, is deeply problematic. If a sukkah is merely a hut, what was the miracle? There is nothing unusual about living in a hut if you are living a nomadic existence in the desert. It's what the Bedouin did until recently. Some still do. Why should there be a festival dedicated to something ordinary, commonplace and non-miraculous?

Rashbam )Rashi's grandson( says the sukkah was there to remind the Israelites of their past so that, at the very moment they were feeling the greatest satisfaction at living in Israel – at the time of the ingathering of the produce of the land – they should remember their lowly origins. They were once a group of refugees without a home, living in a favela or a shanty town, never knowing when they would have to move on. Sukkot, says Rashbam, is integrally connected to the warning Moses gave the Israelites at the end of his life about the danger of security and affluence:

*Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God ... Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery ... You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." )Deut. 8: 11-17(*

Sukkot, according to Rashbam, exists to remind us of our humble origins so that we never fall into the complacency of taking freedom, the land of Israel and the blessings it yields, for granted, thinking that it happened in the normal course of history.

However there is another way of understanding Rabbi Akiva, and it lies in one of the most important lines in the prophetic literature. Jeremiah says, in words we recited on Rosh Hashanah, "*I remember the loving-kindness of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown*" )Jer. 2:2(. This is one of the very rare lines in Tanakh that speaks in praise not of God but of the people Israel.

*"How odd of God / to choose the Jews,"* goes the famous rhyme, to which the answer is: *"Not quite so odd: the Jews chose God."* They may have been, at times, fractious, rebellious, ungrateful and wayward. But they had the courage to travel, to move, to leave security behind, and follow God's call, as did Abraham and Sarah at the dawn of our history. If the sukkah represents God's clouds of glory, where was *"the loving-kindness of your youth?"* There is no sacrifice involved if God is visibly protecting you in every way and at all times. But if we follow Rabbi Akiva and see the sukkah as what it is, the temporary home of a temporarily homeless people, then it makes sense to say that Israel showed the courage of a bride willing to follow her husband on a risk-laden journey to a place she has never seen before – a love that shows itself in the fact that she is willing to live in a hut trusting her husband's promise that one day they will have a permanent home.

If so, then a wonderful symmetry discloses itself in the three pilgrimage festivals. Pesach represents the love of God for His people. Sukkot represents the love of the people for God. Shavuot represents the mutuality of love expressed in the covenant at Sinai in which God pledged Himself to the people, and the people to God. )For a similar conclusion, reached by a slightly different route, see R. Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, Meshekh Chokhmah to Deut. 5: 15. I am grateful to David Frei of the London Beth Din for this reference.(

Sukkot, on this reading, becomes a metaphor for the Jewish condition not only during the forty years in the desert but also the almost 2,000 years spent in exile and dispersion. For centuries Jews lived, not knowing whether the place in which they lived would prove to be a mere temporary dwelling. To take just one period as an example: Jews were expelled from England in 1290, and during the next two centuries from almost every country in Europe, culminating in the Spanish Expulsion in 1492, and the Portuguese in 1497. They lived in a state of permanent insecurity. Sukkot is the festival of

insecurity.

What is truly remarkable is that it is called, by tradition, zeman simchatenu, “*our time of joy*.” That to me is the wonder at the heart of the Jewish experience: that Jews throughout the ages were able to experience risk and uncertainty at every level of their existence and yet – while they sat betzila de-mehegnuta, “*under the shadow of faith*” (this is the Zohar’s description of the sukkah: Zohar, Emor, 103a) – they were able to rejoice. That is spiritual courage of a high order. I have often argued that faith is not certainty: faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. That is what Sukkot represents if what we celebrate is sukkot mammash, not the clouds of glory but the vulnerability of actual huts, open to the wind, the rain and the cold.

I find that faith today in the people and the State of Israel. It is astonishing to me how Israelis have been able to live with an almost constant threat of war and terror since the State was born, and not give way to fear. I sense even in the most secular Israelis a profound faith, not perhaps “religious” in the conventional sense, but faith nonetheless: in life, and the future, and hope. Israelis seem to me perfectly to exemplify what tradition says was God’s reply to Moses when he doubted the people’s capacity to believe: “*They are believers, the children of believers*” (Shabbat 97a). Today’s Israel is a living embodiment of what it is to exist in a state of insecurity and still rejoice.

And that is Sukkot’s message to the world. Sukkot is the only festival about which Tanakh says that it will one day be celebrated by the whole world (Zechariah 14: 16-19). The twenty-first century is teaching us what this might mean. For most of history, most people have experienced a universe that did not change fundamentally in their lifetimes. But there have been rare great ages of transition: the birth of agriculture, the first cities, the dawn of civilization, the invention of printing, and the industrial revolution. These were destabilizing times, and they brought disruption in their wake. The age of transition we have experienced in our lifetime, born primarily out of the invention of the computer and instantaneous global communication, will one day be seen as the greatest and most rapid era of change since Homo sapiens first set foot on earth.

Since 9/11 2001, we have experienced the convulsions. As I write these words, some nations are tearing themselves apart, and no nation is free of the threat of terror. There are parts of the Middle East and beyond that recall Hobbes’ famous description of the a “*war of every man against every man*” in which there is “*continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short*” (Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, chapter X111). Insecurity begets fear, fear begets hate, hate begets violence, and violence eventually turns against its perpetrators.

The twenty-first century will one day be seen by historians as the Age of Insecurity. We, as Jews, are the world’s experts in insecurity, having lived with it for millennia. And the supreme response to insecurity is Sukkot, when we leave behind the safety of our houses and sit in sukkot mammash, in huts exposed to the elements. To be able to do so and still say, this is zeman simchatenu, our festival of joy, is the supreme achievement of faith, the ultimate antidote to fear. Faith is the ability to rejoice in the midst of instability and change, travelling through the wilderness of time toward an unknown destination. Faith is not fear. Faith is not hate. Faith is not violence. These are vital truths, never more needed than now.

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/haazinu/the-spirituality-of-song/>

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## On the Haftarah: We Are a Paradox

By Yitzi Hurwitz \* © Chabad 2023

This haftarah<sup>1</sup> is read twice a year. The first time is on the second day of Sukkot in the Diaspora, and the second time is on parshat Pekudei. With parshat Pekudei, however, we add the two verses that precede the Sukkot haftarah.

The haftarah details how the Temple that King Solomon built was completed. It tells how the Ark was brought and placed in the temple, and talks about how the Ark housed the Two Tablets. Afterwards, the haftarah tells us that the Presence of God filled the Temple in the form of a cloud. It ends off with Solomon blessing the Jewish people. This mirrors the events

in parshat Pekudei. When the Jewish people finished building the Mishkan, Moses blessed them. And when the Mishkan was erected, and the Ark and the vessels were brought in, G d's Presence descended on it in the form of a cloud. It also mentions that the Two Tablets were placed in the Ark. Even the two extra verses speak about the completion of the Temple and the bringing of vessels into it, just as Pekudei does with regards to the Mishkan.

We see a clear connection between these two readings. But why was this haftarah chosen for the second day of Sukkot?

The simple answer is that Sukkot is mentioned in the first verse. Indeed, the events recounted in the haftarah occurred on Sukkot. But if that were the sole reason, then mere mention of the first verse would seemingly be sufficient!. Why do we read about the Temple, the Ark, the Tablets, and the cloud of G d's Presence on the second day of Sukkot? Answering this question will give us a deeper understanding of parshat Pekudei as well.

On Sukkot, in the Grace After Meals, we add the words, *"May the Compassionate One erect the sukkah of David which fell (literally, is falling)."* This refers to the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus the holiday of Sukkot is on some level connected to the Temple.

In the haftarah it says that the Ark and all the vessels were brought to the Temple, and when the Kohanim left, *"The cloud filled the House of G d... For the Glory of G d had filled the House of G d."*<sup>2</sup>

We have to ask: How can the infinite Glory of G d be contained in a finite building? It seems impossible! In fact, it is impossible. Yet G d, who can do anything, joins infinite and finite in the holy space of the Temple.

The Ark was also a paradox. The Talmud tells us, *"The space of the Ark was not measured."*<sup>3</sup> On one hand it was measurable, and on the other hand it didn't take up space.

Same applies to us. We have a soul, which is a part of G d and is infinite, in a body that is finite. We are able to mesh opposites because we are a part of G d. Therefore we can draw G diness, which is infinite, into the physical world, which is finite. And that is our mission, to make this finite world into a home for G d, who is infinite.

Life on earth is a paradox as well. On one hand, we are meant to put our total trust in G d. But at the same time, He wants us to do our best to work in this world, accomplishing to the best of our ability. It is through this meshing of opposites that we complete our mission.<sup>4</sup>

The second day of Sukkot is only celebrated as a holiday outside of Israel. It is a mundane day that we make holy, drawing the infinite into the finite. It is therefore apropos that we read this haftarah on the second day.

The Temple was the quintessential infinite in finite paradigm. And this is hinted in the word Pekudei, which means *"count."* The fact that you can total the sum of something shows that it is finite. Pekudei also means to *"connect."*<sup>5</sup> This translation of Pekudei refers to the ultimate essential bond, where two become one.

The idea of the Mishkan, and by extension, the Temple, is not just that they be filled with G d's Presence, but that the actual physical finite construct becomes one with the infinite Presence of G d.<sup>6</sup>

May we soon merit to see the Third Temple, the sukkah of David, filled and united with G d's Glory, with the coming of Moshiach. The time has come.

Dedicated by Irving Bauman, in memory of his father, Harav Moshe Aron Bauman, of blessed memory.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Pekudei, Chabad and Ashkenazic communities read I Kings 7:51-8:21. Sephardic communities read the Haftarah for the second Shabbat of Chanukah. There is no Haftarah set for when Vayakhel and Pekudei are together, because when

they are read together, it is either parshat Para or parshat Hachodesh, which have their own special Haftarah. )Thanks to my brother Dovid Hurwitz for this tidbit.( Second day of Sukkot, I Kings 8:2-21.

2. I Kings 8:10-11.
3. Yoma 21a.
4. Likkutei Sichot volume 3 pp. 883-884. Sefer Hasichot 5748a p. 327.
5. As in the Talmudic expression, "A man is obligated *lifkod* )to be intimate with( his wife." Yevamot 62b.
6. Likkutei Sichot volume 26 pp. 286-287.

\* Spiritual leader at Chabad Jewish Center in Temecula, California, Rav Hurwitz is a victim of ALS. He composes his spiritual insights using his eyes, because he can no longer speak or type.

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/3807246/jewish/On-the-Haftarah-We-Are-a-Paradox.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3807246/jewish/On-the-Haftarah-We-Are-a-Paradox.htm)

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## **Sukkot: Does Water Make You Happy?**

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky \*

### **The Joy in Self-Discipline**

*Special communal offerings were sacrificed every day of the seven-day holiday of Sukot. A special water-libation accompanied the morning daily offerings on these seven days. )Numbers 29:16(*

During the year, the libations that were poured onto the altar were always performed with wine. On Sukot, a unique water-libation accompanied the morning daily offerings.

The difference between wine and water is that whereas the former has a distinct flavor and acts as a stimulant, the latter is bland.

Accordingly, wine corresponds to our understanding of our Divine mission – the intellectual and emotional motivation that spurs us to pray, study the Torah, or perform G-d's commandments with joy and enthusiasm. Water, in contrast, corresponds to raw discipline, the devotion to G-d that we muster in order to persevere when intellectual or emotional motivation fails us, or to persist beyond the extent to which they drive us.

Nevertheless, we are told that the joy that accompanied the ceremony of drawing the water for the Sukot water-libation exceeded that of all other celebrations. The unbounded joy that accompanied the water-libation reflected the unbounded nature of raw discipline.

Our intellect and emotions are limited by our mental acuity and emotional sensitivity. Discipline, in contrast, is unlimited; our devotion to G-d is rooted in the essential connection between Him and our Divine souls, and it is therefore not subject to any limitations.

Our renewed realization of this unassailable connection to G-d is what powers the unparalleled outpouring of joy accompanying the water-libation.

— from *Daily Wisdom 3*

Gut Shabbos, Gut Yom Tov.

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman  
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#### Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

“...in order that your ensuing generations will know that I had the People of Israel live in sukkot when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God” (Leviticus 23:43).

One of the most colorful and engaging holidays of the Jewish year is Sukkot. Growing up, my children looked forward to this festival more than to any other – despite the interrupting rains we often endured in Manhattan during the Israeli harvest season.

Indeed, there is a great deal of pageantry in building and living in a new habitation for an entire week: the earthy greens and yellows of the vegetative ceiling (*s'chach*) from whose openings we must be able to see the sky; the magnificently decorated makeshift walls emblazoned with fruits and vegetables, colorful depictions of Holy Temple celebrations bringing together past glories and future hopes, and the renderings alluding to our special sukkah guests, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David.

Beyond the spectacle, however, what is the message of this mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah?

This question is especially important when you consider that according to Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk, this mitzvah must be performed with specific intention and understanding, based on the Biblical verse: “...in order that your ensuing generations will know that I had the People of Israel live in sukkot when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God” (Leviticus 23:42-43).

I believe we can find an answer by looking at the curious Talmudic case of the person who feels discomfort in the sukkah (*Sukkah* 26a). Generally speaking, we do not find discomfort serving as the basis for an exemption from a Biblical mitzvah. *Sukkah* is the notable exception, with Jewish law defining discomfiture as the wind or the flies making it impossible to sleep in the sukkah, or rain spoiling the soup you are about to eat in the sukkah (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayyim* 640:4).

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What is it about the mitzvah of sukkah that renders it incompatible with discomfiture?

If, as Rabbi Akiva famously maintains (*Sukkah* 11b), the sukkah symbolizes the desert huts in which the People of Israel dwelt in the desert, there must certainly have been uncomfortable invasions by desert creatures and a pounding hot sun that would have made sitting in such a sukkah incredibly uncomfortable. Nevertheless, such did the People of Israel live for forty years.

Only if we maintain, like Rabbi Eliezer (*ibid.*), that the sukkah represents the Divine clouds of glory that protected and accompanied the people throughout the long desert sojourn, impervious to any foreign element of annoyance, would it make sense to rule that one who is uncomfortable need not sit in our sukkot today.

I would like to suggest, however, that we might view these two opinions as not being in disagreement, but rather as providing complementary perspectives. That is to say, even if the sukkot in the desert were actual makeshift huts whose occupants were vulnerable prey to all the hazards of difficult desert living conditions, if those who lived in them felt that they were living under Divine protection, they were impervious to discomfiture.

I believe that this is the message of the Holy Zohar: “It was taught to the nations of the world that anyone who has a share in our holy nation and our holy land will dwell in the shadow of Divine faith and receive the sacred guests who will bring joy in this world and in the world to come” (*Emor*, 2:78).

Whether your sukkah is a silo or a sanctuary depends on whether or not you feel that your nation and your land are under the loving protective covering of the Divine, come what may.

It is told that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev would sit in the sukkah and continue to eat, sing and study Torah even during the worst rain storms. One of his disciples cited the halakhic principle: “If rains fall, one must (leave the sukkah) and go into the house... Anyone who is freed from the commandment of sukkah (because he is uncomfortable) and still does not leave it, will not receive any reward; he is considered a commoner [Greek, *idiot*]” (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayyim* 639).

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak countered: anyone

dwelling under the Divine Rays of Splendor who can nevertheless feel uncomfortable is truly a commoner!”

Perhaps the deepest message of the sukkah is that true joy and comfort stems not from a fancy palatial residence replete with expensive oak furnishings and chandeliers, but rather from familial love and togetherness within the backdrop of our Biblical guests and under the protection of a loving God.

As the Talmud teaches, “When our love was strong, we could lie on [an area as small as] the blade of a sword, and there was sufficient room; now that our love is no longer strong, a bed of 60 cubits (90 feet / 27 meters) is not large enough” (*Sanhedrin* 7a).

#### The Person in the Parsha Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

##### From Fear to Festivities

Fear and trembling. Those have been our primary religious emotions during the past several weeks.

Although Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are referred to nowadays as the High Holidays, traditionally they were known as the Days of Awe, Yamim Noraim. Frightful days, fearful days.

During this recent time none of us escaped a sense of insecurity. Recognizing that these days are days of divine judgment, we could not help but wonder as to how we were being judged. We felt vulnerable, insecure, and anxious about what the coming year has in store for us.

And this was as it should be. After all, the central theme of the prayers has been fear and trembling. We actually have asked of the Almighty that he “cast His fear over all of His handiwork, and His awe over all of His creatures.”

The great Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard entitled his book about Abraham's binding of Isaac Fear and Trembling. With his great spiritual acumen, he was able to discern that the central theme of the passage in Genesis which Jews read on Rosh Hashanah was man's vulnerability in the face of God's demands.

But now we have emerged from this literally awesome period. Judaism does not want us to

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remain stuck in these overwhelming emotions of anxiety and uncertainty. And so, our Torah has provided us with the festival of Sukkot, a time not for fear and trembling, not even for a contemplation and soul-searching, but a time for serenity and joy.

We emerge from what mystics have termed the "dark night of the soul" into the bright light of simcha, of happiness.

But this happiness is not necessarily one of song and dance, and gala celebration. It is a deeper happiness, a feeling of contentment. It is a happiness which derives from a sense of safety and security, a basic sense of trust.

The central symbol of the holiday of Sukkot is the sukkah, the makeshift and often ramshackle hut in which we dwell, or at least take our meals during the holiday.

What is the meaning of this simple symbol? And how does it inspire this spiritual attitude of trust?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch said it best when he wrote: "The building of the sukkah teaches you trust in God. You know that whether men live in huts or in palaces, it is only as pilgrims that they dwell. You know that in this pilgrimage God is our protection. The sukkah is a transitory hut that one day will leave us or we will leave it. The walls may fall, the leafy covering may wither in this storm, but the sheltering love of God is everywhere. You dwell in the most fleeting and transitory dwelling as calmly and securely as if it were your house forever."

And so this week, we undergo what scientists call a paradigm shift. We experience a different set of religious emotions, emerging from a deeply felt solemnity into a sense of calm security.

And we also redirect our orientation to God. He is no longer the harsh and exacting judge. He is not even the forgiving and compassionate judge. He is now our shelter and protector, the permanent "Rock of Israel", in the transitory experience we call life.

We are able to effect this shift, and this redirection, by using the symbols that the holiday provides us, chief among them the sukkah.

What is the secret of the sukkah? How does it work its wonders?

The secret is to enter it respectfully and reflectively, spend as much time as possible enveloped in its shade, and invite into it two types of guests.

For starters flesh and blood friends and family, with special hospitality for those who may never have enjoyed a sukkah experience.

But we also symbolically summon the "ghost guests", the ushpizin, our ancestors going back to Abraham and Sarah, whom we invite to join us.

Like no other mitzvah, we immerse ourselves in the sukkah. As Chassidim say, we enter the sukkah with "our boots on", totally, holding nothing back. We dwell in it to the fullest extent possible, for an entire week.

And we encounter there twin blessings: the companionship of others, and the cherished memories of those who sat in other Sukkot before us, ancestors recent and long gone, who all participated as we do in that protracted pilgrimage known as Jewish history.

#### Covenant and Conversation

**Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l**

#### What Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah Teaches Us Today

Succot represents more clearly than any other festival the dualities of Judaism. The Four Species (lulav, etrog, hadassim and aravot) are a symbol of the land of Israel, while the succah reminds us of exile. The Four Species are a ritual of rain, while eating in the succah depends on the absence of rain. Above all, though, there is the tension between the universality of nature and the particularity of history. There is an aspect of Succot – rainfall, harvest, climate – to which everyone can relate, but there is another – the long journey through the wilderness – that speaks to the unique experience of the Jewish people.

This tension between the universal and the particular is unique to Judaism. The God of Israel is the God of all humanity, but the religion of Israel is not the religion of all humanity. It is conspicuous that while the other two Abrahamic monotheisms, Christianity and Islam, borrowed much from Judaism, they did not borrow this. They became universalist faiths, believing that everyone ought to embrace the one true religion, their own, and that those who do not are denied the blessings of eternity.

Judaism disagrees. For this it was derided for many centuries, and to some degree it still is today. Why, if it represents religious truth, is it not to be shared with everyone? If there is only one God, why is there not only one way to salvation? There is no doubt that if Judaism had become an evangelising, conversion-driven religion – as it would have had to, had it believed in universalism – there would be many more Jews than there are today. A recent study (the Pew Report, undertaken in 2015) found that there are an estimated 2.3 billion Christians, 1.8 billion Muslims and only 14 million Jews. The disparity is vast.

Judaism is the road less travelled, because it represents a complex truth that could not be expressed in any other way. The Torah tells a simple story. God gave humans the gift of freedom, which they then used not to enhance

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creation but to endanger it. Adam and Chavah broke the first prohibition. Cain, the first human child, became the first murderer. Within a remarkably short space of time, all flesh had corrupted its way on earth, the world was filled with violence, and only one man, Noach, found favour in God's eyes. After the Flood, God made a covenant with Noach, and through him with all humanity, but after the hubris of the builders of the Tower of Babel, God chose another way. Having established a basic threshold in the form of the Noachide Laws, He then chose one man, one family, and eventually one nation, to become a living example of what it is to exist closely and continuously in the presence of God. There are, in the affairs of humankind, universal laws and specific examples. The Noachide covenant constitutes the universal laws. The way of life of Avraham and his descendants is the example.

What this means in Judaism is that the righteous of all the nations have a share in the World to Come (Sanhedrin 105a). In contemporary terms it means that our common humanity precedes our religious differences. It also means that by creating all humans in His image, God set us the challenge of seeing His image in one who is not in our image: whose colour, culture, class and creed are different from our own. The ultimate spiritual challenge is to see the trace of God in the face of a stranger.

Zechariah, in the vision we read as the Haftarah for the first day of Succot, puts this precisely. He says that in the End of Days, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day the Lord shall be One and His name One" (Zechariah 14:9), meaning that all the nations will recognise the sovereignty of a single transcendent God. Yet at the same time, Zechariah envisages the nations participating only in Succot, the most universal of the festivals, and the one in which they have the greatest interest since they all need rain. He does not envisage them becoming Jews, accepting the "yoke of the commands", all 613 of them. He does not speak of their conversion. The practical outcome of this dual theology – the universality of God and the particularity of Torah – is that we are commanded to be true to our faith, and a blessing to others, regardless of their faith. That is the Jewish way.

Shemini Atzeret reminds us of the intimacy Jews have always felt in the presence of God. The cathedrals of Europe convey a sense of the vastness of God and the smallness of humankind. The small shuls of Tzfat, where the Arizal and Rabbi Yosef Caro prayed, convey a sense of the closeness of God and the greatness of humankind. Jews, except when they sought to imitate other nations, did not build cathedrals. Even the Temple reached its greatest architectural grandeur under Herod, a man better known for his political ruthlessness than his spiritual sensibilities.

So, when all the universality of Judaism has been expressed, there remains something that cannot be universalised: that sense of intimacy with, and closeness to, God that we feel on Shemini Atzeret, when all the other guests have left. Shemini Atzeret is chamber music, not a symphony. It is quiet time with God. We are reluctant to leave, and we dare to think that He is reluctant to see us go. Justice is universal, love is particular. There are some things we share because we are human. But there are other things, constitutive of our identity, that are uniquely ours – most importantly our relationships to those who form our family. On Succot we are among strangers and friends. On Shemini Atzeret we are with family.

#### Simchat Torah

The emergence of Simchat Torah signals something remarkable. You may have noticed that Succot and Shemini Atzeret are both described as *zeman simchateinu*, the season of our joy. The nature of that joy was clear and signalled in different ways both by the succah and by the Four Species. The succah reminded the people how blessed they were to be living in Israel when they recalled how their ancestors had to live for forty years without a land or a permanent home. The lulav, etrog, hadassim, and aravot were a vivid demonstration of the fruitfulness of the land under the divine blessing of rain. The joy of Succot was the joy of living in the Promised Land.

But by the time Simchat Torah had spread throughout the Jewish world, Jews had lost virtually everything: their land, their home, their freedom and independence, the Temple, the priesthood, the sacrificial order – all that had once been their source of joy. A single devastating sentence in one of the piyutim of *Ne'ilah* (at the close of Yom Kippur), summed up their situation: *Ein shiur rak haTorah hazot*, “Nothing remains but this Torah.” All that remained was a book.

How could we find joy if we had lost everything as a people? Sa’adia Gaon, writing in the tenth century, asked a simple question. In virtue of what was the Jewish people still a nation? It had none of the normal preconditions of a nation. Jews were scattered throughout the world. They did not live in the same territory. They were not part of a single economic or political order. They did not share the same culture. They did not speak the same language. Rashi spoke French, Rambam Arabic. Yet they were, and were seen to be, one nation, bound by a bond of collective destiny and responsibility. Hence Sa’adia concluded: Our people is a people only in virtue of our Torah (Beliefs and Opinions, 3). In the lovely rabbinic phrase about the Ark which contained the tablets, “It carried those who carried it” (Sotah 35a). More than the Jewish people preserved the Torah, the Torah preserved the Jewish people.

It was, as we say in our prayers, “our life and the length of our days”. It was the legacy of their past and the promise of their future. It was their marriage contract with God, the record of the covenant that bound them unbreakably together. They had lost their world but they still had God’s word, and it was enough.

More than enough. On Simchat Torah, without being commanded by any verse in the Torah or any decree of the Rabbis, Jews throughout the world sang and danced and recited poems in honour of the Torah, exactly as if they were dancing in the courtyard of the Temple at the Simchat Beit HaSho’evah, or as if they were King David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. They were determined to show God, and the world, that they could still be *ach same’ach*, as the Torah said about Succot: wholly, totally, given over to joy. It would be hard to find a parallel in the entire history of the human spirit of a people capable of such joy at a time when they were being massacred in the name of the God of love and compassion.

A people that can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and still rejoice is a people that cannot be defeated by any force or any fear. Rambam writes (Laws of Shofar 8:15) that to experience joy in the fulfillment of a mitzvah out of the love of God is to touch the spiritual heights. Whoever stands on their dignity and regards such things as beneath them is, he says, a sinner and a fool, and whoever abandons their dignity for the sake of joy is thereby elevated “because there is no greatness or honor higher than celebrating before God.”

Simchat Torah was born when Jews had lost everything else, but they never lost their capacity to rejoice. Nechemiah was right when he said to the people weeping as they listened to the Torah, realising how far they had drifted from it: “Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nechemiah 8:10). A people whose capacity for joy cannot be destroyed is itself indestructible.

*Adapted from the introduction to the Koren Succot Machzor with commentary and translation by Rabbi Sacks*

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#### Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm’s Derashot Ledorot

##### The Starry Night\*

“Religion should change with the times.” I am sure that everyone in this congregation has, at one time or another, been accosted by this ubiquitous slogan. I know that I have had to contend with it ever since my first youthful venture outside my native Williamsburg.

“Religion should change with the times.” This is the kind of profound platitude that everyone who utters it thinks he has invented. Like so many other clichés, which at first sight seem to possess so much wisdom and upon reflection prove utterly vacuous, this popular motto is thoroughly banal. It offers simple bromides for

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enormously complex problems. It issues a fog of vague and imprecise but terribly up-to-date sentiments, where clarity and analysis are called for. It has as much to offer to religious philosophy as “twinkle, twinkle little star” has to contribute to the science of astronomy.

Does this mean that we are “against change”? Of course not. To be against change is to be against life, because we are always moving, always changing, always either growing up or growing down, progressing or retrogressing. Change is the law of the universe. Life is always in flux. A great Greek philosopher once said that life is like a river, always changing and moving, and, because of its constant motion, you cannot step into the same river twice. Whereupon another Greek philosopher offered his opinion that so constant a state of flux is it in, that you cannot step into the river even once.

So we do not deny that life does change, and we do not even piously wish that it would not change. But we do maintain that intelligent human beings try to balance change and continuity, motion and stability. Just as complete immutability spells petrification and stagnation, so does constant changeability imply fickleness, unreliability, and irresponsibility. Thus, for instance, all of us want our children to change: to study, to grow physically, to better their characters, to improve their personalities. We want them to be weaned from us protective parents, to have their own careers, to marry and build their own homes, and to make their own reputations in life. But we also want them to be stable, always to remain honorable, responsible, loyal, to keep a word and a commitment once made, and to maintain throughout life their love for parents, brothers, and sisters. Is anyone ready to abandon these qualities with the facile argument that honor should change with the times? Or love should change with the times? Or friendship, or character, or integrity?

Certainly there is change. But a man cannot spiritually or psychologically survive change that is so radical, so abrupt, so unceasing that there is no continuity or stability in his life. He must have something in life that is fixed, some reference point by which to measure new ideas, new promises, new demands, and new phenomena.

That fixed point is Torah. The psalmist sang, “Thy word is a lamp unto my foot and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). Of course, we use our feet to tread on different paths in life. We live neither in a forcibly imposed East European ghetto, nor in the voluntarily self-isolated communities of Western Europe, but in the open and pluralistic and technological United States—and it is an exciting and adventurous life. Our feet stake out new paths constantly. But the lamp and the light for our feet and our paths are the same—Torah and mitzvot. Without them we stumble, we lose

our way, and our adventure turns into a horror, and the excitement into unbearable anxiety.

The more a society is in a state of change, the more it needs some anchor of permanence to give it a sense of stability. When I don my tallit or tefillin, when I hold my lulav and etrog, I suddenly am aware of myself as standing in the grand tradition of my parents and my grandparents and their grandparents before them. I perceive myself as part of a great and noble historical continuum which emerges unshaken from the vicissitudes of the various ages. These observances are both symbol and essence of my roots. And, indeed, in the performance of the Jewish mitzvot, I am aware of my roots such that no matter what winds may buffet my branches, no matter what storms may swirl about me, I remain firm and stable. I feel like a tree, not like a mushroom which appears out of nowhere and disappears into nothing. Thus, the tallit and the tefillin, the lulav and the etrog, kashrut and Shabbat, are more important here and today than they were in Volozhin or Pressburg or Hamburg of a hundred years ago. Our life in these times is obsessed by veneer, by the appeal of the new and the fashionable, by the attraction of tomorrow's style. Marshall McLuhan, for all his sensationalism, has enunciated a truth in his famous statement that "the medium is the message." Considering the proliferation of the various new media in our times, our minds are bombarded by all kinds of novel and evanescent messages, so that the timeless verities are displaced from our consciousness. We have become the generation of the spiritually dispossessed, and our own permanent values have turned unstable and illusory. We are thus perpetual adolescents, internal transition. With all our scorn for the hippies, we must acknowledge in gratitude that they point to a problem that is ours: they, on the margins of society, are the psychopathic symptoms of our inner pathology, our inner emptiness, our inner sickness. We are so caught up in change, so enamored of motion, so mercurial in our spiritual orientation, so volatile in our ethical lives, so fickle in our culture, that we are left without identity, without self, without reality. And it is against this emptiness that the hippies attempt, so pathetically, to reassert the eternal and stable truths of love and beauty and simplicity. It is a pity that their "flower power" has no roots.

In a society of this kind, we need Torah more than ever before. We need a religion which does not change with the times, but which offers the permanence and stability we crave. Religion should not be a mirror that reflects the crazy whirl of life's mad currents. It should be a rudder that keeps us afloat, that tells us where we are going and guides us there, that helps us attain perspective and prevents us from being overwhelmed by the empty foam of life. Were religion to change with the times, it would not be worth the effort to stay religious!

I believe that this idea is implicit in a remarkable statement of the Rabbis of the Midrash (Yalkut Shim'oni, Psalms, 682). They taught that ein Melekh ha- Mashiah ba ella litten le-umot ha-olam . . . sukkah—the King-Messiah will come to the world only to teach the nations of the world about the sukkah. How strange! For over two thousand years, Jews have pined away for the Messiah. For the last eight hundred years or so, we have sung daily of our hearts' deepest yearnings and proclaim courageously our ani ma'amin, our belief and our faith that the Messiah can come at any time, any day. And what for? To teach the gentiles how to build a sukkah! Did not the prophets conceive of the Messiah so much more nobly? Isaiah taught that the function of the Messiah would be to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning forks. Micah taught that the Messiah will establish the House of the Lord on the mountain in Jerusalem so that all nations will proclaim, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Mic. 4:2). And the Rabbis of the Midrash? That the Messiah will come, gather up the nations in the UN, and teach them the prosaic laws of how to build a little sukkah!

What did they mean? I suggest it is this. The sukkah is a symbol of change. The Rabbis refer to it as dirat arai, a temporary abode. Its very flimsiness is an index of its temporariness. It is a symbol of the makeshift booths which our ancestors used on their journey through the Sinai wilderness. It implies, therefore, transition, transience, impermanence. The very insignificance of its defannot, or walls, and the requirement that the covering, or sekhakh be impermanent are further indications of sukkah as a symbol of change and transition. Now, transition is a dangerous period. Consider adolescence and the early years of marriage, or historical transition from one age to another, or economic change and displacements. At a time of this sort, disaster dogs us at every doorstep, calamity is just around every corner, and man is threatened by being swept up in change and losing his moorings. A world of this kind needs a Messiah; it needs his lesson of how to survive the sukkah! The Messiah will teach the world what the Jews always should have known; that we can and must find stability in the midst of change and movement. The Halakhah teaches us that in order for a sukkah to be valid, the covering, or sekhakh, must not be too tightly packed. Specifically, we must be able to see the stars through the sekhakh. Like the ancient mariner who without instruments was able to guide himself by the stars, or like the contemporary interplanetary satellite which moves unerringly through the vast and open reaches of empty space by latching on to a star, so man, caught up in an ever-moving and ever-changing sukkah of life, must be able to see the stars through the sekhakh. That star is—Torah, faith, God.

When the artist Van Gogh was asked about his famous expressionistic painting The Starry

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Night, he said, "I felt a need of—shall I say the word?—religion, and so I went out and painted the stars." It is the very permanence of the stars and the solace they offer to an unstable society that makes them the symbol of religion. It is this fixity amidst flux that Torah offers and that the Messiah will teach.

The religion of Torah, therefore, does not change with the times. It is not subject to the whims of the public opinion poll. Its strength derives from its perennial reliability.

Nevertheless, we must also stress a corollary: that while Torah is changeless, it must always be relevant to a changing society. It must not be so changeless that it has nothing to do with man, who is always in a state of change. Judaism must address man in his changing conditions; it must speak to man of values and faith, of loyalty and honor and meaning, as they apply to his times and his society. But Judaism cannot do this if the teachers of Torah turn their backs on the rest of mankind. This is what we mean when we appeal for the relevance of Orthodox Judaism, and this is our argument with those in our own camp who would cut themselves off from modern society completely. The stars can guide man only when they are visible. If clouds of distrust and diffidence cover the stars, they are of precious little use to man. So the advocates of Torah must speak to modern man in his own idiom; they must respect his intelligence and feel with him in his misery.

When the Rabbis of old complained that Torah munahat be-keren zavit, Torah lies neglected in a hidden corner (Kiddushin 66a), they did not mean for us to crawl into that corner with it and turn our backs on the world. Rather, they meant for us to take Torah out of that keren zavit and bring it into the center of the world scene, into the maelstrom of daily events, into the midst of the raging torrents of the times, and with it to offer man abiding faith and enduring stability.

Of course, by the same token, overemphasizing relevance can destroy the stable character of religion of which we speak. When you are too relevant, you turn religion into a newspaper; and nothing is as meaningless as yesterday's news... Torah, therefore, must not be a sealed book written in an ancient and undecipherable language, nor must it be a running commentary of religious jargon. It must be the Sefer Hayyim, the Book of Life. That is a difficult task—to be permanent and yet relevant, changeless and yet germane. It means that while affirming the unchanging nature of Halakhah, we must be able to explain it in terms of a changing society; that while teaching the timeless truths of Torah, we must relate them to issues that are timely. Above all, we must not be afraid to say that we do not have all the answers, and yet we must never cease searching for them.

\*5728/1967

## Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

This month is packed with major festivals, but we need them all. As I see it, in the same way as we need all three paragraphs of the shema, so too we need, in close sequence, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, then Succot, followed by Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

In the first paragraph of the shema we accept of malchut shamayim, the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and we declare that Hashem is One and His name is one. It's all about our belief in God.

In the second paragraph of the shema, we commit ourselves to a life filled with mitzvot – kabalah of mitzvot, acceptance of the yoke of mitzvot.

In the third paragraph, we recognise that it's not enough to believe in Hashem and to translate that belief into action. What is also required is that we live sacred lives – v'hyitem kedoshim, that our lives will be infused with the presence of Hashem so that we can live in an uplifted manner.

So too with regard to the festivals of the month of Tishrei. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are all about the malchut of Hashem, the grandeur of the royalty of God, HaMelech. He is the King; that is the prominent theme throughout all of our prayers, leading us to that great crescendo at the end of Neila when we declare, "Shema Yisrael," – "Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

But belief in Hashem alone is not enough. We need to translate that belief into action and that's why Succot comes so soon after the Yamim Noraim. Succot provides us with great opportunity for action, through taking the four kinds, dwelling in the succah and so much communal activity, to celebrate Jewish life in action.

But that too is not yet enough, because if we just carry out the mitzvot in a mechanical way, that won't guarantee the continuity of our faith. We need that third component of v'hyitem kedoshim, to lead a sacred existence, and that's why on Shemini Atzeret we recall the lives of near and dear ones, and those fond memories should inspire us to lead a meaningful, uplifted existence. Together with that, we celebrate Simchat Torah, recognising that thanks to our study of Torah and the inspiration it gives, we are gifted with an opportunity to live a life of v'hyitem kedoshim which gives us a most incredible opportunity for meaningful and happy existence. Yes, there are so many major festivals, but we certainly need them all.

## Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel Encyclopedia of Jewish Values\*

### VeZot HaToraH – Getting & Being Old

In describing the uniqueness of Moses at the very end of the Torah, the verse ascribes one final supernatural miracle to Moshe Rabbeinu (Deuteronomy 34:7). Although he was one hundred and twenty years old, "his eyes did not dim, nor did natural force abate." In other words, in spite of his advanced age, Moshe did not get older physically, and his body remained young and vibrant. Since that fate is not in store for any of us, it is appropriate to analyze and understand that portion of life that we all aspire to reach – old age. As a Jew, how should we view this period of our lives, when we no longer can perform as well physically, and certain physical strengths weaken? Is it indeed a time to look forward to, or to be feared? How should we behave differently as Jews in old age?

Although there are many different sources relating to old age, the general Jewish attitude about reaching this time in life seems quite ambivalent. Some sources appear to say it is a time to dread. We ask God, for example, not to be "thrown into" old age and for Him not to leave us when we get there (Psalms 71:9). The Talmud (Shabbat 151b) explains the verse in Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 12:1) that speaks about "the days of evil," as referring to the time of old age. In the Talmud, Rava complained (Bava Kama 92b) that he was never treated appropriately for the age that he truly was. When he was young, they treated him as an adult, i.e., they expected him to act more mature than his years. When he became old, they treated him like a child. This passage is reminiscent of many children who today take care of their elderly parents and often have to "mother" these elderly people who at one time were parents in the role of authority. Rav Dimi looks at the crown of youth as something positive, but the crown of old age is a heavy burden, too heavy to bear (Shabbat 152a). That same Talmudic page further describes all the negative aspects of aging. In old age, the mind begins to deteriorate, a person's lips do not function, and a person's hearing begins to fade. The Mishna (Avot 4:20) speaks of the difficulty of teaching an old person, like "teaching an old dog new tricks," or, in the words of the Mishna, like writing on a piece of paper that has been erased previously. All of these statements point to a fear of old age, a breakdown of the person in old age, and a very negative view of the later years of life.

On the other hand, there are also many positive statements about becoming elderly. The Mishna (Avot 4:20) says that learning from an old person is like eating very ripe grapes and drinking aged wine, as compared to learning from the young when the grapes and wine do not taste as good. Therefore, learning from the elderly is preferred over learning from a younger person. The Talmud (Shabbat 152a) says that the older a scholar gets, the greater

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his scholarship and wisdom, not less. The Talmud proceeds to (Chullin 24b) describe the amazing story of Rabbi Chanina. When he was eighty years old, he was still so spry that he would stand on one foot, change his shoe, then tie his shoe, all while still standing on the one foot. There are very few young people who could accomplish this feat! This shows us that age is only a number and that there are no fixed rules about whom or what is considered old.

Another Midrash (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 14; Midrash Bereishit Rabbah 65:9) seems to prove that being old is a positive, not a negative, development in Judaism. Until the time of Abraham, there was no old age in the world. Although people got older, their faces and bodies did not age and they did not look older. Therefore, the Midrash says, since Isaac looked very much like his father Abraham, when they both came into the room, people could not tell them apart and no one was able to give any special respect to Abraham because of his age. It was then that Abraham *prayed for old age to come into the world* so that he would age, and people could tell the difference between the elderly and younger people to give the elderly the respect they deserve. God thought it was a good idea and immediately gave Abraham old age, as it says (Genesis 24:1) "Abraham became old."

Which approach, then, is the authentic Jewish approach? Is it a positive or a negative to become old, in the Jewish view? It depends on the individual. Each person handles the advancement of age differently. Old age in Judaism is distinctly a state of mind. The Midrash (Genesis 24:1) says that some people have years and other people have old age. The Midrash wants to tell us that you can have advanced years without old age, and you can have old age without advanced years! Certain people can *feel* young even though they have reached advanced years. This was shown in the case of Rabbi Chanina, who behaved as a youngster while at age eighty. On the other hand, certain individuals can feel old, even though they are young in years.

The Talmud (Taanit 5b) analyzes the verse (Samuel I 8:1) indicating that Samuel was old. But the Talmud asks how could he be old when we know he died at age 52? It answers that he aged greatly despite his relatively young years. Samuel felt badly about the fact that he had made Saul king and then witnessed Saul's moral character deteriorate and his rule collapse. This anguish caused Samuel to age, and he *felt old*. It seems clear, then, that if you can feel and act young like Rabbi Chanina, then aging need not be a difficult problem. If you feel old and act old like Samuel, then, indeed, the aging process will take its toll on a person and is a time to be dreaded. Judaism indeed defines old age in objective terms, using seventy years as a benchmark (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 244:1). Nevertheless, the idea of old age, as seen by Samuel, is truly a

subjective one in Judaism, unrelated to physical age.

This concept can be demonstrated from another Talmudic statement (Niddah 9a) that describes a woman's age, a touchy subject not only today, but even during the time of the Talmud. It asks how we can know when a woman is old. The answer is that she is old *only when her friends call her old*. Again, we see that the definition of old age (in calling a person old) is a subjective one, based on how the individual feels and acts. If a woman feels and acts young, her friends will never call her old. Only when she presents herself as old, will her friends think of her as old. Truly, then, in Judaism, old age is a state of mind.

**Coming to Terms with Old Age** - Rabbi Soloveitchik (Oral address to students in May 1981), in describing the war with Amalek before the giving of the Torah, says that this war was necessary before the Jewish people could receive the Torah. Only after a near-defeat, did the people realize they were vulnerable and truly needed God and the Torah to overcome life's difficulties. This is alluded to in the verse (Exodus 19:2) that connects the battle with Amalek at Refidim with the coming to Mount Sinai (see Rashi on this verse). Rabbi Soloveitchik expanded on this concept and said that each person has his own "Refidim," the challenge in life that seems to defeat him. He used the specific example of old age, showing that some people let it defeat them and beat them down, while others, understanding that they no longer do some of the things they had done previously, can cope and make the most out of their new situation. Understanding Torah and its values can help the Jew cope with old age.

This analysis may answer an apparent contradiction between two passages cited earlier. One claims that the mind deteriorates in old age and the other asserts that scholars grow in learning even during old age. In addition to understanding this on a physical level (some people deteriorate, and some do not), we may be able to say that the Torah scholar who learns to properly cope with decreasing physical abilities, (understanding the "Refidim" concept in Torah), will still be able to continue to grow as a human being. On the other hand, a person who was in control of his environment during his entire life, who now has to slow down in old age, may not be able to handle this situation, because he does not properly understand the Torah approach. Similarly, in the interpretation of the Midrash (Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 3), the verse says (Psalms 92:14-15) that he who has been educated in Torah and Torah values as a youngster will indeed remain vibrant and young in old age.

#### **How Others Should Treat Old People -**

When the average adult or even a youngster is asked how an old person should be treated, the usual answer is "with respect." When the same

person is asked *why* this should be so, they usually do not have an answer. Judaism has very specific answers. The reason a Jew must respect an old person is because the Torah says so as a commandment (Leviticus 19:32). The Talmud (Kiddushin 32b) explains the reason by stating that the Hebrew word *Zaken* (old person) is an acronym for the words "he who has acquired wisdom." According to the Talmud, every old person, even with a limited education, has acquired wisdom, simply by living and experiencing life. Book knowledge is not required for a person to acquire wisdom. Although many people have knowledge, they do not possess the wisdom how to apply that knowledge to life's situations. This is the type of wisdom an old person necessarily achieves because of his or her experience. Thus, the Torah requires that an old person receive the respect of all.

The idea that the elderly automatically has some degree of wisdom, can be seen in the name given to the political leaders in early American history and sometimes even today. They were called Village Elders or Alderman (from the original "Elderman" as this term is still used today). They were given this title although there was no requirement that they be old. However, there is an implied equation between wisdom and the term used being elderly.

Can a person acquire wisdom even if one is young? Judaism says yes. The Talmud (Berachot 11a) speaks of the "elders" of Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel visiting a sick Rabbi Yochanan. These were not old men, but, rather, the wise scholars of these two schools. Thus, these scholars are called "old" and wise even though they may have been very young. The Halacha seems to reflect this idea as well (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 244:1), as both Jewish laws to stand up for the elderly and to stand up for scholars are placed together in the same paragraph. They share one thing in common which demands respect -- wisdom. (Given this "new" definition of elderly, i.e., wise, it is now unclear if the earlier sources referring to the prayer for mercy on the elderly and that the Jewish people survive because of the elderly refer to the physically old or the scholars who are called elderly).

\* **This column has been adapted from a series of volumes written by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel "The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values" available from Urim and Amazon. For the full article or to review all the footnotes in the original, contact the author at [nachum@jewishdestiny.com](mailto:nachum@jewishdestiny.com)**

**Important Note:** Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel is completing his two-year cycle of "Jewish Values in the Parashah". He is transitioning to a new **Jewish Values** project, a podcast that you will be able to hear after Shabbat weekly, both an abridged version (about a five minutes), and the full podcast (about 30 minutes) - about the traditional Jewish view of a different Jewish value each week. He will

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begin with Physical Beauty, then to Antisemitism next week, followed by Astrology, Business Ethics, Dreams and Sex. It is intentionally created for both people who have no Jewish background as well as for people with an extensive Jewish background.

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### **Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash**

#### **Rejoicing over the Primal Torah**

##### **Rav Elyakim Krumbein**

We celebrate the Torah on two separate holidays in the year. Given that Shavuot is the "Festival of the Giving of the Torah," why do we also celebrate Simchat Torah, the "Rejoicing over the Torah"?

According to Chazal, the Torah is the spiritual essence residing in all of existence since the beginning of Creation. This primal Torah is described in two different ways. Near the beginning of Bereishit Rabba, we find the following parable:

Usually, when a mortal king builds a palace, he does not build it on the basis of his own imagination; rather, it is planned by an architect. And the artist does not build it off the top of his head; rather, he has plans and diagrams, so he knows how to arrange the rooms and the doors. Likewise, the Holy One, blessed be He, consulted the Torah and created the world.

The Torah is the architectural plan for the world. Thus, any violation of the Torah obstructs the realization of the Divine plan and may even bring catastrophe. Based on this view, Chazal teach that God made a condition when He created the world: If Bnei Yisrael would not accept the Torah, the world would revert to its state of chaos and void (Rashi, Bereishit 1:31).

This is the acceptance of the Torah on Shavuot. It is a matter of sustaining Creation in accordance with the Divine plan.

The other image appears in the Zohar, anticipating an awakening of wisdom in the future: In the six hundredth year of the sixth millennium, the gates of wisdom on High will be opened, along with the wellsprings of wisdom down below, and the world will be made ready to enter the seventh millennium.

The wisdom of Torah is to be found beyond the windows of Heaven and in the depths of the earth. When the gates on High and the wellsprings below are opened, mankind will witness an outpouring of wisdom in

anticipation of Redemption. Here, the Torah is compared to the primal water that emerged and drowned the world in the generation of the Flood. This comparison is also hinted to in other sources. We learn, for example, that Moshe's soul was present in the generation of the Flood: "Where is there a reference to Moshe [i.e., Moshe's essence] in the Torah [prior to his appearance in Sefer Shemot]? [In the verse that reads,] 'insofar as (be-shagam) he also is flesh' [beshagam=Moshe in gematriya]" (Chullin 139b). Likewise we find in the Zohar (Ra'aya Mehimna, Pinchas): "Moshe was meant to receive the Torah in the generation of the Flood, but they were wicked."

The deepest and innermost essence of existence is desire (yitzriyat), the reverse side of which is creativity (yetziratiyat). These two forces churn and froth from the same source. The generation of the Flood was imbued with the forces of fermentation and renewal that it would have needed to commit itself to Torah, but owing to their wickedness, these same forces washed them away, rather than building them up.

In the context of Sukkot and Simchat Torah, in contrast to Shavuot, our perspective on the primal Torah is not that of an infinitely fine and detailed Divine plan, but rather of a primal force that simmers and erupts in the souls of those who occupy themselves with it. It is unpredictable in its manifestations and its renewal.

In Masseket Sukka (53b), we learn that the world was almost drowned by the waters of the deep when King David dug the foundations of the Temple. Miraculously, he was able to repel and subdue them – but this subsiding of the waters was a catastrophe, and the fifteen "songs of ascent" (Tehillim 120-134) were uttered to raise them back to their proper level. David had to discover and reveal the deepest depths in order to lay the foundations for the Beit Ha-Mikdash. We too, need these forces, despite the danger that they pose, because they hold the secret to the vitality of the Torah. The psalms uttered by David are recited over the water during the Simchat Beit Ha-Sho'eva ceremony, with the drawing of the Divine spirit.

Torah is compared to rain: "Let my teaching sprinkle you like rain" (Devarim 32:2). Likewise the evil inclination, which is also an existential need: "The evil inclination is just as essential for the world as rain is, for were it not for the evil inclination, the joy of [Torah] study would not exist" (Zohar, Toledot). The prayer for rain, which we start to recite at this time of year, also arouses the joy that bursts forth on Simchat Torah, reflecting the joy of Torah study.

May we rejoice truly and wholeheartedly in the Torah, which is our light and our strength.

### Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

#### The Link Between God and Man is Torah Study - Yehuda Shtauber

Yehuda Shtauber, OTS Deputy Director for EducationAs we complete the Torah cycle, I would like to discuss the meaning of the concept of Talmud Torah – "Torah study" – by tackling the following question: How can God's Torah turn into the Torah of Man through study, as per the verse "And he shall learn His Torah day and night"?

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Ta'anit 84, Halacha 5) brings the words of R' Shmuel bar Nachmani: "When Moshe came down from Heaven [with the Tablets], they were six tefahim (tephah = handbreadth) long and three tefahim wide; God Himself held the top two tefahim while Moshe held the bottom two tefahim, and there remained two tefahim in the middle. In wake of the deed [the Sin of the Calf] committed by the Israelites, God wished to snatch them [the Tablets] away. But Moshe's hand filled with might and he grabbed them away from God. Of this God praises him and says '...in all the mighty hand' (Devarim 34:12)."

The Maharal (in his book Tiferet Yisrael, Chapter 48) offers a fascinating commentary on this episode, suggesting that this picturesque image clarifies the true meaning of Torah study. This is what the Maharal writes:

"The Torah is the link between God Almighty, the Giver of the Torah, and Man, who is the Receiver of the Torah. For this reason, God Almighty held onto the top two tefahim, and Moshe held onto the bottom two tefahim [of the Tablets]. As to the two tefahim that remained in the middle – these are shared between God the Giver and Man the Receiver. This image exemplifies the absolute connectedness between man and God by means of the Torah. In fact, this is much like the case of two people holding one tallit on each end. The part of the tallit held by each one belongs to the holder; while the remainder is divided equally between them, and belongs to both. The same applies here."

In its simplest sense, the study of Torah is meant to help us gain insight into the intentions of the Giver of the Torah. For this purpose, we have been given traditional and exegetical tools, such as the Talmudical hermeneutics (the middot, or methods, by which the Torah is interpreted), halacha Le'Moshe Mi'Sinai (laws communicated by God to Moshe which have no reference in the written Torah), etc.

The Maharal adds another important dimension to this notion. What is termed Talmud Torah – Torah study is an encounter; a dialogue between the eternal, unequivocal Torah of Hashem and anyone who studies it. Relating back to the image above, one might say that Torah study takes place in the "two

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tephahim in the middle," in the zone shared by man and the Giver of the Torah Himself.

Since no two individuals are identical – in countenance, character, essence or the values particular to the period in which they happen to live – it follows then that the overlap between the two upper tefahim and the two lower tefahim can never be identical for any two individuals. In other words, every individual will interface uniquely with God's eternal Torah and will interpret it subjectively.

Ostensibly, a huge difficulty arises from this notion: there is no one uniform Torah which belongs to all, but many individualistic Torahs created by each one's personal experience of Torah study.

If such is the case, we have no choice but to say that even personal interpretation of the Torah may not be whimsical or capricious, but must be constrained by a set of exegetical anchors.

This idea appears in the introduction of the Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh to the Torah (Bereshit 1:1), in which he outlines an interesting method to validate any proposed commentary. "Be informed, that we are given the permission to interpret the meaning of the verses by using consistent pathways of study (netivot ha'iyun) and by supporting our interpretation with sound and convincing evidence (yishuv ha'da'at), even if earlier exegetes resolved the verses differently. The reason being that we are not warned against deviating from the words of those who preceded us, but only in such case where new commentary will lead to different halacha rulings. In keeping with this you will find that the scholars of the Talmud did not have the authority to dispute the words of the Mishnaic scholars in matters of halacha; however, when it came to resolving the meaning of Torah verses, we can see that they gave different interpretations in many an instance."

It follows then, that in contrast to the realm of halacha which is "less flexible", Torah exegesis per se makes room for personal interpretation. Notwithstanding the above, it still does not allow complete exegetical freedom as in "any interpretation is permissible", but must abide by two main criteria:

Netivot Ha'iyun – This refers to consistent pathways of study and interpretation. In other words, one must set exegetical rules, and use them consistently.

Yishuv Ha'da'at – It is our duty to offer convincing support for any interpretation we propose.

Indeed, it is evident that the Torah exegetes took the liberty to contest their predecessors.

Another crucial factor when it comes to personal commentary aiming to uncover the Divine truth, is to have profound and extensive

knowledge of Torah exegesis in general. A broad and comprehensive understanding of the very vast existing commentary gives one a much broader perspective, from which one is then better able to fine tune his personal outlook.

Similarly, when it comes halacha, our Sages determined that the rulings of Bet Hillel would be followed and practiced, and not those of Bet Shammai – despite the fact that both schools reflected God's truth – and the reason given for this decision was: "For they [the House of Hillel] were humble and modest. Not only would they learn Bet Shammai's teachings in addition to their own, but would give precedence to the words of Bet Shammai."

There are those who think that the halacha was set in accordance with Bet Hillel because their rulings were based on values such as tolerance, inclusion and other positive codes of behavior. However, it is my opinion that the ultimate halachic ruling was not set in this manner. "The halacha is like Bet Hillel" is simply a natural consequence, stemming from the way this "house of learning" conducted itself. Their opinions were more well-founded, as they incorporated the concept mentioned earlier by the Ohr HaChayim – "Yishuv Ha'da'at". The fact that they compared their own opinion to that of others led to more profound knowledge and a broader perspective on their part.

It now becomes clear why there is such a broad and diverse range of opinions when it comes to Torah exegesis. The Rambam's underlying assumption, in his book Shemonah Perakim, that disputes arise from insufficient study and examination ("they did not toil enough in study") – is hardly in keeping with the words of the Maharal. On the contrary, says the Maharal, dispute is the direct outcome of a profound personal bond with God's Torah.

I would like to add something on a personal note. In the synagogue I attended as a boy there was an esteemed persona, in a sense larger than life; a true Torah scholar who combined Torah study with work.

For years, at the end of the Torah reading, he would approach me, and ask me in a grave tone if I would be so kind as to interpret a specific verse from that week's Torah portion, with the excuse that he was hardly satisfied with his own interpretation. The situation was rather awkward and even embarrassing, and at first, I tried evading the challenge. But he continued to insist. No words would suffice in describing how challenging a task this really was, and how I had to muster all my creative skills in order to supply the goods, lest I disappoint him at our next encounter. In retrospect, this was my first meaningful connection with God's Torah.

Additionally, it was noticeable that in any discussion, the man in question was the last to

speak, and his opinion was readily accepted in most cases.

It was only years later that I understood that the fact that he was so attentive to others, and was able to incorporate their opinions and thoughts into his own, made his words well-rounded and more profound.

Let us conclude with the words of Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neria, in his book *Min HaPinkas HaPatu'ach* (From the Open Notebook): "The voice of the Lord is manifest in strength –

in the strength of each and every person. It is the duty of every generation to make the voice of God heard in its own voice, style and language.

### Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org

#### Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

#### A Progression of Joy

There is a progression in our avodas Hashem that occurs during the month of Tishrei. This reflects itself in the role that simcha plays on each of the yomim tovim. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur it is questionable as to whether there is a formal mitzvah of simcha. Although there was a tradition in some communities to recite the phrase "moadim l'simcha chagim u'zmanim l'sasson" on the Yomim Noraim as we do on the Shalosh Regalim, the practice today is to delete these words. According to the view of Tosafos that the mitzvah of simchas yom tov can only be fulfilled by eating special korbanos offered for this purpose, this form of simcha is clearly lacking on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur when such korbanos are not offered. The Rambam describes the Yomim Noraim as days of not-excessive joy, indicating that there is some degree of simcha present albeit not on par with Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos.

As we transition to Sukkos, not only is there definitely a mitzvah of simcha, but in addition Sukkos is referred to as "zman simchaseinu." Simcha is not tangential, but rather is an integral component of the Yom Tov. In contrast to Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, which the Rambam describes as days of not-excessive joy, the days of Sukkos are days during which the level of joy is complete. The Rambam explains that the unique celebration of simchas beis ha'shoeva in the Beis Hamikdash during Sukkos was an expression of the halachic requirement of excessive joy that applies specifically to Sukkos. The excessive joy that is absent on the Yomim Noraim becomes present on Sukkos because of the transition that occurs between these two periods of time. The Rambam observes that the Yomim Noraim are lacking in this intense joy because the intensity of the judgment that is occurring prevents such joy; at a time of Divine Judgment it is impossible to be in a state of total joy. It is the realization that we emerged victorious from the time of judgment that is the source of the great joy of Sukkos. As Chazal describe, when the books of life and death are open on the Yomim Noraim we cannot say

## Likutei Divrei Torah

Hallel. Once we are inscribed in the Book of Life our joy has no bounds.

Since a renewal of life is the source of our great joy on Sukkos, as we transition to Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah our joy becomes even more elevated. We dance in response to the realization that Torah is our very life; the gift of life that has been granted to us can now be infused with talmud Torah and shemiras ha'mitzvos and thus we truly celebrate life. The month of Tishrei is truly a celebration of being inscribed and sealed in the book of life. Just as we dance on Simchas Torah holding dearly the ultimate book of life (i.e. the Torah), so may we merit to live our lives in great joy inscribed and sealed in the book of life.

### Mizrachi Dvar Torah

#### Rav Doron Perz: Celebrating Vulnerability – The Sukkah and Israel

There is a remarkable connection between Sukkot, the sukkah and the Land of Israel, which the Vilna Gaon points out.

First of all, there are only two mitzvot in the entire Torah which we are commanded to dwell in them – we must dwell in the sukkah, and we are commanded to live in the Land.

Secondly, the schach cannot be done passively – you cannot have the schach ready and then build the walls around it. You first have to build the walls, and only then at the end actively place the schach on, creating the sukkah. So too, says the Gaon, coming back to the Land of Israel, the redemption will be one of being proactive. Many of his students were sent in the early 1800s to the Land. In response to the pogroms of the 1880s, the Zionist movement was actively deciding to shape our destiny, and then the building of the State of Israel continuing this march of Jewish destiny in such a proactive way.

Finally, both the sukkah and the Land of Israel appear to be flimsy structures. The sukkah is susceptible to outside influences and very transient. The Land of Israel, too, is a tiny sliver of land – less than one-quarter of 1% of the landmass of the Middle East – without the most defensible borders, with no natural borders and frontiers. A nearby country, Iran, building a nuclear bomb, Hezbollah and Hamas. Yet, this tiny abode is what our Sages call the "Shadow of G-d". It might look small and flimsy to those on the outside, but it is built in faith and destiny. When that is the core of one's cause, and one's security comes from within, it can withstand anything.

May we be blessed to continue to strive to support and be part of the land, to proactively build the Land and State of Israel, and to celebrate the vulnerability in the "Shadow of G-d" in a year of health, happiness, festivities and simcha for all of Am Yisrael.



BS"D

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Sept. 29, 2023

### Piskei Rav Schachter: Rain on the First Two Nights of Sukkos

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

**When rain is predicted throughout the first two night of Sukkos**, the accepted practice among the Ashkenazim is, to remove the shlock from over the sukkah and to recite kiddush immediately after tzeis hakochavim (there is no need to wait) while omitting the beracha of leishev ba'sukkah. [Strictly speaking, the kiddush can even be recited before tzeis hakochavim, provided that you eat the k'zayis of bread after tzeis hakochavim.] One should then wash and eat a k'zayis of bread in the sukkah, once again omitting the beracha of leishev ba'sukkah. The rest of the meal may then be eaten inside. One should be careful to eat another little bit of bread (even less than a k'zayis) inside the house in order to be able to bentsch inside (because bentsching has to be recited in the place where you ate bread). If three men ate together in the sukkah and continued to eat together in the house, they should bentsch with a zimun in the house. (Sefardim do not have the practice to eat in the sukkah if it is raining at all, even on the first two nights). If the weather clears and people are still awake, and the sukkah is clean, one should wash again and eat more than a k'beitza of bread in the sukkah and recite the beracha of leishev ba'sukkah. If, when the weather clears, some family members are sleeping while others are awake, it is appropriate to wake up those who are sleeping, since there is no exemption of this specific type of **מוצעה** on the first two nights of Sukkos.

If the sukkah is not clean enough to eat in it when the rain stops, but a neighbor's sukkah is clean enough to eat in (for instance, the neighbor had a shlock over their sukkah and you did not), even though having to go to a neighbor's sukkah normally constitutes **מוצעה** if it is a significant distance away, one would be obligated to go to the neighbor to eat, since while eating in the other sukkah you will not be experiencing any discomfort.

Even though women generally are careful to voluntarily fulfill the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah and even to recite a beracha (and some would suggest that this practice would constitute a binding minhag tov which would become a potential neder m'drabbanan), a woman has no obligation to go into the sukkah when it is raining, because they never accepted the mitzvah

under such conditions. Instead, they may recite their own kiddush inside the house.

If women already recited shehechiyanu when they lit candles, as many women do, they should not recite the shehechiyanu again when reciting kiddush. If some of the women already recited shehechiyanu at candle lighting and others did not, it is preferable for one of the women who has not yet recited shehechiyanu to say kiddush for the others, and to include the shehechiyanu. Those who already recited shehechiyanu should not answer amen to that beracha if they intend to drink from the kiddush wine, as the amen will constitute a hefsek between the beracha and the drinking. Once we are on the topic, it is worthwhile to point out that R' Akiva Eiger quotes Rav Yakov Emden that it is best for women NOT to recite shehechiyanu during candle lighting at all. You enhance the significance of the beracha of shehechiyanu when it is recited over a cup of wine. We only forgo reciting shehechiyanu over wine on Yom Kippur when there is no kiddush, and we say shehechiyanu at Kol Nidre. The accepted practice is that if you know in advance that it will rain on erev Yom Tov or the first day of Yom Tov, to refrain from hanging those decorations that may get ruined, and to put them up on Chol Hamoed, at which point they will have all of the normal halachos of sukkah decorations.

With regard to placing a roof over the s'chach, the rules are as follows: a. If the s'chach was placed while the roof was already in place over the s'chach, the sukkah is invalid, even if you subsequently remove the roof. b. If you placed the s'chach while there was no roof over it, and then you covered the sukkah, there is a disagreement whether it is necessary to lift the entire s'chach a few inches and place it down again, or it suffices to just open up the roof over the s'chach. The accepted practice is to be lenient and just open the roof over the s'chach. מכתב ברכה דפנאי קצת בספר וראיי כמה וכמה מהאמרים נכתבו מtopic רצינות ויראת שמים ויראת הארץ, ויישר כחכם על המפעל הקדוש הזה, ויה"ר שיתקבלו הדברים ב

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**Eating In The Succah On The First Night Sukkos By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt** | Series: Weekly Halacha | Level: Advanced

FacebookTwitterWhatsAppEmailPrintFriendly The following is a discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

You should dwell in a Succah (Emor 23:42)

Every adult male is Biblically obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread in a succah on the first night of Succos. The Talmud (1) derives this obligation from the similar obligation of eating a k'zayis of matzah on the first night of Pesach. Since these two obligations are closely related, their halachos are similar in many respects. Like all mitzvos, this mitzvah, too, can only be properly fulfilled if there is prior planning and clear knowledge of all the requirements. Let us review the pertinent halachos:

**WHEN IS IT EATEN**

In the late afternoon of Erev Succos, one should not fill himself with food or wine so that he will be able to eat the k'zayis of bread with a good appetite (2).

The k'zayis of bread [and the Kiddush that precedes it (3)] may not be eaten until it is definitely night (4), no earlier than 50 minutes after sundown (5). If one ate before that time, he must eat another k'zayis of bread in order to fulfill the mitzvah (6).

The k'zayis of bread may not be eaten after midnight (7). B'dieved, though, one who did not eat before midnight should do so after midnight and recite the proper blessing (8).

Preferably, one should sit down to eat the k'zayis of bread immediately after coming home from Ma'ariv. Unnecessary delays should be avoided (9).

**HOW MUCH MUST BE EATEN**

There are various views in the poskim about the exact measurement of a k'zayis. Since this is a Biblical obligation, it is proper to be stringent and eat at least 1.75 fl. oz. of bread, though one who eats 1 oz. of bread fulfills his obligation.

There is a view in the Rishonim (10) that holds that the minimum amount of bread one is obligated to eat in the succah on the first night is a k'beitzah, not merely a k'zayis. Although the basic halachah does not require the larger amount (11), still it is proper to satisfy that view as well (12). The amount to be eaten [to satisfy all views], therefore, is 3.5 oz. of bread (13). The bread which is eaten [whether it is a k'zayis or a k'beitzah (14)] must be eaten within a time-span of 3 to 4 minutes (15). No talking may take place until the full amount is chewed and swallowed (16). L'chatchilah, it is proper to chew and then swallow the bread in its entirety (17).

#### THE BASIC PROCEDURE

One is obligated to eat the minimum amount of bread even if he does not enjoy it and even if it causes him distress (18). Even a person who is classified as a choleh sh'ein bo sakanah is obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread (19).

Before eating the bread, one must have in mind that he is about to fulfill the Biblical mitzvah of eating bread on the first night of Succos (20). If one fails to have this intent and eats the piece of bread as he normally does every Shabbos or Yom Tov, it is questionable if he has fulfilled the mitzvah (21). In any case, he should eat another portion of bread with the proper intent (22).

One does not fulfill his obligation by eating cake, etc. (23) Only bread made out of one of the five species of grain is valid.

Women are exempt from this mitzvah, but if they do eat the required amount of bread in the succah, it is considered a mitzvah and they may recite the blessing (24).

There are some who maintain that the bread should be eaten without being dipped in honey (25), etc. Most poskim are not particular about this stringency (26).

#### ARE WE REQUIRED TO FULFILL THIS MITZVAH WHEN IT IS RAINING?

There are many discussions in the poskim concerning the obligation to eat in the succah on the first night of Succos if it is raining. The following points are raised:

If rain is falling, is one obligated to eat in the succah or not? If it is raining, is one obligated to wait and see if the rain will stop so that he can eat in a rain-free succah? If one does eat in the succah while it is raining, can a blessing be recited? If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then the rain stopped, is he required to eat in the succah again? If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then went to sleep, is he obligated to get out of bed to eat again once the rain has stopped? Since there are different rulings on all of these issues, the following, then, is a summary of the majority opinion (27):

If it is raining steadily and there is a reliable weather forecast for rain all night, one should make Kiddush [with shehecheyanu] and eat a k'zayis [or a k'beitzah (28)] in the succah. No blessing over the succah is recited. The rest of the meal is eaten inside the house (29).

If there is no reliable weather forecast and there is a possibility that the rain will stop [e.g., it is drizzling or it is raining on and off], it is proper to wait an hour or two for the rain to subside (30). The poskim agree, however, that if the delay will disturb the dignity and pleasure of the Yom Tov, or if the family is hungry and/or tired, there is no obligation to wait.

If the rain stops while the meal is being eaten inside the house or even after the meal has finished, one is obligated to eat at least a beitzah (31) of bread in the succah. Even if the rain stops after midnight, a beitzah of bread must be eaten in the succah. If one has already gone to bed and then the rain stops, there is no obligation to get out of bed in order to eat in the succah (32).

FOOTNOTES 1 Succah 27a. 2 Mishnah Berurah 639:27. 3 Beir Halachah 639:3. 4 Rama O.C. 639:3. 5 This is the generally accepted time for "night". Under extenuating circumstances, there are those who permit eating the bread a few minutes earlier. Since this is a Biblical mitzvah, it is proper – weather permitting – to wait for 72 minutes after sundown, to satisfy the views of the Rishonim who hold that before that time it is not definitely night. 6 Mishnah Berurah 639:25. If, mistakenly, one ate the bread even

earlier than sundown, not only must he eat another k'zayis but he must also repeat the blessing of leishev basukah. 7 Rama 639:3. 8 Mishnah Berurah 639:26. In that case, though, at least a k'beitzah of bread should be eaten. 9 Mateh Efrayim 625:42, 44. 10 Quoted by the Ritva and Ran in Succah 27b. 11 O.C. 639:3. 12 Mateh Efrayim 625:51; Mishnah Berurah 639:22. 13 The amount of a beitzah according to the Chazon Ish. 14 Mateh Efrayim 625:52 and Eleff le-Mateh 87. 15 Mishnah Berurah 639:22. Children under bar mitzvah may take up to 9 minutes for the amount to be eaten–Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchah 54 note 130). 16 Kaf ha-Chayim 639:50. 17 Mateh Efrayim 625:52. Mishnah Berurah, though, does not mention this. 18 Beir Halachah 639:3. 19 Bikurei Yaakov 639:6,24; Aruch ha-Shulchan 639:17. 20 Mateh Efrayim 625:51; Mishnah Berurah 625:1. In addition to this, one should bear in mind the reasons behind the mitzvah of succah. According to some poskim (Bikurei Yaakov 625:3 based on Bach), failure to have this intent invalidates the mitzvah. Mishnah Berurah, however, rules, that b'dieved one fulfills his obligation even if he does not have in mind the reasons for the mitzvah. 21 See Chidah (Simchas ha-Regel, quoted in Mo'adim U'zmanim 6:69) who questions if one has fulfilled his obligation in this case. See, however, Mishnah Berurah 60:10, quoting the Chayei Adam. 22 Mateh Efrayim 625:53. 23 Mishnah Berurah 639:21. 24 Separadic women, though should not recite the blessing on this mitzvah or on any mitzvah which they are not obligated to perform, such as lulav, shofar, etc. 25 See Yechaveh Da'as 4:37 for the various views. 26 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Nishmas Avraham O.C. pg. 320 and Harav O. Yosef (ibid. pg. 337). Tzitz Eliezer (15:32-14) maintains that one should be stringent. See also Mo'adim U'zmanim 1:86. 27 Based on rulings of Mateh Efrayim and Mishnah Berurah. 28 Mateh Efrayim 625:51, 62 and Elef le-Mateh 84. See, however, Ktzei ha-Mateh who holds that when raining all agree that a k'zayis is sufficient. 29 When reciting Hamotzi, one should have in mind that he will recite Birkas ha-Mazon inside the house. 30 Some poskim are more stringent and recommend waiting until midnight. 31 In this case, a k'zayis is not enough. 32 There is a minority opinion (Mo'adim U'zmanim 1:86, based on his understanding of the Gr'a; Harav M. Soloveitchik, quoted in Reshimos Shiurim (Succah, pg. 92) and in Mesorah Torah Journal, vol. 14, pg. 57) which maintains that even after going to sleep one is obligated to get out of bed in order to eat in the succah. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 1997 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Neustadt is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Hayeled Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available–please send email to the moderator, Dr. Jeffrey Gross jgross@torah.org. The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118–HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra

[https://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Eating\\_in\\_the\\_Sukkah](https://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Eating_in_the_Sukkah)  
**Eating in the Sukkah**

Eating in the Sukkah

There's an obligation to eat a Kezayit of bread in the Sukkah on the first night of Sukkot.[3] During the remaining days there is no obligation to eat in the Sukkah because you can just eat fruits or vegetables but there is still a mitzva to eat bread in the succah every day.[4] While sitting in the Sukkah, one should have intent that one will fulfill the mitzvah, and that Hashem commanded us to sit in Sukkot in order to remember the exodus from Egypt (Yetsiat Mitzrayim) and that the Sukkot are in commemoration for the clouds of glory.[5] According to most authorities, after the fact, if one didn't have these intentions then one fulfills the mitzvah as long as one had intention to fulfill the mitzvah.[6]

Rain or Sick

A person who is sick is exempt from the Sukkah.[11] One is not required to eat in the sukkah if it is raining.[12] If it is raining and one began to eat inside, he may continue to eat inside even when it stops raining.[13]

However, these rules only apply after the first night. For the rules for the first night see below. Even after it stops raining but the sukkah is still wet and the s'chach is dripping one is exempt from the sukkah.[14] One who is suffering from sitting in the sukkah is exempt. For instance, if one cannot sleep in the sukkah because of the wind, because of the flies buzzing, because of the cold, or even because of a small amount of rain he is exempt. Additionally, one is only exempt from the sukkah due to suffering if leaving the sukkah will help alleviate his suffering.[15] ... First Night of Sukkot There is an obligation to eat a Kezayit of bread in the Sukkah on the first night of Sukkot.[53] According to many rishonim, there is an obligation to eat a meal in the Sukkah each day and night of Yom Tov.[54]

#### Kiddush

On the first night of Sukkot, one should wait to do Kiddush until after Tzetz HaKochavim. However, after the fact if one made Kiddush during Bein HaShemashot and ate a Kezayit of bread one should make sure to have another Kezayit after Tzetz HaKochavim, but one doesn't need to make another Bracha of LeShev BaSukkah.[55] The order of Kiddush is hagefen, kiddush hayom, leshav ba'sukkah, and then on the first night, shehechiyanu. The reason that leshav follows kiddush hayom is because we only sit in the sukkah due to the sanctity of the day. Also, we delay shehechiyanu until the end in order to ensure that it covers both the kiddush hayom and the sukkah itself.[56] After the fact, if one made Shehecheyanu before Kiddush one fulfilled one's obligation (and one shouldn't go repeat it after Kiddush).[57] According to Ashkenazim, if one didn't sit in the sukkah on the first night but recited kiddush with Shehechiyanu indoors, one should repeat Shehechiyanu the next time one eats in the sukkah even. According to Sephardim, one should not.[58]

If one didn't make a Shehecheyanu on the first night of Sukkot, one can make it the rest of days and nights of Sukkot.[59]

Some Sephardi poskim hold woman shouldn't answer Amen to the bracha of LeShev Bsukkah in the kiddush if they plan to drink wine or grape juice since it could be a hefsek.[60]

#### If it rains the first night of Sukkot

If it rains the first night of Sukkot, According to Ashekenazim, one is not exempt from the Sukkah. Some poskim hold that one should wait an hour or two for the rain to stop. If it does, one should eat in the Sukkah with a bracha of LeShev Basukkah. But if it doesn't, one should recite Kiddush and eat a kezayit of bread in the Sukkah without the bracha of LeShev Basukkah.[61] Other poskim hold that one may say Kiddush in the Sukkah without waiting for the rain to stop.[62] If the weather forecast is that there is supposed to be rain all night, even according to Ashkenazim, it isn't necessary to wait any amount of time and it is fine to immediately make Kiddush without the bracha of LeShev Basukkah and eat a kezayit of bread in the Sukkah.[63] When eating a kezayit of bread in the Sukkah and then going inside, a person should eat a little bit of bread inside so that he can recite birkat hamazon inside.[64] According to Sephardim, one is exempt from the Sukkah and one should eat in the house.[65] However, if one wants to be strict one may wait a little bit for the rain to stop but one should not wait too long which would cause oneself pain on Yom Tov. If after eating the house the rains stops then if it's before chatzot (halachic midnight) one should go into the Sukkah to eat one kezayit of bread and make LeShev Basukkah and if it's after chatzot one shouldn't recite the bracha of LeShev unless one eats a kebeytzah of bread.[66]

If one recited Kiddush and ate a keyazit of bread in the Sukkah while it was raining and then one wakes up in the middle of the night and sees that it is not raining, some poskim hold that one does not have to get up to eat in the Sukkah.[67] while others hold that one should get up to eat more than a kebeytzah of bread in the Sukkah.[68]

If it rains the second night of Sukkot If it rains the second night of Sukkot, according to Ashkenazim, it isn't necessary to wait to see if the rain is going to stop. He should just recite Kiddush inside and at the end of the meal eat a kezayit of bread in the Sukkah, even if the rain has not yet stopped. If it is still raining he should not recite LeShev Basukkah. If afterwards it stopped

raining he should return to the Sukkah to eat more than a Kebeytzah with a bracha of LeShev Basukkah. This is the strict halacha, however, some poskim hold that it is proper even on the second night to wait a little bit to see if the rain is going to stop.[69] Some poskim argue that it isn't necessary to sit in the rain in the Sukkah on the second day of Sukkot. If someone wants to be strict they may eat a kezayit of bread in the Sukkah in the middle or end of the meal.[70]

**Kiddush During the Day** According to Ashkenazim, if one plans to eat mezonot products after reciting the daytime kiddush he should recite leshav ba'sukkah before drinking the wine.[71] According to Sephardim, no leshav is recited for mezonot.[72] Regarding one who plans on eating bread after the daytime kiddush, some recite leshav before drinking the wine, whereas others recite leshav only before eating the bread.[73] According to Sephardim, it is proper to stand for Kiddush. The Ashkenazic practice, however, is to sit.[74] **Lighting Candles in the Sukkah** Ideally the Yom Tov candles should be lit where they are going to eat. That is, the Sukkah. However, if there is any concern that it might cause a fire one should just have electric lights in the Sukkah and light the candles indoors in the kitchen or bedroom where they can be enjoyed on Yom Tov.[75] Even though women are exempt from eating in the Sukkah the mitzvah of lighting Yom Tov candles, nonetheless women have the initial right to light the candles instead of having the men light.[76]

**Sources** 3. Chazon Ovadyah pg 132 4. Mishna Brurah 639:24 5. There is a dispute in Gemara Sukkah 11b whether the Sukkot that Jews sit in are in commemoration of actual sukkot that Bnei Yisrael sat in in the desert or the Ananei Hakavod (clouds of glory) that God gave us for protection. The Tur 625:1 writes that the Sukkot are in commemoration of the Ananei Hakavod and the Jews sit in the Succa specifically in the winter (instead of when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt) to show that even though the norm is to move back into your house for the winter, we move outside to fulfill G-d's will. The Bach 625:1 s.v. BaSukkot says that the fact that the Tur wrote this indicates that one hasn't fulfilled one's mitzva completely if while sitting in the Sukkah one didn't remember the exodus from Egypt (Yetziyat Mitzrayim) since the pasuk states explicitly that the mitzvah of Sukkot is to remind us of the exodus. The Mishna Brurah 625:1 writes that one should have the intent that Hashem commanded us to sit in Sukkot in order to remember the exodus from Egypt (Yetziyat Mitzrayim) and that the Sukkot are in commemoration for the clouds of glory. □ See also the Tur 417 who quotes his brother regarding the connection between Sukkot and Yacov Avinu. See more about that idea on [dailyhalacha.com](http://dailyhalacha.com). 6. The Pri Megadim (A" A Intro to Siman 625) writes that this is only in order to do the mitzvah in it's best way, however, after the fact even without the intent one has still fulfilled one's obligation as long as one had the intent to fulfill the mitzvah (as part of the concept that mitzvot need kavana). Chazon Ovadyah (Sukkot pg 97) and Mishna Brurah (625:1) agree with the Pri Megadim, unlike the Bikkurei Yaakov (625:3) who holds that one doesn't fulfill one's obligation at all without the proper intent. Rav Shternbuch in Moadim UZmanim (vol 1 pg 169) writes that although lacking the Kavanna doesn't take away the mitzvah, however, one still loses the separate mitzvah of having kavannah.

11. Shulchan Aruch 640:3 based on Mishna Sukkah 25a. 12. Mishnah Sukkah 28b 13. Mishna Brurah 639:38 based on Rashi Sukkah 29a "viyardu." Ritva Sukkah 29a "Tannu Rabanan," writes that one is not required to eat in the sukkah if there are rain-clouds in the sky and it appears as if it is going to rain. Rav Shalom Schwadron in Daat Torah OC 639:5 says that most poskim don't accept this opinion but he is in doubt if you can recite a beracha in such a situation. 14. Shevet Hakehati 1:199 15. Shulchan Aruch 640:4, Rama 639:2, 639:5, and 640:4 ... 53. The Rabbis in the Mishna (Sukkah 27a) hold that there is an obligation to eat in the Sukkah on the first night and afterwards it is optional to eat in the Sukkah. The gemara explains that the reason for the Rabbis is that there is a gezerah shava between Sukkot and Pesach and just like there is an obligation to eat Matzah on the first night of Pesach, so too there is an obligation to eat bread on the first night of Sukkot. This is codified by the Rambam (Sukkah 6:7) and Shulchan Aruch

639:3. 54. The Gemara Brachot 49b states that on Yom Tov one would have to repeat Birkat HaMazon if one forgot to say Yaaleh VeYavo because there is an obligation to eat a meal. The rishonim point out that this seems to be at odds with the gemara Sukkah 27a which says that it is optional to have a meal on Sukkot other than on the first night. □ Some rishonim answer that there is an obligation to eat a meal each day and night of Yom Tov because of Yom Tov, but the obligation unique to the Sukkah is just the first night. If so, what's the difference between the obligation to eat a meal due to the fact that it is Yom Tov and the obligation to eat a because of the Sukkah? Rabbenu Yehuda (Tosfot Brachot 49b s.v. Iy) answers that if it rains and one has to eat inside, if the obligation is just because of Yom Tov one would fulfill one's obligation. However, if the obligation is because of the Sukkah one would have to eat in the Sukkah anyway after the rain stops. The Rosh (Brachot 7:23) quotes Rabbenu Yehuda with a slight discrepancy; he states that one should eat one's meal in the rain as opposed to waiting until the rain stops. □ Some rishonim argue that there is no obligation to eat in the Sukkah if it rains outside and the first night is no different. Such is the opinion of the Rashba (responsa 4:78) and Raavad (cited by Kol Bo 87 and Beit Yosef 639:3). According to the Trumat HaDeshen (Pesakim n. 160), the Smag (Asin 43), and Or Zarua 2:301 also agree. S"A 639:3-5 rules like the Rashba that one is not obligated to eat in the Sukkah besides the first night and one is not obligated to eat in the Sukkah on the first night if it rains. Chazon Ovadia (p. 100 and 122) rules like S"A in both instances. □ However, the Magen Avraham (188:7 and 639:10) and Mishna Brurah 639:23 hold that one is obligated to eat in the sukkah each day and night of Sukkot. Also, the Rama 639:5 rules that one is obligated to eat in the sukkah on the first night if it rains. □ Alternatively, the Ritva (Sukkah 27a s.v. VeShiur) quotes his Rebbe as explaining that while one can fulfill the regular Yom Tov meal by eating a Kezayit of bread outside the Sukkah, the first night meal needs to be eaten in the Sukkah even if it is only a Kezayit. The Tur 639:3 agrees. This opinion is also cited by the Ran (Sukkah 12b s.v. Matnitin). Accordingly, one would be obligated to eat a meal each day and night of Yom Tov. □ Other rishonim answer simply that the Gemara Brachot which said that it is an obligation to eat a meal on Yom Tov was only referring to the first nights of Pesach and Sukkot. However, there's no obligation to eat a bread meal the rest of the days of Pesach and Sukkot. This is the opinion of the Tosfot (Sukkah 27a s.v. Iy), Rashba (Brachot 49b s.v. Tefillah and responsa 3:287), and Smag (Asin 43). 55. Rama 639:3 writes that one make sure not to eat until nighttime. Mishna Brurah 639:25 explains that this is based on the connection between Pesach and Sukkot and by Matzah one may only eat at night as it says in the *ר'ב*. Mishna Brurah continues that after the fact if one ate one should eat another Kezayit but not make another LeShev BaSukkah because of Safek Brachot LeHakel. Nitei Gavriel (Sukkot 38:12) extends the Rama to not even making Kiddish before nighttime. Yalkut Yosef (Moadim pg 138) agrees with the above halachot. 56. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 643:1, Mishna Brurah 643:1, Chazon Ovadia Sukkot pg. 95 57. Mishna Brurah 643:3 58. The Ran (Sukkah 22a s.v. VeIm) cites the Raavad who says that if one didn't eat in the sukkah on the first night and said shehechiyanu indoors, one should say shehechiyanu the next time one eats in the sukkah for the sukkah itself. This is codified by the Rama 641:1. Chazon Ovadia (p. 127), however, is concerned for the Bach (responsa 132) who argues that the bracha of shehechiyanu can exempt a mitzvah even if it isn't present when the bracha was made. Seemingly, this is only relevant for the Rama under extenuating circumstances. See Eliyah Rabba 641:2. 59. Magen Avraham 643:1, Mishna Brurah 643:2, Chazon Ovadyah (pg. 95) 60. Rav Dovid Yosef (Mitzvat Yeshiva Bsukkah 5781 min 9) citing his father, Rav Ovadia Yosef 61. Rama 639:5, Mishna Brurah 639:35 □ Practically, the Rama 639:5 writes, that if it rains one should remain in the sukkah for kiddush and eating of the first kezayit of bread. □ However, the Gra (639:3), in explaining the opinion of Tosfot, writes that eating in the sukkah while it is raining is worthless since it isn't considered a sukkah. Rather one should eat in the sukkah after it stops raining. □ Accordingly, the Tzalach (Brachot 49b) writes that a person should wait an

hour or two for the rain to stop so that one can eat in the sukkah after it stops raining. The Mishna Brurah 639:35 agrees. □ However, the Shvut Yaakov 3:45 (cited by Shaarei Teshuva 639:13) writes vehemently against those who would wait until midnight to start the meal to wait for the rain to stop. He explains that either one is exempt from the sukkah altogether, like S"A, or one should eat in the sukkah while it is raining, but waiting to eat only detracts from simchat Yom Tov. □ Chachmat Shlomo 639:5 writes that one is usually exempt from sitting in the Sukkah when it is raining because doing so would be causing oneself pain. On the first night, however, since it is a mitzvah to eat in the sukkah, that in and of itself is a reason why it would be considered an enjoyment and not a pain to eat in the rain. □ **Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky ("Eating In The Succah The first Night Of Succos and Hilchos Mitztaer" min 30-3)** quotes Rabbi Mordechai Willig as having ruled that if it rains on the first night of Sukkot one may say Kiddush in the Sukkah without waiting for the rain to stop. Similarly, Rav Hershel Schachter ("Inyonei Sukkos 2" min 51-2) said that if it is raining the minhag is to say Kiddush without leshev ba'sukkah, eat a kezayit of bread in the sukkah, and then if it stops raining have another kezayit in the sukkah. 62. Rabbi Tzvi Sobolovsky in a shiur on yutorah.org (min 30-3) quotes Rabbi Mordechai Willig as having ruled that if it rains on the first night of Sukkot one may say Kiddush in the Sukkah without waiting for the rain to stop. 63. Rav Hershel Schachter (Teshuva Tishrei 5784) 64. Rav Hershel Schachter (Teshuva Tishrei 5784) 65. Shulchan Aruch 639:3-5 rules like the Rashba that one is not obligated to eat in the Sukkah besides the first night and one is not obligated to eat in the Sukkah on the first night if it rains. Chazon Ovadia (p. 100 and 122) rules like Shulchan Aruch in both instances. 66. Yalkut Yosef (Moadim pg 140), Chazon Ovadyah (Sukkot pg 122) 67. Mishna Brurah 639:36 68. Rabbi Tzvi Sobolovsky in a shiur on yutorah.org (min 30-5) quotes Rabbi Mordechai Willig as having ruled that if it rains on the first night of Sukkot and one ate in the Sukkah, and then fell asleep, if one wakes up and sees that it stopped raining, one should get up and eat a Kezayit in the Sukkah in order to be certain that one fulfilled this mitzvah deoritta. Rav Hershel Schachter (Teshuva Tishrei 5784) agrees that he should eat again in the Sukkah. He adds that someone who woke up should even wake others up in order to fulfill this mitzvah. 69. Mishna Brurah 639:36. In Shaar Hatziyun 639: 71 he cites Magen Avraham who is lenient not to require sitting in the Sukkah at all on the second day if it is raining, but rejects that opinion because Radvaz and Eliya Rabba argue that the second day is like the first day for this matter. 70. Magen Avraham 639:15, Shulchan Aruch Harav 639:19, Aruch Hashulchan 639:18 71. Mishna Brurah 643:9 72. Chazon Ovadia p. 134 73. Mishna Brurah 643:9 74. The Rambam (Sukkah 6:12) writes that one should stand for kiddush and then sit for the bracha of leshev ba'sukkah. The Maggid Mishna explains that the Rambam held that one should recite the bracha immediately prior to fulfilling the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah. The Raavad, however, argues that the bracha is really made upon the eating and so it should be said sitting before eating. The Maggid Mishna and Rosh (Sukkah 4:3) agree with the Raavad and explain that the language of 'leshev ba'sukkah' doesn't refer to literally sitting but to dwelling as per the pasuk "BaSukkot Teshvu". Shulchan Aruch 643:2 holds the Rambam and Rama like the Raavad. 75. Mateh Efraim 625:33 writes that the candles should be lit in the sukkah. Chazon Ovadia (Sukkot p. 207) writes that the candles can be lit indoors if there's any concern of danger. Responsa Maamer Mordechai 4:12 clarifies that the candles can be lit in the kitchen or bedroom but the woman should be sure to benefit from them during the night and not just leave them in the kitchen and go somewhere else. Aseh Lecha Rav 2:42 agrees. 76. Chazon Ovadia (Sukkot p. 213) ...

TorahWeb.org via Thu, Sep 28, 3:55 PM

**Rabbi Mordechai Willig Simchas Yom Tov: When, Then and Now**

I. The Eighth Day

"You shall rejoice in your festival... you shall be only (ach) joyous" (Devarim 16:14,15). Rashi cites the Gemara (Sukkah 48a) that the second

command adds that the mitzva of simcha applies to the night of Shmini Atzeres as well. What about the day of Shmini Atzeres? Rashi (48a) explains that one must offer shelamim on the seventh day in order to eat its meat on the eighth night, so certainly (kal vachomer) he must eat the meat the eighth day, since the main (ikar) simcha is during the day.

However, in Pesachim (71a) Rashi states that the mitzva of simcha is limited to the eating of the shelamim meat, applies only to the eighth night, and the eighth day is excluded from this mitzva, as the Torah says twice (Vayikra 23:40, Devarim 16:15) regarding simcha, "seven days". How can this contradiction in Rashi be resolved? This question was raised by the Maharsha (Sukkah 42b).

Rav Bezalel Zolty (Mishnas Ya'avetz, Orach Chaim 41:2) resolves the seeming contradiction answers based on a dispute regarding shelamim which were slaughtered on erev yom tov (Pesachim 70b-71a). Ulla holds that one does not fulfill the mitzva, because the slaughtering must take place at the time of simcha (zevicha b'shas simcha), i.e. on yom tov itself. Ravin disagrees and maintains that one does fulfill the mitzva because we do not require slaughtering at the time of simcha.

Rav Zolty explains that Rashi in Pesachim is explaining the position of Ulla. The night of Shmini Atzeres is part of the seven days of Sukkos because when it comes to kodshim, a halachic day begins in the morning and continues through the subsequent night (Chulin 83a). As such, the mitzva of simcha begins on the morning of the first day of Sukkos and extends through the night (only) of the eighth day, for a total of seven halachic kodshim days. (It cannot be fulfilled on the first night since, from the perspective of how we count days for purposes of kodshim, Sukkos has not begun yet, nor does it extend to daytime of the eighth day, which is past the seven [kodshim] days that the Torah specified twice. Although the Mishna (Sukkah 48a) states that simcha is observed for eight days, it means that it applies on eight calendar days, from the dawn of the fifteenth of Tishrei until the dawn of the twenty-second.)

Rashi in Sukkos, however, is explaining the position of Ravin. According to Ravin, the eighth night is not an extension of the seven days of Sukkos, rather it is part of the independent mitzva of Shmini Atzeres. Rav Zolty says that the halacha follows Ravin (see Rambam Hilchos Chagiga 2:12 and Hilchos Yom Tov 6:17), and a proof to this is that the Gemara (48a) must have adopted the position of Ravin since it suggests that the word "Ach" comes to include the first night. This presumes, as Rashi explains, Ravin's position that the shelamim can be slaughtered on erev yom tov and eaten on the first night.

## II. Night and/or Day

The Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim 124, 71a) is unsure whether one must eat shelamim meat day and night, or is only once, either during the day or night, enough. The Mishna (Sukkah 42b) states: "Lulav and arava six and seven, Hallel and simcha eight." Six and seven depend on whether the first or last day of Sukkos is on Shabbos, as the Mishna explains. Tosfos (ibid.) asks: simcha is also not always eight days; if the eighth day is motzaei Shabbos, the mitzva is only seven days, since shelamim may not be slaughtered on Shabbos, and if slaughtered on Friday, it may not be eaten beyond the day of Shabbos. The Maharshal asks: given that every Sukkos has a motzaei Shabbos, why did Tosfos ask his question only regarding the eighth night falling out on motzaei Shabbos? Maharshal answers that Tosfos chose the eighth night because it is included (48a) explicitly, but in reality the question applies every year. The Maharsha disagrees, saying that in other years the mitzva can be fulfilled on Sunday during the day, and only when the eighth night is on motzaei Shabbos is there a question, since Tosfos agrees with Rashi in Pesachim that the mitzva does not extend until the eighth day. The Maharsha clearly holds that it is sufficient to eat meat by day, on Sunday in most years. The Chazon Ish's doubt is thus resolved leniently (according to the Maharshal the doubt remains).

One question remains: How do we divide the days? Does the night follow the day as in kodshim, or does the night precede the day as in all other areas of halacha? Perhaps this, too, depends on the dispute between Ulla and

Ravin. According to Ulla, the obligation of simcha is in place for seven twenty four hour days, from dawn of the fifteenth until dawn of the twenty-second, and the days begin and end at dawn, as in kodshim. However, according to Ravin, the obligation of simcha is eight full days, from sunset preceding the fifteenth until sunset of the twenty-second. If so, the day is divided from sunset to sunset, as in all other halachos. As mentioned, the halacha is according to Ravin.

## III. Nowadays

The Rambam (Hilchos Yom Tov 6:17) includes other types of simcha, such as meat and wine, in the biblical mitzva of simcha. Tosfos (Moed Kattan 14b) writes that only shelamim meat is a biblical mitzva, and nowadays simcha is only rabbinic.

Tosfos (Sukkah 42b) answers the question about motzaei Shabbos, when there is no shelamim meat, by citing the Gemara (Pesachim 71a) where Ulla is questioned: when the first day of Sukkos is Shabbos, how does one fulfill simcha? One may not slaughter on Shabbos, and Friday is not bizman simcha. Rav Papa answers: one fulfills the mitzva with clothing and wine. Presumably, this means clothing for women and wine for men (Pesachim 109a). The Rambam adds meat, together with wine.

Tosfos here contradicts the Tosfos in Moed Kattan 14b and maintains that all types of simcha are a biblical mitzva. This contradiction can be answered in the same manner in which Rav Zolty answered the one above. The proof that clothes and wine are a biblical mitzva is only according to Ulla and R. Papa, but the halacha follows Ravin. When the first day of Sukkos is on Shabbos, the mitzva is fulfilled with shelamim meat slaughtered on Friday, and there is no need to say that other forms of simcha are a biblical mitzva. Therefore, l'halacha, Tosfos (Moed Kattan) rules that it is only rabbinic.

The Piskei Teshuvos (530 fn. 63, fn. 73 in 2021 edition) rules that one must eat meat and drink wine twice daily on chol hamoed. According to our analysis, once a day, from sunset to sunset, suffices, and this is the opinion of Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Y.S. Elyashiv as well (cited there). The Piskei Teshuvos (529 fn 99) rules that one should eat red meat, as opposed to chicken. According to the Rambam this is an obligation, while according to the Shulchan Aruch it is a mitzva but not an obligation (Biur Halacha 529:2). If one does not enjoy meat or wine, he should fulfill the mitzva with what he enjoys. Even on Yom Tov itself, eating meat once a day is sufficient. In our home, on Shabbos we eat chicken, on yom tov we eat red meat once each day. On the second night of Shavuos, and the night of Simchas Torah, we eat dairy.

May we soon merit the rebuilt Beis Hamikdash and eating the meat of shelamim and fulfilling the biblical mitzva of simchas yom tov according to all opinions.

## Rav Kook on Succoth: Our Protective Fortress Inbox

Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org> Thu, Sep 28, 12:57 AM (1 day ago) to me

Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser. Rav Kook Torah

### Succoth: Our Protective Fortress

The sukkah booth that we live in during the Succoth holiday is by definition a temporary dwelling. The Sages ruled that a very tall structure, over ten meters high, is invalid as a sukkah because it is a permanent structure. An exposed hut consisting of only two walls and a handbreadth for the third, on the other hand, is perfectly acceptable.

And yet, this rickety booth is our protective fortress. As King David said, "You protect them in a sukkah from the strife of tongues" (Psalms 31:21). Why should such a flimsy structure be a paradigm of protection and safety? The Sukkot of the Great Assembly To better understand the metaphor of the sukkah, we should examine a remarkable Talmudic passage. In Nehemiah 8:17 it states that, from the time of Joshua, the Jewish people had not dwelt in sukkot until the mitzvah was reinstated after their return from the Babylonian exile. How is it possible that this mitzvah was neglected for so many centuries?

The Talmud in Arachin 32b explains that the Jewish people always performed the mitzvah of dwelling in a sukkah. However, the sukkot erected by the Great Assembly in the time of Nehemiah were special sukkot, possessing a protective quality that had not existed since the days of Joshua bin Nun. According to the Talmud, these were not even physical sukkot, but rather a unique spiritual act of Ezra and the Great Assembly: "They prayed and abolished the passion for idolatry, and this merit protected them like a sukkah."

**The Ultimate Fortress** Clearly, the protective aspect of the sukkah is of a spiritual nature. The eternal truth is that the sukkah — purposely defined as a structure so flimsy that it cannot even be called a proper dwelling — is a fortress that protects us from all adversaries and foes. What is it that transforms the exposed sukkah into a shelter and stronghold? Certainly not any of its physical properties. Rather, its source of inner strength is none other than God's word. The sukkah protects us by virtue of the Torah law that declares this structure to be our shelter during the holiday of Succoth. This is an important message for all times, and especially in our generation. We need great courage to return to the land of our fathers and rebuild our national home. Where can we find the moral and spiritual resolve to withstand the challenges of those who oppose our return and deny our right to a homeland in Eretz Yisrael? Like the sukkah dwelling, our national home is based on the spiritual strength of God's eternal word. The most advanced weapons may be able to penetrate the thickest walls, but they cannot prevail over the stronghold of God's word.

This is our fortress, our ultimate shelter of security: God's eternal promise that the Jewish people will return to their land and the House of Israel will be built once again.

**The protective sukkah of the Great Assembly** was the merit provided by their spiritual efforts to abolish the desire for idolatry. Our right to the land of Israel is similarly based, not on our military prowess, but on the moral strength of our eternal covenant with God and the merit of the Torah's mitzvot.

**Beautifying the Law** However, we should not be satisfied with keeping only the minimum requirements of Torah law. Jerusalem was destroyed, the Sages taught, because the judges ruled according to the strict letter of the law. They failed to take into account the spirit of the law and seek a ruling that is both just and compassionate — lifnim mishurat ha-din (Baba Metzi'ah 30b).

The mitzvah of sukkah is based on Divine law, but there is an ancient custom to adorn the sukkah with decorated fabrics, fruits, and grains (Sukkah 10a). We should similarly seek to "adorn" the Torah law. We should go beyond the minimum requirements of the Law and aspire to the highest level of God's word, in its purest ethical form. Then we will merit that "David's fallen sukkah" (Amos 9:11), the prophet's metaphor for Jewish sovereignty, will rise again, speedily in our days.

(Silver from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ma'amarei HaRe'iyah vol. I, pp. 149-150) Get your copy today!

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## **HOSHANA RABBA**

### **SHIUR OF RABBI J.B. SOLOVEITCHIK**

BOSTON, 1969

**Transcribed and summarized by Rabbi Dr. Nisson E. Shulman**

I. The Torah commanded that within the precincts of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem the lulav and esrog should be taken on each of the 7 days of Sukkos. Beyond the Temple precincts it was taken in hand only on the first day. The source is Vayikra 23:40, "Ulekachtem lachem bayom harishon pri etz hadar... usemakhtem lifney hashem elokechem shivas yamim." While the lulav commandment seems to apply to the first day alone, our sages interpreted the command of simcha to mean by means of the lulav and esrog. Hence, that commandment was applied to each of the seven days. In the same way, the arava was taken in hand within the Holy Temple on each of the holiday's seven days, but outside its precincts it was taken only on the

seventh day. The source of the arava commandment is the oral tradition (that does not diminish from its authority as a Torah commandment).

In the Beis HaMikdash there was special significance to taking the lulav on the first day and the arava on the seventh day, for only on those days did these respective mitzvot take precedence over the Shabbos. Thus, if Shabbos coincided with the first day, the lulav would be taken in hand. If it coincided with the seventh day, the mitzvah of arava applied. On the other days of the holiday, Shabbos took precedence over both of these mitzvot. The reasoning regarding lulav is obvious, for only on that day were both commands operative, "ulekachtem" and "usemachtem." Thereafter, only the "usemachtem" commandment remained. We do not know why the arava took precedence over the Shabbos on the seventh day (See Sukkah 42b). In the Temple, the commandment of arava was fulfilled in two ways. They would decorate the altar with long aravos, which were so tall that their tops waved over it. At that time they would blow "hatzotzros," the trumpets. They would also, on each day of Sukkos, after fulfilling the mitzvah of the lulav and esrog, put them away and take the arava. We will later discuss what they did with the arava.

II. When the Holy Temple was destroyed, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai decreed that these commandments should remain operative in remembrance, but with this difference, the lulav was maintained for each day of Sukkos except for Shabbos, and the arava applied only on Hoshana Rabba. On Hoshana Rabba, besides decorating the altar, might they also have taken the arava in hand while marching around it seven times? Otherwise, how can we consider the arava a remembrance of the Temple? What possible commemoration can there be for the decoration of the altar? However, if in the Beis HaMikdash we had marched around the altar with the arava as well, then by our marching around the Sefer Torah on the bima today, we do, indeed, reflect the practice in the Temple. [It appears that arava on Hoshana Rabba was considered an even more important performance than the commandment of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, for the Talmud discusses organizing the calendar in such a way that Hoshana Rabba does not fall on Shabbos (See Sukkah 43b). It has no such discussion in connection with the shofar, which is not blown when Shabbos comes out on Rosh Hashanah. We do not know why Hoshana Rabba has so much prominence.] Rav Yoseph (Sukkah 43b) questions the premise that today arava on Hoshana Rabba is in commemoration of the practice in the Beis HaMikdash, for that could only be true if arava in the Mikdash was taken in hand (netilah), and with it we marched around the altar. Rav Yoseph holds, however, that all they did in the Mikdash was beautify the altar by means of arava but did not march around the altar with it. Thus our custom of arava on the seventh day has nothing to do with the Beis HaMikdash since there is no longer any altar. As Rashi says; *Vehashta deleka mizbeach, heicha nizkefa?* Abaye questions Rav Yoseph's statement by quoting the Mishnah that they would walk around the altar once every day and seven times on Hoshana Rabba. "Was it not with the arava (in hand)?" This is refuted: "No, the marching around the altar was with the lulav in hand."

The Talmud quotes a controversy on this issue, and concludes that they walked around the altar holding the arava. The Talmud cites an incident that took place in the Holy Temple. Dissident followers of Baitus who objected in principle to the oral tradition, tried to sabotage a Shabbos Hoshana Rabba service by burying the aravos which had been prepared from erev Shabbos under stones which on Shabbos are "muktzeh." Ordinary Jews came the next day, disregarded the prohibition of muktzeh, drew the aravos out from under the stones, and practiced "hibut arava." If the practice of arava was limited to decorating the altar (zekefa) alone, the beraita would not have used the term "hibut arava" which means either shaking or banging. (According to Rashi, the arava was waved in precisely the same fashion as the lulav. It is the Rambam who interprets "hibut" as "banging").

So the opinion of those who claimed that the hakafot were with the lulav in hand and without the arava is rejected. Arava remains with a dual aspect, "zekifa," decorating the altar, and "netila," taking the arava in hand and with it marching around the altar.

III. Rambam, Ch. VII Hilchot Lulav, Halakhah 20-22, has a slightly different view than that described above. He cites the Oral Tradition that in the Mikdash they brought an additional arava besides the one bound with the lulav, and describes how the mitzvah was accomplished. Each of the seven days they would bring branches of arava and stand them up around the altar with their tops bending over it. And while they brought these willow branches, they would blow tekiah, teruah, tekiah (with "hatzotzros," trumpets).

Blowing the trumpets in this fashion made it clear that arava was a fulfillment of a mitzvah (a "kiyum") rooted in the Mikdash itself. In effect, it was a mitzvah that the altar be decorated with aravos, for they blew the "hatzotzros" for those procedures dependent on the Mikdash, such as when they opened and shut the Mikdash gates. Whenever the fulfillment of the mitzvah is related to the sanctuary itself, it required the "hatzotzros." That is why, when they removed the aravos, they would say, "Yofi lecha mizbeach," How beautiful (this practice is for) the altar. If arava were a mitzvah incumbent upon the persona (kiyum gavra), then each person would have to approach the altar and erect an arava. But that was not the way it took place. The priests used to do it on behalf of everyone, for the Halakhah was that the altar had to be decorated with aravos.

When the Rambam describes the practice on those occasions when Shabbos coincided with Hoshana Rabba, however, he mentions two procedures: the erection of the arava decoration around the mizbeach, and the taking of the arava in hand; "ubaim haam venotim mimenu kederech sheosim bechol yom." So apparently the Rambam agrees that there are two "kiyumim" to arava, one relating to the altar, that it be decorated with arava, the other relating to each person requiring him to hold an arava. Yet, when describing the daily practice, he indicates that they marched around the altar with their lulavim rather than with the arava (ibid. 23). Moreover, the Rambam assumes the hakafah must be part of Hallel, since they recited "ana hashem hoshiah na;" this could only apply to lulav. How do you explain this apparent contradiction to the Gemara above? The discussion in the Gemara seems to have rejected this view, holding that every day there was "hakafa" with the arava, not only on Hoshana Rabba. How does the Rambam explain this? Apparently the Rambam held that even though there is a personal requirement (kiyum gavra) of "netilat arava," taking it in hand, this is not fulfilled by "hakafah," making a circuit around the altar. It consists rather of moving the arava, or smiting it ("nanuim" or "hibut") (See 22). Our practice on Hoshana Rabba of striking the arava on the floor (bench) or wall is, according to the Rambam, exactly what they did in the Beis HaMikdash. Just as we smite the arava on the wall or floor without a bracha on Hoshana Rabba, in the Beis HaMikdash they used to do this every day of the holiday. Thus, while according to Rashi, arava in the Temple was waved and held as we marched around the altar, and this is an extension of "netila," according to Rambam "hibut," smiting the arava, is the extension of "netilah." He derives this from the beraita's use of the word "hibut" "She'eyn baytusim modim shehibut haarava doche Shabbat." So, according to Rambam, the circuit of the altar was done only with the lulav, and never with the arava.

IV. Why is the Rambam so insistent about this? If you take the "hakafah" and relegate it to the arava, as Rashi does, then it turns out that arava has two communal "kiyumim" deriving from the altar: 1) that the altar be decorated with arava; 2) that the altar has a procession around it by means of the arava. The lulav is left with only one "kiyum gavra," the personal obligation of "netila," that of taking the lulav (4 minim) in hand, reciting a bracha and moving or waving it. The Rambam agrees that there is a dual aspect of the commandment of arava: one is a "kiyum mizbeach," a communal requirement dependent on the altar, the second is a personal responsibility, a "kiyum gavra." The "kiyum mizbeach" is that it be decorated by means of arava; the second is the personal responsibility of "hibut," that every person take an arava and strike it two or three times on the floor or on the wall.

According to the Rambam there were two aspects of the mitzvah of lulav as well: 1) the individual's requirement to hold the lulav in his hand for each of the seven days (and outside the Temple for the first day), and 2) the

communal requirement, the "kiyum mizbeach" that on all seven days the altar be decorated with lulav, not by standing the lulavim up around the altar (as in the case of arava), but by means of a parade around the altar holding the lulav. For the arava, the medium of beautification of the altar is to erect them around it; for the lulav the medium is to make a circuit of the altar, holding the lulav in hand. This is not our individual duty, but a requirement of the altar and could therefore be performed by the priests on our behalf. It would seem, according to this then, that the mitzvah of "usemachtem" branches out, becoming - after the first day of Sukkos a communal duty expressed by the lulav parade around the altar.

V. Today, we practice hakafah every day of Sukkos by walking around the bima upon which a Sefer Torah is held, making one circuit daily and seven on Hoshana Rabba. The Rambam stresses the custom today of circling the "tevah" and thereby means the Sefer Torah which it contained, so that the "tevah" represents the altar (ibid. 23).

According to Rashi, the whole institution of hakafot on days other than Hoshana Rabba makes no sense, because, according to his view, in Temple times there were no hakafot with the lulav, but only with the arava! Furthermore, the mitzvah of the arava is limited to the seventh day, so why should there be any hakafot altogether on the other days?

According to Rambam, however, it is logical. Circling makes sense on every day of Sukkos since it is not related to the arava but to the lulav with which - in the Temple - they would circle the altar on each day of the holiday. Thus, according to the Rambam, circling with the arava is not done on any other day of Sukkos. The lulav parade each day of Sukkos today is in remembrance of the Temple. On Hoshana Rabba the situation changes, for there is then zecher leMikdash, not only by means of lulav, but by means of arava as well; lulav all the seven days, the arava on Hoshana Rabba, its exclusive day.

VI. On Hoshana Rabba we seek to accommodate both views, that of Rambam and that of Rashi. We circle with the lulav, for according to Rambam, besides the personal obligation of "netilah," taking the lulav, there is a communal obligation that the altar have a parade around it just like on every other day of Sukkos. As far as the mitzvah of arava is concerned, that is fulfilled with "hibut," striking the arava. Rashi, who holds that the circuit on every other day of Sukkos is with the arava, applies that to Hoshana Rabba as well, as a communal responsibility deriving from the altar. He also holds that the arava on Hoshana Rabba is also a personal obligation, fulfilled with "netila." Both Rashi and Rambam agree that on Hoshana Rabba there are seven circuits of the altar.

Rabbi Moses Isserles (Rama) therefore says that on Hoshana Rabba you pick up the arava together with the lulav. The Ari HaKadosh, however, maintains that for reasons rooted in Kabbalah one should not take the lulav and the arava at the same time. That is why on Hoshana Rabba we don't pick up the arava until we have put away the lulav. The four items of the mitzvah, lulav, arava, esrog, hadas, represent the complete name of Hashem of four letters, the Yod, He, Vav and He. This is expressed in the Yehi Ratzon, "Bring nigh each to the other and they should be as One in my hand." This name of G-d represents mercy, loving-kindness, "Hashem Hashem, Kel Rachum veChanan." The arava is "din." That is why the arava should not be held together with the four varieties. (Rav Moshe Soloveitchik and Rav Chaim did, indeed, hold the lulav together with the arava).

VII. There are a number of rulings in the Mikdash that are reflected in current practice. For instance, a mourner does not participate in the hakafot. Some achronim question why a mourner should not participate since he is required to fulfill all commandments. The Gaon explains that it is because hakafah is a mitzvah mizbeach, a communal obligation regarding the mizbeach, and an avel does not send karbanot, and has no access to the mizbeach.

The Mishnah clearly indicates that in the Beis HaMikdash, Hoshana Rabba was the most outstanding day of Sukkos, particularly in relation to the arava. We do not know why this is so, although the Zohar elaborates about Hoshana Rabba in Parshat Noach and Parshat Pinhas. The Ramban, too, in Bamidbar

(Shelach), in connection with the spies, on the passage "His protection was removed from them," indicates that the night of Hoshana Rabba is the last chance to influence our "gezar din," the final decree issued on Yom Kippur. Ramban therefore calls the night of erev Hoshana Rabba "leil hahatima;" no change in our "gezar din" can be made thereafter.

We do not know why the Talmud is silent about this element of Hoshana Rabba. But we do see that on Hoshana Rabba the ceremonial procedure changed in the Beis HaMikdash, and intensified seven-fold.

<https://theyeshiva.net/jewish/2550/sukkos-essay-my-love-will-be-stronger-than-your-defiance?print=1>

### Sukkos Essay

#### My Love Will Be Stronger than Your Defiance We Can All Use a Hug:

#### The Power of the Sukkah

Rabbi YY Jacobson

September 28, 2023 | 13 Tishrei 5784

A Gift to a Mother

Three sons left home, went out on their own, and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our mother." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You know how Mom enjoys the Bible, and you know she can't see very well. I sent her a brown parrot that can recite the entire Bible. It took 12 years to teach him. I had to spend \$100,000 a year for 10 years, but it was worth it. Mom just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot will recite it." Soon thereafter, Mom sent out her letters of thanks: "Milton," she wrote, to her first son, "The house you built is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house." "Marvin," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel. I stay home all the time, so I never use the Mercedes. And the driver is so boring!" "Dearest Melvin," she wrote to her third son, "You were the only son to have the good sense to know what your mother likes. That chicken was delicious."

**Anatomy of a Sukkah** For the past three millennia, during the seven days of the joyous festival of Sukkos, we eat, drink, feast, schmuez, relax, read, and sleep in a temporary structure, or hut, known as a Sukkah. This structure consists of walls and a roof composed of material that grew from the ground, like bamboo, straw, or branches. How many walls does the Sukkah require? Jewish law states that a Sukkah must have two complete walls plus a third wall that may even be one handbreadth long (1). If your Sukkah has three or four complete walls, that's wonderful; but the minimum requirement is two walls and a tiny piece of a third wall. Why does the law dictate this exact requirement for the Sukkah walls (2)? And what really is the spiritual and psychological significance of spending seven days in a hut on your porch or backyard?

**Anatomy of an Embrace** Two extraordinary Jewish thinkers, the Arizal, Rabbi Isaac Luria (3) and Rabbi Schnuer Zalman of Liadi (4) turn our attention to the affectionate words uttered by the Bride in the Song of Songs (5), "His left arm lay under my head and His right arm embraces me." These words address (6), in metaphorical prose, two distinct moments in the relationship between G-d the Groom and His people, the bride. During the "days of awe," Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, G-d's "left arm," as it were, lay under the head of the Jewish people. The left side represents in Kabbalah introspection, awe, discipline, and discernment, and this is the primary theme of the days of awe. Sukkos, on the other hand, described in the Torah as "the time of our joy," constitutes the point during the year when "G-d's right arm embraces me." The right arm represents, in Kabbalah, love, and kindness. Take a look at any of your arms, says Rabbi Isaac Luria, and you will notice its division into three distinct sections, each one usually extending in a different direction. The first is the arm itself, from the shoulder to the elbow; the second is the forearm, from the elbow to the wrist; and the third section is from the wrist to the edge of the fingers. Now, take a good look at your Sukkah and you will notice a "right arm's embrace." The first complete wall represents a Divine embrace from the "shoulder" to the "elbow"; the second

wall reflects the embrace of the "forearm" and the third tiny wall symbolizes the palm embrace.

Rabbi Isaac Luria takes this a step further. He explains that these three dimensions of an arm's embrace encompass three distinct parts of the body being embraced. When you embrace another person, explains Rabbi Chaim Vital (7) quoting his teacher Rabbi Isaac Luria, the highest part of the arm (between the shoulder and the elbow) encompasses the entire left waist of the one being embraced. The middle part of the person's arm, the forearm, expands over the entire width of the embraced person's back. Finally, the palm and the fingers extend even further and cover only a small part of the face of the embraced one, a handbreadth of the face. The same is true concerning the Sukkah "embrace." The first two walls represent G-d's light embracing the left waist and the back of the human being dwelling in the Sukkah. The third wall of the Sukkah symbolizes the Divine energy embracing a small part of the Jew's face. (If you have a Sukkah of three or four complete walls, the hug is, of course, an all-embracing one, encircling your back and your face.) This is the language of Kabbalah, written in codes and metaphors. But how can we apply these anthropomorphic descriptions in a visceral and practical way? I will present the explanation presented by Chabad Chassidus into this insight by the Arizal.

**How Do You Express Love?** There are different ways we express love (8). The first is through words of affection. The three simple words "I love you," when uttered sincerely, may have a transforming impact on another life. Words of affection express our inner emotive experience. A second, more powerful expression of love is a kiss. A genuine kiss captures an intense feeling that may not be grasped in words. Words can state, "I love you," while a kiss declares, "I love you more than I will ever be able to tell you how much I love you." A third, perhaps even more powerful expression of love comes in the form of a gaze. Two people in love can gaze at each other for long periods of time without uttering a sound. The sound of a silent gaze is sometimes louder than a thundering outpouring of love. There is something of your soul that you can communicate to another human being exclusively through your eyes (9). A fourth universally accepted method of expressing love is by means of an embrace. A genuine hug embodies a profound bond existing between the two people embracing each other.

**Dissecting the Hug** In Jewish mysticism, the diverse methods of communicating love represent different qualities of love. In the former three methods, the love is toward the face of the beloved one. You speak to one's face, you kiss one's cheeks or lips, and you gaze at one's eyes. In contrast, the target of an embrace is the nape and back of the one being embraced. That is not a coincidence. There are two forms of love, reciprocal and unconditional. The first is directed to the face of the beloved one; the second is directed to the back of the beloved. I may love you because of what I receive in return for my relationship with you. Your wisdom, passion, depth, empathy, sensitivity, candidness, humor, beauty, talents, humor, values, etc. -- qualities expressed in and through your face, your eyes, ears, mouth, and general look -- enrich me. I love you because of these or other tremendous qualities that you bring to my life. This is the type of love primarily communicated in words of affection, in a kiss, or in a silent, romantic gaze, all of them directed toward the face of the beloved one, the primary location of reciprocity. When I express my attachment to you in these three or other forms, I am essentially stating that I cherish you because of your face, because of your qualities and virtues that enrich the caliber of my life. Without you, life for me is that much more empty, boring, and directionless. This love is deep and powerful, but it is conditional. As long as you are here for me, I am here for you. In essence, I love you because I love myself, and you make my "self" so much deeper and happier.

Yet there is a love demonstrated in an embrace, in which my arms encircle your back. You may turn your back on me, but I won't stop hugging you. You may not give me anything in return for my love; you may even want me out of your life, but I still love you with all my heart, because my soul loves your soul. My core is one with your core. We see it with parents and children. All healthy parents love their children but sometimes the love (at

least on a conscious level) is dependent upon "nachas," the delight and pleasure my child gives me in return for my nurture. What happens in those situations when your child turns his or her back on you (usually because of trauma and emotional neglect)? It becomes very difficult for many parents to maintain the same level of intense love and connection. "He's spitting in the face of all my values, how can I show love? She is showing such disdain for her upbringing, how can I accept her?"

That's the secret of the hug. It is the freedom and the courage to transcend the need for reciprocity. I can show my child, or another child, that affection knows no limits. I love not only your face but also your back. Even as you turn your back on me, I will hold you tightly in my grip and not let go. You may not be interested in me, but I am forever connected to you. That is why the hug is the only form of love that does not allow the beloved one to escape your embrace. When I utter words of love to you, when I gaze at you, even when I kiss you, I am not holding on to you; if you want to move away from me, it's your choice. But when I embrace you, even if you wish to escape my embrace, you remain "gripped" in my embrace; I won't let you tear yourself away from me. This is not a coincidence. According to the Chassidic masters, this is the essence of a hug: You may want to run away from me, but I will never run away from you. My love will prove stronger than your defiance. In a way, it is only when my child defies me that I can prove to him or her that my love is more powerful than his or her defiance and it is then that I can heal his or her attachment wounds. When your loved one turns his back on you, you are being given a gift: the opportunity to embrace them with their defiance and their emotional wounds. This can become the greatest source of healing for both of you.

**Hugging Your Child** That is why children appreciate so profoundly the embrace of their primary caregivers. Children enjoy being spoken to. They certainly take pleasure from being kissed (at least sometimes) and being looked upon with tender affection. Children need to be seen and noticed. Yet, more than anything, most children, especially infants, cherish being hugged. When our children hurt themselves or break out in tears, they come running to their parents for a big and long hug to calm them down and restore their confidence. When children contract a "booboo" of any form, they need to be soothed and made to feel safe, and secure. The hug, when done genuinely, makes a statement: "Your value is not dependent upon being perfect and impeccable. I love you unconditionally because of who you are and not because of what you achieve."

**The Holiday of Talking, Kissing, Gazing, and Hugging** All of the Jewish holidays are about the expression of love. Pesach is the holiday focused on speech (Peh Sach, means a speaking mouth. The mitzvah of Passover is to tell the story to your child verbally). G-d shows His love through words. Shavuos is the Divine kiss, communicated through the Torah, his inner breath. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur represent the Divine gaze (they are known as the time of "Yirah," awe, the same letters as the word "Reiyah," gazing). That is why they are days of awe and introspection: When the Kings of Kings gazes right at your soul, your soul feels it, and it is stirred. But on Sukkos, G-d embraces us. It is time for the infinite hug.

What exactly is the Mitzvah of Sukkah? What do you do in the Sukkah? Whatever you do at home, you do in the Sukkah for seven days, and it becomes a Mitzvah. So you eat, drink, chat, relax, hang out, read, meet people, nap, and sleep in your Sukkah -- all mundane endeavors. The core of the mitzvah is that whenever you do at home, when you do the same thing on Sukkos inside the Sukkah it is a Mitzvah, a holy act, a Divine connection. I'm reading the paper, chatting with a friend, taking a stroll, or drinking orange juice in the Sukkah, and it is a Mitzvah. It's not about what you are doing, but where you are doing it. The most physically mundane act performed inside the walls of the Sukkah is defined in Judaism as a medium through which we craft a relationship with the Creator.

G-d is whispering this message via the walls of the Sukkah: I love you in the totality of your being. I am crazy about every part and aspect of your life. Like a mom who kvels as she watches her infant eating or taking a nap, just because this is her beloved child, so too does G-d cherish us eating, relaxing,

or resting in the Sukkah. The walls of the Sukkah capture the love that has no conditions, no qualifications, and no boundaries. As you enter the walls of G-d's embrace, your back is as cherished as your face. G-d says: I love you the way you are and in every facet of your being. This is the Divine whisper shared by the walls of the Sukkah: My child, you are in my grip of love. Never ever will I let go of you. Even if you do not believe in Me, and even if you do not believe in yourself, I will never stop believing in you. Sustaining the Embrace

The purpose of each Jewish holiday is to create an awareness that endures throughout the entire year. The "hug" displayed to us by G-d on Sukkos is meant to carry us through the entire year, to recall how meaningful and powerful every moment and experience of our lives is. "In all your ways know Him," says King Solomon in Proverbs (10). Because really, there is no mundane aspect in your life. G-d takes it all in. He loves it all. (11) Footnotes 1) Sukkah 6b; Rambam Hilchos Sukkah 4:2; Tur and Schulchan Aruch Orach Chaim section 630. 2) The Talmud ibid. derives this law from a biblical source. Here we will present the spiritual and psychological dimension of the law, based on the ancient axiom that each law and Mitzvah in the Torah and in the Talmud contains many layers of understanding. Not only are these multitude of interpretations not contradictory to each other, they actually evolve from each other and enrich each other. 3) Known as the Arizal. He is considered one of the greatest mystics in Jewish history, he lived in Jerusalem, Egypt, and finally passed away in Sefad in 1572, after teaching kabbalah for two years and revolutionizing the landscape of Jewish mysticism. 4) Known as the "Elder Rebbe," The Rav, or the Baal Htanya. The founder of Chabad Chassidus, he was considered one of the greatest Jewish leaders and personalities of his day. He passed away on 24 Teves, 1812 while escaping Napoleon's army. 5) 2:6. 6) Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Chag Hasukkos chapter 4. Likkutei Torah Derushim LeSukkos pp. 78-79; 82d; 84a-b; 87a. Cf. Or Hatorah Derushim LeSukkos pp. 1762-3. 7) Pri Eitz Chaim ibid. 8) See Likkutei Diburim (from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch) vol. 1, opening discourse. 9) See Midrash Rabah Song of Song 1:15, explaining the words "Your eyes are like those of a dove." 10) Proverbs 3:6 11) This essay is based on the works of Rabbi Schnuer Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe (Likkutei Torah and Or Hatorah ibid. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 418 and other sources). Cf. essay by Rabbi Yoel Kahn in Beor Hachasidus (published by Heichal Menachem, Brooklyn, NY)

### Tidbits - Succos 5784 Inbox

**Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> Thu, Sep 28, 9:29 AM (15 hours ago) to me

#### Succos 5784

One should assist the poor to ensure that all of Klal Yisrael have their Yom Tov needs. Otherwise, one's own Mitzvas Simchas Yom Tov is considered severely deficient • Constructing the Succah is a mitzvah and one should involve himself in the process. Some say that the s'chach must be placed on the succah by a Jew who is over bar mitzvah. One should not hang light fixtures or ornaments four tefachim (approximately 14 inches) beneath the s'chach, if people will be sitting beneath these areas • The Yom Tov candles should preferably be lit in the succah, or in a place visible from the succah. As a new fire may not be lit on Yom Tov, a two-day candle is commonly lit before Yom Tov to have a source for Hadlakas Neiros on the second night • There is a mitzvah to be b'simcha and to ensure the simcha of one's family throughout the days of Yom Tov. Be sure to show appreciation for all those who helped prepare for your Yom Tov. Also, one should take the opportunity on Erev Yom Tov to call one's parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a Chag Sameach. Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Kiddushin 47 • Yerushalmi: Kilayim 76 • Mishnah Yomis: Megillah 4:8-9. The Siyum on Megillah is on the first day of Yom Tov, Mazal Tov! Moed Katan begins next • Oraysa - Next week: Yoma 13b-16a

Succos begins on Friday night and the first day of Yom Tov is also Shabbos. All Shabbos restrictions regarding cooking and carrying (outside an eruv) are in effect. The Daled Minim are not taken on Shabbos and are considered

muktzeh • The berachah at hadlakas neiros is “L’hadlik ner shel Shabbos v’shel Yom Tov” • An abridged Kabbalas Shabbos is said. The additions for Shabbos are added in Shemoneh Esrei • The Yud Gimmel Middos before Kerias Hatorah are omitted. Kerias Hatorah is divided into seven aliyos (instead of five). Kah Keli is not recited before Mussaf. The special supplications during Bircas Kohanim are omitted • Seudah Shelishis should be eaten before tesha sha’os (the end of the halachic 9th hour of the day [midpoint between chatzos hayom and shekiya]). Many fulfill seudah shelishis through splitting up the day meal (Bircas hamazon is recited after a course or two, followed by a halachic break [e.g. by taking a walk] and then washing again for bread and completing the meal) • One may not prepare on the first day of Succos for the second night of Yom Tov. As such, preparations for the second night of Yom Tov may not begin until nightfall (tzeis hakochavim) and reciting baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lakodesh for motzaei shabbos. Vatodieinu is added to Shemoneh Esrei on the second night of Yom Tov. Kiddush on the second night includes Havdalah for Motzaei Shabbos (Yakneha”z). As a flame may not be extinguished on Yom Tov, using the regular Havdalah candle is impractical. Therefore, many use a special two-wicked “Yaknehab” candle. (Holding two candles together to join their flames and then separating them may be problematic halachically. Others maintain that there is no absolute need to have a double candle for this berachah.) For all days and nights of Succos yaalehveyavo is added in shemoneh esrei and bircas hamazon. One who omits yaalehveyavo during shemoneh esrei must repeat shemoneh esrei. With regards to bircas hamazon, a man who omits yaalehveyavo in bircas hamazon on Yom Tov must repeat bircas hamazon; a woman does not repeat. During Chol HaMoed however, neither need to repeat bircas hamazon.

There is an obligation on the first two nights of Yom Tov (after tzeis hakochavim) to eat a kezayis of bread (preferably a k’beitza) within k’dei achilas pras (within 2-4 minutes) in a succah. One should have in mind that he is sitting in the succah as a remembrance for both Yitziyas Mitzrayim - our redemption from Egypt - as well as the Ananei HaKavod - the clouds of glory that protected the Jewish nation in the desert. In the event of rain, one should delay the meal to an extent, while bearing in mind the Simchas Yom Tov of his family members and guests. If the rain does not abate, one should go out to his uncovered succah - despite the rain - and recite Kiddush. Shehecheyanu is recited, but not the berachah of Leishev when it is raining. He should then wash and eat the required amount of bread, after that he may continue the meal inside the house. On the second night, many Poskim are more lenient and allow one to eat his meal inside without waiting, and then eat the required amount in the succah if the rain lets up. On both nights, if after fulfilling the obligation in the rain, the rain stops, one must return outside again to eat another halachic shiur. However, if one already retired for the night, he is exempt from this. Aside from the obligatory mitzvah of the first two nights, generally, one who was forced to eat his meal indoors may continue the meal there even if the rain stops. On the first two nights, one should have in mind that the berachah of Shehecheyanu should apply to the Chag as well as to the mitzvah of Succah. When reciting Shehecheyanu, Rabbi Zlotowitz z”l would look at his family and guests gathered around the table and count his blessings, utilizing the opportunity to sincerely express gratitude to Hashem. During Kiddush on the first night of Yom Tov, the berachah of Leishev BaSuccah is recited prior to Shehecheyanu. Many reverse this order on the second night. Ashkenazim have the practice of making a berachah of Leishev when eating a k’beitza of mezonos; Sephardim require a larger amount. One who forgets to make the berachah before eating may still do so until he leaves the succah. One who made the berachah while the succah was pasul (e.g. the s’chach was covered) must repeat the berachah. It is questionable whether to make a berachah of Leishev BaSuccah during Havdalah. One may obviate the uncertainty by partaking in some mezonos along with the Havdalah wine, as the berachah of Leishev is then surely required. One should establish the succah as a comfortable place to eat, learn Torah and spend time over Yom Tov. One must be careful with the holiness of the Succah and treat it with respect.

Dirty plates, trash, etc., should be removed soon after use. Additionally, one should also take care that his speech and conversation are appropriate for the place of ‘Hashem’s shade’. If the wind blows off a section of s’chach on Yom Tov in a way that some of the succah is still Kosher, one may fix it with a shinui. Alternatively, one may ask assistance from a non-Jew. Decorations that fall down on Shabbos or Yom Tov are muktza (machmas mitzvah), and should only be handled indirectly.

The Daled Minim are not taken on Shabbos and are considered muktza. When taking the Daled Minim, one positions the Lulav with the shedra (the spine of lulav where the middle leaves rise from) facing him, the Hadassim on the right and the Aravos on the left. These species must be bound together; many use a keishekel (woven holder made of Lulav leaves). Rings made of Lulav leaves are placed around the Lulav. The highest ring on the Lulav should be a tefach (3.54 inches) lower than the top of the shedrah. The top of the branches (not the top of the leaves) of the Hadassim should reach a tefach below the shedrah of the lulav, and the branch tops of the Aravos (not the top of the leaves) should reach slightly below the Hadassim branches • One should be careful to avoid the melachah of tying on Yom Tov when assembling or adjusting his Daled Minim • On the first two days of Yom Tov, one must be in (halachic) possession of the Daled Minim he will be using. Therefore, if one doesn’t own a set, his friend may transfer ownership to him. The ownership should be transferred back once he has performed the mitzvah. One should not transfer ownership to a minor, as a minor is unable (halachically) to transfer it back to the original owner • Common practice is to recite the berachos while the Esrog is upside down (pitum side down); the Esrog is then turned upright and the four species are shaken in six directions.

On Chol Hamoed, the weekday Shacharis includes the addition of Yaaleh Veyavo to the weekday Shemoneh Esrei, Full Hallel, Kerias Hatorah, Mussaf and Hoshanos. Lamenatzei’ach is omitted. One should wear nice clothing and celebrate with meals of meat and wine. Some have the custom to wear tefillin on Chol Hamoed while others have the custom not to do so. The restrictions against melachah and work on Chol Hamoed are beyond the scope of this work.

On the first two days of Yom Tov, two Sifrei Torah are taken out. The reading is from Vayikra (22:26-23:44), which discusses the Yomim Tovim. On Shabbos it is divided into seven aliyos, and on the second day of Yom Tov it is divided into five aliyos. Maftir (Bamidbar 29:12-16) is leined from the second sefer Torah and pertains to the korbanos mussaf brought on Succos. The haftarah of the first day of Yom Tov (Zecharias 14:1-21) discusses Milchemes Gog u’Magog, the war that will take place in the End of Days. The Tur (O.C. 490) writes that this victory will occur in the month of Tishrei. The haftarah for the second day of Yom Tov (Melachim Alef 8:2-21) discusses the Chanukas Habayis of the Beis Hamikdash which took place on Erev Succos. On Chol Hamoed one sefer Torah is taken out. The four aliyos (Bamidbar 29) pertain to the korbanos brought on each day of Succos. The pesukim included are determined by the day of Yom Tov (they therefore differ from Eretz Yisrael to Chutz L’Aretz).

The Pele Yoeitz, quoting from the Arizal, says that one who is joyous throughout the days of Succos and makes the tremendous effort to avoid any anger and unhappiness will merit a year full of simchah. Rav Yeruchem Olshin shlit”a explains that by leaving our homes and entering the fragile edifice of our Succah, we demonstrate that it is not the brick and mortar of our homes that protect us; it is Hashem who provides all our needs. The Sefer Orchos Tzaddikim, despite its many chapters, does not include a chapter on bitachon. Rather, in the chapter Shaar HaSimcha, the Orchos Tzadikim writes extensively about bitachon and how reliance on Hashem brings a person true happiness. When a person recognizes that he is the child of a most loving and powerful Father in heaven, Who only seeks his ultimate success, he is filled with immense tranquility and happiness. Thus, one who celebrates this Yom Tov and develops genuine bitachon will surely merit simchah for the year ahead.

Fw from Hamelaket@gmail.com

**Rav Yochanan Zweig** This week's Insights is dedicated in memory of Leila Applebaum. Dancing with the Bride The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a heritage to the Congregation of Jacob (33:4).

Simchas Torah is a day in which we celebrate the Torah. Why did Chazal see fit to designate a separate day for Simchas Torah? Would not Shavuos, the day we received the Torah, be a more appropriate time for this celebration? The Talmud instructs a father that as soon as his child is able to speak, he should teach him, "The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a heritage to the Congregation of Jacob." Why is this the verse selected when there are earlier verses in the Torah that convey a similar message, such as "This is the Torah that Moshe placed before Bnei Yisroel"?

The last four parshios in the Torah record the events that transpired on the day of Moshe's death. A major event that ensued was the new covenant in Parshas Nitzavim. The concept of "each Jew is a guarantor for his fellow Jew," in regard to mitzvos and aveiros, is introduced as a result of our responsibility for the covenant.

The general concept of a guarantor is discussed by the Talmud. The Talmud teaches that one who accepts upon himself to repay a loan should the borrower default is required by Torah law to honor his commitment to pay. The commentaries raise the following difficulty: Legally, for a person to be liable to perform a service, there must be consideration, such as money. What is the instrument that obligates a guarantor to honor his commitment? The Ritva answers that although the guarantor does not receive money, he nevertheless receives the satisfaction that the lender is relying upon his credibility to issue the loan. This benefit serves as the instrument for the transaction in lieu of money. In light of this explanation, the following difficulty arises: Why are Bnei Yisroel bound to their commitment of arvus? What were they receiving that they did not already have?

To begin answering the aforementioned questions, we must analyze another concept that was introduced on the day that Moshe died: "Torah is no longer in the Heavens." While Moshe was alive he consulted with Hashem concerning all difficult Torah legislation. Therefore, Hashem was the final arbiter for Torah legislation. Thus, as long as Moshe was alive, Torah was still in the Heavens. On the day of Moshe's death, Bnei Yisroel were given unilateral authority over all Torah legislation. This is what is meant by "The Torah is no longer in the Heavens." This new authorization that Bnei Yisroel received is the instrument that obligates them to honor their commitment to be guarantors.

At Sinai, when Bnei Yisroel received the Torah, Chazal describe the relationship formed as that of a bride and groom. Hashem was the groom and Bnei Yisroel was the bride. On the day that Moshe died a new relationship was formed; Bnei Yisroel became the groom and the Torah was the bride. This is alluded to in the verse, "Torah tziva lanu Moshe morasha kehillat Yaakov." Chazal see in the word "morasha" an allusion to the word "meorasa," which means "betrothed" (i.e. the Torah that Moshe commanded us is also betrothed to us). The notion of the Torah not being in Heaven and the Torah becoming the bride to Bnei Yisroel are one and the same. The Talmud instructs a father to begin teaching his son Torah with the verse that reflects this new relationship.

Thus, Shavuos celebrates Bnei Yisroel becoming a bride to Hashem, while Simchas Torah celebrates Bnei Yisroel becoming betrothed to the Torah. This is reflected in the customs of the day. In most Jewish communities, a representative is chosen to be the "chassan Torah," the groom to the Torah. We also dance with the Torah as a groom dancing with his bride.

To Rule is Divine He became King over Yeshurun (33:5).

The Ibn Ezra renders the verse "He became King over Yeshurun (i.e. Israel)" as a reference to Moshe being the King of Israel. The Ramban points out that this interpretation contradicts the following Talmudic discourse: A major component of the Rosh Hashanah prayers is a section known as "malchiyos," which declares the existence and total sovereignty of Hashem. One of the verses that the Talmud lists should be recited within this section is the verse, "Vayehi Bishurun Melech." Clearly, the King being referred to in the verse is

Hashem, not Moshe. How does the Ibn Ezra resolve this apparent contradiction?

A more striking contradiction can be found in Rashi's commentary on the Torah. When explaining the verse "He became King over Yeshurun," Rashi defines "King" as Hashem. In Parshas Behaaloscha, Hashem commands that a set of trumpets be fashioned for Moshe's exclusive use. Rashi comments that they were used in a manner befitting a king. Here Rashi cites the verse, "He became King over Yeshurun" to prove that Moshe had the status of king.

The Talmud teaches that, although a scholar may waive the honor that is due to him, a king is not permitted to do so. The Mordechai, one of the early Talmudic codifiers, sheds some light on the reason for this. A scholar, who earns the right to be honored, may relinquish this right. However, the honor due to a king is Hashem's honor: "For sovereignty belongs to Hashem." Therefore, a king has no right to waive the honor due to him. The Jewish notion of monarchy is that the king functions as a conduit for Hashem's sovereignty over the world. This is what is meant by sovereignty belonging to Hashem.

Moshe Rabbeinu epitomizes the notion of the Jewish king being the conduit for Hashem's sovereignty over this world. As Chazal say, "The Divine Presence spoke through Moshe's mouth." Therefore, there is no contradiction in interpreting the verse "He became King over Yeshurun" as referring to both Hashem and Moshe, for Moshe's sovereignty is, in reality, the sovereignty of Hashem.

## For Moadim: Musaf insights

### The CHAGIM in PARSHAT PINCHAS

As you 'should' have noticed, every time that we doven MUSAf (i.e. on shabbat, rosh chodesh, & yom-tovim), we always include a quote from Parshat Pinchas.

Similarly, the Torah reading on every rosh chodesh and yom-tov is either entirely from Parshat Pinchas, or at least the 'maftir' section!

To understand why, the following shiur undertakes a simple analysis of chapters 28->29 in Parshat Pinchas.

#### INTRODUCTION

Even though we find several presentations of the Jewish Holidays throughout Chumash, their presentation in Parshat Pinchas is quite unique. In fact, our shiur will show how the primary topic of this unit may not even be the holidays! [It will help us understand why these holidays are 'repeated' in Sefer Bamidbar, even though they were already discussed in Parshat Emor /i.e. Vayikra 23.]

We begin our study by identifying the precise unit under discussion and its structure.

#### AN ORGANIZED UNIT

Just about every time that Chumash presents a unit of "mitzvot" - it begins with a very short introductory narrative - the most common form being "va'ydaber Hashem el Moshe lay'mor", or something similar.

This standard format allows us to easily identify chapters 28 & 29 as a unit, as it begins with that opening phrase (see 28:1), and the commandments continue until the end of chapter 29.

Note as well 30:1 we find what constitutes the concluding verse of this unit, for it describes Moshe's fulfillment of God's command in 28:2, that Moshe should command these laws to Bnei Yisrael!

In the opening verse God instructs Moshe (see 28:1-2): "Command Bnei Yisrael and tell them - keep the laws of My [daily] offerings..."

In the closing verse (see 30:1):

"And Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael [telling them] everything [all the laws] that God had commanded him."

[Note a very similar structure between Vayikra 23:1 and 23:44.]

This alone already indicates that all of the laws included between these opening and closing verses forms a unit. [Note how the chapter division of Chumash seems to have made a major mistake here, for 30:1 should really have been 29:40! Note how the 'parshia' break of Chazal is much more accurate (as usual) than the 'King James' chapter division! This 'mistake' probably stems from a misunderstanding of the opening pasuk of Parshat Masei, and how it connects to the last verse of Parshat Pinchas.]

As we browse through the content of chapters 28->29, it seems as though its primary topic is the holidays, for they begin in 28:16 and continue all the way until 29:39. Note as well how these holidays are presented in the order of their lunar dates, i.e. beginning with Pesach and concluding with Succot .

Nonetheless, when we consider that this unit begins in 28:1, we must assume that the first fifteen psukim share the same theme. By taking a closer look, the connection becomes rather obvious, for the first topic is the daily "olah" offering - a lamb - offered once in the morning and once in the evening (see 28:2-8). These laws are followed by the commandment to offer an 'additional' "olah" every Shabbat (see 28:9-10), and more elaborate "olah" on every Rosh Chodesh [first day of the lunar mon

Now, to determine what thematically ties this unit together, we need only list the topic of each of its individual "parshiot" in search of a logical progression:

As we will see, the progression is very logical:

PSUKIM	TOPIC / The laws of:
28:1-8	the DAILY korban TAMID
28:9-10	WEEKLY korban MUSAf for SHABBAT
28:11-15	MONTHLY korban MUSAf for ROSH CHODESH
28:16-25	a special korban MUSAf for CHAG HA'MATZOT
28:26-31	a special korban MUSAf for CHAG SHAVUOT
29:1-6	a special korban MUSAf for YOM TRU'AH
29:7-11	a special korban MUSAf for YOM KIPPUR
29:12-34	a special korban MUSAf for each day of SUCCOT
29:35-38	* [note how each day is a separate parshia!]
29:39	a special korban MUSAf for SHMINI ATZERET
	the summary pasuk

The progression within this unit is very straightforward. We begin with the DAILY "korban tamid", followed by the WEEKLY "musaf shabbat", followed by the MONTHLY "korban rosh chodesh", followed by the YEARLY schedule of korbanot offered on the chagim, beginning with the first month, etc. It is for this reason that the FIRST pasuk of each of these 'holiday' "parshiot" begins with the precise lunar date.

#### THE KEY PHRASE: "AL OLAT haTAMID..."

As you review these parshiot, note how each parshia relates in some manner to the daily "olat tamid". The opening parshia describes it, while each and every parshia that follows concludes with the statement "al olat ha'tamid" or "milvad olat ha'tamid".

The Torah goes out of its way to emphasize that each of these korbanot are to be offered IN ADDITION to the daily OLAH offering! In fact, that is why we call the offering a 'MUSAf'! - The word "musaf" stems from the verb "l'hosif" = to add on. These special korbanot are offered in ADDITION to the daily korban TAMID, and hence their name - a korban MUSAf.

Therefore, this unit begins with the KORBAN TAMID and then continues with the detail of each korban MUSAf that is offered in addition to the daily "olat tamid". Hence, a more precise definition for this unit would be KORBANOT TMIDIM u'MUSAfIM.

Indeed, each of the holidays are mentioned within this unit, but not because the holidays are its primary topic. Quite the contrary; the holidays are mentioned, for on each holiday an 'additional' korban is to be offered.

#### BETWEEN EMOR & PINCHAS

With this background, we can better understand the difference between the presentation of the chagim in Parshat Emor (see Vayikra chapter 23) and their presentation here.

In contrast to Parshat Pinchas whose primary topic is korbanot, the primary topic in Parshat Emor is the holidays. In fact, that is precisely its title: "moadei Hashem..." - God's appointed times (23:1,4)! That unit details the nature and specific laws for each holiday. For example, the prohibition to work, the need to gather ("mikraei kodesh"), and special mitzvot for each holiday, such as: offering the "omer", the "shtei ha'lechem",

blowing shofar, fasting, succah, lulav & etrog etc. [To verify, review Vayikra 23:1-44.]  
 [Btw, that parsha **does** include certain korbanot, such as those which come with the "omer" and "shtei ha'lechem". But again, those korbanot are special for that day and hence, relate to the special nature of each of those holidays.]

Notice as well that each holiday in Parshat Emor includes the mitzvah of "v'hikravtem ishe la'Hashem" [you shall bring an offering to God/ see 23:8,25,27,36]. However, this commandment appears quite ambiguous for it doesn't specify which type of korban is to be offered.

Parshat Pinchas solves this ambiguity, by telling us precisely what that offering should be. To prove how, note a key summary pasuk found in Parshat Emor:

"These are God's appointed times set aside for gathering IN ORDER to offer a - ISHE LA'HASHEM -, an OLAH, MINCHA, ZEVACH, & NESACHIM, - on EACH DAY - DVAR YOM B'YOMO." (See Vayikra 23:37, compare with 23:4)

What does "dvar yom b'yomo" refer to? Most likely to the precise details for these korbanot as recorded in Parshat Pinchas! [Note Rashi on that pasuk (23:37), that is exactly what he says!] [Using computer jargon, we could say that Parshat Emor is 'indexed' to Parshat Pinchas - or, if each "v'hikravtem ishe" in Emor was in 'hyper-text', it would link to its respective URL address in Parshat Pinchas. [e.g. 23:8->28:19, etc.]

Also, if you look carefully at the names of the chagim in the opening pasuk of each parshia in Parshat Pinchas, you'll notice that each specific name reflects the primary aspect of the chag as it had already been described in Parshat Emor! [That comparison is quite straightforward, but beyond the scope of this shiur.]

With this background, the presentation of the holidays in Parshat Pinchas is quite easy to understand. Each holiday is introduced by its lunar date and name (based on its more detailed description in Parshat Emor). This introduction is followed by the complete details of the korban MUSAFFIM for that holiday, including the type of each korban, and the number of animals that are to be offered. Other than those details (of the korban MUSAFFIM), Parshat Pinchas does not add in any new laws for any of the "chagim".

#### THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF PARSHAT HA'MUSAFFIM

Let's return now to Parshat Pinchas to take a look at the actual korbanot and what they're all about.

Even though the korban MUSAFFIM of each holiday is presented in a separate parshia, the set of korbanot for each holidays are quite similar. Note how each set contains:

- \* an OLAH offering of PARIM, AYILIM, & KVASIM;
- \* the appropriate flour & wine offerings,
- [better known as "MINCHATAM V'NISKAM";
- \* and a CHATAT offering of a SEIR IZIM (a goat).

The following table compares the specific korbanot of each chag. [If you have the time (and patience), I recommend that you try to work it out first on your own.]

As you review this table, note how similar most of the MUSAFFIM are. However, note as well where and how they differ!

CHAG / OLAT:	PAR	AYIL	KEVES	/ SEIR CHATAT
ROSH CHODESH	-	2	1	7
CHAG HA'MATZOT	2	1	7	1
[same for all 7 days]				
SHAVUOT	-	2	1	7
ROSH HA'SHANA		1	1	7
YOM KIPPUR	-	1	1	7
[same as R.H.]				
SUCCOT (day 1)	-	13	2	14
SUCCOT (day 2)		12	2	14
SUCCOT (day 3)	-	11	2	14

SUCCOT (day 4) -	10	2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 5) -	9	2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 6) -	8	2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 7) -	7	2	14	1
SHMINI ATZERET -	1	1	7	1

As you study this chart, note how one can easily identify certain groups of holidays. Let's organize them as follows:

#### GROUP ONE: [the 2-1-7-1]

Rosh Chodesh, Chag ha'Matzot, and Shavuot

Note how all three are connected to YETZIAT MITZRAYIM! [Rosh Chodesh - based on Shmot 12:1, and Shavuot can be considered the conclusion of Pesach.]

#### GROUP TWO: [the 1-1-7-1]

Rosh ha'Shana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret

Note, that all three are in Tishrei! Since the first two are 'days of judgement', then we must conclude that Shmini Atzeret must also be a 'day of judgement'!

[e.g. "tfilat geshem" etc.]

#### GROUP THREE: [the {13-7}-2-14-1]

The seven days of Succot

This is the most interesting group, for (unlike "chag ha'matzot") even though each day of Succot is the same holiday, for some reason the number of PARIM decreases daily.

#### DOUBLE NATURE

In addition to this obvious division into three groups, there remains another interesting phenomenon in the above chart. For some reason, the OLAH offering on Succot seems to be DOUBLE. On every other holiday we offer one AYIL and seven KVASIM, but on each day of Succot we double that - offering TWO and FOURTEEN instead! Furthermore, in regard to the PARIM, there's an 'explosion'. Instead of either one or two, we find THIRTEEN! More puzzling is the fact that each day we bring one less.

So what's going on with the korbanot on Succot?

One could suggest that Succot should not be considered a separate category, but rather a COMBINATION of the other two. Let's explain why.

On the one hand, Succot could be included in Group One, for that group contains the other two "shalosh regalim" (i.e. Chag ha'Matzot and Shavuot). On the other hand, Succot could also be included in Group Two, for that group contains all of the other holidays that fall out in the seventh month (i.e. "chagei Tishrei"). [Thematically as well, Succot fits into both groups. On the one hand it is a thanksgiving holiday (like the holidays in Group One), where we thank God for our fruit harvest /that's why we recite the Hallel. On the other hand, it is also a time of awe (like the holidays in Group Two), for we anticipate the rainy season which will determine the fate of the forthcoming year/& that's why we recite the "Hoshanot".]

This 'double nature' of Succot can explain why its korbanot are DOUBLE - two AYILIM instead of one; & fourteen KVASIM instead of seven. But what about the PARIM? According to this interpretation, we should only bring THREE on each day of Succot. So why do we bring and 'extra' ten on the first day, an extra nine on the second, etc.

It's rather cute, but if we add up all the 'extras', i.e.  $10+9+8+7+6+5+4$  we find that we've added 49 [=7x7] PARIM. In relation to the "chagim", finding significance in the number seven (or its multiple) should not surprise us. There are many instances in Chumash when 'seven' relates to our recognition that it God who controls what we perceive as nature (see shiurim on both Parshat Breishit and on Parshat Emor).

Our recognition that God controls nature is most critical on Succot - for it sits at the junction (and 'overlap') of the agricultural

year, i.e. at the end of the previous year (the autumn fruit harvest) and beginning of the new year (the upcoming rainy season).

Furthermore, should we add these 49 PARIM to the original 21 PARIM [3x7days], we find that a total of SEVENTY parim are offered during SUCCOT. Chazal point out that these seventy bulls are representative of the seventy nations of mankind. [See shiur on Parshat Noach and the 'Migdal Bavel 'vort'.]

[If you want to find additional meaning to the number 7 or 49 [=7x7] in relation to the 7 days of Succot in the 7th month, ask your local kabbalist. - "v'akmal".]

In summary, we have shown how what appears to be a rather monotonous list of korbanot may actually be hiding some very fundamental aspects of the "chagim". Hopefully, next time you doven MUSAF, it will make your tefilah a bit more meaningful.

shabbat shalom,  
Menachem

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#### **FOR FURTHER IYUN**

1. If you are not familiar with the structure of tfilat Musaf, after the standard opening three brachot, we recite a "piyut" which describes our sorrow (& our fault) over the fact that the Bet ha'Mikdash no longer stands (e.g. "mpnei chataeinu", or tikanta shabbat..." etc.). That "piyut" concludes with our wish that the Bet ha'Mikdash will be rebuilt so that we can once again offer the korbanot - then we quote the actual korban from Parshat Pinchas and a brief description of its NESACHIM. This is followed by yet another piyut (e.g. "yismchu b'malchutcha" or "melech rachaman...") and then concludes with the bracha of "kedushat ha'yom" (e.g. "mkadesh ha'shabbat", or "yisrael v'hazmanim").

2. Note that in regard to lighting Chanuka candles, Bet Shamai's shita that we begin with eight and conclude with one is based on a comparison to PAREI ha'CHAG - i.e. the PARIM of Succot.

3. The only korban that doesn't change for any holiday is the "seir izim l'CHATAT". This korban serves as atonement for any possible sin of Am Yisrael in the Mikdash. The "seir izim" is chosen as it is symbolic of the sin of the brothers of Yosef when they used a "seir" to 'cover up' their sin. See Ramban! As its purpose is atonement, only one offering is necessary per set, and hence it is not doubled in Succot as are the other korbanot.

4. See previous shiur on Rosh Ha'shana for a more complete explanation of why Tishrei (at the beginning of the rainy season), serves as a time when all mankind is judged.

5. Note machloket between Ramban (and everyone else) concerning whether this korban MUSAF was offered in the desert or only once Bnei Yisrael entered the land. Relate it to his "shita" of "yeish mukdam u'muchar ba'Torah". [Ramban on 28:1 & on Vayikra 3:2.] Relate this to the above shiur.

## **SUKKOT: To KNOW, or to REMEMBER**

Wouldn't make more sense to celebrate Sukkot during the month of Nissan instead of Tishrei?

After all, this is the holiday that commemorates our dwelling in 'booths' in the desert after we left Egypt, and it was in the month of Nissan that we first set up camp in the desert! In fact, Sukkot was even the name of Bnei Yisrael's very first camp-site, during that first week of the Exodus, as Sefer Shmot records:

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Sukkot, about six hundred thousand men on foot, beside children..." (see Shmot 12:37-39 / note as well that it was in the camp site of Succot when they first baked matza!)

Furthermore, the sole pasuk in Chumash that explains the historical reason for this holiday emphasizes how we must thank God for His special protection and care in the desert immediately after the Exodus:

"You shall sit in **sukkot** for seven days... in order that future generations may **know** that I made Bnei Yisrael dwell in **sukkot** when I brought them out of Egypt..." (see Vayikra 23:42-43).

Pay attention, however, to the special wording of this pasuk - for it doesn't command us to 'remember' (what happened in the desert), rather - we are commanded to '**know**' ['lema'an yeid' u doroteichem' / as opposed to 'lema'an tizkeru']!

In the following shiur, we will show how this distinction can help us better understand the historical reason for the holiday of Sukkot, and appreciate why the Torah instructs us to celebrate this holiday specifically during the autumn harvest season [i.e. to coincide with the agricultural holiday of "chag ha-asif"].

### **INTRODUCTION**

As you probably recall, we find both an historical reason, as well as an agricultural reason for each of the three 'pilgrimage holidays' [the 'shalosh regalim'].

- In the beginning of the **spring** ['chag ha-aviv'] we celebrate our Exodus from Egypt = 'chag ha-matzot'
- During the **grain harvest** ['chag ha-katzir'] we celebrate the giving of the Torah = 'chag shavu'ot'
- During the **fruit harvest** [chag ha-asif] we celebrate our dwelling in 'booths' in the desert = chag ha-sukkot.

Now the reason why we are commanded to 'remember the Exodus' in the spring is simple - it's because that event took place in the spring (see Devarim 16:1). Similarly, we received the Torah in the month of Sivan, hence we are to commemorate that event seven weeks later - on "Shavuot".

However, there doesn't appear to be any obvious reason for celebrating 'our dwelling in booths in the desert' specifically in Tishrei. After all, this holiday does not commemorate a single event, but rather an entire time period of our national history - that spanned over forty years. So what makes Tishrei special?

In fact, it might have made more sense to commemorate 'our dwelling in sukkot' in Nissan - together with our commemoration of the Exodus. Certainly, both events are related (and as we explained earlier that Sukkot was first mentioned in Chumash when we left Egypt /see Shmot 12:37 & 13:20!).

Nevertheless, the Torah insists that we commemorate our 'desert experience' six months later, in the month of Tishrei (a month that certainly doesn't lack holidays), and specifically at the time of our grain harvest.

To explain why, we begin with a general distinction which relates to the historical reason for celebrating all of the holidays.

### **REMEMBERING 'WHAT', OR REMEMBERING 'WHY'**

We posit that when Torah instructs us to remember a certain key historical event, God is not interested that we simply remember **what** happened, rather it is more important that we remember **why** that event took place.

[Recall that in our shiur on chag ha-matzot / Parshat Bo, we applied this principle to our understanding of chag ha-matzot and korban pesach; likewise in our shiurim on the underlying reason for the four fast days in Sefer Zecharya.]

Applying this principle to Sukkot, we posit that we don't sit in the sukka simply to 'remember' [and express thanksgiving] that God provided for our needs during our journey through the desert; rather the Torah commands that we sit in the sukka in order to remember **why** that entire desert experience was necessary!

Therefore, our shiur will first consider **why** the entire desert experience was necessary. Then, we will show why the summer harvest becomes an ideal time to commemorate that time period of our history. Finally we will explain why we are commanded to **know** these events (not just remember them); and why **seven** days are necessary to accomplish this goal!

### **LIFE IN THE DESERT - A TRANSITION STAGE**

Let's begin by taking a closer look at the Torah's commandment to celebrate Sukkot, noting how the Torah focuses on commemorating the 'desert experience' (and **not** the Exodus itself):

"You shall sit in **sukkot** for seven days... - **in order** that your future generations may know that I made Bnei Yisrael dwell in **sukkot** when I brought them out of Egypt..."  
(see Vayikra 23:43).

In our shiur on Parshat Beshalach, we explained how Bnei Yisrael's various experiences in the desert [after they left Egypt] could be understood as a 'training' period - initiated by God to help transform this nation of slaves into a nation capable of establishing His model nation in the Promised Land.

Even though this process began with a 'big bang' - i.e. the Ten Plagues, the Exodus, the splitting of Red Sea, etc. - those great miracles were necessary to convince Bnei Yisrael of their total dependence upon God (see shiur on Beshalach). However, that high level of miracles could be considered more of an 'attention getter' than an ideal. Sooner or later, Bnei Yisrael would need to learn to recognize God in their daily lives without the help of miracles. But this required a long 'educational' process that would spiritually prepare them for challenges of daily existence once they would inherit the Land of Israel.

In fact, Moshe Rabbeinu himself provides us with a beautiful explanation of the preparatory nature of the entire 'desert experience'! We need only quote from that speech, delivered to Bnei Yisrael as they prepare to finally enter the land, to understand the purpose of their experiences in the desert:

"All these mitzvot which I command you... keep in order that you live... and inherit the Land..."

**remember** the way that God has led you during your wanderings of forty years in the **desert** - in order to **test** you with hardships to **know** what is in your hearts; whether you would keep His commandments, or not...

\* "He gave you the **manna** to eat... in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, **rather** man lives on the words of God..."

've-yada'a' et levavecha...'

[In order that] you should **know**, that just as a father puts his son through hardship (to train him), so too has God put you through hardship" (See Devarim 8:1-6).

Note how Moshe explains how the 'manna' served as a 'training' food for Bnei Yisrael, to teach them in the desert that their food comes from God, so that when they enter the land of

Israel - and make their own food - they will remember that God is the underlying source of their sustenance.

To support these introductory remarks, Moshe continues by explaining **why** this 'testing period' was necessary:

"...for God is bringing you into a good land... a land of wheat and barley, vines, figs and pomegranates, of olive trees and honey...a land where you will lack nothing..."

\* **Be careful**, lest you **forget** God and fail to keep His commandments. Should you eat and become satiated, and build fine **houses** and live in them... and everything you own has prospered...

\* **Beware** lest you grow **haughty** and **forget** your God who took you out of Egypt...

\* **Lest** you say: My **own** power and my **own** might have won this wealth for me.

\* **Remember** that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to get wealth..." (see Devarim 8:7-19).

It was specifically because daily life in the land of Israel would be without 'obvious miracles' - that this training in the desert was so necessary! As Moshe explains, God is fearful that once Bnei Yisrael cultivate the land and provide for themselves, they may become haughty thinking that 'they did it all themselves' - and hence reminds them how they must always remember 'their lesson' from the desert.

According to Moshe Rabbeinu's speech, this transition period in the desert was necessary to prepare Bnei Yisrael for the spiritual dangers facing their agrarian society, which they are about to establish in the Land of Israel. To recognize the hand of God in a miracle was easy - but to recognize His hand within the nature will be much more difficult.

This background provides us with a very logical reason for the Torah's commandment to celebrate Sukkot on a yearly basis.

As this danger of 'becoming haughty and forgetting God' is so real, it will apply to future generations as well, especially those who never experienced the desert! Hence, the Torah instructs Bnei Yisrael that all future generations must not only remember this 'desert experience', but they must virtually 're-live' [to **know** it] - by living in a sukka for seven days!

## THE MOST FITTING TIME OF THE YEAR

This background also explains the 'advantage' of celebrating Sukkot at the conclusion of the harvest season.

If we are sitting in the 'sukka' to remember why that desert experience was necessary - and if that experience was necessary due to the fear of haughtiness that may stem from economic prosperity - then the 'harvest season' [when economic prosperity is at its highest] is the best time to remember those events, for that is when the fear of haughtiness is greatest!

This fear was not only expressed by Moshe Rabbeinu in his speech (as quoted above in 8:3-12), but see also shirat Ha'azinu (see especially 31:16,20 and 32:13-15!). Our own life experience certainly supports the reality of this fear.

Just as dwelling in the desert prepared Bnei Yisrael for their entry into Eretz Yisrael, so too, our sitting in the sukka prepares us for the spiritual challenges that inevitably surface as we gather our produce & reflect on our 'profits' and wealth.

[See Rashbam on Vayikra 23:43, in contrast to the interpretation of Ramban to that pasuk. Our shiur will follow the direction of Rashbam, noting how he also quotes from Devarim chapter 8!]

Therefore, the Torah commands that we celebrate **Sukkot** at the climax of the agricultural year - as we gather the fruits and 'count our wealth'. It is specifically during this time of year that the spiritual dangers of affluence are greatest. At the height of the harvest season, we must not only 'remember' the lesson of that desert experience, we must actually re-live it, or as the Chumash commands us - we must **know** it.

## KNOWING SOMETHING - In the Biblical Sense

The Torah's use of the phrase 'lema'an **yeid' u doroteichem' takes on additional meaning when we consider the deeper meaning of the word 'lada'at' - to **know**. As we all remember, the Torah uses this word to describe the intimate relationship between husband & wife: 've-Adam **yada** et Chava ishto' (see Breishit 4:1). [It is not by chance that this word is also used to describe the Tree of Knowledge -'etz ha-da'at' in the story of Gan Eden.]**

Later on in Sefer Breishit, when God takes a 'close look' at the people of Sodom - to punish them for their terrible sins - this type of intense relationship as well is described with the verb lada'at - see Breishit 18:21, [Note also Breishit 15:8 & 13.]

Similarly, in preparation for the Exodus, God wants to make sure that Bnei Yisrael will internalize the message of '**Ani Hashem'** - that He is their God, and the only God: [See TSC shiur on Parshat Va'era / Ani Hashem.]

To emphasize this commandment, note again how the Torah employs the verb lada'at to describe this intense relationship:

"Therefore, tell Bnei Yisrael that I am God, and I will take them out of..., and save them... and redeem them with an outstretched hand... and take them as My nation and I will be their God ---

**"vi-yda'tem** ki Ani Hashem Elokeichem" - In order that you will **know** that I am the God who has taken you out of Egypt" (see Shmot 6:6-7).

In other words, to 'know something' (or someone) in the Bible entails much more the intellectual knowledge. To know - reflects an intense and very close relationship - to internalize that idea.

This can help us appreciate the meaning of 'lema'an **yeid' u doroteichem**' in Vayikra 23:43. We are commanded to sit in the sukka not just to remember what happened, but to **know** it - i.e. to totally identify with the purpose of that 'desert experience' and its eternal message.

Note as well how Moshe Rabbeinu used this very same word when he explained the purpose of the original desert experience: "And you shall **know** in your hearts..." [that this was a 'training' experience] (see Devarim 8:5).

This also explains the difference between the mitzvot of Pesach and Sukkot. The mitzvot that we observe on Pesach (and chag ha-matzot) are in order to 'remember' [lizkor] what happened (and why), yet we are not commanded to re-live that experience - for it was a 'one-time' event in Jewish history. In contrast, on Sukkot, we must re-live that 'desert experience' for its underlying purpose is no different today than it was back then - to inculcate the eternal message that man should not become haughty at the height of his prosperity.

## WHY SEVEN DAYS?

This background can also help us understand why the Torah requires that we sit in the sukka specifically for **seven** days. Note that all the agricultural holidays revolve around the number seven.

\* 7 days of chag ha-matzot in the spring;

\* 7 weeks until chag ha-shavu'ot;

\* 7 days of chag ha-sukkot

As we explained in our shiur on Parshat Breishit [perek aleph], the Torah's description of the story of Creation in **seven** days emphasizes that the creation of what we call **nature** was not by chance, nor a 'balance of powers' among a pantheon of gods, but rather - the willful act of one God, for a purpose. Therefore, each time that **seven** is found in Chumash (e.g. Shabbat etc.), it is to remind us that God is the creator of, and master over, all nature.

Thus, it is only 'natural' that we find the number seven prominent in the agricultural holidays, as we thank God for His providence over nature, and recognize that He is the true source of our prosperity.

## FROM SUCCOT TO SHMINI ATZERET

The above interpretation can also help us understand the importance of Shmini Atzeret. As the shalosh regalim come to their conclusion, we add one extra day of celebration, void of any specific mitzva, other than rejoicing with God. Even though it is the 'eighth day' of **Sukkot**, we do not need to sit in the sukka, nor do we need to take the lulav - for the preparatory stage is now over!

On the other hand, we cannot just jump from the desert right back into the Land of Israel. Instead, a time of transition is necessary to wean us from the 'desert environment' back to daily life. [This also emerges as a primary theme in Sefer Yehoshua.]

This may explain why we don't sit in the sukka on this 'final' day of Sukkot, for it represents how we must return to our homes. We keep the essence of our 'desert-like experience' - our closeness to God - and make it the basis of our daily natural existence.

From this perspective, one could suggest that we do not simply **leave** the sukka on **Shmini Atzeret**, rather we bring the sukka into our homes. We then rejoice with the Torah [dancing seven hakafot - just like Yericho!], for its mitzvot - that we received in the desert - enable us to continue the spirit of our 'Sukkot honeymoon' with God throughout the entire year

chag sameiach,  
menachem

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## FOR FURTHER IYUN & some mini-shiurim

### A. FROM THE SUKKA TO THE HOUSE

Based on the last point in the above shiur, we can explain our custom on Hoshana Rabba (7th day of Sukkot) afternoon to bring our 'keilim' (vessels) **from** the sukka back **into** the house - in preparation for Shmini Atzeret. This may highlight the primary purpose of this Yom Tov, i.e. to move the spiritual message of the sukka into our homes for the remainder of the year.]

[In a similar manner, the 7 days of Sukkot followed by Shmini Atzeret could be compared to the 7 day milu'im ceremony of the mishkan which was required before the special yom ha-shmini dedication ceremony (see Vayikra 8:1-10:1.). Note the from the eighth day onward, the mishkan became functional, but seven day are necessary as **preparation**. [Note also first mishna in Yoma - 7 days before Yom Kippur, the kohen must prepare himself etc.]]

### B. PRI ETZ HADAR

The conclusions of our shiur may shed light on Chazal's explanation of 'pri etz hadar' (see Vayikra 23:40). Rashi quotes two Midrashim for etz hadar:

- 1) A tree that the 'taste of its fruit' is the same as the 'taste of the tree'.
- 2) A fruit that 'dwells on the tree' from year to year.  
(see Rashi 23:40 & Masechet Sukka 35a)

The first Midrash is quite difficult for it relates to what Chazal refer to as 'chet ha-aretz' - i.e. the 'original sin' of the land during the process of Creation (see Breishit 1:11 / & Rashi on 'etz pri'). Even though God commanded that the land bring forth an 'etz pri oseh pri' - a fruit tree giving fruit - the land brought forth instead an 'etz oseh pri' - a tree giving fruit. Even though there doesn't seem to be much of a difference between these two expressions, Chazal relate this minute change to the manner by which nature appears to 'hide' God, or act itself as a god.

This is a bit difficult to explain, [and the following is an over simplification of a very complex topic] but in a 'nutshell', when the tree gives fruit every year, it appears that the tree itself creates the fruit. When man contemplates this phenomena in nature, that trees 'on their own' can create fruit, he may conclude that trees have their own power - or that there may be some nature god who 'programs' these trees (how else does it know what fruit to make). In other words, man begins to see various powers within

nature, and relates them to many gods (e.g. fertility gods, rain gods, grain gods, sun gods etc.). This leads man to 'worship' these gods to ensure that nature produces the proper produce and provide a successful harvest.

In contrast to this dangerous misconception, God wants man to realize that there is only **one** God behind nature, even though the way that nature works often leads man to a very different conclusion. [See Rav Yehuda HaLevi's explanation of perek aleph in Breishit and 'shem Elokim' in HaKuzari ma'amar revi'i.]

In contrast to all of the other trees that give fruit according to the standard one year agricultural cycle, the **etrog** tree is very different. Instead of its fruit growing in the spring and harvested in the fall like all other trees, the fruit of the **etrog** can stay on the tree year after year, or as Chazal explain 'ha-dar' - a fruit that **lives** on the tree from year to year ['ha-dar ba-ilan mi-shana le-shana']. This special phenomena sort of 'breaks the rules' of nature - indicating that there must be a higher power above nature! By taking specifically an **etrog** on Sukkot, we take a powerful symbol from nature itself to remind ourselves that God is above nature, and He alone controls it.

### C KOHELET & the Harvest Season

Relate the minhag to read Sefer **Kohelet** on Sukkot to above shiur and Devarim 31:7-13 (mitzvat Hakhol). Carefully compare the end of Sefer Kohelet to Devarim 31:12-13! Note also how Kohelet describes the spiritual problems relating to affluence.

### D. VE-ACHALTA VE-SAVA'TA - & then what?

Recall how our shiur was based on Devarim chapter 8. In that chapter, review once again 8:10, the famous pasuk that we are learning birkat ha-mazon from, paying careful attention to its context.

Then, review Devarim 31:14-21, noting especially 31:20, and the phrase 've-achal ve-sava...'. Note how these psukim thematically relate to Devarim 32:7-15 in shirat Ha'azinu!

Can you explain the deeper meaning of the contrast between 've-achal ve-sava ve-dashen' and 've-achalta ve-sava'ta u-beirachta'!?

### SOME ADDITIONAL MINI-SHIURIM

#### I. FROM YOM KIPPUR TO SUKKOT

We are all familiar with the custom to begin work on our **sukka** immediately after Yom Kippur. Although this custom is often understood as simply a great way to 'get off to a good start', ['mi-chayil el chayil'], it may also allude to something more significant

First of all, recall that the original Yom Kippur in Chumash was the day that Moshe came down with the second luchot and middot ha-rachamim. Recall as well that with the help of these **midot**, God had agreed to Moshe's plea that He return His **Shchina** to Bnei Yisrael, even though He had taken it away in the aftermath of chet ha-egel / see Shmot 33:1-8). Nonetheless, the **Shchina** itself, even though God promised that it would return, does not return immediately, rather - only some six months later - after Bnei Yisrael build the mishkan (see Shmot 25:8 & Vayikra 9:1-5!).

In fact, immediately after receiving the second luchot, the first thing that Moshe does is gather the people together and charge them with the building of the mishkan (note Parshat Vayakhel). Even though the **Shchina** is returning, Bnei Yisrael must become active in this process; they must do something to 'receive' the **Shchina**. Just like Moshe had to now carve his own **second luchot** ['psol lecha...'] / see Shmot 34:1 (in contrast to the first **luchot** which God Himself had carved)], in a similar manner Bnei Yisrael must now become more active and build the mishkan.

The mitzva to build the **sukka** immediately after Yom Kippur may reflect this same idea. Just as Bnei Yisrael began to work on the mishkan after (and as a result of) Yom Kippur, we also begin building our **sukkot** in which can 'meet the **Shchina**' in a manner similar to the purpose of the mishkan.

We can also relate this to PART II of our shiur on Yom Kippur in regard to the deeper meaning of **kappara**.

Recall from our shiur on Yom Kippur that one aspect of kappara was to 'protect' man, allowing him to encounter the **Shchina**. If indeed our kappara on Yom Kippur was successful, then we should now be ready to encounter the **Shchina**. Considering that our sitting under the 'sechach' of the **sukka** symbolizes our sitting under the 'clouds of God's glory' in the desert ["sukkot kenegged ananei ha-kavod" / Sukka 11b], then Yom Kippur could actually be considered a **preparation** for Sukkot! To enable us to 'dwell' together with the **Shchina** in our **sukka**, we must first complete the process of kappara on Yom Kippur.

This thematic connection can help us understand many other halachot and customs of Sukkot.

For example, the gemara in Sukka 5b learns the minimum height of the **sukka** - 10 'tephachim' - from the height of the **kaporet**! [Recall last week's shiur which discussed the significance of the **kaporet** in relation to the **Shchina** / see also complete sugya in Masechet Sukka beginning at the bottom of 4b.] In fact, the same shoresh as 'sechach' is found in the pasuk which describes the **keruvim** on the **kaporet**: 've-hayu ha-keruvim... sochechim be-kanfeihem al ha-**kaporet**...' (see Shmot 25:20).

This pasuk clearly shows how the sechach of our **sukka** reflects our dwelling under the **Shchina**.

## II. THE DOUBLE MUSSAF ON SUKKOT

In Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar chps. 28-29) we find a complete list of all the korbanot **mussaf** which we offered in addition to the daily **tamid** offering in the bet ha-mikdash.

If you make a table of the korbanot for each holiday, you will notice an interesting pattern:

On each of the Tishrei holidays (except **Sukkot**), i.e. Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret, we offer an identical **korban mussaf** - 1 'par', 1 'ayil', and 7 'kevasim'.

On each of the shalosh regalim (except **Sukkot**), i.e. chag ha-matzot and Shavu'ot, we offer an identical **korban mussaf** - 2 parim, 1 ayil, and 7 kevasim.

The **mussaf** of Sukkot is quite different, each day the amount of parim changes (from 13 down to 7), and each day we offer 2 eilim and 14 kevasim! [See Bamidbar 29:12-34.]

The additional parim are the most striking difference, and Chazal explain that these are added for the 70 nations for whom Sukkot is also celebrated (13+12+11+10+9+8+7=70). [See also Zecharya chapter 14, haftara on first day Sukkot.]

However, the extra ayil & kevasim also require explanation.

Note, that they are **double** the number that are offered on all of the other holidays. In other words, instead of 1 ayil we bring 2 eilim; instead of 7 kevasim we bring 14 kevasim. This indicates that there must be something 'double' about Sukkot.

The answer may be quite simple. **Sukkot** is **both** one of the shalosh regalim (see Shmot 23:14-17 & Devarim 16:1-17), and a **Tishrei** holiday as well. Therefore, it requires a **double mussaf**. In other words, it should have daily:

- 3 parim [2+1];
- 2 eilim [1+1];
- 14 kevasim [7+7].

However, we add an additional 49 parim [10+9+8+7+6+5+4] to reach a total of 70 [49+(3x7)=49+21=70], as explained above.

[Again we find 49 [7x7] related to the shalosh regalim.]

This may reflect the double nature of **Sukkot**. On the one hand it is one of the shalosh regalim in which we thank **Hashem** for our harvest of the agricultural year **which has just finished**. At the same time, we stand in anticipation of the agricultural year **which is about to begin**, awaiting its important rainy season (see shiur on Rosh Ha'shana), just as we do on all of the other Tishrei holidays.

This 'double nature' is reflected by the two times in daily davening on **Sukkot** when we hold the lulav & etrog, during:

- 1) **Hallel** - to **thank** God for the harvest of the past year;
- 2) **Hoshanot** - to **pray** to God in anticipation of the **new** Year.

Similarly, this 'double nature' may also reflect the **two** reasons that Chazal [see Sukka 11b] give us for sitting in the **sukka**.

- 1) **sukkot mamash** - real booths, to protect us from the sun.

This may reflect the aspect of the harvest holiday, where we need to build temporary booths in the field as we gather our fruits in the fields.

- 2) **sukkot kenegged ananei ha-kavod** - representing God's **Shchina** which protected Bnei Yisrael in the desert.

## III. NOT BY CHANCE

Regarding for celebrating each of the shalosh regalim.

In our shiur, we discussed the connection between the historical and agricultural reason for Succot. Now we will discuss that connection in regard to the other two shalosh regalim.

The fact that the Torah provides **two** reasons for celebrating **sukkot** should not surprise us. After all, the other two shalosh regalim - i.e. chag ha-matzot & Shavu'ot - also carry both historical and agricultural perspectives:

**Chag ha-matzot** not only commemorates the events of the Exodus from Egypt, but also must be celebrated at the onset of the spring. [See Shmot 13:3-4, 23:14-15, & Devarim 16:1-2.] Consequently, on that holiday the Torah commands us to bring the 'omer' offering from the first barley harvest (see Vayikra 23:10-11).

Similarly, even though chag **Shavu'ot** commemorates the historical event of matan Torah, the Torah presents it primarily as an agricultural holiday (= chag ha-katzir), marking the conclusion of the wheat harvest. [See Shmot 23:16 & Vayikra 23:15-17.]

This phenomena - that each of the shalosh regalim contains both historical and agricultural significance - begs explanation, and suggests that we search for a thematic connection between each perspective - for each holiday.

## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Recall from our study of Sefer Shmot that God orchestrated the events of the Exodus in such a manner that we would celebrate this event specifically at the onset of the spring. [See Shmot 13:2-3, 23:14-15, & Devarim 16:1-2.]

Thematically, this may suggest that our freedom from bondage reflects only the **first** stage of the redemption process, just as the spring is only the first stage in the yearly cycle of the harvest season.

However, if this assumption is correct, then we should extend this reasoning to the other two holidays as well. One could suggest that Shavu'ot and Sukkot, respectively, each focuses on a certain aspect of the culmination of the redemption process that began with the Exodus. Let's explain how.

Recall how the Torah presented a double purpose for the Exodus from Egypt:

- 1) to receive the Torah at Har Sinai  
"... ta'avdu et Elokim ba-har ha-zeh" (see Shmot 3:12)
- 2) to inherit the Land of Israel  
"... a'aleh etchem...el eretz zavat chalav u-dvash"  
(see 3:17).

[See TSC shiur on Parshat Shmot.]

This double purpose may be reflected in the respective historical aspects of the two 'harvest' holidays that follow the 'spring' holiday. Clearly, **Shavu'ot** - the 'grain harvest' holiday - commemorates the events of **matan Torah**. Hence, we must conclude that **Sukkot** - the fruit harvest holiday - must commemorate in some manner our entry into the Land of Israel.

We discussed this aspect in detail in the above shiur.

# Parshas Emor: Commemorating the Desert Experience: An Analysis of Parshat Hamo'adot (Ch. 23)

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

## I. PARASHAT HAMO'ADOT

The only complete treatment of the holiday calendar found in the Torah is the centerpiece of our Parashah. Although reading it in the original (to which we will refer throughout the shiur) is preferable, here is a translation which may be used for reference. Paragraph breaks represent separation of Parashiot and those few terms which are in bold-faced print will be explained in the shiur:

- 1 Hashem spoke to Mosheh, saying:
- 2 Speak to the people of Yisra'el and say to them: These are the appointed festivals of Hashem that you shall proclaim as Mikra'ei Kodesh, my appointed festivals.
- 3 Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is a Shabbat Shabbaton, a Mikra Kodesh; you shall do no work: it is a Shabbat to Hashem throughout your settlements.
- 4 These are the appointed festivals of Hashem, the Mikra'ei Kodesh, which you shall celebrate at the time appointed for them.
- 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to Hashem, 6 and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to Hashem; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.
- 7 On the first day you shall have a Mikra Kodesh; you shall not work at your occupations.
- 8 For seven days you shall present Hashem's offerings by fire; on the seventh day there shall be a Mikra Kodesh: you shall not work at your occupations.
- 9 Hashem spoke to Mosheh:
- 10 Speak to the people of Yisra'el and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the omer of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.
- 11 He shall raise the omer before Hashem, that you may find acceptance; on the day after the Shabbat the priest shall raise it.
- 12 On the day when you raise the omer , you shall offer a lamb a year old, without blemish, as a burnt offering to Hashem.
- 13 And the grain offering with it shall be two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to Hashem; and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.
- 14 You shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your settlements.
- 15 And from the day after the Shabbat, from the day on which you bring the omer of the elevation offering, you shall count off seven weeks; they shall be complete. 16 You shall count until the day after the seventh Shabbat, fifty days; then you shall present an offering of new grain to Hashem.
- 17 You shall bring from your settlements two loaves of bread as an elevation offering, each made of two-tenths of an ephah; they shall be of choice flour, baked with leaven, as first fruits to Hashem.
- 18 You shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, one young bull, and two rams; they shall be a burnt offering to Hashem, along with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to Hashem.
- 19 You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of well-being.
- 20 The priest shall raise them with the bread of the first fruits as an elevation offering before Hashem, together with the two lambs; they shall be holy to Hashem for the priest.
- 21 On that same day you shall make proclamation; you shall hold a Mikra Kodesh ; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a statute forever in all your settlements throughout your generations.
- 22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am Hashem your God.
- 23 Hashem spoke to Mosheh, saying:
- 24 Speak to the people of Yisra'el, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a Shabbaton, a commemoration of T'ruah , a Mikra Kodesh.
- 25 You shall not work at your occupations; and you shall present Hashem's offering by fire.
- 26 Hashem spoke to Mosheh, saying:
- 27 Now, the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a Mikra Kodesh for you: you shall deny

yourselves and present Hashem's offering by fire;

28 and you shall do no work during that entire day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before Hashem your God.

29 For anyone who does not practice self-denial during that entire day shall be cut off from the people.

30 And anyone who does any work during that entire day, such a one I will destroy from the midst of the people.

31 You shall do no work: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your settlements.

32 It shall be to you a Shabbat Shabbaton , and you shall deny yourselves; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening you shall keep your Shabbat.

33 Hashem spoke to Mosheh, saying:

34 Speak to the people of Yisra'el, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, and lasting seven days, there shall be the festival of booths to Hashem.

35 The first day shall be a Mikra Kodesh ; you shall not work at your occupations.

36 Seven days you shall present Hashem's offerings by fire; on the eighth day you shall observe a Mikra Kodesh and present Hashem's offerings by fire; it is a solemn assembly; you shall not work at your occupations.

37 These are the appointed festivals of Hashem, which you shall celebrate as times of Mikra Kodesh , for presenting to Hashem offerings by fire - burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day -

38 apart from the Shabbats of Hashem, and apart from your gifts, and apart from all your votive offerings, and apart from all your freewill offerings, which you give to Hashem.

39 Now, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep the festival of Hashem, lasting seven days; a Shabbaton on the first day, and a Shabbaton on the eighth day.

40 On the first day you shall take the fruit of majestic trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Hashem your God for seven days.

41 You shall keep it as a festival to Hashem seven days in the year; you shall keep it in the seventh month as a statute forever throughout your generations.

42 You shall live in booths for seven days; all that are citizens in Yisra'el shall live in booths,

43 so that your generations may know that I made the people of Yisra'el live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Hashem your God.

44 Thus Mosheh declared to the people of Yisra'el the appointed festivals of Hashem.

## II. SEVEN QUESTIONS ON THE PARASHAH

Since every subsection within our selection utilizes and highlights the number seven (which is a topic for a separate shiur), I would like to pose seven questions on the text:

1) Five of the holidays mentioned are also described as a Shabbaton - and two of them, [the weekly] Shabbat and Yom haKippurim are called Shabbat Shabbaton. What is the meaning of this word (which is clearly related to Shabbat)?

2) The listing presented is "the appointed times of Hashem which you (the B'nei Yisra'el) shall declare". Those holidays which fall on a given day of the month (e.g. Pesach on Nisan 15) are clearly declared by the B'nei Yisra'el, when the court announces the new month (under those circumstances when the calendar was fixed on a monthly basis by the testimony of witnesses who had seen the new moon); this is the Gemara's explanation for the liturgical phrase M'kadesh Yisra'el v'haZ'manim (He who sanctifies Yisra'el and the seasons) - it is Yisra'el who sanctify the seasons (BT Berakhot 49a). It is, therefore, understandable why Pesach, Shavu'ot etc. are listed in a group headed by "which you shall declare in their time". Shabbat, on the other hand, exists independently of our declaration or observance of that holy day (which is why the signature form in the Shabbat liturgy is M'kadesh haShabbat, with no mention of Yisra'el (see, however, JT Berakhot 8:1 for a variant version). Why then is Shabbat included in our list? This question is a bit stronger when viewed against the backdrop of the Gemara in Arakhin (11b), which notes that the reason we don't say Hallel on Shabbat is because Shabbat is not considered a Mo'ed (appointed time).

3) In the section (vv. 9-14) relating to the beginning-of-the-harvest offering (brought on the second day of Hag haMatzot), the Torah describes this offering as an omer - which is the amount of the offering. Not only is it odd to refer to an offering by its volume, this term is repeated four times within a space of 6 verses. What is the significance of the omer as an appellation for this offering?

4) At the end of the section detailing the festival of Shavu'ot (vv. 15-22), the Torah interjects the laws of Pe'ah (leaving the corner of the field unharvested for the poor) and Leket (leaving the gleaning of the harvest - again for the poor). What is the

rationale behind the inclusion of these "non-holiday" laws in our list?

- 5) In v. 24, the holiday of the first day of the seventh month (which we commonly call "Rosh haShanah") is denoted not only as a Shabbaton, but also as a Zikhron T'ruah - meaning "commemoration of a [Shofar's] blast". Although Rashi explains that this refers to the obligation to recite the various theme-driven verses during Musaf of Rosh haShanah, this only works if we read Zikhron T'ruah as "a mention of a Shofar blast"; however, a simpler read is "a commemoration of a Shofar blast". What is being commemorated by the blasting of the Shofar?
- 6) In v. 32, Yom haKippurim is called a Shabbat Shabbaton (just as it is earlier in Vayyikra - 16:31). Why is Yom haKippurim given this title - which is otherwise only accorded to Shabbat?
- 7) A careful look at the "parashah" of Sukkot / Sh'mini Atzeret (vv. 33-44) reveals that there are really two distinct sections within this one parashah. Note that v. 37 begins with Ele Mo'adei Hashem, a perfect conclusion to the opening Ele Mo'adei Hashem (v. 4). Once that "conclusion" is finished (v. 38), the Torah adds another perspective of Sukkot / Sh'mini Atzeret. Note the differences between the two sections:
  - a) In the first section, the holiday is called Hag haSukkot, but does not explain the meaning for this title; the second refers to it as Hag l'Hashem - but associates the timing with the end of the harvest season.
  - b) In the first section, both the first and eighth days are called Mikra'ei Kodesh; in the second section both are called Shabbaton.
  - c) The first section only includes the commands regarding not working and bringing the proper offerings; the second includes the two Mitzvot unique to the holiday - the four species (Lulav, Etrog, Hadas, Aravah) and residing in the Sukkah. Our final question: Why are there two independent texts of Sukkot / Sh'mini Atzeret?

### **III THE VILNA GA'ON'S EXPLANATION**

R. Eliyahu Kramer zt"l, known as the Ga'on miVilna (d. 1799), suggests a brilliant and innovative approach to understanding the first section which answers our second question - and a bit of the first.

[Introductory note: as the Torah instructs us in Sh'mot 12:16, we are not allowed to do M'lakhah on a Yom Tov, with the exception of Okhel Nephesh (M'lakhah needed for eating purposes for that day; this is permitted only when Yom Tov falls on a weekday). This is not true regarding Shabbat, on which all M'lakhah is forbidden - nor is it true for Yom haKippurim, where there is no permit for any food-related M'lakhah].

The Ga'on maintains that the first section (vv. 1-3) is not addressing [the weekly] Shabbat; rather, it operates as a header for the rest of the Parashah:

Six days shall work be done - this refers to the six holidays (first day of Pesach, last day of Pesach, Shavu'ot, Rosh haShanah [remember that from the Torah's perspective, even Rosh haShanah is only one day], first day of Sukkot and Sh'mini 'Atzeret) when some type of M'lakhah (Okhel Nephesh) may be done;

But the seventh day is a Shabbat Shabbaton- this refers to the seventh of these days, Yom haKippurim;

You shall do no work- on Yom haKippurim, all types of M'lakhah are forbidden.

In this fashion, the Ga'on explains the inclusion of Shabbat on our list - it isn't there at all! It also explains the use of the phrase Shabbat Shabbaton in v. 3 - it is referring to Yom haKippurim, which has already been titled Shabbat Shabbaton in Ch. 16.

Although there is much to recommend this approach, I would like to suggest one that not only responds to all of our questions, but also addresses this "Shabbat" section from a "p'shat" perspective.

### **IV. WHAT IS A "MIKRA KODESH"?**

Before addressing the overall theme of this parashah, I would like to pose two questions of a general nature:

- a) What is the meaning of the phrase Mikra Kodesh , which is the description of each one of these special days (along with a general name for all of them: v. 2,4,37)?
- b) What is the rationale behind the placement of this list? Why is it set towards the end of Sefer Vayyikra? (Of course, this question could be posed no matter where it is placed; nevertheless, if we can find a solid reason why this parashah "belongs" here, that is a path we should pursue.)

## **REEXPERIENCING THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOY KADOSH**

Every one of the days under discussion is liturgically referred to as a Zekher liY'tziat Mitzrayim - a "commemoration of the Exodus". Although it is abundantly clear why Pesach serves this purpose - and both Shabbat (D'varim 5:15) and Sukkot (Vayyikra 23:43) are connected with the Exodus in the Torah - the rest of the holidays don't have an apparent connection with the Exodus. Even the Sukkot association is weak if we understand Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim as the plagues and the crossing of the Reed Sea. Why is each of these holy days considered a Zekher liY'tziat Mitzrayim?

I would like to suggest that the entire system of the Jewish calendar - including both Shabbat and all of the Yamim Tovim - is designed to help us reexperience and internalize the "highlights" of our travels through the desert. In other words, we must adopt a more complete and inclusive understanding of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim . As we examine the salient features of each of these holy days, specifically as they are outlined - and alluded to - in our text, we will find that each of them reinforces a component of that experience which the Torah desires us to maintain. We will also find that the order of the holy days can be viewed as deliberate and sequentially significant.

When we stood at the foot of Har Sinai - which was the intermediary goal of the Exodus (Sh'mot 3:12) - God assured us that if we keep His covenant, we will become a Goy Kadosh (a holy nation). There are two distinct elements in this formula: A nation, implying a unified purpose, common concern and pervasive sense of mutual responsibility. The second element is holiness, wherein that unified group is directed towards a sanctified purpose. This order is significant and indispensable; we must first achieve a sense of unity and fellowship before moving that group into the realm of the holy. It is only after this dual goal has been achieved that we can construct the Mishkan and allow God's Presence to rest among us - which is the pinnacle of the Goy Kadosh. The system of the Jewish calendar can best be understood through the prism of the evolution of the B'nei Yisra'el towards their destiny as a Goy Kadosh.

This explains why each of these holy days is considered a Mikra Kodesh . The word Mikra is used in only one other context (besides Sh'mot 12 - Pesach; our parashah and the other "listing" at Bamidbar 28) - in Bamidbar 10:2. God commanded Moshe to fashion two trumpets of silver, which were to be used l'Mikra ha'Edah - to assemble the people. A Mikra is, therefore, a call of assembly. What then is a Mikra Kodesh? Simply an assembly for a holy purpose. In other words, a Mikra Kodesh is an actualization of the ideal of the Goy Kadosh - the group coming together for a holy purpose.

This also explains the placement of this parashah at this juncture in Vayyikra. After detailing the parameters of "public" Kedushah (the Mishkan and those impurities which cause defilement) and "private" Kedushah (see last week's shiur), along with the special Kedushah of the Kohanim (Chapters 21-22), the Torah brings these together as the private/individual Kedushah is manifested in the public domain, chiefly through the offices of the Kohanim.

After this introduction, we can re-examine the parashah, note the underlying theme and answer our questions.

## **V. ANALYZING THE PARASHAH**

### **SHABBAT**

Even though we are accustomed to thinking of Shabbat as a commemoration of - and testimony to - God's creation (see Sh'mot 20:12), Shabbat also has an explicit Zekher liY'tziat Mitzrayim dimension, as mentioned above. Besides the explicit verse (D'varim 5:15) cited previously, there is a direct Shabbat association with the desert experience which is uniquely tied up with the notion of national unity.

One introductory note: As we have mentioned in earlier shiurim, when studying Tanakh, we must simultaneously view the text as outsiders while experiencing it as participants. As outsiders, we are enriched with the global view of the entire

canonized text and the interpretations and comments of our sages. As participants, we only know what the original target audience (be it Mosheh, Aharon or the B'nei Yisra'el) knew; we must try to understand (to whatever extent possible) the impact of these particular words and phrases on the ears of this original audience.

When Shabbaton - a relatively rare word - is used, it certainly must evoke in the listener the original context in which it was used. A quick search of the Tanakh reveals that the earliest appearance of this word is in the Chapter 16 of Sh'mot - in the story of the Mahn (Manna).

The story of the Mahn is, (as we indicated in this year's shiur on Parashat Beshalach ), the central turning point in the preparation of the B'nei Yisra'el for their arrival at Sinai.

A quick review of the story will help us understand the relevance of the story of the Mahn to our goal of building a holy nation.

There are two central features of how the B'nei Yisra'el were to respond to the Mahn.

\* They were to only take the proper amount per person in the household.

\* They were to take double on Friday and take none on Shabbat.

Each of these commands (which, for the most part, the whole nation followed) carries a critical step in the development of the holy nation.

R. Yaakov Medan, in a wonderful article (Megadim 17:61-90), points out that the command for each person to restrict himself to a daily portion for each member of the household represented not only a good deal of faith in God - but also tremendous self-restraint and concern for one's fellow. This is how he explains the "test" of the Mahn (16:4) - that we were tested to see how much concern each of us could demonstrate for our fellow, knowing that if we took more than our portion, someone else would go hungry. Indeed, the B'nei Yisra'el passed this test with flying colors! (v. 18) For a slave people, wandering in a desert to exercise this much self-restraint was a demonstration of their readiness to stand as a unified nation and to enter into a covenant which includes mutual responsibility.

This self-restraint was the first building block in the process of turning a multitude of slaves into a unified nation. The ability to maintain concern for one's fellow in the face of such temptation was the first indication that we would indeed be able to become a Goy Kadosh.

By beginning the parashah of Mikra'ei Kodesh with Shabbat - and by specifically referring to that day as a Shabbat Shabbaton , we are immediately reminded of - and brought back to - that wonderful demonstration of mutual concern with the Mahn. Indeed, Shabbat carries a powerful "social-justice" component (see Ramban at D'varim 5:15); by stepping back from our daily attempt to conquer the world and amass more for ourselves, we are given the golden opportunity to allow others in to our lives and to develop our own empathy for those less fortunate. In addition, the cessation from M'lakhah heightens our awareness of Who is really in charge and of our obligation to look out for all of His creatures.

## **HAG HAMATZOT**

This one is pretty straightforward. In order to keep the experience of the Exodus at the forefront of our consciousness, the Torah commanded us to relive it (therefore calling it Hag haMatzot, underscoring the method by which we reexperience it) every year. Note that these holy days are also called Mikra'ei Kodesh , in that they remind us of our holy ingathering. Besides the overarching thematic Mikra'ei Kodesh, this one is a bit special - if we think back to the various guidelines and restrictions given us in the context of the Korban Pesach (e.g. to be eaten as a household - see our shiur on Parashat Bo).

One question about this section which we must address is the repeated introduction in v. 4. Once the Torah already captioned this chapter (in v. 2) with the phrase "These are the appointed times..." why repeat it two verses later?

We will only get to this question near the end of the shiur in our discussion about the two sections of Sukkot / Sh'mini Atzeret.

## **OMER HAT'NUFAH**

On the day after Hag haPesach (the second day of Hag haMatzot), we are commanded to offer up an Omer's worth of grain (barley). Why this amount - and why mention it so often?

When we look back at the Mahn story, we note that each portion of Mahn that fell was 1/10th of an Ephah - or 1 Omer's worth! It is not surprising that the Torah commands us to "lift up" (symbolically returning the Mahn to its rightful Owner) exactly that amount of grain the day after Pesach. The lesson is clear: Liberation must carry with it a renewed sense of concern for social welfare and a mutual responsibility. As soon as we have celebrated our freedom, the Torah commands us to remember the miracle of the Mahn - and our miraculous response to the test.

## **PE'AH AND LEKET**

The exact middle verse of our parashah is the "interjected" command to leave Pe'ah (the corner of the field) and Leket (gleanings) for the poor. Now we can understand the significance of this addition - while harvesting, celebrating with a new grain offering (v. 16) etc., we must not forget our brothers and sisters who have fallen on hard times. The Torah interrupts the flow of the calendar to remind us that we can not be Holy without ensuring that we are doing so as a Nation.

## **ZIKHRON T'RUAH**

When we come to evaluate the meaning of this phrase within the context of our parashah, we have to again return to the mode of "participant" as opposed to "observer". If the B'nei Yisra'el are commanded to perform an act of commemoration of a Shofar-blast, it must refer to a particular blast which they had already experienced - and are now being commanded to commemorate.

The only Shofar blast which we know of in their past was the blast (or series of blasts) at Har Sinai which prefaced and followed the Revelation. The festival of the first day of the seventh month ("Rosh haShanah") is, therefore, a commemoration of the stand at Sinai. The Shofar which we blow is intended to remind us of that great event.

When we first arrived at Sinai, the Torah describes us as "encamping opposite the mountain" (Sh'mot 19:2). The Hebrew verb for this encampment is not the expected vaYahanu ("and they encamped"), rather it is the singular vaYihan (lit. "and he encamped"). Rashi (ibid) is sensitive to this anomaly and explains that we encamped there "as one person, with one heart".

The stand at Sinai was the next step of the process begun with the Mahn (hence, Rosh haShanah is also called a Shabbaton) - moving from a Goy to a Goy Kadosh.

## **YOM HAKIPPURIM**

We then move to a new level of Goy Kadosh . Previously, the unity we experienced was the product of the spirit of sharing and self-restraint. We now come to the day on which we allow ourselves to be stripped of all that divides us. We have no food, drink, fancy clothes (we dress in white because we are either angels or dead) or family life - we have all been "equalized". Yom haKippurim gives us the opportunity to move to a new level of mutual concern - and to focus that concern on a holy enterprise. The sole focus of Yom haKippurim in its first presentation in the Torah (Vayyikra 16) is the purification of the Mishkan. We have now moved from a Goy Kadosh in the abstract (the stand at Sinai) to a Goy Kadosh with a purpose and a focus of activity - sanctity of the camp and a reenshrinement of God's Presence. Yom haKippurim is called Shabbat Shabbaton because it is a "super-Mahn" experience; mutual concern focused on a holy goal.

## **SUKKOT AND SH'MINI ATZERET**

At this point, it pays to review the three points of contrast between the two treatments of this holiday:

- a) In the first section, the holiday is called Hag haSukkot , but does not explain the meaning for this title; the second refers to it as Hag l'Hashem - but associates the timing with the end of the harvest season.
- b) In the first section, both the first and eighth days are called Mikra'ei Kodesh ; in the second section both are called

Shabbaton.

c) The first section only includes the commands regarding not working and bringing the proper offerings; the second includes the two Mitzvot unique to the holiday - the four species (Lulav, Etrog, Hadas, Aravah) and residing in the Sukkah. And now to the answers:

The first section of Sukkot / Sh'mini Atzeret deals with the holiday as a part of the agricultural cycle of celebration - a cycle which began with Hag haMatzot.

[This also explains why the first section here ends with the concluding Ele Mo'adei Hashem - closing off the "middle" section of the list which began at v. 4. This answers the question asked above (in the section on Hag haMatzot) as to why there is a second caption of our list in v. 4.] As such, it is simply called Hag haSukkot - a purely agricultural connotation. Keep in mind that a Sukkah is a booth used by the workers during harvest season when they could not return home every night - and to rest during the heat of the summer noontime. These days are denoted as Mikra'ei Kodesh - a teleology which is only realized in the second section. They are also replete with offerings and two days of non-work - dedicated to God - but there is no "unity" factor here.

The second treatment, beginning (v. 39) with Akh (which evokes the beginning of the Yom haKippurim section), is a dramatic turn. Instead of being a harvest festival, it is to take place "when you have gathered in the produce of the land" (i.e. that is when you are to celebrate, not the focus of the celebration). This festival includes a Shabbaton at the beginning and the end - bringing us back to the unity theme.

We are then given the two Mitzvot unique to Sukkot: Arba Minim (the Four Species) and Sukkah.

There are many Midrashim explaining the symbolism of the Arba Minim (e.g. they represent the four types of Jews, the four climes of Eretz Yisra'el, four parts of the body) - but all of them rest on two basic Halakhic premises: All four species are indispensable for the Mitzvah (inclusion) and all four must be taken as one (community). The introduction of this Mitzvah here underscores the Shabbaton aspect of Sukkot.

Regarding the Mitzvah of Sukkah, the Rabbis said (BT Sukkah 27b): "all that are citizens in Yisra'el shall live in Sukkot" - this teaches that all of Yisra'el are worthy to reside in one Sukkah" (this is playing off the way that Sukkot is written in the verse - it could be read Sukkat which is singular, indicating all citizens residing in one Sukkah). This is, again, a Mitzvah which is indicative and symbolic of inclusion of all Jews. The Goy Kadosh is reinforced as we celebrate the end of the harvest.

What can we make of the culmination of our parashah? In what way is Sukkot an appropriate "pinnacle experience" in this sequence? Note that unlike the first treatment, in this second section the festival is called a Hag l'Hashem - a festival of God; that surely indicates something significant...what is it?

Looking back over the sequence of Hag haMatzot (freedom), Omer (the Mahn), Pe'ah (more social concern), Zikhron T'ruah (Har Sinai) and Yom haKippurim (Goy Kadosh) - we note that there is one critical, final step in the desert experience which has not yet been internalized.

As Ramban points out in his introduction to Sefer Sh'mot, the goal of the entire Exodus enterprise was to restore us to the glorious stature of our ancestors, with the Shekhinah residing in our midst. This was accomplished only when we constructed and successfully dedicated the Mishkan (which is, according to Ramban, why Sefer Sh'mot concludes at that point).

The Mishkan, although in the public domain, held a personal connection with each Jew. Not only were all prayers directed there (see MT Hilkhot T'fillah 1:3), but Aharon constantly wore the Hoshen, which included the names of all 12 tribes (on 12 stones) and the Ephod, whose shoulder-straps included all 12 tribes (on two stones). Every Jew had a place in the Mishkan - but could not practically come in.

The Sukkah, coming at the culmination of the season of holy days which walk us through the evolution of the B'nei Yisra'el into a Goy Kadosh, is evocative of the Mishkan. It is indeed fitting that this holiday, from its Shabbaton perspective, with its inclusive and communal approach to Kedushah, be called Hag l'Hashem .

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