Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Succos

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Torah Wellsprings - Succos

Succah and the Four Minim Teach Us Temimus and Emunah

The Rema m'Pano teaches as follows: The size of a small succah is 7 x 7 tefachim, which is 49 square tefachim. The height of a minimum succah is ten tefachim high. This means there are 490 square tefachim in the succah. 490 is the gematria of תמים. In (Devarim 18:13) it says תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ. The measurements of the succah hints to the important concept of temimus – which is a simple and pure belief in Hashem. The Imrei Noam (ג' דסוכות אות ד') adds that the mitzvah of lulav also hints to temimus because it states (Vayikra 23:40) וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים וַעֲנַף עֵץ עָבֹת וְעַרְבֵי נָחַל, and Chazal say that וּלְקַחְתֶּם is made of two words, לקיחה תמה (see Succah 34b and 37a), which can be translated as "take temimus". These should be the traits we seek to develop on this Yom Tov.

It states (Vayikra 23:42-43), בַּסֻּכֹּת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים... לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, "For seven days you shall live in succos…. in order that your ensuing generations should know that I placed Bnei Yisrael in succos when I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim."

The Gemara (Succah 11b) states a machlokes: Reb Eliezer says that the succos we commemorate are the ענני כבוד, clouds of glory, which surrounded and protected Bnei Yisrael in the desert. These are called the "succos" that Hashem placed Bnei Yisrael in when they were in the desert. Reb Akiva says סוכות ממש עשו להם, Klal Yisrael made actual succahs, like the ones we build on our porches and backyards for Succos. They were the temporary houses the Jewish people lived in during the forty years they were in the desert, after leaving Mitzrayim.

According to Reb Akiva, we must understand the pasuk לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, "in order that your ensuing generations should know that I placed Bnei Yisrael in succahs when I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim." Didn't they build the succahs and dwell in them on their own? Why does it state כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, that Hashem placed us and had us sit in succos?

The answer is that even when a person builds a hut and lives in it, he must know that Hashem did it. Everything is from Hashem. The idea to build a hut, and the strength and ability to do so, are all from Hashem. This is the temimus we attain from living in the succah for seven days. We discover that everything is from Hashem; even what we do on our own is from Hashem. לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם, this emunah we must know, and we must teach it to the future generations. Everything that occurs is from Hashem.

The Rashbam explains the reason we must know, in all generations, that Hashem placed us in succos. It is to learn to appreciate what we have now. He writes, "I placed Bnei Yisrael in succahs in the desert for forty years, a place where there was no civilization or portions of land. Thereby, you will praise Hashem for giving you a portion of land, houses filled with goodness. You won't say in your hearts that your strength and the might of your hand granted you your wealth." We understand from the Rashbam's holy words that sitting in the succah helps us recognize the goodness we have today, in comparison to what was in the past. In the past, we lived in a desert, without civilization and a regular home. Today, we live so differently. Furthermore, the succah reminds us that everything we have today is from Hashem. Let us not think we attained it with the strength of our hands.

Chizkuni (ibid.) writes, "The Yom Tov is in the time when we gather in the crops. Lest people's hearts will become proud due to their homes that are filled with all types of goodness, and they might say that they

earned all this wealth by the strength of their hand. From sitting in the succah, they will praise Hashem Who gave them a land and houses filled with all good." Once again, the lesson of succah is to know that everything we have is from Hashem.

The Rambam (Morah Nevuchim vol.3, ch.43, quoted in the Ksav Sofer ד"ה ולקחתם) explains the reason for the mitzvah of the four minim: "After the harvest, and after gathering in the crops, every person will praise Hashem, and they won't say that they earned all of this due to their strong hand."

Succah Teaches us Bitachon

It states (Vayikra 23:42) בַּסֻּכֹּת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, "Live in succahs for seven days." The Gemara (Succah 2a) explains, "אמרה תורה כל שבעת הימים צא מדירת קבע ושב בדירת עראי, "For all seven days, leave your permanent home and dwell in a temporary abode." Why do we leave the strong walls of our home and live in a succah for seven days?

Menoras HaMaor (נר ג' כלל ד' ח"ו פ"א) explains, "The mitzvah of succah tells us that a person shouldn't trust in his tall and sturdy home, even if it is filled with a lot of good. He also shouldn't trust in the aid of a human, even if he is a powerful ruler of the land. One should trust in the One Who spoke and the world came into being… The mitzvah of succah teaches us this lesson. The mitzvah is performed after we finish gathering the crops of Eretz Yisrael, including the vineyard. This is a time of בעיטה [kicking, rebellion, when a person tends to rebel against Hashem because he feels he can manage on his own]. His treasures are filled with wealth; he has already returned from the field to his home in the city; he has put pitch on his roof, and he has closed all openings of his home, so the rain of the winter won't come in. Neither the wind nor any other elements will bother him. Therefore, Hashem commanded that one should leave his sturdy home and dwell in the succah. This will train him to trust in *Hashem yisbarach,* and to place upon his heart that all the good that he has received from the field was given to him with Hashem's will. He should remember that the protection for his life, and everything he has, is from *Hashem yisbarach*, and he shouldn't trust in the goods that he already has."

Sfas Emes (5645 ד"ה מצות) writes, "The mitzvah of succah is about bitachon in Hashem yisbarach, as Chazal say, צא מדירת קבע, 'Go out from your permanent home'. [Go out of the mindset that you can rely on your wealth and your home.] Don't trust in your wealth or your property, only in Hashem."

Chazal (Succah 9b) say, העושה סוכתו תחת האילן כאילו עשאה בתוך הבית, "If a person builds his succah under a tree, it is [pasul, just] as if he made the succah in his home." Some explain that there is a similarity between a succah built under a tree and a succah built in a home. A succah must be built under the heavens, *without interference*, so a person will know that he is dependent on Hashem, alone, Who dwells in heaven. He shouldn't trust in any person, and he shouldn't seek the protection of a home or a tree. He should rely on Hashem alone.

Some explain (quoting Reb Shamshon Refael Hirsh zt'l) that this is the reason מחובר – when the schach that covers the succah is attached to the ground – is pasul. The schach must be detached from the earth. Generally, people are very "attached" and dependent on their assets and money. Therefore, we tell him, "For seven days, leave your permanent home, cleanse your mind from trusting in others, and dwell for seven days in a temporary abode, under the צילא דמיהמנותא, shade of emunah. Train yourself to be "detached" from this world, and to trust in Hashem.

Chazal (Succah 28b) says, "When a child still needs his mother, he is exempt from sitting in the succah." The Gemara asks, "Who is a child who needs his mother? It is a child who, when he awakens from his sleep, calls Mother, Mother. The Gemara explains that if he calls "Mother" once, it is natural. Older children also do that when they wake up in the morning. But if he repeats "Mother!

Mother!" the child is very young and very dependent on his mother, and is therefore *patur* from sitting in the succah. Some explain (אתה בחרתנו עמ' ק"ב) that the purpose of the succah is to train us to trust in Hashem. If the child calls "Mother! Mother!" he is trusting in human beings. He isn't prepared for the mitzvah and lesson of succah: to trust in Hashem alone.

Succos is called חג האסיף, "the Yom Tov of gathering." This is because Succos is celebrated in the season when the new crops are brought into the home. The Sfas Emes (ד"ה מצות 5645) teaches that just as the new crops are the source of food for the entire year, so, too, brachos come down from heaven on Succos, which will be with us the entire year. Succos teaches us to trust in Hashem, and when we trust in Hashem, Hashem will bestow His blessings upon us.

The Kli Yakar (Vayikra 23:42) writes, "After people harvest their crops, they want to go home and live in a permanent dwelling. The Torah is concerned that this might lead to arrogance. Therefore, the Torah says כל האזרח, whoever has plans to live in this world as a permanent resident, ישבו בסוכות, he must first dwell in the temporary *succah*. This will remind him to be humble and to know that he is a stranger in this world. He isn't a permanent resident here. With this realization, he won't place his trust in the walls of his home. He will trust in Hashem alone… This is what our forefathers did when they left Mitzrayim. They didn't live in high-class homes. They were surrounded by the seven clouds, where Hashem's honor was among them. They were בצל ש-ד-י, in the shadow of Hashem, and not in the shadow of their homes, made from good wood."

The Gemara (Succah 2a) tells us that a succah higher than twenty *amos* is *pasul*. The Gemara explains that when the walls of the succah are so high, one will be sitting in the shade of the walls and won't receive shade from the schach. Therefore, the succah is pasul. The Aruch l'Ner (סיום למסכת סוכה, נדפס בסוף המסכתא) explains the problem. The walls of the succah represent this world. The schach represents Hashem's hashgachah pratis, Who gives him all his needs at every moment. "Schach higher than twenty amos is pasul because then he sits in the shadow generated from the walls and not from the schach. This represents a person who trusts in matters of this world to help him and is pasul, and not desired by Hashem." A person must trust in Hashem Who watches over him with hashgachah pratis and gives him all his needs, at every moment. Knowing this is the primary mitzvah of succah.

Shulchan Aruch (631:3) states, דֶּרֶךְ הַסְּכּוּךְ לְהְיוֹת קַל, כְּדֵי שֶׁיֵּרָאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים הַגְּדוֹלִים, "It is the way of schach that one should be able to see through them the large stars." Pri Megadim (א"א תרל"א סק"ב) explains that the reason is so he can see the heaven, as it states (Yeshayah 40:26) שְׂאוּ מָרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ מִי בָרָא אֵלֶּה, "Lift up your eyes on high and see Who created these." He will understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the entire world and leads it.

Erev Succos, and the Importance of Chessed

The Shaarei Teshuvah (625) writes, "It is proper to give a lot of tzedakah on *Erev Succos*. Reb Chaim Vital would distribute the entire *tzedakah pushka* to the poor on this day." Rebbe Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* would give a lot of tzedakah on erev succos. He would say that there is no nicer נוי סוכה, *succah* decoration, than the *tzedakah* one gives on *erev Succos*.[1]

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1. The Tzanzer Rav was renowned for his extraordinary tzedakah and generosity, but he would say that he wasn't born that way. He worked on himself until he changed his nature and transformed himself into a giver. He added that once he had reshaped his middos, if he met a poor person whom he couldn't help, he felt as though his skin was being torn from him. That is how deeply it pained him when he was unable to assist another Yid.

Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah writes, "*Erev Succos* is a special day to give tzedakah. It is also the day to find proper guests, poor *b'nei Torah*, for all the days of the *Yom Tov*."

The importance of having guests on Succos is discussed in the Zohar. The *Zohar* teaches that the seven *ushpizin*: Avraham,[2] Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid, come to our *succos* to celebrate with us. When they arrive, they check to see if there are guests at the seudah. If guests are present, they remain in the *succah* and they bless everyone. But if there are no guests, they leave.[3]

"My brothers and friends, holy to Hashem, friends of the Above, and loved ones of my soul, think about your greatness when you perform this mitzvah [of having guests on

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2. On the first day of succos, Rebbe Eliezer of Dzikov zt'l was especially careful to have guests, since it is the ushpizen of Avraham Avinu, who excelled in hachnasas orchim. One year, he had no guests, so he asked his son, the Imrei Noam zt'l, to go outside and find someone who needed a meal. His son walked through the streets until he found a homeless man and invited him into his father's succah.

The Dzikover Rebbe was very pleased. He said, "Avraham Avinu's guests weren't any better. Avraham cared so deeply for people that he was eager to bring anyone who desired a meal into his home. At least on this day, we should emulate the ways of Avraham Avinu."

A similar story is told about Reb Chaim Ozer zt'l. Someone came to his home on succos, and Reb Chaim invited him to eat in the succah. Reb Chaim excused himself, saying, "I won't be eating in the succah. It is very cold outside, and I caught a cold. Chazal (Succah 25b) say, *mitzta'er patur min hasuccah* — one who experiences tzaar is exempt from the mitzvah of succah. But you can go up and eat there."

Shortly after the guest entered the succah, Reb Chaim joined him. He explained, "Chazal say that one who has tzaar is exempt from succah, but they didn't say he is exempt from the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim."

The Beis Yisrael zt'l would often repeat this story, and he added (b'derech tzachus) that perhaps this is why tzaddikim remained in the succah even when it rained. They had guests — the holy Ushpizin. Rain exempts a person from succah, but not from hachnasas orchim.

The practical lesson is clear: when it comes to middos, a person cannot excuse himself by saying he has tzaar. Perhaps he isn't feeling well, but that does not exempt him from being kind to another Yid.

3. The Gemara (Avodah Zorah 3) teaches that in the future, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewards the Jewish nation, the nations of the world will come forward and demand reward as well. They will claim that they, too, want another chance to keep the Torah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will reply, "Fools! It is too late to perform mitzvos now. You had your opportunity, and you rejected the Torah and its mitzvos. Nevertheless, I have a simple mitzvah — the mitzvah of succah. Keep this mitzvah, and you will receive reward."

The Gemara relates that immediately the nations will climb onto their rooftops and build succos there. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will then cause the sun to blaze intensely, making the heat unbearable. They will kick their succos and walk away. The Gemara explains that although Yidden also leave the succah when the heat becomes too great — for the halachah is *mitzta'er patur min ha'succah*, one who is in distress is exempt — a Yid would never kick the succah in contempt. The nations of the world will kick the succah, showing disdain, and therefore they do not deserve reward.

B'derech tzachus, we can understand why the Gemara says the goyim will build their succos on the roof. They choose the rooftop intentionally — they don't want anyone knocking on their door asking to be invited in. Yidden, by contrast, seek guests for succos; they look for opportunities to bring others into their succah.

We can also explain this Chazal more deeply. The burning sun represents the hardships of life, and the succah represents shelter, trust, and belief in Hashem. Non Jews may have emunah as long as life is comfortable. But when the sun beats down — when life becomes difficult — they kick the succah; they abandon their belief. The Jewish nation, however, believes and trusts in Hashem under all circumstances. Even when it is metaphorically very hot and uncomfortable, the Jewish nation continues to rely on Hashem.

Succos]. In this merit, you earn redemption and freedom for your children, in all future generations. Hashem's honor resides on you all day long… and the *avos hakedoshim* dwell with you in the succah. They are happy with you because you gave your bread to very poor *talmidei chachamim*, and you brought them into your home. The needy eat the portion of the *ushpizin*. You will receive seven brachos from the ushpizin. How could a person not be inspired and excited to perform this mitzvah?!"[4]

The Shlah Hakadosh (Succah, Ner Mitzvah 8) writes, "One should invite the ushpizin with his mouth, and then he should give the portion of the Ushpizin to the poor who sit around his table. If they aren't around his table, he should send food to their homes…"[5]

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4. One of the tzaddikim of our generation, shlita, asked, "How do we invite the ushpizin to our homes? How can we say אזמין לסעודי אושפיזין קדישין, 'I invite to my meal the holy ushpizin?' Who are we to invite these holy guests? However, on Yom Tov Succos, in the beis HaMikdash, we offered seventy korbanos corresponding to the seventy nations of the world. These korbanos brought goodness and bounty to all the nations of the world. This means that, on Succos, we do kindness even for goyim, even for those who don't deserve it. Therefore, we can ask the holy ushpizin that they should extend kindness to us, even if we don't deserve it – certainly when we have the merit to be in the company of poor guests. The holy ushpizin will be happy to join us in the succah.

5. During World War One, the Chofetz Chaim was in exile in Sanubask, Russia. They were unable to locate a fresh esrog, but someone managed to find an esrog from the previous year, and the Chofetz Chaim made a brachah on it in the morning, before going to beis medresh. However, he didn't take it to beis medresh for נענועים, the shaking of the lulav. He explained that the other congregants will be jealous of him because he has an esrog and not them. Shaking the lulav is a holy custom, but it doesn't permit one to cause pain and distress to others. (ח"ח חייו ופועליו חלק ג' עמ' תתכ"ד)

The following story happened in Yerushalayim. A family put up their succah, but one of their neighbors complained that the succah was exactly where he usually parks his car. He asked that they take down the succah and build it elsewhere. The owner of the succah explained that it is hard for him to move the succah, and he should please allow him to use the area for eight days, but the neighbor refused to give in.

Having no other choice, the owner of the succah asked his children to take down the succah and to rebuild it nearby. The children were very upset about this. They said, "The place where the succah stood before doesn't belong exclusively to the neighbor. The area belongs to all residents of the building." They encouraged their father not to give in and to leave the succah right where it was.

The father replied, "If you want me to use this succah this year, you must move it. I will not sit in a succah if the neighbor is upset about it." The children obliged and moved the succah.

On the first night of Succos, some heavy stones came crashing down from the building onto the neighbor's car, which was parked in "his" parking spot. Had the succah still been there, the stones would have fallen on them. They were saved in the merit of being mevater.

In Bnei Brak, someone lived on the fourth floor and wanted to build a porch so he could put up a succah there. The neighbors from the floors below told him that he couldn't do so, because it would make their succahs pasul. His other option was to build the succah in the courtyard below. That would mean that every time he forgot a spoon or needed something from home, he would have to go up and down four flights of stairs. But what choice did he have?

But then the neighbor from the first floor told him that he allowed him to build over the area where he generally has his succah. He said, "I am mevater, and I will build my succah on another porch, which is on the other side of the building."

This vitur saved his life. There were powerful winds that Succos (תשע"ח), and a roof of a porch from the third floor fell onto the porch on the first floor, where he previously built his succah. The first-floor neighbor

Rashi (Devarim 16:11) writes: אם אתה משמח את שלי אני משמח את שלך, "[Hashem says:] If you bring joy to Mine, I will bring joy to yours." This means if you bring people who are suffering to your table, and if you give them simchas Yom Tov, Hashem will give to you and to your family simchas Yom Tov as well. Rashi is referring to this pasuk (Devarim 16:11) וְשָׂמַחְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ, "You shall be happy before Hashem, your G-d, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite who is within your cities, and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are among you…" Eight kinds of people are mentioned in this pasuk, and Hashem calls the four categories listed at the end of the pasuk שלי, "Mine," because they are poor and alone, and Hashem feels close to them and wants people to help them. These four kinds of people are: וְהַלֵּוִי... וְהַגֵּר וְהַיָּתוֹם וְהָאַלְמָנָה "The Levite (who was often poor)… the stranger, the orphan, and the widow." When we bring joy to these four categories of people, Hashem promises that He will bring joy to the four categories of people listed at the beginning of the pasuk: וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ, "Your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant." About this, Rashi writes, אם אתה משמח את שלי אני משמח את שלך, "[Hashem says:] If you shall bring joy to Mine, I will bring joy to yours."

The Imrei Emes asks that there is a fifth category listed in the pasuk, for it states וְשָׂמַחְתָּ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹקֶיךָ **אַתָּה** וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ, "You shall be happy before Hashem, your G-d, **you**, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant…" So, in addition to "Your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant," which are four categories, "You" is also mentioned in the pasuk.

The Imrei Emes answers that indeed there are five categories of people who will receive joy from Hashem. You will also be happy, and you deserve this because you gave joy to *five*! You brought joy to the four categories we mentioned: the Levi, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow, and you also brought joy to Hashem because Hashem is happy when we bring joy to those in need.[6]

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thought he was helping his neighbor, but he was saving himself. Due to his vitur, he wasn't there, and his life, and the lives of his family members, were saved.

6. Many people in Yerushalayim would come annually to show their four *minim* to Reb Shimon Aharon Polonski *zt'l*, the Tepliker Rav, and he would tell them whether the minim were kosher and mehudar, or if they should buy something else. After paskening, the Tepliker Rav would then ask them to give a donation for the poor of Yerushalayim.

Once a person told him, "I can't give money to the poor. I need the money to buy the four *minim*."

The Tepliker Rav disagreed. He said, "You can borrow the four *minim* from a friend. You aren't obligated to buy your own set. However, if a poor family is sad on Yom Tov because they couldn't afford a meal, and they shed just one tear, that creates a *kitrug* in heaven, which is very hard to silence."

One year, on the first day of Succos, the Tepliker Rav asked someone to lend him his *esrog* since he didn't have his own. How did it happen that he didn't have his own esrog? This is the story: On *Erev* Succos, the Tepliker Rav heard shouts coming from his neighbor's home. He knew this family. Their father had passed away; there were young orphans at home. The mother had remarried, but things weren't going so smoothly there.

The shouts continued, so the Tepliker Rav knocked at their door and asked whether he could help. The family told him that one of the children had broken the *pitom* of the stepfather's esrog. "The stepfather is now in the mikvah, but we are scared of how he will react when he finds out."

The Tepliker Rav told them, "I will give you another *esrog*. You don't have to tell him what happened. Just

The Holiness of the Succah

The Zohar (103b) states, "Come and see: When a person sits in this abode, the shade of emunah, the Shechinah spreads out its wings over him from Above."

Reishis Chochmah (Shaar HaKedushah ch.4) writes that his Rebbe, the Remak, would only speak divrei Torah because the holiness of the succah is very great.[7]

Mishnah Berurah (632:2) writes, "Since the kedushah of the succah is so great, it is proper that one shouldn't speak much there, other than words of kedushah and divrei Torah. Certainly, he must be cautious not to speak *lashon hara*, *rechilus,* or other forbidden words in the succah."

Bikurei Yaakov (639:2) writes, "The Shlah was very strict that one shouldn't become angry in the succah."

Yesod Yosef (ch.77) writes, "When one sits in the succah and learns and davens there, he is literally in the upper worlds."

Sfas Emes (5643) writes, "Man was created to live in Gan Eden, and this is the place of true joy, as we say (in the Sheva Brachos of a chasunah), שַׂמֵּחַ תְּשַׂמַּח רֵעִים הָאֲהוּבִים, כְּשַׂמֵּחֲךָ יְצִירְךָ בְּגַן עֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם, 'Grant abundant joy to these loving friends, as You bestowed gladness upon Your created being in the Garden of Eden of old.' Mankind was banished from Gan Eden, but there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines. This is why people are happy when they are in the *succah*. The succah is Gan Eden…"

It states (Shir HaShirim 1:4) הביאני המלך חדריו, "The king brought me into His [innermost] chambers. נגילה ונשמחה בך, "We will rejoice with You." When we are in the Succah, we are in Hashem's innermost chamber, a place of immense joy. As Chazal (Chagigah 5:) say, after the churban Beis HaMikdash, Hashem cries

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say that I asked to see his esrog and ruled it was pasul, so I gave you another one." The Tepliker Rav gave them his own esrog. He could borrow an esrog in beis medresh, but now he had to help this family.

Esrogim used to be very expensive, and Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz zt'l would put aside money throughout the year to have enough funds to buy the four *minim*. One year, as he was walking with his package of money to buy an *esrog*, he encountered a simple Yid, who was crying bitterly. He asked him what happened.

The man told him that his horse had died, and he couldn't afford to buy another one. This man needed a horse for his parnassah. Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz handed him his money bag and told him to buy a horse. With the leftover money, Rebbe Mordechai purchased an *esrog*. It was a kosher esrog but not a *mehudar*. When he came home, he told his family, "This *Yom Tov*, everyone will make a *brachah* on a beautiful *esrog*. We will make a *brachah* on a beautiful horse…"

That Succos, Rebbe Mordechai davened in the beis medresh of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zt'l*. Rebbe Elimelech said, "I smell the scent of Gan Eden coming from your *esrog*." Rebbe Mordechai told him how he was *moser nefesh* to help another Jew. That merit brought a scent of Gan Eden on his otherwise simple esrog.

7. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 1:1) writes: "The way a person sits, moves about, and acts when he is alone in his home is different than how he sits, moves about, and acts when he is in the presence of a great king. [Also], the way he speaks freely with his family is different from how he will speak in the presence of a king." We must never forget that we stand before Hashem, and that will help us act and speak with yiras Shamayim at all times. This mindset is especially appropriate when we sit in the succah. We are sitting before Hashem, and we should act accordingly.

Halachah states that the walls and the schach have kedushah. Therefore, we are forbidden to derive pleasure from them all seven days of Succos (see Shulchan Aruch 638:1). Furthermore, Chazal (Succah 9a) say, כשם שחל שם שמים על החגיגה כך חל שם שמים על הסוכה, "Just as Hashem's name is on the korban chagigah, Hashem's name is on the succah". There are all expresses of the kedushah of the succah.

in His outer chambers and is happy in His innermost chambers.[8]

Yaaras Dvash (vol.1 drush 6) writes, "Hashem's cloud hovers over the succah. Although we don't see it, it is certain that whoever sits in the succah *l'shem shamayim* and learns Torah there and is happy with the Yom Tov and the mitzvos, Hashem's cloud hovers above him."[9]

The Pri Megadim states: One mustn't use a *succah* as a shortcut, and it is certainly forbidden to spit there because the *succah* is holy and its laws are similar to those of the Beis HaMikdash. Arizal teaches that one's table in the succah should have four legs to resemble the Shulchan of the Beis HaMikdash, which had four legs.[10] Chazal consider a succah to be built on Har HaBayis, next to the Beis HaMikdash. The Gemara disproves this in the end. Nevertheless, a הוא אמינא, an initial thought of Chazal, also has significance and is indicative of the kedushah of the succah. Its holiness is like that of the Beis HaMikdash, which is built on the Har HaBayis.

When Succos falls on Friday night, some people don't say "Shalom Aleichem" (which is said before kiddush). Shem MiShmuel explains that the kedushah of the succah is so great that malachim cannot go there.[11]

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8. Rashi learns the opposite: that Hashem cries in the inner chambers and is happy in the outer chambers. Perhaps this can be compared to the Chovos HaLevavos (Prishus 4) הפרוש צהלתו בפניו ואבלו בלבו, that a tzaddik, "Joy is on his face, while he mours in his heart." Our explanation above follows Rabbeinu Chananel, who says that Hashem's joy is in the inner quarters, and the distress of the Churban is expressed in the outer chambers. This is why the judgment is limited to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but when Succos arrives, we enter the inner chamber, the place of Hashem's joy.

9. Keren l'Dovid writes, "When one sits in the *succah l'shem shamayim*, he feels the holiness with *hislahavus*. He experiences the light of the mitzvah and knows that it is true that the עניי כבוד surrounded us. This sensation cannot be explained in words, but someone who experienced it knows it's true."

One of the laws of the succah is that it must be at least ten tefachim high. The Gemara (Succah 4:) explains that this is because the Shechinah never descended below ten tefachim. The Chesed L'Avraham and the Sfas Emes (תרמ"ב ד"ה כתיב) say that this hints at the holiness of the succah. It tells us that the Shechinah resides above it.

According to halachah, a succah must be made of at least two full walls and one smaller wall, the length of a *tefach*. The holy sefarim explain that this represents an arm. An arm has three parts: The two larger parts of the arm and the palm. The succah, with its two large walls and one small wall, represents an arm. Keviyachol, when we sit in the succah, it is like Hashem is hugging us.

Some tzaddikim were careful that a goy shouldn't enter the *succah* because of its immense kedushah.

The Chiddushei HaRim *zt'l* teaches that Hashem cares for us in the same manner as a mother cares for her child. On Rosh Hashanah, בלאוט מען אונז אפ, Hashem blows on us and blows away our impurities. On Yom Kippur וואשט מען אונז אפ, Hashem rinses us off, as it says, וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים, "I will throw onto you purifying waters" (*Yechezkel* 36). And on Succos, דעקט מען אונז צו, Hashem covers and swaddles us.

Similarly, the Ohev Yisrael (Likutim) says that a chicken first feeds its chicks and then covers them under its wings. This is how the Shechinah interacts with us during these days. On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem gives us parnassah, and on Succos, Hashem takes us under His wings.

10. We repeat this not necessarily so that people should go out and buy a table with four legs, but rather to highlight the holiness of the succah, which resembles the Beis HaMikdash.

11. Before each meal, there is a custom to invite the Ushpizin to the succah אברהם, יצחק, יעקב, משה, אהרן, יוסף, ודוד. The question was raised (for those who say Shalom Aleichem in the succah on Friday night) which should be recited first: Should we first invite the Ushpizin, or should we first greet the malachim and begin with Shalom Aleichem?

When we say Hoshanos we call out in a loud voice הושענא שואגים הושע נא (אום אני חומה), "Hashem should save those who shout out Hosha Na." Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, prayers are said in a silent voice, as we say, וכל מאמינים שהוא עונה לחש, "Everyone believes that Hashem answers silent tefillos." Reb Shalom of Belz zt'l explains that on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we should daven silently to hide our tefillos from the malachim, the *mikatrigim*, who wish to prevent them from ascending to heaven. But on Succos, when we sit in the succah under the shade of the Shechinah, we are shielded from all the *mikatrigim.* Therefore, we can pray in a loud voice. We can shout הושע נא, and our tefillos will go up and be answered.

When Yaakov Avinu escaped from Eisav, where did he go? The Zohar (vol.3 p.100:) states that he ran to a succah. The Bnei Yissaschar (Tishrei 10:7) writes, "With the *or makif*, the holy light of the succah, all *tumah* flee from him." It is a place of holiness and protection from all bad and from all *tzaros*.

Salvations from the Succah

We say in Neilah, יחביאנו צל ידו תחת כפני השכינה. The Ateres Tzvi zt'l says that צל ידו refers to the shade of the succah. We daven on Yom Kippur that in the merit of the mitzvah succah, יחביאנו, Hashem should protect us.

The Zera Kodesh (first night of Succos) from Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz zt'l says that צל means shadow, not shade. The Gemara (Succah 2a) states אדם יושב בצל סוכה, "A person sits in the shadow of the succah." Also, the Zohar HaKadosh (vol.3 103b) calls a succah צילא דמיהמנותא, "The shadow of emunah." However, this expression is difficult, because when one sits under the schach, he sits under the *shade* of the succah, not in its *shadow*. When there is a tall tree that gives off a shadow, one can sit in that shadow, but when one sits directly under the tree, he isn't under the shadow. He is in the shade of the tree. So, why is sitting in the succah called sitting in the צל, shadow?

The Ropshitzer Rav answers with the renowned Midrash (see Shlah Hakadosh, תולדות אדם, שער הגדול אות ה׳) to explain the pasuk (Tehillim 121:8) ה׳ צלך, "Hashem is your shadow". The midrash explains that Hashem is called צלך, our shadow, because just as all movements of man are seen in his shadow, so, too, the way a person acts, Hashem does the same in heaven. When a person has compassion on his fellow man, Heaven will act with compassion. When one is kind, Heaven performs kindness, etc. This explains the reason the shade of the succah is called צל, shadow. When we sit in our succah made of wood and stone, Hashem protects Bnei Yisrael in His succah in heaven. There is a shadow effect. The Ropshitzer writes, הגם שאין ערך ודמיון כלל עם כל זה מוכרח לומר כן, "Although there is no comparison at all…" There is no comparison between our succos, made from stone and wood, to the holy succah in heaven, "nevertheless, we must say so."[12]

Someone told the Satmar Rebbe zt'l that he thinks we should invite the malachim first because the rule is תדיר ושאינו תדיר תדיר קודם, whatever is more frequent comes first. Shalom Aleichem is recited every Friday night and should, therefore, be said first.

The Satmar Rebbe replied that although Shalom Aleichem is said each week, different malachim come each week. This is because the level of malachim that accompany us on Shabbos night depends on the person's deeds during the week and on the amount he prepared himself during the week for Shabbos. Therefore, said the Satmar Rebbe, the ushpizin and the malachim are equally תדיר. The question thus remains which one should be invited into the succah first: the malachim or the Ushpizin?

The Satmar Rebbe said, "In my opinion, the Ushpizin should be invited first because the Ushpizin are tzaddikim, and tzaddikim are greater than malachim."

12. The Zohar (vol.3, 100b, which some say before the tekiyos on Rosh Hashanah) states that Yaakov escaped from

Chazal say מצטער פטור מן הסוכה. The Tiferes Shlomo translated it: מצטער פטור, one becomes freed from all his *tzaros*, מן הסוכה, in the merit of performing the mitzvah of succah.[13]

The Yeitav Lev zt'l said that even if the decree on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was חייב, chalilah (that he is guilty and undeserving of a good year) on Succos, חיי"ב turns around and becomes the roshei teivos for (Tehillim 149:5) יעלזו חסידים בכבוד ירננו, "The righteous will exult in Hashem's honor; they will sing praises…" They will praise Hashem for His kindness that will come to them.

The end of the pasuk is בכבוד, ירננו על משכבותם, "…they will sing praises on their beds." The Sfas Emes (5653) says that this pasuk alludes to the mitzvah of sleeping in succah, the only mitzvah one performs while sleeping. The word כבוד in this pasuk also hints at succah because the succah commemorates the ענני הכבוד, clouds of glory that protected Bnei Yisrael in the desert. This mitzvah results in יעלזו חסידים, a lot of joy, because the mitzvah of succah brings many salvations.

The mitzvah of succah is mesugal for a long life. The Ropshitzer Rav zt'l learned

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Eisav by hiding in a succah. Shaar HaKavanos (ענין סוכה דרוש ד') from the Arizal teaches, "The concept of succah is that we, Yisrael, children of kings, build a succah and sit in the shade of Hashem's encompassing light (אור מקיף), which surrounds us like a succah. By sitting in the succah, we draw onto ourselves this encompassing light. The Bnei Yissaschar (Tishrei 10:7) teaches that this light banishes all tumah, kelipos, and *chitzonim*, which seek to harm us. He notes that this is hinted at in the pasuk (Devarim 28:10) וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה' נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ וְיָרְאוּ מִמֶּךָּ, "All the peoples of the earth will see that Hashem's name is called upon you, and they will fear you." The Bnei Yissaschar explains that a key word in this pasuk is עָלֶיךָ, "upon you." This refers to the אור מקיף, the light that surrounds us. This holy light protects us, for it banishes all tumos and all kelipos and all harm. The Bnei Yissaschar explains that tumah is afraid of this encompassing light because the tumah doesn't possess this light. As it states (Bereishis 3:1) וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם, the snake was naked; it didn't have clothing encompassing it. When we sit in succah, this gives us the encompassing light (אור מקיף) that protects us from all harm.

The Imrei Noam (Or Ropshitz, אושפיזיא דיעקב אות א') zt'l teaches that סכ"ך is roshei teivos of (Tehillim 22:17) כִּי סָבָבוּנִי כְלָבִים, "For dogs [Eisav], have surrounded me." Also, it states (Shemos 15:7) וּבְרֹב גְּאוֹנְךָ תַּהֲרֹס קָמֶיךָ, "With Your great pride, You tear down those who rise up against You". The סופי תיבות, final letters spell סכ"ך. These sources hint that with the mitzvah of succah, we tear down our enemies, and we are protected from all harm.

Shem MiShmuel (תער"ד ד"ה בזוה"ק) writes, "I heard from my father [the Avnei Nezer zt'l] that when one says קריאת שמע שעל המטה in the succah, he should say only the first parashah of Shema, as we do on the night of ליל שמורים, after the seder." The explanation is as follows: Every night of the year, it is recommended that one read the entire Shema, with all its three parshiyos. This protects us from the tumah and chitzonim, who seek to harm us. However, the night of the seder is called ליל שמורים, the night that is protected. We aren't afraid of the tumah on this night, and therefore, there is no need to say all three parshiyos of Shema. The Avnei Nezer says that the same is when one says Shema in the succah before going to sleep. In the succah, we aren't afraid of the chitzonim, and therefore, it is sufficient to read the first parashah of Shema.

People asked the Vilna Gaon zt'l whether it is permitted to sleep alone in the succah. (The question relates to the precaution many people practice, not to sleep in a room alone, because they are afraid of chitzonim.) The Vilna Gaon replied, שומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע, when one performs a mitzvah, nothing bad will happen to him. (מעשה רב אות רכ"א).

It states (Bereishis 33:17) וְיַעֲקֹב נָסַע סֻכֹּתָה וַיִּבֶן לוֹ בָּיִת... עַל כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם סֻכּוֹת, "Yaakov traveled to Succos and built himself a house… Therefore he named the place Succos." The Zohar HaKadosh (vol.3 101a) states that this pasuk tells us that the mitzvah of succah protects Bnei Yisrael from the kitrug (prosecuting malachim), and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy with His children.

13. The Gemara (Succah 25:) says, מצטער פטור מן הסוכה, one who has tzaar, is exempt from the succah. The Kotzker zt'l explains this Gemara in a mussar fashion. It teaches us that one shouldn't feel any tzaar or pain when he is in the holy succah, under Hashem's wings. If he feels distress in the succah, פטור מן הסוכה, this demonstrates that he hasn't attached himself to the essence and holiness of the succah.

this from the pasuk (Vayikra 23:42) כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכות, "Every resident of Yisrael shall dwell in succahs." The word אזרח is gematria גבורה, mighty, and the pasuk says (Tehillim 90:10) אם בגבורות שמונים שנה, that the mighty live up until eighty. So, there is an indication in the pasuk that for keeping the mitzvah of succah, one will merit to live long.[14]

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14. The Tzelemer Rav zt'l was in a nursing home visiting a friend when an elderly person approached him and said that he was 116 years old. He asked the Tzelemer Rav to daven for him that he should die.

The Tzelemer Rav said, "You appear healthy, and your mind is sound; why do you want to die?"

The old man replied, "It is because of my ninety-year-old son, who is also in this facility. He suffers terribly, and I can't bear to watch his suffering so much. That's the reason I want to leave this world."

The Tzelemer Rav went to visit his son. He was lying in bed, in terrible pain. The son said, "I am certain that I will live four more years."

The Tzelemer Rav asked how he knew that, but the son didn't have the strength to answer. So, the Tzelemer Rav returned to the old father and asked him how his son knew that he would live for another four years. The old man said, "In my youth, I lived in Kalamaya. When I turned twenty, I worked in the Kalamaya post office, and my job was to deliver letters. When my manager noticed how strong I was, they began sending me to deliver the heavy packages to the intended addresses.

"One Erev Succos, I came to the post office, as I did every day, and I saw a package of sefarim for Reb Hillel Kalamaya zt'l. I understood that Reb Hillel might want to study from these sefarim over Succos, so I made sure to deliver the sefarim to Reb Hillel before Yom Tov. When I got to Reb Hillel's home, I saw that he was sad. I was surprised to see him in this state, since it was erev Succos, זמן שמחתנו, a happy time! His succah was standing and decorated; he had the four minim, so I asked Reb Hillel why he was sad. He replied that he was worried that he wouldn't be able to sleep in the succah. He explained that the goyim who lived near his home were lately becoming rowdy and drunk at night. Reb Hillel lived on a central street, and many people would pass his succah. He feared that the goyim might break into his succah in the middle of the night and harm him…

"I said, 'Reb Hillel! I am strong. I will stay with you in your succah, and I will protect you from the goyim.' Reb Hillel was delighted with this arrangement.

"I stayed in his succah the entire Yom Tov. At night, I kept a stick near me in case there was trouble. On the first night of Succos, after we went to sleep, the goyim came to the succah. I chased them away. They returned the next night, and the night after that, but they received a beating from me each time, until they realized they would be better off not coming back. There was peace for the second half of Succos.

"At the end of Yom Tov, Reb Hillel gave me a brachah that I should live until 120 years with good health, and that none of my children should die in my lifetime. As you can see, the brachah has come to fruition. My son apparently understood from this story that he has another four years to live. I am 116, I will live until 120, and none of my children will die in my lifetime. Therefore, my son knows that he will live for another four years."

The Tzelemer Rav was very inspired by this story and told the old man not to daven to die. He should instead daven that his son should have a refuah sheleimah.

Before leaving the nursing home, the Tzelemer Rav spoke to the staff and asked them to contact him if anything changed regarding the old man's health. Additionally, from time to time, he would come by to visit this old man.

Four years later, the home administration contacted the Tzelemer Rav to tell him that the old man was niftar. He was 120 years old. An hour afterward, they informed him that the son was also niftar.

We learn from this story that (a) if you help others keep the mitzvah of succah, you can merit long life. (b) Have hakaras hatov for those who help you, especially those who help you perform the mitzvah of succah. (c) We also see from this story the power of brachos from tzaddikim.

Yesod HoAvodah says (Devarim 32:39) מחצתי ואני ארפא, that with the מחיצות, the walls of the succah, there will be refuah.

The Kaf HaChaim (siman 621:6) teaches, "Whoever is cautious with the mitzvah of succah, to keep it properly, is guaranteed that there won't be disputes in his home throughout the year." Segulas Yisrael (מערכת מ' אות י"ח) writes that learning masechta Succah, any day of the year, is mesugal to be saved from machlokes. The hint is (Tehillim 31:21) תצפנם בסוכה מריב לשונות, "Protect them in a succah from the disputes of tongues." Reb Naftoli of Ropshitz zt'l would study *masechta* Succah throughout the year. He said that it is mesugal for *shalom bayis.*

The mitzvah of succah is mesugal for parnassah. Tiferes Shlomo says that this is hinted at in the Mishnah (Succah 28.) מי שהיה ראשו ורובו בסוכה ושלחנו בתוך הבית, "A person whose head and most of his body are in the succah and his table is in the home." Alluded to in these words is that, from this mitzvah, he brings parnassah to his table. Another indication is the Gemara (Succah 29), מנא מיכלא חוץ לסוכה, that also when the Yom Tov passes, and he is חוץ לסוכה, outside the succah, he will receive מיכלא, food, and parnassah because he performed the mitzvah of succah.

Sfas Emes (5637) says, "The mitzvah of succah brings blessings and a light of kedushah to the person's home."

Sfas Emes (5658) explains the brachah of Shemoneh Esrei, מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה, as follows: מלך ממית ומחיה, "a King Who gives life and death," this occurs on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. ומצמיח ישועה, "He sprouts salvations," this happens on Succos because on Succos, salvations come, and the harsh gezeiros are ripped up.

Salvations from the Four Minim

There are many *segulos* in the merit of taking the four minim.

The Yerushalmi (quoted in the Rosh סוכה פ"ג כ"ו, and see also Maharsha, Succah 38a) writes that when we shake the lulav during Hallel, it shakes up and weakens the מקטרג, the malachim who speak against us.[15]

Reb Mendel of Riminov zt'l (מנחם ציון, האזינו) says, "During Succos, we take the four minim, like brooms. With them we sweep away all the resha'im of the world. For, in every generation, the seventy nations of the world are *mikatreg* against us. This is so true; it is like I see it with my eyes. Every Yid creates the seventy nations himself [with his aveiros], and we must overcome them and negate them. Therefore, we take the four *minim,* and we fight with the *mikatrigim* who cause us tzaros. The four *minim* are our weapons, as the Tikunei Zohar (29a) tells us. We wave the four *minim* back and forth, so that wherever there is a *mikatreg* who speaks

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15. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur have passed, and people think that the days of judgment are over, but it isn't so. As we will explain, Hoshana Rabba is still an integral part of the days of judgment. Our lives, successes, parnassah etc. are still being determined, even if we are unaware of it. Therefore, Hashem gave us the mitzvah to shake the lulav on Succos, as that silences the mikatrigim, and they won't speak against us on Hoshana Rabba. With this mitzvah, we prepare and protect ourselves from a harsh judgment. People perform this mitzvah, and often have no idea that they are being judged.

We can compare this to a child who is blissfully playing on a rooftop, unaware that there is no gate there, and that he is in great danger. But people below are aware. They place cushions on the ground, around the house, and call Hatzalah to save the child. Similarly, many people are unaware that we are still in the judgment, and that our lives, our parnassah, our health, etc. are on the line. It is a critical time, but many aren't aware of it. Hashem gave us a mitzvah to shake the lulav to silence the mikatrigim so that we will have a good judgment. With this mitzvah, Hashem protects all of us, including those who aren't aware of what is at stake.

against Yisrael, they will fall under our feet, and they will have no ability to stand.

The Beis Aharon (p.138) writes that ערבה is gematria זרע (277). This tells us that the *aravos* that are in the lulav, and the *Hoshanos* on *Hoshana Rabba*, are mesugal for bearing children. (The source is פרי עץ חיים שער הלולב פרק ג׳. Imrei Pinchas השלם תס"ה tells a story about someone who told his wife to cook the aravos as a segulah for bearing children; see there).

Chazal (Taanis 2a) tell us that the key for bearing children is in HaKadosh Baruch Hu's hands, and He doesn't give it over to a *shaliach*. The *aravah* (and all the four minim) are similar, because they are entirely in Hashem's hands. As the Bnei Yissaschar (Tishrei 10:24) writes, quoting from early kabbalah sefarim, that although all plants have a malach appointed over them to hit them and to tell them to grow (see Bereishis Rabba 10:6), the four species (esrog, lulav, hadasim, aravos) are entirely under Hashem's *hashgachah,* and no *malach* is involved. We are obligated to take the four *minim*. This shows that we too are entirely under Hashem's hashgachah. We aren't under the influence of malachim. With this information, we can explain the reason the *aravos* are mesugal for bearing children. Chazal (Taanis 2a) say that bearing children is entirely in Hashem's hands, and He didn't give it over to the malachim. Thus, bearing children has a similarity to the four minim and to the *aravos*, as they are both entirely under Hashem's *hashgachah*.

The מהרי"ל (Hilchos Lulav) writes that לולב is gematria חיים, life. This hints that when one buys a beautiful lulav and esrog, he merits life in Olam HaZeh and in Olam Haba.

Eliyahu Rabba (תרמ"ה א) writes that לולב spells לו לב. ל"ו is gematria thirty-six, which represents the thirty-six tzaddikim who are in each generation and the thirty-six *masechtos* in Shas. ל"ב stands for the Torah, which begins with the letter ב׳ (בראשית) and ends with the letter ל׳ (ישראל). לולב is gematria חיים, which is Torah. He will merit children tzaddikim who have a לב, a heart for Torah.

Taking Advantage of these Days

The Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 47:7) tells the following mashal: A king said to someone he loved, "Measure as many gold coins as you want and keep them for yourself." The Midrash says that this person didn't eat or sleep. We are certain about that because he wanted to take as many coins as he could. Similarly, the Midrash says that during the forty days that Moshe Rabbeinu was on Har Sinai receiving the Torah, he didn't eat, drink, or sleep.

Chazal (Succah 53.) tells us, "When we were in the Beis HaMikdash, celebrating the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah, our eyes didn't get tired." The Sfas Emes (5634) explains that they didn't want to sleep. The joy and the kedushah were available, and they didn't want to lose it by sleeping. Like the mashal of the Midrash (stated above), when a person can take a lot of good, he doesn't think about eating and sleeping.

The Beis Yisrael zt'l said that the same applies to Yom Tov. It should be so precious to us that we don't want to miss a moment.

Wasting time is the worst of all. This was taught by Reb Yechezkel of Kuzmir zt'l, and he proved it from hilchos succah. It states in hilchos succah that if there is space in the schach (called איר) or if there is סכך פסול (not kosher schach) on the roof of the succah, the succah is pasul (see Shulchan Aruch 632:1-2). But there is a difference between a space and when there is non-kosher schach. Four *tefachim* of non-kosher schach disqualify the succah. An empty spot in the schach disqualifies the schach when there are three *tefachim* of air, emptiness. Reb Yechezkel of Kuzmir zt'l said that we can learn from this the great fault of emptiness, of not doing anything at all. Therefore, let us not be idle, especially during the holy days of Succos.

Shem MiShmuel (Shabbos Chol HaMoed Pesach 5673) writes, "Every moment of the holiday [chol-hamoed], one should be prepared and ready to receive the holiness that is coming down, non-stop."[16]

The Mishnah (Avos 3:11) states, המבזה את המועדות... אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים טובים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא, "Someone who disgraces the Yomim Tovim… even if he knows Torah and he has good deeds, he doesn't have a portion in Olam HaBa." Rabbeinu Yonah says that מועדות refers to *Chol Hamoed*. We must honor these days, to be very cautious not to desecrate them or to dishonor them in any way. Rabbeinu Yonah writes, "The Mishnah doesn't need to discuss Yom Tov because it is like Shabbos [and everyone understands that we must honor Yom Tov]. Rather, the Mishnah is talking about Chol Hamoed, when one says that Chol HaMoed doesn't have kedushah like the first days." Thinking that way is a desecration of *chol hamoed*.

The Chiddushei HaRim zt'l teaches that there is special kedushah on Shabbos Chol Hamoed. He explains that throughout the year, the kedushah of Shabbos comes and is created from our avodas Hashem that we performed during the weekdays before Shabbos. Shabbos Chol Hamoed is a very high time because its holiness is formed from the avodas Hashem that was done on Yom Tov and chol hamoed. This year, Succos, there is no Shabbos chol hamoed. But this lesson tells us of the great kedushah of the Shabbos of Shemini Atzeres.

ושמחת בחגך - *Simchah*

The Rambam writes, "There is a mitzvah to be happy on all holidays, but it is especially important to be happy on Succos, as it states (Vayikra 23), ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך שבעת ימים, 'rejoice before Hashem your G-d for seven days'". *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 529:2) states, "A person is obligated to be happy and in a good mood on Yom Tov together with his wife and children. How does he make the family happy? He should give children nuts and roasted grains [and other foods children enjoy], and for women, he should buy them clothing and jewelry, according to his abilities."[17]

We take the four minim every day of Succos (aside from on Shabbos); however, for most of the days, the obligation is d'Rabbanan. From the Torah, the mitzvah of lulav is only on the first day of Succos. The mitzvah of simchah, to be happy on the holiday, is for all eight days of Succos. The Imrei Noam zt'l says that this tells us the importance of happiness on Yom Tov. Hashem loves it when His nation is happy.[18]

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16. Pele Yoetz (Chol HaMoed) writes, "Chazal (Yerushalmi Shabbos 15:3) say, לא נתנו שבתות וימים טובים לישראל אלא לעסוק בתורה, Hashem gave Shabbos and Yom Tov to Yisrael so they could study Torah. Some people say they can't learn Torah because they are busy earning a living. If such a person uses his time well on chol hamoed, as well as the other times when he is off from work, and devotes himself to studying Torah, he will receive reward even for the times he was working. [Because by studying at every free moment and every opportunity he proves that if he didn't have to work, he would study Torah then as well.] He should be especially cautious to study Torah on chol hamoed, because chol hamoed are days of judgment. On Pesach, there is a judgment on the תבואה, the grain crop, and on Succos the judgment is for water (see Rosh Hashanah 16a), and the gmar din is on Hoshana Rabba…"

17. On the weeks leading up to Succos, someone in Yerushalayim opened a four-minim store right next door to a jewelry shop. A talmid chacham entered the jewelry store, and a simple Yid went to the four-minim shop. They met outside, each holding in their hands their purchases. The simple person commented, "My purchase is superior to yours because I bought a mitzvah. I bought the four minim!"

The scholar responded, "You bought a mitzvah דרבנן (that year, the first day of Succos fell on Shabbos) and I bought a mitzvah דאורייתא. I purchased jewelry for my wife, fulfilling the Torah's obligation to bring happiness to one's wife on Yom Tov."

18. Think about how much you are ready to invest to purchase a kosher set of the four-minim. That should help you understand how much effort you should invest in being happy on Succos.

Sfas Emes (תרמ"ג ד"ה ימי) zt'l writes, "When the Jewish nation becomes pure from all their aveiros on Yom Kippur, there is immense joy in heaven. We should join Hashem in His happiness."

The Alshich (Emor) writes, "From the day the world was created, Hashem was never as happy with His creation as the day the Mishkan was built. And in every generation, Hashem is extremely happy on Succos, for then Bnei Yisrael are cleansed from their sins. The succah is our sign that we attained this purity."

The Shlah HaKadosh (סוכה נר מצוה סוף אות ט) writes, "A person must be happy every day of Succos. His face should be beaming with joy because the holy *Ushpizin* dwell with him."

In *Hilchos Lulav* (8:15), the Rambam writes, "The joy that one has when he performs mitzvos is a great service, and whoever refrains from that joy deserves to be punished."

Reb Chaim Vital (Hakdamah l'Shaar HaMitzvos) zt'l writes, "Do not view mitzvos as a burden, as something you wish to quickly 'get over with them.' Instead, think that you will earn many thousands of gold coins with every mitzvah you perform. With this thought, you will have boundless joy when you perform the mitzvos, as happy as someone who received millions of gold coins…"[19]

It states (Avos 2:15), ובעל הבית דוחק, "The *baal habayis* is pushing…" We can explain these words with a mashal: Customers trying on shoes in the shoe store often have difficulty returning the shoes to the box. When they try putting the shoes in side by side, they find the box isn't wide enough. When they try placing one on the other, the box isn't tall enough. But the baal habayis of the store can slip the shoes into the box with ease. The baal habayis knows how to push the shoes together in a way that they fit perfectly into the box. The nimshal is that we are the baal habayis over our joy; therefore, בעל הבית דוחק, the baal habayis knows how to push simchah into his life. Chazal say, הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו, when a person desires to be pure, Heaven helps him. Similarly, when one tries to be happy, Hashem will help him succeed.

Chazal (Succah 48.) say that we must also be happy on the final night of Yom Tov (the night of Shemini Atzeres). The Sfas Emes taught that "the final night" hints at the hardships of the dark galus, in the final generation. Even during these challenging times, we are obligated to be happy.

A man once shared his troubles with Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt'l. Reb Shlomo Zalman assured him that despite his problems, happiness was within reach. The man replied, "It is impossible for a person who suffers as much as I do to be happy."

Reb Shlomo Zalman replied, "I know someone who is a widower, deaf in one ear, and three of his children are childless. Nevertheless, he is always happy."

The man said, "It can't be. How can he be happy? The story can't be true."

Upon that, Reb Shlomo Zalman releaved that he was referring to himself.

The Alter of Slabodka, zt'l, taught: When the Rambam omits a halachah from his sefer, talmidei chachamim don't assume that the Rambam accidentally overlooked this halachah and forgot to put it in. They are certain that the Rambam intentionally left out the halachah, and they study the topic in depth to understand the reason the Rambam omitted it. So, when something is lacking and missing in your life, why do you think it happened by chance or by accident? Everything is from Hashem, and if you lack something, there is a reason for it, and it is for your good.

The Yiddish expression, מיטן פיטום אראפ, "with the *pitom* facing down," is said when one suffers a lot, and everything seems to be going in the wrong direction. But notice that we make the brachah on an esrog specifically when it is מיטן פיטם אראפ, the pittim facing downwards. This is a reminder that we should praise Hashem in all situations because everything is for the good.

19. In military training, soldiers do not use real bullets and live ammunition. It would be a waste of money

Reb Mordechai of Chernobyl *zy'a* said that Succos is called זמן שמחתינו, because זמן means prepare (להזמין, to prepare, to order). On Succos, we prepare and store up simchah for the entire year (see Magen Avraham, Trisk, Shabbos Chol HaMoed Succos).

Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch (The Maharash - Maamarim, 5655) teaches, "Joy [throughout the year] comes from our happiness on Succos."

It states, ושמחת בחגיך... והיית אך שמח. The Abarbanel writes, "This *pasuk* is a guarantee that if you will be happy on Succos, you will be happy the entire year." Similarly, the Ibn Ezra on the *pasuk* ושמחת בחגיך (*Devarim* 16: 14-16) writes that if we are happy on Succos, we are blessed to be happy forever.

Pele Yoetz zt'l writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this becomes a good omen (siman) for the entire year. The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good and happy year."[20]

Rashi (Bamidbar 29:18) teaches that ninety-eight sheep were sacrificed on Succos.[21] The 98 sheep annul the 98 curses written in parashas Ki Savo.

Avnei Nezer says that we serve Hashem with joy on Succos, and this annuls the *klalos*, curses, written in parashas Ki Savo, which come because (Devarim 28:47) תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה, "you didn't serve Hashem with joy."

Beis Aharon (p.156.) writes, "During the yomim nora'im [Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur], we draw down the bounty with fear, and on Succos, we open the treasuries of bounty with our joy."[22]

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l was at a chasunah, performing the mitzvah of simchas chasan v'kalah. Someone asked him, "No one is happier than a chassan and kallah. Wouldn't you use your time more wisely if you brought joy to those who are suffering? Why do you bring simchah to the chassan and kalah, who are anyway happy?"

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to do so. However, in battle, they must use live ammunition. If they fail to do so, the enemy will capture them and laugh at their incompetence. The Kedushas Levi (Likutim, Avos, ד"ה אם למדת) utilizes this analogy to illustrate what happens when a person serves Hashem without passion and without joy. "The extent of his enthusiasm determines how far he can distance himself from materialism and the level of awareness of Hashem he can achieve. However, performing mitzvos mechanically, without passion, is akin to a soldier who neglects to load his weapons with live ammunition during battle."

20. About Yom Kippur it states (*Vayikra* 23:27) ...אך בעשר לחודש השביעי יום הכפורים הוא. The word אך is also mentioned in reference to Succos, as it states (ibid. 23:39) ...אך בחמשה עשר יום לחודש השביעי תחוגו את חג ה'.

The Meshech Chachmah (אמור ד"ה אך) explains that אך can be translated as "even so." If one didn't do teshuvah, perhaps he shouldn't fast on Yom Kippur? The Torah tells us that, even so, he must fast. Succos, we celebrate the atonement. But what if he didn't do teshuvah and didn't achieve atonement? Perhaps he shouldn't keep Succos? So the Torah writes אך, that even so, he should rejoice on Succos.

21. (Bamidbar 29:13-32) כבשים בני שנה ארבע עשר תמימים יהיו, "Sheep, within the first year, fourteen perfect ones they shall be." This was brought all seven days of Succos. 7 x 14 = 98.

22. Once, during Succos, Reb Meir of Premishlan zt'l was informed that a close relative of his was sick and his life was in danger. Reb Meir replied, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded us to blow shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and Meir'l did so. Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur, and Meir'l did so. Hakadosh Baruch Hu requires us to be happy on Succos, and I want to do so. But Chazal say, אין מערבין שמחה בשמחה, one mustn't mix two joys. [On Yom Tov, we are happy because it is Yom Tov, ושמחת בחגך, and we shouldn't be happy for other reasons.] If something bad happens, I will be required to accept the sad news with joy, as Chazal say, that one must bless Hashem with joy for bad tidings, and then I will have another joy in addition to the joy of Yom Tov. We mustn't mix two joys. Therefore, I request Hashem that my relative remain alive, so I will be able to focus my joy on the Yom Tov alone."

The Chozeh answered that Chazal (see Yerushalmi Bikurim 3:3) say that all one's aveiros are forgiven on the day of his chasunah. The chassan and kallah are concerned: They are pure now, but how can they be sure they will remain pure and clean from sin for the rest of their lives? This is the reason we dance before them. We are telling them, "If you are happy, you will remain clean from sin. Your joy will protect you from falling into sin." This can be one of the reasons we have a mitzvah to be happy on Succos. It helps us maintain our purity, which we attained on Yom Kippur, throughout the year.

One counsel for attaining happiness (taught by the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch, zt'l) is to daven for it. This is what Dovid HaMelech did, as it states (Tehillim 86:4): שמח נפש עבדך, "Gladden Your servant's soul."

Another counsel is to believe that everything that happens to you is from Hashem and for your benefit. When one believes this, he will be happy in any situation. This might be the reason there is a special mitzvah to be happy on Succos. When we sit in Succah, we remember Hashem, and we remember the miracles Hashem performed for us in the desert. As it states (Vayikra 23:42-43), בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים... למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלקיכם, "You should dwell in succahs for seven days… so you will *know* that I had Bnei Yisrael dwell in succahs when I took them from the land of Mitzrayim, I am Hashem, your G-d." When we know Hashem and His wonders and His hashgachah pratis, we will always be happy with our lot.[23]

Appropriate Joy

Shulchan Aruch (529:3) writes, "One should eat, drink, and be joyous on Yom Tov, but the focus should not be on the meat, wine, laughter, and lightheadedness, as they are not true joy. They are levity and foolishness. We are not obligated to engage in silliness and foolishness, but rather in the joy of serving Hashem."

The Rambam (*Hilchos Lulav* 8:14) writes, "The dancing at the *simchas beis hashoeivah* [in the Beis HaMikdash] wasn't performed by *amei ha'aretz* or by whoever wanted to dance. Only the *gedolim*, *chachmei Yisrael*, *roshei yeshivos*, the heads of the Sanhedrin, chassidim, elders, and *anshei ma'aseh* were worthy to dance there. They danced, clapped their hands, played music, and were happy in the Beis HaMikdash during Succos, and the rest of the nation, the men and the women, came to watch and listen."

The Ritva (*Bava Basra* 121.) explains that the average person wasn't permitted to dance and perform stunts. This was to ensure that the joy remained holy and that it didn't turn into הוללות, levity.

Sfas Emes zt'l suggests that this concept is hinted at in the word 'אך' from the verse 'והיית אך שמח'. 'אך' is a term that expresses limitation. The Torah instructs us 'והיית אך שמח', to be exceedingly joyful, but with limitations. Not all forms of happiness are beneficial. We should only seek the joy that will result in a connection with Hashem.[24]

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23. Rebbe Hirsh Riminover zt'l said that the *schach* hints that Hashem watches over us with hashgachah pratis. He watches over us through the cracks in the schach. Perhaps this is alluded to in the pasuk (Shir HaShirim 2:9): משגיח מן החלונות, מציץ מן החרכים, "Observing through the windows, peering through the lattices." We are constantly under Hashem's protection.

24. People sing ושמחת בחגיך והיית אך שמח with a tune that repeats the word אך several times. *Bederech tzachus*, Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt'l* said that this is based on the Chazal, אין מיעוט אחר מיעוט אלא לרבות, that whenever there is more than one מיעוט, limitation, expressed in the Torah, it means that we should increase rather than decrease. Therefore, we repeat the word אך, to increase our joy, and not to decrease it. This reminds us to be extra happy on Yom Tov.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* teaches that we read *Koheles* on Succos to remind us that joy isn't the product of *hevel havalim,* or frivolity. True *simchah* is when it is connected to Hashem, to His Torah, and His mitzvos.

Luxuries

It states, וה' ברך את אברהם בכל, "Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." The Midrash says that בכל, "everything," refers to the mitzvah of *succah*. This means Hashem blessed Avraham with the mitzvah of succah, which is בכל, "everything." How is this mitzvah everything?

The Chozeh of Lublin (*Avnei Zikaron* 662) *zt'l* explains that the *succah* reminds us of the vainness of luxuries. During Succos, we live in a temporary hut for seven days, and all is fine and well. We discover that luxuries are not as essential as we thought they were. And when we know this, we have everything. Even if we have fewer physical possessions, we can be satisfied with our lot.

When we think we can't live without luxuries, we are never satisfied. Whatever we have, we need more. It is never enough. We need a renovated kitchen and a new car. When we make a simchah, we need to copy the wealthy, or it won't be good enough. We think that vacations must cost a lot of money, or they aren't enjoyable. This results in financial debt, and then with hard work to cover the expenses, which means less time for Torah and mitzvos, for things that truly matter. We are always unhappy because we feel that we don't have enough, yet. Succah is בכל, "everything." We attain awareness that we can have little, and yet have a lot in life.

It states (*Bereishis* 25:8): ויגוע וימת אברהם בשיבה טובה זקן ושבע, "Avraham passed away at an old age, old and satisfied." The Siforno translates ושבע as "He was satisfied with everything he desired to see and to do in his lifetime." This is a great and rare level. Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes:

"This *pasuk* reveals Avraham's good *middos*. He left this world feeling fulfilled. He didn't need more. This is unlike most people about whom it states (*Koheles* 5:9), אוהב כסף לא ישבע כסף, 'One who desires money will never have enough money.' And Chazal (*Koheles Rabbah* 1:32) say, 'When a person leaves the world, he hasn't attained half of what he wanted. If he has one hundred, he wants two hundred. If he has two hundred, he wants four hundred.'" But Avraham was satisfied and happy with his lot, and that is a wonderful and unique level. He attained this level because he was blessed בכל, with everything, which means he was satisfied with his portion.

Rebbe Yonason Eibshitz (Yaaras Dvash 6:1) writes, "For the person who fears Hashem, this idea doesn't only apply to Succos. Throughout the year, he will remember that life is temporary and that he's a guest in this world. And, therefore, he shouldn't build expensive houses decorated with gems and diamonds for his pleasure. This will cause him to desire more money and to sin, and he will become a *baal gaavah* and forget Hashem Who created him. Remember Yonadav ben Rechav's precious, ethical will (see *Yirmiyahu* 35:6). He instructed his children not to live in houses, only in tents, one day here and the next day somewhere else. Our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov did that. They dwelt in tents, and they had long lives.[25] They didn't have to worry about

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Or, it can be explained this way: אך is a מיעוט, implying that we must know that even a tiny amount of joy is already a great accomplishment.

Another approach is that אך is a limitation, which refers to when things aren't going well for a person. The Torah instructs us, היית אך שמח; even then, one must be happy.

25. Reb Yonason Eibshitz also notes that the Mishkan, made from יריעות, skins, and woven cloth, wasn't a

fires burning down their castles. They didn't live with the fear of enemies, hunger, or plague. They could quickly undo the ropes of their tents and travel elsewhere.

"When Bilaam saw the Jewish nation dwelling in tents, he said, מה טובו אהליך יעקב, 'How good are your tents.' 'Tents', in this pasuk, is intentional because we are a nation that dwells in tents… and that is good for us in this world and the next. But when we build houses of lime and stone, the stones will shout out all the sins of theft, pride, temptation, and desire. This is the lesson of the mitzvah of succah…"

Unity

One of the *segulos* of succah and the four minim is that they are mesugal for אחדות, that there be unity among Yidden, and that there shouldn't be any machlokes.

The Gemara (*Succah* 27) says, "All Yidden can dwell in the same *succah*." There are halachic lessons that are learned from this phrase.[26] Nevertheless, there is also a hinted message. It tells us that Klal Yisrael will have the attribute of unity. Where there isn't unity, or chalilah, if there is machlokes, people aren't able to sit under the same roof or to eat at the same table. Yet, the Torah tells us, "All Yidden can dwell in the same succah." This means there is unity among them, and the unity comes from the mitzvah of succah. It is mesugal for annulling all machlokes and for attaining unity among Yidden.

This unity began on Yom Kippur. *Sfas Emes* (*Yom Kippur* 7651) writes, "On Yom Kippur, Bnei Yisrael become united. We are always united in the realm of the soul, and it is sin that divides us. On Yom Kippur, when our aveiros are forgiven, we become one." This oneness is experienced on Succos.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30:12) teaches that the *esrog*, *lulav*, *hadasim*, and *aravos* represent all Bnei Yisrael, from the tzaddikim (represented by the esrog) to those who are at low spiritual levels (represented by the aravos) and all Yidden in between. They are tied together. This means the aravos (the lower Yidden) must be close to the esrog (to the tzaddikim). Their connection with the tzaddikim grants them atonement. The tzaddikim also gain from their connection with all Yidden, including those who are at levels far beneath them. As the *Beer Heitev* (645:9) writes, "אתרוג is *gematria* 610. When combined with the other three species, the *gematria* is 613." Perfection is achieved when all four categories of Yidden unite.[27]

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permanent structure. Yet, it lasted 480 years. The Beis HaMikdash that Shlomo HaMelech built was made of stone and gold, and it stood for less time – 410 years. The second Beis HaMikdash lasted 420 years, and during the 420 years, the Greeks ruled part of the time, and the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed several times. So, we see that a דירת ארעי, a temporary dwelling, can last longer than permanent structures. Similarly, he writes, the *avos* owned few luxuries, and therefore, they lived long.

26. The Gemara explains that "All Yidden can dwell in the same succah" teaches us that a succah isn't required to be לכם, owned by the person performing the mitzvah. The mitzvah can also be performed with a borrowed succah.

27. A rasha said to Reb Meir of Premishlan zt'l, "The Rebbe is like an esrog, and I am like the aravos. Both of us are needed. If someone buys the most precious esrog but doesn't have aravos, he cannot perform the mitzvah. So, what makes you better than me? We both need each other, and we are both lacking when we are alone!"

Rebbe Meir of Premishlan replied, "Certainly, we should unite together. That is ideal, and that is what we do on Succos. However, when reshaim group together and distance themselves from the tzaddikim, this is like a bunch of aravos on Hoshana Rabah; we hit and bang them until their souls depart…"

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l notes that the esrog, which represents the tzaddikim, isn't tied together with the

The Mitzvos and their Meaning

The Meiri writes, "A person who eats matzah on Pesach and sits in a *succah* on Succos is like a donkey that carries wheat during the wheat harvest and grapes during the grape harvest season…" In other words, the "time" shouldn't be the only reason we perform the mitzvos. We should utilize our minds and understand the reasons for the mitzvos, to the best of our abilities, and to perform the mitzvos with heart and soul.

The Meiri says that those who keep the mitzvos solely because the "time" arrived, and they don't have any other thoughts, about this it states (Tehillim 119): עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתיך עבדך אני הבינני, "A time to do for Hashem; they have voided Your Torah." The Meiri explains: עת לעשות לד', when one keeps the mitzvos solely because the time has arrived for the mitzvah, הפרו תורתיך, he transgressed the Torah, *chalilah*. עבדך אני, I am Your servant; therefore, הבנני teach me the reasons behind the mitzvos so that I can perform them correctly.[28]

On its most basic level, the mitzvah of succah is so that we will know and remember the miracles Hashem performed for us when He took us out of Mitzrayim and led us with His miracles and care for forty years in the desert. As it states (Vayikra 33:42-43), בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים... למען ידעו... כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים, "For seven days you shall sit in the succah… *so you will know* that I had Bnei Yisrael sit in succos when I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim."

This is one of the few times the Torah explicitly tells us the reason for a mitzvah. Hashem obligates us to sit in a succah, למען ידעו, so we will know that we sat in succos when we left Mitzrayim. And since the Torah tells us the reason for the mitzvah, the Bach says we must think about the reason when we perform the mitzvah. According to the Bach, when sitting in the succah, one must think about yetzias Mitzrayim, the miracles Hashem performed for us in the desert, and in particular, the miracle of the ענני הכבוד, clouds of glory that surrounded and protected us in the desert.

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other species. They are held together for the mitzvah, and then they part ways. This hints that although tzaddikim should connect to others to elevate them, they should limit their interactions with people of lower spiritual levels, so that they won't learn from their ways.

28. Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* related a story that happened in his hometown:

A gentile child was murdered, and false witnesses testified that a Yid killed the child to use his blood to bake matzos.

The Yidden explained to the judge that these were false witnesses. The judge believed them, but even after cross-examining the witnesses, the witnesses stuck to their narrative. Without proof that the witnesses were lying, the lives of all Yidden in the area were in danger.

One wise Yid told the judge, "Nowadays, there is a new method to identify murderers. Modern courts use trained bloodhounds. The dog smells the victim's blood and can afterward determine who the murderer was."

The judge agreed to use this test. The judge ordered all townspeople to gather in the town square. Everyone came, and the Yidden were also there, *Tehillims* in their hands. The judge had the dog smell the blood-stained clothing, and the dog immediately went to the murderer, who was present.

No one was surprised by the revelation because the murderer the dog went to was renowned for his cruelty and dishonesty. This is how the Yidden of this town were saved from the blood libel.

Reb Eliyah Lopian concluded, "The dog didn't know it was saving the Jewish community. It only knew how to smell the blood and go to the person with the same scent. However, when we perform mitzvos (succah, lulav, etc.), we should know what we're doing."

Mishnah Berurah (625:1) writes, "When one sits in the *succah,* he should think that this is to remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim* and to remember the עניי הכבוד, the clouds of glory, in which Hashem surrounded us in the desert to protect us from the elements. One should think about these thoughts, and in this manner, he will keep the mitzvah properly. However, *b'dieved*, one fulfilled the mitzvah even if he only had in mind that he is performing Hashem's mitzvah."[29]

Chazal (*Succah* 3) say, ראשו ורובו ושולחנו בתוך הסוכה, one's head, most of his body, and his table must be inside the *succah*. One cannot sit partially in the succah and mostly out of the succah. Even his table must be in the succah. The Sfas Emes says this *halachah* means we must be totally immersed in the mitzvah. One shouldn't merely place his physical body in the succah, while his head and heart are elsewhere. Even his table should be in the succah.[30]

Hoshana Rabbah

Hoshana Rabba is called in Chazal יום ערבה, the day of *aravah,* because the kohanim went around the *mizbeiach* with long *aravos*, and they would place the *aravos* near the *mizbeiach*.

The Zohar (vol.3, 32a) states, "The *aravah* looks like lips. It is certainly so, because this day is dependent on one's lips." This means that the success of Hoshana Rabba is dependent on the tefillos of Bnei Yisrael.[31]

The Rokeach (Hilchos Succos, 221) writes that in the past, when beis din would determine when rosh chodesh is, they were cautious that Hoshana Rabba should never fall on a Shabbos. The Rokeach explains, כי היו בוכים ומתחננים על המים לכך ולא יתכן בשבת, this is because they would cry and pray for rain. Therefore, this day can't be on Shabbos."

When we think about this lesson from the Rokeach, we are astounded by the importance of tefillah on this day. Rosh Hashanah can be on Shabbos, although we aren't able to blow shofar. Yom Kippur can also be on Shabbos, but Hoshana Rabba can't be on Shabbos because we need the tefillos of Bnei Yisrael on this day.

The Sifsei Tzaddik (Hoshana Rabba 32) writes, quoting his grandfather, the Chiddushei HaRim zt'l, that the Torah gives a punishment to the נערה המאורסה because (Devarim 22:24) עַל דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא צָעֲקָה בָעִיר, " because she did not shout [even though she was] in the city…" We see that when a person can shout and pray, and he doesn't do so, he is held responsible for what occurred. Therefore, we should shout out to Hashem on Hoshana Rabba. If we don't, it is like we agree to the harsh decrees, if they will occur. Furthermore, it seems that if we shout out to Hashem, salvation will certainly come. Everyone should shout out to Hashem, even if he doesn't know what he

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29. Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah writes, "When a person learns about the greatness of this mitzvah of succah and its great reward and about the seven exalted *Ushpizin* who visit him in the succah, he will yearn with all his heart for this mitzvah… because the mitzvah of *succah* is very great."

30. The table represents the family. The head of the family should create a joyous atmosphere in the succah so that his wife and children too should be delighted with the Yom Tov and its mitzvos.

31. The Sfas Emes (תר"נ ד"ה ליום) writes, "It is called Hoshana Rabba, the great salvation, because even people at low levels, and also the generations of low levels – people who can be compared to an aravah – which doesn't have a taste or a smell, they can receive their salvation. What is their specialty [to receive salvation]? It is because it states (Tehillim 116:6) דַּלּוֹתִי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ, "When I was poor, He saved me." This means that when people know that they are poor [spiritually] and that they are in dire straits, that is when their salvation comes. Therefore, Chazal say, 'Although I am poor, לי נאה להושיע, it is beautiful to save me.' This is because the primary salvation goes to the poor. This is why Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come specifically to the low generation."

needs and what he lacks. Nevertheless, he should shout out הושע נא, that Hashem should save him.[32]

Hoshana means "save" and Rabba means "great." What does Hoshana Rabba mean? The Divrei Chaim of Sanz zt'l said that

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32. A group of yungerleit came to Reb Elyah Roth zt'l (from the tzaddikim of Yerushalayim, and the gabbai of Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l) on Hoshana Rabba night, and they asked him to tell them some words of chizuk. He replied, "Now isn't the right time for such conversation. Quickly, grab a Tehillim, and begin davening. We have to take full advantage of this time."

It is told about Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l (Halichos Shlomo, Succos, p.241) that "from the beginning of Hoshana Rabba night, Rabbeinu was very afraid, as he was during the Yomim Noraim (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). He spent most of the night of Hoshana Rabba saying Tehillim with hislahavus. Even when he was old, he would get out of bed several times during the night to continue saying Tehillim. He also encouraged his family members to say a lot of Tehillim on Hoshana Rabba. He didn't appreciate it when people visited him on the night of Hoshana Rabba. If someone came, he would speak with him briefly, and as soon as the conversation was over, he returned to his Tehillim. For many years, he davened Shacharis כותקין.

In the tefillos of Hoshana Rabba we say אנא הושיעא נא. Then we say it more lengthily, אנא א"ל נא הושע נא והושיע נא, and in the end, we say אנא א"ל נא הושע נא והושיעה נא אבינו אתה. The Divrei Shmuel explains this with a mashal:

A king banished his son from his palace, and with the passage of time, the prince's clothes tore and were ruined. He was now dressed in dirty, ripped rags. He wanted to return to the king, but he was embarrassed to tell the king that he was his son. How could he tell that to the king, appearing as he did? Therefore, he came to the king and asked for tzedakah. The king gave him the amount he generally gave to people who appeared that way. The king's son didn't accept this small amount. He asked for a larger donation. The king wanted to give him more, but the son didn't accept that either. The king asked him, "Why don't you accept what I give you?" The son replied, "I am related to the king, and therefore, I should receive what is generally given to a relative of the king." The king gave a larger gift, something appropriate for a relative of the king, but still the son refused to accept it. He explained that he is a *very close relative* of the king, and he deserves more. He shouldn't get the amount that is given to a distant relative. Then the son couldn't contain himself any longer, and he shouted from the depths of his heart, אבינו אתה, you are my father.

Similarly, when we begin davening, since we are dirty and in rags (metaphorically) due to our sins, we are embarrassed to admit that we are the King's children. We begin asking for Hashem's salvation, and then we ask for more, and then finally we shout the truth, אנא א"ל נא הושע נא והושיעה נא אבינו אתה – we are Your children, and therefore, please give to us as the King gives to His children.

The Kedushas Yom Tov zy'a said the following mashal:

A king banished his wayward son from his palace. The son came to a city and told them that he is the king's son. However, they didn't treat him properly. They made him wear dirty clothes and caused him a lot of tzaar.

One day, they heard that the king planned to visit their city. The people of the city were afraid. What would happen to them when the king discovered how they had treated the king's son? They immediately began to treat the king's son well, and they dressed him in beautiful clothes.

When the king saw his son and how kindly he was being treated, he figured that it would be beneficial for his son to remain there. The people will train his son to act properly.

The son became very worried when he heard the king say this and took counsel from local wise people. They advised him to dress in the clothes he usually wears, and he should tell the king that this is what he wears all year long. He did that. The king was shocked to see his son in the dirty clothes. The son told the king that the people were nice to him only recently, when they heard that the king was coming, but they generally treat him cruelly, and they force him to wear these dirty clothes.

Hearing the truth, the king took his son back to the palace.

Hoshana Rabbah can be translated in three ways, and they are all correct. (a) הושענא רבה means "The great Hashem should save us." (b) הושענא רבה means Hashem should save the great Jewish nation.[33] And (c) הושענא רבה means that Hashem should save us with a great salvation.[34]

Rebbe Dovid Moshe of Tchortkov *zt'l* (whose *yahrtzeit* is on Hoshana Rabbah) said that Hoshana Rabba means we will be saved because we say "Amen yehei shmei *rabbah*".[35]

There were tzaddikim who davened very lengthily on Hoshana Rabba. One year, on Hoshana Rabba, which was on Friday, in the beis medresh of the Divrei Yoel of Satmar zt'l, the Satmar Rebbe told the gabbaim to announce that the women should go home to light Shabbos lecht. They shouldn't wait until the tefillah was over, because it was almost Shabbos.

On that Hoshana Rabba, the Satmar Rebbe told the following mashal:

The people of a certain city committed a grave offense against the king, and they were all sentenced to death. They knew that the king annually visited a garden in this city. The elders of the city decided that they would go to the garden on that day and meet with the king and plead for his mercy and that he should forgive them.

The elders assembled in the garden, and they waited for the king, but the king didn't come! As the day was about to end, many of the elders wanted to go home. They said their plan had failed. One wise elder said that the king was certainly present, although they didn't see him. He said, "The king's custom is to visit the garden today, so he must be here. It is just that this time, he came disguised, appearing like a common citizen. Let's call out to the king and implore him to save us. We will shout out to the king, whom we can't see, but we know he is present, and he will surely hear us and forgive us."

The nimshal is that throughout the year, the body incites the neshamah to do aveiros. Then, when Elul and the yomim noraim approach, the body is afraid of the King, and the body agrees to allow the person to do teshuvah. The King is pleased, and he wants this situation to continue. We say to Hashem, "This isn't how it generally is. We suffer immensely, and we are usually very distant from Hashem."

This is expressed on Hoshana Rabba. The rings that bind the lulav represent our connection with Hashem. We take off those rings on Hoshana Rabba, and we show Hashem how we appear all year long, distant from Hashem, and we ask Hashem to have compassion on us and to take us back to Him.

33. The Jewish people are called rabbah, great, as it states (Shemos 4:22) בני בכורי ישראל, "My firstborn son, Yisrael." So, Yisrael is the firstborn, the greater and older son.

34. The Gemara (Shabbos 31a) tells us the questions that are presented to a person after his passing. One of the questions that the beis din of heaven will ask him is, צפית לישועה, "Did you anticipate salvation?" Literally, this means, did you wait for Moshiach? The Imrei Emes *zt'l* explains that צפית לישועה can mean did you wait and look forward to הושענא רבה?

We should look forward to this day because Hashem bestows great salvation on Klal Yisrael on this day.

35. Chazal say, "Whoever answers *Amen yehei shmei rabbah* with all his might, his judgment is ripped up." Reb Yochanan says, "Even if one has the sin of *avodah zorah*, he will be forgiven" (*Shabbos* 119).

During World War II, the Yidden of Yerushalayim made a *kabbalah* to improve how they say *Amen yehei shmei rabbah*. They began saying it with all their might and with a lot of *kavanah*. When the Nazi general, Rommel *ym's*, was in Mitzrayim, intending to bring his army to Eretz Yisrael, Rebbe Shlomke Zvhiler *zt'l* told his *gabai*, "I sense that the *resha'im* won't be able to conquer Eretz Yisrael because the Yidden improved how they recite *Amen yehei shmei rabbah*." And indeed, the Yidden of Eretz Yisrael were miraculously spared.

The Satmar Rebbe cried, "We think the King is not here, but He is certainly present. If we cry out to Him, He will listen to our tefillos. Let's raise our voices together and cry out, 'הושע נא והושיעה נא אבינו אתה!'"

The Awesome Judgment

Hoshana Rabba is a day of judgment. It is the completion of the judgment of Rosh Hashanah and of Yom Kippur.[36] Shas and poskim hardly mention the judgment of Hoshana Rabbah, and therefore, many people aren't aware of it. Especially in the past, it was concealed from most people. Those who studied kabbalah knew that Hoshana Rabba was a day of judgment, but the vast majority of people didn't know about it.

Why was the judgment of Hoshana Rabba unknown in the past? Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* explains that in the past, people were very afraid on a day of judgment. If they knew that Hoshana Rabbah is a day of judgment, it would ruin their *simchas Yom Tov*, and they wouldn't be able to perform the mitzvah of ושמחת בחגיך. Therefore, it was destined that people shouldn't know about the judgment, and it was only discussed in kabbalah sefarim. In later generations, the fear of judgment isn't as intense as it used to be, and therefore, more sefarim reveal to us that a tremendous and awesome judgment transpires on Hoshana Rabbah. What will occur this year is largely dependent on this day.

Reb Shlomo Zalman adds that there was one aspect of judgment on Hoshana Rabba that was known to the earlier *doros*. The Mishnah states, בחג נידונים על המים, "Succos we are judged for rain." The amount of rain this year is judged and determined on Succos and on Hoshana Rabba. The Levush writes, "Therefore, people light more candles in the beis midrash on Hoshana Rabbah, similar to Yom Kippur, because it is the final day of judgment for rain." It was always known that Hoshana Rabbah was a day of judgment for rain. In later generations, it became known that it is also a day of judgment for all areas of life.

Reb Shlomo Zalman explains that in the past, rain meant life. If it didn't rain, people would die from thirst. Today, things have changed because water can be transported if needed. (The Chazon Ish ruled that we don't fast for rain anymore because a lack of rain isn't as tragic as it used to be.) Therefore, years ago, it was sufficient for people to know that they were being judged for rain, and this would arouse them to *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah*. Today, that isn't enough. Therefore, the sefarim revealed more details of the awesome judgment of this day. All matters and salvations are judged and determined on this day.[37]

Shemini Atzeres

The Midrash says that after seven days of Succos, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, קשה עלי פרידתכם, "It is hard for Me when you leave," and Hashem asks us to stay one more day. The Imrei Emes writes that the feeling should be mutual. Bnei Yisroel should also feel that it is difficult to part from the Yomim Tovim.

The Rema MiPano teaches that the literal translation of חג is a circle. All Yomim Tovim are a chag, a circle, surrounding a primary, focal point. The focal point, he said, is Shemini Atzeres. This is the reason, according to some opinions and siddurim, Shemini Atzeres isn't referred to as a חג (see *Shulchan*

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36. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* said in the last year of his life, "I passed the judgment of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. But I didn't pass the judgment of Hoshana Rabbah."

37. Two yungerleit were chatting on Hoshana Rabbah night in the beis medresh of Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zt'l. The Rebbe rebuked them, "I am certain you have something very important to discuss because otherwise you wouldn't discuss it tonight. However, you would have been better off discussing this matter during Kol Nidrei than speaking on this holy night."

Aruch 668). All Yomim Tovim are a חג, surrounding this special day, which stands in the middle.[38]

It states in Mishlei עוז והדר לבושה ותשחק ליום אחרון. The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* explains: עוז is Rosh Hashanah because Hashem judges us with His might. והדר is Succos, the day we take a פרי עץ הדר. And then comes Shemini Atzeres, ותשחק ליום אחרון, the day of immense happiness.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 7) discusses גדול יום הגשמים "How great is the day it rains!" The Avodas Yisrael *zt'l* says that the Gemara is referring to the greatness of Shemini Atzeres, the day we daven for rain. (We say תפילת גשם).

The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* teaches that Shemini Atzeres is greater than Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur, we love Hashem through afflictions (fasting, etc.). Shemini Atzeres is to love Hashem through joy, which is a greater connection, as it states (*Shir HaShirim* 7:7) מה יפית ומה נעמת אהבה בתענוגים, "How beautiful it is when the love to Hashem is with pleasure and joy."

The Chinuch (324) writes that we don't take the four *minim* on Shemini Atzeres because the four minim are to remind us to direct the joy we have in our hearts at this time of year (from gathering in the crops) to Hashem. On Shemini Atzeres, we don't need any reminders to direct our love to Hashem because יום השמיני כולו לה׳, "The eighth day is solely for Hashem." It is a day we are entirely with Hashem, and our love and joy are fully with Him.

The Yesod Yosef writes, "The custom is to take all the *sifrei Torah* out of the *aron kodesh*… Because when a father loves his son, he opens all his treasuries for him and doesn't withhold anything. Similarly, Hashem bestows upon us immense goodness."

The *Zohar* states, "On Hoshana Rabbah, the judgment is completed, and the blessings begin. On the following day (Shemini Atzeres), the Jewish nation celebrates with the King and receives blessings for the entire year. It is only the Jewish nation that is present at that celebration. And when one sits alone with the king, whatever he asks will be granted."

Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l* teaches, "Be extremely careful with the *tefillos* of Shemini Atzeres to say them with immense *kavanah*… There is no better day and greater *eis ratzon* than this day, when Hashem desires to hear our *tefillos*…. Everything depends on this day."

The Kotzker zt'l said that on Shemini Atzeres is the gzar din (the decree) for parnassah. His son, Rebbe Dovid zt'l, used to daven *b'yichidus* (by himself). One year, on Shemini Atzeres, the Kotzker called for his son and told him that on Shemini Atzeres, it is important to daven with a minyan because, on this day, it is decreed how much parnassah one will receive in the coming year. This is hinted at in the words והיית אך שמח. The final letters of והיית אך שמח spell חת"ך, the name of the malach appointed over parnassah. Chazal tell us that the words והיית אך שמח refer to Shemini Atzeres.

Reb Aharon Chernobyler zt'l said that *benching* גשם on Shemini Atzeres (said with Mussaf) is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

The Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l said in the name of his father, the Rebbe Reshab zt'l, "We must cherish the forty-eight hours of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. Every moment of these days, we can fill buckets with ruchniyus and gashmiyus. We receive this bounty because of the dancing. (Sefer Maamarim 5711, p.79).[39]

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38. At a chasunah, there is a chuppah, dancing, and a meal, but the purpose of it all is for the chasan and kallah to go home and to build a home together. The Sfas Emes says that the yomim tovim represent various stages of a chasunah. For example, the *schach* on the *succah* resembles the chuppah. After the chuppah is the *yichud*, which is an even greater unity – that occurs on Shemini Atzeres.

Simchas Torah

Yesod VeShoresh HaOvadah (ch.16) writes, "Whoever is happy with the Torah on this day, he is guaranteed that his children and descendants will always be Torah scholars."

Shlamei Chagigah (p.292: printed year תק"נ) writes, "Fortunate is the person who rejoices with the Torah on Simchas Torah, for this will rectify his soul for the times that he disgraced the Torah. Additionally, there's a guarantee from early scholars that whoever is happy with the Torah on this day will have offspring who will always study the Torah. There was a Rav who was very happy on Simchas Torah, and his descendants were renowned scholars for three consecutive generations. Everyone knew it was because of his happiness with the Torah on Simchas Torah. He rejoiced and danced with the Torah in a way that wasn't done by other rabbanim and gedolei Yisrael. Despite his prestigious Rabbinic position, he would jump and dance before the Torah and encourage others to do the same." In this merit, he merited children and grandchildren, exceptional talmidei chachamim.

The Shaar HaKavanos writes, "My teacher (the Arizal) went around the bimah... danced and sang with all his strength. Then, on *motzei Yom Tov*, he went to several *batei midrashim* to dance with the Torah (called in Eretz Yisrael הקפה שניות), and this lasted many hours."

Maaseh Rav states that the Vilna Gaon zt'l "would go before the sefer Torah with immense joy, his face was like a burning fire, and he would clap and dance with all his might before the Torah."

The Satmar Rebbe zt'l danced with all his strength on Simchas Torah, although he was weak. When people asked him about this, he said, "Chazal (Succah 48.) say, שמיני עצרת רגל בפני עצמה היא[40]." On Shemini Atzeres, everyone receives another רגל (foot) to help him dance.

Dancing with the Torah on Simchas Torah is mesugal for bearing children. The Yismach Yisrael zt'l learns this from *Michal,* who was upset with her husband Dovid Hamelech when she saw him dance with all his might before the aron hakodesh (see Shmuel 2, 16:23). She was punished that she couldn't bear a child. We understand from this that when one does the opposite and is happy with the Torah, he will be rewarded with children.[41]

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39. The Rayatz zt'l of Lubavitz said that during the hakafos, we can ask for great things, and our tefillos will be answered. When we dance with the Torah, we are demonstrating our love for Hashem and His Torah, as we say in the Hoshanos, חבוקה ודבוקה בך, "hugging and connected with You". On Succos, one person holds the sefer Torah, and the congregation, holding the four minim, circles the sefer Torah and the bimah. On Simchas Torah, we show a higher level of connection to Hashem because people hug the Sefer Torah and dance with it around the bimah.

When a storeowner trusts his customer to take merchandise and pay later, this is called הקפה. The Rayatz explains how this alludes to the הקפות of Simchas Torah. He explained that a storekeeper will only extend credit to customers he trusts and who are able to pay up. If he suspects a customer won't pay, he won't sell to him on credit. The dancing on Simchas Torah is called הקפות because, on Simchas Torah, Hashem gives us salvation and many brachos on account of our *future* good deeds. On this day, Hashem trusts us that we will pay up our debts, so he gives us on loan. [It seems that this is because Simchas Torah is after the Yomim Noraim, and every Yid was inspired to do teshuvah. We have repaired our credit, and Hashem gives us salvations and brachos, on account of our good deeds to come throughout the coming year.]

40. Literally, this means Shemini Atzeres is its own holiday, and not a continuation and final day of Succos.

41. It is brought down in Shivchei HaBaal Shem that one Simchas Torah, the students of the Baal Shem Tov zy'a were dancing joyously, and one of the poorer students left the holy dancing and sat on the side, disappointed. He couldn't continue dancing because his shoe had ripped. Udel, the Baal Shem Tov's

The Importance of Shalom on Simchas Torah

The Heilige Ruzhiner zt'l (Irin Kadishin, Shemini Atzeres) says that very often, disputes and machlokes break out on the Yom Tov Shemini Atzeres – Simchas Torah. One can check this and he will see that this occurs in all places. The yetzer hara is certainly investing effort to incite machlokes on this day, and that is an indication of the importance of maintaining peace on this day.

This is based on the principle that we can learn from the yetzer hara what is important. If the yetzer hara places effort to get us into a machlokes on this holy Yom Tov, this tells us of the importance of maintaining peace on this Yom Tov.

The Gemara (Shabbos 31a) tells that someone came to Hillel and asked that he convert him while he stands על רגל אחת, on one foot. Hillel told him, "What you hate being done to you, don't do to others." The holy Ruzhiner explains that רגל אחת alludes to Shemini Atzeres, which is called רגל בפני עצמו, its own holiday. Therefore, we understand that the ger tzedek asked Hillel to teach him the secret of Shemini Atzeres. Hillel told him to be cautious with hatred and machlokes. "What you hate being done to you, don't do so to others." That encompasses the secret of Shemini Atzeres – Simchas Torah. It is a Yom Tov of peace.

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daughter, noticed what happened and told the student, "If you will guarantee me that I will bear a son this year, I will get you a pair of new shoes." (She had shoes in her store.) The student gave his word. She immediately brought him the shoes. That year, she gave birth to the great tzaddik, Rebbe Boruch'l of Mezhibuzh.

A member of our *chaburah* didn't have children. One Simchas Torah, he danced with all his might with the Torah, and nine months later, he had his first child. The following Simchas Torah, he did the same, and once again, nine months later, he had his second child. He had a friend who also didn't have children. When he heard that his friend had two children in the merit of dancing with the Torah, he wanted to do the same. However, he was embarrassed to dance with all his might in the beis medresh where he usually davens, so he went to an old-age home where no one recognized him, and he danced enthusiastically and honored the Torah immensely. Nine months later, his first child was born.

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt'l said in his father's name, Rebbe Shalom of Belz zt'l, "I can't tell you what the hakafos are about. But I can tell you this: All tefillos that didn't go up the entire year, go up during the *hakafos*." This is hinted in the words (see Succah 48a) פז"ר קש"ב which can mean פז"ר, the tefillos that were scattered and didn't go up; קש"ב, on Shemini Atzeres, Hashem listens to those tefillos.

The Minchas Elazar zt'l (Shaar Yissaschar, Zman Simchoseinu 17) writes that the Baal Shem Tov zt'l said, quoting Eliyahu HaNavi, that whoever davens with kavanah on Hoshanah Rabba, Shemini Atzeres, and Simchas Torah, he will merit to have kavanah the entire year.

The Beis Aharon zt'l (Pesach p.94.) writes, "Dancing on Yom Tov is the highest form of tefillah… for it is a prayer with כל עצמותי, all one's limbs."

The Ateres Yehoshua (ד"ה במאמרם) explains the Mishnah (Negaim 12:1) בית עגול אינו מטמא בנגעים, that due to the עגולים, our dancing in a circle on Simchas Torah, אינו מטמא בנגעים, all plagues and troubles go away.

The Chida teaches that by dancing on Simchas Torah, we knock down the iron walls that separate us from Hashem.

On Simchas Torah, we read the Parasha of וזאת הברכה, the brachos Moshe Rabbeinu gave Bnei Yisrael. As we read them, we receive those brachos again. Rebbe Henoch of Alexander zt'l said this is why *birchas kohanim* isn't performed on Simchas Torah. We are receiving Moshe Rabbeinu's brachos, so we don't need any other brachos.

Therefore, during the hakafos, one has to be extra cautious to honor everyone, and not to chas v'shalom cause distress to anyone. The reward of the hakafos could be lost due to this severe aveirah.[42]

After Simchas Torah

Reb Chaim Palagi (*Sefer Chaim siman* 36) writes, "It's the custom of chassidim to be cautious with their thoughts, speech, and deeds during the twelve days [following Simchas Torah], for they correspond to the twelve months of the year. The righteous stay home during these twelve days, and they review what they studied. This is a great *segulah* to receive Hashem's *siyata dishmaya* every day of the year – from the beginning of the year until the end. He will succeed with everything he does, whether in Torah, chassidus, or business."

In the Yom Tov *tefillah* we say, והנחילנו ה' אלקינו...מועדי קדשיך, "Hashem gave us as an inheritance…the holy *Yomim Tovim*…" An inheritance, the Sfas Emes said, is something

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42. Someone asked the Chofetz Chaim zt'l for the deep meaning and purpose of the hakafos. He replied, "When you are dancing with the talis over your head, be careful not to step on another person's foot. You won't even know whose foot you step on to ask him for forgiveness. This is the סוד ההקפות, the deep secret of the hakafos."

One year, on Simchas Torah, Russian soldiers arrived in Zvhil. Among them were many Jewish soldiers, and they needed food and drink. Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil said to the chasid Reb Yosel Koz'lik zt'l, "Take this sack and go around to the Jewish homes, and collect food for the Jewish soldiers." Reb Yosel agreed, saying that he would do so immediately after the hakafos.

Rebbe Shlomke replied, "The Torah will rejoice even if you aren't here, but the soldiers are hungry now!" Reb Yosel followed his rebbe's orders, and he immediately went door-to-door to gather food for the soldiers.

Rebbe Shlomke's face lit up when Reb Yosel returned with the sack filled with food. Rebbe Shlomke took the sack on his shoulders and danced hakafos around the bimah with it. This expressed his deep love and care for his fellow man.

One time, after the hakafos were finished in the beis medresh of the Maharil Diskin zt'l, the Maharil Diskin requested that they conduct another seven hakafos. Everyone was surprised; nothing like this had ever occurred before. They already did seven hakafos; why should they do another set of seven hakafos?

The Maharil Diskin told his son that there was a talmid chacham in the beis medresh whom they had forgotten to honor with a hakafah. Therefore, the Maharil Diskin repeated the seven hakafos, and during the second set of hakafos, he honored this talmid chacham properly. This was a clever solution. Sometimes, asking forgiveness for not honoring someone only makes matters worse. Without any apologies, he conducted seven more hakafos and thereby was able to honor the talmid chacham.

Imrei Pinchas (Shaar 4:4) tells: One year, before the hakafos of Simchas Torah, Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l told his student, Rebbe Refael of Bershad zt'l, "Until now, we did hakafos with weapons in our hands. These were the four minim (because on Succos, we circled the bimah with the four minim). The Zohar calls the four minim weapons. But now we're doing hakafos empty-handed. Although we will be carrying the holy sefer Torah, it isn't a mitzvah to hold Sifrei Torah, as it was a mitzvah to hold the four minim. Tell me, Refael. How does it look to perform hakafos empty-handed? How can we do hakafos in this manner? The answer is that a person should become holy like the four minim. His heart should become like the esrog, his spine like the lulav, his eyes like the hadasim, his lips like the aravos, and then he can take the sefer Torah and dance with it."

Rebbe Refael of Barshid cried when he heard this because he felt that he wasn't on this level. Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer calmed him, "Don't cry, Refael. I will carry you on my shoulders."

In other words, in Reb Pinchas Koritzer's merit, his student Reb Refael can dance with the Sefer Torah, and it will be like the four minim are holding the Sefer Torah.

that remains forever. It isn't something that leaves after a few days. So too, the holidays should always stay with us, even after the Yom Tov is over.[43]

There's a tefillah one recites when he *gezegens* (takes leave) from the succah (on Shemini Atzeres, or in Eretz Yisroel, on Hoshana Rabba). It is printed in many siddurim and machzorim. In this prayer, we say, "It shall be Your will that the malachim associated with the succah and the four minim should come with us into our homes..." We don't leave the mitzvos behind. We take the blessings and spirituality we gained from these mitzvos to our homes, and we keep them for the entire year.

The *piyut* of Shemini Atzeres (מערבית לשמ"ע) states, פונים מסוכה לביתם לישב צקון לחשם הקשב, "To those who leave the succah to return to their homes, listen to their prayers."

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* asks: Wouldn't it be more appropriate for the *piyut* to write, "Listen to the *tefillos* of those who *dwelled* in a succah"? Why do we pray that Hashem listen to the *tefillos* of those who *leave* the succah?

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* answers that we ask Hashem to listen to the prayers of those who take the lessons and kedushah of the succah with them, and they stay with these lessons the entire year. The Yom Tov is over, people leave the succah, but there are those fortunate ones who remain with the kedushah and with the messages of succah. They bring it with them into their homes the entire year.

The Gemara (*Gittin* 56) defines a בריה קלה as "an insect that eats but does not produce waste". קלה means to take in and not give out. The Gemara (*Avodah Zorah* 3) refers to *succah* as a מצוה קלה, a light and easy mitzvah. Reb Avraham Yehoshua Freund of Nasod *zy'a hy'd* explained that *succah* is called מצוה קלה because one should take in the light and holiness of the *succah* and never let it leave him.

The two words בסוכות תשבו are opposites, because סוכות is a *temporary* dwelling and תשבו means to live *permanently*. Chazal (Succah 28:) answer that this הקש (juxtaposition of two ideas) teaches us, בסוכות, to live in the succah, תשבו, in a permanent manner. The Gemara explains, "If he has beautiful vessels or beautiful sheets, he should bring them into the succah. He should eat and drink and spend time in the succah…" He should live in his temporary abode (בסוכות), in a permanent manner (תשבו).

There is a concept called אין הקש למחצה. This means that when two ideas are juxtaposed in the Torah, the *drashah* should be studied both ways. Therefore, the Satmar Rebbe zt'l says, the words בסוכות תשבו also tell us that we should live in our permanent homes with the uplifted spiritual feelings and thoughts that we had when we sat in the succah. תשבו, live in your homes, בסוכות, as you lived in the succah.

It states (*Tehillim* 60:8) ועמק סוכות אמדד. The word אמדד means measure. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l says that סוכות אמדד refers to the measurements of a succah, which equal 360 tefachim (as we will explain). 360 is also

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43. A chassid of the Beis Aharon of Karlin zt'l returned home after spending a *Yom Tov* with his Rebbe. People asked him, ווי אזוי איז אריבער די יום טוב, "How did the *Yom Tov* pass?"

The chassid replied, די יו"ט איז נישט אריבער, די יו"ט איז אריין, "The *Yom Tov* didn't pass, it entered." The *Yom Tov* became part of him.

Once, after *Yom Tov*, Rebbe Dovid of Tolna *zy'a* asked one of his chassidim how he planned to get home. The chassid replied, "The goy that drove me here will take me back."

The Rebbe said, "You're returning with the same goy?" We shouldn't go back after *Yom Tov* being "the same goy" that arrived. The Yom Tov should change us; we should become new people.

approximately the number of days in a solar year. Therefore, ועמק סוכות אמדד tells us that the measurements of the succah spread holiness to the entire year. Each day of the year receives sanctity from the mitzvah of succah.

How does a succah have 360 tefachim? Also, why does the succah hint at 360 days and not a full year of 365 days?

Let us first answer the first question. How do we know that a succah is 360 tefachim? We are calculating the height of the tallest succah, which is twenty amos high. Each amah is six tefachim, so 20 x 6 = 120. A succah needs three walls, so the equation is 20 x 6 x 3 = 360 tefachim, indicating that the succah brings kedushah to the 360 days of the year.

Five days are missing from this number because five days a year can exist without the kedushah of succah. These are the five days between Yom Kippur and Succos. On these days, we have atonement for all our aveiros, and therefore, these days don't need to receive the kedushah from the succah.

These ideas are alluded to in the pasuk we mentioned. It states אלקים דיבר בקדשו אעלוזה אחלקה שכם ועמק סוכות אמדד. Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* translates it to mean, אלקים דיבר בקדשו, Hashem says, אעלוז ה׳, I rejoice with the five days from Yom Kippur until Succos. אחלק ה׳, and I divide these five days שכ"ם, from the 360 days of the year. (שכ"ם is gematria 360.) They are not calculated like the rest of the year, because on these days we are clean from all aveiros. עמק סוכות אמדד, I measure the measurements of the succah, and they are 360, indicating that from the succah comes holiness for the entire year.

Rebbe Yissacher Dov's son, Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l*, added that this is the intention of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 39:6), הנה טפחות נתתה ימי, the days of the year receive their spirituality from טפחות, the *tefachim* of the *succah*.[44]

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44. The Dubno Magid related the following *mashal*:

A king had an only daughter, whom he loved immensely. When the time came for the king's daughter to get married, a matchmaker told the king, "I have a perfect match for your daughter. He lives far away, but he is a wealthy prince, and his father is a great king. The prince possesses all the qualities one could desire."

The king agreed to the match, and his daughter got married. Not long after the wedding, the groom told his new wife that he very much wanted to go live in his homeland. His wife didn't want to move so far away from her father, but when she saw how much it meant to her husband, she consented.

Upon arriving in the foreign land, she discovered that the matchmaker had deceived them. Her husband was not a king's son. He wasn't wealthy, either. It was all a charade.

To make matters worse, her husband was cruel to her. He didn't conduct himself like a prince who was raised with good manners. He behaved like the crudest, most unrefined people.

One day, they received a letter from the king. The king wrote, "I miss you very much, and since you aren't visiting me, I decided to undertake the long journey and visit you." The king wrote the date he expected to arrive.

The husband knew that he had better make some major changes so that the king, his father-in-law doesn't discover the truth. He hired a crew of workers to clean and decorate his house to make it appear like the home of a prince. He also began treating his wife well, so the king wouldn't suspect anything was the matter between them.

The king arrived and was very happy with what he saw. He felt that he had selected the perfect husband for his daughter.

As the king prepared to return to his palace, his daughter realized that this was her last chance to reveal the truth to her father. At a private moment, with tears streaming down her face, she told her father that

her husband was not a king's son and that he treated her cruelly.

The Dubno Magid explains that when Rosh Chodesh Elul arrives, *keviyachol*, it is like Hashem announces that He will visit us during the days of judgment. Throughout Elul, people are busy cleaning up their deeds, so the King shouldn't realize anything is amiss. The body makes peace with the *neshamah*, to conceal from the King what is really going on throughout the year.

But when we reach *Ne'ilah*, and the King is about to leave, the Yid cries out to Hashem and says, "I suffer so much from my body. When You visit, the body acts nicely to me, but now that You're about to leave, I must tell You that the body is cruel to me and tries to draw me to sin…"

The Dubno Magid's mashal and nimshal end here, but some add in one more line:

In the mashal, when the king's daughter complained that her husband isn't nice to her, the king told his daughter, "I have a solution for you. I will live in this city, close to you. With me nearby, your husband will always treat you well."

Also, in the nimshal, Hashem answers, "Build a *succah,* and I will live together with you. In my presence, the body won't disturb you."

Even after Yom Tov passes, you can take the atmosphere of the yom tov back with you into your homes, and Hashem will remain with you. In Hashem's presence, the body will not prevent you from serving Hashem.