



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

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**SUKKOT 5784 • 2023**










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**חג סוכות שמח!**

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www.mizrachi.org  
office@mizrachi.org  
+972 (0)2 620 9000



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# Sukkot and the Secret of Simcha

## The More We Pursue Happiness – The More it Eludes Us



**Rabbi Doron Perez**  
Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

My grandparents were married for 75 years. They passed away over the last 2 years, both at the age of 97. At their 75th wedding anniversary, I thought to myself that I had never met or known of another couple who had reached this remarkable milestone.

Originally from Lithuania and later South Africa, my grandparents made *Aliyah* in 1979 to Tel Aviv. They left all their children and grandchildren behind in the hope that they would follow. They were leaders of the Jewish community and great Zionists and believed that this was the right thing to do. Indeed, they were privileged that all their children and grandchildren followed suit and all live in Israel today.

### The Secret of a Happy Marriage

My grandparents always seemed to have a loving and happy marriage. So, when I first got married, I decided to ask my grandmother a question about happiness in marriage. I was totally unprepared for the answer that I received. When I asked her whether her 55 years of marriage at that time had been happy ones, she responded as follows: “You know, I have never really thought about it.”

I could not believe that a person who had been married for 55 years had never thought about whether or not their

marriage had been a happy one. It made me realize how different our generation is as we seem to be obsessed with the pursuit of happiness and are continually questioning whether we are happy about all aspects of our lives. Herein lies a remarkable irony: the generation that relentlessly pursues happiness seems to be the most distant from it.

This is the central theme in cultural critic Ruth Whippman's book, *America The Anxious - How Our Pursuit of Happiness is Creating a Nation of Nervous Wrecks*.<sup>1</sup> She quotes a study of psychologists from the University of California, Berkeley who show that “paradoxically, the more people valued and were encouraged to value happiness as a separate life goal, the less happy they were.”

The American writer and thinker Henry David Thoreau put it well when he said “Happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it eludes you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and sits softly on your shoulder.”

### Simcha as a State of Being

Why is this the case? Why is the quest for happiness the very sign that we won't find it?

The answer is that happiness is not something we find when we search for it but a

by-product of living life in the correct way. What emerges clearly is that happiness is not a transient emotion or a destination to be pursued but rather a **state of being**. The more one lives in sync with one's core values the more happiness finds us. The moment we detach ourselves from living life and begin to search for happiness as an end in and of itself, the more it evades us. Happiness is a natural result of living life the way it should be lived – of being the people we ought to be. Happiness cannot be a destination but is rather a result of the journey of an inspired life process.

It is this very state of being, says Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, that we ultimately hope to be blessed with on Sukkot.<sup>2</sup> After all, only this holiday is defined in our prayers as זמן שמחתנו – the time of our happiness.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, it is the only holiday where we find the unusual expression of *simcha* “והיית אך שמח,” “You should be only happy,” implying a type of complete or ultimate happiness.<sup>4</sup> What is the meaning of this phrase? Rav Hirsch explains that it refers to a state of being, a mindset that we hope to achieve having been celebrating in G-d's presence in the Temple precinct for the entire seven days.

Happiness can be transformed into a character trait, a permanent quality and a *joie de vivre* that accompanies us throughout our lives. It is this state of being that we hope to take with us into the long, rainy winter months. Indeed it can only be this mindset that will successfully see us through the “winter” periods of life, the difficult and dark times.

The Malbim<sup>5</sup> states that this is the very meaning of the word שמחה in Tanach as opposed to ששון. These are the two primary expressions of joy in the Bible and they have distinct meanings. ששון is an expression of external celebratory joy, whereas שמחה is a more internal and ongoing sense of joy – a state of being.

### Israel – The Happiest Place in the World?

Perhaps this is the reason why Israel is continually rated among the happiest countries in the world, at least according

to the UN World Happiness Report conducted annually over the last eight years. The report ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be, according to six key variables: GDP per capita, social support, life expectancy, freedom to make choices, freedom from corruption and generosity. Year in and year out, Israel is in the top 10 to 15 countries, scoring ahead of countries such as the UK, Germany, Luxembourg, the US and over 140 other countries.

What is striking about these findings is that Israel ranks ahead of dozens of countries that don't face the ongoing challenges of aggressive terror states on their borders ( Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon), a threat of nuclear extinction (Iran's publicly stated aspirations and nuclear program), or ongoing Palestinian terror attacks and, therefore, the need for mandatory military draft. Incredibly, despite these unique threats and being situated in one of the toughest regions in the world, Israel scores high every time.

How can this be explained?

It seems to me that living in Israel, despite all the challenges, comes with a great sense of **being Jewish**. Israel is the only country that G-d promised to the Jewish people and no other nation has so long and deep a connection to a land like the Jewish people's connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. It is somehow linked to the essence of Jewish life, to our ultimate purpose. Journeying to the Land like Abraham, walking the same streets as Samuel and fighting like King David to defend the same country gives those living in Israel a unique sense of connection to Jewish history and destiny – an indescribable feeling of being Jewish.

### Happy in Israel, Unhappy in the Diaspora?

This also explains an unusual detail of *halacha*. Why is the Priestly Blessing (*duchening*) performed every day in Israel, but only on *Yom Tovim*, according to the *Ashkenazi* tradition, in the Diaspora? The Rema explains<sup>6</sup> that a *Kohen* must be in a state of *simcha* to bless the people. Since this can be achieved only on the holidays

– the *chagim* – in the Diaspora, as they are designated times of celebration, only then can the *Kohanim* perform the blessing.

I always struggled to understand this – are people happier in Israel than anywhere else? There are many unhappy people in Israel and many very happy people around the world, and vice-versa!

It seems that the answer is as explained above. The happiness being discussed here is not the individual measure of this or that person, but rather a deep and collective state of being. There is something about being in Israel, a spiritual synchronicity, a type of X-factor plugging one into a deep state of alignment with Jewish destiny and, hence, a state of happiness.

Sukkot, Shemini Azteret and Simchat Torah are unique opportunities to tap into this sense of *simcha*. To celebrate Jewish life, the *mitzvot* of the day and to stand in the presence of G-d. When we are living in sync with our deepest values, we merit the resultant blessing of living with happiness as a state of being. We hope and pray that it accompanies us throughout our lives. The butterfly will then sit constantly on our shoulder.

1. St. Martin's Press 2016.
2. Rav Hirsch's commentary on Deuteronomy 16:15.
3. Of the three times in Torah that *simcha* (joy) is mentioned in connection with a holiday, two are about Sukkot.
4. The simple meaning of the verse refers to Sukkot. Rashi quotes the Talmudic commentary in Sukkot 48a which connects it to the last day of *chag* – Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. This day (days in the Diaspora), when there are no particular *mitzvot* such as sitting in the *sukkah* or waving the *lulav*, seem to be the crescendo and pinnacle of our happiness. We simply celebrate being in G-d's presence alone and are most primed to achieve this level of ultimate happiness.
5. Rabbi Meir Leibush. He mentions this distinction in a number of places, for example, see Isaiah 35:1, in his section on the meaning of words.
6. Orach Chaim 128:44

# True Simcha



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi  
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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## Z'man Simchateinu

Though there is a *mitzvah* of *simcha* on all Yamim Tovim, only Sukkot is described as “z'man *simchateinu* — the time of our joy.”<sup>1</sup> Of the four times the word “*simcha*” is used regarding the Yamim Tovim, three of them refer to Sukkos.<sup>2</sup> What is the source of this heightened level of *simcha*?

The simplest explanation is that we celebrate the successful harvest marked by Sukkot, also known as *Chag Ha'asif* — the harvest festival.<sup>3,4</sup>

## Lifnei Hashem

While other cultures also have harvest celebrations, Sukkot is different in that it focuses on the Beit Hamikdash.<sup>5</sup> We celebrate *lifnei* (before) Hashem because we (are meant to) realize that He is the cause of our success. Much like the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim*,<sup>6</sup> on Sukkot, we use harvest products to praise<sup>7</sup> and thank<sup>8</sup> Hashem for our success. Sitting in the Sukkah, we remember how Hashem cared for us in the desert and realize that He continues to do so today.

## Simchat Beit Hashoeva — Celebrating the Water Libation

The focus of our joy in the Beit Hamikdash was the Simchat Beit Hashoevah, the “Water Libation Celebration.”<sup>9</sup> Throughout each night of Sukkot, the people celebrated the water drawn from the Shiloach spring before pouring it onto the *Mizbeiach* the next morning. Chazal note that one who never witnessed the joy of this ceremony “never saw joy in his entire life!”<sup>10</sup>

Why was this ritual, which is not even (explicitly) mentioned in the Torah, the center of the Sukkot celebration? Pour-

ing water seems like little reason to celebrate. Sukkot is observed at the end of the summer when the springs are at their lowest point. The water libation ceremony is a national prayer beseeching Hashem to provide us with more water in the year ahead.<sup>11</sup> Why was this ceremony the source of such extraordinary joy?

## A Deeper Level Of Simcha

The focus on the Simchat Beit Hashoevah expresses a deeper level of *simcha*. We rejoice not only because of our successful harvest but also because of our realization that Hashem cares and provides for us. Most people celebrate their success but have no real reason to assume that it will continue in the future. We, however, know that our success signifies the strength of our relationship with Hashem, so we are confident that the success will continue.

When we pour our precious last drops of water on the Mikdash's *Mizbeiach*, we are like Eliyahu Hanavi at Har HaCarmel, who poured out four giant jugs of the last remaining water (after years of drought) on the *Mizbeiach* as an expression of his confidence in Hashem's mercy.<sup>12</sup>

The water libation ceremony expresses this same confidence by not only pouring out our last water but also celebrating intensively while doing so. We reflect on our success of the past year, appreciate its source, thank and praise Hashem for it, and express our faith and confidence in the future.

Like Eliyahu Hanavi, whose actions and *tefillot* at Har HaCarmel were answered with rain,<sup>13</sup> our celebration and demonstration of faith make us worthy of receiving rain and Hashem's other *berachot*.<sup>14</sup>

Though it is always easy to focus on what we are missing in our lives, we must use Chag HaSukkot to focus upon and celebrate Hashem's great blessings that we often take for granted. May this celebration strengthen our confidence and merit continued health, happiness, and *hatzlachah* in the upcoming year.

1. See Mishneh Torah, Sukkah 8:12 who speaks of a “*simcha yeteira*” on Sukkot, in contrast to the regular level of *simcha* on other yamim tovim.
2. Vayikra 23:40, Devarim 16:14,15. “*V'samachta b'chagecha... v'hayita ach sameach*,” often sung on yamim tovim, actually describes Sukkot specifically.
3. Shemot 23:16.
4. Vayikra 23:39. See also Sefer HaChinuch 324. Chazal link the joy to our having received Hashem's forgiveness during the first part of the month of Tishrei (see Midrash Tehillim 102, Sukka 53a, Vayikra Rabba Emor 30).
5. Moreh Nevuchim 3:43, based on Vayikra 23:40. This is also why Sukkot is described as “*Chag Hashem*” (Vayikra 23:39. See also Devarim 16:15). Vayikra 23:40 is the basis for the fact that (min haTorah) the daled minim are taken seven days only in the Beit Hamikdash (Sukkah 41a). See Rambam Sefer Hamitzvot Aseh 169 who connects the taking of the daled minim to the *simcha* of Sukkot.
6. Note the parallel between the pesukim that describe the *simcha* of Sukkot with the daled minim (Vayikra 23:40) and those that describe the bringing of *bikkurim* (Devarim 26:2,11).
7. This is why we take the daled minim during, and integrate them within, Hallel.
8. See Rashbam and Ramban on Vayikra 23:39 and Ritva on Sukka 53a.
9. כל שמחה זו אינה אלא בשביל ניסוך המים (רש"י סוכה נ)
10. מי שלא ראה שמחת בית השואבה, לא ראה שמחה מימיו (תלמוד בבלי סוכה נא)
11. Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashana 16a.
12. Melachim I 17:34–35. See also Shmuel II 23:16.
13. Ibid 45.
14. Sefer HaChinuch 325.

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# Rain, Redemption and Universal Recognition



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

**S**ukkot is celebrated as a holiday of nature and history as we read (Vayikra 23) of our proclamation of holiness during the agricultural harvest, the taking of four water-dependent species, and the commandment to dwell in *sukkot* (huts) to remind us of Hashem's supervision in the wilderness. The *haftarah* on the first day of Sukkot revisits these existential themes as we hear Zecharia's eschatological prophecy (chapter 14) aimed to encourage the minority Jewish population of *Shivat Tzion* to regain sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Redemption will continue to unfold, exclaims Zecharia, but only those who choose to call out to Hashem will be worthy of inclusion in the process.

He begins his prophecy by describing how *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* will fight against foreign nations in Yerushalayim (reminiscent of 1948 and 1967): *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Hashem go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fights in the day of battle* (Zecharia 14:2-3).

He continues to detail miraculous changes in the political and natural realms as victory will ensue and Yerushalayim will be safe from its enemies. Thereafter an earthquake will come and *"This is what will be: on that day, living waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea; in summer and winter it will be so."* (14:8) *Then the land will be smoothed out like a plain from Geva to Rimon, until the area south of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem will be lifted up in her place. From the Gate of Bin-yamin to the site of the First Gate and to the*

*Corner Gate, from the Tower of Chananel to the king's winery, they will inhabit her.* (14:10)

Following the calamitous disasters in Yerushalayim, Zecharia describes the aforementioned waters which will flow and irrigate even the salty soil near Sedom. Furthermore, the earthquake and the waters will alter the topography of the city, lifting Yerushalayim as a mountain above surrounding plains. Light will abolish darkness and all will recognize Hashem as King over the entire world. While the war is meant to punish our adversaries, the earthquake comes to highlight Hashem's sovereignty.

The climax, however, will be a global plague that will not be overcome through natural means and will elicit recognition of Hashem's powers. Zecharia notes that those nations that survive the cataclysmic war and pandemic will be required to go to Yerushalayim every year on Sukkot to pay homage to G-d: *And it shall be, that who of the families of the earth who do not go up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the L-rd of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain* (ibid. v. 17). Even "super-power" countries must recognize Hashem's kingship; countries such as Egypt, who depend on the Nile River for water, must learn that Hashem controls natural and supernatural forces, and has the ability to stop the most natural phenomenon of rainfall!

This prophecy underscores the universal themes of Sukkot; it is a festival that transcends the private sphere of *Am Yisrael* and embraces the nations of the world. (i.e. Sukka 55b - *Rabbi Elazar said: To what do these seventy bulls [sacrificed on Sukkot] correspond? The seventy nations.*) The rain for which we pray on Sukkot is meant to give life to the entire world, and Hashem's

powers are manifest in the agricultural harvest of Jew and non-Jew alike. When Shlomo HaMelech inaugurated the first *Beit HaMikdash* on Sukkot, he intended for the Temple to serve as house of prayer for ALL the nations.

Zecharia concludes his vision with a poignant description of horses and pots – symbols of man's efforts to control natural forces through warfare and cooking, which will be transformed into sacred objects dedicated to Hashem's Mikdash. Even household pots will be treated as holy as we recognize Divine immanence in every aspect of our lives! Sukkot is the time to reflect upon these messages and relay them to the global community. Hashem controls agricultural-natural forces and provides us with protection and health.

On Sukkot we are meant to recognize and internalize mankind's vulnerabilities and Hashem's omniscient powers – which extend beyond the natural – embracing us with Clouds of Glory and miraculously-supervised rainfall in Israel and throughout the world. When earthquakes and tsunamis strike, we must process the tragedies as universal "wake-up" calls for cognizance of the Divine. Once this message is relayed through our proper responses to tragedy and consistent advocacy for our religious beliefs, then we will not only merit participation in redemption, but witness the universal realization –

והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד

And the L-rd shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the L-rd be One, and His name one (ibid. v.9).

Chag Sameach!

# Halachic Q&A



## Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council  
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

### Question: Does all food need to be eaten in the sukkah? What about drinks? Water?

Answer: There is an important principle regarding dwelling in a *sukkah* derived from the *passuk* (Vayikrah 23:42): “*Ba-sukkot teshvu shiv'at yamim kol ha'ezrach beyisra'el yeshvu bassukkot* – You shall live in *sukkot* seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in *sukkot*.”

The Midrash (Torat Kohanim Emor, 17:5) teaches us that we must dwell – “*teshvu*” – like we normally dwell in our homes – “*ke'in taduru*”. The Midrash lists eating and sleeping amongst other things we do in order to make our dwelling in the *sukkah* like our home.

Halachically, there are times that one is allowed to leave the *sukkah*. However, based on the simple reading of the *pesukim* and words of Chazal, a person has to work hard to make the *sukkah* like his home and to spend the most amount of time doing the special *mitzvah* of sitting under the wings of the *shechina*.

### Eating in the sukkah

The Mishna (Sukkah 25a) states: One may eat and drink [in the framework of] a casual meal outside the *sukkah*.<sup>1</sup> The next *mishnah*, however, brings a story of two Tanaim who were strict about not eating anything outside the *sukkah*:

An incident [occurred where] they brought a cooked dish to Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai [for him] to taste, and to Rabban Gamliel [they brought] two dates and a bucket of water. And they each said: Take them up to the *sukkah* and [we will eat them there]. [In contrast, the *mishnah* relates] And when they gave Rabbi Tzadok less

than an egg-bulk of food, he took it in a cloth and he ate it outside the *sukkah*.

The Gemara settles the discrepancy between the *mishnayot*: While one may eat a casual meal outside of the *sukkah*, Rabban Yochanan and Rabban Gamliel accepted upon themselves a stringency. The Mishnah records their practice to teach us that one may rule stringently in this manner and that doing so does not pose an issue of *yuhara* (religious arrogance).

### Is it proper to accept this stringency?

The latter part of the *mishnah* (above) quoted Rabbi Tzadok who was not stringent like the other *tana'im*. The Ritva and Ran explain that this part of the Mishnah teaches that even a *talmid chacham* does not need to act stringently and he does not appear like one who isn't careful with *mitzvah* observance by not accepting it. Therefore, it is *mutar lechatchila* to be stringent, but also *mutar lechatchila* to not be stringent, and each may act according to his or her own preference.

### What food does the stringency apply to?

The Mishnah taught that Rabban Gamliel was stringent with the two dates and a bucket of water. Based on this, the Rambam writes (Sukkah 6:5): “a person who follows the stringency of not drinking **even water** outside the *sukkah* is worthy of praise.”<sup>2</sup> This is also implied in the Yerushalmi (Sukkah 5:5), which relates the story of Rabbi Ami who was thirsty, but refused to drink until he entered the *sukkah*. On the other hand, the Maharil says that one should be stringent regarding all foods and drinks **except for drinking water**. Seemingly, his under-

standing is that Rabban Gamliel went up to the *sukkah* because of the dates (or a combination of dates and water), but he would not have gone up to drink water alone.

In practice: The Shulchan Aruch quotes the Rambam, that even one who is stringent with water is praiseworthy. However, because this is all a stringency, a person can certainly choose to accept the Maharil's version of the stringency. Sometimes when we are too stringent, it is hard to maintain, and it may be that leniency with water will help us maintain the stringency with other foods and drinks.

While we mentioned that eating a casual meal is not obligated in *sukkah*, it seems that if one does, they are fulfilling a *mitzvah* in doing so, because we learned the principle of dwelling in the *sukkah* like one dwells at home, and casual meals are certainly eaten in the home as well.

What foods are considered *achilat keva* (set meals) which require *sukkah* and *achilat arai* (casual meals) which do not?

1. Bread or *mezonot* more than *k'beitza* (56 cubic centimeters, a bit bigger than the volume of 2 match boxes) must be eaten in a *sukkah*. (SA OC 639:2).
2. Meat, fish, etc. – these can be eaten outside of the *sukkah* in a casual manner, however it is proper to be stringent if they are being eaten in the context of a meal. (MB 639:15)
3. Fruit and vegetables can be eaten outside of the *sukkah* (even a large amount). (SA, Rema 639:2)
4. One may drink all amounts outside

Continued on next page

# ארבעת המינים

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרִי עֵץ הַדֶּרֶךְ כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף עֵץ עֵבֶת וְעֵרְבֵי נַחַל וְשִׂמְחַתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים (ויקרא כ"ג, מ).

וצריכים להשקאת מים יותר משאר פירות, ולכך נצטוונו בחג הסוכות, שהוא זמן נסוך המים, והוא יום הדין על גשמי השנה, שנרצה להקב"ה על המים עם ארבעה מינין אלו המורים על המים" (רבנו בחיי).

נראה כי מגוון ההיבטים והמשמעויות של מצווה זו איננו מקרי. כל אחד מהפירושים הללו מוסיף עוד נופך מעניין, וכולם יחד יוצרים אורית מיסתורין - תחושה של מעשה בעל ערך רב ומשמעות עמוקה, שאינה גלויה וידועה לנו.

לקראת השנה החדשה, אנו מבקשים מה' בקשות רבות ומגוונות, ולא תמיד אנו יודעים מה באמת נצטרך בשנה זו. בעזרת מצוות ארבעת המינים שיש בה הרבה כוונות נסתרות, אנו מתפללים שהקב"ה יצרף את כל הבקשות והכוונות הטובות, ויברך אותנו בשפע טוב מדויק בשנה הבאה עלינו לטובה.

כמו זר פרחים או מגש פירות יפה, המבטאים את **השמחה עם סיום ימי הדין**: "כדי שתראו שיצאתם זכאין מבית דין, שתיראו כשרים שמוליכים בידם פירות יפות לריח טוב, וענפי עץ לטייל ותשמחו שבעת ימים" (ר"י בכור שור).

אך באופן הפשוט ביותר, נראה כי נטילת ארבעת המינים בחג הסוכות קשורה בקשר הדוק **לעונה החקלאית**, משני היבטים:

חג הסוכות הוא **חג האסיף**, בו אנו שמחים על הפירות ועל שפע הטוב שקיבלנו השנה, ומודים לה'. **הכרת הטוב** נעשית ע"י לקיחת ארבעה מיני פירות וצמחים שונים, והנפתם לפני ה'.

במקביל, חג הסוכות הוא לא רק זמן שמחה אלא חלק מימי הדין, ובו **"נידונים על המים"**. לכן, חג הסוכות משופע בתפילות על הגשמים: שמחת בית השואבה וניסוך המים על גבי המזבח; תפילת הגשם בשמיני עצרת; בקשת גשמים לאחר החג.

ברוח זו, ניתן להבין את מצוות ארבעת המינים כחלק **מהתפילה על הגשם** - לוקחים ארבעה סוגי צמחים, מציגים אותם לפני ה' ומתחננים אליו שהשנה הבאה תהיה מלאה בגשמי ברכה, אשר יאפשרו צמיחה של תבואה ופירות, כפי שמסביר רבנו בחיי: "על דרך הפשט: ארבעה מינין אלו הם גדלים על המים

לקיחת ארבעת המינים בחג הסוכות היא מצווה משמחת וחביבה במיוחד, וזכתה לפירושים רבים ומגוונים (את רובם ניתן למצוא בדברי רבנו בחיי לפסוק זה).

הפירוש הידוע ביותר הוא שארבעת המינים הם משל **לארבעה סוגי אנשים**, בדרגות שונות של לימוד תורה וקיום מצוות, ולקיחתם יחד בחג הסוכות מסמלת את **האחדות של העם** ואת הערבות ההדדית;

מדרש אחר רואה בארבעת המינים סמל **לארבעה איברים** מרכזיים בגוף - לב, עיניים, שפתיים, ועמוד השדרה - שבעזרתם נעשות פעולות האדם. לקיחתם בחג מזכירה לנו **לכוון את כל מעשינו לעבודת ה' ולמצוותיו**;

מדרש נוסף טוען שארבעת המינים מרמזים על **ארבעה אבות האומה**: אברהם, יצחק, יעקב ויוסף, המבקשים רחמים על בניהם וזכותם מגנה על עם ישראל;

פירושים על דרך **הקבלה** רואים בארבעת המינים רמזים לעולם האצילות;

לעומת פירושים אלה, הרואים בארבעת המינים רמזים וסמלים, ישנם פירושים הרואים מצווה זו כפשוטה. אפשרות אחת היא שארבעת המינים הם

Continued from previous page

of the sukkah; however one should be careful not to drink wine in a formal manner outside of the sukkah. (ibid, and MB SK 13)

These rulings are in terms of the line between *achilat keva* (which requires sukkah) and *achilat arai* (which is exempt

from sukkah). As we mentioned earlier, one who wishes to be stringent may (and there is no issue of religious arrogance). Additionally, there is no issue if one does not accept the stringency. The stringency applies to water as well. However, one may accept the stringency with the ex-

clusion of water (like the Maharil).

● Compiled by Yaakov Panitch.

1. Translation of *mishnayot* from sefaria.com
2. Translation from chabad.org

# Join the Sukkot Revolution



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

**A** mother from New York once told me that when she came to Israel with her children and they visited the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem, they saw a watermelon and asked what it was. They were used to getting it already cut up in pieces, without the rind, because that's how it was sold where they lived. It is possible to foresee that this will soon be the case here as well. The world becomes more convenient, more technological, more hygienic, more "already peeled" every day.

In this context, the celebration of Sukkot becomes a revolutionary act. To observe this holiday, we must keep the mitzvot of entering the sukkah and grasping the four species in our hands. We cannot perform these mitzvot through an app on our cell phones, but must be active participants. The fragrance of the etrog and the hadas cannot be experienced remotely on Zoom. We cannot virtually check to see if the light streaming through the s'chach results in more sun than shade below. In this regard, our Sukkot experience is highly subversive. After all, it provides many of us with our only encounter each year with the grass, the sun, the moon, and the ants.

One of the famous questions Rebbe Nachman from Breslov would ask his chasidim when they were preoccupied with business affairs was the following: "Have you looked up at heaven today?" Our answer on Sukkot is yes. The festival of Sukkot is one week out of the year in which we have no choice. We must stop looking down at a screen and look up instead – at the branches, the leafy green, and the heavens peeking through.



This evening we enter the sukkah for a week under the s'chach, a week of waving the four species, and a week of holiday joy. Sometimes our many obligations obscure the main point of Sukkot, so here are a few words from Rabbi Professor Jonathan Sacks, z"l, that remind us what Sukkot is really all about:

"The Power of Sukkot is that it takes us back to the most elemental roots of our being. You don't need to live in a palace to be surrounded by Clouds of Glory. You don't need to be rich to buy yourself the same leaves and fruit that a billionaire uses in worshipping G-d. Living in the sukkah and inviting guests to your meal, you discover – such is the premise of Ushpizin, the mystical guests – that the people who have come to visit you are none other than Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov and their wives. What makes a hut more beautiful than a home is that when it comes to Sukkot, there is no difference between the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor. We are all strangers on earth, temporary residents in G-d's almost eternal universe. And whether or not we are capable of pleasure, whether or not we have found happiness, we can all feel joy.

Judaism is no comforting illusion that all is well in this dark world. It is instead the courage to celebrate in the midst of uncertainty, and to rejoice even in the transitory shelter of the sukkah, the Jewish symbol of home."



Hadar Goldin once painted a wonderful picture of a boy sitting under a tree. The boy looks out at nature and changes the living world he sees into music. This painting was made public last year with the

approach of Sukkot, along with a request to hang it everywhere as a sukkah decoration. We are supposed to bring into the sukkah all aspects of our lives - to eat and drink and converse in it. And so we are also presented with the opportunity to bring into the sukkah our obligation to return the bodies of Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul from Gaza, as well as Avera Mengistu who has been taken captive there.

Rina Shnerb was intensively involved with our enslavement to cell phones. As a high school student, she felt that they had taken control of us instead of our being in control of them. She was constantly thinking of ways to decrease our screen time while promoting simple human interactions with others. Her family has continued her efforts and, before Sukkot, they publicized the following message: "Disconnect in order to connect." Specifically, we are encouraged to enter the sukkah without our cell phones in order to enjoy quality sukkah time without them.

Hadar fell in Operation Protective Edge nine years ago, and Rina was murdered in a terrorist attack four years ago. These two young people succeeded in leaving a legacy, and their families memorialize them in inspiring ways which can upgrade the holiday experience for all of us.



גם אתם נוטים לדחות דברים גדולים בגלל טרדות החיים? הרעיון הבא אולי יכול לעזור: אנחנו נוהגים להזמין לסוכה בכל יום את אחד האושפיזין: אברהם, יצחק, יעקב, משה, אהרון, יוסף ודוד.

כשמתכלים על סיפור חיייהם של אבות האומה, רואים שהם לא הפסיקו להתמודד עם משברים ובעיות: אברהם עזב את מולדתו והגיע לארץ, ומשם למצרים ובחזרה. יצחק נדד ברחבי הארץ והתמודד עם אויבים. יעקב ברח לחרון, חזר לארץ,

*Continued on page 11*



# The Beauty of the Aravah



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

**T**he *Arba'at HaMinim* are known for their beauty, but when considering the beauty of the four kinds, there seems to be an odd one out.

The *Lulav* is majestic in its height and stature. The *Etrog* has beautiful appearance and taste. The *Hadas* has a pleasant aroma and intricate leaves.

And then there's the *Aravah* (willow). The *Aravah* is not particularly aesthetic to behold. It has no pleasant aroma. Where is the *Hiddur* (beauty) in taking a lowly and simple *Aravah*?

This question is strengthened when we consider the *Mishna* in Masseket Sukkah (4:5) which describes how on Hoshana Rabba, we would encircle the *Mizbe'ach* in the *Beit HaMikdash*.

On Hoshana Rabba, the *Mizbe'ach* was decorated with long *Aravah* branches. And the *Mishna* tells us that as people were leaving and took in the sight of the *Mizbe'ach*, they would declare, "יפי לך מזבח, יופי לך מזבח" – Beauty unto you, Altar, Beauty unto you, Altar.

And even as we find ourselves between *Batei Mikdash*, the *Aravah* still receives great attention on Hoshana Rabba, as we take a bunch or willow in our hands.

How did the *Aravah*, seemingly the simplest and humblest of the *Arba'at HaMinim* reach such prominence and praise for its beauty?

In order to understand the beauty of the *Aravah*, we have to understand its role in the context of the *Arba'at HaMinim*.

The Gemara teaches us that in the first instance, the four kinds need to be in an *Eged* – bound together. (The Israeli bus company is called *Eged* because it is a cooperative owned by its members. It was also created as an *Eged* in 1933 by the

merger of four smaller bus companies coming together).

In order to fulfil the *Mitzva* of *Arba'at HaMinim*, all four species must be present. Despite their individual qualities, none of them alone can be used to perform the *Mitzva* – they can only be used when they are together as part of a full set.

The real beauty of the *Arba'at HaMinim* is not in their individual aesthetic qualities, but the way they come together. The *Lulav*, *Hadasim* and *Etrog* are far more beautiful when joined by the *Aravah*, and the *Aravah* takes on new beauty and significance when placed with the other three.

So it was on the *Mizbe'ach* as well. The *Aravot* in and of themselves are not particularly beautiful, but when placed alongside the *Mizbe'ach*, offsetting the *Mizbe'ach* with refreshing greenery, they contributed to an overall pleasing experience.

The *Aravah* itself, in its name and in its nature, represents this concept of interdependence and harmony.

Of all the 4 kinds, the willow is the most dependent on water for its growth. It cannot survive alone but must grow alongside rivers, streams or sources of water.

The name *Aravah* means mixture, indicating the *Aravah's* natural inclination to blend and mix with other elements. The *Aravah* alone does not have much beauty but must be in the context of other ingredients to shine.

In the *Halachot* of what qualifies as a Kosher *Aravah*, one of the requirements is that it is not allowed to be *KeMasor* – like a saw with jagged edges. This fits in with the symbolism of the *Aravah*, which represents unity and harmony, as opposed to a saw which represents division.

As the *Midrash* in *Vayikra Rabba* points out, each of the four kinds represents a

different kind of Jew. The *Etrog*, with both a pleasant taste and pleasing aroma, represents Jews who have both Torah and good deeds. The *Lulav*, with a pleasant taste but no aroma, represents Jews with Torah but no good deeds. The *Hadas*, with a pleasant aroma but no taste, represents Jews who have good deeds but no Torah. The *Aravah*, with no taste and no aroma, represents Jews with neither Torah nor good deeds. Ultimately, the *Mitzva* can only be performed when all four kinds are brought together.

The *Sefat Emet* explains that this is why the *Aravah* is granted such prominence on Hoshana Rabba. It is specifically because it represents those who lack Torah and good deeds, in order to highlight the value of every single person.

This message is especially important within a youth movement setting. On the one hand, it is essential to welcome and appreciate the value of every single *Chanich/a*. At the same time, the *Aravah* teaches us that great beauty is not just about accepting or tolerating others. True beauty is found when those who do not naturally fit in are able to shine. Not only do they shine themselves, but they enable the overall group to achieve a level of beauty that could never have been achieved without their presence.

Sukkot is all about coming together. We invite *Ushpizin* and others into our *Sukkot*. We share our *Simcha* with those less fortunate than ourselves.

By internalizing the lesson of the *Aravah*, may we merit the fruition of our prayer during the *Yamim Noraim*:

"*V'Yeasu Chulam Agudah Echat LaAsot Retzoncha BeLevav Shalem*" – may we all become one "*Agudah*" – one group bound together to perform the will of Hashem.

# Radical Uncertainty



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

There is something very strange about the festival of Succot. On the one hand, it is the festival supremely associated with joy. It is the only festival in Parshat Emor that mentions rejoicing: “And you shall rejoice before the Lord your G-d seven days” (Lev. 23:40). In the Torah as a whole, joy is mentioned *not at all* in relation to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur or Pesach, once in connection with Shavuot and *three times* in connection with Succot. Hence its name: *z'man simchatenu*, the festival of our joy.

Yet what it recalls is one of the more negative elements of the wilderness years: “You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, so that future generations may know that I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your G-d.” (Lev. 23:42-43)

For forty years, the Israelites lived without permanent homes, often on the move. They were in the wilderness, in no man's land, where it is hard to know what to expect and what dangers lie in wait along the way. The people certainly lived under Divine protection. But they could never be sure in advance whether it would be forthcoming and what form this protection might take. It was a prolonged period of insecurity.

How then are we to understand the fact that Succot of all festivals is called *z'man simchatenu*, the festival of our joy? It would have made sense to call Pesach – freedom's birthday – the festival of joy. It would have made sense to call Shavuot – the day of revelation at Sinai – the festival of joy. But why give that title to a festival that commemorates forty years of exposure to the heat, cold, wind and

rain. Remembering that, why should we feel joy?

Besides which, what was the miracle? Pesach and Shavuot recall miracles. But travelling through the wilderness with only temporary homes was neither miraculous nor unique. That is what people who travel through the wilderness do. They must. They are on a journey. They can only have a temporary dwelling. In this respect there was nothing special about the Israelites' experience.

It was this consideration that led Rabbi Eliezer to suggest that the succah represents the Clouds of Glory, *ananei kavod*, that accompanied the Israelites during those years, sheltering them from heat and cold, protecting them from their enemies, and guiding them on the way. This is a beautiful and imaginative solution to the problem. It identifies a miracle and explains why a festival should be dedicated to remembering it. That is why Rashi and Ramban take it as the plain sense of the verse.

But it is difficult, nonetheless. A succah looks nothing like the Clouds of Glory. It would be hard to imagine anything *less* like the Clouds of Glory. The connection between a succah and Clouds of Glory comes not from the Torah but from the book of Isaiah, referring not to the past, but to the future:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a *cloud* of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a succah for shade from heat by day, and a shelter and hiding place from the storm and rain. (Is. 4:5-6)

Rabbi Akiva dissents from Rabbi Eliezer's view and says that a succah is what it says it is: a hut, a booth, a temporary dwelling. What, according to Rabbi Akiva, was the miracle? There is no way of knowing the answer. But we can guess.

If a succah represents the Clouds of Glory – the view of Rabbi Eliezer – then it celebrates G-d's miracle. If it represents nothing other than a succah itself – Rabbi Akiva's view – then it celebrates the *human* miracle of which Jeremiah spoke when he said: “Thus said the Lord, ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved Me and followed Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown.’” (Jer. 2:2)

The Israelites may have complained and rebelled. But they followed G-d. They kept going. Like Abraham and Sarah, they were prepared to journey into the unknown.

If we understand this to be the miracle, we can infer a deep truth about faith itself. *Faith is not certainty. Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty.* Almost every phase of the exodus was fraught with difficulties, real or imagined. That is what makes the Torah so powerful. It does not pretend that life is any easier than it is. The road is not straight and the journey is long. Unexpected things happen. Crises suddenly appear. It becomes important to embed in a people's memory the knowledge that we can handle the unknown. G-d is with us, giving us the courage we need.

Each Succot it is as if G-d were reminding us: don't think you need solid walls to make you feel safe. I led your ancestors through the desert so that they would never forget the journey they had

to make and the obstacles they had to overcome to get to this land. He said, "I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Lev. 23:43) In those booths, fragile and open to the elements, the Israelites learnt the courage to live with uncertainty.

Other nations told stories that celebrated their strength. They built palaces and castles as expressions of invincibility. The Jewish people was different. They carried with them a story about the uncertainties and hazards of history. They spoke of their ancestors' journey through the wilderness without homes, houses, protection against the elements. It is a story of spiritual strength, not military strength.

Succot is a testament to the Jewish people's survival. Even if it loses its land and is cast again into the wilderness, it will lose neither heart nor hope. It will remember that it spent its early years as a nation living in a succah, a temporary dwelling exposed to the elements. It will know that in the wilderness, no encampment is permanent. It will keep travelling until once again it reaches the promised land: Israel, home.

It is no accident that the Jewish people is the only one to have survived 2,000 years of exile and dispersion, its identity intact and energy unabated. It is the only people who can live in a shack with leaves as a roof and yet feel surrounded by Clouds of Glory. It is the only people who can live in a temporary dwelling and yet rejoice.



**Faith is not certainty.  
Faith is the courage to  
live with uncertainty.**

Economist John Kay and former Governor of the Bank of England Mervyn King have just published a book, *Radical Uncertainty*. In it they make the distinction between *risk*, which is calculable, and *uncertainty*, which is not. They argue that people have relied too much on calculations of probability while neglecting the fact that danger may appear from a completely unexpected source. The sudden appearance of the Coronavirus just as their book appeared proved their point. People knew there was a possibility of a pandemic. But no one knew what it would be like, where it would come from, how rapidly it would spread, and what toll it would take.

More important than the calculation of probabilities, they say, is *understanding the situation*, answering the question, "What is going on?" This, they say, is never answered by statistics or predictions but rather by narrative, by telling a story.

*That is exactly what Succot is about.* It is a story about uncertainty. It tells us that we can know everything else, but we will never know what tomorrow will bring. Time is a journey across a wilderness.

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we pray to be written into the Book of Life. On Succot we rejoice because we believe we have received a positive answer to our prayer. But as we turn to face the coming year, we acknowledge at the outset that life is fragile, vulnerable in a dozen different ways. We do not know what our health will be, what our career or livelihood will be, or what will happen to society and to the world. We cannot escape exposure to risk. That is what life is.

The succah symbolises living with unpredictability. Succot is the festival of radical uncertainty. But it places it within the framework of a narrative, exactly as Kay and King suggest. It tells us that though we journey through a wilderness, we as a people will reach our destination. If we see life through the eyes of faith, we will know we are surrounded by Clouds of Glory. Amid uncertainty we will find ourselves able to rejoice. We need no castles for protection or palaces for glory. A humble succah will do, for when we sit within it, we sit beneath what the Zohar calls "the shade of faith."

**I believe that the experience of leaving the protection of a house and entering the exposure of the succah is a way of taming our fear of the unknown. It says: We have been here before. We are all travellers on a journey. The Divine Presence is with us. We need not be afraid. That is a source of the resilience we need in our interconnected, hazardous, radically uncertain world.**

*Continued from page 8*

הם ידעו להתמקד בעיקר, גם כשהכול מסביב רעד, ואולי יותר מכך: דווקא מתוך האתגרים, הם הצליחו לצמוח ולגדול.

זו נקודה שאפשר לאמץ, גם כשיוציאים מהסוכה.

ועוצמתית. אברהם אבינו, למשל, לא חיכה שהצרות ייגמרו, אלא הצליח לייסד תוך כדי הכל את האמונה היהודית. דוד המלך, בתוך כל ההתרחשויות, כתב את ספר תהלים.

הם לא דחו הכול ל"אחרי המשבר". הם הבינו שהחיים הם עכשיו, תוך כדי המהומה. במקום לחכות לשקט ולשלווה ואז להתחיל לעשות מה שחשוב,

וירד למצרים. את יוסף האחים שלו מכרו, והוא התגלגל לכלא המצרי. משה הוחבא בתיבה ביאור, והמשיך לבית פרעה ולמדנין. אהרון אחיו נדד יחד איתו 40 שנה מאתגרות במדבר. גם חייו של דוד היו מלאים מלחמות ומרידות. אבותינו ניהלו חיים של "סוכה", של ארעיות, לא של בתי קבע. אבל למרות כל הטלטלות, כל אחד מהם בנה את עצמו תוך כדי: למד, ניגן, עשה טוב והפך לדמות משמעותית, נצחית

# Nisuch HaMayim



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

The Mishnah (Sukkah 4:9) records that the Sadducees did not observe the practice of *nisuch hamayim* (pouring of the water) in the Beit HaMikdash on Sukkot, for they believed only in the Written Torah and did not accept the traditions of the Oral Torah. On one occasion, a certain Sadducee Kohen, refusing to perform the *nisuch hamayim*, poured the water on his feet instead of on the *mizbe'ach*. The enraged onlookers pelted him with *etrogim*, causing the *mizbe'ach* to become damaged and unfit for use.

The biblical source for *nisuch hamayim* is a matter of dispute among the Tanna'im (Ta'anit 2b-3a). One opinion holds that it is a *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai*, a tradition of the Oral Torah that has no source in the Written Torah. It cannot be derived through any of the exegetical principles through which the Torah is expounded. Other Tanna'im disagree and do find a source in the Written Torah for *nisuch hamayim*. Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteirah learns that the three letters, "מ", "י", and "ם" in the words, ונסכיה, ונסכיה, and כמשפטם (Bamidbar 29:18,31,33), respectively, are extra and were added for exegetical purposes. The resulting word, מים, is an allusion to *nisuch hamayim*. Rabbi Akiva's source is the use of the plural term ונסכיה - "and its libations," a reference to a *nisuch hamayim* and a *nisuch hayayin*.

Maimonides interprets another Tannaitic dispute on the basis of this debate. The Gemara (Zevachim 110b) discusses which of the Beit HaMikdash services one would be punished for performing if he did so outside of the Beit HaMikdash. According to Rabbi Elazar, not only is one who slaughters or offers a sacrifice outside the Beit HaMikdash liable for *karet*,

but also one who performs the *nisuch hamayim* outside during Sukkot. The Gemara states, "Rebbi Elazar said [this ruling] according to the opinion of Rebbi Akiva, his teacher, who said that *nisuch hamayim* is of biblical origin," but the Gemara does not explain the interdependence of these two teachings.

Maimonides explains that if we were to derive *nisuch hamayim* from the Oral Torah exposition of Rebbi Akiva, reading in between the lines of the Written Torah, the punishment of *karet* would be appropriate if *nisuch* were to be performed outside. Maimonides writes that since, instead, *nisuch hamayim* is a *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai*, we do not accept the opinion of Rebbi Elazar, and one who performs the *nisuch hamayim* on Sukkot outside the Beit HaMikdash would not be liable.

The Rosh makes a similar comment regarding the *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai* of half-payment for damages due to pebbles sent flying in the normal course of an animal's activity. Rava questions whether the damage caused by the force generated by the animal is generally treated as if it was caused directly by the body of the animal itself so that the owner should have been obligated in full damages, or if generally one's force is not like his body and the owner should therefore have been totally exempt from payment for damages. Rava concludes that the former explanation is the correct one; one's force is considered like his body. The *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai* that the rabbis have received as part of the Oral tradition serves to reduce the owner's liability to half-damages in this case.

The Rosh explains that Rava realized that the nature of *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai* is always to be *lenient*, to reduce one's obli-

gation. The Gemara (Sukkah 6b) employs a similar logic in discussing how many walls are required in the construction of a *sukkah* - three full walls plus a *tefach* to serve as the fourth wall, or two full walls plus a *tefach* to serve as the third wall. The Rosh explains that the *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai* always comes to detract from the requirement of one of the full walls. Thus, the discussion revolves around whether a *sukkah* starts with a four-wall or only a three-wall minimum; the final wall is then *reduced* by the *Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai* to measure only the size of a *tefach*.

The Kabbalists explain that the Oral Torah was given with the *Middat HaChessed* (Attribute of Mercy), and leans towards more lenient positions. In contrast, the Written Torah was etched in stone, given with the *Middat HaDin* (Attribute of Judgement). Thus, while the Written Torah demands "an eye for an eye," the Oral Torah is more tolerant, requiring of the assailant only a monetary penalty.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha.

# The Festivals of Hashem



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

This week we will talk about the *pesukim* in Parshat Emor that teach us about the different holidays. The *pasuk* in the beginning of פרשת המועדים reads:

”דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, מוֹעֲדֵי ה', אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ--אֵלֶּה הֵם, מוֹעֲדֵי”

“Speak to the Jewish people and tell them, the festivals of Hashem, that you will mark them as holy, these are the festivals”.

This is a pretty well-known *pasuk*, yet it seems to be very redundant. Had the *pasuk* just read “Speak to the Jewish people and tell them these are my *ימים טובים*”, it would have been a wonderful introduction. Yet, the extra phrase “אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ” seems to not be adding anything, and therefore we must understand what is its explanation.

The Netziv gives a beautiful explanation for this *pasuk*. One might think that the *ימים טובים* are days that are holy because of some event that took place in history. The Torah was given on the 6th day of Sivan, and for that reason we celebrate Shavuot to commemorate the event. The Jews left Egypt on the 15th day of Nissan, and for that reason we celebrate Pesach then, and so on. One might think that the holiday came into effect as a result of some historical event, just as we find in many other societies where there are days throughout



The days already have intrinsic *kedusha* within them, regardless of the event in history that happened.

the year that are meant to commemorate events in history. The Netziv explains that the point of this *pasuk* is to teach us the opposite. The Torah is telling us that these are not arbitrary days where something happened, but rather they are *ימים טובים* בעצמם. The days already have intrinsic *kedusha* within them, regardless of the event in history that happened. We see this in the Mishna in the first *perek* of מסכת ראש השנה. There, the Mishna says that the world is judged at 4 points during the year. On Pesach the world is judged about the grain, on Shavuot we are judged about the fruits, on Sukkot we are judged about the water, and on Rosh Hashana the humans are judged. These are judgments that are going on in *שמים* during these various days, yet they did not start only after a certain event in history. Even before the giving of the Torah, the 6th day of Sivan was the day that the world was judged about the fruits, and even before we sat in huts in the desert, the 15th of Tishrei was a day of judgment about the water. Thus,

we see that the days themselves already had some element of *kedusha* within them, even before anything happened on them. Now we can go back and explain the *pasuk*. Hashem is telling the Jewish people that these are the holidays of Hashem, set days for Hashem from the very beginning of existence. These days, which are already *מועדי ה'*, are now supposed to become the *ימים טובים* of the year. The Jewish people are supposed to make the “מועדי ה'”, which are already intrinsically holy, into festivals of the year, “אלה הם מועדי”.

This idea from the Netziv gives us a new perspective about all of our *ימים טובים*, and really all of the *mitzvot* in general, that they all carry two elements with them. We obviously have the fulfillment of the *רצון ה'*, that it is Hashem's will that we celebrate a *יום טוב* on that specific day. However, beyond the *גוף המצוה* there is an aspect of the world that is fixed when we do a *מצוה*, relating back to the beginning of time. There is inherent *תיקון* on those specific days that is accomplished when we celebrate the *ימים טובים*, beyond just the surface level fulfillment of Hashem's will. There is intrinsic *kedusha* on all of our *ימים טובים* that we tap into when we celebrate the holidays.

May we all merit to appreciate that inherent *kedusha* as we celebrate the upcoming *יום טוב* of Sukkot.

# Having Kavanah for the Mitzvah of Sukkah



**Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef**  
Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel

**T**he Tur and the Shulchan Aruch generally do not mention any Midrashim or Aggadah, but in Hilchot Sukkah (625:1) they state as follows: “On Sukkot we shall dwell for 7 days, etc. Because on Sukkot I protected the children of Israel. These refer to the clouds of glory who protected them from all the intense heat and the sun of the desert.”

Bach explains that the Tur and Shulchan Aruch are stating that when one is eating in the *sukkah*, there is an obligation to have *kavana* for the reasoning of the *mitzvah*. This is also the ruling of Elya Rabba (625:9) and Chessed LaAlafim (cited by Kaf HaChayim 8:32), and they say that one who did not have this intention when eating during the first night of Sukkot, must eat another *kezayit* of bread in order to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

This *halachah* is similar to the *mitzvah* of *tzitzit*, where the Shulchan Aruch (8:8) states, “One should have this intention in wrapping: That G-d commanded us to wrap ourselves in it in order to remember all of his commandments and to do them.” Similarly, the Shulchan Aruch (25:5) says regarding the *mitzvah* of wearing *tefillin*, “When putting them on, have in mind that G-d commanded us to put these four passages which contain [the principle of] monotheism and the Exodus on the arm opposite the heart and the head opposite the brain so that we may remember the miracles and wonders that He did for us which indicate His Unity and that He is omnipotent in heaven and on earth to do with them as He wills. And to submit to G-d his soul, which resides

in the brain as well as his heart which represents the main physical desires and thoughts. Through this, he will remember the Creator and moderate his pleasure [-seeking].” According to the Bach, one is required to have these intentions when performing these *mitzvot*.

The truth is, if possible, one should say the *Leshem Yichud* prayer before performing these *mitzvot* so that one will have the proper intentions. Maran zt”l generally did not recite “*Leshem yichud*” for any *mitzvah*, but on the first night of Sukkot, he would recite the *Leshem yichud* so that he had the proper intentions because he wanted to satisfy the opinion of the Bach who states that one is required to have these intentions.<sup>1</sup>

Bikurei Yaakov (by the Aruch LaNer) writes that this *kavanah* is an obligation and one does not fulfill the *mitzvah* without it. However, Mekor Chaim (of the Chavot Yair) writes that having intention for the reasoning of the *mitzvah* is not a prerequisite of the *mitzvah*. Olat Tamid (11) also writes that since we rule that a person does not need to have *kavanah* in order to fulfill a *mitzvah*, certainly not having intention for the reasoning of the *mitzvah* does not disqualify one’s *mitzvah*.

However, the Shulchan Aruch (60:4) seems to imply that the *halachah* follows the opinion that one needs *kavanah* when performing a *mitzvah*. Nevertheless, Pri Megadim (M.Z. 625) states that if one did not have *kavanah*, he has still fulfilled the *mitzvah* and does not need to perform the *mitzvah* again. This is also the ruling of the Mishnah Berurah (25:19, see also Biur Halachah, *siman* 60 “*Ve’yesh Omrim*”).

Chayeh Adam (68:9) says that if one does an action and it is obvious that one is doing it for a *mitzvah*, then it is considered like he had *kavana*. In this case, it is very clear that he is eating in the *sukkah* for the sake of a *mitzvah* since otherwise, he could have eaten his meal in his home. Nevertheless, initially, one should have intention to fulfill the *mitzvah* and also have in mind the reasons of the *mitzvah*. However, if one did not have *kavanah*, the *halachah* is that he does not have to eat another *kezayit* of bread, and he has nevertheless fulfilled the *mitzvah*.

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1. Maran zt”l also would recite the *Leshem yichud* for *Sefirat ha’omer* (the short version). Near the end of Maran’s life, he began reciting *Leshem yichud* more often. He also began to put his *tallit* on his head. For most of his life he didn’t put his *tallit* on his head since it was uncomfortable for him, but at the end of his life he began to do so to show that it was indeed good to do if one can.

# The Proper Time for Succot



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

...וְהָיָה הָאָסֵף בְּצֵאת הַשָּׁנָה, בְּאֶסְפֵּךָ אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂיךָ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה (שמות כג:טז)

...And the festival of the **ingathering** at the departure of the year, when you gather in [the products of] your labors from the field. (Shemot 23:16)

The Meshekh Hokhmah asks why isn't Succot referenced by name in *parashat Mishpatim*? Instead, it's exclusively referred to as *chag ha'asif*, when we gather in the produce. Why must we wait until Emor to discover the name *Chag HaSuccot*?

In addition, many commentaries are puzzled by the date on which we celebrate Succot. It would have been more logical to celebrate Succot following Pesach and prior to Shavout, symbolizing the Succot in which we dwelled during the intermittent journey in the desert that transpired between the historical events of *Yitziyat Mitzrayim* (Pesach) and *Matan Torah* (Shavuot). The Tur (625) suggests that the reason we celebrate Succot in Tishrei instead of Nissan is so that it is clearly recognizable that we are sitting in the *Succa* because we were commanded to do so and not for pleasure. If we celebrated the holiday of Succot in the spring, people might postulate that we sit outside because the weather is pleasant and not to fulfill a particular *mitzva*. The assumption of this approach seems to point to a *Pirsumei Nissa* type of idea for the *mitzvah* of *succot* as well. It must be clear to others what we are doing. It is a *mitzvah* that has a goal of publicizing Hashem's kindness to us.

The Gra, though, offers a different, fascinating explanation. In his commentary on *Shir Hashirim*, the Gra posits that if one does the math, Moshe remained on Har

Sinai for a hundred and twenty days — three sets of forty days. The first time he ascended was on the seventh day of Sivan, and he descended on the seventeenth of Tammuz, at which point he broke the first set of *Luchot*. At this point, Hazal tell us that the special protective *Ananei Hakavod* (clouds of glory) surrounding the nation disappeared. Moshe, then ascended on the eighteenth of Tammuz to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the nation and returned on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul to inform Bnei Yisrael that they had been forgiven for their transgression of *cheit Ha'egel* (golden calf). Moshe's final ascent on Har Sinai was on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, and he returned on Yom Kippur with the second set of *Luchot*.

At that point, on the following day, Moshe announced the building of the *Mishkan* and requested that people donate the requisite items. On the twelfth and thirteenth of the month of Tishrei, contributions and donations were collected for the *Mishkan*. On the fourteenth day of Tishrei, they began to build the *Mishkan*, and on the fifteenth day, the *Ananei Hakavod* returned. The clouds that had disappeared at the time of *cheit Ha'Eigel* returned with the commencement of the building of the *Mishkan*. It is no coincidence, then, that we celebrate Succot on the fifteenth day of Tishrei, **exactly** on the date upon which the *Ananei Hakavod* returned and encircled the nation. According to the Gra, Succot was not moved from the Spring to the Fall, it is at the particular time that the

"Succot" (*Ananei Hakavod*) reappeared in the desert! After all, we hold like Rabbi Eliezer (succah 11b) that the *succah* is meant to remind us of those special clouds of glory. (See also – Bach O.C. 625).

The Meshekh Hokhmah then adds a fascinating suggestion. Perhaps the *yom tov* of Succot didn't even exist prior to *cheit Ha'Eigel*. There **was** a *chag ha'asif*, but there may not have been a *mitzvah* of *succah*, and that is why the Torah only refers to the time as *chag ha'asif*, when referencing the *chag* prior to *cheit Ha'Eigel*.

When we sit in our *Succot*, we should contemplate not only the *Succot* in which we temporarily dwelled during our journey in the desert, but recognize that our *succah* symbolizes the *Ananei Hakavod* that reappeared, which should remind us of Hashem's continued *hashgacha* over all aspects of our lives.

# Lessons from the Esrog



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

**T**o commemorate the miraculous exodus, when G-d ensconced us in booths of protection as we sojourned in the desert, we dwell in the Succah for seven days, we take the *arbah minim* each day of the festival, and we rejoice before Hashem. Each of these *mitzvos* represent different aspects of the *chag* and our service of G-d.

In regard to the *arbah minim* – the four species of Succos – the *esrog*, *lulav*, *hadassim* and *aravos* – the Torah classifies the *esrog* as אֶרֶב עֵץ הַדָּר, the fruit of a tree of splendor. Interestingly, there is another time in the Torah a *mitzvah* is classified as *hiddur*. In Parshas Kedoshim, the *pasuk* commands us: *You shall rise before an aged person and you shall glorify the elderly, and you shall fear your G-d. I am Hashem* (Vayikra 19:32).

Whenever a word in the Torah is used in different contexts, the usage of the same word can always be connected to teach us a lesson. The following story of Rav Aryeh Levin *zt'l* teaches us the importance of *hiddur mitzvah* and the respect we must show to our fellow Jews.

A number of days before *chag ha'Succos*, R' Aryeh Levin entered the Rubinstein *seforim* store in Meah Shearim, which also sold the *arbah minim* before Succos. Turning to the man behind the counter, he asked, "Did you pick out an *esrog* for me, like I requested?" Nodding, Mr. Rubinstein took a wrapped *esrog* box out from under the counter and handed it to R' Aryeh Levin.

R' Aryeh thanked the proprietor, paid for the *esrog*, turned and hastily left the store. A young *bachur*, who happened to be in the store at the same time, watched

this entire exchange with great interest. As soon as R' Aryeh left the store, the young man ran after the rabbi and called out, "Rav Levin, I have a question!" With a degree of *chutzpah*, the young man asked the Torah scholar, "About the *esrog* the rav bought, doesn't the rav want to at least look at the *esrog* before purchasing it? At least to see if it's *mehudar!*"

Rav Levin looked at the young man with glowing eyes. "This is indeed a good question," he said after a moment. "But I have an even better answer. You see, twice in the Torah, the word '*hadar*' is used in regard to *mitzvos*. Once regarding the *mitzvah* of the *esrog* taken on Succos: *And you shall take for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the tree of splendor*, and a second time with regard to the *mitzvah* of honoring the elderly: *You shall rise before an aged person and honor the presence of an elder.*" Rav Levin continued, "Now, some people are only careful when it comes to the *hadar* of their *esrog*: checking, searching and examining to make sure their *esrog* is the finest in the land. This is indeed an important and admirable *mitzvah*, one that is relevant at this time of year."

Rav Levin smiled as he delivered the lesson, and message, to the young man. "I, on the other hand, try to be careful with the other *mitzvah* of *hiddur* as well, the one dealing with the honor of an elderly person. As a result, since I am now on my way to an old-age home to visit a man who has no visitors and no one to talk to, I placed more emphasis on the *hadar* of this person, than the *hadar* of the fruit!" (Torah Tavlin, Israel Bookshop, R' Dovid Hoffman, p.477).

The *mitzvah* of the *arbah minim* and the *hiddur* of the *esrog* teaches us about the

importance of *mitzvos bein adam la'Makom* – the *mitzvos* we do "between us and G-d." But there is another category of *mitzvos* that we must make sure is *mehudar* – glorified, beautiful and full of splendor – as well, and that is the category of *mitzvos bein adam la'chaveiro* – "between man and his fellow."

On multiple occasions, I have heard Rabbi Shay Schachter relay in *shiurim* the following about his father, HaRav Herschel Schachter, *shlita*: When the Rosh Yeshiva would go to purchase his *arbah minim*, the boys selling the sets would always want to show the Rosh Yeshiva the most expensive sets. Rav Schachter would insist he did not need the most expensive *esrog* and *lulav* set, and a more basic, absolutely *kosher*, *arbah minim* set would be fine. After purchasing his *arbah minim*, Rav Schachter would go home, take out his checkbook, and write a check for *tzedaka* for the difference between the more expensive set the boys wanted to sell him and the one he purchased at a lower cost.

The *Beis haLevi*, Rav Yoshe Ber ha'Levi Soloveitchik of Brisk *zt'l zy'a*, said, "While performing the *mitzvah* of giving charity, the poor person should be treated with at least the same respect and dignity that we give to our *esrog* on Succos." (Great Jewish Wisdom, Artscroll, R' Moshe Bamberger, p.154-155)

In this way, the *mitzvah* of *hiddur* is applied both to the fruit of the tree of splendor, and our concern, love and care for our fellow man.



# The Double Musaf on Succot



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

In Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar chps. 28–29) we find a complete list of all the korbanot **musaf** which we offered in addition to the daily **tamid** offering in the Bet Ha'Mikdash.

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

On each of the Tishrei holidays (except **Succot**), i.e. Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret, we offer an identical **korban musaf** – 1 “par,” 1 “ayil,” and 7 “kevasim.”

On each of the “shalosh regalim” (except **Succot**), i.e., Chag ha'Matzot and Shavuot, we offer an identical **korban musaf** – 2 “parim,” 1 “ayil,” and 7 “kevasim.”

The **musaf** of Succot is quite different, each day the amount of “parim” changes (from 13 down to 7), and each day we offer 2 “aylim” and 14 “kevasim”! [See Bamidbar 29:12–34].

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

However, the extra “ayil” and “kevasim” also require explanation.

Note, that they are **double** the number that are offered on all of the other holidays. In other words, instead of 1 “ayil,” we bring 2 “aylim;” instead of 7 “kevasim,” we bring 14 “kevasim.” This indicates that there must be something ‘double’ about Succot.

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

3 “parim” [2+1];

2 “aylim” [1+1];

14 “kevasim” [7+7].

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

This may reflect the double nature of **Succot**. On the one hand it is one of the “shalosh regalim” in which we thank **Hashem** for our harvest of the agricultural year **which has just finished**. At the same time, we stand in anticipation

of the agricultural year **which is about to begin**, awaiting its important rainy season, just as we do on all of the other Tishrei holidays.

This ‘double nature’ is reflected by the two times in daily davening on **Succot** when we hold the lulav and etrog, during:

1) **Hallel** – to **thank** G-d for the harvest of the past year;

2) **Hoshanot** – to **pray** to G-d in anticipation of the **new** year.

Similarly, this ‘double nature’ may also reflect the **two** reasons that Chazal [see Succah 11b] give us for sitting in the **succah**.

1) **Succot mamash** – real booths, to protect us from the sun.

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

2) **Succot k'neged ananei ha'kavod** – representing G-d's **shchina** which protected Bnei Yisrael in the desert.

This may reflect a more spiritual aspect of the holiday, as we attempt to re-live an intimate relationship with Hashem.



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# Celebrating Hashem's Love



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

The Talmud in Masechet Sukka describes the special celebration that was held each night of Sukkot in the *Bet Ha'mikdash*, which was called the *Simhat Bet Ha'sho'eba*. This celebration featured euphoric singing and dancing, and even juggling. The greatest sages would dance with unmatched fervor and intensity. We commemorate this event by conducting our own *Simhat Bet Ha'sho'eba* celebrations during Sukkot, singing and dancing with immense joy and festivity.

What is the reason behind this practice? Why do we hold such an event specifically on Sukkot, and not on the other holidays?

The answer is found in the famous comments of Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797) to explain the meaning of the holiday of Sukkot.

The Torah (Vayikra 23:23:43) tells us that we reside in Sukkot during this holiday to commemorate the "Sukkot" in which our ancestors resided during their sojourn in the desert. According to one view in the Gemara, which is accepted in the *Shulhan Aruch* (Orah Haim 625), this refers to the *Ananeh Ha'kabod*, the miraculous "clouds of glory" that encircled our ancestors as they traveled. The Vilna Gaon explained that after *Beneh Yisrael* worshipped the golden calf, G-d removed these special clouds. Although He continued sustaining them by providing the heavenly manna and the miraculous well of water, He denied them the benefits of the *Ananeh Ha'kabod*, which made the conditions especially comfortable and even cleaned *Beneh*

*Yisrael's* clothing. These clouds, which were more of a luxury than a necessity, expressed G-d's special love for His people, like an expensive piece of jewelry that a husband buys for his wife. Once *Beneh Yisrael* betrayed Hashem by worshipping the golden calf, these clouds were taken away. On Yom Kippur, Hashem announced that He forgave *Beneh Yisrael*, and would not destroy them, but the *Ananeh Ha'kabod* returned only several days later – once they began building the Mishkan. After having given gold for fashioning an idol, they now generously gave their gold and other precious possessions toward the construction of a Sanctuary for G-d. Having shown their unbridled devotion to G-d, the *Ananeh Ha'kabod* returned, signifying the full restoration of *Beneh Yisrael's* prior relationship with G-d, to the point where His love was now expressed just as it had been before the sin of the golden calf.

The Vilna Gaon explained that this is what we celebrate on Sukkot – the return of the *Ananeh Ha'kabod*, which signified the full restoration of our special relationship with Hashem.

If, indeed, Sukkot marks the rectification of the sin of the golden calf, then we can perhaps gain insight into the meaning behind the *Simhat Bet Ha'sho'eba* celebration.

The Torah says (Shemot 32:19) that when Moshe returned from the top of Mount Sinai, and he saw the people dancing around the golden calf, he was incensed, and he threw the stone tablets down

to the ground, shattering them. The commentaries note that what angered Moshe was not the sin per se, but rather the joy and festivity surrounding the sin. As human beings, we are going to make mistakes and act wrongly on occasion. But what makes our misdeeds especially grievous is when we commit them happily, with enthusiasm and excitement. As part of the *Tikkun* (rectification) of the sin of the golden calf, we must reverse our ancestors' fervent celebration of the golden calf by showing joy and enthusiasm for the service of Hashem.

This is what the joy of Sukkot is all about. Immediately after Yom Kippur, during the days when our ancestors generously donated materials for the *Mishkan*, we spend money for the *Misvot* of *Arba Minim* and *Sukka*, and we are busy and excited preparing for the Yom Tob. And then, during Sukkot, we excitedly sing and dance to celebrate our special relationship with Hashem.

Over the course of the year, we have at times failed to show proper enthusiasm for the service of Hashem. We occasionally displayed greater excitement for things such as money, entertainment, lavish vacations and material possessions, than for our relationship with our Creator. On Sukkot, we correct this mistake by celebrating with Hashem, and by experiencing and showing sincere, genuine joy over our status as Hashem's children, which is truly the greatest source of joy and excitement possible.

# Shabbos and Sukkah – Our Mobile Home



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

**W**hen we read Shlomo Hamelech's words (Koheles 2:10), "this is my portion from all of my toil," we remember Rashi quotes the dispute between Rav and Shmuel regarding what "this" refers to. One of them explains that it was Shlomo's scepter and the other says that it refers to his cup. But according to both, Shlomo is referring to a dark period of his kingship when he was replaced by an imposter. According to the Midrash, Shlomo used to go door-to-door and he would say, "I am Shlomo Hamelech!" But no one believed him. It was a very difficult time. But in this pasuk, Shlomo says that while he may have lost the kingship over the nation, but that he was still king of his staff, his scepter. But what does that mean? How was ruling over a single piece of wood he carried with him any kind of kingship?

The Sfias Emes and Reb Tzadok explain the true nature of a Jew's place in this world. When a Jew connects to the place of the holiness of Shabbos and enters Hashem's embrace within the *sukkah*, he realizes that wherever he goes, he is in Hashem's place. Wherever he goes, he hears Hashem whispering to him "The place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Shmos 3:5). When we merit recognizing Hashem's love for us wherever we go, we acquire a place for ourselves wherever we are. We thus fulfill "a man may not leave his place on the seventh day" in every place and every time.

A Jew is not limited to living a sanctified life in his *shul*, *yeshiva*, *beis medrash*, or *mikva*, nor is he limited to recognizing holiness only in places like the *Yerushalayim* or the *Beis Hamikdash*. He can connect to his

inner point, to the G-dliness within himself and which embraces him wherever he goes. That is his "inheritance without borders." When the Torah says, "and they will break out to the West, East, North, and South," it means that a Jew has the power to enter the boundaries of Shabbos and take shelter in the shade of Hashem's *sukkah*, wherever he is. A person can take up residence in Hashem's treasure house at any time and in any place.

The *pasuk* says regarding *sukkah*, "In order that your generations [דרתיכם] should know..." (Vayikra 23:43). This implies that the *Sukkah*, like *Shabbos*, is one's portable home (דרתיכם/דירותכם). This reality demonstrates that Hashem's shelter is with us wherever we are.

Especially in the modern world, many people have large homes. They may own apartment buildings with thousands of units, but they flit around from place to place, from idea to idea, and from one diversion to another. But they have no place where they truly belong. That is so often the case in the upside-down world of confusion in which we live. The *sukkah* and *Shabbos* center us, just as they did for Yaakov Avinu when he camped outside of one of the most dangerous cities in his time and in ours, the city of Shchem. By keeping *Shabbos* and dwelling in the *sukkah*, we recognize that Hashem is the "Place" within which we exist in the world. And that is something that goes with us wherever we are.

Dovid Hamelech calls out to us, in the chapter of Tehillim we read from the beginning of Elul through Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah (27:5), "When he hides me in a *sukkah* on a day of evil, He covers

me in the shelter of His tent." After Yom Kippur, when we feel the relief of our reconnection to Hashem after feeling so distant, the *sukkah* beckons us to find relief in its walls, in the shade of the Divine Presence, as the *Navi* (Yeshayahu 26:20) so aptly describes, "Go, my nation, come into your chambers and close the doors behind you, hide for a moment until the wrath passes," which the Sfias Emes explains, refers to the shelter we find in the *Sukkah* after Yom Kippur.

That is why Shlomo Hamelech comforted himself by reminding himself that he was still king over his staff, the thing that supported him wherever he went. He remembered that even if he was no longer ruler of a nation, he still had the support of Hashem wherever he went. Hashem still knew who he was so he was not alone. Even walking along the road in the rain, he felt that he was still in Hashem's home, under G-d's protection.

May Hashem cause us to bring the blessings of this Yom Tov and this *Shabbos* with us into our daily lives in this world of confusion. May we always merit to take shelter under the *sukkah* of Hashem's Presence wherever we are. And may He send the descendant of Shlomo Hamelech to rebuild the fallen *sukkah* of Dovid Hamelech very soon in our days.

# Shake ‘Em Up



Rabbi YY Jacobson  
TheYeshiva.net

“You shall take for yourselves on the first day [of the festival],” instructs the Torah, “the fruit of the splendid citron tree, the frond of a date palm, the thickly leafed sprig of the myrtle, and willows that grow at a brook.”

What is the significance of this *mitzvah*? Why do we take these four species, and why do we need to shake them?

The Midrash observes that these four kinds possess distinct characteristics. The citron has both a delicious taste and a delightful fragrance. The palm branch generates taste (dates) but no smell. The myrtle branch professes a delightful aroma but lacks any taste, while the willow is both scentless and tasteless.

On a symbolic level, we might suggest that these four species represent four general personality types. There are human beings who exude a beautiful aroma, who know how to give off positive energy and express themselves eloquently, but once you “taste” them or get to know them on the inside, you may be disappointed. They are good for the show biz, not for authentic relationships.

Others may lack an “aroma.” They have no skill for schmoozing up a crowd or bringing life to a party, but once you get to know them on the inside, you marvel at their delicious taste and flavor.

Others are blessed with both an outer aura and an inner depth, while others lack both fragrance and taste.

On a deeper level, the Midrash suggests, that the citron represents the individual who is both knowledgeable in Torah and spiritual wisdom (taste) and replete with good and noble deeds (aroma). The date palm personifies the learned but deed-deficient individual – the scholar who

devotes his life to the pursuit of wisdom (taste) but shuns the active sphere (aroma). The myrtle embodies the active but unlearned Jew. Finally, the willow represents the Jew who lacks all outward expression of his or her Jewishness.

When you look into your own spiritual mirror, you can identify whether you are a citron, a palm branch, a myrtle or a willow.

Ordinarily, these four categories remain distinct, each to their own. How can the “citron” Jew connect with the “willow” Jew? How can the myrtle tolerate the palm? Under usual circumstances, each of us remains fixed in our own comfort zones, spending time with people who think like we do, and live like we do. Why shake the boat and create inconvenience?

Yet on Sukkot, the Torah instructs us to bind the palm frond, myrtle, willow and citron and join them together to perform a single *mitzvah*. The four distinct and even contradicting categories of people must unite. But how? How can you take four opposite Jews and bring them together?

The Torah, aware of this challenge – perhaps the greatest one in Jewish life today – tells us that part of the *mitzvah* is to give the four species a nice big shake. To unite the four categories, the Torah is telling us, you need to “shake” them up!

The dramatic distinctions between all of the categories of Jews are significant as long as each feels complacent in his or her own existence. The moment we are shaken up, however, the layers of self-perception are peeled away and our authentic inner core comes to the fore. Then all categories of Jews discover who they really are and what they truly stand for. And it is then that we realize that we are truly ONE.

You can’t plan for such a moment, but when it comes, nothing is more powerful than it, as it affects our deepest core.

One such moment famously occurred in Jewish life during the 1967 Six-Day War. The moment Jews perceived the danger of six powerful Arab countries pledging to annihilate Israel, all Jews – even the most universally-minded Jews usually shunning any form of particularism – experienced an atomic surge of Jewish consciousness, ready to put their lives on the line to protect our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Even a Jew who a day earlier doubted if G-d was a reality, if Torah was true, and if we had a moral right to live in a land, which, according to Arabs had been stolen, that Jew suddenly knew in the deepest recesses of his heart that this was and is the Jewish homeland, eternally.

And then, in six days, came victory and an unprecedented Jewish awakening in Israel and around the world. Totally unexpected, the miraculous victory of the Six-Day War evoked an extraordinary spiritual awakening amongst people of all backgrounds. Religious and secular alike, believers and cynics, could not contain their tears when touching the stones of the newly reclaimed Western Wall. Regardless of their previous life choices, regardless of education or lack of education, people from all over the world suddenly felt a surge of connection, and were drawn to travel from the world over to touch the stones remaining from the ancient Holy Temple.

Those experiences contributed to the renaissance of Jewish life and awareness around the world, which began then and continues until today. Youngsters who till that time felt completely alienated and apathetic to their heritage, suddenly

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# Sheltering Together In Divine Presence



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

As the Baal Shem Tov haKadosh sat in his *sukkah*, a great tumult raged outside. In the early days of the Chasidic movement, some of its revolutionary practices, as well as the spiritual awakening of the followers of the Baal Shem Tov, drew prejudice, strife and legal controversy. While detractors and opponents were always on the lookout for an opportunity to attack the *tzadik* and undermine the fledgling movement, this time it seemed there was good reason to make their claims.

The Ba'al Shem Tov had constructed what looked to be a highly questionable *sukkah*, stitching together a patchwork of materials that seemed to barely pass even the minimal halachic requirements. The rickety looking hut relied on so many *kulahs* in Jewish Law and all the loopholes detailed in *masechet Sukkah*, it was barely recognizable to the rabbis who were now gathering at the Sukkah, ready for a confrontation, and to accuse him of blatant laxity in halacha.

A debate ensued between the scandalized scholars and the *tzaddik*. They summoned a variety of sources and opinions denouncing the *sukkah*, while the Baal Shem Tov calmly defended it on each count. Finally, the rabbonim of Brodt bluntly declared it to be *pasul* and a spiritual danger to the community.

Seeing that his explanations had fallen on deaf ears, the Ba'al Shem Tov closed his eyes, entered a meditative state and began to pray. The *rabbonim* were unsure how to react. At that moment, a piece of paper fell from the *s'chach*, a note signed by no less than an angel from heaven, *Matat Sar haPanim*, attesting to the valid-

ity of the *sukkah*: “The *sukkah* of the Baal Shem Tov is kosher!”

Opening his eyes, the Baal Shem Tov then began a instructional shiur, explaining the intricate laws of constructing a *sukkah*, listing the various ‘leniencies’ that he had relied on, such as *dofen akumah*, *gud achis mechitzah*, *gud asik*, *lavud*, *avir*, and others. He also detailed how each particular *halacha* and its structural application related to a different spiritual state and level of observance.

“There are many different types of Jews in Klal Yisrael of varying levels of education, knowledge and observance. The *sukkah* is kosher,” concluded the Baal Shem Tov, “and so are the *Yidden*.”



“For seven days... all who belong to the people of Israel will live in *sukkos*”

(Vayikra, 23:42)

...This teaches that it is fitting for all of Israel to sit in one *sukkah*.

(Sukkah, 27b)

“One ought to bind themselves and be focused on being part of the entire *klal*... and strive to fill their home with great love and *shalom*, so that their love shines outward and spread forth; In that way, it will be considered as if all of Israel dwells together in one *sukkah*.” (Reb Nosson of Breslov, zy’a)



*Zeman simchaseinu*, the simcha of the Festival of Sukkos, flows forth from the *Yamim Noraim*. Our exuberant joy is framed by the gravity and achrayus of our committed relationship with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. The celebration of Sukkos is an in-

itation for us to actualize our declarations and intent. It is a call to Divine intimacy, welcoming us into the ineffable embrace and union between *Am Yisrael* and *Hashem Yisborach*.

*Knesses Yisrael*, Hashem’s beloved *Kallah*, is summoned to enter:

“The King has brought me into His chambers, we will be joyful and happy together.” (Shir haShirim, 1:4)

Beneath the stars and sky, under a canopy held up by poles and prayers, and the “*chuppah*” of *s'chach* hovering over us, we are a royal bride and Groom entering into a covenant of *Kidushin*, sanctity and exclusive commitment. As a bride and groom fast in preparation for their new beginning, we fast on Yom Kippur. Just as they celebrate a week of “*sheva brachos*”, we celebrate seven days in the *sukkah*, rejoicing in our new state of union. At each of the seven festive meals we welcome *panim chadashos*, “new faces”: the *Ushpizin Kadishin*, different holy guests each night, who join us in celebrating our wedding.

The Navi describes the *ananei ha-kavod* as a *chuppah* that covers us from above and envelopes us in Divine love:

“Hashem will create a cloud by day and smoke with a glow of flaming fire by night hovering over the shrine and meeting place of Har Zion; Indeed, over all the glory shall hang a canopy, and it shall serve as a *sukkah* for shade from heat by day and as a shelter for protection against drenching rain.” (*Yeshayah*, 4:5)

The Baal haTurim (*Vayikra*, 23:42) invokes the specific term *chuppah*, and suggests an additional aspect to the *ananei haKavod*. They imply intimacy and loving con-

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# What is the Special Joy on Sukkot?

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

International lecturer and curriculum developer

**A** key to understanding the core elements of a Yom Tov is to see how Chazal describe the chag in our *tefillah*. Pesach is referred to as *Zeman Cheruteinu* (the time of our freedom), Shavuot as *Zeman Matan Torateinu* (the time of the giving of our Torah). Both of these appellations refer to a historical reality reflecting that time. However, Sukkot seems to be the exception; it is referred to as *Zeman Simchateinu* (the time of our joy). In what way does this designation relate specifically to Sukkot if all holidays have a requirement to be in a state of *simcha* (happiness)?

The Vilna Gaon, in his commentary on *Shir HaShirim*, remarks that as a consequence of the Sin of the Golden Calf, *Klal Yisrael* lost the Clouds of Glory that they received upon their exodus from Egypt. The period between the 17th of Tammuz and Yom Kippur was an intense time of *teshuva* (repentance) and desire for reconciliation between the Jewish people and G-d. On the day after Yom Kippur they were commanded to build the *Mishkan*. Between the 12th and 14th of Tishrei, people came in droves to donate materials to build the *Mishkan*. On the 15th of Tishrei, construction began of this special edifice that consecrated the deep relationship between G-d and His people. The Vilna Gaon notes that when *Am Yisrael* began to build the *Mishkan*, the Clouds of Glory returned. Indeed it is a time recalling a special historical reality; a time of intense joy, when *Am Yisrael* felt they were

finally forgiven for the Sin of the Golden Calf, and their special relationship with G-d was restored.

Every year, as we sit in the *sukkah*, we are reminded of the gift of the Clouds of Glory and feel the special love renewed at this time. With this we can appreciate Chazal's statement: if it rains on the first night of Sukkot (in Israel), it is a bad omen. The Talmud likens this to a servant who pours a cup of wine for his master, and the master spills it out. Although there are many times we may be prevented from doing *mitzvot* – and for that, we are not held responsible – when it rains, and we cannot sit in the *sukkah*, it is an unfortunate sign that G-d does not desire our *mitzvot* and closeness.

The joy of Sukkot is the joy of *mitzvot*, the joy of connection. We do more *mitzvot* on Sukkot than on any other *chag*. Indeed, the Rambam maintains that the obligation to be joyful in doing *mitzvot* is inferred from the laws of Sukkot. Although *kavanah* (intention) is imperative throughout the year, it is specifically on Sukkot that we need to embrace both the joy of the *mitzvah* with the service of the One commanding us as well.

There is an additional dimension to *Zeman Simchateinu*. When sitting in the *sukkah*, we should not only be thinking of the Clouds of Glory. We should also be thinking about the physical huts that we lived in during our sojourn in the desert. The word "*sukkah*" is derived from "*sechach*," the

feeble covering of the *sukkah*. The *sechach* can't be connected to anything that grows from the ground, nor can it be positioned under anything else. These *halachot* bring to mind our total dependence on G-d. The Sefat Emet teaches that when a person completely relies on G-d, he can then enter into a state of pure *simcha*. He even likens the *sukkah* to the Garden of Eden, about which we say in the *Sheva Brachot*, כשמחר, כשחחר, כשחחר, כשחחר – "As You gladdened Your creation in the Garden of Eden of old."

Rabbi Reiss, in *Pa'amei Moed*, encourages us to focus on the imagery of a baby who feels utterly secure in the knowledge that he is being cared for and has no worries in the world. Sitting in the *sukkah*, we are sitting in the *צילתא דמהימנותא*, that exceptional shade of *emunah*.

The Ari HaKadosh notes that the minimum requirement for a *sukkah* is two walls and a bit of a third one. Rav Pincus takes this idea and tells us to visualize the *sukkah* as a big hug from G-d! Is there any greater joy than feeling we are in the presence of G-d, knowing that He loves us and is here to take care of us, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?

Seven days of joy. Seven days of connection. Seven days to strengthen our relationship with G-d and revel in His presence. Seven days akin to *Sheva Brachot*, renewing our union with G-d. What a meaningful expression of *Zeman Simchateinu*!

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experienced a yearning to reconnect with their roots, to discover ideals, values, and dreams that their people carried with them from Sinai to the 20th century.

Whence such a transformation? We can understand an arousal in the hearts of Jews who believed in the sanctity of the

Western Wall. But how can we justify the warm tears streaming down the face of a secular Jewish atheist upon touching the stones of an ancient wall?

The answer is that our cynicism, agnosticism, apathy, and loyalty to modernity and all of its trends may run deep in our

intellect, but it is not the essence of who we are. When the Jew is shaken to his or her very core, what emerges is a pure, undiluted, and absolute devotion to the Jewish people and to its G-d.

# Know How to Travel to Sukkot



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrahi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

**T**his is the time to travel slowly. “While I travel slowly,” Yaakov said to Esav after the last confrontation with his brother, a confrontation that ended in an embrace.

We would have expected a complete union between the brothers to sit in a joint *sukkah*. Still, Yaakov understood that sometimes an encounter can be explosive and walking together is wonderful, but for that, you have to create longing. He goes to Sukkot and promises his brother that they will meet again “until I come to my lord in Seir.” Yaakov cares for the tender children, his flock of orphans, he has done all he can to be reconciled and understands that he is now going to the *sukkah* with his family.

We all want reconciliation, there is almost no place I have not put my feet when I was just asked to be a friend. I firmly believe in the offering that is sent from brother to brother, I firmly believe in my brothers and sisters who are far from being Esav,

G-d forbid, and I understand that things are moving slowly now.

The *sukkah* is the only place in public space where we are not guests who need someone to welcome us. We are simply hosts. Our door is open and those who wish to come and sit in the shade of faith are blessed by us with unending blessings. But on this holiday, we do not ask to be naturalized in anyone’s heart. “All citizens of Israel will sit in *sukkot*.” We are citizens of our family and our community, we have a place in the world and the public sphere.

This is also called *Sukkat Shalom*.

The Mishnah describes a man who comes with his offering in hand and experiences rejection: “It happened to a servant who was pouring a cup for his master, and he spilled a kiton on his face and said to him, ‘It is impossible to use it.’” This is how the Sages describe the rain that falls on Sukkot. And why? After all, the holiday talks about water and rain – that’s exactly

it! But the rain that falls even before the rain prayer on Shemini Atzeret is like one person saying to another: take everything as long as you do not come into contact with me. We want to give after a relationship is established to stimulate it. Any other giving is dishonor poured out before us. Now we are waiting for a prayer that will connect us all, a prayer that will lead to a miraculous connection.

I told my children, who were so sad at the end of Yom Kippur, “And now do not be sad. You have seen the tremendous effort to connect brothers and sisters who were so happy to meet and hear and respect each other despite differences of opinion. Come and let us go home now, children. Without isolating ourselves from what is happening around us, without closing ourselves in our normal homes. We are here, in the public space, opening a door, but also building walls to resist an evil spirit. Until our brothers come and sit by our side. Come Ushpizin, come.”

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nectivity, the manifestation of a marital bond in which two individuals become one. Sheltering together in Hashem’s Presence, we are bonded together, and become one in the *sukkah*.



There is much we can learn from the Ba’al Shem Tov’s *sukkah*. In cultivating and creating *yichud*, in building a shared dwelling place together, we are called to focus on the *tov*, the good that is there,

not what is lacking. Yiddishkeit provides the tools to construct a life of holiness and joy and a home that is suffused with love, firm on the foundations of *ayin tovah*, inclusivity and *Ahavas Yisrael*. Such a home is surrounded by *ananei haKavod* all year ‘round, and filled with mutual respect and peace.

It is indeed “fitting for all of Israel to sit in one *sukkah*”; there is nothing more beautiful — and precious to Hashem — than

individuals uniting, coming together in love and friendship. May we all merit to celebrate together during these auspicious days, to give ourselves over to the purity of Yom Kippur and the intimacy of the *sukkah*. May all be blessed to build homes filled with שלום ורעות, אהבה ואחווה.

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



**David Curwin**

balashon.com

Author of the book *Kohelet: A Map to Eden* (Maggid)

**M**egilat Kohelet, read on Sukkot, contains numerous Hebrew words and roots that do not occur anywhere else in the Tanakh. Many of those are found frequently in Aramaic, and since Aramaic had significant influence on the development of Hebrew, those Kohelet words become common in Rabbinic Hebrew.

One of those roots is תקן. In the Hebrew portions of the Tanakh, it only appears in Kohelet (1:15, 7:13, 12:9). It means “to be or become straight”, as in its first appearance in Kohelet:

מַעֲוֹת לֹא יִיכַל לְתַקֵּן וְחֻסְרוֹן לֹא יִיכַל לְהַמְנוֹת:  
“That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.” (Kohelet 1:15)

It also appears once in the Aramaic section of Daniel, with the meaning “to establish”:

... וְעַל-מַלְכוּתִי הִתְקַנַּת ...  
“And I was [re]established over my kingdom.” (Daniel 4:33)

It then entered Rabbinic Hebrew where it took on a number of related meanings:

- to repair
- to prepare

- to arrange
- to establish
- to amend

Some linguists connect the תקן with the similar root תכן. This latter root is said to derive from the root כון, which also can mean “to set up, establish” (as in הַכְנָה – “preparation”) and “to straighten” (as in כְּנָה – “direction, intention.”) So a common origin, perhaps from Akkadian, is possible.

The root תקן has many applications today. In addition to the ones mentioned above, we have the verb הִתְקִין – “to install” (as in software) and the adjective תְּקִין – “intact, in order, proper.”

There are also several nouns. Two of the most common are תְּקִינָה and תְּקִינָה.

The word תְּקִינָה originally meant “arrangement, ordinance, ruling,” and today means “rule,” usually as set by a legislative or executive body. It is the source of the related תְּקִינָה – “set of rules, bylaws.”

Many more meanings are associated with the word תְּקִינָה. In general, it means “correction, fixing, improvement, emendation, regulation.” But it has taken on many more specific meanings over time,

such as:

- תְּקִינָה סוּפְרִים – It can refer to both the book scribes would use to prepare when writing a Torah scroll (from this we get the תְּקִינָה קוּרְאִים used to prepare the reading of the Torah) and to corrections or emendations to a text that the scribes themselves made.

- A תְּקִינָה can also refer to a set of readings proscribed by kabbalistic practice to be recited at certain special times. This name came from the belief in their ability to enact repairs in the “Higher Worlds.”

- תְּקִינָה עוֹלָם – Literally meaning “repairing”, “improving” or “establishing” the world, it has been adopted for different purposes over the centuries. Those include legal enactments intended to preserve the social order, the eradication of idolatry, to return the sparks of Divine light to their source, and the pursuit of social justice.

So despite Kohelet’s claim that “that which is crooked cannot be made straight,” it seems we have never stopped trying.

## Parsha Riddle



**Reb Leor Broh**

Mizrachi Melbourne

According to the Gemara, what is considered a “light Mitzvah” (מצוה קלה)?

Answer to the Parsha Riddle

The Mitzvah of Sukkah (Avodah Zarah 3a)





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