TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry







סוכות - הושענא רבה

שמיני עצרת - שמחת תורה

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

ואשתו מרת חנה ב"ר דוד ע"ה

ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

ר'יעקב ב"ר שלום הלוי פרידמאן ע"ה

ר'חיים דוד ב"ר אלכסנדר הכהן ריטשמאן ע"ה

ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

סוכות

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

Rabbosai – We are all gathered here together, a few days after Yom Kippur just before Succos.


שירת משה

מאת הגאון הגדול מרנא ורבנא רבינו משה סופר
בעל החתם סופר זצ"ל.

האבד"ק דרעזניץ, מאטערסדארף, וס"עסבורג יע"א.

ובסוף הספר נמ ציווי האחרון שלו:

עם

שיר חדש

מאת בנו הגאון מאור הגולה רבינו שמעון סופר זצ"ל.

האבד"ק מאטערסדארף, וקראקא יע"א.

ונבחר ועדה המחוקקים במלכת אוסטריא.

Famously, the **Heleige Chasam Sofer** composed various poems of 'deveikus' and songs expressing love to The Riboino Shel Olam. It is said that these were composed during this auspicious time that combines Yom Kippur to Succos.

There has been a cleansing and forgiveness. We are different now from the way we were before Yom Kippur. And we must believe it. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger** famously explains the pasuk that we say on Succos (Koheles 9:8) - **בְּכָל־עֵ֥ת יִהְי֖וּ בְגָדֶ֣יךָ לְבָנִ֑ים** – *'At all times, let your garments be white and clean.'* – To mean that (Motzei Yom Kippur) 'we are pure people wearing pure clothes.' – When a person gets a new suit or hat, he is particularly careful not to get it soiled or dirty. So too, coming from Yom Kippur, we have been gifted a new pristine neshomo, and we must be very careful not to soil it. We must remain pure and maintain it going forward.

The Vilna Gaon taught that the practice of not reciting *Tachanun* between Yom Kippur and Sukkos is based on the idea that this period is a continuation of the atonement of Yom Kippur, leading directly into the joy of Sukkos. Therefore, it is a time of intense joy, which is incompatible with the sombre and

supplicatory nature of *Tachanun*. Not only that, but we can still ask people for mechillah during this time!

Where are the kabolos that you made? Now is the time to practise what we preached regarding our committments on Yom Kippur.

We are a Manchester kehilla, based in Ohel Torah, which is very close to the tragic and murderous incident that happened on Yom Kippur to Yidden on the way to shul and in shul.

Rabboisai, we are not a political movement, but our response must be that we must think about everybody else, in heart and in mind. If there's one small thing that we can do - I suggest – Every time we finish Shemonei Esrai, we should put extra emphasis on the words that we finish with … **הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁלוֹם** -That Hashem should bentch every Yid whoever and whatever he is – with Shalom.

Our tefillos are very meaningful, and in this way, we can empathize with others who have suffered in such a difficult manner. We must care and have compassion for each other. And Im Yirtze Hashem we will be mekable the YomTov as a z'man Simchaseinu with all Yidden together with rachamim for **אַחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל**.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

Rabbosai – There is only a short time left to the great YomTov of Succos, a z'man Simchaseinu. The Rishonim discuss that when we go into the succah, we must remind ourselves that the main pshat in the words of the Chazal - **כי מצות הסוכה היא זכר לענני הכבוד** – The heavenly protection that The Ribboino Shel Olam gave Klal Yisrael in the midbar.

The question that the Rishonim ask is – 'The YomTov of Succos should take place in Nissan, because Klal Yisrael were surrounded by the **ענני הכבוד** when they came out of Mitzrayim. Why do we celebrate Succos in Tishrei? What happened in Tishrei that suddenly gives us cause to celebrate **ענני הכבוד** now?

There are various answers by the Tur, The Gaon etc.



The month of Tishrei marks the successful journey toward atonement and renewed Divine favor. The joyous festival of Sukkos, which begins on the 15th of Tishrei, commemorates this return of Divine protection. The *sukkah*—a temporary, fragile hut—serves as a tangible reminder of the miraculous, temporary dwellings that sheltered the Yidden in the desert. The progression from the serious introspection of Yom Kippur to the celebratory joy of Sukkos symbolizes the spiritual journey of forgiveness and restored Divine closeness, which is ultimately marked by the return of the Clouds of Glory.

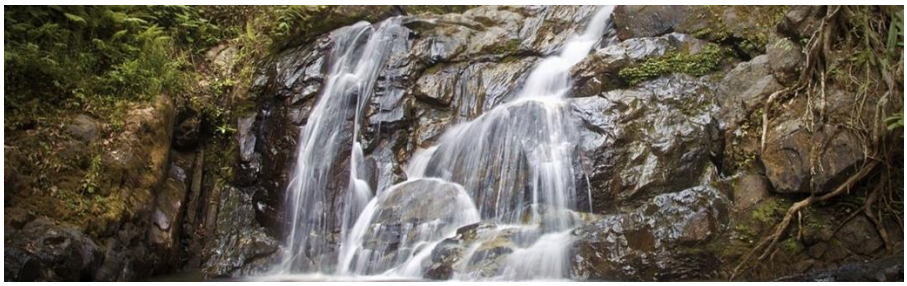
I would like to suggest that the return of the **ענני הכבוד** is not just something as a reminder of the historic commemoration of what happened in the midbar, but **הֱבִיאַנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו** - '*the king brought me to his chambers*.' (Shir Hashirim 1:4). This is a real live event that we walk into the succoh and we find ourselves protected by the **ענני הכבוד** as it was in the days of old.

Clouds always represent The Shechina. May we together with all Klal Yisrael be protected and enjoy the **זמן שמחתנו** together.

R' Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz ZT'L (She'lah HaKodesh) would say:

'One should always pepper his speech with phrases like: 'Boruch Hashem,' or 'with the help of Hashem,' or 'G-d willing,' etc. Training oneself to speak in such a manner will help a person to always maintain a sense of gratitude to the Creator for all that he has.'

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



R' Nachum Ze'ev Bornstein z"l

R' Bornstein, the author of a Talmudic commentary entitled Agudat Ezov, was born in 1821 and died in 1885. One of his sons was the Sochatchover Rebbe, R' Avraham Bornstein, known as the "Avnei Naizer," after his collection of halachic responsa. (R' Avraham's son was known as the "Shem M'Shmuel.")

It is related that for many years, the older R' Bornstein used the following method to select the etrog over which he would recite the berachah: at the end of Yom Kippur, before havdalah, he would dip his hand into a box of etrogim, take one out, and put it away until the morning of the first day of Sukkot without even looking at it. Remarkably, he always ended up with the nicest etrog in town.

A few years before his death, R' Bornstein stopped this practice and began selecting his etrog. When one of his grandchildren asked the reason for his earlier practice and the reason that he changed his custom, R' Bornstein explained:

G-d created man inherently good, and a good person is automatically drawn to that which is good. However, through his sins, man poisons himself and loses the ability to find good instinctively.

If one repents on Yom Kippur, he finds himself at the close of that day in his original perfect state. Thus, during the first moments after Yom Kippur, I was instinctively drawn to a perfect etrog.

However, now I am older and feel that my end was nearing, and I know that on whichever Yom Kippur turns out to be my last, I will necessarily not be forgiven for all my sins, for if I am, I will be unable to die that year. Therefore, I can no longer risk choosing an etrog in my usual manner. Also, if I continue to choose an etrog in this way and I end up with an etrog of poor quality, I will know that

my last year has come and I will not be able to serve Hashem with a clear mind any longer.

R' Bornstein was a chassid of **R' Mendel of Kotzk**, and the two later became in-laws. R' Mendel said that the reason the elder R' Bornstein merited to have a son who enlightened the world (i.e., R' Avraham) was that on one Purim night, R' Bornstein was the only person in the world studying Torah at a particular moment. The Sages say that if the world were ever without at least one person studying Torah, it would cease to exist; thus, in his merit alone, the world continued to function. (Gedolei Ha'dorot p. 752)

***"True, complete, and good salvations and recoveries, in mind and body… A good, blessed year with health and blessings… May the merit of the mitzvah of the holy succah and sacred Four Species safeguard us throughout the year, to merit salvation and all types of recoveries, and to be blessed with all the blessings that each and every one of us requires…" ~* Admor of Kretchnif, Harav Dovid Moshe Rosenbaum Zt'l.**

[**The Admor Harav Dovid Moshe Rosenbaum of Kretchnif (1925-1969)** was of the leading chassidic Rebbes in Eretz Yisrael after the Holocaust. He was renowned as a tzaddik and miracle-worker. Heeding the counsel of the **Chazon Ish**, he settled in Rechovot where he founded and established Kiryat Kretchnif.]

וַאֲנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ בָּטַחְתִּי יָגֵל לִבִּי, בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ

תהלים י"ג:ו

When I fully trust that Hashem is looking after me, I can truly live with happiness. Because happiness is a direct consequence of trusting Hashem. ~ R' Ephraim Wachsman.



Rabbi Eliezer Papo - The Pele Yoetz Zt'l כא תשרי

Rabbi Eliezer Papo who was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in 1785, is considered the exemplary spokesman of the Sephardic musar tradition of the eighteenth century. He promised in his will that, "Whoever comes to my grave in purity after immersing in a mikveh, and prays with a broken heart, I guarantee him that his prayer will be accepted." As such, his kever on the banks of the Danube in Silestra, Bulgaria, is the destination of hundreds of visitors annually. His talmid muvhak was Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto.

An outstanding rabbinic scholar, he was deeply devoted to piety and spirituality and authored books of halacha, homiletics, and musar, as well as being committed to kabbalah. One of his noted works is Beit Tefillah, which is filled with many different prayers for specific situations, including one for the welfare of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Papo's Hilula occurs on the sixth day of Sukkot, and he discusses in his work Pele Yoetz the importance of Hol Ha'mo'ed. He cites the comment of Hazal that whoever disgraces the "Mo'adot" - referring to Hol Ha'mo'ed - forfeits his share in the world to come.

The Rabbi lamented that many people are unaware of the severity of certain Misvot - such as failing to celebrate Hol Ha'mo'ed - and thus unwittingly lose their share in the next world.

He urged Jews to consult a Rabbi to learn what is permissible and what is forbidden. As a result of not consulting a Rabbi, he observed, many people do not even eat, or eat very little, on Hol Ha'mo'ed, whereas Halacha requires eating and drinking more festively on Hol Ha'mo'ed than on ordinary weekdays.

The Pele Yoetz urges all people who are "concerned for their souls" to study from books or from a Rabbi the laws of Hol Ha'mo'ed, so they know which activities are forbidden, and to eat and drink more festively on Hol Ha'mo'ed, to ensure that they do not forfeit their share in the eternal life.

More generally, the Pele Yoetz adds, a G-d-fearing person will be sure to set aside regular time for Torah learning, to avoid denigrating the Torah. The Rabbi taught that he who fails to learn Torah is called "Nazuf" - rejected by the Almighty, and that this is especially important on Hol Ha'mo'ed, which is a time of judgment.

The culmination of this judgment occurs on Hoshana Rabba, the final day of Sukkot. Therefore, Rabbi Popo taught that throughout Hol Ha'mo'ed, and certainly on Hoshana Rabba, that we must perform as many Misvot as possible, especially Torah study, in our effort to secure a favorable judgment. The Pele Yoetz concludes with "This [discussion] suffices for one who has a heart."

In spite of the brevity of his life, Rabbi Papo achieved depth and breadth in his rabbinic scholarship, and left to posterity a significant literary legacy. His attitude was one of acceptance: whatever happened was for the best since it was G-d's will. Suffering and adversity were to be received with equanimity; they provided opportunities to demonstrate true faith in Hashem.

He also taught that it was wrong to be overly concerned with earning a livelihood. One has to work for a living, not relying on a miracle to sustain him and his family, but income is determined by Hashem. If He wants someone to be poor, he will be poor no matter how hard he works. And if Hashem wants him to be rich, he will be rich even if he does not work hard. - We are all obliged to devote some time to making our living but must realize that our level of success is determined by G-d.

Rabbi Papo lived and worked in Bucharest as chief rabbi, physician and philosopher. During the Russian-Turkish War in 1829 he arrived

in Selestria, Bulgaria, where he rescued the local population from a cholera epidemic, creating quarantine "belts" and infirmaries. He then served as rabbi of the community of Selestria for the rest of his life, and died there in 1826 at the age of forty-one.

He called for a life of piety and acceptance of G-d, and demanded total allegiance to rabbinic tradition. He stressed the need to live according to traditional patterns and preferred the traditionalism of Moslem lands to the modernity of Europe. His ultimate focus was not on life in this world, but on the world to come.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Beis Yisrael of Gur zy"a, once asked one of his close chasidim to buy him a kosher l'mehadrin lulav for Succos. That year, there was a shortage of lulavim, and the shaliach searched for many hours until he found the type of lulav his rebbe wanted.

The rebbe was very happy with the lulav and asked, "How much did it cost?" On second thought, the Beis Yisrael said, "Better don't tell me."- He realized that his shaliach might say a lower price than he actually paid in order not to upset him. So, the Beis Yisrael told the shaliach, "It is better that you don't answer this question."

He preferred that over causing him to lie.

"While performing the mitzvah of giving charity, the poor person should be treated with at least the same respect and dignity we give our esrog on Succos." ~ Beis Halevi.

The Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Kagan ZT'L would say: 'People worry that they do not have enough to live. Why do people not worry that they might not have enough to die?'

זכרו תורת משה
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

In 1877, during the war between Russia and Turkey, there were no *esrogim* available in the Russian Empire, as their enemy Turkey was the source of the *esrogim*. In Vilna, only one esrog was for sale; a sailor had smuggled it in, even swimming it through the Black Sea while holding it in his teeth! Reb Leib, A Litvish man, who was not a wealthy man, sold his house for 150 rubles to purchase the esrog.



On the first day of Sukkos, Reb Leib first made a brachah himself on the esrog before giving it over to the line of people lining up several blocks long to shake the esrog. However, the eagerly waiting crowd pushed, causing a jostle that made the esrog fall, breaking off its *pitom*.

The people standing there were filled with intense pain, that they weren't able to shake the esrog. On top of that, they now had to somehow tell Reb Leib what had happened.

Seeing the crowd standing there silently, Reb Leib asked what had happened. When someone told him, Reb Leib calmly responded, "If there is no esrog, then there is no brachah!" In other words, Reb Leib was saying, that until now our obligation was to shake it, and now not, very accepting of the situation with *simchah*.

"Which act showed more greatness?" asked the **Chofetz Chaim**. "Selling his house to purchase an esrog, or accepting its loss in the way he did?"

"Surely," continued the Chofetz Chaim, "what he said upon hearing the loss was a far greater thing! That shows how he understood

Hashem is running the world, and that's the greatest demonstration of *emunah*!" (heard from **Rav Yosef Kahaneman, the Ponovezher Rov**, who heard it directly from the **Chofetz Chaim**.)



A New Beginning by R' Shmuel Silber

The Succah is a hug from The Rebboino Shel Olam. The Succah is when Hashem says, "I'm back, I'm back in your life, and I want to re-connect, and I want to re-establish the relationship because you have a new start!"

The same way thousands of years ago on the 15th of Tishrei, the clouds which left on the 17th of Tammuz, then came back on the 15th of Tishrei – every single year!

I had my Rosh Hashana. I had my Asseres Y'mei Teshuvah. I had my Yom Kippur. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu is worried – 'Do you really believe that I forgave you?' - 'Do you really believe that you have a new start with a blank slate?'

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is worried that we don't actually believe this! So what does Hashem do? – Every 15th of Tishrei eve, Hashem says, "This is what I want you to do…. I want you to leave your house, and I want you to enter into my embrace – into the Succah – I want to hug you, and I want to hold you! And I just want to whisper into your ear – ' New beginning, new year!' It's a new you, and I'm back, to be here with you this year!"

"The sukkah reveals that the true dwelling place of a Jew is not a house of stone, but in the shade of Hashem's Presence. On Sukkos we step out of our homes to proclaim that our only real security comes from Him." ~ Sfas Emes.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz shared an amazing insight about Shalom, peace.

There is a teaching that the study of Maseches Succah is a Segulah to bring about peace and avoid argument. It is written in the Sefer HaMiddos (Eirech Merivah 57): "To prevent an argument, study Maseches Succah." A Succah is called "Succas Shalom", a shelter of peace. It has the ability to unify and group of all of Klal Yisroel together, with peace and tranquility. There is a hint to this from the Gemara (Succah 27b), "All of Klal Yisroel are fit to sit in one Succah."

The power of the holy Succah affects peace and unity in Klal Yisroel, to the point that we become like one person with one heart! **כאיש אחד בלב אחד**



Guaranteed Happiness by R' Ari Neuwirth

I'm not here to tell you why we sit in the Succah, because I think we all know that. I'm not here to discuss why we shake Lulav and Esrog, because I think we all know that. But there is one thing that I believe that most people don't know. – And that is the **מצוות עשה דאורייתא** of being happy, rejoicing, being B'Simcha on Succos!

Just like you want to shake Lulov, or sit in the Succoh, you have to be happy – it is a **מצוות עשה דאורייתא**. Not for one day, not for two days, but for the whole of Succos (7/8 days)!

I always had this question. What is simcha? How do you define simcha? If you smile, is that called being happy? This question

bothered me. I asked people, and I found in **Reb Yeruchem Olshin's** sefer Yerach LaMoadim, he discusses this exact topic, and gives a fascinating answer.

He begins by saying and quoting the **Pele Yoetz** – "A person who fulfils this commandment of **וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּחַגֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ – 'A** person who will be happy on the whole of Succos, it is a good sign for the entire year!'

He quotes the **Gur Arieh**, who says – 'One who rejoices and is happy, and doesn't let things bother him, then he is promised to have a year of simcha – hapiness!'

The Arizal says the same thing. 'If you are happy on Succos, I guarantee that for the rest of the year, you will be a happy person!'

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz

Why does Sukkot follow so closely after Yom Kippur?

Indeed, not only are they close to each other on the calendar, a deeper connection between them is suggested by the Halachah that one should perform some part of his Sukkah-building on Motzai Yom Kippur / the night when Yom Kippur ends. Why?

R' Moshe Eisemann shlita (former Mashgiach Ruchani of Ner Israel in Baltimore, Maryland) explains: Our Sages refer to Yom Kippur as a day of salvation or liberation. A gift such as liberation brings with it responsibility, and it must be cherished and nurtured. It also must be protected. Thus, it is no coincidence that the first stop that Bnei Yisrael made after their liberation at the Exodus was at a place called "Sukkot." Thereafter, they were protected by the Clouds of Glory, which our Sukkot commemorate.

For the same reason, every night in Ma'ariv, we recite the blessing, "**גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל**" / "The One who redeemed Yisrael," and then we pray,

וּפְרוֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ "And spread over us the Sukkah of Your peace." And, after Yom Kippur, we hurry into our Sukkot.

R' Eisemann continues: The Sukkah extends our Yom Kippur experience. On Yom Kippur, the Shechinah was with us. At the conclusion of that holiday, the Shechinah departs, so we build a Sukkah and invite it back.

The Sukkah protects what we accomplished on Yom Kippur. How so? By placing the imprint of sanctity on everything we do in ordinary life. We eat in the Sukkah, drink in the Sukkah, sleep in the Sukkah, relax in the Sukkah, etc. Everything is sanctified. Therefore, Sukkot, R' Eisemann writes, tells us how a "Yom Kippur Jew" looks.



Why is there no Berachah on building the Sukkah?

Because it is not a Mitzvah which one must do with his own hands; indeed, one could even have a non-Jew build a Sukkah for him. (Tractate Menachot 42a)

Rashi z"l explains: If there were a blessing, it would have to be (consistent with the usual formula), "Who sanctified us with His Mitzvot and commanded us to build a Sukkah." However, that statement would not be true; Hashem did not command us to build a Sukkah, as is evident from the fact that a Sukkah built by a non-Jew is also kosher. (Rashi: Commentary to Menachot 42a)

Some say that the reason there no Berachah on building the Sukkah is that we only recite a blessing on a complete Mitzvah. Building a Sukkah is, at best, the beginning of a Mitzvah.

Nevertheless, observes **R' Shaul Eliezer Yedidyah Taub z"l** (1887-1947; the "Modzitzer Rebbe"), there is an allusion to a Berachah in the Sukkah itself, as follows:

Although Halachah requires a Sukkah to have only two full walls and a partial third wall, a "complete" Sukkah is composed of four walls ("D'fanot"), with S'chach on top. The Gematria of the word "Dofen" (singular for wall), multiplied by four (for the four walls), plus the Gematria of the word S'chach, equals 660, which is also the Gematria of the words, "Baruch Attah Hashem." (Imrei Shaul)

The Halachah states that one is exempt from sitting in the Sukkah if doing so will cause him to suffer. Why? We do not find that one is exempt from other Mitzvot (for example, eating Matzah) merely because observing the Mitzvah may be unpleasant!

R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern z"l (the "Kotzker Rebbe"; died 1859) explains: The idea of the Sukkah is that one negates his independent existence and places himself completely in G-d's hands. However, if one suffers from sitting in the Sukkah, this is an indication that he has not succeeded in nullifying his independent existence. What, then, does he accomplish by remaining in the Sukkah?! (Emmet Ve'emunah No. 10)

The Duke of Manheim asked R' Zvi of Berlin: "Why do children ask the 'Four Questions' on Pesach and not on Sukkot? It would appear that Sukkot brings more changes to their lives than Pesach does!"

"On Pesach," R' Zvi answered, "the child sees everyone sitting around the table, at ease like free men, and not like people in exile. This arouses the child's curiosity and he asks, 'Why is this night different?' On Sukkot, however, the child sees Jews exiled from their homes and without a true roof over their heads. That does not surprise him at all; Jews have always lived that way, ever since they first went into exile."

בס"ד

למודי משה

● Grab Those *Mitzvos*



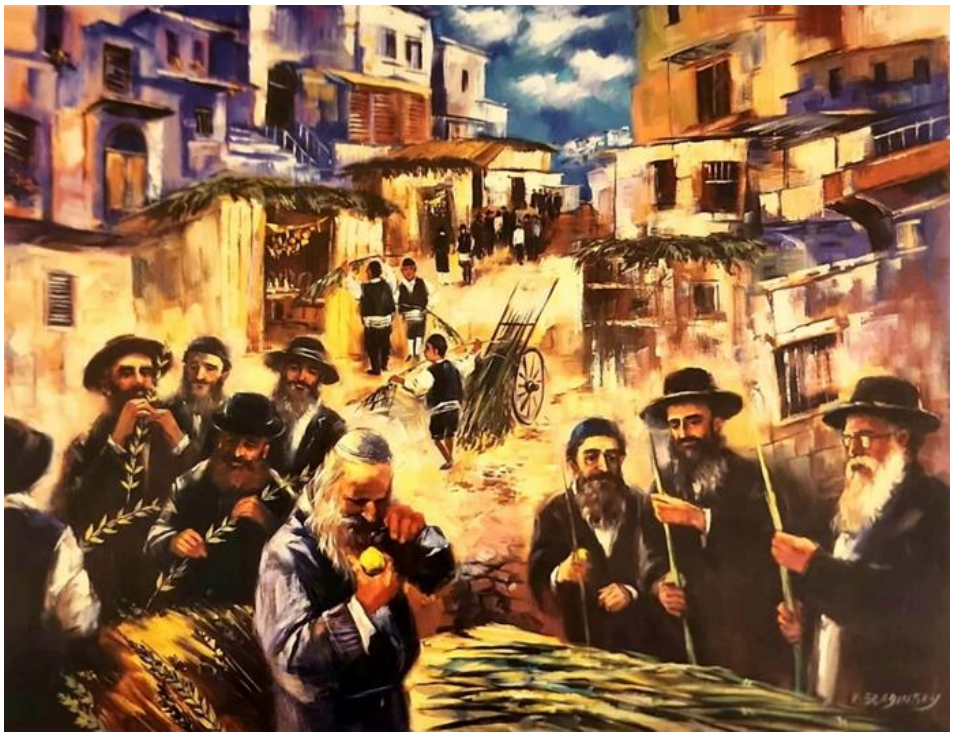
The Gemara teaches us in the beginning of *Maseches Succah* (2a): **צא מדירת קבע ושב בדירת עראי** , which literally means, "Leave your permanent dwelling and sit in a temporary one."

The *Chida* (*Simchas Haregel*) writes that this is one of the most important lessons that we must absorb from the Yom Tov of Succos – that we are not on this world forever. Just like we live in the *succah* temporarily, so too we are only in this world temporarily.

We tend to live our lives as if we will be here forever, but in truth, our days are limited, and every moment is precious. The more we contemplate this lesson, the more focused we'll be on grabbing as many *mitzvos* as possible that will in turn bring us to eternity in Olam HaBah.

Besides for the mitzvah of sitting in the *succah*, we have a second mitzvah during the Yom Tov of Succos, the mitzvah of *simcha*. What is the connection? Sitting in the *succah*, recognizing that we live in a temporary world, serves as a reminder that true happiness can only be attained when we keep the *mitzvos* that bring us to eternity; any other happiness and contentment is only temporary.

● Chumrah's vs. Hurt Feelings



During the First World War, it became very difficult to obtain *arbah minim*. **The *Chofetz Chaim*** was fortunate in that somebody sent him a *lulav* from overseas, the only one in town.

The *Chofetz Chaim* recited the *berachah* on the *lulav,* but did not wave it during *Hallel* in *shul*. He explained, "Although taking the species is an obligation, waving them during *Hallel* is only a custom. I think that it is more important not to draw attention by waving the *lulav* – and causing others less fortunate to fell anguish – than it is for me to fulfil this custom."

● The Higher We Go, The Harder the Challenge

R' Shlomo Brevda *zt"l* once heard a powerful lesson from the ***Chazon Ish***. - When R' Brevda was a *bochur*, he was once miraculously saved from a near-death situation *r"l*, and became sincerely inspired to become a better person because of it. However, the next morning, he woke up a lot later than anticipated and ended up *davening* pretty much the same way that he had been doing before this life-changing incident. -This bothered R' Brevda tremendously, so he went to the *Chazon Ish* and shared his predicament.

The *Chazon Ish* taught him a very important lesson. He said that the way Hashem made everything work in this world is *zeh l'umas zeh* – one opposite the other. Therefore, if a person becomes inspired by something which brings him closer to Hashem, the *yetzer horah* is

given the ability to counteract that energy and motivation in order to bring him back down. Because the inspiration was so strong, that's why it was faced with so much adversity from the *yetzer horah*, and that's why his upward gain dwindled so quickly.

This is very relevant to us as well. As we walk away from the Yomim Nora'im, we are on such a high, but because of this high, we are faced with tremendous hardship in our Avodas Hashem that tries to pull us down and counteract the inspiration.

● Why Is Succos Called So?

Why is Succos called "Succos" because of the mitzvah of *succah* that we do on Succos. Why is not called "Chag Arbas HaMinim", after the mitzvah of *arbah minim* that we do on Succos?

1) **The *Abarbanel*** (*Parshas Emor*) answers, that on Succos there are two *mitzvos*, *succah* and *arbah minim*. And the reasoning behind the two *mitzvos* are very different. The mitzvah of *succah* serves as a remembrance of what happened in the past, like it says: **כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים** – "In huts Bnei Yisroel dwelled when leaving the land of Egypt", whereas the mitzvah of *arbah minim* is for the present, to praise Hashem for all the grain we merited to gather in this year. Since the *inyan* of remembering the *succos* Hashem provide us with in the dessert came first, we call Succos, "Succos" and not "Chag Arbas HaMinim".

2) The mitzvah of *succah* is fulfilled already at night, whereas the mitzvah of *arbah minim* is only in the day, since the mitzvah of *succah* comes first we call Succos, "Succos".

3) One of the main purposes of the Yom Tov of Succos is to remind us that we are **בצילא דמהמנותא** – "In the shade of the Ribbono Shel Olam", therefore, we call the Yom Tov "Succos" to remind us of this idea, that we are under the shade of the Ribbono Shel Olam.

● Why Would We Commemorate that Hashem Provided Us With Real Huts?

The Gemara (*Succah* 11b) cites a *machlokes* regarding what exactly it is that we are commemorating on Succos. R' Eliezer says we are remembering the *ananei hakavod* in which Hashem enveloped us. While R' Akiva says it means *succos mamash* [literal huts]. At first glance R' Eliezer is more easily understood. The fact that Hashem protected us with the heavenly clouds is a reason to annually recall the *neis* [miracle]. But what's so unique about real huts? What was the alternative? Camping under the stars?!

In the *tefillah* "Ribbono Shel Olam" many recite before taking out the *sefer* Torah on Yomim Nora'im we *daven* that Hashem grant us "*parnosah tova v'chalkala, v'lechem le'echol, ubeged lilbosh*" – "good sustenance, bread to eat and clothes to wear". The obvious question is: Once we asked for *parnosah tova* isn't it superfluous to request bread? *Parnosah* should encompass that too?

I once saw a *peshat* and I'll elaborate: Imagine an extremely wealthy man on a luxury cruise. The ship capsizes and he is left stranded on an island. He may have lots of money in the bank, but right now he's struggling to put bread in his mouth. Hence, we *daven* that we never lack even the basics.

In a similar vein, we cannot thank Hashem enough, even for the roof over our heads. Thus, even *succos mamash* is a reason for celebration. So, as we enter the *succah* let's remind ourselves to thank Hashem for all that we have. Yes, even the basics. We must count our blessings and not take any of them for granted. We will then attain the level of *simcha* we need this *zeman simchaseinu*!

"We cannot make peace with Hashem until we have made peace with each other." ~ Rabbi Avraham Yitzchok Kook.

● Luxuries

The *pasuk* says: **וה' ברך את אברהם בכל** – "Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." There are several translations of the word **בכל**, everything. The Medrash states that **בכל**, "everything" is the mitzvah *succah*. This means that when one has the mitzvah of *succah*, he possesses everything. Hashem blessed Avraham with the mitzvah of *succah;* therefore, Avraham had everything.

Why does having a *succah* equate to having everything?

The Chozeh of Lublin (*Avnei Zikoron* 662) *zt"l* explains that the *succah* reminds us of the vainness of luxuries. They are not as significant as we perceive them to be. We discover that we can live in a hut for seven days, and it is fine and comfortable. We learn that it is feasible to be content with less. When we know this, we have everything. Even a person with few physical possessions can feel satisfied with his lot. But when one thinks he needs more and can't live without luxuries, he never feels he has everything. He always feels that he lacks something. He needs a new kitchen and a new car; the old one isn't good enough for him. He is never satisfied.

Be aware: Living a luxurious life doesn't mean leading a happier life than those with less. So, you have a beautiful chandelier in the hallway and go on exotic vacations once or twice a year. The person down the street who can't afford these things can be just as happy with his life, and often he is even happier.

Every person has different needs, but one thing is certain: If you aren't happy with your portion, traveling and buying expensive items won't resolve your problems. You can tour the world, live in a beautiful mansion, and still be miserable. But if you are happy with your lot, you have everything, no matter what you have or do. That is the *berachah* that Hashem gave Avraham. He blessed him with **בכל**, everything. This is the lesson we learn from *succah*, and this is how Hashem gave Avraham "everything." (Torah Wellsprings)

● Why Is the Mitzvah of *Succah* the Only Mitzvah We Find a *Heter of Mitzta'er* For?

The halachah is that if one is *mitzta'er* [uncomfortable] he is exempt from having to eat and sleep in the *succah* (*Orach Chaim* 640:14). We don't find such an exemption by other *mitzvos,* what is unique about the mitzvah of *succah* that we find such a thing?

The *Madanay Asher* suggests a number of answers:

1) There is a halachah by *succah* of **תשבו כעין תדורו** – "one should dwell in the *succah* like he would in his house". One wouldn't sit in his house if he was uncomfortable, therefore, if one is uncomfortable, he is exempt from *succah* as well. In other words: There is no special *din* that *mitzta'er* is exempt, rather, it's because of the *din* of **תשבו כעין תדורו** .

2) The *Divrei Yatziv* (cited in *Shefa Chaim,* Succos pg. 268) writes that the *succah* is a remembrance of the *ananei hakavod* which: **שבאו לישראל לרווחתם ולהנאתם** – "Yisroel entered, for space and benefit", therefore, the mitzvah of *succah* was only given in a place where one is comfortable to sit in it, just like the *ananei hakavod.*

3) Since this is the first mitzvah Klal Yisroel fulfill after Succos, *Chazal* made sure that the mitzvah should be easy without any pain involved, and they said that if one is uncomfortable, he is exempt.
4) The Kotzker Rebbe explains: The idea of the *succah* is that one negates his independent existence and places himself completely in Hashem's hands. However, if one suffers from sitting in the *succah*, this is an indication that he has not succeeded in nullifying his independent existence. What, then, does he accomplish by remaining in the *succah*?! (*Emes Ve'emunah* No. 10)

"If I believe in Hashem, I can believe in miracles. And if I trust in Hashem, I can expect them." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

● Today's Clouds of Glory

According to the opinion of R' Eliezer (*Succah* 11b), the underlying reason we celebrate the Yom Tov of Succos is in commemoration of the *Annanei HaKavod* [Clouds of Glory] which surrounded the Jewish people throughout their travels in the desert. Yet, when considering this, the obvious question stands out. The Jews were not only privy to the miracle of the *Annanei HaKavod* in the desert. They also received the daily provisions of the *mon* and were supplied refreshing water from the Well of Miriam.

Why in fact then do we not commemorate those miracles? Why didn't *Chazal* enact a Yom Tov during which we would go swimming for seven days or turn on all the faucets in our house? Or why don't we have a Yom Tov during which we eat food which incorporates a variety of flavors akin to the *mon* which tasted like anything you wished?

The truth is that there is very good reason to celebrate the miracle of the *Annanei HaKavod* even in our day and age. And that is because the purpose they served still lives on with us. And that is the concept of *hashgacha pratis*.

The *Annanei HaKavod* represent that we are completely enclosed and watched over by the hand of Hashem. As it relates to the Well of Miraim and the *mon*, those were miracles only experienced at the time the Jews traversed the desert. They were limited to that generation. But Divine Providence exists quite clearly even today. Without question, Hashem has always been involved and will continue to be involved in the day to day running of the world.

When we sit in our *succah* and observe our surrounding enclosure, all we must remember is that Hashem closely watches over us every moment of every day and every night. And even fifteen years later, He still watches over us…

● This *Esrog* Is Perfect – But Not for You

(Adapted from Around the Maggid's Table)



Rav Sholom Eizen, *zt"l*, one of the foremost *poskim* of Yerusholayim 50 years ago, was renown as an expert in checking *lulav* and *esrog*. In the days leading up to Succos hundreds of people lined up in front of his house to get his advice on the *lulavim* and *esrogim* they were planning on buying.

Once, a young *avreich* came in holding an *esrog* which this young fellow felt had extraordinary excellence. He wanted to know the Rav's opinion. Rav Eizen complied and took the *esrog* to examine it. He studied it from all angles, turning it around and around. After a few moments of a very exacting inspection, the Rav lifted up his head and turned to the young man. "This *esrog* isn't for you."

The *avreich* was astonished by the Rav's comment. Questions started racing through his mind. I had studied the laws of *arbah minim* thoroughly, he thought. I spent hours searching for an *esrog* which, according to my understanding, was perfect. Why does the Rav think this *esrog* is not for me?

In his confusion the *avreich* turned to the Rav and asked, "Is there some *halachic* issue with this *esrog*? I'm not an expert, but it seemed to my inexperienced eyes to be a perfect *esrog*."

Instead of answering the young man, Rav Eizen asked him a question. "What do you do?"

"I learn in a *kollel* in Yerusholayim."

"Do they pay you there?"

"Certainly."

Rav Eizen inquired as to how much the *kollel* paid him and the young man told him the exact amount, which wasn't very much.

"Now, I shall ask you my last question," replied Rav Eizen. "How much did you pay for the *esrog*?" The *avreich* mentioned a substantial figure.

"Just as I thought," Rav Eizen responded. "You are absolutely right. The *esrog* is superb. It is a perfect *esrog*, both in halachah and in splendor; It is beautifully formed. However, listen to my advice. Buy a much cheaper *esrog*, and with the money you save buy your wife a dress for Yom Tov. This will be the real *kavod* [honor] of Yom Tov. You will thus perform the mitzvah of being joyous on Yom Tov."

R' Moshe Greenwald zt"l of Chust would say:

"Upon entering the sukkah we say, **ותתן לי זכות לשבת ולחסות בסתר צל כנפיך .. ולחסות מזרם וממטר** - ***'Give me the merit of sitting (in the sukkah) and being protected in the shade of Your Presence ... and be protected from flooding rains.'***

This is an allusion to the warning in the Torah not to add or subtract any mitzvos in the Torah.

There are 248 mitzvos asei - corresponding to the 248 limbs in a person's body. The word **זרם** is one less than 248, while **מטר** is one more than 248.

Thus, we recite that by fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah, we ask Hashem to allow us to fulfil all the mitzvos and He should protect us from possibly sinning by adding or subtracting even one iota of a mitzvah."

The Soldiers Who Were Saved from The Drone Attack in The Zechus of "Mayim Achronim"

"Four soldiers killed, seven seriously hurt in Hezbollah drone strike on military base. 58 soldiers wounded as UAV crashes into dining hall as troops were gathering at training base in Binyamina."



The father of one of the Golani soldiers who survived the Hezbollah drone strike at the training base in Binyamina on Sunday evening shared the neis his son had experienced in the zechus of Mayim Achronim.

The father told *Kol B'Ramah Radio* on Monday afternoon: "Last week, they decided to have the soldiers eat in shifts due to concerns about attacks. Last night, they entered the dining room for supper and one of the soldiers asked my son and his friends to join him for zimun. They got up to wash their hands with Mayim Achronim at the water fountain outside the dining room."

"On their way out, they heard the drone and saw it crash into the dining room. He and all the soldiers from the unit who were sitting closest to the impact site were saved in a neis in the zechus of the mitzvah of Mayim Achronim."

The father, who works in the Ramot neighborhood of Jerusalem, told his friends and acquaintances on Monday about how his son was spared, causing a Kiddush Hashem and chizzuk in the mitzvah of Mayim Achronim. *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*



Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

One Erev Succos, the litigant in a case insisted on getting a Halachic decision from Bais Din, and he refused to make a compromise. **Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, zt"l**, asked this man if he had purchased his Esrog yet. The fellow responded that indeed he had. When Rav Scheinberg asked him how much he had paid for it, the man mentioned a large sum of money.

Rav Scheinberg commented, "I can see that you obviously have an appreciation for Mitzvos. Therefore, I am going to offer you a Mitzvah at a real bargain of a price. All you need to do is compromise at the Din Torah. What do you say to this great opportunity?"

The man understood and agreed to Rav Scheinberg's recommendation!

Succos Treasures

The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation shared a story. **Rav Yankele of Pshevorsk** went to visit an elderly Chasid during Chol HaMo'eid Succos. The man lived with his wife on a high floor of an assisted living facility, and his declining health made it difficult for him to leave the apartment.

When the Rebbe arrived at the door, the Chasid's wife greeted him. She urged, "Please, Rebbe, don't tell him it's Succos. If he knows, he'll insist on going downstairs to the Succah, and it's simply too much for him."

The Rebbe readily agreed to keep the secret. As he entered the apartment, the Chasid's face lit up with pleasure. "Shalom Aleichem!"

he said, and then, turning to his wife with the alacrity of Avraham Avinu serving the Malachim, he said, "Please bring the Rebbe some fruit!" - His wife had expected this request. Soon the Rebbe's attendant was entering the room with a grand platter filled with beautiful fruit. -The Chasid asked the Rebbe, "Please make a Brachah on a fruit as a Zechus for me."

Now the Rebbe found himself in a dilemma. He had never taken a bite of food or a sip of a drink outside the Succah on Succos. Even when he was imprisoned in a Siberian labor camp, he had fasted most of the day and saved his rations for the few moments he was able to sneak into a tiny Succah that he had constructed out of a pit in the frozen earth and covered it with some twigs.

The Rebbe peeled the apple and shifted it from hand to hand, trying to stall and distract the Chasid with conversation. However, the Chasid held onto his hope to hear the Rebbe's Brachah. "Please, Rebbe, I need the Zechus of your Brachah!"

At last, the Rebbe cut off a tiny piece of apple (Halachically permissible) and recited a loud Brachah on it, to which the man answered with a resounding "Amein!"

Later, the Rebbe's attendant asked why, if Siberia hadn't broken his determination to eat only in the Succah, this elderly Chasid's pleading was able to do so.

The Rebbe answered, "In Siberia, I was willing to sacrifice myself for the Mitzvah of Succah. But to sacrifice another Yid? This I simply cannot do!"

In the Rebbe's eyes, he had not abandoned a stringency. Instead, he had chosen to sacrifice one stringency in order to perform another. It was Ahavas Yisroel, his love for a fellow Yid at the highest level!

L'Maaseh... A Tale to Remember



The Tepliker Rav, zt"l, was one of the great Poskim of Yerushalayim. **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l**, turned to him many times for clarification when Rav Shlomo Zalman was writing his Sefer, Meorei Eish, in which he discusses the subject of electricity, which at that time was a new and complex topic of Halachah.

With the Tepliker Rav's reputation for the highest levels of Torah knowledge, it was no surprise that from Yom Kippur to Erev Succos, long lines of people formed at his door wishing to show him their Esrogim. The Tepliker Rav not only knew Esrogim, but he treasured the Mitzvah and always purchased for himself the most beautiful Arba Minim that were available. Therefore, people were shocked when on the first day of Succos, the Tepliker Rav asked someone, "Could you please give me your Esrog as a present?"

He phrased his request this way, because Halachah states that on the first day of Yom Tov, a person may only fulfil the Mitzvah with Arba Minim that he owns. The man understood the request, but he was incredulous that the Tepliker Rav didn't have an Esrog. How could this be? He gladly gave the Rav his Arba Minim, and later set

out to discover the story behind this strange request. This is what he discovered:

On Erev Succos, the Tepliker Rav's apartment had quieted down. The lines were gone and the Rav sat quietly learning. Suddenly, he heard shrieking coming from somewhere in the apartment building. It sounded like someone was in trouble!



He leaped out of his seat and ran out the door into the hallway. There, he saw an open door and could perceive that the screaming was coming from within that apartment. He knocked on the door and said, "Is everything okay? Is anyone hurt?"

The woman of the house was hysterical. She explained, "It's so important to my husband to get a good Esrog. He bought the most expensive one the dealer was selling, and he warned all the children to stay away from it. He just left the house to do a few last-minute Yom Tov errands, and my son took the Esrog and began to play with it and it fell. A piece broke off! The Esrog is ruined, and I can only imagine what my husband is going to do when he finds out!"

The Tepliker Rav calmly told the woman, "There is nothing to worry about. Wait right here." He ran to his apartment and came back with his own Esrog. He told her, "Listen to me carefully. Here is a beautiful Esrog, but your husband obviously is not going to be misled into thinking it's his. Give me the broken Esrog. I'll dispose of it. Take this new Esrog and tell your husband that I came to see his Esrog because I heard it was so beautiful. I looked at it carefully and I admired it, but I found a Shailah that might have made it invalid. So, I took an extra Esrog that someone gave me as a gift, a

very special Esrog, and gave it to him as a gift instead." - That is how the Tepliker Rav found himself without an Esrog on Succos.

We learn from this what our priorities should be. Having a beautiful Esrog is a worthy goal, but it's not the only Mitzvah in the Torah. It doesn't supersede everything else. - When faced with the choice between having a magnificent Esrog or doing an exquisite act of Chesed, the Tepliker Rav knew which to choose!

The Machzor Speaks

At this time of year, we start mentioning **מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם** in Shemoneh Esrei. By inserting this into our Tefilos, we are asking Hashem to help the crops grow by causing the winds to blow and the rains of Brachah to fall. We are acknowledging that Hashem is the Source for everything we have, and we ask for His Brachos to continue to provide for us.

It has been taught that the words of **מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם** can possibly be understood in a different way as well. **מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ** — may the Ruchniyus be uplifted, **וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם** — and let the Gashmiyus be lowered. These words are a charge for us, as we enter the winter months ahead, to increase our Ruchniyus, our spiritual pursuits, and that our Gashmiyus, our physical pursuits be diminished.

With this Tefilah, we are asking Hashem to allow us to have a year filled with the lofty quest for spiritual attainment, while at the same time, requesting to be spared from the snares of Gashmiyus!

To truly love someone, you don't need to understand them fully or agree with them fully – you just need to be there for them fully. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Lelover Rebbe, Rabbi Dovid Biderman (1746-1814).

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Shimon Finkelman writes that when **Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, zt"l**, the Rosh Yeshivah of Ner Yisroel, was a young Bochur, he once borrowed a newly published volume of Or Somei'ach. The one who lent it to him said that he could borrow it as long as he returned it by the next morning.

Having no access to a lamp, Rav Ruderman spent the night learning the entire Sefer by the light of the moon, and he was able to quote from it at length for the rest of his life!

In the early 1940's, Rav Ruderman purchased a rare copy of the Sefer Oneg Yom Tov at a Seforim store in New York. The price was $100, which was a small fortune in those days. However, as Rav Ruderman later explained, "Who can live without an Oneg Yom Tov?!"

When the Chofetz Chaim's son, Rav Yehuda Leib, was a young boy, he would carry a Sefer from the Nevi'im or a Megilah, as is the custom for the children to do during Hakafos. Arguments always broke out amongst the boys as to who should get to carry which Sefer of Navi.

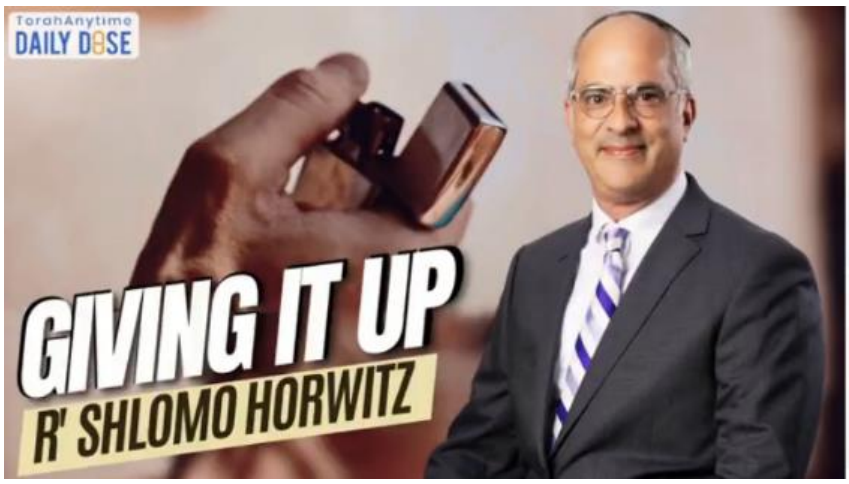
The Chofetz Chaim would tell his son that it was not worth fighting about, and he shouldn't get involved with it. He would give his son a copy of the Sefer Mitzvos HaGadol to carry during the Hakafos and stressed that it was most significant Sefer to carry, because it included both the Torah She'bich'sav and the Torah Shel Ba'al Peh, the Written and the Oral Torah!

Rav Yosef Leib Bloch, zt"l, would teach, "Chazal tell us that on every day of Succos we are commanded to bring numerous Korbonos, and these represent the many nations of the world. However, on the Yom Tov of Shemini Atzeres, only one Korbon is offered.

This is because this unique holiday is made for the sole purpose of elevating Klal Yisroel above the other nations. Therefore, we bring

one Korbon to emphasize that when a Jew elevates his spiritual level, he must focus on accomplishing one Mitzvah at a time.

When a person tries to grab too much too quickly, he is bound to fail. A Yid must concentrate his efforts on doing one good deed at a time, and in this way, he will succeed in his spiritual pursuits!"



Rav Ezriel Tauber Zt'l was speaking to a teen at a Friday night Kiruv Shabbaton. In the middle of the conversation, the kid pulls out a packet of cigarettes and was about to light one up on Shabbos.

Rabbi Tauber said, "Let me ask you a question."



"Sure" said the kid.

The Rabbi said, "If you only had one cigarette left, and G-d Himself came and asked for that cigarette, would you give it to Him?"

The kid said, "Of course I would."

Rabbi Tauber smiled and said, "G-d is asking you for **that** cigarette because it's Shabbos. Would you give it up for Him?"

The boy was stunned, and quietly said, "Yes."

Rabbi Tauber made that kid feel good. He did not attack him. He did not condemn him. And that was the start of his journey for keeping Shabbos!

HaRav Chaim's Son-In-Law Has Slept on A Piece of Plywood Since October 7



Rebbetzin Leah Kolodetsky, the daughter of **HaGaon HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, z'tl**, moved the relatives of hostages to tears who visited her at her home in Bnei Brak on Sunday evening.

The hostages' relatives were in Bnei Brak as a part of a Sukkos tour. The Rebbetzin told them that for months after October 7, her husband, **HaGaon HaRav Yitzchak Kolodetsky**, 70, slept on the floor in solidarity with the suffering of the hostages. However, at the end of the winter, her husband caught a cold from sleeping on the floor, so he placed a thin piece of plywood on a bed and slept on that.

Chareidi journalist Yisrael Cohen, who accompanied the families, said: "We arrived at the home of Rebbetzin Kolodetsky to get a bracha. She told us in a 'by the way' manner that her husband hasn't slept on a bed since October 7."

"The son-in-law of HaGaon HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, z'tl, a Talmid Chacham and Rav in Yisrael, over the age of 70, decided to sleep on a board he placed on a bed. For a year already. Every night."

He added: "The Rebbetzin said – 'You can go in the room and see. How can we sleep comfortably when we have no idea how and where the hostages are sleeping?" - *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*

דרגה יתירה

One of the most important messages from *Chag HaSukkos* is appreciation! We leave our comfortable and pleasant residences and move into our small makeshift homes for one week. - Why? - So that we may realize just how much we have and how thankful we must be for the bounty in our lives that we take for granted.

R' Avraham Hakohen Pam *zt"l* provides an extraordinary explanation for the permanent dwelling and the temporary dwelling. He says that the permanent dwelling of a person is his own thoughts which primarily revolve around himself. The temporary dwelling of a person is his thoughts about others. He visits that "place" from time to time but usually he is focused on his own needs.

The physical manifestation of the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* – to move into your temporary dwelling place and remain there for a full seven days - is equal to the spiritual comprehension of *sukkah* - to stop thinking about yourself and start thinking about others!

This is one of the ways to truly achieve the goal of *Yom Tov*: **וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּחַגֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ** – One of the greatest ways to achieve real *simcha* in this world is by thinking about other people rather than thinking only about yourself!

There is a famous *chazal* that tells us: **'בִּשְׁבִילִי נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם'** - "*The world was created for me.*" - This quote is often misinterpreted. It does not mean that the whole world was created just for ME and the world owes ME and should treat ME a certain way. That is the selfish interpretation. - The selfless interpretation is that the whole world was created for me to make the world a better place! I was given unique talents and abilities that I must use to help others!

May we take these lessons of thinking about others, of compromise and being mevater to heart and may the joy of this beautiful *Yom Tov* spill over into our entire lives.



In 1877, during the war between Russia and Turkey, there were no *esrogim* available throughout the entire Russian Empire, as their enemy, the Turks, was the main supplier. In the city of Vilna, they managed to find one *esrog* for sale – one for which a sailor had smuggled it through, even swimming with it attached to his person, through the Black Sea into Russia.

A middle-class man by the name of Reb Leib was determined to purchase it. "Whatever it entails, I'll see to it that I buy that *esrog*," he declared. There was just one simple problem. How was he going to come up with the 150 rubles needed for its purchase? He wasn't rich, or even mildly wealthy. The only belonging of such value was his house. But he really wanted that *esrog* so he and his wife agreed to put their house up for sale just so they could shake an *esrog* on the forthcoming *Yom Tov*.

Within a short time, they found a customer and were soon holding the complete sum to cover the cost of his prized *esrog*.

On the night of *Sukkos*, Reb Leib was twisting and turning from excitement. The hours went by and soon it was time for him to perform the mitzvah of a lifetime. As dawn was nearing, Reb Leib fervently ran to the *mikvah* in preparation for the *mitzvah*, and then back home. As soon as dawn broke, Reb Leib made a *beracha* and shook the *esrog* in all directions.

He looked out his window and saw lines of people waiting outside his apartment, waiting to shake his *esrog*. He happily handed it over to them granting them permission for its use. Shortly thereafter, the eager crowd pushed and shoved mightily, causing a jostle that caused the *esrog* to fall on the ground, breaking off its *pitom*.

The people standing there were filled with pain - they were unable to *shuckle* the *esrog*. The air thickened with their agony. On top of that, they now had to break the news to Reb Leib, and they were afraid of his reaction.

Seeing the crowd standing in silence, Reb Leib sensed that something was wrong. "What happened?" questioned R' Leib. When someone built up the courage to disclose what had occurred, they were shocked to hear the soft-spoken voice of Reb Leib respond, "Well, if there is no *pitom*, then there is no *beracha*!" Meaning, that up until now our obligation was to shake it, and now our obligation was not to shake it - a true acceptance of the situation. - The audience was in awe over Reb Leib's humility.

The story was told over to the great **Chofetz Chaim *zt"l*** in Radin. He was noticeably shocked by what he heard, and he proceeded to question all those around him, "Tell me, which act shows his true greatness? Is it the fact that he sold his house to purchase an *esrog*, or is it his acceptance of the loss of the *esrog*?"

The people standing there were under the impression that selling his house for this *mitzvah* was surely greater, but that was not the opinion of the *Chofetz Chaim*.

"In my opinion, his reaction and calm demeanor was surely greater," continued the *Chofetz Chaim*. "Accepting the way *Hashem* runs the world is a demonstration of *emunah*, and that is the foundation of all the *mitzvos*. That was a proclamation how he understood that *Hashem* is conducting the world, and that's the root to all the remaining *mitzvos*!"

The great Sage concluded, "So yes, he passed two great challenges, but the second challenge was the greater one."

A kollel fellow in Israel finally found the esrog of his dreams. As is customary, he took it from the store and brought it to his Rav for a ruling on its kashrus for use.

R' Yehoshua Neuwirth z"l known by the name of his book, the Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchaso, looked at the esrog and admired its beauty, then said, "It's truly a stunning esrog. Take it back to the dealer. It's posul."

The man was shocked. "What's wrong with it? I didn't find a single blemish!"

"How much does it cost?" asked the Rav.

"500 shekel," replied the confused man.

"Tell me, "Asked R' Neuwirth. "Does your wife have a new dress for Yom Tov? Don't your children have holes in their shoes? You can buy a cheaper esrog which will still be kosher and then take care of your family's needs. For you, an esrog that costs so much is unfit for use."

Out-Of-Town Visitor

An elderly Yid asked **Rav Benzion Felman** to clarify something strange he kept witnessing. This man lived in Tel Aviv, across from the great shul, and he noticed that **Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman**, *zt"l*, would come and visit the Arba Minim shuk, between Yom Kippur and Sukkos. This observer noted how the Rav would repeat this perusal year after year, and yet the Rav never bought anything.

This strange conduct piqued this Yid's interest. "The Ponovezher Rav is a busy man, who utilizes every free moment for learning Torah and running his many institutions. Why would he come every day to the shuk and spend many long hours without purchasing even a single aravah? Maybe you, Rav Benzion, as one of the Rav's close students, can explain what the Rav is looking for."

The question remained on Rav Benzion's mind until Rav Kanaheman was *niftar*. At the *levaya*, one of the Rav's primary *talmidim*, **Rav Pinchas Shreiber**, one of the "*yaldei Teheran*," (an orphan from Iran) who the Rav had raised as one of his own, delivered a *hesped*. During the *hesped*, Rav Pinchas mentioned the following:

"When I found out that the Rav traveled to the Tel Aviv shuk, I asked him, 'Rebbi, your time is precious. Why do you travel all that distance when *mehudar minim* are delivered directly to your door?'"

The Rav answered him with a story from the Gemara (*Shabbos* 33b) of **Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's** exit from the cave that he and his son, **Rabbi Elazar**, hid from the Romans for thirteen years. When Rav Elazar saw people forfeiting eternal life for the temporal life in this world, everything he set his eyes on was incinerated. Rabbi Shimon set his eyes on the same thing and brought it back to its previous state.

On Erev Shabbos, they saw an elderly Yid holding in his arms two bundles of hadasim to honor Shabbos — one for *Zachor* (the requirement to remember Shabbos), and the other for *Shamor* (the requirement to safeguard Shabbos). When Rabbi Shimon saw this, he said to Rav Elazar, "See how precious mitzvos are to the Yidden!" Witnessing that, calmed down Rav Elazar's anger, and he no longer destroyed the world with his eyes.

Nowhere in the *Shulchan Aruch* will you find a halachah that teaches one to buy bundles of hadasim to honor Shabbos, and still, that simple Yid loved and honored Shabbos so much that he procured for himself two fragrant bundles — one for *Zachor* and one for *Shamor*.

"In that story," explained the Rav Yosef Shlomo to Rav Pinchas, "the elderly Yid revealed to Rav Elazar that Yidden don't just 'observe' Torah and mitzvos, they're *happy* about them and *love* them! Yidden are *happy* about Shabbos, and they *love* Shabbos. Yidden are *happy* about Hashem, and they *love* Hashem. The love of Hashem burns in their heart like a burning flame. When Rav Elazar saw the extent of

their happiness and love of mitzvos, he dropped his claims against them and ceased destroying everything he encountered on his path."

Continued the Rav, "As a result of the War, I lost my wife and children; I lost the community I led and the yeshiva I founded. Afterward, I thought that the Yidden went lost. But behold, I see after the war that the Yidden of Tel Aviv flock to the shuk and spend many long hours seeking out *mehudar* esrogim with no *bletelach* and lulavim sealed up to the top. After all the physical and emotional suffering they endured in the *Shoah*, they still are prepared to spend lots of money and effort to merit *mehudar* arba minim, they're defiantly eternal.

"That's why I travel every year to the Arba Minim shuk. So while it's true that *mehudardike* arba minim are brought to my doorstep, nonetheless, once a year, I wear out my soles to see Am Yisrael in its beauty and splendor. Once a year, I travel to Allenby Street to see how, even after that Churban, the Yidden are happy with mitzvos and love their Father in Heaven. *That joyous sight enlivens me, and it invigorates me throughout the winter.*"

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah



It says in the Mishna Brurah – Siman **תעז** (Hilchos Pesach) - **ראיתי מבני עליה שהיו מנשקין המצות והמרור וכן הסוכה בכניסתו וביציאתו וכן ארבעה מינים שבלולב והכל לחבוב המצוה ואשרי מי שעובד ה' בשמחה**

People used to kiss the matzos and the marror. Similarly, they used to kiss the succah upon entering and leaving. Also, they used to kiss the Arba Minim. – Happy is the person who serves Hashem with happiness.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

Something special for all the mathematically inclined people!

Sukkos has a special order of korbanos of the holiday. On the first day, 13 oxen were offered. The number was reduced by one each day, making the total 70 (13 + 12 + 11 + 10 + 9 + 8 + 7 = 70), corresponding to the original seventy nations of the world. These sacrifices were brought as atonement for the nations of the world, and in prayer for their wellbeing and harmony between them.

The power given to Noah to establish the seventy original nations was later vested in Avraham, of whom it is written, "For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations." From then on, the seventy nations were to draw their sustenance through Avraham's descendants and the flow of Divine sustenance for the nations was divided between Yishmael and Esav, each of whom became the head of thirty-five of the nations. Therefore, when Israel came to sacrifice seventy oxen during Sukkos as atonement for the nations of the world, they sacrificed thirty-five oxen on behalf of the nations under Yishmael's dominion, and thirty-five on behalf of those under Esav's dominion.

The Vilna Gaon discovered this secret hidden in the Torah itself. In the verses describing the number of oxen each day, he noticed that the accompanying sin offering is sometimes referred to as a 'kid of goats' and sometimes as just a 'kid'. - Based on the tradition that 'kid of goats' refers to Yishmael, he determined that some of the oxen and their respective sin offerings correspond to Yishmael, and the others correspond to Esav.

Amazingly, the oxen offered on the days whose sin offering is slated as 'kid of goats' (Yishmael) [days 1,2,4] equals 35 [13+12+10]. Similarly, those offered on the days noted only by 'kid' (Esav) [days

3,5,6,7] also equal 35 [11+9+8+7]. Thus, the mystical secrets of the Divine flow of blessing are revealed to us a bit through the order of the sacrifices on this holiday.



Normally we first experience Elul, which is the 'Yemei rachamim,' days when we ask for Divine mercy. After that we go through Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the 'yemei haDin,' when we stand before G-d in judgment. - Hopefully, if we merited mercy, and we passed judgment through repentance and good deeds, we will come to the days of Sukkos and the 'yemei haSimcha,' days of happiness.

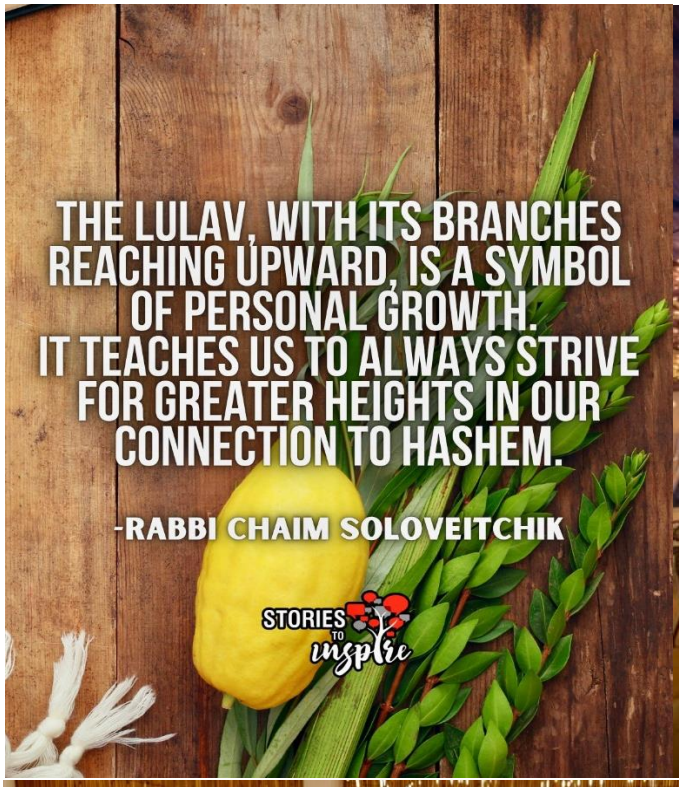
The Sfas Emes, though says that there can be another order as well. Even if we didn't merit mercy, and we didn't rise to the challenge of passing judgment, we can still reverse the ruling.

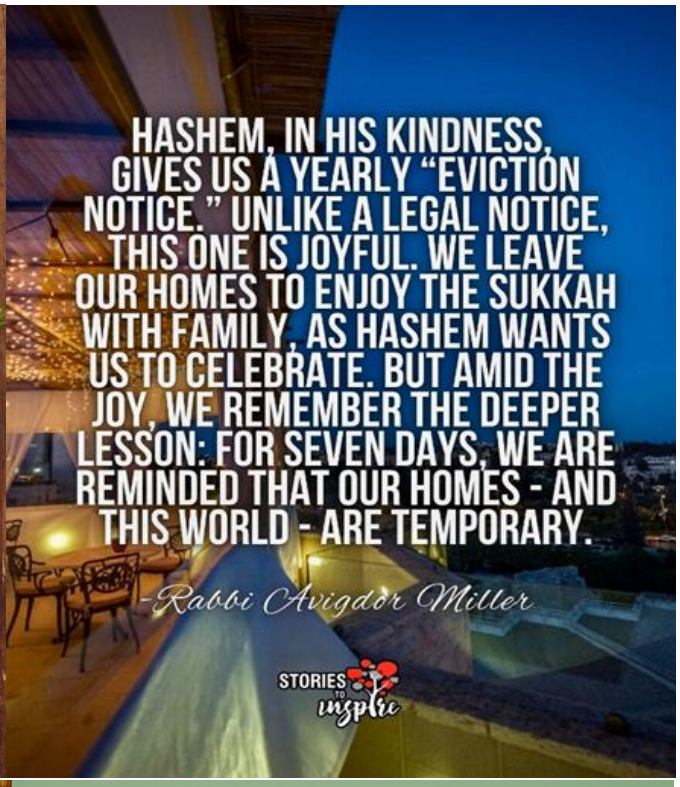
When we celebrate Sukkos with joy and with acceptance of whatever Hashem has in store for us, we bring about an 'ohr hachozer,' a light of reversal. This light has the power to reverse the negative judgment and make it positive and earn us Divine mercy for our simple trust in Hashem.

Therefore, these days we should be 'only happy,' rejoicing in Hashem's protection and love, and through that we will merit a good year full of blessings and prosperity.

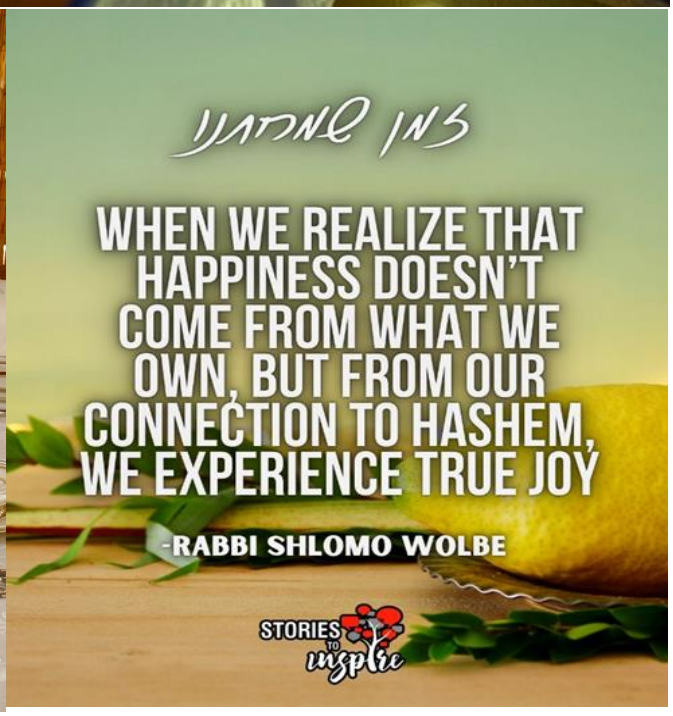
R' Aharon of Karlin ZT"L would say:

"I learned "nothing" from my Rebbe, the Mezeritcher Maggid. I learned how a great tzaddik and scholar can humble himself to the point where he is, in his own eyes, a mere 'nothing'!"









A dandelion is considered a weed by some and a wish by others. The difference isn't in the flower, but in the eyes that behold it. Perspective has a remarkable way of changing our experience without changing our circumstances. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1903-1993)



◣ Going All In - Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa

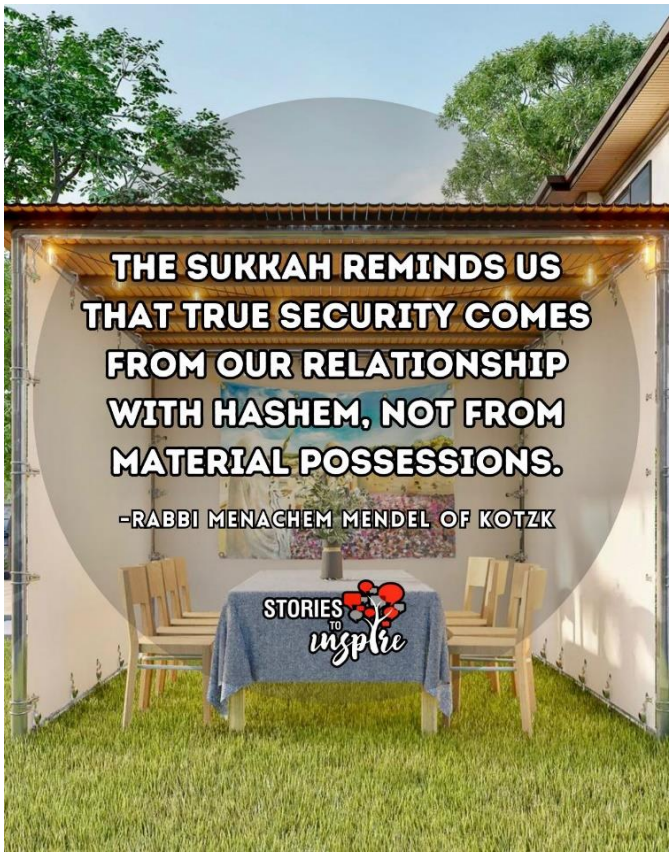
The mitzvah of sukkah is the most wonderful of all mitzvos. Matzah you eat with your mouth, tefillin you put on your arm, shofar you hear with your ears, Torah you study with your eyes and mind, but the sukkah! You go in completely, even with your boots!

◣ Just Be Happy - Chasam Sofer

On the first day of Succos, the Torah commands us to fulfil many mitzvos: sukkah, lulav, esrog, simcha, etc. On the rest of the days of Yom Tov, there are just two mitzvos: sukkah and simcha. But on Shemini Atzeres the Torah is very clear. There is only one mitzvah that we must perform with every fibre of our being- **והייתא אך שמח** - And you shall be only joyous.

◣ Proper Priorities - Dzikover Rebbe

A chassid asked the Dzikover to bless him that he should have exceptionally fine hadasim, aravos, lulav and esrog for the festival. - The Rebbe replied: "What you need for Sukkos is a kind heart, a humble spirit, a truthful mind, and the will to perfect yourself. After you have attained these, it will be time to concern yourself regarding an exceptionally fine set of the symbols for Sukkos." (Namely, "First attain 'Arba Middos,' and then acquire 'Arba Minnim.'")



Rebbe Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev used to invite the plain, common folk into his succah. Explaining why, he said "in Gan Eden the tzaddikim will be sitting in the succahs of the hide of the Livyasan and I, a simple man, will want to join them. I will be asked, 'What is your merit that you deserve to sit in the succah?' and I will reply, 'Just as I, Levi Yitzchok, invited the plain people to sit in my succah, so too please let me enter the heavenly succah'."



Tamid Besimcha

As is understood, the **Brisker Rav** took great care to acquire an esrog that had no suspicion of being grafted. Those close to him made sure to bring him one from the forests of Morocco, where there was no chance of dealers tampering with the trees.

Rav Lorence related the following personal story "As Sukkos of 1958 approached, an emissary of the Brisker Rav left Eretz Yisroel for Morocco to bring the Rav a mehudar esrog. But when he arrived back on erev Sukkos, the customs officials detained him and confiscated that year, for fear of infestation that could harm the plants in Eretz

Yisroel. The emissary returned to Yerusalayim, and sadly told the Brisker Rav that the esrog had been confiscated by customs.

The Brisker Rav asked me to do whatever I could to release the esrog. Nor did he content himself with a simple request. In order that I not take the matter lightly, the Rav explained at length how important it was to him and what a tremendous favor it would be to him if I succeeded in releasing the esrog, enabling him to perform the mitzvah with an esrog that was unquestionably not grafted. He asked that I take care of the matter personally and do everything in my power to see that the esrog reach him before Yom Tov started. He implored me to such an extent that I felt as if his lifeblood depended on it.

I promised to do whatever I could, no matter what it took, to bring him the esrog before nightfall.

I went to Lod and asked the official who had confiscated the esrog to return it. I told him who the Brisker Rav was, how important the matter was to him, and how concerned he was that he had not yet received the esrog. The official understood and said that under those circumstances he would release the esrog, but he did not have the authority to do so. For that, I would have to speak to a second official. I went to speak to the other official, who sent me to a third, who sent me to the fourth, and so on. If I thought I was already familiar with Israeli bureaucracy, that day I got a thorough grounding in it.

One hour passed, then two. The higher-ranking officials were sympathetic, and since I was an MK they treated me respectfully. But no one was able to offer me any concrete help. Time was running out, and Yom Tov was fast approaching. I came to the conclusion that the only person with the authority to release the esrog was the chief administrator of the airport himself. I tried to find him, but he had already left. I called his home, as well as any other place I could think of that he might be, but to no avail.

As I ran from one official to the next, I had to keep the Brisker Rav updated. Since the Rav did not have a telephone in his home, I called a middleman, who then went to the Rav's home to appraise him of the situation.

The Rav's tension hit its peak. Each time I called, the middleman told me that the Rav requested that I leave no stone unturned in my attempt to obtain the esrog, as he saw it a question of the actual fulfillment of the mitzvah. It was getting late, and one by one the customs offices began to close. When it was clear that there was no way to release the esrog before Yom Tov, I went back to Yerushalayim to the Brisker Rav's home where I told him that it was no use-I had not succeeded in releasing the esrog, and there was no possibility of receiving it that day.

I have no words to describe the Brisker Rav's heartache. His face literally turned black from pain and anguish. Finally, he turned to me and said, "Even if I won't have the esrog for Yom Tov, it is still very important to me that I have it for Chol Hamoed." He asked that I continue to try and procure the esrog. He stressed that the sooner he gets the esrog the better.

I did everything that I could but was unsuccessful. I repeatedly attempted to the chief administrator, but he had left for Sukkos vacation, and I was unable to locate him either on Motze'ei Yom Tov or on the first day of Chol Hamoed. I enlisted the aid of all the high-ranking customs officials, but no-one came up with any leads.

Hours passed, then days, and no esrog. In the meantime, messengers from the Brisker Rav came to me every half an hour to see if there had been any progress. Each time I answered that there was a bit more progress, but I still did not know what the final outcome would be. I cannot describe the tension, pain and anguish that the brisker Rav went through during Chol Hamoed. He did not take a break for one second. Instead, he kept coming up with new ideas of how to release the esrog from customs.

Finally, I found the chief administrator, although I no longer remember if he was in Israel or abroad. I asked that he issue clear instructions to the airport officials to release the esrog. He replied, "I would love to help, but I'm not authorized to issue such instructions."

"Who does have it?" I asked "The minister of agriculture. It was already Hoshana Rabba I began searching for the minister, Mr. Kaddish Luz who lived in a kibbutz. I called the office of the Kibbutz and Mr. Luz was ill and was in the hospital. I traveled to the hospital and requested Mr. Luz to help us get the esrog. We got a hold of stationary, and he wrote an order allowing the esrog to be released.

I contacted the airport official and told him I had the paper and he said he would wait for someone to come get it. I then told the Brisker Rov the good news that within a short time he would receive the esrog. I sent someone to the Lod airport, but when he arrived, the office was locked and bolted shut! They had locked the office of the esrog!

I literally shook with dread. There was nothing left to do. I entered the Brisker Rov's home worried and fearful. How would I break the news? When I entered the room, to my surprise, the Rov smiled and said, "Nu, Reb Shlomo, so there's no esrog?" I confirmed but I asked why is the Rov smiling? The Brisker Rov responded in Yiddish "AZ MEN HOT NISHT, IZ MEN PATUR! If you can't, you're patur!

As long as there was a chance that I can get an esrog, I did whatever I could. As you know I was fearful troubled and pained by the situation. But now that we have tried everything, so what reason do I have for being upset? That is the answer to your question why I am calm and in a great mood – if you don't have the means to do the mitzvah you're patur.

Fascinating INSIGHTS



Laughter and Learning

Laughter occurs when something unexpected disrupts our assumptions. A good joke catches us off guard, forcing us to momentarily step outside our usual thought patterns. This expansion of perspective is why humour is a powerful tool for learning. When a person laughs, he becomes more open, more flexible in thought, and more willing to see things in a new way. This explains why Rabba began his *shiur* with *milsa d'bidichusa*, humour, making his students laugh—because an expanded mind is better prepared to absorb wisdom.

The gemara (Sukkah 7a), when discussing the minimum size of a Sukkah wall, refers to an expanded tefach as a **טפח שוחק**, a "laughing tefach." Rashi explains that a standard tefach is measured with four fingers pressed tightly together, while an expanded tefach is measured with the four fingers slightly relaxed and therefore somewhat separated, making this tefach slightly larger. The expanded tefach is called **טפח שוחק**, which signifies expansion. - In the same way, when we make others smile and laugh, we help them open up and expand.

R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L would say:

"People think that they have no time to learn Torah. Well, study mussar, and they will soon find that they really have much more time than they think!"

The Most Magnificent Succah by Rabbi Shlomo Landau



Duvid Lelover had a magnificent succah that was made of the finest wood. It had intricate carvings and engravings of the twelve tribes, and many of Yerushalayim's Yidden would visit the succah each Chol HaMoed to marvel at its beauty. It may have been the most beautiful and intricate succah in all of Eretz Yisrael.

One can only imagine the shock of the residents of Yerushalayim when on one Erev Succos, they passed by R' Duvid's courtyard and a simple, plain, and unassuming wooden succah stood in place of the usually stunning succah. Word spread quickly through the streets of Yerushalayim. R' Duvid's succah had been a Succos fixture in Yerushalayim and people just could not imagine a Succos without R' Duvid's magnificent succah!

Many a person approached R' Duvid with concern. "Rebbe, what happened to the succah?!" "Rebbe, Succos without your special succah is just not a Succos!" But the Rebbe just shrugged his shoulders and refused to respond to anyone's questions.

Perhaps the whereabouts of R' Duvid's magnificent succah would never have surfaced if not for Zalman the tailor.

One day, Zalman casually shared a story with a friend. You see, Zalman and his family lived in a tiny teetering hut on the outskirts of Yerushalayim. Poverty was a constant in Zalman's bare home, and the children were always hungry.

During one particularly brutal Yerushalayim winter, the temperatures were lower than usual, and the frigid winds blew fiercely. In most of Yerushalayim's homes, the fires in the fireplaces burned strong to keep the cold out and the warmth in, but

in Zalman's home, the family sat huddled together under whatever clothing and blankets they owned. Zalman simply did not have the funds to purchase wood for the empty fireplace.

Due to the constant cold, Zalman's young son developed a high fever. The doctor was summoned to Zalman's tiny hut and when he entered, he was shocked by the squalor and frigid temperature. "Your son has a serious case of pneumonia. You must figure out a way to heat your home! Otherwise, I am not confident that your son will make it!"

Zalman's worry and concern only intensified. He knew that he must get wood to heat his hut, but he did not have a penny to his name! What to do? Where to turn?

Suddenly, he had an idea. R' Duvid! If anyone can help, it was R' Duvid. Zalman donned his patched and threadbare coat and braced himself as the wind and cold hit him with their full force. He knocked at R' Duvid's door. R' Duvid warmly welcomed Zalman into his home and asked him why he was out in such fierce weather.

Zalman began to cry. "Rebbe, it's my son. He has a really bad case of pneumonia and the doctor says that we must keep our home warm. Rebbe, I have no wood and not a penny to my name to purchase any kindling. Please can you help?!"

R' Duvid was broken by Zalman's desperate situation, but what could he do? He likewise did not have a penny to his name. But he must help!

Suddenly, R' Duvid broke into a smile. "I've got it! I have a wonderful solution. I have plenty of wood for you to warm your home and help your son."

"Really?" Zalman's eyes lit up.

"How?"

"No worries, I have enough wood to last you for a while. Give me a few minutes..."

R' Duvid ran out of his house and grabbed a saw. He ran to his most precious possession, his one-of-a-kind succah and began to saw it into small pieces. He ran back into the house. "Come," he said to Zalman. "Here is a huge pile. Please take as much wood as you need! May Hashem send a speedy refuah sheleimah to your son."

That Succos, while it may have appeared from the outside like R' Duvid was sitting in the simplest of succahs, the inside emanated an otherworldly beauty that certainly came from R' Duvid's superhuman selfless devotion to another Yid.

All About Succos (adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)

Binding the Lulav with its Own Kind

We bind the three species only with their own kind, says the Gemara in Succah (36b), based on the opinion of R. Yehudah, who considers binding the Lulav a Mitzvah. Consequently, were one to bind them with another species, one would be taking, not four species, but five, thereby contravening the La'av of 'bal Tosif' (adding to the Mitzvos).

The Sha'arei Teshuvah writes that in the event that one forgot to bring Lulav branches to Shul with which to bind one's Arba Minim, one is permitted to remove them from one's Lulav with one's teeth, since this constitutes a Shinuy (an unusual way of removing the branches), and conforming with an oft-used rule that the Chachamim did not extend their decrees to cases that are unusual, and certainly when it is for a D'var Mitzvah, such as here. He does add however, that it is better to remove them discreetly (in a location where he remains unseen when he does it).

The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.

The Weekly Vort

■ Holiness Of The Sukkah

R' Yehudah ben Besairah says (Sukkah 9a) that just as the name of Hashem rests on the *korban chagigah*, so does it rest on the *sukkah*. Although the *korban chagigah* is eaten by the one who brings it, and only a small portion of it is offered on the *mizbe'ach*, nevertheless, the holiness extends to the entire *korban*.

In a similar way, the name of Hashem rests on the *sukkah*. Whether we learn Torah or enjoy our meals in the *sukkah*, Hashem's Name is associated with every action done therein. (Divrei Shaul)

■ The Four Species

We take one *esrog*, indicating that we have one Hashem; one *lulav*, showing that we are one nation; three *hadassim*, signifying the three *Avos* – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov; and two *aravos*, symbolizing the two *Luchos*. (Elyah Rabbah 651:1)

■ Greater Than The Perfect Esrog

One year, **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** purchased a particularly beautiful *esrog*. The *esrog* dealer himself remarked that it was among the finest he had ever sold. R' Shlomo Zalman brought it home with joy, treasuring the *mitzvah*.

The next day, a poor widow who lived nearby came to see him. She was weeping. "Rebbe," she said, "I saved up money all year to buy a *mehudar esrog* for my only son, but when I came to the store, I found that someone had just bought the one I hoped to get. My son will be heartbroken..."

Without hesitating, R' Shlomo Zalman took out the *esrog* he had just purchased and handed it to her.

The widow exclaimed. "But Rebbe! What will you do for Yom Tov?"

R' Shlomo Zalman smiled warmly: "For me, there can be no greater *hiddur mitzvah* than bringing *simcha* to a widow and her child on Yom Tov."

That year he made do with a simpler esrog, but his *talmidim* said the joy and radiance on his face throughout Sukkos was unparalleled—because his *esrog* had been infused with *chessed* – truly *mehudar*! (And From Jerusalem His Word)

The Four Species & the Mizbei'ach

Chazal say that whoever takes the four species on Succos and shakes them, it is as if he would have built a Mizbei'ach and brought a Korban on it.

The Mizbei'ach measured 32x32 Amos. Now 32x32= 1024. The combined Gematriyos, of Lulav, Esrog, Hadas and Aravah, believe it or not, equal 1024! (Nachal Kidumim).

A Short Riddle in Honour of Shabbos

When would a person (correctly) add "*yaaleh v'yavo*" to his *Shemoneh Esrei* prayers on a day that is not Yom Tov, *Chol HaMoed*, or Rosh Chodesh?

Rav Shlomah Zalman Auerbauch (*Shulchan Shlomah* 268:fn 3) rules that if a person finds himself on Shabbos without a *siddur* and he does not know the Shabbos *Shemoneh Esrei* by heart, he should say the weekday *Shemoneh Esrei* and add "*ya'aleh v'yavo*," in which he should include the words **ביום השבת הזה** - on this Shabbos day.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



Harav Chaim of Sanz would borrow a fortune of money before Sukkos in order to distribute funds to indigent families for their Yom Tov expenses.

His followers asked him, "Is one actually expected to take out loans in order to donate to others?"

He answered as follows:

"Some people borrow money to adorn the festival with fine clothing and delectable food. – I however, borrow to adorn the festival…. With Charity!"

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport- יעלה ויבא



On Sukkos, as on other Yomim Tovim, we add the special **יעלה ויבא** paragraph to our prayers. Because we say this insertion so often, it unfortunately becomes easy to speed through it by rote without properly appreciating its depth and its meaning.

To prevent this from occurring, it is worth calculating the tremendous number of bakashos that are packed into this paragraph. Although it may seem like a simple question of addition, the correct calculation involves a lot of multiplication.

We begin by asking Hashem **יעלה, ויבא, ויגיע, ויראה, וירצה, וישמע, ויפקד, ויזכר** – ***May there rise, come, reach, be noted, be***

favoured, be heard, be considered, and be remembered. This is a total of eight verbs, each of which modifies each of the six nouns which follow: **זכרוננו, ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל**– ***our memory; our consideration; the remembrance of our forefathers; the remembrance of Your servant Moshiach ben Dovid; the remembrance of Yerushalayim, the city of Your holiness; and the remembrance of Your entire nation, the House of Israel.***

Multiplying the eight verbs by the six nouns to which each verb applies yields 48 requests. Continuing through the paragraph, each of these 48 petitions pertains to each of the following seven requests: **לפליטה, לטובה, לחן, ולחסד, ולרחמים, לחיים, ולשלום**– ***for deliverance, for goodness, for grace, for kindness, for compassion, for life, and for peace.***

Multiplying 48 by seven yields 336 requests in the first section of this insertion. We then proceed to beseech Hashem **זכרנו ד' אלקינו בו לטובה, ופקדנו בו לברכה, והושיענו בו לחיים**– ***Remember us Hashem our G-d on this day for goodness, consider us on it for blessing, and save us on it for life*** – which is an additional three requests, bringing the total up to 339.

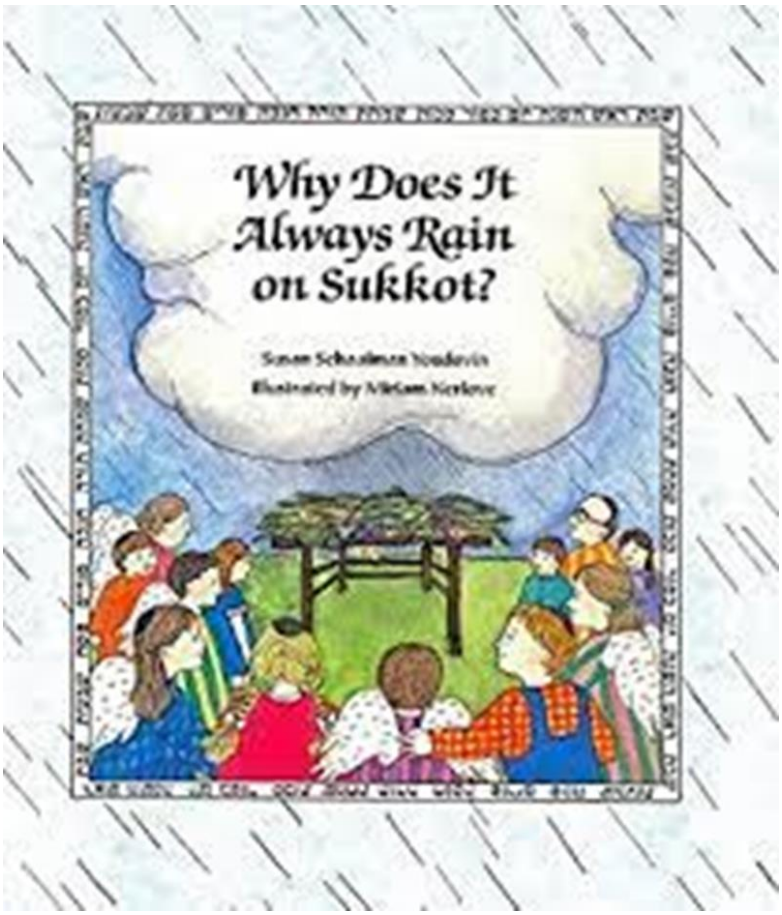
Finally, we ask Hashem **ובדבר ישועה, ורחמים**– in the matter of salvation and compassion – He should **חוס, וחננו, ורחם עלינו, והושיענו**– ***pity, be gracious with us, be compassionate with us, and save use us.***

Multiplying these two subjects by the four requests that we make for each of them yields an additional eight requests, which when added on to the previous count results in a grand total of 347 requests concisely packed into this paragraph that we will be saying more than 30 times throughout Sukkos, hopefully with a newfound appreciation for the tremendous depth of its content.

Leishev baSukkah –by Rav Yitzchok D. Frankel

Our desire to spend time in the Sukkah, may be challenged. Inclement weather is not particularly conducive to staying outdoors in a dwelling with holes in the roof. We are only commanded to live in the Sukkah as we would in our homes. Would we stay in our homes if there was water dripping through the roof?

This presents us with another issue: What do you do if it rains on the first night (or second night, in the Diaspora) of Sukkos (when we have a positive commandment to eat in the Sukkah)? While it is not within the scope of this article to deal with all the philosophical implications of rain on Sukkos, suffice it to say that our sages have told us that it is not a sign of blessing to be forced out of the Sukkah. We pray, therefore, that this question remains in the field of the theoretical.



On the first night of Sukkos a married man or one eating with female family members or young children should wait approximately one hour to see if the rain will stop. If the rain continues, he should go into the Sukkah; say the Kiddush with the "Shehechiyanu" blessing, wash as one usually does before the consumption of bread and eat at least a kizayis of bread in the rain. He should **not** say the bracha of "leishev baSukkah." He may then complete his meal in the house. After the meal, he should wait until slightly before the Halachic midnight to see if the rain will stop. If the rain stops, he

then washes, enters the Sukkah again, says the brocho "leishev baSukkah," eats at least a kibeitza of bread and then says Birkas haMazon.

On the second night, if it rains, one need not wait at all, and he may begin his meal immediately in the house. Kiddush with "shehechiyanu" is made in the house. This would even apply to a single person. At the end of the meal, before saying the Grace After Meals, even if it is still raining, he should eat a kizayis of bread in the Sukkah in the rain. Again, a bracha of "leishev baSukkah" is not said. A bracha of "shehechiyanu" is not needed for the sukkah on the second night. One may then go back into the house to say the Grace After Meals.

According to many opinions, even on the second night, one should wait again until slightly before the Halachic midnight to see if the rain stops. If the rain does stop then the procedure is the same as the first night. On all other days or nights of Sukkos, if the rain is so strong in the Sukkah that if it was raining in the house a person would be driven out of his home to find other shelter, or if the rain is ruining his food, preventing him from eating, he need not eat in the Sukkah. If one has already started his meal inside, and the rain stops, he may complete his meal in the house.

"The most precious thing we have is time. You woke up this morning, Hashem gave you the biggest present in the world. – Time is potential. Time is life. No Time, potential is over." ~ Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein Zt'l.

"The mitzvah of residing in a sukkah is so encompassing that it even includes the heavy winter boots that one wears!" ~ R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk ZT"L

Parsha Points to Ponder

If a person doesn't recite the invitation to the seven Ushpizin to join him in the sukkah, do they still come?



The **Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah** notes that the passage in the Zohar HaKadosh which discusses the Ushpizin implies that they only come if they are verbally invited to come.

The custom of **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** was to invite the Ushpizin only once, on the first night of Sukkos, which he maintained sufficed for the entire Yom Tov.

The **Kaf HaChaim** writes that just as a chair is designated for Eliyahu at a circumcision, so too should a chair be set up in the sukkah for the Ushpizin. The **Chida** derives from the Zohar HaKadosh that if no chair is provided, the Ushpizin will not come into the sukkah.

"Hashem's presence can be felt in every aspect of creation, from the smallest blade of grass to the grandest mountain." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

The Special Succah



The Succah and the Mitzva of the four species has the power to give us special protection and support from Hashem spiritually and physically. The following are some allusions to this:

A) The word **סכה** forms an acronym for **סומך כל הנופלים** , ***He supports all the fallen ones.***

B) The term **סכה** is related to the term **סכך**, protection. Indeed, the Succah corresponds to the **ענני הכבוד** which protected us in the desert.

C) If we spell out the letters of the word **סוכה** (**סמך , ואו , כף , הי**) and then add up the letters our result is 248. In our body, there are 248 limbs. This is the meaning in **סומך ה' לכל הנופלים** - Hashem helps the entire person, every limb on his body. In fact, Succah is a Mitzva we do with our entire body, when we are in the Succah. This is in contrast to other Mitzvos for example Tefillin encompasses only the head and arm. Tzedaka is with the hand and so on.

E) Each of the four species we shake on Succos corresponds to a different body part: The Lulav to the spine, the Esrog to the heart, Hadas to the eye and Arava to the lips. Looking at the first letters of **הדסים ,לולב, אתרוג,** and **ערבות** we arrive at the word **אעלה** , to elevate, as this is what it does to us.

Not surprisingly the first letters of **וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת** *purify our heart to serve You sincerely* spell **לולב**.

The Well of Love

We know that Succos corresponds to the **ענני הכבוד** - ***clouds of glory***.

The Mabit (1500-1580) asks why is there only a Yom Tov for the **ענני כבוד** and not for the **מן** or the **באר**, well of water, as these were also in the desert at that time?

There is that which is expected of us and that which is above expectations. It is expected that a mother provides shelter for her child. However, when she buys ice cream and adds the sprinkles her child enjoys, that is above what is expected. This demonstrates the mother's love for the child. It is the unnecessary details that are done that show love.

With this we can answer our question. In the desert, the **באר** and the **מן** were necessities since we can't live without food or drink. The **ענני כבוד**, however, was an unnecessary detail. This showed Hashem's love for us. For this reason, we have a Yom Tov—Succos—only for the **ענני כבוד**.

Sharing An Esrog

In the 1700's there was a community that had only one Esrog during Succos although they had many Lulavim. In a community that was 40 hours travel away there were no Esrogim at all. During Succos this community sent a messenger to the community with the Esrog pleading with them for the Esrog as they relied on them each year for the four species. They reasoned that since the other community already fulfilled the Biblical Mitzva- which is on the first day- and even days after that, they should now receive the Esrog so that the Mitzva shouldn't be completely missed. This brought about a disagreement in the city as some said to send it whereas others said don't. Since they were in doubt, they didn't send it. **R' Dovid Pardo** was asked what should have been done?

He replied that the Esrog should've been sent so that they shouldn't be lacking the Mitzva completely. He explained that the Mitzva of the four species after the first day is Rabbinical whereas Gemilus Chassadim is a stringent Biblical Mitzva.

The Way To Live



To be in the Succah is to live with Hashem. It comes as no surprise that the initials of **בסכת ימים תשבו שבעת** *you shall dwell in Succos for 7 days*, spell **שבתי**. This refers to **שבתי בבית ה'**; ***I dwell in the house of Hashem***, since living in the Succah is dwelling with Hashem.

The Succah is the idea of **וי- ה- ו- ה בהיכל קדשו**; *Hashem is in His holy Sanctuary*. **היכל** has a numerical value of 65, the same as **אדנ- י**.

י- ה- ו- ה has a sum of 26. The two together have a total of 91, the same sum as **סוכה**. With this we can take the words of the Gemara that says **שם שמים** attaches itself upon a Succah, literally, as **סוכה** shares the same numerical value as **י- ה- ו- ה** and **אדנ- י**. Additionally, the root of the word **אמונה** - which is the idea of the Succah- is **אמן**. This also has a Gematria of 91.

The Gemara says a Succah that is not 10 Tefachim high is invalid. This is because the Shechina doesn't descend lower than 10 Tefachim. This is telling us that the Shechina dwells in the entire Succah!

Rabbi Dovid Kaplan -Today's Clouds of Glory



According to the opinion of R' Eliezer in the Talmud (*Sukkah* 11b), the underlying reason we celebrate the holiday of Sukkot is in commemoration of the Clouds of Glory which surrounded the Jewish people throughout their travels in the desert.

Yet, when considering this, the obvious question stands out. The Jews were not only privy to the miracle of the *Annanei HaKavod* in the desert. They also received the daily provisions of the *manna* and were supplied refreshing water from the Well of Miriam. Why in fact then do we not commemorate those miracles? Why didn't Chazal enact a holiday during which we would go swimming for seven days or turn on all the faucets in our house? Or why don't we have a Yom Tov during which we eat food which incorporates a variety of flavours akin to the *manna* which tasted like anything you wished?

There is very good reason to celebrate the miracle of the Clouds of Glory even in our day and age. And that is because the purpose they served still lives on with us. And that is the concept of ***hashgacha pratis***.

The Annanei HaKavod represent that we are completely enclosed and watched over by the hand of G-d. As it relates to the Well of Miraim and the manna, those were miracles only experienced at the time the Jews traversed the desert. They were limited to that generation. But Divine Providence exists quite clearly even today. Hashem has always been involved and will continue to be involved in the daily running of the world.

One day, a man phoned the Rosh Yeshiva of a yeshiva in Israel. Explaining that he had seen an ad for the yeshiva in the newspaper and was overly impressed, he asked if he could make a donation. While the Rosh Yeshiva assured the man that they had placed no ad in any newspaper, the man remained undeterred.

"I will be down at the yeshiva a bit later today," he said. Sure enough, later that day, the man pulled up in front of the yeshiva in his fancy, expensive car. Entering inside, he went on to approach the Rosh Yeshiva. "Rabbi," he said, "I am so taken aback by your ad. Would you mind if I take a look at the premises?" Gladly complying with his request, the Rosh Yeshiva went on to provide a tour of the building.

After doing so, the man said, "Rabbi, I initially had in mind of giving you $80,000. But I am in fact so impressed with your entire system of operations that I have decided to give you an even $100,000. Taken aback by this stranger's beneficence, the Rosh Yeshiva gave it one last try. "Just tell me again, what brought you here?" "Don't you know," he said, "the ad you have in the newspaper…?" And with that, the man wrote out the cheque and walked back to his car.

The Rosh Yeshiva called over Moshe, the yeshiva's head of operations. "Did we submit an ad for any newspaper recently?" Without a moment's thought, Moshe said, "Not that I am aware of." Without any explanation for how such a cheque ended up in their possession, the yeshiva went on to investigate the matter. And sure enough, the true story was uncovered.

Fifteen years earlier, a religious newspaper had just begun its publication in Israel. Desperately wishing to break into the market, they struggled to meet any significant success. After two weeks and two editions released, they were running out of funds. And so, they turned to various organizations for support to stabilize themselves. Asking even *yeshivos* if they would be willing to submit an ad into their paper in lieu of a donation, this particular yeshiva consented. While nothing substantially materialized from the ad, the newspaper wound up in the local barber shop. And for fifteen years it did not

move. The newspaper remained sitting in the same barber shop for fifteen years.

And then the day finally arrived. Fifteen years later, in walked a man to get a haircut, grabbing a newspaper as he took a seat. And what did he then see inside? The ad for this yeshiva. And so, a decade and a half later, the ad the yeshiva submitted came through. Just imagine the likelihood of a newspaper sitting in the same spot for years and a man being motivated to donate thousands of dollars as he sits on a barber's chair getting a haircut.

That is what it means to have hashgacha pratis in our day and age. When we sit in our Sukkah and observe our surrounding enclosure, all we must remember is that Hashem does the exact same to us. He closely watches over us every moment of every day and every night. And even fifteen years later, He still watches over us…

Mrs. Charlene Aminoff -My Dear Gali

שהחינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה Who has kept us alive, sustained us and brought us to this time

It was a beautiful day in Miami Beach, Florida. Deciding with my husband, Jonathan, that we would take the kids to the beach to go wave running on jet skis. But then I noticed that my 2-year-old daughter, Gali, had fallen asleep next to the pool. Not wishing to disturb her and wake her up, I asked my housekeeper if she could keep an eye on her while we would be away for a little while.

We soon realized that we had a problem. Once they had made it all the way out into the water, their jet ski broke down. All that could be heard were their screams for help. But, to be sure, help only arrived quite some time later. By the time they returned to shore, it was 3:30 pm.

At this point, Jonathan realized that it would not be worth heading upstairs for only half an hour. And so, as the saying goes, if you

cannot beat them, join them. Deciding that he would stay with us, we all agreed to make our way down to the pool and have lunch.

Walking closer to the pool, as we finally arrived, we were met by yelling and screaming. "Somebody call 911! Somebody call 911!" With my husband having been an experienced medic for Hatzalah for over 20 years, he immediately sprang into action. Turning to the man screaming, he asked, "What's the matter? I can help you!" It was at that moment that I finally saw what the source of the commotion was. There stood a man holding the dead body of a little girl in the pool.

My heart started racing. "She looks so familiar," I said to myself. And then, all of a sudden, I looked to where my 2-year-old daughter, Gali, was supposed to have been sleeping. She was not there. But my housekeeper was asleep right next to her.

If I could tell you what gehinnom felt like, I could describe it in vivid detail. All I could think was, "What am I going to do? How am I going to wake up tomorrow and live?"

My husband immediately grabbed Gali and started performing CPR. Yet although he was keeping his cool, he was yelling, "Gali, come back to daddy! Gali, come back to daddy!" As for myself, all I could do was stand there and look at my daughter. Her eyes were open, face was blue and nails, purple. At that moment, one thought raced through my mind.

While I hadn't been religious my whole life, one major connection I always had with Judaism was Tehillim. And in chapter 119, the first verse beginning with the letter kuf says, "And I cried out with all my heart, answer me Hashem; I will keep Your ways." As I pondered this Pasuk, I realized what I had to do. I would have to give something to Hashem. I would have to offer something big of myself to Hashem if I wished to change the circumstances I was looking at. There was only one thing I could think of, though: my beautiful hair.

Although I was Torah observant, I was not covering my hair completely. I had been wearing my hair down with a bandana, hat or beret, but not fully covering it. The reason was because my beautiful blond hair stood out as my identity. I also always figured that being the wife of a CEO of a hedge fund, I would certainly be unable to walk into a gala dressed in a Carolina Herrara outfit, bedecked in Harry Winston jewellery and yet wearing a sheitel or mitpachat on my head. It just didn't make sense to me. And so, I kept on pushing it off. Until one day, when that all changed.



That day was July 26, 2010. As I stood watching my husband perform CPR on my little daughter, I grabbed my blue pashmina shawl and started screaming and sobbing, "Shehechiyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh!" And with that, I began to wrap my long, thick hair.

It took me minutes to wrap everything. I was screaming, sobbing and wrapping over and over again. All that I could imagine was how all the jewellery, money and luxuries I owned would not matter at all if I would wake up tomorrow and not have Gali. At that moment, all my priorities in life drastically shifted.

By the time I finished wrapping all my hair, I looked over at my husband. He recognized what I had done and knew that I had just accepted upon myself a lifelong vow, regardless of Gali's outcome. I was going to be covering my hair for the rest of my life. As for Jonathan, he too realized that now or never was the time to turn to Hashem. And so, he began storming the heavens. Shaking and begging Hashem to revive our dear daughter, I could tell that he was having an intensely emotional conversation with G-d. He had noticed

me wrapping my hair, and he knew that he too needed to do something if we wished Gali to stay with us.

By the time I finished saying my Shehechiyanu and tucked the last strand of hair into my shawl, my husband finished his short tefillah to Hashem.

And then, at that very moment, he started screaming, "I got her pulse! I got her pulse!" To this day, that is my favourite sentence he has ever said in his life. More than "I love you" or "Will you marry me?" those four words, "I got her pulse!" were the best words he ever said.

The stretcher was waiting, and so we quickly loaded Gali into the ambulance and headed off for the hospital. Jonathan stayed in the ambulance with Gali, while I followed behind with police escort.

By the time I entered inside the hospital, I was met by my tough CEO husband crying uncontrollably. Fearing the worst, I began screaming. I knew that if he was crying, I should be too. But then, he picked up his hands from his face, and he was smiling. And so, I started dancing. Jonathan was smiling, so I was dancing. And so, there I was dancing in the middle of the hospital. When the doctor shortly thereafter came out and told Jonathan that he had saved Gali's life, he cried ten years' worth. We had been married for ten years at the time, and not once did he shed a tear. He made it all up on that one day.

My daughter, Gali, was clinically dead for 3 minutes and 10 seconds. A little 2-year-old weighing 22 pounds remained underwater without taking a breath for 3 minutes and 10 seconds. Considering her situation, we went on to transfer her to the Miami Children's Hospital in Coral Gabels, a special hospital for drowning victims. As we did so, my husband flew down some of the most prominent neurologists. And after 8 hours of tests, worldwide Tehillim and every member of my family accepting upon themselves one area

of tznius to improve in, we waited for the neurologist to tell us news of our daughter.

At this point, we knew that Gali was alive but knew nothing about her neurological state. My husband had flown in one of the top neurologists in the country from Boston, Dr. Keith Meyer. Finally, the doors opened, and out walked Dr. Meyer, joined by his entourage. "Mr. and Mrs. Aminoff," he said, "we are doctors and we practice medicine. And the basis for medicine is science." Right there and then, Dr. Meyer started crying. "But your daughter, Avigail Chanah, is not science. And she is not medicine. She is a miracle!"

Lighting up the wall with all of the CAT scans and MRI tests that had been taken, he said to us, "3 minutes and 10 seconds of your daughter being clinically dead, and not a trace of brain damage."

The wall was then lit up with x-rays from her lungs. It was not in any way noticeable that she was underwater for even 10 seconds. Her lungs were perfectly clear. Then her blood work was put on display. "Not one trace of abnormal blood gas results in your daughter's body. We cannot make sense of this," Dr. Meyer said.

As I remained sitting there with my huge, blue shawl on my head, I pointed upward towards it. "I think I know what it is," I said.

Stopping for a moment, my husband and I turned to Dr. Meyer and said, "Are you Jewish?" "I actually am," he said. Continuing to question him, I asked, "Do you believe in G-d?"

Dr. Meyer looked at the other doctors, and together they all nodded. "I guess we do now." "Mrs. Aminoff," said Dr. Meyer, "I am going to be honest with you. Until today, I don't know what I believed. But I promise you that I can go home tonight and tell my wife and kids that there must be a G-d because of your Gali. We are practical people who use statistics and proofs. But this is clearly the working of G-d."

As I heard those words, all I could think of was that perhaps this nightmare occurred for this one doctor in Coral Gables to turn his life around and become a baal teshuva. I would never know, but without question, that was a most reasonable consideration. Yet, clearly, there was much more that Hashem had in mind for me and my family. The doctors then gave me and my husband a few minutes to regroup. I knew that now would be the best time to inform Jonathan of the few changes I had committed to. But I didn't know how to break it to him. I was almost waiting for someone to make an introduction, but that was not going to happen. And so, I mustered the courage myself to broach the subject.

"Jonathan," I said, "there are a few things I need to tell you." "No, no, me first," he said. "No, trust me," I said to him, "you want me to go first." "Okay, what is it?"

"Well," I began, "first of all, I will not be wearing bathing suits anymore. Second of all, I will no longer be able to shake any of your business partners' hands because I am shomer negia. Thirdly, all my designer gowns and clothes that have slits will have to be closed. Additionally, the movie theatre which you just finished building in our basement is not going to be plugged into cable. And lastly, I am going to cover my hair."

He thought for a moment and just stood there. I could only imagine what was running through his head. "How am I going to tell the guys?"

But now it was his turn. "Honey, when you reached over for your shawl, I realized right away what you were about to do. To be honest, I was so happy with your decision because I knew that there was no way I would be able to get Gali back on my own. And in fact, you actually encouraged and inspired me to offer a little sacrifice of my own. As I saw you wrapping your shawl, I turned to Hashem and said, "Hashem, I have given You 20 years of work in Hatzalah. Now I am cashing in all those merits. If You give me back my daughter, I promise You 20 more years in Hatzalah.

"At the moment I finished with my promise for Hatzalah and you finished with your Shehechiyanu, I felt Gali's pulse. So honey, I am going to be in Hatzalah until I am 58 years old." After this little discussion between me and my husband, the doctors returned and told us, "You can now take your miracle daughter home. No follow-ups are needed."

And there we were. She had fallen into the pool on Monday, was released from the hospital Tuesday night, and Wednesday morning, she was back in the pool. I myself did not look once at the pool for another two weeks, but Gali was back in action without undue delay.

The next day, the building hosted a little party for us, partially in recognition of the amazing survival of Gali and partially in the hope that we would not sue them. At the party, we met the man who had saved and held Gali's body while in the pool. His name was Richard Marianski.

Walking over to us, he said, "Do you know that your daughter is a miracle?" "Yeah," we said, "we know she is a miracle.

"No," he reiterated, "she is really, really a miracle. - You don't understand. I live in this building two months out of the year. Yet when I live here, I never have time to go swimming. But on Monday, I happened to go swimming because I had an appointment later in the day and it was a beautiful day out. I figured that I would go for a quick swim.

But that is only half the story. "You see, I was doing laps in the deep end and your daughter, Gali, had fallen into the pool all the way on the other diagonal side of the pool, in the shallow end. After I finished my laps, I began thinking that I would climb out of the pool using the ladder in the deep end, next to where I was. But I couldn't do so, as just a bit earlier, I had pulled a tendon in my knee. It would have been too difficult for me to use the ladder and climb out of the pool. I therefore decided to use the steps in the shallow end. But I didn't swim straight from one end of the pool to the other end.

Instead, I chose to swim diagonally across the pool from one side to the other. And there I saw, underneath the water, a little ball lying at the bottom of the shallow end. That was your daughter, Gali."

As Richard relayed this information, I couldn't believe my ears. I could just imagine what would have been if Richard woke up that morning and his knee wasn't hurting him. There was no way he would have swum to the shallow end. He would have simply climbed out of the pool in the deep end, grabbed his towel and left. And there was no one else in the pool at the time.

When we later arrived back home in New York, we immediately began planning a huge seudat hoda'ah (meal of thanks) as per one of the vows I made. Sponsoring a meal for many guests, we wanted to additionally hold a private gathering for rabbanim in our home to recall the miracle we experienced. Inviting local rabbis and some others from Israel, we hosted them together at our house.

Telling us that we had been the recipients of an enormous, open miracle, they suggested that we accept upon ourselves something uniquely special as a sign of hoda'ah for Gali's survival. And so, we went on to create Gali's Couture Wigs, a sheitel company based out of Great Neck, New York.

Behind the Scenes

Of the many behind-the-scene miracles which occurred and were clearly orchestrated by Hashem in saving Gali's life, let me share with you one which stands out most prominently.

When Gali was born, she was diagnosed with a terrible case of sleep apnea. While I had been told over and over by her ENT doctor that she needed to have her tonsils removed, being her worried mother, I did not want to see my 2-year-old daughter under anaesthesia. And so, I kept on pushing it off to a later date. Shortly before we left to vacation in Miami, the doctor said to me, "Mrs. Aminoff, the tonsils need to go." "Please," I said, "we are about to leave on a vacation for 8 weeks." "I am sorry," repeated the doctor, "but you

have to do it now. I am not going to allow you to push it off any longer. Your daughter needs to grow and needs to eat."

Telling him that we would take care of it immediately after we returned from Miami, the doctor conceded. "But we are booking the date right now," he said. That was fine with me. As long as it wouldn't need to be done right now.

After vacationing in Miami and returning to New York, sure enough, we had her tonsils removed. But then, shortly after her surgery, her ENT doctor came racing out of the operation room with his face palely white. He knew what had happened to Gali just the other month.

"Mr. and Mrs. Aminoff," he said, "her tonsils saved her life." "What are you talking about?" I said.

"If you would have listened to me and taken out her tonsils earlier, there is no way she would have survived drowning. Clearly, though, Hashem made you delay removing her tonsils so they could remain in her body." He then went on to explain exactly what he meant.

"You see, your daughter's tonsils were in such poor condition and so significantly damaged that they trained her body to function on very low levels of oxygen. It was almost like a mountain climber who must use oxygen when climbing to high altitudes because the air is so thin. Your daughter was basically breathing like a mountain climber. If she would have had her tonsils removed, within 24 hours, she would have reverted back to normal breathing like every other child. Yet under such conditions, there is no way she would have survived being underwater for 3 minutes and 10 seconds. And so, Mr. and Mrs. Aminoff, that is why I say Hashem had you postpone her surgery. Her tonsils saved her life."

Having experienced such a riveting journey, my husband and I realized that Hashem had been sending us countless wake-up calls throughout our life, yet we hadn't picked them up. But now, we finally

had. And without question, it was a wake-up call which would change the course of our lives forever. Baruch Hashem.

Rabbi Chaim Rosenfeld- The Flight of a Lifetime

ושמחת בחגך - *'And you shall rejoice on your festival...'* *(Devarim 16:14)*

Looking to purchase some real estate, David finally found the land of his dreams in Australia for ten thousand dollars. A week later, however, he received a phone call. It was an oil company interested in the land David had purchased. "We will give you ten million dollars for this land," they said. With his jaw dropping, David immediately agreed. "There is one condition however; you must be here in Australia within twenty-four hours to sign the contract."



Hearing this, David immediately races to the airport. "I need a ticket to Australia now!" David says to the clerk politely yet anxiously. "I'm sorry sir, but all flights are booked." "No, no," says David, "you don't understand. I need to be in Australia within twenty-four hours. If need be, I will charter my own airline. I don't care if it costs me thousands of dollars." "I'm sorry sir, but all our private planes are already taken."

Now getting more nervous, David asks if he can see the head manager. Taking out fifty thousand dollars, David hands the stack of bills to the manager. "Here, please take it. I just need you to get me on a plane to Australia right now!" Sure enough, David gets on the next plane. The only catch is that the restroom is where David will spend the next long stretch of several hours. There is simply no other space.

There is also another man on this plane. A multi-millionaire, he has travelled around the world and lived a life of luxury ever since he knew. But with his children negligently spending all the money he has given them; they break off all contact and relationship with their father. And then the man's wife leaves him. Now depressed and all alone without any family, he decides he needs to get away and buys a first-class ticket to Australia. Being served champagne and all sorts of other delicacies, he comfortably sits back and relaxes.

The stewardess then gets on the PA system with an announcement. "Who is the happiest man on this plane?" Everyone immediately turns their head in the direction of the wealthy man in first-class. "Now let me ask you, who is the saddest man on this plane?" Still standing cramped in the tiny bathroom is David. Who in reality, however, is the happiest man on this plane? David. Although he is in the bathroom, he is looking at his watch and thinking, "Nine hours to go!" And who is the saddest man on this plane? The man in first-class. Without a relationship with his family and all alone, life is depressing.

What distinguishes David from this other man? Destiny. While the man in first-class may be enjoying a momentary comfortable ride, he knows that he is landing to a life of misery. David, however, although at the moment quarantined in an uncomfortable bathroom, knows that in just a matter of hours he will be ten million dollars richer.

The same is true of life. We are all on a plane. The airplane picked us up in the hospital as a baby and will drop us off after a hundred and twenty years. And while some people may get to sit in first-class, others will ride in business, coach or the cargo. And then there will be those who sit in the bathroom. But it does not make any real difference. What will determine one's happiness in life is where they are going and what their destination is. And every member of the Jewish people is on their way to Olam Haba, as our Sages teach, "All of Israel has a share in the World to Come" (Sanhedrin 90a).

As we transition from the days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and enter the joyous days of Sukkot, we must wonder why in fact we are so happy. What has changed that engenders such festive rejoicing? The answer is that now, after more than an entire month of repentance and introspection, we finally have realized who we truly are. We finally have come to terms with our purpose in life and where we are heading. We are on a flight, a long flight, but we know that when we land, we will be the happiest people around. And if that is so, we have all the reason to smile from ear to ear right now even during our flight.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein- A Breath of Life

כי הם חיינו ואורך ימינו ***For they [Torah and mitzvot] are our life and the length of our days…***



Living in Los Angeles today is one of the most sought-after personal trainers for professional sport athletes. Known to have coached many of the biggest superstars in football and basketball, he has a standing reputation as someone who makes champions.

Charging thousands of dollars per lesson and coaching only a few clients per year, only those athletes possessing the will and ambition to make it to the top seek him out. A while ago, this personal trainer was approached by a college football player straight out of school. He had set his sights on entering the NFL and becoming the best of athletes.

In order to prove that he had what it took to make it to the top, the boy was told to meet the trainer at Malibu beach one morning in his

bathing suit. Although curious as to why such instructions were given, the boy did not question the trainer.

He was not the best coach around for no reason, after all. Arriving at the beach as told, the boy met the trainer. "Are you ready?" asked the guru. "Yes, sir," replied the boy. "What would you like me to do? You want me to sprint as quickly as I can?" "No," said the trainer. "Just come with me into the water."

Complying with the instructions, the boy followed the trainer. Moving further and further into the water, the guru kept on walking. By now, the water had reached near their necks. As the boy began wondering what exactly the trainer had in mind, he was told to stop moving. They were now situated quite far out into the water. The trainer then turned to the boy and said, "Okay, now I want you to put your head underwater and hold your breath for as long as you can."

Listening to the trainer, the boy lowered his body and head underwater and began holding his breath. 5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds, 20 seconds… 30…40… 45… Suddenly and unexpectedly, the trainer placed his hands on the boy's head.

Unsure what was going on, the boy tried lifting his head up, but he couldn't move. The guru was firmly holding him down. Having not breathed for quite a while, the boy started thrashing and convulsing in an attempt to take a breath. But the trainer was too strong and well-positioned for any of the boy's efforts to accomplish anything.

By now, the boy was nearly about to faint. With his face purple and having been under water well beyond what he could handle, he was on the verge of drowning and conking out. But then he felt a release of pressure. The trainer had let go. Pushing up with his last ounce of strength, the boy gasped for air like never before. Spending several seconds regaining his composure, the boy then looked at the trainer with a stare of disbelief. "Are you out of your mind? What are you

trying to do to me? I couldn't breathe!" "Lesson over," said the trainer.

Standing there dumbstruck, the boy wondered if this trainer was insane. "What do you mean?" he asked. Staring back at the boy, the trainer said, "When you want to win as much as you just wanted to breathe, then you will become a champion. Until then, it's a waste of time. Only when your desire to win means life or death for you, will you become one of my students and develop into a superstar. But until then, I have nothing to teach you." And with that, the trainer walked away.

The same is true of Yiddishkeit. While life is not always about becoming a champion and most people would strongly object to this trainer's extreme methods, he did hone in on one true life principle as it relates to Torah. When the centre of your world is Hashem and His Torah, you will be able to achieve the greatness the Torah has in store for you. Only when you need Torah as much as you need to breathe, when you feel the need to connect to Hashem as much you need a fresh breath of air, will you develop into that person you aspire to become and rise to the highest of heights.

It most certainly takes hard work, but no one attains greatness easily. Those that push upwards and reach the pinnacle of greatness are those who feel that without this breathe of air, they will not survive. The choice is yours. How much do you want to breathe?

A man who had tremendous success with troubled teens was asked the secret for his success. "It is the same method for dealing with anyone," he replied. "Spouses, colleagues, children, even yourself." - "My goal is to help them imagine what they could be tomorrow, not dwell on what they are today."

Rabbi Paysach Krohn- Heartfelt Words

השדרה של לולב דומה לשדרה של אדם וההדס דומה לעין והערבה דומה לפה והאתרוג דומה ללב *The spine of the Lulav resembles the spine of a person; the Hadas, the eye, the Aravah, the mouth, and the Etrog, the heart* *(Vayikra Rabbah 30:14)*



There is a beautiful organization called Links. Aimed at caring for teenagers who have unfortunately experienced the loss of a parent, Links provides emotional and social support for numerous individuals and families. The first time I looked into the organization, I inquired as to how many children would perhaps be interested in receiving an automated telephone call.

The first time I looked into the organization, I inquired as to how many Simchat Torah message every Friday before Shabbat. I would prepare a two-minute recording which anyone who so desired could listen to. It would consist of a one-minute thought on the weekly Parasha followed by a blessing of "Yesimcha Elokim k'Efraim v'k'Menashe" for boys and "Yesimeich Elokim k'Sarah Rivkah Rachel v'Leah" for girls.

The first time I presented this idea to a group of forty girls, twenty raised their hands and said that they would like to receive the beracha every Friday. And so, the first week, I followed through as accordingly planned. On Motzei Shabbat, I received a print-out of how many girls actually picked up the phone and listened to the message. I was shocked when I looked at the results. Only ten out of the twenty picked up.

Wondering what had happened, I called Mrs. Sarah Rivkah Kohn, founder and director of Links, and asked for an explanation. "Why would these girls register if they do not pick up the phone?"

"Rabbi Krohn," Mrs. Kohn said, "don't you understand? These girls let the message go onto their cell phones so they can listen to it numerous times before Shabbat. They are so desperate to receive a beracha that they want to listen to what you say over and over again. The only way they can do this is if they do not pick up the phone the first time and allow the voicemail to record the message."

As I heard the true reason for these girls' behaviour, I was moved. I confirmed this to be true when a woman later approached me from the Samcheinu Organization, a support group for young widows, and said, "Rabbi Krohn, I just want to tell you how much my entire family appreciates your phone calls. Every Friday at one o'clock, my whole family gathers around the phone and listens to your message. And then again, before Shabbat, we listen to your kind words."

The foremost way to developing a Lev Tov, good heart, is by thinking about others and speaking kind words. It is as simple as that.

Chacham Eliyahu Hamway ZT"L (Av Bet Din of Aleppo)

"The Zohar teaches that Hashem often saves wicked people from harm because in the future, their descendants will be righteous. Based on this, we can understand why Hashem designated the Arava to be placed with the Lulav.

The word **ערבה** has the same numerical value as the word **זרע** (277) which means seed or offspring. Thus, like the Arava, which is likened to the Jew with no Torah or good deeds, even such a person will merit to be joined together with the righteous of Israel - but only on the condition that his children follow along the proper path of Torah and mitzvos."

Greatness does not bring happiness; happiness brings greatness.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Thank You For Life by Rabbi Binyomin Pruzansky



The Chovos HaLevavos teaches that a person should think about all of the good that Hashem has done for him, from the time he was born until today. This should fill him with a deep sense of hakaras hatov, enough to inspire him to serve Hashem with all his heart.

Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein was real and down-to-earth, which made him so effective as a speaker and an educator. He related the stories and ideas that inspired him, believing that if these stories and ideas inspired him, they could inspire others, as well.

More often than not, he was right on the mark. As someone involved with people enduring trauma and challenges, Rabbi Wallerstein used to approach Holocaust survivors and ask them how they managed to survive and then build their lives anew. If these people, who went through such hardship yet kept going, could disclose their secret to Rabbi Wallerstein, he could transmit that information to others, to teach them how to overcome the challenges in their own lives.

One such Holocaust survivor, a very special man named Mr. Weiss, was still serving as baal tefillah for the Yamim Noraim at the age of ninety-seven. Moreover, this was in a tent, during Covid-19, when the world at large was dealing with unprecedented challenges.

Rabbi Wallerstein asked him, "After the war, when you found out that everything was lost, that six million Jews had been slaughtered,

among them your family members, did you have any questions? Did you wonder why Hashem had done this? Please tell me the truth. If you did question Hashem's ways, I understand. You were a young man who lost everything: your family, your friends, your yeshivah, your town."

Mr. Weiss looked at him, eyes piercing, and asked, "You want to know the truth, Rabbi Wallerstein?"

"Yes, I do!"

"I had one question.

When I realized what had happened, I looked up to Shamayim and asked, 'Six million Jews died — and You let me live? Why me? What did I do to deserve life?'"

"You mean, you didn't ask Hashem why everyone had to die?"

"No, of course not. I had my emunah intact. All I asked Hashem was why I merited to live. What did I do to deserve this kindness?

I realized that I would be forever indebted to Hashem. And I made up my mind to make Hashem proud of me. When I go up to Shamayim after 120 years, I want Him to be pleased that He gave me life." - Then he went on to list all of the bnei Torah among his descendants and how he merited raising a family of shomrei Torah u'mitzvos.

"I will come up to Hashem after 120 and tell Him, 'You made a good decision.'" Said Rabbi Wallerstein: "We all need to do this. Before we go to sleep at night, we need to feel grateful to Hashem for all the kindness that He bestows upon us every day. And since Hashem decided to give us life today, that means He wants us in This World.

How lucky we are..." At the end of every day, and at the end of our lives, we want to be able to tell Hashem - "***You made a great decision***!"

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל



Rebbi Meir Baal Haness was a talmid of Rebbi Akiva, Rebbi Yishmael, and Elisha ben Avuyah. His father was a descendant of the Roman Emperor Nero who had converted to Judaism. There are 335 halachos that are mentioned in the Mishnah with Rebbi Meir's explanations. His wife was the famous wise woman, Beruriah.

In one encounter, when neighbouring wicked people disturbed him, she advised him wisely to pray for their teshuva instead of their destruction. Rebbi Meir followed her advice and his prayers were answered (Berachos 10a).

Rebbi Meir was given a title of Baal HaNess (the master of miracles) for the many miracle stories that were told about him. The most famous one is the following:

Once Rebbi Meir's sister-in-law was captured and held by the Romans. Rebbi Meir took a bag of gold coins, disguised as a Roman horseman, and set off to free his sister-in-law. Rebbi Meir approached the guard and offered him the bribe. He explained to the guard that half the money could be used to bribe his supervisors, while the other half was his to keep. When questioned by the worried guard what will happen when the money runs out, Rebbi Meir told him to say "G-d of Meir - answer me!" and that would save him in any situation.

To prove his point, Rebbi Meir threw a clump of dirt at the jail watch dogs. The dogs came running towards him. As soon as the dogs came near, Rebbi Meir said "G-d of Meir-answer me!" and the dogs retreated. Convinced by what he had just seen, the guard released Rebbi Meir's sister-in-law.

Eventually, the guard was convicted by the Roman government for that act and was sentenced to death. When they attempted to hang him, he uttered: "G-d of Meir-answer me", the rope around his neck tore and he managed to run away.

Erev Succos



One year, on the *Shabbos* that came between Yom Kippur and Succos, Yehuda, a boy from America who was learning in *Eretz Yisroel*, went away for that *Shabbos*. He had already purchased his *Lulav*, and he carefully left it near his bed in the dormitory while he was away. When he returned after *Shabbos*, he found his bed a little ruffled, which was not how he left it. His things were moved and knocked around a little, and to his dismay, his *Lulav* had become *Pasul*.

He turned to his roommate and asked, "What happened to my bed?" Yehuda didn't want to confront him about the *Lulav*, so he didn't mention it. The roommate casually replied, "My friend came for *Shabbos* and needed a place to sleep. I knew you wouldn't mind, so I let him use your bed."

However, Yehuda minded very much since he didn't have a *Kosher Lulav* anymore. He was very perturbed, but he kept it quiet and went

instead to speak about his frustration to his *Rosh Yeshivah*, **Rav Nossan Tzvi Finkel, *zt"l***. Rav Nosson Tzvi said to him, "It's a shame that your *Lulav* became *Pasul*, but I have a suggestion for you. Many people bring me *Lulavim* for Succos. They would all like me to use the *Lulav* they bring me on *Yom Tov*. Come over to my house later and choose a *Lulav* from my collection. You can use that one this Succos."

Yehuda was very pleased with this offer, and later that day he came to Rav Nosson Tzvi's home and found several beautiful *Lulavim* lying on the table. He chose one, and Rav Nosson Tzvi said to him, "I'm giving this to you on one condition. You can't bear a grudge against your roommate or be angry at him at all."

Yehuda agreed, and went back to *Yeshivah*, elated at the thought of using such a beautiful *Luluv* on Succos.

Only later, did the family find out the truth about those *Lulavim*. Rav Nosson Tzvi did not really have any extra *Lulavim* and no one had ever brought any for him to use. Before Yehuda came over, Rav Nosson Tzvi asked his family members to put all their *Lulavim* on the table, and after Yehuda had taken one, the *Rosh Yeshivah* gave everyone in his family a *Lulav*. He was the only one left without having a *Lulav*, and he went out to go get one for himself.

Rav Nosson Tzvi loved peace so much that he was happy to give away his own *Lulav* to a *Bachur*, and make sure that no one would be upset with another person, and that there would be peace in the *Yeshivah*!

R' Yehonason Eibeschutz ZT"L (Yaaros Dvash) said:

"Praiseworthy is the person who learns Torah in the sukkah. He who sits in the sukkah for the sake of the mitzvah alone and rejoices in the Yom Tov will be surrounded by a Heavenly cloud. He may not see it - but it surely exists!"

One of the most outstanding stories of escape from Auschwitz-Birknau is the story of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolph Vrba-Rosenberg.



It took place on April 7, 1944. According to the opinions of several historians, the Vrba-Wetzler Report, often referred to as the Auschwitz Protocol, one of the most famous documents in the free world at that period, was a major contributing factor in multitudes of Hungarian Jews not being sent to Auschwitz.

Wetzler and Vrba, two Jewish youths from Slovakia, arrived at Auschwitz early in the operation of the camp. Having been witness to the atrocities occurring in the camps, they found themselves in positions as official secretaries of the camp. This job gave them access to files which contained information about all the horrific activities, the torture, and brutality, and of course the murder. They copied down all the information they could lay their hands on, thus endangering their lives. If discovered, the SS would torture them and then murder them on the spot. Yet, they felt it their sacred duty to document the atrocities and publicize the whole story to the free world. Thus they had to escape. But how to escape Auschwitz-Birkenau?

Very few were successful in avoiding the guards, and of those few, only a handful actually survived. Auschwitz-Birkenau was made up of three main camps - Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Buna. Around each one

of these main camps was a security ring, an internal double fence of electrified barbed wire. Powerful flood lamps lit up the area each night.

For every ten yards, there was a guard tower manned by an SS soldier armed with a heavy machine gun. Each evening the Jews would return from their work and gather inside the outside fence. A count was made. If the number matched the number count from the morning, the guards in the outside towers were released from duty for the night. If one Jew, even one, was found missing, an alarm was sounded and a massive search was commenced, encompassing thousands of personnel, accompanied by two hundred dogs. This continued until either the escapees were caught, or three days passed.

In the interim, the watch around the outside fence was maintained day and night. At the end of three days, if the escapees were still not tracked down, the Germans assumed that they would not be found in light of the intensive search that had transpired within the confines of the camps, and the search was handed over to the authorities outside the camps.

Vrba and Wetzler's plan was simple. They would hide for three days, somewhere outside the inner fence, but within the outer wall. On the third night, after the guards were released, they would slip away under the fence. But how could they hide in a place so well guarded? Where would they hide? How could they evade the intense search that would take place?

Luck had it, that at that time, the Germans decided to build a new camp called "Mexico" in expectation of the Hungarian Jews. In advance of the building, they brought long wide boards of wood with which to build the barracks. The boards were temporarily stored in piles. A group of Jews had the job of piling up the wood. With the approaching holiday of Sukkos in mind, the Jewish underground arranged that one of the piles would be arranged such that inside was a small compartment, large enough for two or three people to

sit, but which could not be discerned from the outside. The pile would look just like all the other piles. It was into that tiny compartment that Vrba and Wetzler crawled and hid.

Night fell, and they heard the Jews returning to the camp; they knew that they were being counted. Then the alarm siren went off, and the search began. For two and a half days, patrols of armed Germans with dogs passed near and on top of their pile. But they weren't discovered. Even the dogs didn't detect them?

They learned a trick from a Russian officer that Russian tobacco soaked in kerosene confuses a dog's sense of smell and so the dogs never found them. Two days passed, then night, and then another half a day. It appeared they were about to succeed. The search parties were tiring. It was the afternoon of the the third day; all they had to do was to wait for nightfall.

Suddenly, they heard voices. Two guards were still searching. One said to the other, "Otto, perhaps they're inside the pile of wood?" "Yeah, sure!" answered the second German, "and the two Jews are inside listening! Forget it. The dogs were here." But they didn't give up. They kept on trying.

Vrba and Wetzler were lying inside, their nerves on the verge of bursting. Many attempts at escape from Auschwitz had failed, and finally they were almost successful in slipping away - and here were two Germans approaching their hiding place. The guards removed one layer of boards. Then, a second layer. There had been 3 layers of boards covering them from the top. Only one layer was left. The two Jewish youths, hiding inside, were preparing their knives as a welcoming gift for the two Germans. But they also realized that even if they kill those German criminals, someone else would catch them. They saw themselves being led up to the gallows, beaten and mutilated. Now at the last minute, right on the verge of their great escape, before their getaway had succeeded, they were about to be caught!

Suddenly, they heard a noise, and the two Germans said to each other, "Ha! They caught them!" and then ran away. Two hours passed, night fell, and they heard the all-clear signal pass from one tower to the other. They waited another two hours until it was pitch black darkness.

All that was left was to lift up the boards, step outside, and slip under the outside non-electrified fence, to freedom. Simple to say, but not for inmates of Auschwitz. They attempted to push up the pile of boards on top of them. Only one row of boards remained, and they found they just didn't have the strength.

For three days they had not eaten or drank. Combined with no sleep and nerve-racking strain, cramped into such a small compartment, Vrba and Wetzler simply didn't have the strength to lift up the remaining boards. Out of desperation, they mustered their last remaining ounce of strength, and slowly, slowly they pushed up another inch, another inch, until they finally pushed off the final layer of boards and stepped out of their hiding place.

Vrba said to Wetzler, "Imagine what would have been if those two German criminals hadn't taken off two layers of boards? If we couldn't remove one layer half a foot thick, then for sure we would've had no chance with one and a half feet of wood!"

Within two hours they were outside the camp. The first person they met was a German woman whose son had been sent to an SS prison camp. She hated the Nazis with a passion. Instead of turning them in, she gave them food. The first Pole they met was a member of the Polish underground and he helped them escape over the border to Slovakia. The first Slovak they met was also a member of the underground and he helped them make contact with the Jewish community in Jernina.

And thus was written the famous Vrba and Wetzler Report outside the borders of Auschwitz.

רַבּוֹת עָשִׂיתָ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹקַי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וּמַחְשְׁבֹתֶיךָ אֵלֵינוּ אֵין עֲרֹךְ אֵלֶיךָ אַגִּידָה וַאֲדַבֵּרָה עָצְמוּ מִסַּפֵּר **"Many, O L-rd my G-d, are Your wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts which are toward us; none can compare to You; if I would declare and tell of them, they would be more than can be numbered."** Tehillim (40:6)

Sitting in our sukkos, we can't help but think about Vrba and Wetzler sitting in theirs! In life, we may find ourselves inside a hole. The Germans are lifting off the layers of planks. But we are in a better situation than Vrba and Wetzler.

Vrba and Wetzler thought they were about to be caught and they were cursing the whole world. They were not able to know that at that very moment Hakadosh Baruch Hu was opening the door for their escape to freedom.

We, on the other hand, are clearly aware of this, because the parts of the play that we do see are so obviously part of His master plan.

R' Eliyohu of Vilna ZT"L (Vilna Gaon) would say:

"There are 91 kosher and 85 non-kosher structures and situations of a sukkah mentioned in Shas. 91 is equal to the numeric value of the word סוכה when spelled in full, indicating a proper sukkah, and 85, equal to the word סכה when spelled without a "ו", indicating a sukkah which lacks kashrus."

The Shelah (סוכה נר מצוה סוף אות ט) writes,

"A person must be happy every day [of Succos], his face should beam with joy because of the holy Ushpizin who dwell with him."

There Are No "Mistakes"



I just met a person from France, while visiting in *Eretz Yisroel*, who told me the following episode. Around 35 years ago, this person had made a *Bar Mitzva* for his son, and "*Rabeinu*" (this is how the Jews in France called **R' Gershon Liebman** - a leader of the Novardok Yeshiva movement after World War II, and rosh yeshiva of Novardok in France) had come to join the *Simcha*.

On the way back, the driver got confused and started driving in precisely the opposite direction!

"*Rabeinu*" noticed that some time had passed, and they hadn't reached their destination. So he asked the driver: Why aren't we there yet? - The driver replied: 'I have gone the wrong way, literally in the opposite direction!'

"So where are we now?", asked "*Rabeinu*". "We are next to the airport near Paris, called Orly". Said "*Rabeinu*": "If Hashem brought us here, it is certainly not for nought! Park your car in the terminal parking area, and enter the station. Look around; maybe there is a *Yid* in distress!"

The driver did as he was told and entered the terminal. It was already the wee hours of the night, and he started circling about the area.

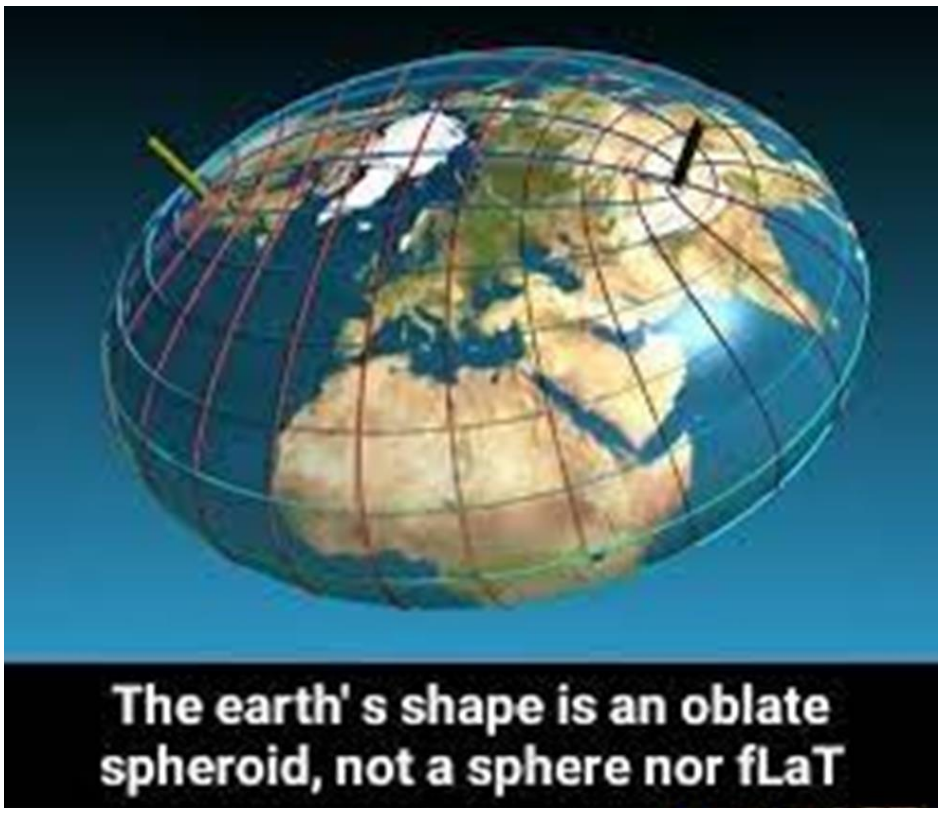
All of a sudden, he was approached by a *Yid!* This *Yid* came from *Eretz Yisroel* to visit his son learning in Bussières (the *Novardok Yeshiva* in France) but he didn't understand a word of French! He had been searching the airport for hours, to find a fellow Jew to

help him find directions. It was so late, and he still had no idea where to go!

Now the driver "understood" the words of "*Rabeinu*". Indeed, there are no "mistakes". *Aderaba*, Hashem deliberately brought them here; in this case, in order to help a stranded Jew in distress! - The driver told him that he can come along, and he took him to his destination, along with "*Rabeinu*".

We see from this story the pure *Emuna* of "*Rabeinu*", that there is no such thing as "mistakes". Everything that happens is Hashem's guiding Hand, and if He brought them here, there must be a good reason.

Earth Is Round?



The "Blue Marble" - as astronauts have dubbed it. Appearances, however, can be deceiving. Planet Earth is not, in fact, perfectly round. Sir Isaac Newton, a 17th century physicist famous for his theory on gravity, first proposed that Earth was not perfectly round. Instead, he suggested it was an oblate spheroid - a sphere that is squashed at its poles and wider at the equator. He was correct and, because of this bulge, Earth has a bit of "plasticity" that allows the shape to deform very slightly.

Our Sages did not need scientific theories to determine the true shape of the Earth. According to Chazal, Planet Earth is shaped like .... an Esrog!

The renowned Tzaddik, **R' Aryeh Leib of Shpola zt"l (Shpola Zaida)** is quoted in Sefer Dor Deah as saying something remarkable: "When I pick up my Esrog on Chag HaSukkos, I see on the face of the Esrog a reflection of the entire Earth, and what has been decreed upon each and every country. The Pitum (tip) on top corresponds to the Northern Pole, while the Uketz (stem) corresponds to the southernmost tip or Pole.

For this reason, we hold an Esrog with the Pitum facing upward for this is how the Earth moves in its gravitational orbit, as explained by those knowledgeable in the science of Geography. The upper half of the Esrog is considered the more esteemed half because it compares to the upper half of the Earth, in which Eretz Yisroel and Yerushalayim are located.

Therefore, during the seven days of the Yom Tov of Sukkos, anyone with a clear vision and deep eyes can see on the face of his Esrog all that he will need for the entire year from whichever country, and he will not need to use (Geographical) charts or maps at all!"

R' Nosson Adler ZT"L (Chasam Sofer's Rebbe) would say: "A person should strive to attain the four species of lulav, esrog, hadas and arava from the Holy Land. This is derived from the posuk in Tehillim (137:6): **תִּדְבַּק לְשׁוֹנִי לְחִכִּי אִם־לֹא אֶזְכְּרֵכִי אִם־לֹא אַעֲלֶה אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַ‍ִם עַל רֹאשׁ שִׂמְחָתִי**: - '***My tongue should cleave to my palate if I do not remember; If I do not set (the thought of) Jerusalem at the height of my joy.***'

The word **אַעֲלֶה** spells out the first letters of **אַתרוג עַרבה לַולב הַדס** and **שִׂמְחָתִי** refers to Chag HaSukkos."

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L (Kedushas Levi) would say: "Rain on the night of Sukkos is considered a negative omen. However, I see it differently. Rain on Sukkos is a sign of protection and good blessings.



When one wishes to protect himself from an ayin hara (evil eye), he spits on the ground three times, so the evil spirits should not attach themselves to him.

Similarly, the rain is Hashem's manner of 'spitting' in order to keep the evil spirits away from His beloved nation. It is surely a good sign!"

Love All Mankind

In the years after he immigrated to British-mandated Palestine in 1936, **R' Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz ZT"L** (Rosh Yeshivah of Ponovezh L'Tzirim) developed a reputation as a Torah educator par excellence. R' Michel Yehudah would often say that he learned from **R' Isser Zalman Meltzer ZT"L and the Chazon Ish ZT"L**, that reaching heights in Torah is contingent on the love that a Rebbe has for his students. R' Michel always recalled the words of the Chazon Ish. "First and foremost, before one begins to teach, one must be an **אוהב את הבריות** (love all mankind). Only then, can one teach Torah."

The Chazon Ish said of R' Michel Yehudah, "When he wakes up in the middle of the night, he thinks about how to relate to each and every bochur and how to help him." This, he said, "is called a mechanech! This is a Maggid Shiur."

As a young man R' Michel Yehudah and his wife suffered the tragic loss of a baby daughter. A pot of boiling liquid accidentally fell on their infant daughter, taking her life. The Chazon Ish came repeatedly to console him and at the end of the shiva period, he sent all the people out of the room and spent the next four hours infusing R' Michel Yehudah with chizuk.

Even during the shiva the Chazon Ish told him he could deliver his shiurim, despite being a mourner, because he had the halachic standing of a person who was needed by the public. R' Michel Yehudah thought he could never be consoled, but the only thing that helped him forget his grief was the Shiurei Torah that he delivered.

R' Michel Yehudah related that soon after he arrived in Bnei Brak, the Chazon Ish asked him to change from his short European-style jacket to a long jacket. R' Michel Yehudah told the Chazon Ish that he didn't have enough money to buy a new jacket, but when he purchased his next jacket, he would make sure to get a long one.

The Chazon Ish asked him, "If you stop eating butter with your bread, how long will it take you to save up for a new jacket?" R' Michel Yehuda said he understood from the question how important it was to the Chazon Ish, that he wear a new jacket. R' Michel Yehudah immediately went to a Gemach (free-loan society) and borrowed money to buy one.

Soon after his marriage, in 1941 (5701), the Chazon Ish gave R' Michel Yehuda the seed of an ungrafted Esrog and told him to plant it in the yard of his home and he will have Parnassa from it. The Chazon Ish guaranteed that Mehudar Esrogim would grow on the tree.

R' Michel Yehudah initially protested that growing Esrogim requires a great deal of care, and he had no experience. On top of that, Bnei Brak was not the ideal climate for growing Esrogim. R' Michel Yehudah explained to the Chazon Ish that the time needed to care for the tree would surely take him away from his Torah learning, but

the Chazon Ish reassured him that Hashem could send the beracha with one gust of wind! All he needed to do, said the Chazon Ish, was to plant and water it - and it would grow!

R' Michel Yehudah followed his mentor's advice and indeed, after



planting and watering it, the tree began to sprout and take root. The Chazon Ish would frequently ask about the tree and would constantly remind R' Michel Yehudah to water it. Compared with other Esrog trees, it needed little care. Yet, every year it grew an abundance of beautiful Esrogim.

His grandson related that during the second year of the tree's life, it looked like it would fail. R' Michel Yehudah reported this to the Chazon Ish who told him not to worry. "If the Ribono shel Olam desires it," said the Chazon Ish, "He can make a wind come that will revive the tree." There was an immediate improvement and, as is well known, the tree lived long after its planting, despite generally short lifespans for Esrog trees.

The first year after the fourth year of the tree's production the Chazon Ish arrived at R' Michel Yehudah's home to personally choose his Esrog, getting down on his hands and knees under the tree branches to select a choice Esrog. Every year after that, the Chazon Ish would buy his Esrog from R' Michel Yehudah's tree. He would come to choose an Esrog, as would the **Steipler Gaon ZT"L**, who always insisted on paying more than the quoted price, saying, "You're giving me everything. I am giving you nothing." And **R' Chaim Kanievsky ZT"L** was known to make his blessing only on an Esrog from R' Michel Yehudah's tree, regardless of whether another might

be cleaner. - These valued Esrogim became known as the famous "Lefkowitz-Chazon Ish Esrogim." Over seventy years later, the tree stood tall in R' Michel Yehudah's yard and produced beautiful Esrogim from year to year.

In the summer of 5771 (2011), R' Michel Yehudah passed away at the age of 98. Within a few months, news emerged from Bnei Brak that the historic tree was dying. Since the time of R' Michel Yehudah's passing, the tree's branches gradually became dried out and the tree withered. The fruit has since fallen off and the branches have completely dried out.

Upon learning of the news, the **Toldos Aharon Rebbe Shlit'a**, who is careful each Sukkos to recite a beracha on an Esrog from R' Michel Yehudah's tree, sent his chassidim to confirm the report.

They indeed found that the tree had withered. Since R' Michel Yehudah allowed certain Esrog growers to take seedlings from his tree to grow entire orchards of Esrogim certified as kosher (mehudar) by the Chazon Ish, those who are stringent to only obtain "Lefkowitz Esrogim" can still find them today, from trees planted with seeds from the original "Lefkowitz Tree."

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT"L (Chorev) would say: "The sukkah is a symbol of universal peace and brotherhood, as we recite in the evening service on Shabbos and festivals: **ופרוס עלינו סכת שלומך** - ***'Spread over us, Your sukkah of peace.'***

The term sukkah in this prayer is not used to describe the outdoor huts that we sit in but rather to symbolize peace and brotherhood, which shall be based, not on economic and political interests, but on a joint belief in the one true G-d."

Jewish Warsaw Was in A State Of Panic!

It was less than two weeks till Sukkos and not a single esrog could be found! Drought and other unfavourable conditions had conspired to create a dire situation where it seemed impossible to procure an esrog - any esrog - let alone a beautiful esrog mehudar. Rabbanim and askanim held meetings with dealers throughout the countryside to come to some sort of resolution, but there was none. But just when it seemed all was lost, salvation arrived in the form of a gentile merchant who rolled into town one afternoon with a wagonload of clean unblemished esrogim!

Apparently, this goy had the foresight to import high quality citron fruit from a neighbouring country, and when he realized his good fortune and the fact that he could command any price for these prized commodities, his greed knew no bounds. The very next day, he set up a stand in the town marketplace and began charging exorbitant prices for the esrogim. A few prospective buyers came by, but they blanched when they heard the price. The gentile did not fret for he knew in his heart that it was only a matter of time before he would have the entire city of Warsaw paying any price he asked! The Jews of Warsaw - and especially the local esrog dealers - were worried about the turn of events and they turned to the **Rebbe of Ger, R' Yitzchok Meir Alter ZT"L** (Chiddushei HaRim) for advice.

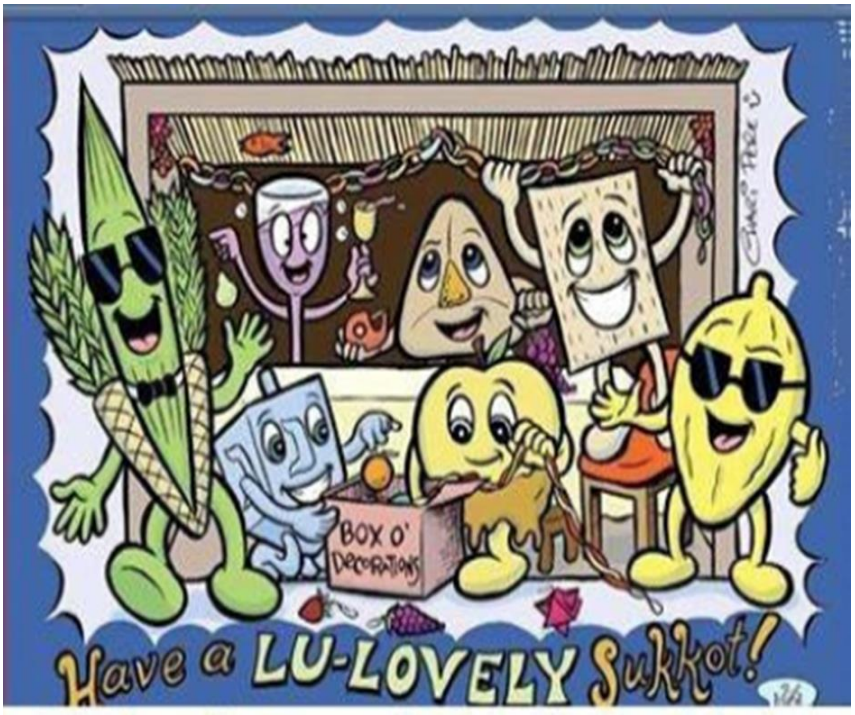
The Rebbe listened quietly to their plight and then he came up with a plan of action. A few moments later, the dealers left his home smiling from ear to ear.

Very early the next morning, the gentile set up his stand expecting that day to be the day he sells out, when he noticed a number of signs in the windows of the Jewish esrog merchants. The signs read: "Esrogim Mehudarim - Cheap Prices." He was shocked. How could it be? He looked in the windows of their shop and lo and behold, there were piles upon piles of bright yellow and green esrogim - beautiful in shape and appearance - some even nicer than his!

He was sunk! He had no idea how they managed to get these esrogim but he knew that now that the Jewish dealers were selling esrogim, nobody would buy from him - and surely not at his high prices. When the next Jew came by his stand and asked how much were his esrogim, he quoted a ridiculously low price and the Jew bought it on the spot. A few more Jews came and he continued to "give away" his merchandise until he had none left.

It wasn't until it was too late that he learned that the "esrogim" in the Jewish dealers' windows were nothing more than brightly painted wood chips and rocks - and he had been duped!

The Joyous Succah



There was once a chasid of the Rebbe, **R' Shlomo of Karlin ZT"L**, who lived in a small town near Karlin, in a small broken-down house.

This chasid did not have much of anything, but nonetheless he was happy with his lot. Every year when the festival of Sukkos arrived, the chasid would wait until everyone else had built their sukkos, and he would then go around and ask for whatever they had left over. People would offer him a rotted board or a rusted nail, and it was from these leftovers that he would build his sukkah. For seven days the chasid would sit in his sukkah and sing with great joy.

Across the field from where the chasid's rundown shack stood, there lived a very wealthy man. This wealthy man owned the local factory and employed most of the town. His house was large, and he

did not lack anything in the way of materialism. But he was not happy. In fact, he was more than just not happy. He was downright miserable.

The rich man's sukkah was a wonder. It was cavernous, with an oak table, candelabra and running water. The sukkah had everything one could imagine. Nonetheless, every year the wealthy man sat in his sukkah, and when he would hear the Karliner chasid singing from across the field, it drove him absolutely crazy. There is nothing that makes a sad person so sad as to meet a happy person, and there is nothing that makes a sad person happier than to meet another sad person.

One year as the festival of Sukkos approached, the wealthy man was struck by an idea. He approached everyone in the town and told them, "Listen here. You are all employed by me, and I give you all that you have. This year, when the Karliner chasid comes around asking for rotted boards or rusted nails, you are not permitted to give him."

Now when the wealthy man issues such a directive, what was anyone to do? After all, the wealthy man did own the town. When the chasid requested from the townspeople if they could spare a leftover piece from their sukkah, the people would just shrug their shoulders, turn their palms up, and shake their heads. "I am sorry," they would say, "but this year I cannot even spare a rusty nail." The chasid was rejected by every single person in town and was about to despair of building a sukkah that year, when suddenly he had a brainstorm. Immediately, he ran to implement his plan.

Sukkos arrived and the wealthy rich man sat at his oak table in his sukkah, with his candelabra and everything he could imagine. The wealthy man recited Kiddush in peace and blissful quiet. He was happy that he would not be disturbed this year by the Karliner chasid.

Suddenly, from across the field, he heard singing! The wealthy man quickly jumped up! "How can it be?" he wondered aloud. He looked outside and lo and behold, across the field, a shabby sukkah was propped against the Karliner chasid's house. The wealthy man ran across the field and burst in on the chasid. "Where did you get the wood for this sukkah?" he exclaimed.

The Karliner chasid received the wealthy man with a glowing face. "Shalom Aleichem! Come in! Sit down!" Still standing, the rich man repeated his question, "Where did you get this wood from?" "I will be glad to tell you," the chasid said, his face aglow. "But first, allow me to tell you a story.

Yesterday, I was looking around town for a way to build a sukkah, and I asked people if they could spare a board or a nail. It was the strangest thing that ever happened to me. It seemed like everyone had used up their materials and there was nothing left over. It was already getting late in the afternoon, and I was still walking around town without even the first board to use for a sukkah." The rich man knew all this and smiled inwardly.

The chasid continued. "And then, who do you think I should run into? None other than the Malach HaMaves, the Angel of Death himself! I was fearful, but I mustered up the courage and asked him, 'Angel of Death! What brings you to town?' The Angel of Death responded, 'Oh, I just have one more pick up today until after the holiday.'

I said to the angel of Death, 'Would you mind if I ask you who it is?'" The rich man was now listening intently. "Now, you will not believe this," the Karliner chasid continued, leaning forward, staring right at the rich man. "The Angel of Death mentioned your name!" Now it was the rich man's turn to get excited, but the Karliner chasid said, "I told the Angel of Death, 'That guy? You came to get that guy? Don't even bother.' The Angel of Death asked me, 'Don't bother? Why not?' I said to him, 'Because he is so sad, it is like he is already dead.'"

The chasid looked at the ghastly white face of the rich man. "'Well,' said the Angel of Death, 'if he is that sad, I guess I do not even have to bother. And with that, he turned and left." "Now," said the Karliner chasid, "I know that the Angel of Death is not returning until after Sukkos, and I also know that the chevra Kadisha keeps wooden stakes that say "Here lies ...." which they put in a new grave before they put up the headstone. I decided to 'borrow' these stakes since no one was using them anyway, and with them, I built my sukkah!"



With that, the Karliner chasid burst into a joyous song. The rich man sat there like a stone. The chasid's words pierced the man's heart like arrows and he began to cry from the depths of his heart. Finally, he asked the chasid, "Please tell me. What can I do? I cannot remove the sadness from my heart. I have everything in life except for joy. And you, who has nothing - from where do you get all this joy?" The chasid responded: "If you want to be joyous, you must go to the Karliner Rebbe. There you can learn what true simcha is." The wealthy man went to Karlin and was transformed into a new person - full of joy and happiness. He became one of the greatest Karliner chasidim.

All that he needed was for someone to ignite the spark that was hidden deep inside him.

"The more you give to a person, the more you love that person. A stranger is simply someone you have not yet helped. Performing acts of kindness for everyone will fill your world with friends and loved ones." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1892-1953).

R' Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dinov ZT"L (Bnei Yissaschar) "The Medrash Raba teaches that the entire world - Jews and Gentiles alike - are judged on Rosh Hashana. However, when Bnei Yisroel walk outside with their Arba Minim on the first day of Sukkos, it is then known that they have succeeded in their judgment.



How does the Arba Minim prove that we have been meritorious in din? Because unlike every blade of grass that has its own guardian angel telling it to grow, the four species are under the direct protection of Hakadosh Boruch Hu Himself. Similar to the Jewish people, who are elevated above the other nations and enjoy unique Divine protection.

Thus, when Jews carry the Arba Minim, it demonstrates the uniqueness of our relationship with the Almighty and it is then clear to all that He has judged us favourably."

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L (Lubavitcher Rebbe) would say: "Although a sukkah is only a temporary dwelling, in certain respects we treat it as if it were our regular home - eating, drinking, and studying Torah in it.

This, too, is the way we should treat the world at large. We should not regard the world as an end unto itself, but rather as a means of furthering our spiritual development and refinement. By properly utilizing the physical world and making the most of it in a spiritual manner, we bring G-dliness into our surroundings, transforming the temporary into something lasting and eternal."

The Vilna Gaon ZT"L

The great love with which the saintly Vilna Gaon ZT"L observed mitzvos is well known, as is the story of how he was prepared to sell his olam haba - his place in the world to come in order to observe a single mitzvah. In fact, in the last minutes of his life, on the fifth day of Sukkos in the year 5558 (1797) at the age of seventy-eight, the Gaon asked for a lulav and esrog in order to perform this great mitzvah one last time.



R' Eliyahu managed to recite the beracha and he breathed his last breath on this world while clutching tightly to the Arba Minim, as if he was trying to take these precious mitzvos with him onto his eternal reward.

Many scholars and students would come from all over to visit with the Gaon and ask him their unresolved Torah questions. Others came just to see him and bask in his "four amos of halacha."

It is told that one bright young student once came on Yom Tov morning, just before the prayer service, to wish the Vilna Gaon, "A Gut Yom Tov." The Gaon, who was always absorbed in his learning, did not notice that he had a visitor.

The young man thought that the Gaon was deliberately ignoring him due to something he might have said or done. He relayed to his father-in-law, one of Vilna's leading laymen and a close acquaintance of the Vilna Gaon, the episode of what had happened.

After the festive Yom Tov seudah, the father-in-law accompanied his son-in-law to the Vilna Gaon's home. The Gaon greeted the layman cordially and wished him a good Yom Tov. The man asked the Gaon whether he had any complaint or grievance against his son-in-law,

mentioning what had happened that morning. R' Eliyahu replied, "Chas Vsholom! What are you saying? Me, angry? For what?"

The father and son-in-law were satisfied and got up leave. In parting, the Gaon turned to the young man and added, - "May you live to be a hundred." Decades passed, and that young man reached a ripe old age, well into his nineties. At the age of ninety-eight, he fell sick. His family wanted to call a doctor, but the man said it wasn't necessary, because he was going to live for two more years just as the Vilna Gaon had blessed him many years ago.

And so it was. No doctor was called. The man recovered and went on to live the full hundred years with which the Gaon had blessed him.

Building a Sukkah



In the last fifteen to twenty years, Judaism has sprung to life across Russia. Jews are practicing their religion openly, where they were once forbidden and imprisoned for doing so. However, when it comes to the Festival of Sukkos, it is really an open miracle, since this holiday was almost completely forgotten due to the dangers and risks of attempting to put up a sukkah or obtain a lulav and esrog, while Communism was in power, and the KGB was on the prowl.

R' Avrohom Berkowitz, the Director of the international Jewish Community of Moscow, recounts a story that he heard not long ago, while visiting Kazan, Russia, a city in the largely Muslim Tatarstan region. Moshe Adinov, a 65-year-old local dentist and regular participant in the daily minyan in Kazan, told Rabbi Berkowitz a

remarkable Sukkos story that must be passed on for further generations.

"My father was Reb Nachum Eliyahu Adinov. He was a sofer in Kazan before World War II. He kept the traditions in our home, but of course there was no Jewish school. I went to public school even on Shabbos. A lot of tradition was weakened. Nevertheless, I remember growing up with as many Jewish traditions and holidays as was possible. "My father was afraid for my future. He always warned me not to repeat to others what we did at home. 'Be a Jew at home and a Russian in the street,' he would always say. In fact, I probably would have never been accepted at university had I been recognized as a practicing Jew.

"We lived in a small wooden home, not in an apartment building like most people. We had a ***besedka***, basically a porch, in the back of our home and every year we'd celebrate the holiday of Sukkos. My father would cover the roof of our besedka with leaves and foliage and we'd invite over many Jewish friends. The well-kept secret was that the only sukkah in town was in our house. My father would make kiddush on wine, tell stories and gently speak to us. It was a most memorable experience and this memory of Sukkos always stayed with me.

"My father died in 1965, and I inherited the house. I wanted to keep that Sukkos tradition alive, to continue the tradition for my children. I thought that, due to his limited means, all my father was able to do was put up trees and foliage. I wanted to do better than him! I had friends in the steel industry, and every year since 1965, I put up a sturdy aluminium roof on the besedka. I was proud that I continued my father's tradition."

Moshe smiled bashfully at the memory. "In 1998, Rabbi Yitzchok Garelik and his wife Chana moved to Kazan. It was so beautiful to have a young Jewish family celebrating in public what I always did secretly. It was incredible for me, and I developed a close personal relationship with their family.

That year, Rabbi Garelik said to me, 'Moshe, tomorrow night is Sukkos, and I want you to come to the beautiful sukkah we built.' When I walked into the rabbi's sukkah, I saw Rabbi Garelik in his holiday finest, holding an overflowing glass of wine, candles shining in his face - and wouldn't you know it - foliage, branches and trees above his head! "I couldn't contain my emotions. I began to cry.

I suddenly realized that what my father did all those years was the way it was supposed to be done, and for the last 30 years, by placing an aluminium roof, I was not doing it the right way. I had only meant to make my sukkah more beautiful!

"Rabbi Garelik said to me, 'Your father is surely looking down from Heaven with all the great Jews of the past and smiling, and I have no doubt that the Almighty had the utmost pleasure from the beauty of your sukkah with the aluminium roof more than any sukkah in the world with the appropriate foliage, because you did it with such love and sincerity.'

The Gemara Teaches Us The Following:

One may not smell (during Sukkos) the hadass set aside for the mitzvah, but one may smell the esrog. The Gemara asks, "Why is there a difference between the hadas and the esrog?"

The Gemara replies that since the main use of a hadas is for fragrance, it becomes muktzah and one may not smell it. But since the main "use" of an esrog is for food, one may not eat it, but one may smell it (Sukkah 37b).

The gematriya of לולב is ***חיים. The Maharil writes that this hints that when one buys a beautiful set of the four minim, he will merit life in this world and the next world.***

Sukkos in Auschwitz

Fulfilling the mitzvos connected with Sukkos in Auschwitz was unthinkable, for an attempt at religious observance carried the death sentence. Yet there were those who did their utmost to perform the mitzvos in spite of the mortal danger, displaying an extraordinary degree of self-sacrifice.



When a new shipment of barracks came in, **R' Tzvi Hirsch Meisels ZT"L, the Veitzener Rav**, spirited one bed out of the storage room and used an axe to break it into pieces. Several boards were used as sukkah walls; other sections were broken into splinters, to be used as schach. Miraculously, no one noticed or heard the loud sounds of the axe. Of course, under such conditions, there were no decorations in this sukkah!

The location of the sukkah, outside where the walls of two barracks nearly met, was kept a closely guarded secret. To the uninitiated observer it appeared to be merely a pile of boards. Each person would make his way inside, quickly eat a kzayis of bread, and then quickly run out.

During the course of the preparations, a unique question arose: is one allowed to make a berachah "**לישב בסוכה**" in this situation? The Shulchan Aruch rules that if one is afraid of robbers or bandits while sitting in the sukkah, he has not fulfilled his obligation Since in Auschwitz, some argued, we are in mortal danger as we sit in the sukkah, can this be fulfilling the mitzvah?

After much debate, the Veitzener Rav ruled that the berachah should be said. He based his decision on the gemara, "You shall reside in the sukkah the way you (ordinarily) live." Explained R' Tzvi Hirsch: "We ordinarily live under dangerous conditions - living in the barracks in Auschwitz is no less dangerous than sitting in a sukkah in Auschwitz. The Germans could come at any minute and take us to the gas chambers, no matter where we are! Our lives are endangered in the same way - whether we are in the sukkah, or in our 'house' - our barracks. Therefore, this sukkah is quite identical to the way we ordinarily live and it is kosher!"

R' Yoel Teitelbaum ZT"L (Satmar Rebbe) would say:



"When Chazal tell us that rain is a bad sign on Sukkos, because it is like a master who is not pleased with his servant's service, that is only in Eretz Yisroel where the rainy season only starts after Sukkos.

So, if it rains on Sukkos, this is unusual, and we take it as a bad sign. But in Chutz L'aretz, where it's normal to have rain in the summer, it's not a bad sign at all if it rains on Sukkos. However, if it doesn't rain, that is definitely a good sign."

"Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable, or happy. The amount of work is the same."

Rabbi Paysach Krohn Shlit'a is known to say:



"Do you want to be happy? Stop thinking about yourself start thinking about others!" This is one idea behind the Sukkah - that we leave our "permanent dwellings" - our self-centred thoughts - and enter our "temporary dwelling," focusing on the needs of others.

As **R' Pam** often quoted: The city of happiness that we're all looking for can only be found in the state of mind! The sukkah also represents humility and the need for a person to be yielding in the way he deals with others. From the halachic requirements of the sukkah, we can learn out the meaning of the sukkah. One should have four walls. However, if he can't manage that, it's okay, no problem, three walls are okay too. And if he is unable to build three walls, that too, is not a problem! Even two walls and a tefach is still kosher. It's all about flexibility and compromise.

As the **Vilna Gaon ZT"L** famously writes, the "**ס**" of the word "**סכה**" represents all four walls. The "**כ**" comes second for this alludes to three walls. And the "**ה**" symbolizes the two walls and a piece! May we take these lessons of thinking about others and compromise to heart and may the joy of this beautiful Yom Tov spill over into our entire lives.

"Would've, could've, should've…" is heresy! What you are really saying is that it wasn't Hashem's will. ~ R' Yissocher Frand.

On the Yom Tov of Sukkos we are told to leave our permanent dwelling and enter into a temporary dwelling. This is to help us continue our upward climb in spirituality that began on the first day of Elul through Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and escalates with the beautiful holiday of Sukkos. There is so much meaning and deep understanding in everything we do on Sukkos, from the lulav, esrog, hadassim and aravos to the Ushpizin who come to visit us each night. But the significance of the Sukkah itself is surely of paramount importance and has much to teach us.

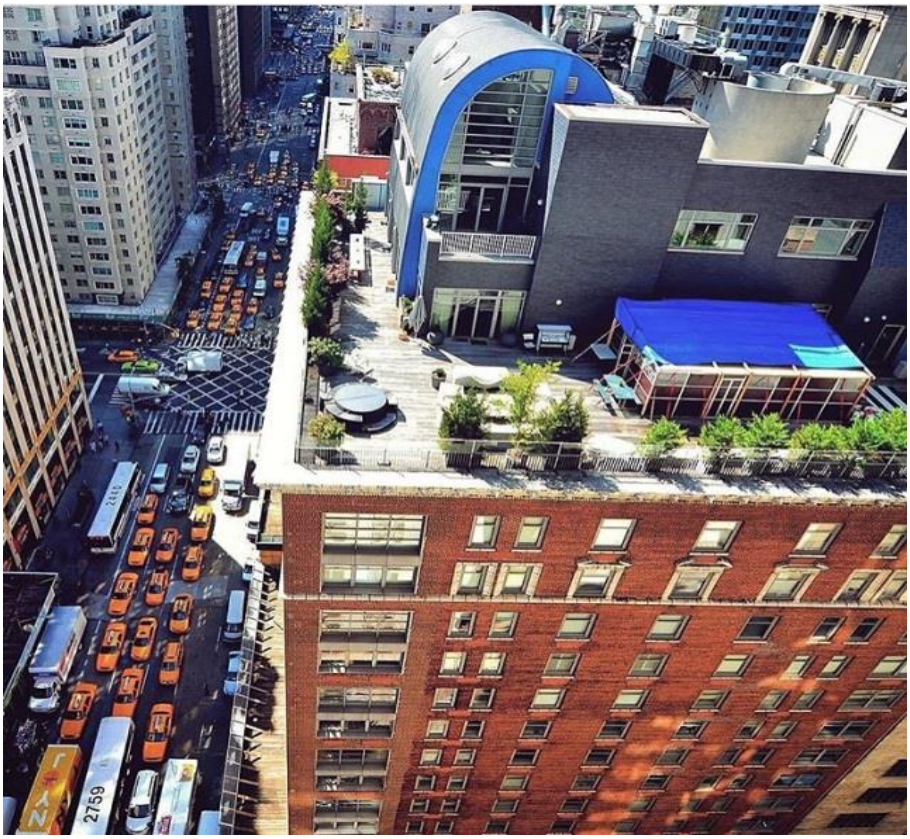


According to **R' Avrohom Pam ZT"L**, the "permanent dwelling" of a person is his own mind! Human nature is to be self-centred. One's thoughts largely revolve around his own needs. Of course, one also thinks about others, about chessed, but that is the "temporary dwelling" of the mind!

The fundamental mitzvah on Sukkos is to be HAPPY!! For this reason, Sukkos is called "Zman Simchoseinu" the time of our rejoicing. Says R' Pam, thinking of the needs of others is the formula for a life of simcha!

Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch, zt"l, writes that there is a lesson that we can learn from the Succah and the Lulav, which teaches us how to look at materialism. When we move into the Succah, it negates the idea that material possessions are our ultimate value. By leaving the comfort of our homes to fulfil the Mitzvah of living in a Succah, it shows Hashem that we don't hold worldly things too highly or as too important.

The Succah on the Roof



A story is told about a person who lived in an apartment building in Manhattan. As there was no place to build a succah, he asked permission from the owner of the building to build his succah on the roof.

The owner said that he would rent the roof to him for $799. The Yid explained to him that there was no reason to charge him for the roof since no one was using it, but this wealthy man insisted that he rent it. As if that wasn't enough, he wanted a signed contract in front of a lawyer that he is renting the roof.

The Yid didn't understand why he was making such a big deal about a rental for a week, but he didn't have a choice other than to agree to those terms. Many things were littering the roof. He spent time cleaning up, so he could have a place for his succah, and that's when he found a bag, filled with expensive gems, concealed under an old rotting pipe.

He brought the bag to the police so that they can assist in finding the rightful owner. A few days later, the police contacted him that the owner of the gems wasn't alive anymore, and according to the law, all the gems belong to him, the finder.

The owner of the apartment building heard about the treasure that was found on his roof and claimed that since it was found on his roof, it should go to him. The matter went to court, and the court ruled

that since the money was found when the roof was legally rented out, the money should go to the finder. *(Wellsprings - R' Biderman.)*



R' Yonasan Eibeschutz ZT"L

The great tzaddik and Rov of the "Three Communities": Altoona, Hamburg, and Wandsbek, was R' Yonasan Eibeschutz ZT"L. Renowned for his genius from a young age, he had earned a reputation as an accomplished scholar in all aspects of Torah study, including Halacha, Drush and Kabbalah. It was this last aspect of his learning that became the centre of perhaps the greatest internal controversy within the Torah community, and eventually the greater Jewish community, throughout the world.

Because of his Kabbalistic abilities in assisting his downtrodden brethren, even as far back as the early 1700's, he was suspected of being an adherent to Shabsai Tzvi (a Jew who proclaimed himself to be Moshiach. Vast numbers of the Jewish diaspora accepted his claims, even after he was proven to be a fake and became a Jewish Meshumad (apostate) with his conversion to Islam in 1666.

Shabsai Tzvi's followers, both during his life and even up to two centuries later, were known as Sabbateans.). R' Yonasan vigorously denied this claim his entire life and even got up one year on Yom Kippur in front of his entire synagogue to denounce the Sabbatean movement.

In 1725, he was among the leading Prague Rabbonim who excommunicated the Sabbatean sect. There were, however, Rabbonim that still harboured suspicions about R' Yonason Eibeschutz and continued to suspect him. Chief amongst them was the great scholar and son of the **Chacham Tzvi ZT"L**, **R' Yaakov Emden ZT"L**, who was the lead antagonist in the dispute since he suspected R' Yonason of harbouring secret Sabbatean beliefs as a result of a dispute concerning the kemayas (amulets) which he was

issuing. It was alleged that these amulets recognized the Messianic claims of Shabsai Tzvi and were thus heretical in nature.

Once the controversy started, however, R' Yaakov Emden later found serious connections between the Kabbalistic and commentative writings of R' Yonason with those of the known Sabbatean, Judah Prossnitz, who had been an acquaintance of R' Yonason from his days in Prossnitz.

After R' Yonasan Eibeschutz passed away, someone opened up his Tefillin and found that they were empty! This caused quite a stir in the community. The students of R' Yaakov Emden, who for so many years had waged a battle against R' Yonasan, pounced on this opportunity to defame the eminent rabbi, saying that he never really wore Tefillin. In their view, this was proof to the validity of their claims that R' Yonason Eibeschutz was in fact a Sabbatean all along.

It took a bit of investigative inquiry but eventually the truth came out: This specific pair of Tefillin of R' Yonason Eibeschutz dated from the time when he was the Rov of Hamburg, where the custom was to wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. R' Yonasan was not originally from Hamburg and it was against his custom to don Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. On the other hand, as the leader of the community, he did not want to go against the local custom. In the end, he came up with a brilliant idea. He had a special pair of Tefillin made which contained no parshiyos inside them, which he would only wear on Chol Hamoed in the local synagogue. This way, he could appear to be following the local custom while at the same time, he maintained his own personal practice of not wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed!

"Tears are a gift from Hashem. With them, we cleanse the windows of our souls and gain a clearer view of the world." ~ Rabbi Noach Weinberg.

There was once a Jewish innkeeper who provided food and lodgings for weary travellers. He was friendly and personable, however, his jealous competitors decided to slander him. Before long, he was ordered to appear in court to defend himself against the baseless charges. The simple innkeeper was terrified about his fate for he had spoken to individuals who told him that if convicted, he could face a long jail sentence or possibly even execution. One friend advised him to schedule an appearance before the Emperor who was a benevolent monarch, and would no doubt exonerate the innkeeper if he was told the truth. But the poor man argued and said that he had no connections to the Palace and no way to even set up an appointment.

The Emperor had a habit from time to time, to dress up as a peasant and mingle with his subjects to get to know them. One night, he even came to the inn, where the kind innkeeper served him food and drink and made him comfortable. He had no idea he was actually serving the king. Later, when he found out that his guest had been the Emperor himself, he was truly distraught over the missed opportunity to plead his case and free himself.

When we sit in our sukkah, the Shechinah itself sits with us and this gives us the opportunity to draw close to Hashem and plead for the things we need in life.

***The Chofetz Chaim ZT"L** advises us to seize the moment and not waste our precious time, for when else will we have this incredible opportunity to sit with the King of all Kings in a personal setting, in our very own sukkah?*

A person who truly trusts in G-d is truly rich. But a person who is only reputed to trust in G-d is like a person who is only reputed to be rich. ~ R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l

The careful performance of mitzvos is one of the characteristic traits of the great dynasty of Brisk. From **R' Chaim (Brisker) Soloveitchik ZT"L**, down to the present day Roshei Yeshivah of Brisk in Jerusalem, every possible addition to glorify a mitzvah as well as every stringency in the performance of a mitzvah, is upheld in the most optimal manner. Mitzvos notwithstanding, there was one aspect of behaviour which the Brisker Rov, **R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"L** stressed over every other attribute, a concept which dominated his actions and interactions with every human being:

Bein Adam L'chavero - commandments between man and his fellow man. Of course, one must be stringent in his obligations and the Torah exhorts us to fulfil every mitzvah to perfection - but never must this be done at the expense of the feelings and emotional integrity of another person.

One year, there was a shortage of kosher hadassim in the city of Brisk. The Brisker Rov maintained a custom to only use hadassim that were 28 centimetres long, as per the opinion of the Netziv. However, try as they might, the members of his household and his students were unable to locate hadassim that conformed to his rigid standards.



Understandably, this caused R' Yitzchok Zev quite a bit of angst and consternation before the holiday. Sukkos was fast approaching and there were no hadassim! How would he perform this all-important mitzvah in the manner in which he was used to? Time was running out and the entire Soloveitchik household could feel the pressure that was building

within their father, and consequently, spilling over to the rest of the family.

There was a young boy who would come and go in the house of the Brisker Rov from time to time and was known to R' Yitzchok Zev and his family. The boy lived nearby, and he recognized the air of depression that had settled over the Soloveitchik household due to their inability to locate kosher hadassim. He decided to do something about it.

Early on the day before Sukkos, the young boy left his house and without mentioning where he was going, he travelled out of Jerusalem to a moshav an hours walk from the city. He had heard that there were hadassim there and he decided that he would make every effort to find ones that met the standards of the Brisker Rov. He received permission from the owner of a field to search for a set that was to be used by the Rov.

For hours on end, he sorted through stalk after stalk until he managed to procure three perfect sets of hadassim that would stand up to the most rigid requirements. He practically ran the whole way back to Jerusalem with a heart bursting with happiness and joy that he would be the one to bring kosher hadassim to the Brisker Rov. Yet as he approached the house, he could again sense the depressive feeling that had pervaded the home. So many people had gone to search for hadassim but none had been successful.

Suddenly, the door burst open and the young boy practically sailed through. Dusty and sweating, his feet still trailed the mud and grime that had collected on his shoes from the field he had been in for so many hours. Nevertheless, he ran into the home and called out in his shrill child's voice, "Hadassim! I have hadassim! Perfect, kosher hadassim Mehudarim!"

The smile on his youthful face was as bright as the rising sun and he swelled with an inner glow that he had succeeded in bringing the Brisker Rov what he had been lacking. But R' Yitzchok Zev did not

notice the boy's smile. Nor did he even glance at the three sets of beautiful kosher hadassim that had been laid carefully on his table. All he noticed was that the boy had burst rudely into his home.

"Is this the way a person walks into a home?" he questioned the boy with a stern gaze. "Do you understand that today is Erev Yom Tov and the floors are being washed? You went out of your way to get hadassim with Mesiras Nefesh; but the person whose job it is to wash the floors also works with Mesiras Nefesh! How do you think she feels that you brought all this dirt into the house where she is cleaning? Where is your 'Bein Adam L'chavero'?"



All of Berditchev was in a quandary. Sukkos was just around the corner, and there was not a solitary esrog in the whole town. **R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L** told a group of his chassidim to wait at the nearby crossroads in the hope that they would encounter some passer-by who owned an esrog. Sure enough a wagon soon trundled by, and the man inside it had an unusually beautiful esrog with him. He was on his way home. The trouble was that his home was in some far-off town, and he was only by-passing Berditchev.

They brought the stranger to their Rebbe, who immediately entreated him to spend the festival with them, and by lending his esrog, enable the whole community, including the tzaddik himself, to carry out the mitzvah of pronouncing a blessing over the Four Species. The stranger would not agree. He was on his way home to spend Yom Tov with his family. How could he upset their festive joy by not being there?

The tzaddik promised him wealth and children, but even this did not help. He had wealth and children, thank G-d, and was in need of nothing. Then the tzaddik said: "I hereby promise you that you will share my lot in the World to Come!" The stranger immediately changed his mind. This was worth staying on in Berditchev for the

duration of the festival. The tzaddik was overjoyed, and the community was enabled with all the mitzvos of the Arba Minim.

Right before Yom Tov, R' Levi Yitzchok issued a secret order to all the townsfolk of Berditchev: no one was to allow this guest to eat in their sukkah. Not a soul could guess what the reason could be, but it was an order from the Rebbe.



On the first night of the festival, the unsuspecting fellow returned from the synagogue to the room which he had rented in someone's house. There, indoors, he found everything prepared - wine for Kiddush, two loaves, candles, and a festive meal. He was dumfounded. Could it be that the householder, such an upstanding and observant Jew, did not have a sukkah? He went out to the yard, and duly found a sukkah set up exactly as the halacha requires. Inside it he could see his host and all his family sitting happily around the table. He asked to be admitted but was refused. Why so? There was no answer.

Somewhat downcast, he proceeded to call on the neighbouring families, each of which he found sitting happily in their sukkos. He begged to be admitted - but in each case the response was the same baffling refusal. It finally came out that behind all of this was an order from the tzaddik.

He ran off to R' Levi Yitzchok's house in consternation, and asked, "What's this all about? How have I sinned to deserve this?" R' Levi Yitzchok replied, "If you will waive your claim to the promise I made to you about the World to Come, then I'll straight away give the order that you should be admitted to a sukkah." The stranger was shocked and dismayed. What was there to do now? On the one hand

there was the promise of the tzaddik that he would share his lot in the World to Come. On the other hand, there was a mitzvah waiting to be fulfilled - to eat in a sukkah. In the end, the sukkah won the day. It was unthinkable that a Jew like himself, who all his days had observed the mitzvah of the sukkah, should miss it this year. He would be eating like a goy, indoors, G-d forbid!

He told the tzaddik that he released him forthwith from his promise about the World to Come, and (at the tzaddik's request) even gave him his hand in confirmation. Then off he went and quietly ate his festive meal in someone's sukkah.

As soon as the festival ended, R' Levi Yitzchok called for him. "Now," he said, "I hereby return my promise to you. I wanted you to learn, my son, that I didn't want you to pick up your portion in the World to Come cheaply through an easy bit of bargaining. I wanted you to earn it, through your deeds. That is why I arranged matters that you should be put to the test with regard to the mitzvah of the sukkah. Now that you have withstood this test and demonstrated great Mesiras Nefesh for the sake of fulfilling this mitzvah, you truly deserve to share my portion in the World to Come!"

R' Yehudah Aryeh Alter Zt'l (Sefas Emes) would say:

"Only regarding the Yom Tov of Sukkos, does the posuk state, '*You shall observe it for seven days in the year*,' implying that these seven days of joy constitute a vessel of simcha radiating joy throughout the year. Similarly, in our Kiddush on Yom Tov, we refer to our Festivals as **מעדים לשמחה** (appointed times for rejoicing) rather than **מעדים בשמחה** (appointed times of rejoicing) to teach us that our Festivals are not only days of rejoicing, but storehouses of joy and gladness for the remainder of the year."

"Finding" A Wife

The famous gemara (Berochos 8b) teaches that the Sages would ask every man, soon after he married, whether he had "found" a wife or whether he was "finding" a wife. This refers to either of these two posukim: "**מצא אשה מצא טוב**" - "*One who found a wife has found goodness*" or "**מוצא אני את האשה מר ממות**" - "*I am finding more bitter than death a woman.*" What is the purpose of this question?



The saintly Vilna Gaon ZT"L explains that the difference lies in the tense of the word **מצא** - "found" or **מוצא** - "finding." This teaches us that our happiness is in our hands! If we decide to appreciate the great find that Hashem has bestowed on us, we are fortunate. However, one who is always seeking - "finding" - and is not satisfied with anything, will find trouble.

People tend to misjudge the value of the marriage relationship. ***A wife is a helpmate, the greatest find man will ever discover***. If one has the right attitude and works on understanding and appreciating Hashem's ways, he will have cause to rejoice endlessly. However, one who rejects a pious and wise woman fails the test and loses the greatest wealth. We must open our eyes and rejoice!

"When a person wants to know how to proceed in a particular situation, let him open a holy book and he will understand what to do." ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l

R' Eliyohu Kramer of Vilna ZT"L (Vilna Gaon) said:



"Which of the 613 mitzvos is the most difficult to observe? It is the mitzvah of **ושמחת בחגך** - *being joyous on Sukkos*, because for seven consecutive days a person must be in constant joy. Regardless of what might occur during these days that might make it difficult for a person to feel happy, the mitzvah to rejoice requires one to overcome all obstacles to joy. Thus, it is the most difficult mitzvah to accomplish."

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L (Kedushas Levi)

"The gemara tells us that when Moshiach comes, the tzaddikim of that generation and all previous generations, will sit in his sukkah wearing crowns. Well, I will be eager to share in these festivities and will try to push my way into Moshiach's sukkah. Of course, the guard at the door will turn me back saying, 'A coarse and simple man like you has no business in Moshiach's sukkah.'

I will tell him, 'Listen, I always had simple people in my sukkah and I endured their company; surely Moshiach can put up with me!"

"If someone is too tired to give you a smile, leave one of your own, because no one needs a smile as much as those who have none to give." ~ R' Samson Raphael Hirsch zt"l

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L (Tzemach Tzedek) would say:

"There is a halachah that **מצטער פטור מן הסוכה** - ***'One who feels pain (or discomfort) is exempt from sitting in the sukkah.'*** Aside from the normal interpretation, perhaps Chazal are teaching us something more: '**מצטער**' - A person who finds himself in distress, **פטור** - is able to free himself, both mentally and physically. How? **מן הסוכה** - By correctly performing the mitzvah of sukkah!"

On the day before Sukkos, 1939, after being thoroughly demolished by the fierce German onslaught - the "Blitzkrieg" - which began only four short weeks earlier, the hapless Polish army surrendered unconditionally, and a ceasefire was established.



The people of Warsaw emerged from bomb shelters grateful for the quiet, and the following wonderful scene took place: Thousands of Jews, who had just come out of cellars in every corner of the city, hurried to pull planks and doors out of the debris, and began building kosher sukkos for the coming Yom Tov.

Many sukkos went up, only to be torn down by furious German soldiers who would then chase the Jews away. The Jews of Warsaw, bursting with love for the mitzvah, would find another place and build a sukkah there, The Germans, joined by enthusiastic Poles, would knock down that sukkah as well. But the spirit of the Jews won out in the end, and by the time Yom Tov began, hundreds of sukkos

were standing. Though perhaps not decorated, they were all kosher l'mehadrin, testifying to the tremendous love the Jews had for Hashem's mitzvos and their devotion to Him at all times and under all conditions.

On that very same day, Erev Sukkos, the **Brisker Rov, R' Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik ZT"L**, who was living in Warsaw at the time, was notified that an esrog was waiting for him by the Lubavitcher



Rebbe, R' Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson ZT"L, who lived at the other end of town, well over an hour's walk from his house. A brave young Gerrer chasid volunteered to go, at great risk to his own life, and bring the esrog for the Brisker Rov.

Through a series of miraculous events, he was successful in procuring the esrog, and word quickly spread that there was a kosher set of arba minim in the vicinity, in the possession of the Brisker Rov.

It was still dark, very early the next morning, when the Brisker Rov woke up to the sound of a great crowd outside his home. He opened his door a crack to see what was going on and discovered, to his amazement, a long line of people stretching from his doorway into the distance. It was truly inspiring to see just how precious the mitzvos of Yom Tov were to the downtrodden Jews of Warsaw.

Suddenly, just before dawn on the first day of the chag, the sound of trucks rolling in and horns honking broke the stillness. The trucks were full of German soldiers coming to break up the illegal gathering. They lashed out right and left, striking defenceless Jews dressed in holiday garb, viciously with the butts of their rifles. The Jews scattered in all directions, and many suffered painful injuries, moaning and bleeding in the street. Having finished the job, the soldiers piled into the trucks and just as quickly sped off.

No more than a few minutes passed before the crowd of tenacious Jews had reassembled in their places, waiting in silence for the sunrise and their chance to fulfil the mitzvos of the arba minim. The sun came up and the people began taking the arba minim one after the other. Each one made a beracha, shook the lulav and esrog, and quickly handed it to the next person.

The Germans returned, again and again, throughout the day, to disperse the crowd, and some people at the end of the line did not even manage to perform the mitzvah before sunset. They did not despair, though, and came back the next day to try their luck again; perhaps they would merit the mitzvah on the second day of Yom Tov.

Among the many people who came to make a bracha over the arba minim, the Brisker Rov noticed one man who, when he took the lulav and esrog in his hands, made a heartfelt beracha, and his joy in performing the mitzvah was extraordinary.

R' Yitzchok Zev asked for an explanation, and, in response, the man recounted that all his family had been killed in the bombings over the last month. His last child had been killed by an exploding shell a few hours before the beginning of Yom Tov! He had nothing left but the mitzvos that he performed and his gratitude to Hashem for allowing him to do so!

The Brisker Rov would later describe the length of the line of people, comparing it to the distance from his Jerusalem home on Press Street to the Zichron Moshe shul. "It was then that you saw," he added emotionally, "what a Jew really is!"

"If I was offered to trade places with Abraham Our Father, I wouldn't do it. What would G-d get from this? He'd still have one Abraham and one Zushe!" ~ R' Zushe of Anipoli

At the turn of the century, Jewish life in the United States was a tough proposition. Many immigrants who escaped their homeland dreaming of a new beginning on these "golden" shores, instead found earning a decent living, while at the same time maintaining a semblance of religious observance, almost impossible. The American standard was to work seven days a week, and a person who wished to keep both Shabbos and his wage-earning job, was often forced to choose between the two. Sadly, many observant Jews were unable to withstand the test and the holy Shabbos became an unfortunate casualty.

One man, however, would not give in. He was a skilled worker, and his talents were in demand, yet no employer was willing to tolerate his absurd request to take off on Saturday. As a result, more often then not, when Friday would roll around, he was told that if he didn't show up the next day, he should not bother, coming in on Sunday.

The pious man would nod his head but then would ask for one small favour: rather than being verbally fired, could his employer write him a "pink slip" so he could have his termination in print? The employer, seeing no reason not to, would usually oblige this unusual request.



NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

It was not until many months later, that the man's reason for requesting the papers became known. A few days before the Yom Tov of Sukkos, as his children were building and decorating their

sukkah, he informed them that he had his own special decorations that he would like to put up.

"What decorations could Papa have come up with?" they thought. It was then that their father pulled out his stack of "pink slips" and began pasting them up against the walls.

"My children," he said with an inner joy born of spiritual greatness, "this is the most glorious 'decoration' that we can put in our sukkah. For with these, we are declaring that we work for no one other than the 'Boss of all Bosses' - Hakadosh Boruch Hu, and we do so **בלב שלום** - wholeheartedly!"

Incidentally, every one of his children and grandchildren remained true to Yiddishkeit, and many great Talmidei Chachamim emanated from his family.

R' Shneur Kotler ZT"L, was known for his extraordinary kindness and love for his fellow Jews throughout his life. Close friends recall that as a young man he built a sukkah using old, broken boards, which were all he had. When R' Shneur's neighbour, a non-observant Jew, saw the shabby-looking sukkah, he promised to build R' Shneur what he called a "proper" sukkah the next year. And he did.

The sukkah stood for twenty years, built and rebuilt each year before Yom Tov, and each year R' Shneur thanked the man for his generous gift. Then the man died, and at the same time the boards, exposed for two decades to rough autumn weather, began to warp so badly that they could no longer be used.

The Kotler family wanted to discard the sukkah boards, and while R' Shneur did build a new sukkah, he refused to throw away the old boards. Instead, he used them for counter covers during Pesach. Finally, however, the boards deteriorated so badly that the family again wished to replace them.

Again, R' Shneur refused. "No," he said softly, "we can never replace these boards. The man who built us a sukkah from these boards did not have much in spiritual wealth, but he did have a very special zechus every year with the construction of this sukkah. I want his zechus to go on and on and be remembered."

The Sukkah

The gemara (BM 85a) tells of a young calf that was being led to slaughter, who ran away and hid under the hem of the coat of Rabbeinu Hakadosh. Rebbi promptly returned it to the shochet, saying, "Go, for this is the purpose of your creation!" However, as a result, Rebbi was made to suffer tribulations since he showed no mercy towards the frightened calf.

When a creature - any creature, even an animal - turns to you for shelter and begs to be saved from harm, the Midas Harachamim - Attribute of Mercy, dictates and demands that you show it mercy and do your utmost to protect it and not turn it away.



Similarly, expounds **R' Nosson Wachtfogel ZT"L**, this is the concept of the sukkah, which is known as - *Shelter of Divine Faithfulness*. When we sit in the sukkah, we are begging for Heavenly protection and mercy, even though we may not necessarily deserve it.

Nevertheless, one who takes pains to go out of his home and reside in a sukkah for seven days, is assured of Hashem's ever vigilant protection and will never be turned away, for the Midas Harachamim dictates that it is so!

"מה נשתנה"

Why do the children ask the "**מה נשתנה**" on Pesach and not on Sukkos? After all, the Yom Tov of Sukkos certainly brings a more dramatic change in our lives, as we leave our homes for seven days and perform many more unusual mitzvos than on Pesach.

R' Zvi Berliner ZT"L answers that on Pesach, a child sees everyone festively gathered around the table, like free men at ease, not like people in exile. This is curious to him, and he asks the four questions.

On Sukkos, however, when he sees his fellow Jews living in huts without a true roof over their heads, this doesn't surprise him at all. This is the way Jews have lived ever since they went into golus!

Be Joyous



During the Yom Tov of Sukkos, we are especially enjoined to be joyous and happy, more than on any other Yom Tov. We see this from the posuk, - ***"And you shall rejoice in your festivals .... and you shall be only joyous."*** The meforshim ask: Why is this command to be joyous on Sukkos, repeated twice, in one posuk after another?

The answer, explains **R' Dovid Feinstein ZT"L**, is that the second mention in the parsha is a guarantee from Hashem that someone who rejoices during the Yom Tov of Sukkos, will merit to be joyful all year long. We can see this in an interesting gematria: By rejoicing for the seven days of Yom Tov, a person adds seven (7) to 348, the

numerical value of the word "**שמח**" - "Joyous," which totals the number 355 - the numerical value of the word "**שנה**" - "Year." Thus, in reward for accepting upon ourselves this concept of ultimate joyousness on the Yom Tov of Sukkos, while we perform the mitzvos and live outside in our sukkos, the Torah promises that we will rejoice the entire year, in the comfort and support of our homes.

Furthermore, during these days of Yom Tov, we must use the money which we consider to be "ours," to provide for the needs of the poor. But in spite of giving away our money, we feel greater joy on Sukkos, than at any other time.

The mishnah tells us - "*Whoever fulfils the Torah despite poverty, will ultimately fulfil it in wealth*" - If we do not let poverty deter us from serving Hashem, He will allow us to serve Him in comfort and good fortune. And in both situations, Hashem will see to it that we are **שמח** - in our observance.



Every year, right after Rosh Hashanah, R' Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira ZT"L of Mogelnitz would give a large sum of money to an agent and send him out to purchase the most beautiful esrog for the entire community. One year it was extremely difficult to find a beautiful esrog; they were all blemished. As Yom Tov approached, the agent arrived at a village where he heard that a certain rich man had managed to buy the most beautiful esrog imaginable. The agent hurried to the rich man's house. But he was nervous. How could he convince this stranger to part with his esrog? All he could do was express his feelings.

He explained to the wealthy householder about R' Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira; that he was a great tzaddik, an exalted person for whom performing every mitzva in an enhanced manner was an integral aspect of life. The wealthy man sat silently for a few minutes, thinking deeply. Then he spoke. "You say your rabbi is a big tzaddik? Well, I'll tell you what," said the rich man. "I paid a handsome sum for this esrog. Thank G-d, I can afford it. But there is one thing I cannot buy. My wife and I have no children. I am prepared to 'sell' you my esrog. My non-negotiable price is that your holy rabbi should bless us to have a child, and that his blessing should come true within a reasonable period of time. If it does, then the esrog is my gift to him. But if not, then retroactively your great rabbi and your entire community will not have fulfilled the mitzva."

Silence filled the room as the stunned agent was unable to respond. Finally, he decided that he had no choice and accepted the proposal, after which he set off straight for home. R' Chaim Meir's joy knew no bounds when he saw the esrog, until the agent told him the condition of the "transaction." For a long time, R' Chaim Meir sat still, engulfed in his lofty thoughts. "All right," he finally stated, softly but firmly. "I accept upon myself this difficult condition. I will do that which I am able so that he and his wife should have a child. Now it is up to the Almighty to do His part."

About a year later, a small package arrived for R' Chaim Meir. Inside was an esrog of superior quality, along with a note from the rich man announcing that a son had been born to him and his wife a few weeks before. R' Chaim Meir was overjoyed at the news, as he could now fully rejoice over his mitzva of the previous Sukkos, which no longer had a shadow of doubt cast over it.

Every year, from then on, the rabbi would receive a beautiful esrog from the grateful, rich man. One year, the messenger who delivered the esrog was a young yeshiva student. "I have an esrog which my father requested that I deliver to the honourable Rabbi," said the young bochur. R' Chaim Meir stared at the youth. Tears welled up in

his eyes. He placed his hand on the boy's head. "Not only are you the bearer of an esrog," he said, "you are the son of an esrog!"



Happy

The holiday of Sukkos is unique in that we are specifically commanded to be happy. But does Hashem expect us to turn our emotions on and off like a faucet? How is it possible to be happy, just because the Torah tells us to? We can answer this in the same way as we resolve the question of how the Torah commands us to love - *"Love of G-d"* and - *"Love your fellow Jew"*.

The Torah commands us to think those thoughts clearly and do those things which will arouse the feelings of love. So too, there are two ways to arouse a feeling of joy: through the head, and through the feet. We can sit and meditate on things that make us happy, or we can get up and start to dance. But whatever our approach - we must start, and the heart will follow. When a Jew is happy, it expresses his trust and faith in Hashem that whatever happens is for the best. Serving Hashem with joy reveals the good that is hidden in everything.

The holiday of Sukkos is a time to recharge our batteries, to "stock up" on an abundance of joy for the coming year. We are taught that all of the spiritual goals we were trying to reach on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur by fasting and praying are attainable on Sukkos and Simchas Torah - simply by being joyful and dancing!

Two boys once applied to the Pressburg Yeshiva. There was only one space available so it was left to the Dean, **R' Moshe Sofer (Chasam Sofer)** to decide. As the rebbeim watched, the Chasam Sofer tested each boy. One was a genius. His breadth of knowledge was vast, his understanding and sharp intellect astounding. He was the favourite among the assembled teachers. The other boy did fine but was not spectacular. However, after the boys left, it was the second one whom R' Moshe chose.

The rebbeim were stunned. "But the first boy would add so much to our Yeshiva; his mind is so sharp! Why did you choose the second?" "I watched them coming to the Bais Medresh through the window," replied the sage. "On the ground was some s'chach from the Sukkah that was recently taken down. The first boy walked straight over the s'chach, trampling it as he approached. The second boy carefully walked around the s'chach, giving it the deference of something used for a mitzvah.

If the first boy could show such disregard for HaShem's mitzvos, not loving them, especially just days after Sukkos, then he does not belong here, no matter how much Torah he knows."



One Succos the students of the Chasam Sofer brought their Rebbe an exceptional Esrog.

They spent a great deal of effort and money to get the most beautiful Esrog they could find for their Rebbe. Word soon spread across town that the Chasam Sofer had an Esrog that was exquisitely beautiful, and on Yom Tov, everyone wanted to see it.

The Chasam Sofer's Esrog passed from one hand to another until hundreds of people had got permission to say a Brachah on it to fulfil their Mitzvah. The next morning the Chasam Sofer took out his Esrog to fulfil the Mitzvah once again. However, the Esrog, while

still kosher, was not nearly as smooth and beautiful as it had been just the day before, since so many people had handled it.

The Chasam Sofer's students were saddened and disappointed when they saw what happened to the Esrog, but the Chasam Sofer had a different reaction. He smiled as he gazed at the Esrog and lovingly kissed it. He said, "Now that this Esrog has passed through many hands and dozens of Yidden have made a Brachah over it, it truly is Mehudar Min Ha'mehudar, and the finest of the fine!"

Kedushas YomTov

The Maggid of Kozhnitz, R' Yisroel Hofstein zt"l once asked **R' Yaakov Yitzchok of P'shischa**, **the Yid Hakadosh**, as follows:

"I cannot understand it, but for some reason, I feel a greater level of kedusha on the second day of Yom Tov than on the first day. Why would this be so? Shouldn't the first day be greater?"

The Yid Hakadosh thought for a moment and then gave a fantastic answer. "After a domestic spat, when a husband and wife finally get past their differences and make up, their love for each other is greater than it was before.

Similarly, we keep the second day of Yom Tov only in Golus (not in Eretz Yisroel) - the exile which was entirely caused by our transgressions. And yet, when we are in this terrible exile, the Shechina is always there with us, which is both our consolation - and the reason for our reconciliation. As a result, we feel a greater love of Hashem on the second day of Yom Tov." (Tiferes HaYehudi)

"One who speaks loshon hora destroys three people: the subject of his evil words, his listener and himself." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

A Non-Observant Jewish Soldier Decides to Wave Lulav and Esrog on the Last Day of Succos

Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells an inspirational story, which demonstrates the meaning of a Jewish name and a Jew's overwhelming desire to pay gratitude to Hashem. The story takes place during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when the Israelis were attacked on the holiest day of the year by Arabs, on all fronts.

One of the critical points of the battle was in the area of the Suez Canal. The chaplains involved with the dreadful work of collecting the fallen soldiers drove up and down the area, with great care and caution to do their job. Since it was now Succos when they were doing this, the Rav in charge of the chaplains took along a Lulav and Esrog, so that the soldiers could perform the Mitzvah.



Soldiers who were otherwise not observant asked to Daven from a Siddur and shake the Lulav and Esrog, as war brings out the real essence of a person, and this was their opportunity to express themselves Spiritually. The Rav arrived on Hoshanah Rabbah at the last outpost near the Suez Canal, and soon a long line of soldiers formed, each waiting his turn to use the Lulav and Esrog.

As they were standing in line, a young soldier driving an ammunitions truck noticed the crowd that had gathered and out of curiosity, stopped his truck, got out, and walked over to the group. He asked, "Why is everyone gathered here?"

The soldiers explained that the Rabbi had come with a Lulav and Esrog. This soldier was not interested in waiting around for his turn, as he was totally non-observant, but when the soldiers mentioned that this was the last day that the Mitzvah could be performed for this year, he changed his mind and decide to wait.

Eventually, it was his turn to say the Brachos. As he took the Lulav and Esrog into his hands and began the Brachah, a bomb hit his truck. The bomb blast set off multiple explosions on the truck, as it set off all the ammunitions that were loaded there. The blasts were so intense that they caused a deep crater where the truck had originally been parked.

The soldier realized the miracle that occurred and that his life was saved as he was about to shake the Lulav and Esrog. Three months later, this Rav who had shared his Lulav and Esrog with so many soldiers that day, read an announcement in the army newspaper.

Apparently, the wife of the ammunitions truck driver had given birth to a little girl, and the announcement included a statement by the father: "I believe with every fibre of my body that I am alive today and that I merited to see my daughter come into the world, only because of the Mitzvah that I was performing when my truck was hit by a bomb.

In remembrance of Hashem's goodness and kindness to me, I have named my daughter Lulava!"

How to Juice an Esrog

It is said regarding **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev**, that he was so aflame with excitement during the recitation of Hallel, that he would sometimes squeeze and crush the esrog he held in his hand! (*Sefer HaMo'adim IV, Sukkos, page 95)*

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

Vayikra – 42:23 בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים – ראש דוד.



Why is there a Mitzvah of Sukkos as a Zecher to the Ananei Hakovod that Klal Yisroel had in the Midbar, and there is no Yom Tov as a Zecher for the other two great miracles that occurred for Klal Yisroel – the Mon and the well?

The Zohar Hakodosh says that the Mon and the well were for all who journeyed through the Midbar, including the Eiruv Rav, while the Ananei Hakovod were exclusively for Klal Yisroel. The Yom Tov of Sukkos, commemorating the Ananei Hakovod, is to remind us that Klal Yisroel is Hakodosh Boruch Hu's nation, for we are the children of the Almighty.

אל תבואני רגל גאוה Tehillim 36:12 – **חיים והשלום** ***"Let not the foot of arrogance come to me."***

In the tefillah said before tying the Lulav with the Hadassim and Aravos, we say that the three Hadassim are K'neged the three Avos; Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. The two Aravos are K'neged Moshe and Aharon. The Lulav is K'neged Yosef Hatzaddik, and the Esrog is K'neged Dovid Hamelech.

The Arizal says that the Roshei Taivos of this Posuk in Tehillim **אַל תַּבוֹאנִי רַגֶל גַּאוָה** - written by Dovid Hamelech, is **אתרג**. The Mitzvah of the Arba Minim protects one from arrogance.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

דעת משה –בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים

It is known that the Sukkah is a Remez to the Ananei Hakovod which surrounded Klal Yisroel on their journey from Mitzrayim. Avos 4:1 **איזהו מכובד המכבד את הבריות** – ***"Who is honoured, he who honours others."***

הבריות refers to **הבריאות** – ***He Who constantly creates anew.*** Each moment Hakodosh Boruch Hu constantly imbues life into everything in this world with more life. If He were to stop for a moment, life would cease to exist on this world.

Who is honoured? It is he who honours Hakodosh Boruch Hu, Who creates anew every moment. He knows that all life is from Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and his Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya, Yechida, are all sustained every moment from Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

This is the Yesod of the Ananei Hakovod, to recognize that we are constantly surrounded by Hakodosh Boruch Hu. This is what the Sukkah is to teach us, that we should constantly be thinking about the Hashgacha of Hashem.

סוכה is the Gematria of 91, which is the same Gematria as the Shem Adnus and the Shem Havayah of Hakodosh Boruch Hu

י-ה-ו-ה .. א-ד-נ-י .(The Shem Havayah is Meramez the world above, and the Shem Adnus is Meramez to the world down here. It is all controlled by Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

"To love Hashem, you must love His creations. Every human being carries a Divine Spark: When you love others – you love Hashem." ~ Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



When one sits in a succah, he is being hugged keviyachol by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. As it states in Shir HaShirim (2:6) ***שְׂמֹאלוֹ תַּחַת לְרֹאשִׁי וִימִינוֹ תְּחַבְּקֵנִי "His left arm is under my head, and He hugs me with his right arm."***

The Midrash says this hug is represented by the walls of the succah. **The Arizal** said that the required three walls of the succah represent the arm, with its three parts.

The Gemara teaches that a succah needs at least, two regular length walls, and a third shorter wall, the length of a tefach. This is the arm, with the small hand. It represents keviyachol Hashem's arm, hugging us as we sit in the succah.

Because of these reasons, we should be extremely happy when we keep the mitzvah succah. If we aren't on the level to have joy naturally, we can fake it until it becomes real. Being in the succah, we are living in a very holy locale. As the Yesod Yosef writes, "When one sits in succah, and he learns and davens there, he is living in the upper worlds literally …"

The Mishnah Berurah says (439:2): "Since the succah is extremely holy, it is proper that one should minimize speaking divrei chol (mundane talk) there and instead speak Torah and holy words. One should unquestionably be careful not to speak lashon hara, rechilus, and other forms of forbidden speech in the succah."

The Keren l'Dovid writes, "When one sits in the succah l'shem shamayim, he feels the holiness, with hislahavus (ferver).



He experiences the light of the mitzvah, and he knows that it is true that we were surrounded by the **עננ הכבוד**. This is something that cannot be explained. But someone who experienced it knows that it's true."

The Sfas Emes writes, "The succah is like Gan Eden. Man was created to live there, in a place of true joy. Adam was banished from Gan Eden, nevertheless, there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines… This is why people are happy when they are in the succah…"

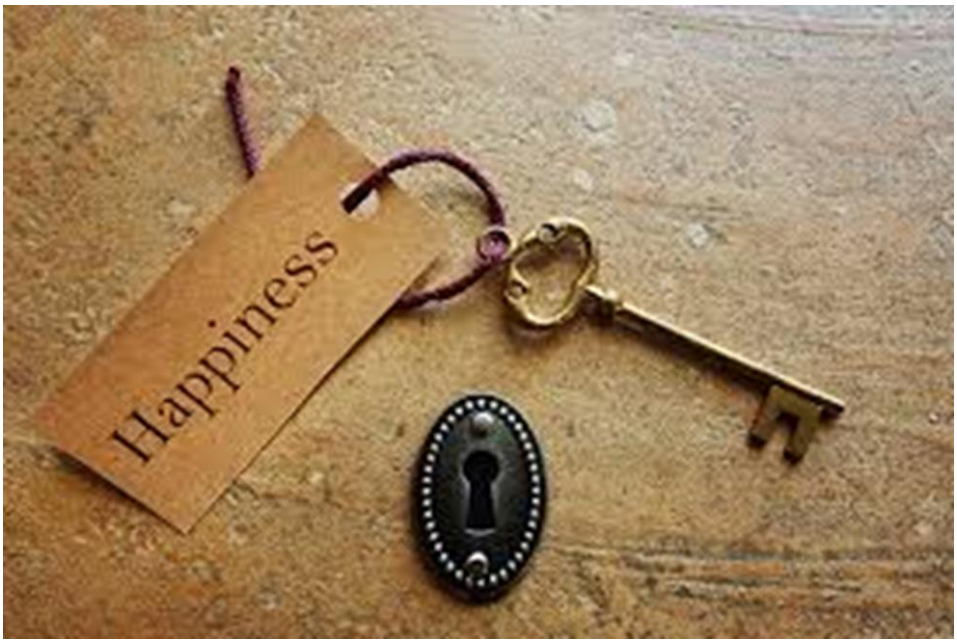
This happiness differs among people. Some people are happier than others when they sit in the succah. **The Shem MiShmuel** explains that this is because the succah is like teivas Noach (Noach's ark). Rashi tells us that the animals came by themselves to the teivah, but the teivah wouldn't let all animals inside. Only the animals that didn't sin were able to enter. Similarly, everyone sits in succah, but they may be banished from the spirituality of the succah. Only those who are worthy can enter and experience its great joy and holiness.

The Shem MiShmuel writes, "The siman is: if the succah accepted him he will experience a very good feeling being in the succah. But chas veshalom, if the succcah doesn't accept him, he will not enjoy being there… If one enjoys the succah immensely, this proves that the succah accepted him immensely.

Simchah *(Devarim 16: 14 – 15).*

One of the mitzvos of Succos is simchah; to be happy and to bring joy to others. As it states **וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּחַגֶּךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וְהַלֵּוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיָּתוֹם וְהָאַלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ...שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תָּחֹג** "*Be happy in your holiday, you, your son and daughter… the orphan, widow that lives among you, and you shall be very happy*" **The Rambam writes** "There is a mitzvah to be happy on all the holidays, but there is particular importance to being happy on Succos, as it states **וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים וַעֲנַף עֵץ־עָבֹת וְעַרְבֵי־נָחַל וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים**:, ***"rejoice before Hashem your G-d for seven days"*** *(VaYikra 23:40).*

These laws are stated in **Shulchan Aruch** (Orach Chaim 529:2): "A person is obligated to be happy and have a good heart on Yom Tov, him, his wife and children and everyone else who is associated to him.



How? Hand out nuts and roasted grains (candy) to the children. For the women, buy clothing and jewellery, according to your abilities….

"When it comes to being happy, many people think of it like a good idea, a nice practice, something that's enjoyable. We must recognize that it's an obligation. We are obligated to be happy on Yom Tov, and it's a mitzvah like all other commandments. We don't know the value of mitzvos, and how to evaluate them. It's very possible that the mitzvah to be happy on Yom Tov is just as important as lulav and succah. Who knows? Maybe simchah is the greatest mitzvah of this holiday?

Someone was spending a lot of money on the four minim. A scholar saw that and said to him, "You're busy with a derabanan (since that year, Succos began on Shabbos) and I'm busy with a de'oraysa," as he was buying jewellery for his wife.

The Beis Ahron (p.156) teaches, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the way to connect to the holiday is through fear, and on Succos, it's through love and joy. Similarly, the **Pele Yoetz** writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this is a good omen for the entire year.

The **Arizal's** students write that someone who is joyous with a happy heart, without any distress on this holy holiday, ***it is certain that he will have a good year, and he will be happy throughout the year."***

Many wonder why there is a mitzvah to bring joy to a chassan and kallah. We understand that one should bring joy to those who are sad, but the chassan and kallah are happy, so why should we have a mitzvah to bring them joy?

The Chozeh of Lublin zy'a explained: A chassan's sins are forgiven on the day of his chasunah. He becomes pure like Adam HaRishon before his sin. The chassan however, is concerned, as he doesn't know how to maintain his pure state for the rest of his life? The answer is through happiness.

Joy elevates us above the lowliness of the world and enables us to steer clear from temptations and sins. Joy also gives us the strength to combat the yetzer hara. This is the reason we have a mitzvah to bring joy to the chassan and kallah. We are hinting to them that if they build their home on the foundations of joy, they will remain sin-free throughout their lives.

We have just become purified from all sins on Yom Kippur. The Torah tells us that after Yom Kippur we should be happy for seven days. This joy will enable us to maintain our purity throughout the year.

Me'oros Hatzadikim- Shabbos- Spiritual Pleasure

For Rav Levi Yitzchok, the time spent at the Shabbos table was a more profound spiritual experience than the time spent in shul. He never spoke about mundane matters during the entire Shabbos. And when he came to the table, his eyes lit up with a celestial fire. He sang zemiros, made Kiddush and cut a slice of the challa. He brought the challa to his mouth and took a bite, his eyes closed to savour the pure ecstasy of the taste. "Oneg Shabbos!" he cried out. "Ah, the pleasures of Shabbos!"

Once while he was sitting at the Shabbos table, the yetzer hora, the evil inclination, spoke into his ear. "Look at you sitting at the Shabbos table and taking such pleasure from the delicious foods. Do you get as much pleasure from the tefillos in the shul?" "Absolutely not," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "So how do you justify this to yourself?" insisted the yetzer hora. "You cannot disturb my pleasure," Rav Levi Yitzchok replied. "Eating on Shabbos is a mitzva from the Torah, while davening is a Rabbinic law, so of course I enjoy eating on Shabbos more than davening."

Once, when Rav Levi Yitzchok was in Warsaw for a Shabbos, he conducted his Shabbos table in his customary manner. He bit into the challa and cried out, "Oneg Shabbos! Oneg Shabbos! Oneg Shabbos!" The people at his table saw his face aflame with passion, and it seemed as if he was on the verge of expiring. One was a simple wagon driver, an unlearned man who lived for his regular glass of whiskey and slab of marbled meat. He stared at Rav Levi Yitzchok in amazement. He had never seen a person so overcome with ecstasy.

"Rebbe!" he called out. "I've wasted all my money." Rav Levi Yitzchok gave the man a quizzical look. "I've spent so much money on the pleasures of this world," he said, "and now I see that spiritual pleasures are so much greater. And they don't cost any money!" Such was the effect that Rav Levi Yitzchok had on those around him, even the simplest among them.

Someone once asked the **Kozhnitzer Maggid** why it was that Rav Levi Yitzchok was so poor when so many other Chassidic Rebbes were quite wealthy. "It is simple," explained the Maggid. "The Gemora says (Bova Kama 92a) that if a person davens for another Jew when he shares the same need he will be answered first. The Chassidim of the other Rebbes ask him to daven for them that they will be prosperous and that all their material needs will be fulfilled. Therefore, the Rebbes are answered first, and they become wealthy. But the Berditchever Chassidim know that spiritual pleasures are much greater, and they ask their Rebbe to daven for their spiritual advancement. Therefore, their Rebbe is answered first, gaining not material wealth but even greater spiritual achievements."

The Shaarei Teshuvah writes:



"It is proper to give a lot of charity on erev Succos. **Reb Chaim Vital** would distribute the tzedakah pushke to the poor on this day."

Rebbe Chaim of Tzanz (who was extremely generous to the poor every day of the year) increased his tzedakah on erev Succos, distributing large amounts of money to the poor. He said that there isn't a nicer noy succah [succah decoration] than the tzedakah that one gives on erev Succos.

Esrog



Tzaddikim said that if people would know the value of the esrog, they would spend all the money in the world to acquire it. It's good to invest in a beautiful esrog, but at the same time, we mustn't lose sight that a good heart is even more valuable.

Chazal say, 'The esrog corresponds to the heart." It is this good heart that Hashem's desires from us. Good middos are ten times more precious to heaven than the most expensive esrog.

R' Shimshon Raphael Hirsch says:

"What is it that estranges us in life from Hashem, makes us conceited or bereaves us of hope, and amid all our cares for our well-being leaves no room for our true happiness? It is the madness with which we cling to worldly possessions and place them upon a pedestal as the gods of our life; it is the madness with which each one of us builds his tower of Babel and we believe ourselves secure in our own sham shelters.

From this madness may Sukkos deliver us; from the idolization of possessions and of man's talents may our submission to the Sukkos release us, and instead may it lead us to Hashem as the only basis of our life; may it teach us to put our trusts in Hashem, to rely only upon Hashem: --Emuna."



When we wave the Lulav upward, it teaches us to uplift our property to Hashem, and to value what Hashem has given us. The Lulav reminds us to cherish our possessions and dedicate them to Hashem and use them for holy pursuits. Showing Hashem that we don't hold materialism to be our main pursuit in life and that whatever we have we will use for Hashem, we will have then joyfully fulfilled Hashem's will on Earth, and this is the ultimate and true happiness.

It is perhaps another reason why Succos is called Zman Simchaseinu, the time of our happiness. Additionally, when we shake the Lulav in all directions, we proclaim that everything in the universe is Hashem's, and He created everything. The Brachah of Hashem is everywhere and at all times!

There was a certain Rav who, whenever he had to drive somewhere, he always looked to see if anyone had to go in that direction as well and would offer them rides in his car. He explained, "The car is not mine, it is Hashem's, but He was so nice to let me use it. The least I can do is use it for Chesed and try to help as many people as I can!"

This is the lesson of the Succah and the Lulav, that everything is from Hashem, and we should use what we have to serve Him!



R' Uri of Starlik had saved up spare money throughout the year to be able to purchase an Esrog. Out of concern that he still might not have enough money, he travelled to the large neighbouring city where the Esrogim were less expensive. On the way, he passed a wagon driver whose horse had collapsed and died suddenly. R' Uri used most of his hard-saved money to purchase a horse for the driver at a nearby stable, leaving himself with just a small amount of money for an Esrog. R' Uri went and bought an Esrog for the amount he had remaining, a simple, unattractive Esrog.

In his embarrassment, he entered the Shul of **Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk** and settled in a far corner, so that no one would see his Esrog. When Rav Elimelech finished his Shemonah Esrei of Shacharis and was getting ready to say the Brachah on his own Lulav and Esrog, he suddenly stopped and turned to his attendant. He said, "In this Bais HaKnesses there is an Esrog that smells of Gan Eden! Let us find which one it is."

They made their way through all the people there, and they were amazed to see the Rebbe searching for the "wonderful scent" that emanated from an Esrog, and they watched him stop right in front of R' Uri, in the far corner of the Shul, who was trying to cover his plain Esrog with his Tallis. Rav Elimelech announced, to R' Uri's surprise, "This is the Esrog giving off the scent of Gan Eden!" and he asked R' Uri for permission to use his Esrog to make a Brachah on, because it was a product of true Ahavas Yisroel, as it was gotten through an act of Mesiras Nefesh!

Building the Sukka



The Klausenberger Rebbe told the following story about the **holy Berditchever**, who, in his youth, was already recognized as a child prodigy. The wealthy Rav Yisrael Peretz of Levertov took him as a son-in-law and cared for his every need so that the young illuy (genius) could sit and learn undisturbed.

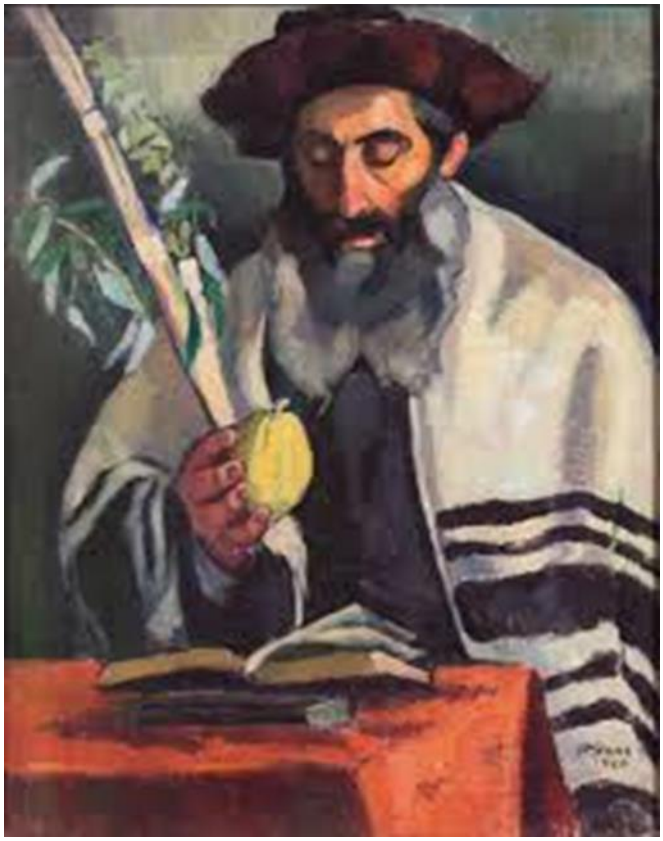
To his father-in-law's utter amazement and dismay, he received reports that his illustrious son-in-law was seen in the streets of the city carrying a heavy load of straw which he intended to use as s'chach for his sukka for the upcoming festival. The burden weighed him down, and he was covered with dust and sweat from the exertion.

His father-in-law, who was known as an honourable person, was greatly embarrassed by this public display of his son-in-law performing manual hard work like a common labourer. Later, he called Rav Levi Yitzchok in to rebuke him for his ways. "But everything I did was for the sake of the mitzva of building a sukka," explained Rav Levi Yitzchok. (In fact, the poskim discuss whether a person of public stature may engage in public labour building his sukka; See Sha'arei Teshuva, Siman 625.)

His father-in-law rebuked him sternly, saying, "But why sully yourself and embarrass us so by acting like a common porter? You should have approached my wagon driver and ordered him to load the straw on the wagon and to harness the horses, and he would have brought the straw home for you – to your house – in a dignified fashion!"

"I don't understand," said Rav Levi Yitzchok in astonishment. "How could you expect me to give such a precious and important mitzva over to a wagon driver and horses?" (*Shiur Chumash Rashi by the Sanz-Klausenberger, Parshas Chayei Sara, 5734)*

Shaking and Breaking the Lulov



When the **Holy Ruzhiner** was but a child, just five or six years old, he visited Berditchev on Sukkos and this is what he saw: **The Holy Berditchever** was reciting Hallel with lulov and esrog in hand. Due to his otherworldly excitement, he was simply aflame with hislahavus and as he shook the lulov, it snapped! One after another they would break – again and again. Someone stood there and kept replacing the broken lulovim with new ones the entire time!

The Holy Ruzhiner, just a boy at the time, stood there holding his own little lulov and remarked, "There are those who, due to their love of Hashem, simply cannot contain themselves and they break everything, and then there are those whose fear and awe of Hashem is so great that they don't even dare to move at all!"

"Whoever fulfils the mitzvah of succah, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will shelter and protect him from harm." (Pesikta D'Rav Kehana 9:28)

Mitzvos

There are two kinds of mitzvos, those such as tefillin and tzitzis that deliver no pleasure to the body and those such as eating on Shabbos and Yom Tov that are pleasurable to the body; of course, even those mitzvos that provide pleasure must be performed for the purpose of fulfilling the will of Hashem rather than satisfying the desires of the body.

The question arises, why indeed did Hashem give us mitzvos that are pleasurable to the body? Why put us in a position in which we might be distracted by the physical pleasure from the true purpose of the mitzva?

It is because the soul derives great pleasure from the performance of all mitzvos. It is thus purified and drawn toward its celestial origins where it encounters the eternal goodness in store for Tzaddikim. But a human being is comprised of both body and soul, and as long as the body is not properly purified, he cannot fully experience the eternal goodness in store for him.

Therefore, Hashem gave us mitzvos that provide physical pleasure. And when a person overcomes his material desires and performs these mitzvos solely for the fulfilment of the will of Hashem, his body is also purified and elevated to the level of his soul.

Sleeping In The Succah

Someone once said that he didn't sleep in the succah because it was too cold.

Rebbe Yitzchak of Skvere zt'l replied, "I never saw anything colder than your Shemone Esrei, and I see that you can sleep well through it!"



Someone driving an expensive Mercedes came to the border. The border police suspected contraband and asked him to open the baggage compartment. All they found were buckets of soil. "What's this?" they asked him. "I'm building a new home, and the earth I need for building is cheaper in the other country. So I go there and fill up buckets with sand…"

They didn't believe him. It was strange that one would import soil, just to save a few pennies. So they sifted through the earth hoping to find diamonds but they didn't find anything, and they let him pass.

The following day, he drove his Mercedes to the border, once again. The border patrol sifted through the soil, didn't find anything and let him on his way. This happened every day for months. After a while, they stopped sifting through the earth, because they saw that there was nothing there.

One day, he came to the border and told the guards that he wouldn't be coming anymore. "I finished building my house, so there's no reason for me to import anymore earth." They asked him, "Tell us the truth: were you just importing earth all this time? It doesn't make sense that you would go through all this effort, just because the earth is a few pennies cheaper."

He replied, "I'll tell you if you promise that you won't arrest me and that you won't report me to the government." They promised. He said, "Fools, the soil was just a decoy. I was importing Mercedes cars. Every day, I drove a new Mercedes …"

The moral is that there many things that can distract us from the primary focus of the Yom Tov. Let's not get side-tracked. We have a mitzvah to sit in a succah and to perform the mitzvos, and that is the real treasure we should be focusing on.

Chasam Sofer: Loving Your Esrog to Death

Sometimes during Sukkos, an esrog can turn brown from holding it too much. Even in a case where the change in colouring would normally make it possul, the **Chasam Sofer** says that in this case it is still kosher, provided it came from holding it on Sukkos (and not before Sukkos). The reason, he says, is because shiyarei mitzva zeh hiduro – "the remains of a mitzva are its beauty".

Rav Yechiel Michel Stern, in Sefer Kashrus Araba'as HaMinim, writes that we should rely on this heter only on Chol HaMo'ed where the mitzva is D'Rabonnon, and not on the first day where the mitzva is Min HaTorah. However he brings from the Shu"T Zecher L'Yehosef that he was matir even on the first day.

From Where Did The Yidden Obtain Wood In The Desert For Building Sukkos?

Rabeinu Bachye: the Jews obtained wood from the merchants of the other nations (like they purchased food from them). The miracle we commemorate is that for 40 years HaShem provided the Jews with every need, as they wandered through an inhospitable and uninhabitable desert.

The Midrash Tanchuma says that the waters of the Well of Miriam flowed around the Jewish encampment. There sprouted endless variety of trees and hedges.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Yaaras D'vash (2:10) asks that although **השטן** is gematriya 364, **שטן**, which is a more accurate spelling of Satan, is gematriya 359. It seems that the Satan only has permission to speak on 359 days of the solar year, which leaves six days a year when he must remain silent.

The Yaaras Dvash answers that indeed, "…there are six days each year that the Satan must be silent and can't prosecute. They are from Yom Kippur until after the first day of Succos..." The Satan must remain silent. This indicates to us the specialness of these days.

It can also be claimed that the purity continues through Hoshana Rabba. It is written, "Search for Hashem when He is near" (Yeshayah 55). The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 18) teaches "These are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur." The ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are mesugal for atonement. Hashem is near us, ready to accept our teshuvah.

Luxuries Luxuries Luxuries

Another lesson that we should learn from succah is to avoid luxuries. We are commanded to leave our comfortable homes, with its luxuriously furnished rooms, and to spend a week in a temporary succah. This reminds us that luxuries shouldn't be our goal in life. There are more important ambitions to pursue.

There is a wondrous Midrash (quoted in Avnei Zikoron of the **Chozeh of Lublin** 662) on the passuk **וה' ברך את אברהם בכל**, ***"Hashem blessed Avraham with everything."***

The Midrash states that **בכל**, "everything," means the mitzvah succah. Hashem blessed Avraham with everything, by giving him the mitzvah of succah.

What is the Midrash teaching us, and why is having a succah considered having everything? We can explain that succah reminds us that luxuries aren't the purpose of this world, and therefore, one should be satisfied with his lot, even if it's small and paltry. A person who lives with this credo will always feel that he has everything.

Luxuries



One of the reasons the pursuit of luxuries should be discouraged is because living extravagantly might cause a person to forget who gave him all those things. The nature of this world is that the more one is steeped in materialism, the harder it is for him to recognize Hashem. Therefore, the Torah gave us the mitzvah of succah, so on one week of the year we should contemplate on the following precepts: ***Everything I have is from Hashem. I can't earn anything alone…***

Rebbe Yohonoson Eibshitz (6:1) writes, "The one who fears Hashem won't only have succos during the holiday of Succos, but throughout the entire year he will remember that life is temporary; he's living here as a guest.

One should sleep in the shade of the succah and leave the permanent dwelling place… He should look up at the stars and place his trust in Hashem. He shouldn't build expensive houses, decorated with gems and diamonds, just for pleasure. This will lead him to desire more

money and to other sins, even stealing so he can fill up his fortress and be proud, and he will forget Hashem who created him.

The Yaaras Dvash added that avoiding luxuries and living with the minimum, is mesugal for arichus yammim, long life. He proves this from the forefathers who lived in tents, and therefore they lived long, too.

The Yaaras Dvash also proves this from the Mishkan, which was made from **יריעות**, skins and woven cloth, and the Mishkan lasted for 480 years (counting the years the Mishkan stood in the desert and later in Eretz Yisrael, until its last location in Nov and Givon). Whereas the Beis HaMikdash that Shlomo HaMelech built from stone and gold only stood 410 years. The second Beis HaMikdash also only stood for 420 years, and in the middle, there was the Greek conquest, and the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed several times. So we see that when there are fewer luxuries, things last longer.

Happiness

The Imrei Noam noted that the mitzvah of lulav is only for one day (as it says **ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון**) while the mitzvah of simchah is for seven days (as it states **ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבעת ימים**). He says that this teaches us that Hashem loves simchah, and He wants His children to be happy. Therefore, the mitzvah for joy is for more days than that of the arba minin.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l taught that the aravah only costs a few pennies, but it becomes a great mitzvah on Hoshanah Rabba. This is because we used the aravah joyously on Succos when we shook the four species. And when a mitzvah is done with joy, even if it is inexpensive, it's worth far more than expensive mitzvos performed without joy.

One erev Succos, in one of the communities in Europe, there weren't any esrogim available. One merchant arrived with an esrog and, taking advantage of the shortage, asked for an exorbitant price. Everyone in the community contributed what they could to buy that esrog. But there was one wealthy miser who refused to contribute any money. Because of him, they almost weren't able to buy it.



The esrog was in the rosh hakahol's home, because he paid most of the money. The entire community lined up at his door to have the opportunity to shake the four minim, including that wealthy miser. Since he didn't give any money towards buying it, the rosh hakahal refused to give him the esrog. As the rosh hakahal was walking to the beis medresh, proudly holding the four minim, the wealthy miser shouted the brachah al netilas lulav, lifted up the rosh hakahal and shook him in all six directions.

The rav of the community witnessed this and told the rosh hakahal to allow this wealthy man to hold the esrog and lulav in his hands. When the miser man died, his deeds were weighed in heaven, and the scale tipped to the side of sin. A merciful angel asked "Did the court place the mitzvah of lulav that he performed onto the scale?" "We have," the court replied, "and we placed his shame on the scale as well, when the rosh hakahal didn't permit him to shake lulav, but it still isn't sufficient." "Did the court also place the rosh hakahal onto the scale?" "The rosh hakahal?" the court asked. "Why should we do that?" The kind angel explained, "He so desired to do the mitzvah, he even lifted the rosh hakahal to do it. The rosh hakahal's weight should be placed on the scale, too." That tipped the scales in his favour, and he was thereby granted entry to Gan Eden.

Tzedakah On Erev Succos

There is a mitzvah of tzedakah on erev Succos. **The Shaarei Teshuvah** (625) writes "It is proper to give a lot of tzedakah on erev Succos.

Reb Chaim Vital would distribute the [entire] tzedakah pushke to the poor on this day."

Rebbe Chaim of Tzanz would also give a lot of tzedakah on erev Succos. He said that there isn't a nicer succah decoration than the tzedakah one gives on erev Succos. The holiday of Succos is a time of unity, and therefore we seek to help our fellow man.

The Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah writes "Erev Succos is the time to give tzedakah. It is also the day to invite honourable guests, like bnei Torah, for the Yom Tov."

The Zohar teaches that on Succos, the seven ushpizen (Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Ahron, Yosef, and Dovid) come to our succos to celebrate with us. When they come, they look to see if there are guests present. If there are guests, they remain in the succah and they bless all the participants. But if there aren't any guests, they leave the succah. Therefore, it's important to have guests on Succos. (If one doesn't have guests, he should at least give charity to the poor, to help them celebrate Yom Tov. In this merit, the ushpizen will bless us, when they visit our succos.)

Rebbe Eliezer of Dzhikov was especially careful to have a guest on the first day of Succos, because the first day of Succos is the ushpizen of Avraham Avinu who is renowned for hachnassas orchim.



A Wise Man would say: "Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else."



The Esrog That Made the Rebbe Smile



Crown Heights Torah scribe Rabbi **Yehuda Clapman** told the following story: One year before Sukkos, the chossid **Reb Elye Gross** asked me if I already bought an Esrog? When I replied that not yet, he suggested that I go to a certain individual to purchase an Esrog by him, because this Jew simply needs the livelihood. I obliged and I went to this person to search for a nice Esrog. I looked around for a while and I couldn't find any Esrog that pleased my fancy.

While there, another individual comes in, picks an Esrog, asks how much, pays and turns to leave. Empty handed, I joined this individual on his way, and as we exited the house, I turned to him and asked, what nice Esrog were you able to find here, I'm here for a good while and I couldn't find anything reasonable. "For me, a mehuderdike esrog is to give a Jew Parnassa for Yomtov!" he replied. I was very impressed by his answer, to say the least.

On Yomtov, we met in shul, and in my curiosity, I checked to see what Esrog he was really using. I was thinking that for sure he bought himself another beauty of an Esrog elsewhere (as he was capable of doing), and that this other Esrog that I saw him buy, he bought just to support that merchant for Yomtov.When I saw the Esrog that he was using I was astonished, he actually used that Esrog that I witnessed him buy. I was so touched by what I witnessed, that I decided that I must write to the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** this beautiful story of pure Ahavas Yisroel.

Somewhat hesitatingly I went to the Rebbe's office, and I asked the secretary if it would be appropriate to write this story to the Rebbe? The Mazkir (secretary) was not pleased with my question, and he responded: Every day the Rebbe gets letters full of negativity and sadness, and here you have a beautiful story of pure Ahavas Yisroel which would give the Rebbe so much pleasure, and you are hesitating to write?

I got the message, and I went to a certain Jew in Crown Heights who had a beautiful handwriting, plus he was a masterful writer and poet, I told him the story, and he went ahead to write for the Rebbe a whole Megila, telling the story with poetry and charm, he used special paper and he wrote with gorgeous lettering and style, and off I went to the Rebbe's office to hand the letter for the Rebbe.

Next day I got a call from the Rebbe's Mazkir (secretary), he said I have no answer for you from the Rebbe, but I will describe to you what happened with your letter. "I put your letter on top of the pile of letters I brought into the Rebbe, I wanted your letter to be the first letter the Rebbe saw so he can read it first, and sure enough the Rebbe took your letter immediately and started reading. I stayed by the door and watched, here is what I saw: - "The Rebbe started reading, and I noticed that he was not reading it fast as he would do many times, but rather I saw that he was concentrating and reading your letter word by word and line by line, and as he progressed in reading your letter line by line, I saw the Rebbe's smile grow bigger and bigger and bigger! Your letter caused the Rebbe much Nachas!

Let's all celebrate a beautiful Yomtov of Achdus in these last moments of Hakhel (the year of gathering which terminates on the second night of Succos).

Pain is a reality, suffering is a choice.~ R Nosson Tzvi Finkel

The Joy of the Mitzvah -Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

The Vilna Gaon had a brother named R' Avrohom who lived in a small town some distance from Vilna. One day, the Gaon sent a letter to his brother requesting that he move to Vilna so that they can learn together. The response baffled him. R' Avrohom wrote, "I would love to move to Vilna but my wife refuses to move." What was stopping his wife from moving? After a while, the whole story came out.

Many years earlier, Sukkos was approaching and R' Avrohom went out to look for an esrog. There was one problem. The roads were all ruined from the bad weather and there were no esrogim to be found! After much searching, a rumour was heard that someone had come to town with an esrog for sale. R' Avrohom and other members of the town went to visit the salesman and were disappointed to hear that he wanted an astronomical price, more than anyone could afford. It looked like there wouldn't be an esrog in town that year.

When R' Avrohom's wife heard the news, she was filled with pain. How could it be that they wouldn't have an esrog? She thought it over and came up with a solution. They would sell their house which they had received as a chasunah present, move to a small shack, and use the money to purchase the esrog. She presented her idea to R' Avrohom who agreed with the plan.

They sold their home, purchased the esrog, and moved to a small shack. There was no one happier that Sukkos than R' Avrohom and his wife! Every time she passed by their original home, she was filled with such joy when she remembered the mitzvah which they had done. "How can I move to Vilna?" she said. "I don't want to lose that reminder of the mitzvah which we did." How great is the joy of one who does a mitzvah, especially when done with great dedication and self-sacrifice.

True Joy



There is a special mitzvah on Sukkos to be "b'simcha – happy" for eight days straight. How does one come to true happiness? Are we meant to sing and dance for eight days straight?

The Orchos Tzaddikim (ch. 9) writes that simcha is attained *"when one has much abundance of tranquillity in his heart without any bad happenings. One whose desires are fulfilled and doesn't have anything depressing happen to him, he will be happy."*

This seems quite obvious but also quite unrealistic. Is there any person in the world who attains all his desires? Is there someone who has never had a bad thing happened to him? Furthermore, these things are beyond our control, so how can we be commanded to be "b'simcha" if this is the only way to achieve happiness?

The answer can be found in the words of the Orchos Tzaddikim himself. He explains that it is within our power to achieve all of the above. Our desires can be changed to what is granted to us by Hashem. "Bad" happenings can be non-existent with a strong emunah that Hashem does no bad. Strengthening our emunah is the only way to come to true tranquillity and complacency which results in true simcha. While it is good to sing and dance, and these actions make one happy, it would seem that an imperative part of our attempt to fulfil this mitzvah is to work on strengthening our emunah.

As we sit in the Sukkah we should reflect on the miracles Hashem has done and can still do. For this reason, the Sukkah is referred to as "the shade of emunah," for it has the ability to strengthen us in

this area. Singing and dancing is a way of expressing our praise and appreciation of Hashem and His unending kindness. This allows us to further strengthen our emunah and bring about a lasting inner happiness.

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev zt'l was extremely poor. The only item in his home that had value was the tefillin that he inherited from his father, **Reb Yitzchok Derohovitz zt'l**. His wife urged him to sell the tefillin so they could support the family, but he didn't want to.

Once, a wealthy person came to Zlotchev, and offered a lot of money for the tefillin, Reb Michel turned him down. But one year, Succos was approaching, and there were no esrogim available. There was only one merchant who had an esrog – and he was asking an enormous amount for it; fifty reinish. The Rebbe took his precious tefillin and sold them for fifty refinish. With that money, he bought the esrog.

Rebbe Michel's joy was endless. He had a beautiful esrog for Yom Tov. "How did you manage to buy the esrog?" his wife asked him. He didn't answer. But she continued to ask, so he told her that he sold the tefillin to buy the esrog. She became angry. "How could you do that? I asked you to sell the tefillin so many times; we needed the money for the most basic essentials, but you refused. And now, you simply sold it?" She grabbed the esrog, bit into it and made it passul.

Rebbe Michel raised his eyes heavenward and said, "Ribono Shel Olam! I don't have the tefillin anymore. I don't have an esrog either. Should I also become angry? That night, he saw his father in his dream. His father told him, "Your second deed was even greater than your first. Your ability to control your anger was more precious in heaven than your mesirus nefesh to buy an esrog. Because of your restraint, many gezeiros raos [harsh decrees] were annulled."

Making Changes

אנא ה' הושיעה נא - *Please Hashem save now!*

A person stands and recites Hallel on Succos and cries out: **אנא ה' הושיעה נא** – ***"Please Hashem save now!"*** and he shakes his Lulav. He continues and says: **"אנא ה' הצליחה נא "** – ***Please Hashem bring success now!"*** and here he does not shake the Lulav.

This teaches that when things are not good for a person and he requests salvation, he is prepared to shake and make changes, however, when he is successful, he is not looking to move.

When a person feels that things are good and calm – it is difficult for him to make any changes. When his situation is more or less severe, there is no person that will not make changes. Something to think about. [*R' Shmuel Winzelberg] (B'Noam Siach on Yom Kippur*)

Food for Thought -Rabbi Moshe Revah

Rashi (Sukkah 22b) says that a sukkah on top of a tree or animal is kosher b'dieved if one were to violate the Rabbinical prohibition of climbing up the tree on Yom Tov. Why isn't this a problem of mitzvah haba'ah b'aveira which applies even to issurei d'rabbanan (Pesachim 35b)?

The Shulchan Aruch (633:3) states that if one put decorations in a sukkah which is the minimum size of 7x7 tefachim and made it smaller, the sukkah is passul. **R' Akiva Eiger** explains that the decorations are muktzah and can't be moved; therefore, they minimize the liveable area. The question is they are only muktzah because they are part of a kosher sukkah, but since this sukkah is passul, how can the decorations be muktzeh?

וה' ברך את אברהם בכל

The Vilna Gaon taught that Avraham Avinu was given the Mitzvah of Succah, based on the Pasuk, "VaHashem Beirach es Avraham Ba'kol", and Hashem Bentched Avraham 'Ba'kol', with everything, which alludes to the Mitzvah of Succah. Why was Avraham chosen to receive this Mitzvah?

Also, Ba'kol means 'everything', and it would seem that we are limiting his Brachah by explaining to mean only a Succah!

Rav Yerucham Olshin explains that an essential focus of the Mitzvah of Succah is that we are leaving a permanent structure to live in a temporary one.

The Sefer HaK'sav V'HaKabalah (Emor 23:43) explains that this is also a reminder that life in this world is only temporary, while Olam Haba is the permanent existence. The word 'Ba'kol', in its basic form, is 'Kol', 'everything'.

Avraham epitomized this idea of being satisfied with what one has (see Pirkei Avos 5:19). By living our lives feeling that we have everything we need, we are living in this world with an Olam Haba perspective, of everything being provided for us by Hashem.

This is the reminder of leaving our homes to enter the Succah, and this also explains why this Mitzvah alone, defines and does not limit the Brachah of everything included in Ba'kol!

"Patience is a wonderful virtue. Make an effort to be gentle and forbearing with insulting and aggravating people and with your family. Be as strong as a lion to control your tongue even if you are burning with the desire to speak your mind. - "A word is worth one gold piece; silence is worth two." (Talmud Megillah 18a) ~ R' Eliezer Papo zt"l.

After the Chofetz Chaim's wife passed away, the elderly Tzaddik who was in his 70's at the time, got remarried. His new wife came from a prestigious family, yet she was significantly younger than the Chofetz Chaim. During their first year of marriage, just a few days before Succos the Chofetz Chaim was building his own Succah, despite his old age.

When he was finished, his wife came outside to look at his work. She said, "The Succah is beautiful! However, would it be possible to build the Succah over there?" She pointed to a different corner across the yard, far from the spot where the Chofetz Chaim had always built his Succah.

Without saying a word, the elderly Chofetz Chaim began to take apart the Succah. His wife smiled and went back into their home. A few hours later she returned, and this time the Succah was exactly where she had requested.

She said, "The Succah really looks beautiful, but I think it looked better where you had it originally." Without saying a word, the Chofetz Chaim took apart the Succah for a second time and returned it to its original place.

Hours later, his wife came outside again and said, "Now the Succah looks perfect!" Again, the Chofetz Chaim didn't say a word. He just smiled in agreement!

Before the Satmar Rebbe's zt'l chasunah, his father told him, "Why is the chuppah customarily under the sky?

To remind the chassan and kallah to turn to Heaven for all their needs. Just as a succah is outdoors, where one can see the sky through the s'chach, to help him remember Hashem, so is the chuppah outdoors for this purpose..."

Likute Mimini Michoel

It is written in the **sefer Sha'arei Teshuvo**, quoting the mekubolim , that one should increase the amount of one's charitable donations on erev Sukkos.

The sefer **Iyunei Chayim** offers an explanation in the name of **Rav Kasriel Dovid Kaplin** that the connection is attributable to the fact that the gematria of the word sukkah is comparable to that for the word tzedokoh . Given that the gematria of sukkah is ninety-one and the gematria of tzedokoh is one hundred and ninety-nine, this explanation needs some analysis.

The elucidation comes from **Kedushas Tzion of Bobov**, who begins by describing the minimum shiur of a kosher sukkah. There must be two full walls of no fewer than seven tefochim , with a third of at least one tefach. The minimum height requirement is ten tefochim. Thus far, the calculation amounts to two walls of seventy tefochim squared with the additional ten tefochim third wall, making one hundred and fifty tefochim squared.

To this one must add the minimum size of s'chach, a further seven by seven tefochim making a sub-total of one hundred and ninety-nine tefochim squared, thereby achieving an equivalence with the numerical value of the word tzedokoh.

However, this analysis continues in that the floor of the sukkah also has kedushoh during yomtov and one can therefore add a further forty-nine tefochim squared, which now equates to the two hundred and forty-eight limbs of a person. This hints at the special quality of the mitzvah of sukkah whereby one immerses one's entire being within its physical and spiritual environment.

The first Bostoner Rebbe, **HaRav Pinchas Dovid Horowitz**, offers an additional insight. Chazal tell us that shkulo mitzvas sukkah keneged kol mitsvas shebatorah – the value of the mitzvah of sukkah is comparable to all of the commandments in the Torah. The Rebbe explains, as we elucidated above, that the minimum size of a sukkah,

including s'chach and floor, is two hundred and forty-eight tefochim squared. This number also represents the number of positive mitzvos in the Torah. To satisfy the previously mentioned adage of Chazal, we must find at least an allusion to the three hundred and sixty-five restrictive commandments.

In reality, this poses no challenge. The Rebbe emphasises how when one sits in one's sukkah, active in positive mitzvos and absorbing the rarefied surroundings, any inclination to engage in conduct that would breach a restrictive commandment is completely suppressed. Adding one's abstention from any forbidden conduct, therefore, yields observance of all six hundred and thirteen mitzvos in the Torah, satisfying Chazal's dictum.

As we put down the Arba Minim, what can we carry forward with us into the Yom Tov and year ahead?



The four species represent four letters of HaShem's name. The short Esrog is the yud, the tall lulav is the vov, and the hadassim and aravos are each a hai.

We know that during Sukkos we hold these items together and through this act we pray for G-d's name to be unified in the world. However, though we tie three of the species together, we don't make a holder that has room for the Esrog as well. Instead, it is held in the other hand (even if you can hold all four in one hand) and the two hands are brought together to

unify G-d's name. Why is this so? Why don't we want to have all the items united in one unit?

Perhaps there is a deep lesson we can take with us from this Yom Tov. The prayer recited before blessing the Lulav includes the line, "May G-d's name (represented by the 4 types) be unified in my hands." Through our actions we can sanctify the name of HaShem.

The Extraordinary Mitzah of Succos - by Rafi Jager

First: the mitzvah of sukkah is done with the entire body — all of you sits in the sukkah — while most mitzvot are performed with specific parts of the body. **Second:** a person can dwell in his sukkah virtually the entire holiday — the longer you stay, the more the mitzvah! — while most mitzvot are done for a limited period of time only (Shabbat candles-Friday afternoon). **Third:** since the sukkah is your "house" during Sukkot, you are centred there and "home-in" to it, and therefore are connected to the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah even when you leave it. It is as if it follows you around wherever you go! **Fourth:** through sukkah, nearly all of our mundane activities can be transformed into holy acts. In general, the routine activities of eating, sleeping, socializing, etc. are not necessarily mitzvot.

During Sukkot, however, by doing all these activities in a sukkah, they acquire the level of mitzvot, and thus become infused with holiness for the entire year to come.

Try to maintain consciousness of these aspects of the mitzvah. One of the most potent lessons of the sukkah is that, as Jews, all our activities can become mitzvot, and we can connect to G-d in whatever we do, no matter how "mundane" it may seem.

Chazal say (Succah 25:) מצטער פטור מן הסוכה, that if someone has distress in the succah, he is **פטור**, exempt from this mitzvah.

The Kotzker zt'l explained, that if a person is sitting in the holy succah, his joy is so intense. How can he feel any distress there? He should be so happy, until he doesn't feel any discomfort at all. If he feels the discomfort, that's a sign that he is **פטור** - detached from the reality where he is in.

Living Jewish

בַּסֻּכֹּת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים ***In sukkot shall you dwell seven days***

The sukka surrounds the entire person and one is enjoined to conduct all worldly affairs within it for seven days. The fact that all a person's being is encompassed, teaches us that not only through prayer and study do we worship G-d.

The sukka teaches that it is also through the physical world that we approach G-d and draw holiness into our surroundings, as it states, "in all your ways shall you know Him." The mitzva of sukka strengthens our realization of this and gives us the power to carry out our G-dly mission throughout the year. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

Unity

Even tzaddikim and Torah scholars have to unite with other Yidden, including the lowly ones. This is represented by the esrog, which isn't valid without the other three species.

Similarly, the **Beer Heitev** (645:9) writes "Esrog is gematriya 610. When combined with the other 3 species, the gematriya is 613."

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder

The Mishnah in Sukkah (51a) teaches that a person who did not merit witnessing the Simchas Beis Hashoeivah in the Beis Hamikdash never saw true joy.

Why was Simchas Beis Hashoeivah specifically a cause for such tremendous happiness? (Darash Moshe Parshas Pinchas)



Rav Moshe Feinstein notes that the joy of Sukkos in the Beis Hamikdash was associated with the pouring of the water-libation on the Altar, which is unusual in that water is tremendously abundant and has virtually no monetary value.

However, this is precisely the point, as the fact that the entire nation can serve Hashem using something as cheap and readily available as water teaches that every individual is capable of serving Hashem with whatever abilities and possessions he was granted.

A poor person should realize that poverty doesn't preclude him from serving Hashem at the highest level, as even water can be elevated and transformed into an offering in the Temple, and it this message of the water libations which caused such tremendous joy at the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah.

"In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. That means we have 1,440 daily opportunities to make a positive impact."

Happiness

We are commanded on Sukkot to be happy. The word for happiness in Hebrew is שמחה. The letters in the word simcha can be broken up into two words שם meaning "there" and חה, which has no meaning, but has the gematria of 13.

The world for love, אהבה, is also equal 13. Therefore, the word simcha can be broken into שם, "there," is ahavah, "love."

That is the essence of a person who has simcha. He realizes that he is loved… After finishing the intensity of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur we realize that HaShem forgives for our sins, and we remember how much HaShem cares for us and loves us. This inspiration, this overflow of love, is supposed to be the joy, the simcha of Sukkot.

The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l, would spend hours selecting Hadasim. When asked why he did this, he explained that he felt that his lengthy effort was a Segulah for Siyata Di'shmaya, help from Shamayim, in regard to Shemiras HaEinayim, guarding one's eyes from seeing things that are not appropriate to look at.

In addition, Rav Segal said that all the exertion and effort that one undergoes in building a Succah and purchasing the Arba Minim, is spiritually cleansing and is part of a complete Teshuvah!



No Bracha On The Mitzvah Of Building A Sukkah??? Written by Binyamin Rose



We have special brochos for so many mitzvos, why not for building a sukkah? The Classic Commentaries bring a multitude of answers to this question. The Gemorra in Menachos (42), and the Tur Orach Chayim bring some of these answers.

The Imrei Shaul adds his own insight to this question. He tells us that the bracha is actually hinted at in the very mitzvah itself. For when one builds a "complete" sukkah, it is composed of four walls (d'fanos) with s'chach on top. If one adds up the gematriya of the word **דופן** (singular for wall), multiply it by four, (560) and then add the gematriya of the word **סכך** (100), one comes up with the same gematriya as the words "**ברוך אתה י-ה-ו-ה**" [a total of 660].

The bracha is hidden in the very sukkah itself!

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l

Reb Shlomo Zalman told him, "I know a yid who needed an operation, and ever since then he is deaf in one ear. He is also a widower, r'l. He also has three children who never bore children. - Despite all his troubles, he is always happy, and he always has a smile on his face." The man said, "I can't believe that there is such a person. How can he be happy, after suffering so much? It can't be true."

Reb Shlomo Zalman told him that he was speaking about himself!

We make the *brachah* on the *esrog* מיטן פיטום אראפ, with the *pitom* facing down. The words **מיטן פיטום אראפ** is also an expression which people use to refer to when everything is spiralling downwards, and nothing is working out as he wants.

But we make a brachah when it is **מיטן פיטום אראפ**, because we believe that although we don't understand, everything is good.

The *Sfas Emes* (5645) writes: "The mitzvah of *succah* is the mitzvah of *bitachon*. As Chazal say **צא מדירת קבע**,**'Go out of your permanent house…'** and stop trusting in your assets and begin trusting in Hashem alone… Succos is **זמן שמחתנו**, ***'the time of our happiness,'*** No one is happier than the one who trusts in Hashem…"



It is known among chassidim that the preparation for a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself.

Rebbe Dovid of Tolna *zt'l* said that this concept is learned from the four days that are between Yom Kippur and Succos, when people are buying the *arba minim*, preparing the *succah*, etc. and they have atonement, but during Succos, when they perform these mitzvos, they don't have atonement. For the first day of Succos is called **יום הראשן** "the first day for the counting of sins." This shows that the preparation for a mitzvah, is greater than the mitzvos themselves.

There are different customs regarding saying Shalom Aleichim Friday night during Succos.

We begin with those who don't say it. **The Shem MiShmuel** explains that the kedushah of the Succah is so great, the malachim can't enter. For those who do say Shalom Aleichem, there is a question regarding what one should recite first? Should he begin with Shalom Aleichem to greet the malachim, or should he start with the invitation to the Ushpizin?

Someone told the **Satmer Rebbe zt'l** that he thinks we should invite the malachim first, because of the rule, **תדיר ושאינו תדיר תדיר קודם** - whatever is more common goes first. We say Shalom Aleichem every Friday night of the year. It is more common than calling the Ushpizin, and therefore Shalom Aleichem should be first.

The Satmer Rebbe disagreed. He said that although the words of the Shalom Aleichem are the same each week, they aren't the same. Because the malachim that come to him are dependent on his deeds and his preparation for Shabbos during the six days before Shabbos.

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

"The giver gets more than the recipient. The recipient acquires something material and limited. The one who gives, however, acquires for himself a good and pure heart." ~ The Alter of Novardok.

"The essence of faith is the perception that there is truly nothing in this world besides for Hashem." ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner.



Many people would bring their four minim to **Reb Shimon Ahron Polonski *zt'l*, the Tepliker Rav**, to ask him whether they were kosher and *mehudar*.

In return for this service, he asked them to donate some money to the poor of Yerushalayim so that he could help them with the yom tov expenses.

One person told him, "After I buy the four minim, I won't have money left to help the poor." The Tepliker Rav told him, "Who says you have to buy the four minim? You can borrow from someone else and perform the mitzvah that way. However, if a poor family is sad on yom tov because they couldn't afford to buy a meal, and if they shed even just one tear, that creates a kitrug in heaven, which is very hard to amend."

One year, the Tepliker Rav asked someone to lend him his *esrog*. He had a lulav, hadasim and aravos, but he didn't own an esrog. This is what happened: On *Erev* Succos, the Tepliker Rav heard shouts and cries coming from his neighbour's home, so he knocked on their door to see what was going on and if he could help. It was a broken family. The father had died, and the children were orphans. Although the mother remarried, things still weren't smooth in the family.

They told him that one of the children had broken the pitom on the stepfather's esrog. "We are worried about what his reaction will be when he finds out what happened." The Tepliker Rav understood what they meant. He might rebuke the orphan very harshly for breaking the pitom, and he might be angry with his wife, too, for allowing the child to get close to the esrog.

The Tepliker Rav told them, "When your step-father comes home, tell him that I asked to see the esrog, and I ruled that it was pasul. You don't have to tell him that it broke. Instead, I will bring you my esrog…"

Therefore, that year, the Tepliker Rav didn't have an esrog. Someone else's shalom bayis and simchas yom tov were more important to him than owning his own four minim.



The Yesod Yosef (ch.77) writes- "When one sits in the succah, and he learns and davens there, he is *mamash* in the upper worlds…" **The Yaaras Dvash** (vol.1 drush 6) writes, "Above the Succah is Hashem's cloud. Although we don't see it, nevertheless, it is certain and true that whoever sits in the succah *leshem shamayim* and he studies Torah there, and he is happy with the holiday, and with the mitzvos, Hashem's cloud hovers above him."

The Sfas Emes (5643) writes, "[The *Succah*] is like Gan Eden. Man was created to live in Gan Eden, the place of true joy, as we say, **כשמחתך יצירך בגן עדן**.

Adam was banished from Gan Eden. Nevertheless, there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines… This is the reason people are happy when they are in *Succah*…"



The Berdichiver Rav *zt'l* once met the Satan and noticed that the Satan was very sad. "What's the matter?" the Bardichever Rav asked him. "A shipload of *esrogim* is arriving, and the Gemara (*Succah* 38.) says that when Yidden shake the four *minim*, it is like arrows in my eyes."

Later, the Berdichever Rav found the Satan; this time the Satan was happy. "What happened that you are happy?" the Bardichever Rav asked. The Satan replied, "The ship with all the esrogim sank. Now, they won't have the opportunity to keep the mitzvah."

Chol HaMoed Succos, the Satan was sad again. The Bardichever Rav asked him about that." The Satan replied, "This year most Yidden didn't shake lulav, that's true. Nevertheless, they all yearned immensely for the mitzvah, and their yearning is very precious to Hashem. Additionally, a few Yidden somehow found a way to buy esrogim for a very high price, and they were extremely joyful with the mitzvah. The desire, the price, plus the joy are very precious before Hashem, even more precious than had all the *esrogim* arrived…"

The Steipler Gaon's Lulav by Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



The Steipler Gaon was extremely humble, yet he knew that his actions were carefully watched by others, and he kept this in mind at all times. Before Succos one year, he went to a certain store looking to buy a Lulav which met his high standards of Kashrus. However, he could not find one that he liked, and he left the store without buying anything. After taking a few steps down the street, he suddenly turned around, went back into the store, and came out again with a Lulav that he had just bought.

Later, someone asked him to explain why he did that, and he said, "The truth is, I did not find a Lulav that I liked. But after leaving the store it dawned on me that if someone would see me leaving the store empty-handed, they might say that the Steipler was in that store and could not find a single Kosher Lulav!

This would cause a loss of business and be a great source of distress to the owner of the store. That is why I went to buy a Lulav. It certainly is Kosher, but I do not plan to use it!"

Torah Tavlin

R' Yehoshua Horowitz of Dzikov zt"l (Ateres Yeshuah) would say: "The Seforim Hakedoshim tell us that the source of sickness in the world is when the four foundational elements of the world - Earth, Water, Air, and Fire - overcome one another and disease breaks out. Hashem sends His Middas Hadin to take over the Teva, and the only way to inject a Refuah into the world is when the Tzaddikim are able to overturn the Din into Rachamim through their tefillos.

The mitzvah of Sukkah also has the ability to bring about healing, and turn the Din into Rachamim, particularly stomach ailments and the like which are considered the most severe.

The four walls of the Sukkah amount to four times **דופן** (wall) together with **סכך** which equals 660, and is also the gematria of **שלשל** (diarrhoea).

And the Gemara states: **המשלשל דפנות מלמעלה למטה** - which alludes to the walls of the sukkah healing the sickness of **שלשל.**

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר, כפת תמרים, וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל
You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a tree of splendour, fronds of date palms, and branches of a cord-like tree, and brook willows. *(Vayikra 23:40)*

With the commandment to take the four species on Succos we take one Esrog, one Lulav, three stems of Hadasim, and two stems of Aravos, which total seven items of growth all together. These correspond to the seven heavens that are suspended above the earth, according to Chazal (Chagigah 12b and Midrash). From this, the Chachmei Yisroel state that whoever fulfills the Mitzvah of the Arba'ah Minim properly on Succos, then the seven heavens in the world open up for him, and his Tefilos reach the **כסא הכבוד** - Honoured Throne.

Additionally, the Chachamim state that the Mitzvah of the Arba'ah Minim is equivalent to all 613 Mitzvos in the Torah.

The Gematria of the word **אתרוג** is 610. When we add the other three species, this equals 613.

Rebbe Elazar of Germayza, author of HaRokeach, elaborates on this Mitzvah. The Torah begins with the letter **ב (בראשית)** and ends with letter **ל (ישראל)** and the Books of Nach begin with the letter **ו (ויהי)** in Sefer Yehoshua, and end in Divrei Hayamim II with the letter **ל (ויעל)**

The letters that begin and end the Torah and Nach, join together to form the word **לולב.**

This hints to us that whoever fulfils the Mitzvah of Lulav properly, it is as if he has fulfilled everything that is written in the Torah and other Holy Writings. (Parperaos LaTorah)

On Succos we take the Lulav, Hadasim, and Aravos together with the Esrog.

Rav Shimon Sofer offers an interesting insight as to their symbolism. The Esrog, which has flavour, looks nice and gives a pleasant smell, represents the wealthy person who can care for his family as well as for others. The Hadasim have a nice aroma but have no taste, and the Lulav, which has a beautiful appearance but no smell or taste, represent the middleclass people. And the Aravos, which have no fragrance, no taste, nor any special appearance, represents the destitute and poor person.

By bringing them all together, we are expressing the need for unity and camaraderie. In order for us to properly understand the needs of the poor, we have to make their plight personal to us. If not, we can easily dismiss their needs based on our own perspectives. By getting to know others better we get to see the real person they

are and his real needs, and thereby be able to properly help him in his time of need. (Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn)

A Heartfelt Hug - Rabbi Yehoshua Alt



There was a rabbi who would visit prisons that had Jewish inmates in order to cheer them up and encourage them. The rabbi's love spilled over that he would even inspire the non-Jewish prisoners, giving them hugs just as he did to the Jewish inmates. However, in one of the prisons he visited, there was a certain inmate that was exceptionally scary-looking— muscular, very tall, covered in tattoos—whom he avoided due to fear.

As he was leaving this prison, he heard someone call out from behind him, "rabbi, no hug for me?" It was this scary-looking inmate. The rabbi then gave him a hug. Then the inmate told the rabbi he needs another hug, to which the rabbi conceded. The inmate then began to cry saying those were the first hugs he had ever received in his life.

In one of the Nazi death camps that were liberated by an American soldier's platoon, there were many starving children. The American soldiers set up a huge pot of soup to feed these children, and the children lined up, eager to receive their share of food.

One particular soldier made eye contact with a boy at the end of the line. Since the American soldier couldn't speak the boy's native language, he communicated by offering the boy a hug. After they finished hugging, the soldier looked up and noticed that the children who were previously lined up for soup had postponed their chance to

eat and instead formed a line behind the soldier to receive their hugs as well.

The four walls of the Succa and the Schach covering overhead is compared to a child that is totally embraced in a full body-surrounding hug. It is a Divine hug for us, His children (as we are called **בנים אתם לה'**, ***you are children to Hashem***).

Of course, four complete walls are preferable, but the Succa can be made with a minimum of two complete walls and a section of a third wall. Even a child who is older appreciates a "smaller hug"—an affectionate arm around the shoulder. That is like the minimum Succa—a Succa of two walls and a bit.

The Arizal points out three sections—the arm itself from the shoulder to the elbow, the forearm from the elbow to the wrist and from the wrist to the edge of the fingers.

This parallels the Succa where the first wall represents a Divine embrace from the "shoulder" to the "elbow"; the second wall reflects the embrace of the "forearm" and the third small wall symbolizes the palm embrace. This is what is referred to in **תחבקני וימינו**, ***His right arm embraces me***.

The Succah is Hashem's hug to each of us. We must be conscious of His Hug when we enter the Succa and feel His divine, eternal, and unconditional love for us.

A young man once came to Rabbi Noson Tzvi Finkel to announce his engagement. Noticing that he had a very solemn facial expression, Rav Noson Tzvi lectured him on the importance of having a cheerful expression. Rabbi Finkel stressed that while this is a great obligation at all times, it is especially necessary when he is in the presence of his fiancé. ~ R' Zelig Pliskin.

The Rizhiner once sat on Sukkos and burst out in a peal of laughter!

Such an outburst of mirth was quite uncharacteristic for him and his close followers were very surprised. The Rizhiner explained that just then in Shomayim there was laughter and joy, for a simpleton had just awakened great simcha in the supernal realms by his sincere action. This simple Jew was hungry but there was no sukka in sight. What was he to do? How could he eat outside the sukka?

Just then he had a brilliant idea! He promptly removed his hat and turned it upside down so that the hole would be on top and the sides of the hat's brim would serve as the walls. He then gathered some straw to serve as s'chach for the roof of his makeshift sukka. Thus he sat down to eat with a sukka on his head.



This simple act of devotion was so comical, yet so great, that in Shomayim they laughed in delight – and so did the Tzaddik.

"People who run after the pleasures of this world will lack inner peace as soon as they are unable to gratify their desires. Therefore, they will suffer even if there are no external factors that are problematic." ~ The Vilna Gaon.

"The one who does not see the Omnipresent in every place, will not see Him in any place." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.



תואר מרי חרחיים בעל עטרת צבי וצייל

The Rebbe of Kotzk zt'l said moments before his demise, "Someone who devotes himself to studying Torah, **ובבא בזה לו ערב אני** I guarantee that he will enjoy goodness, in this world and in the next world. But those who don't want to devote themselves to Torah they will fall into the abyss."

The Vilna Gaon zt'l said that every person should choose one masechta, and know it perfectly, and by heart. One of the benefits is that during the times when he doesn't have a sefer available, he can always think about the masechta that he is an expert in.

Someone told the Vilna Gaon that he chose the masechta Succah to be an expert, and that he has succeeded. The Vilna Gaon asked him, "If you are an expert, I'll ask you a question: Chazal tell many examples of succos; some are kosher, others are passul. Think through all Chazals that discuss succos, and tell me, how many times did Chazal say that the succah is kosher, and how many times do Chazal say that the succah is passul?" The man didn't know the answer. He was an expert, but not to that extent.

The Vilna Gaon told him that an expert in a masechta should be able to answer that question. One should know the masechta backwards and forwards, and even such a question shouldn't stumble him.

The Vilna Gaon said that there are eighty-five passul succos stated in Chazal, and ninety-one kosher succos. This is because the Torah writes succah two ways: **סוכה** and **סכה**. - **סוכה** is gematryia 91. **סכה** is gematriya 85. There are 91 kosher succos and 85 passul.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter - Your Greatest Joy



כָּל מִי שֶׁלֹּא רָאָה שִׂמְחַת בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה ***One who has not witnessed the water-drawing celebrations…***

Chazal tell us, "One who has not witnessed the Simchas Beis Ha'Shoeva (the water-drawing celebrations conducted in the Beis Hamikdash throughout the days of Sukkos) has never seen joy in his life" (Sukkah 51a).

As the Gemara relates, water was drawn in the early morning from the Shiloach Spring, which flowed near the Beis Hamikdash, and from there was poured on the Mizbeach as a special water libation. The entire previous night was spent in celebration by all Jews, with prominent sages and scholars leading the festivities.

While such celebration was made in response to the ritual water-drawing, one cannot help but wonder what it was exactly all about. What was so joyous about water being poured on the Mizbeach that it warranted such revelries and outdid every other joy ever experienced?

The Midrash states that on the second day of Creation, Hashem divided the firmament between the Heavenly waters above and the terrestrial waters below. On this day, Hashem refrained from pronouncing "It is good," for the waters below were saddened to be distanced from Hashem, while their corresponding celestial waters remained close to Him in Heaven above. On the following third day of creation, however, Hashem pronounced "It is good" twice since the distress of the earthly waters was allayed. In response to their

being distanced from Hashem in Heaven, they were given the special opportunity of being poured on the Mizbeach over Sukkos. - In this sense, by partaking in the service of the Beis Hamikdash, the lower waters would be capable of drawing close to Hashem as they had desired before.

The words of the Midrash beg for an explanation. The daily amount of water poured on the Mizbeach over Sukkos was three lugim, or approximately a litre and a half. Yet as the Midrash makes clear, all the terrestrial waters were appeased because there would be water poured in the Beis Hamikdash. But why would such a small amount mollify all the lower waters? Only a very small percentage of all the water throughout the world would be used, and only thousands of years after the beginning of Creation. What made the waters so ready to accept this alternative?

Rav Zundel of Salant explains that there is something much more precious and valuable than being gloriously positioned in Heaven with the angels and Hashem. And that is the deep-seated satisfaction which comes from accomplishing the purpose for which you were created. There is no greater joy in the world than knowing that one fulfilled their mission in life.

The purpose of all the water created in the world is not as it may seem. Yes, the oceans and lakes provide us with water to drink and sustain us. But ultimately water was created solely for the time when it would be poured on the Mizbeach. That was its ultimate purpose and mission. And so, when that time came, it was the most joyous time of all for the waters in the world. The time to achieve the reason for which it was brought down to earth was being fulfilled.

This is why the Simchas Beis Ha'Shoeva was the greatest time of joy. As the Jewish people observed water being poured on the Mizbeach, they came to this realization. Everything in life is worth it so long as they could achieve their purpose.

Each and every Jew understood that there was a specific, unique reason they were born and brought into this world. They each had a mission to accomplish that no one else could. And if that mission could be fulfilled, all the sorrows and troubles they experienced were worth it and they had all the reason to be the happiest people alive. And they were.

As we celebrate Sukkos today in our own lives, despite there being no Mizbeach and no Beis Hamikdash, the ecstatic joy experienced then still resonates and echoes. It is the joy of purpose and the joy of life. And there is nothing greater and more fulfilling than that.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

One Succos, **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, zt"l**, was in the Succah, and he told his guest that he suffered from the cold and he was therefore exempt from the Mitzvah of Succah. He then stood up and went indoors. A bit later, Rav Chaim Ozer returned and joined the guest in the Succah. The guest asked him why he returned and said, "I thought you are exempt from being in the Succah?"

With his characteristic smile, Rav Chaim Ozer said, "I may be exempt from the Mitzvah of Succah, but I'm not exempt from the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim!"

Clouds of Glory

We all know that the sukkah reminds us of the Clouds of Glory which protected us in the desert, but what about the mon and the Well of Miriam which fed us and quenched our thirst there?

The Bnai Yissaschar says that when we eat and drink in the Sukkah and realize from Whom all the good we enjoy comes, this serves as a commemoration of these miracles as well.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



A story occurred with **Rav Mordechai of Nedverne, zt"l**. In Rav Mordechai's city, there was an outbreak of cholera, which is a very contagious plague. The doctors warned the general public to be extremely careful in regard to sanitary conditions.

It just so happened that it was right before the festival of Succos when this occurred. Despite the plague, Rav Mordechai built his Succah as usual. The mayor of Nedverne, who was a terrible anti-Semite, insisted that Rav Mordechai dismantle his Succah, claiming that it was against sanitary regulations to have a Succah. The Rav ignored the mayor's message, and refused to take down his Succah.

When the mayor saw that he was being ignored, he immediately dispatched a number of police to make the demand again, and to warn Rav Mordechai of the dire consequences for non-compliance. Rav Mordechai responded, "I made the Succah so that it should stand, not so that it should be torn down." Overcome with rage, the mayor threatened the Rav if he would not concede to his demand.

Rav Mordechai looked at the mayor and said, "My great uncle was the great Tzadik, **Rav Meir of Premishlan, zt"l**." The mayor heard those words and scoffed in anger, "Who cares who your uncle was? Tear down this Succah right now!" During this whole dialogue, Rav Mordechai never lost his temper. He remained calm in the face of the mayor's rage. He reiterated his statement yet again, which

brought many threats to his physical well-being from the mayor. Yet, he would not budge. Finally, he said to the mayor, "Let me tell you a story, so that you will understand why I mentioned the name of my holy uncle.

There was once a priest who was blessed with ten tall, strong

sons, who were the picture of health. The priest was also the proud owner of a beautiful garden filled with many fragrant flowers and trees. One day the priest decided that he wanted a small garden of little flowers. In order to fulfil his desire, it was necessary to cut down a number of beautiful trees. He proceeded to chop down the trees and planted little flowers instead.

Suddenly, as soon as the priest completed his plan, his sons, one by one, became gravely ill and died. In no time, the priest had lost nine of his beautiful sons. All but one had died. Suddenly, the youngest son, the only child left to the unfortunate priest, became seriously ill.

The priest turned to doctors, to magicians, to anyone, in his desperation, who he thought could help him. But nothing helped as his son lay dying. A few of his close friends suggested that as a last resort he should travel to Rav Meir of Premishlan, who was the preeminent Jewish sage of the time. He was known to all to be a virtuous, holy man.

The priest figured that he might as well go to the great Rebbe. After all, nothing else seemed to be working. What did he have to lose? He came to the Rebbe and recounted the terrible tragedies that had befallen him. He pleaded with the Rebbe to intercede on his behalf so that his last remaining son would live.

The Rebbe looked at him with stern eyes and said, 'You had a beautiful garden where wonderful fruit trees were growing. You were not satisfied, however, with these trees. You desired a garden of flowers. So, you cut down the trees. Do you realize that you cut down G-d's trees? Are you aware that man is compared to a tree? To

cut down a tree is like destroying a life. The A-lmighty has taken your sons as punishment for your greedy behaviour. However, your coming to me is an indication of your repentance. Therefore, I assure you that your remaining child will be spared.' The Rebbe prayed on behalf of the child, and his prayers received a positive response, and the child lived."

Rav Mordechal completed the story and said to the mayor in an accusing voice, "You are that child that my uncle saved! How dare you repay the good that he produced for you by insisting that I dismantle my Succah!"

When the mayor heard the story, he fell to his knees in shame, and pleaded with Rav Mordechai to forgive his disrespect. "It is true!" cried the mayor. "I was that boy that was saved. I have forgotten the meaning of gratitude. You may keep your Succah and celebrate your festival in the manner that you desire!"

A Tefillah at Home Bore Fruits in the Orchard

Boaz, the *esrog* man as he was known, kept the mitzvah of *shemittah with* so much joy, like he had scrupulously adhered to each seven years, with every detail, infused him with special pride.

No one knew the secret of Boaz's *esrogim*. How did his trees give such beautiful fruits, clean, and twice the size of other *esrogim*? Make no mistake: Boaz did not have a secret that he was hiding from his friends. But the secret of his success could only be described with one word: "*Emunah*." Boaz loved his trees and their fruits with all his heart. If this would not have been his source of livelihood, he would not have sold even one *esrog*. Because how can a person sell something he has invested all his heart into?

Boaz loved his trees, and they returned the love with the most delightful fruits. Yet, during *shemittah*, his love for his Creator overpowered his love for his trees. When *shemittah* began, Boaz bid

his trees farewell, silently apologizing to them. Then he left the orchard without locking the gates behind him. For the coming year, he would be ignoring them completely; only towards the end of the year would he come to visit them.

This year, Boaz had to be like everyone else. Every other year, he would choose the most select of his fruits, one that he put his eye on and nurtured for a number of months. When he came to shul, there would be a line of distinguished people pleading with him to shake his *esrog*. But this year, he had to work and expend effort to obtain a *mehudar esrog*.

In contrast to previous *shemittah* years, this year Boaz knew where he would go and that he would certainly find what he was seeking. During the other six years, Hashgachah had sent him Mahmoud, an elderly Arab, a tenth generation farmer, who Boaz insisted on calling a "*chassid umos ha'olam*," a righteous gentile. Mahmoud, in contrast to many others who Boaz employed and dismissed over the decades he was in the business, had proven to be extremely loyal and displayed uncompromising professionalism.

Sometime after beginning his work, when Boaz wondered about Mahmoud's expansive knowledge on the subject of *esrog* breeding, Mahmoud related that his family had a small *esrog* orchard that it has been tending to for generations.

Many years earlier, many Yahuds would come to the village and buy *esrogim* from his orchard – beautiful fruits at relatively low prices. But in recent years, since the intifada and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, entry to his village was blocked to Jews. The source of the family's livelihood was wiped out, and he had to find a job working for someone else in the field he knew so well.

Late one night, the lights on Mahmoud's battered Peugeot flashed in the back yard. Boaz, who had been waiting for the signal, hurried to climb into the back seat. Before any of the family noticed, Mahmoud began driving quickly towards his village.

An hour later, with the lights off and the motor humming quietly, the vehicle drove through the path that led to Mahmoud's orchard. Behind him sat Boaz, almost paralyzed with fear, but his heart soaring with the knowledge that this year, in *shemittah*, he would merit to make a *brachah* on a beautiful, *mehudar esrog*, like he did every year.

At the entrance to the orchard, Mahmoud cut the engine. The darkness was inky and Boaz had to grope his way among the trees. The thorns scratched at his hands, but he did not back down until he felt the smooth surface of the fruits. "Mahmoud," Boaz said, "bring me a flashlight."

"A flashlight?!" Mahmoud gasped. "Are you crazy? In one second, we'll have Hamas and Jihad down here, and what they will do to us…" But Boaz insisted: "Without a flashlight, I cannot take even one *esrog* from here."

Having no choice, Mahmoud went back to the car and took out a tiny flashlight that emitted a dim glow. Using the light and his sense of touch, Boaz was able to choose ten *esrogim*. But then a new problem came to light: Mahmoud had forgotten to bring a carton to hold the *esrogim*. At first, Boaz tried to use his pockets, but when they filled, and it wasn't enough, he pleaded with Mahmoud to go home and bring a properly padded cardboard box.

This time, as well, the frightened Mahmoud tried to object, but Boaz was like a drunk in a wine cellar, and he would not back down on his request.

A quarter of an hour passed – which to Boaz felt like eternity – until Mahmoud returned with the carton, and a frightened look in his eyes, along with two uninvited guests….

"I told you it wasn't good to turn on the flashlight…" Mahmoud muttered under his breath. He was silenced by a slap on the cheek from one of the armed young men behind him. The other one hissed in Arabic, "We'll take care of you yet, you traitorous old man!"

Even before Boaz could absorb what had happened, he was on the ground with a loaded gun aimed at his face.

Meanwhile, in Boaz's house, his oldest son Eliezer sat with an *Sefer Tehillim*, as his tears moistened the yellowing pages, and his mouth murmured the words of the *tefillah* without let-up.

Eliezer had a good reason to worry. A short time before, he had been told that his father had left of the house. With his honed senses, he realized where his father could have disappeared to. The ties his father had forged with his Arab worker had bothered him for some time already, and something in his heart made him think that there was a connection between that bond and his father's sudden disappearance.

Eliezer called the police, but the tired desk sergeant claimed that not enough time had passed to classify this as a disappearance. He asked Eliezer to update him if his father did not return by morning.

Meanwhile, all Eliezer could do was daven, and he did so with all his heart.

In the orchard, Boaz lay face down, his ears listening to the murderous plans of the two young armed men standing over his back. His mind was flooded with the memories of the horrors of long ago days, when he was a persecuted youth, and was almost murdered by the Nazis who had destroyed his family…

Boaz felt that his end was near and consoled himself that at least he would merit to die in the Holy Land, while doing a mitzvah that he loved so much. His lips murmured the words of *Krias Shema*…. Boaz prepared himself for the worst. Without realizing it, he lovingly stroked the fruits of the mitzvah nestled in his pockets and waited for the gunshot that would end his life. Suddenly, he held his breath as he heard a cry in Arabic, which was followed by a rapid pounding of footsteps.

For a number of seconds, there was silence in the orchard. Then a dim flashlight shone into Boaz's face. It was Mahmoud, leaning over him, and urging him to run to the car that still waited at the entrance to the orchard.

Mahmoud skilfully skirted all the obstacles that potentially could block him, and within a short time, his car was back in Boaz's backyard, where it had been just a few hours earlier…



Before they parted, Boaz asked Mahmoud to explain what had suddenly thwarted the terrorists' plans. Mahmoud did not understand Boaz's surprise. "What do you mean? They realized that there are grenades in your pocket and they ran away in fright!" "Grenades?" Boaz was puzzled. But then he stuck his hand into his pocket and burst out laughing as he pulled out two beautiful *esrogim*.

Only at home, when he found his son engrossed in tearful prayer, did Boaz realize what was the real zechus that had saved him from a near certain death. The chapters of *Tehillim* offered on his behalf had protected him, and had planted the sudden, foolish idea in the minds of the murderers, who then abandoned him and left him alive.

"I do not want followers who are righteous, rather I want followers who are too busy doing good that they won't have time to do bad." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

"Sorrow locks the gates of Heaven. Prayer opens locked gates. Joy has the power to tear down the walls." ~ The Baal Shem Tov.

Pele Yoetz 20 Tishrei 5588/1828.



Sunday, 20 Tishrei, the fifth day of Chol Hamoed Succos, is the 194th *yarhtzeit* of the *tzaddik* **Rav Eliezer ben Rav Yitzchak Papo**, the Raavad of Silistra, Bulgaria, and author of *Pele Yoetz*. He passed away at the age of 44 on 20 Tishrei 5588/1828.

He wrote on Tehilim 119:162

שָׂשׂ אָנֹכִי עַל־אִמְרָתֶךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלָל רָב ***"I rejoice over Your word as one who finds great spoil"***

"If those who refrain from answering amen would know the tremendous reward for answering amen…they would run to listen and answer…and they would rejoice over one answering of amen as if they had found great booty."

Sometimes a person needs to lose themselves in order to truly find themselves. Always remember that the past is a place of reference, not a place of residence; it carries lessons, not limitations. Don't let yesterday's shadows block tomorrow's light – your next move is far more important than your last mistake.

What matters most is not where you've been, but where you choose to go from here. The future is waiting with open arms. Lift your eyes and keep moving forward knowing that the future is not bound by yesterday but built by the steps you take today. ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz, zt"l, lived in abject poverty. His family barely had any food to eat. Yet, all year long, he managed to scrape together enough money to buy an Esrog for Succos.

One Erev Succos, he went to buy an Esrog with six rubles in his pocket. As he approached the marketplace, he saw a Jew sitting and crying. "Why are you crying?" Rav Mordechai asked, concerned.

The man replied, "I am a water carrier, and my horse just died. Now I will have no way to carry the barrels of water, and I will have to become a beggar!"



Overcome with pity, Rav Mordechai gave the man his six rubles to buy a horse. The man was overjoyed, and Rav Mordechai went home. When he entered his house, Rav Mordechai said, "Baruch Hashem for arranging this Mitzvah for me. All others will make a Brachah on an Esrog, and I will make a Brachah on a horse!"

R' Elimelech Biderman Torah Wellsprings Hashem's Hug

The Arizal explains (in Pri Eitz Chaim) that the minimum requirements for a sukkah to have two walls and a third wall that is only a tefach, represents the two sections of the arm and a hand. This is because when we are in the sukkah it is as if Hashem himself is giving us a hug.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yehudah Zev Segal, was known for running to his *Succah* on the first night of Succos with the anticipation and enthusiasm of a small child.

Once when he was sitting in his *Succah*, a student that was visiting him got up to start leaving, and Rav Segal walked him to the door, but not any further. He said, "Please forgive me. I would love to escort you all the way out, but it would mean too great of a loss! Each moment that one is in the *Succah*, he fulfils a mitzvah, and that is why I can't escort you further."

Rav Segal also spent hours selecting *Hadasim*. He explained that this lengthy effort was a *segulah* for *Siyata DiShmaya*, for protecting one's eyes from improper things. In fact, Rav Segal said that all the exertion and stress one undergoes in building a *Succah* and purchasing the *Arba Minim* is spiritually cleansing and is part of a complete *Teshuvah*!

Vechol Maaminim - הושע נא למענך אלקינו



Why did *Chazal* institute that we recite special *tefillos* and *Hoshanos* on Sukkos more than on any other Yom Tov?

The ***Sfas Emes*** explained: The mitzvah of sukkah, which instructs a person to leave his permanent home and move into a temporary home for the seven days of the holiday, reminds a person that he must never place his trust

in his wealth or assets. Rather, he should always put his faith in the One who created the world.

To further emphasize a person's dependence on his Creator, *Chazal* instituted that we add *Hoshanos* to the *tefillah* of Sukkos. It was established that specifically on those days that a person harvests his crops to his home, he should daven for *parnassah* and success.

Through that he will recognize that the blessing of the entire year depends on the Creator, and he should not put his faith in his own strength and success. Instead, he should trust Hashem, Who gives him the strength to accomplish.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Shimshon Rephael Hirsch, *zt"l*, teaches that Succos is also named "The Harvest Festival". The grain that was left in the field to dry during the summer is now gathered and put into storage.

The rich man with a full storage bin, who may feel the pride of his own accomplishments, is commanded by the *Torah* to leave his warm and comfortable home and sit in the little *Sukkah*. He gazes at the stars through the cracks in the *S'chach* and remembers *Hashem*, who took us out of Mitzrayim and provided us with all of our needs in the desert. This is a reminder to him to not take credit for his success, as it is all from *Hashem*.

On the other hand, the poor man, whose storage bin is far from full, is worried how he will feed his family in the approaching cold winter. The *Torah* also commands him to leave his home and sit in the *Sukkah*, and he also sees the stars through the *S'chach*. He is thereby also reminded that just as *Hashem* provided for us in the *Midbar*, *Hashem* won't forget us now, either, and He will surely provide us with all that we need!

The *Machzor* Speaks - A Closer Look at *Davening*

את יום חג הסוכות הזה זמן שמחתינו ***…This holiday of Succos, the time of our rejoicing.***



With regards to Succos, the Torah mentions the word **שמחה**, *rejoicing*, three times— **ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבעת ימים (ויקרא כג:מ)** , ***And you shall rejoice before Hashem your G-d for seven days*** (*Vayikra* 23:40), **ושמחת בחגך (דברים טז:יד)** , ***And you shall rejoice with your holiday*** (*Devarim* 16:14), and **והיית אך שמח (טז:טו)** , ***And you should only be happy*** (16:15).

However, regarding Pesach, there is not even one mention of rejoicing!

The *Medrash Yalkut Shimoni* on *Parashas Emor* (**רמז תרנ"ד**) explains that on Pesach we are judged for our grain. Since we are uncertain as to how our crops will turn out for that particular year, we don't make mention of rejoicing, because we have some measure of doubt. However, by Succos, since our sins have just been forgiven on Yom Kippur, and all the grain and produce has been harvested and gathered into the storehouses, the Torah mentions **שמחה** — rejoicing, three times. There is no doubt that our happiness can be felt in full!

Succos Treasures by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg



The passing of the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael, **Rav Yaakov Weinberg, *zt"l***, in the summer of 1999, was a terrible blow to the Baltimore community. A father figure to many, Rav Weinberg had a dynamic personality that endeared him to his students and so many others. Although life seemed to have stopped that fateful Thursday, everyday tasks still had to continue.

As Mrs. Michal Seidemann was doing her weekly shopping, she noticed a woman with tears streaming down her cheeks putting food in her shopping cart. The woman kept repeating, "Who will I now turn to for advice?" Mrs. Seidemann barely knew this woman but felt compelled to try to comfort her. However, her efforts were unsuccessful, as the woman was inconsolable.

"You don't understand," sobbed the woman. "I called the *Rosh Yeshivah* with my problems, and he was always there to guide me. Let me tell you something extraordinary that he did for my family, that will give you an idea as to why I am so distraught. I am a single mother of five young children, and money is always tight. When Succos was approaching one year, I realized that I had no money for a *Succah*. I called the *Rosh Yeshivah* to ask him if it was necessary for me to build a *Succah*, since my children were all under the age of *Bar Mitzvah*.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explained to me that technically I wasn't required to have a *Succah*. However, it is wonderful for children to have memories of family meals in their own *Succah*. Therefore, it would

certainly be marvellous if I could obtain one. After our conversation, I understood the importance of building a *Succah*, yet I had no idea how I would get the money to buy one.

I barely had time to think about it when a truck pulled up in front of my home the next day. A young man appeared at my door, and within minutes, he began emptying panels of wood from his truck. Tears welled up in my eyes as I watched him assemble the most beautiful *Succah* in my backyard. I found out that immediately after I had spoken with the *Rosh Yeshivah*, he had called this fellow who builds *Succahs* and asked him to build one for me at the *Rosh Yeshivah's* expense. Although I had never once mentioned to him that I did not have money to pay for a *Succah*, he understood my dilemma simply from my question.

This is just one example of how the *Rosh Yeshivah* looked out for my family, and there were so many more. And yes, the *Rosh Yeshivah* was absolutely correct. Our family was able to create many years of memories in our own *Succah*, and when we sit in our *Succah* each year, we remember Rav Weinberg's wisdom, kindness, and concern!"

Succos Gems

According to the *Zohar*, on each day of Succos we welcome one of the *Ushpizin* to our *Succah*: Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid. What is the specific connection between these great people and Succos?

The *Succah* represents the idea of *Galus*, exile, because we are demonstrating that we live in huts. If it so happened that on Rosh Hashanah we were decreed to receive a sentence of exile, then instead of ending up actually exiled, we fulfil this decree by exiling ourselves from our homes for one week, and living in the *Succah*.

Each of the *Ushpizin* guests have experienced exile in some form. **Avraham** was sent by Hashem from his birthplace to a foreign land,

where he was on his own. **Yitzchak** went to the land of the P'lishtim, and when there was a famine, he was mistreated by them. **Yaakov** had to run from Eisav and Lavan, and in his old age was forced to leave *Eretz Yisroel* and go to Mitzrayim. **Yosef** was sold as a slave by his brothers. **Moshe** had to flee from Pharaoh. **Aharon** wandered in the desert for 40 years with the entire nation, and **Dovid** had to run from Shaul *Ha'melech* and then from his own son.

In spite of this, these great people trusted Hashem, and that is the lesson of the *Succah*! (*Rav Eliyahu Ki Tov*)

Sukkah Decorations: A Halachic Analysis by Rabbi Yair Hoffman



There are some fascinating halachos about the Sukkah and its decorations of which some people may be unaware.

Forbidden To Benefit From

Once a Sukkah becomes an "Official Sukkah" it is forbidden to derive other types of benefit from its parts for the entire Sukkos. If the Sukkah fell down, that wood may not be used for other purposes. This is true whether we are discussing the wall panels or the Schach.

One may also not benefit from Sukkah decorations throughout Sukkos (See SA 667:1) once the Sukkah has become an "Official Sukkah." Outside of Israel this means until after Simchas Torah. In Israel it does not include Shmini Atzeres.

An Official Sukkah

How does a Sukkah become an "Official Sukkah?" It had to be used once on Sukkos itself. Merely preparing the Sukkah for use does not make it an "Official Sukkah" for these purposes. This is known as "Hazmana lav milsah" (ibid).

Sukkah Decorations

It is a Mitzvah (SA 638:2) to decorate the Sukkah to appear beautiful on account of the idea of "Zeh Keli v'Anveihu." Indeed, the Shlah HaKadosh (Sukkah Ner Mitzvah #5) writes, "VeMitzvah l'yafoso – Vechol Hamarbeh harei zeh meshubach – It is a Mitzvah to make it beautiful -the more he does so – the more praiseworthy he is." The Mogain Avrohom (638:9) writes that one should not post a Pasuk and hang it on the Sukkah. The Bikkurei Yaakov (638:18) is lenient. It is permitted to use decorations that were made for non-Jewish holidays as a Sukkah decoration, as long as they were never used (Responsa Shaivet HaLevi Vol. II #57).

Sitting Under The Sukkah Decorations

Ideally, the Sukkah decorations should be within 4 tefachim of the Schach (about 12 inches). This makes them insignificant. If it is hanging more than 1 foot below the schach and it is more than 12 inches in length and width then it is not considered sitting in the Sukkah if one sits under it (MB 627:12).

Muktzah

If the Sukkah decorations fell on Yom Tov itself, they are considered Muktzah Machmas Mitzvah and may not be moved regularly. If they fell on the table, they may be moved kl'achar yad – in a different manner. If this is not feasible then they be moved normally if the spot is needed. This is only on Yom Tov, but on Shabbos they may only be moved kl'achar yad.
On Chol haMoed they may be put back normally in their place. They may not be used for another purpose throughout the Sukkos holiday.

Conditional Sukkah Decorations

Although it is discouraged by the Ramah, it is theoretically possible to verbalize a condition before Sukkos begins and say, "I am not bodel – treating them as Noi Sukkah for the Bain HaShmashos of each night of Sukkos." It is not enough to think this condition, it must be verbalized (Mekor Chaim 638:2).

After Sukkos

After Sukkos, the Sukkah decorations should not be used for a degrading purpose. If the decorations were fruits, they may be eaten.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR YOM TOV SUKKOS

The Special Guest of The Dzikiver Rebbe

One year, on the first day of Succos, the Dzikiver Rebbe didn't have a guest, so he asked his son (**the Imrei Noam zt'l**) to go outside and look for someone who needed a yom tov meal.

The son walked around the streets until he found a homeless, drunk person. "Come with me," he said to the pauper. "My father wants you to eat the seudah with him." The Dzikiver Rebbe rejoiced with his guest and served him fish, meat, and other delicacies.

The Rebbe said: "Avraham Avinu didn't have more respectable guests. But Avraham cared so much about people that he was eager to bring home anyone who desired a meal. At least, on this day, we should emulate Avraham Avinu's ways…"

The Shlah says one shouldn't become angry in the succah.

Sukkah In the Barracks

During WWII, the **Rebbe of Radoshitz** was deported to the labour camp of Skarszysko. His barrack became the centre of the inmates for learning Torah, davening, and *mitzvos*. Even in the Gehinnom of Skarszysko, the Rebbe did not deviate from observing any *mitzvos*.

Before *Sukkos*, he asked the Jews working in the construction brigade to please provide him with a hammer and nails, and that every time they returned from work, they bring along pieces of wood and boards. As the materials accumulated, the Rebbe kept measuring the wood until he was satisfied that there were sufficient boards to build a kosher *Sukkah*.

On Erev Sukkos, one inmate brought a few branches to complete the *Sukkah* with *s'chach*. Working swiftly, they set up the walls adjacent to the barrack, until a tiny *Sukkah* stood, only visible to those who were aware of its existence.

After Maariv, on the first night of *Sukkos*, the Rebbe made his way, with great difficulty, into the little *Sukkah*, made *kiddush* and said the *brachos* of sitting in the *Sukkah* and *she'he'che'yanu*. He quickly ate his crust of bread. The *Sukkah* was only large enough for one person. Many faithful Jews risked their lives that *Sukkos* to slip in, one by one, make the *brachos*, and eat some bread.

There was constant danger that the Kapo, or the Nazis y"s, would discover the *Sukkah* and murder them all. But their firm faith and love of the *mitzvah* was stronger than their fear. Hashem's Hand protected them, just as the Clouds of Glory protected the Jews in the desert.

The Rebbe of Radoshitz ate and drank every morsel and drop in the *Sukkah* throughout the Yom Tov, as did all of his faithful followers in the barracks of Skarszysko. (**One Jew's Power One Jew's Glory**)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

On Chol HaMoed Succos there was music and dancing in the **Chazon Ish's *zt'l*** *succah*, and after most of the people left, a Yid from America approached the Chazon Ish and said, "The Yidden in America want *chizuk*. What should I tell them?"

The Chazon Ish replied that each generation has its unique mitzvah. About Noach it is written, **צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו** . This means that Noach performed the mitzvah that was uniquely needed for his generation. "In our generation," the Chazon Ish said, "the mitzvah of our times is ***emunah***."

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid



There is a very interesting Gemara. The Gemara says that **לעתיד לבוא** – when the time that Moshiach comes and the Yidden are going to receive all their reward for the mitzvos that they did in this world, the goyim are going to come with a complaint. They will say, "give us a mitzvah, also give us something that we can receive a reward for." And The Riboino Shel Olam is going to reply," Yes, sure, no problem- you want a mitzvah, take the mitzvah of Succah. Sit in a Succah".

The goyim are going to walk into their booths, and after a short amount of time, the sun is beating down on them and they say that they can't sit in this. They walk out of the Succah and kick it with distain on the way out.

It is very interesting that this is the mitzvah opportunity that they were given out of all the 613 mitzvos. Why? What does this represent and why do we need to know this?

The answer is something that I think goes along these lines.

Why is Succos now? Why particularly at this time of the year? The Rishoinim ask this question, saying that Succos should really take place in the month of Nissan after the time of Pesach when we came out of Mitzrayim. This is when we got the **ענני הכבוד** - ***The clouds of Glory*** which is what the Succah represents.

Many answers are given. One answer could be like this:

The reason why we sit in the Succoh in Tishrei is because it is after Rosh Hashana. It's after Yom Kippur. It's after the **עשרת ימי תשובה**. It is after the period of time that we have uplifted ourselves. It is after the time that we have re-connected with our creator. We are now on a higher spiritual level. So what do we do with it? We take it and bring it back into mundane life. We eat, we drink, we sleep, we schmooze, we walk around, all in the Succah. Everything is done in this holiest of places.

The regular life that we lead, is now on a higher level. The goyim **לְהַבְדִּיל אֶלֶף אַלְפֵי הַבְדָּלוֹת** also have their uplifting moments, but they remain right there, in their places of worship. However, the Yidden have taken their uplifting moments of re-energising , and utilise this to sit in the Succah in an uplifting way. - That is the contrast. That is the mitzvah.

The Zohar says that the mitzvah of Succah is the mitzvah of *Emunah,* because you go out of your secure home and you enter into your insecure Succah, and you are showing who is protecting you, who is running the world.

We should all be zoche B'ezras Hashem to have these kavanos **זכר ענני הכבוד,ליציאת מצרים** the Emunah and protection of Hashem, when we sit in our Succahs. - ***I want to wish everyone a most incredible Shabbos and a beautiful happy and uplifting Yom Tov!***



Important Halachos By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Please be aware that there is a difference below between "must" and "should." "Should" is preferable and ideal, but not absolutely necessary. Also, there is an order to the "shoulds." They appear in the order that is preferable.

LULAV

✦ The lulav must be four tefachim from where the lowest leaves are connected to the spine until the top of the spine not including the t'yomes. According to the Chazon Ish this is 15.35 inches. According to Rav Moshe Feinstein this is 14.16 inches. According to Rav Chaim No'eh this is 12.6 inches.

✦ The top leaf (t'yomes) must not be open like a fork, it must be both doubled and closed.

✦ The top leaf must not be split more than half of its length.

✦ When there are two top leaves neither one may be split more than half of its length.

✦ The t'yomes must not be cut off.

✦ The lulav must not be crooked or bent over like a sickle.

✦ The lulav must not be withered.

✦ If just the t'yomes is withered – the Mishna Brurah writes it is invalid, the Chazon Ish permits it.

✦ The leaves of the lulav must not be so dried out that they cannot be tied together.

✦ The t'yomes should be completely closed.

✦ The spine of the lulav should be five tefachim from where the lowest leaves are connected to the spine until the top of the spine not including the t'yomes.

✦ The lulav should be green and appear fresh

✦ The lulav should be completely straight.

✦ Ideally, it is the choice form of fulfilling the Mitzvah if the leaves lie naturally together (MB 645:3).

ESROG

✦ The esrog must be at least the volume of an egg.

✦ The esrog must not be grafted from other types.

✦ The esrog must be hadar – beautiful – as defined by chazal.

✦ There must not be any part of the esrog that is missing.

✦ The upper chotem (where it starts angling upward) must be free of blemishes – black or white spots

✦ The upper chotem must be free of scabs that are raised.

✦ The esrog must not be completely round like a ball.

✦ The esrog must be edible – it may not be orlah (first three years) or tevel (untithed).

✦ The esrog should be at least the volume of two eggs.

✦ The whole esrog should be free of any marks and scabs

✦ It should have a pitom.

✦ It should be shaped like a tower.

✦ It should be yellow.

✦ It should be bumpy and not smooth lie a lemon

✦ The stem should be recessed into the fruit.

✦ The stem and the pitom should be at 180 degrees to each other.

HADDASSIM

✦ They must be 3 tefachim in length. According to the Chazon Ish this is 11.8 inches. According to Rav Moshe it is 10.62 inches. According to Rav Chaim No'eh it is 9.45 inches.

✦ They must be triple-leaved – meshulash (three leaves growing at same level) for at least 1 and ½ tefachim.

✦ They should be meshulash for 3 tefachim.

✦ All the leaves should be intact.

✦ All the leaves should be green and appear fresh.

✦ The leaves should not be larger than a thumb nail.

✦ The wood part should be covered with leaves, i.e. the top of the leaf should reach and cover the bottom of the leaf above.

ARAVOS

✦ They must be 3 tefachim in length. According to the Chazon Ish this is 11.8 inches. According to Rav Moshe it is 10.62 inches. According to Rav Chaim No'eh it is 9.45 inches.

✦ The top of the Aravos must be intact

✦ Most of the leaves must be present.

✦ The leaves should be green and appear fresh.

✦ The leaves should be complete and not slit

✦ The leaves should be long

✦ The leaves should have smooth edges

✦ The wood part should be reddish.

✦ The aravah, ideally, should come from a tree that grows next to a river (Arvei Nachal).



Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Reb Avrohom Horowitz once planted an arovos tree near the edge of his yard in Bnei Brak. **The Steipler Gaon, ZT"L**, father of **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, shlit"a**, used these arovos every year and also used to give arovos out for free to anyone who wanted. Reb Avrohom's neighbor didn't like observant Jews and was annoyed with this tree. One day, the neighbor dug a deep hole in his yard, right next to the arovos tree. He then poured kerosene into the hole so that the tree should die. Upon discovery, Reb Avrohom told the Steipler what the neighbour had done.

The Steipler went to take a look and commented; "This tree that provided so many Yidden with Mitzvos will grow better with the kerosene!

As the Torah says (Shemos 1:12), 'as much as they will afflict so it would increase!'" Reb Avrohom relates that the more kerosene the neighbor poured, the higher the tree grew! Eventually, it grew higher than his roof, and people had to climb onto his roof to cut arovos, of which there were a huge abundance.

Comment: Rav Chaim Dov Keller, ZT"L, points out that there was a cause and effect which is suggested in the aforementioned Pasuk. There was a requirement that there be 600,000 people at the Receiving of the Torah. Due to the harsh servitude that Klal Yisroel were subjected to in Mitzrayim, Hashem led them out after only 210 years as opposed to the 400 years.

As a result, they needed to have a burst of population growth, giving birth to six at a time in order to have the 600,000 needed before leaving Mitzrayim. "Ka'asher ya'aneh osoh", as much as the

Egyptians would afflict, and thereby cause Klal Yisroel to go out sooner, "kein yirbeh vichein yifrotz", the effect would be that Klal Yisroel would increase exponentially so as to meet the 600,000 number.

Vechol Maaminim

Sitting in the sukkah is called by the holy Zohar (Emor 103 1) "Betzila d'meheimnusa" – in the shadow of emunah; this is for good reason.

When a person leaves his permanent home for a temporary home, this is a declaration that a person should not put his faith in his possessions. Rather, he should place his trust only in Hashem. As such, the deep connection between the mtizvah of sukkah and the mitzvah of answering amen is easily understood.

Answering **אמן** is the foundation of emunah, and this is manifested by the fact that **סוכה** is numerically equivalent to **אמן**.

Harav Yaakov Yokev Ettlinger, **the Aruch Laner**, began his sefer Bikkurei Yaakov (hilchos sukkah and lulav) with these words: "The righteous should rejoice…and even the weaker ones in Yisrael, with this holy holiday that is called Yom Simchaseinu, and his joy is doubled. And they should be very careful to fulfil the mitzvah of sukkah as its number [equivalent] is 91, which is equal to the two Holy Names that together combine to make 'amen,' and its holiness is doubled and one who fulfils it according to halachah will have his reward doubled from Above."

Let us internalize and remember that the secrets of amen run endlessly deep, and through that, we will be strict to answer amen to each brachah. If we will be like the 'tzaddik shomer emunim,' then surely Hashem will open the gates to our tefillah, as we ask in the nusach of Hoshanos: "Ta'aneh emunim shofchim Lecha lev kamayim," may Hashem grant us good and happy lives, amen v'amen.

SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes



Shopping for a Lulav and Esrog before Succos can be a daunting and tiring task. It is not uncommon to find customers, examining dozens of Lulavim in search of one that they will deem to be satisfactory.

As one who was exacting in his performance of Mitzvos, **Rav Eliyahu Moshe Shisgal** surely wanted a Lulav of the highest quality. Yet he would never pick up a Lulav in a store unless it was handed to him by the proprietor, for fear that if he himself were to lift it out of the box, he might inadvertently damage it and cause the proprietor a loss.

He would never respond when asked in a store, whether a particular Esrog or Lulav was satisfactory by his standards, out of concern that if he were to respond negatively, people might say that the merchandise was inferior.

A Heartfelt Hug - Rabbi Yehoshua Alt



There was a rabbi who would visit prisons that had Jewish inmates in order to cheer them up and encourage them. The rabbi's love spilled over that he would even inspire the non-Jewish prisoners, giving them hugs just as he did to the Jewish inmates.

However, in one of the prisons he visited, there was a certain inmate that was exceptionally scarylooking — muscular, very tall, covered in tattoos — whom he avoided due to fear.

As he was leaving this prison, he heard someone call out from behind him, "rabbi, no hug for me?" It was this scarylooking inmate. The rabbi then gave him a hug. Then the inmate told the rabbi he needs another hug, to which the rabbi conceded. The inmate then began to cry saying those were the first hugs he had ever received in his life. (Obviously, if he would have had some hugs in his life prior to this, he would have been a different person.)

Tangentially, about 100 years ago, a rav in Eretz Yisrael who was questioned why he loved Jews that were far removed from an observant Torah lifestyle answered, "Better that I err on the side of baseless love than to err on the side of baseless hatred."

In a similar story, R' Yitzchak Dovid Grossman once made a chanuka party in prison with a music band, donuts, latkes, making it an uplifting experience.

When it was over, he said goodbye to everyone and then spontaneously gave a hug to one of the inmates, radiating warmth. With that he made his exit from the prison.

A few days later he received a letter addressed to him. It said, "I'm the prisoner whom you hugged just before leaving the chanuka party at the prison. I am now sitting in my cell, crying and writing this letter to you. I want you to know that tonight was the first time in my life that someone gave me a hug or put their arms around me, just because they wanted to show me how much they cared." He signed his name at the bottom of the page.

In one of the Nazi death camps that were liberated by an American soldier's platoon, there were many starving children. The soldiers set up a huge pot of soup to feed these children, and the children lined up, eager to receive their share of food.

One particular soldier made eye contact with a boy at the end of the line. Since the American soldier couldn't speak the boy's native language, he communicated by offering the boy a hug. After they finished hugging, the soldier looked up and noticed that the children who were previously lined up for soup had postponed their chance to eat and instead formed a line behind the soldier to receive their hugs as well.

The four walls of the Succah and the Schach covering overhead is compared to a child that is totally embraced in a full body-surrounding hug. It is a Divine hug to us, His children (as we are called **בנים אתם לה'**, you are children to Hashem [Devarim 14:22]).

Of course, four complete walls are preferable, but the Succa can be made with a minimum of two complete walls and a section of a third wall. Even a child who is older appreciates a smaller hug —an affectionate arm around the shoulder. That is like the minimum Succa—a Succa of two walls and a bit.

The Arizal points out three sections—the arm itself from the shoulder to the elbow, the forearm from the elbow to the wrist and from the wrist to the edge of the fingers. This parallels the Succa where the first wall represents a Divine embrace from the shoulder to the elbow; the second wall reflects the embrace of the forearm

and the third small wall symbolises the palm embrace. This is what is referred to in **וימינו תחבקני**, His right arm embraces me (Shir Hashirim 2:6).

The Succah is Hashem's hug to each of us. We must be conscious of His Hug when we enter the Succa and feel His divine, eternal, and unconditional love for us.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

ושמחת בחגך – Simchah

Rambam writes, "There is a mitzvah to be happy on all holidays, but it is especially important to be happy on Succos, as it states [about Succos], **ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך שבעת ימים**, "rejoice before Hashem your G-d seven days" (*VaYikra* 23).

The Shlah writes, "A person must be happy every day [of Succos], his face should beam with joy because of the holy Ushpizin who dwell with him."

We are also happy on Succos because of all the mitzvos we perform on this Yom Tov. - When we are happy on Succos, our happiness will remain with us the entire year.

Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl *zy'a* said that Succos is called **זמן שמחתינו** and a translation of **זמן** is to prepare. On Succos we prepare and store up simchah for the entire year.

It states, **ושמחת בחגיך... והיית אך שמח** , and the **Abarbanel** writes, "This *pasuk* is a guarantee: If you are happy on Succos, you will be joyous the entire year."

The Ibn Ezra on the *pasuk* **ושמחת בחגיך** (*Devarim* 16:14) also writes that if we are happy on Succos, we are blessed to be happy forever!

The Pela Yoetz zt'l writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this becomes a good omen (siman) for the entire year.

The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good year, and he will be happy throughout the year."



Succah – Gan Eden in this World

The holiness of the succah is very great. It is our opportunity in this world to visit Gan Eden and Olam HaBa.

The Yesod Yosef writes, "When one sits in the succah and learns and davens there, he is literally in the upper worlds…"

The Sfas Emes (5643) writes, "[The *succah*] is like Gan Eden. Man was created to live in Gan Eden, which is the place of true joy, as we say **כשמחך יצירך בגן עדן** . Although Adam was banished from Gan Eden, there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines. This is why people are happy when they are in the *succah*."

The Yaaras Dvash (vol.1 drush 6) writes, "Hovering over the succah is Hashem's cloud. Although we don't see it, it is certain and true that whoever sits in the succah *leshem shamayim* and learns Torah there and is happy with the yom tov and the mitzvos, Hashem's cloud hovers above him."

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

Some people have the custom of singing Shalom Aleichem Friday night of Succos, and some don't. **The Shem MiShmuel** explains the custom of those who don't sing Shalom Aleichem. He explains that the kedushah of the succah is so great that malachim cannot go there.

For those who do say Shalom Aleichem, there is a question whether one should begin with Shalom Aleichem, to greet the malachim or whether to begin with the ushpizin, to first invite the holy ushpizin into the succah?

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

Bread For Guests and Tzedakah for The Poor Tzedakah for Sukkah Decorations



One year on Erev Sukkos, the **Divrei Chaim of Sanz zy"a** told his sons that he needs a few thousands rubles. His sons went out to borrow the money from wealthy chasidim and brought it back to their father.

The Divrei Chaim then went and distributed the money to poor people. When he went into his Sukkah that night, he said, ***"Some Rabbanim adorn their Sukkah with nice decorations. As for me, the tzedakah I gave is my Sukkah decoration!"***

"Why do people not have what they want? Because they don't want what they have. If only they would want what they have, they would have what they want!" ~ The Alter of Kelm.

Food For the Poor in The Place of The Ushpizin

Sefer Chemdas Yomim writes that there is a minhag amongst upright people who are able to afford it to invite guests into their Sukkah. However, those who don't have enough room in their Sukkah for guests would make a special dish on Erev Yomtov, which they would distribute to the poor.

When they gave it, they would say, "This portion of our seudah will be in place of the portion of the Ushpizin who come to our Sukkah." When the poor man would eat this dish in his home while in the middle of his own seudah, he would consider it as if he had been invited to the person's Sukkah and was eating at his table.

The Chidah writes the same thing in his Sefer Kaf Achas.

A Non-Jewish Guest for Sukkos

Rav Menachem Mendel of Lisk zy"a, the father of **Rav Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz zy"a**, did not want to enter his Sukkah on the first night of Sukkos until he found guests to eat with him because the Zohar Hakadosh speaks strongly about the obligation to welcome guests into one's Sukkah.



One year, his young son was very hungry. When he saw that his father would not make Kiddush until a guest was found, he decided to play a trick on him.

The boy took an old beketcha and an old shtreimel that had been his father's. He went out to the street and found a non-Jewish man and told him that if he put on this disguise, he would be given a really good meal. Of course, the non-Jew agreed, and the boy proudly brought the guest that he had found to the Sukkah.

When the Lisker Rebbe saw the guest, he was overjoyed. He went to say Kiddush, unaware the guest was a gentile from the street.

In the middle of the seudah, however, he realized that his son had fooled him. He asked the boy, "Naftali, what's this? Why did you bring a goy into my Sukkah?"

The Ropshitzer Rebbe answered, "Tatteh, tonight is the Ushpizin of Avrohom Avinu. What type of guests did Avrohom Avinu have? He also had non-Jews in his home. So, why does it bother you that a goy is sitting at your table with a shtreimel?!"

Parnassah in the Merit of the Sukkah

The influence of the Sukkah also provides us with parnassah for the entire year. **Sefer Tiferes Shmuel** sees this from the Gemara (Sukkah 28B) that speaks about: 'Someone whose head and the majority of his body is in the Sukkah, and his table is in his house."

He says that this hints to the fact that when one sits in his Sukkah "his table will be in his house", meaning that he will have parnassah (which is referred to as a person's "table") in his home (even after the yomtov is over and he is no longer using the Sukkah).

The Tiferes Shmuel also uses this idea to explain the Gemara (ibid 29B) that says that one's pots that are used to prepare food should be kept outside of the Sukkah. This is a hint that the mitzvah of Sukkah creates parnassah for the entire year, even when one is not in the Sukkah.

In other words, even when Sukkos is over and one returns to his home, he will still have the parnassah that he obtained from the mitzvah.

"Positive anything is better than negative nothing."

And You Shall Rejoice Before Hashem

The Yismach Yisroel of Alexander zy"a said as follows:

The crying of the Yomim Noraim rectifies crying that comes from bad sources. And the simcha of Sukkos rectifies the celebrations and joy people felt all year that stemmed from bad sources.

Water Cannot Extinguish the Love of The Sukkah

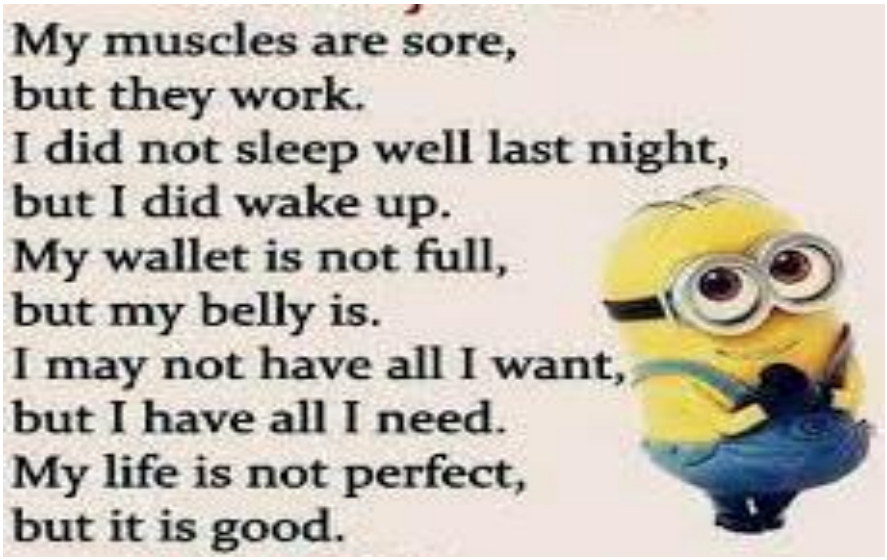


Rav Shmuel Abba of Zichlin zy"a was once sitting at his seudah in his Sukkah and saying divrei Torah when it stated to rain. The tzadik did not stop saying his divrei Torah. In fact, he became more enthusiastic. He continued saying Torah with fiery passion until the Sukkah was almost completely flooded with water.

Suddenly, he got up from his chair and said loudly, "Much water cannot extinguish the love! (Shir Hashirim 8:7)" - At that moment, the sky cleared up and the rain stopped. And the sun began to shine.

"The mitzvah of sukkah is the most wonderful of all mitzvos. Matzah you eat with your mouth, tefillin you put on your arm, shofar you hear with your ears, torah you study with your eyes and mind, but the sukkah! You go in completely, even with your boots!" ~ Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa (1765-1827)

Thank You Hashem





Succos, as with all Yamim Tovim, is replete with deep meanings and symbolism. One idea is reflected in the most prominent part of Succos, the succah itself. When we leave our homes and go into huts with no shelter from the elements, we show that we are placing our lives in the hands of Hashem.

As we sit there, we are meant to contemplate the miraculous ananei hakavod, the protection that Hashem provided for us in the wilderness when we left Egypt.

During the Yom Tov of Succos, a person must make the succah his home and live in the succah just as he lives in his house during the year. This means that his ordinary activities should be done in the succah.

Nevertheless, there is no obligation for a person to sit in the succah at every moment of the day. One is required to be in the succah only when he performs certain activities.

For example, eating [certain foods], sleeping, even talking to one's friend must be done in the succah. The point is to make one's year-round home temporary and the succah his permanent residence.

Nevertheless, for every moment one is in the succah, one fulfils a mitzvah and receives tremendous reward. Therefore, one should make every effort to be in the succah as much as possible. (The succah should not be a place where we only go to eat and then leave!)

Exactly what intent must one have while sitting in the succah?

Apart from the intention to fulfil the mitzvah of sitting in a succah, there are two additional intentions one should have in mind when sitting in the succah:

1 - **זכר ליציאת מצרים** ~ Remembering that Hashem took us out of Egypt.

2- **זכר לענני הכבוד** ~ Remembering the Clouds of Glory that protected us at that time.

If one did not have these intentions in mind, did he fulfil the mitzvah?

Although many poskim maintain that without the proper intentions the mitzvah of sitting in the succah has not been fulfilled, the final halachah is that the mitzvah was fulfilled, albeit not in the proper manner. One must one have this intention every time one sits in the succah.

What Requires a Succah?

Since the Torah requires us to "live" in the succah just as we live in our houses, the general rule is that anything one does in his house must be done in the succah. Consequently, sleeping, eating, talking, learning, playing, reading, etc., must all be done in the succah.

However, activities that one would normally leave one's house to perform may be performed outside of the succah.

Which foods must be eaten in the succah?

The following food types must be eaten in the succah:

* **Bread** – Any amount of bread which is a k'beitzah (100 cc) in volume or more must be eaten in the succah.

* **Mezonos** – Any amount of mezonos which is a k'zayis in volume or more must be eaten in the succah.

* **Meat/Fish/Cheese** – Eating a small amount of these foods does not require a succah. However, if one eats the amount that constitutes a complete meal, it is best to eat it in the succah.

* **Fruits/Vegetables/Nuts/Crisps** – These items may be eaten in abundance – even if one eats them alone for lunch or supper – and they do not require a succah.

* **Wine** – Drinking a glass of wine does not require a succah unless one is part of a group of people drinking wine together (in which case it is recommended that one eat some mezonos with the wine in order to recite a berachah for sitting in the succah).

* **Coffee/Tea** – These drinks do not require a succah.

* **Water** – One does not need to sit in a succah to drink water.

* Note: Although one is exempt from eating many of the above items in a succah, the poskim praise one who eats and drinks nothing – even water – outside of the succah.

What should Not be Done in the Succah?

Although we have learned that the succah should be treated as one's home throughout the duration of Succos, the succah is a very holy place (as many seforim state that the Shechinah rests there and that it is compared to the Beis ha'Mikdash) and thus demeaning acts should not be performed in the succah.

The following are some examples of activities that should not be done in the succah:

* Washing plates and silverware in the succah. (Cups can be).

* Relieving oneself.

* Changing a baby's diaper.

* Due to the holiness of the succah, one should be extremely careful not to speak forbidden things, such as lashon ha'ra, rechilus, etc.

* There is an opinion that a non-Jew should not be allowed into the succah.

May one wash netilas yadayim in the succah?

According to many poskim, one should not wash his hands in the succah in preparation for the meal. Nevertheless, washing the hands upon awakening in the morning (negel vasser) may be done in the succah (since it must be done within 4 amos from one's bed), and the water should be removed immediately.

Are there any types of objects that should not be brought into the succah?

Anything that one normally would not bring to the place of eating should not be brought into the succah (unless there is no other option). For example, one should not bring into the succah:

• baking pans,

• mixing bowls,

• buckets.

Nevertheless, even if one does bring these items into the succah, the succah remains valid (but many authorities maintain that a berachah for sitting in the succah should not be made until these items are removed).

May pots be brought into the succah?

Pots that one normally would never bring into his dining room should not be brought into the succah (unless there is nothing else suitable with which to serve the food). Serving trays and bowls certainly may be brought into the succah.

Must the plates and utensils at the end of a meal be removed immediately after eating?

After everyone has finished eating, the plates and utensils should be removed from the succah. One need not remove them as each person finishes his portion, just as one would not rush in one's home to remove them from the dining room table immediately after each person has finished eating. Nevertheless, they should not be left in the succah too long after everyone has finished.

Drinking glasses may be left on the table until they are no longer being used; they do not need to be removed at the completion of the meal since people normally continue to drink from them even after the meal.

• The table may be cleaned after shalosh se'udos, while it is still Shabbos.

Although on an ordinary Shabbos this is considered an act of preparing for after Shabbos and is prohibited, on Succos it is permitted since it is being done for the immediate need of preserving the holiness of the succah.

• Similarly, it is permitted to bring a garbage can into the succah when cleaning up, provided that it is not left there.

When is the berachah of לישב בסוכה recited?

According to many Rishonim, a berachah must be made each time that one enters the succah. Other Rishonim disagree and rule that the berachah is said only upon eating something in the succah. - The final halachah is that we make the berachah only when we eat a food item that must be eaten in the succah, such as bread or mezonos.

If one leaves the succah after making a berachah on it and then he subsequently returns, must he recite a new berachah?

Only if one leaves the succah completely is he required to make a new berachah upon his return.

Short Story of The Week By Yoni Schwartz

During the frightening days of WWII, while the Mir Yeshiva was in Shanghai, it faced a grave dilemma. Shanghai, being a major port city, was also a prime military target. The dark orange skies rained fire and brimstone, bombs fell right and left, and the streets erupted like volcanoes. Fear was everywhere.

The talmidim approached **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz and Rav Chatzkel Levenstein** to ask whether they should relocate somewhere safer. After careful deliberation over all the intricate details, both roshei yeshiva decided it was best to stay. The talmidim, themselves tremendous talmidei chachamim, still felt uneasy about the decision. They decided to perform a "Goral HaGra," a procedure of opening a Tanach and taking guidance from the Pasuk that appeared. They opened to a Pasuk in Melachim Beis (Yeshaya 37:35) " **וְגַנּוֹתֵי עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעֲנִי וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי** - *I shall protect this city to save it, for My sake and for the sake of David, My servant.*"

When they read this, their anxiety was calmed… but only temporarily. The next morning, they awoke to the same gloomy sky and squinted their eyes into the horizon with suspicion.

Suddenly, a siren wailed, followed by a deafening boom. Another bombing raid had begun. They again questioned whether they should move. Then, out of nowhere, crowds of Chinese civilians began gathering under the awning at the entrance of the yeshiva. The talmidim asked them, "This isn't a bomb shelter. It's not even a strong building. Why are you coming here?"

The locals replied, "Every building in Shanghai has already been hit… every building except this one. We've been huddling here for the past few days because we know this building must have some kind of protection. Maybe it's not the building itself, but surely something very special is happening inside."

Comment: Sukkos the holiday when we display our bitachon in Hashem by "sitting in the shelter of the Most High" and "dwelling in the tent of the Almighty" (Tehillim 91:1). As we approach the long, cold stretch of winter, we must strengthen our faith more than ever and remember that when we do Hashem wants Hashem takes care of all our needs. Though life may feel frightening or uncertain at times, Hashem is always by our side, protecting us, guiding us and loving us.

Arba Minim

In the city of Bnei Brak, there are many esrog merchants and one has numerous options to choose from while purchasing an esrog. **R' Chaim Greineman zt"l**, a renowned Talmid Chacham and the nephew of the **Chazon Ish zt"l**, distinguished himself by referring to himself as "Lulav Socher" (merchant), although he carried all the other Minim as well. Everyone knew that he sold only the highest quality Arba Minim and his honesty and caring knew no bounds.

After his passing, a woman travelled from a town in the north of Israel to be menachem avel. She insisted on relating a story that occurred many years ago and affected her family deeply. The woman related that she lost her husband while her children were young and she struggled mightily to not only feed and clothe her family but see to their education and Torah learning as well. It was not an easy task, and she could not afford the best yeshivos and schools for her children with the little that she had, but she did her best.

A number of days before Sukkos, her 13 year-old son asked her for some money to buy Arba Minim. He had never had one before but

this year, he was a Bar Mitzvah, and really wanted to perform the mitzvos. Tearfully, she explained that she didn't have the money, perhaps he could borrow from a friend?

Her young daughter came to the rescue and offered to babysit and with the money she earned, her brother could buy a lulav and esrog for the chag.

She worked diligently for a few days and put together a small amount of money. On erev Sukkos, she handed her older brother the money and he thanked her for her sacrifice. He then took the money and headed out to the street to purchase a full set for Yom Tov.

With youthful exuberance, he set out on his quest. After perusing a number of tables, he finally found an esrog that he liked. He took out the money he had and told the merchant that he wished to buy the esrog.

The man laughed at him and said, "Do you want an esrog or a hadas? With this amount of money, I'm afraid that's about all you're going to get!" Dejected, the boy walked away, and his sensitive heart cried out in pain. He walked down the street and couldn't hide the tears as they rolled down his cheeks.

A sympathetic yungerman noticed the boy with a kipah and tzitzis crying and asked him what was wrong. The boy explained that he only had a small amount of money and did not know where he could purchase Arba Minim for the chag. The yungerman pointed to a street up ahead and said, "Try Rechov Yerushalayim. Harav Greineman sells Lulavim there. Maybe he can give you a discount." The boy followed the directions and came to Rav Greineman's home. He told the Rav that he was learning in a local Beit Sefer and he was hoping to buy Arba Minim for Sukkos.

Rav Greineman was curious and asked the boy, "Your father is not buying you a set?" The boy responded practically in tears again, "My father is in Gan Eden."

Rav Greineman quickly understood the situation and acted decisively. "You should know," he told the boy, "I am a lulav merchant, but I will only take money from someone who is working. A boy who learns in a yeshiva does not have to pay. I don't take money from him. A boy who learns Torah, the entire world is kept alive because of him!"

The boy smiled when he heard these words and inside his heart soared. He was not an unfortunate orphan who could not even afford to buy a lulav and esrog for the chag. He was special - he learned Torah in yeshiva and according to the Rav, he was deserving of a set of Arba Minim.

Rav Greineman picked out a beautiful esrog and accompanied it with a lulav, hadasim and aravos of superior quality. The boy was beaming from ear to ear. But that was not all that Rav Greineman did. He made it his mission to look after the child and after Sukkos, he got him accepted in Yeshiva Tiferes Zion, a higher calibre yeshiva in Bnei Brak, where the boy's Torah learning career took off.

He became a solid ben Torah and raised his family's level of observance immeasurably. The woman who had travelled a great distance to the Greineman home during the shiva concluded her story. "Today, Boruch Hashem, all my grandchildren are bnei Torah, learning in prestigious yeshivos - in the zechus of the Rav's Arba Minim!"

The Chasam Sofer writes that those who have the minhag to sit in the Sukkah on Shemini Atzeres outside of Eretz Yisrael should make the following condition:

If today is the seventh day of Sukkos, my sitting in the sukkah should be l'shem mitzvah. And if it is the eighth day, then my sitting here should be merely for the sake of shade (Chasam Sofer, Responsa, Even HaEzer, §90).

Nefesh Shimshon – by Moreinu Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l

The Sign of Victory



Chazal say that one of the reasons we take a *lulav* on Sukkos may be understood by way of parable.

The soldiers of a certain country went to war, and back home, the public did not know which side was victorious. When the returning soldiers came out proudly holding up their weapons in their hands, this showed that they were the victors.

So writes **Avudraham:** The reason we shake the *lulav* is to make it known that we defeated all the *mekatregim,* all the accusers; It says in *Pesikta* that this practice is like those who were victorious in battle and hold a *lulav* in their hands.

This is the way of kings who were victorious and captured cities: they take a spear, with the emblem of their country hanging from it, and go up to the top of a tower, and wave it in every direction, to show that the king defeated all of them.

There is a very clear message here. They hold their weapons in their hands. They do not just wave the flag and emblem of the country on a pole. Because if the victor will throw down his weapons, and celebrate, in the end, the enemy will rise up again, and catch him defenceless and defeat him.

This is why the victors wave a spear along with the insignia of the country. It signifies that the victory is a true and lasting one, as shown by the fact that they are still wielding their battle weapons.

So it is with our victory in *teshuvah*. When can we show ourselves as having won the great war of Yom Kippur? Only when the weapons we fought with, when our increase in *teshuvah* and *maasim tovim,* is still in our hands.

This is symbolized by the *lulav* and the other species. They correspond to a person's heart, eyes, lips and spine. They signify that the entire person, with all his senses and feelings, belong to *kedushah.* They also show that we will keep the *mitzvos* wherever we turn: up, down and the four directions of the compass. Thus our victory is a true and complete one.

Chazu Bonai - Chizuk From Our Chachomim

י״ח תשרי , Chol Hamoed Sukkos, marks the *Yohrzeit* of **Rav Meshulam Igra זצ"ל**, **רב** and **ראש ישיבה** of Pressburg. Born in 1752 to R' Shimshon and Reizel in the town of Buchach, Galicia, young Meshulam was an exceptionally bright child. At the age of nine he was set to be engaged to the daughter of the wealthiest man in Brody, R' Shmuel Bick, and the prospective father-in-law asked for the boy to be brought to the town's **בית המדרש** . Whilst there, he became involved in an intense Halachic argument with the **רב** , **Rav Yitzchok Horowitz זצ״ל** , and to the astonishment of all present, young Meshulam emerged victorious!

Rav Yitzchok returned home, and when his daughter came out to greet him, he placed his hand on his daughter's hand and said, 'May you be **זוכה** to marry a man of the calibre of Meshulam Igra'.

After his **בר מצוה** Rav Meshulam married a girl from a different town, but his new wife soon found that Rav Meshulam's **צדקות** and **התמדה** was too much for her and sadly their marriage ended. At the age of 16, Rav Meshulam remarried to none other than Chaya Rivka Horowitz, the **רב** 's daughter!

At the age of 17, he was appointed **רב** in Tismenitz where he opened a **ישיבה**. He would end up teaching some of the greatest minds of the next generation including Rav Mordechai Banet, Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer, the **קצות** and the **נתיבות** . His **עמילות** in **תורה** was legendary.

Once, while walking in the marketplace immersed in **תורה** thoughts, he was knocked to the ground by a team of horses who were pulling a heavy carriage. The townspeople rushed to pick Rav Meshulam up, and as they got to him they heard him mumbling, 'and from this we can prove that the **הלכה** is like the **ראב"ד** and not the **רמב"ם**!

Many prestigious **קהילות** offered him the **רבנות** but in his humility he refused and remained in small Tismenitz.

After 27 years, when a bitter dispute erupted with the **ראשי הקהל** regarding the draft law, he decided the time had come to leave and he accepted the position as **רב** in Pressburg. There too, he opened a world-famous **ישיבה** .

He was **נפטר** in Pressburg in 1801 and is buried there. His successor, the **חתם סופר**, said in his **הספד** that his two arms were like **ספרי תורה** and that there was no way to comprehend his **בקיאות** and **חריפות**.

יהי זכרו ברוך

The Sfas Emes zt'l writes, "When the Jewish nation becomes pure from all their aveiros on Yom Kippur, there is immense joy in heaven, and we should participate in Hashem's joy."

"Remember: Being happy on Succos isn't merely a good idea, a Chassidic concept, or the like. It's a mitzvah דאורייתא of equal importance (and perhaps of greater importance) as all the other obligations of the yom tov." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

R' Eliyahu Maksumov – The One and Only

The word 'miracle' said in Hebrew, could be understood as **מי-רק-קל**, Who- only-Hashem. Who is the performer of all miracles? **רק-קל** – only Hashem.

Some people say that miracles are just coincidences and are random. It is just a **מקרה** – a happenstance- a coincidence. But we don't believe that. If you take a closer look at the word, you will find that it is an anagram of **רק מה'** – only from Hashem! There is no such thing as a coincidence.



בס"ד

TIDBIT

For the day

A ESROG has to be שלם.
Without deficiencies.

ראשי תיבות
of four things that have to be
שלמים – no halfway measures!

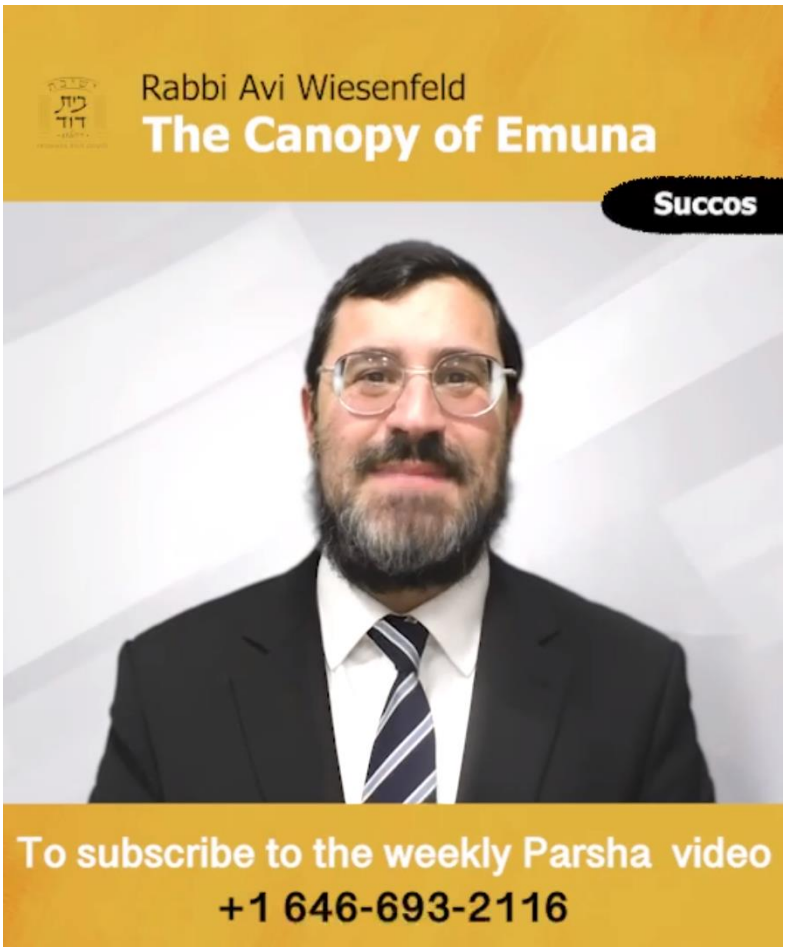


א מונה שלמה.
ת שובה שלמה.
ר פואה שלמה.
ג אולה שלמה.

The Pele Yoetz zt'l writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this becomes a good omen (siman) for the entire year.

The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good year and be happy throughout the year.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid



Succos is a very strange YomTov. It is a zman simchaseinu – a time of intense happiness. After all the Torah says Simcha three times with regards to Succos, as opposed to Pesach, where it doesn't say simcha at all.

Why? What is the simcha of Succos?

Because when Klal Yisrael left Egypt, they sat in booths. And therefore, to commemorate this fact, we sit in the Succah.(according to one opinion)

Really?



For forty years, The Yidden lived without permanent homes. So why do we glorify this? Where's the simcha in this? What was the miracle anyway? That's what travellers do – sit in temporary booths. What is the simcha on Succos all about?



Perhaps the answer is the difference between our homes and the Succah. And that will give us the answer.

Our homes are something permanent. There is a certain certainty when we sit in our homes. However, when we sit in the Succah, there is uncertainty. Is it going to rain? Is the wind going to be too much to bear? Will it smell outside? Anything could happen.

We love living in certainty. That it is why it is called a home – because we feel at home, as opposed to living with uncertainty.

People think that faith means that we are certain about everything,- but that's not true. ***Faith is not certainty. Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty!*** And on Succos we demonstrate that.

We go out of our homes, our permanency, our certainty, and we go into our succah, and we say, "Riboino Shel Olam, just like You looked after Klal Yisrael then, You will look after us now. Of that we are certain!"



During a brutal study in the 1950's Dr. Curt Richter carried out a series of experiments using water, buckets and rats. In the very first experiment, he put rats into a bucket and filled it halfway with water. Although rats are supposed to be good swimmers, the rats drowned after about 15 minutes.

In the second experiment, Richard repeated the same process, but just as the rats were about

to give up and drown, he removed them from water and dried off the rats. He then put them back in the bucket for a 2nd time. How long do you think they lasted – another 15 minutes?

No, they lasted for 60 hours! Because they had hope. The rats believed that eventually, somebody would rescue and remove them from the water.

When Klal Yisrael know that The Riboino Shel Olam has always eventually come to our rescue and saved us in our difficult times, and He has always been there for us, then we will have complete Emunah when we walk into the Succah.



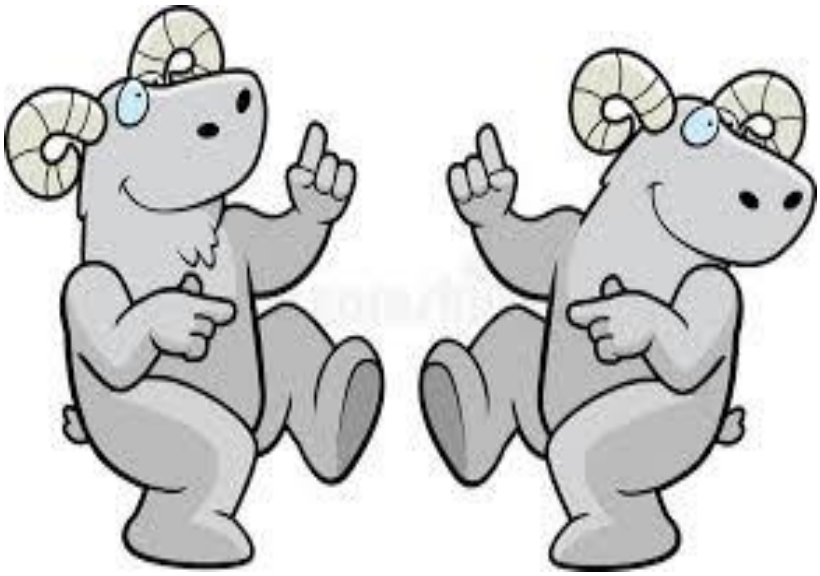
Every Succos we get a reminder of what Hashem did for us when we left Mitzrayim. And this gives us the chizzuk to continue throughout our lives and to have Emunah with everything that happens to us. To never lose hope, and to know with certainty that The Riboino Shel Olam is always there with us and for us, to catch us and save us. - Anything is possible when you believe in Hashem!

Wishing everyone a wonderful YomTov!

Rebbi Mendel of Kotzk once heard that a certain rebbe boasted that he saw the Ushpizin. The Kotzker Rebbe said, "I don't see the Ushpizin, but I believe in the words of Chazal that they come to visit us. And with emunah we can see further than with the eyes."

HADERECH

Hallel - Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu Zt'l



Chazal in Pesachim 118a explain the verse recited during Hallel הֶהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבָעוֹת כִּבְנֵי־צֹאן "The mountains danced like rams, hills like young sheep" (Tehillim 114:4), to be a reference to the Giving of the Torah. What stands out is the fact that although all the mountains and hills danced, only one mountain Har Sinai, was chosen to be the site of Mattan Torah. Nothing actually happened to all the other mountains. Why then does their rejoicing play any role in the overall picture of Mattan Torah? What is their significance?

I would like to share a beautiful insight into this Chazal The Gemara in Berochas 55a says that Hashem only gives wisdom to the wise-hearted. There are two difficulties with this statement, Firstly, what need is there for one who is already wise to be given wisdom? Secondly, the mind and the heart are two distinct organs. What does being wise of heart have to do with intellectual wisdom?

Let me share with you a story.

When **R' Eizel Charif**, the 19th Century Rav of Slonim, was looking for a Shidduch for his daughter, he sought to find the top Yeshiva Bochur. Whilst in the city of Volozhin, he approached the Rosh Yeshiva and said, "I'm looking for a husband for my daughter. With the Rosh Yeshiva's permission, I would like to pose a complex Talmudic question to the Bochurim and see who will come up with the correct answer. Whoever that boy is will marry my daughter,"

Agreeing to R' Eizel's idea, the question was posed before the students in the Beis Medrash.

Eager to come up with an answer the students immediately took to resolving the query. Many boys lined up outside R' Eizel's door and discussed the matter with him. But no one provided the correct answer. – After some time, R' Eizel felt it was time to move on to the next town and seek a boy there.

Packing his bags and loading them onto the carriage, he began to drive away, But then, all of a sudden, a boy began running after him. "Rebbe! the boy yelled, "wait!" Thinking to himself that one boy had finally figured out the answer, the Rebbe waited for the boy to reach him. "So, what is the answer?" said R' Eizel. "Rebbe," replied the boy, "I don't know what the answer is. That is why I came here; can you tell me?"

Without hesitation, R' Eizel said, "This is the boy who is going to marry my daughter," - The goal of learning Torah is not necessarily to come up with the correct answer, but to want to know the answer. It is about possessing the ambition, drive, and yearning to learn Torah.

Dovid Hamelech says in Tehillim אַחַת שָׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת־ה׳ אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ (27:4) - "***One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek***."

Dovid Hamelech was expressing his strong desire and passion to seek Hashem. Someone who is a chacham lev" - wise-hearted, is not someone who necessarily knows Torah, but someone who is eager to know Torah. That is the key to greatness.

With this we can answer our original question. What allusion to Mattan Torah lies within this Posuk, "The mountains danced like rams, hills like young sheep"? Those mountains were not the conduits to transmit the Torah?

The key to Torah is yearning and desiring it. The mountains and hills eagerly desired to have the Torah be given upon them and danced

enthusiastically with great anticipation and hope that they would be the chosen site to do so.

What matters most when it comes to Torah is the great effort and thirst to attaining and reaching great heights. That is the ultimate goal and what counts most in the eyes of Hashem. He who deeply longs to understand Torah is the most fitting recipient of Torah; not necessarily the one who knows the most, the one who is the most intelligent or the wisest.

That is what Hashem holds most dearly and looks for in His devoted children.

SUKKOS - The Weekly Vort

● Enclosed In The Sukkah

The reason Hashem commanded us to sit in the sukkah right after Yom Kippur, is as follows: When Bnei Yisroel went out of Egypt, they were steeped in tum'ah (spiritual contamination). But Hashem cleansed them, elevating them to the point where they were ready to receive the Torah.

Afraid that they might revert to their old evil ways, Hashem surrounded them with the Clouds of Glory, making sure that they would not stray. The same way, after Yom Kippur, when all Jews are cleansed of their sins, Hashem fears that we may backslide to our old failings.

To prevent this from happening, He encloses us with the mitzvah of sukkah, placing us under His protective care. (**Chashavah L'Tovah**)

● Sin-Free Dwelling

The Zohar says that the sukkah is comparable to Noach's *teivah* (ark). Just as Noach's *teivah* protected its occupants from the raging flood, so does the sukkah protect us from all evil.

The Gemarah (Sanhedrin 108a) says that only those who had not sinned were admitted into the *teivah*. Perhaps this is why Sukkos falls right after Yom Kippur. Since on Yom Kippur Hashem has forgiven all our sins, we deserve to dwell under the protective shield of the sukkah. (**Shem MiShmuel**)

● **The Sukkah And The Torah**

We can draw a parallel between the sukkah and the Torah, for just as the s'chach of the sukkah provides shade, so is the Torah a protective shade guaranteeing the survival of Klal Yisroel.

Also, the sukkah must have a minimum of three walls, and the Torah has three parts: Torah, Nevi'im and Kesuvim.

What's more, the height of the sukkah must be at least ten handbreadths, an allusion to the Ten Commandments.

Furthermore, we are obligated to dwell in the sukkah day and night just as we are required to learn Torah day and night. And, just as women are not obligated to learn Torah, so are they exempt from dwelling in the sukkah. (**Kad HaKemach**)

● **An Uncluttered Mind**

We are commanded to dwell in the sukkah, "*so that your future generation will know that I caused Bnei Yisroel to dwell in huts when I took them out of Egypt*" (Vayikrah 23:43).

It takes an uncluttered mind to fully understand the significance of this. Unfortunately, having sinned all year long, we cannot think straight, as the Gemarah (Sotah 3a) says, "A man does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of foolishness enters into him."

The Torah tells us to dwell in the sukkah right after Yom Kippur, because, since our sins are forgiven, our mind is crystal-clear and our intellect alert and sharp. It is the ideal time for grasping the deeper meaning of the mitzvah of sukkah. (**Chiddushei HaRim**)

● **Discomfort In The Sukkah**

The Gemarah (Sukkah 26a) rules, "If a person feels discomfort, he is exempt from eating in the sukkah." Why should feeling distress relieve a person from fulfilling a mitzvah?

The sukkah is called "the shade of faith." Therefore, when sitting in the sukkah, one should leave behind all his worldly concerns and dedicate himself to Hashem with total self-effacing faith in His mercy and compassion.

When one attains this self-negating faith, he feels no pain or discomfort. That is why a person who feels discomfort is exempt from the mitzvah of eating in the sukkah.

By feeling discomfort, he proves that he has not reached the point of total self-nullification. Since he has not grasped the meaning of the sukkah, any further stay there is of no benefit to him. Therefore, he is exempt from the mitzvah. (**The Kotzker Rebbe**)

● **Clouds Of Glory**

Hashem gave the Jews in the wilderness three gifts: the *mann*, the well and the Clouds of Glory. The Clouds of Glory are recalled through the mitzvah of sukkah. Why didn't the Torah prescribe mitzvos to commemorate the great miracles of the *mann* and the well?

The miracles of the well and the *mann* came only in response to the bitter complaints of Bnei Yisrael to Moshe and Aharon. Since they are associated with complaint, they are not commemorated with a mitzvah. The Clouds of Glory, however, were greeted with joy and exultation.

The Gemarah states (Shabbos 130a): Every mitzvah the Jews accepted with joy they still observe with joy. They greeted the Clouds of Glory with joy, therefore the joy of the mitzvah of sukkah endures forever. (**Sfas Emes**)

● **Closer To Hashem**

The Midrash compares the Four Species to parts of the body: the *esrog* to the heart, the *lulav* to the spine, the *hadassim* to the eyes, and the *aravos* to the lips. By saying, "You must take for yourselves… the Four Species," the Torah is telling us that through the Four Species we should bring all our limbs closer to Hashem. (**Chiddushei HaRim**)

● **Waving The Lulav**

The Zohar describes the profound mystical meditations connected with the ritual of waving. Since these esoteric reflections are beyond our understanding, we should have in mind to do Hashem's Will when we shake the *lulav*. If that is our intention, Hashem will consider our waving as if we had done it with all the Kabbalistic thoughts the Sages connected to it. (**Yesod Ve'shoresh Ha'avodah**)

● **Hashem's Festival**

"You shall celebrate [Sukkos] as the festival of Hashem." (Vayikrah 23:39) Sukkos is called "the festival of Hashem" because it is only on Sukkos that Hashem rejoices with perfect jubilation.

On Pesach, His joy was impaired because Bnei Yisrael were still mired in the impurity of Egypt. They had to purify themselves for seven weeks before they were ready to receive the Torah.

On Shavuos His happiness was dampened because he foresaw that soon after receiving the Torah, Bnei Yisrael would worship the golden calf.

But on Sukkos, having forgiven their sin, Hashem commanded Moshe to begin building the *Mishkan*. On that first Sukkos in the wilderness, Hashem's joy was sublime. Each year Hashem's joy reaches its peak after Yom Kippur when He has forgiven all sins, and Jews are busy preparing for the *mitzvos* of Sukkos.

That is why it says, "*You shall celebrate the festival of Hashem.*" (**Alshich HaKadosh**)

● **Pesach And Sukkos**

R' Elimelech of Bluzhov asks: Why did the Torah institute two *Yomim Tovim* – Pesach and Sukkos – to commemorate the same event – *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt)?

A possible answer may be that Pesach calls to mind that Hashem redeemed Bnei Yisrael from Egyptian bondage. After the Exodus they rose to an exalted spiritual level when Hashem surrounded them with the seven Clouds of Glory. This glorious spiritual elevation had to be remembered by a separate Yom Tov – Sukkos. (**Tzvi Latzaddik**)

● **With Joy**

"On the first day, you must take for yourselves a fruit of the citron tree. You shall rejoice before Hashem for seven days." (Vayikra 23:40)

By juxtaposing these *psukim* (verses) the Torah is telling us to rejoice with the mitzvah of the Four Species all seven days with the same intensity and freshness as on the first day. (Yetev Panim, Sukkos 170b)

● **Like Your Home**

Hashem's shade protects us, even if we are exempt from sitting in the sukkah, as when it rains or one does not feel well. For the mitzvah is to dwell in the sukkah as one normally dwells in his house.

Now, if one leaves his house to take a trip, it is still his house, although he is away from home. So too, the protective shade of the holiness of the sukkah remains with us, even if circumstances prevent us from sitting in it. For this reason the mitzvah of sukkah is termed "an easy mitzvah," because one can fulfil it even if he is exempt from it. (**Divrei Chaim of Sanz**)

● **Intense Prayer**

Hoshanah Rabbah translates as "great help." On this day, with prayer and entreaties, Jews can obtain Heavenly intervention, both materially and spiritually. (**Divrei Shalom**)

● **True Happiness**

The Torah tells us to be especially happy on Sukkos. But isn't there a danger that leaving our homes for a temporary sukkah will detract from our happiness?

The only way we can achieve true happiness is by realizing that this world, like the sukkah, is only our temporary abode. If a person over-emphasizes the importance of this world, true happiness will elude him. He will be jealous of others. He will desire wealth, honour and physical pleasures that are not fully available to him. He will feel like he is being denied his due, and never be satisfied with what he has, which will lead to sadness.

Thus, by going out into the sukkah, our temporary abode, we will be able to fulfil the mitzvah of rejoicing on Sukkos. (**R' Yakov Neiman in Darkei Mussar**)

● **The Ark**

"Just as the ark of Noach was for protection, so is the Sukkah." (**Zohar**)

The Shem MiShmuel points out that our Sages say (Sanhedrin 108b): "As soon as the ark let a creature aboard, it was a sign that no sin had been done with that creature. If the ark did not allow a creature aboard, it was a sure sign that a sin, in fact, had been done with it."

The mitzvah of Sukkah therefore follows Yom Kippur. Like the creatures entering the ark, before being permitted entry to the Sukkah, Bnei Yisroel must be purified and cleansed, having been atoned for their sins on Yom Kippur.

● **Gathering Ourselves In**

About the four species the Torah states, "And you shall take for yourselves [*la'chem*]." The same words can also be understood as, "And you shall take yourselves." Sukkos is called "chag ha'asif," the holiday of the "gathering in," of the harvest.

At this time of year, cleansed of our sins and thinking clearly, we are able to "gather ourselves in," to collect ourselves and understand what is primary and secondary in life. Having been granted atonement, our place in this world – a temporary dwelling (Sukkah) in this temporary world - becomes clear to us. (**Sfas Emes**)

● **The Main Intent**

About the mitzvah of dwelling in the Sukkah, the Torah states (Vayikrah 23:43), "*So your generations shall know that I sat the children of Israel in Sukkos when I took them out of the land of Egypt.*"

The Bach expounds on the words "shall know," stating that one does not fulfil this mitzvah unless he understands that the main intent is that we remember the Exodus from Egypt.

● **Not to Cause a Loss**

A few days before Sukkos, **the Steipler Gaon** entered a shop to buy a lulav. He carefully searched but did not find a lulav to his liking. When he was half-way down the block, he suddenly turned back to the shop, picked up a lulav at random, and paid for it. He explained later to his escorts, "Had I left without a lulav, word might have spread that I was in the shop and did not find one kosher lulav. People would not go there and I would have been the cause of the resulting financial loss to the proprietor." [**Talelei Oros**]

● Since the *s'chach* must be made of plant material and may not contain things that are subject to defilement, it protects those sitting in it from impurity and defilement. (**Roshei Besamim**)

● **The Berdichever Rebbe made it a point to invite common folk to his sukkah.** He explained: The Gemara says that when Mashiach will come, the *tzaddikim* of that generation and all previous generations will sit in his sukkah wearing crowns. I, too, will be eager to share in the festivities, and will want to push my way into the sukkah.

When the guard at the door will turn me back, saying, "A coarse fellow like you has no business sitting in Mashiach's sukkah," I will tell him, "Listen, I always had a lot of plain people sitting in my sukkah, and I endured their company, so Mashiach can put up with me." (**Sukkas Shalom**)

● **Hashem gave the Jews in the wilderness three gifts: the *mann*, the well, and the Clouds of Glory.**

Why do we only recall the Clouds of Glory through the mitzvah of sukkah, and not commemorate the other great miracles? Since the *mann* and the well were essential for the Jews' survival, they did not consider them as gracious gifts of Hashem. For this reason, no remembrances were instituted for them. Since the Clouds of Glory were not vital for their survival, they were recognized as signs of Hashem's boundless love of Klal Yisroel. That is why the Clouds of Glory are remembered through the mitzvah of sukkah. (**The Chidah**)

● **למען ידעו דורותיכם – *So that your generations shall know*** The Torah states that the reason for the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* is for future generations to always know that Hashem sheltered Bnei Yisrael in *sukkos* (booths) in the desert after their exodus from Egypt. Chazal state (Sukkah 25) that one who is in pain is exempt from the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*.

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that this is because his pain causes his mind to be unclear and not focused – and the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* can only be fulfilled with full knowledge and mental capacity, as it says **למען ידעו** , *so that they shall KNOW*.

● **שמחת בית השואבה – *The joy of the drawing of the water*** Is not the central part of the mitzvah the *pouring* of the water on the altar? Why is the joy associated with the *drawing* of the water?

The Imrei Emes explains: We learn from here that the preparation for a mitzvah (the drawing of the water) is greater than the mitzvah itself (the pouring of the water).

● In Egypt, the Jews had fallen to the very abyss of spiritual contamination. By taking them out of Egypt and giving them the Torah, Hashem lifted them to the peak of holiness. The *pasuk*, ***"In order that future generations will know... when I brought them out of Egypt"*** is telling us that future generations should know that the same thing happens every year. By forgiving our sins on Yom Kippur and bringing us into the holy environment of the sukkah, Hashem takes us from the depth of impurity, raising us to the peak of holiness. (**Zera Kodesh**)

● **כשהיינו שמחים שמחת בית השואבה לא ראינו שינה בעינינו – *When we rejoiced in the joy of the drawing of the water, our eyes did not see sleep*** (Sukkah 13).

How is it possible to "see sleep" with one's eyes open? Chazal teach that one who sits idle is like one who sleeps with one's eyes open.

During the *Simchas Beis Ha'Sho'eiva*, Bnei Yisrael merited to utilize all of their time for Torah and worship of Hashem; they did not sit idly for even a moment, and therefore their (open) eyes did not "see sleep." **(Chasam Sofer) [Yeinah Shel Torah]**

● **The Vilna Gaon** said: The most difficult mitzvah of the 613 mitzvos is, ***"You shall rejoice on your festival,"*** because it entails being joyful for eight days of Yom Tov, avoiding worrisome and sorrowful thoughts, allowing nothing to interfere with the simchah of the Yom Tov. [**The Essence of Sukkos**]

● **Please Save Us!**

The 51 days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Hoshanah Rabbah are "days of compassion and favour." The word "Hoshanah" of Hoshanah Rabbah is a compound form of the entreaty "*Hoshah na*, please save us!" The word "*na*, please," has the numerical value of 51. What did we beseech Hashem time and again on this day? "Save 51 – please accept all prayers of the past 51 days, since Elul. Please grant us help for all our needs!" **(Bnei Yissoschor) [Perspectives on Sukkos]**

● **Hope For the Ignorant**

One might think that there is no hope for those who do not have Torah knowledge. To teach us otherwise, we tie the *aravah* together with the other *minnim*, indicating that by joining forces with *talmidei chachomim* and supporting Torah institutions, those ignorant of Torah can gain merit. But the *esrog*, the symbol of the *talmid chachom* who performs good deeds, is not tied into the bundle. He stands on his own merits; in fact, the entire world is sustained in the merit of the righteous *talmidei chachomim*. Yet the *esrog* is the smallest of the Four Species, to teach us that a *talmid chachom* must be humble and shun pride and arrogance. (**Keser Torah**)

● **Holiness Of The Sukkah**

R' Yehudah ben Besairah says (Sukkah 9a) that just as the name of Hashem rests on the *korban chagigah*, so does it rest on the sukkah. Although the *korban chagigah* is eaten by the one who brings it, and only a small portion of it (the innards) is offered on the *mizbe'ach*, nevertheless, the holiness extends to the entire *korban*. In a similar way, the name of Hashem rests on the sukkah. Whether we learn Torah or enjoy our meals in the sukkah, Hashem's Name is associated with every action done therein. (**Divrei Shaul**)

● **Sukkos In Tishrei**

Why is Sukkos celebrated in Tishrei, rather than in Nissan, when Bnei Yisroel departed *mitzrayim* and began residing in the sukkos?

On Sukkos, when the harvest is brought in and the storage houses are bursting with grain and produce, people might become overconfident, forgetting that their bounty comes from Hashem. Therefore, Hashem decreed that we should leave our secure homes and live in the sukkah, to remind us of Klal Yisroel wandering in the *midbar* for 40 years. They had neither houses, fields nor crops. Mindful of that, we will be grateful to Hashem for giving us a bountiful harvest, with the realization that it is He who grants us prosperity. (**Rashbam**)

● **The Four Minnim**

We take one *esrog*, indicating that we have one Hashem; one lulav, showing that we are one nation; three *hadassim*, signifying the three *Avos* – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov; and two *aravos*, symbolizing the two *Luchos*. (Elyah Rabbah 651:1)



Erev Succos

Rebbe Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* was very generous with the poor. On *Erev Succos*, he increased his tzedakah by distributing large amounts of money to the poor. He said that there is no nicer **נוי סוכה**, *succah* decoration than the *tzedakah* one gives on *erev Succos*.

Reb Shimon Deutsch *zt'l* (*Imrei Shefer*) writes, "My teacher, **the Chasam Sofer *zt'l***, would [hold the four *minim* throughout the entire *tefillah*]. He explained that he loved the mitzvah and holding the four *minim* helped him daven with greater kavanah.

The Chasam Sofer said he has more kavanah on Succos while holding the four minim than on Yom Kippur."

The Midrash teaches that the four *minim* represent the human body: The *esrog* represents the heart, the *lulav* the spine, the *hadasim* the eyes, and the *aravah* the mouth.

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l explains that when you want to awaken someone, you shake them. Similarly, we shake the four *minim*, which represents the person, to awaken him to *ruchniyus*.

On Shabbos we don't need to take the four *minim*, because Shabbos awakens us.

The Shevet Mussar explains that *yavash* (dried-out *esrog* and *lulav*) are *pasul* because one needs to be fresh and alive when he serves Hashem, not shrivelled up and dry. And, indeed, that is the segulah of the four *minim* to awaken us so we can serve Hashem with a *chiyus* and vigour.

A Lesson Can Be Learned From.....

A businessman was once on his way to Shul one morning when he spotted a wagon rolling into town loaded up with merchandise of the kind that he dealt in. The businessman quickly stopped the wagon driver and entered into negotiations with him to purchase the merchandise. When they concluded their business and the wagon driver agreed to deliver all the merchandise to his warehouse, the businessman continued on his way to Shul, where he unfortunately found that they had finished Shacharis.

The next day, the businessman made sure to get to Shul on time and, as if to make up for yesterday, davened with much concentration and fervour. After Shacharis, a man approached him and said: "Reb Yid, I watched how you davened just now and I would be very interested to purchase from you the S'char Mitzvah you earned for your davening".

The businessman wasn't quite sure if the offer was serious, but in any case, he replied that he was not interested in selling his mitzvos, which he considered priceless.

The man pointed out to him that apparently the businessman's mitzvos did have a price, because he had seen how yesterday morning, to guarantee himself a certain profit, the businessman had foregone davening Shacharis with a minyan entirely.

The businessman accepted the rebuke but explained that perhaps he had not placed the proper value on the mitzvah of Tefilah B'Tzibur before performing it. However, once he had the mitzvah "in his pocket", it became priceless.

The Plotsker says this is Hashem's Chesed, that He pays S'char according to our deeds, and does not look at our possibly inconsistent intentions. - (**Pleasant Ridge Newsletter**)

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Gentle Jews

In July 1938, delegates from thirty-two countries met at the French resort of Evian to deal with the Jewish refugee problem. With the exception of the tiny Dominican Republic, no country was willing to accept more refugees.

The countries that refused included the United States, Britain, France and Australia who offered excuses for not letting in refugees. Why did the Dominican Republic allow entry to Jews whereas the other countries refused?

Rafael Trujillo who was the dictator of the Dominican Republic at that time had a daughter that went to school in France. When the events in Europe were turning against the Jews, this girl would tell her father that there was only one girl who cared and was kind to her, and she was a Jew. We don't know the identity of this Jewish girl, but it was because of her that thousands of Jews were saved!

After Israeli officials met with the leader of Russia, Vladimir Putin, in 2017, Putin invited them for a state dinner. At the dinner, Putin, in a casual conversation, related a childhood story. He mentioned that he was an only child and that although his parents worked extremely hard, they were very poor. On his block there was a nice family he really liked who would constantly host him. He would play there on many afternoons, they would feed him at times and even help him with his homework. He noted that on Friday, the mother of this family would light candles followed by a festive meal soon after.

When he grew older, he realized that this family was Jewish. Since then, he said that he always tried to treat Jews as well as he could. (Heard from Rivka Ravitz, who heard the story from Putin at the dinner.)



The Affable Lion by Tzivia Meth

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky Dayan in Slutsk & London, Chazon Yechezkel (Elul 24)

A born genius who stared down the Russian authorities. A brilliant writer whose Chazon Yechezkel has become the classic commentary on Tosefta. The leader of Vaad Hayeshivos in Eretz Yisrael.

For all the titles Rav Yechezkel Abramsky held in his life perhaps the one with the most enduring influence was Chief Dayan in the London Beis Din — a position he only accepted after ensuring that he would be able to raise the standards of halachah for all of British Jewry.

London 1935.

The winds blowing from Germany bear increasingly frightening news. Those emanating from the Soviet Union bring tidings of Communism's tightening grip over Yiddishkeit. British Jews are apprehensive at the darkness all around them but are focused on filling the vacant seat of chief dayan on the London Beis Din.

It seems almost impossible to satisfy all the factions involved in the decision with the growing religiously conservative immigrant community demanding a greater voice in communal policy and the powerful left-wing establishment attempting to maintain the status quo without fracturing the community.

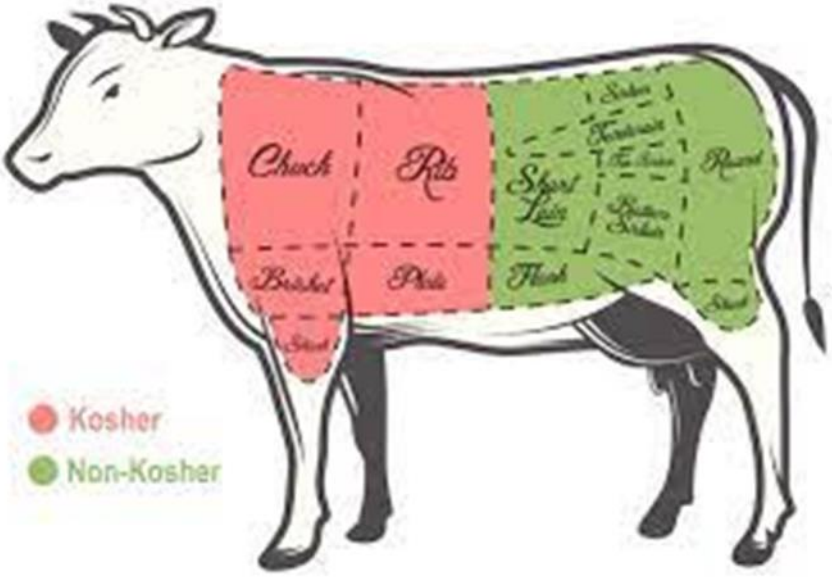
The chief dayan must maintain the beis din's grandeur pleasing everyone — but bowing to no one. His ideology and policies will shape British Jewry's present and future. Possible candidates include such luminaries as Rabbi Dr. Isaac Herzog future chief rabbi of Israel and Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg the Seridei Eish. One name keeps recurring: Rav Yechezkel Abramsky a recent émigré from Communist Russia where he narrowly escaped a death sentence for teaching and disseminating Torah. His consideration for the position is an enigma to many as his minimal English and his ultra-right-wing hashkafos pose a marked contrast with the United Synagogue's centrist religious positions. Rav Abramsky himself balks when he learns of the existing halachic leniencies and the pressure to maintain them.

Ultimately in a prescient gamble Rav Abramsky accepts the position forever changing the spiritual map of British Jewry.

While the Ashkenazic community in London dates back to the late 17th century, the formal communal organization known as United Synagogue was founded in 1870. It was a unique community model in that its members maintained only Orthodox rabbis and standards while many communities in central Europe at the time were affiliating with the Reform movement.

Historian Dr. Miri Freud-Kandel points out that because British Jews who wanted to assimilate were not required to join the official community those Jews who were affiliated with the United Synagogue were favourably disposed toward tradition.

This situation was in marked contrast to most of Continental Europe where nonreligious Jews were required to join the official community and many of them voted for Reform communal standards. While this structure maintained basic Orthodox standards throughout the country and kept a measure of unity in the Jewish community it was not without its own challenges.



The London Beis Din which was under the jurisdiction of the United Synagogue was only able to enforce halachic standards — particularly related to kashrus — that Eastern European immigrants arriving toward the end of the 19th century considered to be below par.

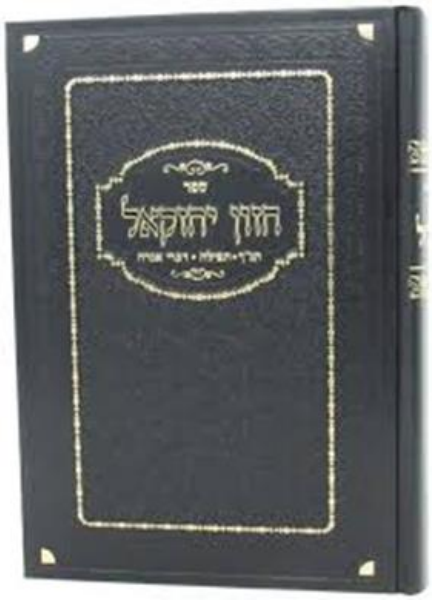
In 1891 for instance a shechitah controversy impelled the immigrant community to form their own shechitah supervision.

Over the next few decades the London Beis Din improved many of its kashrus standards but lack of nikkur proved a persistent problem plaguing beis din–certified butcher shops.

Nikkur is the process of removing the gid hanasheh and forbidden fats from hindquarter meat. Overall the United Synagogue succeeded in remaining Orthodox but at a cost: It was forced to rely on leniencies that are usually reserved for extenuating circumstances.

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky stepped into this breach with courage foresight and a regal personality renewing the beis din's halachic rigor — and thereby its prestige — throughout the world. The Iluy from Most Rav Yechezkel Alter Abramsky whose 40th yahrtzeit was on 24 Elul was born in 1886 in Dashkovtsy Lithuania a tiny town without even a minyan of Jews. His father Mordechai Zalman was a timber merchant but the family was so poverty-stricken that Rav Abramsky would stand in sefarim stores for hours (with the owner's permission) to memorize sources from sefarim he couldn't afford to buy.

Upon completing cheder in the nearby town of Most Rav Yechezkel studied in the yeshivos of Novardok Telz Ramailes Slabodka and Brisk where he earned a reputation as "the illui (genius) from Most."



After marrying Reizel Jerusalimsky at the age of 23 Rav Abramsky served as rabbi in the Russian towns of Smolyan Smolevich and Slutzk.

While in Slutzk he published the first volume of his magnum opus Chazon Yechezkel a commentary on the Tosefta. But the political upheaval in Soviet Russia soon turned Rav Abramsky's peaceful existence into an international drama.

In 1929 apprehensive about prospects for his sons' yeshivah education he sought to emigrate from the Soviet Union to become rabbi of Petach Tikva. Because he was a prolific Torah teacher and author instead of granting his request Soviet authorities placed him on the emigration blacklist.

Sensing that he was a wanted man Rav Abramsky hid in various cities throughout Russia for the next ten months. At one point he dreamt that NKVD officials were coming to arrest him. He and his wife

Reizel decided that he should leave immediately to find another hiding place.

Sure enough the police showed up at his apartment shortly thereafter and demanded to know his whereabouts. Reizel made up a story that she and her husband had quarreled and that he had abruptly left the house. Although her ruse worked, she was distraught at having presented even a fictional account of a squabble.

Soon after this episode the Soviet police apprehended Rav Abramsky and condemned him to death. Rebbetzin Abramsky then collaborated with **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski** to solicit prominent rabbis and Jewish organizations throughout the world to lobby the Soviet government on his behalf. Their efforts led to Rav Abramsky's sentence being commuted to five years of hard labour in Siberia and eventually to his full release.

During his year in the Siberian labour camp Rav Abramsky continued to work on Chazon Yechezkel ingeniously smuggling it out on cigarette paper. He was freed on Erev Yom Kippur of 1931 and given a month to leave the country.

Rav Elchonon Wasserman recounted that **the Chofetz Chaim** said five perakim of Tehillim each day on Rav Abramsky's behalf but on that Erev Yom Kippur he did not say the Tehillim announcing with certainty that "the Rav of Slutzk" had been freed.

Rav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz later the rav of Elizabeth NJ went to greet Rav Abramsky at the train station in Riga Latvia but did not see anyone who could pass for a rav of Rav Abramsky's stature.

To Rav Teitz's consternation it soon became apparent that the beardless man on the platform trying to conceal his face in his coat collar was none other than Rav Abramsky. In a last effort to humiliate Rav Abramsky before his release the Soviet officials had pulled out his beard!

Since Rav Abramsky did not want to be seen without a beard Rav Teitz arranged for minyanim to be held in his apartment until his beard grew back.

His exacting standards weren't always popular, but no one could deny that Rav Abramsky restored the prestige of the London Beis Din. Through the efforts of askanim who had to arrange for a passport because the Russian authorities had stripped him of travel documents, Rav Abramsky arrived in London in late 1931.

For the next two years he served as rabbi of the Machzikei Hadas synagogue in east London where he delivered numerous shiurim throughout the week in addition to an advanced shiur at Yeshivah Etz Chaim.

In early 1934 when Dayan Shmuel Yitzchak Hillman retired from his post as Chief Dayan of the London Bais Din Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz sought to replace him with a preeminent halachic authority. Even the non-religious leaders of the United Synagogue were keen to select a figure acceptable to right-wing Orthodox Anglo-Jewry as the latter group had become increasingly vocal about the London Beis Din's lax standards particularly regarding shechitah.

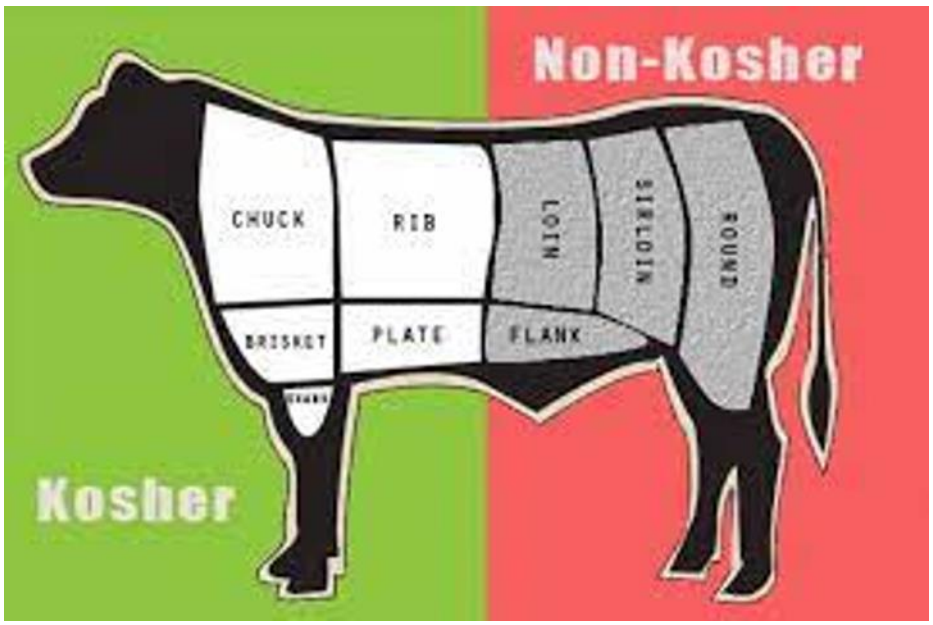


The United Synagogue first approached Rav Avigdor Schonfeld head of the right-wing Adas community but he rejected the offer. Other rabbanim also came under consideration but when Rav Abramsky emerged as a possible candidate all other options faded. Although he was far to the right of the centrist Rabbi Hertz and possibly the

least likely to be able to communicate with his constituency due to the language barrier (he barely spoke English) Rav Abramsky had the greatest name recognition of all the nominees.

Rav Menachem Gelley and Rav Ivan Binstock both currently dayanim on the Bais Din emphasize that the United Synagogue and Chief Rabbi Hertz were singularly impressed by Rav Abramsky's credentials. "Rav Abramsky had an outstanding reputation " explains Rav Gelley "and it was considered a 'catch' to have someone of his stature on board."

The United Synagogue made its official offer to Rav Abramsky in June 1934. Although initially amenable, Rav Abramsky grew wary of taking the position when a butcher, under the guise of asking about the kashrus of a chicken, furtively apprised him of the flagrant kashrus violations taking place under the beis din's jurisdiction.



Of greatest concern was the fact that for decades, the beis din had licensed butchers who openly sold meat that was not menukar (porged). This left the onus on the customer to request that the meat be menukar (as in shatnez testing). Many customers did not do so, either out of ignorance or because proper nikkur made the meat look unappealing.

Many butchers felt no compunction selling meat without nikkur, and the chief rabbi and beis din had been unsuccessful in stopping the practice. After hearing about these violations, Rav Abramsky demanded that if he were to become chief dayan, the beis din would forbid butcher shops they certified from selling hindquarter meat

altogether, thus eliminating the need for nikkur. Rabbi Hertz countered that he would commit to certify only butchers who did nikkur.

Rav Abramsky suspected that this commitment wouldn't be enforced, so he rejected the job offer. At this juncture, the United Synagogue approached Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, then the head of the Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin, to fill the position. Although Rav Weinberg expressed interest in the position, the Hildesheimer Seminary exerted pressure on him to remain with them, and Rav Weinberg withdrew his candidacy.

In an unexpected turn of events, Rav Hertz returned to Rav Abramsky and repeated his offer: If he would accept the position of chief dayan, the beis din would certify butchers only if they committed to do nikkur on all hindquarter meat.

Although he had initially rejected this proposal and insisted that he would only consider the position if no hindquarter meat would be sold, Rav Abramsky changed his mind and accepted the offer.

What caused this change of heart?

This mystery unravelled when I chanced upon a footnote in Rav Abramsky's biography stating that in the period between the two offers, Rav Abramsky visited his father in Eastern Europe.

In a United Synagogue protocol from October 28, 1934, one of the officials of the United Synagogue expressed the hope that Rav Abramsky would visit Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky in Vilna, and be advised to soften his approach to the offer from the London Beis Din. - Rav Abramsky did indeed meet with Rav Chaim Ozer. What, precisely, did Rav Chaim Ozer advise him, and why?

That footnote in the biography did not supply any further details, but careful examination of a handwritten letter from Rav Chaim Ozer to Rav Abramsky that appears on in the book provided an important clue to the latter's change of heart.

Dated Rosh Chodesh Nissan (April 4) 1935, the letter reads, "If there is hope that the breaches will be fixed, especially in the matters of kashrus, my advice is that you accept the position."

It seems clear that Rav Chaim Ozer influenced Rav Abramsky to be more flexible with regard to his demands, but there is an additional factor that may have swayed him. Rav Abramsky apparently realized that Rabbi Hertz's second offer — despite the weakness of the terms — was, in a sense, a capitulation. At this point, Rabbi Hertz's proposed ban on selling meat without nikkur could not be an empty offer.

This theory is supported by reports in the Jewish Chronicle, newspaper. With each of his offers to Rav Abramsky, Rabbi Hertz had sent a letter regarding nikkur to the Shechita Board. The first was never read, but the second was.

According the Jewish Chronicle, at the time of the second offer, "a meeting was convened to consider a letter from the Chief Rabbi on the subject of the sale of hindquarter meat. After tracing the arrangements made in the past, and recent developments [emphasis added], the letter states that the Beth Din has decided that henceforth, all hindquarter meat sold in any shop under the control of the Beth Din and Shechita Board must be porged, and that one of the conditions of the license must be that no customer shall be sold hindquarter meat unporged."

At this point, Rav Abramsky decided to compromise, and almost a year to the day from the first offer, he was officially appointed chief dayan on June 20, 1935.

Less than a month after his appointment, Rav Abramsky issued a full-page public statement in the Jewish Chronicle describing the firm measures the beis din would now enforce to prevent the sale of meat without nikkur. But he never relinquished his goal of entirely eliminating the sale of hindquarter meat, and during World War II,

when many porgers were enlisted to assist in the war effort, he was able to enact a ban on the sale of hindquarter meat.

This measure met with stiff opposition. Sir Robert Waley Cohen, vice president of the United Synagogue, expressed concern that prohibiting hindquarter meat would necessitate using additional cows, making British Jews appear unpatriotic during a period of wartime rationing. In addition, the Shechita Board was facing a large deficit as a result of meat rationing, and fees lost from hindquarter licenses threatened to further increase the deficit.

Despite the pressure, Rav Abramsky did not back down from his demand, with his wife Reizel supporting him by offering to open a restaurant to sustain the family should he resign over the issue.

After a meeting with the Shechita Board in 1941, Rav Abramsky delivered an ultimatum: If the committee would not stop the sale of hindquarter meat, he would leave the post of chief dayan. He rose, submitted his letter of resignation, and abruptly left the room.

The members of the committee realized that Rav Abramsky was serious and voted unanimously to prohibit the sale of hindquarter meat.

This ban has never been annulled, and to this day, Jews in Great Britain are not in danger of eating gid hanasheh because of Rav Abramsky's perseverance.

The nikkur episode was but one instance in which Rav Abramsky displayed a unique instinct for timing, knowing how and when to intervene to buttress halachic observance.

In another instance, a fashionable catering hall opened in London, and the management repeatedly refused to obtain kashrus certification from the London Beis Din. Since many of their customers did not keep kosher, the administrators saw no need for the extra expense.

Rav Abramsky, who regularly read the Jewish Chronicle so he could know what to daven for, noticed a prominent advertisement about the dinner of a major Jewish institution scheduled at this catering hall. The guest of honour was to be a member of the royal family.

Rav Abramsky and his fellow dayanim immediately drafted an advertisement notifying the public that the dinner would not be under kashrus certification, and asked one of the dayanim to notify the Jewish institution of the impending advertising campaign. Within ten minutes, Rav Abramsky received a call from a lawyer representing the hall, threatening to sue the beis din for damages. Rav Abramsky responded that a prominent attorney had already been hired to represent the beis din.

In the scramble for a compromise, the Jewish institution's lawyer suggested that the hall be certified for this one occasion. Rav Abramsky promptly refused the offer. Not long thereafter, the manager of the hall personally approached Rav Abramsky and requested permanent certification from the beis din.

Another key achievement for Rav Abramsky during his tenure as chief dayan of the London Beis Din was to improve geirus (conversion) standards in three areas. First, the London Beis Din had previously only required conversion candidates to commit to keep Shabbos and to study Jewish laws and customs.

In his contract, Rav Abramsky stipulated that candidates would also be required to live in a Jewish environment and demonstrate that their workplace would not hinder Shabbos observance.

Second, upon assuming office, Rav Abramsky restricted synagogue rabbis from being involved in the conversion process, outside of referring potential geirim to the Beis Din.This lent more objectivity to the conversion process, because if the prospective convert was dating or engaged to a Jew, the local rabbi was often subject to pressure to convert the potential marriage partner.

Third, after World War I, in an increasingly secularized society, interreligious socializing became more common, and the number of non-Jews seeking conversion was much higher than ever before. While the beis din generally refused to convert people motivated by marriage, they often capitulated when pressure was brought to bear from high places. Rav Abramsky, however, was never intimidated by any chief rabbi or officers of the United Synagogue into allowing dubious conversions.

One prominent member of the London community repeatedly approached the beis din to convert his son's fiancé. After delaying the decision for a while, Rav Abramsky finally informed the family that since they were Kohanim, it was forbidden for the young man to marry a convert in any case, so the conversion would be pointless.

When asked why he had not rejected the conversion on those grounds at the outset, Rav Abramsky replied that he had not wanted the public to assume that the young man's status as a Kohein was the only obstacle to this conversion, but that any conversion for the sake of marriage would be rejected.

Furthermore, Rav Abramsky explained that he wanted to establish that "there is no bias in the matter, even for community leaders."

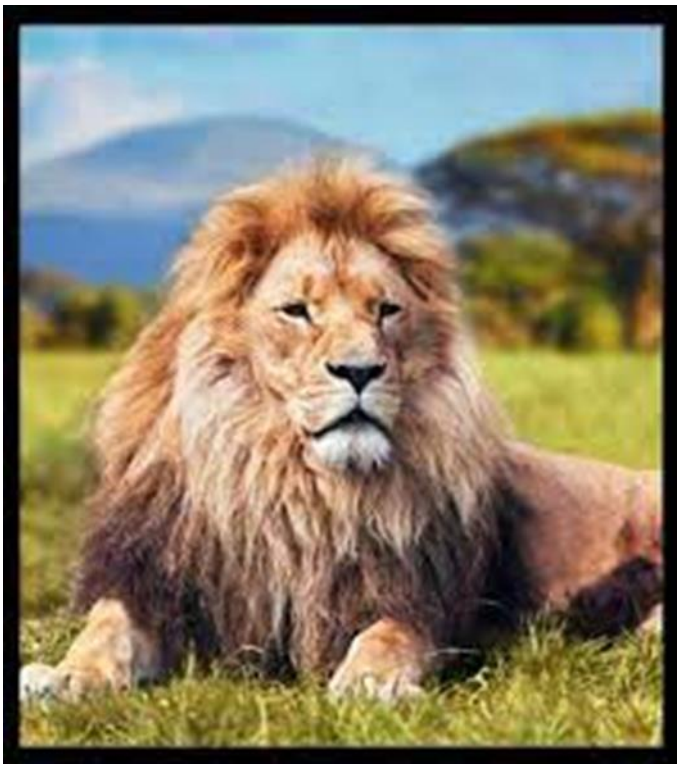
The numbers are dramatic. In 16 years under Rav Abramsky's leadership, the London Beis Din accepted only five converts — as compared to 24 converts in 1925 alone!

Rav Abramsky's uncompromising conversion standards were not popular with many of London's Jews, especially secularized Jews. Reform historian Jonathan A. Romain protests, "For many Jews, the Chief Rabbi's Court sometimes appeared to be less a communal servant than a communal tyrant."

While Rav Abramsky was hardly a tyrant, he certainly did not view himself as a servant of the public, but a servant of Hashem, charged with safeguarding and preserving the authenticity of the Jewish nation.

An Affable Lion

Upon reaching the official retirement age of 65 in 1951, Rav Abramsky and his wife settled in Bayit V'gan in Yerushalayim. He gave shiurim in the Slabodka yeshivah in Bnei Brak, continued to publish seforim, and later served as nasi of the Vaad Hayeshivos. But his influence on British Jewry continues to be felt until today, and eventually, even secular Jews came to appreciate the values he had brought to their community.



On Rav Abramsky's 90th birthday, the Jewish Chronicle paid tribute to him, stating: ***"[Rav Abramsky] laid down the law as he saw it… He [has] the presence of an affable lion, though he is not always so affable, especially when [halachah is] contradicted, and even the late and great Sir Robert Waley Cohen (a non-religious power broker of the United Synagogue), no respecter of holy persons, stood in awe of him."***

Rav Abramsky's approach to religious leadership was poignantly captured by the late Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits, in which he recounted a visit with Rav Abramsky after the latter had relocated to Yerushalayim, during which Rav Abramsky drew his attention to a passage in the first perek of Yehoshua: "***Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the Land which I swore to their fathers to give to them. Only be strong and very courageous to observe, and to do according to all the law which Moshe, My servant, commanded you***…"

When discussing acquiring Eretz Yisrael, Hashem only commands Yehoshua to be "strong and courageous," noted Rav Abramsky, but

when it comes to observing the laws of the Torah, Hashem instructs him to be very courageous.

These words accurately depict Rav Abramsky's own ability to stare down any opposition to his efforts to shore up the halachic standards in England — be it communal leaders, left-leaning rabbis, or even a British judge.

When a shochet who had been fired sued the London Beis Din in secular court, Rav Abramsky was called to testify. After establishing Rav Abramsky's name and position, his attorney asked, "Is it true that you are the greatest living halachic authority on the European continent?" "Yes," Rav Abramsky replied. "It's true."

"Rabbi Abramsky," the judge said sharply, "isn't some humility in order?"

"Your honour," the Rav replied, "I am under oath!"

Emunas Chachomim

R' Avrohom Chaim Spielberg was one lone Jew among thousands of Arabs working in a railway factory in Haifa during the British Mandate in Palestine. His expertise at metal working and his fluency in five languages smoothed his dealings with his British employers and with his Arab co-workers.

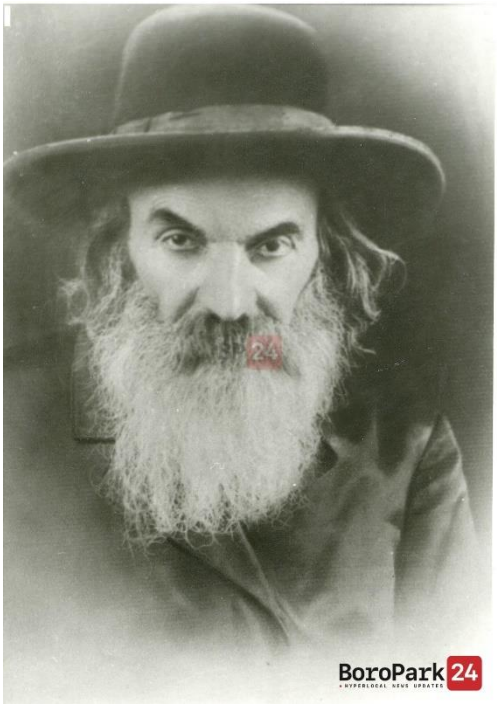
In return for various favours that R' Avrohom did, his Arab co-workers filled his work quota on Shabbos. But the hatred of the Arabs intensified throughout the land, erupting in the 1929 Chevron massacres and many other Arab attacks of Jews. The Jews formed underground defence groups to defend themselves.

Outside events were having their effect on the Arabs in the railway factory. One morning, R' Avrohom found his worktable overturned and his tools scattered. Two weeks later, the morning after the Jewish underground had foiled an Arab ambush and killed all the would-be attacking Arabs, R' Avrohom found himself cornered by his

former friends at work, each one openly threatening that they would not rest until they slaughtered him.

When R' Avrohom approached the Arab plant manager, he found him to be in the same league as his co-workers. The British overseer was sympathetic and supportive, but practically speaking, could not offer R' Avrohom guaranteed protection.

It was only a matter of time before the Arab workers would attempt to carry out their threats. But the problem of earning a livelihood was just as frightening as the Arabs' threats. These were times of extreme hardship when people could easily die of hunger.



R' Avrohom could not stand the intense pressure. He went to pour out his bitter heart to the holy tzaddik, **R' Shlom'ke of Zhvil**, who lived in Yerushalayim. After R' Avrohom explained his situation, R' Shlom'ke first looked into a sefer and then sat lost in thought for a few moments. R' Shlom'ke then suddenly turned to R' Avrohom and said, "What are you afraid of? I don't see any reason to be afraid. Whoever touches you will come to a bitter end."

These words breathed new life into R' Avrohom. He firmly believed that the holy Rebbe, R' Shlom'ke, had marshalled the forces of nature on his behalf.

Fortified with his belief in the Rebbe's promise, R' Avrohom confidently and fearlessly reported to work at the factory the next day.

He was suddenly surrounded by a throng of his Arab co-workers. One of them, Mahmoud, thrust a powerful fist into his face, causing blood to stream from R' Avrohom's nose.

He cried, 'Rebbe! Holy Rebbe, you promised me. Hashem, save me in the Rebbe's merit!"

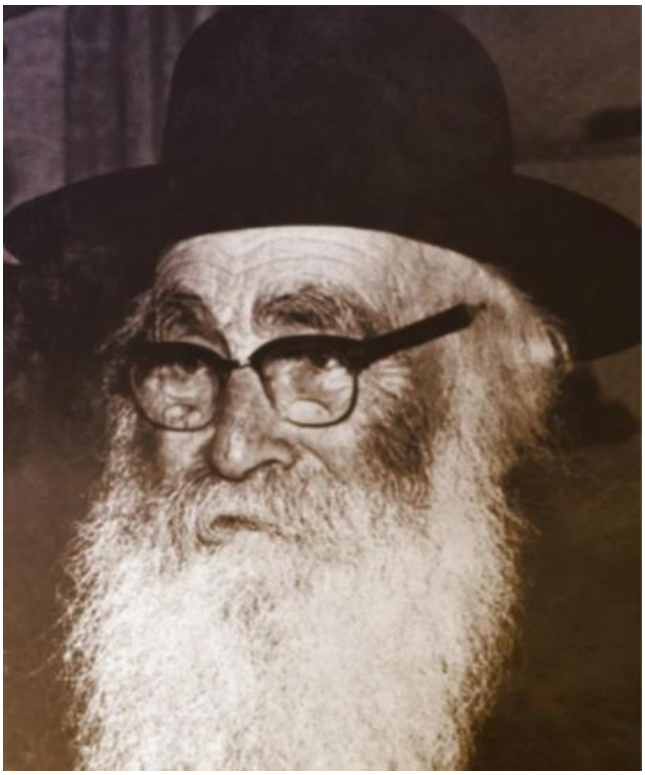
Mahmoud drew back, content to let the others finish the job he had begun. He began walking away when he suddenly fell heavily to the floor. An ambulance was summoned. Soon they heard that Mahmoud died of a massive brain haemorrhage.

The thousands of Arab workers understood that the Hand of G-d had struck down their colleague. From that day forward, until R' Avrohom Chaim's retirement, no one ventured to harm as much as his fingernail, treating him with utmost respect and courtesy. (Tales for the Soul, Vol. 4)

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES



Emunah And Tefillah: A Potent Combination

The great "tzaddik of Yerushalayim," **Rav Aryeh Levin**, lived through the harrowing days of World War I in the holy city with his family, including the daughter who would later marry **Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv**.

Famine was rampant, no relief agencies functioned successfully, and children and the elderly were collapsing from hunger. Rav Aryeh and his family had tasted no food

in two days, so the tzaddik decided to make his way to a relatively wealthy individual whom he had helped many times in various ways.

Rav Aryeh had once arrived barefoot at this man's door, since he had already sold his well-worn shoes for whatever he could obtain for them to feed his starving children for that day. Although the man had given him some money as a gift, Rav Aryeh insisted on considering it a loan.

True to form, he returned the money soon thereafter, and so he thought that he had established his credibility. To his shock, his former benefactor turned him down this time.

"Rebbi," the man declared sadly, "I myself have fallen on hard times, so I have extremely little to give away. I must admit, however, that I will help some people, but not you. You see, if I do not help the others, I know that they would curse me and my family. But I know that you, Rav Aryeh, would never stoop to such a thought, let alone words, so I cannot help you. I am so sorry."

Rav Aryeh trudged home, crying and despondent. When he entered his dilapidated home, he began to weep bitterly, asking his wife tearfully, "Why am I and my family being punished because I will not bear a grudge?"

His righteous rebbetzin was not left without a response. "Cannot Hashem always help?" she declared. "Don't you always remind us that 'even if a sharp sword lies on one's neck...'? Where, my dear husband, is your usual bitachon and emunah?

Let us think for a moment — why didn't this good man help us? It can't be because he is unable, for we know that he is capable. It can't be because he doesn't trust you, for you have proven your reliability. It must be because Hashem is planning to redeem us in a more honourable fashion."

Rav Aryeh accepted these words, coming from such a noble and pure soul. Moments later there was a knock at the door, with a mailman

delivering a small package. Rav Aryeh opened it with trembling hands. Thinking that he was dreaming, he held up the contents, eyes sparkling with renewed faith. It was a ten-dollar bill, a respectable amount of money in those dire days. Why would anyone send him money from America?

With tears of joy now in his eyes, he read the note and remembered. Some years before, he had met someone in Petach Tikvah, who inquired, "Aren't you the grandson of So and-so?" Rav Aryeh had answered in the affirmative, and the man had noted, "You are the spitting image of your grandfather."

The letter informed him that this man had just passed away, leaving the order in his will that ten dollars be sent to a certain Aryeh Levin in Yerushalayim.

Rav Aryeh repeated his wife's wise words. Indeed, "even if a sharp sword lays upon one's neck, he should not despair."

Direct Line

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky was known for his unyielding commitment to honesty in all areas. When Rav Yaakov's wife was about to undergo a serious operation, he wished to receive a bracha for her well-being from **Rav Moshe Feinstein**. His numerous attempts to reach Rav Moshe, though, met with no success, as the phone line was consistently busy.

Although Rav Yaakov was privy to the number of Rav Moshe's other, private phone line, which was an unlisted number, he did not feel justified in using it. That number, he explained, had been given to him to reach Rav Moshe about matters concerning klal Yisrael; for a personal matter, he was not permitted to use it.

When a person has zero tolerance for even the slightest trace of sheker, and when he lives with emes as his top priority, his actions will affect his children, his talmidim, and everyone else in his life.

The impact of such a life—like that of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky—can last for generations, creating ripple effects that can reach thousands or even millions of people.



"When one sits in a succah, and he learns and davens there, he is living in the upper worlds literally.' ~ The Yesod Yosef.

נחלת יושר
ארגון להפצת שיעורי תורה ומוסר
מיסודו של שר התורה מרן הגר"ח קניבסקי זצוק"ל

The Man Who Brought the Steipler and Rav Chaim to Eretz Yisroel By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Rav Matityahu Ze'ev Chaim Stiegel (1866 -1960) zatzal was the founder and head of the Beis Yosef Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. He was the one who was zoche to arrange for the Steipler and Rav Chaim to come to Eretz Yisroel.

The picture above is that of the Steipler, when he was a Rosh Yeshiva in Pinsk.

Rav Mates was born in the town of Ostrow in the Lomza district of Tsarist Russia. At the age of 11, his parents emigrated from Poland, and, left alone, he entered to study at the Novhardik Yeshiva. He was one of Rav Yosef Yozel Horowitz's closest students. It was in Novardik that he first met the Steipler, and was most impressed by him. Rav Mateslater married Miriam, daughter of Rabbi Moshe Eliezer HaCohen Bayer of Mottla, an associate of Chafetz Chaim.

Since his youth, Reb Matis has been involved in the establishment of the Novharduk Yeshiva. He helped found and direct the Beis Yosef Yeshivos in Kharkov, Zvihel and Mezrich.

As early as the 1920s, even before he immigrated to Israel, he came up with the idea of establishing a yeshiva in the Bnei Brak colony that was just established at that time. He discussed this with Rav

Shimon Kalish, the Rebbe of Skarenwitz, who was the rabbi of Bnei Brak founder Yitzhak Gerstenkorn. However, the implementation of the plan did not materialize at the time and was postponed until his immigration to Eretz Israel.

In the meantime, the Steipler became a Rosh Yeshiva in the Novardik Yeshiva in Pinsk.

In the summer of 1931, Rabbi Schiegel immigrated to Eretz Israel, together with his colleague Rabbi David Bliacher. The two rabbis established the yeshiva in Bnei Brak near their arrival in Eretz Yisrael. In the beginning, the yeshiva was housed in the Great Synagogue in the centre of Bnei Brak. Shortly afterwards, Rabbi Bliacher returned to Poland and Rabbi Stiegel continued to run the yeshiva alone. Rabbi Shtigel held the position of Rosh Yeshiva, but at the suggestion of the Chazon Ish, gladly assigned it to Rabbi Yaakov Israel Kanievsky, whom he knew from the Novhardik Yeshiva.

At first, however, there was no answer from the Steipler. Apparently, the letter was sent to the Yeshiva in Pinsk, and the Talmidim – not wanting to lose their Rosh Yeshiva, hid the letter from the Steipler!

In Av of 1933, the **Chazon Ish** settled in Bnei Brak, after his arrival he offered to give lessons at the yeshiva, until the arrival of his brother-in-law Rabbi Yaakov Israel Kanievsky.

Rabbi Shtigel organized immigration visas for, the Steipler and his entire family, including the young Rav Chaim. He also obtained visa for another hundred yeshiva students The Kanievsky's left on Purim 1934. During the boat ride, the Steipler learned all of sefer Shmos with the six year old Rav Chaim.

At the beginning of the month of Nisan 1934, Rabbi Kanievsky immigrated and settled near the yeshiva.

Rav Mates' youngest son is Rabbi Meir Shtigel, author of the "Shomer Emes" series of Seforim and the Rav of Yeshivas Hemed

for young people today in Bnei Brak. His sons-in-law are: Rav Rosenthal – Head of the Rama Kollel and author of a series of seforim "Mateh Aharon" on various Shas tractates.

Sukkos in Warsaw in 1939

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman quotes the **Chasam Sofer** - "Sukkos and Shemini Atzeres are even greater than Yom Kippur, because during Yom Kippur we love Hashem through affliction, and on Simchas Torah, we love Hashem through joy. The mitzvah and the holiness of the holiday come from the Jewish people's happiness.'

On September 1st, 1939, in the middle of the month of Elul, Germany attacked Poland. The bombardment continued for three weeks and didn't stop until September 27th, Erev Sukkos, when the Polish commander surrendered. As soon as the ceasefire went into effect, an amazing phenomenon happened. Despite their bombed homes and the devastation everywhere, the people began to climb out of their shelters.

Hundreds of Warsaw's Jewish survivors leaped from the cellars and rubble, grabbed broken doors and window frames, and pulled them together to construct Sukkot. By the arrival of sunset – 5:40 pm that day – numerous makeshift Sukkot greeted the holiday, and a few hours later was the first night under German occupation. Gratitude to Hashem is not conditional. Just as He was and is there for us, our appreciation of Hashem will always prevail.

May we never hesitate to knock on Hashem's door, pray, and connect to our Creator. May we all truly appreciate all the good that Hashem has bestowed upon us and our families. May we have simcha on these holidays and let it flavour all our days in the future!

Focus on Middos

R' Akiva Eiger Zt'l was extremely reluctant to serve as the Chief Rabbi of Posen and only agreed because his mother asked him to accept the position! His uneasiness about having to tell others what to do is recorded in a personal letter. In it, he revealed that he davened on the Yomim Noiroim that Hashem would release him from his position.

R' Akiva Eiger had an important guideline from which he did not deviate. The city of Posen was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and he wouldn't answer questions that came from outside the country. He explained to the questioner that answering their question would be improper. The stature of other rabbonim would be diminished if all their communities sent their questions to an out-of-country Rav.

However, he once answered a letter from Bialystock, Poland. He began his Reply: "Although I am unworthy of answering questions from distant lands that are surely filled with great Rabbonim and בַּעֲלֵי הַלָּבָה – And surely, Poland is not lacking in either, this time I will answer."

R' Akiva Eiger then proceeded to explain why he deviated from his usual practice in this instance.

"A few months ago, I was at a simcha at which someone from your town said that he would write me concerning a difficult matter. Although I did not encourage him to do so, I also did not discourage him. In fact, I may have even nodded my head slightly. That may have been taken as a commitment to answer the question. If I appeared to have agreed, I do not want to appear as if I changed my mind on a commitment."

Why did R' Akiva Eiger's questionable nod override his concern for the honour of the Polish Rabbonim?

R' Akiva Eiger explained clearly in his letter that this was an exception. Even though he was a humble, modest person, he was fully aware of his greatness … He held that any possible Chillul Hashem overrides his personal humility.

We, too, must not be too humble and think, "Who notices what I do?" We all represent B'nei Torah to the outside world!

Staying Up Late at Night By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

Rav Chaim Kanievsky zatzal was asked by a Rosh Yeshiva the following question:

I often tell my talmidim to get an early start in the mornings and not to stay up late. They respond that there are many stories of Gedolim who stayed up late at night to learn. What should I tell them?

Rav Chaim zatzal answered: "One cannot bring proofs from stories as their circumstances were different – they only did so at that point in their lives if they knew that it would not affect them. One must know that even if there is no immediate effect, it could affect them negatively later on.. I personally would go to sleep in the afternoons whenever I felt tired even for a few hours, and that was why I was able to learn late into the night.

Some people have the custom of singing Shalom Aleichem on the night of Succos that falls out on Friday night, and some don't.

The Shem MiShmuel explains the custom of those who don't sing Shalom Aleichem.

He explains that the kedushah of the succah is so great that malachim cannot enter!

Rav Chaim zatzal's "Chovos" Schedule By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

So what were Rav Chaim zatzal's chovos – his daily learning schedule, and what time of day did he learn them? Also, at what age did he begin doing them?

This is what he learned from 3:00 AM to 5:00 AM each morning and continued from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. –

- 8 blatt of Bavli every day, and he also learned the parallel Yerushalmi on those Mishnayos in the Bavli as well.
- 2 prakim of Tanach every day.
- 4 blatt of the Yerushalmi daily,
- 3 prakim of the Rambam's Mishna Torah

- 5 pages of Shulchan Aruch except when he was up to Orech Chaim – where he went slower, as he added the Mishna Brurah to the schedule too. In the in-between-hours, he davened vasikin and also attended Bris Milahs serving as Sandek.

Rav Chaim zatzal began with Shas from age 16 to age 20. The first year he finished it four times. He added Rambam and Shulchan Aruch at age 20. Zohar and Midrashim were added later. His yearly siyum at the Lederman Shul also included Midrash Rabbah, Sifra, Sifrei, Midrash Tanchuma, Zohar and the 6 sedarim of Mishnayos. (Rebbitzen Kanievsky p.144-145)

Both of his sons ylct"v , Rav Avrohom Yishayahu and Rav Yitzchok Shaul, also have the same chovos schedule.

"What matters most isn't what's happening around me, but what's happening within me." ~ Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (1895 – 1986)

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein was one of the greatest Jews that ever lived. He knew all of the Torah (much of it by heart). People came to him from all around the world to ask him what to do and how to live according to the Torah and he always helped them.

Reb Moshe lived to be a very old man and he was very respected by Jews everywhere. But, Reb Moshe never thought he was too great to help another person.

One time, a few days before Succos, the old shamash in Reb Moshe's yeshiva was building a Succah. He was having a problem putting up the schach. The shamash came to Reb Moshe and asked him if he could send some yeshiva bachurim to help him put up the schach.

Instead of asking bachurim to help put up the schach, Reb Moshe took a ladder, climbed up and put on the schach himself.



ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות - Harav Hagaon R' Matisyahu Salomon

We say in Shmoneh Esrei of the Yom Tov davening the following expression, "**ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות** ". Literally this means that, Hashem has "Exalted us above all the languages, and nations of the world."

Yet, the great **Rav Shlomo Heiman zt"l** once gave an alternative, and insightful way, to explain these words.

There are a number of times and opportunities, in our daily lives, that Hashem grants us very special, and memorable moments, which can't be expressed in words of our own. For example, when a child is born, the day of a boys Bar Mitzvah, the day of a Chasunah, etc, these are moments that we find ourselves completely lost for words, There are no adequate words with which we are fully able to convey our feelings to the One Above. There is nothing we can really say to

Hashem, to properly express our deep gratitude for the incredible kindness he has bestowed upon us.

There are no sufficient words, which can capture our deep emotional thoughts, feelings, and experiences that we are going through at those particular moments of time, in our lives.

The only thing we could possibly do, is to acknowledge and to convey to Hashem that we will never forget this precious moment in time, because it is set firm and rooted deep into our hearts, higher and more exalted than any words.

Likewise, this is the exact attitude and feeling we have for every Yom Tov that comes our way. The experience of every single Yom Tov, is a similar and indescribable event. The day of a Yom Tov elevates our Neshomo to a different level in Avoidas Hashem. We become closer to Hashem, and our unique relationship feels somewhat more real and tangible, over the time.

We don't have the suitable words to express our deep connection and close feeling we are experiencing at moment! - May we: be Zoche, to all the **ברכות** of the coming Yom Tov, Bimheiro Biyomeinu Omein!

You'll Know it When you Feel it

When one sits in the succah *leshem shamayim*, he feels the holiness with *hislahavus*. He experiences the light of the mitzvah, and he knows that it is true that the cloud of glory surrounded us. This is something that cannot be explained with words, but someone who experienced it knows that it's true. **~ The Keren L'Dovid.**

Look back and be grateful - Look ahead and be hopeful – Look around and be helpful.

Invest in Being Happy!

From the Torah, the mitzvah of lulav is on the first day of Succos, but the mitzvah to be happy on Succos is for all seven days. **The Imrei Noam zt'l** says that this is to tell us that Hashem loves it when His nation is happy and in good spirits, therefore he made this mitzvah for seven days.

How much effort Bnei Yisrael invests to get the four minim! Some spend hours, seeking the best they can find. Let this be a sign of how much effort we should invest to be happy, for this is a mitzvah from the Torah for all seven days of Succos. **~ R' Elimelech Biderman.**

Sukkos - Beauty Defined



An interesting custom is mentioned in conjunction with the upcoming holiday of Sukkos. In the Shaarei Teshuva (Orech Chayim 625), we find that 'One should increase the giving of charity on the eve of Sukkos."

Rabbi Yehudah Assad offers an insightful explanation of this custom. After the nation of Israel was rescued from the pursuing Egyptian nation by the splitting of the Red Sea, they sang a song in praise of Hashem. They uttered the words " 'This is my G-d, and I will adorn Him"

The Talmud (Shabbos 133b) offers two possible meanings for this passage. One is "adorn

yourself before Him in the fulfilment of Mitzvos, namely by making a beautiful Sukkah in His honour, acquiring and using a beautiful Lulav, using a beautiful Shofar, etc.

Abba Saul, however, interpreted the passage as "This is my G-d and I will be like him," meaning we should be like Hashem: just as He is gracious and compassionate, so too we should be gracious and compassionate.

On Yom Kippur, we spent the entire day fasting, praying that we be forgiven and that we be sealed for a good year. As soon as we conclude Yom Kippur, we immediately begin to involve ourselves in the Mitzvos associated with Sukkos, the holiday that occurs a few days later. We build a Sukkah and decorate it so that it is truly a sight to behold. We spend time selecting a beautiful Esrog, looking for a fruit with a beautiful shade of yellow, with no blemishes, with perfect symmetry. We search through the selection of Lulavim available to us, hoping to find one that is as straight as an arrow, meeting all the Halachik stringencies. We do this all so that we, in accordance with the verse, can adorn, can glorify the name of G-d. We attempt to do these Mitzvos in the finest way possible.

However, there is another way to interpret that verse. In our relationship with Hashem, we not only should perform His Mitzvos in the finest way possible. We must also act with our fellow man in the finest way possible. And we do that by emulating G-d. Yes, we can have a beautiful Esrog. Yes, we can have a magnificent Sukkah. But if we do not treat our fellow man in the way the G-d would, we have not fulfilled the entire meaning of the verse "This is my G-d and I will adorn Him," זֶ֥ה אֵ-לִ֖י וְאַנְוֵ֑הוּ .(Shemos 15:2)

We therefore must remember the poor and needy at this time, when they might find they are lacking the resources needed to properly celebrate the holiday. We can have a beautiful esrog, but not at the expense of our brothers and sisters in need.

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

תורה תבלין

כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסֻכֹּה בְּיוֹם רָעָה יַסְתִּירֵנִי בְּסֵתֶר אָהֳלוֹ בְּצוּר יְרוֹמְמֵנִי '***That He will hide me in His tabernacle on the day of calamity; He will conceal me in the secrecy of His tent; He will lift me up on a rock***.' (Tehilim 27:5)



The Warsaw Ghetto evokes memories of resistance; the rare instance where Jews attempted to fight back against the Nazi oppressors, where Jews behaved like "heroes" and the world took stock of their efforts.

Heroes? If one would want to talk of heroes, there are many more Jews who fit that description, Jews who never lifted a gun in their lives. Jews who did not have the wherewithal to do battle in physical terms against the Germans, yet fought with the courage of a lion to their fullest spiritual capacity. Are these people any less deserving of the title "Heroes"?

The great Chassidic leader, **R' Klonymos Kalmish Shapiro *zt"l* Hy"d *of* Piaczeczna**, was one such hero, one of the most powerful spiritual forces in the Warsaw Ghetto. He suffered no less than anyone else - if not more, in fact - but he never lost his faith in *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* and never lost his unique ability to project this faith onto others and give them hope. He exemplified the type of courage that is so often overlooked by those who are fond of describing the Jewish reaction to Hitler and the Nazis in terms of passivity and resignation.

An example of R' Klonymos Kalmish's courage and compassion came to light in one of the darkest moments of his life. In the first days of the war, in early September 1939, the German air force attacked the city of Warsaw with a ferocious "blitzkrieg" that decimated the historical city and brought it to its feet in shockingly swift fashion.

Horribly, thirty-four thousand Jews were killed in the span of a few days. At the time, life seemed to become unbearable for the Jews of Warsaw; little did they suspect that the worst was yet to come.

Two days before the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* was to begin, R' Klonymous Kalmish's beloved and exceptional son was mortally wounded by a shell. A few hours later, his son's wife, Rebbetzin Gittel, was killed while standing outside the hospital where her husband lay wounded, and at almost the exact same time, the *Rebbe's* sister-in-law, Rebbetzin Chana, was also killed in a horrible fashion. Death and destruction lay everywhere.

A young Chassidic boy, an ardent follower of the *Piaczeczna Rebbe* - known to many as the "children's *Rebbe*" due to his active interest in the religious well-being of not only his adult *chassidim*, but especially the children - knowing that it was usual for the two *Rebbetzins* to carry their jewellery with them at all times (in case they needed it to save themselves), found their lifeless bodies and removed their jewellery. He had recognized these two *Rebbetzins* and wanted to give their possessions back to the *Rebbe* before the gentiles had a chance to rob them.

Unfortunately, the boy was caught in the act by a German patrol and taken to Gestapo headquarters charged with the heinous crime of robbing the dead. The Germans had no compunction about killing people but woe unto the person who thought to steal from the dead! This was a crime which carried the most severe punishment, especially in those moments of anarchy as the conquering monsters were taking control of the city.

Suddenly, R' Klonymous Kalmish was confronted with a number of very difficult tasks: he must transfer his wounded son to a regular hospital where there was a better chance for his survival; he also had to arrange for the burial of his daughter-in-law and sister-in-law. However, when he heard of the young boy's arrest, he immediately dropped these other matters and risked his life to run to the Gestapo and vouch for the boy's honesty.

Everyone trembled with fear, because it was well known that whoever stepped into Gestapo headquarters did not generally make it out alive. Undaunted, the *Rebbe* presented his case to the Gestapo and somehow managed to find favour in their murderous eyes. After a brief consultation, he was told to return the next day and they would see what could be done.

The next day, the first day of *Sukkos*, the *Rebbe's* son's condition worsened. R' Klonymous Kalmish was desperate to transfer his son to a better facility where the care would be much better, but he knew that the time it took to accomplish this would not allow him to plead on behalf of the young child in the Gestapo prison.

The *Rebbe* made his decision. It was one of the most difficult choices he ever faced. He asked one of the young *Chassidim* to go to the cemetery, to his wife's grave, and ask her to pray for her son's life, while he himself set out for Gestapo headquarters once again to plead for the release of the arrested boy. He hoped his son could hold on for bit longer until he could redeem the child.

With the Almighty's help, he accomplished his mission: his sincere pleading won the boy's release and he brought him home that day. Amongst the many tragedies that were taking place all around him, witnesses would testify that the happiness that shone on the *Rebbe's* face because he'd merited to save a Jewish life was indescribable.

זכרו תורת משה

My Rescued Life

The famous *maggid*, **R' Reuvain Korelistein** from Bnei Brak, was in need of a kidney transplant. He was advised to travel to New York to be there when a kidney donor is available. He settled in Boro Park until it would be his turn. The relocation was particularly difficult, as his family wasn't able to join him in the US, and being forty years ago, communicating with them wasn't as easy as it is today.

He waited for days and months, but no kidney became available. After two years of waiting, an *asken* decided that it was time to move on. He investigated and found out that in San Francisco, there was a very good hospital, and they would try to arrange a kidney from there. The *asken* decided that he would have to stay with him, since he didn't know English and wasn't able to communicate and get around.

When they landed in San Francisco it was 3 AM, so he didn't bother calling his family, although his wife told him that as soon as he arrives, he should call in case there was an availability.

At 6 AM, there was a pounding knock on the door, and it was the police, pressing them to call home. After he called home, he was told that they were called, saying that a donor had been found and that they should respond ASAP.

He right away called the hospital, but they explained that after three hours of no response, they offer the next in line the donation, and since it was now three hours and fifteen minutes later, they'd already offered it to someone else, and now it was no longer available.

This *asken* was beside himself. Here he had taken R' Reuvain to San Francisco only to miss the potential Boro Park kidney. Out of embarrassment, he decided to hide this episode from R' Reuven so as not to cause him unwarranted aggravation.

Two days passed, and R' Reuven noticed that the *asken* wasn't in his usual mood. He was down and missing life. He asked the *asken* what was going on, but got no response. After a great amount of persistence, the *asken* told him what had happened while they were on the plane. When R' Reuvain heard the story, he started dancing out of extreme joy.

"Look what Hashem did to spare me from the wrong kidney!" he exclaimed. "Hashem took me on a long-distance flight to make sure that I shouldn't get it. It must be that that one would've been terrible for me, and therefore He spared me from it. Isn't that a reason to be happy?!"

This wasn't just what he said; this is truly what he felt. He felt so strong about it that every year afterward, he would make a *seudas hodaah* to thank Hashem from saving him, and in particular from saving him from that harmful kidney.

Three months later, they found a donor and, *Baruch Hashem*, R' Reuvain was able to return to his routine and lived close to 30 years.

A while later, the *asken* inquired about the two recipients, and after investigation found that both recipients had died from that kidney. Exteriorly, it seemed like a healthy kidney, but the interior was infected and diseased. Hashem was sparing R' Reuvain after all.

What we see is that in every situation, there are two ways one can approach it. It's up to the person how he's going to feel. Will he approach it with the understanding that it is coming from Hashem, and therefore see everything in a positive light? Or will he not have this understanding, won't live with this in his mind, and will be lacking serenity?

'Despair is the worst of ailments. No worries are justified except: "Why am I so worried?"' ~ R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l.

"A Guarantee"

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach told of a *segulah* to be saved from all worries. Reb Shlomo Zalman noted that this is a "proven and true" *segulah*.

Now let's think for a moment: Had the *posek ha'dor* told us that he has a "guarantee" to free us from worries and anxieties, we would do anything. So, listen carefully to his advice, internalize it, and carry it with us for life to secure us from any future, unwanted, and unnecessary worries.

He says like this: One should write on a paper all the kindness that Hakadosh Baruch Hu does for him, and when he says *Modim* in *Shemonah Esrei*, he should remember all those points and thank Hashem for them. Doing so frees a person from all worries. (*Torah Wellsprings*)

L'Maaseh... A Tale to Remember

It was Erev Succos, late in the afternoon. Most people had already purchased their Esrogim and Lulavim, even those who did not have money to spend on a Mehudar set. People were now busy decorating their Succahs, and preparing for Yom Tov.



Reb Itzik, the Esrogim dealer, had already packed away his merchandise, and was trying to estimate how much profit he had earned during the busy pre-Yom Tov season. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Yichyeh, a man from Yemen who had recently moved to town, was standing at the doorway, with a look of joy in his eyes.

Reb Itzik asked, "What brings you here on Erev Yom Tov?" Yichyeh said, "Look what I brought!" He unwrapped a small bundle, and showed the Esrog dealer a sack of Esrogim, green and fresh, and still wet from the morning dew. It was obvious they had been cut that day.

Reb Itzik asked, "Where did you get them from?" Yichyeh responded, "I had some business to take care of outside the city, and on the way, I stopped at the orchard to check out the Esrogim. Aren't they beautiful?"

Reb Itzik looked at the Esrogim with his skilled eyes. The first two were not especially remarkable, but the third one, he looked it over very carefully, and it was truly a Mehudar Esrog, one that doesn't come by every day! It was perfect, and truly a dream for an Esrog dealer. However, Reb Itzik realized, it was a just day too late. If this Esrog had arrived yesterday, or the day before, he would have been able to sell it for a small fortune. But today, he could probably only get a very small amount for the beautiful Esrog, as no one was shopping for Esrogim anymore.

With a heavy heart, the merchant bought the Esrogim from Yichyeh, and went to lie down to rest. He had barely dozed off when there was a soft knock on the door.

Reb Itzik jumped. Who could be coming to see him now? Most probably a miserly person, who was too stingy to pay full price for an Esrog and was now looking to make a deal.

Reb Itzik got out of bed, went to the door, and opened it up. He saw a thin, emaciated young man, who whispered, "Are there any Esrogim to still buy? Maybe even a Mehudar one?"

Reb Itzik realized that this wasn't a miser looking for a cheap deal. He welcomed the young man inside, but he couldn't hold back from saying, "Reb Yid, you are only now out looking for a Mehudar Esrog? Why did you wait so long?"

The young man apologized and said, "I couldn't buy an Esrog until now." He explained, "My wife has been in the hospital for three weeks already, and some of my children are ill."

Reb Itzik had compassion on the young man. He brought out the box of Esrogim that Yichyeh had just bought over. He held up the perfect Esrog and said, "Here is a beautiful Esrog, but you know, for a Mehudar Esrog, one has to pay."

The young man held the Esrog in his hands, and scrutinized it carefully. He looked at it from every angle, and spent a very long time with it. Reb Itzik was already impatient. What was taking so long? Now he would probably not be able to rest before Yom Tov.

Reb Itzik was about to pressure him and get upset, but then he noticed something that broke his heart. The young man was sobbing as he held the beautiful Esrog, which he was certain he would not be able to afford. He quietly asked, "How much is this Esrog?"

Reb Itzik smiled and said, "Reb Yid, you have Mazel this year. Boruch Hashem, I had a very good season, and no one is shopping for Esrogim anymore. I'm going to give you the Esrog, for free, with the condition that you keep me in mind during your Tefilos."

The young man's face lit up with joy, and thanked Reb Itzik profusely! He took the Esrog and went back home to his family.

He reflected on the teaching of Chazal that the Esrog represents our heart. This was truly a good and beautiful Esrog, but most of all, it was the story of someone's good and beautiful heart! ❤️❤️❤️

On Sukkos we connect what we know to what we are. We replay all the kedushah and taharah that we attained on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and we bring it into our lives. This is the most profound connection there is. ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus zt"l.



Sukkos was a very special time for Rav Shimshon zt"l. I remember as a child what a big deal he made out of Arba Minim. Before the chag he was very involved with looking for mehudar Arba Minim. He literally ran from store to store and from sale to sale until he found what he was looking for.

On Sukkos itself, he would go to a special vasikin minyan, to which a talmid chacham with a lot of different kinds of esrogim would come. He wanted to take lulav with as many different kinds of esrogim as he could in order to satisfy all Halachic opinions and approaches.

During Sukkos, he was tremendously happy and would sit a lot in the sukkah. The only time when we would just sit and sing was Sukkos, and then he would sing old songs in Yiddish, and a lot of people would come to hear him sing these songs. Of course, it was not their musical interest that drew them... the singing emanated from the depths of his heart and soul, and that is what attracted people.

It is impossible to describe his excitement on Simchas Torah. He just danced and danced and danced without resting for a moment. It was incredible. He was always dancing and getting others to dance, including the children, as it was important to him that they should take part in the joy over the Torah.

May we all merit true simcha on Sukkos, simcha of mitzvah, simcha of atonement for our sins, simcha of sitting in the sukkah in the shade of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And may we merit realizing how much we have to be happy for, and just be b'simcha!!! - **Harav Yosef Dov Pincus** | Rosh Hakollel.



For the Yom Tov Table

The Pele Yoeitz, quoting from the **Arizal**, says that one who is joyous throughout the days of Succos and makes the tremendous effort to avoid any anger and unhappiness will merit a year full of simchah.

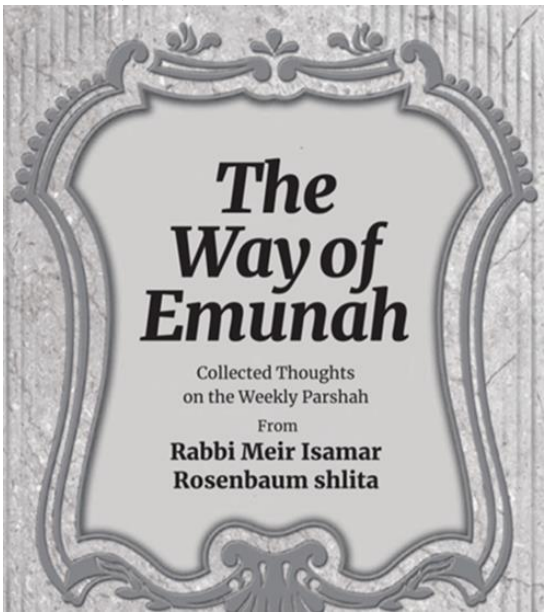
Rav Yeruchem Olshin shlit"a explains that by leaving our homes and entering the fragile edifice of our Succah, we demonstrate that it is not the brick and mortar of our homes that protect us; it is Hashem who provides all our needs.

The Sefer Orchos Tzaddikim, despite its many chapters, does not include a chapter on bitachon. Rather, in the chapter Shaar HaSimcha, the Orchos Tzadikim writes extensively about bitachon and how reliance on Hashem brings a person true happiness.

When a person recognizes that he is the child of a most loving and powerful Father in heaven, Who only seeks his ultimate success, he is filled with immense tranquillity and happiness. Thus, one who celebrates this Yom Tov and develops genuine bitachon will surely merit simchah for the year ahead.

The Zohar makes an extraordinary claim:

'If we would truly recognize the great love Hashem has for us, we would run through the streets roaring like lions in our yearning to draw closer to Him.'



Giving Tzedakah on Erev Sukkos

It is said in the of the **Arizal zy"a** that one should give a lot of tzedakah on erev Sukkos.

The Chida zt"l (Sefer Kisei Dovid, explains the reason for this by quoting Chazal, who say that when Klal Yisroel left Mitzrayim, they made a pact to do chesed to each other.

He explains this to mean that those who give tzedakah and do chesed are not shielded by any angels or other entities. Rather, they are protected directly by Hashem. Accordingly, the Medrash is saying that when the Jews left Egypt, they made a pact to do chesed to each other so that they should be guided directly by Hashem, and not through any angel or intermediary. And in this merit, they were able to have Hashem walk before them day and night (Shemos 13:21) and always protect them.

On Sukkos, we commemorate the Ananei Hakavod, which were a sign of Hashem personally protecting and caring for Klal Yisroel in the merit of them giving tzedakah and doing chesed for each other. Therefore, it is appropriate to approach this day by giving tzedakah and helping our fellow Jews. When we do this, we too will merit being guided directly by Hashem and not through any intermediary.

R' Avrohom Mordechai Alter ZT'L (Imrei Emes) would say:

'Wherever one goes, he should make sure to have good friends. Even if he doesn't stay in one place for more than a few days, he should always keep in mind that even a sefer can be a good friend!'



On Sukkos, we go to a temporary hut, yet we find it is a mitzva to decorate it with lush tapestries and furniture, as we would have in our normal homes and even nicer and fill it with our silver items and expensive dishes. Why?

Keep it plain and simple. Why have the materialism we are trying to escape follow us into a spiritual dwelling? Doesn't that defeat the point?

No. Quite the opposite.

The sukkah symbolizes our short time on earth. Seven days correspond to the seventy years of a person's life; the temporary walls and leaky roof remind us life is flimsy and can end any moment. The main thing is serving our Creator, who always looks down on us, and is clearly visible if we bother looking up through the cracks.

By beautifying the sukkah, we see the futility of pursuing life's luxuries, running after material possessions and pleasure, because they have no staying power. No matter how much money we have, or where we live or what we drive, no matter how much we spoil ourselves and indulge in life's decorations, we are still living in a world that is as temporary as a sukkah.

"Hashem is more exacting with the sin of lashon hara than with any other sin. As Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai taught in the Zohar: "Hashem is prepared to forgive anything except lashon hara." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Yom Tov With Rav Chaim - Rav Chaim by Naftali Weinberger



On *Succos*, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** was very stringent to spend as much time as possible, day and night, in his *succah*. Following the opinion that one can fulfill the *mitzvah* of going to Yerushalayim even when there is no *Beis HaMikdash*, Rav Chaim used to go to Yerushalayim on *Succos*. The difficulty with that, he said, was that since he went at night, after a long and tiring day, he would have to resist dozing during the ride so as not to sleep outside the *succah*.

One year, he mentioned to his father-in-law, **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv**, how difficult it was not to fall asleep. Rav Elyashiv told him that *holchei derachim* (travelers) are not obligated to sleep in a *succah*; if he falls asleep, he can be lenient. Rav Chaim did not want to rely on this leniency and would do his utmost to remain awake.

His son, Rav Yitzchak Shaul, who travelled with Rav Chaim for many years, related that in order to keep him awake, Rav Chaim would ask him interesting questions, such as "How many times does it say '*kelev*' in *Maseches Berachos*?" Rav Yitzchak Shaul would spend a few minutes going through each *daf*. One year, after he responded to a question about how often a certain word appears in a *masechta*, Rav

Chaim pointed out thirteen additional occurrences, which Rav Yitzchak Shaul had missed!

On *Shabbos Chol HaMoed Succos* 5773/2012, despite his advanced age, Rav Chaim stood for the entire reading of *Koheles* to avoid accidentally dozing off outside the *succah*. Afterward, he jokingly declared, "If I had been alive in the times of *Chazal*, I would have instituted the reading of *Koheles* on *Pesach* instead, and *Rus* or *Shir HaShirim* [which are much shorter] on *Succos*, so that people shouldn't end up sleeping for half an hour outside the *succah*!"

Rav Chaim Kanievsky on Succos by Rabbi Avraham Yeshayah Shteinman



When **Rav Elyashiv** returned from *shul* on *Succos*, he was particular to hold the Four Species in his two hands, to fulfil the *mitzvah* according to the custom of the people of Yerushalayim of old, as the *Gemara* states (*Succah* 41b): "This was the custom of the people of Yerushalayim: A person leaves his home with his *lulav* in his hand. When he goes to the *shul*, his *lulav* is in his hand. He recites the *Shema* and prays with his *lulav* in his hand." The *Gemara* explains that this custom of the men of Yerushalayim showed how diligent they were in the performance of *mitzvos*.

To show love for the *mitzvah* as the people of Yerushalayim of old did, one must carry the *Arba Minim* in the same way he holds them in his hands. Carrying the *esrog* in a box, or the *lulav* in a case is not

following this custom, and does not demonstrate that degree of love for the *mitzvah*.

Indeed, the *Rama* writes (652:1), "One who is scrupulous should hold the *lulav* in his hand when he goes from his house into *shul*, and also during the time of *davening*, and he should take it back to his house." This, he says, is a sign of one's love for the *mitzvah*. The *Mishnah Berurah* states, however (ibid. 6), that today, holding the *lulav* all day appears arrogant, but the custom is still to carry the *lulav* to and from *shul* in the morning. Rav Elyashiv was very particular to abide by this custom.

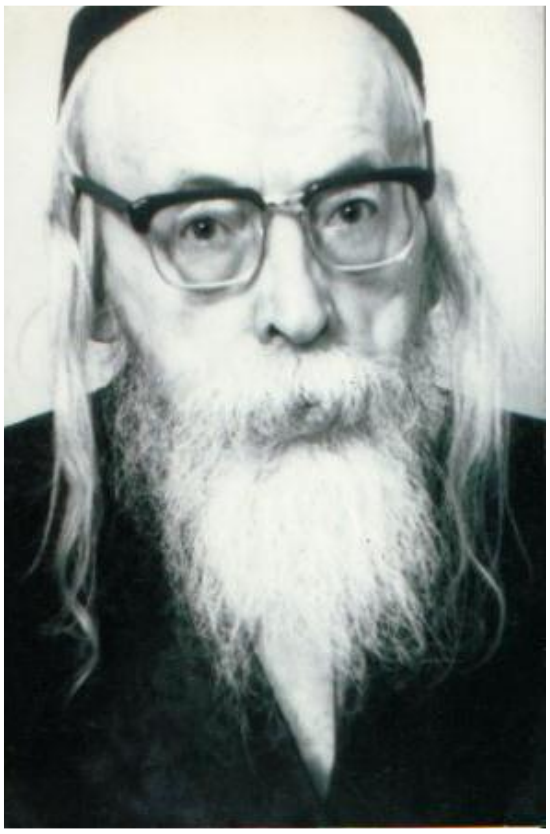
Just as a person fulfils the *mitzvah* of *simchas Yom Tov* each time he drinks wine on *Yom Tov*, and the more he drinks the more of a *mitzvah* he does, so, too, the more a person takes his *Arba Minim*, the more he fulfils the *mitzvah*, even though he already fulfilled his obligation by taking them the first time.

After discussing this topic in his *shiur*, Rav Elyashiv turned to those around him and inquired — uncharacteristically — whether they observed this practice. He also related that his son-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, had visited him, and he had asked him how the people of Bnei Brak fulfilled the custom of the people of Yerushalayim of old — were they particular to hold the *lulav* and *esrog* without a case? Rav Chaim, he said, answered that in Bnei Brak this custom was completely unknown.

(Rav Chaim himself did try to carry his *Arba Minim* to and from *shul*, but he was not scrupulous about this, especially in his later years, when he gave his *Arba Minim* to others to hold.)

Yet Rav Elyashiv was very scrupulous in this regard, and he encouraged the observance of this custom.

Beyond The Letter Of The Law - 40 Days Of Caring The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation



Rav Yankele of Pshevorsk went to visit an elderly *chassid* during *Chol HaMoed Succos*. The man lived with his wife on a high floor of an assisted living facility, and his declining health made it difficult for him to leave the apartment.

When the *rebbe* arrived at the door, the *chassid's* wife greeted him.

"Please, *rebbe*," she urged, "don't tell him it's *Succos*. If he knows, he'll insist on going downstairs to the *succah*, and it's simply too much for him."

The *rebbe* readily agreed to keep the secret. As he entered the apartment, the *chassid's* face lit up with pleasure. "*Shalom aleichem*!" he said, and then, turning to his wife with the alacrity of Avraham serving the *malachim*, he said, "Please bring the *rebbe* some fruit!"

His wife had expected the request. Soon the *rebbe's* attendant was entering the room with a grand platter laden with beautiful fruit.

"Please make a *brachah* on a fruit as a *zechus* for me," the *chassid* asked of the *rebbe*.

Now the *rebbe* found himself in a dilemma. He had never taken a bite of food or a sip of drink outside the *succah* on *Succos*. Even when he was imprisoned in a Siberian labor camp, he had fasted most of the day and saved his rations for the few moments he was able to sneak into a tiny *succah* he had constructed out of a pit in the frozen earth, topped by some twigs.

The *rebbe* peeled the apple and shifted it from hand to hand, trying to stall and distract the *chassid* with conversation. However, the *chassid* held onto his hope to hear the *rebbe's brachah*. "Please, *rebbe*, I need the *zechus* of your *brachah*!"

At last, the *rebbe* cut off a tiny piece of apple (*halachically* permissible) and recited a loud *brachah* on it, to which the man answered a resounding "*Amein*!"

Later, the *rebbe's* attendant asked why, if Siberia hadn't broken his determination to eat only in the *succah*, this elderly *chassid's* pleading was able to do so.

"In Siberia, I was willing to sacrifice myself for the *mitzvah* of *succah*," the *rebbe* answered. "But to sacrifice another *Yid*? This I simply cannot do!"

In the *rebbe's* eyes, he had not abandoned a stringency. Instead, he had chosen to sacrifice one stringency in order to perform another—*ahavas Yisrael* at the highest level.

Living Chessed by Rabbi Avrohom Asher Makovsky

There is a story of the ***Chofetz Chaim*** that took place while he was temporarily living in Russia during World War I. The community there needed *Arba Minim*, but they were impossible to obtain.

Finally, one set was procured for the *Chofetz Chaim*, and on the first day of *Succos*, he used his *Arba Minim* and then gave everyone in *shul* a chance to do so as well. They were then returned to the *Chofetz Chaim* for use during *Hallel*, but he did not perform the customary shaking of the *lulav* during the *Hallel*.

Later, the *Chofetz Chaim* was asked why he did not take the opportunity to use the *Arba Minim* during *Hallel*, since everyone had already fulfilled the *mitzvah* with it.

He answered that while shaking the *lulav* and *esrog* during *Hallel* is a beloved and important *minhag*, it is still a *minhag*. If some of the men in *shul* would have felt bereft watching the *Chofetz Chaim* do what they could not, he explained, he would be transgressing a Torah prohibition against causing another pain. - A *minhag* does not have the status of something for which a person can transgress a Torah *mitzvah;* therefore, he refrained.

Minhagim and *chumros* are precious, wonderful ways to elevate our *avodas Hashem*, and we must take them seriously. However, unlike *mitzvos*, if there is a pressing need, we are allowed to be lenient, and the greatest, most pressing need a Jew has is to avoid hurting someone's feelings.

Yom Tov With Rav Chaim - Rav Chaim by Naftali Weinberger

Rav Chaim quoted the *Chafetz Chaim* when cautioning older singles not to be as selective as they might have been when they first began the *shidduch* process.

Avraham's* daughter was no longer very young. A *shidduch* had been suggested for her, a *bachur* with a good reputation, but he was not the type of *metzuyan* (outstanding student) her father had hoped she would marry. Should they proceed with this less-than-stellar suggestion?

The *Chafetz Chaim* responded by noting the difference between searching for an *esrog* a few weeks before *Succos* and searching for one on *Erev Yom Tov*. A few weeks before *Yom Tov,* one can afford to be very selective and reject anything that is less than perfect. However, on *Erev Succos*, with time running out, one's goal is to obtain an *esrog* that is *halachically* acceptable and, if possible, beautiful—but it does not have to be perfect.

"So, too, with *shidduchim*," said the *Chafetz Chaim*. "Your daughter has already been in *shidduchim* for many years. Therefore, she and you should be prepared to consider a *shidduch* that is good for her, although it may not be exactly what you had originally been seeking."

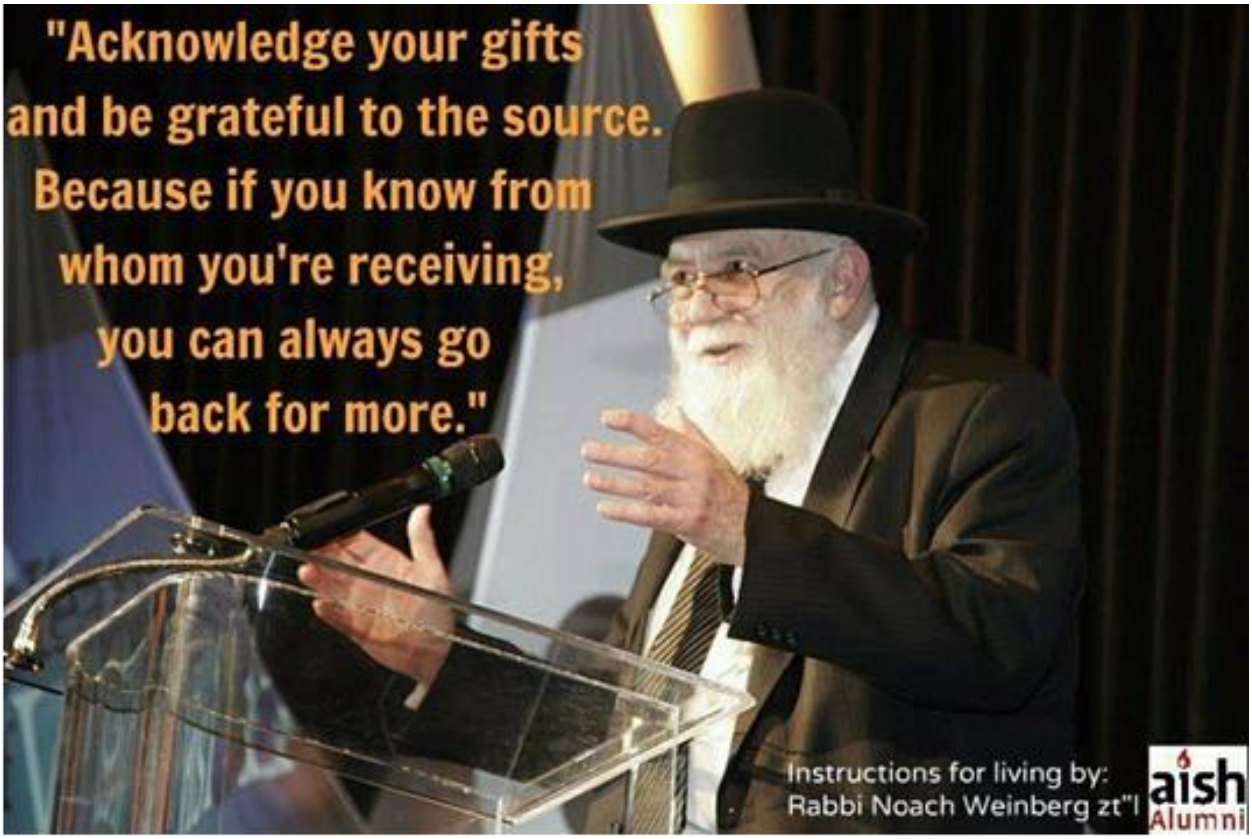


Bein Adam LaMakom - Bein Adam Lachaveiro

R' Yaakov Edelstein zt"l was the Rav of a modern secular Israeli city, Ramat HaSharon, one of the great Mekubalim of the generation, and an approachable Litvishe Dayan and Posek. A series of illnesses left him without the capability to speak, and he communicated by writing.

At one point, he recovered enough that his caregivers felt they could teach him how to speak again. They asked him to write down the two words he wanted to start with. R' Yaakov wrote "Amen" and "Todah" (Thank you.) Two words that say it all, Bein Adam LaMakom and Bein Adam Lachaveiro.

The Ramban (Parshas Bo) says the underlying reason for every mitzva is for Man to acknowledge Hashem as his creator. Amen is a short, two-syllable word that simply and succinctly accomplishes this mission. The same goes for the word Todah. People crave recognition. By thanking someone, you give him recognition that he is worth something and that you need him. Nothing can satisfy him more as you acknowledge his importance in your world and the world at large.



Rabbi Asher Weiss - The World of the Sukkah

As we transition from the holiday of Yom Kippur to the holiday of Sukkos, many works of Chassidus and Mussar and beginning with our Sages have sought to underscore the connection and tie between these two holidays.

Beginning with days of fear and awe, we move into days of joy and happiness. Years ago, I remember how the **Klausenberger Rebbe zt"l** married off his youngest daughter. At the Sheva Berachos, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l** attended. The Klausenberger Rebbe requested that Rav Yaakov say some words at the special occasion, upon which Rav Yaakov said the following.

A Chassan on the day of his wedding is forgiven for all of his sins (Yerushalmi Bikkurim 3:3; Rema, Even Ha'Ezer 61:1). The same is true for the Kallah. But why is this so? What did the Chassan and Kallah do to deserve that their sins be wiped away?

Rav Yaakov explained that, in truth, the Chassan did not do anything to deserve this remarkable zechus (merit). However, it is necessary

that this take place. Since the Chassan wants to be in a state of simcha in order to make his newlywed wife happy, it is necessary that his sins be forgiven, for otherwise the weight of him carrying the filth of his sins will reduce his joy and decrease his ability to attain an uplifted spirit. Therefore, it is imperative that he be forgiven of his sins so that he can obtain the proper frame of mind as he enters his new phase of married life.

The same is true when it comes to Sukkos. Why are we so joyous on Sukkos more than any other time of year?

It is specifically now because we have been forgiven for our sins on Yom Kippur. We walk away from Yom Kippur entirely cleansed of all our sins, and what greater simcha could there be. What greater gift from Hashem can we imagine.

מעריב - ופרוש עלינו סוכת שלומך

The question is: Why is **שלום** associated with a **סוכה**?

The answer is that the **מצוה** of **סוכה** has the most halachic loopholes than any other **מצוה**. For example; dofen akumah, lavud and gud asik…The same concept holds true when it comes to **שלום** - we have to learn to be flexible for the sake of **שלום**.

1 – Sometimes we need to bend (dofen akumah)

2 – Sometimes we need to connect (lavud)

3 – And sometimes we must extend. (gud asik)

Therefore, we daven to Hashem that our **שלום** should be like the **סוכה**. A person should do whatever is necessary to bring about **שלום**: We must "bend" our will to accommodate others. "Connect" to someone who is lonely. "Extend" a hand to a stranger. We must take whatever steps that are necessary to close the gap and put the needs of others before our own.

A Lesson Can Be Learned From:

Every year the **Baal Shem Tov** would choose an Esrog which matched his high level of spirituality. He would search far and wide until he would find that perfect (for him) Esrog.

One year, he had a very difficult time finding "it", and as Yom Tov neared, he dreamed that "his" Esrog was to be found with a Jew in Constantinople. The BESHT immediately set out for Constantinople and, arriving at the Jew's home, asked to see his Esrog. The BESHT sensed a strong connection to the Esrog and offered the Jew a sizable sum of money for it. The Jew refused to sell it, but he invited the Tzadik to stay with him over Succos, and use it. So, the BESHT spent Yom Tov with the Jew and the Esrog.



At the conclusion of Yom Tov, the BESHT thanked his host and asked him if he could think of why he had merited to acquire the Esrog that was apparently intended for the BESHT.

The man asked the Tzadik when he began looking to find and purchase an Esrog. The BESHT replied that he began several weeks before Succos.

The man then explained: "Every year, on the day after Simchas Torah, I set up a jar, and every day I place a few coins in it towards next year's Esrog. Thus, I am engaged in the mitzvah of Esrog all year". The BESHT agreed that this was indeed why he had merited such a wonderful Esrog. (**Pleasant Ridge News**)

"One who truly trusts in Hashem is as confident in His salvation as they are in the certainty that the sun will rise each morning." ~ Sefer Haikarim.

Gedolim Be'Masayhem

Rav Eliyahu Vilna Gaon, Gra (Tishrei 19)

'He Who Fulfils Them lives By Them'

It was the third day of Chol HaMo'ed Sukkos, the yahrzeit of the Vilna Gaon. **The Munkaczer Rebbe**, author of Minchas Elazar, was sitting with his Chassidim in his sukka and he related the following story: "I heard this story from reliable sources who have handed down the story directly from the author of Kedushas Levi, **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev**.

"It was the third day of Chol HaMo'ed Sukkos in the year that the Vilna Gaon passed away. Rav Levi Yitzchok said: 'Just now the Vilna Gaon has passed away and has been brought before the Heavenly tribunal. They looked over his case and ruled that they would open for him the gates of Gan Eden immediately.



At that moment the souls of the students of the Ba'al Shem Tov appeared before the court and appealed the ruling on the grounds that the Gra had opposed them and made their lives so difficult. The Vilna Gaon retorted in his defence that his intentions were purely for the sake of Heaven, that he had misunderstood the ways of the Chassidim.

The Ba'al Shem Tov's students responded that although it was true that his intentions were purely for the sake of Heaven, his opposition prevented them from serving Hashem properly. (Note: The opposition to the founder of Chassidus, the Ba'al Shem Tov, and his followers rose in the wake of the false messiah movement of

Shabsai Tzvi in the mid-1600s, which had led many Jews astray. Many Rabbonim saw Chassidus as potentially dangerous. Those opposed to Chassidus became known as misnagdim. The opposition of the Gra and his followers came in the form of bans, excommunication, boycotts on employing Chassidim, and chasing Chassidim out of town, which most certainly disrupted their Avodas Hashem.)

"'The court was about to reevaluate the judgment, but at that moment the holy Torah herself (and other versions of the story include the thousands and thousands of pages of Talmud that the Gra had studied in his lifetime) surrounded the Gaon, shielding him from all sides. The Torah testified that the Gra never transgressed even a minutia of a law, whether it was a Torah law or a rabbinical enactment.



'How can it be that someone who spent his entire life studying me should be treated this way?' said the Torah. 'Do not touch him!' "'

Then and there the court ratified its previous judgment, upholding its decision to send the Gra straight to the highest level of heaven, the Gan Eden Ho'Elyon, and receive his reward.'"

All this did the Berditchever relate on the day of the Vilna Gaon's passing. Then word went out in Berditchev that the Gra had passed away and ascended to heaven to walk before Hashem in everlasting light.

Testimonials From The Vilna Gaon's Sons

The following pages are filled with the remarkable testimonies of the Vilna Gaon's closest family members and disciples, his sons, and **Rav Chaim of Volozhin**. These first-hand accounts testify to the Gaon's lofty stature. Many of the anecdotes were and heard direct from their Gaon's holy mouth. The following is direct account recorded by the Vilna Gaon's two sons in their introduction to their father's commentary on Shulchan Aruch:

Mastery of Torah in His Youth

Born on the first day of Pesach **תפ״ב** in Selitz near Brisk, Lithuania, by age 6½, he already displayed his genius in shul by delivering a complex drashah which his father had taught him.



During Shalosh Seudos, his father brought him before Rav Heschel of Vilna. The Rav asked rhetorically, before the gedolim sitting with him, "Have you ever seen such a wise and insightful child as this?" They answered back that this drashah was no achievement as they assumed he had reviewed the material with his father two or three times and that he had simply memorized. They concluded that he was repeating the drashah verbatim. Yet, Rav Heschel believed that the child truly had the ability to say amazing insights such as these on his own.

"Give him an hour to prepare, and he will demonstrate his amazing capabilities," Rav Heschel promised them.

For the next hour, the young prodigy learned on his own and afterwards, those gathered proceeded to ask him many difficulty questions on the portion he worked on. He then provided them with one single astounding answer that resolved the many questions and difficulties all at once!

They were astonished at this and embraced young Eliyahu and kissed him in affection. They had seen for themselves that he possessed rare mental acuity and insight. By age nine he had mastered all of Tanach, Mishna, and Gemara. He had studied midrashim and had come up with complex reasoning. He began to study the works of Kabbalah such as Etz Chaim and complex halachic responsa. Where others failed, he succeeded in grasping the complexities of these texts and unlocking their mysteries.

Within half a year, he had mastered all the writings of the Etz Chaim. At age thirteen he accepted upon himself the ways of piety and asceticism befitting the title, "Chassid," and from that point on, he never looked beyond four cubits, guarding his eyes and focus until the day he died.

He accepted upon to himself distance himself from life's earthly pleasures and limited himself to two olive-sized portions of bread soaked in water. This was what the Gaon ate daily for breakfast and supper and even swallowed the pieces whole so as not to taste them.

He studied the Shas—Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi—for six years, Tosefta, Mechilta, Sifra and Sifri as made amendments and sifted through incorrect editions, perfecting the girsa by checking for inaccuracies.

For six more years, he studied the works of the poskim and halachah and toiled to identify and verify the sources, as had the Beis Yosef done when he gathered all the shitos. The Be'er Hagola followed in the way of his forebearer, and the Vilna Gaon did the same.

Rav Eliyahu began demonstrating how the rulings all had their sources in the words of Chazal in the Bavli, the Yerushalmi, halachic midrashim, or in the comments of Rashi and the Tosfos.

The Gra accomplished all that he did due to his drive for truth. He persistently sought the emes and ignored the falsehoods of this world. This passion for truth and mastery of every aspect of halachah shielded him sins and errors recounted in the dictums of Chazal and allowed him to follow mitzvos precisely to the letter.

Once on a journey, the Gra, along with a disciple, stopped to rest at the home of an upstanding Jew. That evening, the master of the house served supper and asked Rav Eliyahu of Vilna to please have something to eat. Although he felt ill with an upset stomach, the Gra tried to eat in order to please his host regardless of how sick he felt. But, after just tasting the food, he threw it all up. When the master of the house came back and saw the plate still full, he again encouraged his guest to eat. The Gra complied and again vomited all he had eaten. This same scenario repeated itself a few times.

"Why do you force yourself to eat when you are clearly unable to keep anything down?" asked Rav Eliyahu's disciple.

"Chazal say that we must do whatever the master of the house tells us except to leave," explained the Vilna Gaon. "The halachah dictates that wherever Chazal say we must do something—even a Rabbinic decree or ruling—the shiur (amount required) to do is 'until your soul goes out.'

The Vilna Gaon was simply fulfilling the halachic requirement as he understood it to be!

Just Two Hours of Sleep A Day

The Gra waged a war against his body all his life. One clear example of this was the great avodah he accepted upon himself not to sleep more than two hours in each twenty-four hour period.

For many years, he never slept more than a half an hour straight at a time. Even during that half hour of rest, his lips constantly murmured halachos and aggados—laws, rulings and homiletics. After a half hour rest, he would arise, wash his hands, and return to his studies with renewed energy. Then he would go back to sleep for another half hour.

He would sleep for these short periods at night, with a half hour nap reserved for the day hours. With strategies such as this, he fought his yetzer regarding food and sleep all the days of his life. - He came to the point where nothing ever truly bothered him.

This amazing ability to know and act only in accordance with his Creator's will was demonstrated to us twice. We heard from his own pure and holy mouth that something was found to be counter to the will of the Creator and so, he refrained from it.

For example, I asked him from time to time why he never went to live in the Holy Land (Eretz Yisrael), and he did not give me an answer. Once, I was persistent and prodded him until he answered me: "I do not have permission from Heaven to do so."

Another time he had said that he would compose his own Shulchan Aruch based on the format of the Four Turim. He wished to pasken and decide one single binding ruling based on his own opinion that would be backed by irrefutable proofs.

A few years before his passing I asked him again regarding this undertaking and he answered on this occasion as well, "I do not have permission from Heaven."

The most respected and wisest of people recognized [the Gaon's] unfathomable greatness and wished to bask in his presence, to study his ways and learn from them. They came in great numbers to speak with him in learning and to daven together with him in his beis medrash. They witnessed themselves how his love for tefillah was so great—that every word which left his mouth was uttered in sanctity. It seemed that his wisdom, straight heart, and knowledge all grew

further through his ardent tefillah. The love of Hashem was palpable with every word that left his holy lips. For those who experienced this, it touched them so deeply that it filled them with a love and yearning to serve Hashem that lasted all day long. Even so, it was obvious to all that such lofty levels were simply beyond our generation's capacity to appreciate or emulate.

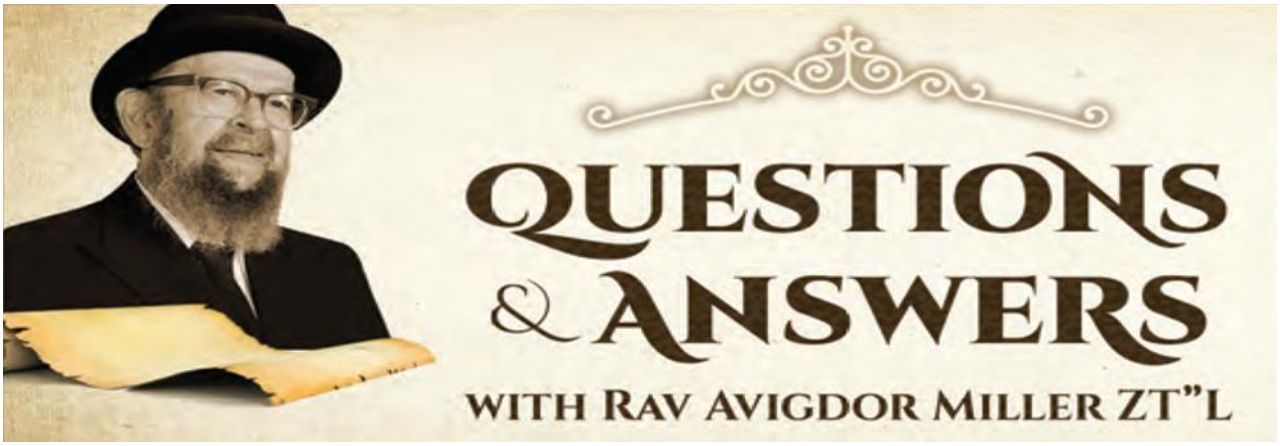
The Gra's seven students and disciples listed in order are: **Rav Chaim of Volozhin**, author of Nefesh Hachaim and Ruach Chaim on Pirkei Avos; **Rav Shlomo Volkmir**; **Rav Shlomo Zalman**, the brother of Rav Chaim Volozhiner; **Rav Saadia**, brother-in-law of Rav Shlomo Zalman of Volozhin; **Rav Shlomo of Tultshin**, maggid of Vilna; **Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Semyatitz**; and **Rav Shlomo of Mogilev**.

Besides his disciples from Vilna, the disciples from Shklov are also mentioned in order: **Rav Binyomin, Rav Simcha Bunim**, and his brother **Rav Menachem Mendel**.

Thought of the week: ***As Dovid HaMelech asked: "May you merit to always dwell in the house of Hashem, yet never get so comfortable there that you forget Whose house it is."***



Citing the Kol Bo, the Mishna Berura (530:2) writes: "Hashem's intention of giving us the chag [Yom Tov & Chol HaMoed] was to attach us to awe and love for Him, and to engage in the study of His pure Torah."





What should we think about when we sit in the sukkah?

When we sit in the sukkah the Torah tells us what our thoughts should

be. Hashem says that the reason we sit in the sukkah is, **לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** – *in order that your generations should know, that I put your forefathers into sukkahs, into tents and huts when I took them out of Egypt (Vayikra 23:43).*

Pay attention. During the forty years in the wilderness the Bnei Yisroel were more secure against foreign enemies than any subsequent time in our history. They lived in an open camp with no fortifications, vulnerable to attack from anyone and yet they were safer than any other time!

Now, had we had fortified cities in the *midbar,* high walls and people standing on the walls with bows and arrows prepared to shoot at the enemy, maybe. But they had nothing at all. And all the nations knew that we were carrying all the wealth of Mitzrayim.

I always give the same *mashal*. Suppose you go to Harlem or to Bedford Stuyvesant and you make a tent on an empty lot and you want to sleep there for the night. And everybody, all the people who live there, know that you have a pile of money in your tent. What chance do you have to survive?

And it wasn't one night. It wasn't a month or even a year. It happened for forty years! And where did they live? Not in houses. **בַּסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי** - They were in sukkos. A sukkah is not a house. Some flimsy walls, some sticks on top; whatever it was, it was almost nothing at all. That's a protection?

The answer is that it was the most effective of all protections we ever had! The camp of the Am Yisroel was invulnerable because there was a Sukkah overhead. And that was the *ananei kavod,* the Clouds of Glory, the Clouds of the Presence of Hashem, that were protecting them.

And that's what the sukkah that we sit in symbolizes. We sit in the sukkah under the s'chach and we say, "This sukkah is a pretty flimsy protection. There's no roof of masonry and there's no iron door. There's nothing." - And yet, that flimsy sukkah overhead represents the idea that it is Hashem who is protecting our nation throughout all the generations.



I saw in a sefer that the sukkah is bitachon, that it means bitachon. What does that mean?

Now, I'm not responsible for everything that every *mechaber* writes in every *sefer* but there's no question that the sukkah teaches us the lesson of *bitachon*. After all, when you go out into the sukkah it's not a protection at all. Two walls and a *tefach.* Two walls and a flimsy roof?! That's a very weak protection; you're not too safe out there. So if you'll think, as you're sitting in the sukkah, that you're sitting under the protection of Hashem, that's an important lesson we practice when we go out of the house into the flimsy little hut. **ה' מָעוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ לָּנוּ** – *You're a dwelling for us* (Tehillim 90:1). We live in You; we're being protected by You all the time.

We think that it's our efforts that protect us but it's wrong. Certainly we have to try to be safe against accidents, against predators, against robbers and so on, but we have to know Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One Who guards us.

I once went home at night, and I locked up the door – I made sure the door was locked – and then I went to sleep for the night. I slept safe and sound all night.

I got up in the morning and couldn't find my keys. I went outside, and the key was sticking in the keyhole, on the outside, all night. Anybody who wanted could have taken out the keys and opened up the door!

It was a lesson *min haShamayim*. I was thinking, "You were safe all night. Is it because you locked the door? No, you didn't lock the door. Hashem locked it for you. Hashem is the One Who kept you safe."

And so the sukkah is a lesson **בִּטְחוּ בַה' עֲדֵי־עַד כִּי בְּקֹה ה' צוּר עוֹלָמִים** – *Trust in Hashem forever, because in Hashem, that's the everlasting rock* (Yeshaya 26:4).

It's very important to learn how to trust in Hashem. It doesn't mean you should be careless with your safety but no matter what you do, no matter what precautions you take, always remind yourself Hashem is the One Who is guarding me.

So even though you may live in your brick house all year long and you bolt your doors every night, sitting in the sukkah for seven days teaches us that our brick walls and our iron doors are all just imagination. Because really it is only Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who is protecting us. - That's what we're thinking about in the sukkah.

It's a very big mitzvah to trust in Hashem. If we learn to live with *bitachon* it's a very big achievement. And so, yes, among the other symbols the sukkah is also a symbol of *bitachon*.



The Mishna says that rainfall during Sukkos is a siman klalah, a bad sign (Taanis 2a). Is that only in Eretz Yisroel or also in chutz la'aretz?

If it rains on Sukkos, it's a *siman klalah* anywhere.

In two senses, however. In one sense that it spoils the crops. You see, the *asif*, the grain, was reaped a long time ago but it remains on the fields over the summer months to dry, so now if it's going to rain, it will spoil the grain. So that's in Eretz Yisroel but in America, *lehavdil*, they don't let the grain stand on the field a long time after harvesting. In Eretz Yisroel they did that in the ancient times. And so in that sense it was a *klalah* because the grain spoiled.

But it's also a *klalah* for us too because anything that prevents us from fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah is a great loss. We would prefer to be able to eat in the sukkah always and gain its lessons. And so even in *chuz la'aretz*, though we're not farmers and we don't have any sheaths of grain standing on the field to be spoiled by the rain, it's a pity when it rains on Sukkos.

That's why the Gemara says that when a Jew walks out of his sukkah because of the rain, he has to walk out of his sukkah with regret. Not that he's happy it's raining; "I'm *patur* from the sukkah now." No, he has to walk out with regret.

That's the sign of a Jew, regret that he can't fulfill the mitzvah.

The Gemara says (Avoda Zara 3a) that one day the *goyim* will also have sukkos. *Le'asid lavo* the *goyim* will all make sukkos too. And when it gets too hot or it rains, the *goy* will say, "Look, I'm happy. I'm *patur* from sukkah." - That will be the test between a Jew and a *goy*. The Jew is sorry he has to leave the *sukkah*. And therefore it's a *klalah* for us too whenever it rains on Sukkos.



Why is it that on Sukkos we add in *birchas hamazon* הָרַחֲמָן הוּא יָקִים לָנוּ אֶת־סֻכַּת דָּוִד הַנּוֹפֶלֶת – *The Merciful One should rebuild the fallen Sukkah of Dovid.*

What does the Sukkas Dovid have to do with Sukkos per se?

It means the Beis Hamikdash that Dovid Hamelech planned and prepared for his son, Shlomo, to build.

And the answer is, the sukkah has a special significance because the sukkah is the symbol of the Jewish nation's existence in exile – we exist with the most unprotected of circumstances. We are most vulnerable because we are little people compared to all the nations of the world and in exile we surely are vulnerable; we don't have any army to protect us and we are at the whim, at the pleasure, of all the nations. And they are trying their best; they have always tried their best to get rid of us. -They have made very big efforts; it is only because people don't know about history that they forget about these things, they are unaware. But in many generations they have tried their best.

Emperor Hadrian tried his best and he was a very powerful man; he had the Roman Empire at his disposal and he tried his best to stamp out the Jewish people. Not to mention Haman and Hitler and all the rest of them.

And so we live in a sukkah in Olam Hazeh and that sukkah seems to be a flimsy existence. But actually, it is the strongest kind of dwelling because the sukkah is the promise that the Almighty made that we are going to be forever. He promised that. The nations will come and go but the Am Hashem will endure forever.

That's what the sukkah represents and that's why it's forbidden to make a sukkah with an iron roof, a concrete roof, because *that's* the lesson. Our sukkah, the *s'chach*, the flimsy little cover, is enough

because the *ananei kavod,* the clouds of glory of the *Shechina,* is stronger than any material.

The sukkah means that the Jew will be around forever! It doesn't mean every Jew; individuals may *chalilah* go lost but we are here forever!

Now, because the sukkah is a symbol of our national existence that is assured forever, that is why we have to remind ourselves that part of the picture is lacking. As confident as we are sitting under the protection of Hashem's *ananei hakavod,* it's not complete until the sukkah of Dovid is re-established.

Even though we are protected in *golus* we want the Beis Hamikdash because without that we're not a complete nation. And so whenever we say *birchas hamazon* on Sukkos we say those words to remind us of these two principles: We are reminded of our miraculous existence in this world and also that we are looking forward to an even greater future with the rebuilding of the Sukkas Dovid, the Beis Hamikdash.



The Ushpizin that we say on Sukkos; why do we suddenly invite the great men of antiquity Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov and so on as our guests? Why not on Pesach to the seder or at other times?

The sukkah is a symbol of our national existence that is assured forever; it represents the house that we live in under the watchful Eyes of Hashem. And so inviting in the *Ushpizin* is as follows: It's like somebody who moved into a new home; so he has to remind himself there was a friend who laid out a ten thousand dollars loan, another one who laid out another ten thousand – let's say it is his wife's parents or maybe an uncle. Without them, he couldn't have bought the house and so when it comes to making a *chanukas habayis* he calls them in.

And so when we make our sukkos which represent the eternal existence of our nation, we call in the great men who founded our sukkah. The Avos are brought in, the founders of our people, because they are the ones who are responsible for the love that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has for us and for the covenant that He made with us. - Hashem made a covenant with Avraham and Yitzchak and Yaakov, and therefore we invite them in. And because of Dovid and Moshe and Aaron and Yosef all these great men who helped establish our nation. And therefore we invite them into the sukkah, the symbol of our nation's eternal existence, because that is where they belong – it's because of their contribution to our nation that we have survived.



Are there any special things to think about when I'm shaking the daled minim?

Look; a person shouldn't just lean back and do the minimum. You'll just shake this way, shake that way and finished?

Let's say you're a *frum* person who keeps everything; everything! So you bought a beautiful *esrog, bilti murkav,* and you paid good money for it. So now you're holding a *lulav* and an *esrog.* Is that enough?

Now there's no question that if a person will take the *arba minim* on Sukkos and shake it and he's thinking only, "This is what a Jew has to do," he's going to get Olam Haba for that mitzvah. But that's not enough; maybe you should be *mechadeish* something in the mitzvah. You have to be a *mechadeish.*

When you make the *naanuim,* you should say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "I'm thanking You Hashem that You gave me a good heart." You know, many people have sick hearts. They wish they could have your heart! The *medrash* says that the *esrog* is like the heart. So as you hold up

the *esrog* you think, "Thank You Hashem for giving me a good solid healthy heart.

"And You gave me good eyes." Many people have trouble with their eyes. A lady came over to me in the street last week with a little baby and she said, "Rabbi, give my son a blessing please. He's blind." Oh, my heart was breaking. My heart was breaking for them. And that's what the *hadassim* are telling us. The *hadassim* are telling us to say thank You for the eyes.

The *aravos* are the lips, the mouth. "Thank You Hashem that I can talk." Don't you see sometimes in the street, people who are talking with their hands. *A rachmanus.*

"You gave me a good backbone." Many people, *nisht eingedacht, lo aleichem,* are bent over. They have hunchbacks. Their spines are bent. And you have a straight back. Now, that's something to think about when you pick up the *lulav.* That's called being *mechadeish* in the mitzvah, putting more into it than the minimum.

And so when you make the *naanuim,* back and forth, back and forth, it means our thanks are to You because it came from You to us. Our thanks are to You because of what's always coming from You to us. That's what we're saying when we shake it back and forth. We shake in all directions because we say, no matter from where the good comes from, it's only coming from You all the time.

And so you take the *lulav,* that's your backbone, your *shedrah,* and you take your heart, that's the *esrog,* and you take the *hadassim* that's your eyes, and you take the *aravos,* that's your lips, your mouth, and you take all of these and you say "I dedicate them to You Hashem for what You did for me."

Back and forth, back and forth; that's what you think about by the *naanuim.* We say to Hashem, "It's all coming from You to me and in return, I will use them only for You."



What is the purpose of Chol Hamoed?

Chol Hamoed is meant to be an opportunity for people to think over what the Yom Tov is all about. On Yom Tov we're very busy; we're busy bringing *korbanos* and making *seudos* and sometimes we forget to think about the lessons we're supposed to learn from the Yomtiv. And therefore, Chol Hamoed is an opportunity to think over what it's all about.

It's very important to think over, "What is it all about? What's Yom Tov all about?!" We're so busy bringing in Yom Tov; there's so much work to do and therefore many times people don't think at all about the lessons of Sukkos. You were too busy; first you were busy building your sukkah, and then you were worrying about your *lulav* and *esrog* and so maybe you didn't think about the Sukkos lessons sufficiently.

And therefore you need some time to think it over; and that's what Chol Hamoed is for. It's a few days that give you the opportunity to think things over; you have the time to appreciate the lessons of Sukkos more and that way you finish off the Yomtiv with more inspiration. - You can come back into the second days of Yomtiv with a new inspiration, with the inspiration that you're supposed to get from Sukkos.



What's the purpose of circling around the bimah when we do Hoshanas?

The purpose is we are acting out an ancient form of serving Hashem: וַאֲסֹבְבָה אֶת־ ה׳ מִזְבַּחֲךָ - *I go around Your altar, Hashem* (Tehillim 26:6)

The purpose of going around something means, "That's the centre of our lives. That's our interest." Just like the *kallah* goes around the

chosson under the *chuppah* to show that she's going to dedicate her life to helping the *chosson* establish a Torah home and serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu together; she'll dedicate herself to raising up a family who will be under his guidance, and together they're going to succeed in their service of Hashem, so also we circle the *shulchan* to show that the Torah is the centre of our lives, that the service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the most important of all the themes in our lives.



Memories of Rabbi Avigdor Miller

In the early years many of Rav Miller's congregants did not build their own sukkahs. Besides for speaking in the shul all the time about the importance of building a sukkah, one Rosh Hashanah Rav Miller announced that on Sukkos he would personally visit anyone who built a sukkah.

This was enough to motivate his congregants, and after only a few years he had to stop visiting the sukkahs because there were simply too many to visit.

On his visits to the sukkahs, he would tactfully point out any detail that was not halachically correct. In one sukkah that did not have proper s'chach he said, "We can eat fruit in this corner here," hinting that the sukkah needed more s'chach.

In his sukkah Rav Miller slept on two narrow benches that he pushed together. When people asked him if it was comfortable enough he would smile and say that he's just as comfortable as in his home.

Unbeknownst to the ones who asked the question, Rav Miller, in his late forties began sleeping on a wooden board (originally the leaf of his dining room table) placed on top of his mattress. And even when

he no longer needed it for his back, this board remained his bed, as he found it to be a boon for his spiritual growth.

I remember one year when it rained all night the first night of Sukkos. The Rav took it very seriously, and told us that it was a stern reprimand min HaShamayim. "If so many Yidden were prevented from fulfilling the mitzvah, then we have to understand that Hashem is telling us something."

There was a discernible lack of Jewish pride in the early years, especially in the smaller, less centralized neighborhoods such as East Flatbush where Rav Miller was a rav.

One example was the way arba minim were carried to shul on Sukkos. People were ashamed to be seen holding this strange-looking religious article, so they would wrap the lulav in newspaper and keep the esrog in a bag.

Rav Miller spoke against this practice and announced in shul that he was inviting everyone to go with him on a "lulav walk." (Other times he called it a "kiddush Hashem walk.")

After davening, the entire congregation walked together down the main streets holding their lulavim and esrogim proudly.

Even in the later years in East Flatbush, when observant Jews were no longer embarrassed about carrying a lulav and esrog, Rav Miller would take a longer roundabout route when he walked home on Sukkos after davening, with a large entourage of talmidim and mispalelim. He went down the busy Utica Avenue to Linden Boulevard and back up to Snyder Avenue, an area where many non-observant Jews lived.

Although his goal was seemingly to make an impression on the onlookers, to show non-observant Jews the pride one should have in Torah and mitzvos, his main objective was actually to strengthen the pride of the marchers themselves.

Our shul was fairly narrow and there was only a small amount of space to pass around the bimah – on one side there was a wall, and on the other side a row of benches – so going around for Hoshanas was always a challenge, especially on Hashana Rabbah.

One year it was especially crowded and as the first circuit proceeded, with the Rav of course leading, people were having great difficulty getting around, and were being squeezed terribly. Still, the Hoshanas proceeded. But by the time we were trying to complete the second circuit, people were being crushed; it was just not working.

At that point the Rav walked back to his seat and said the rest of the Hashonos at his seat. Most of the people did likewise while a few, with the crowd now reduced, were able to persist and go around.

Later, the following was reported to me by the gabbai, who was present after most of the people had left: The Rav, after the davening, walked to the bimah with his arba minim, and proceeded to walk around five more times! - He didn't want to create difficulty or danger for other people and so he went back to his seat during Hoshanos, but after davening he made sure to fulfill the minhag of going around seven times.

Although I did not see this myself because that year I davened in a parallel minyan that had been set up downstairs to relieve the Hoshana Rabbah overcrowding, but I was told that the Rav scolded the shatz for reading so quickly through the Hoshanas. - He said that the Hoshanos are unfamiliar words and people need to be given more time to say them properly.

The Rov once to the shul after davening and saw everyone had gone home, with all the leaves left on the floor. He was upset and said to the person there that the first obligation is derech eretz – not to make a mess – and that there is no need to bang on the ground hard enough for the leaves to fall off.

I remember watching the Rav fulfill the minhag neviim of hitting the hoshanos on the floor at the end of the hoshana service. He did not whack the Hoshanas onto the floor. He merely touched them softly to fulfill the mitzvah.



Succos is a זְמַן שִׂמְחָתֵנוּ – A time of happiness. Why? What is so happy about the Yom Tov of Succos?

Klal Yisrael spent many many years in uncertainty, travelling through the desert.

We like to live in a world with certainty. We like to know when our next meal is. And if everything that we want in the store is going to be there.

But we have to recognize that 'real life' is not living with certainty, but rather it is the courage to live relying on the Ribono Shel Olam.

Zman Simchasseinu

"Succos is the 'Holiday of Happiness' because after all the hard work of purifying ourselves, from the Three Weeks. through Elul and Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur, there's nothing better than enjoying an intimate and close encounter with Hashem with a clean soul." – Rav Nevenzall – Torah Temima.



The Most Magnificent Succah by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Duvid Lelover had a magnificent succah that was made of the finest wood. It had intricate carvings and engravings of the twelve tribes, and many of Yerushalayim's Yidden would visit the succah each Chol HaMoed to marvel at its beauty. It may have been the most beautiful and intricate succah in all of Eretz Yisrael.

One can only imagine the shock of the residents of Yerushalayim when on one Erev Succos, they passed by R' Duvid's courtyard and a simple, plain, and unassuming wooden succah stood in place of the usually stunning succah. Word spread quickly through the streets of Yerushalayim. R' Duvid's succah had been a Succos fixture in Yerushalayim and people just could not imagine a Succos without R' Duvid's magnificent succah!

Many a person approached R' Duvid with concern. "Rebbe, what happened to the succah?!" "Rebbe, Succos without your special succah is just not a Succos!" But the Rebbe just shrugged his shoulders and refused to respond to anyone's questions.

Perhaps the whereabouts of R' Duvid's magnificent succah would never have surfaced if not for Zalman the tailor.

One day, Zalman casually shared a story with a friend. You see, Zalman and his family lived in a tiny teetering hut on the outskirts of Yerushalayim. Poverty was a constant in Zalman's bare home, and the children were always hungry.

During one particularly brutal Yerushalayim winter, the temperatures were lower than usual and the frigid winds blew fiercely. In most of Yerushalayim's homes, the fires in the

fireplaces burned strong to keep the cold out and the warmth in, but in Zalman's home, the family sat huddled together under whatever clothing and blankets they owned. Zalman simply did not have the funds to purchase wood for the empty fireplace.

Due to the constant cold, Zalman's young son developed a high fever. The doctor was summoned to Zalman's tiny hut and when he entered, he was shocked by the squalor and frigid temperature. "Your son has a serious case of pneumonia. You must figure out a way to heat your home! Otherwise, I am not confident that your son will make it!"

Zalman's worry and concern only intensified. He knew that he must get wood to heat his hut, but he did not have a penny to his name! What to do? Where to turn?

Suddenly, he had an idea. R' Duvid! If anyone can help, it was R' Duvid. Zalman donned his patched and threadbare coat and braced himself as the wind and cold hit him with their full force. He knocked at R' Duvid's door. R' Duvid warmly welcomed Zalman into his home and asked him why he was out in such fierce weather.

Zalman began to cry. "Rebbe, it's my son. He has a really bad case of pneumonia and the doctor says that we must keep our home warm. Rebbe, I have no wood and not a penny to my name to purchase any kindling. Please can you help?!"

R' Duvid was broken by Zalman's desperate situation, but what could he do? He likewise did not have a penny to his name. But he must help!

Suddenly, R' Duvid broke into a smile. "I've got it! I have a wonderful solution. I have plenty of wood for you to warm your home and help your son."

"Really?" Zalman's eyes lit up.

"How?"

"No worries, I have enough wood to last you for a while. Give me a few minutes..."

R' Duvid ran out of his house and grabbed a saw. He ran to his most precious possession, his one-of-a-kind succah and began to saw it into small pieces. He ran back into the house. "Come," he said to Zalman. "Here is a huge pile. Please take as much wood as you need! May Hashem send a speedy refuah sheleimah to your son."

That Succos, while it may have appeared from the outside like R' Duvid was sitting in the simplest of succahs, the inside emanated an otherworldly beauty that certainly came from R' Duvid's superhuman selfless devotion to another Yid.

The Weekly Vort

■ Greater Than The Perfect Esrog

One year, **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** purchased a particularly beautiful *esrog*. The *esrog* dealer himself remarked that it was among the finest he had ever sold. R' Shlomo Zalman brought it home with joy, treasuring the *mitzvah*.

The next day, a poor widow who lived nearby came to see him. She was weeping. "Rebbe," she said, "I saved up money all year to buy a *mehudar esrog* for my only son, but when I came to the store, I found that someone had just bought the one I hoped to get. My son will be heartbroken…"

Without hesitating, R' Shlomo Zalman took out the *esrog* he had just purchased and handed it to her.

The widow exclaimed. "But Rebbe! What will you do for Yom Tov?"

R' Shlomo Zalman smiled: "For me, there can be no greater *hiddur mitzvah* than bringing *simcha* to a widow and her child on Yom Tov."

That year he made do with a simpler esrog, but his *talmidim* said the joy and radiance on his face throughout Sukkos was unparalleled—because his *esrog* had been infused with *chessed* – truly *mehudar*!

■ Holiness Of The Sukkah

R' Yehudah ben Besairah says (Sukkah 9a) that just as the name of Hashem rests on the *korban chagigah*, so does it rest on the *sukkah*. Although the *korban chagigah* is eaten by the one who brings it, and only a small portion of it is offered on the *mizbe'ach*, nevertheless, the holiness extends to the entire *korban*.

In a similar way, the name of Hashem rests on the *sukkah*. Whether we learn Torah or enjoy our meals in the *sukkah*, Hashem's Name is associated with every action done therein. (Divrei Shaul)

■ The Four Species

We take one *esrog*, indicating that we have one Hashem; one *lulav*, showing that we are one nation; three *hadassim*, signifying the three *Avos* – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov; and two *aravos*, symbolizing the two *Luchos*. (Elyah Rabbah 651:1)

All About Succos (adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim & the Yalkut Yitzchak)

Binding the Lulav with its Own Kind

We bind the three species only with their own kind, says the Gemara in Succah (36b), based on the opinion of R. Yehudah, who considers binding the Lulav a Mitzvah. Consequently, were one to bind them with another species, one would be taking, not four species, but five, thereby contravening the La'av of 'bal Tosif' (adding to the Mitzvos).

The Sha'arei Teshuvah writes that in the event that one forgot to bring Lulav branches to Shul with which to bind one's Arba Minim, one is permitted to remove them from one's Lulav with one's teeth, since this constitutes a Shinuy (an unusual way of removing the branches), and conforming with an oft-used rule that the Chachamim

did not extend their decrees to cases that are unusual, and certainly when it is for a D'var Mitzvah, such as here. He does add however, that it is better to remove them discreetly (in a location where he remains unseen when he does it).

The Four Species & the Mizbei'ach

Chazal say that whoever takes the four species on Succos and shakes them, it is as if he would have built a Mizbei'ach and brought a Korban on it.

The Mizbei'ach measured 32x32 Amos. Now 32x32= 1024. The combined Gematriyos, of Lulav, Esrog, Hadas and Aravah, believe it or not, equal 1024! (Nachal Kidumim).

I am Your Servant

A number of *chassidim* of the ***Imrei Emes*** once approached him with a complaint. "We've been told that your father, the ***Sfas Emes***, once promised that when we recite the verse in *Hallel* '*Ana Hashem*,' all of their prayers will be answered. But Rebbe, we've focused on these words in *Hallel* and yet we find that our prayers have not been answered. How can this be if your father promised this?"

The *Imrei Emes*, after thinking, replied, "My father was not referring to reciting that verse. He rather was referring to a different *pasuk* which contains the words, '*Ana Hashem ki ani avdecha*' – Answer me, Hashem, because I am Your servant."

It is very easy to simply ask Hashem for things and request that He help us. But to ask Hashem to answer us because we are His servants, and we want to receive blessing in life because we want to serve him to our utmost, such a blessing is sure to be answered. (Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum)

The Ride - Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Weg

A Yid was once looking for a ride back to Yerushalayim from Kever Rochel. Someone pulled over and offered him a ride. The Yid asked the driver where he was going. The man told him that he's headed to a certain neighborhood in Yerushalayim.

The Yid said, "I appreciate your offer, but where I live is totally in the opposite direction; I don't want to make you go out of your way."

The driver replied, "It's okay, it's on the way."

The Yid didn't understand. "How could it be on your way? When you get off the highway in Yerushalayim, to get to my neighborhood, you need to make a right, and to get to yours you need to make a left?"

The driver said, "It depends where I'm headed, if I'm headed home, then you're right, it's out of my way. But if I'm headed towards *Olam HaBah*, then it's on my way!"

May we all be *zocheh* to properly utilize the mitzvah of *succah* as a springboard to remind us that our minds should be focused in the right direction towards *Olam HaBah* for the rest of our lives!

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

During World War One, the **Chofetz Chaim** was in exile in Sanubask, Russia. They were unable to locate a fresh esrog, but someone arranged for an esrog from the previous year, and the Chofetz Chaim made a brachah on it in the morning. However, he didn't want to use it for the **נענועים**, shaking the lulav. He explained that people in the beis medresh would be jealous of him that he could perform this mitzvah, and they could not.

Shaking the lulav is a holy custom, but it doesn't permit one to cause pain and distress to others. [חי"ח חייו ופועליו חלק ג' עמ' תתכ"ד]

Reb Chaim Vital (Hakdamah l'Shaar HaMitzvos) zt'l writes, "Do not view mitzvos as a burden, as something you wish to quickly 'get over with.' Instead, think that you will earn many thousands of gold coins with every mitzvah you perform.

With this thought, you will have boundless joy when you perform the mitzvos, as much joy as someone who received millions of gold coins!

זמן שמחתינו

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

Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch (The Maharash – Maamarim, 5655) teaches, "Joy [throughout the year] comes from the joy of Succos."

It states **ושמחת בחגיך... והיית אך שמח**. **The Abarbanel** writes, "This *pasuk* is a guarantee: If you are happy on Succos, you will be happy the entire year."

The Ibn Ezra on the *pasuk* **ושמחת בחגיך** (*Devarim* 16: 14-16) writes that if we are happy on Succos, we are blessed to be happy forever.

The Pele Yoetz zt'l writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this becomes a good omen (siman) for the entire year.

The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good and happy year."

The Kaf HaChaim (siman 621:6) teaches, "Whoever is cautious with the mitzvah of succah, to keep it properly, is guaranteed that there won't be disputes in his home throughout the year."

On the Friday night of Succos, some people don't say "Shalom Aleichem" (which is said before kiddush). **Shem MiShmuel** explains that the kedushah of the succah is so great, malachim cannot go there. - For those whose custom is to say Shalom Aleichem, inviting the malachim to the Shabbos night meal in the succah, there is a question of what to say first. Should he first say the Ushpizin, to invite the holy tzaddikim (**אברהם, יצחק, יעקב, משה, אהרן, יוסף, ודוד**) to the succah, or should he first say Shalom Aleichem, to invite in the malachim?

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

The Satmar Rebbe replied that although Shalom Aleichem is said each week, however, different malachim come each week. This is because the level of malachim that come on Shabbos night depends on a person's deeds during the week and on the amount he prepared himself during the week for Shabbos.

Therefore, the Satmar Rebbe said that the ushpizin and the malachim are equally **תדיר**. The question thus remains who one should invite into the succah first, the malachim or the ushpizin?

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

The Sfas Emes (Succos **תרל"ט**) writes in the name of the **Chidushei HaRim** that **ולקחתם לכם** means to take yourself to Hashem.

לולב is roshei teivos for **וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת** , "Purify our heart to serve You with truth."

Reb Shimon Deutsch *zt'l* (*Imrei Shefer*) writes, "My teacher, the **Chasam Sofer *zt'l***, would [hold the four *minim* throughout the entire *tefillah*]. He explained that he loved the mitzvah and that holding the four *minim* helped him daven with greater kavanah.

The Chasam Sofer said he has more kavanah on Succos while holding the four minim than on Yom Kippur."

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

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

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, gives a beautiful Mashal: When a parent gets a child new clothing for the Yom Tov of Succos, they warn the child when they put on their new clothes to be careful and not get their new clothes ripped or dirty.

The same applies to us as we have just left Yom Kippur. Hashem has just given us a clean Neshamah and we are starting the New Year with a fresh and clean slate. We too must take great care not to get our freshly cleaned Neshamos dirty with Aveirah, Chas V'Shalom!

Rav Shlomo Wolbe (Alei Shur) taught:

"Gratitude is the very foundation of a person's humanity."

בְּמָטוּ מִינָּךְ מֹשֶׁה אוּשְׁפִּיז עִילָּא

Rav Chanania Lipa Schwartz, a devoted *Satmar chassid* living in Jerusalem, once shared a story so remarkable, it continues to echo for generations. It's a tale of spiritual foresight, divine protection, and the mysterious ways of *tzaddikim*.

"When I was a *bochur* learning in the *Satmar Yeshivah*," Rav Lipa began, "I had the *zechus* to spend time in the home of our *Rebbe*, **R' Yoelish Teitelbaum *zt"l***. I would often sit near him during the *Tischen*, absorbing every word, every gesture.

The *Rebbe* had a special *minhag* during *Sukkos*: each day of *Yom Tov*, during the *Tish*, the *Chassidim* would sing the 15 *Shir HaMaalos* - Songs of Praise - and the *Rebbe* would honor someone with the name of the *Ushpizin* of that day to lead the recital.

One year, on the day of the *Ushpizin* of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, to my surprise, the *Rebbe* turned to me and asked me to sing. I was stunned. My name isn't Moshe. I hesitated, unsure if he had mistaken me for someone else.

"Quietly, I asked, '*Rebbe*, why me?' He looked at me with those piercing eyes and said, 'Don't you have a brother named Moshe?' I nodded, still confused. What did my brother Moshe have to do with this? The *Rebbe* didn't explain further. He simply smiled and moved on. I didn't understand it then, but I would come to see that moment as the beginning of a miracle."

Years passed. The world changed. The terrible war broke out, and Rav Lipa was already married and living in Batur. Then came the decree from the Hungarian government: every Jewish man over the age of 25 was to be conscripted for forced labor, the *Munka-Tabor*. Rav Lipa received his order to report to Farstein, and the danger was real. Many who went never returned.

"I was desperate," Rav Lipa recalled. "I needed a way out. I could never last under such conditions of forced labor. And then I remembered my brother, Moshe, *a"h*. He was 19 years older than me

and had passed away from an illness. I still had his documents. Maybe, just maybe, I could use them and pretend to be him. But there was a problem: I was 28, and Moshe's papers said he was 47. I didn't look anywhere near that age. I knew they'd never believe me."

Unsure of what to do, Rav Lipa sent a messenger to Satmar to ask the *Rebbe* for guidance. The *Rebbe* responded that he hadn't seen Lipa in a long time and wanted him to come to Satmar. "I arrived in Satmar just before candle lighting on *Shabbos Chanukah*. I went straight to the *Beis Midrash* and *davened Kabbolas Shabbos* with the *Rebbe*. After *davening*, I approached him to say *'Gut Shabbos.'* As I passed before him, he looked me over - right side, left side, up and down. He made a grand show of looking at me from all sides. After a minute, he smiled. It was clear he was pleased with what he saw."

After *Shabbos*, Rav Lipa met with the *Rebbe* again. The *Rebbe* told him plainly: "Take your brother Moshe's documents. Don't worry. *A goy* doesn't know the difference - a man with a beard always looks older to them."

With the *Rebbe's beracha* and guidance, Rav Lipa took the documents and went to report. The scene was tense. Many Jews stood in line, their faces etched with fear. Everyone was worried - would they be accepted, or sent to the labor camps?

"The man ahead of me in line tried the same trick," Rav Lipa recalled. "He had someone else's documents, but they could tell he was too young. They shouted at him, accused him of trying to evade the army, and forced him into service. I was trembling. My heart was pounding." When it was his turn, he handed over Moshe's documents. The officers looked at the papers, then looked at him - right side, left side, up and down - just like the *Rebbe* had. And then, to his astonishment, they nodded. - "Moshe," they said, "you're good to go."

He was free. "I couldn't believe it," Rav Lipa said later. "It was as if the *Rebbe's* gaze had imprinted something on me. They saw what he saw. They believed I was my brother Moshe!"

But the story didn't end there. On the train ride home, Rav Lipa was stopped by a group of army officers who asked for his documents. "This isn't you - you're too young," one officer said to him.

Rav Lipa replied, "I just came from Farstein. They accepted me there."

Just then, another officer ran over and told them they had to leave immediately. One of them slapped Rav Lipa across the face - a common cruelty in those days - and they left. The slap stung but Rav Lipa was relieved.

"It was only later," he said, "that I realized the full picture. The *Rebbe* had honored me with the *Shir HaMaalos* years earlier because of my brother Moshe. He saw what was coming. He saw the whole story before it even began."

Some time later, at a wedding celebration in Batur, Rav Lipa went to greet the *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe*, in his full glory, stood at the head of the celebration. He looked at Rav Lipa and joked, "How are you, Moshe?"

The *Rebbe's* son-in-law, the great *tzaddik* of **Samihaly *zt"l***, said, "Isn't this Lipa, not Moshe?" -And the *Rebbe* smiled and replied, "I'll tell you who he is!"

The Beis Aharon taught:

Rejoice in every mitzvah, no matter how small. Every word, thought, and deed done for Hashem is priceless and never lost.

This is what you were created for. Grab as much as you can.





Inspired by Time - Which Pill Do You Want? – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Sukkos is a time period surrounded by mitzvos; we spend vast amounts of time and money finding and purchasing the perfect arba minim and we ensure that we have large and nicely decorated sukkos.

It is interesting that the essence of the yom tov is simcha, in fact we refer to it in the shemoneh esrei as zman simchasenu. It is true that every yom tov carries a mitzvah of simchas yom tov, yet the Rambam and others explain that there is a special and unique mitzvah of simcha on sukkos.

We must understand what gives Sukkos its uniqueness. However, the question goes a step further. At this time, we are barely a few days after the yamim nora'im, having reached their climax with Yom Kippur. The cry of the shofar, desperate pleas of avinu malkenu, and

roaring proclamation of "Hashem hu ha'Elokim" still ring in our ears. How can we continue from this emotional and awesome time into Sukkos, a time of joy and merriment?

R'Ezriel Tauber gives a wonderful mashal:

Reb Avraham arrived at the home of his Rav looking very distressed and with a very important question to ask. Rebbe, I have been married for 30 years now, and I can no longer continue. The situation has become unbearable and I have decided that "higi'u mayim ad nafesh" – I wish to divorce her.

The Rav listed attentively and asked him to elaborate, what is it in the marriage that he cannot contend with any longer, what is bothering him so much?

Reb Avraham outlined the two primary problems. 1) I never see a smile on the face of my wife. She seems to be uninterested in the marriage. She is constantly bitter and complaining, nothing is ever good for her and she seems to have no interest in me at all. What good is such a marriage.

2) The second problem, continued Reb Avraham, is the house. My wife is no balabusta. She never cooks. Every day when I come home there is no supper waiting for me. The house is an absolute mess 7 days a week 365 days a year. The laundry is never done. In short, she does not take care of me or any of the household needs. What good is a wife if she does not do the basic household chores?

The Rav stroked his long white beard and turned to Reb Avraham with the most interesting and unexpected proposal. "You know, I understand what your wife is suffering from and, in fact, I have the correct cure" began the Rav. "I have been working on a cure for this for many years with a doctor and recently we had a breakthrough - we have a pill that she may take and she will instantly be cured, she will become a different person. But there is one catch, it can only cure one of the two problems; you must choose which of the two problems you wish to have improved.

Which problem would we assume he would choose to cure? Every sane husband would choose to cure the first problem. Why? Because if a wife is happy, if she is walking around with a smile on her face, this shows that there is a connection and that there is something to the marriage - there is a relationship. As soon as we see that there is a relationship which she is excited about, even if she cannot cook, bake, or clean, these are mere technicalities. Cleaning help can be provided and dealt with later, the main priority is that there is a relationship.

If, however, only the second problem is cured, she will cook gourmet meals, bake the most delicious cookies, all the laundry will be clean and crisp, and the house will be spick and span, yet she will have a sour face. She will walk around sad, saying she does not want her husband. All the meals and cookies will then be worth nothing. There would be no relationship and everything else is not worth anything; for that price one could simply get a maid.

We are a mere few days after the yamim nora'im. These were days of teshuva mi'yirah. Our lives were on the brink, and we shuddered as we read u'nesaneh tokef. We did teshuva and made resolutions that we would improve and that our avoda would be better.

We then move into the days of Sukkos. This is the time when we hope that our teshuva and kabalos managed to achieve what we wanted. We hope we merited a better year but who knows what has been decided.

On Sukkos there is no shofar, selichos, vidui, or fasting. We enter the sukkah where we bask under the **צִלָּא דִּמְהֵימְנוּתָא**, under the wings of Hashem. We eat with His presence, sleep under His protection, and, most importantly, we rejoice and celebrate with Him.

What exactly are we supposed to be celebrating? "Ashrenu ma tov chelkenu u'ma na'im goralenu", we are thrilled to be part of Klal Yisrael, to be part of His nation.

When Hashem sees a yid who is sitting, dancing, and singing, evidently so happy to be a yid and to be connected to Hashem, He looks back at the avoda of Elul and says, perhaps the avoda of Rosh Hashana was not 100%, the vidui could have been better, and there are areas of your avodas Hashem that require improvement, yet all of this we can work out later. - At least now that I see you are happy, I see there is a connection and a relationship - this is more important than anything.

With this a yid can be zoche for more bracha. This is the pill and we now understand why Sukkos is a level higher and comes directly after Yom Kippur. Sukkos is thus the true avoda of simcha

Entering the Embrace of the Shechinah

Stepping into the Sukkah is a moment of pure wonder. It is the only mitzvah where a Jew is completely enveloped by the mitzvah itself, [Mikvah, living in Eretz Yisrael?] embraced on all sides — as if Hashem Himself is holding us close.

The halacha teaches that as we partake of the first kezayisin the Sukkah, our hearts should not only focus on the mitzvah of Sukkah, but also on its profound symbolism — the Sukkah is a living remembrance of the Ananei HaKavod, the Clouds of Glory that surrounded and protected our ancestors in the wilderness.

Yet one must ask: why do we dedicate an entire Yom Tov to commemorate the Ananei HaKavod? True, they were wondrous — shielding Klal Yisrael from harm, smoothing the path through the barren desert, performing countless miracles. But there were other daily miracles in the Midbar as well — the Man that fell from the heavens and tasted however one desired; the Be'er shel Miriam, a miraculous well that sustained them. Why not a Yom Tov for the Man, or the Be'er? Why reserve an entire Yom Tov for clouds?

Furthermore, the Ananei HaKavod first appeared when Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim — one might expect that we would celebrate this miracle during Sefiras HaOmer, close to Pesach, not after Yom Kippur.

To understand this, and to appreciate the true joy and depth of Sukkos, let us explore one of its most beautiful dimensions.

From Selicha to Simcha

Every year as we reach Sukkos, a familiar question arises: how do we transition so quickly? We ascend through Rosh Hashanah, days filled with awe and reverence, with tearful prayers of kingship and renewal. We journey through the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, culminating in the unparalleled sanctity of Yom Kippur, when we fast, dress in white like the malachim, and pour our hearts out through Viduy and Ne'ilah. Then, just days later, we are meant to enter a cozy Sukkah, enjoy festive meals, and wave the Arba Minim with joy and song — how does one leap from the solemnity of forgiveness to the joy of Sukkos?

I once heard from Rav Charlie Harari an amazing explanation with a poignant true story:

A Story of Rebuilding

Moshe and Chani had been married only a short while, yet things were falling apart. Moshe, young and immature, failed to grasp the depth and responsibility of marriage. In his foolishness, he deeply hurt his wife and shattered her trust.

Though he tried to make amends, it seemed too late — the damage was great, and they separated. They began therapy. After many painful sessions, Moshe finally faced the depth of his mistakes.

One day, in tears and sincerity, he turned to Chani and said from the depths of his heart: "I am so sorry."

At first, she could hardly believe his words, but as he repeated them with honest remorse, she realized he truly meant it.

After a long pause, she responded softly: "Moshe, I forgive you."

Moshe lit up: "Does that mean I can come home tonight?"

"No," she replied.

He was shocked: "But you just said you forgive me!"

I do," she answered. "I bear no grudge, and I wish you no harm. But forgiveness alone does not rebuild a relationship. That takes time, trust, and a renewed bond of love."

The Secret of Sukkos

This is the inner meaning of Sukkos. - On Yom Kippur, after forty days of teshuvah, after days of broken hearts and sincere regret, Hashem says to us: "Salachti — I forgive you."

This is an astonishing gift! We are cleansed, a new slate, a new chance. But forgiveness alone does not guarantee closeness. As with Moshe and Chani — one can forgive yet still feel distant.

Then comes Sukkos. Sukkos is when Hashem says: "Not only do I forgive you — I want you back. Come into My embrace. Dwell in My home. Let us be close once again."

That is why the Ananei HaKavod are so central. The clouds were not mere protection — they were Hashem's embrace, a sign of His love and connection with His people.

A Deeper Glimpse — Restoring the Relationship

When Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they became Hashem's beloved nation. He split the sea, revealed His glory, gave them the Torah at Har Sinai, and wrapped them in the Ananei HaKavod — a canopy of divine love. But then came the cheit ha'Egel — the sin of the Golden Calf. As Chazal say, it was as if a bride betrayed her groom under the chuppah. Moshe shattered the luchos; the relationship was broken.

For forty days, Moshe pleaded. On Yom Kippur, Hashem declared: "Salachti kidvarecha." I forgive you. But the clouds did not return

immediately. Klal Yisrael wondered: "Has Hashem truly taken us back? Or has He forgiven us — but remains distant?"

It was only on Sukkos, after renewed effort and closeness, that the Ananei HaKavod returned. Only then did Hashem fully embrace His people again — not just forgiveness, but renewed love, closeness, and joy.

And that is what we celebrate. Not protection, but connection. Not survival, but a deep, joyous relationship with Hashem.

Entering the Sukkah

So as we step into the Sukkah, let us feel it: we are entering Hashem's embrace. The walls surround us; the s'chach shelters us — we are enveloped in the Shechinah.

This is the true joy of Sukkos — the greatest joy: to know that not only has Hashem forgiven us, but He longs for us, desires us, draws us close once more.

Let us enter the Sukkah with hearts full of gratitude and simcha — and dwell in the embrace of our Father in Heaven.

והוה מקבל כל אדם בשמחה שמחה - Greet Every Person with Simcha

The **חיד"א** links the concept of receiving every person with simcha to the idea of that they are all children of **אברהם יצחק יעקב**. The **חיד"א** points out that the last letters of the words **אברהם יצחק יעקב** and **ישראל** combine to spell out the word - **מקבל** - to receive/greet.

This hints that one should remember that every Yid is a descendant of **אברהם יצחק יעקב.** If one does so, one will greet everyone warmly.

"הסוכה היא מקום השראת קדושה." - The sukkah is a place where holiness rests. ~ Chazon Ish.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַּסֻּכֹּת: לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם - *"Every native in Israel shall sit in booths; so that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them out of Egypt."* (Vayikra 23:42,43)

While on Pesach we read of the splitting of the Red Sea, and on Shavuos we read about the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, on Sukkos we read a section which doesn't refer specifically to Sukkos, but rather contains mentions of all the festivals. However, of the three festivals mentioned in it, only Sukkos contains a rationale behind the ritual observance of the Yom Tov.

In regard to Sukkos, the Torah clearly states that the purpose of sitting outside in booths is so that the Jewish People will know for all generations that their forefathers dwelled in sukkos, huts, in the desert.

One last point is that regarding Sukkos, the Torah mentions "native" Israelites, which is not done regarding Pesach or Shavuos. What is the message behind this?

The Kli Yakar comments that the word "ezrach, native," refers to someone who is a resident, for at the time of the harvest, everyone wants to leave the field and go inside his house to enjoy being settled.

The Torah was worried that such behavior would cause people to become arrogant and smug and make them forget where the bountiful harvest had come from. Therefore, anyone who wishes to be a "resident" of this Earth, as opposed to those who know their true home is on a spiritual plane, is directed to sit in huts to recognize his insignificance in this world as he is merely passing

through. In that way, he will not depend on the protection of his roof, but rather the protection of the shadow of the Al-mighty, as the Jews in the desert did when they left Egypt.

In other words, by leaving his home on Sukkos, he gains a greater appreciation of the kindnesses HaShem did for the Jews when we left Egypt. He begins to recognize what we gained when we were given the Torah and chosen as HaShem's people. Pesach is the time of our birth as a nation, analogous to planting. Shavuos commemorates the establishing of our laws and ideals, those things that set us apart from the other nations, corresponding to working a field. Sukkos represents the harvest and therefore doesn't only remind us of the Divine protection afforded us in the desert but also gives us perspective on all the holidays and events that preceded it.

Only Sukkos has a purpose attached to it because only at the end of the cycle, when it comes time to see what your efforts have brought to fruition, can one appreciate the earlier steps. When one sees the progression from slavery to a free and noble people, worthy of Divine protection, he can begin to grasp the magnitude of the miracles that took place beginning with the Exodus.

That is why on Sukkos we read about all the holidays, because we finally have enough of the picture to appreciate all HaShem has done for us, and be truly happy. That is why Sukkos alone is called Zman Simchaseinu, the time of our happiness.



The Maharil would famously say that the Shabbos that gave him the greatest oneg was Shabbos Chol Hamoed. It is when the wonderful kedusha of the chag blends in with the kedusha of Shabbos, forming a beautiful combination of dwelling in the sanctity of the time and connecting to the Boreh Olam.



Your Beautiful Sukkah - Rabbi Shlomo Horwitz

The great **Rav Avraham Genachovsky zt"l**, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chebiner in Yerushalayim, lived in Bnei Brak. Beyond his towering stature in Torah, he was equally renowned for his extraordinary sensitivity and care for others. His close friend, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l**, once described him as a truly great man — *gadol me'od me'od*, a *ma'ayon ha'misgaber*, an overflowing spring of Torah, kindness and refined character.

One story captures this beautifully.

Rav Genachovsky had a neighbor, a widow who lived alone and often felt isolated. Before Sukkos, she asked him if he might have any extra *s'chach* she could use for her sukkah. He replied warmly, "Certainly; once I see how much I'll need, I'll let you know." A few days later, she noticed a pile of *s'chach* outside his home. Assuming it was what he no longer needed, she took it for her Sukkah. In truth, it was not extra; it was the rabbi's own *s'chach*.

When Rav Genachovsky realized what had happened, he immediately understood that if she discovered her mistake, she would be deeply embarrassed. Yet, there were two halachic problems. First, her *s'chach* was technically stolen, taken without permission, which would invalidate her Sukkah. To resolve this, he mentally transferred ownership to her, declaring in his mind that the *s'chach* now belonged to her. But there remained a second issue: the Sukkah still violated the principle of *ta'aseh v'lo min ha'asuy*— one cannot retroactively make invalid *s'chach* valid without lifting and replacing it.

What could he do without embarrassing her?

He devised a plan. Knowing he was on good terms with her, he knocked on her door and said kindly, "I happened to notice your Sukkah. It's truly beautiful! May I come see it up close?" Flattered, she eagerly invited him in. After admiring it, he said, "It's so lovely, I would be honored to be a partner in your mitzvah. Would you allow

me to participate by lifting each piece of *s'chach*, just so I can have a share in your Sukkah?" She was touched by the offer and readily agreed. With quiet grace, the rabbi lifted each piece of *s'chach* and replaced it, thus making her Sukkah halachically valid, while preserving her dignity entirely.

It was an act of profound Torah greatness; not merely in scholarship, but in *middos*. In a single gesture, Rav Genachovsky fulfilled the *halachah*, spared a widow from shame, and transformed an awkward mistake into an act of kindness and connection.

📖 The Guardians – bringing Jewish history to life!

🍋 "As Pure as Gold" – Rabbi Chaim Berlin's Etrog



In the summer of 1888, Rabbi Chaim Berlin, son of the Netziv of Volozhin, wrote from Europe to a friend in Yerushalayim.

His request? Two etrogim from Eretz Yisrael, to be sent weeks before Sukkos so they would arrive in time.

But it's the details that fascinate us. Rabbi Chaim didn't simply ask for etrogim, he described, in his own handwriting, exactly how they must look:

"They should be beautiful, to the utmost degree of hiddur (perfection)…Pure as gold, with no discoloration or spots of any kind. Large in size, for the larger they are, the more beautiful they

become (though never at the expense of their cleanliness). Their growth should be graceful, and with a pitam, specifically…"

This rare letter shows not only how the gedolim of past generations fulfilled the mitzvah of the Four Minim, but also the deep longing they had for the most perfect etrog, the symbol of hidur mitzvah.



אושפיזין - The הכנסת אורחים of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer by Harav Shlomo Freshwater

I heard a story about Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer from **Rav Shneur Kotler**. One day, it was told to Rav Isser Zalman that the **Chazon Ish** had been seen outside on his street. It appeared that he was on the way to Rav Isser Zalman's house. Rav Isser Zalman immediately readied himself to greet the **גדול הדור** properly, particularly in light of the fact that a visit such as this was rare, as the Chazon Ish almost never left his own **ד' אמות**.

As the guest was climbing up the hill to get to Rav Isser Zalman's house, Rav Isser Zalman saw that it wasn't the Chazon Ish. Indeed, he had a similar hat and glasses and was the same size as the Chazon Ish., but it wasn't the Chazon Ish. Everyone expected Rav Isser Zalman to come back into the house but he stayed by the door to wait to greet the guest who was a meshulach that came to request a Hamlatzah (recommendation).

Despite this, Rav Isser Zalman showed him the same honour as he would have showed to the Chazon Ish. He accompanied the man out and requested that he give a bracha to his wife, the rebbetzin. When the man left, the members of Rav Isser Zalman's household asked him to explain the matter, why did he honour the meshulach with the level of honour fitting for a Gadol Hador?

Rav Isser Zalman answered that in essence, it is fitting to greet every Yid with great honour, like one would when welcoming in the in the Chazon Ish, but because of **ביטול תורה**, this was a mitzvah he could not fulfil, for if such measures were applied practically, one would not have time to learn. However, at this point in time, having already set aside half an hour of his time to honour the Chazon Ish, he decided to fulfil the **הכנסת אורחים** of **מצוה** even for a regular person.

ד׳ מינים - Harav Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro שליט"א

We once said a beautiful peshat when it comes to the daled minim. A person holds in their right hand, the lulov - the hadasim and the arovas. And in their left hand they hold the esrog. But one has to wonder, but the right hand is the more prominent - the stronger of the two. - Shouldn't one hold the esrog in the right hand? After all the way we speak with the awe and the reverence, about an esrog? Why do you hold the esrog in the left, rather hold the lulov - the hadasim and the arovas in the left hand?

And I believe that the **Chasam Sofer** zechusoi yogen oleinu tells us, so incredibly.

You're right that the esrog represents the most incredible type of Yid. But at the end of the day, the esrog is only a yochid-one. Whereas the lulov - the hadasim and the arovas may not be the type of Yid that's as spectacular and sparkling- but they are a rabim. They have unity. And the koach of a rabim – takes precedence over the koach of a yochid. And that's why it's the rabim, the lulov - the hadasim and the arovas-that are held in the right hand.

We clearly see how critical the component of achdus and the rabim is - to kenesses Yisroel.

Let us make sure that whenever the rabim is in effect, not to add another piece of loshon hora and not to go ahead and add to a derogatory report. But rather to create for the rabim unity and achdus - words that are soothing and healing, words that bring about yachad shivtei yisroel.





TheYeshiva.net
BY RABBI YY JACOBSON

The Hadas

הדס is an eye, **ענף עץ עבות**.

יעקב was **רכוש בבנים**, filled with children.

What type of eyes? There's eyes and there are eyes. Helen Keller was blind and deaf, and yet she had an extraordinary impact. She learned to communicate, she learned to write books. I once read a line by her.

She said, '***the only thing that's more painful than not having eyesight is when you have eyesight but you don't have vision***.' There's people who have eyesight but they don't have vision.

They say a good joke: Moshe Dayan was Israel's defense minister, he had a patch on his eye. You remember? He had a patch on his eye.

So he was once driving on an Israeli highway and **כמנהג** Israeli drivers 150 kilometers per hour, which is pretty slow in Israel. So a policeman stops him. Says, Dayan, you're the general, you're the defense minister. I should quadruple your summons.

אתה נוהג כמו משוגע. You're driving like a madman. Your ticket should be five times the amount because you're supposed to be a role model. He looks at the policeman and says, **אדוני השוטר**, my dear officer, you look at me. I have one eye. Now what would you like me to do with this eye? Look at the speedometer or look at the highway? Yeah, some people, their whole life they look at the speedometer, they never see the highway. What type of eyes do you have to have?

יעקב אבינו״ס eyes. What were **יעקב אבינו״ס** eyes? He had a good life. He was married, he had a huge family, he was living by the father-in-law, he didn't have to take responsibility. He was successful, he was wealthy, everything was good. And one day he wakes up and he tells his father-in-law, **ויאמר יעקב אל לבן שלחני**! Enough is enough! Twenty years by the **שוער** and the **שוויגער** is enough! I'm out! I'm out! He calls his wives **רחל** and **לאה** from the field and he says, I looked. - **וירא יעקב את פני לבן**.

He saw the face of **לבן**. He saw it's not good. He tells his wives, I looked at your father, I saw.

What exactly did he see? He saw one thing: Today my kids are young, everything is dandy, but do my children have a future here? Will my children have a future in this house? Surrounded by **לבן הארמי** - a grandfather who's a crook? **מיט א גנב, מיט א שקר, מיט א גזלן**.

In this environment of my father-in-law will I be able to give my children what I have to give my children? He saw the future. He saw the future and he said we're out. He uprooted himself.

We're going to go to one old man, my old father **יצחק** living in **ארץ ישראל**. That's where I'm going to bring my family.

וישא יעקב את עיניו וירא. - He saw.

Some people have eyesight, but they have no vision. They sell their lives for comfort in the present and they forfeit they abandon their future. Some people sitting right here, you know what I'm talking about. In our own lives.

We do things that are comfortable right now. We sacrifice our marriage, we sacrifice our children, we sacrifice our relationship with our children, we sacrifice what really matters just for what feels or looks good right now, whether it's physical, material, spiritual, emotional, whatever it is. Do I have **יעקב אבינו'ס** eyes? **הדס**?





The Lulav

Then there's a spine. Oh. You can have a heart but not a spine.

סוכות you have to ask yourself if you have a spine.

Whose spine?

יצחק's spine. What's the spine of **יצחק**? It's the sense of confidence, of pride, that was represented by **יצחק** who was ready to sacrifice his life, **וילכו שניהם יחדיו**. When he hears that he's going to be the sheep for the **עולה**, he doesn't duck, he doesn't run, with resolve, with unwavering strength, he's ready to make the sacrifice **בקומת זקופה**, with full stature, an erect spine, tremendous **תוקף**, tremendous potency, **וילכו שניהם יחדיו, כפות, כפות תמרים**.

The question we have to ask ourselves **סוכות** is, do we have a spine? Are you always apologizing for your existence? Some Jews are always apologizing for being Jewish.

They're always embarrassed, they're always ashamed. Even people that wear **שטריימלאך, מיט בעקעשעס מיט גארטלאך**, they're not ashamed in their **שול**, but somewhere else they become ashamed.

איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי, asked **ר׳ יהונתן אייבשיץ**, there was only one Jew in **שושן הבירה**? It's like saying **איש יהודי היה ב**-New York City. Really? Only one Jew?

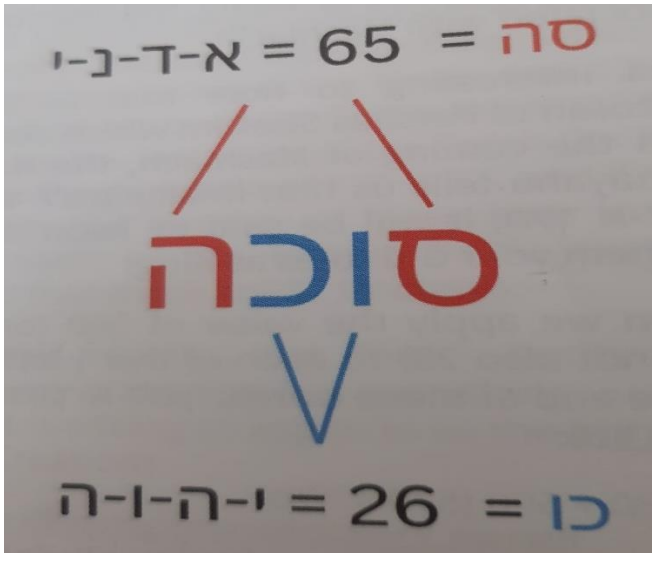
ר׳ יהונתן אייבשיץ טייטשט, איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי.

There were many Jews, but there was one Jew in **שושן הבירה** he was a Jew. Ah, that's a little different.

איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה, in the capital of **שושן** he was the same Jew. Sometimes Jews become defensive, meek, bent, repressed. They apologize for themselves, they apologize for their homeland, they apologize for their strength.

Somebody once said, how do you know somebody's a Jew? When he makes a fist, the next step is **אשמנו, בגדנו, גזלנו**. This past **יום כיפור** Jews made fists and ten times **על חטא, על חטא, על חטא**. Somebody else makes a fist, you go check out your nose by the doctor the next day, maybe broken nose or a rib.

But sometimes we make a fist and right away we're apologizing. The spine of **יצחק** you have to ask yourself is, do you have genuine confidence in your life? Do you have a spine? A healthy spine that's not bent, not crushed, not repressed, not spiritually, not psychologically, and not emotionally.



CONGREGATION ISRAEL OF SPRINGFIELD

Rabbi's Message

The month of Tishrei contains four major holidays: Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, and Shemini Atzeres/ Simchas Torah. There are a number of differences as to how these Yamim Tovim are celebrated, and **Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** (19th century leader of German Orthodoxy) uses one of these differences to teach us a fundamental lesson about Judaism.

All the holidays, aside from *Sukkos*, are one day celebrations. Even *Rosh HaShana*, which is now commemorated with two days, is really meant to be a one-day affair. Why are the *moadim* of *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur*, the proverbial '*Days of Awe*,' only one day long, whereas *Sukkos* is seven days long?

Rav Hirsch explains that *Rosh HaShana* is a day of Divine Justice, the Day of Judgement, *Yom Kippur,* a solemn day with a focus on fasting and atonement. Each of these experiences is an essential part of the inner life of a Jew. However, neither is to become the norm, the default setting if you will, of the Jewish Personality. Hence, these days are limited to an observance of only one day. However, *Sukkos* comes with a seven-day time-span as a result of the centrality and importance of its primary theme to the emergence of the Torah lifestyle.

What is the theme of *Sukkos*? All indicators point to the theme of *simcha*, which is a joy stemming from personal fulfillment, as the hallmark of the holiday, and it is specifically this trait, according to Rav Hirsch, that is to be the foundation stone of our inner lives.

"הסוכה מראה שהאדם סמוך על חסדי ה'." *-The sukkah shows that a person relies on Hashem's kindness.* **~ Chasam Sofer.**

The Minyan That Came From Heaven By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

It was Chol Hamoed in Eretz Yisrael. A family decided to take a trip together. They rented a large van so everyone could go—nine men in total, along with the driver, a Shomer Torah u'Mitzvos, making ten. A perfect minyan.

They planned their day carefully. They assumed they would reach their destination in time to daven Mincha comfortably. But as often happens, things didn't go as planned. Traffic delays. Unexpected stops. And suddenly, they realized— it was almost shkiah. They had no choice. They needed to stop immediately and daven.

They pulled over at a gas station and asked the driver, "Would you join us so we can have a minyan?" "Of course," he said. "B'simcha." They prepared to begin—but then the driver hesitated. "I have one thing," he said. "I can't daven without a siddur. I always need a siddur in my hand."

One of the men smiled. "No problem. I have a small Mincha-Maariv in my wallet."

The driver thanked him—but then added something unexpected. "I also can't daven here." They looked at him. "Here?" they asked. "Why not?"

"I can't speak to Hashem in a gas station," he said. "I need a makom kadosh. A shul. A beis medrash. This… this is not a place for tefillah."

Now they were unsure what to do. Time was slipping away. Shkiah was approaching. But they all wanted to daven b'tzibur. So they made a decision. They would search. Nearby was a small moshav. They drove in, unsure of what they would find. It wasn't known to be particularly religious—but maybe, just maybe, there would be a shul.

And there was. They found a small building and knocked on the door. Inside, they saw something surprising. The shul looked brand new.

Construction equipment was still inside. It didn't even seem fully finished. And there, sitting alone, was one man.

They approached him. "Excuse us," they said. "We're looking to daven Mincha. Would it be okay if we joined here?" The man didn't answer right away. Instead… he began to cry. He put his head into his hands, overcome with emotion. Then he looked up and said: "Yes… yes, of course. B'simcha rabbah."

They began to daven. But something was different. This man—this lone individual—davened with a fire they had never seen. He swayed back and forth, completely immersed, like it was Kol Nidrei… like it was Ne'ilah. It was just Mincha. But for him, it was everything.

After davening, they turned to him. "Tell us, "they asked gently, "what made this so special for you?"

The man took a deep breath. "I'll tell you, "he said. "My daughter was very ill." "The doctors… they were giving up hope." His voice trembled. "But I didn't give up." "Al tisya'esh," he said. "Never give up. No matter what."

"I turned to Hashem and I said: 'Borei Olam… if You give my daughter a refuah sheleimah, I will build a beis medrash in this moshav. A place for Your presence.'" - "And Hashem answered me." "She recovered."

There was silence in the room. "So I kept my promise," he continued. "I built this shul." "But the people here—they told me: 'It's beautiful… but who's going to come? Who's going to daven here? You're wasting your time.'"

He paused. "Today… I finished building it." "Mincha was the first tefillah that could be said here." "I went outside… there was no one. No one to join me." "So I sat here alone… and I said: 'Borei Olam, I built this for You. Not for me. Maybe… maybe… we can have a minyan.'"

He looked at them, his eyes filled with tears. "And then…" "I saw ten people walk in."

They stood there, stunned. This was no coincidence. This was a message. A sign. A response from Heaven.

The man whispered, over and over: "Thank You… Hashem. Thank You."

Sometimes we wonder if our efforts matter. If what we build… what we sacrifice… what we do for Hashem… makes a difference. This story reminds us: Nothing is ever lost. No act of devotion is ever ignored. And sometimes—when a person builds something for Hashem with a full heart— Hashem Himself sends the minyan. Because when we take a step toward Him— He sends the answer.

The Weekly Vort

The Peleh Yo'etz - Rabbi Eliezer Papo *20 Tishrei (1827)*



Rabbi Eliezer Papo was a major exponent of the musar tradition. Posek and Kabalist

Rabbi Eliezer Papo was a major exponent of the musar tradition. Rabbi Papo became an outstanding rabbinic scholar, deeply devoted to piety and spirituality. He authored books of halacha, homiletics,

and musar, and was profoundly committed to kabbalah as well. Rabbi Papo served as rabbi of the community of Selestria (Bulgaria). He died in 1828 at the age of forty-three.

In spite of the brevity of his life, Rabbi Papo achieved remarkable depth and breadth in his rabbinic scholarship and left to posterity a significant literary legacy. It may be said that Rabbi Papo, in the early nineteenth century, was the exemplary spokesman of the Sephardic musar tradition of the eighteenth century.

Rabbi Papo stressed the need for sincere piety and saintliness. He generally felt that Jews should devote themselves to fulfilling Hashem's commandments, without worrying too much about the problems of this world. It was the world-to-come which has ultimate value; it was that goal to which Jews should direct their lives.

His attitude was one of acceptance: whatever happened was for the best since it was G-d's will. Suffering and adversity were to be received with equanimity; they provided opportunities to demonstrate true faith in Hashem and to repent.

Rabbi Papo taught that it was wrong to be overly concerned with earning a livelihood. To be sure, one had to work for a living, not relying on a miracle to sustain him and his family. But income is determined by Hashem. If Hashem wants someone to be poor, he will be poor no matter how hard he works. And if Hashem wants him to be rich, he will be rich even if he does not work hard. We are all obliged to devote some time to making our living but we must realize that our level of success is determined by Hashem.

Rabbi Papo stressed that one must have faith in the words of the sages, submitting to their authority, and indeed, practicing intellectual subservience to anyone greater than oneself. It is proper not to speak with definitive certainty, but to be open to the possibility that others may have more understanding of truth.

Rabbi Papo advocated a tradition-bound, static Judaism. He called for a life of piety and acceptance of G-d. He demanded total

allegiance to rabbinic tradition, stressed the need to live according to traditional patterns and preferred the traditionalism of Moslem lands to the modernity of Europe. His ultimate focus was not on life in this world, but on the world to come.

◣ Among the towering figures of Sephardic Jewry, few have left such an enduring impact on the hearts of Klal Yisroel as R' Eliezer Papo, the holy author of *Peleh Yoetz*. For over two hundred years, his *sefer* has guided Jews of every background, teaching how to live with *simchah*, yiras Shomayim, and *ahavas Yisroel*. But behind the timeless words lies the story of a *tzaddik* whose life itself was a living *Peleh Yoetz* — a wonder and a source of *hadracha* to his generation and all those that followed.

◣ R' Eliezer was born around the year 1785 (5545) in Sarajevo, Bosnia, then a flourishing center of Torah for Sephardic Jewry under Ottoman rule. His father, R' Avraham Moshe Papo, was a respected *talmid chochom* and a man of integrity, known for his gentle nature and humility. From his father, young Eliezer absorbed not only the sweetness of Torah but also the sensitivity and compassion that would later shine so brightly in his own life.

◣ From his earliest years, he displayed remarkable *kedushah* and self-control. While his friends played in the streets, Eliezer could often be found sitting in a quiet corner, reviewing Mishnayos by heart. His rebbeim were astonished by his diligence. He studied with fiery intensity, rarely looking up from his *seforim*, and would weep during *davening* with genuine emotion. The older *talmidei chachomim* in Sarajevo saw in him a purity and sincerity that were uncommon even among those many years his senior.

◣ As he matured, his reputation spread. He became known for his penetrating clarity in learning and his deep humility. He never argued for honor, never sought attention, and never raised his voice in anger. His only ambition was to come close to Hashem through Torah, *tefillah*, and kindness.

◣ He married and settled for a time near the city of Nish, where he continued to grow in Torah and *avodah*. His home was simple but filled with *kedusha*. The local Jews soon turned to him with their halachic questions and spiritual dilemmas, sensing that this young *talmid chochom* possessed both wisdom and compassion. Eventually, his name reached the broader Ottoman Jewish world, and the *kehilla* of Silistra, a historic community along the Danube River (in what is now Bulgaria), called him to serve as their Rav.

◣ When R' Eliezer arrived in Silistra, he encountered a *kehillah* struggling materially and spiritually. The city's Jews lived under heavy taxes and frequent hardship. Many were simple laborers, and Torah observance had grown weak. Yet R' Eliezer saw not weakness, but potential. With his characteristic gentleness, he set about lifting the community both physically and spiritually.

◣ He began by organizing regular *shiurim* and encouraging daily *tefillah* with *kavanah*. His *derashos* were not fiery rebukes but heartfelt appeals, spoken in clear, accessible language. He would remind his listeners that every Jew, no matter his level, could draw close to Hashem through even the smallest act done sincerely. Over time, the entire atmosphere of the town changed.

◣ He became not only a Rav but a father to his people. He visited the sick personally, comforted mourners, and quietly distributed *tzedakah* from his own meagre funds. He was known to go hungry himself rather than allow another Jew to lack food for Shabbos. He lived in poverty but never complained, saying only that "Hashem gives to each man what his *neshamah* needs."

◣ R' Eliezer abstained from every form of pleasure, subsisting on little food, yet despite his asceticism, he radiated warmth and joy. People said that when he spoke, his voice carried sincerity that penetrated the heart. His face shone with inner light, and his very presence inspired people to *teshuvah*.

◣ R' Eliezer refused to accept a salary from the community. He viewed his position as a sacred trust, not a livelihood. Whatever small income he earned, he distributed to widows, orphans, and poor families. Once, a wealthy merchant insisted on sending him a monthly gift of money. R' Eliezer accepted it only on condition that it would be given anonymously to the needy — and he himself became the messenger to deliver it quietly.

◣ He was deeply humble. When praised for his *sefer* or his leadership, he would say, "I am not a teacher, only a reminder. I remind Jews of what they already know in their hearts."

◣ It was in Silistra that R' Eliezer wrote his most famous sefer, *Peleh Yoetz*. First published in Constantinople in 1824 (5584), it was a sefer unlike any other. Organized alphabetically, from *Ahavah* to *Teshuvah* and *Zechirah*, it addressed every area of daily Jewish life — from honesty in business to raising children, from anger and jealousy to joy and gratitude.

◣ What set *Peleh Yoetz* apart was its clarity and warmth. It was not written in lofty language or filled with complex *pilpul*. Instead, it spoke directly to the heart, offering practical, fatherly guidance infused with Torah and *yiras Shomayim*. R' Eliezer wrote not for *talmidei chachomim* alone but for every Jew who sought to live faithfully in a confusing world.

◣ In the sefer *Peleh Yoe'etz*, in the section on *Ahavas Yisrael*, R' Eliezer wrote: "Whoever causes pain to another Jew is like one who wounds his own body, for all of Klal Yisroel are one. Let a man imagine that he and his fellow are like two arms of the same body — would one arm ever strike the other?" In the section on *Simchah*, he encouraged: "A person must strengthen himself to serve Hashem with joy, for all that happens to him is for his good, though his eyes may not yet see it." And under *Teshuvah*, he offered hope for all time: "There is no gate locked before tears. Even one who has stumbled all his life can become beloved before Hashem in an instant."

◣ He wrote these lines from lived experience. R' Eliezer's entire life was one long act of *ahavas Yisrael*. His *sefer* was a mirror of his *neshama*.

◣ He also wrote several other works: *Elef HaMagen*, a collection of *derashos* on the Torah; *Chesed L'Alafim*, a halachic commentary on *Orach Chaim*; and *Beis Tefillah Le'Eliezer*, a collection of *tefillos* and *bakashos*. These *seforim* display the full breadth of his Torah mastery and his profound understanding of the human heart.

◣ Many stories were told of R' Eliezer's *chessed* and sensitivity. When a poor widow came to him in tears over her mounting debts, he quietly sold one of his few *seforim* to pay them off.

◣ When a man insulted him publicly in the marketplace, the onlookers were outraged. But R' Eliezer only smiled. "Do you not know," he told them, "How beloved is one who is silent when humiliated? Let him insult me — he is doing me a kindness." That very night, he recorded this teaching in *Peleh Yoetz* under the entry *Bizayon*: "The one who is insulted and remains silent — his sins are forgiven, and he is precious before Hashem."

◣ A young merchant confessed to him that he had cheated in business. R' Eliezer did not rebuke him harshly. Instead, he placed a gentle hand on his shoulder and said, "You can begin again today. Do not despair — every honest act is a crown of honor before Heaven." Years later, that same merchant became one of the community's most generous *baalei tzedakah*, saying it was those few words that changed his life.

◣ He lived entirely *leshem Shomayim*. When a plague of locusts once threatened to destroy the crops around Silistra, the farmers — both Jews and gentiles — came to R' Eliezer in panic. He led them to *daven* with tears, reciting Tehillim and fasting. Miraculously, the locusts changed direction and the crops were spared. Even non-Jews spoke of "the holy rabbi whose prayers save lives."

◣ In 1827 a deadly cholera epidemic swept through the Balkans. When it reached Silistra, fear and grief filled the town. R' Eliezer called for fasting, *teshuvah*, and *tzedakah*. Day and night, he could be found in the shul, *davening* and weeping for mercy. His voice was hoarse, his body weak, but he would not rest.

◣ When the deaths continued, he secluded himself in *tefillah*. He turned to Hashem and declared that he was ready to offer his life in exchange for the lives of his people. Soon afterward, he contracted the very disease he had begged Heaven to remove — and after a brief illness, on 20 Tishrei, during Chol HaMoed Sukkos, *zeman simchaseinu*, his pure *neshama* ascended.

◣ The moment he passed away, the plague ceased. The people of Silistra were overcome with awe. They wept bitterly but felt that he had, indeed, given his life for them. From that time forward, he was known as *R' Eliezer HaKadosh* — the holy Rav.

◣ Before his *petirah*, R' Eliezer made a remarkable promise: whoever would immerse in a *mikveh* and come to *daven* at his *kever* in Silistra with sincerity would have their *tefillos* answered. For nearly two centuries, Jews from all over the world have made the journey to his resting place. Miracles and *yeshuos* have been reported by those who *davened* there, fulfilling his holy words.

◣ His *seforim* were preserved and later published by his son, R' Yehuda Papo, ensuring that his Torah and his teachings would live on. But it was *Peleh Yoetz* that became his eternal legacy.

◣ Over the generations, *Peleh Yoetz* has been embraced by Jews of every background. Sephardic chachamim, Ashkenazic roshei yeshiva, Chassidic rebbes, and simple *baalei batim* have all found in it guidance and comfort. The Ben Ish Chai urged his *talmidim* to study it regularly, calling it "a *sefer* that refines the soul." R' Ovadiah Yosef often quoted from it in his *teshuvos*, referring to its author as "haTzaddik haKadosh." The *Chofetz Chaim* is said to have kept a copy in his home.

◣ Many families have the custom to learn from *Peleh Yoetz* before the *Yomim Noraim* or when facing personal challenges. Its words are simple yet profound, filled with encouragement and light. R' Eliezer's teachings about *shalom bayis*, honesty in business, and patience in suffering remain as relevant as ever.

◣ What gives *Peleh Yoetz* such timeless power is that it speaks directly to the heart. R' Eliezer wrote as a loving father guiding his children. He understood human weakness and did not demand perfection — only sincerity, humility, and the willingness to try again. "A person should not despair," he wrote. "Even a small *mitzvah*, done with joy, is precious in the eyes of Hashem." His life was the embodiment of that message — a life of selflessness, compassion, and complete dedication to Klal Yisrael.

◣ Nearly 200 years have passed since the voice of R' Eliezer Papo was silenced on Sukkos in Silistra, yet his influence only grows. His *sefer* is studied worldwide. His *kever* continues to draw *mispallelim*.

◣ The *Peleh Yoetz* remains as fresh and relevant as the day it was written, a living guide to all who seek truth and closeness to Hashem.

◣ R' Eliezer Papo's life was one long act of *avodas Hashem* — pure, humble, and filled with love for every Jew. His words are indeed a *peleh*, a wonder; and he himself remains the *yo'etz*, the eternal guide — guiding us toward *emunah*, *middos tovos*, and *simchah shel mitzvah*, until the day when all of Klal Yisrael will again rejoice together in the ultimate *zeman simchaseinu*. - *The yahrzeit of R' Eliezer ben R' Avraham Moshe Papo zt"l is on 20 Tishrei (1827). May his merit protect us.*

"Succos comes after Yom Kippur because one needs to be pure from all the sins to be accepted into the spirituality of the succah." – The Shem MiShmuel



Rav Zev Wolf Landau Keser Torah, Zer Zahav (Elul 11)

The Inner Beauty of The Kotzker Rebbes Esrog

Year after year, Yankel took pride in sending the most beautiful *mehudar esrog* to his rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. But that year business wasn't doing well at all. "While things have taken a downturn," thought Yankel, I have a *chazakah* – an annual obligation to fulfil" He did his best and managed to buy the rebbe a beautiful *esrog—one* that was nearly the quality of past years.

This year however, a competitor emerged when wealthy chassid moved in. He challenged Yankel's longstanding tradition of providing the rebbe with a *mehudar esrog,* and having greater means, he sought to outdo him. And in fact, the *esrog* he bought for the Kotzker looked more mehudar than Yankel's!

"Reb Feivel," the Kotzker Rebbe summoned his devoted *gabbai.* The rebbe handed him the two *esrogim and* instructed him to present them before his inner circle of chassidim.

"Show these two esrogim to my dear disciples and to Rav Avrohom, my son-in-law as well. Let us hear their opinion on this matter!"

The *gabbai* returned with their decision. They all agreed; in their opinion, the newer *esrog* was far more mehudar.

The Kotzker was not satisfied though. He turned back to Reb Feivish and asked, "Did you show the two esrogim to Rav Zev Wolf?"

"Zev Wolf? No, I did not."

"Please show the *esrog* to him as well." The Kotzker said.

When Zev Wolf examined the two *esrogim* he declared unequivocally that it was the former *esrog* that was more *mehudar* and that the rebbe should take that one.

When his decision was relayed to the Kotzker, he agreed. The rebbe's son-in-law, Rav Avrohom, author of the *Avnei Nezer* heard the decision, and disagreeing, hurried to his father-in-law's room.

"It seems clear that new esrog is more *mehudar!*"

"If you think so, here-- take it as a gift," the Kotzker said handing his son-in-law the newcomer's *esrog.*

On the first day of *Yom Tov,* the *Avnei Nezer* recited the *brachah* over the new esrog and shook it with the four species. On the second day, however, the *esrog* fell apart!

Hurrying off to Rav Zev Wolf, the Avnei *Nezer* asked in amazement "How did you know? Was it the divine intuition – *ruach hakodesh?*"

"No, no" said Rav Zev Wolf, "it was not that!" he assured the *Avnei Nezer*. "I saw that the rebbe was asking us to decide between two *esrogim*-- one clearly more externally beautiful than the other. I just knew there must be something more to his request . . ."



Searching for the Perfect Hadasim

Rabbi Eliezer Yudakovski *shlita* relates the following: In my younger years, I once went out to look for *hadassim* for my *lulav*. In those days, finding truly beautiful *hadasim* was one of the hardest tasks when it came to *Arba Minim*. They weren't sorted and packaged as they are today. The branches arrived in buckets, and one had to examine them carefully — checking each *hadas* one by one, measuring the distances between the leaves, and so on.

Of course, I wasn't the only one in the *Arba Minim* market. Many Jews came to buy *hadasim*, and it was far from simple to find

beautiful ones among all those branches that others had already gone through, selecting the best.

So, I decided to travel farther. I went to Petach Tikva, thinking that there weren't as many *bnei Torah* there as in Bnei Brak, and therefore I might find *hadasim* more easily.

I searched the entire day and finally found three branches of *hadas*: two were truly beautiful, and the third was very fine — but had a tiny imperfection.

I brought the three *hadasim* to Maran **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman**, who in those years still received people with questions about the *Arba Minim*, until his eyesight weakened somewhat and he stopped answering such questions.

Rav Shteinman examined the *hadasim* and said to me: "Two of these are excellent, but the third could be better… it would be worthwhile to buy another one!"

I said to Maran, "But I already spent an entire day searching for these *hadasim*!"

He replied: "Nu, what's the problem? Then invest one more day — and you'll have three *hadasim* of the highest beauty!"

The next day, I traveled again to Petach Tikva, and after several hours of effort, I succeeded in finding the most beautiful *hadas* of all.

The Sfas Emes describes the sukkah as an "or makif," a surrounding spiritual light. Unlike other mitzvos, the sukkah envelops a person completely. Even someone who feels spiritually distant is lifted by simply being inside it. The sukkah reveals a holiness that surrounds and elevates us beyond our usual limits. We are literally surrounded by kedushah.

Ushpizin Ila'in — The Special Sukkos Guests



On Sukkos there is a widespread *minhag Yisrael* to invite the *Ushpizin* to the *sukkah*. What are they? Do they come one by one, or do all seven come every single night? In which order do they come? Does one need a *panim chadashos* if he makes *Sheva Berachos* on Sukkos? Everyone knows that there are seven *Ushpizin,* are there any other guests which come to visit on Sukkos?

What Does the Word "*Ushpizin*" Mean?

The term "*Ushpizin*" is Aramaic for "guests." In the language of *Chazal*, "*Ushpizin*" refers to the seven exalted shepherds of Klal Yisrael — Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David — whose souls, according to the teachings of the *Zohar*, visit the *sukkah* of every Jew during the seven days of Sukkos.

The Yom Tov of Sukkos is unique, and not only do we welcome physical guests, especially the needy, but we also welcome these supernatural guests, the *Ushpizin*, the holy shepherds of Klal Yisrael.

The *Ushpizin* Arrive Each Day of Sukkos

All seven *Ushpizin* arrive every single day, like we say in the *nussach* which we recite to invite them, "*Tivu, Tivu* ***Ushpizin Ila'in***" — "Come, **exalted guests**." Since the invitation is in the plural, it implies that all seven enter the *sukkah*.

From the continuation of the *nussach* we recite it is also clear that they all come every day. However, each day one of them is the main guest — Avraham on day one, Yitzchak on day two, and so on and the rest come along with him.

The *Zohar* instructs that upon entering the *sukkah*, one should invite the *Ushpizin* with joy and a shining countenance. The *Shelah*

HaKadosh (*Sukkah, Amud HaShalom*) and the *Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah* (*Sha'ar* 11, *HaItun, Perek* 13) add that one should invite them every time he sits down to eat in the *sukkah*, day or night.

The *Shelah HaKadosh* writes that when entering the *sukkah*, one should verbally invite these exalted souls, as it is a splendor for them when they are able to surround a person spiritually from all sides, as described by Rav Hamnuna Saba in the *Zohar*.

Inviting the Poor

The *Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah* writes sharply quoting the *Zohar*: If one does not invite the *Ushpizin*, they do not come. Similarly, if one does not gladden the hearts of the poor, the *Ushpizin* do not enter his *sukkah*.

He concludes: The entire year there is an obligation to learn Torah at the table, and especially on Sukkos in order to honor the seven *Ushpizin*. The main way to show them honor is to learn by the table, sing *zemiros,* and to invite poor people.

The *Shelah HaKadosh* writes that one should try very hard to have guests on Sukkos to take part in his meals, and if no poor people are available, one should send food to their homes or give *tzedakah* in their merit.

The *Pele Yoetz* and *Moad L'chol Chai* advise giving money to *tzedokah* on *erev* Sukkos, and before giving it one should split it into seven portions and say aloud: "This is for the portion of Avraham, the holy guest… This is for Yitzchak etc."

The *Elef HaMagen* (on *Mateh Ephraim s.k.* 58) brings from *Seforim HaKedoshim* that one should host at least one poor person each day of Sukkos and give him an honorable portion of food treating him as if he is the *ushpiza* of that day.

If possible, one should invite seven poor people every day corresponding to the seven *Ushpizin*. One who does this will have lots of *berachah*.

The *Ushpizin* Chair

The *Chida* writes in *Avodas HaKodesh* that one should prepare a beautiful chair or bench, covered with a distinguished cloth, in honor of the *Ushpizin Ila'in* — the special guests who enter the *sukkah*. He compares this to the chair of Eliyahu HaNavi prepared at a *bris milah*. If the chair is not prepared and designated, Eliyahu does not appear — for Eliyahu HaNavi does not come without an invitation.

By extension, the same applies to the *Ushpizin*: If they are not invited, they do not arrive.

Various Different Customs in Honor of the *Ushpizin*

There are many beautiful customs that are practiced in honor of the *Ushpizin*.

The *Siddur* of the *Chida* brings that one should add at the end of *Birchas HaMazon*: **הרחמן הוא ישפיע עלינו שפע קדשה וטהרה, משבעה אושפיזין עלאין קדישין זכותם תהא מגן וצנה עלינו** - "*May the Merciful One bestow upon us holiness and purity from the seven exalted Ushpizin. May their merits protect and shield us.*"

Some say during *zimun*: **ברשות מורי ורבותי - וברשות שבעה אושפיזין עלאין** - "*With permission of my teachers and rabbis — and with permission of the seven Ushpizin Ila'in.*"

The *Toras Emes* brings that *tzadikim* would attribute special sanctity to people whose names matched the *Ushpizin*. There is also a custom in some communities to give *aliyos* to those whose names correspond to the *Ushpizin* of that day.

The *Elef L'Mateh* (*Mateh Ephraim* 625:109) writes that one should give a *devar* Torah each day on the theme of that day's *Ushpizin*.

A Remarkable *Chiddush*

The *Betzel HaChochmah* (2:1) cites the *Avodas Yisrael* who says: If one makes a *Sheva Berachos* during *Chol HaMoed* Sukkos, the *Ushpizin* count as "*panim chadashos*" and there is no need for any

new guests. He concludes, however, that the *Avodas Yisrael* himself did not rule this way in practice, and it is difficult to rule accordingly due to the rule of *safek berachos lehakel*.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (639 *s.k.* 2) brings from the *Maharil* and so is the implication of the *Shulchan Aruch* (639:1) that if one wants to talk with his friends he should speak in the *sukkah,* like one would do in his house due to the principle of "*teishvu kein taduru*" – "one should make his *sukkah* like his house." It is clear from the *Sha'ar HaTziyun* (*s.k.* 4) that even whilst talking, one gets a mitzvah of sitting in the *sukkah*.

However, the *Shlah* argues and says that one shouldn't speak idle chatter in the *sukkah,* and one should only speak Torah. By being careful with this, Hashem will bestow upon the person *kedusha* and *tahara* from the *Ushpizin,* which will help one be successful in all his endeavors.

Shalom Aleichem

The *Shu"t Vayechi Yaakov* (*siman* 30) writes: Those who say *Shalom Aleichem* on Sukkos should invite the *Ushpizin* after *Shalom Aleichem*.

The Belzer Rebbe, R' Yissochar Dov *zt"l,* explained: First we greet the *malachim* — for they are already present. Then we invite the *Ushpizin* — who must be summoned.

In the *Haggadah Shel Pesach* of Pressburg (pg. 63) they relate that Rav Shlomah Eliezer Alpandari *zt"l* (author of *sefer Shu"t Hasaba Kadisha*) once related that he spent Sukkos in Presburg together with the *Chasam Sofer* and he and all that were present saw the *Ushpizin* enter the *sukkah*.

Some Additional Sukkos Guests – Eliyahu HaNavi, the *Imahos* and Shlomah HaMelech

The Moroccan community has a custom to prepare a special chair for Eliyahu in the *sukkah* as well, placing holy *sefarim* upon it. The *Nitei*

Gavriel (Sukkos, pg. 28) explains this based on a teaching of the Belzer Rebbe (*Midbar Kodesh*) who teaches that Eliyahu HaNavi also comes to dwell in the *Tzila d'Mehemenusa*, this is hinted at in the *pasuk*: **בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים** – "you shall dwell in *sukkos* for seven days" which has the *roshei teivos* **תשבי** , the name of Eliyahu.

The *Midbar Kodesh* (*Mo'adim*, Sukkos, pg. 91) further writes that the *pasuk*: **כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסכת** – "every member of Klal Yisrael shall sit in the *sukkah*" hints at the fact that even attributes leaning toward judgment are sweetened through the *sukkah*. He then writes that the word "Ezrach" when spelt in full, equals the *gematria* of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, Leah — indicating that the four *Imahos* also enter the *sukkah* together with the *Avos*, arousing mercy and compassion upon Klal Yisrael.

It is recorded in the name of the Ruzhiner Rebbe that he would invite Shlomah HaMelech as the "eighth guest" on Shemini Atzeres

We have added that Eliyahu HaNavi comes to the *sukkah,* as well as the *Imahos,* Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah. And on Shemini Atzeres Shlomo HaMelech arrives.

So, when building your *sukkah* make sure there is lots of spare room.

There are different *minhagim* regarding the order we invite *Ushpizin*. Some prepare a special chair or light seven candles in their honor. The main way to honor them is to recite *divrei* Torah at the table, to sing *zemiros*, and to support the poor.

Tzaddikim attribute special merit to those whose names match the *Ushpizin* of the day. Some communities give them *aliyos* or the honor of lighting the *Ushpizin* candles.

The order of the *Ushpizin* according to *Chassidim* and Sephardim is according to the order of the *sefiros*: *Chesed* – Avraham, *Gevurah* – Yitzchak, *Tiferes* – Yaakov, *Netzach* – Moshe, *Hod* – Aharon, *Yesod* – Yosef, *Malchus* – David.

According to Ashkenazim the order is according to the generations: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, David and some say: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Aharon, Moshe, David.

Some suggest that during *Chol HaMoed* Sukkos, the *Ushpizin* count as *panim chadashos*, eliminating the need for new guests when it comes to reciting *Shevah Berachos*. Practically, this is difficult to rely upon and the rule is *safek berachos lehakel*.

On Shabbos during Sukkos there are different customs regarding *Shalom Aleichem, Eishes Chayil,* and *Azamer Bishvachin*. Those who say *Shalom Aleichem* should first greet the *malachim*, then invite the *Ushpizin* — as the Belzer Rebbe explained: The *malachim* are already present; the *Ushpizin* must still be invited.



Sukkos — Elevating the Physical World by Rabbi Aaron Litwin

Sukkos is **זמן שמחתנו**, the happiest Yom Tov, and also **חג האסיף**, a time of abundance. Yet we read **קהלת**, which repeats **הבל הבלים**. Why introduce such a message during a festival of joy?

And why is Sukkos associated with **יעקב**, and why do we make a **ברכה** on **לישב בסוכה** every time we enter — unlike **מצה** on Pesach?

1. The Three Avos and Three Modes of Serving Hashem

The **פסוק** says: "**ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך.**"

The **בעל הטורים** explains:

- **אברהם— בכל לבבך** Represents the heart, emotional devotion.
- **יצחק— בכל נפשך** Represents life itself, mesirus nefesh.
- **יעקב— בכל מאדך** Represents possessions, material resources.

Yaakov's avodah is the elevation of **גשמיות**.

2. Yaakov's Unique Power — Connecting Physical and Spiritual

Yaakov's "ladder" symbolizes the bridge between:

- **עולם הזה**— the physical world
- **עולם הבא**— the spiritual world

The ladder's **גימטריא** equals **ממון** and **סיני**, teaching that money and Torah can be connected and elevated.

Yaakov's declaration: "**וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך**" is the essence of **מעשר** — transforming material wealth into spiritual purpose.

Yaakov lived in the world of **לבן** yet maintained full **רוחניות**. His vision of the **בית המקדש** was a **בית**, a home — the place of ordinary physical life — showing that holiness is found within the physical, not apart from it.

3. What Sukkos Represents

Sukkos is the Yom Tov of elevating the physical world.

Three central mitzvos:

- **ישיבה בסוכה** We take wood, leaves, and physical materials and turn them into **צילא דמהימנותא**— a space of **קדושה**.
- **ארבעה מינים** Physical plants become instruments of spiritual elevation.
- **ניסוך המים** Even simple water is lifted to the **מזבח**, fulfilling the lower waters' desire to rise.

Sukkos and Yaakov share the same theme: bringing **גשמיות** upward.

4. Why We Make a Bracha Every Time

On Pesach, once we eat **מצה**, the mitzvah is fulfilled. But Sukkos is not a single act — it is a way of living. Eating, sleeping, and daily life inside the **סוכה** become acts of **קדושה**. Therefore, every entry is a new moment of elevation, requiring a new **ברכה**.

5. Koheles and Sukkos

Koheles is not depressing — it is clarifying.

When physicality is treated as the goal, it is **הבל הבלים**. But when physicality is used as a vehicle for **קדושה**, it becomes meaningful and elevated.

This is the message of:

- Sukkos — elevate the physical
- Yaakov — connect earth and heaven
- Koheles — physicality is empty unless it is uplifted

Sukkos teaches that holiness is not escape from the physical world — it is the transformation of the physical world. Yaakov embodies this mission, and Koheles warns us not to mistake physicality for the destination.

Sukkos is the celebration of using the world correctly — turning **גשמיות** into **רוחניות**.

Chag HaAsif

The Alexander Rebbe, the *Tiferes Shmuel*, brings a beautiful insight: Why is Sukkos called *Chag HaAsif* - the Festival of Gathering?

Because this Yom Tov has a unique power to bring all Jews together. The *sukkah* itself, with its four walls, represents the idea of embracing all kinds of Jews no matter their level of observance, background, or knowledge. We bring the Four Species into the *sukkah* to show that every Jew belongs, and every Jew matters.

On Sukkos, we step into a space of unity, we hold tightly to one another, and we declare: The strength of Klal Yisrael lies in our togetherness.

The Weekly Vort

■ An Easy Mitzvah

Hashem's shade protects us, even if we are exempt from sitting in the *sukkah*, as when it rains or one does not feel well. For the *mitzvah* is to dwell in the *sukkah* as one normally dwells in his house. If one leaves his house, it is still his house, although he is away from home. So too, the protective shade of the holiness of the *sukkah* remains with us, even if circumstances prevent us from sitting in it. The *mitzvah* of sukkah is termed "an easy mitzvah," because one can fulfill it even if he is exempt. (Divrei Chaim)

■ Pesach And Sukkos

Why did the Torah institute two Yomim Tovim – Pesach and Sukkos – to commemorate the same event: *yetzias Mitzrayim*. A possible answer may be that Pesach calls to mind that Hashem redeemed the Jews from Egyptian bondage. Afterwards, they rose to an exalted spiritual level when Hashem surrounded them with the seven Clouds of Glory. This glorious spiritual elevation had to be remembered by a separate Yom Tov – Succos. (Tzvi LaTzaddik)

■ Smooth Sailing

I had the children of Yisroel live in huts (Vayikrah 23:43). The Chidah notes that it really should say, "I had the children of Yisroel travel through the wilderness." He explains: The Midrash says that throughout their wanderings in the wilderness, the Jews were nestled comfortably inside the Clouds of Glory, much like a passenger sailing aboard a ship. The ship crosses the ocean while he relaxes, enjoying the sun and the cool sea breeze. The "huts" in the wilderness were the Clouds of Glory. Like an ocean liner crossing the sea, the Clouds of Glory gently carried Bnei Yisroel to their destination in Eretz Yisroel. (Chomas Anoch)



A Novel Insight into the Age-Old Question of Why We Celebrate Sukkos in Tishrei *(Devar Torah is from the sefer U'Matok Ha'oir)*

There is a well-known and famous question asked regarding the Yom Tov of Sukkos: Since Sukkos comes to commemorate *Yetzias* Mitzrayim — "So that your generations may know that I made the children of Yisrael dwell in *sukkos* when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" — why do we not celebrate Sukkos in Nissan, the month of redemption?

The *Tur* explains: If we were to build *sukkahs* in Nissan, it would appear as though we were simply moving into our summer cottages. But when we go out to the *sukkah* in Tishrei, it is clear that we do so for the sake of the mitzvah.

A Deeper Explanation from Rabbi Shlomo Kluger *zt"l*

The Gemara tells of a Jew who took a non-Jewish woman, and Rava decreed lashes upon him. As a result, the sinner's soul departed. When this reached the house of Shabur HaMelech he sought revenge against Rava. But Iphra Hormiz, Shabur's mother, heard of her son's plan and warned him: "My royal son, do not harm the Jews — it is dangerous to start up with them!

Why?

Because they merely pray, and their G-d grants their request. For example: when rain does not fall, they pray — and He sends rain."

A Story from Yemen

An elderly Yemenite Jew once told me — he was over ninety years old and remembered his childhood in the *cheder* in Yemen. There was a terrible drought, and the Yishmaelim announced to the Jews: "If by tomorrow no rain falls, we will slaughter you all — for only you can

bring rain." And when an Arab promises, he fulfills — especially when it comes to slaughtering Jews.

The old man recalled: His rebbe gathered all the children into the *Beis HaMedrash* and said, "We will now recite *Tehillim* until rain falls — woe to anyone who stops!" They did not leave the *Beis HaMedrash* until all of Yemen had turned to mud.

That is what Iphra Hormiz meant: "One does not start up with Jews."

Rava's Test

Her son replied: "The Jews *daven* for rain in the winter — let's see them get rain in summer!" So Iphra Hormiz sent word to Rava to *daven* for rain in Tammuz, to avert her son's decree.

Rava *davened* — but was not answered. He then said before Hashem: "Ribbono Shel Olam! 'Elokim, we have heard with our ears; our fathers have told us the work You performed in their days, in days of old.' You performed miracles beyond nature for our fathers — and we have not seen such with our own eyes." His *tefillah* was accepted, and rain poured down so heavily that the gutters of Mechoza overflowed into the *Chidekel* River.

That night, Rava's father appeared to him in a dream and warned: "You have troubled הקב"ה to bring rain out of season — against the natural order. There is anger upon you; the destructive forces seek to harm you. Do not sleep in your bed tonight."

In the morning, Rava found his bed torn apart by the swords of the demons.

Rabbi Shlomah Kluger explains: We begin the year with the Yamim Noraim — Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Who knows what decrees may have been written? During the days of *teshuvah*, we cried and pleaded that Hashem have mercy, annul harsh decrees, and change the plan for good. We troubled Hashem to alter the natural order — to overturn what was meant to be according to our deeds. Now, who

knows what danger may result from that? Perhaps the destructive forces have already filed their petition and are sharpening their swords.

Therefore, Hashem tells us: "Leave your homes; do not sleep in your fixed bed. Go hide in the *sukkah*." As the *pasuk* says: "For He will hide me in His *sukkah* on the day of evil; He will conceal me in the shelter of His tent." There, you will be protected from harm.

The Sukkah They Burned by Rabbi Fischel Schachter

There once stood an extraordinary sukkah in Yerushalayim. It was unlike any other sukkah in the city. Its seven magnificent wooden panels had been brought all the way from Europe. They had been fashioned by a previous Rebbe who was himself a talented artist, and the walls were adorned with intricate artwork and holy names. Each panel was special. The Ushpizin were represented upon its walls.

This was not simply a structure in which someone happened to eat his Yom Tov meals. This sukkah was a work of holiness. When its owner first brought the enormous wooden boards through the port of Jaffa, the local Arabs laughed. Who schleps giant wooden panels all the way from Europe? But once the sukkah was assembled in Yerushalayim, people understood.

Word spread throughout the city. People came just to see it. Great rabbanim and mekubalim visited it. **Rabbi Shmuel Salant**, the legendary Rav of Yerushalayim, came as well. By then, his eyesight had deteriorated severely. He could no longer appreciate the magnificent artwork with his eyes. But when he entered, he sensed something. He breathed in the atmosphere. He felt the kedushah.

Other great mekubalim came with their talmidim and spent hours learning inside its walls. Year after year, the sukkah became a destination. A place of Torah. A place of kedushah. A place of simchah.

And then, one year — It disappeared. Where Was the Sukkah?

Sukkos arrived. The Chassidim came expecting to see those familiar seven walls. Instead, they found an ordinary sukkah. They were stunned. "Rebbe, where is the sukkah?" No answer. "What happened to it?" Silence. "Was it stolen?" The Rebbe wouldn't explain.

The magnificent sukkah that had been carried from Europe, that had hosted great tzaddikim and mekubalim, was simply gone. And no one knew why.

One year passed. Then another. The question remained unanswered. Until thirteen years later.

Thirteen years after the sukkah disappeared, there was a great celebration. A boy was becoming bar mitzvah. The Chassidim of Yerushalayim were invited. A large crowd gathered for the simchah. And during the celebration, the Rebbe stood up. He looked around the room. Then he said: "Tonight, I am going to answer a question you asked me thirteen years ago."

Everyone listened. They knew immediately what he meant. The sukkah. What had happened to those seven magnificent boards?

The Rebbe began to explain. Thirteen years earlier, a terrible typhus epidemic had struck. People were becoming desperately ill. Children were dying. Medical care was primitive, and there was often little that could be done.

One family had just welcomed a newborn baby. And then the baby became sick. Very sick. The doctors examined the child. There was one treatment, they said, that might help. Hot baths. Today, that sounds simple. Turn on a faucet. Fill a tub. But Yerushalayim in those days was a very different place. Hot water didn't simply come from a faucet. If you wanted hot water, you had to heat it. And to heat it — You needed wood.

There was just one problem. The Turkish authorities had confiscated the available wood for the soldiers. There was virtually

no firewood to be found. People were freezing. Families couldn't simply go out and purchase wood. And now this father was being told that his baby's life might depend upon something he could not obtain. Wood.

The desperate father ran to the Rebbe. He was crying. "The doctors say my baby needs hot baths." "But there is no wood." "What am I supposed to do?" "My baby is going to die."

The Rebbe listened. And then he had an idea. There was wood. Seven large, beautiful pieces of wood. Wood that had traveled all the way from Europe. Wood that had been carefully decorated. Wood upon which holy names had been placed. Wood that had formed one of the most magnificent sukkahs in Yerushalayim.

The Rebbe went to get his sukkah. He carefully removed the holy names that could not be destroyed. Then he handed over the boards.

The father must have been stunned. These were the famous walls of the sukkah. The walls that people came from across Yerushalayim to see. The walls within which great rabbanim and mekubalim had learned Torah.

But the Rebbe wasn't finished. He stood there together with the father. And they began cutting the boards. Piece by piece. The magnificent sukkah was chopped apart. Then they placed the wood into the fire. The boards burned. The water became hot. And the sick baby was bathed.

Again and again, the wood from that precious sukkah provided the hot water the child desperately needed. And the baby survived.

The Rebbe looked around the the bar mitzvah celebration. Then he revealed the reason he had finally chosen to tell the story. "If you want to know why there is a bar mitzvah here tonight — it is because we burned the sukkah." The child whose life had been saved thirteen years earlier — was the bar mitzvah boy standing before them.



Making Room

A distinguished Yerushalmi, **Reb Shmuel Belchavitz***, lived with his large family in Yerushalayim. For years, he had built his sukkah on the balcony of their apartment, but as his children grew older and the family grew larger, the little sukkah could no longer hold everyone comfortably.

His sons therefore decided one year that they would build a large sukkah downstairs in the courtyard. They measured the area carefully, purchased walls to the exact dimensions they needed, and spent hours laboring over the construction. Finally, after considerable effort, the sukkah stood complete.

Then came a knock at the door. It was one of the neighbors. "Part of your sukkah," he informed them, "is standing in the place where I park my car. I want you to take it apart and move it somewhere else."

Reb Shmuel tried to reason with him. The sukkah had already been built, his sons had invested hours of hard work, and it was only for the eight days of Sukkos. Perhaps, just this once, the neighbor could park elsewhere.

The neighbor would not hear of it. The space was his, he insisted, and he did not grant them permission to use it.

When the sons heard what had happened, they were furious. "What does he care if he parks somewhere else for eight days?" they argued. Then they started with halachic reasoning, claiming that it was not at all clear that the spot belonged exclusively to this neighbor. All the residents shared rights to the area, so why should they dismantle an entire sukkah because of one unreasonable demand?

Reb Shmuel listened and then gave them his answer. "I will not sit in a sukkah that causes another Jew pain. If you want me to eat my Yom Tov meals in this sukkah, take it apart and move it."



That was the end of the discussion. - Reluctantly, the sons began again. They dismantled the sukkah they had spent hours constructing, carried the pieces to another part of the courtyard, and rebuilt the entire structure, this time in a place that fully satisfied the neighbor.

The first day of Sukkos passed. Late that night, after Yom Tov had ended, the family was asleep in their sukkah when they were suddenly awakened by tremendous crashes from across the courtyard. - They rushed outside.

Three enormous Jerusalem stones had broken loose from high above and crashed directly onto…the parking spot where their sukkah had originally stood. The neighbor's car was crushed under them.

The family stared at the wreckage. Had they refused to move their sukkah, their children would have been sleeping in that exact spot. The outcome scarcely needed imagining.

Reb Shmuel had given up a perfectly reasonable argument because he refused to cause another Jew anguish. He had insisted on making room for someone else, even when he believed he did not have to. Only later did they discover what else had been made room for. - Their lives.

They made room for another Jew — and Heaven made room for them to live.

It states, **ושמחת בחגך... והיית אך שמח**. **The Abarbanel** writes, "This pasuk is a guarantee: If you are happy on Succos, you will be happy the entire year."

The Ibn Ezra on the pasuk **ושמחת בחגך** (Devarim 16: 14-16) writes that if we are happy on Succos, we are blessed to be happy forever.

כפת תמרים

Rebbe Elazar of Germayza, zt"l, author of HaRokeach, elaborates on this Mitzvah. The Torah begins with the letter **ב (בראשית)** and ends with the letter **ל (ישראל)**, and the Sifrei Nach begin with the letter **ו (ויהי)** in Sefer Yehoshua, and end in Divrei Hayamim II with the letter **ל (ויעל)**.

The letters that begin and end the Torah and Nach, join together to form the word **לולב**. This hints to us that whoever fulfils the Mitzvah of Lulav properly, it is as if he has fulfilled everything that is written in the Torah and other Holy Writings.

Faith All Year Round

Satmar Rebbe

The Gemara (Sukkah 26a) learns from the *pasuk* that one should dwell in his sukkah for the seven days of Yom Tov just as he dwells in his house all year.

But it goes both ways: A person must always remember to dwell in his house with the same *kedushah* (holiness) and respectful attitude that he has while living in his sukkah. Just as he dwells in the "Shelter of Faith" for seven days, he must incorporate *emunah* in his home all year round.

Protecting Our Spark - Sefas Emes

Every Jew has within him an inner spark of G-dliness that is rekindled every year during the High Holy Days. Such a frail spark needs protection, and the succah provides it. It was to this spark that the Psalmist referred in the promise (29:11), **ה' עז לעמו יתן** to His people.

The Most Beautiful Decor

Divrei Chaim of Sanz

People are accustomed to decorate their sukkah with all kinds of beautiful adornments. But the beauty of my sukkah is different: *Tzedakah* - charity, that is what makes my sukkah beautiful!

What Really Matters

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

When **Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi zt'l** began to disseminate his teachings, many young men flocked to him and became his ardent followers, despite the prevailing opposition to the *chassidic* movement. They found that *chassidus* injected a new vitality and joy into serving Hashem that was lacking in traditional Judaism.

Among the newly converted *chassidim* were two sons of a leading Torah scholar of the time.

One day, they approached the Ba'al HaTanya with a dilemma that had been on their minds for some time:

Should they attempt to win their father over to the *chassidic* approach to serving Hashem, as they found it spiritually fulfilling, or was he too set in his ways to change his lifestyle?

"Tell me," asked the Rebbe, "does your eminent father perform *mitzvos* with joy?"

"Every year," related one of the sons in reply, "when we finish building our sukkah, our father climbs onto a bench and kisses every piece of the *s'chach*."

"In that case," said the Ba'al HaTanya, "don't worry. He's fine just the way he is!"

The Finest Decoration

Rabbi Avraham Twerski

It is customary to have beautiful decorations in the sukkah. But the sukkah of the Tzaddik of Sanz was bare, with no decorations. "The finest beautification of the Sukkah is to give the money for the decorations to the poor," he said.

It is said that the neshamah of **R' Naftali of Ropshitz** was related to the *mitzvah* of sukkah. Every day of the year he would speak about the sukkah, learn the laws of the sukkah, or do something for the sukkah.

Proper Priorities

Dzikover Rebbe

A chassid asked the Dzikover before Sukkos to grant him a blessing that he should have exceptionally fine *hadasim*, *aravos*, *lulav* and *esrog* for the festival.

The Rebbe replied: "What you need for Sukkos is a kind heart, a humble spirit, a truthful mind, and the will to perfect yourself. After you have attained these, it will be time to concern yourself regarding an exceptionally fine set of the symbols for Sukkos." (Namely, "First attain '*Arba Middos*,' and then acquire '*Arba Minnim*.'")

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

Sometimes the most powerful moments in life begin with the smallest, simplest decision. The following remarkable story is retold by **Rabbi Fischel Schachter *shlita***, and the lesson it imparts will last for generations.

A secular Israeli couple living in the southern part of the land of Israel, decided one year to build a *Sukkah*. Why? They really weren't sure themselves. "Our kids know almost nothing about Judaism," said the wife. "Let's build a *Sukkah*, just so they have something, some connection to their religion."

Her husband was surprised. "But we're not religious. In fact, we are quite leftist. What will our friends say?"

His wife smiled and answered with a sharp retort. "Yeah, well ... sometimes when you go far enough to the left, you wind up on the right," she argued.

So they built it. They headed outside and gathered branches from a palm tree that stood outside their home to use as *schach*, the covering for the *Sukkah*. It was a small act of just one *mitzvah*, but to the family, it meant a lot.

Then came the horror of October 7th. The sirens, the terror, the rockets. The morning air shattered under a relentless barrage of siren wails and thunderous explosions, giving way to an immediate, paralyzing dread as shouts in Arabic and the cold, metallic rhythm of automatic gunfire echoed through the streets outside.

Inside the darkness of the heavy metal-doomed *mamad*, the reinforced safe rooms that were meant to protect, families huddled in breathless silence, parents desperately wrapping their arms around crying children while applying every ounce of strength to hold the heavy iron door handle shut against the unimaginable nightmare prowling outside, just inches away.

Every step on the gravel, every shatter of glass, and every frantic whisper on the radio magnified an agonizing suspense, where seconds stretched into an infinity of pure survival instinct and desperate prayers amidst the unfolding terror of that black morning.

The family ran into their *mamad*, as terrorists stormed their community. Once inside, the father gripped the door handle as hard as he could, while terrorists on the other side of the door tried again and again to break it open. Eventually, the terrorists gave up, but not without leaving their mark. With murderous malice and intent, they lit the house on fire, as flames began to rapidly spread, consuming the house.

The door handle, jammed from the struggle, wouldn't budge, leaving the family trapped inside the safe room, their only option being to escape through the open window.

"Are you crazy?" the wife cried. "There are terrorists outside! How can we go out the window?"

"We have no choice," her husband said. "If we don't, we'll die here from the fire and smoke."

So, one by one, the family climbed out of the window and into a world of carnage and fear. And then they began to run toward a palm tree. Its low branches offered a fragile shield, enabling them to camouflage as they crouched and hid.

Craven Hamas fighters, looking for more innocents to kill, passed by again and again, yet they never noticed them.

At one point the father said, "Look over there. I think I see a better place to hide - a burnt-out shelter across the street. Let's leave this exposed tree and run for it." But his wife stopped him. "*Hashem* has saved us here. They pass by but somehow they don't see us. Let's stay."

And they did. They stayed by that tree until, hours later, they were rescued.

When they finally emerged, they saw that their home had been burned to the ground. Everything was gone. Except one thing. The *sukkah*. It remained untouched. And then they turned back and looked again at the tree that had sheltered them. It was the very palm tree from which they had taken the *schach*.

Rabbi Schachter concludes the story with the following lesson. This is what happens when a Jew, no matter how distant, makes even a small decision to reconnect. One *mitzvah*. One step. One action to say, "I want to live a life of meaning. I want to give my children something to hold onto." And in return, *Hashem* gives us shelter. Sometimes, quite literally.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

In the world of European Jewry before the war, two great spiritual philosophies flourished side by side: the fervent, mystical devotion of *Chassidim*, and the razor-sharp, exacting devotion to Halachic law exemplified by the Lithuanian *yeshivah* tradition. Few stories capture the meeting of these worlds quite as gracefully as an incident involving the **Brisker Rov, R' Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik *zt"l***, and an ardent *chasid* of the **Divrei Chaim, R' Chaim Halberstam *zt"l* of Sanz**.

While staying at the famous Krenetz bathhouse, the *Brisker Rov* was hosted by a member of the renowned Englander family, a devout follower of the *Sanzer* dynasty. One morning, as the host observed his distinguished guest preparing for morning prayers, he noticed something that deeply unsettled him. The *Brisker Rov* was looking directly into a mirror to adjust his head *tefillin*.

To a *Sanzer Chassid*, this was practically unthinkable. The *Divrei Chaim* had written an explicit *halachic* ruling forbidding men from looking in mirrors, viewing it as an act of vanity and contrary to the spirit of *tefillah*. To the host, seeing a great leader act directly against his *Rebbe's* teachings felt like a slight against the *Divrei*

Chaim himself. Yet, out of profound reverence for the *Brisker Rov's* formidable *Torah* scholarship, Mr. Englander refused to confront him directly or cause him embarrassing distress. Instead, he devised a subtle, respectful protest.

Before serving the morning meal, the host carefully placed a volume of *Divrei Chaim* on the dining table, the *sefer* in which the *Sanzer Rav* provides *teshuvos* to some of the most difficult *halachic* questions, leaving it open to the exact page where the *Sanzer Rav* condemned the use of mirrors. In this way, he aimed to get his point across in a respectful fashion.

When the *Brisker Rov* sat down to eat, he immediately noticed the open *sefer* on the table and after reading the *teshuva* to which it was open, he caught the host's quiet message. Rather than taking offense or launching into a cold, complex Talmudic debate, the *Rov* smiled gently and spoke to his host in a language the *chasid* could deeply appreciate.

"I see what you have done and I appreciate the subtlety," the *Rov* said warmly. "Since you are a *chasid*, let me explain myself to you in the spirit of *Chassidus*. This is a manner in which you can understand."

The *Brisker Rov* then recounted a famous story about the *Divrei Chaim* himself. One year on *Sukkos*, a downpour struck the town of Sanz. According to *halacha*, heavy rain exempts a person from staying in the *Sukkah*. In fact, the *Gemara* notes that someone who insists on staying in the *Sukkah* when exempt is considered a *"Hedyot"* - a foolish layman. Yet, the *Divrei Chaim* refused to leave his beloved *Sukkah*, braving the pouring rain to remain surrounded by the holy walls.

When his students asked how he could ignore the Rabbinic label, the *Sanzer Rav* answered, "I am perfectly willing to be called a *hedyot*, a fool, as long as I get to sit in the *Sukkah*."

Looking up at his host, the *Brisker Rov* delivered his gentle punchline: "The *Divrei Chaim* was willing to be called a simpleton just to cherish the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah*. Likewise, I am willing to go against the *Divrei Chaim's* personal warning about mirrors, as long as I ensure my *tefillin* are positioned in the absolute exact location required by the *Aibishter*."

For the *Brisker Rov*, precise *halachic* placement was his passion; for the *Divrei Chaim*, it was the warmth of the *mitzvah* itself.

Two distinct spiritual paths met in complete mutual respect, proving that while their methods differed, their ultimate devotion was one and the same.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker - Burst of Inspiration: Succos and the Brilliance of the Vilna Gaon

Let me share with you one of my favourite **סוכות דברי תורה**, which I heard probably over 30 years ago, a magnificent idea. It involves a story with the **וילנא גאון**.

A person had learnt **מסכת סוכה**. He had learnt it so well that he felt confident enough to go to the **וילנא גאון** to be tested (brave man). And although he may have learnt the **מסכת** backwards and forwards, **גמרא, רש"י, תוספות, ראשונים, אחרונים**, he was not expecting the first question.

The first question was, says the **וילנא גאון** to this man, "How many times does this **מסכת** make reference to a **כשר סוכה** and to a **פסול סוכה**?"

Now, you can learn the **מסכת**, but there's no way you're going to know that. The **וילנא גאון** said, "There are 91 references to a **כשר סוכה** and 85 to a **פסול סוכה**. And the **רמז** is that **סוכה** can be spelt **מלא** or **חסר**. It can be spelt full, **סוכה**, or it can be spelt **סכה-חסר** . If it's spelt **מלא**, the **גימטריא** is 91. Spelt **חסר** is 85.

So amazingly there are 91 references to a **כשר סוכה** and 85 times a **פסול סוכה** appears in the **מסכת**."

There's an amazing **חשק שלמה**. The **חשק שלמה** in the beginning of **מסכת סוכה, דף ב׳**, says the following. He notes a fascinating point: Why is it that **סוכה** throughout the **גמרא** and **שולחן ערוך** is spelt **מלא**, but throughout **תנ״ך** it's spelt **חסר**, **סמ״ך כ״ף ה״א**? Why is that?

Says the **חשק שלמה** an amazing idea. The **שם סוכה**, the name of **סוכה** represents the names of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**.

The two most common names we refer to **הקדוש ברוך הוא** with are the **שם אדנות** and the **שם הויה**. The **שם הויה** is **יו״ד, ה״א, ו״ו ה״א**, which is **26 גימטריא**, and the **שם אדנות** is **אל״ף, דל״ת, נו״ן יו״ד**, which is 65. - 65 and 26 is 91.

The **רש״י** tells us in **פרשת בשלח, חז״ל** say: **אין השם מלא**, the name of **השם** is not complete, **ואין הכסא מלא עד שימחה זרעו של עמלק**. The name of **השם** is only complete when **משיח** comes. In other words, throughout **תנ״ך**, which is pre-**משיח** coming, the name of **השם** is not complete, so we spell the name **חסר**, because it's not yet 91, the **שם** of **השם** is not yet complete. But in the **גמרא** and in **שולחן ערוך**, which is referring to even times beyond when **משיח** will come, we spell it complete, **סמ״ך ו״ו כ״ף ה״א**.

Here's the amazing thing: there is one exception to the rule.

The one exception throughout **תורה** and **תנ״ך** where **סוכה** is spelt **מלא** is a **פסוק** in **תהלים** 76:3. The **פסוק** says, **ויהי בשלם סוכו ומעונתו בציון**. So, how come it's spelt **מלא** over there? Doesn't that break the rule?

The answer is no, because that time is referring to post-**משיח**. So, the one time in **תנ״ך** that **סוכה** is spelt **מלא** is referring to post-**משיח**, which, of course, is going to be when **השם**'s name is **מלא**, because the **זרע** of **עמלק** would have been wiped out.

So, you see amazing things going on here, there's so much more to say. But the idea is very powerful: when we walk into our **סוכות**, we're actually achieving that tremendous closeness with **הקדוש ברוך הוא**. His names, as it were, His presence is felt there, because His name pervades the actual **סוכה** – The 65 and 26 is 91 - **סוכה מלא**.

One final point. We say an amazing thing that one of the most exquisite **תפלות** that we have is **עלינו לשבח**. Perhaps because we say it so often we don't realise its beauty. But in the second paragraph, we refer to a time, a majestic tomorrow, a time when everyone will recognise **הקדוש ברוך הוא, לראות מהרה בתפארת עזך**, a time when **כל בני בשר יקראו בשמך**.

How many words are there in the second paragraph of **עלינו**? You guessed it, 91. Because that is referring to a time when the seed of **עמלק** will be wiped out, the **שם** of **השם**, the **שם** will be **מלא**, the name of **השם** will be complete.

And really, the idea is a very beautiful one, that we should go into our **סוכות**, have a smell, a taste of **עולם הבא**, a taste of post-**משיח** times, with that closeness with **הקדוש ברוך הוא**.

אם ירצה השם, those days should come very soon. **גוט יום טוב**.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Succah Teach Us Temimus and Emunah

The Rema m'Pano teaches as follows: The size of a small succah is 7 x 7 tefachim, which is 49 square tefachim. The height of a minimum succah is ten tefachim high. This means there are 490 square tefachim in the succah. 490 is the gematria of **תמים**. In (Devarim 18:13) it says **תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם ה' אלקיך** . The measurements of the succah hints to the important concept of temimus – which is a simple and pure belief in Hashem.

חג האסיף

Succos is called **חג האסיף** "the Yom Tov of gathering." This is because Succos is celebrated in the season when the new crops are brought into the home.

The Sfas Emes teaches that just as the new crops are the source of food for the entire year, so, too, brachos come down from heaven on Succos, which will be with us the entire year.

Succos teaches us to trust in Hashem, and when we trust in Hashem, Hashem will bestow His blessings upon us.

Erev Succos, and the Importance of Chessed

The Shaarei Teshuvah (625) writes, "It is proper to give a lot of tzedakah on *Erev Succos*.

Reb Chaim Vital would distribute the entire *tzedakah pushka* to the poor on this day."

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

Rebbe Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* would give a lot of tzedakah on erev succos. He would say that there is no nicer **נוי סוכה**, *succah* decoration, than the *tzedakah* one gives on *erev Succos*.

The Sanzer Rav was renowned for his extraordinary tzedakah and generosity, but he would say that he wasn't born that way. He worked on himself until he changed his nature and transformed himself into a giver.

He added that once he had reshaped his middos, if he met a poor person whom he couldn't help, he felt as though his skin was being torn from him. That is how deeply it pained him when he was unable to assist another Yid.

ענני כבוד

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

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

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

Long Life

The mitzvah of succah is mesugal for a long life. - **The Ropshitzer Rav zt'l** learned this from the pasuk **כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכות** - "Every resident of Yisrael shall dwell in succahs." (Vayikra 23:42)

The word **אזרח** is gematria **גבורה** (mighty), and the pasuk says (Tehillim 90:10) **אם בגבורות שמונים שנה** - that the mighty live up until eighty.

So, there is an indication in the pasuk that for keeping the mitzvah of succah, one will merit to live long.

Reb Naftoli of Ropshitz zt'l would study masechta Succah throughout the year. He said that it is mesugal for shalom bayis.

The Kaf HaChaim (siman 621:6) teaches, "Whoever is cautious with the mitzvah of succah, to keep it properly, is guaranteed that there won't be disputes in his home throughout the year."

Segulas Yisrael writes that learning masechta Succah, any day of the year, is mesugal to be saved from machlokes.

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

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

Eliyahu Rabba writes that **לולב** spells **לו לב** - **ל"ו** is gematria thirty-six, which represents the thirty-six tzaddikim who are in each generation and the thirty-six *masechtos* in Shas.

ל"ב stands for the Torah, which begins with the letter **ב'** (**בראשית**) and ends with the letter **ל'** (**ישראל**)

לולב is gematria **חיים**, which is Torah. - He will merit children tzaddikim who have a **לב**, a heart for Torah.

ושמחת בחגך - Simchah

The Rambam writes, "There is a mitzvah to be happy on all holidays, but it is especially important to be happy on Succos, as it states (Vayikra 23) **ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך שבעת ימים**, 'rejoice before Hashem your G-d for seven days'".

We take the four minim every day of Succos (aside from on Shabbos); however, for most of the days, the obligation is d'Rabbanan. From the Torah, the mitzvah of lulav is only on the first day of Succos. The mitzvah of simchah, to be happy on the holiday, is for all eight days of Succos.

The Imrei Noam zt'l says that this tells us the importance of happiness on Yom Tov. Hashem loves it when His nation is happy.

Reb Mordechai of Chernobyl *zy'a* said that Succos is called **זמן שמחתינו** because **זמן** means prepare **להזמין**.

On Succos, we prepare and store up simchah for the entire year.

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

It states **ושמחת בחגיך... והיית אך שמח**. **The Abarbanel** writes, "This *pasuk* is a guarantee that if you will be happy on Succos, you will be happy the entire year."

Similarly, the **Ibn Ezra** on the *pasuk* **ושמחת בחגיך** (*Devarim* 16:14-16) writes that if we are happy on Succos, we are blessed to be happy forever.

Pele Yoetz zt'l writes, "We are commanded to be happy, and this becomes a good omen (siman) for the entire year.

The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good and happy year.

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

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l notes that the esrog, which represents the tzaddikim, isn't tied together with the other species. They are held together for the mitzvah, and then they part ways.

This hints that although tzaddikim should connect to others to elevate them, they should limit their interactions with people of lower spiritual levels, so that they won't learn from their ways.



Simchah Isn't Just About the Finishing Line

The *Yom Tov* of Sukkos is identified as *Zman Simchasenu* - a time specifically meant for rejoicing and happiness.

The *Trisker Maggid* cites his father, the *Chernobyler Maggid* who explained that by altering the vowels of the word *Zman,* "time", it can be read as *Zimain*, meaning "to prepare." Meaning, one who truly experiences joy during Sukkos will carry that happiness throughout the entire coming year.

Additionally, he asserts that maintaining joy throughout Sukkos guarantees an abundance of *brachos* for the rest of the year. He notes that the *Chernobyler Maggid* considered this the true definition of *Zman Simchasenu. Zman* indicates preparation; as we are preparing and amassing our *simcha* - both inner and external happiness - for the whole year ahead.

By joyfully investing in these seven days, we will merit the greatest *yeshuos.*

The *Shem Mishmuel* presents a question raised by his father, the *Avnei Nezer.* In *Parshas Emor, Rashi* cites a *Midrash* regarding the *posuk* noting that during Sukkos, ninety-eight lambs were brought as *karbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash.* This total corresponds to and was meant to annul the ninety-eight *klallos* listed in *Parshas Ki Savo.*

The *Avnei Nezer* asks: What is the inner connection between offering these lambs and nullifying those severe *klallos?*

He provides the following explanation.

One might wonder while reviewing the *tochacha* in *Parshas Ki Savo:* why did *Klal Yisroel* have to face such severe and harsh consequences? Clearly it was due to their *aveiros*.



However, how can it be that the same people - who witnessed the remarkable miracles and had *Nevi'im* while the *Beis Hamikdash* stood – fall to the *yetzer hara* and commit so many *aveiros*?

The *Avnei Nezer* explains the *yetzer hara* first attempts to make a person feel depressed and broken. Once their spirits have been broken, the *yetzer hara* takes control over their logic and emotions, leading them away from clarity so that they unfortunately succumb to temptation with much greater ease.

However, the *Avnei Nezer* says that if a person remains joyful – refusing to give into the *yetzer hara's* plans – they are protected and have a *shmirah*. When a person is happy, the *yetzer hara* cannot penetrate the same way and *chas v'shalom* suggests an *aveira;* he is, so to speak, locked out.

He notes that within the *tochachas*, the Torah explicitly explains that the *yetzer hara* gained entry and led the *Yidden* to *aveiros* because of the lack of *simcha*.

It all stems from one root cause found in the posuk: **תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אלקיך בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוּב לֵבָב** - *because you didn't serve Hashem with joy and a good heart when you had everything.* – The failure was not serving Him with happiness despite all the good the *Yidden* had.

When we recognize the goodness of our lives; the endless *brochas* that we have, we are healthy, that we are able to breathe, walk and see, and so many thousands of things – we feel the urge to thank Hashem and celebrate. In such a state of joy, the *yetzer hara* cannot enter our personal space and rob us from our logic.

The *Avnei Nezer* explains that Sukkos is a time of rejoicing. When *Klal Yisroel* brought the ninety-eight *karbanos*, they did so with great happiness. By serving Hashem with joy, they effectively nullified those ninety-eight *klallos.*

The *Shem Mishmuel* adds a profound insight into the *posuk*, noting that regarding Sukkos, the Torah uses a specific word not found by any other *Yom Tov*. It says, **בחגותם חג לה' שבעת ימים בשנה** – *You shall celebrate it as a Yom Tov to Hashem seven days in the year.*

Asks the *Shem Mishmuel:* why is the phrase **בשנה** necessary; it seems extra? - He explains that if you are happy during these seven days - when those ninety-eight joyous *karbanos* are offered - you can rectify the entire year.

In today's times, our *tefillos* take the place of those *karbanos*, as the *posuk* says, **ונשלמה פרים שפתינו** - *let our lips substitute for bulls.* When we *daven* joyfully, it's as if we're offering the ninety-eight *karbanos*. We possess a unique power during these seven days, as we have the opportunity to rectify the entire year.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita – What Is The Succah Reminding Us Of



רבותי, we are all still trying to carry forward the inspiration of Yom Kippur, and to prepare for the **זמן שמחתנו** of Sukkos. I'd like to share one or two ideas on the theme of the Yom Tov, as the Torah describes it.

The pasuk tells us to sit in the sukkah **למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים**, so that all future generations will know that Hashem made Klal Yisrael live in sukkos when He took them out of Mitzrayim.

When the Torah says **למען ידעו**, it is telling us that as we do the mitzvah, we should be conscious of what the sukkah represents and what message lies within it. That gives the Yom Tov an extra dimension when we sit in the sukkah b'ezras Hashem.

There is a famous machlokes in the Gemara about what **בסוכות הושבתי** means. One view is **סוכות ממש**, the simple pshat that Klal Yisrael lived in booths and temporary dwellings as they traveled through the midbar. The other view, which we follow in Shulchan Aruch, is that it commemorates the **ענני הכבוד**. Incidentally, *anan* refers to the Shechinah, which is often presented as a cloud. It was not merely a matter of shelter. It was the divine protection of the Ribono Shel Olam Himself surrounding Klal Yisrael.

Both views need understanding. On the simple pshat, what is there to remember? Why would the Torah remind us that Klal Yisrael lived in tents when they left Mitzrayim?

The Rashbam in Parshas Emor (**ויקרא כ"ג:מ"ג**) explains that Chag HaSukkos is the time of **באספך מגרנך ומיקבך**, when the year's produce is gathered in and a person may feel a certain satisfaction at his wealth. So the Torah reminds him of where Klal Yisrael began: they left Mitzrayim with nothing, **בלא יישוב ובלא נחלה**.

Remembering those humble beginnings should lead us to full *hodaah* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, **ומתוך כך תתנו הודאה למי שנתן לכם נחלה ובתים מלאים כל טוב**. Times were once difficult, and we must not take our comforts for granted. That is the message if the sukkos are real sukkos.

Now to the other pshat, the **ענני הכבוד**. The Acharonim ask why the Torah commemorates only the clouds, when Klal Yisrael also experienced the *man* and the water from the *be'er*. There are many answers. I'd like to suggest the following.

The *man* was **לחם מן השמים**, obviously divine, and the people clearly understood it as a miracle. Water from a rock is likewise plainly against the order of nature. Nobody could mistake these for anything but *nissim*. However, the **ענני הכבוד** were different. Chazal tell us they flattened the terrain, levelling hills and filling ditches, regulated the climate so that the journey was pleasant, and shielded Klal Yisrael from their enemies. A person walking along in such conditions could easily get used to a pleasant environment, a smooth road and no trouble from enemies, and not realize that it was all due to special divine protection. It was not natural. Hashem was doing it for them, and for us.

That is a message that is easily overlooked, and the Torah asks us to remember it. When things go smoothly in life, and each of us has whatever he has, *l'tovaso*, we should not assume that it is simply the natural course of things. There is a great deal of divine protection and *hashgachah* that we are unaware of, smoothing our path. That is worth a Yom Tov of its own.

So on both pshatim the message is the same. Whether it is the Rashbam's call to appreciate what you have and not take it for granted, or the call to notice the subtle *tovos* in our lives and recognize that what runs smoothly is being smoothed *min hashamayim*, Sukkos is a Yom Tov of *hodaah*.

This also answers why Sukkos in particular is called **זמן שמחתנו**. When we appreciate the *tovos* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we become happy people. Unhappy people are those who don't appreciate what they have. They feel entitled to things and lack appreciation for life. Those who appreciate everything they have are happy.

With the message of **למען ידעו דורותיכם**, whichever pshat we follow, may we appreciate the *chesed* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and be happy people. May the Ribono Shel Olam help it be a **זמן שמחתנו** for all of Klal Yisrael, and may everyone's needs be met.

When we step into the sukkah, we step into the divine protection of the **ענני הכבוד**, the Shechinah itself. May we merit to become close to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and to all the *yeshuah* and *berachah* that come from living in His home.

A freilichen Yom Tov, a guten kvitel, and may it be **שמחתנו** in every way for all Yidden wherever they may be.

Rav Tzadok HaKohen explains that the sukkah reveals a person's inner emunah. Throughout the year, faith can remain hidden beneath routine and habit. But when a Jew steps into the sukkah, he performs an act that has no practical purpose — it is purely spiritual.

This reveals the deepest part of the Jewish soul: the willingness to live under Hashem's shelter, even temporarily, and to find joy in that dependence. He writes that this is why Sukkos is called זמן שמחתנו — because true joy comes from recognizing Hashem's presence in every aspect of life.

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

A guten Erev Shabbos, a guten Erev Yom Tov to my dear friends of Project *Mesorah*. This is your friend, Rabbi Pesach Krohn, speaking to you **ערב שבת** and **ערב יום טוב סוכות**.

I must tell you, I love to sit in the *sukkah* just to be embraced by the walls of the *sukkah*. I feel I'm being embraced by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. But there's another element of of protection here. We know that the *halachah* is **צלתה מרובה מחמתה**, that the shade has to be more than the sunlight. In other words, the *schach* can't be so spread apart that there's more sun than shade.

And I think there's great symbolism here. Shade represents darkness, and many of us in life go through different dark challenges, but we have to know that even though that it's **צלתה מרובה מחמתה**, we're being embraced by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And just like Hashem took care of us, even though we didn't have the sturdiest Sukkos in the *midbar*, Hashem takes care of us as well here. And even though it's **צלתה מרובה מחמתה**, we're still sitting in the embracement of the walls of the *sukkah* and protected by Hashem.

And that should give us a great confidence as we go into the new year. And so, to the men, I say, **ישימכם אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה** and to the women, **ישימך אלקים כשרה, רבקה, רחל, ולאה**. And to everyone, **יברכך ה' וישמרך, יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחנך, ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום** You should have a *freilichen* and uplifting Shabbos, a *freilichen* and uplifting Yom Tov Sukkos and Simchas Torah, and *im yirtzeh Hashem* the next *brachah* I'll give you will be by **שבת פרשת בראשית**. Have a great Shabbos and a great Yom Tov.



"**הסוכה מגלה את שורש השמחה**." - ***The sukkah reveals the root of joy. ~ Rav Hutner.***



FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory



Aside from the Sukkah, the other main mitzva of Sukkos is the taking of the Lulav and Esrog, along with the hadasim and aravos. They are bound together and waved in every direction, as a means of finding favor with Hashem for rain.

But why these four species? Why not other fruits or vegetation?

The Midrash tells us that every herbage has a special angel appointed over it. At each moment, it strikes the vegetation and says, "Grow. Grow." (Yes, when you cut the grass, you may be putting an angel out of work…) However, these four items, the Lulav, Esrog, Hadasim and Aravos, were not assigned to any angel. Hashem, Himself, controls their growth.

Because they remain in Hashem's control, as if they are in His hand, then when we take these four minim together, it's like we're handling the King's sceptre, that which He held in his own hand. This is a sign of trust in us, and when we hold them, we wield tremendous power. Just as Achashveirosh extended his sceptre towards Esther and showed her grace, Hashem extends His sceptre to us on Sukkos, and shows us we're His chosen people.

"שמחת סוכות היא שמחה של קרבת אלקים." - *The joy of Sukkos is the joy of closeness to Hashem. ~ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.*



Ah, Gutn erev Yom Tov. Here is a stunning vort that you could share over at your Sukkos table. Ever wonder why it is that on Sukkos we're fortunate to be visited by the **אושפיזין**: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, David, pretty prestigious guests.

But on the Seder night, somehow they don't show up. And I would think that they should come on the Seder night. Yaakov was in Mitzrayim, Avraham has the **ברית בין הבתרים**, the vision about **יציאת מצרים**, like that should be the time that they're visiting us. Yet for some reason they only come on Sukkos.

Says **Rav Yaakov Galinsky** something super magnificent. At the Seder, we differentiate between the **ארבעה בנים**. There's the **חכם**, there's the **רשע**, maybe we kick him out, maybe we keep him, there's the **תם**, the **שאינו יודע לשאול**. When there's disparity and there's a wedge between the children, the zeides are hesitant to show up.

But on Sukkos, when we know each of the **ארבעה מינים**, the lulav, the esrog, hadasim, and aravos represent a different type of Jew, the aravah is the guy that has no Torah, has no **מעשים טובים**, the esrog is the tzadik, the other ones are the fellows in between, everyone comes together and we bring them together **אגודה אחת**, as one unit, one entity. When there's unity amongst the grandchildren and the descendants, ah, then the grandparents get nachas and they want to be a part of it.

So this Sukkos, embrace the unity and the achdus, put aside the differences, and im yirtzeh Hashem each and every one of us will be zocheh to have the most amazing and wonderful guests.

Rabbi Dov Tepler - The Return of the Clouds

The question is a well-known question. Why do we celebrate Sukkos on the fifteenth of Tishrei? If the sukkah commemorates the *Ananei HaKavod*, the Clouds of Glory that surrounded Klal Yisrael when we left Mitzrayim, seemingly Sukkos should be celebrated in Nissan, when we left Egypt.

The Vilna Gaon explains that it is true that we received the *Ananei HaKavod* when we left Mitzrayim. However, after the *Chet HaEgel*, the Clouds of Glory departed. Moshe Rabbeinu then ascended Har Sinai and ultimately descended on Yom Kippur with the *Luchos Shniyos*, bringing Klal Yisrael the message of forgiveness. The preparations for the Mishkan followed, and on the fifteenth of Tishrei the *Ananei HaKavod* returned.

That is what we celebrate on Sukkos. We celebrate the return of the Clouds of Glory after the *Chet HaEgel* and the teshuvah of Klal Yisrael.

But the Vilna Gaon points out something even more remarkable. The second *Ananei HaKavod* were greater than the first. Originally, the Clouds of Glory were perceived only by the tzaddikim and nevi'im. When they returned after Yom Kippur, however, their presence could be perceived by everyone.

How, though, could the relationship afterward possibly be greater than it had been before the sin?

Rav Elya Svei explains a magnificent idea.

The *kapparah* of Yom Kippur does not simply mean that the dirt has been washed away and we are restored to where we were before. Through genuine teshuvah, the relationship itself can become deeper than it was previously. Klal Yisrael could, so to speak, turn to Hashem and say, "The closeness You gave us before was not enough. The proof is that despite all that closeness, we still fell and sinned.

If we are going to succeed now, we need a deeper relationship with You." And Hashem agreed.

The second *Ananei HaKavod* were greater than the first. They had fallen and Hashem did not merely take them back. He brought them closer.

We are celebrating not merely simplicity and trust, but renewed closeness. We are celebrating the return of the *Ananei HaKavod*, and not merely the old clouds, but something greater than what existed before.

That is why these days contain such extraordinary *simchah*. Sometimes after you fall, you don't just get up and pick up where you left off. You pick up far better than you ever were.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff – Why Succos is this Time of the Year

רבותי, just a short message to greet everybody, and to hope that **כל ידידינו**, whoever they may be and wherever they are, are connecting to the beautiful Yom Tov of Sukkos, the **זמן שמחתינו**, and are able to be **שואב שמחה**.

Sometimes that itself is an avodah. We call Sukkos **זמן שמחתינו**, but for many of us, we have to work on it—to find the simcha of the Yom Tov, to understand its messages, and to make it a **שורש** for simcha throughout the year, when we're **מקיים** the Yom Tov properly.

I'd like to share one short idea about the **שאלה** that the Rishonim ask: Why is Sukkos at this particular time of year, in Tishrei?

The whole message of Sukkos is to remind us that when **כלל ישראל** came out of Mitzrayim, they came out in Nisan, not in Tishrei. There are many famous **פשטים** from the Gaon, the Rishonim, and others.

I'd like to suggest the following. We know the sukkah reminds us of **ענני הכבוד**—that Divine protection through which the Shechinah

protected **כלל ישראל**. And we are meant to remember this whenever we enter the sukkah.

The Ramchal, very famously in *Derech Hashem*, gives us a remarkable **יסוד**. The sukkah is not simply a reminder of something that happened long ago. Every year, when the Yom Tov comes, a certain **השפעה**, an opportunity for closeness to Hakadosh Baruch Hu through **ענני הכבוד**, is renewed, to a degree, as every Yid enters the sukkah.

The Ramchal writes:

מלבד תועלת הגשמיות, ענני הכבוד שהקיף הקדוש ברוך הוא את ישראל, apart from the physical protection they provided, **עוד היתה תועלת גדולה נולדת בהם בדרך הרוחניות**.

There was another, much greater benefit in the realm of ruchniyus. Those clouds brought Klal Yisrael into a completely different stratosphere, enveloped in **דביקות** with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. There was a **הארה** of kedushah and **דביקות**.

And he continues: **ודבר זה נעשה בשעתו לישראל**, and **ומתחדש דבר זה בישראל בחג הסוכות על ידי הסוכה**.

It's an amazing idea. The **ענני הכבוד** are not merely a historical memory; they become relevant to us, to a degree, every time we walk into the sukkah. And we have to try to feel what that means—to be surrounded by the **צלא דמהימנותא**. - And that should bring with us a **זמן שמחתינו**, which should continue with us and for our families and for all our needs, for all of **כלל ישראל** throughout the year. A freilichen, gebentshten, zissen Yom Tov, kol **טוב**.

During the Yomim Nora'im, we draw down the bounty with fear, and on Succos, we open the treasuries of bounty with our joy. ~ Beis Aharon.

Why does the Torah command us to make a זכר specifically for the Clouds of Glory?

The **Bnei Yissaschar** has a particularly beautiful explanation of why Sukkos commemorates specifically the **ענני הכבוד**, rather than the other two great miracles in the Midbar—the **מן** and the **באר**.

The **מן** and the **באר** were necessities—food and water. A person cannot survive without them. But the **ענני הכבוד** were something beyond necessity. They represented an extra measure of love and affection that Hashem showed Klal Yisrael.

The Bnei Yissaschar explains that this is the meaning of the Torah's words: **"למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל"**

We are meant to know—not merely remember—that Hashem's relationship with us is not limited to providing what we *need*. He gives us extra protection, extra kindness and extra **אהבה**, simply because we are His children.

He develops this even further: the Clouds of Glory were like a **לבוש**, a garment surrounding and protecting Klal Yisrael. The **עננים** even cared for their clothing, so that their garments did not wear out. Furthermore, he says that it is a kal v'chomer that if Hashem provides us with the extras like clothes, of course He will provide us with what we need to survive.

Thus, sitting in the sukkah is a yearly reminder that Hashem surrounds us with His protection.

And there is an especially powerful point for after Yom Kippur: the Bnei Yissaschar says that the **ענני הכבוד** returned as the model for the sukkah after Yom Kippur, to demonstrate that Klal Yisrael had been cleansed from their sins. The very fact that we are once again sitting beneath the "Clouds of Glory" is a sign that we have emerged from Yom Kippur clean and accepted before Hashem.





An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

הושענא רבה



Hoshanos. There is a *segulah* for good *parnassa* to take – after *Sukkos* - some of the leaves from the *Hoshanos* that were banged on *Hoshana Rabah* and carry them around in one's wallet or pocket. - This is brought down in the famous **דבר בעתו** calendar from **R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l*.**

The power of Hoshana Rabbah lies within our mouths (symbolized by the aravah) our words and our prayers. Even the lowliest Jew can earn a favorable judgment on Hoshana Rabbah simply by using his mouth for beseeching Hashem to help in whatever areas he needs. ~ Sefas Emes.



In his sefer Menorat Hameor, **Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav, zt"l**, points out that taking an aravah from the beaten aravot on Hoshana Rabbah, is a segulah for salvation and protection throughout the year.

Rabbi Meir Simchah Hacohen, zt"l, of Dvinsk, the author of "Ohr Same'ach" used to distribute the remnants of his aravah to Jewish soldiers who were drafted into the army.

They testify that all those who took the aravah from him was miraculously saved during the war and returned home safe and sound.

The Ancient Minhag of Beating the Aravah Overrides Judgments



On Hoshanah Rabbah after the beating of the aravos, **Rav Mordechai of Lechovitch zy"a** turned to the crowd and said, "It is well known that 'minhag mevatel din.' A minhag takes precedence over a din. (This literally means that a minhag takes precedence over a halacha; however, the Rebbe was making a play on words and explaining it to mean that a minhag overpowers a strict judgment).

Therefore, I say that through the merit of the minhag of beating the aravos, we should merit to annul all dinim from upon Klal Yisroel and we should merit a sweet and blessed year."

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Reb Chaim Vital (Hakdamah l'Shaar HaMitzvos) **zt'l** writes, "When you perform a mitzvah, don't consider it a burden that you want to finish quickly and 'get over with.' Rather, when you perform mitzvos, be happy with an endless joy, as if you were given millions of gold coins for performing this mitzvah."

Chemdah Genuzah (vol.2 p.47) writes that the **Ropshitzer Rav zt'l** would say every year on Hoshanah Rabba, "People say: 'If I am holding on to you, that means I am stronger than you, and you must do as I say.' So, too, now that we are holding Hashem in our hands, keviyachol, Hashem has to listen to our tefillos."

Torah Tavlin

One year, at the **Sanzer Rebbe's** Leil Hoshana Rabba tish, a distraught woman entered the sukkah and began crying, yelling that the holy **Divrei Chaim** must help her on this auspicious night. Her only son, her sole source of income and sustenance, was called up to report for the military draft tomorrow morning and as the Polish military commander was a well-known anti-Semite who relished heaping scorn and pain upon his Jewish conscripts, it is imperative that the Rebbe bless him to get out of the draft.



R' Chaim was in an exalted state of mind. His body was in this world, but his thoughts and consciousness were somewhere in the upper spheres of heaven. The chassidim tried to get his attention but his murmured response was that on this exalted night, one cannot think of personal issues, only issues pertaining to the needs of the klal.

No amount of cajoling from the woman could shake the Rav out of his reverie and it wasn't until **R' Dovid K'shanover zt"l**, the Sanzer's son and a tzaddik in his own right, finally stood up and blessed her with success, did she leave the sukkah in an utter state of panic.

Hours later, as the Rebbe's tish was coming to a conclusion, R' Chaim arose and began walking into his private room. Suddenly, he stopped in the doorway and pronounced the famous words of Chazal: **הֲלָכָה הִיא בְּיָדוּעַ שֶׁעֵשָׂו שׂוֹנֵא לְיַעֲקֹב, אֶלָּא שֶׁנִּכְמְרוּ רַחֲמָיו בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה** - The law is known that Esav hates Yaakov, but at that moment (when Yaakov met Esav and his 400 men - Parshas Vayishlach), he was filled with mercy." Then, he turned, kissed the mezuzah and entered his room.

Nobody understood the message, and no one had a chance to ask the Rebbe what he meant. The next morning, the young man reported to

the military tribunal to face the hostile commander who would be conducting his interview.

As soon as he saw the young Jew step forward, he smiled wickedly and stood up from his seat. He strode forward and towered over the boy menacingly, as if to further intimidate him. In response, the young man burst into tears and began shaking uncontrollably. He wailed and trembled and the commander laughed out loud at the perceived cowardice of the Jewish conscript. He continued to laugh and heap scorn on the boy while the Jew cried and cried without end.

This went on for another minute or two, until the commander tired of his intimidation tactics and stopped laughing. But the Jewish boy went right on crying, wailing loudly and weeping incessantly. The commander did not what to do. The Jew would not stop crying. With a little less harshness in his tone, he told the boy to stop crying but to no avail. Softer now, he asked him why he was crying so much, and the young man blurted out his family details amidst a fresh torrent of tears. His words were practically unintelligible, and the commander strained to make them out. Still, the boy continued crying and now, the military leader was soothing him with words of comfort.

The commander had gone from a harsh madman to a merciful comforter - and with his last move, he led the boy outside, saying, "Go, young man, you are free from military service." The boy did not even have time to compose himself and the commander turned sharply and went back into the tent.

With an unburdened heart, the young man ran home and told his family the good news. When word reached the court of the Sanzer Rav, the chassidim now understood the cryptic words of the great R' Chaim Halberstam on the night of Hoshana Rabba, and the power this day has - to soften even the most ardent anti-Semite's heart.

Nefesh Shimshon – by Moreinu Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l

Hoshana Rabba - The day of kisses



Among Hoshanah Rabba's aspects is love. After we beat the *aravos*, we say, ***"May it be Your will… that the love will be awakened between them, and You will kiss us with the kisses of Your mouth."***

Sukkos expresses love. The *Halachic* shape of a valid *sukkah* – two adjacent walls and a third, small one – forms the shape of an arm giving an embrace. The *sukkah* is an embrace from *Hashem*.



Hoshana Rabba, the "Day of *aravah*," expresses love even more intensely. The shape of *aravah* resembles the lips. Hoshana Rabba is a kiss from *Hashem*, and a kiss is an even greater expression of love!

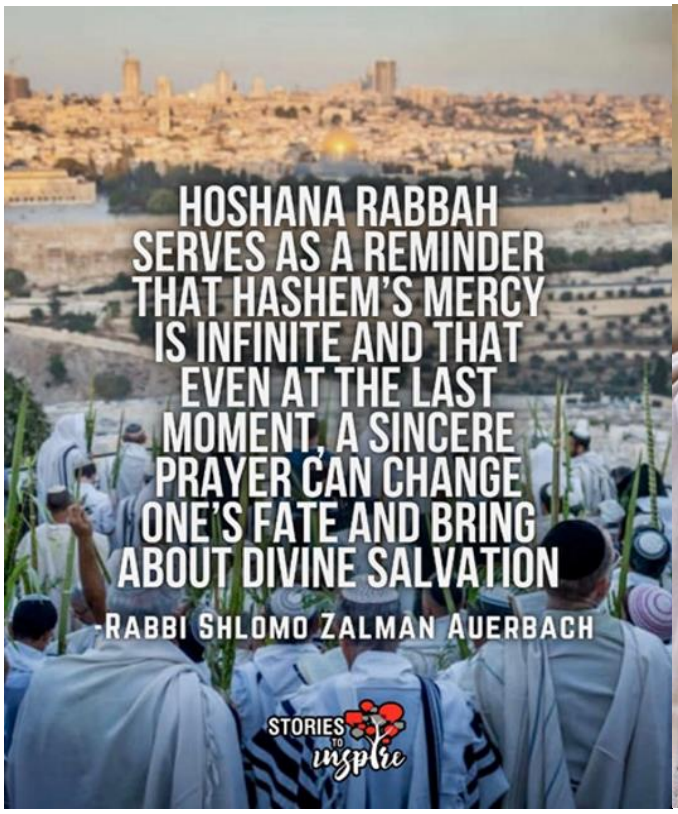
Hoshana Rabba is a day of kisses. We "kiss" *Hashem*, so to speak, meaning that we devote and give ourselves totally to Him. This *mesirus nefesh* doesn't mean that we actually give up our lives. It means that we totally dedicate ourselves to serve Hashem.

Beating *aravos* is a minhag originating with the *Nevi'im* (Sukkah 44a). It is not a legally binding obligation.

Aravah resembles the mouth, it represents a kiss of total devotion, and *mesirus nefesh* of this type is not something that you can ordain and obligate. You can't force someone to give his very self. It is a "*minhag*," meaning that it comes from deep within a person.

This may be compared to a father who told his son to do some tasks for him. After the son finished all he was told to do, he gave his father a kiss. He was not asked to give a kiss – it came from the son himself.

On Rosh Hashanah we blew the *shofar*. On Yom Kippur we fasted. Then we built *sukkos* and dwelt in them.We took *lulavim*. After we finished all we were told to do, and we put down the lulav, and there was no more specific *mitzvah* we need to perform, our Jewish heart feels love and devotion for *Hashem*, and we give ourselves totally to Him through a kiss, through the *aravos* of Hoshana Rabba. - After this, *Hashem* kisses us back, and that is the day of Shemini Atzeres.





Hoshana Rabbah is the day when the gates of mercy are about to close, but even in the last moments, Hashem stretches out his hand to us, waiting for our prayers to rise. It is a day of final changes, where even the smallest gesture of teshuvah can change the course of our lives. ~ R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.

Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l taught that the aravah only costs a few pennies, but it becomes a great mitzvah on Hoshanah Rabba. This is because we used the aravah joyously on Succos when we shook the four species. And when a mitzvah is done with joy, even if it is inexpensive, it's worth far more than expensive mitzvos performed without joy.

● **Hoshana Rabba**



The Remah states that the custom is to take the Aravos (willows) from Hoshana Rabba and save them to fuel the fire when baking matzos for Pesach.

The Klausenberger Rebbe asks why the Aravah merits such special attention above the other components of the 4 species.

He answers: Our Sages teach (Makkos 23a), "Once he is hit, he is again considered your brother." Someone who suffers court-administered lashes is cleansed of his sin. The Aravah has neither taste nor aroma, but once we strike it on the ground on Hoshana Rabba, it suddenly becomes valuable.

So, too, regarding a person who possesses neither Torah nor good deeds. When people suffer, even those who are like the Aravah merit Hashem's mercy, and they thereby gain additional worth. (**Talelei Oros**)

"People worry that they might not have with what to live. They should rather worry they won't have with what to die." ~ Chofetz Chaim zt"l in Chayai Hamussar.

The Awesome Judgment

It is known that Hoshana Rabbah is a day of judgment, reminiscent of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The judgment aspect of Hoshana Rabbah wasn't known to many in the past because the Gemara almost doesn't mention it.

The Gemara calls Hoshana Rabbah "Yom Aravah" the day we take the *aravah*, and it hardly mentions that it is a day of judgment. Similarly, most early sefarim don't mention that Hoshana Rabbah is a day of judgment. It is called a day of judgment in kabbalah sefarim (**יְסוֹד וְשׁוֹרֶשׁ הָעֲבוֹדָה** ch.16). So, it was known to those who knew kabbalah, but the average person didn't realize that it was a day of judgment.

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* explained that in the early generations, the fear of judgment was so great that if people knew that Hoshana Rabbah was another day of judgment, it would take away from their *simchas yom tov*. Therefore, the judgment was concealed from them so they could perform the mitzvah of **ושמחת בחגיך**, and it was only discussed in kabbalah sefarim, which the common folk didn't have access to.

In later generations (and in our times), the fear isn't as intense in people's hearts as it used to be, and therefore, more *sefarim* revealed that there's an awesome judgment on Hoshana Rabbah, too.

What will happen in the year is largely dependent on this day. This knowledge spurs us to daven, to do *teshuvah*, and to give *tzedakah* to annul all harsh decrees.

Two yungerleit were schmoozing on Hoshana Rabbah night in the beis medresh of **Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zt'l**. The rebbe rebuked them, "I am certain you have something very important to discuss because otherwise you wouldn't discuss it tonight. - However, you would have been better off had you discussed these matters during Kol Nidrei than to speak on this holy night!"

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



Hoshana Rabbah is a day when we spend a lot of time with tefillah, which is a focal point of the day. Some people say a special Tikkun Leil Hoshana Rabbah. Other people spend the entire night learning.

There is obviously something very poignant about the power of speech on this day.

The Vilna Gaon says that Succah itself is a mitzvah for us to be *mesaken* the *aveiros* that a person did using one's mouth. That is why you will find that the letters of the word **סוכה** correspond to 4 of the 5 **מוצאות הפה** – the 5 different parts of the mouth that one uses to articulate and speak words. **ס** uses the teeth, **ו** uses the lips, **כ** uses the palate and the **ה** uses the throat. The part of the mouth that we haven't yet used, is the tongue. The Gaon says the reason for this is because the tongue of a person, which is most powerful, is hidden and guarded inside the mouth. - **כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסֻכֹּה** '***That He will hide me in His Succah***'. (Tehilim 27:5)

There is a famous Medrash on Tehillim 39:2 - **אָמַרְתִּי אֶשְׁמְרָה דְרָכַי מֵחֲטֹוא בִלְשֹׁונִי אֶשְׁמְרָה לְפִי מַחְסֹום בְּעֹד רָשָׁע לְנֶגְדִּי** '***I said, "I will guard my ways from sinning with my tongue; I will guard my mouth [as with] a muzzle while the wicked man is still before me***'.

There was a story about a king of Persia who was near death. The doctors told him that there was no cure for him until they brought him milk from a nursing lioness, which would heal him. One of them replied and said, "If you want, I will go, just get me ten goats, and then you will have the milk."

The king ordered his servants to give him the goats, and he went to hunt lions, where he found a lactating lioness with her cubs. On the first day, he stood from afar and threw her one of the goats, which she ate. On the second day,

he approached her a little closer and threw another goat, and so on every day until he was playing with her and taking her milk. When he was halfway back, he fell asleep and had a dream that all of his body parts were fighting against each other. The legs said that they were the most important because without them, he wouldn't have been able to get the milk. The hands said that they were the most important because without them, they wouldn't have been able to milk the lioness. The eyes said that they were the most important because without them, they wouldn't have been able to guide him to the lioness. The heart said that it was the most important because if it hadn't given him the idea to get the goats, nothing would have worked. The tongue said to them, "If it weren't for me, what would you have done?" All the body parts answered him and said, "Don't try to compare yourself to us. You are hidden away and put in a dark and shadowy place." "And furthermore, you have no bone like all the other organs," the tongue answered them, "Today you will say that I am your king and ruler."

The man heard these words and was afraid. He woke up from his sleep, went on his way, and arrived at his destination. He entered the palace and said to the king, **ואמר לו הא לך חלב כלביא** *"Here is the milk of a lion." Immediately the king became furious and ordered him to be hanged. As he was going to be crucified, all his organs were crying. The tongue said to them, "Did I not say that there is nothing real in you? If I save you, will you acknowledge that I am your king?" They said to him, "Yes."*

The tongue returned to the king and pleaded for him. The king asked him, "Why did I order you to be hanged?" He replied, "You brought lion's milk to hasten my death." The king asked him, "Why do you care about my well-being, let the milk be a cure for you." Furthermore, my name, Levya, means 'lion'. They took milk from him, tested it, and found lion's milk. His organs said to him, "Now we acknowledge that you spoke the truth."

It is said, **מָוֶת וְחַיִּים בְּיַד־לָשׁוֹן***"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).*

The meforshim say that this is one of the reasons why we take 5 Aravos as the Hoshanas, which we hit 5 times on the ground to be *mechaper* the aveiros of the mouth and which is symbolic of the five **מוצאות הפה**.

The Sefer Hachinuch writes that the Aravah is reminiscent of a person's lips. The mitzvah of the Aravah is there to teach us how important the correct use of our lips and speech is.

There is no bigger *nachas ruach* for The Ribboino Shel Olam when we use the power of speech properly to daven to Hashem, and to give each other words of kindness and chizuk.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

חז"ל describe **הושענא רבה** as a **יום דין** with extraordinary **כוח התפילה**. To understand its meaning for us, the **גמרא** tells of **רבינו הקדוש**: A frightened **עגל** ran into his cloak seeking **רחמים**. **רבי** told it, **לך כי לכך נוצרת**, - "Go, for for this you were created." He was then struck with years of **ייסורים**. Only when he stopped his maid from killing a **חולדה**, reminding her "**ורחמיו על כל מעשיו**," did the suffering cease.

The **גמרא** teaches that although a **שוחט** has no **טענה** upon him, here the **עגל** sought **רחמים** personally from **רבי**. When a **בריה** nestles into one's cloak, **רחמים** must be felt. If that is true for animals, how much more for us—**בנים של הקדוש ברוך הוא**—when we enter the **צילא דמהימנותא** and seek **רחמים** throughout these **ימים**.

רב אליהו גוטמאכר brings the **אלשיך**'s story of the **רמב"ם**, physician of the sultan. People lined his daily route to ask for medical advice. One **מלמד** complained he could not eat or sleep because another **מלמד** had taken his **תלמידים**. The **רמב"ם** told him to store a **דלעת** in cold water. Months later, when the sultan's daughter fell ill, the only cure required a fresh pumpkin. Soldiers searched the kingdom; the **מלמד** gave them his **דלעת**. The daughter recovered, and the sultan invited him to request any reward. But the **מלמד** asked only that he be the sole **מלמד** in his town.

The sultan refused—during **שמחה** he gives, not takes away. The **רמב"ם** later told him he was a fool; he could have asked for wealth

or lifelong **פרנסה**. But since the sultan would celebrate again in a year, he should ask then for **פרנסה**.

Rav **גוטמאכר** explains: on **ימים נוראים** we ask **ה׳** to remove, destroy, retract—"**וכן תן פחדך... הפר עצת אויבינו**." But on **ימים טובים**, especially **הושענא רבה ושמיני עצרת**, days of **שמחה**, we ask **ה׳** to give—to bestow **שפע** and **פרנסה** for **כלל ישראל**.

The **חובות הלבבות** gives a **משל**: a city annually appoints a stranger as king, then after a year exiles him to a deserted island. One king secretly prepared: he sent groups of workers to develop the islands—building, cultivating, creating commerce—so that when his reign ended and he was exiled, he arrived to a flourishing kingdom ready for him.

So too, from **אלול** through **ראש השנה, יום כיפור**, and **סוכות**, we prepare ourselves. **ה׳** visits us—"**דרשו ה׳ בהמצאו**"—and we build our inner islands. **הושענא רבה** is the final day of preparation before **שמיני עצרת**, the intimate **יחידות** of **כלל ישראל** with **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, after the **אומות** have received their **חלק**. Now we ask **ה׳** to dwell with us, to be **קובע** His presence in our hearts and in **כלל ישראל**.

The **גמרא** discusses **נשמה יתירה**: on **מוצאי שבת** we smell **בשמים** because the **נשמה יתירה** departs. On **מוצאי שבת** that is **יום טוב**, we do not—because the **נשמה יתירה** of **יום טוב** replaces it. Yet on **מוצאי יום טוב** we also do not smell **בשמים**, implying **יום טוב** has no **נשמה יתירה**. - The **מפרשים** resolve this by explaining that **יום טוב** *does* have a **נשמה יתירה**, but of a different kind. **שבת**'s **נשמה יתירה** comes weekly and departs weekly. **יום טוב**'s **נשמה יתירה** is thematic—each **יום טוב** gives a spiritual **כוח** that can energize us for the entire year, depending on how deeply we connect to its **ענין**.

בעזרת השם with that the **ריבונו של עולם** will give us a year of **פרנסה** for **כלל ישראל**, a year of **ישועות**, a year where **כלל ישראל** has **ישועות, נחמות, הצלחות** and ultimately the **גאולה שלימה במהרה בימינו אמן**.

Hoshana Rabbah – What Does Water Mean? By Rabbi Yair Hoffman



The Mogain Avrohom (OC 664) explains that it is the minhag to stay up all night and learn Torah on the night of Hoshana Rabbah.

While it is true that the essential reason for this is because the entire world is judged on water, the Sfas Emes (Sukkos 5643) gives us an additional insight.

WATER = SOMETHING ELSE AS WELL

Rav Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter (1847-1905), the Sfas Emes, explains that the essential Tefilah of the davening for water on Hoshana Rabbah refers to Torah being referred to as water. The first pasuk in Yishayahu (55:1) mentions water:

1. Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye for water, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

But the next two Psukim clearly indicate that this water refers to Torah.

2. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your gain for that which does not satisfy? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3. Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Therefore, one of the reasons that we Daven so urgently and that we stay up all night is because we are davening that Torah be a part

of our lives. - It is not just physical water that we are blessed with – it is also spiritual water in which we receive blessing.

As an aside, why is tonight called Hoshana Rabbah? Below are three answers:

- The Eliyahu Rabba (OC 664:1) cites the Mateh Moshe (957) as to why Hoshana Rabba is called with that name. "The Holy One Blessed be He said to Avrohom Avinu: I am One in the world and you are one in your world (Psachim 118a). In the future, I will grant your children a special day to atone for all their sins – this is the day of Hoshnana Rabbah (great salvation). I shall give them the 21st day, which is My Name of E'h'e'y'e – which is gematria 21.
- The Levush (664:1) states that it is called Hoshana Rabbah because we have many more Aravos, called Hoshanos, on this day – the 7th day of Sukkos.
- The Chayei Adam (153:2) explains that it is called Hoshana Rabbah because we recite more Hoshanos on this day – the 7th day of Sukkos.

Hosha'na Rabah Questions

To explain why the last day of Succos is called 'Hosha'na Rabah, the Medrash relates how Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Avraham that just as He was Unique, so too was Avraham unique, and that on account of that uniqueness, He would designate a unique day in the year for his descendants to receive atonement for their sins … and that day would be Hosha'na Rabah.

The Magid Meisharim explains that the Gematriyah of G-d's Name 'Ehekeh' is twenty-one, Avraham lived in the twenty-first generation from the Creation, and Hosha'na Rabah falls on the twenty-first day of Tishri.

If Avraham's children would not merit atonement on Rosh Hashanah, he explains, then they will merit it on Yom Kipur; and if even that does not work out, then they will attain it on Hosha'na Rabah.

Take the main letters of Hashem's Name 'Havayah', and you will find that they correspond to the above days of atonement, as Yom Kipur falls ten days after Rosh Hashanah ('Yud'), Succos five days later ('Hey'), and Hosha'na Rabah six days after that ('Vav'). And that, says the Magid Meisharim, explains why the 'Secret of the Seal' (which one would have expected to take place on Yom Kipur, takes place on Hosha'na Rabah.

Finally, he points out, if you multiply twenty-one by itself, you will arrive at four hundred and forty-one, which is the Gematriyah of 'Emes', which, according to Chazal, is the seal of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hence the final seal that decides every person's fate is stamped on the night of Hosha'na Rabah.

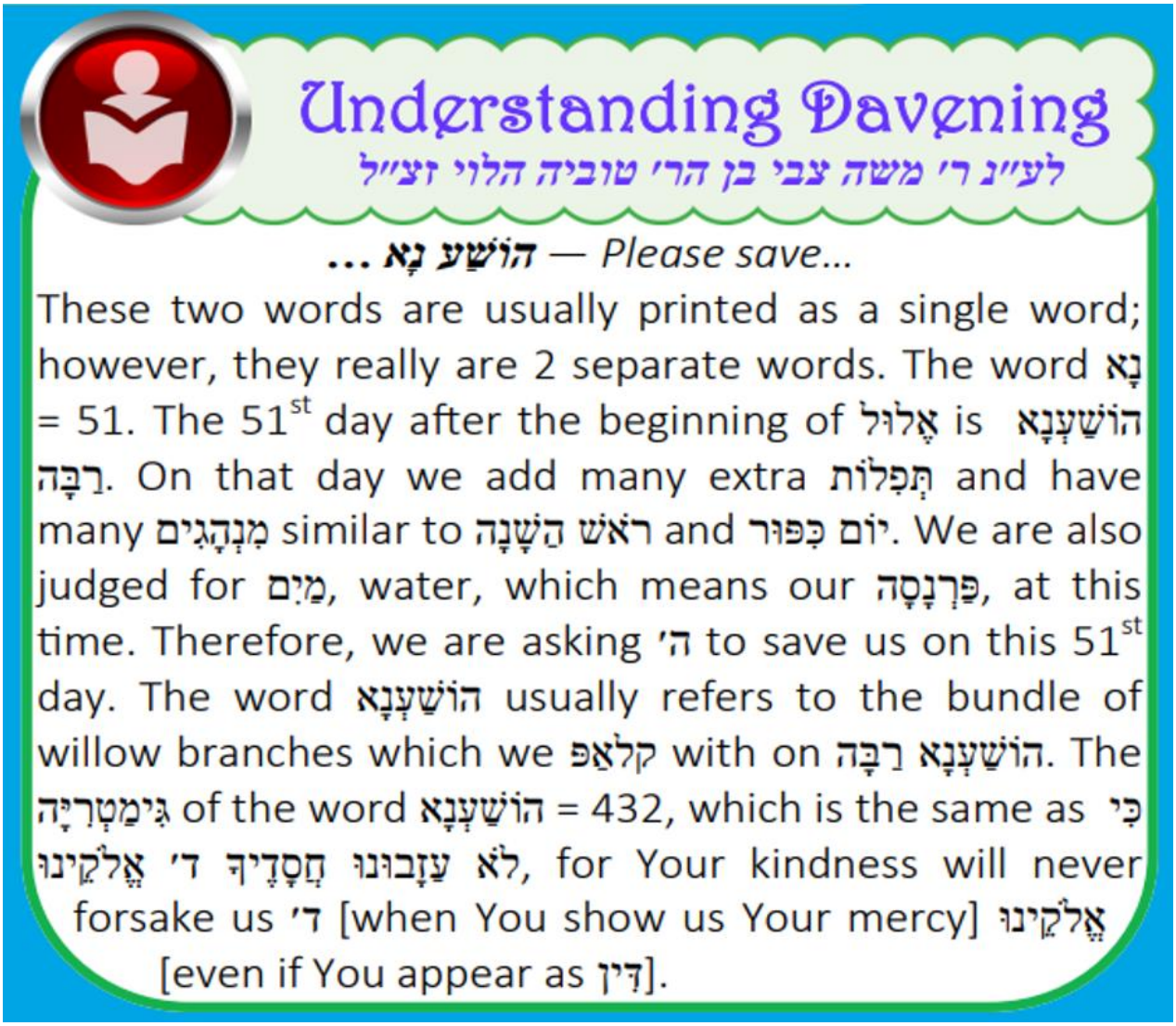
Hoshanah Rabbah is the yahrtzeit of Rebbe Dovid Moshe of Tchortkov zt'l.

He would say that Hoshanah Rabbah is named after the 'amen yehei shmei **rabbah**.' Chazal say, "Whoever answers amen yehei shmei rabba with all his might, his [negative] judgment is ripped up. Reb Yochanan says, "Even if one has the sin of avodah zorah, he is forgiven" (Shabbos 119). Hashanah Rabba therefore means that our salvations come because we say amen yehei shmei rabba.

During World War Two, the Yidden of Yerushalayim made a kabalah to improve how they say amen yehei shmei rabba. They began saying it with all their might and with kavanah to mitigate the destruction.

When the Nazi general, Rommel ym's was in Mitzrayim, with the intention to come to Eretz Yisrael, **Rebbe Shlomke Zvhiler zt'l** said to his gabai, "I sense that the reshaim won't succeed to conquer

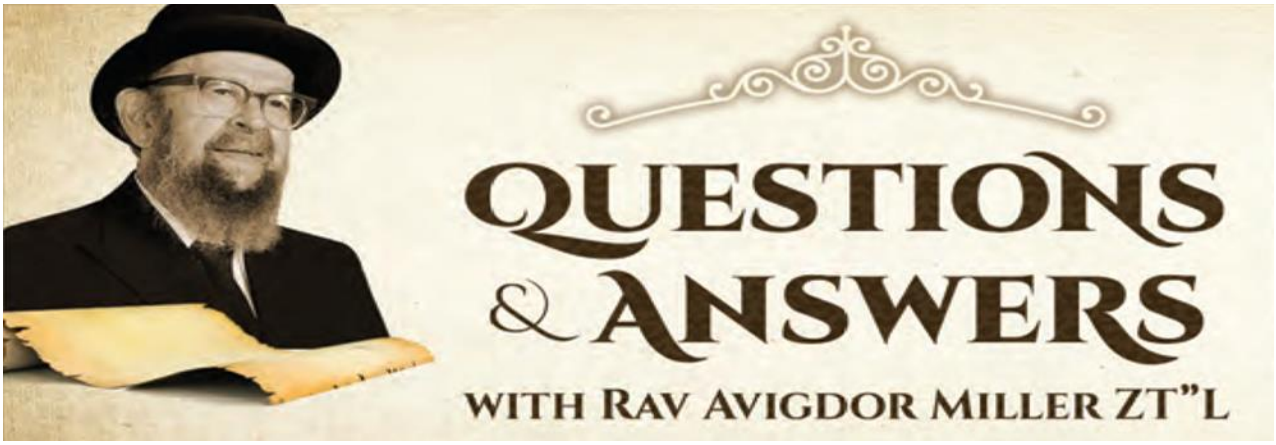
Eretz Yisrael, because the Yidden have improved how they say amen yehei shmei rabba."



The Aruch HaShulchan records that on Hoshana Rabbah people: stayed awake at night, learned, said Tehillim, went to the mikvah, wore a kittel, davened with a special tune, and cried extensively, like on Yom Kippur. - "בוכים הרבה, כמו ביום הכיפורים"

"והיום הוא הגמר דין" –"This day is the completion of the judgment."

That is a remarkable description of how seriously earlier generations viewed the day.





Can the Rav sum up the lesson of Hoshana Rabbah in a few words?

The theme is – and it's surprising that most people don't even notice it – the theme of Hoshana Rabbah is rain! You're asking for rain!

The *shatz* stands up and he plaintively prays **הוֹשַׁע נָא**! He's crying out and praying for rain. And repeated so many times because that's the theme of the day. And the custom that the *neviim* instituted of striking the ground with the *aravos*, that's also prayer for rain. It's a form of praying for rain!

People don't know what's taking place! They're thinking about everything else except for the most important thing. On Hoshana Rabbah of all the things that we request we are asking for rain!

And we've actually been receiving this happiness for the last few days. The only pity is that it interferes with our mitzvah of living in the sukkah. Otherwise we should be internalizing that it's a happiness; a great happiness.

Rain means everything that you put into your mouth. Not only the soda – because that's what rain is; it's soda, just without the dirt. Rain means not only that you'll have something to bathe in – and that in itself is a great benefit – but rain means entire generations of people. All of us are eighty percent water. That's what we are, eighty percent rain!

So when it rains, generations are descending from the clouds. Rain is a very great blessing! And we should learn that lesson tomorrow.

It's a pity – people talk and talk and talk, for hours they're walking around the *bimah*, talking and walking, talking and walking. And the *chazan* even puts on a *kittel*, only that he doesn't begin to know what he's talking about. The same *shatz* who *davened* all morning, as soon as he finishes *davening*, he walks out of the shul and it's raining, and he says, "What a nasty day!" - He just got through asking for it!

The answer is that he doesn't even know what he's saying. What is that about?! You're yelling for hours about rain, rain, rain, and then when the rain comes, you complain about the rain.

It shows us how unthinking the world is. It's a pity that nobody thinks. You have to learn what a great blessing rain is. At least **that** you should come away with after Hoshana Rabbah. You should feel some sort of responsibility to appreciate the rain!

If you're going to commit yourselves tomorrow morning, like I'm sure you will, to spend a long time – it takes hours in some places – praying for rain, then you have to realize that rain is a great happiness.

It says in Gemarah Taanis 7a - **אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: גָּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים כְּיוֹם שֶׁנִּיתְּנָה בּוֹ תּוֹרָה** ***'The day of the rains is as great as the day on which the Torah was given.'*** *- How great is the day when it rains!*

Hoshana Rabah is a day when the gates of mercy open for one seeking a final repair; even the faintest knock of the heart is heard. ~ Rav Chaim Volozhiner.

'Hoshana Rabah shows that a person can transform all days of judgment into mercy when he stands before Hashem in truth.' ~ The Sfas Emes.



What is meant when people say that Hoshana Rabbah is the final sealing of the decree that was sealed on Yom Kippur?

The truth is that the final sealing of the decree is done on Yom Kippur. That's the end. Finished. On Hoshana Rabbah we are actually only being judged for *parnassah,* in the form of water that we need for all food to grow.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu always leaves some little last resort for the losers. So if somebody in that little interval between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah is able to generate a great effort of *teshuvah* he will be able to alleviate to some extent – to some extent – his *gezar din,* his final decree.

But not ordinarily. Ordinarily, for all practical purposes the *gezar din* is made on Yom Hakippurim. It's only the *kabbalah seforim* that revealed to us that there is a little back door left to get in. Because according to the Gemara it's only on Sukkos that we are judged for water, for *parnassah,* and that's all.

So a person should never wait for Hoshana Rabbah. Never delay doing *teshuvah.* A person has to make himself very busy on Yom Kippur doing *teshuvah* and he shouldn't rely on Hoshana Rabbah.

Now, there are many good questions, but the time is up. And so, everyone should get a good tzetel, a piska tava. Gmar chasimah tovah on Hoshana Rabbah. - Hashem should give you a year of happiness. וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּחַגֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ

On this day it is revealed that a person is judged by his inner will; the hoshanos uncover the desire of the heart. ~ Rav Tzadok HaKohen.

The Kloisenberger Rebbe zy'a said:

The esrog ends up made into jelly. The lulav gets burnt with chametz. The hadas gets mixed in with the besamim.

How does the aravah end up on top of the aron hakodesh? Because he was hit and smacked, and someone who is hit and Smacked – Hashem wants him next to him!



The Beis Aharon (p.138) writes that **ערבה** is gematria **זרע** - 277, to hint that the aravah – in the lulav and the Hoshanos on Hoshanah Rabba – are mesugal for bearing children.



The Arizal writes that in the times just before the coming of Mashiach, the main avoda will be tefila. This means that in these times Hashem will take every Yid regardless of what type he is. He might be an esrog or a lulav, yet he might also be an aravah. He may be missing a heart or spine, yet if he comes with his aravos he will be accepted.

If he approaches Hashem with his lips, talking to Him and connecting with Him, Hashem will take his tefilos and he will be worthy of yeshuos without limit.



Hoshanah Rabbah: A novel *minhag* appears in the *sefer Nehar Mitzrayim* (*Hilchos* Yom Kippur *sif* 2) and *Keser Shem Tov* (*Gagin*, pg. 224), they bring: In Egypt, the *minhag* was to perform *kapparos* on the night of Hoshanah Rabbah, because Hoshanah Rabbah is considered a "small Yom Kippur."

The *Shu"t She'eiris Simchah* (*siman* 8) writes that one who did not perform *kapparos* during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah may make up for it on Hoshanah Rabbah.



Hoshana Rabbah

Hoshana means "save" and Rabba means "great." What does Hoshana Rabba mean?

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz zt'l said that Hoshana Rabbah can be translated in three ways, and they are all correct.

(a) **הושענא רבה** means "The great Hashem should save us."

(b) **הושענא רבה** means Hashem should save the great Jewish nation.
(c) **הושענא רבה** means that Hashem should save us with a great salvation.

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

Two yungerleit were chatting on Hoshana Rabbah night in the beis medresh of **Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zt'l**.

The Rebbe rebuked them, "I am certain you have something very important to discuss because otherwise you wouldn't discuss it tonight. However, you would have been better off discussing this matter during Kol Nidrei than speaking on this holy night."

The Sfas Emes — Hoshana Rabbah is the day when even the "lowest" Jew can be saved - "The reason Chazal established so many prayers on this day is because it is called *Hoshana Rabbah* — for on this day one can be saved, even those who are spiritually low, and even spiritually low generations, represented by the aravah, which has neither taste nor fragrance." - **דלותי ולי יהושיע** - "I am impoverished — and therefore, He will save me."

Hoshana Rabbah Serves as a reminder that Hashem's mercy is infinite and that even at the last moment, a sincere prayer can change one's fate and bring about Divine salvation. ~ Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.



Hoshana Rabbah is the day when the gates of mercy are about to close, but even in the last moments, Hashem stretches out his hand to us, waiting for our prayers to rise. It is a day of final chances, where even the smallest gesture of teshuvah can change the course of our lives. ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.



The prayers of Hoshana Rabbah can overturn even the most severe decrees. ~ Rabbi Chaim Vital.





An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



שמיני עצרת

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

שמיני עצרת



Shemini Atzeres

When we mention Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos in Shemoneh Esrei and Kiddush, we say "Chag HaMatzos, Chag HaShavuos, Chag HaSukkos" – placing "chag" before the name of the Yom Tov. On Shemini Atzeres we say "Shemini Atzeres Ha'chag Ha'zeh," placing "chag" after the name of the Yom Tov (according to nusach Sephard). Why this difference? The three festivals commemorate three miracles – the Exodus, the Giving of the Torah and the Clouds of Glory. The miracle came first, then the festival that celebrates it; hence the word "chag" precedes the festival name. But Shemini Atzeres does not commemorate a miracle. We celebrate it because Hashem asked us to remain with Him for one more day. Our closeness to Hashem on Shemini Atzeres is the cause for the "chag."

Therefore the words Shemini Atzeres come before "ha'chag ha'zeh." (**Me'ir Eynei Chachamim**)

The Kozhnitzer Maggid, R' Yisroel Hopstein ZT"L would quote the words of the gemara Chagigah 4a): "Who is considered a fool (שוטה)? One who loses things that are given to him." This may be applied to those who do not understand or make use of the holy day of Shemini Atzeres.

For weeks, we have been drawing closer and closer to Hashem and our level of spirituality has grown immeasurably. Now, on this holy day, Hashem does not want us to leave, to see it all go to waste, and we must work extra hard to maintain this pure level, for otherwise, we are no different than the fool who simply loses things!

R' Yosef Leib Bloch ZT"L (Mahari'l) would say:



"Chazal teach us that every day of Sukkos, we are commanded to bring numerous korbonos, representing the many nations of the world. However, on the Yom Tov of Shemini Atzeres, only one korbon is sacrificed. This is because this unique holiday is made for the sole purpose of elevating Klal Yisroel above the other nations.

Therefore, we bring one korbon to emphasize that when a Jew elevates his spiritual level, he must focus on accomplishing one mitzvah at a time. When a person tries to grab too much too quickly, he is bound to fail. A Jew must concentrate his efforts on one good deed at a time and in this way, he will succeed in his spiritual pursuits."

Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l* teaches, "Be extremely careful with the *tefillos* of Shemini Atzeres to say them with immense *kavanah* because in addition to being the day that completes the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah, everything depends on this day. - There is no better day and no greater *eis ratzon* than this day, when Hashem desires to hear our *tefillos*."

The Medrash Rabbo explains the significance of Shemini Atzeres. After a king had entertained all his subjects for seven days of feasting, he invited his closest friend to tarry another day for a special, private banquet. - So it is with Hashem, who wishes on Shemini Atzeres to focus His attention on Klal Yisroel, His closest friend.

R' Tzvi Hirsch Friedman Zt"l of Liska (Hayashar Vehatov) would say: "The Torah states: **ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם** - 'The eighth day shall be an assembly for you.' This teaches us that on Shemini Atzeres, we are now on our own. Until now, we have sat in the protective shade of the sukkah, like children sitting comfortably at their father's table. But on Shemini Atzeres, we leave the sukkah and now the responsibility rests squarely on our shoulders. This is the meaning of **לכם** - Now, YOU have to earn Hashem's protection."

R' Moshe Sofer ZT"L (Chasam Sofer) would say:

"On the first day of Sukkos, the Torah commands us to fulfil many mitzvos: Sukkah, Lulav, Esrog, Simcha, etc. On the rest of the days of Yom Tov, there are just two mitzvos: Sukkah and Simcha. But on Shemini Atzeres the Torah is very clear. There is only one mitzvah that we must perform with every fibre of our being. **והיית אך שמח** - *'And you shall be only joyous'.*"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Sefer Moed L'Kol Chai (25:11) writes that Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah is an Eis Ratzon, an extremely opportune time for one's Tefilos to be accepted by HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Therefore, it



is proper for one to Daven with extreme Kavanah. This concept is based on the **Zohar Ha'kadosh** in Parashas Noach and Parashas Tzav, where it says that everything that one asks for, with true sincerity, will be given to them!

Shemini Atzeret



Our Sages explain the reason for the holiday of Shemini Atzeret thus: After the Jewish people had already been together with G-d for the seven days of Sukot, G-d requested that they remain with Him for another day, as "Your separation is difficult for Me."

This can be interpreted to mean "The separation between one Jew and another is difficult for Me." To be strengthened against this separation, the Jewish people should gather together on Shemini Atzeret amongst themselves, while their hearts are happy, and they will come to closeness, love and unity. (*Tzror Hachaim*)

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah



Rebbe Shmuel Ehrenfeld writes in his Sefer 'Chassan Sofer' that there was an ancient custom in their Shul in Matersdorf that on Shemini Atzeres after Minchah they would distribute walnuts (Egoz) and they would toss them in the courtyard of the Shul for Simchas Yom Tov.

He explains that the reason that they specifically chose walnuts is because of the Halachah in Shulchan Aruch (583:2) that people are careful not to eat walnuts on Rosh Hashanah because the Gematria – numerical value – is the same as the word Cheit – sin.

Therefore, to publicize that they repented with love in these days, which are days of joy, and no sin is found amidst the Jews, they would specifically throw walnuts to hint that through repentance their intentional sins were converted to merits, and there was no hint of incidental sin to be found!

"בעצרת מתגלה הקשר הפנימי שאינו תלוי במעשה." - On Atzeres, the inner bond that does not depend on action is revealed. ~ Rav Tzadok HaKohen — Pri Tzadik.

The Chasam Sofer zy'a teaches us:



Shemini Atzeres is greater than Yom Kippur because on Yom Kippur we become close to and connect with Hashem through afflicting ourselves (by fasting, not washing, etc.) and on Shemini Atzeres we draw close to Hashem through joy, which is a much more intense connection. As it states (*Shir HaShirim* 7:7) **מה יפת ומה נעמת אהבה בתענוגים**, ***"How beautiful it is when the love is with pleasure and joy."***

The **Chasam Sofer** notes that there is no special mitzvah on Shemini Atzeres (unlike most yomim tovim that have a particular mitzvah, like shofar on Rosh Hashanah, fasting on Yom Kippur, Succah and lulav on Succos, matzah on Pesach etc.).

"This is because the holiness of Shemini Atzeres comes from people's joy. They experience pleasure by connecting with Hashem…"

The Sfas Emes says: The *s'chach* of the *succah* resembles a wedding chuppah. After the chuppah, comes *yichud*, an even greater unity. That is Shemini Atzeres.

R' Noach of Lechovitz zt"l would say: "The theme of Shemini Atzeres may be better understood if we think of it in terms of a bride and groom. During the wedding, they are both decked out in a wardrobe of exquisite, elegant clothes and jewellery. However, when they come together in their private chamber, they remove their fancy garments and jewellery.

It is the same with Shemini Atzeres. During the seven days of Chag HaSukkos, the Jewish people offered a profusion of seventy bulls, but on Shemini Atzeres - the moment they achieve complete unification with Hashem - they brought only one bull."

Chabad.org -Yizkor



Yizkor is recited four times a year; *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Shemini Atzeret*. It is not unusual for one to shed a tear or be overcome with emotion when this prayer is recited. The memory of the beloved one who is no longer physically in our midst justifiably evokes in one a feeling of sorrow and sadness.

In the *Amidah* and in the *Kiddush*, whenever we mention the *Yom Tov* of *Shemini Atzeret*, we describe it as "*zeman simchateinu*" — "our season of rejoicing." If so, the compatibility of *Yizkor* prayer with *Shemini Atzeret* is puzzling?

According to sociologists and psychologists, in contemporary times we are suffering from what is termed a "generation gap." The children do not respect the views of the parents and write them off as antiquated in their thinking and unable to understand and comprehend modern society. Often, parents come to Rabbis or professionals seeking their assistance to bridge the gap and help create a mutual language between them and their children. One of the saddest circumstances of society is that regardless how much a parent does for his child, the child still does not demonstrate the proper respect, appreciation, and gratitude to the parent.

The prayer of *Yizkor* has been termed by many as a moment of communication. In absolute solitude, the child reminds himself of his beloved parent, recalling how he misses him or her and contemplating the vacuum created with his or her departure.

The greatest *simchah* and joy to a parent is when his child thinks of him and wants to be spiritually reunited. Consequently the highlight of *simchah* — happiness and joy — is expressed in the moment of *Yizkor,* when child and parent communicate open heartedly with each other. Thus, it is a most appropriate prayer for *Shemini Atzeret* — the season of rejoicing.

Simchas Torah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

Rashi (*Bamidbar* 29:38,39) quotes the *Medrash Agadah* which states that after having spent the Tishrei *Yamim Tovim* with *Hashem*, He asks us to stay for one more day. The *Medrash* explains this as *Hashem* expressing that our departure is difficult for Him and therefore we should stay for one more day, *Shemini Atzeres*.

How does one more day solve the ache of the departure?

Rav Yaakov Nayman explains that the purpose of this day is not just to have one last day together. We all, understandably, have to return to our routines. This one day is symbolic of the closeness and relationship we have with *Hashem*.

As we step away from the *Yom Tov* season and begin the long winter, *Hashem* is begging us to remember our closeness and keep Him in our daily lives. *Hashem* wants us to incorporate Him into our daily living, particularly during the time between Succos and Pesach. This can be done through learning *Torah* daily, *Davening*, and having daily conversations with *Hashem*.

Torah Sweets – Shemini Atzeres - Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

"Please spend one more day unified and together, transcending these differences and pettiness."

Many mistake Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah as the "last days" of Sukkos, but in truth, they are an independent holiday – a regel bifnei atzmo.

The Midrash (*Rashi Vayikra* 23:36) classically compares Shemini Atzeres to a King who hosts all of his children for a party for several days and when the last day comes, he pleads, "*please stay with me one more day because* **קשה עלי פרידתכם** *-'your separation is difficult for Me.'"-* However, there is another phenomenal interpretation.

The **Imrei Emes** (1865-1948) explains that what bothers Hashem is not our parting from **Him**; He will come with us and be with us at all times, even after YomTov. What bothers Him is **our** separation – the idea that for the last month and a half, the unity exhibited during the Yamim Noraim/Sukkos were so refreshing that Hashem wants one more day for us to keep that going. We have been united, spent quality time together, worked together, celebrated together, focused on our sense of community with a shared destiny, together… and now, the holidays will be behind us and we will go back to the usual divides, focusing on our differences instead of our commonalities… we will go back to judging others based on what is on or not on their heads instead of what is in their hearts… Hashem asks, "Please spend one more day unified and together, transcending **your** differences."

After two turbulent and pain-filled years, our brothers and sisters are finally coming home. During this time, we have experienced tragedy, hatred and condemnation together, we have cried, prayed and hoped together, and now, with the return of the hostages, we can celebrate, dance and rejoice together.

Our enemies have shown us very clearly that to them it matters not the type of a Jew. To them, it is of no relevance what type of kippah

one wears or if one wears a kippah at all. To them, it is of no relevance the level of one's spiritual observance. To them, it is of no relevance which side of the political aisle we find ourselves on. To them, it is of no relevance our appearances or externalities. They see beyond our varying customs, beyond our differences – they see our shared essence and core – to them, we are one.

This was true of our enemies throughout history – during the Holocaust, the crusades, and the pogroms – and it is true now…

As such, how do spend this one last day, this independent holiday of Shemini Atzeres? How will we spend this one last day, this regel bifnei atzmo? We will grab hands and dance in a circle – a circle that has no beginning and no end, no hierarchy or tier system, no head of the table or dais – just everyone dancing equally in a circle, united, together. There will not be one circle for shtreimels, one for black hats and one for kippot serugot. There will not be one circle for the old and one for the young, or one circle for the republicans and one circle for the democrats. There will be only one circle, one people, one community, one history and one destiny. That is the enduring image of this holiday; that is the message we take with us into the dead of winter and beyond.

Please G-d, let us not stop dancing when Simchas Torah ends. Let us not go back to the usual separation. Let us not stop holding the hands of the person on our left and our right – literally, and metaphorically.

The future may remain uncertain, but for now, let us be there for one another, let us hold each other close and never let go.

Seeing separation and division is hard for Hashem and it should be hard for us, too.

"How can it be that my coarse, physical body dares tread upon the holy Sukkah's floor? ~ Saba Kaddisha of Lechovitz.

"How careful must one be before opening his mouth and talking. Even a fish wouldn't get into trouble if only he kept his mouth shut!"



בעצרת מתגלה היחוד של ישראל עם קונם. - ***On Atzeres, the unique unity of Israel with their Creator is revealed.*** **~ Rav Hutner —** ***Pachad Yitzchak.***

Sason ve'Simchah

The question is asked as to why, in the Piyut that is said in many Shuls 'Siysu ve'simchu be'Simchas Torah',' siysu' precedes 'simchu', and not in the reverse order, as is more common?



In answer to this question, they quote the **G'ro**, who, based on the wording of 'Keil Adon' that we recite each Shabbos morning, "s'meichim be 'tzeisom ve'sasim be'vo'om', explains that 'Simchah' refers to the joy that one derives from performing an act, whereas 'Sasson' refers to the thrill of accomplishment upon completing it.

Consequently, in this case, Sasson precedes Simchah, since it pertains to the conclusion of the Torah, whereas Simchah pertains the resumption of the cycle, when we start the Torah all over again.

Maybe we can use the same concept to explain why the wording in the Sheva B'rachos ('Ashar boro Sason ve'Simchah ... ') follows the same sequence. Perhaps there too, Sason and Simchah refer to the Chasan (and Kalah)'s two phases in life – the termination of bachelorhood on the one hand, and the commencement of married life on the other.

Sason therefore refers to the joyful experience of bringing the first stage to a successful conclusion, and Simchah, to the commencement of a new life with one's new partner.

Simchas Torah Night: The Unnecessary Shehecheyanu



A common mistake that comes up on the night of *Simchas Torah* might cause people to say a **ברכה לבטלה** - a blessing made in vain. It is due to following scenario: during the long *Hakafos* of *Simchas Torah* night, many *shuls* make a *Kiddush* so that people should not get too hungry and be fresh for the singing and dancing. One person makes *Kiddush* for everyone and the "*mekadesh*" has everyone in mind - both men and women - when he makes the *beracha* of "*Shehecheyanu.*" The ladies are also *yotze* with that *beracha* when they say *Amen*.

It is important, therefore, to remember that when the ladies come home after the *Hakafos* and light candles before the *seudah* of *Simchas Torah* night, they should not repeat the *beracha* of "*Shehecheyanu*" again.

It should be announced in *shul* before *Kiddush* is made out loud, that that ladies should not say **שהחיינו** later, or alternatively, they should have in mind not to be *yotze* with the *beracha* being said now in *Kiddush*, and then they can make it themselves at candle lighting.

When a woman lights the Shabbos candles with joy in her heart, she brings peace into the world, health and happiness to her family, and is blessed with children who brighten the world. ~ Zohar.





Why is Shemini Atzeres considered a separate holiday from Sukkos?

You must know that Shavuos is the *atzeres* for Pesach; a few weeks after Pesach we come back to the Beis Hamikdash for a separate *yomtiv* to recap the lessons of Pesach. And the same thing, Shemini Atzeres is the *atzeres* for Sukkos, for recapping its lessons.

Shemini Atzeres really should be a while after Sukkos; it should be a few weeks later – an opportunity to come back to the Beis Hamikdash and review all of the Sukkos lessons – but the Gemara says that right after Sukkos the winter season begins. It's the rainy season and if you go home now you won't be able to come back a month or two later because the roads might be impassable. And therefore the Torah says, make the *atzeres* of Sukkos right after Sukkos.

Pesach is in the spring so you can come back a few weeks later for Shavuos and think over the lessons then. But on Sukkos we have Shemini Atzeres right away to think things over. - And so Shemini Atzeres, that's the day for cementing the lessons into our minds. It's like a final review – "What did I accomplish?" What places did we not think enough?

And so on Shemini Atzeres we review all the lessons of Sukkos and cement them into our minds.

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder

Rashi explains (29:36) **התעכבו לי מעט עוד. ולשון חבה הוא זה**, ***"Remain with Me a little longer."*** It expresses [His] affection [for Israel]. It is like children taking leave of their father, who says to them, "It is difficult for me to part with you; stay one more day."



The festival of Shemini Atzeres is Hashem's way of saying that after we have spent so much time together with Him in the sukkah, it is difficult for Him to separate from us and He therefore asks us to linger one more day. How will this solve the problem of the painful separation, which will presumably only become more difficult after spending additional time together?

The **Darkei Mussar** explains that through Hashem expressing to us how difficult it is for Him when we separate and asking us to remain with Him for one additional day, we will respect His request and make efforts not to separate from Him throughout the entire year. Even if we are unable to spend the entire day with Him as on a Yom Tov, we will make sure to make time each day to study Torah and pray.

Rav Shimshon Pinkus compares this to a man who falls in love with a woman, and when the time comes for her to leave, he is distraught by the prospect, so he takes out a ring and betroths her. He is no longer saddened by the idea of separation, as he knows that they are married, and it will only be temporary. Similarly, Hashem asks us to remain with Him for more day so that the connection will be so great that it will form a bond which will last throughout the year.

However, he adds that in truth, the question is predicated on a false premise. If a person is placed in a room full of precious gems and told that he may keep all of the jewels that he gathers in 7 days and at the end of that period he is offered one more day to collect more, he would rejoice even though he knows that he still won't be able to gather all of them. Similarly, even one additional day of closeness to Hashem is precious even if it doesn't last forever.

Shemini Atzeres

Although Shemini Atzeres is mentioned in the Torah (Vayikra 23:36, Bamidbar 29:35), the Torah makes no mention of the holiday of Simchas Torah. **Rav Eliezer Yehuda Valdenberg** compared this to Pesach, which we call Pesach, but it is referred to in the Torah as Chag HaMatzos. Hashem refers to a Yom Tov with a name which praises that which we gave toward the Yom Tov, for example, we baked the Matzos at Hashem's directive, while we refer to Hashem's impact, like when He skipped over our houses during Makas Bechoros.

With Shemini Atzeres, Hashem is mentioning our dedication to Him, our spending an extra day of a Yom Tov with Hashem, therefore in the Torah it is named Shemini Atzeres. But we refer to the love which Hashem has imparted on us through giving us the Torah, therefore we call it Simchas Torah.

The Rov of Ramat Chen, **R' Yaakov Yosef Auerbach zt"l**, the nephew of **Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, z"tl** was orphaned from his mother and father, and R' Shlomo Zalman took care of all his needs. When he married, R' Shlomo Zalman took the place of his father at the wedding. The wedding took place in Tel Aviv, and the chosson and kallah were planning on living in Tel Aviv after the wedding. After the wedding, R' Shlomo Zalman informed the family that he wished to spend the night in Tel Aviv.

The relatives were shocked since they were sure that R' Shlomo Zalman would return directly to his house in Yerushalayaim after the wedding. Whoever was familiar with R' Shlomo Zalman's tight schedule of learning and davening, knew that it was very rare that he spent a night away from his home.

R' Shlomo Zalman's nephew was unaware of the reason his uncle decided to stay the night in Tel Aviv. He eventually discovered the reason when he merited to also tend to the needs of an orphan, including accompanying him to the chupah.

R' Shlomo Zalman called him before the wedding and said, "I hope that you do for the orphaned chosson what I did for you." His nephew didn't understand what R' Shlomo Zalman was referring to, until he was reminded about the night after his wedding when he stayed the night in Tel Aviv.

R' Shlomo Zalman explained, "Every chosson and kallah receive many gifts on the day of their wedding. One of the happiest moments after the chasunah is when the young couple opens their presents, and afterwards they show them off to their parents. You had no parents, and I knew you wouldn't be able to enjoy these happy moments. Therefore, despite the difficulties it involved for me, I stayed in Tel Aviv the night after the wedding so that you could show me your presents the next day."



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



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

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

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

Sweeter Than Honey - We Need To Learn How To Dance!

During WWII, right before Shemini Atzeres, the **Klausenberger Rebbe ztl** decided that he would not let the horrible Nazis take away his Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

He decided to ask the doctor to say that he was very sick and couldn't go to work, and somehow he managed to get the sick note.

Later that day, someone close to the Rebbe heard some terrible news. He was forced to swear that he wouldn't tell anyone: The Nazis were going to make a selection, and anyone who was weak or sick would be sent immediately to the crematorium, where they gassed and killed Yidden in Dachau.

He rushed to the doctor and pleaded, "I beg you, please, I can't tell you what or why, but if you want to save the Rebbe's life, take back that sick note and order the Rebbe that he must go to work on Shemini Atzeres." And the doctor listened.

When the Rebbe found out that his note was taken back, he was very upset with the doctor and was very upset with him. But only after Shemini Atzeres did the Rebbe realize what had happened. Anyone considered weak or sick had been sent away!

The Rebbe tried hard to apologize to the doctor and to thank him. But on the actual day of Shemini Atzeres, the Rebbe still refused to go to work. No matter what they would do to him, he was not giving up his Shemini Atzeres.

When the Nazis lined everyone up that morning, they noticed that the Rebbe was not there. They found him davening inside. They got very angry and dragged him outside and began smashing the Rebbe in the head with their guns, again and again, until blood was gushing from his head. By the time they were finished, he was barely alive.

Everyone thought they would never see the Rebbe again, that this might be the end of the Klausenberger Rebbe. He was taken to the doctor, who tried to help him.

Later, when the Yidden came back from the day's backbreaking labor, they couldn't believe their eyes. There was the Rebbe, alive, holding a page of Mishnayos that he had somehow saved from the Nazis. Not only was the Rebbe alive, but he was holding that precious page of Mishnayos close to his chest with such love, as if it was a Sefer Torah.

The Rebbe started dancing, yes, dancing after everything he had just gone through; the Rebbe was DANCING around a small wooden chair as if it was a bimah! His eyes closed, in a different world!

Rav Hutner writes (Pachad Yitzchak, Ma'amer 58) that in this extra day of Shemini Atzeres lies the heart of the Jewish people, the pulse of Klal Yisrael.



An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



The Rayatz of Lubavitch zt'l said in the name of his father, the Rebbe Reshab zt'l, "We must cherish the forty-eight hours of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. Every moment of these days, we can fill buckets with ruchniyus and gashmiyus. - We receive this bounty because of the dancing.

שמחת תורה



Rabbi Aron Lankry- Time to Celebrate

תורת ד' תמימה משיב נפש The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul *(Tehillim 19:8)*

To many of us, Simchat Torah is one of the most exciting holidays. With dancing and singing continuing late into the night and throughout the next day, it is a spectacular sight to see and revel in. Yet something striking stands out when pondering the real reason behind Simchat Torah. Just six months ago, we celebrated a Yom Tov of a seeming similar nature: Shavuot. Reliving the magnanimous day we received the Torah, we accepted and embraced our beautiful Torah heritage. As such, it seems odd that we would have a day at the end of Sukkot relating to the celebration over the Torah. Wouldn't it be more appropriate for Simchat Torah to be observed during Shavuot, the time of the Giving of the Torah?

Years ago, there lived a king who had a fabulous daughter. A girl of refined character and spectacular beauty, the king grew worried that she would be taken advantage of and marry someone who would not fully appreciate her. Musing over the best method of finding her a husband, the king finally came up with an idea. He would hang up signs announcing that his daughter was looking for a husband yet had one condition: the man who would marry her could not see her before the wedding.

Following through with his idea, the king went about posting signs in every town announcing his daughter's availability for marriage, albeit with the one condition. While the talk of the town turned to who would step forward and grab this opportunity, within days, rumour had it that something was amiss. Why else would the king remain so adamant that his daughter not be seen before getting married if nothing was wrong with her? She must have some sort of problem that the king is hiding, everyone thought. And so, no one took the offer.

All except one. One boy stepped forward. Ready to marry the king's daughter, he put on his best suit, and headed straight to the palace. Knocking on the large, ornate door, he was greeted by one of the guards. "I am here to marry the king's daughter." Without further delay, he was ushered into the king's private quarters, at which point he reiterated, "I love you, your highness. I love your country and everything that you stand for. With your permission, I would like to receive your daughter's hand in marriage."

Hearing the boy's enthusiasm and sincerity, the king could tell that he would most perfectly suit his daughter. And so, the date was set in three months' time for the grand wedding to take place.

Three months later… the long-awaited day finally arrived. Leading the boy down to the wedding canopy, for the first time he saw his bride. And to his utter astonishment, she was absolutely beautiful. Her appearance was breath-taking.

After concluding the ceremony, the bride and groom were finally allowed a few moments to speak to one another and enjoy each other's company. As the boy began to engage his bride in conversation, he noticed that she was quite intelligent. And not only that, but she could speak seven languages and read and write poetry. Quite quickly, all of his original worries disappeared. As the weeks went by, the boy's love only continued to increase for his wife. She was much smarter, beautiful and benevolent than he could ever have imagined. And so, he approached the king with a request. "Your majesty, it is now my turn. I would like to celebrate. Six months ago, when we got married, you celebrated the marriage of your daughter. But now, after getting to know how special she is for the past number of months, I would like to have my own special party celebrating my beautiful marriage." And true to his word, an exquisite, lavish celebration was held in the king's palace.



The same scenario plays itself out on Simchat Torah. As we received the Torah on Shavuot, we readily exclaimed, "*Naaseh v'nishmah* – We will do and we will hear." We expressed our readiness to embrace the Torah and enter into an eternal covenant with it and Hashem. But at the time, we perhaps did not fully appreciate its beauty and vastness. Only Hashem, the One Who granted us this gift in marriage, knew what beauty it truly possessed. It is only after

spending six months delving into its wisdom and seeing its brilliance that we have arrived at a genuine appreciation of its profundity and depth of meaning.

And now, at this time of Sukkot, we are finally ready. Turning to our Father, the King, we say, "It is our turn to celebrate. We have spent months with the Torah at our side, gleaning from its wisdom and insights, and now we know what beauty it has to offer. With Your permission, we would like to celebrate…"

That is what Simchat Torah offers us. A day to bask in the beauty of our marriage to the Torah. And without question, its beauty is something worth dancing for late into the night.



The Festival of Sukkos Somehow Found Its Way Into Hassag.

During the second world war, Hassag was called a labour camp, but in truth, it was a slaughter-house - no more, no less. The Jews who were brutally imprisoned there lived in overcrowded barracks. Many died of starvation, cruel treatment or typhus. Their task was the manufacture of millions of bullets for the German army. Day and night, they stood over their machines as each piece of metal went through seven stages of preparation until it was perfected into its death-dealing form.

The Jewish captives were a slated to be a part of this vast mechanism of destruction: destroying and being destroyed at the same time. There was an unused corner between two factory buildings in Hassag and a number of prisoners co-opted the space for their use. Lumber was piled up, as if in storage, for the sukkah walls, and somewhat above these walls, branches were unobtrusively stacked for the schach. Jews slid in and out of this temporary dwelling with their treasured crusts of bread, thinking of the protective sukkos in the wilderness thousands of years previously, and treasuring those stolen moments, for the experience of eating

in the sukkah, no matter how makeshift it was, was a genuine experience. They had no Torah scroll, and joy was absolutely foreign to Hassag. Worse yet, on that date, just one year earlier, many of them were witnesses to the liquidation of the Czestochowa Ghetto and the demise of their loved ones.

On one of the days of Chol Hamoed Sukkos, a whispered message flitted around the camp: the shoemaker had been delayed in his return from the ghetto. The shoemaker was one of the "fortunate Jews" in the camp who had special status. As "Skilled Valuable Jews" these Jews had special talents and consequently enjoyed certain privileges, such as assignment to unguarded factories or performing various personal services for high-ranking German officers. He was an expert shoemaker, whom the Germans actually honoured with the title "Schuster Meister" - Master Shoemaker.

Very little was known about him personally, but it was clear that he was unsurpassed in the craft of boot-making and as a result, his talents were much in demand by the high-ranking German officers. It was this unassuming man, whose life was so assured (comparatively), who risked his life two weeks earlier to smuggle in a shofar for Rosh Hashanah. Some members of the the Aufraumungs Kommand - the clean-up squad - guessed that he used his special status with the S.S. command to be allowed to search for special materials for his craft among the stores of ghetto plunder, which were kept under particularly heavy guard. Once inside, it was quite simple to slip the shofar under his loose clothing. Simple, but risky, for would he have been apprehended by the guard, few questions would have been asked, and little heed given to the answers. The sentence would have been swift - a rifle bullet on the spot or perhaps a prolonged torture followed by a public hanging. But Boruch Hashem the cobbler was not caught, and the shofar was delivered.

Now, during the holiday of Sukkos, he was looking to fulfil the dictum of the Sages: "One mitzvah brings on the fulfilment of another."

Fortified by the success of his first venture, the shoemaker was prepared to further the Yom Tov celebration. He had gone off to work in the morning like any other day. When he finally came back, he did not head for the kitchen for his especially generous portion, but instead hurried into his hut. What had happened? The impossible ... no... the incredible had come to pass for the second time in a month! He had successfully spirited a Sefer Torah out of the clutches of the dreaded Gestapo and smuggled it into camp. He simply rolled it around and around his body, let his loose tunic hang over it, and then walked into the camp. Where he had gotten it from, he adamantly refused to reveal.

It was later learned that he had literally saved the Sefer Torah from desecration because a short while later the Gestapo burned all the Sifrei Torah, seforim, and various sacramental cloths and articles in one gigantic bonfire. This one Sefer Torah was the sole surviving remnant of the sacred articles of the Czestochowa Ghetto.

The intrepid cobbler decided to bribe one of the guards and offered the Nazi something that he could never have purchased for any sum: a pair of officer's boots! (The Germans seemed to have regarded hand-crafted boots as a singular luxury and thus reserved for high-ranking officers. Hence, too, the shoemaker's privileged status.) The shoemaker was allowed to select one item from the pile, and he took this Torah scroll because of its small size, which made it feasible for him to wrap it around his stomach without causing a tell-tale bulge, and later, in camp, its size permitted easy concealment.

A regular minyan on Shabbos had already been instituted in one of the barracks, and it was there, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Sukkos, that the heroic shoemaker demanded: "Who wants to hide the Sefer Torah?" Two brave Jews decided to assume the responsibility. They immediately removed a board from the head of one of the wooden cots that was used for sleeping, and in the hollow underneath it, they concealed the scroll. The news of the Sefer Torah's arrival had naturally electrified the entire camp.

All Sukkos, the Torah was used - sparingly, of course - and on Simchas Torah night, crowded hakafos in the cramped run-down shack were held. These hakafos would have been outlandish in any other situation. Carrying the Sefer Torah in their arms as in conventional hakafos, was impossible, as they would have been running quite a risk. Being caught carrying the Torah would have meant sure death, but what value did their lives have, anyway? It would have been worth it! But the scroll would have also been destroyed G-d forbid and this was a loss they would not risk.



The Sefer Torah remained safely hidden behind the board. The inmates stealthily walked around the wooden cot that contained its sacred treasure. As they passed it, they leaned over and kissed the board that lay directly above the Sefer. And so it went, far into the night. The silent "dancers" held themselves strenuously in check, as the joyous songs surged repeatedly to their lips. One song echoed softly in their ears. Because of its obvious relevance, they could not contain it inside. As they walked around the Sefer, they were almost deafened by the silent screaming that enveloped each one of them: "Rejoice on Simchas Torah, because it is our strength and our light!"

The Sefer Torah miraculously survived the war, although the whereabouts of the heroic shoemaker are unknown. Today, the Sefer is safely ensconced in the Aron Kodesh of the Gerrer Bais Medrash in Bnei Brak.

"The only thing that can truly make a person happy, is the knowledge that there is a Creator who loves you." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.

R' Chaim (Brisker) Soloveitchik zt"l

The Shulchan Aruch writes that the reason why we call the final day of the Yom Tov, 'Simchas Torah' is because on this day, 'we are joyously happy, and we make a feast of drinking to celebrate the completion of the Torah.'

This is why it is called 'Simchas Torah'?

For this reason, the holiday should be called 'Simchas Yisroel' - since it is Bnei Yisroel who are rejoicing and celebrating! It is clear, though, that the mitzvah on this day is not just that Klal Yisroel should rejoice with the Torah - the most important thing is that the Torah should rejoice with the Jewish people!"

Rabbi Ari Neuwirth -Dancing with our Father



Every Jewish holiday serves its own, unique purpose and contains particular, special mitzvos pertaining to it. On Rosh Hashanah, we blow the Shofar; on Sukkos we sit in the Sukkah and shake the Lulav and Esrog; on Pesach, we eat Matzah, and so on. Shavuos, as the Gemara (*Shabbos* 88b) tells us, commemorates the day we received the Torah.

But this leads us to the curious question of what purpose Simchas Torah serves. When we dance and sing with the Torah, aren't we

celebrating the fact that we were given such a special Torah and have the incredible privilege to learn it? But then again, isn't that what Shavuos is about? What then differentiates these two holidays?

Rav Simcha Zissel Broide zt"l, late Chevron Rosh Yeshiva, unravels this dilemma with an analogy of a gift. There are two types of gifts a person can receive, he explains. On the one hand, a gift can be luxurious and rare. A piece of jewellery or diamond ring, for example, are intrinsically valuable no matter who gives it to you. On the other hand, there is another type of gift that is relatively inexpensive and not rare, and yet it is very valuable. Why would that be so? Because the person who gave it to you is someone you admire and respect.

Imagine you attend a baseball game. Before the game, the baseballs which are tossed around on the field are worth a few dollars. But how much would the ball inflate in price were it to be autographed by one of the players, let alone the best player? Quite significantly.

In another example, beginning with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it has been customary for presidents to use multiple pens when signing major pieces of government legislation. To date, President Lyndon Johnson holds the record for using the most pens – 72 – to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The moment these pens leave the president's hand, they became valuable souvenirs and are typically distributed among political allies and friends. In one instance, a pen used by President Johnson to sign a water bill in 1965 was marketed at $499. But why are such pens so treasured? Because once they touch the president's hand and become a monumental part of history, they turn into gold.

This, explains Rav Simcha Zissel Brodie, is what distinguishes the holidays of Shavuos and Simchas Torah. We are celebrating two different types of gifts during each of them. On Shavuos, we focus our attention on the gift which we received, namely the Torah, which unto itself is extremely precious and valuable. On Simchas Torah, however, we revel in the Giver – Hashem – and dance with Him. The

focus is on Who gave us the Torah and the shared relationship we have. Before we embark on our journey beyond the month of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos, we spend one day dancing with Hashem, the One with whom we have developed a very close relationship. We take the time to appreciate the grandeur and greatness of Hashem, Who has given us so much.

It is only after such inspiring and impactful days that we are in position to fully grasp how privileged we are as Jews and how much we ought to cherish and value our connection to Hashem. And that is why we break out in unbridled dancing and singing. We are dancing with none other than our Father in Heaven.

And so, this Simchas Torah, a special opportunity awaits us. It's the time we've been looking forward to for so long. Let us dance, sing and rejoice with Hashem. He's also been looking forward to dancing with us for so long.



The Kozhnitzer Maggid, R' Yisroel Hopstein ZT"L would quote the words of the gemara Chagigah 4a): "Who is considered a fool (שוטה)? One who loses things that are given to him." This may be applied to those who do not understand or make use of the holy day of Shemini Atzeres.

For weeks, we have been drawing closer and closer to Hashem and our level of spirituality has grown immeasurably. Now, on this holy day, Hashem does not want us to leave, to see it all go to waste, and we must work extra hard to maintain this pure level, for otherwise, we are no different than the fool who simply loses things!



One who does not waste time will find time for everything. ~ R' Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai zt"l



Simchas Torah

The joy with which **R' Chaim Shmulevitz**, Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, learned was visibly apparent. His eyes sparkled with excitement and a smile often played on his lips. After clarifying a point, he might exclaim "Ess iz Sossen'dik!" (It is joyous!).

Once, when learning with his partner, R' Chaim thought of a connection between two far-flung topics in the Talmud. As he elucidated his point, R' Chaim leaped upon a bench. As he reviewed it, his feet began to dance. (**For Love of Torah**)



Cast Your Bread...

Yisroel Greenhart sat down to rest on a bench from his stroll through Marine Park when a glitter in the grass caught his eye. He bent down and found a beautiful diamond ring. No other passersby were around, so Yisroel elatedly brought home the ring for his wife.

Mrs. Greenhart felt bad enjoying a ring over which the owner must be feeling anguish. She urged Yisroel to make an effort to locate the owner. He posted a sign near the park bench stating his find and his phone number. Late Friday afternoon a man named Joe Paller called. He had been carrying his wife's ring in his pocket while walking in the park and gave Yisroel an accurate description of the ring.

When Yisroel told Joe that he could only pick up the ring on Saturday night, Joe exclaimed, "I knew it! I knew you must be a religious Jew who observes the Sabbath. Who else would post a lost-and-found sign for a diamond ring?"

When Joe picked up the ring, Yisroel refused the reward which Joe offered. The great Kiddush Hashem that resulted was certainly payment enough!

Several months later, as Yisroel was strolling in Marine Park early one morning, he suddenly found himself surrounded by three tough-

looking teenagers. Yisroel looked around the deserted park, praying for some escape.

As if in answer to his prayers, two men appeared in the distance. One was Joe Paller; the other was his friend, Mike. Joe recognized Yisroel, saw he was in trouble, and urged Mike to help save Yisroel. Mike was a big, strong fellow and he quickly taught one of the teens a lesson he would never forget. The other two quickly fled.

Yisroel profusely thanked Joe and Mike for saving his life. Joe replied, "I'll never forget what you did for me. The least we could do is help you!" (**Visions of Greatness, Vol. 4**)

L'Maaseh



Hundreds of chassidim would travel from all over to be with their Rebbe, **R' Meir'l of Premishlan ZT"L**, for the Yamim Noraim until after Sukkos.

It happened one year, that the daughter of R' Meir'l became sick before Yom Tov and her condition steadily worsened until she was literally hovering between life and death by the last day of Yom Tov. The great Tzaddik, however, did not change his mannerism even one iota. On the day of Simchas Torah, he sang and danced in the Bais Medrash, with a joy that lit up his face. Those that did not know how seriously ill his daughter was, had no idea based on the Rebbe's lively and energetic hakafos; the many that did know, however, were quite worried and even a bit

perturbed that R' Meir could act with such joyous abandon as his daughter wasted away hour by hour.

Finally, a group of chassidim and family members came before the Rebbe and begged him to intercede. They requested that he daven for his child, his precious daughter - at least do something to help her at this crucial time. R' Meir'l allowed them to lead him to her room. When he saw how ill she was, he raised his eyes skyward and said, "Master of the World, You commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana; Meir'l blew. You commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur; Meir'l fasted. You commanded us to sit in a sukkah; Meir'l did that as well. Now, You command us to be joyous on Simchas Torah and Meir'l is joyous. But You also made his daughter ill and Meir'l wants to accept this decree with joy as well. But how can he do so?

Do we not have a halacha that states, **אין מערבין שמחה בשמחה** - ***'Do not combine one joyous event with another'?"***

Suddenly, the sick girl began to sweat, and her fever broke! Within a few short days, she recovered entirely!

Honouring The Torah

On Simchas Torah we honour the Torah by expressing an outpouring of love to the Torah and those who learn it.

We have two Chasanim - "Grooms" on this special day whom we honour. There is a Chasan Torah and a Chasan Bereshis. Why do we need two grooms?

The reason, says **R' Avrohom Pam ZT"L**, is that at this special time, we celebrate our accomplishments in Torah - yet we do not rest on our laurels. We also celebrate our future goals and aspirations in Torah growth. R' Pam explains that renewal begins with resolutions. Just as we all made resolutions before Rosh Hashana to solidify our teshuva into real growth, so too, as the holiday of Sukkos comes to a close with the exuberance and joy of Simchas Torah, it is

imperative not to lose that "high" feeling by making new kabbolos in Torah learning. Maybe start going to a shiur, learn chumash with a new commentary, or get a new study partner!

The goal of Simchas Torah is the literal meaning of the words: ***Happiness of the Torah***! As much as we rejoice with the Torah, the main goal is when the Torah rejoices with us! If we renew our dedication to Torah, and strive to upgrade our learning and performance of mitzvos, we will dance with the Torah on the holiday itself, but the Torah will rejoice with us all year long.



R' Itzikel of Pshevorsk ZT"L would say:

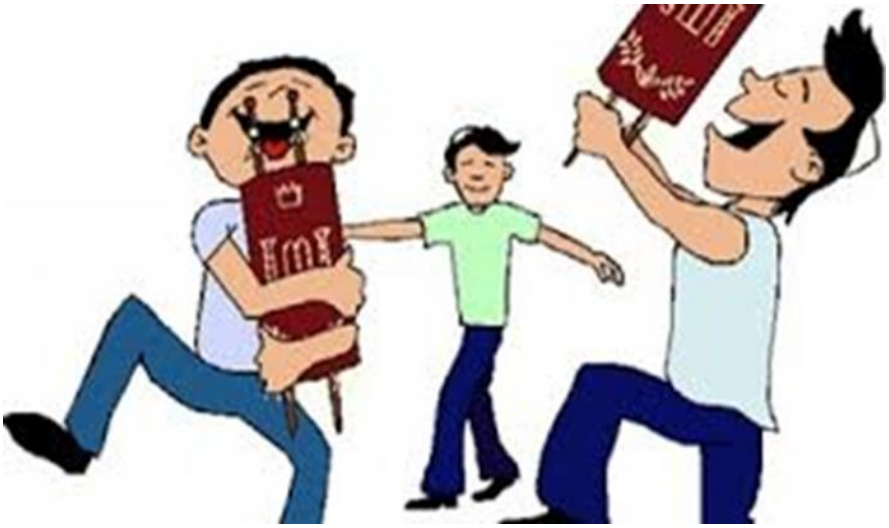
"It is important that we allow the Nashim Tzidkaniyos (righteous women) to come to shul and take part in our Hakafos by watching the dancing on Simchas Torah. Anyone who has a problem that the women's section is open on Purim and Simchas Torah, gives a clear indication that he did not do a complete Teshuvah on Yom Kippur!"

R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L would say:

"Simchas Torah is a bittersweet holiday for me. On the one hand, I rejoice greatly in our precious Torah. On the other, I am saddened over the many Jews who violate the Torah daily. Thus, the more joy I feel on Simchas Torah, the more keenly I feel pain over the level to which our people have sunk!"

A chassid once travelled to the Chozeh of Lublin ZT"L to spend Yom Tov. When he came before the Rebbe, he was shocked when the Chozeh told him, "Go home! You don't belong here!" When the chassid tried again the next day, the Rebbe exclaimed. "Didn't I tell you to go home?"

Deeply dejected, the chassid set out on his journey home. On the way, he stopped at an inn to spend the night. There he met a group of chassidim traveling to the Chozeh.



After a few rounds of l'chayim, the chassidim cheerfully started to dance, drawing the disheartened chassid into their circle. Round and round they went, joyfully singing Hashem's praises. Gradually the chassid's gloom turned into simcha as he danced mightily.

At the height of their ecstasy, the chassidim said to him, "Come back with us to the Rebbe!" The chassid decided to give it another try. To his great surprise, the Chozeh was delighted to see him. Embracing him warmly, the Chozeh said, "When you came the first time, I saw Heaven had decreed that you were to die shortly. I sent you home, because I didn't want you to die here on Yom Tov. But with your simcha, you caused the heavenly decree to be annulled!" Indeed, he lived to a ripe old age.

The Skulener Rebbe, R' Eliezer Zisha Portugal ZT"L would tell people, "This story represents the underlying idea of Simchas Torah. After our intense prayers on the Yamim Noraim, and after the decree was sealed, we rejoice on Simchas Torah. For even if the

decree is not favourable, it is still possible to reverse it and change it into goodness and blessing through the power of simcha!"

There are many comparisons between the holy days before Simchas Torah and the days of Sefirah before Shavuos. They are both 50 days in length and the last day of each period, the day which culminates the entire period, is called "**עצרת**". Both on Shavuos and on Simchas Torah we rejoice with the Torah - so what's the difference? **The Dubner Maggid ZT"L** answers with a moshol .

There was once a king who chose for himself a queen and threw a lavish wedding party. He invited many friends and guests and ordered a large feast to be prepared. It was a grand wedding and all those in attendance rejoiced in the king's good fortune. Six months later, though, the king decided to throw another grand party. He once again ordered a royal feast, hired musicians and dancers, and invited his close friends and relatives to attend. Everyone was surprised. Why was the king making another wedding party? The king explained: "When I took this woman to be my queen, I was happy and contented. However, I realized that I really did not know her very well. But now, after I've spent so much time with her, I can truly appreciate how special she is. Now, I am overwhelmingly thrilled and exhilarated! So now, I wish to make a feast and rejoice once again!"

On Shavuos Klal Yisroel received the Torah - we all said **נעשה ונשמע** - with blind faith. We rejoice on Shavuos for this great gift. But on Simchas Torah, after we've become familiar with the beauty, wisdom and sweetness of the Torah - now we sing and dance in pure ecstasy for we know how great this gift is, how exceptional is our **תורה הקדושה**

Sweetness Of Torah

In Bnei Brak, there was a custom among many of the yeshivos and their rebbeim at the end of a school year, to take their entire class of students to the home of the tzaddik and posek hador, **R' Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz ZT"L, the Chazon Ish.**

The boys would eagerly look forward to this opportunity to see and hear the great Gaon, in person, while the Chazon Ish, in turn, would speak to the students about the importance of Torah learning and dedication that is required to attain great heights in diligence and Yiras Shomayim.

A remarkable story is told about a rebbe who brought his class to the home of the Chazon Ish for their annual trip. After they had spent some time there, the rebbe motioned that it was time to leave and the boys stood up and began filing out. The Chazon Ish pointed discreetly at one of the boys at the end of the line and asked the rebbe quietly, "Who is that boy? What type of student is he?" The rebbe looked and then with a dismissive shrug, he answered, "Oh, that boy? He is a weak student. In fact, he learns absolutely nothing in class, I don't know why he's even in my class. He knows nothing, his ability is nothing - he is basically a nothing!"

Harsh words from the mouth of melamed, and the Chazon Ish appeared disturbed to hear it. Without another word, he walked over to the boy and beckoned for him to come and sit down at the table. The bewildered boy did as he was told, panic-stricken that he was singled out and about to be tested by the great tzaddik himself. But R' Avrohom Yeshaya set his mind at ease with a warm and caring smile. Then he went over to the bookcase and pulled out a volume of mishnayos. He sat down next to the boy, smiled easily, and said, "Come, little one, let's learn a bit of mishnayos together." He opened up the sefer to the first page, put his finger on the place and slowly began to read the words. Patiently, he translated and explained every word of the mishnah, so clear and concise that the young boy

had no trouble following and understanding every word. The Chazon Ish learned the mishnah in its entirety with the boy, then went over it once again to make sure that he truly understood every word. When he was satisfied, he closed the volume and bid the boy good-bye.

The story now fast forwards approximately ten years. The night of Simchas Torah arrived and many of the residents of Bnei Brak would come to the huge hall of the Ponovezher Beis Medrash for hakafos. The exuberance of the students was a spectacle to behold and hundreds of people would attend the hakafos, which lasted well into the night hours. The rebbe, with his children and family, also attended the hakafos. After dancing for a short time, the Rebbe stood on the side and was watching with tremendous admiration the sight of one student, who was so caught up in the excitement of the night. He clasped the Sefer Torah in his arms with a love that burned bright and the rebbe found out that this boy was considered the best bochur in the yeshivah.



How shocked and amazed he was to learn that this bochur - the best bochur in yeshivah - was the very same student from his class years ago, the one he classified to the Chazon Ish, as a "nothing"! His shock

soon turned to distress. How could he have been so wrong? What happened that brought about this incredible change in the young man's character and, even more telling, his learning ability?

Instantly, he ran out of the yeshivah and headed straight to the home of the Chazon Ish. Upon greeting him warmly, the Chazon Ish welcomed the rebbe into his home. The melamed explained what he had seen and why this bothered him so much.

R' Avrohom Yeshaya nodded for a minute and then, as if recalling the entire incident from ten years ago, he said, "Every person is given the ability to study Torah. This is the hallmark of a Jew. Some people, though, need to have their G-d-given ability unmasked by tasting a bit of the sweetness of Torah. I couldn't believe that this boy was a 'nothing' - he just hadn't yet tasted the sweetness of Torah. Therefore, I sat down to learn with him one mishnah - one single mishnah that he understood perfectly in its entirety, was all it took to open up his mind and allow him to shteig in learning!"

Simchas Torah



In the city of Kamenitz, the holiday of Simchas Torah was a confluence of excitement, inclusiveness, and pure joy. Many of the residents, men, women and children, would head over to the famed Yeshiva Knesses Bais Yitzchok of **R' Boruch Ber Lebovitz ZT"L**, to watch and join in the feverish dancing and singing, and even the women would crowd into the ladies section and jostle with one another to catch a glimpse of the action and join in the simcha.

One year, a number of over-zealous bochurim in the yeshiva felt that they did not want to have to deal with the potential problems that

could arise from having the ladies inside the yeshiva building. Worrying that a mishap could break out, whereby the boys could find themselves coming into contact or viewing the ladies as they walked in and out, they locked the ladies entrance to the building. When some women came to watch the festivities, they couldn't get into the yeshiva and discouraged were forced to turn around and go home.

The custom in Kamenitz for many years was that on the night of Yom Tov, a delegation of students from the yeshiva would call on the Rosh Yeshiva at his home and wait until he finished his Yom Tov meal, and then escort him, with singing and dancing in the streets back to the festivities in the yeshiva. This year was no different, however, when they arrived, R' Boruch Ber told them in a solemn and unequivocal voice that he was not going. "But Rebbe, everyone is waiting," they cried in dismay. R' Boruch Ber shook his head. "Not everyone," he declared. He announced right then and there that as long as the women and girls of the city were barred from entering the yeshiva, he was not going in either.

He explained his reasoning as follows: "Unfortunately, in our day and age, when Kavod Hatorah and appreciating Torah scholars has fallen so far, many girls have no understanding of the value of a Talmid Chacham or a Ben Torah, and have no interest in marrying one, nor raising a family based on the values of Torah study. But today, here in our Beis Medrash, we have a chance to offer them a glimpse of what a true Ben Torah looks like; hugging, kissing and dancing with the Torah, exuding the blissful joy of one who knows what Torah is - and they go and lock the Ladies section?!" He shook his head with dismay at the shocked and somewhat embarrassed bochurim.

"One day out of the year - Simchas Torah - we have the opportunity to cause a tremendous Kiddush Hashem and increase Kavod Hatorah in the world. One day!" It was only after the bochurim promised to open up the Ezras Nashim and allow the women to enter the yeshiva, did R' Boruch Ber agree to accompany them to the Beis Medrash.

R' Chaim Soloveitchik (Brisker) ZT"L was honoured with the first hakafah each year, as befitting the Rov of the city. One year, however, the Rov held onto the Sefer Torah for all seven hakafos, singing and dancing for many hours in a row!



When someone later asked him why this year he took all seven hakafos, he shrugged and replied, "The gemara in Berachos (55a) writes that three things can shorten the lifespan of an individual. One of those things is if someone gives a person a Sefer Torah to read from and he does not read it. I believe that the same applies if someone gives another a Torah to hold by hakafos and he gives it away to another. Thus, I will not give over a Sefer Torah that I am holding to another person unless they ask to take it from me. Since no one offered to take it from me, I held it the entire time!"

Everybody Receives an Aliyah

Says the Yalkut Yitzchak, is because on this day we conclude the Torah, which ends with the word "Yisrael". Now the letters Yisrael, which form the first letters of the words 'Yesh shishim ribu osiyos la'Torah'. This in turn, hints that every Jewish person owns his own letter and portion in the Torah. And so everyone makes a point of being called to his Torah on the day that the Torah is completed.

The gemara tells us: (Taanis 31a)- *In the future (when Moshiach comes) the Holy One Blessed Be He will make a circle for the righteous and He will sit in the middle, in Paradise. And each and every one will point with his finger, as it says, "And he will say on that day, behold this is our Lord, we trust in Him and He will give us salvation."*



Our custom of Hakafos on Simchas Torah, when we carry the Sefer Torah in our arms and dance lovingly in a circle, is learned from this gemara. As a result, the holy **Vilna Gaon ZT"L** was very strict against people standing by the Bimah in the middle of the dancing during the joyous hakafos. Since we dance in a circle to represent the future circle that will surround Hashem, how can we dare stand in the middle of the dancing - as if we are taking the Almighty's place!

R' Akiva Eiger ZT"L would say: "Every year on Simchas Torah, they give me Choson Torah. What shall I do? It's been already 50 years - and I still don't even know the kallah!"

The Yesod V'Shoresh HaOvadah writes about Simchas Torah (Perek 16), "Whoever is happy with the Torah on this day is guaranteed that his children and descendants will always be Talmidei Chachamim!"

R' Yisroel Baal Shem Tov ZT"L would say:



"The dancing on Simchas Torah is so exalted and so elevated that even the Angel Michael comes down to this earth and collects all the fallen and torn straps of the shoes of the Jews as they dance. He then uses these to create a crown to exhibit the splendour of Klal Yisroel."

Simchas Torah

In the city of Kamenitz, the holiday of Simchas Torah was a confluence of excitement, inclusiveness, and pure joy. Many of the residents, men, women and children, would head over to the famed Yeshiva Knesses Bais Yitzchok of **R' Boruch Ber Lebovitz ZT"L**, to watch and join in the feverish dancing and singing, and even the women would crowd into the ladies section and jostle with one another to catch a glimpse of the action and join in the simcha.

One year, a number of over-zealous bochurim in the yeshiva felt that they did not want to have to deal with the potential problems that could arise from having the ladies inside the yeshiva building. Worrying that a mishap could break out, whereby the boys could find themselves coming into contact or viewing the ladies as they walked

in and out, they locked the ladies entrance to the building. When a number of women did come to watch the festivities, they could not get into the yeshiva and discouraged were forced to turn around and go home.

The custom in Kamenitz for many years was that on the night of Yom



Tov, a delegation of students from the yeshiva would call on the Rosh Yeshiva at his home and wait until he finished his Yom Tov meal, and then escort him, with singing and dancing in the streets back to the festivities in the yeshiva. This year was no different, however, when they arrived, R' Boruch Ber told them in a solemn and unequivocal voice that he was not going. "But Rebbe, everyone is waiting," they cried in dismay. R' Boruch Ber shook his head. "Not everyone," he declared. He announced right then and there that as long as the women and girls of the city were barred from entering the yeshiva, he was not going in either.

He explained his reasoning as follows: "Unfortunately, in our day and age, when Kavod Hatorah and appreciating Torah scholars has fallen so far, many girls have no understanding of the value of a Talmid Chacham or a Ben Torah, and have no interest in marrying one, nor raising a family based on the values of Torah study. But today, here in our Beis Medrash, we have a chance to offer them a glimpse of what a true Ben Torah looks like; hugging, kissing and dancing with the Torah, exuding the blissful joy of one who knows what Torah is - and they go and lock the Ladies section?!" He shook his head with dismay at the shocked and somewhat embarrassed bochurim.

"One day out of the year - Simchas Torah - we have the opportunity to cause a tremendous Kiddush Hashem and increase Kavod Hatorah in the world. One day!" It was only after the bochurim promised to open up the Ezras Nashim and allow the women to enter the yeshiva, did R' Boruch Ber agree to accompany them to the Beis Medrash.

In Time, You Will Find It…

Stuart Mintz was born in 1950 to a Jewish family in Cleveland, Ohio. Regretfully, Stuart did not receive a Jewish education, so for the first 35 years of his life, aside for his bar mitzvah celebration, he felt virtually no connection to his Jewish heritage. As far as he was concerned, he was the quintessential American citizen.

The turnabout in his life happened in 1988, when Stuart and his friends were offered a subsidized trip to Israel by an organization, and they decided to take advantage of the opportunity to go. They landed in Israel on Friday morning, and by the time they had gotten themselves together and settled into their hotel, it was already Shabbos in Yerushalayim.

Stuart and his friends were exhausted from the flight, so they ate their dinner, and had an early night. Shabbos dawned in the Holy City. Stuart opened his eyes quite early and gazed at the scenery from the window of his room. Everything was quiet and still, and Stuart realized that besides for gazing at the scenery, there really was not much to do on this day…

In Yerushalayim during those years, everything was closed. There was no taxi to order, nor were buses active. All leisure establishments were closed. Stuart and his six friends felt imprisoned in their hotel rooms. They wanted to start their long-awaited trip already, but did not know how to go about it. Suddenly, one of the friends stood up and suggested: 'Why don't we do a 'synagogue tour'?! The synagogues are open today… Let's go out, visit a few, we'll breathe the air a bit and come back…"

Stuart was indignant: "Go to a synagogue? Why on earth? We go to synagogue on Yom Kippur, maybe on Rosh Hashanah. Who goes to a synagogue on a regular Saturday?" But his friends decided to go, so Stuart followed. They walked out of the hotel and began to roam the streets. For about an hour they walked, passing by dozens of shuls, but they didn't dare enter.

Suddenly, they arrived at a building with a bright white façade. It was the Great Synagogue. Its windows were open and the sounds of tefillos wafted outside. Without knowing why, Stuart turned to his friends and suggested: "Let's go into this synagogue and look at it from inside." They didn't dare step into the sanctuary itself, sure that their mode of dress would arouse negative attention. So they went up to the women's gallery.



It was the first time in their lives they had stepped into an Orthodox shul. They went upstairs. The women's gallery was empty, and Stuart looked down into the busy shul below. The scene that met his eyes left an indelible impression on his heart for the rest of his life. For the first time in his life, he saw people standing around a bimah, wearing talleisim; most of them had white beards, and they were reading from the Torah scroll.

Stuart was overcome by the scene. "Wooowww…," he breathed slowly. "I'm sure that if I could go back two thousand years in time, I would see exactly the same thing: Elderly Jews reading those same words, from the same Sefer Torah…Could that be the reason that we, as Jews, still exist today?!" His question did not get an answer,

but in actuality, that was the turning point in his life. Suddenly he realized how little he knew of his heritage.

A fire of curiosity began to burn inside him, and he felt a strong urge to learn more – much more – about his heritage, and to connect to it…

Ten years later, Stuart, who was already observing Torah and mitzvos, was seated at the Shabbos table with his parents, who were visiting that week. The light of the Shabbos candles illuminated their souls, and apparently, generated a feeling of openness…

Stuart's father suddenly turned to him and said, "Stuart, I don't think I ever told you the story that happened with your grandmother, when you were in the hospital just after your birth." He then related:

For a few weeks after you were born you were hospitalized, after it was discovered that you had a rare blood condition that endangered your life. During that time, your grandmother was at home in Cleveland when she heard a gentle knock at the door.

There was a young rabbi at the door who introduced himself as **Menachem Mendel Taub – the Kaliver Rebbe**. After surviving the Holocaust, including unspeakable torture at Auschwitz, he emigrated to the United States and settled in Cleveland. With his characteristic energy, he set about establishing a shul, and all he lacked was a Sefer Torah. He wanted to buy one, but being a penniless refugee, he couldn't dream of procuring such a sum of money. Still, he did not give up. As a first step towards his goal, he decided to visit the homes of Cleveland's Jews, those close to observance and those further away. That's how he arrived at your grandmother's house.

When she heard this, she asked, "How much does a Sefer Torah cost?" The Rebbe replied, "Three thousand five hundred dollars." At the time this was a colossal sum of money. Grandma, who came from a traditional Jewish home, told him, "If you promise me that the

first Shabbos that you read in the Torah you will make a Mi Shebeirach for my sick grandson, then I'll give you the whole sum you need." The Rebbe agreed, and Grandma wrote a check for $3,500 and gave it to the stunned Rebbe.

There is no doubt that the Rebbe made that Mi Shebeirach for you more than once, and now you are here, almost fifty years later, healthy as can be." Stuart's father concluded the story, and the pieces began to click into place in Stuart's mind.

"Dad, maybe you know where that Sefer Torah is today?" Stuart asked. "Sure, I know," his father replied. "A few years later, the Rebbe made aliyah to Israel, with a few of the members of our community. After asking our permission, he took the Sefer Torah, and everything else from the shul, with him."

Stuart was stunned, and began to wonder: Ten years ago, there was a Sefer Torah in Eretz Yisrael that changed my life. Now I hear about a Sefer Torah that saved my life. Is it possible that the same Sefer Torah that started my teshuvah process is the one my grandmother donated?

Stuart decided to look into it, and what he learned was the unbelievable – it indeed seems to have been that same Sefer Torah… The Sefer Torah that his grandmother bought with her savings saved his life in his infancy and saved his spiritual life as a young man.

The passuk "Eitz chaim hie lamachazikim bah vesomcheha me'ushar" took on a new meaning for him. Many years ago, his grandmother paid $3,500 to the Kaliver Rebbe so he could buy a Sefer Torah for his shul and make a Mi Shebeirach for her grandson's recovery. At the time, she had no idea that this action would save Stuart's life twice, once physically and once spiritually. *(Rabbi Yoel Gold)*

On Simchas Torah, when the annual reading of the Torah is completed, it is customary to call a learned scholar - one who has delved into the intricacies and tasted the sweet pleasures of the Torah - to the reading of the final portion.This honour is referred to as Chosson Torah - literally, the bridegroom of the Torah, indicating a loving relationship between the person who is engaged in study and the Torah itself. Just as a groom and bride share a loving relationship, so too the Torah and its scholars achieve a lasting bond and enjoinment.



The story is told that in one community, a wealthy man who was totally unlearned wished to receive the distinct honour of Chosson Torah. He approached the gabbai and requested to be given this wonderful honour, however, the gabbai was extremely hesitant and reluctant to oblige.

A man not taken to having his wishes refused, the rich man offered a substantial sum of money to the gabbai, and the caretaker could not resist the temptation. When the rich man was actually called up and smugly performed his obligation, the rov of the shul, suspecting that this was done for financial gain, confronted the gabbai. "Is it true that you were paid to give this honour to him?" asked the rov in an accusatory tone. The gabbai held out for a time before admitting that he was indeed paid to extend this honour to someone totally ignorant of Torah.

Seeing that man was truly sorry, the rov softened his tone in order to mollify the chastened gabbai. After all, it was a mistake and he was unable to resist the forceful manner in which he the rich man approached him.

The rov looked at his trusty gabbai and said, "In truth, I can understand this situation quite well. You see, the Chosson Torah is a bride and groom relationship.

When a young man and a young woman are acquainted with one another and are mutually attracted, there is no need to have a shadchan - matchmaker, involved, and no payment is necessary. However, if the two are total strangers and are brought together by a matchmaker, the latter receives a fee for his services."

"The same is true in this case," quipped the rov. "When a Torah scholar receives the honour of Chosson Torah, it is a loving relationship, because he and the Torah have known each other for a long time and have developed a mutual fondness.

In a situation, though, where the person receiving this special honour is a total stranger to the Torah, there obviously had to be a matchmaker, who had to be given his fee!"

The Cantonist's Unusual Medals of Honour

On Simchat Torah in the 'Soldiers Synagogue' in Czarist Russia around a hundred years ago, there were several Synagogues in this town but the best place to be was where the Cantonists danced. No one rejoiced like the Cantonists.

Cantonists were Jews that had been torn from their parents at an early age and forcefully inducted in the army as a plan to 'convince' them to leave Judaism. It didn't work, as we will see. Very few children actually converted, many more died and those that survived were marred for life.

The dancing and singing were at a wild pace, the men spun, lifted their feet and legs to the rhythm of their own voices as they grasped large cloth- covered Torah Scrolls. They were hoarse from singing, their eyes were closed in ecstatic joy and sweat covered their faces and drenched their jackets and shirts as they danced and sang faster and faster. especially one, who we will call Shimon.

He was perhaps fifty years old and he was jumping and spinning more than anyone else non-stop for a half-hour singing, over the din of the other voices, ' Torah, Torah, I love you so! I love you so!"

Finally, out of breath and exhausted, he handed the scroll he was carrying to someone else and sat down. His shirt had torn in the revelry and, unbeknownst to him, it exposed deep scars on his chest that the children immediately noticed. They gathered around him as he was trying to catch his breath.. a huge smile on his glistening face. and asked him how he got the scars. "Ahh! These?" He replied "These are my medals of honour!"



When he saw that they really wanted to know he became a bit more serious and began, "When I was eight years old, my father, of blessed memory, was the Rabbi of the town and he led a meeting. I listened from behind my door which was opened a bit and heard everything. "It seems that the Czar's soldiers had come earlier that day and demanded that the town produce twenty young men for the army, or they would induct everyone, and no one wanted it to be their son.

"The rich people said they would give money, big money to the community if their sons were exempted while the others, my father included, insisted on a fair and equal lottery. It was serious, there was yelling, even crying and lasted most of the night but finally the lottery idea won. "I fell asleep after a few hours of their

arguing, but suddenly I was awakened by a scream. I knew it was my mother and I understood immediately what had happened. I was one of those chosen!

"My mother came into my room, crying and weeping almost uncontrollably, hugging me and kissing me with no words. "But I told her, 'Mommy, you don't have to cry. I'll come back . I promise. You'll see!' But she answered, "Shimon, my beloved son, your soul is more in danger than your body!" "But I answered, "Mommy, I swear I will always remain a Jew!"

"The next day my father spoke to me for an hour and although he didn't cry at all, I knew that his soul was shattered. And, in fact, he died just a few weeks later, a young man, from a broken heart.

"A few days later two 'snatchers' came into town and began taking children forcefully from their parents. It seems that the rich people couldn't stand the pain of losing their children and hired them. All the parents tried to hide their children, but it didn't work. My mother also hid me in a barrel, but they burst into our house, beat my mother and when I jumped out to protect her, they took me as well.

"The next day there was a wagon full of us, hands tied to one another like animals with armed guards on horseback around us. But somehow my mother managed to break through, toss me a bag (which I later discovered contained Tefillin and a prayer book and said, 'Don't forget the day of your Bar-Mitzva'. Those were the last words I ever heard her say.

"Three years later I was still a year away from my Bar-Mitzva and I had succeeded in keeping my promise to my mother I did not give in to them. But I knew I couldn't hold out much longer. The tortures and punishments they subjected me to were indescribable. I was a leader and an example to the others so they decided that they would put all their efforts in me. I was beaten, starved, deprived of sleep,

warm clothing and kept in solitary confinement and as time went on it got worse.

"That's how I got these my 'medals'." He said, touching his chest and continued his story.

"After they had tortured me intensively for several weeks, they made a proposition. The general himself was going to visit the camp and if I converted before him, they would give me rights, warm bed, good food, a high rank in the army and even let me see my parents again (my father had already passed away, but I didn't know).

"I told them to give me three days to think.
"In those three days they kept up the tortures and didn't let up on me even a bit. Just that the officials kept visiting and promising me, they wanted to be sure that I wasn't going to let them down.

When the day came, soldiers came for me, dressed me up and took me, with themselves as an 'honour' guard to the ceremony. There sat the general with royal escorts on all sides.. everyone was smiling.

They presented me as the boy who saw the light and was willing to leave Judaism for the church. All eyes were on me.

I noticed, when they took me on the stage, that the walls were decorated with several pairs of large crossed swords with two smaller swords beneath them. I reached behind me, pulled one of the smaller swords with its sheath from the wall, drew it from its sheath and declared.

"In the name of his glorious majesty the Czar, this is for the three days I said I would consider changing, G-d forbid, my religion! I am a Jew, and I will always be a Jew!! SHEMA YISROEL!! "

"And before they knew what was happening, I put the pinky, ring finger and index finger of my left hand on the table before me (careful to hide my middle, Tefillin finger) and, in one powerful move, chopped them off with the sword and held them up for all to see!! I was spraying blood on the pure white uniforms of the officials!

"The crowd let out a gasp. The officials left the room in confusion.. they had suffered a clear defeat by a Jewish boy.

"I don't know how, but I didn't die. The bleeding stopped, I got better and even served ten more years in the army until they discharged me. But they never talked to me about religion again.

"I didn't know it at the time, but I wasn't the only such story, But I heard that when the Czar Nicholas, may his name be cursed forever, heard what I had done, it was the last straw. They knew they were defeated and the entire Cantonist plan was dropped.

Thank G-d! NOW. It's Simchas Torah tonight!! Let's dance!!"

And saying this he leaped up and began dancing again and singing "Sisu V'Shimchu B'Simchas Torah!!"

Bris Avos

Rabbi Leibel Stempel shlit"a from London relates: This happened many years ago. I used to travel to my uncle, **the Bobover Rebbe zy"a**, every year for Simchas Torah.

I was younger then, and makpid not to eat anything outside the Sukkah. It's one thing to keep this holy chumra when you're home, but travelling makes it much harder, especially when it's an eleven-hour flight, not to mention the time travelling to and from the airport! But that was my hanhagah, and I kept it no matter how difficult it was. To make it a little easier, I asked my daughter in New York to order a car service to be waiting for me at the airport. At least I wouldn't have to fast any longer than necessary.

When we arrived at the airport, the car service was nowhere in sight. We called the company, and they explained that the driver had gotten lost on one of the one-way streets. I had to flag down a taxi. As each taxi passed by, he'd ask where I needed. "Manhattan," I said. "No, I'm going to Boro Park," they kept responding.

This kept happening, and I was getting hungrier. This too is for the good, I thought, and asked Hashem to help me. Eventually I found a taxi who could take me. I slid thankfully into the seat, and my gaze wandered to his nameplate. "Darbarmediker." I sat up straight. That's the name of all the descendants of the Kedushas Levi!

I hadn't been sure that he was Jewish, but now I knew. I started talking to him. "You're a Jew, right?" He nodded. "Not only that, but your ancestor was a great Rabbi, Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev." "Yeah, my grandfather once told me something like that."

I felt like I had to do something for his neshamah. Such yichus! "Forgive me, but do you keep the Torah? Wear tefillin?" "No, no. In Russia it was against the law to do anything Jewish. I never even had a bris." A bris? Ribbono Shel Olam, not even a bris! "I think it's time for you to join with the rest of the Jews of the generations…" But he wasn't interested; not at all. "What do I need it for? It's a whole operation at my age. I have enough problems in my life." And he started telling me his tzaros – most of all, that he didn't have any children.

Hmmm… maybe there was a connection between the two things. "Do you know that your ancestor can help you from Heaven? Maybe you should have a bris and he'll bless you?" I took his number and wished him well.

As soon as I could I contacted a Chabad shaliach nearby and told him the story. Baruch Hashem, they started working on him, and he opened up to Yiddishkeit, slowly but surely. After several months, he was ready to agree to have a bris! He needed to schedule an operating room in the hospital for it. The date was set for the end of Tishrei.

Before Sukkos I received a phone call from the Chabad shaliach. "We want you to be the sandek – you were the one who started him on the path to teshuva." Of course! I couldn't be happier. Such a zechus, to bring a Yid into the bris! "What's the date?" I asked. "Two

days after Sukkos." Two days after Sukkos… that's the 25th of Tishrei – the yahrtzeit of the Kedushas Levi!



And that's what happened. The Berditchever's descendant had his bris on his yahrtzeit. That same year, he was blessed with a child! It seems clear that the Berditchever used his powers to help him, once he made the effort to come closer to Hashem. Yes, he named his son Levi Yitzchak.

Dancing on Simchas Torah

Everyone dances on Simchas Torah, the greatest scholar and the simplest Jew. Everyone is equal; no one can tell who is the Torah sage and who has never even studied. All Jews are on the same level.

A person dances with his feet, not with his head. The feet are responsible for transporting the whole body, including the head. If people danced with their "heads" on Simchas Torah, their rejoicing would be limited, each person being only as joyful as his intellectual capacities allow. The joy of Simchas Torah, however, is unlimited and knows no bounds. By dancing with our feet, we express a higher level of joy that transcends all intellectual understanding. This spiritual level will cause a joy so intense that it is immeasurable.



Thus, says the **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L**, it is for this reason that Simchas Torah is not celebrated by sitting down and studying like on Shavuos, for our happiness is not derived from how much Torah we understand. On the contrary, we dance with a completely rolled-up Torah scroll! Encased in its mantle, no one can even see what is written in it. On Simchas Torah, everyone dances: the Jew who has studied much and the Jew who is just starting out on the journey, the learned scholar and the one who has no idea what Torah is all about. For on Simchas Torah all Jews are equal, rejoicing in the Torah with an infinite joy.

Pearls of Wisdom



In Vilna, when the *Aron HaKodesh* would be opened on Simchas Torah, and the *Sifrei Torah* were taken out, **the *Gra*** would burst into joyous and cheerful dancing, which did not stop until the *Sifrei Torah* were returned to the *Aron*!

Rabbi Yechiel Spero writes a story which took place in Yerushalayim during the second World War, as Rommel and his Afrika Corps were getting closer to the Holy Land. The mood in the country was full of fear and anxiety.

The Shomer Emunim Shul, in Me'ah She'arim, was the place to be on Simchas Torah. The dancing and singing would be so uplifting that it could not be matched by anything at any other time of year.



That year, however, the Davening was without the usual heart and passion. After a few minutes of Hakafos, the Rav of the Shul, Rav Aharon Roth, ordered the dancing to stop because he wanted to address the crowd. He said, "My dear friends, I would like to share a story with you that I feel has great meaning for us.

There was once a king who decided to have a very festive and unique birthday party for himself. He sent out letters throughout the land inviting the most graceful dancers and the finest musicians, and they were all to assemble dressed in the most lavish outfits for the grand event. All was arranged and the special day arrived. The scene was truly fitting for a king's party.

Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, the king noticed a slight commotion, as an elderly, crippled man struggled to make his way to the dance floor. Not only was he handicapped, he was also blind, and

he bumped into the tables and chairs. After much exertion, the man finally made it to the dance floor and began to hobble around in a makeshift dance using his crutches for support. The king was mesmerized, and he ignored the rest of the show, focusing on this man who was doing his best to keep his balance.

One of the king's servants was taken aback by this and asked the king for an explanation. He said, 'My king, we have the finest dancers and musicians here, and yet, you are only watching that poor man who is hobbling around on his crutches.'

The king smiled and explained, 'You are right. All those who have gathered here tonight are truly talented and their performance is certainly exemplary. But, let me ask you, are they not deriving personal enjoyment from their performance? Are they dancing only for me, or are they also enjoying dancing for the king and being in the spotlight?

That man has nothing to gain from his dancing. He can't see and he can't dance. Yet, he does so because I requested it. He is acting solely for me! You can even see the pain on his face, but he still continues to dance just because he wants to please me. That is why his dancing is so precious to me — because it is for me!'"

Rav Aharon concluded, "My dear friends, in past years our dancing was different. We danced for Hashem, but we also danced for ourselves. We derived personal joy and benefit from the dancing. This year, however, with war all around us and the very fate of the Jewish People is on our minds, we have the unique opportunity to dance solely for Hashem! Tonight, let us dance, but just for Hashem!"

"Winning doesn't always mean being first. Winning means you're doing better than you've done before."

Peaceful Hakafos

The Chofetz Chaim would add additional *hakafos* on Simchas Torah, up until ten or more, to make sure that each person would have a chance to carry a *Sefer Torah*, and that there not be any hard feelings. The earlier *hakafos* would be divided up among the community members, while the Chofetz Chaim saved the final *hakafos* for his *talmidim*.

When the Chofetz Chaim's son, R' Yehuda Leib, was a young boy, he would carry a *sefer* from the *Nevi'im* or a *Megillah*, as is the custom amongst the children. Arguments were always inevitable amongst the boys as to whom should carry which *sefer* of *Navi*.

The Chofetz Chaim would tell his son that it was not worth fighting about. He would give him a copy of the *Sefer Mitzvos HaGadol* to carry during the *hakafos*, stressing that it was most significant as it included both the Written and Oral Torah.

Alcohol



In Temple times, a Kohen who had imbibed alcohol was not permitted to fulfil any priestly duties. This has a practical application today in that a Kohen, who has drunk alcohol, should not *Duchen*.

In some shuls, the custom is that Kohanim Duchen at Shachris on Simchas Torah (they will make Kiddush/le'chaim only after their aliyah). However, in other shuls, the custom is that the Kohanim do not Duchen at all.

As justification for this latter approach, the **Alexander Rebbe** points out that the last parshah in the Torah, Vezos Habrocho,

contains within it Moshe's own blessing to the people immediately prior to his passing. Such a brochoh on this occasion is more than a fitting substitute for that of the Kohanim. (*Mimini Michoel*)

Rejoicing With the Torah



It was a dark night when **R' Sholom Schwadron** made his way through the deserted streets of Shaarei Chessed, to the home of his brother-in-law, the great **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach**. R' Sholom practically danced along the streets as he sang, "A fantastic *chiddush*! Amazing!" He climbed - or rather floated - up the steps to R' Shlomo Zalman's home, knocking excitedly on the door.

His nephew told him that R' Shlomo Zalman had just gone to lie down, but was not asleep yet. R' Sholom said, "If your father is not yet asleep, allow me to make him happy."

As R' Sholom approached the room, he called out, "R' Shlomo! It is worth your while to get up!"

When R' Shlomo Zalman came out, sparks began to fly as R' Sholom shared with him a *chiddush* on the Maharsham (R' Sholom's grandfather, whose *seforim* R' Sholom published). R' Sholom then exclaimed, "Nu, that's some *chiddush*, isn't it! Let's dance!" Hand in hand, the two Torah luminaries circled the room in a joyous dance. (**Voice of Truth**)

Before Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin became Rav in Yerushalayim, he was the Rav of Lomza, Poland.



Simchas Torah was exceptionally joyous in Lomza. On Erev Simchas Torah after Minchah, the entire community gathered before the home of the Rav and accompanied him to Shul under a Chupah. The community leaders stood under the Chupah with the Rav, and everyone clapped and danced, as if accompanying a Choson. The Hakafos continued until the late hours of the night.

One year, immediately after the Hakafos, the Rav motioned that he wanted to speak to the Gabbai. The Rav whispered something in the Gabbai's ears, and the Gabbai then immediately went to the Bimah and asked for silence.

He made the following announcement: "According to the Rav's request, we are beginning the Hakafos all over again!" Though it was very late and the people were exhausted, they listened to the Rav's directive, and didn't ask any questions. The Chazan began saying 'Atah Ho'raisah', and everyone said it along with him. The Hakafos began all over again, and the congregation danced with their remaining energy.

When the Hakafos were finally complete, the exhausted congregation went home to make Kiddush. Rav Yehoshua Leib's son, Rav Yitzchok Yerucham, later asked his father, "What was wrong with the first Hakafos that we had to repeat them?"

Rav Yehoshua Leib replied, "There was a certain Talmid Chochom at the Hakafos who did not receive an appropriate Hakafah, according to his stature. Therefore, it was worthwhile to repeat the entire Hakafos, just to correct the injustice that was done to him and restore Kavod HaTorah!"



I was arrested together with a number of other chassidim on the 13th of Elul, 1935.

We all were sentenced to exile for "counterrevolutionary" activities. The train transit took many days, until we arrived at the first destination. There the prisoners were sent to various locations, such as the Ural Mountains, Siberia and Uzbekistan. We were sent to Turkestan. From there we were sent to Alma Alta, the capital of Kazakhstan. Once there, we were told to travel to Chimkent, where the local GPU (the precursor of the KGB) office would inform us where to go.

We arrived in Turkestan in the month of Teves, 1936. Around a half a year later, Reb Leizer Naness joined us. A year later, Reb Itche developed an illness and the doctors ordered that he relocate to a city in a warmer climate, so only I and Reb Leizer remained there.

Before Tishrei of the year 1937, Reb Itche - who was a shochet - sent us two chickens he had shechted. We decided to use one for Rosh Hashanah and erev Yom Kippur, and the second one we salted and put away to be used for Sukkot. Our apartment was a mere thirty meters or so from the offices of the local GPU, and our neighbour was the official in charge of the prisons. His name was Karim, and he was the brother-in-law of our landlord, a Muslim named Ibrahim. So if we sang or said anything out loud, it was heard by them.

We made a small sukkah and ate in it in complete silence, as we didn't want to bring any additional attention to ourselves. There was a certain Bucharian Jew who worked as a driver and assistant to the

reigning officer. He quietly passed on to us that every week, accusations were being received that we were trying to influence others to rebel against the government, and he told us that we should be careful with whom we talk. Thanks to him, we were spared from the many traps that the GPU set up to ensnare us. Despite this, on Hoshana Rabba, I asked Reb Leizer to pick up a half-litre of mashke in honour of Simchas Torah.



Reb Leizer replied that since we use a large goblet to make kiddush, he doesn't want to make kiddush on mashke. "I will make kiddush for the two of us," I replied. "Furthermore, we will do it late in the evening, when the offices are generally closed. We will be careful to be quiet, as we were the entire week when we were in the sukkah." Reb Leizer agreed. We came to the sukkah after eight in the evening of Shemini Atzeres. I made kiddush, drinking most of the goblet, and he sipped a small amount. Then we began eating the meal in complete silence. However, after a half hour or so, I took some more mashke and he also drank a little more, and we began singing extremely quietly.

As it is known, whiskey doesn't always hit you immediately; sometimes it takes some time. So without realizing it, the song we were singing became louder and livelier, until we began dancing. Evidently, we completely forgot where we were, and we danced and sang for a while. We then sat down to rest and conclude the meal.

Suddenly, we heard footsteps in the courtyard. The fear of being discovered erased all the effects of the mashke. We waited with trepidation to see who was coming to us and what the consequences

would be. A moment later, our landlord Ibrahim entered and wished us a joyous holiday. He then said: "My brother-in-law Karim told me to pass on his best wishes to you in honour of your holiday." Hearing this, our faces became pale and showed signs of fright.

Ibrahim noticed our fear and immediately said in a comforting tone: "Karim was visiting me when you two were singing and dancing. He said, 'Ibrahim, listen to what I have to tell you. I truly envy those two Jews.' "When I heard him say this, I feared for your well-being.

I asked Karim, 'What is there to be jealous of?' "'Although they are your tenants,' he replied, 'I know much more about them than you. I can just tell you the following: If the GPU would investigate and believe even one percent of the accusations that we receive against them, no remnant would remain of them. When I walk past their apartment on my way to the prisons, I notice that they sit with their backs to each other. So I know that the accusations brought against them — that they try to influence others to speak against the government — are completely false, as they barely speak to each other, fearing what the consequences may be. "'They were sentenced not only as counterrevolutionaries, but also as ones who recruit others to do the same. So their sentence will last for many years, and they have no chance of being pardoned. They know that this is their situation, and I tell you that they fear even the slightest movement of a leaf, thinking someone is preparing an accusation against them.

So tell me, why are they happy? What do they have to celebrate about? The only reason they are rejoicing is because it is their holiday! "'Tell me the truth: Do you or I ever have a joyous occasion such as this in our lives? We also have holidays, but we are not truly joyous then. When do we experience happiness? Only when we get even or take revenge against someone who has crossed our path. So there really is something to be envious of them, of their intrinsic happiness which neither of us have. "'The truth is that I would like to personally wish them a joyous holiday, but I fear that my presence

will disturb their rejoicing, so I have decided not to visit them personally. But you should definitely go and wish them a joyous holiday. Just remind them not to dance and sing throughout the night. And after you wish them well, give over my best wishes to them as well.'"

Two months later, on Yud Tes Kislev, Reb Leizer was arrested. Ibrahim told me shortly afterwards that Karim had told him the following: "When I come into my office every day, I sign the pile of papers lying on my desk automatically, without giving it any thought. The majority of them are death sentences. "That day, I came into the office and for some reason, I glanced at the papers in front of me. Leizer's document was on top; he, too, was sentenced to death. Reading the accusations against him, I knew they were false and fabricated, and I remembered being envious of his joy. So I crossed out that sentence and exchanged it with a number of years of exile." Ibrahim added that this is why Karim personally threw Reb Leizer into the wagon that took him to Siberia, as it was the only way he could save him. Otherwise, he would have been shot.

Years later, after both of us were able to escape or leave Russia, I met Reb Leizer one Tishrei, as we both came to celebrate it with the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe. At that time he related to me the following: "When I was arrested, I was waiting for interrogation by the GPU.



As Karim was making his rounds, he came to my cell, and I said to him: 'Comrade Karim, this is the third day I am here without anything to eat. I didn't do anything to be arrested; the accusations against me are false. I am not healthy, and I can't endure the pain of starvation.'

"In a loud and angry voice he replied, 'You are a counter-revolutionary, and you deserve to be put to death.

Suffering is good for you; it will teach you how to behave!' Saying that, he stormed out of my cell, and I was shattered. But less than five minutes later he walked in again with a pita bread under his garment, which he tossed in my direction. "He then said: 'Eat it up without leaving a crumb, so that even if you die, no one will know that you had something to eat. If someone sees you eating it, don't dare say that I gave it to you, because then I personally will shoot you. Say you were starving and stole it from another prisoner. Stealing is considered a minor infraction, and you will get a lighter punishment.'" Karim was known to be a cruel person. The only explanation why he assisted us is that the joy of Simchas Torah sweetened all judgements. *(by Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon)*

Dancing on Simchat Torah



The blessings and forgiveness which we seek on the Days of Awe by beseeching the Alm-ghty through solemn prayer and earnest repentance, can be attained on Simchat Torah in a joyous vein, by dancing with the Torah. (The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe) The last letter of the Torah is "lamed". The first letter of the Torah is "beit" in "B'Reishit". These two letters together spell the word "lev - heart." The Torah is the heart of the Jewish people.

The Chida wrote a prayer that some say before the hakafos. This prayer states that by dancing on Simchas Torah, we bring down all the iron walls that separate us from Hashem.



Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt'l said in the name of his father, **Rebbe Shalom of Belz** zt'l, "I can't tell you what the hakafos are about. But this I can tell you: All tefillos that didn't go up the entire year go up by the hakafos."

The Beis Aharon zt'l (Pesach p.94.) writes, "Dancing on Yom Tov is like the highest form of tefillah… For it is with all one's limbs. Similar to the highest prayer, which is **כל עצמותי** , with all one's essence."

The Ateres Yehoshua (**דיה במאמרם**) explains the Mishnah (Negaim 12:1) **בית עגול אינו מטמא בנגעים**, that due to the **עגולים** , dances that we do on Simchas Torah, all plagues and all troubles go away.

The **Rebbe Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l** said in the name of his father, the **Rebbe Reshab zt'l,** "We must consider every moment precious from the 48 hours of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, for in these days we can draw buckets of spiritual and material bounty. We get these by the dancing…"

Simchas Torah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



When something is encircled, it shows that the centre is the focus. eg at a wedding we dance around the bride and groom, who are the centre of attention and rejoicing. - Now look at the Yom Tov of Succos. On every day of Succos we take our lulav bundle and circle a Sefer Torah which is held at the bimah. On Hoshanah Rabbah, we make this circuit seven times. It seems strange that after putting such focus with the Torah at the centre of the circle for seven days, to take the Torah down and dance with it on Simchas Torah, around an empty bimah seven times!

R' Yitzchak Aizik Sher, in Leket Sichos Mussar, explains that an empty bimah represents interactive Torah study. By culminating the Yom Tov with dancing around an empty bimah, we are stressing that as important as the Torah is itself, teaching Torah and studying it with a partner is actually the Highest of the High of attainments.

Count Your Blessings

Write down the kindnesses Hashem does for you. When you say Modim in Shemoneh Esrei, think about them and thank Hashem for each one. This is a proven and true segulah to free one from worry.~ R' Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

In Auschwitz, the murder-crazed Germans were rounding up Jews to take them to their untimely deaths in the gas chambers. The death-rooms were equipped with fake showerheads which were attached to the ceiling, and they told everyone that it was a shower room, where they can get clean and freshen up.

Fifty young men, *yeshivah* students, were rounded up from the camps and ushered into the 'shower room', but they were not fooled. They knew that whoever entered there did not come out alive. They filed into the chamber and the guards closed and bolted the door behind them, ready to gas their helpless victims to death.

With indescribable spirit, one of the boys in the gas chamber jumped to his feet. "My friends!" He said, "How can we be so sad? Tonight is Simchas Torah! Though we don't have any *Sifrei Torah* to dance with, we have Hashem right here with us! Let's dance with Him before the Nazis gas us!" He started singing ***Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu! We are so fortunate! How great is our portion!***



The boys began to form a circle and danced and sang these uplifting words, encouraging each other with their joy, even in the face of death. Outside, the guards could not make any sense of the celebrating going on inside the gas chamber. They were used to hearing cries and moans— not singing and dancing!

They called over the Commandant, who opened the bolts and angrily swung open the door to the chamber. He started screaming at the boys to immediately stop their silly behaviour!

But the young men did not listen and continued to dance with more fervour. One of the boys said to him, "We know that soon we will be dead, but our lives do not end with death— they are only just beginning! We will go up to *Shamayim*, and be close with Hashem and reunite with our families— unlike you, a murderous *goy*— for once you die, you are dead, never to return or continue anywhere ever again!"

The Commandant was beside himself with anger, and said, "Death by gas chamber is too good for you! You need to be taught a lesson and are hereby sentenced to a slow, painful and torturous death!" He had them all lead out of the gas chamber, and locked up in a special barracks, to await their torture.

Later that night, a miraculous thing happened. A call came out that there was an urgent need to immediately fill *fifty positions* in a labour camp in a faraway location. An officer who was unaware of the specially designated 'torture barracks' that the boys were being held in, was very happy to find the exact number of young men he needed to send, and dutifully transported them in the dark of the night, out of Auschwitz!

All 50 boys survived the war, and forever took to heart the lesson to never give up hope, even while facing certain death, and Simchas Torah always had a strong, lasting, and special meaning to them.



בשמחת תורה מתגלה שהאדם עצמו נעשה ספר תורה. - On Simchas Torah, it is revealed that a person himself becomes a Sefer Torah. ~ Rav Hutner — Pachad Yitzchak.



The story is told *of a leader that allowed any one of his subjects to marry his daughter on condition that the potential suitor wouldn't meet or see his daughter before the marriage. Soon the local inns were buzzing with rumours such as, "I heard she is a deaf-mute" and "I know for a fact that she is foolish." Finally, a simple wholehearted Jew said that he is willing to marry her. After all, she is the daughter of our leader who is so great. As it turned out, he was the only one who volunteered. After the lavish wedding, the groom escorted his bride to their new home where she removed her veil. He was astounded at her beauty. After speaking with her and testing her character, he was very impressed as she excelled beyond his greatest hopes. Overjoyed, he held a lavish party to celebrate his good fortune.*



In this analogy, the leader is Hashem. When He offered the Torah to each nation, they refused as each one claiming some fault in the Torah that they would be unable to live with. When it was offered to the Yidden, they said ***נעשה ונשמע, we will do and then we will understand*** (Shemos 24:7). They accepted the Torah without having seen it.

Although the Jewish people accepted the Torah, they feared a loss as they assumed that the numerous obligations in the Torah would deprive them of pleasures and freedom.

Similarly, the groom in the analogy married the leader's daughter fearing he would be disappointed in other areas. But as the Jews

learned the Torah and applied it's teaching to their lives, not only did they not have to give up anything, but they also found the Torah maximized their pleasure in every way.

This also explains why Shavuos and Simchas Torah are celebrated so differently as on Shavuos, we stay up all night learning Torah whereas on Simchas Torah we dance.

On Shavuos, we show our readiness and anticipation to receive the Torah. Since it is an intellectual appreciation, we stay up all night learning Torah. On Simchas Torah, however, we dance expressing our emotional joy. We are showing that even our bodies have gained tremendously by keeping the Torah.

Ask one who has increased their Torah observance and they will say they feared some aspect of the Torah would be restrictive whether keeping Shabbos, Kosher, and the like. However, they kept the Torah knowing it was the most meaningful thing to do.

As they grew in their Judaism, they found their lives enhanced in every way. On Simchas Torah, we dance for the Torah we will learn because now we realize what the Torah we received really is.

Simchas Torah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Although Shemini Atzeres is mentioned in the Torah (*Vayikra* 23:36, *Bamidbar* 29:35), the Torah makes no mention of the holiday of Simchas Torah.

Rav Eliezer Yehuda Valdenberg compared this to Pesach, which we *call* Pesach, but it is referred to in the Torah as *Chag HaMatzos*. Hashem refers to a *Yom Tov* with a name which praises

that which we gave toward the *Yom Tov*, for example, we baked the *Matzos* at Hashem's directive, while we refer to Hashem's impact, like when He skipped over our houses during *Makas Bechoros*.

With Shemini Atzeres, Hashem is mentioning our dedication to Him, our spending an extra day of a *Yom Tov* with just us and Hashem, therefore in the Torah it is named **שמיני עצרת**. But we refer to the love which Hashem has imparted on us through giving us the Torah, therefore we call it Simchas Torah.

The Machzor Speaks A Closer Look at Davening



In *davening*, we describe this *Yom Tov* as *Z'man Simchaseinu*, a time of gladness. ***Sfas Emes*** says that it is because of this time of joy that the Sages chose Simchas Torah as the time when we complete the Torah and start it again. This is the climax of the holiday of Succos— to rejoice over the Torah, because the only true joy we can experience is through the Torah.

When the *Chassan Torah* is called up for the last *aliyah* of the Torah, in the special *Reshus* prayer that is said, the Torah is described as a 'gladness' which gladdens the heart and enlightens the eyes. It provides life, prosperity, honour, glory and good fortune to those

who walk its good and just paths. Torah is the real only *simchah*, and it is why we focus on this source of happiness in the *Z'man Simchaseinu*.



Rabbi Daniel Staum - Join the Circle

שִׂישׂוּ וְשִׂמְחוּ בְּשִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה וּתְנוּ כָּבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה Rejoice and be glad with the celebration of the Torah, and give honour to the Torah

Each morning throughout the days of Sukkos, we take our Lulav and Esrog and circle around the Bimah and Sefer Torah once as we recite Hoshanos. This holy daily activity builds up in a crescendo of greater and greater intensity, reaching its peak on Hoshanah Rabbah, when we encircle the Bimah and all of the Sifrei Torah from the Ark seven times.

As to why we dance in a circle, it stems from the prophetic words of the Gemara (Taanis 31a) which teaches that in the time to come, the righteous will form a circle around Hashem in Gan Eden. It is then that each and every righteous individual will point at Hashem with his finger and declare, "This is my G-d; we will rejoice in His salvation."

The customary circle which we typically form as we dance is thus suggestive and symbolic of the great circle which will come together in future times. In this sense, explains the Maharal, the act of dancing in a circle demonstrates that each member is equally close to the centre. The equidistance of each individual to the centre mutualizes those involved and simultaneously validates each one's connection to that which exists in the middle. As in the described scenario of the time to come, each tzaddik will equally share in the bliss and grandeur of Hashem, as one unified and integrated nation.

During the days of Sukkos, as we walk around the Sefer Torah with our Lulav and Esrog, we indicate our fervent dedication and equal connection to Hashem's Torah and mitzvos. Clutching our beautiful

Lulav and surrounding the Torah concretizes and expresses our love for Hashem's mitzvos and Torah.

Yet, when we come to Simchas Torah, something else occurs. We take out the Sifrei Torah and they join the dancing circle. No longer are they at rest in the middle of the circle, but they rather find their way out to the perimeter and merge with everyone else presently dancing. When this happens, though, nothing substantial appears to be left in the middle for us to dance around. But how can that be? What are we forming a circle around?



Rav Yitzchak Isaac Sher zt"l beautifully explains that we are indeed dancing around something. And that is the bimah, the platform centred in the middle of shul from where we read the Torah. It is upon the bimah that we roll out the Torah every Monday, Thursday and Shabbos and read the eternal words of G-d. The bimah is the place upon which we place our Jewish books and imbue ourselves with the lessons and messages of our Torah and Sages. It is there that we nourish our souls and elevate our minds and hearts in the service of Hashem. While the Aron Kodesh serves as the Sefer Torah's private and sheltered resting place, the bimah stands out in the open and provides those praying and learning a place from which to connect to Torah and Hashem.

And that is why, explains Rav Yitzchak Isaac Sher, as we revel in the Torah on Simchas Torah as "our life and the length of our days," we encircle the place from which such spiritual life emanates.

But there is more to the special service of Simchas Torah that grabs our attention. After all those present in shul have been called up to the Torah and received an Aliyah, we call up the "Chassan Torah,"

groom of the Torah, and read to the end of the Torah. Subsequently, we call up the "Chassan Bereishis," groom of Genesis, and read the beginning of Parshas Bereishis. But, as you may be aware, the manner in which we call up both the Chassan Torah and Chassan Bereishis is quite unconventional.

Before calling up the Aliyah for Chassan Torah, which is given to a prominent individual, we request permission from the heads of the Jewish court, the esteemed Jewish leaders, and the recognized members of the community. In a beautiful, melodious and poetic tune, we extol the virtues and praises of the Chassan Torah and commend his prominence. Yet, when it comes to the next Aliyah of Chassan Bereishis, permission is requested for him as well to ascend for the Torah reading, but for him it is asked not from the honoured associates mentioned previously for the Chassan Torah. It is rather requested from "every young child to old man, along with every row in the shul." The contrast between whom we seek permission from in the context of Chassan Torah and Chassan Bereishis is evident. But why is that so? Why does there exist any difference? The answer is so simple yet so profound.

The Aliyah of Chassan Torah, given to a Torah scholar of special prominence, is not something everyone can so closely relate to. Over the course of the past year, we may not have immersed ourselves in Torah study as much as we could have. Compared to our potential in the realm of Torah knowledge and mastery, we may have fallen short. Yet, the Aliyah of Chassan Bereishis, which begins anew the reading of the Torah and symbolizes a new and fresh start, is something we all can relate to. "Every young child to old man, along with every row in the shul" can identify with Chassan Bereishis, with a new beginning and a new start. Even if we only opened our Torah books seldomly throughout the past year, we can still connect to a new cycle of Torah study and mitzvah dedication.

This is what the day of Simchas Torah affords us. It is a time when we all unite in dancing circles around the site upon which Torah study

lives and breathes and a time when we excitedly recommit ourselves to greater Torah learning and education. Such is the extraordinary opportunity we have before us. Use it well, live it fully and make it last. Because if we do, we can rest assured that next year, we won't be dancing in the same spot as we did this year. We'll be way above and beyond.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



It is an accepted custom that after picking up a *Sefer* which has fallen to the floor, one honours it with a kiss. **Rav Avraham Yaakov *HaKohein* Pam, *zt"l***, would point out that there is an even better custom, and that is to learn from the *Sefer* for a minute or two, or say a *Pasuk* or two from inside it. This is surely a higher level of honour than giving it a mere kiss. Rav Pam would use this lesson as an analogy to explain how one should view Simchas Torah. First, we express our love for the *Torah* by dancing with it and kissing it. However, when the *Hakafos* have ended and the *Yom Tov* has gone by, we must take that expression of love that we showed the *Torah* and turn it towards a renewed dedication to learning *Torah*!

"שמחת תורה היא שמחתם של דבקים בתורה." - *Simchas Torah is the joy of those who cling to the Torah. ~ Chazon Ish.*

Simchas Torah Gems

It was the festival of Simchas Torah in the concentration camp. It happened to be Sunday, and the German guards were nowhere to be seen. Someone began to sing the *Hakafah* song of *Mipi Keil* out loud: ***"There is none as powerful as Hashem, there is none as blessed as [Moshe] Amram's son, there is no greatness like the Torah, and no one expounds it like Yisroel!"*** Suddenly, a Nazi officer appeared, and the singer stopped in mid-sentence. The officer turned to a man named Yosef and said, "What is going on here? Tell me! What is he singing?!" Yosef replied, "today is a Jewish holiday and what you heard was what I would say is more of a prayer than singing."

The officer snapped at him, "Tell me what the words mean!" and Yosef translated the Hebrew words into German. The officer was dumbstruck when he heard what it meant. He glared at Yosef and said, "Do you really believe those words?" Before Yosef could reply, a young man jumped to his feet and said, "Yes! I believe them!" The German shook his head and walked away, muttering out loud, "It is unbelievable! If they believe this strongly, then I am afraid that we will never succeed against these people!"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

After *Hakafos* on Simchas Torah, when everyone left the *Shul* to go home for the *Yom Tov* meal, **the *Chafetz Chaim*** would stay behind to learn for an hour or two. Someone once asked the *Chafetz Chaim* about this, "Why don't you go home first and enjoy your meal? Afterwards you can learn Torah."

He gave the following answer: "If you arrive at a wedding in the middle of the celebration, you will find everyone dancing. You won't be able to tell who belongs to the family of the *chosson* or *kallah*. However, if you want to find out who is related to the family, you

must wait until after the banquet is over. Then, everyone will leave except for the close family members.

During *Hakafos* everyone is dancing and celebrating. Now that the festivities are over, I want to show that I am a 'close family member' of the Torah, and that is why I stay behind to learn after everyone else has left!"



Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-Rosh Hayeshiva Beis Dovid

The Boyaner Rebbe (Rabbi Yitzchok Friedman (1850–1917), known as the Pachad Yitzchok) said a beautiful mashal about Simchas Torah.

The king had a dear son who once did a terrible act against him. The king could not just ignore this deed. He expelled his son from the palace. However, as a father, he made sure to know about how his son was managing.

He made a day when the king was going to pass judgement on his son. He gave his son some time to gather together a case for clemency. The father thought that his son would for sure be found innocent, and be allowed back into the palace, and everything would be ok.

While the son was away, he thought, what am I going to do. How am I going to protect myself? How am I going to get a lawyer to fight my case? As he was thinking all this, a man walks in carrying a big dusty old book. He says to the son, "come, I want to read this book with you". He started reading all the advice on how to get on the good side of people and how to find favour. This will enable you to prove yourself innocent. Beautiful! I love this book!

He memorised everything in the book. When it came to the court case, he utilised everything that he had read, and he was found innocent. He was allowed back into the palace.

One day, the king goes for a stroll with his son. He said to his son that he is so excited that he wants to bring him into the private

treasure house. I don't think that you have ever been in there before. Now is a good time.

He goes into the private treasure house, and he shows his son a big dusty old book. The son says, "hold on a minute, this is the book that I used! You obviously sent it to me".



Says the Boyaner Rebbe we continuously fall through the traps of the yetzer hara. We fall, what can we do? Sometimes The Riboino Shel Olam throws us out of shamayim, but in His compassion, he sends us a book. A book of eitzos entitled, "how to become innocent". "How to gain favour in Hashem's eyes".

This is the book of the Torah that Hashem wrote and gave to Klal Yisrael. This Torah is what we dance with on Simchas Torah. When a person dances b'simcha with the Torah, it changes not only him, but it changes all future generations.

Simchat Torah Hakafot

One year, the Reform Temple of Springfield, NJ, decided to show their members what authentic "Simchat Torah Hakafot" looked like.

A group of temple members took a bus to the grand Beis Medrash of the Bobover Rebbe, **R' Shloime Halberstam ZT"L**, to witness the famous Grand Rabbi's sublime dancing on this special day. It was a truly uplifting experience. Many temple members were impressed with the intensity of the singing and even joined in.

One Reform Jew stood up on a table, clapping his hands, singing and shouting alongside the chassidim - until he suddenly heard a name he had long-forgotten being called. "Zaleski. I give the honour of holding a Sefer Torah to Commander Zaleski." The man was stunned. He hadn't heard that name in decades - since the time he was masquerading as a Catholic in the Polish army during the war years. How could this chasid know his name?



"I owe you a debt," the chasid replied when asked this question. "I am glad to repay some small part of it by giving you this honour." When the Reform Jew still did not move, the chasid continued, "don't you remember, back in Krakow, when you rescued two boys who were being held in a coal bin in the police station..." Before America, before emigrating, back in Poland. Two boys in the coal bin - yes, he did remember.

It was the winter of 1945. Having advanced within the Polish security forces to the position of head of state security for the County of Krakow and its neighbouring communities, only a handful of people knew that he was Jewish. To the rest, he was Tadeusz Zaleski. After Russian forces liberated Poland, the few Jewish survivors gradually began to drift back into the cities. Krakow was no exception, and they organized themselves into Jewish committees to look after Jewish interests. Zaleski was made aware of a situation that two Jewish boys who had been arrested by police for racketeering had disappeared. The police had caught them transporting sugar, had confiscated their vehicle and its cargo, and had taken the boys into custody. After that, the two had vanished and nobody knew where they were.

Zaleski inquired of the chiefs of each of the Krakow precincts whether they knew anything of the fate of these two brothers, but none did. He decided to take matters into his own hands and conduct a surprise inspection of the city's jail cells, undertaken for bureaucratic reasons. For two days, he went from jailhouse to jailhouse, inspecting numerous dingy prison cells. He was finally led to one building in the precinct called Wolnica. The inspection was proceeding just as the others had, except at the end of the dark basement corridor, there was one door that remained locked tight. The police chief assured Zaleski that it was just a bin used for storage of coal. Nevertheless, the security head persisted in being allowed to look inside.

Excuses were made and foot-dragging ensued. The keys are lost, he was told, whereupon Zaleski backed everyone away, took out his side-arm, and shot the padlock off the door. As the door swung open, he was able to discern in the dim light of the bin, two filthy figures - the missing Jewish boys he was seeking. As the alarmed chief rambled on about lost records and confused paperwork, Zaleski berated him for incompetence. "Clean them up and bring them to my headquarters. Now!"

The elderly chasid, with the long red beard, looked at the Reform Jew and exclaimed, "Commander Zaleski, I am one of those two boys whom you rescued that fateful day! I will never forget you - I will never forget your face, your eyebrows. I have constantly thought about how we were delivered from that coal bin. The minute you walked in, I knew it was you!"

And while the people from the Springfield Reform Temple in New Jersey stared through the window of the shul in Brooklyn, their neighbour, who had danced with the Sefer Torah, arm in arm with the Bobover Rebbe, now fell into the embrace of a red-bearded chasid dressed in a black silk coat and fur shtreimel, his face wet with long suppressed tears of joy.

How Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Sang and Danced Alone

From the memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, detailing how she and her husband celebrated in Soviet exile. (Kehot Publication Society)



The Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson was arrested by the Soviet authorities in 1939 for his fearless stance against the Party's efforts to eradicate Jewish learning and practice in the Soviet Union, and particularly for producing and distributing kosher-for-Passover matzah.

After more than a year of torture and interrogations in Stalin's prisons, he was sentenced to exile to a remote, primitive village in Kazakhstan, where his wife, Rebbetzin Chana, joined him. Together in suffering and sorrow, they bravely celebrated Jewish holidays with the little they had, and even managed to share with others.

In this entry from her diary, Rebbetzin Chana details how they celebrated Simchat Torah with deep emotion and joy all alone in the village, as well as how they celebrated the following year in relative "ease" in Almaty.

Even though Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was torn from his beloved congregation and forced to celebrate alone, his oppressors were no match for his heartfelt prayers and tenacious joy. Indeed, today, Jewish life in the former Soviet Union has blossomed beyond what anyone could have imagined.

The very stones were dancing

Sukkot [5703 (1942)]: For a *sukkah*, we paid to build an anteroom to our room—ostensibly for the purpose of preventing cold winter air

from blowing straight through our door. When our landlady demanded that we finish the room with a roof, we told her that presently we couldn't afford it but would do so before the onset of the winter cold.

Simchat Torah: We didn't yet have a Torah in our possession. Our guest who ate his *Yom Tov* meals with us had found work as a night-watchman and had to spend his nights in the fields guarding the produce, so now he could come only during the day. Thus, only I was present with my husband in our room at night.

The time of *hakafot* arrived. It is most difficult for an ordinary person like me to describe my husband's emotional experience, as was evident on his face. He started reciting the customary verses preceding the actual *hakafot—Ata horeta ladaat ki Hashem Hu haElokim, ein od mil'vado*—using the same tune he used back at home, when he celebrated *hakafot* in *shul* together with many hundreds of Jews. The following night, he used to celebrate *hakafot* in our home with several dozen of those close to him. Whether at *shul* or at our home, it was not just [his] dancing—it seemed like the very paving stones danced along to his joy.

Here, too, he enveloped himself with such joy. He recited every verse, and after every circuit he sang and danced, alone, to the melody known in our hometown as "the *Rav's* melody." He circled around in the narrow space in our room between his bed and the table, reciting the verses of the *hakafot*:

"…Pure and upright One, please save us… Benevolent One and bestower of goodness, answer us on the day we call."

He wanted this to be pure joy, and his deep emotion was manifest in the words he recited:

"He who knows thoughts, please save us… He who is garbed in righteousness, answer us on the day we call."

This was a most difficult experience for me to endure. Sitting on a wooden stool in the corner, I observed the immensity and intensity of my husband's love of the Torah as he danced away all the seven *hakafot*.

Following *hakafot* on *Simchat Torah* morning, he recited *Sissu v'simchu b'simchat Torah* with similar enthusiasm.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

A Bobover chassid asked his rebbe, the **Kedushas Tzion**, when is the best time to bring his son, for the first time, to the Rebbe. He advised him to come on Simchas Torah.

"Although on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we stand most of the day and we daven, but Simchas Torah we rejoice with the Torah most of the day. Serving Hashem with joy will be engraved in your young son's heart forever. Therefore, I recommend you bring him on Simchas Torah"

"A person must realize that on Simchas Torah, we are not just rejoicing for ourselves; we are rejoicing with the King. When a person dances with the Torah, he must feel as though he is dancing with the Almighty Himself, as the Torah is the medium through which Hashem communicates His will to us." ~ The Chofetz Chaim

"The true measure of a Jew on Simchas Torah is not how loud he sings, but how much he yearns to be bound to the Torah. Even a simple Jew who dances with genuine love for the Torah achieves a level of attachment that a scholar might strive for all year." ~ The Steipler Gaon.

Torah Tavlin

A story is told about the legendary Lubavitcher Chasid, **Reb Mendel Futerfas z"l**, during the time he was imprisoned in a Siberian Gulag. Reb Mendel was known to find a lesson in everything he encountered.



Reb Mendel's cellmates were not Jewish and had little to keep themselves entertained. However, one man smuggled a deck of cards into the prison and at night, the men would sit around and play cards. Reb Mendel didn't play with them, but he was just happy that their attention was diverted from bothering him to their card games. Of course, in Siberia, a deck of cards was contraband and if the men were caught, they would face stiff punishment.

The warden had a suspicion when he heard lots of talking and fun being had in the cell, but no matter how many times he came in to check the cell, he could never find the actual deck of cards. Even Reb Mendel could not figure out how they managed to conceal it time and time again from the warden's prying eyes.

One time, the warden heard sounds of fun again and swiftly came running in. It all happened so fast. This time he ordered everyone to stand back and empty their pockets and not move until he kicked over all the flimsy mattresses. He searched each man as well as the entire cell. But once again, he was unsuccessful.

Reb Mendel was so curious. How did the cards disappear so quickly and so thoroughly? Later, he approached one of his cellmates, Gregory, and asked him the question. The Russian smiled and said,

"You see that guy over there?" He pointed to a small, scurrilous man, who was moving quickly from side to side. "Do you know who he is? He was the best pickpocket in Moscow. He stole so much from people because he has the quickest hands. So, when the warden comes in looking for the cards, he hides them in the only place the warden would never think to look - the warden's own pocket! The warden checks the whole cell and then, on his way out, the pickpocket takes the cards back."

The Yemei Hadin and Sukkos have passed and now, on Simchas Torah, we exult with Hashem's most precious possession. Why? Because all year long, we are searching for the Torah, we are longing for it and we wish to learn it and follow it. Suddenly, today it all becomes clear. It was with us, actually inside of us all along!

The realization that we have the Torah and all that we need to fulfil it properly, is a cause for so much joy and celebration that we dance deliriously on this holiday and we thank Hashem for this precious gift.

Leaving The Yomim Toivim

We are now at the stage where we are taking leave from the glorious Yomim Toivim.

When somebody leaves a place, they often make a **סעודת פרידה** – a farewell party.

We come across the word **פרידה** with regard to Lulav. It says in the Mishna:

לוּלָב נִקְטַם רֹאשׁוֹ, נִפְרְצוּ עָלָיו, פָּסוּל. נִפְרְדוּ עָלָיו, כָּשֵׁר

"*If the top of the lulav was severed or if the palm leaves were severed from the spine of the lulav, it is unfit. If its leaves, although still attached, were spread and are no longer completely joined to the spine, it is fit.*"

So we can infer, that when a person leaves a place or in our case we are leaving the Yomim Toivim, we are not completely severing our ties.

As long as we still maintain a connection, then all the beauty , goodness and inspiration that we have gleaned over this period will not leave us permanently.

A Story For All By: R' Nachman Seltzer

Simchas Torah is a very happy day, or at least it's supposed to be. That's what made the whole episode so much more interesting. It was at the end of the davening on that particular Simchas Torah afternoon, and I was just about ready to leave my spot and head towards the large double doors at the back of the shul when it was time for the final kaddish of the day. The reciter of the kaddish was an old man, and he was doing the recitation in an extremely emotional tone of voice.

For some reason I felt like there was something going on over here, something hiding behind his trembling voice and tear-filled eyes and I decided to find out what it was.

I watched him as he chanted the familiar words; each word rolling off his tongue with a burning fluency, a longing, a sincerity, there was definitely something going on. So, after the kaddish was over and the people were all filing out of the shul, I approached him and sat down beside him, watching as he said a few more kapitlach tehillim before going home. He looked up at me, the vestiges of his moving testimony still staining his cheeks and gave me an inquiring stare.

"Can I ask you something," I began. He hesitated for a minute before replying, "Yes what do you want to know?"

"Well," I continued, "I was watching you just now when you said the kaddish and I was really wondering who you were saying such a

kaddish for! I mean I've never seen somebody say kaddish with such fervour before! I know I'm very chutzpadik and I'll understand completely if you don't want to tell me, but maybe you'll let me in on the background of your kaddish."

"You know," he said, "you really are very chutzpadik and I should tell you to get lost..... really I should give you a patch," he said almost to himself, but then he smiled, and his eyes were sad and vulnerable, yet warm and full of clarity all at the same time. I sat down beside him on the old wooden bench and waited patiently for him to marshal his thoughts.

I don't know what it is about me, but I've found that people respond to me in ways that they never do with other people and I in turn appreciate their confidences and collect their memories and secrets, keeping them locked up in a secure place in my heart, only unveiling their stories if they want to share them with others as well.

The old man closed his eyes for about three minutes while I waited anxiously and when he reopened them, I knew that he had been to the past and back. And this is the story he told :-

"I was brought up in a little Polish town," he began, while stroking his tangled beard. "I was part of a little clique of boys my age. We had so much fun together....."his voice kind of trailed off as he relived his beautiful memories. "We did everything together," he went on, "we attended cheder together, played in the park and were just a great group of kids.

When I was twelve years old," he went on, "my Zeide ulov hasholom, bought me my first pair of tefillin. They were the most beautiful objects I had ever laid eyes on, and I promised him that I would put them on every single day of my life. I took this promise very seriously," the old man went on, "and I made sure that I donned my tefillin first thing every morning.



I loved davening in those tefillin! It was the greatest experience in the world entering the shteibel on those cold winter mornings, chopping a steaming glass of hot water from the samovar and then wrapping my precious tefillin around my arm and head. I felt a connection with my grandfather, with my ancestors and most of all, with Hashem!"

I stared at him, this old, old man. It was hard to imagine that someone so wrinkled and aged was ever really young, but the more I listened to what he had to say,the more the years fell away, and I could see the vibrant, charismatic youngster that he had once been.

"Yes, our lives were so good," he spoke gently with a vague accent tasting of Warsaw, "but soon came word about the war and nothing mattered anymore.....but survival.

It entered our lives like a whirlwind of destruction, like a dervish of turmoil, thrusting millions of lives into a catastrophic tunnel from which few emerged alive. Not only that, many of those who did escape were never the same again. Our group managed to stay together, don't ask me how! We were together while our village was turned into a ghetto and we were transferred in one group to Bergen Belson; the second of many stops on the hellish journey we were unknowingly embarking on.

While there, I had the privilege of saving the life of a fellow Jew." He related to me, how one of the skeletons living in their barracks had contracted typhoid, making it a very small matter of time before he was discovered and sent to the "infirmary."

Nobody lasted there for long. So, this young boy, took it upon himself to feed this man his daily rations, thereby ensuring his very survival. He then traded his own rations, his only sustenance, for

cigarettes which he used to buy medicine to combat the horrible disease. And he personally made sure that he took his medicine and watched the man climb back from from his meeting with the Angel of Death. And through it all, he never missed a day with his Tefillin!

"My friends would scream at me, their sorrow making them utter words that they would have never dreamed of saying, if not for their despair. They would berate me for still believing in the one above and they would say that he had abandoned his nation, chas v'sholom!

They would ask me why I was still risking my life to put on my Tefillin day after day and how our lives were lost anyway, so what was the point! And all I could say was, "yeshuas Hashem k'heref ayin, G'd's salvation comes in the blink of an eye.

Moments of Amusement

On Simchas Torah, the two Chief Rabbis of Dvinsk, **Reb Meir Simcha and the Rogatchover**, would daven together. Watching the rejoicing with the Torah, Reb Meir Simcha would remark, "I have just completed a study and Rav [--] is mentioned in the Talmud but seven times."

The Rogatchover would smile and answer, "You know, of course, that the sixth time, in Zevachim, is a mistaken text, and that you made up the seventh to test me." Such were the "light" moments of our sages of the last generation.

"On Simchas Torah, the feet dance. The feet represent the lowest part of the body, yet it is the feet that carry the entire person. This teaches us that the simplest Jew—represented by the feet—has a power of connection that can surpass even the intellectual, because his connection is rooted in essential, unadulterated joy." ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe.



It was Simchas Torah night in the yeshiva, and I (Rabbi Yisroel Reisman) had a question for **Rav Pam ZT"L** that would be applicable for the next day. Rav Pam remembered that the answer to the question was provided by the Netziv in his Meishiv Davar (which was out of print at the time and not available at the yeshiva), but he couldn't remember the actual response itself. After a few moments, Rav Pam remembered the Netziv's answer. I was satisfied with the response and returned to my Simchas Torah dancing.

A while later, Rav Pam invited me to walk home with him, so we could look up the answer together. I was so excited to have this personal experience with Rav Pam.

As we were about to leave, another member of the yeshiva who had overheard my question, said that **Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky ZT"L**, had been asked the same question and given the same answer that Rav Pam gave me. I was disappointed to hear this, as I thought it meant that Rav Pam and I were no longer going home together to look up the response together. However, to my pleasant surprise, Rav Pam still insisted that we walk home together to look up the response.

On our way back, I asked Rav Pam why he insisted on going home, even though we were quite certain what the response was. He responded that just that afternoon, he had spoken about dedication to learning and that he had specifically mentioned **Reb Zalman of Volozhin's** mesiras nefesh in travelling a considerable distance to look up a particular response to a halachic question. Rav Pam continued that initially, this evening, when he could not remember the response to my question, he was not planning on going home to check for the response. This disturbed him, "I just discussed the

importance of learning and of looking things up even if it means traveling a great distance. Yet here I was, hours later, unwilling to look up the response myself. So, I decided I had to go home to look up the answer.

A person must always be honest with himself".



A Father is Always a Father - Tiv Hakehila.

The story is told of **Rebbe Hershele of Spinka** who was a great Admor abroad, when he danced with the Sefer Torah in the hakafos on Simchas Torah. In the middle of hakafos, the Rebbe heard a large commotion that developed in the shul. He turned his head towards the noise and saw that there was indeed a quarrel at the side of the Bais HaMedrash.

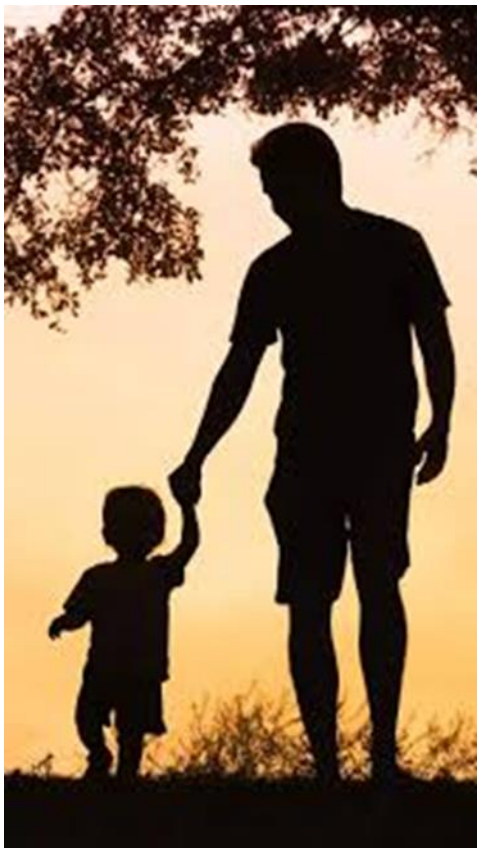
On the spot, the Rebbe handed the Sefer Torah to another man who would continue to dance with the Sefer Torah and headed to the area of the quarrel.

In the midst of the fight, he saw that his son who was a young man fighting with an older man, each of them was trying to shout above the other one while all the men surrounding them were fanning the flames, all of them siding with the older man.

The Rebbe intervened on behalf of his young son and told the old man that if he could not stop, he should leave the Bais HaMedrash. Afterwards, when everything calmed down and the old man was appeased and everything returned to peace, they turned to the Rebbe to teach them how it happened that the Rebbe sided with his son in such an extreme way and did not even try to reconcile them at the time?

The Rebbe replied, "I heard the sound of a quarrel, I looked and realized that everyone had come out against my son, and no one tried to protect him and understand what was in his heart. At that moment, I decided to take off the mantle of the rabbinate! I

removed the title of Admor from me, I set the hakafos on the side, and I approached my son to be his father!

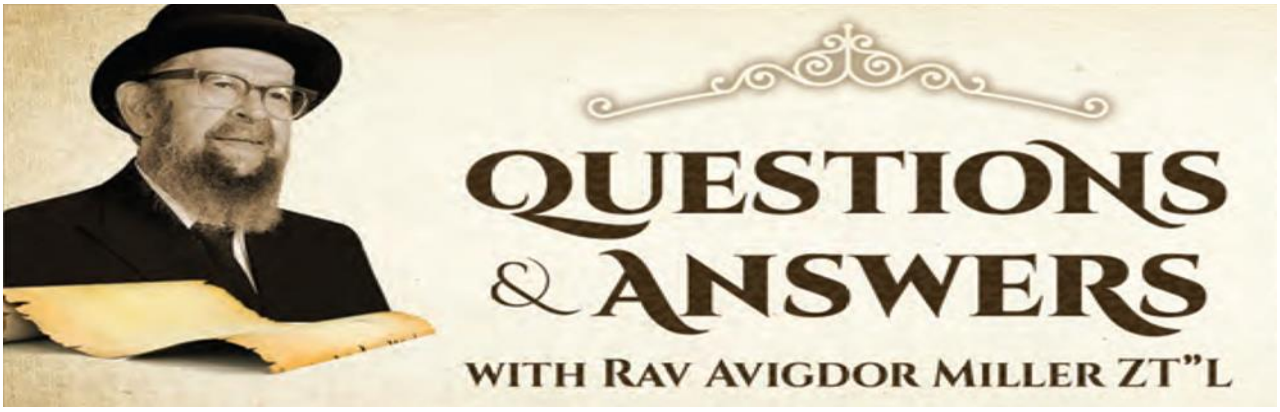


In a situation like this when everyone was attacking him, I felt that the child should know that he has a father who supports him and will be his father, no matter what!!!"

Our teacher, Rav Gamliel, told the story and said that he once received testimony from a man whose son had completely gone off the derech and left everything. The same man when he heard the story was very moved and turned to his son and said, "My son, I want you to know one thing. I want you to know and take to heart well, no matter where you are or what situation you will be in, always remember that in any situation you may find yourself, I am your father!!! I was your father when you were a baby, and as a child, and I will always be your father!!!"

It was not long before the boy returned with wholehearted Teshuva, and he later said that this sentence had transformed him. Hashem, Who is the King of all kings is our Father! The main thing is that we get close to him.

R' Eliezer of Kamarner said, "When a righteous man's heart breaks into a thousand pieces, and he is afraid he will become depressed, he should search for his good qualities and praise himself. - At other times, when he fears he might become conceited, he should search for his mistakes and faults. ~ P'air Yitzchok.





If a husband and a wife attempt to live in peace and they succeed, can their happiness in this world be deducted from their happiness in the next world?

When people are happy as a result of doing mitzvos, they will never lose any reward in Olam Habo because of that happiness. Although other kinds of happiness like wealth or fame or even long life may be deducted from your reward in the World to Come – a person has to be afraid he's being paid off in this world – but if you're happy as a result of mitzvos, if you're happy because you practice living peacefully with people and people like you, or husband and wife like each other, that will never be deducted as part of your payment.

And so if you'll sit in the sukkah and rejoice with your family on Sukkos, that will never be deducted from your schar in Olam Habo. That's a klal gadol – the simcha of a mitzvah is never considered as payment in this world.

Emes – truth – is singular. There is only one truth. If one tried to divide this truth into a number of separate truths, what he's done is create sheker – falsehood. ~ R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l.



How would the Rav say we should best use the dancing and singing on Simchas Torah in order to serve Hashem?

On Simchas Torah we get together and we dance and we sing. But you have to know that for most people, this singing is a wasted opportunity. Let's say they're singing **כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר ה' מִירוּשָׁלָם**. (The Rav zatzal sang the niggun here). And they're dancing, singing; it's a pity, it's a waste of time. -**No**; it's not a waste of time – it doesn't have to be a waste. The fact that you're repeating the words should be utilized by you. Each time you say it you're thinking "From Tziyon someday will come forth the Torah."

And each time, you say it with conviction, with the intention that it should be deeper and deeper impressed into your neshamah that **כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה**, a time will come when the Torah will come out of Tziyon. You'll see what's going to happen one day. It will be tremendous. A whole torrent of Torah will flow out of Tziyon, and the devar Hashem will come forth from Yerushalayim.

Again and again. Again and again you say the words. But this time you'll say the words with a different intent. Not because you want to hear the *niggun* again; not because you want to maintain the tune. No, you want to maintain *the words!* You want to put those words into your mind; you want it to go in so deep that you become a new personality. So you say the words over and over again.

And so too all those songs which are ***shirei kodesh*** – you have to get those words into your head. That's why it's not good to have a *niggun* without words. No, it should be with words. And you say the words over and over again. And each time, as you walk and stamp and dance, you're stamping the words into your heart. With each stamp, you bang it into your heart deeper and deeper.

That's the way to celebrate Simchas Torah, so that when Simchas Torah is over, you're not just tired and worn out; but after Simchas Torah you're not the same person anymore! You're a *ben aliyah.* - You have practiced that great principle of making your mind follow your words.



What's this idea of Isru Chag; of celebrating Yom Tov on the day after Yom Tov?

In Mesichta Sukkah (45b) it says like this: **כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה אִיסּוּר לֶחָג בַּאֲכִילָה וּשְׁתִיָה, מַעֲלֶה עָלָיו הַכָּתוּב כְּאִילּוּ בָּנָה מִזְבֵּחַ וְהִקְרִיב עָלָיו קָרְבָּן** – '*Anybody who makes an addition to Yom Tov by eating and drinking something additional, the Torah considers it for him, as if he built an altar to Hashem, and he offered an offering.*'

Now, that doesn't make sense! The day after *yomtiv,* you're going to bring an offering?! But It's all over! Everybody has gone home!

The answer is that you *haven't* gone home yet! You're still in the aura, in the atmosphere of the *yomtiv* because you hate to part with *yomtiv!*

You know, when *yomtiv* comes to an end we're not required to do more — it's all over. And some people are even looking through the window and they're counting the stars that are visible to know when *yomtiv* is finished.

But here is a man who long after *yomtiv* is over – actually it's the day after *yomtiv* and he has to go to work already – but before he sets out to go to work in the morning, he puts on his breakfast table a bottle of wine. He doesn't have time to drink much but he pours out a little thimble-full of wine and he also adds one more thing to his breakfast that he ordinarily wouldn't eat. And why is he doing that? He's doing it in honor of the *yomtiv* that just passed by.

Now, to us it seems like a futile expression because after all it's not *yomtiv*. Last night was *havdalah;* it's all over. But not for him! This man is still adding to the *simchas yom tov*. - By demonstrating his affection for the past *yomtiv*, by showing that it still lingers in his memory he demonstrates an affection for the *yomtiv* and its lessons.

And the Gemara is telling us that it's not considered a small thing at all. Adding beyond the line of duty is such an achievement that it's as if he has built a *mizbeach* and brought an offering to Hashem. That's the greatness of Isru Chag.



Why is it that the month of Cheshvan doesn't have any holidays in it or even any fast days?

And the answer is that Cheshvan comes right after the month of Tishrei. And since we lost so much time learning, so we need time to make it up. You know, if you learn every day with groups of *bochurim* in the *yeshivah*, your heart hurts because of all the learning that goes lost. Now it's Rosh Hashanah, now it's Yom Kippur, now it's Sukkos. Your heart hurts you – you're missing so much.

And if you're a businessman you lose out a lot. If you work for a company, your boss is getting more sour with you every day. He sees you're taking off for this *yomtiv* and this holiday. You need a lot of alibis to explain that!

So finally Cheshvan comes along and it's a solid month of achievement. You can work every day; you can learn every day. And that's a great blessing, a great opportunity for making progress. No *yomim tovim*, no fast days, there's a lot of time to achieve. - Now, if you have a better explanation, go ahead, why not?



How would the Rav say we should best use the dancing and singing on Simchas Torah in order to serve Hashem?

On Simchas Torah we get together and we dance, and we sing. But you have to know that for most people, this singing is a wasted opportunity.



Let's say they're singing **כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלם**. And they're dancing, singing; it's a pity, it's a waste of time.

No; it's not a waste of time – it doesn't have to be a waste. The fact that you're repeating the words should be utilized by you. Each time you say it you're thinking "From *tziyon* someday will come forth the Torah." And each time, you say it with conviction, with the intention that it should be deeper and deeper impressed into your *neshama* that **כי מציון תצא תורה** – a time will come when the Torah will come out of *tziyon*. You'll see what's going to happen one day. It will be tremendous. A whole torrent of Torah will flow out of *tziyon*, and the *dvar Hashem* will come forth from Yerushalayim.

Again and again. Again and again you say the words. But this time you'll say the words with a different intent. Not because you want to hear the *niggun* again; not because you want to maintain the tune. No, you want to maintain the words! You want to put those words

into your mind; you want it to go in so deep that you become a new personality. So you say the words over and over again.

And so too all those songs which are *shirei kodesh* – you have to get those words into your head. That's why it's not good to have a *niggun* without words. No, it should be with words. And you say the words over and over again. And each time, as you walk and stamp and dance, you're stamping the words into your heart.

With each stamp, you bang it into your heart deeper and deeper. That's the way to celebrate, so that when Simchas Torah is over, you're not just tired and worn out; but after Simchas Torah you're not the same person anymore! You're a *ben aliyah*. You have practiced that great principle of making your mind follow your words.

Shaarei Ratzon – Rabbi Moshe Garfinkel - Lakewood On



Simchas Torah after we finish V'Zos Habracha - the whole Torah and start laining the beginning of Beraishis. The Haftorah for Simchas Torah is the first Perek of Yehoshua.

There are two reasons for this. One is because it is, in a way, a continuation of V'Zos Habracha where Moshe Rabeinu was niftar and in this Haftorah, Hashem tells Yehoshua that he will take over.

The second reason is because Hashem tells Yehoshua **חֲזַק וֶאֱמַץ מְאֹד** - be very strong in Torah learning, **וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה** - and learn Torah day and night, and then you will be matzliach. When we finish the Torah, right away we strengthen ourselves and start again with great cheshek so that b'ezras Hashem, we will be Zocheh to an abundance of hatzlacha and Seyata Dishmaya.

16 Absolute "Must Knows" About Simchas Torah by Rabbi Yair Hoffman

1. EARLIEST SOURCE IS ZOHAR AND GAONIM

Everyone, of course, should note that while in Eretz Yisrael Simchas Torah and Shmini Atzeres are celebrated on the same day, in chutz laAretz, Simchas Torah is on the second day of Yom Tov. It can only fall on a Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday.

The Gemorah itself has very little about Simchas Torah, and even its very name is not used. We only find mention (Megillah 31a) that on this day we read the Parsha of v'Zos HaBracha. Rishonim explain, however, that there was an enactment to complete the Torah on this day.

We do find mention of Simchas Torah in the Zohar of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (Pinchas 256b). It also states that we crown the Sefer Torah with her crown.

The next mention of Simchas Torah is found in the works of the Geonim (Ritz Gias end of Hilchos Lulav, the Siddur of Rav Saadya Gaon, and a response of Rav Hai Gaon (cited by the Rashba #260). The Rishonim discuss it as well.

2. WHY IT IS CALLED SIMCHAS TORAH

The Tur (Siman 669) explains that it is called Simchas Torah because this is the day that the Torah is completed and it is proper to rejoice when we complete it.

The Mateh Moshe (Siman 976) provides a different explanation: When Klal Yisroel learned the Torah the accusing Satan said before Hashem: They learn it, but they never finish it. When the finished it Hashem said, See they have completed it. The Satan responded, "Yes but they do not begin it again. When they started again the Satan had nothing further to say. Since the accuser is silenced it is called, "Simchas Torah." As pointed out by

the Sefer Minhagim of Worms – Hashem Himself became our defence attorney. This is certainly a day to call Simchas Torah.

3. THE ORIGINS

Rav Yoseph Karo traces the idea of Simchas Torah to a Midrash in Shir HaShirim (1:9): And Jerusalem came and stood before Hashem.. And he made a feast for all His servants. Said Rabbi Yitzchok – from here we learn to make a feast-celebration for the conclusion of the Torah.

The Abarbanel (Parshas VaYelech) writes that Simchas Torah is the last vestige of the Mitzvah of Hakhel that we celebrated every seven years. He writes that the Gadol of the Kehilah receives Chassan Torah because he is compared to the king who read from the Torah during Hakhel.

The Seforno in Parshas Emor (Vayikra 23:36) explains that since Shmini Atzeres is the day that Hashem says, "Son, stay with Me one more day," this is a special time in which to come closer with the Creator. This is why Chazal set Simchas Torah on Shmini Atzeres – for it is through Torah that we may cleave to Hashem.

4. SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE DAY

Rabbeinu Bachya in his Kad HaKemach (Atzeres) explains that this day of Simchas Torah is likened to the day of Matan Torah itself.

The Yesod v'Shoresh haAvodah states that whomsoever is careful to rejoice on Simchas Torah is assured that Torah shall never cease from his descendants. This is a remarkable thing to keep in mind. However, the Simcha should be a true expression of Torah joy and not be an expression, Heaven forbid, of drunken activity. There is an age-old Yiddish expression that our Bubbies and Zeidy's used to express that such behavior is decidedly not of Jewish practice.

At Maariv the custom is to recite special Psukim. This is found in the Rishonim as well. It is interesting to note that Rabbi Akiva Eiger

writes in a letter (Igros Rabbi Akiva Eiger #129) that the Pasuk Atta Horaisa LaDaas should be given to someone whose main occupation is Torah study. This is kavod HaTorah and doing otherwise is a Bizayon HaTorah.

Many have the minhag to recite the Borchu of Maariv in the Nigun of Yomim Noraim and NOT that of Yom Tov. We see from all this that there is in fact a happy and somber tone to SImchas Torah – it should not be an atmosphere of drunkenness and excess.

The Shliach Tzibbur then takes the Sefer Torah in hand and declares: Please Hashem save us." This is mentioned in the Maharil and Levush (Siman 669). This is a serious plea, and not merely something that is sung without meaning.

Because of the special Mitzvah of Simcha on this day, Yiskor is actually moved up to the previous day of Shmini Atzeres in order to better enjoy the Simcha of the day. Generally speaking, Yiskor is recited on the last day of a Yom Tov.

By the same token, we change the Birchas Kohanim to Shacharis instead of Mussaf because the excess Simcha that is in the hakafos are not in line with how the Birchas Johanim should be recited. For those shuls that daven Mussaf before the hakafos the Birkas Kohanim remains at Mussaf.



5. TORAH SHOULD BE LEARNED AS WELL

Generally speaking, Yom Tov should be divided as Chatzi lachem v'chatzi lashem – half to you, in festive eating and drinking and half to Hashem in learning Torah.

Rav Shach zt"l expressed his concern that Simchas Torah has, unfortunately devolved into excessive merrymaking,

when in fact, it is a day of complete holiness and Simcha involving Torah. He emphasized that the celebration should be with Torah and its study as well. Rav Shach thus urged everyone to also engage in Torah study on this day as well.

6. THE REASON THE FLAGS



The flags are not a recent innovation. The flags are, in fact, an ancient minhag in Klal Yisroel. The Aruch HaShulchan explains that the Minhag is to show all the children that we proudly bear the symbol of Torah as we walk in the ways that Hashem has commanded us.

7. HAKAFOS

There are two sets of Hakafos – those at night and those in the day. The leining that many Kehilos do on the night is, according to one explanation, so that the Torah will not be handled for no reason at all.

The Hakafos, just like regarding the Hakafos of the Lulav are patterned upon the Hakafos on Sukkos of the Bais HaMikdash.

The Hakafos should not be taken lightly. It is one of the last vestiges of the Holy Beis HaMikdash, and serves as a reminder of what we had.

There is a bit of a problem, however. On Sukkos we do not make Hakafos without a Lulav in hand. How can we do on Simchas Torah, without a Sefer Torah in hand? Some address this point by makig sure that whenever they do a Hakafa they are dancing in front of a Sefer Torah. Others are more lenient and understand it as doing

Hakafos around the Bima itself – even though there is no Torah there now. Some make sure that there is a Sefer Torah by the Bima that is stationary.

8. An AVEL

There are various minhagim as to what an Avel (a mourner) does on Simchas Torah. Some say that he should not do a hakafah since the hakafos are based on that of Simchas Torah. Others permit it. Yet a third opinion is that an avel may only do so by holding the Torah once or by dancing in front of it and then stopping. Each person should ask the Rav in that shul in which he is davening.

9. HAKAFOS ON SHMINI ATZERES

In the Nusach Sefard minyanim it is the custom to have Hakafos on the first night of Yom Tov as well. Ashkenazim do so only on Simchas Torah – the second day of Yom Tov Sheini. Rav Vosner ruled (Shaivet HaLevi IX #141 that this is not considered change in minhag if an Ashkenazi shul wished to adopt this custom after Aleinu. He writes that it is, in fact, an expression of addition of Simcha before Hashem.

10. EVERYONE RECEIVES AN ALIYAH



It is the custom in Klal Yisroel for every person to receive an Aliyah on Simchas Torah. It is for this reason that many shuls break up into different groups so that everyone could receive the Aliyah in a prompt fashion.

There is also a halacha that Musaf should ideally be recited before the seventh hour of the day (See Shulchan Aruch 286:1). Indeed, the Biur Halacha explains that ideally it should be recited before

the 6 and ½ hour of the day. It is on account of this halacha that many people daven Mussaf before the reading of the Torah. This is why there are various different minhagim in different shuls and Yeshivos.

It should also be noted that there is an extra reason why Mussaf should be recited earlier. According to the Sefer Kitzur HaKavanos of Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato on Shmini Atzeres mussaf the final petek (of our future) is handed in on Mussaf. This is also cited in numerous other Kaballah sforim. It is for this reson that some recite the Kaddish preceding Mussaf in the Yomim Noraim tune.

11. CHOSSON TORAH

The Aliyah given on the very last Aliyah of Sefer Dvarim is called Chosson Torah. The Machzor Vitri (418) explains that this Aliyah is very important because it is considered as if he had read the entire Torah, sinve we know that a Mitzvah is only called upon the person who completes it (See Rashi Parshas Aikev Dvarim 8:1). The term Chosson is employed because of these people (the Chosson Bereishis as well) who receive the Aliyos adorn the Torah as a Chosson adorns a bride (Seder HaYom). It is a bigger matter to be Chosson Torah than Chosson Bereishis, which is also a great matter.

The Chazan who calls up the Chosson Torah recites a special preamble inviting the Chosson Torah up. In it he recites aloud, "Arise, arise, arise, Ploni the son of Ploni, Chosson Torah." In Hebrew this is "Amod, Amod, Amod, Ploni Ben Ploni." This is an ancient Minhag in Klal Yisroel and is founf in the Minhag of Kehilas Worms. He recites it twice, and the Chosson Torah arises to his Aliyah on the second time because one should initially decline an honor.

The Sefer Minhag Yeshurun explains that it is recited three times in order to remind the Torah leader or community leader that the three pillars of Torah in the community are upon him to

strengthen. The three pillars are Torah study, Avodah (now prayer) and Gmilus Chassadim.

After his Aliyah the congregations says, "Chazak Chazak v'nischazaik."

Some have the minhag to bring a fruit that one has not yet eaten from in order to be able to recite a Shehecheyanu on this Aliyah (and on Chosson Bereishis as well). This is to fulfill the view of the Rokayach who says that a shehecheyanu should be recited. Some explain that this is on account of arising to greatness in having been the recipient of this Aliyah.

Others say that in recent times, no one has seen the bracha of shehecheyanu recited. Because of the preponderance of rare fruits throughout the entire season some say that a Shehecheyanu can no longer be recited on a new fruit.

12. HAGBAAH

Many have the Minhag of performing the Hagbaah in a different manner than the rest of the year. The magbiah switches hands and shows the ksav to the congregation rather than having it face him. It is a controversy whether this is a correct Minhag or not. The Aishel Avrohol justifies it, while the SHaarei Ephraim (8:62 and 10:16) says it is incorrect. In most places, the minhag is to do it, however. Nonetheless, if the Torah is particularly heavy or the Magbiah is not a strong person – it should not be done. Poskim have written that the Hagbaah should not specifically given to a strong man who is an Am HaAretz on this account.

13. KOL HA'NE'ARIM

The minhag of giving everyone an Aliyah also includes giving all the children present one main Aliyah generally done under a huge Talis or a number of Taleisim held together. One adult joins them as well.

The Mishna Brurah (669:13), citing the Levush, explains that the purpose is to train children in the Mitzvah of Krias HaTorah. The

Shaarei Ephraim (8:57) states that it is so that they will love the Mitzvah and to train them in Torah. There are also those who explain that since everyone must receive an Aliyah, children are also included.

Often women wait a considerable amount of time for the Aliyos to be over so that their child can get Kol Ha'Nearim. Rav Mordechai Gross posed the question to Rav Elyashiv zatzal as to whether Kol HaMearim can be done earlier or whether this is considered a change in Minhag. Rav Elyashiv responded that it is permitted, provided that the adults would agree to it. The reason why it is last is because the Gemorah in Gittin 60a indicates that adults come before children in terms of Kavod.

14. PAYING

It is the custom in Klal Yisroel (Seder HaYom, Siddur Yaavetz) to auction off these two Aliyos in order to raise money for the shul. The minhag is that much money is paid for these two Mitzvos to show the Chavivus of the Mitzvah (See Siddur Yaavetz and Seder HaYom).

Ideally, this Aliyah should be given to a Kohain to fulfill the Mitzvah of veChibadto – And you shall honor him. Nonetheless, the Minhag is to give it to the highest bidder to raise the money for the Tzedakkah of the shul. The Aliyah should go to someone who is at least either a scholar or an Askan or leader in the community.

The Knesses HaGedolah writes that these Aliyos should not be sold because they should only be given to those crowned in Torah. The Eliyahu Rabbah, however, writes that one cannot abolish a minhag in Klal Yisroel and the median of only having worthy people bid should be adopted.

15. CHOSSON BEREISHIS

The Aliyah given to the very Aliyah in Bereishis is called Chosson Bereishis. It is a great matter to be the first one to do

something. Nachshon Ben Aminadav was the first one who entered the waters even before Kriyas Yam Suf happened. Aside from showing Bitachon in Hashem, he was the first to follow the command, which is a great zchus.

When the Baal Koreh reaches the words Vayehi Erev vayehi Boker it is the custom for the entire congregation to recite it, for all the days of Maaeh Bereishis. The custom is also for the entire congregation to say the words, Vayechulu hashamayim" up until "laasos."

This is only done on Simchas Torah and is not done on Shabbos Bereishis when the entire Parasha is read. The Taamei HaMinhagim (83) provides the reason for this custom. He explains that the reason for this reading of Bereishis is not to fulfill the Mitzvah. [Indeed, from the language of the Tur the reading of Sefer Bereishis is merely a minhag and not an full obligation].

The reason for this reading to entrench Emunah into the hearts of Klal Yisroel. That it was Hashem, who has given us the Torah who created the world. This is why the entire congregation recites these verses.

The reason why we all recite aloud the paragraph of Shabbos is because Shabbos has always been viewed as the symbol or flag of the Jewish nation. Just as patriots of any nation look at their flag as more than a mere dyed cloth with fancy designs, so too is Shabbos viewed in the eyes of the Jewish people. It is a sign of our deep belief in Hashem Yisbarach – that it was He who Created the world. But it is more than this too.

Our belief in HaKadosh Boruch Hu is not just limited to the notion that an omnipotent entity created the world. An integral aspect of Torah theology is that this omnipotent entity, HaKadosh Boruch Hu, is the source of all good. He rewards good and punishes evil. The Jewish understanding of Hashem and His unique Oneness is that

midos and emunah Bashem are intrinsically interwoven with each other .

A belief in the Oneness of Hashem perforce also includes the notion that He defines what goodness is. Altruism, goodness, and good midos are not, chalilah to say, the results of some theory of evolutionary biology – no, they are part and parcel of our conception of the Borei Olam Himself. This thought is expressed in both the Zohar (Bereishis) as well as in the writings of the Alter of Slabodka (Bereishis) - Indeed, this is the raison d'être of Creation itself – so that Hashem can reward those who do good and fulfil his Ratzon.

If, in the path of life, we successfully attempt to emulate G-d – then we will be rewarded. The recitation of this pasuk aloud on Simchas Torah shows that the observance of Shabbos is thus the flag of the Jewish people – the idea and notion that represents all this.

16. CONCLUSION

The Bikkurei Yaakov cited by the Mishna Brurah explains that Simchas Torah is a time of great rejoicing for the masses in the Simcha of Mitzvah. It is therefore wrong that some people do not make this a Simcha in the Simcha of Torah. The Torah should not be left in a corner. May Hashem rectify this, the Bikkurei Yaakov writes, and repair that which is broken.

Boruch Hashem, in many kehilos, the Torah is truly celebrated on this day with the resurgence of Torah study and recognition of its centrality in Klal Yisroel. - May we all be zocheh to yeshuos and nechamos as we celebrate the Torah on this wonderful Yom Tov!

"We shouldn't be too happy when good things happen, and we shouldn't be overly sad when bad occurs because we don't know what will come from them. The good might be bad, and the bad might be good. Only time will tell." ~ Rambam

The Shabbos Queen

The Gemara in Maseches Chulin tells a story that Rabbah the son of Rav Huna came to the house of Rabbah the son of Rav Nachman and they served him a very elegant meal. They brought out three sa'ah of bread smeared with honey and oil, which was a delicacy.

He asked his host if he had known that he was coming in that he prepared so lavishly. The host answered, "Are you greater than the holy Shabbos about which it says **וקראת לשבת עונג**? I prepared this great seuda in honour of Shabbos."

As we begin a new year of Shabbossos, we need to remind ourselves about our special guest, the holy Shabbos Queen, who visits us every Shabbos. We say it in Lecha Dodi, and the **Chofetz Chaim** would often tell the visitors who requested Brachos that Shabbos is the **מקור ברכה** - the source of Bracha. May indeed all our Shabbossos of the year be a source of Bracha for us and all of Klal Yisroel.

The Sweetness of Torah - Harav Shlomo Freshwater

Let me share with you a little story that once heard.

A Yid in Yerushalayim was once davening Mariv in a shul whilst **Hagoan Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l** was present in the Shul. The Yid went up to Reb Shlomo and questioned, "Rosh Hayeshiva, can I walk you home after Mariv?"

Reb Shlomo Zalman replied "I am sorry, but I have to stop off at a Bar Mitzvah."

Reb Shlomo Zalman continued to relate to him who's Bar Mitzvah it was.

So the Yid responded, "It's fine, I am also going to this Bar mitzva."

So Reb Shlomo Zalman said, "fine, we will go together to the Bar mitzva".

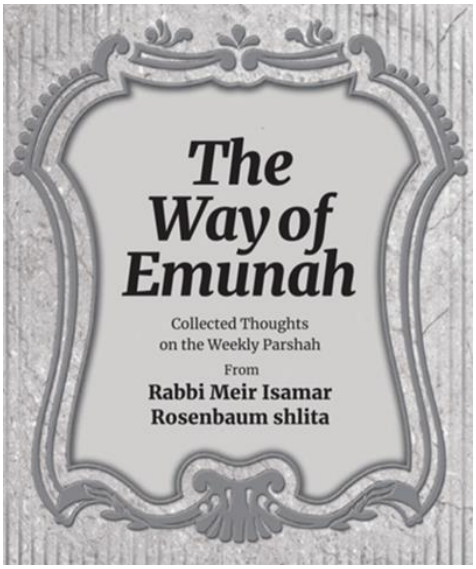
On the way, Reb Shlomo Zalman said that I have to stop off for a moment by the Moicher Seforim store to buy a Sefer for the Bar mitzva boy. So they both went into the store to buy the Sefer. Reb Shlomo Zalman bought the Sefer and he inscribed in it the following:

לכבוד הבחור הבר מצוה לרגל הכנסתך לנעם המצוות – I am giving you this present on the occasion of your coming into the beauty of the Mitzvos, the sweetness of the Mitzvos.

The Yid then said to Reb Shlomo Zalman, "Rosh Hayeshiva, I have never seen that type of expression before. I have always seen people write - **לרגל הכנסתך לעול המצוות** - to the yoke of the Mitzvos.

So Reb Shlomo Zalman Responded, "I am aware that everyone writes it like that. However I write in this manner because the Bar mitzva Bochur thinks to himself, 'What is happening, I am getting such a terrible yoke, such a responsibility?!"

Hence, I would like to teach him that this is not so. It is sweet, it is beautiful, you are getting a Yetzer Tov - it's not a yoke. It is a sweetness. It is tranquillity. It is a beautiful present from the Riboino Shel Olam!



The Impact of The Hakafos

Dancing on Simchas Torah is very powerful and holy. **The Kedushas Yomtov of Sighet zy"a** (quoted in Sefer Tzadik Katamar Yifrach, page 12) said, "***When a person raises his foot to dance on Simchas Torah, he rectifies more than he fixed on Rosh Hashanah and the entirety of the Yomim Tovim***!"

Exactly 79 Years Ago… By Rabbi Yosef C. Golding

A few weeks ago, on *Simchas Torah* at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Queens, a 12-year-old boy, bedecked with a large Talis over his head, ascended the Bimah and began to belt out the *pizmon*/song of *Ein Adir KaHashem*, during the fourth *hakafah*. His voice was strong, on tune, and the entire shul joined him, joyously.

But some of the people watching and listening had tears rolling down their faces…



In a small shul in Monsey, Mr. Friedenson gets up to dance for his *hakafah*, and while he holds the Sefer Torah tightly in his arms, his mind takes him back to another time and another place. This is when he prepares himself for what can only be described as the "highlight" of the entire day. Midway between the fourth and fifth *hakafah*, the lively group suddenly quiets down and awaits "the story." Mr. Friedenson stands up at the *bimah* and in his inimitable manner recounts a fascinating and inspiring incident that occurred to him in the Starachowitz concentration camp, many years earlier.

Somebody Remembered that today was Simchas Torah

"I will never forget that year. We were in the smithy shop preparing to work for the day, but for some reason, we had not been assigned any work to do. This was unusual but we were not complaining. Somebody remembered that today was Simchas Torah, and we all began singing the appropriate songs. Then, someone started the niggun, *'Ain adir k'Hashem, v'ain baruch k'ben Amram.'* (There is none as powerful as Hashem, there is none as blessed as [Moshe] the son of Amram). This is a traditional *niggun* that is usually sung when we dance with the Torah on Simchas Torah.

"Anyway, we were singing the part of this *niggun* that says, *'Ain z'chiyah k'Torah, v'ain chachameha k'Yisrael.'* (There is no merit like the Torah, there are no men of wisdom like those in [Klal] Yisroel), when suddenly the camp commandant, a somewhat civil German by the name of Bruno Pape, walked into the room. He looked at us singing and he seemed to become angry. 'What is this? Why are you singing? Do you have it so good here that you can sing?' Everybody stopped quickly. We were frightened. Pape was relatively civil – but he was still a German.

"'Friedenson,' Pape called to me, 'tell me, what are you singing?' I stepped forward, obviously chosen to be the spokesperson of the group. I explained that today was our holiday and that we were praying in song, a song pertaining to the holiday.

"Were You Praying for the Downfall of the Fuhrer?"

"'You were praying or you were singing?' asked Pape. 'Were you praying for the downfall of the Fuhrer? Is that what your song is about? Translate the words for me.' I did as he asked and I explained the meaning of the words to him. When I came to the part that there are no men of wisdom like the scholars of Israel, he derisively exclaimed, 'Are you Jews so wise? *Du glaube in das?* Do you believe in this?'"

Mr. Friedenson paused for a moment to wipe his brow. The strain was tremendous, but the look on the faces of the men and children as they listened to his words was worth all the effort. Like a lion, he gathered up his strength and continued.

"I remember, there was a boy of seventeen or eighteen, just a Jewish boy, not even from our religious group. He jumped up and said in German, 'Yes, Herr Commandant, I believe! *Ich glaube*!'

"Ich Glaube, Yes! We Believe"

Pape then began asking each of us in turn if we also believed in this. He went from person to person, starting with me. You have to

understand that we were not afraid to say the truth to him, because we knew he was good to us. Each and every person in the shop said, '*Ich glaube*, Yes! We believe.'

"Pape looked at us and excitedly gestured with both arms while exclaiming, 'You Jews are amazing. I don't know how the Fuhrer will ever be able to defeat you!' and he walked away. It was an incredible moment of pride and faith."

Mr. Friedenson finished the story and broke out into a huge smile. "How right he was and how fortunate we are today to be able to learn Torah in re-established centers of Torah and *Chassidus* throughout the world. We must never be afraid and we must always believe. Nu, what can I say … '*Aiyn z'chiyah k'Torah v'ain chachameha k'Yisrael ……*'"

…Back in Kew Gardens Hills, just a few weeks ago, the reason for the tears was because this 12-year-old singing at the Bimah was **the great grandson of Reb Yosef Friedenson**, exactly 79 years after the above story. The tears were tears of joy.

Yes *Riboino Shel Olam*, ***ICH GLAUBE***! I BELIEVE!

Kavod Hatorah

One *Isru Chag*, the day following *Simchas Torah*, ***Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl***, visited his close friend, ***Horav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, zl***, *Rav* of Kovno, Brisk, and later Yerushalayim.

Rav Yisrael commented that he was saddened over the sorry state of affairs concerning *kavod HaTorah*, the honour one should have for and give to the Torah. *Rav* Yehoshua Leib asked to what specific incident he was referring.

Rav Yisrael replied, "This happened with me. On *Simchas Torah* I *davened* in the large *shul*. The *gabbai*, sexton, was engaged in the bidding process to see the various honoraria. When he came to *chassan Torah* (which usually is an honour reserved for the *Rav* of

the *shul*) I offered two *zuz*, two dollars. That is all I could afford at the time.

I waited and waited for another bidder to raise the price (which was ludicrous for such an honour), and no one came forth! Apparently, no one felt the Torah was worth much. I ended up purchasing the *aliyah*, because there was no one else."

Rav Yehoshua Leib responded, "His Honour is mistaken. No one bidded because, here in Kovno, we do not take *kavod HaTorah* lightly. When the congregation noted the *Rav's* desire to purchase *chassan Torah*, they each refrained from bidding."

Joy And Sadness

Once, during *Simchas Torah*, ***Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl***, was dancing with the Torah, singing out loud as tears streamed down his face. His *talmidim*, students, asked, "*Rebbe*, how can you cry as you dance?"

Rav Yisrael replied, "When a person has two distinct emotions, unrelated to one another – one joyful, the other sad – invariably, the joyful news will in some manner mitigate the man's feeling of sadness. If both joy and sadness are intertwined, however, the joy will not have an effect on the sadness. On the contrary, the joy might even create greater sadness.

"Today is *Simchas Torah,* a time when we rejoice with the Torah. We have all maintained an inexorable bond with the Torah and with its *mitzvos*. At this same time, however, feelings of grief and pain for those of our brothers and sisters who are distant from the *osher*, happiness, that suffuses our lives awaken within me. Yes, I feel joy, but I also feel pain. One does not negate the other."

Rav Yisrael's attitude, his love for each and every Jew, was real.

Dancing From Simchas Ha'torah

The joy and intensity with which **R' Chaim Shmulevitz** learned was visibly apparent. His eyes sparkled with excitement and a smile often played on his lips. After clarifying a point, he might exclaim, "***Ess Iz Sossen'dik***! (It is joyous!)"

Once, when learning with a partner, R' Chaim thought of a connection between two far-flung topics in the Gemara. As he elucidated his point, R' Chaim leaped upon a bench. As he reviewed it, his feet began to dance.

R' Chaim once entered an unheated *beis midrash* on a frigid winter day, wearing a heavy coat, jacket and sweater. Before long, the warmth generated by his intensive toil in Torah study caused him to remove his coat. A while later, he removed his jacket. Finally, R' Chaim removed his sweater and spent the rest of the day studying in his shirtsleeves! (**For Love of Torah**)

L'Maaseh... A Tale to Remember

Rav Yechiel Spero wrote a great story. **The Chazon Ish, zt"l**, was known for his outstanding Hasmadah, diligence in learning, and just as great was his unique love for all Jews. The Chazon Ish lived in Bnei Brak, where **Rav Yosef Kahaneman, zt"l**, the Ponevezher Rav, had reestablished the Ponevezh Yeshivah.

It was during the war years, and the Yeshivah had experienced incredible growth, not only in numbers, but also in the intensity of the learning. Therefore, it was no wonder that on Simchas Torah, the day that we celebrate with the Torah, the sense of ecstasy and great joy emanating from the students was palpable. The dancing was a celebration that went beyond the regular rejoicing. Each individual felt spiritually uplifted, as he danced together with the other Yeshivah students, who truly felt a close relationship with the Torah.

Once a year, the elderly Chazon Ish would come to the Yeshivah, to celebrate Simchas Torah with the Talmidim. It was a sight to behold. The elderly sage danced in a way that was unmatched by those who were decades younger than him. He was not a part of the Yeshivah administration, nor did he hold any official position as a Rebbe. He just wanted to dance with the Bachurim of the Yeshivah.

Seeing the Gadol HaDor, the greatest Torah giant of the generation, dance with such energy, encouraged the boys to also dance with liveliness and excitement. While the dancing endured, no one felt weak from the exertion. But once the dancing ended, everyone felt the exhaustion of their efforts.

Now it was time to accompany the Chazon Ish to his home. The sage also felt the strain. Once the dancing had ended, he realized how old his physical body had become.

Escorted by the Bachurim, the Chazon Ish slowly made his way home. On the way, they came upon a man dressed in clothes that were not clothes one would wear on Yom Tov. The man looked like he just did not belong. He appeared withdrawn, and unhappy.

The Chazon Ish stopped and walked over to this man to ask him what was bothering him. The Chazon Ish himself was exhausted, yet, when he saw another Jew in pain, he felt that person's pain.

The man did not need more to open up. He was like a bottle of soda that had been shaken up, waiting to burst through. He began with his sad tale. "I was not born Jewish. After years of study and a deep desire to become a part of the Nation of Hashem, I converted and became a Ger. Tonight, on the night when Jews all over celebrate their relationship with the Torah, I have nowhere to go. It is like a wedding, only I was not invited! I am all alone. Look at me. I look different, I talk different. I am different. I sat myself down on the street and just contemplated about my being excluded from the Jewish world that I so much wanted to join."

The man concluded his story and hung his head in dejection.

The Chazon Ish listened to the man talk, and then asked, "Do you know any Jewish songs?" He asked the man to pick one of the songs that he knew, and to begin singing. He said, "You sing, and I will dance, and together, we will celebrate Simchas Torah."

The Talmidim were shocked beyond belief. Their Rebbe could hardly walk home. He was already advanced in years, and he was in poor health. Tonight, he had just danced spirited dancing for hours. And yet, if another Jew felt alone and in need, he would gather whatever strength he might have and use it to enliven the life of another Jew.



The man slowly began to sing. Unsure of himself, he started with a mumble. "Toras Hashem Temimah," the Torah of Hashem is perfect, he sang, picking up speed as he got more confidence.

The Chazon Ish began to dance with a fervour that overshadowed his earlier dancing. As a Chassan dances before his Kallah, the elderly Chazon Ish danced before this man. The man smiled and cried at the same time, as he kept singing.

The Chazon Ish kept dancing exuberantly. - Why did he do this? Because he wanted to make someone smile. The Ger felt out of place without family and friends on a night that everyone seemed so happy, but the Gadol HaDor taught him otherwise. ***No Jew is left behind, and no Jew is left alone***.

The Bachurim stood there in amazement, as they watched the Chazon Ish, who minutes earlier had hardly been able to walk home, now dancing enthusiastically with a joy that transcended this world, and carried him higher to another dimension, a dimension that is reserved only for the few, unique, and worthy individuals!

Pearls of Wisdom . . .A Word for the Ages

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, was more than the Rav of Yerushalayim, he was a world leader, and he was a recognized and respected Talmud Chacham. Yet, on Simchas Torah, he would dance with the children. He would hold their little hands while dancing and swirl them around the Sifrei Torah, while the onlookers would clap and sing.

Rav Yosef Chaim was not so young and healthy. Despite suffering from various illnesses and advanced age, each year he would gather all the children together and dance the Hakafos with them on and on. Children were his life. When he heard about certain accomplishments that children would make, he would award them prizes and rewards. He did this in order to instil within them with the sweetness of Torah. He did not have to do this, but he wanted to. He could have easily asked others who were younger than him and did not hold such a distinguished position to do this, and they would have happily taken over, but Rav Yosef Chaim wanted to impart nthe beauty of the Torah to the children himself!

The Power of *Simchas* HaTorah on Simchas Torah

The *Mishnah Berurah* cites the ***Arizal*** as having stated that the highest summit of *kedusha* that he was able to achieve was a product of his having rejoiced in the *simchah shel mitzvah* with all his strength. - Likewise, the **Vilna Gaon** was known to dance with all his might before the *Sefer* Torah.

The highest *madreigah* a person can reach, the loftiest height that a person can achieve is not on Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, or Hoshanah Rabbah; rather, it is on Simchas Torah by rejoicing over the Torah.

R' Chaim Palagi (*Mo'ed Lekol Chai, siman* 25) declared that one who is careful and makes sure to rejoice with the Torah on Simchas Torah is assured that Torah will never cease from his descendants.

If one wants to ensure that the Torah will remain with his family forever, he should rejoice with great excitement over the Torah!



Song is Greater than Words

When we make the *hakafos* during Sukkos with the *lulav*, we recite *Hoshanos*. We don't sing them; we recite the words. But on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah when we make *hakafos* with the *Sefer Torah* it is accompanied by songs and melodies.



Song expresses something very deep. There are various emotions that we express to *Hashem*. We thank Him and we plead with Him. When we plead, we say *Hosha-na* ("Please save!") and when we thank, we say *Halleluyah* (which is the essence of the *Hallel*.)

When a person cannot express the deep emotions he feels, either because he doesn't know how or because he is so overflowing with feeling that he can't express it in words, he breaks out in song.

When a Jews takes the *Arba Minim*, which symbolizes the taking of his heart, eyes, lips and backbone, and he circles the *bimah*, he feels great happiness. But he still manages to recite the *Hoshanos*.

When he holds a *Sefer Torah*, it's beyond him. All he can do is dance and sing. - The meaning of *hakafos* is so powerful that it can't even be put down on paper. There is simply no way to describe what happens in the world when Jews dance and make *hakafos* to rejoice over the Torah.

The *chagim* are over. There is no more *shofar,* no *lulav* and no *sukkah*. But *Simchas Torah,* joy over the holy Torah, is not confined to a specific holiday. When it comes to the Torah, you never "finish the *mitzvah* and that's it." You can finish the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* or *lulav* but you can't finish the *mitzvah* of learning Torah. So we dance and circle and sing endlessly.

We can make *hakafos* with the *Sefer Torah* in every *tefilah* because Torah is not limited to a specific time. It is non-stop *deveikus*. Even after we make *Havdalah* and recite *Hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol,* we can keep on celebrating, because with Torah there is no separation between sacred time and mundane time. ***Torah is limitless and endless***.

Hashem showers us with "candies" when we dance and celebrate over His holy Torah. He grants us the *ahavah, achvah, shalom v'rei'us* of Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. And we ask Him to send us also the "candies" of abundant *parnassah*, of the ability to learn Torah with physical and emotional health, and to have blessing and success in all our undertakings.

The *Zohar* states that all the gates are open on Shemini Atzeres. - May *Hashem* help us to all rejoice together in *simchas haTorah.*

"The Humble person finds Serenity; One who seeks honour and recognition cultivates a life of inevitable frustration." ~ R' Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l.

Simchas Torah Insights: Celebration and Elevation by Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein



The main objectives when it comes to the Torah are learning it and applying its teachings. As such, the celebrations on Simchas Torah upon completing the Torah reading would seem to be a break of sorts – albeit of value, and hopefully well-deserved. A broader perspective on the matter will show us how, while dancing with a Sefer Torah is not learning per se, it is not as separate from the enterprise of learning Torah as might first appear.

The Gemara (Berachos 7b) makes the following rather surprising comment: "*The serving of Torah is greater than its learning.*" By the "serving of Torah," the Gemara is referring to attending to the needs of a Torah sage. Needless, to say, this statement requires some contemplation. After all, surely the reason the sage is deserving of being attended to is due to the Torah knowledge that he attained and possesses! If so, then why is attending to him greater than engaging in the very thing that made him great – Torah study itself?

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook (Ein Aya to Berachos) explains. The goal of learning Torah is to impact upon and elevate the person. This effect will be based on two factors: 1) The amount of Torah knowledge the person possesses, and 2) The level of regard the person has for the Torah.

The crucial nature of the second element should be obvious, for if a person has abundant Torah knowledge but does not regard the Torah

highly, the effect of his Torah learning will be minimal at best. Hence, the product and effect of one's Torah learning is ultimately a combination of the above two elements.

It is the nature of people's relationships with their values that when they express a value outward, it serves to embed it deeper inwards. This means that if a person expresses regard for Torah, such as, for example, by attending to a Torah scholar, that itself will instill within him even more regard for Torah, which will then in turn elevate *all the Torah* that he learns. In this way, within measure, attending Torah can be greater than learning Torah.

So, too, when we come to dance with the Torah on Simchas Torah, we are giving honor to the Torah. We are raising our relationship with the Torah higher, and in so doing, we are preparing and allowing ourselves to be elevated that much more by all the Torah that we have learned this past year, and that we look forward to learning this coming year!

The day of Simchas Torah is accompanied by hakafos around the bimah, just as are the days of Sukkos. However, there is a basic difference between the two: a) On Sukkos, there is a Sefer Torah in the middle of the circle at the bimah, and the people circle it holding the arba minim. b) On Simchas Torah, there is nothing at the bimah, and the people circle it holding the Sifrei Torah. What is the meaning behind these two forms of hakafos?

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Cited in Nefesh HaRav, p. 221) explains that whenever there is a circle, all the points along the circumference are seen as turning inwards towards the center. When it comes to Hakafos, this means that whatever is at the edge of the circle represents the means through which to approach what is in the middle. Therefore: On Sukkos, the Sefer Torah is in the middle of the circle. What is being emphasized during the Hakafos is that Torah wisdom cannot be meaningfully acquired through intellectual investment alone.

In this respect, the Torah is not like other disciplines. Rather, it can only be fully absorbed when accompanied by the fulfillment of the Mitzvos. As such, those who circle around the Torah circle hold the Mitzvah items of the arba minim in their hands.

On Simchas Torah, the hakafos reflect the teaching of the Gemara (Ta'anis 31a) that in the future, Hashem will make a circle in Gan Eden with Himself in the center and place the righteous all around the circle. Therefore, we do not have any physical object at the bimah which is the center of our hakafah, for that will be occupied by the Divine presence.

Conversely, we take the Torah scrolls and circle around with them, indicating that one can only draw close to Hashem to the fullest extent possible through the study of His Torah.

There is a further element here. After all, many, if not most, of those dancing on Simchas Torah is not holding a Sefer Torah. With what, then, are they circling around the Divine presence in the middle?

R' Aizik Sher, the Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka, writes that the mitzvah with which most people dance on Simchas Torah is that of "*ve'ahavta le'reacha kamocha* – you shall love your neighbor as yourself"! By joining hands with the rest of those present, they are expressing their love for their fellow-Jews (Leket Sichos, vol 2 p. 136)

Through this expression of unity, not only are they celebrating their connection with the Divine presence in the center, they are moreover causing it to dwell among them with greater intensity, for as the **Ramchal** writes, Hashem is One, and He connects with His people when they are one (Ma'amar Hachochmah).

Indeed, one may say that, in a sense, on Simchas Torah we also circle the bimah together with the arba minim, just as we did on Succos. The only difference is that, at this stage, we are no longer holding the four species; rather, having absorbed the message of the

mitzvah, we come to embody it in ourselves! The two primary themes of the arba minim, as highlighted in the midrash are: They represent the various parts of the body – heart, spine, eyes, and mouths, which together praise Hashem.

Also, they represent the coming together of different types of Jews – those with Torah learning, Mitzvah performance, both or neither (Vayikra Rabbah, 30.) So, too, on Simchas Torah, all the parts of our body are enlisted when we sing and dance in honor of Hashem and the Torah.

Similarly, when we dance together, all those present are included in the circle. When one chooses his place in shul, he may naturally be as to who should be sitting to his right and his left. Yet, when dancing on Simchas Torah, one takes the hand of the person on their right – whoever they might be; and one gives their hand to the person on their left – whoever they might be.

By taking hold of the Torah scrolls and the hands of our fellow Jews, the dancing on Simchas Torah combines the two ideas of devotion to Hashem's Torah and the love for His people – and that is a formidable/beautiful combination with which to dance before Hashem on this final day of the Festival!

Short And Sweet Story of The Week

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, ZT"L, taught us the importance of money and other valuables in comparison to our holy Torah. He was living in London during the time when the Germans bombed the city, and in his neighborhood, there was no bomb shelter. The only sheltered place was a local bank, which had a fortified room that housed a safe.

Rabbi Abramsky's son asked the bank manager if his father could be authorized to enter the safe during an air raid. Normally, no one is allowed to enter the bank's vault, but nevertheless, the manager

agreed to the request, knowing that a lofty person like Rabbi Abramsky would never dream of removing anything from the safe.

After several days, the bank manager called Rabbi Abramsky's son and told him about a strange thing that happened each time entered the vault during an air raid. "Your father goes into the room and murmurs something; I can't figure out what it is, he added, "ask your father what he was saying."

Shortly after, the son called the bank and informed the bank manager that his father had told them that each time he enters the bank's vault, he says the Pasuk in Tehillim (119:72), **טוֹב לִי תּוֹרַת פִּיךָ מֵאַלְפֵי זָהָב וָכָסֶף** "***your mouth is better for me than thousands in gold and silver***".

R' Yechezkel explained the reason why he had said this verse: "When I enter a room that has so much money in it, I am afraid that I will begin to desire money. In order to be spared from this test, I internalized in my heart that the Torah is worth more than all the silver and gold in the world."

Comment: As we get ready to conclude another cycle of Torah reading, we should look at the occasion no less than if we closed a multimillion-dollar deal, except that money comes and goes, but Torah wisdom stays forever, both in the benefits gained in this world and in terms of the reward in the Next World.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

In Vilna, when the Aron HaKodesh would be opened on Simchas Torah, and the Sifrei Torah were taken out, **the Gra** would burst into joyous and cheerful dancing, which did not stop until the Sifrei Torah were later returned to the Aron!



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

Simchas Torah Is Beyond Words

It is a universal custom among the Jewish people to make hakafos on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. **The Arizal** explained the deeper levels of meaning in very many different mitzvos and minhagim. He wrote detailed explanations even of the custom to beat the aravos on Hoshana Rabba. But he wrote nothing at all about the meaning of hakafos on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

We do know that after the Arizal finished his hakafos – which he would do in Maariv, Shacharis, Musaf, Minchah and Motzaei Hachag – when he passed by a shul where they were still doing hakafos, he would go in and join them.

We see how important the hakafos were to the Arizal, so it is surprising that he wrote nothing of their deeper meaning. It is also surprising that hakafos, which would seem to be relevant only on Yom Tov itself, are practiced on Motzaei Yom Tov as well.

On Hoshana Rabba we make seven hakafos with the lulav. When we finish them, we don't add an extra hakafah. We finished the mitzvah and that's it. But when we make hakafos with a Sefer Torah, there is no such thing as "we finished the mitzvah and that's it." We make seven hakafos, and again and again and again.



Song is Greater than Words

When we make the hakafos during Sukkos with the lulav, we recite Hoshanos. We don't sing them; we recite the words. But on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah when we make hakafos with the Sefer Torah it is accompanied by songs and melodies. - Song expresses something very deep.

There are various emotions that we express to Hashem. We thank Him and we plead with Him. When we plead, we say Hosha-na ("Please save!") and when we thank, we say Halleluyah. When a person cannot express the deep emotions he feels, either because he doesn't know how or because he is so overflowing with feeling that he can't express it in words, he breaks out in song.

When a Jews takes the Arba Minim, which symbolizes the taking of his heart, eyes, lips and backbone, and he circles the bimah, he feels great happiness. But he still manages to recite the Hoshanos. When he holds a Sefer Torah, it's beyond him. All he can do is dance and sing. The meaning of hakafos is so powerful that it can't even be put down on paper. There is simply no way to describe what happens in the world when Jews dance and make hakafos to rejoice over the Torah.

The chagim are over. There is no more shofar, no lulav and no sukkah. But Simchas Torah, joy over the holy Torah, is not confined to a specific holiday. When it comes to the Torah, you never "finish the mitzvah and that's it." You can finish the mitzvah of sukkah or lulav

but you can't finish the mitzvah of learning Torah. So we dance and circle and sing endlessly.

We can make hakafos with the Sefer Torah in every tefilah because Torah is not limited to a specific time. It is non-stop deveikus. Even after we make Havdalah and recite Hamavdil, we can keep on celebrating, because with Torah there is no separation between sacred time and mundane time. Torah is limitless and endless.

Hashem showers us with "candies" when we dance and celebrate over His holy Torah. He grants us the ahavah, achvah, shalom v'rei'us of Torah and yiras Shamayim. And we ask Him to send us also the "candies" of abundant parnassah, of the ability to learn Torah with physical and emotional health, and to have blessing and success in all our undertakings.

The Zohar states that all the gates are open on Shemini Atzeres. May Hashem help us to all rejoice together in simchas haTorah.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Oizer Alport

In what case would one not be required to bring out another Sefer Torah after an invalidating mistake was found in the Sefer Torah being read, even if the error was located in the first three pesukim of the reading?

The sefer China V'chisda (Kesubos 7) writes that if a mistake is found in the Sefer Torah from which the Torah reading for Chosson Bereishis is being read, even if it is located in the first three verses, there is no need to bring out an additional Sefer Torah to complete the reading.

The reason for this unusual ruling is that the reading of Chosson Bereishis is not legally required and is only a custom; as such, once it has been begun, the custom has been fulfilled, and the laws governing the traditional Torah reading do not apply.

Rav Elimelech's Dancing

The following story is related in the name of the **Shinover Rov zy"a**:

One year, when the **Rebbe Rav Elimelech** was still working as a melamed in Lizhensk, he was honoured on Shemini Atzeres with the hakafah of "Ozer Dalim".

In that town, the minhag was that the man honoured with carrying a Torah during a hakafah would only walk around the bima during that hakafah. However, Rav Elimelech became so enthusiastic while carrying the Torah that he forgot the rule and continued carrying and dancing with Torah through the seventh hakafah.

When the hakafos ended, he realized what he had done. He handed the Torah to the shamash and ran out of the bais medrash. He ran home and told his wife, "Hide me. They are definitely coming to search for me!"

However, his wife asked him to make Kiddush first and to eat the seudah, promising to hide him afterwards. He made Kiddush and they ate quickly and recited Birchas Hamazon, and Rav Elimelech then ran to hide under the bed.

Someone began to knock on the door and Rav Elimelech told his wife, "You see. I told you that they would come looking for me."

The Rebbitzen went to the door and told the people there that her husband wasn't home. The men told her, "We know that he is home. If you don't open the door, we will break it open!"

She opened the door and they looked for Rav Elimelech, but they couldn't find him. - The Rebbitzen asked, "Why are you looking for my husband?" They replied, "The gabbaim honoured your husband with one hakafah but he took two. Everyone enjoyed this very much, so the kehillah sent a bottle of wine."

As soon as the men left, Rav Elimelech came out from under the bed!

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



One Book, One Mind - Dancing With Your One Love



On Simchas Torah the *minhag Yisroel* is that we take all of the *sifrei Torah* out from the *aron kodesh* and we dance, we make *hakafos*. We're celebrating the completion of another cycle of reading the Torah from beginning to end, and we're starting now again from *Bereishis bara Elokim*.

Now, one of the features of this day, an aspect that is not spoken about often enough – is that we are dancing with only one *sefer*. The *sefer Torah*, that's the only book we're holding. And we do that because we're emphasizing to ourselves and to our *chaveirim* that this was the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu from the beginning: The Am Yisroel should have only one *sefer*.

Now we're accustomed already to *seforim,* to libraries of books, but the strict Torah law is that even *divrei Torah* are forbidden to write. Even to write a *siddur* of *tefillah* was *ossur* in the ancient times. The Gemara (Shabbos 115b) tells about a man who made *siddurim* and was selling them, so the *chachomim* went after him to prevent it. It was a strict Torah policy – no books except one.

It was only later in our history when the *Chachomim* saw that the Torah would be forgotten otherwise – there were wars and exiles and persecutions, and the generations became much weaker – so they permitted the writing of *divrei Torah.* And that's how the Mishna and the Gemara and all other subsequent *seforim* came to be in writing. But in the olden days of the Tannaim and all the way back to Har Sinai there could be no such thing. In a Jewish home or even a *beis medrash* or yeshivah, you wouldn't find any other book except the *sefer Torah,* the Tanach. We were a one-book nation.

Among us there's only one book that's *permitted* to be written. We have a Torah from Har Sinai and only a prophet, *al pi Hashem,* is allowed to write anything else. Nobody is privileged to take their own thoughts and put pen to paper, or feather to scroll.

And he explains what a very big difference that made. Pay attention to the very important contrast Josephus made. The Am Yisroel, he said, have just one set of ideals for the entire nation. Even if it occurs to somebody to be *mechadesh* something, he could say it, he could tell his friends or his family maybe, but to put it down in writing, to give it that *gushpanka,* the seal of the written word, was absolutely forbidden. It's only the *dvar Hashem* that was in writing.

But among the Greeks, Josephus said, anybody who wishes can write. That's the policy of the nations of the world; literature is open to anybody who could scribble. If you have the knack for writing – and even if you don't – go ahead. Every Tom, Dick and Yenta writes a book. And so what do the books express? All the foolishness that enters their minds.

Now if the writers would have just kept their ideas in their own minds, that would be one thing; they would have misguided degraded minds. But the problem is the rest of the world, the readers. By verbalizing, by writing, they're doing a very great harm to humanity.

The writers, the Greeks and those who followed in their footsteps, created a literature that harmed the intellect of mankind. The truth is that even their own philosophers say so. Plato, in one of his works, declares that the writers and the poets and the playwrights have corrupted the people. Every kind of mischievous idea was put into books and thereby into the minds of the people.

Wasted Forests

Now, we could talk much more about the literature of the gentiles because it doesn't end; every day trees are being chopped down to keep the printing presses going, to supply paper for books. Today especially there's a new branch of literature corrupting the world. One of the mainstays of modern literature, which requires entire forests to keep it going, is romance.

Now when you look for the subject of romantic love in ancient literature you won't find it. It didn't exist because the whole thing doesn't exist. There's no such thing, It's a dream, a fantasy. It's **לֹא הָיָה וְלֹא נִבְרָא**. Romantic love as portrayed in the books is something that doesn't exist in real life.

True Love and True Literature

Of course there's such a thing as married love but it's something that has to be fostered – it's like a plant. You have to water it with a lot of patience, a lot of kindliness, one to the other – and *yiras Shamayim* helps a lot too – and as years pass by, it grows into a true plant, a true tree that has *peiros*, they give forth produce. – Our Book says **וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ**- a man must be loyal to his wife (Bereishis 2:24). Our Book says **וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ** – And Rivkah became his wife and then, after he was married, he loved her

(Bereishis 24:67). But it's an entirely different thing from romantic love!

And so the world is being corrupted from every corner. The libraries and the newspapers and magazines are teaching the world about every type of falsehood. Romance, adventure, entertainment, psychology, pity on criminals, false history, immorality, all types of corrupt ideals. And so the world, as it becomes filled with more books, it's filled with more filth. The stench grows and grows.

But we, the Am Yisroel, we are the stubborn ones. We have only one Book and from there comes everything, all of our attitudes. And on Simchas Torah, that's an integral part of our happiness. We're jumping up and down with our sefer Torah! This is our book! But not only that it's 'ours' – *it's the only one as far as we're concerned!* We have only one great Book and this Book speaks about things that are worth talking about and it vocalizes the greatest aspirations of mankind.

Studying Our Book

Now, while we're dancing with our one Book, with our one set of ideas, we need to make use of the opportunity. It's not enough just to dance and be happy and sing. It's a good beginning, but it's not enough, because if we won't make use of this Book that teaches us how to think and what to think, then what's the use?

Imagine someone gives you an instruction manual for life and he tells you that this is the only book you'll ever need. "Don't bother looking elsewhere," he says, "just in here." So what will it help if you'll dance with it? You have to open it and study it too.

We have the instruction manual! The Torah is given to us that we should know the great truths. We know b'tzelem Elokim bara oso! We know Bereishis bara Elokim! We know vi'hinei tov me'od!

And we know why Hakadosh Baruch Hu insisted on only one *sefer*. Only the Torah, because it's an entirely different way of

looking at the world. Instead of seeing the world through the eyes of Victor Hugo and Karl Marx and all the writers, all the science books and newspapers, we look at the world through the eyes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

And so let's go back, as much as possible, to the good old days when there was one *sefer* and we'll see how to look at the world through the eyes of that one *sefer*. That's a good thing to think about when you're dancing on Simchas Torah. We're dancing with only one sefer because there's nobody else that can tell us anything. **מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת**! This is the only truth! Outside of that one book, you'll look through the eyes of writers and you'll get a crippled picture of the universe. Just the Toras Hashem, that's our one source of information. That's the happiness of the day!

Parsha Points to Ponder by Oizer Alport

In what case would one not be required to bring out another Sefer Torah after an invalidating mistake was found in the Sefer Torah being read, even if the error was located in the first three pesukim of the reading? (China V'chisda)

The sefer China V'chisda (Kesubos 7) writes that if a mistake is found in the Sefer Torah from which the Torah reading for Chosson Bereishis is being read, even if it is located in the first three verses, there is no need to bring out an additional Sefer Torah to complete the reading.

The reason for this unusual ruling is that the reading of Chosson Bereishis is not legally required and is only a custom; as such, once it has been begun, the custom has been fulfilled, and the laws governing the traditional Torah reading do not apply.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

The Holocaust and Hakafos Shniyos



In October 1942 at the end of Simchas Torah in Tel Aviv, **R' Yitzchak Yedidya Frankel, the father-in-law of R' Yisrael Meir Lau**, removed a Sefer Torah from the *Aron*, and addressed his congregants.

He spoke of the dire situation in war-torn Europe, particularly Poland, where communication had ceased (no telephones, telegraphs or mail). Entire Jewish communities were cut off, and their fate was unknown.

"They should be beginning their Simchas Torah celebrations. (Outside of Eretz Yisrael, Simchas Torah is celebrated the day after Shemini Atzeres while in Eretz Yisrael it's observed a single day.) But we do not know whether the Jews are allowed to enter their shuls and perform the traditional processions of holding the Sifrei Torah. All Jews are responsible for one another. Let us act and perform processions on their behalf, at least symbolically."

R' Frankel then took the Sifrei Torah, sang songs, danced and completed a second night of hakafos on behalf of European Jewry suffering the horrors of the Holocaust. This was how R' Frankel initiated the tradition of hakafos shniyos in Eretz Yisrael, a second round of dancing with the Torah scrolls, held on Motzai Simchas Torah.

Sefarim Out, Candle In!

The Yalkut Yitzchak cites the Minhag to empty out all the Sefarim from the Aron ha'Kodesh on Hosha'ana Rabah and on Simchas Torah, adding that one then places a candle in the Aron ha'Kodesh (we do not do this nowadays because of the fire-hazard involved).

And he attributes this Minhag to the Pasuk in Mishlei 6:23 **כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אוֹר**. To teach us that the Mitzvos illuminate us in all our ways, and that from the Torah there emerges light for all of Yisrael.

A Custom by Rabbi Shimshon Pinkus



It is a mistake to think that on Simchas Torah and Shemini Atzeres, as long as we dance with the Torah and celebrate, we can also allow ourselves to unwind a little, *davening* with less *kavanah* and letting up a bit on the proper spirit of *avodas Hashem*.

Just the opposite is the truth. Simchas Torah is the most awesome day of the *Yamim Nora'im*. Rosh Hashanah and *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* and Yom Kippur are awesome, and Sukkos is the preparation to the most awesome day of all, Shemini Atzeres. This is when we are so connected to *Hashem* and so joyful over our relationship with Him that we jump and dance out of love of Torah and happiness over *avodas Hashem*.

It says in the **Zohar** that whatever we ask *Hashem* on this day is granted. This is compared to a king who freely grants the requests of his subjects on the day when he is overflowing with joy.

For this reason, we need to put extra special energy into our *davening* on this awesome day and rejoice greatly over the Torah

with a joy of *kedushah* that is unsullied by light-headedness and wild behavior.

If we do so, the *kedushah* of the *Yamim Nora'im* will keep going throughout the coming year, and bring us pure *avodas Hashem*, as well as life and peace and all the *berachos*.

One Simchas Torah, as the Shul began the song "Moshe Emess" and many began jumping up and down, a Yid approached Rav Pinkus and asked him, "What happened? Why are they jumping up and down?"

Rav Pinkus responded: "Seemingly, something is burning within them. If you would drink a cup full of burning coals, would you not jump up and down? - These Yidden have been learning Toras emess all year round and now the Torah is burning from deep within them, how can they not jump?

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

It is an accepted custom that after picking up a Sefer which has fallen to the floor, one honors it with a kiss. **Rav Avraham HaKohein Pam zt"l** would point out that there is an even better custom, and that is to learn from the Sefer for a minute or two, or say a Pasuk or two from inside it. This is surely a higher level of honor than giving it a mere kiss.

Rav Pam would use this lesson as an analogy to explain how one should view Simchas Torah. First, we express our love for the Torah by dancing with it and kissing it. However, when the Hakafos have ended and the Yom Tov has gone by, we must take that expression of love that we showed the Torah and turn it towards a renewed dedication to learning Torah!

מצוות צריכות כוונה

- **שמחת תורה**

When dancing and rejoicing with the **תורה** on **שמחת תורה**, one should have in mind to be **מקיים** the **מצוה** of **אהבת התורה**.

הריני מכוין לקיים מצות אהבת התורה כאשר צוה השם

One should also have in mind the mitzvah of **כבוד התורה**.

הריני מכוין לקיים מצות כבוד התורה כאשר צוה השם

- **חסד עם בניו**

When involving one's children on Simchas Torah – dancing with them and holding the little ones – one should have in mind:

הריני מכוין לקיים מצות חסד כאשר צוה השם

- **אַחִיזָה בְיַד חֲבֵרו**

When one holds his friend's hand while dancing on Simchas Torah, it is a demonstration of ahavas re'im, love for one's friend. This is a fulfillment of the mitzvah of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ**. One should therefore take a moment to have in mind:

הריני מכוין לקיים מצות וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ כאשר ציוה השם

CONGREGATION ISRAEL OF SPRINGFIELD

Rabbi's Message

The culmination of the Days of Awe and Z'man Simchasainu is a day of incredible joy and merriment, but what exactly are we celebrating?

The obvious answer is that on *Simchas Torah* we celebrate the completion of the annual cycle of Torah reading. We started with *Bereishis* a year ago, and we have finally come to a close with the reading of *V'Zos HaBracha*. We honor that accomplishment.

The *Chidushei HaRim* (*founder of the Gerrer Chasidic Dynasty*) offers a different perspective of the rejoicing on this distinctive

day. He would tell his students that on *Simchas Torah* we do not look back at the past, but instead, we dance for the future.

This year, with its cycle of Torah reading and study, has gone. Did we utilize the opportunities it presented for spiritual growth and inspiration? For the answers to, and issues raised by these questions, we have already traversed the landscape of the *Yomim Noraim*. These are not our concerns on *Simchas Torah*. On this day we rejoice with the Torah by looking forward to the meaningful relationship that we will develop with it during the next year.

According to the *Chidushei HaRim* this is the reason why we celebrate on *Simchas Torah*: we are excited and overjoyed by the potential and promise of the new year.

Simcha for All the Torah We Plan to Learn – No Limits

In a *ma'amer* on Simchas Torah (*Pachad Yitzchak, Ma'amer 57*), **Rav Hutner** relates an incident concerning the **Chiddushei HaRim**. Two students of the *Chiddushei HaRim*, were dancing on Simchas Torah. The *Chiddushei HaRim* commented that one of them would tire before the other. As they continued to dance, his prediction proved accurate, and one tired well before the other. His *talmidim* asked him how he had known.

He answered that the dancer who tired first is in fact a much more learned *talmid chocham*. He was dancing as a celebration of all the Torah he has learned this past year. Every *masechta* he had completed gave him tremendous joy, and he danced to celebrate these achievements. But what he already learned is finite, and therefore the dancing will ultimately come to an end.

The second dancer, however, is dancing to celebrate his new aspiration and longing to learn more in the coming year. He is dancing for the Torah he plans to learn in the coming year. Torah that is yet

to be learned knows no boundaries – it is infinite – and therefore the dancing, too, has no boundaries or limits.



📖 The Guardians – bringing Jewish history to life!

📜 The Forgotten Honor of Women in the Synagogue! 👑📖

Over 600 years ago, in Italy, an ancient siddur recorded an intriguing synagogue custom, one that honored women in a way rarely seen today.

📖 In this 14th-century manuscript, the wife of a Chassan Torah or Chassan Bereishis wasn't just a silent observer, she was given a formal title: "Kallas Torah" and "Kallas Bereishis" (Bride of the Torah)!

👑 These women sat in the front row of the women's section and were escorted in a festive procession to and from the synagogue, where they honored those accompanying them with delicacies - a fascinating glimpse into the dignity given to women in Italian Jewish communities centuries ago.

💡 This rare siddur doesn't just preserve prayers—it preserves forgotten traditions!

🕯️ **A 600-Year-Old Siddur -A Hidden Clue:**

A miniature Ashkenazic siddur, written circa late 1400s, includes a rare dedication to Liphait bat R' Asher HaLevi, wife of Rabbi Yaakov ben Yekutiel HaKohen, a respected figure from a prominent family. Her name appears in the reshus for the Chassan Bereishis, a remarkable hint that women were given formal honor as Kallas Torah and Kallas Bereishis.

📜 **A Custom Remembered:**

This unique siddur reflects a fascinating practice that also appears in other sources from Ashkenazic and Italian communities. As Avraham Yaari notes in "Toldot Chag Simchat Torah" (p.136), these "brides of the Torah" were honored with a place of distinction in the women's section and celebrated with processions and festive gatherings.



וכבר ראינו לעיל, שבווירמייזא במאה השבע־עשרה היו מוליכין ביום שמחת־תורה, לאחר סעודת שחרית וקודם מנחה, את חתני־התורה יחד עם נשותיהם לבית־החתנות של הקהילה, והשמש היה מכריז על כך ברחוב היהודים "בזה הלשון: חתן וכלה אונטיר דז ברייט־הוייז ווירן! (בואו להוליך חתן וכלה לבית־החתנות!) ואז חתן־תורה ואוהביו וקרוביו, וגם חתן־בראשית ואוהביו וקרוביו באין תחת הברייט־הויז עם נשי חתן־תורה ובראשית . . ." [86].

בווירמייזא, כבקהילות רבות אחרות באשכנז, נהגו למכור מצוות כל השנה במכירה פומבית בליל שמחת־תורה בין מנחה לערבית (ועל כך בפרוטרוט להלן בפרק כ"ד). אולם בווירמייזא נהגו עוד שהנשים מכרו אז במכירה מיוחדת את המצוות המסורות לנשים, ובראשן עמדו נשי חתן־תורה וחתן־בראשית. שמש הקהילה ר' יוסף יוזפא הלוי (נפטר בשנת תל"ג, 1673) מתאר את המנהג כך:

"מנהג נשים בין מנחה למעריב הנ"ל [בליל שמחת־תורה] באים במלבושיהן היקרים והנאים הטובים שיש להם, ובאים בחצר החיצון של בית־הכנסת לפני פתח החיצון של בית־הכנסת דנשים, ורוב הנשים, בפרט נשים בחורות, מחברות יד ליד, ובראשן נשי חתן־תורה וחתן־בראשית, והולכין עיגול סביב סביב ומשוררין יגדל וזמירות שרגילין לשורר לכבוד חתן וכלה, והכל לכבוד התורה, ואח"כ הולכין לבית־הכנסת שלהן, ושם נער אחד קורא ומכריז המצוות של נשים ומוכרן. ואילו הן: כיבוד ב"ה [טאטוא בית־הכנסת], תלוקת ווימפלש [חגורות ספרי־התורה] לקפלן, לעשות פתילות להדלקה, ולשאוב מים לנטילת ידים בחצר בית הכנסת של אנשים ונשים. ודמי מצוות ההמה [של הגברים] באין ליד הג"ץ [הגבאי צדקה], רק הנשים מחזיקות דמיהן לעצמן, ועושין שתי נשים צדקניות לגבאות עליהן, והמה קונין בהם שעוה ומדליקין נרות בב"ה דנשים כל השנה כולם" [87].

בחברון היו נשי חתני־התורה יושבות בשמחת־תורה בשורה הראשונה של עזרת־הנשים [88], משום כבוד וגם כדי שתוכלנה לזרוק ממתקים על ראשי בעליהן בעלותם לתורה. אבל לא מצינו בין יהודי ארצות־המזרח תואר "כלה" לנשי חתני־התורה.

וכשם שכיבדו את חתני־התורה בכל מיני כיבודים, שהיו תמיד מעין הכיבודים שנהגו בחתן־נשואין תוך שבעה לחופתו, כך נהגו כבוד מיוחד בנשי חתני התורה, שנקראו בקצת קהילות בתואר "כלה תורה" או "כלה בראשית", ואף הכיבודים הללו היו מעין מה שנהגו בכלת־נשואין תוך שבעה לחופתה.

בכמה קהילות באיטליה היו נוהגים שנשים רבות מלוות את "כלה תורה" ו"כלה בראשית" לבית־הכנסת בשמחת־תורה בתהלוכה, ואף היו מלוות אותן בחזירתן מבית־הכנסת לביתן, ובבית היו ה"כלות" מכבדות את בנות־לויתן בכל מיני מעדנים. בתקנות קהילת ריג'יו־אמיליה משנת תקכ"א (1760) נגד הבזבוז והמותרות נקבע, שביום שמחת־תורה מותר לנשים ללוות את "כלה תורה" ו"כלה בראשית" (כך בגוף התקנות) לבית־הכנסת בכל מספר שהוא, אבל בחזירתן מבית־הכנסת לביתן יוגבל מספר הנשים המלוות לשתים בלבד, ואף אותן אין לכבד בבית אלא בממתקים

The Weekly Vort - True Simchas Ha'torah

Aryeh, a *talmid* in Lakewood, once passed the office of **R' Aharon Kotler**, and saw him dancing—all alone! He watched in amazement until R' Aharon noticed him and asked him to call Boruch, one of the yeshivah's outstanding *talmidim*, to the office. R' Aharon spoke privately with Boruch for some time.

Afterwards, Aryeh asked Boruch why the Rosh Yeshivah had summoned him. Boruch explained, "For more than twenty years, the Rosh Yeshivah has strained himself to understand a comment of the Vilna Gaon on Choshen Mishpat. Today, he finally arrived at what he is certain is the correct explanation. That is why the Rosh Yeshivah danced. He summoned me to share the explanation he had been *me'chadesh*." (For Love of Torah)



On Hoshana Rabba we make seven hakafos with the lulav. When we finish them, we don't add an extra hakafah. We finished the mitzvah and that's it. - But when we make hakafos with a Sefer Torah, there is no such thing as "we finished the mitzvah and that's it." We make seven hakafos, and again and again and again. ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus zt"l.

Reb Chaim Volozhin, relates that the Arizal (his Rebbe) would dance hakafos at Ma'ariv, Shacharis, Musaf, Mincha, and even on Motzei chag. - And, if on his way home he would see another shul doing hakafos, he would stop to join them.

זכרו תורת משה
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Dancing Before the Nazis



Yechezkel Gewertzstone* flew to Eretz Yisrael for Yom Tov of Sukkos, overjoyed at the thought of spending Simchas Torah in the presence of his Rebbe. Each passing day of Sukkos filled him with greater anticipation of the dancing, the singing, and the electrifying *kedushah* of his Rebbe's *beis midrash*. It was what he lived for.

But Hashem had other plans. Shortly before Simchas Torah, Yechezkel fell ill. His plans, his dreams, and his joy all collapsed in a moment. While that alone was painful, what tormented him even more was knowing where he would now be spending Simchas Torah: in the small local *shul* of the *moshav* where he was staying. The place was lifeless — no fire, no *simchah*. For Yechezkel, it was as though his world had turned upside-down.

And indeed, that night, the *hakafos* were subdued — routine, almost dreary. That is, until one man changed everything.

An elderly Jew suddenly came into shul, leapt into the center of the circle, and began to dance. His feet barely touched the ground, and his eyes burned with light. Though well into his seventies, he moved like a young man of twenty, radiating *ruach* and *chiyus*. Before long,

his energy had swept through the entire *tzibbur*, lifting them higher and higher.

Yechezkel was transfixed. Who was this man?

When the *hakafos* ended, he couldn't contain himself. He approached the dancer, his voice trembling with curiosity.

"Tell me," he said, "where do you get such strength, such *simchah*? It's something deeper…"

The man smiled softly. "Ah," he said. "You want to know? Then listen."

The man paused, his eyes distant.

"As a child," he began, "I lived through the war. It was Simchas Torah, 1940, in Łódź. I was on my way to shul for davening and *hakafos*. In the street, I saw a Nazi dragging a Yid by his collar. I couldn't look away. Something inside me broke. I ran to him and overpowered him."

He closed his eyes. "The Nazi, humiliated, turned to me and said, 'Your end has come.' I'd received a death sentence for a capital crime."

The old man's voice dropped to a whisper. "The Nazi raised his revolver…then paused. 'One minute,' he said. 'If I kill you, I'll have to bury you. And I don't want to waste the effort. Dig your own grave. When it's ready, I'll pull the trigger.'"

The man's eyes glistened as he continued. "I took the shovel. I dug a few inches, and then I stopped. I thought to myself, '*These are my final moments in this world. Should I waste them digging a hole, or should I dance my last hakafos before my Creator?*'

"So I dropped the shovel…and I danced."

His voice shook. "I danced in front of that Nazi — my feet flying, my soul on fire. I danced as though Heaven itself was watching. The Nazi was furious. He screamed, cursed, threatened — but I couldn't stop. I was already in another world."

"When he finally dragged me away, he said, 'You think you're free because I didn't shoot you right away? I'll make your punishment worse.' He took my name and address, and he handed it to the commander."

The man's voice softened again. "But Hashem, in His infinite mercy, arranged that my case was lost in their files. The Nazis never came for me. And that year, I had my Simchas Torah — not in a *shul*, not with a *Rebbe*, but in a ditch before a Nazi with a gun."

He smiled at Yechezkel. "So, my friend, tell me — after you've danced before death itself, after you've learned that *simchah* is stronger than fear, after you've seen what it means to be truly alive — is it any wonder," his eyes twinkled, "that even seventy years later, I'm still dancing?!"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A traveler once stopped at an inn to rest up from his journey. He went to the dining room and ordered a large and expensive meal, but when the innkeeper presented him with the bill, the traveler apologized, and said that he was unable to pay it because he did not have any money.

The innkeeper threatened him, and said that if the bill is not paid, he is calling the police to have the man arrested. The guest told the innkeeper, "Calling the police will not get you paid, because I still will not have any money to give you. Instead, I will make a deal with you. I am a professional dancer. Allow me to put on a performance, and you will charge people to come and see me. That will more than cover the cost of my meal!"

The Kalever Rebbe explained with this Mashal that we are just like this traveler. We come to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur asking Hashem for the best of everything, and we promised to do Teshuvah and correct our ways. However, as Simchas Torah approaches, the

last day of Yom Tov, we find that we are unable to keep our promises, due to our shortcomings. Instead, we offer to dance for Hashem and rejoice with His Torah! The lively dancing actually inspires us to try and keep our promises to improve ourselves to do proper Teshuvah!

By dancing with Hashem's Torah, we rededicate ourselves to carry out Hashem's will, and do only more and more Mitzvos!



Torah Gems

שישו ושמחו בשמחת התורה כי היא לנו עז ואורה

Simchas Torah is a Simchah for every Jew, provided that the Torah is as happy with us as we are with it, and we rightfully identify with it.

R' Avraham J. Twerski relates that one time at the Simchas Torah celebration, with people singing and dancing joyously with the Torah, a person who had virtually no contact with Torah study, was particularly lively. Someone couldn't resist and asked him, "Do you have any idea what is contained in that Torah with which you are dancing? In what way does the celebration of the Torah concern you?"

The man's answer was enlightening. "Suppose my brother was marrying off his child. Would I not rejoice in my brother's simcha, even though it's not my actual child who is getting married?"

"I know nothing of the Torah," continued the man emotionally, "but the Torah scholars are my brothers - and their simcha is my simcha!"

Explains R' Twerski, this man is so right. The simcha of one Jew with the Torah should be a simcha for all Jews. In this respect especially, we are all one family.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Simchas Torah

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

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

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt'l said in his father's name, Rebbe Shalom of Belz zt'l, "I can't tell you what the hakafos are about. But I can tell you this: All tefillos that didn't go up the entire year, go up during the hakafos."

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

R' Yonason Eibeschutz ZT"L would say:

"An ignoramus who buys Choson Torah on Simchas Torah, is indeed extremely pious. Imagine, he is a Choson - but he hasn't seen his kallah for the entire past year!"

R' Eliyohu Lopian ZT"L would say:

"The joy in life which dedicated Torah study brings with it, cannot be conveyed in mere words. It must be experienced!"

Quickly to the Beginning - Rabbi Moshe Dov Heber

If you look carefully at the *Reshus l'Chassan Torah* and the *Reshus l'Chassan Bereishis*, recited when we call up those honored with these special *aliyos* on Simchas Torah, you may notice a subtle but striking difference between them.

At the conclusion of *Parshas V'Zos HaBracha*, we call out, "*Amod, amod, amod, Reb Ploni ben Ploni, Chassan Torah*—Stand, stand, stand, Reb so-and-so the son of so-and-so, the Groom of Torah." But when we are about to begin *Parshas Bereishis*, the language changes: "***Maher**, amod, amod, Reb Ploni ben Ploni, Chassan Bereishis*—***Quickly**, stand, stand, Reb so-and-so the son of so-and-so, the Groom of Bereishis.*"

Noticeably, there is an added word—quickly. Why the sudden urgency? Why do we tell the *Chassan Bereishis* to hurry, when no such language appears in the call for the *Chassan Torah*?

I have heard an explanation offered in the name of various *mefarshim* that contains a beautiful insight into the Jewish relationship with Torah.

When the *Chassan Torah* is called to the Torah, the congregation is still in the midst of hearing the Torah reading. We are still learning, still listening, and still immersed in *Krias HaTorah*. And so we call upon the *oleh* who will complete the Torah. But the moment before *Chassan Bereishis* is different. *V'Zos HaBracha* has just ended and the Torah has been completed. But *Bereishis* has not yet begun. For one brief moment, *Klal Yisrael* stands between the end and the beginning. We have finished the Torah, but we have not yet begun it again.

And such a moment cannot be allowed to linger. *Maher!* Quickly! Call up the *Chassan Bereishis*. Begin again. *Klal Yisrael* cannot remain, even symbolically, in a state in which we have finished learning Torah. The instant we reach the end, we must already be moving toward the

beginning. There can be no prolonged interruption between ending the Torah and beginning it again.

Perhaps this also explains a beautiful practice found at many public *siyumei haShas*. One person is honored with completing *Maseches Niddah*, the final *masechta* in Shas, and immediately afterward another is honored with beginning *Maseches Berachos*. Because for *Klal Yisrael*, Torah is never truly "finished." We may complete a *Parsha* or we may complete a *masechta*. We may even complete the entire Torah or the entire Shas. But we are never finished learning.

The last word of Torah is never simply an ending. It is an invitation to begin again.

The Song With a Pshat - Rabbi Eliezer Abish

There are different kinds of songs that we sing when we dance. There are songs with words, where singing the words again and again allows their message to penetrate more deeply. And then there are *niggunim* without words, which can sometimes draw people into the dancing in an entirely different way. But there is something particularly powerful about a song whose words and melody come together, because then we are not merely singing. We are internalizing an idea.

Many years ago, when the **Ribnitzer Rebbe *zt"l*** was living in Sea Gate, New York, the **Skulener Rebbe *zt"l***, author of *Noam Eliezer*, came there for a two-week vacation. The two Rebbes had been close friends for many years, and when the Ribnitzer Rebbe heard that the Skulener Rebbe was nearby, he decided to visit him. Word quickly spread that the Ribnitzer Rebbe was going to see the Skulener Rebbe, and naturally, a group of people came along.

When the Ribnitzer Rebbe entered, the Skulener Rebbe greeted him warmly. "Ah, Chaim Zanvil! What a *kavod* that you came. I prepared a beautiful *kibbud* for you." The Ribnitzer Rebbe looked around. He

looked at the table. There was no cake, no *l'chaim*, nothing to eat or drink. He turned to the Skulener Rebbe as if to say, "Where exactly is this *kibbud* you prepared?" The Skulener Rebbe smiled and explained, "Chaim Zanvil, when I said that I prepared a *kibbud* for you, I meant that I prepared a *niggun* for you. I composed a song."

The Skulener Rebbe then began singing his famous *niggun* to the words, "*Zechor davar l'avdecha, al asher yichaltani*—Remember Your word to Your servant, through which You gave me hope" (*Tehillim* 119:49). He sang the melody several times with great feeling. When he finished, the Ribnitzer Rebbe looked at him and asked, "Leizer Zusha, you composed this song yourself?" "Yes," replied the Skulener Rebbe. The Ribnitzer Rebbe looked at him and asked, "Leizer Zusha, you have nothing better to do with your time than compose songs?"

The Skulener Rebbe looked back at his old friend and said, "Chaim Zanvil, we are not composing songs. We are saying a *pshat*." And once again he began singing, "*Zechor davar l'avdecha, al asher yichaltani*," repeating the *niggun* several more times. When he finished, the Ribnitzer Rebbe said, "The *niggun* is beautiful. But the *pshat* I still don't understand."

So the Skulener Rebbe explained. "Today's generation is weak. It is difficult to inspire the younger generation to continue faithfully along the path of Torah. They hear that they have to keep this *mitzvah* and that *mitzvah*, observe every detail, maintain the traditions of their parents and grandparents, and live according to the demands of Torah. And sometimes they look at all of it and say, 'Why so much? Why every detail? Why all these restrictions? Isn't it too much pressure?"

"That," explained the Skulener Rebbe, "is the *pshat* in the *niggun*." He began singing the words from Tehillim: "*Zedim helitzuni ad me'od*—The arrogant ones mock me exceedingly" (ibid. v.51). They make *leitzanus*. They look at the Torah Jew and say, "So much? You have to keep every last *mitzvah*? Every last detail? Why can't you relax a little? Why does everything have to be so serious?" But then

comes our answer: "*MiTorascha lo natisi*—From Your Torah I have not turned away." We are not being forced to remain with the Torah. We want the Torah! We love the Torah! We have no desire to move away from it.

The Skulener Rebbe began singing the *niggun* again, now with its meaning fully revealed. This time, when he finished, the Ribnitzer Rebbe looked at him and said, "Ah! A beautiful *niggun* — and a beautiful *pshat*." And the Ribnitzer Rebbe stood up and began singing together with the Skulener Rebbe.

Two weeks later, a distraught father came to the Ribnitzer Rebbe. He was worried about his son, who seemed to be drifting away from the proper path. He saw the kinds of books his son was beginning to read and other changes that deeply concerned him. "Rebbe," he asked, "what should I do?"

The Ribnitzer Rebbe told him, "Reb Leizer Zusha said a beautiful *pshat* in the *niggun* of *Zechor Davar*. Go home. Don't speak to your son about anything. Just sing Reb Leizer Zusha's *niggun*."

The father followed the Rebbe's instructions. He went home and began singing the *niggun*, again and again. His son could not understand what his father wanted from him or why he kept singing the same song. But the father continued. And after several weeks, he began to notice a significant change in his son. He returned to the Ribnitzer Rebbe and told him what had happened.

Sometimes when we sing a song, we are doing far more than singing a melody. We are saying a *pshat*. We are taking an idea that might otherwise remain in the mind and allowing it to enter the heart. When we sing "*MiTorascha lo natisi,*" again and again, we are declaring something about who we are: "I will not turn away from Your Torah." Your Torah is mine, and I do not want to leave it.

That is something to remember as we approach Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. When we sing and dance with the Torah, the songs are not merely the background music to the celebration. The songs

themselves can be Torah. The *niggun* can itself be a *pshat*. And when we sing those words with enough feeling, again and again, they can penetrate deeply enough that long after the dancing has ended, the message will still be singing inside of us… *"MiTorascha lo natisi."*

The Joy Within Us - Dayan Yehoshua Posen



Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro *zt"l* explains that during this Yom Tov season, we experience four different levels of *simchah*, each one rising higher than the one before it. The first is the *simchah* that applies to every one of the *Shalosh Regalim*: *"V'samachta b'chagecha*—You shall rejoice on your festival" (*Devarim* 16:14). It is a *mitzvah* to rejoice on Yom Tov, and the Torah gives us concrete ways through which that *simchah* is expressed and experienced.

But on Sukkos, we encounter another dimension. The Torah tells us, *"U'semachtem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem*—You shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d" (*Vayikra* 23:40). This is no longer simply the *simchah* of Yom Tov. It is *simchah lifnei Hashem*, the extraordinary experience of rejoicing in the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This was expressed with particular intensity through the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah*, about which Chazal say that one who never witnessed its celebration never truly witnessed *simchah* (*Sukkah* 51a).

Then comes Shemini Atzeres, and we rise to an even higher level. Chazal describe Hakadosh Baruch Hu as saying to *Klal Yisrael*, *"Kasheh alai preidaschem*—Your departure is difficult for Me" (Rashi, *Bamidbar* 29:36). The nations have departed and the many

korbanos of Sukkos have been completed. Now there is only Hakadosh Baruch Hu and *Klal Yisrael*. We are no longer merely rejoicing before Hashem. On Shemini Atzeres, we rejoice with Hashem.

But there is still one level higher. And we might wonder: what could possibly be greater than rejoicing with Hashem Himself?

The answer is reflected in the Pasuk (Bamidbar 23:21): "Hashem his G-d is with him, and the acclamation of the King is within him." The Vilna Gaon explains that this refers to the joy over Torah, which Hashem has placed within us, as we say in the *beracha* after an *aliyah*, "*V'chayei olam nata b'sochenu*— He planted eternal life within us." Hashem did not merely give us a Torah to study or a Torah to hold. He planted His Torah *within us*. Torah becomes part of the Jew himself. And when a person experiences the *simchah* of Torah not merely as something standing before him, and not merely as something he is holding in his arms, but as something planted within his very being, that represents an even higher level of *simchah*.

And so, there we have it. The progression which moves ever closer, from the *simchah* of the festival to the *simchah* before Hashem to then the *simchah* with Hashem, until ultimately the *simchah* of carrying His Torah inside ourselves.

With Much Shevach And Thanks To Hashem!



Dear Readers, I cite from the Pele Yoetz: 20 Tishrei (1827)

"Behold, he who has been graced by Heaven with knowledge, and his portion has been placed among those who study in the bais medrash, how great it be for him to write down whatever novel Torah thoughts that Hashem has graciously allowed him to bring to light, whether it be something small or something more significant. He must not be lax in doing this! For it has already been said (Sefer Chassidim 530) that a person is destined to give a reckoning in Heaven for not compiling in a sefer all the novel Torah thoughts that have been revealed to him by Heaven."

The Pele Yoetz continues with the notion that one who puts his chiddushim to paper is regarded as if he has brought korbanos. Furthermore, through the vehicle of the written word, he is able to disseminate Torah to multitudes that will be read and studied long after he is no longer among the living.

Last, he should never think that his words will be in vain, because one day, someone, even in a distant land, will pick it up and be inspired. It is a loss for Klal Yisrael when Torah wisdom, hard-earned clarity, or stirring inspiration remains sealed in the heart or buried in notebooks. If something can be shared, if another Yid may benefit from one's chiddush, it is incumbent upon him to see to it that he enriches Jewish life.

The goal of Torah Treats has always been to bring the beauty and depth of Torah to the largest possible audience, and to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought. I hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics -"לְהַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וּלְהַאְדִּירָהּ"

Baruch Hashem, this objective has borne fruit.

I offer heartfelt gratitude to the רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם for the abundance of siyata d'Shmaya He has bestowed upon me and enabling me to complete this monumental project.



I have now completed my lockdown project of Torah Treats – Oisfay Yitzchok. I hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed compiling it.

B'Ezras Hashem, I will edit and make available to all subscribers the whole finished file as soon as I can. I will e-mail you all IYH with links/zip drive/web site.

I have attempted to reproduce these 'geshmacke vertlech' to the best of my ability. Any perceived inconsistency is the result of my efforts to transcribe the shiurim and should not be attributed to the speakers. I apologise for any typos poor grammar or repeated material.

Much Hakaros Hatov goes to Rabbi Avigdor Frankenhuis for getting me started on this journey and encouraging me all along.

I would like to thank my son-in-law Shimshon Dresdner for sponsoring this whole project from beginning to end, and for all his encouragement.

Many thanks go to Rabbi Yehoshua Sofer (a huge powerhouse of Torah & Chesed) for introducing me to his Leil Shishi programme,

and in particular to Rabbi Yechiel Emmanuel, who has changed my life forever, for the better.

I would also like to thank Rabbi Morderchai Litwin and Rosh Hayeshiva Rabbi Yosef Brandeiss who for years encouraged me to write down my divrei Torah (with sources), and last but by no means least, all those people who I have accosted on the street to tell them a vort.

Finally – and most importantly I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dear wife, Sorele שתחי׳ה for allowing me the time (a lot of it) and encouraging me at every stage in this monumental project. The inclusion of stories was her idea. She has been a source of strength, wisdom, and unwavering support throughout our marriage. The nachas we enjoy today is a direct result of her tireless devotion and selfless efforts. She should be bentched with all the goodness that The Ribono Shel Olam has at His disposal.

May Hashem grant us continued good health and abundant nachas

May we receive much Chizuk in these turbulent times, and may we see many Brachos and Yeshuos come quickly to Klal Yisroel! May Hashem bring the final Geulah now and end this long, difficult Galus, and may we be able to serve Him again with Kedushah and Taharah in the third Bais HaMikdash!!! Bimheiro v'yomeinu. – Yitzchok.










אַשְׁרֵי הָעָם
יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה,
ה' בְּאוֹר פָּנֶיךָ
יְהַלֵּכוּן
תהלים פט:טז