

# Succos

## SELF-CENTERED

## *Rav Pam on the Festivals* *by Rabbi Sholom Smith*

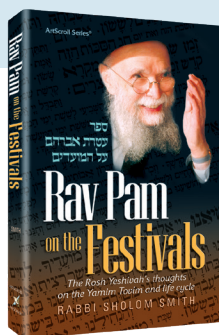
*Leave the permanent dwelling and settle  
in a temporary dwelling (Succah 2a).*

One of the most basic requirements of a *succah* is that its walls not be higher than twenty *amos* (about thirty-five to forty feet). The *Mishnah Berurah* (633:3) explains that the reason for this disqualification is that *Chazal* determined that until this height, even walls made from reeds would be able to stand on their own. Walls higher than this would, like permanent housing, require additional supports, thickness and foundations. Such construction could not be considered a “temporary dwelling,” and would be invalid for use as a *succah*. The thickness of walls less than twenty *amos* high is of no concern, because theoretically the walls could have been built as a “temporary dwelling” without supports.

There is much symbolism in the requirement for a *succah* to be a temporary dwelling. *Succos* follows the forty-day period of *teshuvah* that begins on *Rosh Chodesh Elul* and ends with the conclusion of *Yom Kippur*. It is an opportune time to absorb a fundamental lesson of the *succah* — to consider one's time on this earth as a temporary dwelling. Although a person needs a place to live, clothing to wear and food to eat, this should not be the focus of his existence. He should realize that this world is a temporary dwelling, a vestibule before the World to Come (*Pirkei Avos* 4:21). This will motivate him to spend his limited time on this earth pursuing spiritual goals and attainments.

There is another way to explain the words of the Talmud to leave one's permanent dwelling and settle in a temporary dwelling. Occasionally, one meets a person whose entire life revolves around himself. He is constantly thinking about his own needs, desires, pleasures, and so on. His "permanent dwelling" is his

*continued on page 3*



## ARBA MINIM

# FAITH IN CHAZAL

*Ushpizin*

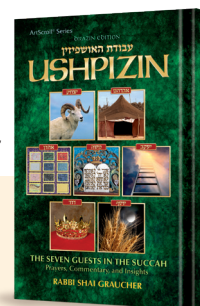
by Rabbi Shai Graucher

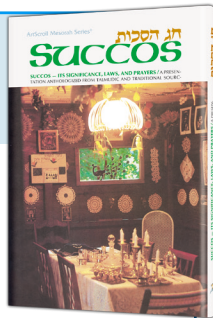
Rav Shlomo Kluger (*Kehillas Yaakov*, *Derush* 56) points out

that the entire *mitzvah* of the *Arba Minim* (Four Species) is not spelled out explicitly in the Chumash itself, but is derived from the Oral Law. We have a *mesorah* (tradition), from generation to generation, as to what the *esrog*, *lulav*, *hadassim*, and *aravos* all are, so on *Succos* we affirm our loyalty and trust in our sages, from *Matan Torah* at Sinai throughout history.

Elaborating on this point, Rav Kluger then quotes a *Midrash* about the *lulav*: There is an allegory that describes two people who vie in a legal battle before the king. Although people were not informed in whose favor the judgment went, they can discover the outcome by looking to see who walks out holding a weapon. Thus, *Klal Yisrael*, along with the nations of the world, face the Divine judgment on the Day of Atonement. We cannot tell which one emerged victorious, so Hashem commanded to “Take (the Four

*continued on page 2*





The *Gemara* (Succah 26a) states that if one is distressed in the *succah* due to conditions such as rain or cold, he is exempt from the *mitzvah* – *mitzta'er patur min ha-succah*.

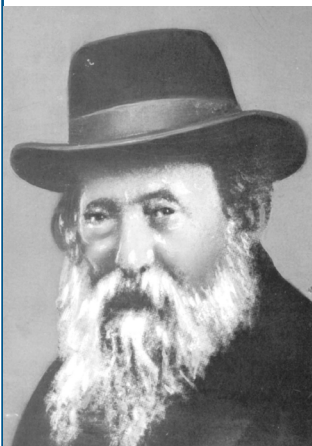
Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski was a frail man whose poor health made it impossible for him to eat in the *succah* in cold weather. Once, he had a guest who, being in good

health, went out to eat in the *succah* on a cold day. To the visitor's surprise, Rav Chaim Ozer, bundled in heavy clothing, came out with his food to join him in the *succah*.

In reply to the guest's insistence that the *gadol hador* not sit in the cold, Rav Chaim Ozer said, "One who is exempt by reason of 'distress' – *mitzta'er* – is released only from the obligation of *succah*, not from other *mitzvos*. Here there is a *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*,

hospitality to guests, and from that I am not exempt."

Thus, notwithstanding the cold, Rav Chaim Ozer ate in the *succah* to fulfill the obligation of hospitality rather than let his guest eat there alone (see Rav Moshe Shternbuch's *Moadim Uzemanim* 88). 📖



Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski

An interesting interpretation of the practice of beating the *aravah*-bundle is given in a responsum by Rav Tzemach Gaon (*Teshuvos Ha-Geonim Shaarei Teshuvah*, 340). The leaves of the willow are shaped like the lips and these twigs have the purpose of atoning for the sins of the lips. We beat them on the earth to symbolize our

**WE ARE CONFIDENT  
THAT NO ONE'S LIPS,  
NOT EVEN THE SATAN'S,  
CAN HARM US.**

resolution that from now on, we will not sin with our lips again, but rather we will "put his mouth to the dust..." (*Eichah* 3:29).

Rav Tzemach cites a second interpretation: During the preceding holidays — *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* — the *Satan* incites God's Attributes of Judgment against *Klal Yisrael*. But now, after we have accumulated many *mitzvos*, we are confident that no one's lips, not even the *Satan's*, can harm us. So we beat the symbolic lips — the willow — to the earth. 📖

## FAITH IN CHAZAL

continued from page 1

Species) for yourselves on the first day (of *Succos*)." You can see from the fact that *Klal Yisrael* emerges from before Hashem holding the *lulav* and *esrog* that the nation emerged victorious (*Midrash Rabbah*, *Vayikra* 30:3).

Rav Kluger explains that taking the *lulav* is not merely the display of a "weapon," but shows our belief in the words of *Chazal* regarding what these four species are. The merit of our faith in *Torah Sheba'al Peh* and our *emunas chachamim* are what allow us to be victorious in

**THE BASIS  
OF ALL OF  
YIDDISHKEIT  
INVOLVES  
NULLIFYING  
OURSELVES TO  
THE WISDOM  
OF THE SAGES.**

judgment.

The *Akeidah* was entirely based on *emunas chachamim* (as Yitzchak Avinu had not heard the command from Hashem, but obeyed his father), and when we follow in this

path, we receive the merit of a good judgment, as symbolized by the *lulav*.

The *Sheim MiShmuel* (end of *Moadim*) wrote a letter to his son-in-law, who had to eat on *Yom Kippur* because he was not well. There he says that the basis of all of *Yiddishkeit* involves nullifying ourselves to the wisdom of the sages, being *mevatel* our *daas* to the *daas* of Torah. Therefore, he encourages his son-in-law not to feel anguish at having to eat, because by eating, he is listening to the *chachamim* who say that one must eat when he is not well. 📖



own mind. From time to time, he may think of other people and even give up some of his own desires to fulfill their needs. This is his “temporary dwelling.” The *Gemara* says that the underlying theme of *Succos*, known as *Zeman Simchaseinu* (“Season of our Rejoicing”), is to leave one’s permanent dwelling and settle in a temporary dwelling. This means that if a person truly desires to attain happiness and satisfaction in life, he must spend more time thinking about the needs of other people and not be self-centered.

By trying to bring *simchah* into the lives of those around him, especially the unfortunate and forsaken, he will bring joy into his own life as well.

The *Midrash* (*Koheles Rabbah* 1:34) says, “A person does not leave this world with even half his desires fulfilled.” This is perhaps an overstatement; many people go through life

without attaining even a tenth of what they want. Life is a continuous string of hardships, disappointments, frustration and misery — if their lives revolve around themselves. However, if a person concentrates on helping others overcome their problems and lightening their “*peckel*,” he himself will feel a sense of joy in his own life.

A depressed woman once called Rav Avrohom Pam for an *eitzah* (advice) for her difficult situation. She had been married for a number of years and was still childless; the medical prognosis seemed hopeless, which was the cause of her depression. Rav Pam suggested that she get involved in *tzorchei tzibbur* (the needs of the community). His reasoning was simple: If she was thinking about herself and her unfortunate predicament throughout the day, it was no wonder that she fell into depression. If she were to occupy her mind and time with helping others, it would give her a sense of satisfaction and purpose that would bring joy into her own embittered life. The woman accepted Rav Pam’s advice and threw herself into volunteering for a number of worthy *tzorchei tzibbur* projects.



Rav Avrohom Pam


In a letter to Rav Pam a few months later, her husband, a distinguished *talmid chacham*, reported that he had seen a dramatic change for the better in his wife’s mood. He noted that Rav Pam’s advice could be found in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Hilchos Tefillah* 93:2,4). In describing how a person should prepare for *tefillah*, the *Shulchan Aruch* says that “*tefillah* should not be recited in a state of frivolity, of light-headedness . . . or anger, but only in a state of *simchah*, such as having said comforting words

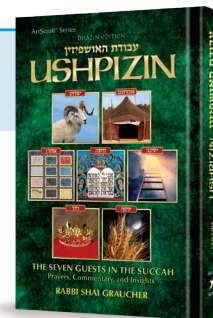
## A JEW SHOULD STRIVE TO EASE THE BURDENS THAT LIE SO HEAVILY UPON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE AROUND HIM.

of Torah. As a prelude to *tefillah*, involvement in communal matters is comparable to studying Torah (which ‘gladdens the heart’; see *Tehillim* 19:9), since it is a joy to a person to be involved with communal matters.”

It is human nature for a person to be self-centered. A baby thinks only of itself and tries to fulfill its desires. It is not in the least concerned that its crying at night will deprive its exhausted, overworked parents of their sleep. As a child develops physically, its mind matures as well, and it is taught to think about others, not only about itself.

Yet, for many people, this trait remains underdeveloped. The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 14a) says that a Jew is required to emulate the ways of his Creator. Hashem created His world in order to bestow kindness on His creations. He obviously considers the continuing existence of the world to be worthwhile, as we say, “In His goodness, He renews daily, uninterrupted, the work of creation” (*Tefillas Shacharis*). Thus, a Jew should strive to ease the burdens that lie so heavily upon the shoulders of those around him.

Helping others is the formula for a life of *simchah*. The theme of *Succos* is that one must leave his permanent dwelling — his own mind, and settle in a temporary dwelling — thinking of the needs of others. In doing so, he will find contentment in his own life and will enjoy a year-round *Zeman Simchaseinu*. 



On the third day of *Succos*, we invite Yaakov Avinu to our *succah*. From Yaakov we learn the attribute of truth and how to deal properly with materialism.

The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 417) writes that all three of the Biblical *moadim* (festivals) correspond to one of the *Avos*. *Succos* corresponds to Yaakov, as seen in the *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 33:17), “And for his cattle he (Yaakov) made *succos* (huts).” The *Tur* continues and says that the days of *Rosh Chodesh* of the twelve months are also called *moadim*, and are each aligned with one of the twelve tribes. The verse that connects Yaakov to *Succos* is as follows (*ibid.*): “Yaakov traveled to *Succos* and built himself a house, and for his cattle he made *succos*; thus he named the place *Succos*.”



one forget his Creator. Therefore, when it says that Yaakov built *succos* for his animals, it is really referring to the animal aspect within a person, as the *sefer Shevilei Emunah* (*Nesiv* 6) writes on the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 12:10), “*Yodei’a tzaddik nefesh behemto* — A righteous person knows the soul of his animal.” A *tzaddik* is able to reign in the animal tendencies within himself, so that he can enjoy the world in good measure but without overindulging.



Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi

**WE MUST REALIZE  
WHAT SHOULD BE  
PRIMARY AND WHAT  
IS SECONDARY.**

The *Bnei Yissaschar* in his *sefer Agra D’Kallah* (*Vayishlach*) wonders what the Torah is telling us here, and he explains that since *Succos* is the time of harvest and joy, one can get too preoccupied with his worldly possessions and finances. Yaakov anticipated this and taught a vital lesson to his children: that material wealth is only temporary, just like a *succah*. We are commanded to dwell in *succos* at this time of the year to emphasize that all we have in this world is fleeting, just as our dwelling in the *succah* is temporary.

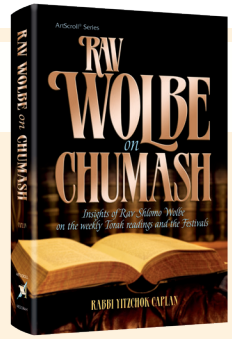
The *Shelah* (*Maseches Succah*, *Ner Mitzvah* §46) writes regarding possessions and material wealth that *Succos* is the harvest time, and therefore one’s house is full of plenty more than at any other time of year. The increase of available food and drink makes a person prone to feelings of haughtiness and self-reliance, which may make

This is what the *pasuk* means when it says about Yaakov “*ulemiknei hu asah succos* — for his cattle he made *succos*.” The word *asah* (made) means to fix something, so the *pasuk* is alluding that Yaakov fixed something for his animals, meaning that he helped his animal instinct stay within its proper boundaries, by building *succos*, by making sure that his material possessions remained a secondary part of his life.

The laws of the *succah* teach this lesson as well, says the *Shelah*. The minimum measurement of a *succah* requires that there be enough room for one person’s head, most of his body, and a table for eating, which add up to a mere seven-by-seven *tefachim*. The lesson we learn from Yaakov making *succos* is that he lived his whole life in a minimal way, as if in a *succah*. He wanted materialism only in order to be able to use it in serving

*continued on page 12*





Chazal tell us (Succah 2a) that a *succah* taller than 20 *amos* is invalid, and one who sits inside it does not fulfill his obligation. The Torah commands us to sit in a *succah*, “So that your generations will know that I caused the *Bnei Yisrael* to reside in *succos* when I took them out of *Mitzrayim*” (Vayikra 23:43). The *Gemara* infers from this that a person can only fulfill his obligation when he knows that he is residing in a *succah*. When the *succah* is higher than 20 *amos*, one’s eyes do not notice the *s’chach* and he therefore does not know that he is sitting in a *succah*.

What does this mean? It is hard to believe that one would not be aware that he is sitting in a *succah* simply because the *s’chach* is outside his field of vision.

What Chazal mean is that even though one knows he is in a *succah*, he is missing the added dimension of awareness afforded by his vision.

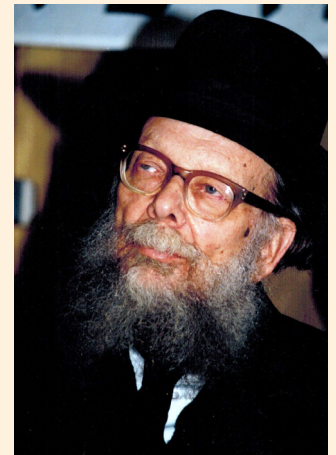
With this in mind, we can explain the following *pasuk*: “And you shall know today and take to your heart that Hashem is the G-d in the Heavens above and on the earth below” (Devarim 4:39). The Torah used similar wording with regard to both the *mitzvah* of *succah* and the obligation to “know” Hashem, and Chazal revealed to us that “knowing” refers to a level of certainty achieved with the aid of one’s physical senses. If so, one’s level of knowledge that there is a G-d must parallel the level of knowledge needed to fulfill one’s obligation of *succah*. A person is therefore required to attain an awareness of Hashem that is tangible. The *baalei mussar* refer to this as *emunah chushis*.

The *mitzvah* of *emunah* requires even more than this, however. While it is incumbent even upon gentiles to know that there is a G-d — as the Torah tells us regard-

ing the Egyptians (Shemos 14:4), “And *Mitzrayim* will know that I am Hashem” — only the *Bnei Yisrael* are expected to have *emunah*.

*Emunah* is the ability to address Hashem directly: “Blessed are You, Hashem.” It is the ability to believe that when one *davens*, Hashem literally stands opposite him and hears every single word he utters. It is the ability to recognize Hashem in all of a person’s bodily func-

**IT IS THE  
ABILITY TO  
ACKNOWLEDGE  
THAT WE ARE  
COMPLETELY  
SURROUNDED  
BY HASHEM AT  
ALL TIMES.**



Rav Shlomo Wolbe

tions, in all of nature, and in all of history. It is the ability to acknowledge that we are completely surrounded by Hashem at all times.

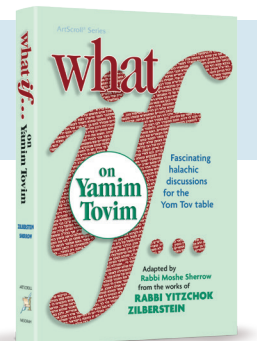
*Succos* affords us an opportunity to contemplate these ideas. The Vilna Gaon said that the *mitzvah* of *succah* is unique in that it totally envelops a person. The *succah*, which symbolizes Hashem’s Clouds of Glory, reminds us not only of the Divine Providence the *Bnei Yisrael* merited in the desert, but also of the Divine Providence each of us merits every single day. 📖



**Catch up on all the  
fascinating interviews at  
[artscroll.com/insideartscroll](http://artscroll.com/insideartscroll)**

Interviews with: Rabbi Gedaliah Zlotowitz/ Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Rabbi Meyer Yedid, Rabbi David Sutton, Rabbi Yaakov Feitman, Rabbi Paysach Krohn, Rabbi Binyomin Pruzansky, Rabbi David Ashear, and Rabbi Yaakov Bijou





Q. Avi sold Shimmy a beautiful *esrog* with a *pitum*. They agreed that Avi would wrap the *esrog* and deliver it to Shimmy's house, and Shimmy would pay for the *esrog* upon delivery. The *esrog* arrived on *Erev Succos*, but in Shimmy's haste to finish all his *Yom Tov* preparations, he did not open the box until the morning of *Succos*. To his great chagrin, he discovered the *pitum* lying at the bottom of the box! He doesn't know if it broke in transit to his house, in which case he would not have to pay for the *esrog*, or if the *esrog* had been delivered whole and the *pitum* broke while already in his possession. Does Avi have to return the money that Shimmy paid for the *esrog*?

A. The *baraisa* in *Maseches Chullin* (51a) discusses the case of someone who sold a cow to a *shochet*, and after *shechitah*, it was found that a needle had punctured one of its stomachs. The *baraisa* enumerates various signs to identify whether the needle pierced the stomach before the *shechitah*, rendering the animal a *tereifah*, or whether the needle punctured the stomach after the *shechitah*. If the hole in the stomach has produced a scab, then it is apparent that the hole was there three days before the *shechitah*, and the one who sold the cow to the *shochet* within those three days would be required to return the *shochet's* money. In a case

of doubt, the one who wishes to claim money from the other would have to prove the animal's status to substantiate his claim.

*Rashi* explains that if the hole had not scabbed, it would be questionable how recently the stomach was punctured, and since a *shochet* usually pays for the cow before the *shechitah*, the burden of proof would be upon him if he wishes to

## DOES AVI HAVE TO RETURN THE MONEY THAT SHIMMY PAID FOR THE ESROG?



invalidate his purchase.

*Tosafos* explains, based on the *Gemara* in *Kesubos* (76b), that since the needle was found only after the cow was already in the *shochet's* possession, even if he had not paid for the animal yet, the burden of proof would still be upon him. Since the needle was discovered when the

animal was in his possession, the likelihood is that the needle entered while in his possession, as well.

According to the opinion of *Tosafos*, in our case as well, Shimmy would have to prove that the *pitum* had broken off before he accepted delivery. Since the *pitum* was found broken only after the *esrog* was in his possession, it may just as well have broken in his possession. Even if Shimmy had not paid for the *esrog* yet, he would still be required to pay for it.

However, the *Bi'ur Halachah* (*siman* 656) writes that if one bought a *lulav* or an *esrog* and discovered that it had rotted, the *Elya Rabbah* cites the *Shiltei Giborim* stating that if there is reason to suspect that it was rotten before the sale, that would be grounds to invalidate the sale. In case of doubt, the burden of proof would be

upon the one who is asking for the money (whether to be paid or returned). It would seem that even if it was discovered rotten while in the customer's possession, we would not assume that it rotted only then.

Perhaps there is no contradiction between these two cases. The *Sm"a*

*continued on page 12*



## SHEMINI ATZERES

### THE WISEST REQUEST

*Simchas Torah by Rabbi Moshe Lieber*

*Shemini Atzeres* is not only a time of special closeness between G-d and His people. It is also a time when He looks favorably upon requests.

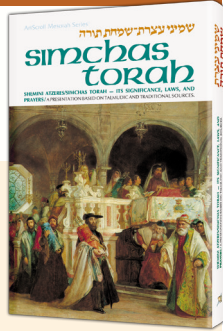
What should one ask for on so auspicious a day?

The *Nesivos Shalom* suggests that rather than asking for one's particular needs of the day, whether physical or even spiritual, one would do better to request that he always be allowed access to the King in order to speak to Him.

### CLOSE TO G-D, EVERYTHING IS ALWAYS GOOD.

Most needs are temporary and subject to change. Even if today's wish is granted, tomorrow may bring new desires and necessities. However, when one asks G-d to grant him the closeness to Him that will enable him to turn to Him in prayer at all times, this wish will be granted. This is a request which, in essence, encompasses all others, for he now has the key of prayer that can unlock all gates. Close to Hashem, everything is always good.

David Hamelech had the emotional depth and clarity of perspective to make this request of Hashem: **אֶחָת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה' אוֹתָהּ אֶבְקֶשׁ שְׁבֹתִי - בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי לַחֲזוֹת בְּנֶעֱמָהּ ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ** - *One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek: That I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life; to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary* (Tehillim 27:4). David Hamelech, the prototypical master of personal repentance (*Avodah Zarah* 4b), said: "I have only one desire . . . and **אוֹתָהּ אֶבְקֶשׁ**, that shall I [continue to] seek, because this request — to dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life — embodies all of my desires. May G-d grant that every moment of my life be an intimate encounter with Him and thus I will receive the innermost desires of my heart." 📖



## SIMCHAS TORAH/SHEMINI ATZERES

### HASHEM'S BELOVED CHILDREN

*Simchas Torah by Rabbi Moshe Lieber*

An insight of the Vilna Gaon sheds light on the celebration of *Simchas Torah* as part of *Shemini Atzeres*. In our daily prayers, we beseech Hashem, "Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah and bring us near, our King, to Your service." In seeking help to return to Torah, we address Hashem as our Father, while in our request to be brought closer to His service, we turn to Him as our King. Why the difference?

The Vilna Gaon explains that while service of Hashem is an opportunity incumbent upon Jews and non-Jews alike (the latter through the seven Noachide laws), the Torah was given to the Jewish people alone. The King allows all His subjects access to Him, but only His children are permitted to enter the inner sanctum of His treasury and enjoy His most prized possession. Thus, it is quite fitting that on *Shemini Atzeres*, the day when the King celebrates exclusively with His own children, we rejoice with the Torah, the prized possession that He shares only with us (*Imrei Moshe*).

### ONLY IN TORAH CAN ONE EXPERIENCE UNDIMINISHED JOY.

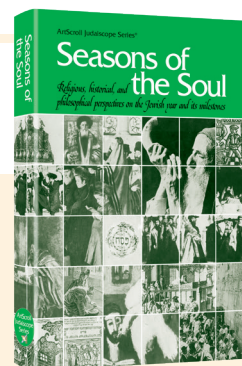
The *Zohar* tells us that when *Klal Yisrael* is involved in rejoicing with the Torah, Hashem says to His Heavenly entourage, "Take note of My beloved children, who forget their own troubles and involve themselves in My joy." Our prayer is that this moment will extend itself throughout the year — through the study of Torah. We celebrate *Simchas Torah* on *Shemini Atzeres* with the hope that through joy in Torah study, we will always experience the special closeness to Hashem that we feel on this most joyous of days (*Nesivos Shalom*).

The sages teach, "From the time the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, all that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has in this world are the four *amos* where *halachah* is studied" (*Berachos* 8a). The *Avnei Neizer* explains that Hashem's Presence resides only in places of joy. The cataclysmic effect of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* forced the Divine Presence to abandon its earthly abode. Only one place was saved from the ravaging effect of that terrible tragedy — the four *amos* of Torah study, which pulsate with joy. Thus, on the festival of *Shemini Atzeres*, a time of exultation, we celebrate *Simchas Torah*, for only in Torah can one experience undiminished joy. 📖



# A SEFER TORAH IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

*Seasons of the Soul* by Y. Yechezkieli, adapted by Moshe Barkany



Hasag. It was called a labor camp, but it was a slaughterhouse: no more, no less. We were the remnants of the Chenstochover Ghetto. Our families had been sent to their death. Only we few remained, like limbs torn from their bodies, writhing with pain, living a life without life.

Our task was the manufacture of bullets, millions of bullets for the mighty German Army. And whenever it suffered a loss or a defeat, the guards exacted their revenge on us, the bullet-makers.

We, the inmates, were only part of a vast mechanism of destruction, destroying and being destroyed at the same time.

*Simchas Torah* was approaching. We had no Torah Scroll, and joy was absolutely foreign to Hassag. Worse yet, on that date, just one year earlier, we were witnesses to the liquidation of the Chenstochover Ghetto.

*Simchas Torah* — a day of unbridled joy? Hardly. Yet, *Simchas Torah* was brought to Hassag by a shoemaker, who was so obscure to us that I cannot even recall his name. Here is how it happened:

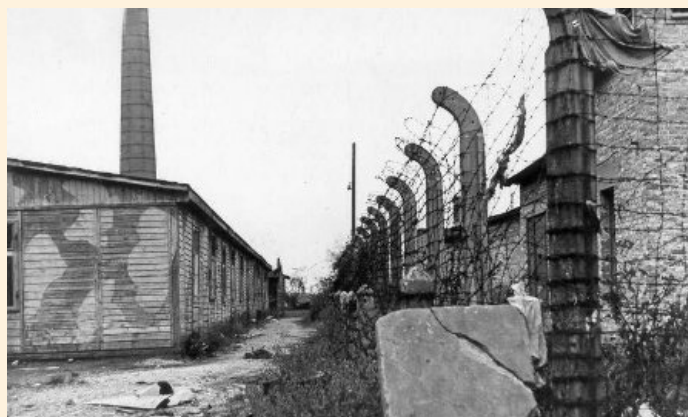
One day of *Chol HaMoed Succos*, a whispered message flitted around the camp: the shoemaker had been delayed in his return from the ghetto. When he finally appeared, he did not head for the kitchen for his especially generous portion, but instead hurried into the depths of his hut. What had happened?

The impossible — no, the incredible — had come to pass: He

had successfully spirited a *Sefer Torah* out of the clutches of the dreaded Gestapo and smuggled it into our camp. How? 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. A theory was advanced that he had found it in the SS stores of Jewish properties, from where he had procured a *shofar* one month earlier.

## THE NEWS OF THE SEFER TORAH'S ARRIVAL HAD NATURALLY ELECTRIFIED THE ENTIRE CAMP.



*The Hasag labor camp, the site of awe-inspiring hakafos.*

But we were at least partially wrong. It had not been nearly as easy to get the *Sefer Torah*. The SS maintained an extremely heavy guard on their large holdings of Jewish plunder, and were particularly careful with *sefarim* and other religious objects, regardless of their intrinsic value. Our intrepid cobbler decided to bribe one of the guards, but

since he was not exactly solvent then, he offered the corporal 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 them for high-ranking officers. Hence, too, the cobbler's privileged status.)

We later found out that he had literally saved the *Sefer Torah* from desecration, because a short while later, the Gestapo burned all the *Sifrei Torah*, other *sefarim*, 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 ghetto. The cobbler selected it

because of its small size, for that made it feasible for him to wrap it around his midriff without causing a telltale bulge, and later, in camp, its size permitted easy concealment.

We had instituted a regular *minyan* on *Shabbos* in one of the barracks, and it was there, on *Shabbos Chol HaMoed Succos*, that the heroic shoemaker turned to us and demanded: "Who wants to hide the *Sefer Torah*?"

A companion of mine and I decided to assume the responsibility. We immediately removed a board from the head of one of the wooden cots we slept on, and in the hollow under it concealed the Scroll.

The news of the *Sefer Torah's*

*continued on page 10*



A casual reader of the new federal regulations published in the Federal Registrar of April 23, 1968 might have failed to notice anything of great import to observant Jews. Yet, nestled away among the hundreds of pages of regulations promulgated that day was one issued by the Plant Quarantine Division of the Department of Agriculture dealing with preventing the dreaded Mediterranean fruit fly entering the United States. That regulation carried within it the potential to prevent hundreds of thousands of American Jews from fulfilling the Biblical command of the Four Species.

The Mediterranean fruit fly inhabits citrus fruits. And among the citrus fruits imported to the United States is the citron, better known to us as the *esrog*. Previous regulations had permitted *esrogim* to be imported to northern states, where no citrus plants are grown, but it was now determined that more strenuous protections were needed. The new regulations therefore required all citrons to be fumigated with ethylene dibromide.

The problem, pointed out by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, chairman of Agudath Israel of America, in a June 13 Memorandum to the Department of Agriculture, is that the fumigation might well render the *esrogim pasul* (unfit) for performance of the *mitzvah*. Since *esrogim* grown in Israel do not ripen until late July, and must be shipped by late August to be in the United States in time for *Succos*, there would not be enough time to analyze the effect of ethylene dibromide on the *esrogim*, nor to test alternative fumigants, before *Succos* of that year. Subjecting the *esrogim* to extreme cold, the other solution

proposed by the director of the Plant Quarantine Division, was also known to be injurious to *esrogim*.

Rabbi Sherer was well aware that there was little point in relying on the sympathy of Department of Agriculture bureaucrats to the religious requirements of observant Jews. The mandate of the depart-



Rabbi Moshe Sherer

**THE MANDATE OF THE DEPARTMENT WAS TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN CITRUS INDUSTRY, NOT TO ENSURE THAT OBSERVANT JEWS HAD ACCESS TO *ESROGIM* FOR *SUCCOS*.**

ment was — justifiably — to protect the American citrus industry from the Mediterranean fruit fly, not to ensure that observant Jews had access to *esrogim* for *Succos*. He would have to come up with a solution that would be fully responsive to their concerns before he could appeal to America's "time-honored tradition of religious freedom."

Rabbi Sherer's proposal was for the *esrogim* grown in Israel to be quarantined for five days after cutting in warehouses far removed from the orchards in which they were grown. After five days, they would be inspected

by the Israeli Agriculture Department.

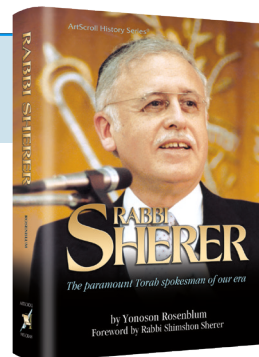
Because the presence of the Mediterranean fruit fly renders the fruit unfit for ritual use, and would be easily ascertainable to the trained eye, there could be no doubt that the proposed inspection would be adequate. In addition, the Israeli Agriculture Department agreed to sponsor an inspector from the United States Division of Plant Quarantine to come to Israel and supervise the inspection, packing, and shipping procedures.

Rabbi Sherer emphasized that the plan would be temporary, since they would test the effect of various fumigants on the *esrogim* before the following *Succos*.

With the memorandum in place, Rabbi Sherer called upon Senator Jacob Javits to use his influence to arrange a meeting with the appropriate Agriculture Department officials and to attend himself so as to emphasize the importance of the issue.

Two days later, Senator Javits sent a telegram that he had arranged a meeting for Rabbi Sherer with Dr. Ned Bayley, an assistant secretary in charge of scientific matters, for the first week of July. Though he could not personally attend, he promised Rabbi Sherer that his top aide, Roy Millenson, would be present, and the Department of Agriculture would fully understand the importance of the matter to Senator Javits.

At that meeting, Rabbi Sherer's proposal was fully accepted by Dr. Bayley, and on July 30, 1968, Israel's



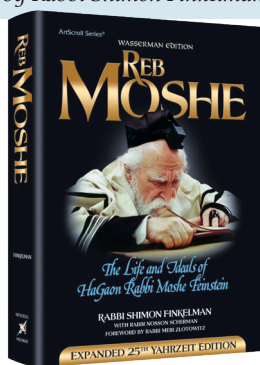
Rav Moshe Feinstein's practice was to eat his *Succos* meals in the *succah* of his son-in-law, Rav Eliyahu Moshe Shisgal, before he, too, moved to the high-rise apartments on FDR Drive in New York City.



**"IT HAS BROUGHT ME SUCH EXALTED GUESTS!"**

One *Erev Succos*, it rained with such intensity that Rav Shisgal's *succah*, which had no protective covering, was not usable for the *Yom Tov* meal that night. Although it had stopped raining, the table and benches were drenched and water dripped from the *s'chach*. Rav Moshe, his son-in-law, and a third *talmid chacham* who usually joined them for the *Succos* meals made arrangements to eat in the *succah* of the Kapytshnitzer Rebbe, whose *succah* had been protected by a strong cover.

That night, as the three made their way to the *succah*, the Kapytshnitzer Rebbe was already seated in his *succah*, surrounded by his *chassidim*. When the guests entered his *succah*, the *rebbe* said, "Chazal tell us that rain on *Succos* is not a good omen. However, for me it is a good omen, for it has brought me such exalted guests!" 📖



## PROTECTING THE *ESROGIM*

continued from page 9

Ethrog Center and the United States Department of Agriculture entered into a formal agreement based on the proposal. With that agreement, the ability of Jews to observe the *mitzvah* of *Arba minim* was assured for 1968.

Rabbi Sherer did not, however, stop there. To ensure that *esrogim* could be imported in future years, and to avoid the higher cost of *esrogim* that would be the result of United States inspectors spending several weeks in Israel each year, he arranged a series of meetings between officials of the Israeli Department of Agriculture and those from the Division of Plant Quarantine.

On May 6, 1969, he received a phone call from Chaim Ouziel, the economic attaché at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., informing him that the Department of Agriculture had agreed to rely on the inspection of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, without any U.S. inspector being present.

The system put in place at that time has remained in place ever since, another feather in the cap of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, one of the greatest statesmen and advocates our nation has ever seen. 📖

## A SEFER TORAH IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

continued from page 8

arrival had naturally electrified the entire camp. On *Simchas Torah* night, we held crowded *hakafos* in the cramped run-down shack we called home. These *hakafos* would have been outlandish in any other situation. The *Sefer Torah* remained safely ensconced in its hollow behind the board. We stealthily walked around the wooden cot that contained our sacred treasure. As we passed, we leaned over and kissed the board that lay directly above the *Sefer*.

We knew that if we had carried the *Sefer Torah* in our arms, as in conventional *hakafos*, we would

## THE SILENT "DANCERS" HELD THEMSELVES STRENUOUSLY IN CHECK, AS THE JOYOUS SONGS SURGED REPEATEDLY TO THEIR LIPS.

have been running a great risk. Don't think it was our lives that we were protecting! Of course, being caught carrying the Torah would have meant sure death, but what value did our 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 we would not risk.

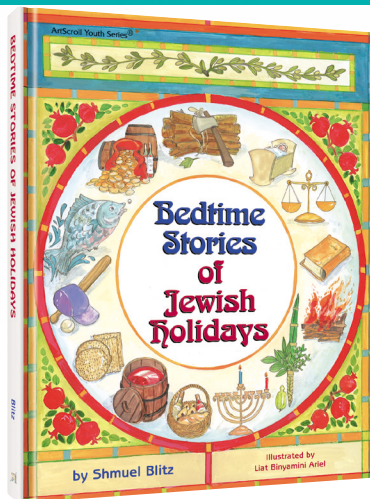
And so it went, far into the night. The silent "dancers" held themselves strenuously in check, as the joyous songs surged repeatedly to their lips.

One song echoed softly in our ears. Because of its obvious relevance, we could not contain it within us. And as we walked around the *Sefer*, we were almost deafened by the silent screaming of its chords that enveloped us all: "Rejoice and be glad on *Simchas Torah*, because it (the Torah) is our strength and our light!"

Do you think I made up this story? Have you ever been at the Gerrer Bais Midrash on Or HaChayim Street in Bnei Brak? Well, the *Sefer Torah* is there, in the Aron HaKodesh. I brought it there after the war. 📖



# SUCCOS FOR CHILDREN



## THE HOLY SUCCA

*Bedtime Stories of Jewish Holidays by Shmuel Blitz*

The *rebbe* of Rachmastrivk, Rav Mordechai Twerski, was a holy man.

“The time has come for me to move to Eretz Yisrael,” he decided one day.

Since it was a very long journey from Ukraine, he brought very little with him. But there was one thing he would not leave behind — his father’s *succah*. This *succah* was very special. Many great Torah leaders had celebrated the holiday inside it. One could feel holiness in its very walls.

Before Rav Twerski left Poland, a rich man offered to buy the *succah* from him. The rich man understood how special this *succah* was.

“I will pay you any price. Just sell me your holy *succah*,” the man begged.

But the *rebbe* would not sell it. “This *succah* is my treasure,” he answered. “It was given to me by my father.”

When he arrived in Eretz Yisrael, Reb Mordechai moved to Yerushalayim. His first winter there was unusually cold. Next door to the *rebbe* lived a little girl named Chanah. That winter she became very sick. Her family was poor. They did not have enough money to buy firewood to heat their house. But Chanah needed to be warm to get better. Every day, the *rebbe* came to visit her.

“How are you feeling today, Chanah?” he asked. “May Hashem bring you a quick and full recovery.”

But every day, little Chanah became sicker. The *rebbe* prayed and prayed for her, but nothing seemed to help.

“If only we had money to buy firewood,” Cha-

## HE SAW HIS PRECIOUS SUCCA SITTING THERE.

nah’s worried parents told the *rebbe*. “Maybe then she would get better.”

The *rebbe* ran back to his house and opened his storage cabinet. He saw his precious *succah* sitting there. “There is no choice,” he thought.

He grabbed an axe and chopped up the *succah* into many small pieces. The *rebbe* brought this wood to Chanah’s house.

“Here, I have this extra firewood in my house,” he told her parents. “Please use it to heat your home. With Hashem’s help, Chanah will have a speedy recovery.”

The parents gratefully accepted his gift, not knowing that it was the wood from his cherished *succah*. And that week, Chanah had a complete recovery from her illness. 🏠

## POSSESSIONS ARE TEMPORARY continued from page 4

Hashem, as the *pasuk* (Bereishis 28:20) describes Yaakov's basic material goals: "bread to eat and clothes to wear."

This is why *Succos* corresponds to Yaakov, and our goal is to apply the lessons of Yaakov's approach to worldly items.

Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi makes a similar point. Why are we told that Yaakov built *succos* for his animals? Why is this important? And what does this tell us about *Succos* and Yaakov's connection to the *Yom Tov*? Chazal do not even say that Yaakov building *succos* for his animals occurred on *Succos*. Furthermore, Yaakov was wealthy and could have built nicer quarters for his animals. Why didn't he?

The answer is found in the *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* on Bereishis 33:17: "Yaakov traveled to *Succos* and built himself a house, and for his cattle he made *succos*." The *Targum* says that Yaakov built a *beis midrash* at *Succos* and spent twelve months there. He also made temporary huts for his animals. When it says in this *pasuk* that he built a house, it refers to a study hall for Torah. That is Yaakov's true home.

This *pasuk* summarizes Yaakov Avinu's entire philosophy of life, and it instructs us as to what our philosophy should be as well: We must realize what should be primary and what is secondary. Yaakov wanted to emphasize this lesson immediately following his encounter with Eisav because his family had been exposed to Eisav's value system, which is diametrically opposed to that of Yaakov. 📖

## HANDLE WITH CARE

continued from page 6

(*Choshen Mishpat* 232 §34) writes, in a different context, that in a case of doubt concerning a *tereifah*, an animal is assumed to be healthy until we discover otherwise. Thus, the needle is assumed to have entered the cow in the possession of the one who owned it when the needle was discovered. In contrast, cheese that usually turns wormy has no such immunity to be assumed "innocent" until proven "guilty." In the case of an *esrog* with a *pitum*, since most *pitums* do not break off of their own accord, the probability would be that it most likely broke off in the possession of the one who found that it had broken off. Thus, Shimmy cannot invalidate the sale, since he cannot prove otherwise. 📖

# ArtScroll's Chol Hamoed gift to you!

## Save up to \$25 – Choose your Savings!

SAVE

\$5

OFF \$50

SAVE

\$15

OFF \$100

SAVE

\$25

OFF \$150

Use promo code **CHOLHAMOED20**

Expires Monday  
October 12 at midnight

**FREE SHIPPING OVER \$49 IN THE USA**

*Wishing all of our readers  
a good Yom Tov!*

