

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Succos



בס"ד

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Torah Wellsprings

Succos

Preparing for Yom Tov

Chassidim say, "Preparing for a mitzvah is greater than performing the mitzvah."

The Sfas Emes *zt'l* (Ha'azinu 5634) brings proof to this surprising concept from the following lesson, taught by the Shlah HaKadosh (Succah, Torah Or, 2):

"On the four days between Yom Kippur and Succos, the Jewish nation is busy serving Hashem, building the *succah*, buying the four *minim*, preparing

for Yom Tov inspiration (התעוררת הלב)." He writes that our occupation with the mitzvos purifies us, which is why we don't accumulate aveiros these days.

On the first day of Succos, when we are actually performing the mitzvos that we prepared for, by sitting in the succah taking the lulav, we might accrue aveiros,¹ *r'l*, but when we prepare ourselves for the mitzvos, we remain free of sin. This proves that preparing for a mitzvah is greater than performing the mitzvah.²

1. It states (Vayikra 23:40) וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן "Take [the lulav] on the first day." The Midrash (Tanchuma Emor 22) explains that the 15th of Tishrei is called the first day because "It's the first day for reckoning *aveiros*..." (לחשבון עבירות).

2. The Taz (beginning of 581) asks why preparing for a mitzvah should bring atonement more than performing the mitzvah. According to the Sfas Emes, it is because the preparation is greater than performing the mitzvos.

Every night of Succos (besides for Shabbos and Yom Tov), there was a grand celebration in the Beis HaMikdash with music and immense joy as the Yidden celebrated the mitzvah of נִסְכּוֹךְ הַמַּיִם, pouring water on the *mizbeiach*. Most of the festivities were when they prepared for the mitzvah, such as when they drew the water from the spring. The Imrei Emes of Gur zt'l used this to show that preparing for a mitzvah is greater than doing the mitzvah.³

Chazal say (Yoma 29), הַרְהוּרֵי, עֲבִירָה קָשִׁין מֵעֲבִירָה "Thinking about an *aveirah* is worse than doing the *aveirah*." The worst part of an *aveirah* is the preparation for the *aveirah*, and thinking how to perform it. The Sfas Emes

(בהוקתי תרמ"ד) writes that just as thinking about an *aveirah* is worse than the *aveirah* itself, similarly, thinking about the mitzvos is greater than the mitzvah itself. "The correction of the soul comes from thinking and desiring to serve Hashem."

It states (*Hosheia* 14:10), כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל דָּרְכֵי ה', צְדִיקִים יִלְכוּ בָם וּפְשָׁעִים יִכְשְׁלוּ בָם, "for the ways of Hashem are straight, the righteous shall walk in them, and the rebellious shall stumble on them." The *pasuk* can be connected to this concept that *tzaddikim* prepare for the mitzvos, but the *resha'im*, יִכְשְׁלוּ בָם, just fall into the mitzvah without any prior preparation. Hashem wants our preparation.⁴

3. Chazal say, "Whoever didn't see the joy of the *simchas beis hashoeivah*, never saw joy in his lifetime." And Chazal say that people drew (שׂוֹבְהָ) *ruach hakodesh* at this celebration. The Gemara doesn't say that they drew *ruach hakodesh* from the mitzvah itself, only from the celebrations before the mitzvah, when they were *preparing* for the mitzvah.

4. Some buy an *esrog pushka* (a silver *esrog* box) as a gift for a *chasan*.

Erev Succos

Rebbe Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* was very generous with the poor.⁵ On *Erev Succos*, he increased his *tzedakah* by distributing large amounts of money to the poor. He said that there is no nicer *נייט סוכה*, *succah* decoration than the *tzedakah* one gives 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."

Take Advantage of the Days

During the forty days that Moshe Rabbeinu was up on Har Sinai to receive the Torah, he didn't eat, drink, or sleep. The Midrash (*Shemos Rabbah* 47:7) writes, "How do we know that Moshe didn't sleep during these days? We can compare it to a king who said to a person whom he loved, 'Measure gold coins and take them for yourself.'" We can be certain that he didn't want to eat or sleep. He only wanted to measure as many

This *hidur mitzvah* (glorifying the mitzvah) is different from most *hidur mitzvah* because it isn't directly related to it.

For example, a silver Chanukah menorah becomes part of the mitzvah. A silver *becher* for *kiddush* and *havdalah* becomes part of the mitzvah. But the silver *esrog* box is used before and after the mitzvah, not during the mitzvah.

This is because the *esrog* represents the heart, and the heart of a mitzvah is expressed primarily by how much one prepares *before* performing the mitzvah and by the joy he feels *after* he completes the mitzvah.

5. He noted that he was born with a stingy nature but worked on himself and became very generous. He said that if there is a poor person who he can't help, he feels like his skin is being ripped.

coins as possible to keep for himself. "Similarly, Moshe was 'measuring' Torah and forgot to eat and drink. When he wanted to sleep, he said, 'If I sleep, I will lose out.'"

The Sfas Emes (5634) quotes this Midrash and explains that this is the reason Chazal (Succah 53.) tells us, "When we were in the Beis HaMikdash, celebrating the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah, we didn't fall asleep." All those participating in the *simcha* didn't want to sleep because if they slept, they would miss out.

The Beis Yisrael zt'l would often repeat this vort from the Sfas Emes and explain that when it is Yom Tov, we must take advantage of the time. We should feel and remember how precious every moment is and not waste it.

The Kotzker zt'l and Reb Yechezkel of Kozmir zt'l found a hint that בטלה, wasting time, is the worst

way to be עובר on hilchos succah (see Shulchan Aruch 632:1-2). A succah needs to be covered with schach; there may not be empty areas (אוויר) where there is no schach, and it can't have schach pasul, non-kosher schach. The open spaces, where there is nothing at all, are worse than if there is non-kosher schach. Non-kosher schach will render the succah pasul if it covers four tefachim. However, air, emptiness, and nothing at all will render the succah pasul even if there is just three tefachim of space in the schach. This signifies the damage caused by emptiness. Ideally, a person should always be active, doing deeds that will grant him the ultimate reward.

The Shem MiShmuel (Shabbos Chol HaMoed Pesach 5673) writes, "Every moment of the holiday one should prepare himself to accept the holiness that is coming down non-stop." This applies to the days of chol

hamoed, as well. We should try to utilize our time wisely.

The Mishnah (Avos 3:11) states, המבזה את המועדות... אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים טובים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא, "Someone who disgraces the holidays... even if he knows Torah and he has performed good deeds, he doesn't have a portion in Olam HaBa." It is hard to write these words, but we must know the importance and the obligation to honor the holidays. What does מועדות, holidays mean? What is it referring to? Is the Mishnah referring to *yom tov* or *chol hamoed*?

Rabbeinu Yonah says that it is referring to *chol hamoed* because if the *mishna* were speaking about *yom tov*, it would have stated המחלל המועדות, someone who transgresses the *yomim tovim*. Rabbeinu Yonah adds, "The Mishnah doesn't need to discuss *yom tov* because *yom tov* is like Shabbos [and everyone understands that we must honor the *yom tov*]. Rather,

it refers to *chol hamoed*. One disgraces *chol hamoed* by saying that these days don't have kedushah like the first days."

The Mishnah is urging us to recognize the holiness of *chol hamoed*, and to honor the days.

The Chiddushei HaRim zt'l teaches that there is special kedushah on Shabbos Chol Hamoed. He explains that throughout the year, the holiness of Shabbos is created and formed from our *avodas Hashem* performed during the weekdays preceding Shabbos. When Shabbos is *chol hamoed*, the holiness of the *yom tov* was created from the holy days of *yom tov* that preceded it, and therefore, the Shabbos will be very exalted. (This year, Shemini Atzeres is on Shabbos, and the Shabbos will be very unique because it will be created from the week of *yom tov* and *chol hamoed* that preceded it. And the first day of *succos* will be created from *Yom Kippur* and the other holy days that preceded it.)

Ushpizen

The Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah writes, "Erev Succos is the time to distribute tzedakah. It is also the day to try to find proper guests, *b'nei Torah*, for the *Yom Tov*."

The *Zohar* teaches that the seven *ushpizen*, Avraham,

Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid, come to our *succos* to celebrate with us. When they arrive, they check to see if there are any guests. If there are guests, they remain in the *succah* and bless everyone. But if there are no guests, they leave. Therefore, it is important to have guests on Succos.⁶

6. The Gemara (*Avodah Zorah* 3) tells us that in the future when Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewards the Jewish nation, the nations of the world will request another opportunity to keep the Torah so they can receive reward. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say, "Fools! It is too late to perform mitzvos. [The time for performing the mitzvos was before the era of the reward.] Nevertheless, I have a simple mitzvah; it is called *succah*. Keep this mitzvah [and I will grant you reward]".

The Gemara relates, "Immediately, they will all go up and build a *succah* on their rooftops. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will have the sun shine brightly, it will become extremely hot for them, and they will kick their *succos* and leave."

The Gemara explains that although Yidden also leave the *succah* when it's very hot, for the halachah is *בצטער פטור מן הסוכה*, someone who is in distress is exempt from *succah*, but a Yid never kicks the *succah* when he leaves. The nations of the world will kick the *succah* in disdain, and therefore, they don't deserve any reward.

B'derech tzachus, we can explain that they build their *succos* specifically on their rooftops because they don't want people knocking at their door, asking for a meal. Contrarily, Jews seek to have guests on Succos.

The first day of Succos is the *ushpizen* of Avraham Avinu, who excelled in *hachnassas orchim*. Therefore, Rebbe Eliezer of Dzikov *zt'l* was extra cautious about having a guest for the first day of Succos. One year, Reb Eliezer of Dzikov didn't have a guest for the first day of Succos, so he asked his son (the Imrei Noam *zt'l*) to go outside and find someone who needed a meal. The son walked around the streets until he found a homeless man and invited him into his father's succah.

The Dzikover Rebbe was thrilled with the guest. He commented, "Avraham Avinu didn't have better guests. Avraham cared so

much about people that he was eager to bring anyone who desired a meal into his home. At least, on this day, we should emulate Avraham Avinu's ways."

Unity

The *Sfas Emes* (*Yom Kippur* 7651) writes, "On Yom Kippur, Bnei Yisrael become united. This is because they are truly united in the realm of the souls. It is only due to sin that they become separated. On Yom Kippur, when our aveiros are forgiven, Bnei Yisrael become one."

So, after Yom Kippur, it is easier for us to have *ahavas Yisrael*. We don't have aveiros, so the intrinsic

We can also explain this Chazal as follows:

The hot sun represents the hardships of life, and the succah represents belief in Hashem. The non-Jews have emunah in Hashem so long as everything goes well. But when the hot sun shines brightly, representing difficult times, they kick the succah - they no longer believe in Hashem.

On the other hand, the Jewish nation believes and trusts in Hashem under all circumstances.

oneness of Bnei Yisrael manifests itself more clearly.

The mitzvah of succah represents the unity we've attained. It states, כל האזרח בני ישראל ישבו בסוכות and the Gemara (*Succah* 27) explains, "all Yidden can dwell in the same *succah*." At times of discord, people might say, "I can't be with him at the same table," but on Succos, all Yidden can eat in the same succah. They can be together under the same roof with peace and unity.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30:12) teaches that the esrog, lulav, hadasim, and aravos represent all levels of Yidden, from the tzaddikim

(represented by the esrog) to those who are at low levels (represented by the aravah) and all Yidden, of all levels, in between. They are tied together to perform a mitzvah because they need one another. The aravos (the lower Yidden) need to be close to the esrog (to the tzaddikim) because their connection with tzaddikim grant them atonement. Tzaddikim need to be connected to the lower people because they aren't complete on their own. The *Beer Heitev* (645:9) writes, "אתרוג is gematriya 610. When combined with the other three species, the gematriya is 613." Perfection is when all four categories of Yidden unite.⁷

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

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

Many people in Yerushalayim would bring their four *minim* to Reb Shimon Aharon Polonski *zt'l*, the Tepliker Rav, to ask whether they were kosher and *mehudar* for the mitzvah. In return for this service, he asked them to donate money to the poor of Yerushalayim.

One person told him, "After I pay for the four *minim*, I won't have money left to help the poor."

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

The Tepliker Rav was true to his word – one year, on the first day of Succos, the Tepliker Rav asked someone to lend him his *esrog* since he didn't have his own.

This is what happened:

On *Erev* Succos, the Tepliker Rav heard shouts and cries from a neighbor's home. The family had lost their father, and there were young orphans at home. The mother had remarried, but things weren't going so smoothly.

The shouts continued, so the Tepliker Rav knocked at their door and asked whether he could help. The family told him that one of the children broke the *pitom* on the stepfather's *esrog*. "The stepfather is now in

The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* notes that the *esrog*, which represents the *tzaddikim*, isn't tied 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 so that they can elevate them, they also need to limit their interactions with people of lower levels so they won't learn from their ways.

the mikvah, but we are worried about his reaction when he finds out."

The Tepliker Rav told them, "I will give you another *esrog*. You don't have to tell him what happened. Just say that I asked to see his *esrog* and ruled that it was *pasul*, so I gave you another *esrog*." The Tepliker Rav gave them the *esrog* that he had bought for himself. He could borrow an *esrog*, but now he had to help this family.

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

The man told him that his horse died, and he couldn't afford to buy another one, but he needed

the horse since his *parnassah* depended very much on it.

Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz gave him enough money to buy a horse.

With the leftover money, he bought an *esrog*. It was kosher, but it wasn't the *mehudar* he generally bought.

When he came home, he told his family, "This *Yom Tov*, everyone will make a *brachah* on a beautiful *esrog*. We will make a *brachah* on a beautiful horse..."

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

Staying Focused

The Gemara (*Succah* 3) requires that ראשו ורובו ושולחנו

בתוך הסוכה, one's head, most of his body, and his table need to be inside the *succah*. He can't be partially in and mostly out of the *succah*. Even his table needs to be in the *succah*. The Sfas Emes explains this *halachah* to

mean that we must be immersed in the mitzvah, involved in it, happy with it, and thinking about it. One shouldn't sit physically in the *succah* with his head and heart elsewhere.⁸ Even his table should be in the *succah*.

8. Someone driving a new Mercedes approached the border. The border police checked the trunk to see whether he was bringing undeclared merchandise over the border. All they found was buckets of soil.

"What's this for?" they asked.

"I'm building a house, and earth good for construction is cheaper in the other country. I go there and fill my buckets with dirt to build my home."

They didn't believe him. It didn't make sense to import dirt to save a few pennies, so they sifted through the earth, expecting to find hidden contraband, but couldn't find anything. They let him pass.

The following day, he arrived at the border again in his shiny Mercedes. The border patrol sifted through the soil again, didn't find anything, and let him go. This happened daily. After a while, they stopped sifting through the earth because they knew they wouldn't find anything exciting.

One day, he informed the guards that he won't be coming anymore. "I'm just about finished building my house, so there's no reason for me to bring more earth," he said.

The border police couldn't contain their curiosity any longer. They said, "Tell us why you carried dirt over the border every day. We don't believe you were importing earth to save a few pennies."

This represents the family. The head of the family should create a joyous atmosphere in the succah so that his wife and children will be enthralled with the Yom Tov and its mitzvos.

The Yesod v'Shoresh HaAvodah writes regarding the mitzvah of succah, "When a person learns about the greatness of this mitzvah and its great reward, and about the seven exalted *Ushpizin* who visit him in the succah, he will yearn with all his heart for this mitzvah...because the

mitzvah of *succah* is very great."

The Torah (Vayikra 33:42-43) writes, ... בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים... למען ידעו... כי בסוכות הושבת י את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים, "For a seven-day period you shall live in the succah...to know that I had Bnei Yisrael live in succos when I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim."

This is one of the rare times that the Torah explicitly tells us the reason for the mitzvah. Hashem obligates us to sit in succah, so we will know that we sat

He replied, "If you promise not to arrest me, I will tell you."

They promised, and he said, "I am a luxury car dealer. You thought you were seeing the same car every day, but every day, I imported a brand-new Mercedes tax-free. I needed a decoy so that you wouldn't suspect me, so I began importing earth. That took your focus away from what was really happening."

This mashal reminds us to stay focused on what is important and not get distracted by unimportant trivialities. There is a lot to focus on these days. We can focus on being happy, on the greatness of the mitzvos, and on the lessons of the mitzvos. But then something trivial happens, and people turn all their focus to that matter. We must remember that we don't have time for that. There are greater things to think about now.

in succos when we left Mitzrayim. And since the Torah tells us the reason for the mitzvah, the Bach says that we must have the reason in mind when we perform the mitzvah. It isn't sufficient to think, "This is Hashem's will. I am performing Hashem's mitzvah." That thought may be adequate for most mitzvos of the Torah, but this time, the Torah explicitly tells us that we should think about the reason for the mitzvah.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (625:1) states, "When one sits in the *succah* he should think that [this mitzvah is to] remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim* and to remember the ענני הכבוד, the clouds of glory, in which Hashem wrapped us in the desert to protect us from the cold and heat. One should think these thoughts; in this manner, he will keep the mitzvah properly. However, *bedi'aved*, one has fulfilled the mitzvah even if his only

thought is that he is performing a mitzvah."

On Succos, it is important to contemplate why we have this mitzvah. We can explain that it is because one should keep the mitzvah of *succah* with his whole being. He should think about what he is doing and be connected to the mitzvos.

Ideally, all mitzvos should be performed with mind, heart, and soul. There are endless reasons for the mitzvos, and some of the reasons were revealed by the tzaddikim over the generations. It is a mitzvah to think about the reasons of the mitzvos when performing them.

The Meiri writes, "If a person eats matzah on Pesach and sits in a *succah* on Succos, he is like a donkey that carries wheat during the wheat harvest and grapes during the grape harvest season...."

The Meiri teaches us that "time" shouldn't be the only

reason we keep the mitzvos. About this it states (Tehillim 119) עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך עבדך, אני הביני Hashem; they have made void Your Torah." The Meiri explains: עת לעשות לה', when one keeps the mitzvos solely

because the time has arrived for the mitzvah, הפרו תורתך, he transgressed the Torah, *chalilah*. עבדך אני, I am Your servant, therefore, הביני teach me the reasons for the mitzvos so that I can perform them correctly.⁹

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

A gentile child was murdered, and false witnesses were hired to testify in court that a Jew killed the child to use his blood to bake matzos.

The Yidden explained to the judge that these were false witnesses, and the judge suspected that it was so. However, even after cross-examining the witnesses, the witnesses didn't contradict one another. Without proof that the witnesses were lying, the lives of all Yidden in the area were in danger.

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

The judge agreed to use this test. The judge instructed everyone to gather in the town square. (The Yidden were also there, *Tehillims* in hand.) The judge had a dog smell the blood-stained clothing, and the dog led them directly to the true murderer.

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

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

The Four *Minim*

The Beis Yosef (651) tells the following story:

"In a dream, the Rikanti saw Rabbeinu Yitzchak Ashkenazi writing Hashem's name, but he wrote the final *heh* slightly apart from the first three letters. The Rikanti didn't know the dream's interpretation. The next day, he saw Rabbeinu Yitzchak Ashkenazi carrying the *esrog* apart from the *lulav*. Then, he understood the meaning of the dream. He told Reb Yitzchak Ashkenazi that the four *minim* represent the four letters of Hashem's name and that the *esrog* represents the final *heh* of Hashem's name. One must hold them together so that the final *heh* will be connected to the first three letters."

We tell this story so that we may glean a bit of the holiness of the mitzvah. When we hold the four *minim*, it is like we are

holding Hashem's holy name in our hands.

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zy'a* adds that although the four letters must be near each other, some space is required between the letters. This is the reason we use *koisheklach* (*lulav* holders). They serve as a divider between the four *minim*.

The Midrash (quoted in *Ramban Vayikra* 23:40) states: "The *esrog* is Hakadosh Baruch Hu, as it states... The *lulav* is Hakadosh Baruch Hu, as it states... *Hadassim* are Hakadosh Baruch Hu... The *aravos* are Hakadosh Baruch Hu..." Keviyachol, when we hold the four *minim*, we hold Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We don't know exactly what that means, but it reveals just a drop of the privilege and holiness of the mitzvah.

Based on these ideas, Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zy'a* explains the *pasuk*, ה' לי לא אירא. He teaches, ה' לי, "Since Hashem is with me

[as I hold the four *minim*] לא אירא, I have nothing to fear."¹⁰

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 *hadassim* 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 shriveled 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 vigor.¹¹

10. Chemdah Genuzah (vol.2 p.47) writes that the Ropshitzer Rav *zt'l* would say every year on Hoshanah Rabbah, "People say: 'If I am holding 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*."

11. 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.

Esrog

Tzaddikim have said that if people knew the value of the *esrog*, they would spend all the money in the world to acquire it.¹²

The Gemara (*Succah* 41) tells us that Raban Gamliel once paid one thousand *zuz* for an *esrog*. "This teaches us how much they loved the mitzvos."

Until not very long ago, *esrogim* in Eastern Europe were extremely expensive because they had to be imported from Italy or other countries. In those days, there were only one or two *esrogim* per community, and they were costly. Therefore, for months in advance, the Jewish

community would save up money for this purchase, and they did so with joy, for they wanted to keep this precious mitzvah.

One year, there were very few *esrogim*, so the Vilna Gaon *zt'l* gave a couple of his students a large sum of money and told them to seek an *esrog*.

The students searched hard, but there wasn't anything available. Finally, they found someone who had an *esrog*. However, this man wasn't an *esrog* merchant; he wanted the *esrog* for himself. The students offered him a lot of money, but he refused to part from his *esrog*.

12. The Torah mentions *esrog* first, as it states פרי עץ הדר וכפות תמרים, etc., while the Mishnayos (*Succah* ch.3) mentions the laws of *esrog* last. Why did the Mishnah change the order?

Chazal tell us that the *esrog* represents the heart, the *lulav* represents the spine, *hadasim* the eyes, and the *aravos* the lips. The Mishnah reveals that if you want a pure heart, begin with being cautious with your eyes, speech, and deeds. Then, they will be pure, too.

They explained to him that they needed it for the Vilna Gaon. He agreed to sell it to them on condition that he would be accredited with the reward for the mitzvah.

The students feared that the Vilna Gaon wouldn't be happy with this condition, but they didn't have another esrog, and they agreed.

The Vilna Gaon was extremely happy when he heard about the condition. He explained that this was his opportunity to perform the mitzvah entirely *lishmah*. He won't be getting Olam HaBa for the mitzvah, so his intention will be solely to make a *nachas ruach* for Hashem.

Reb Yonoson Eibshitz's *zt'l* would spend a lot of money to purchase a beautiful esrog. His student, Reb Hirsch of Hessin *zt'l*, would testify that Reb Yonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* would buy an esrog, and if he found a more beautiful one, he would buy that one. And

then, if he found an even more beautiful esrog, he would buy that one, too. His *succah* was also decorated with costly items. His students write, "All his money was valueless to him when it came to loving Hashem and His mitzvos."

There are different versions of the following story, and I will write it as I received it:

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchov *zt'l* was very poor; sometimes, his children went hungry. But there was one item of value in their home. It was an inheritance of the holy tefillin of Reb Michel Zlotchover's father, Reb Yitzchak of Derohovitz *zt'l*. Reb Michel refused to sell them.

His Rebbetzin *zt'l* often pleaded with him to sell the tefillin to support their family, but Reb Michel refused. Once, a wealthy person came to Zlotchov and offered a lot of money for the tefillin, but Rebbe Michel turned down the

offer. "My father's tefillin aren't for sale," he explained simply.

But there was one year when there were hardly any esrogim in Eastern Europe. One esrog merchant came to Zlotchov with an esrog, asking for a lot of money. Reb Michel sold the tefillin and bought the esrog for fifty *reinish*. Rebbe Michel's joy was endless. He had a beautiful *esrog* for yom tov.

His Rebbetzin wanted to know how he had money to buy the esrog, but Reb Michel didn't respond. She asked again until he told her that he had sold the tefillin. She angrily said, "I asked you to sell the esrog for our family, but you refused, and

now you sold it?!" And with that, she bit into the esrog.

Rebbe Michel said, "Ribono Shel Olam! I don't have the tefillin anymore. I don't have an *esrog* either. Should I also be angry?!"

That night, he saw his father in his dream. His father told him that he performed a great deed when he sold the tefillin to buy the esrog, but the second deed, that he controlled his anger, was an even greater accomplishment. His father said, "Your ability to control your anger was more precious in heaven than your *mesirus nefesh* to buy the *esrog*. Many *gezeiros raos* [harsh decrees] were annulled in the merit of your restraint."¹³

13. Back in the day when esrogim were hard to come by and extremely expensive, the community members would chip in and buy one esrog. The wealthier people were expected to contribute more than the less affluent individuals, but everyone had to contribute towards the purchase.

In one town, a wealthy person refused to contribute to the esrog campaign. He thought, "The wealthy rosh hakahal of our city has

בדרך צחות, the Tiferes money to buy the four
Shlomo *zt'l* explained what *minim*. He said that during
we gain by spending a lot of the judgment on Rosh

more money than I have. He will certainly pay whatever is missing to buy the esrog; why should I part with my hard-earned money?"

That is exactly what occurred. The wealthy rosh hakahal paid the difference, and they bought the esrog. The four minim were kept in the rosh hakahal's home because he paid the lion's share of the purchase. Yom tov morning, the townspeople lined up in front of the rosh hakahal's house for a turn to shake the four minim. The wealthy miser was also in line. When it was his turn, the rosh hakahal refused to give it to him. "We almost didn't have this mitzvah because of you, so you don't deserve to use it."

The wealthy miser left the rosh hakahal's home ashamed.

Later that morning, the rosh hakahal walked to the beis medresh to daven shacharis and shake the four minim by Hallel. The wealthy miser ran over to the rosh hakahal, shouted the brachos על נטילת לולב and שהחיינו, and lifted the rosh hakahal and shook him in all six directions. He so desired to perform this mitzvah, and this was the closest he could get to it. When the rav of the community saw this, he told the *rosh hakahal* to forgive him and allow him to hold the *esrog* and *lulav* in his hands.

When the miser died, his deeds were weighed in heaven, and the scale tipped to the side of sin. One merciful *malach* said, "Did we place the mitzvah of the four minim on the scale?"

"We did," the court replied, "and we placed his shame on the scale, too (because he felt humiliated when the *rosh hakahal* turned him away), but it still wasn't sufficient. The scale is still tipped to the side of guilt."

The *malach* said, "We should also add the weight of the *rosh hakahal* because he raised the *rosh hakahal* to keep the mitzvah."

The *rosh hakahal*'s weight was put on the scale, and the scale tipped to the side of virtue, and he was granted entry to Gan Eden.

Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Satan states the *aveiros* of the Jewish nation. Malachim counter the Satan and say, "The Jewish nation isn't guilty for their sins. You are guilty because you are the Satan, and you convince them to sin."

"It isn't my fault that they listen to me," the Satan replies. "They are a wise nation and should ignore my enticements."

"They aren't as wise as you think," the malachim reply. "Just wait a few days, and I will show you just how gullible they are."

A few days later, they buy an esrog, a citrus fruit with a retail value of a few cents, and pay a lot of money for it. The malachim say, "Just see how easily they can be tricked."

Thus, Satan is held responsible for their sins, and the Yidden are inscribed for a good year.

The Berdichever Rav *zt'l* relates that he once saw the

Satan and asked him why he appeared so sad.

The Satan said, "A shipload of *esrogim* is arriving, and I'm very upset about that. The Gemara (*Succah* 38.) says that when Yidden shake the four *minim*, it is like arrows in my eyes."

Sometime later, the Berditchever Rav found the Satan; this time, the Satan was happy. "Why are you so happy?" the Rav asked. "Just a while ago, you were sad because a shipload of *esrogim* was arriving."

The Satan laughed and said, "I'm happy because the ship with the *esrogim* sank."

On Chol HaMoed Succos, the Satan was sad again. The Berditchever Rav asked him why."

The Satan replied, "This year, most Yidden didn't shake lulav, but they all yearned immensely for the mitzvah, and their yearning was so precious to Hashem. Additionally, a few Yidden

bought esrogim at very high prices and rejoiced with the mitzvah. All these matters (the desire, the price, and the joy) are very precious to Hashem, even more than had all the *esrogim* arrived."

ושמחת בהגך - *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 [about Succos], ושמחת לפני ה' ,אלקיד שבעת ימים Hashem your G-d for seven days" (*VaYikra* 23).

Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim* 529:2) states, "A person is obligated to be happy and in a good mood on Yom Tov, together with his wife and children. How does he make the family happy? By giving the children nuts and roasted grains [or other foods that children enjoy] and buying clothing and jewelry for the women according to his abilities." People tend to forget about this mitzvah, and perhaps

that's because it is so hard to keep. Even if one remembers to be happy, he might forget about his obligation to make his wife and children happy.

In Yerushalayim, a jewelry store was next to a shop selling esrogim and lulavim. A talmid chacham entered the jewelry store, while a simple person entered the four-minim shop. Upon meeting outside, each clutching their respective purchases, the simple person proclaimed, "My purchase is superior to yours because I bought a mitzvah."

To this, the scholar responded, "You bought a mitzvah דרבנן, as that year, the first day of Succos fell on Shabbos. However, I bought a mitzvah דאורייתא. I purchased jewelry for my wife, fulfilling the Torah's mitzvah to bring happiness to my wife and family on Yom Tov."

According to the Torah, the mitzvah of lulav is only one day, while the mitzvah

to be happy lasts seven days. The Imrei Noam zt'l teaches that this is because Hashem loves it when His nation is happy, therefore He made this mitzvah for seven days.

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.

The Tzemech Tzedek of Lubavitz, zt'l, advised that one should daven for joy. Dovid HaMelech did so, as it states (Tehillim 86:4) שִׂמַח נַפְשׁ עֲבָדְךָ "Gladden your servant's soul."

It is essential to believe that everything that transpires is from Hashem, and everything is exactly as it should be, and therefore, there is no room for distress.

Some people think that their problems are so significant that they cannot be happy. But then they see people who have even

greater troubles than them, yet they appear happy. This teaches them that they can be happy if they want to. It is up to them to acquire a more positive perspective.

A man once shared his troubles with Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt'l. Reb Shlomo Zalman assured him that despite his problems, happiness was within his reach.

The man protested, claiming that it was impossible for someone enduring his suffering to be happy.

Reb Shlomo Zalman responded, "I know someone who, after an operation, is deaf in one ear. He is also a widower, r'l. Three of his children are childless. Despite his tribulations, he is always cheerful and smiling."

The man didn't believe the story was true. "How can he be happy after suffering so much?"

Reb Shlomo Zalman revealed that he was referring to himself.

The Alter of Slabodka, zt'l, taught: When the Rambam omits a halachah from his sefer, talmidei chachamim don't simply assume that the Rambam overlooked it. They are confident that the Rambam intentionally omitted the halachah and delve into the topic to understand why. Similarly, when something is lacking in your life – be it parnassah or anything else – why do you perceive it as a mistake? Why don't you believe that it was done intentionally, for a reason?

We make the *brachah* on the *esrog* מִיטֵן פִּיטוּם אֲרָאֵפּ, with the *pitom* facing down. The words מִיטֵן פִּיטֵם אֲרָאֵפּ is also an expression that people use to refer to when everything is spiraling downwards, and nothing is working out. But we make a *brachah* when it is מִיטֵן פִּיטוּם אֲרָאֵפּ because we believe that even the matters that we don't understand are for our good.

Reasons for Happiness on Succos

Be happy on Succos because Hashem is happy on Succos.

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

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

The Shlah (סוכה נר מצודה סוף אות ט) writes, "A person must be happy every day of Succos; his face should beam with joy because the holy Ushpizin who dwell with him."

We are also happy on Succos due to all the mitzvos we perform on this Yom Tov. In *Hilchos Lulav* (8:15), the Rambam writes, "The joy that one has when he performs mitzvos is a great service, and whoever refrains from that joy deserves to be punished."

Reb Chaim Vital (Hakdamah l'Shaar HaMitzvos) zt'l writes, "Do not view mitzvos as a burden, as something you wish to complete quickly to 'get it over with.' Instead, envision that you earn many thousands of gold coins with every mitzvah you

perform. This perspective will fill you with boundless joy when you perform the mitzvos, as much joy as someone receiving millions of gold coins for performing this mitzvah."¹⁴

When we are happy on Succos, our happiness will remain with us all year. Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl zy'a said that Succos is called זמן שמחתנו, and one translation of the word זמן is to prepare. On Succos, we prepare and store up on simchah for the entire year.

It states, ושמחת בחגך... והיית שמה, and the Abarbanel

14. In the context of military training, soldiers typically do not use real bullets and other live ammunition, as it would be a waste. They can learn to handle their weapons without the need for actual gunpowder. However, in battle, they absolutely must use live ammunition. If they were to fail to do so, the enemy would capture them and scoff at their incompetence. The Kedushas Levi (Likutim Avos, ד"ה אם למדת) utilizes this analogy to illustrate what happens when a person serves Hashem devoid of passion and joy. "The extent of his enthusiasm determines how far he can distance himself from materialism and the level of awareness of Hashem he can achieve. However, if he performs the mitzvos mechanically, without passion, he is akin to a soldier who neglects to load his weapons with live bullets during a war.

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 בהגיד (Devarim 16: 14-16) 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 be happy throughout the year."¹⁵

Rashi (Bamidbar 29:18) writes that the ninety-eight sheep sacrificed on Succos¹⁶ annul the ninety-eight curses written in parashas Ki Savo.

The ninety-eight klalos of parashas Ki Savo came about because (Devarim 28:47) תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה, "you didn't serve Hashem with joy." The Arizal says that this should be understood literally. The curses aren't for not serving Hashem; they come for serving Hashem without joy.

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

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

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

The Avnei Nezer says that on Succos, when we serve Hashem with joy, it is the perfect time to annul the ninety-eight curses that came from the lack of joy.

Instead of klalos we will enjoy brachos. The Beis Aharon (p.156.) writes, "On the yomim nora'im [Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the treasuries of] bounty open up for us through our fear, and on Succos they open with our joy."

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l was at a chasunah, performing the mitzvah of simchas chasan v'kalah. Someone asked him, "It seems that no one is as happy as a chasan and kallah. Wouldn't your time be better utilized by bringing joy to people going through difficult times?"

The Chozeh answered that Chazal (see Yerushalmi Bikurim 3:3) say that all one's aveiros are atoned for on the day of his chasunah. The chasan and kallah are worried and concerned: How can they be sure they will remain pure, without sin, for the rest of their lives? So we dance before them, to teach them, "If you will be happy, you will remain pure. Your joy will protect you from falling into sin." This can be one of the reasons we have a mitzvah to be happy on Succos. This helps us maintain our purity throughout the year.¹⁷

Proper Joy

Shulchan Aruch (529:3) declares, "One should eat, drink, and be joyful on Yom Tov, but the focus should

17. After the sin of the egel, it states (Shemos 23:4) וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ, "they mourned" and were upset with themselves for performing this severe aveirah. After Adam and Chavah's sin, it states (Bereishis 3:16-17) בְּעֵצַב תֵּלְדֵי בָנִים... בְּעֵצָבוֹן תֵּאֲכַלְנָהּ, "With sadness, you will give birth... With sadness, you will [earn your parnassah]..." We see from these sources that aveiros result in sadness.

not be on the meat, wine, laughter, and lightheadedness, as laughter and lightheadedness do not constitute true joy. They are rather levity and foolishness. We are not obligated to engage in silliness and foolishness, but rather in the joy of serving Hashem."

When one goes to a simchah beis hashoavah in our times, he will generally see everyone dancing. But this wasn't how it was in the Beis HaMikdash. The Rambam (*Hilchos Lulav* 8:14) writes, "The dancing at the *simchas beis hashoeivah* wasn't performed by *amei ha'aretz* or just by anyone who wanted to dance. Only the *gedolim*, *chachmei Yisrael*, the *roshei yeshivos*, the heads of Sanhedrin, chassidim, elders, and *anshei ma'aseh* were worthy of dancing. They danced, clapped their hands, played music, and

were happy in the Beis HaMikdash during Succos, but the rest of the nation, men and women, came to watch and listen."

The Ritv'a (*Bava Basra* 121.) explains that the average person wasn't permitted to perform stunts and dance to ensure that the joy remains holy and that it shouldn't turn into הוללות, levity.

The Sfas Emes *zt'l* suggests that this concept is hinted at in the word 'אך' from the verse 'והיית אך שמח.' Chazal inform us that 'אך' is a term that denotes limitation. According to this interpretation, the Torah is instructing us 'והיית אך שמח', to be exceedingly joyful, but not all forms of happiness are beneficial. We must restrict the kind of joy we partake in. We should only seek the joy that originates from and leads to a connection with Hashem.¹⁸

18. People sing the song *ושמחת בחגך והיית אך שמח* and they repeat the word אך many times. *Bederech tzachus*, Reb Yosef Chaim Zonnefeld *zt'l* said that this is based on the Chazal, אין מיעוט אחר מיעוט אלא לרבות,

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

Succah – Gan Eden in this World

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

The holiness of the succah is very great. It is our opportunity to visit Gan

Eden and Olam HaBa while still in this world.

The Sfas Emes (5643) writes, "Man was created to live in Gan Eden, which is the place of true joy, as we say, *בשמחה יצרך בגן עדן*. Adam was banished from Gan Eden, but there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines. This is why people are happy when they are in the *succah*. The succah is Gan Eden..."

The 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

that whenever there is more than one *מיעוט*, limitation, expressed in the Torah, it means that we should increase rather than decrease. Therefore, we sing *והיית אך שמח*, and we repeat the word *אך* because we should increase our joy and not decrease it at all. We should be extremely happy on yom tov.

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

Another approach is that *אך* is a limitation, which refers to when things aren't well for a person. The Torah says *והיית אך שמח*; even then then, you should be happy.

l'shem shamayim and learns Torah there and is happy with the yom tov and the mitzvos, Hashem's cloud hovers above him."¹⁹

The 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 we were surrounded by the ענני כבוד. This sensation cannot be explained in words, but someone who experienced it knows it's true."

One of the laws of the succah is that it must be at least ten tefachim high. The Gemara (Succah 4:) explains that this is because the Shechinah never descends

below ten tefachim. The Chesed L'Avraham and the Sfas Emes (תרמ"ב ד"ה כתוב) say that this hints at the holiness of the succah, that the Shechinah resides on it.

According to halachah, a succah must be made of at least two complete walls and one smaller wall, the length of a *tefach*. The holy sefarim explain that this represents an arm, which is made up of two larger parts and the *tefach*, the hand. The succah has these dimensions because when we are in the succah, it is keviyachol like Hashem is hugging us.²⁰

Going into the succah is like entering Hashem's innermost heavenly chambers. It states (Shir

19. Tzaddikim were careful that a gentile shouldn't enter the *succah* because of the great sanctity there.

20. The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* taught that Hashem treats us during these days in the same manner as a mother cares for her children. On Rosh Hashanah, בלאזט מען אונז אפ, Hashem blows on us and blows away the bad. On Yom Kippur, וואשט מען אונז אפ, Hashem washes us, as it says, וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים, "I will throw onto you purifying waters" (*Yechezkel* 36). And on Succos, דעקט מען אונז צו, Hashem covers and swaddles us.

HaShirim 1:4) הַבִּיאַנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו, "The king brought me into His [innermost] chambers. נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בְךָ, "We will rejoice with You." There is joy in the succah because it is Hashem's innermost chamber and Chazal say that after the churban Beis HaMikdash Hashem cries in His outer chambers and is happy in His innermost chambers.

There are several comparisons between the succah and the Beis HaMikdash.

The Pri Megadim states: One mustn't use a *succah* as a shortcut, and it is certainly forbidden to spit there because the *succah* is holy and has laws that are similar to the laws practiced in the Beis HaMikdash.

Arizal teaches that one's table in the succah should have four legs to resemble the Shulchan of the Beis HaMikdash, which had four

legs. (We repeat this not necessarily so people will buy a table with four legs, but rather to indicate the holiness of the succah, which resembles the Beis HaMikdash.)

Chazal consider the possibility that a succah needs to be built on Har HaBayis, next to the Beis HaMikdash. This theory is disproved in the end. Nevertheless, it is known that a אֲמִינָה, an initial thought of Chazal, also has significance. This is a sign of the holiness of the succah; it is like a Beis HaMikdash built on Har HaBayis.

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.²¹

21. For those who do say Shalom Aleichem, there is a question

Worthy of Gan Eden

After discussing the holiness of the succah, it is proper to prepare ourselves to make ourselves worthy of entering this holy place.

The Shem MiShmuel (5673) teaches that, although everyone sits in the *succah*, only those who are worthy can experience its great joy and holiness.

The Shem MiShmuel writes, "If the *succah* accepts a person, he will experience a good feeling while in the

succah. But *chas veshalom*, if the *succah* doesn't accept him, he will not be happy there. If one enjoys sitting in the *succah*, it is a sign that the *succah* has accepted him. This can't be seen. It is in the feelings of the heart and revealed only to Hashem." The Shem MiShmuel compares it to *teivas Noach*, which didn't accept the animals that sinned in it.

In the *yotzros* of the second day of Succos we say, ואנכי היודע ועד כי עמי קיימו, מצותיה, "I [Hashem] know

whether one should begin with Shalom Aleichem (to greet the malachim) or whether he should begin with the ushpizin, to first invite the holy ushpizin into the succah?

Someone told the Satmer Rebbe zt'l that he thinks we should invite the malachim first because of the rule תדיר ושאינו תדיר קודם, whatever is more common comes first. Shalom Aleichem is recited every Friday night. It is more common than inviting the ushpizin, and therefore Shalom Aleichem should be said first before the ushpizin.

The Satmer Rebbe disagreed. He said that although the words of the Shalom Aleichem are the same each week, it is different because the malachim that come to his home depend on his deeds and preparation during the week. The Satmer Rebbe added, "In my opinion, the ushpizin should be invited first because the ushpizin are tzaddikim, and tzaddikim are greater than malachim.

and testify that My nation kept the mitzvah [of sitting in succah]." The Shem MiShmuel asks, why does Hashem need to testify? Isn't it something that everyone sees?

The Shem MiShmuel answers that it is visible that we kept the external aspect of the mitzvos. Hashem testifies that we kept the inner spirit as well. Not only did we sit there, but we also experienced the joy and holiness of the *succah*.

The Shem MiShmuel adds that Succos comes right after Yom Kippur because one needs to be *tahor* from all sins to be accepted into the spirituality of the *succah*.

Nevertheless, let us encourage all those who don't yet enjoy being in the succah, by letting them

know that they are also accomplishing a great deal just by being there.

The succah is for everyone.

Reb Avraham Yaakov of Sadigeira zt'l said that this is the reason a succah is made from פסולת גורן ויקב, the leftover branches of the vineyard and the wasted stalks of crops (see Succah 12.). It teaches us that the succah is even for those who feel they are פסולת, leftover, wasted, and unimportant.

Chazal (Succah 22.) say, המעובה כמין בית כשרה, if the *schach* on the succah is very thick, and it appears like a house, it is also kosher. Tzaddikim said that this alludes to the Yidden who are מעובה כמין בית very thick, coarse, and *gashmiyosdig*. The succah is for them too.²²

22. This is also hinted by the lulav, which one shakes in all directions (see Succah 37:). We go up and down with the lulav, indicating that those low can rise high. We shake the lulav back and forth, מוליד ומביא, indicating that those who are מוליד away from the kedushah, מביא, they can return because, on Succos, everyone can return to Hashem.

There was a chassid who was afraid to walk into the *succah*. He said, "The *succah* is filled with Hashem's names. How can I walk on it?"

His Rebbe told him, "A Yid is also comprised of Hashem's names. *Sheimos* may go on top of *sheimos*."

Rebbe Yechiel of Alexander *zt'l* said, "It is truly a wonder how one can enter a *succah*. But every Yid is a חלק אלוקי ממעל, a part of Hashem. Hashem's name is within him. Therefore, he may enter the *succah*."

The Torah says (*Vayikra* 23:42), בסוכות תשבו, "Dwell in the succos..." תשבו has the same letters as בושת, shame. The Yeitev Lev (*Yeitav Panim Succos* 10) explains that one should feel embarrassed to enter the holy *succah*. How does he have the courage to enter this sacred abode? The answer is with thoughts of *teshuva*. As the *pasuk* continues, כל האורה. The translation of האורה, is "I will shine." It is in future tense. It

means: " Although I am not worthy to enter the *succah* right now, in the merit that I plan to improve my ways, I am able to enter the *succah*."

The *pasuk* concludes, כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאם אותם מארץ מצרים, "I had Bnei Yisrael live in succos when I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim." When they left Mitzrayim, they weren't worthy either, but in the merit that they would receive the Torah in the future, they were able to sit in the *succah*. Similarly, since I will improve my ways, I have the right to enter the *succah*, even now.

Emunah

It states (*Vayikra* 23:42-43), בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים... למען ידעו... "You should dwell in succos for seven days... so you will *know*... I am Hashem, your G-d." The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that the segulah of sitting in the *succah* is to help us believe in Hashem. When we sit in the *succah*,

it's an ideal time to talk about *emunah* and to strengthen our awareness of Hashem.

Before the Satmar Rebbe's *zt'l chasunah*, his father, the Kedushas Yom Tov *zt'l*, told him that the *succah* is outdoors, so people can look up at the sky through the *schach* and remember to place their trust in Hashem.²³ He said that this is also why a chuppah is customarily under the sky. This is so that the chassan and kallah can look to heaven and remember to trust in Hashem, for only He can provide for them, not their parents or anyone else.

Luxuries

It states, *וה' ברך את אברהם בכל*, "Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." There are several translations of the word *בכל*, everything. The Midrash 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.

What is the explanation? 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

23. The Yerushalmi (*Succah* 2:3) teaches that *lechatichilah*, one should be able to see the stars through the *schach*.

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 brachah that Hashem gave Avraham. He blessed him with כָּל, everything. This is the lesson we learn

from succah, and this is how Hashem gave Avraham "everything."

It states (*Bereishis* 25:8), ויגוע, וימת אברהם בשיבה טובה זקן ושבע, "Avraham passed away at an old age, old and satisfied."

The Siforno translates ויבע as "He was satisfied with everything he desired to see and to do in his lifetime."

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya explains:

"This *pasuk* is teaching us Avraham's good *middos*. He left this world feeling fulfilled. He didn't need more... This is unlike most people about whom it states (*Koheles* 5:9), אוהב כסף לא ישבע כסף, 'one who desires money will never have enough money.' And Chazal (*Koheles Rabbah* 1:32) say, 'When a person leaves the world, he didn't attain half of what he wanted. If he has one hundred, he wants two hundred. If he has two hundred, he wants four hundred.'" But Avraham was satisfied and happy

with his lot, and that is a wonderful level.

Rebbe Yonoson Eibshitz (6:1) writes, "A person who fears Hashem doesn't have *succos* only during the yom tov of Succos. Throughout the year, he will remember that life is temporary and he's a guest in this world. One shouldn't build expensive houses decorated with gems and diamonds just for pleasure. This will lead him to desire more money, to sin, and cause him to be proud and forget Hashem, Who created him. Remember Yundav ben Rechev's precious, ethical ill (*Yirmiyahu* 35:6). He instructed his children not to live in houses. Rather, they should

live in tents and temporary dwelling places, one day here, and the next day somewhere else. This is what our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov did. They dwelt in tents. This gave them long life²⁴ because they weren't afraid a fire might burn down their castles, and they weren't fearful of enemies, hunger, or plagues since they could quickly undo the ropes of their tents and travel to a different location.

"When Bilaam saw the Jewish nation dwelling in tents, he said, *מה טובו אהליך*, 'How good are your tents.' 'Tents' in this verse is specific because we are a people who dwell in tents...

24. The Yaaras Dvash also notes that the Mishkan, made from *ריעות*, skins, and woven cloth, lasted for 480 years (counting the years the Mishkan stood in the desert and later in Eretz Yisrael, until its final location in Nov and Givon). Whereas the Beis HaMikdash that Shlomo HaMelech built from stone and gold only stood for 410 years. The second Beis HaMikdash also only lasted for 420 years, and during those 420 years, was the Greek conquest, and the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed several times. So we see that where there are fewer luxuries, things last longer. Similarly, he says, the *avos* had fewer luxuries, and therefore they lived long lives.

and they are good for us in this world and the next. But when we build houses from lime and stone, the stones will shout out all the sins of theft, pride, temptation, and desire. This is the lesson of the *pasuk* בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים (Vayikra 23:42)." Dwell in the temporary *succos* for seven days and discover the benefits of this mode of life.

The Kli Yakar (Vayikra 23:42) writes, "After people harvest their crops, they want to go home and live in a permanent dwelling. The Torah feared this might lead to arrogance. Therefore, the Torah says כל האזרח, whoever has plans to live in this world as a permanent resident, יישבו בסוכות, must first dwell in the temporary *succah*, so he will remember to be humble. He mustn't forget that he is a stranger in this world. He isn't a permanent resident here. And then, he won't place his trust in the walls of his home. He will trust in Hashem alone."

The *Sfas Emes* (5645) writes, "The mitzvah of *succah* is the mitzvah of *bitachon*. As Chazal say, מודירת קבע, 'Leave your permanent house...'. It teaches us to stop trusting in our assets and to begin trusting in Hashem alone... Succos is זמן שמחתנו, 'the time of our happiness,' because no one is happier than the one who trusts in Hashem." (see also Rashbam on Vayikra 23:43).

Hoshana Rabbah

Hoshana Rabbah means "a great salvation"; many salvations come from this day.

After one's passing, the Heavenly court will ask him, צפית לישועה, "Did you wait for the salvation?" (Shabbos 31.). The Imrei Emes *zt'l* explains that he is asked צפית לישועה, did you look forward to Hoshana Rabbah? We should look forward to this day because, on this day, Hashem bestows salvation on Klal Yisrael.

Rabbah means great, and The Divrei Chaim of Sanz zt'l said that Hoshana Rabbah can be translated in three ways, and they are all correct. It can refer to Hashem, the Jewish nation, or the salvation we receive. Therefore, (a) הושענא רבה means "The great Hashem should save us." (b) הושענא רבה means Hashem should save the great Jewish nation.²⁵ And (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) would say that Hoshana Rabbah is named after '*Amen yehei shmei rabbah*,' an indication that people who are cautious with *Amen yehei shmei rabbah* will have their salvation. Chazal say, "Whoever answers *Amen yehei shmei rabbah* with all his might, his judgment is ripped up." Reb

Yochanan says, "Even if one has the sin of *avodah zorah*, he will be forgiven" (*Shabbos* 119).

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

The Divrei Yoel of Satmar zt'l was known for his lengthy prayers on Hashana Rabbah. One year, Hashana Rabbah coincided with a

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

Friday, and the gabaim announced the women should go home to light Shabbos lecht because it was almost Shabbos, and the tefillos weren't over yet.

At that time, the Satmar Rebbe shared the following mashal:

A city had committed a grave offense against the king, and as a result, all its inhabitants were sentenced to death. The king had an annual custom of visiting a specific garden in their city, and the city's elders resolved to go there on the designated day to plead for mercy and forgiveness.

The elders assembled in the garden on the appointed day, but the king wasn't there! They waited, hoping that the king would arrive. As the day was drawing to a close, many wanted to go home. Their plan had failed.

One wise elder proposed a different perspective. "The king's custom is to visit this garden on this day," he reasoned, "so he must be here. It must be that he's disguised as a common citizen. Let's call out to the king and implore him to save us. He will surely hear us and forgive us."

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

The Awesome Judgment

It is known that Hoshana Rabbah is a day of judgment, reminiscent of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.²⁶ The judgment aspect of Hoshana Rabbah wasn't known to many in the past

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

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 (see Yesod v'Shoresh HaAvodah 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 בחגך*, 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.

Reb Shlomo Zalman explains that one aspect of the awesome judgment of Hoshana Rabbah was always revealed to the average person. The Mishnah states, *בהג נידונים על המים*, "Succos we are judged for rain," and the Levush writes, "Therefore, people light more candles in the beis medresh on Hoshana Rabbah, similar to Yom Kippur because it is the final day of the judgment for rain." So, it was always known that Hoshana Rabbah was a day of judgment for rain. In later generations, it became known that it was a day of judgment for all areas of life, like the conclusion of

the judgment that occurred on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

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

The Halichos Shlomo (Succos, p.241) brings down Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's customs on this day. "From the beginning of the night, Reb Shlomo Zalman had immense fear,

similar to the fear of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. From nightfall, he spent most hours of the night saying Tehillim with a lot of kavanah. Also in his elder years, he would get out of bed several times on this night to say Tehillim. He didn't appreciate it when people visited him on that night. When someone came, he would speak with him very briefly, and as soon as the conversation was over, he returned to his Tehillim."

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."

Shemini Atzeres

The Midrash says that after seven days of Succos, Hakadosh Baruch requests us to celebrate one additional day. Hashem says, קשה עלי פרידתכם, "It is hard for Me when you leave." The Imrei Emes writes that the Jewish nation should also feel that they don't want to leave the *yomim tovim* – the feeling should be mutual.

According to some opinions and some siddurim, Shemini Atzeres isn't referred to as a חג (see *Shulchan Aruch* 668). The Rema MiPano explains that חג means a circle. All *yomim tovim* are a chag, a circle, surrounding a primary point. The focal point is Shemini Atzeres. Shemini Atzeres isn't called חג because it is the central point.

It can be compared to a chasunah. There is a chuppah, dancing, and a meal, but the purpose of everything is for the chasan and kallah to go home and build a life together. The

Sfas Emes says that the *yomim tovim* are like the chasunah, and the stages leading up to the chasunah. For example, the *schach* on the *succah* resembles the chuppah, and so on. After the chuppah comes the *yichud*, an even greater unity. That happens on Shemini Atzeres.

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

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

The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* teaches that Shemini Atzeres is greater than Yom Kippur because Yom Kippur is to

love Hashem through affliction (fasting, etc.), and on Shemini Atzeres we love Hashem through joy, which is a better connection, as it states (*Shir HaShirim* 7:7) מִדָּה יֵפֶת וְזֶמָּה נִעְמָת אֲהַבָּה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים, "How beautiful it is when the love is with pleasure and joy."

The Chinuch (324) writes that we don't take the four *minim* on Shemini Atzeres because the four *minim* are to remind us to direct our joy (of gathering the crops) to Hashem. Shemini Atzeres we don't need reminders because, יוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי כִּוְלוֹ לֹהֵ, "The eighth day is solely for Hashem." The day was designated to be with Hashem. We don't need any reminders on this day.

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

The *Zohar* states, "On Hoshana Rabbah, the judgment is completed, and the blessings begin. On the following day (Shemini Atzeres), the Jewish nation celebrates with the King and receives blessings for the entire year. Only the Jewish nation is present at that celebration, and when one sits alone with the king, whatever he asks will be granted." The final words reveal the sunique strength of *tefillah* that we have on Shemini Atzeres. "When one sits alone with the king, whatever he asks will be granted."

Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l* teaches, "Be extremely careful with the *tefillos* of Shemini Atzeres to say them with immense *kavanah* 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 Kotzker zt'l said that on Shemini Atzeres is the *gzar din* (the decree) for *parnassah*. His son, Rebbe Dovid zt'l, used to daven *beyichidus* (himself). On Shemini Atzeres, the Kotzker called for him and told him that on Shemini Atzeres it is crucial to daven with a minyan because on this day it is decreed how much *parnassah* he will have this year. This is hinted at in the words *והיית אך שמה*, which the Gemara says refers to Shemini Atzeres and whose final letters spell *ח"ת"ך*, the name of the malach appointed over *parnassah*.

Reb Aharon Chernobler zt'l said that *benching* *גשם* on Shemini Atzeres is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

Bringing Succos Home

(For those who live in *chutz l'aretz*) Shemini Atzeres, in the afternoon, we *gezegen* with (formally take leave of) the *succah*. There's a *tefillah* that some say at this time (*...רבונא דעלמא...*, printed in many

siddurim and *machzorim*). In this prayer, we say, "It shall be Your will that the *malachim* associated with the *succah* and the four *minim* should come with us into our homes..." We don't leave *mitzvos* behind. We take the blessings and spirituality we gained from these *mitzvos* and extend them to the entire year.

The *piyut* of Shemini Atzeres (מערבית לשמ"ע) states, *פונים מוסוכה לביתם לישב צקון לחשם הקשב*, "Those who leave the *succah* [on Shemini Atzeres] to return to their homes, listen to their prayers."

The Shinever Rav zt'l asks:

Wouldn't it be more appropriate for the *piyut* to say, "Listen to the *tefillos* of those who *dwelled* in a *succah*"? Why do we pray that Hashem should listen to the *tefillos* of those who *leave* the *succah*?

The Shinever Rav zt'l answers that we ask Hashem to listen to the prayers of those who take the lessons

and kedushah of the succah with them, even when they return to their homes.

Chazal (Succah 28:) note that the words בסוכות תשבו are contradictory because סוכות is a *temporary* dwelling and תשבו means to live *permanently*. Chazal answer that the pasuk instructs us to live in the temporary succah in a permanent manner. תשבו כעין תדורו, "Live in the succah as you live at home." The Gemara explains, "How does one make his succah permanent? If he has beautiful vessels or sheets, he should bring them to the succah. He should eat and drink and spend time in the succah..."

This lesson is called אֵין הֶקֶשׁ. A hekesh is when two ideas are juxtaposed in the Torah so that certain laws should be learned from one idea to the other. בסוכות תשבו, therefore, teaches us that we should live in this temporary abode in a permanent manner.

There is a concept of אֵין הֶקֶשׁ לְמוֹחֶזֶה, that when two ideas are juxtaposed in the Torah, the *drashah* goes both ways. The Satmar Rebbe zt'l explains that בסוכות תשבו, therefore, teaches us two lessons. It tells us to live in the succah in a permanent manner, as we live in the home, and it also teaches us to live at home the way we lived in the succah. People have holy and uplifting thoughts in the succah; they should take this inspiration back with them when they return home.

In (Gittin 56) the Gemara defines a בריה קלה as an insect that eats but does not produce waste.

So, קלה means to take in and not to give out. The Gemara (*Avodah Zorah* 3) calls *succah* a מצוה קלה, a light and easy mitzvah. Reb Avraham Yehoshua Friend of Nasod zy'a hy'd explained that *succah* is called מצוה קלה because one should take in the shine and holiness of the *succah*, and it should never leave from him.

It states (*Tehillim* 60:8) ועמק סוכות אמדד. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* says that ועמק סוכות אמדד refers to the measurements of a succah. The measurements equal 360 tefachim (as we will explain), and 360 is approximately the number of days in a solar year. ועמק סוכות אמדד implies that the measurements of the succah send holiness to the entire year. Each day of the year receives sanctity from the mitzvah of succah.

We are left to explain a couple of matters: One is to calculate how a succah has 360 tefachim, and two, we need to explain why we are the succah hints to 360 days and not to a full year of 365 days. We will also show more clearly how these ideas are alluded to in the pasuk.

We begin with the first question. How do we know that a succah is 360 tefachim? We are calculating the size of the tallest succah, which is twenty amos high. Each amah is six tefachim, and $20 \times 6 = 120$. A succah needs

three walls, so the equation is $20 \times 6 \times 3 = 360$ tefachim, indicating that the succah brings kedushah to the 360 days of the year.

Five days are missing from this number because there are five days a year that can exist without the kedushah of succah. These are the five days from Yom Kippur itself until Succos. On these days, we have atonement from all our aveiros, as Chazal tells us, and therefore, these days don't need the protection of the succah.

These ideas are alluded to in the pasuk we mentioned. It states אלקים דיבר בקדשו אעלוזה אחלקה שכם ועמק סוכות אמדד. Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* translates it, אלקים אעלוז, דיבר בקדשו Hashem said, אעלוז ה', I rejoice with the five days of atonement, which are Yom Kippur and the four days until Succos. אעלוז אחלקה I divide these five days, שכם *gematriya* 360. Hashem says "אחלקה שכם" I detach these five days from the remaining 360 days of

the year." They are not the same days as the rest of the year, because on these days we are clean from all aveiros. עמק סוכות אמר, I measure the measurements of the succah, and they are 360, indicating that from the succah comes holiness for the entire year.

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

Simchas Torah

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

The Shalmei Chagigah (p.292: printed year תק"ג) writes, "Fortunate is the person who rejoices with the Torah on Simchas Torah for this will rectify his soul for the times that he disgraced the

Torah. Additionally, there's a guarantee from early scholars that whoever is happy with the Torah on this day will have offspring who will always study the Torah. There was a rav who was very happy on Simchas Torah, and his descendants were renowned scholars for three consecutive generations. Everyone knew that it was because of his happiness with the Torah on Simchas Torah. He rejoiced and danced with the Torah in a way that wasn't seen by other rabbanim and gedolei Yisrael. Despite his prestigious rabbinic position, he would jump and dance before the Torah and encourage others to do the same." In this merit, he merited children and grandchildren exceptional talmidei chachamim.

The Shaar HaKavonos writes, "My teacher (the Arizal) went around the bimah... danced and sang with all his strength. Then, on motzei yom tov, he went to several batei midrashim to dance

with the Torah (called in Eretz Yisrael (הקפה שניות), and this lasted many hours."

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

The Satmer Rebbe zt'l danced with all his strength on Simchas Torah, although he was generally weak. When people questioned him about this, he replied, "Chazal (Succah 48.) say, שמיני עזרת רגל בפני עצמה היא.²⁷ On Shemini Atzeres everyone receives another רגל (foot) to help him dance.

Dancing with the Torah on Simchas Torah is mesugal for having children. The Yismach Yisrael zt'l derives this from Michal, who was disgusted with her husband, Dovid Hamelech when she

saw him dance with all his might before the aron hakodesh (see Shmuel 2, 16:23). She was punished that she couldn't bear a child. So, we understand that when one is happy with the Torah, he will be rewarded with children.

A member of our *chaburah* didn't have children, and on one Simchas Torah, he danced with all his might with the Torah. Nine months later, he had his first child. The following Simchas Torah, he did the same, and nine months later, he had his second child. A childless friend heard about what happened and wanted to do the same. So, he went to an old-age home where no one knew him, where he wouldn't be embarrassed to dance with all his might, and he danced and honored the Torah immensely. Nine months later, his first child was born.

27. Literally, this means Shemini Atzeres is its own holiday, rather than the final day of Succos.

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 this I can tell you: 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."

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

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

The Rebbe Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l repeated in the name of his father, the Rebbe Reshab zt'l, "We must know that every moment of the 48 hours of Shemini Atzeres

and Simchas Torah is precious, for on those days we can draw buckets of spiritual and material bounty. We get these by dancing."

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

After Simchas Torah

The first twelve days after Simchas Torah are special days. Reb Chaim Palagi (*Sefer Chaim siman 36*) writes, "It's the custom of chassidim to be cautious with their thoughts, speech, and deeds during these twelve days [following Simchas Torah], for they correspond to the twelve months of the year. The righteous stay home on

these twelve days and review what they studied. This is a great *segulah* to receive Hashem's *siyata dishmaya* every day of the year - from the beginning of the year until the end. He will succeed with everything he does, whether in Torah, chassidus, or business."

In the Yom Tov *tefillah* we say, והנחילנו ה' אלקינו...מועדי קדשך, "Hashem gave us as an inheritance...the holy *yomim tovim*..." An inheritance, the Sfas Emes said, is something that remains forever. It isn't something that leaves after a few days. So too, the holidays should always stay with us, even after the holiday is over.

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

The chassid replied, די יום טוב איז נישט אריבער. די יום טוב איז אריין, "The *yom tov* didn't pass. It

entered." The *yom tov* became part of him.

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

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

The Dubno Magid related the following *mashal* to explain why people cry by *Neilah* (and, as we will see, it is related to our topic):

A king had a beloved only daughter. When the time came for her to marry, a matchmaker proposed, "I have an ideal match for your daughter. He resides far away, but he is a prince, the son of a great king. He is wealthy and possesses all the qualities one could desire."

The king agreed to the match, and his daughter got married. Not long after the wedding, the groom expressed his desire to his wife to live in his homeland. She was reluctant to move so far away from her father, but she consented when she saw how important it was to her husband.

Upon arriving in this foreign land, she realized the matchmaker had deceived them. Her husband was not a king's son, nor was he affluent. It was all a charade.

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

One day, they received a letter from the king. "I miss you dearly, and since you aren't visiting me, I've decided to undertake the long journey to visit you." The king informed them of his expected arrival date.

The husband, realizing the need for swift changes, hired workers to clean and decorate his house to make it appear princely. He also started treating his wife kindly so the king wouldn't suspect anything was the matter.

Upon the king's arrival, he was overjoyed with what he saw. He was pleased that he had selected the perfect husband for his daughter.

As the king prepared to return to his palace, the princess recognized that this was her last chance to reveal the truth to her father. So, in a private moment, with tears streaming down her face, she revealed to her father that her husband was not a king's son and had been treating her cruelly.

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

The king told his daughter, "I will live in this city, close to you, and then

your husband will always treat you well."

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

But then we reach *Ne'ilah*, and the King is about to leave, the Yid cries to Hashem and says, "I suffer so much from my body. When You visit, the body

acts nicely to me, but now that You're about to leave, I must tell You that the body is cruel to me and draws me to sin."

As we wrote above, some add to the *mashal* that the king found a solution for his daughter. He would live near his daughter, so his son-in-law would always be kind to her. The *nimshal* is that Hashem says, "Build a *succah*, and I will live together with you. In my presence, the body won't disturb you. And even after *yom tov*, you can take the atmosphere of the *yom tov* with you, and I will remain with you. In My presence, the body will not hold you back from serving Hashem."