



סוכות

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Sukkos

Questions  
On Any  
Subject

## Sukkos - Time of Celebration



**What was the reason for the happiness at the Simchas Beis Hashoeivah celebrations in the Beis Hamikdash (Sukkah 51a-51b)?**



The Simchas Beis Hashoeivah. So first we have to realize that it took place during Sukkos. It's the whole *yomtiv* of Sukkos that is an especial occasion of simchah; it's *Zman Simchaseinu*, and we have to analyze *that*. What is it about?

You know that every *yomtiv* has a name to it. Pesach is *Zman Cheiruseinu*, the *yomtiv* of our freedom. Shavuos is *Zman Matan Toraseinu*, the *yomtiv* of the giving of the Torah. What is Sukkos? Sukkos is just *Zman Simchaseinu*, the *yomtiv* of our happiness. But we have to know, what is the happiness about?

So you might say the *simchah* is that when they went out of Mitzrayim they were protected by Hashem in the Midbar for forty years. Very good. But if that's right, if that's all it is, we should say that. We don't say that; we say '*Zman Simchaseinu*'.

And therefore we have to realize that Sukkos is the celebration of the great joy that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is our Father who provides us with all the happiness of life. That's what Sukkos is for. That's why the Torah calls it *Chag Ha'Asif*, 'The Festival of The Bringing in of the Crops' (Shemos 23:16). Because when the Israelite, the original Jew, brought in the produce from his fields he looked at the blessings that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestowed on him and he felt that he had to express his gratitude to Him. It welled up in his heart and he just *had* to express his happiness and gratitude.

And so Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave them one festival just for that purpose; to be happy in Hashem, to be happy that He is the One who sustains us always. He is the **אֵל וּמַפְרִיֵם לֶכֶל**. He is the One who gave us this harvest and He is the One who always

EasyPrint edition sponsor:

**Please contact us for sponsorship opportunities.**

Call/Text 732.844.3670

gives us our sustenance and all the needs of life. That's *Chag Ha'Asif*.

Now, together with that is tied in also the general recognition of Hashem not only as our Provider but also as the Protector of His people. Like it says, 'You should live in the sukkah for seven days in order to remember **כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם** – *that you dwelt in sukkos in the Wilderness for forty years* (Vayikra 23:43). It means that you didn't have fortified cities to protect you; you were as unprotected as could be when you were in the wilderness, and yet for those forty years you were more secure than any subsequent period in our history. Because Hashem, not only is He our Provider but He's our Sukkah, our Protector.

And so Sukkos is the season when we thank Hashem. That's the *simchah* of Sukkos – *gratitude*; gratitude for everything! And they utilized the occasion in the Beis Hamikdash to come together and to express the heart, the core of that *simchah*. What's the center of the whole *simchah*? The center is that we love Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Not only gratitude but love. Only that the *ahavas Hashem* is stimulated by gratitude. The jumping-off point, the beginning of love of Hashem, is the feeling that Hashem has given us life and all the needs of life.

And so they came together, all the *chachmei hatorah* and the Jewish people, to express their love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's what Simchas Beis Hashoeiva was; it was *ahavas Hashem*. And they sang songs of love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **אִם אָנִי בָּאֵן** – *If Hashem is here, הֲכֵל בָּאֵן* – *then everything is here* (Sukkah 53a). Because everything we have is from Him.

Now, the highest *madreigah*, the highest pinnacle of achievement for a Jew is when he reaches the love of Hashem. That's why it's the very last *shaar*, the last section, of the Chovos Halevovos. The Rambam too, he puts the subject of *ahavas Hashem* at the end of Hilchos Teshuva because he says that it's the highest of all degrees; the Rambam says it *b'feirush*. And so the climax of *Chag Ha'Asif*

and *Zman Simchaseinu* was Simchas Beis Hashoeiva, an especial celebration in the Beis Hamikdash where the nation expressed their love of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

And because of that they were able to draw forth *ruach hakodesh* just like people draw forth water with buckets. **וּשְׁאָבְתֶם מִים בְּשִׂשׂוֹן**. They drew forth waters with joy. Which water? The waters of the spirit that Hakadosh Baruch Hu showered upon them because of their love for Him.

That's why the greatest men, the *chassidim* and *anshei maaseh*, the ones who loved Hashem most dearly, came together and they served as a model for the people by expressing their *ahavas Hashem*. And **הִבִּיטוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְנָהְרוּ**, the people looked at these great men and they were inspired (see Tehillim 34:6); they were exhilarated when they saw how these great men were intoxicated with His love. And it made an impression on all the spectators; the spectators departed feeling that they had drawn buckets full of *ruach hakodesh* that lasted them for the rest of their lives.

That was the heart, the core, the purpose, of Simchas Beis Hashoeiva; the happiness in Hashem and the love of Hashem.

TAPE # 382 (September 1981)

## *Sitting in the Sukkah*

Q:

**What should we think about when we sit in the sukkah?**

A:

When we sit in the sukkah the Torah tells us what our thoughts should be. Hashem says that the reason we sit in the sukkah is, **לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דוֹרוֹתֵיכֶם** – *in order that your generations should know*, **כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם** – *that I put your forefathers into sukkahs, into tents and huts, מִמִּצְרַיִם* – *when I took them out of Egypt* (Vayikra 23:43).

In the early years many of Rav Miller's congregants did not build their own sukkahs. Besides for speaking in the shul all the time about the importance of building a sukkah, one Rosh Hashanah Rav Miller announced that on Sukkos he would personally visit anyone who built a sukkah. This was enough to motivate his congregants, and after only a few years he had to stop visiting the sukkahs because there were simply too many to visit.

\*

On his visits to the sukkahs, he would tactfully point out any detail that was not halachically correct. In one sukkah that did not have proper s'chach he said, "We can eat fruit in this corner here," hinting that the sukkah needed more s'chach.

Adapted from Rav Avigdor Miller: *His Life and His Revolution* by Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger (Judaica Press)

Pay attention. During the forty years in the wilderness the Bnei Yisroel were more secure against foreign enemies than any subsequent time in our history. They lived in an open camp with no fortifications, vulnerable to attack from anyone and yet they were safer than any other time!

Now, had we had fortified cities in the midbar, high walls and people standing on the walls with bows and arrows prepared to shoot at the enemy, maybe. But they had nothing at all.

And all the nations knew that we were carrying all the wealth of Mitzrayim. I always give the same *mashal*. Suppose you go to Harlem or to Bedford Stuyvesant and you make a tent on an empty lot and you want to sleep there for the night. And everybody, all the people who live there, know that you have a pile of money in your tent. What chance do you have to survive?

And it wasn't one night. It wasn't a month or even a year. It happened for forty years! And where did they live? Not in houses. **בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי**! They were in sukkos. A sukkah is not a house. Some flimsy walls, some sticks on top; whatever it was, it was almost nothing at all. That's a protection?

The answer is that it was the most effective of all protections we ever had! The camp of the Am Yisroel was invulnerable because there was a Sukkah overhead. And that was the *ananei kavod*, the Clouds of Glory, the Clouds of the Presence of Hashem, that were protecting them.

And that's what the sukkah that we sit in symbolizes. We sit in the sukkah under the s'chach and we say, "This sukkah is a pretty flimsy protection. There's no roof of masonry and there's no iron door. There's nothing." And yet, that flimsy sukkah overhead represents the idea that it is Hashem who is protecting our nation throughout all the generations.

TAPE #140 (September 1976)

## Bitachon in the Sukkah



**I saw in a sefer that the sukkah is bitachon, that it means bitachon. What does that mean?**



Now, I'm not responsible for everything that every *mechaber* writes in every *sefer* but there's no question that the sukkah teaches us the lesson of *bitachon*. After all, when you go out into the sukkah it's not a protection at all. Two walls and a *tefach*. Two walls and a flimsy roof?! That's a very weak protection; you're not too safe out there.

So if you'll think, as you're sitting in the sukkah, that you're sitting under the protection of Hashem, that's an important lesson we practice when we go out of the house into the flimsy little hut. **ה' מְעוֹן אֶתָּה** – *You're a dwelling for us* (Tehillim 90:1). We live in You; we're being protected by You all the

time. We think that it's our efforts that protect us but it's wrong. Certainly we have to try to be safe against accidents, against predators, against robbers and so on, but we have to know Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One Who guards us.

I once went home at night and I locked up the door – I made sure the door was locked – and then I went to sleep for the night. I slept safe and sound all night. I got up in the morning and couldn't find my keys. I went outside, and the key was sticking in the keyhole, on the outside, all night. Anybody who wanted could have taken out the keys and opened up the door. It was a lesson *min haShamayim*. I was thinking, “You were safe all night. Is it because you locked the door? No, you didn't lock the door. Hashem locked it for you. Hashem is the One Who kept you safe.”

And so the sukkah is a lesson *בְּטַחוּ בְּה' עַד עַד* – Trust in Hashem forever, *כִּי בְיָהּ ה' צוּר עוֹלָמִים* – because in Hashem, that's the everlasting rock (Yeshaya 26:4). It's very important to learn how to trust in Hashem. It doesn't mean you should be careless with your safety but no matter what you do, no matter what precautions you take, always remind yourself Hashem is the One Who is guarding me.

So even though you may live in your brick house all year long and you bolt your doors every night, sitting in the sukkah for seven days teaches us that our brick walls and our iron doors are all just imagination. Because really it is only Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who is protecting us. That's what we're thinking about in the sukkah.

And there's a very great reward for that. *כָּל הַתּוֹלֵה בְּטַחוּנוֹ בְּהַקְרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא* – Anybody who puts his trust in Hashem, *הָיָה לוֹ מַחְסֵה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלְעוֹלָם הַבָּא* – Hashem becomes to him a trust in this world and the Next World (Menachos 29b). The reward for *bitachon* in the Next World is even greater than in this world. It's a very big mitzvah to trust in Hashem. If we learn to live with *bitachon* it's a very big achievement.

And so, yes, among the other symbols the sukkah is also a symbol of *bitachon*.

TAPE # 756 (October 1989)

## Sukkos and Permanence



**I have a technical question, Rabbi. Why is the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah the one place where the Torah uses the word *אֶזְרַח* in describing the one who has to fulfill the mitzvah?**



The *passuk* (Vayikra 23:42) states as follows: *כָּל הָאֶזְרַח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יָשִׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת* – every citizen of Yisroel should dwell in Sukkos. That's a strange word to use. You don't find *eizrach* used like that; every *eizrach* should eat kosher or every *eizrach* should keep Shabbos or every *eizrach* should refrain from shaving with a razor blade. It doesn't say that. It says every Jew, every Yisroel. Only when it comes to Sukkos, it says *eizrach*.

And the answer is *eizrach* means a certified permanent citizen. And so the Torah says, “All of you who feel like an *eizrach*, a real bonafide citizen in this world, a permanent burgher, so make it your business to move out of your permanent home into a temporary dwelling. And that way you'll remind yourself that you're not a permanent citizen here – you're only a visitor in this world.”

You know, it's a big drawback when you're surrounded by a real brick home. Stucco at least is a flimsy thing after all. But suppose you're an *eizrach* and you have a real brick home, a sturdy building! Maybe you even paid off your mortgage. So you begin to think *עַד עַד עַד פֹּה אֶשֶׁב* – I'll be here forever (Tehillim 132:14). Like Alabama; in the Indian language the word Alabama means 'Here I will rest forever'. And therefore you have to be reminded. There's no Alabama in this world! You won't rest here forever. This place is not our home. We're only passing through on the way to the Next World.

And so Hashem says, “You *ezrach*, you who thinks that he’s permanent in this world I want you to move out into the sukkah for seven days and be reminded that this world is only a temporary place! **צֵא מְדִינַת קִבְעַ וְשֵׁב בְּדִירַת אֶרְעֵי** – *Leave your home, and go into the temporary dwelling* (Sukkah 2a).

And so we move out of our affluent homes into a place where there’s almost nothing, a nothing roof, some paper ornaments hanging from the ceiling, whatever it is. And even though you’ll spend money to beautify the sukkah, it’s still nothing like your home. And by taking up residence in your little hut, you’re sitting there and you’re thinking, “What kind of home is this over my head? It’s a pretty weak kind of protection. And it could rain in too. Some sticks, some *s’chach*. And the walls are also not so permanent. If a cold wind is blowing on Sukkos and you have two walls and a *tefach*, you’ll need an overcoat. And even if it’s not cold, the people passing by won’t give you much privacy there. And therefore you’re being reminded every moment that this world is only a **דִּירַת אֶרְעֵי**, a temporary dwelling.

TAPE # 271 (August 1979)

## Women and the Sukkah



**Why are women not included in the mitzvah obligation to dwell in a sukkah?**



The same question is, why don’t women have any mitzvah that has to be done at a certain time?

Now, this we have to understand is a question that’s possible to ask only in America in these times. Because in a normal society a woman has a big family; she has children of all sizes and she is so busy she doesn’t have time to do anything except the mitzvah of raising the family.

Even with all the conveniences of today; you have a washing machine, you have a dishwasher – a milchige and a fleishige dishwasher – you have

electric broilers, you have everything, and still a mother of a family is busy day and night. And so who would be so cruel as to impose upon her the duty of doing *mitzvos* that depend on time?!

And so it’s enough if she does whatever she is obligated to do. That’s more than enough. There’s so much that a Jewish woman has to do when it comes to her family that she can’t have any spare time to look for other things.

Only a man can separate himself from the duties of the family enough to go to the synagogue every morning, for *kriyas shma b’zmano*, to go to at night to *shiurim* to learn Torah and to do time-dependent *mitzvos* like sitting in the sukkah.

Of course his wife is welcome to sit in the sukkah. The fact is that ideally a sukkah should be a place that’s fit for a man to sleep together with his wife in the same sukkah. Certainly! But the obligation of a sukkah you can’t put on a woman because many times she has to be with the little babies in the house and she can’t pull all the little babies out into the sukkah.

And therefore, women are absolved of these *mitzvos* that depend on time.

TAPE # 271 (August 1979)

## Leaving the Sukkah



**Why is it *davka* by the *din* of sukkah that there’s a *halacha* that **מִצְטַעַר פְּטוּר מִן הַסִּכָּה** – someone who is suffering because of the conditions in the sukkah is exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah, while by other *mitzvos* we don’t find such a *halacha*?**



A *mitztaer*, a person who is in distress, is *patur* from the sukkah because it says **בְּסִפְתָּ תֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁבָע יָמִים** – You should dwell there for seven days, and we understand that **תֵּשְׁבוּ כְּעֵין תְּרוּרוֹ** – you should dwell there the same way you dwell in your house (Sukkah 26a). And in your house when something is

In his sukkah Rav Miller slept on two narrow benches that he pushed together. When people asked him if it was comfortable enough he would smile and say that he's just as comfortable as in his home. Unbeknownst to the ones who asked the question, Rav Miller, in his late forties began sleeping on a wooden board (originally the leaf of his dining room table) placed on top of his mattress. And even when he no longer needed it for his back, this board remained his bed, as he found it to be a boon for his spiritual growth.

Adapted from Rav Avigdor Miller: *His Life and His Revolution* by Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger (Judaica Press)

bothering you in the dining room – if there's a water leak onto the table from the ceiling or there are mosquitoes – so you don't stay in the dining room. You go into the bedroom or somewhere else.

The idea is that living in the sukkah is supposed to be a symbol of enjoying the Presence of Hashem. And if the physical aspect is a contradiction to that joy then he can't enjoy the thought of sitting in the presence of

Hashem. And therefore it's common sense – the mitzvah of sukkah requires the *simchah* of being in the presence of Hashem.

TAPE # E-250 (October 2000)

## Rain in the Sukkah



**The Mishna says that rainfall during Sukkos is a *siman klalah*, a bad sign (Taanis 2a). Is that only in Eretz Yisroel or also in *chutz la'aretz*?**



**יְרִידַת גְּשָׁמִים בְּהַג**, if it rains on Sukkos, it's a *siman klalah* anywhere.

In two senses, however. In one sense that it spoils the crops. You see, the *asif*, the grain, was reaped a long time ago but it remains on the fields over the summer months to dry, so now if it's going to rain, it will spoil the grain. So that's in Eretz Yisroel but in America, *lehavdil*, they don't let the grain stand on the field a long time after harvesting. In Eretz Yisroel they did that in the ancient times. And so in that sense it was a *klalah* because the grain spoiled.

But it's also a *klalah* for us too because anything that prevents us from fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah is a great loss. We would prefer to be able to eat in the sukkah always and gain its lessons. And so for us, even in *chuz la'aretz*, even though we're not farmers and we don't have any sheaths of grain standing on the field to be spoiled by the rain, it's a pity when it rains on Sukkos.

That's why the Gemara says that when a Jew walks out of his sukkah because of the rain, he has to walk out of his sukkah with regret. Not that he's happy it's raining; "I'm *patur* from the sukkah now." No, he has to walk out with regret.

That's the sign of a Jew, regret that he can't fulfill the mitzvah. The Gemara says (Avoda Zara 3a) that one day the *goyim* will also have sukkos. *Le'asid lavo* the *goyim* will all make sukkos too. And when it gets too hot or it rains, the *goy* will say, "Look, I'm happy. I'm *patur* from sukkah." That will be the test between a Jew and a *goy*. The Jew is sorry he has to leave the *sukkah*. And therefore it's a *klalah* for us too whenever it rains on Sukkos.

TAPE # E-160 (October 1998)

I remember one year when it rained all night the first night of Sukkos. The Rav took it very seriously, and told us that it was a stern reprimand *min HaShamayim*. "If so many *Yidden* were prevented from fulfilling the mitzvah, then we have to understand that Hashem is telling us something."

R' Dovid Miller

## Sukkah and Exile



**In *birchas hamazon* on Sukkos we pray, הַרְחֵמֵנו הוּא יְקִים לָנוּ אֶת סִכַּת דָּוִד הַנוֹפֶלֶת – The Merciful One should rebuild the fallen Sukkah of Dovid, it means the Beis Hamikdash. What does the Sukkas Dovid have to do with Sukkos per se?**



Why is it that on Sukkos we add “The Merciful One should erect the fallen sukkah of King Dovid”? It means the Beis Hamikdash, that Dovid Hamelech planned and prepared for his son, Shlomo, to build.

And the answer is, the sukkah has a special significance because the sukkah is the symbol of the Jewish nation’s existence in exile – we exist with the most unprotected of circumstances. We are most vulnerable because we are little people compared to all the nations of the world and in exile we surely are vulnerable; we don’t have any army to protect us and we are at the whim, at the pleasure, of all the nations.

And they are trying their best; they have always tried their best. בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ – In every generation they have tried again and again to get rid of us. They have made very big efforts; it is only because people don’t know about history that they forget about these things, they are unaware. But in many generations they have tried their best. Emperor Hadrian tried his best and he was a very powerful man; he had the Roman Empire at his disposal and he tried his best to stamp out the Jewish people. Not to mention Haman and Hitler and all the rest of them.

And so we live in a sukkah in Olam Hazeah and that sukkah seems to be a flimsy existence. But actually it is the strongest kind of dwelling because the sukkah is the promise that the Almighty made that we are going to be forever. He promised that. The nations will come and go but the Am Hashem will endure forever.

That’s what the sukkah represents and that’s why it’s forbidden to make a sukkah with an iron roof, a concrete roof, because *that’s* the lesson. Our sukkah, the *s’chach*, the flimsy little cover, is enough because the *ananei kavod*, the clouds of glory of the *Shechina*, is stronger than any material. The sukkah means that the Jew will be around forever! It doesn’t mean every Jew; individuals may *chalilah* go lost but we are here forever!

Now, because the sukkah is a symbol of our national existence that is assured forever, that is why we have to remind ourselves that part of the picture is lacking. As confident as we are sitting under the protection of Hashem’s *ananei hakavod*, it’s not complete until the sukkah of Dovid is re-established. Even though we are protected in *golus* we want the Beis Hamikdash because without that we’re not a complete nation. And so whenever we say *birchas hamazon* on Sukkos we say those words to remind us of these two principles: We are reminded of our miraculous existence in this world and also that we are looking forward to an even greater future with the rebuilding of the Sukkas Dovid, the Beis Hamikdash.

TAPE # 141 (October 1976)

## The Ushpizin



**The Ushpizin that we say on Sukkos; why do we suddenly invite them in on Sukkos and not other times?**



Why is it that on Sukkos we invite as our guests the great men of antiquity Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov and so on? Why not on Pesach to the *seder* or other times?

The sukkah is a symbol of our national existence that is assured forever; it represents the house that we live in under the watchful Eyes of Hashem. And so inviting in the *Ushpizin* is as follows: It’s like

somebody who moved into a new home; so he has to remind himself there was a friend who laid out a ten thousand dollars loan, another one who laid out another ten thousand – let’s say it is his wife’s parents or maybe an uncle. Without them, he couldn’t have bought the house and so when it comes to making a *chanukas habayis* he calls them in.

And so when we make our sukkos which represent the eternal existence of our nation, we call in the great men who founded our sukkah. The Avos are brought in, the founders of our people, because they are the ones who are responsible for the love that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has for us and for the covenant that He made with us. Hashem made a covenant with Avraham and Yitzchak and Yaakov, and therefore we invite them in.

And because of Dovid and Moshe and Aaron and Yosef all these great men who helped establish our nation. And therefore we invite them into the sukkah, the symbol of our nation’s eternal existence, because that is where they belong – it’s because of their contribution to our nation that we have survived.

TAPE # 141 (October 1976)

## More on the Ushpizin



**We have a tradition that Avraham Avinu will be coming as a guest to our sukkahs on the first night of Yom Tov. How is it possible for Avraham Avinu to be in thousands of sukkahs at one moment?**



Avraham Avinu is in Gan Eden. He’s not קלא כל הארץ כבודו. You have to understand that. So what does it mean that Avraham Avinu will be our guest? It means that the *shem tov*, the *dugmah*, the example and the influence of a man is just like the man himself. We want Avraham’s influence to come into our sukkah and be *mashpi’ah* upon us.

Avraham was a big oived Hashem. Avraham was ready to sacrifice his son for Hashem. He was a tremendous baal chesed. So what we want is that all the shleimus of Avraham Avinu should come into our sukkah and influence us. That’s more important than Avraham Avinu coming into our sukkah. If he came and we didn’t think about anything, if we didn’t think about who Avraham Avinu was, it would be a waste of time, a waste of a visit. But when Avraham’s influence comes, that’s more important than Avraham himself. And that’s the *ikkar*.

Now, when we say that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in the sukkah, that’s a different story. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in the sukkah and you have to know that. וְשִׁכְנִתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – And I will dwell in the midst of the Bnei Yisroel (Shemos 29:45). אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹכְכֶם – “I dwell among you,” says Hashem (Bamidbar 5:3). And it’s true. It’s true that wherever the Jews come together, Hashem is there too; a hundred percent true. But when we say Avraham is in our sukkah, it means that Avraham’s example and influence is in our sukkah. When we invite Avraham into our sukkah we are being *misparallel* to Hashem that we should be *zocheh* to impress upon our minds the influence and the ideals of this great man.

TAPE # E-202 (September 1999)

## The Naanuim



**What is the meaning of shaking the lulav in all different directions? What do we accomplish?**

“On one of my walks with the Rav zatzal I asked him if he says the Ushpizin on Sukkos. He told me that he does say it because he knows that his shver, Rav Lessin, said it in his home and therefore because his rebbetzin would appreciate it, he does it to please the rebbetzin.”

R' Dov Yaakov Markowitz

A:

And the answer is that there are a number of meanings. But one meaning is, the same as when we say *kriyas shema*. ‘*Shema Yisroel ... Hashem Echad*.’ And *Echad* means, ‘You are One – north, south, east, west, above and below; in all directions there’s nobody but You.’ So we point the *lulav* in all directions; it’s exactly the same thing. ‘*Hashem Echad*,’ that’s what the *lulav* says.

And so by waving the *arba minim* in all the directions we’re accomplishing *emunah*. We’re thinking about the power of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in the north, south, east, west. North means He’s in the North Pole. In case you happen to be stranded on the North Pole, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is there with you. If you’re taking a trip to the South Pole, you’ll find Him there too. If you go east to China, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is with you. If you go west. Wherever you’ll go you’ll find Hakadosh Baruch Hu. *Ma’aleh*, if you go up in a spaceship, or *matah*, wherever you go.

And when a person makes the *naanuim* and he recognizes that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the Melech who is in power everywhere, so as a result Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestows on him the results, the good

fortune and happiness that comes as a result of recognizing His power.

TAPE # 427

## Naanuim and Gratitude

Q:

**Are there any special things to think about when I’m shaking the *daled minim*?**

A:

Look; a person shouldn’t just lean back and do the minimum. You’ll just shake this way, shake that way and finished? Let’s say you’re a *frum* person who keeps everything; everything! So you bought a beautiful *esrog*, *bilti murkav*, and you paid good money for it. So now you’re holding a *lulav* and an *esrog*. Is that enough?

Now there’s no question that if a person will take the *arba minim* on Sukkos and shake it and he’s thinking only, “This is what a Jew has to do,” he’s going to get *Olam Haba* for that mitzvah. But that’s not enough; maybe you should be *mechadeish* something in the mitzvah. You have to be a *mechadeish*.

*There was a discernible lack of Jewish pride in the early years, especially in the smaller, less centralized neighborhoods such as East Flatbush where Rav Miller was a rav. One example was the way *arba minim* were carried to shul on Sukkos. People were ashamed to be seen holding this strange-looking religious article, so they would wrap the *lulav* in newspaper and keep the *esrog* in a bag.*

*Rav Miller spoke against this practice and announced in shul that he was inviting everyone to go with him on a “*lulav walk*.” (Other times he called it a “*kiddush Hashem walk*.”) After davening, the entire congregation walked together down the main streets holding their *lulavim* and *esrogim* proudly.*

*Even in the later years in East Flatbush, when observant Jews were no longer embarrassed about carrying a *lulav* and *esrog*, Rav Miller would take a longer roundabout route when he walked home on Sukkos after davening, with a large entourage of *talmidim* and *mispalelim*. He went down the busy Utica Avenue to Linden Boulevard and back up to Snyder Avenue, an area where many non-observant Jews lived. Although his goal was seemingly to make an impression on the onlookers, to show non-observant Jews the pride one should have in Torah and mitzvos, his main objective was actually to strengthen the pride of the marchers themselves.*

Rav Avigdor Miller: His Life and His Revolution  
by Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger (Judaica Press)

When you make the *naanuim*, you should say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, “I’m thanking You Hashem that You gave me a good heart.” You know, many people have sick hearts. They wish they could have your heart! The *medrash* says that the *esrog* is like the heart. So as you hold up the *esrog* you think, “Thank You Hashem for giving me a good solid healthy heart.

“And You gave me good eyes.” Many people have trouble with their eyes. A lady came over to me in the street last week with a little baby and she said, “Rabbi, give my son a blessing please. He’s blind.” Oh, my heart was breaking. My heart was breaking for them. And that’s what the *hadassim* are telling us. The *hadassim* are telling us to say thank You for the eyes.

The *aravos* are the lips, the mouth. “Thank You Hashem that I can talk.” Don’t you see sometimes in the street, people who are talking with their hands. A *rachmanus*.

“You gave me a good backbone.” Many people, *nisht eingedacht, lo aleichem*, are bent over. They have hunchbacks. Their spines are bent. And you have a straight back. Now, that’s something to think about when you pick up the *lulav*. That’s called being *mechadeish* in the mitzvah, putting more into it than the minimum.

And so when you make the *naanuim*, back and forth, back and forth, it means our thanks are to You because it came from You to us. Our thanks are to You because of what’s always coming from You to us. That’s what we’re saying when we shake it back and forth. We shake in all directions because we say, no matter from where the good comes from, it’s only coming from You all the time.

And so you take the *lulav*, that’s your backbone, your *shedrah*, and you take your heart, that’s the *esrog*, and you take the *hadassim* that’s your eyes, and you take the *aravos*, that’s your lips, your mouth, and you take all of these and you say “I dedicate them to You Hashem for what You did for me.” Back and forth, back and forth; that’s what you

think about by the *naanuim*. We say to Hashem, “It’s all coming from You to me and in return, I will use them only for You.”

TAPE # 757 (September 1989)

## Hallel on Sukkos



**Besides for the mitzvah of picking up the *lulav* and *esrog* we also shake it by *Hodu* in Hallel. What should we think when we shake *lulav* by *Hodu*?**



So when you do the *naanuim* tomorrow morning and you say, הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב – We raise you up Hashem for all of the good You’ve done to us, so you start thinking. Didn’t I marry off my daughters well? It wouldn’t be a bad idea to make one *naanuim*

for this son-in-law. “Ay yah yay! I’m thanking You Hashem for this son-in-law.” And by the next *naanuim*, הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, “I’m thanking You Hashem for the next son-in-law.” That’s how to work it. It’s such a very big thing to have married off your children well that you can never thank enough for a good son-in-law or for a good daughter-in-law.

And that’s how you should think when you make the *naanuim*. It shouldn’t just be a mechanical thing.

In various lectures the Rav only mentioned the first three Hodus and the special gratitude for each of his three sons-in-law that he expresses, one by each Hodu. When he was asked privately what he thinks about during the fourth Hodu, sometimes he said he reviews what he thought about by the first three and other times he said that he thanks Hashem that his daughters are still married to these sons-in law.

Adapted from Rav Avigdor Miller: *His Life and His Revolution* by Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger (Judaica Press) Pages 547-548

You think it's silly! It's not silly at all. I do it. Many times I think like this: One *naanuim* is for my oldest son-in-law. *Boruch Hashem* I have a good *eidim*. *Boruch Hashem!* And *boruch Hashem*, I have a good second son-in-law. And *boruch Hashem* for the next *eidim*. *Boruch Hashem*, there's no trouble there. I never hear any *machlokes*. My daughters live in *shalom* with my *eidim*.

*Boruch Hashem*, I'm happy. Such good *eidims*. That's why we make *naanuim*. That's what it means. "I'm thanking You for what You've given to me."

TAPE # 757 (September 1989)

## Chol Hamoed Attitudes



**What is the purpose of Chol Hamoed?**



Chol Hamoed is meant to be an opportunity for people to think over what the Yom Tov is all about. On Yom Tov we're very busy; we're busy bringing *korbanos* and making *seudos* and sometimes we forget to think about the lessons we're supposed to learn from the Yomtiv. And therefore Chol Hamoed is an opportunity to think over what it's all about.

It's very important to think over, "What is it all about? What's Yom Tov all about?!" We're so busy bringing in Yom Tov; there's so much work to do and therefore many times people don't think at all about the lessons of Sukkos. You were too busy; first you were busy building your *sukkah*, and then you were worrying about your *lulav* and *esrog* and so maybe you didn't think about the Sukkos lessons sufficiently.

And therefore you need some time to think it over; and that's what Chol Hamoed is for. It's a few days that give you the opportunity to think things over; you have the time to appreciate the lessons of Sukkos more and that way you finish off the Yomtiv with more inspiration. You can come back into the

second days of Yomtiv with a new inspiration, with the inspiration that you're supposed to get from Sukkos.

TAPE # E-103 (March 1997)

## Chol Hamoed Activities



**How important is it for parents to train their children in *simchas yom tov*?**



Very important. But you have to know what *simchas yom tov* means.

Now some parents think *simchas yom tov* means taking out the children *chol hamoed* for a ride to go to the park. There's nothing wrong with that but that's *simchah*, not *simchas yom tov*.

It's better to train children, even little children, that today is *yomtiv*, today is *chol hamoed*, and to sit down and make a little *mesibah*; even a five minute *mesibah lekovod yontif*. A little gathering, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, Friday afternoon. A little *mesibah* is more important than two hours in the Bronx zoo or who knows where.

Sit down and talk for a couple of minutes about Sukkos and tell the children, "Let's sing a song, *atah bechartanu* or something else."

And then tell them, suggest it, "Aren't we having a great time *kinderlach*?" And they all chime in, "Yes, but can we go to the park now?"

That's excellent. These few minutes have laid a foundation.

TAPE # 91 (September 1975)

## Hoshanos



**What's the purpose of circling around the *bimah* when we do Hoshanos?**

Our shul was fairly narrow and there was only a small amount of space to pass around the bimah – on one side there was a wall, and on the other side a row of benches – so going around for Hoshanas was always a challenge, especially on Hashana Rabbah.

One year it was especially crowded and as the first circuit proceeded, with the Rav of course leading, people were having great difficulty getting around, and were being squeezed terribly. Still, the Hoshanas proceeded. But by the time we were trying to complete the second circuit, people were being crushed; it was just not working. At that point the Rav walked back to his seat and said the rest of the Hashonos at his seat. Most of the people did likewise while a few, with the crowd now reduced, were able to persist and go around.

Later, the following was reported to me by the gabbai, who was present after most of the people had left: The Rav, after the davening, walked to the bimah with his arba minim, and proceeded to walk around five more times! He didn't want to create difficulty or danger for other people and so he went back to his seat during Hoshanos, but after davening he made sure to fulfill the minhag of going around seven times.

R' Dovid Miller



The purpose is we are acting out an ancient form of serving Hashem: וְאַסְבְּבָה אֶת מִזְבְּחֶךָ ה' – I go around Your altar, Hashem (Tehillim 26:6)

The purpose of going around something means, “That’s the center of our lives. That’s our interest.” Just like the kallah goes around the chosson under the chuppah to show that she’s going to dedicate her life to helping the chosson establish a Torah home and serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu together; she’ll dedicate herself to raising up a family who will be under his guidance, and together they’re going to succeed in their lives of service of Hashem, so also we circle the shulchan to show that the Torah is the center of our lives, that the service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the most important of all the themes in our lives.

TAPE # 427 (September 1982)

## Koheles



**Why do we read Koheles on Sukkos?**



The answer is – one answer, I mean – is that because Sukkos is the Chag Ha’asif, it’s a time of affluence. We just took in our crops and we’re successful and happy, so *hishamru lachem* – watch out! וְאַכְלֵתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ ... הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם – When you eat and you’re full, you have to be careful.

And therefore Koheles is the *hishamru lachem*. It teaches you that *hakol hevel*, it’s all nothing. The only thing that matters is *sof davar hakol nishma*; which means that if you’ll utilize your wealth and your happiness, your affluence, for service of Hashem, yes, then it has a place. Otherwise, all the happiness of life is meaningless.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestows happiness for the purpose. וְלִשְׂמֹחָה מַה זֶה עֵשָׂה – What’s the point of happiness? (Koheles 2:2) *Simchah* has to accomplish something. It has to accomplish gratitude and love of Hashem. If *simchah* doesn’t cause you to love Hashem more, then *simchah mah zu oseh* – what good is *simchah*?

And therefore Sukkos time, when people are celebrating the harvest, they’re so full of joy; the granaries are full, they’re bursting with grain. Everybody is happy. It was a very good year!

*Veachalta vesavata!* Oh, watch out now! *Hishamru lachem*; make sure you don't misuse that happiness. That's why you need Koheles.

TAPE # E-160 (October 1998)

## Hoshana Rabbah



**Can the Rav sum up the lesson of Hoshana Rabbah in a few words?**



We'll see tomorrow morning what the theme of Hoshana Rabbah is. The theme is – and it's surprising that most people don't even notice it – the theme of Hoshana Rabbah is rain! You're asking for rain!

The *shatz* stands up and he plaintively prays, **אָנָא הוֹשַׁעֲנָא הוֹשַׁעֲנָא, הוֹשַׁעֲנָא**! He's crying out, **הוֹשַׁעֲנָא הוֹשַׁעֲנָא**! He's crying out and praying for rain. And repeated so many times because that's the theme of the day.

And the custom that the *neviim* instituted of striking the

*Although I did not see this myself because that year I davened in a parallel minyan that had been set up downstairs to relieve the Hoshana Rabbah overcrowding, but I was told that the Rav scolded the shatz for reading so quickly through the Hoshanas. He said that the Hoshanos are unfamiliar words and people need to be given more time to say them properly.*

R' Dovid Miller

the ground with the *aravos*, that's also prayer for rain. It's a form of praying for rain! People don't know what's taking place! They're thinking about everything else except for the most important thing. On Hoshana Rabbah of all the things that we request we are asking for rain!

And we've actually been receiving this happiness for the last few days. The only pity is that it interferes with our *mitzvah* of living in the *sukkah*. Otherwise we

should be internalizing that it's a happiness; a great happiness. Rain means everything that you put into your mouth. Not only the soda – because that's what rain is; it's soda, just without the dirt. Rain means not only that you'll have something to bathe in – and that in itself is a great benefit – but rain means entire generations of people. All of us are eighty percent water. That's what we are, eighty percent rain! So when it rains, generations are descending from the clouds.

Rain is a very great blessing! And we should learn that lesson tomorrow. It's a pity – people talk and talk and talk, for hours they're walking around the *bimah*, talking and walking, talking and walking. And the *chazan* even puts on a *kittel*, only that he doesn't begin to know what he's talking about. The same *shatz* who davened all morning, as soon as he finishes davening, he walks out of the shul and it's raining, and he says, "What a nasty day!" He just got through asking for it! The answer is that he doesn't even know what he's saying.

Suppose you would call up your friend, once and twice, and then hundred times and you said to him, "Please answer me. **הוֹשַׁעֲנָא**! Please come to me! Please answer me.

*The Rov once walked into the shul after davening and saw everyone had gone home, with all the leaves left on the floor. He was upset and said to the person there that the first obligation is derech eretz – not to make a mess – and that there is no need to bang on the ground hard enough for the leaves to fall off.*

Rav Yaakov Y. Hamburger

\*

*I remember watching the Rav fulfill the minhag neviim of hitting the hoshanos on the floor at the end of the hoshana service. He did not whack the Hoshanas onto the floor. He merely touched them softly to fulfill the mitzvah.*

R' Dovid Miller

*Aneini!* I need you. Please come over. Come! Please! Come! הוֹשִׁיעֵנָא!"

Finally he comes over to your house. You're begging incessantly, so finally he comes over and rings the bell. So you go to the door and tell him, "Stop bothering me already!"

What is that about?! You're yelling for hours about rain, rain, rain, and then when the rain comes, you complain about the rain.

It shows us how unthinking the world is. It's a pity that nobody thinks. You have to learn what a great blessing rain is. At least that you should come away with after Hoshana Rabbah.

You should feel some sort of responsibility to appreciate the rain! If you're going to commit yourselves tomorrow morning, like I'm sure you will, to spend a long time – it takes hours in some places – praying for rain, then you have to realize that rain is a great happiness.

And that brings us back to one of our old subjects; גְּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים – *How great is the day when it rains!* Only that we're running out of time for tonight. Time is up, so I wish you all a pleasant Yom Tov. וְשִׂמְחַת בְּרַגְלֵי וְהֵייתָ אֶדְ שְׂמֵחַ.

TAPE # 91 (September 1975)

## Yom Hadin and Hoshana Rabbah



**What is meant when people say that Hoshana Rabbah is the final sealing of the decree that was sealed on Yom Kippur?**



The truth is that the final sealing of the decree is done on Yom Kippur. That's the end. Finished. Hoshana Rabbah is actually only גְּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים. We're being judged for *parnassah*, in the form of water that we need for all food to grow.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu always leaves some little last resort for the losers. So if somebody in that little interval between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah is able to generate a great effort of *teshuvah* he will be able to alleviate to some extent – to some extent – his *gezar din*, his final decree.

But not ordinarily.

Ordinarily, for all practical purposes the *gezar din* is made on Yom Hakippurim. It's only the *kabbalah seforim* that revealed to us that there is a little back door left to get in. Because according to the Gemara it's only that בְּחַג גְּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים – that on Sukkos we are only judged for water, for *parnassah*, and that's all.

So a person should never wait for Hoshana Rabbah. Never delay doing *teshuvah*. A person has to make himself very busy on Yom Kippur doing *teshuvah* and he shouldn't rely on Hoshana Rabbah.

TAPE # 140 (September 1976)

## Shemini Atzeres



**Why is Shemini Atzeres considered a separate holiday, separate from Sukkos? (Rosh Hashana 4b)**



You have to know first that Shavuot is the *atzeres* for Pesach; a few weeks after Pesach we come back to the Beis Hamikdash for a separate *yomtiv* to recap the lessons of Pesach. And the same thing, Shemini Atzeres is the *atzeres* for Sukkos, for

Now, there are many good questions, but the time is up. And so, everyone should get a good *tzetel*, a *piska tava*. Gmar *chasimah tovah* on Hoshana Rabbah. Hashem should give you a year of happiness. וְשִׂמְחַת בְּרַגְלֵי וְהֵייתָ אֶדְ שְׂמֵחַ. Next Thursday night, Hoshana Rabbah, there will be no lecture.

End of Tape # E-202  
(September 23, 1999)

recapping its lessons. Shemini Atzeres really should be a while after Sukkos; it should be a few weeks later – an opportunity to come back to the Beis Hamikdash and review all of the Sukkos lessons – but the Gemara says that right after Sukkos the winter season begins. It's the rainy season and if you go home now you won't be able to come back a month or two later because the roads might be impassable. And therefore the Torah says, make the *atzeres* of Sukkos right after Sukkos. Pesach is in the springtime so you can come back a few weeks later for Shavuot and think over the Pesach lessons then. But on Sukkos we have Shemini Atzeres right away in order to think things over.

And so Shemini Atzeres, that's the day for cementing the lessons into our minds. It's like a סדר הכל; a final review – “What did I accomplish?”

It's like חסידים ראשונים היו שוהים שעה אחת אחר תפלתם – the *tzaddikim* used to stand a long *shemoneh esrei*, but when they finished, they didn't just pick up and leave. They spent a long time thinking back, “What did we accomplish in our *shemoneh esrei*? What places did we not think enough? What places were we *mechadesh chiddushim* in our davening?” They try to recall, and they make a *cheshbon*, a סדר הכל, a sum total of their *shemoneh esrei*.

And so on Shemini Atzeres we make a סדר הכל; we review all the lessons of Sukkos and cement them into our minds.

TAPE # E-103 (April 1997)

## The Joy of Shemini Atzeres



**Can the Rav talk to us a little about the *avodah* of Shemini Atzeres?**



Shemini Atzeres is mentioned in the Torah with a hint; it says ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם – On the eighth day it should be for you a special day of coming together (Bamidbar 29:35). It's a hint that

although all the days of Sukkos were days of rejoicing, but the eighth day, that is the climax, the peak of our happiness.

And the reason is, because now, after so many days of closeness, we are saying farewell finally. Because we came into these days with Rosh Hashana and then Yom Kippur too; we were concentrating on our *tefillos* and many people are praying better now than they did before because they were practicing up with the *selichos* and all the *tefillos*. And we are more aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we are closer to Him because of Rosh Hoshana and Yom Kippur and the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*. Especially in the ancient days, when they came to Yerushalayim there was an especial closeness. And then the Yom Tov of Sukkos and finally Shemini Atzeres.

Now, it's true that Shemini Atzeres has a certain element of sadness because you are about to take leave. But you know, when you are about to take leave of your beloved, then the love swells up in your breast more than before because now you are saying farewell.

Let's say you are leaving your best friend and you won't see him for some time – of course Hakadosh Baruch Hu is always around but to that especial measure of presence of the Shechinah we are bidding farewell now. And so, Shemini Atzeres is לכם, it's for you. The *chachomim* say it's the time of the greatest love between Hashem and His people. And although on all days of Sukkos we offer seventy offerings, seventy oxen, for the welfare of the seventy nations of the world, but on Shemini Atzeres Hashem says, “Today is different. Today bring only one *korban*, something special between Me and you.”

And our Sages compare it to a king who made a big banquet and he invited all the nobles. And after the banquet was over when the tables were littered with the remains of the banquet and all the dukes and lords went home, so the king spied his best friend who was still lingering around; his friend

didn't want to leave. Everybody else left but the friend is still lingering.

So the king said, "Come over here; let's sit down and make a meal just between me and you. It'll be a banquet of love between us two." And that is what Shemini Atzeres means, a special love banquet between us and Hashem.

In *chutz l'aaretz* because we are in exile and we live among gentiles, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu comforts us with one more day; we dance on Simchas Torah too. In Eretz Yisroel however they finished. So Shemini Atzeres, that's the last day and that is why it is such an important occasion.

TAPE # 141 (October 1976)

## Simchas Torah



**How would the Rav say we should best use the dancing and singing on Simchas Torah in order to serve Hashem?**



On Simchas Torah we get together and we dance and we sing. But you have to know that for most people, this singing is a wasted opportunity. Let's say they're singing **כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה וְדָבַר ה'** **מִירוּשָׁלַם**. (*The Rav zatzal sang the niggun here*). And they're dancing, singing; it's a pity, it's a waste of time. No; it's not a waste of time – it doesn't have to be a waste. The fact that you're repeating the words should be utilized by you. Each time you say it you're thinking "From Tziyon someday will come forth the Torah." And each time, you say it with conviction, with the intention that it should be deeper and deeper impressed into your *neshamah* that **כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה**, a time will come when the Torah will come out of Tziyon. You'll see what's going to happen one day. It will be tremendous. A whole torrent of Torah will flow out of Tziyon, and the *devar Hashem* will come forth from Yerushalayim.

Again and again. Again and again you say the words. But this time you'll say the words with a different intent. Not because you want to hear the *niggun* again; not because you want to maintain the tune. No, you want to maintain *the words*! You want to put those words into your mind; you want it to go in so deep that you become a new personality. So you say the words over and over again. And so too all those songs which are *shirei kodesh* – you have to get those words into your head.

That's why it's not good to have a *niggun* without words. No, it should be with words. And you say the words over and over again. And each time, as you walk and stamp and dance, you're stamping the words into your heart. With each stamp, you bang it into your heart deeper and deeper. That's the way to celebrate Simchas Torah, so that when Simchas Torah is over, you're not just tired and worn out; but after Simchas Torah you're not the same person anymore! You're a *ben aliyah*. You have practiced that great principle of making your mind follow your words.

TAPE E-202 (September 1999)

## Isru Chag



**What's this idea of Isru Chag; of celebrating Yom Tov on the day after Yom Tov?**



In Mesichta Sukkah (45b) it says like this: **כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה אֶסוּר לָחֵג בְּאֲכִילָה וּשְׂתִיָּה** – *Anybody who makes an addition to Yom Tov by eating and drinking something additional*, **מֵעֵלָה עָלָיו הַבְּתוּב** – *the Torah considers it for him*, **בְּאֵלוֹ בְּנֵה מִזְבֵּחַ** – *as if he built an altar to Hashem*, **וְהִקְרִיב עָלָיו קָרְבָן** – *and he offered an offering*. Now, that doesn't make sense! The day after *yomtiv*, you're going to bring an offering?! But It's all over! Everybody has gone home!

And the answer is that you *haven't* gone home yet! You're still in the aura, in the atmosphere of the *yomtiv* because you hate to part with *yomtiv*!

You know, when *yomtiv* comes to an end we're not required to do more – it's all over. And some people are even looking through the window and they're counting the stars that are visible to know when *yomtiv* is finished. But here is a man who long after *yomtiv* is over – actually it's the day after *yomtiv* and he has to go to work already – but before he sets out to go to work in the morning, he puts on his breakfast table a bottle of wine. He doesn't have time to drink much but he pours out a little thimble-full of wine and he also adds one more thing to his breakfast that he ordinarily wouldn't eat. And why is he doing that? He's doing it in honor of the *yomtiv* that just passed by.

Now, to us it seems like a futile expression because after all it's not *yomtiv*. Last night was *havdalah*; it's all over. But not for him! This man is still adding to the *simchas yom tov*. By demonstrating his affection for the past *yomtiv*, by showing that it still lingers in his memory he demonstrates an affection for the *yomtiv* and its lessons.

And the Gemara is telling us that it's not considered a small thing at all. Adding beyond the line of duty is such an achievement that it's as if he has built a *mizbeach* and brought an offering to Hashem. That's the greatness of *Isru Chag*.

TAPE # 584 (January 1986)



**Why is it that the month of Cheshvan doesn't have any holidays in it or even any fast days?**



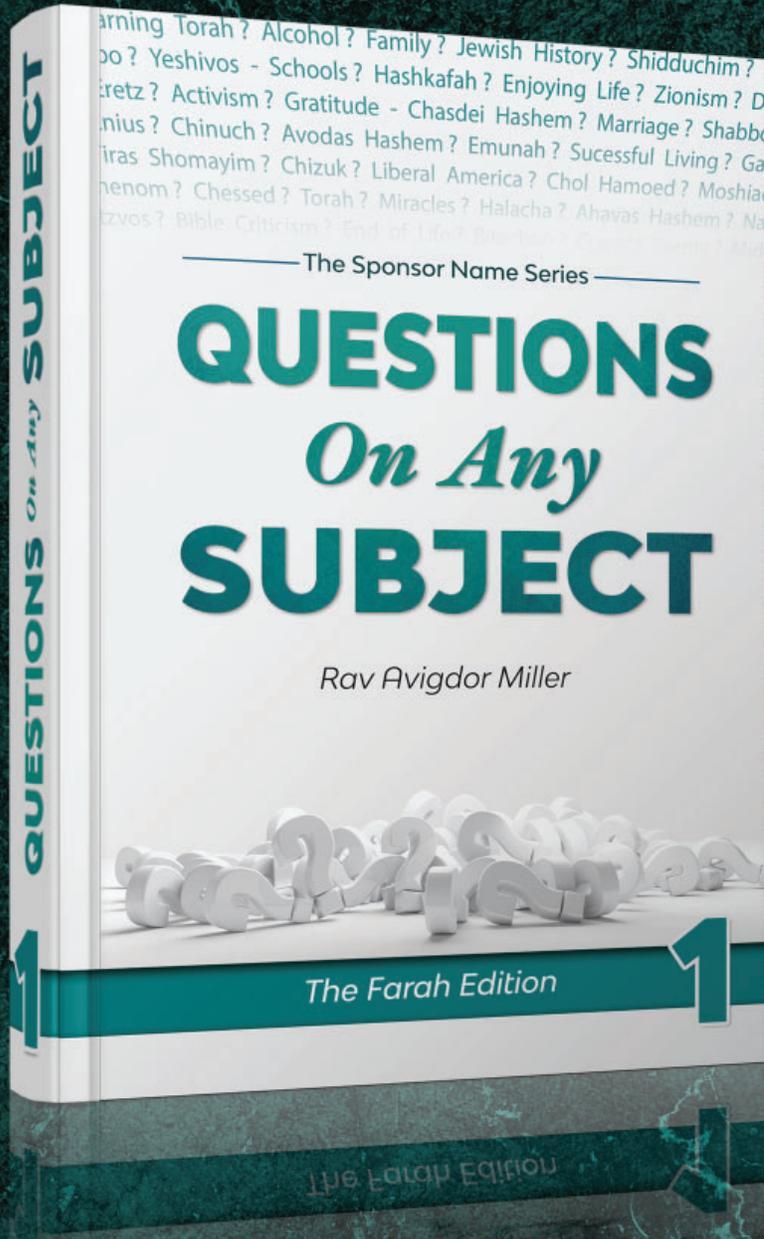
And the answer is that Cheshvan comes right after the month of Tishrei. And since we lost so much time learning, so we need time to make it up. You know, if you learn every day with groups of *bochurim* in the *yeshivah*, your heart hurts because of all the learning that goes lost. Now it's Rosh Hashanah, now it's Yom Kippur, now it's Sukkos. Your heart hurts you – you're missing so much.

And if you're a businessman you lose out a lot. If you work for a company, your boss is getting more sour with you every day. He sees you're taking off for this *yomtiv* and this holiday. You need a lot of alibis to explain that!

So finally Cheshvan comes along and it's a solid month of achievement. You can work every day; you can learn every day. And that's a great blessing, a great opportunity for making progress. No *yomim tovim*, no fast days, there's a lot of time to achieve.

Now, if you have a better explanation, go ahead, why not?

TAPE # 144 (October 1976)



In Stores  
*This Chanukah*  
Be'ezras Hashem