



AT THE ARTSCROLL YOM TOV TABLE

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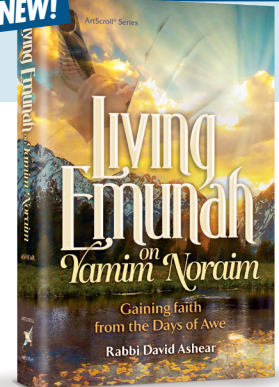
PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

SUCCOS

NOT SO FLIMSY

Living Emunah on Yamim Noraim by Rabbi David Ashear

NEW!



Hashem is the *Shomer Yisrael*, the Guardian of Israel (*Tehillim* 121:4). He protects us and watches over us.

On the festival of Succos, we fulfill the great mitzvah of dwelling in the *succah*. The *s'chach* represents Hashem's protection over us. One might ask why something so flimsy and insubstantial is the symbol of Hashem's protection. Shouldn't it be something more substantial, perhaps brick or iron? The simple explanation is that we don't need any material shield, because Hashem Himself is protecting us.

Rabbi Isseroff* made a wedding for his son in Eretz Yisrael during the Covid-19 epidemic. He made sure to adhere to all guidelines and regulations, and only a few family members and friends were in attendance.

The police came to check up on the wedding at the beginning of the *chuppah*. They looked around, seemed satisfied with what they saw, and left peacefully. But later, during the dancing, they returned and brought the wedding to an abrupt end. They cornered the *chassan* and *kallah* and pointed a gun at them. Rabbi Isseroff was carted off to jail, where a hostile police officer verbally abused him. The *chassan* and *kallah* were released but were fined 10,000 *shekalim*.

News of this fiasco spread quickly, and major efforts were made to get the rabbi out of jail. He was finally released in the wee hours of the morning. It was an experience the family hoped they would quickly forget.

Fast forward seven months.

Rabbi Isseroff came home on Friday morning,

Erev Shabbos Shuvah, to prepare a speech that he would deliver to his congregation the next day. Before beginning to write, he listened to his voice messages.

"This is Reuven Klein.* I wanted to call months ago to ask for your forgiveness," said a voice he did not recognize. "I am the one who called the police on your wedding, and I have had no rest since. Please, I am begging you to forgive me."

At that moment, Rabbi Isseroff made the decision to change the subject of his speech, and he worked for the next few hours on a *derashah* about forgiving people. First, he read about how much Hashem appreciates when we forgive and how He forgives us when we forgive others. Then he read from a *sefer*, *Yarei'ach L'Moadim* by Rav Yerucham Olshin, elaborating on a segment of the *Mesillas Yesharim* in Chapter 19, and became very inspired.

Only then did he return the call.

"I commend you for admitting your wrongdoing and asking for forgiveness," he said.

Reuven said he called the police because he thought the wedding was violating public health rules. "I'm in my twenties, and ever since I informed on you, I stopped getting *shidduch* suggestions. Until that point, I was actively dating. I never had a problem before. But in the past seven months, I didn't get a single call."

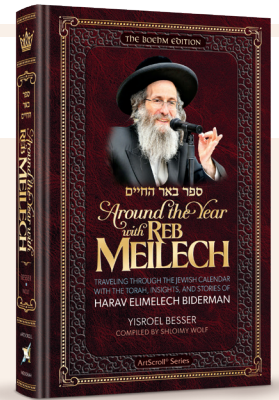
"I forgive you," said Rabbi Isseroff, but added



WHY IS SOMETHING SO FLIMSY THE SYMBOL OF HIS PROTECTION?

*names have been changed

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The very first Mishnah in *Masechta Succah* tells us that a succah cannot be higher than twenty *amos*.

One of the reasons the Gemara gives is that if a succah would be higher than twenty *amos*, the person would be sitting in the shade of the *defanos*, the walls of the succah, and not the *s'chach*.

The *defanos* cannot be too high, says the Aruch LaNer, because the wise person sits in the succah and raises his eyes to contemplate the *s'chach*, perceiving that it — the symbol of the *Hashgachah* that hovers above each and every person — is the *ikkar*, the primary aspect, of the mitzvah.

The walls represent the tangible, visible experience of this world, but they are not reality. The goal of the succah is to allow us to see the *s'chach* and ponder its message.

Reb Meilech moves his hands, as if tapping the four walls, and then raises his eyes. "Defanos here, defanos there, this phone call I should have made, that person I should have met... no, look up and see the truth, that the Basheffer says, 'Ich feer di velt, I run the world' — there is only Hashgachah, and more

Hashgachah. Look up and see the sky, because the more you look up, the more you can see reality," he says.

And this clarity brings us to *simchah*, to true inner joy.

The Gemara (*Succah* 2a) states: "Go out of your permanent dwelling." This means, says the Sfas Emes, to let go of your attachment to wealth and possessions, and enter into His embrace. That's why this Yom Tov is



Reb Meilech Biderman

TRUE SUCCESS MEANS BEING ABLE TO DISCONNECT

zman simchaseinu, our time of rejoicing, for there is no joy like the joy of one who truly has faith in Hashem, as the Chovos HaLevavos writes.

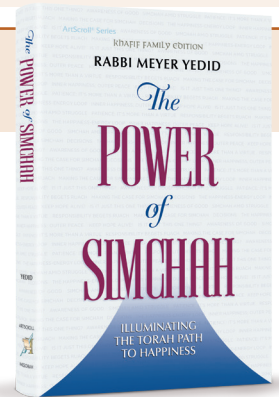
Therefore, concludes the Sfas Emes, we daven for the year ahead throughout the days of this Yom Tov, crying *Hosha na* each morning, asking for health, sustenance, peace, and blessing, all that a person needs in life. During these days, when peo-

ple see clearly that the source of their success lies not in the field or storehouse, but only in the benevolence of the Ribbono Shel Olam, then they can ask that the *berachah* never cease.

Using this concept, Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explained why branches or trees that are connected to the ground are unacceptable for use as *s'chach*. The person is satisfied and content, having just completed months of work, harvesting the field and gathering the produce that it has yielded.

Remember, we tell him, do not remain attached to the ground! Remember that true success means being able to disconnect. To symbolize this, we make *s'chach* — a main aspect of the succah — out of those branches that have been detached from their source!

It is in the temporary dwelling, the place where we sit surrounded by pure faith, that we can be happiest of all. 📖



Simchah is not merely about having a good feeling about yourself; it affects nearly every area of life.

Let's discuss how to make simchah a reality in our lives.

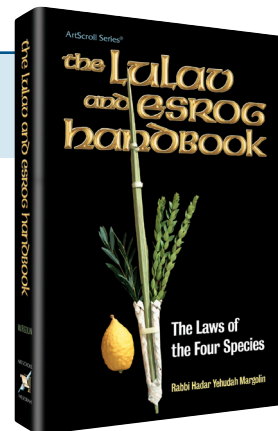
We begin with the words of the *Chovot HaLevavot* in his famous introduction to *Shaar HaBechinah*. He asks why, although Hashem has showered humanity with so much kindness — every person has received, and continues to receive, tremendous blessing that they didn't pay for and don't necessarily deserve — do people often not recognize or appreciate how good their lives are? Why aren't we enjoying the blessings we

receive from Hashem?

The first reason, says the *Chovot HaLevavot*, is that people are so busy trying to find more pleasure that they cannot enjoy what they already have.

There's a cycle of hunger for pleasure. It starts with a person developing a need for something. While he's hankering for that new thing, he's generally not going to enjoy what he has, because he's waiting for his desire to be fulfilled. But even when he gets that new thing, his pleasure from

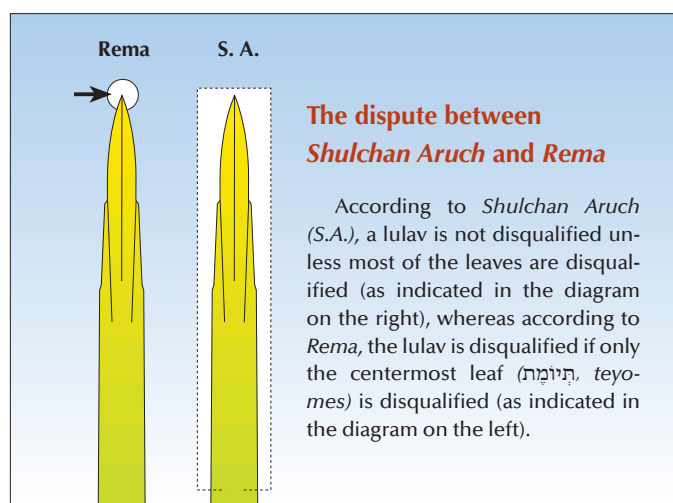
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The Fundamental Dispute between *Shulchan Aruch* and *Rema*

There is a fundamental dispute between the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Rema* which applies to many of the disqualifications regarding lulav. According to the *Shulchan Aruch* (645:3; this is also the opinion of the majority of the earlier authorities [*Rishonim*]), the lulav is disqualified only when the majority of its leaves are affected by a disqualifying problem. According to this view, virtually all lulavim available today may be used.

Rema, however, follows the opinion of those *Ris-*



honim who disqualify the lulav even when only the תיוֹמָה [*teyomes*], the centermost double leaf — which is the highest of the three central leaves growing out of the top of the central spine (שְׁדֵרָה, *shidrah*) of the lulav — is affected.

The accepted Ashkenazi practice accords with the ruling of *Rema*. We will therefore explain all the disqualifications as applying to the *teyomes*.

תיוֹמָה / The *teyomes*

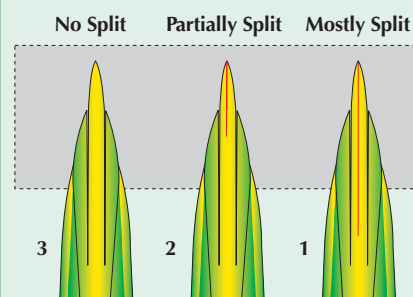
Each leaf of a lulav grows as a folded double-leaf, connected in back and unattached in front. These leaves grow out of the sides and top of a spinelike center known as the שְׁדֵרָה, *shidrah*. The central double-leaf that grows out of the top of the *shidrah* (usually the middle-most of three central leaves) is known as the *teyomes* (*Rema* 645:3).

A split *teyomes*

If the *teyomes* is split most of the way down the leaf (נִחְלָקָה, *nechlekeh hateyomes*), the lulav is disqualified for use on the first day of Succos and one using such a lulav on *Yom Tov Shen*i may not recite the *berachah* (*Gra* and *Mishnah Berurah*). The lulav may be used, with a *berachah*, on Chol HaMoed (*Mishnah Berurah* §17).

When the *shidrah* ends in two leaves rather than three, both are considered the *teyomes*, and even if only one of them is split most of the way, the lulav is disqualified (*Mishnah Berurah* §15).

A split *teyomes*



1. When a majority of the *teyomes* is split, the lulav is disqualified for use on the first day of Succos. It may be used on the other days, but is not desirable.
2. When a minority of the *teyomes* is split, the lulav is kosher for use on all the days. Nevertheless, it is not ideal.
3. An ideal lulav has a *teyomes* that is not split at all.

The ideal *teyomes*

Some disqualify a *teyomes* with a slight split, reasoning that as the lulav is waved, the split will increase until most (or all) of the *teyomes* is split. Ideally, one should take this view into account (*Rema*; however *Mishnah Berurah* §19 writes that according to the letter of the law it is unnecessary to take this view into account). Although the *Taz* understands that, even according to the stringent opinion, only a split that is a טֶפַח, [*tefach*], handsbreadth, or more in length affects the lulav, the *Chayei Adam* understands this opinion to restrict using a lulav with a split of *any* size in its *teyomes*. Accordingly, many look for a lulav whose *teyomes* is completely closed.

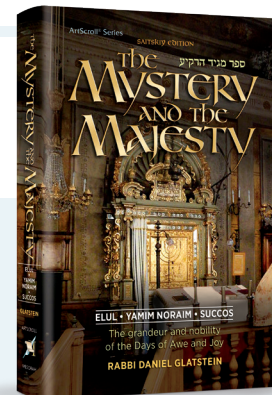
Gluing a split *teyomes*

Several of the later *poskim* (*Maharsham* in *Daas Torah*, R' S. Z. Auerbach, and R' Y. Y. Fisher [in his approbation to *Arbaas HaMinim*]) state that the reason for avoiding a lulav whose *teyomes* is partially split is the fear that the split will spread as the lulav is used. They therefore assert that if a partially-split

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THE SANCTITY OF THE BEIS HAMIKDASH IN THE SUCCAH

Culled from *The Mystery and the Majesty* by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein



The following excerpt briefly covers the essentials of an essay entitled, *The Sanctity of the Beis HaMikdash in the Succah*.

Why Is *לשכון שמו* Omitted from Succos?

Analyzing the *pesukim* regarding the *Moadim* we encounter an anomaly that warrants exploration. Regarding Pesach, the verse states, *וַיִּבְחַת פֶּסַח לָהּ אֱלֹקֶיךָ, צֹאן וּבָקָר בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ* *You shall slaughter the pesach-offering to Hashem, your God... in the place where Hashem will choose to rest His Name (Devarim 16:2)*. The Torah tells us here that the Beis HaMikdash served as a place for the *Shechinah*, the Presence of Hashem, to rest. The Torah continues, commenting about the Yom Tov of Shavuot: *וְשִׂמְחַת לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ ... בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ* *You shall rejoice before Hashem, your God...in the place that Hashem, your God, will choose to rest His Name (ibid., 16:11)*. Again, the Torah is telling us that the Beis HaMikdash is the location that Hashem selected for *hashra'as HaShechinah*. Finally, we come to the commandment regarding the Yom Tov of Succos, which states, *שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תָּחֹג לָהּ אֱלֹקֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל תְּבוּאָתְךָ וּבְכָל מַעֲשֶׂה יָדֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אֹדֵן* *A seven-day period shall you celebrate to Hashem, your God, in the place*

that Hashem, your God, will choose, for Hashem will have blessed you in all your crop and in all your handiwork, and you will be completely joyous (ibid., 16:15). The *Meshech Chochmah* points out that while here the Torah identifies the Beis HaMikdash as “the place that Hashem ... will choose,” the *pasuk* does not mention that the Beis HaMikdash serves as the resting place of the *Shechinah*. The words *לשכון שמו* are conspicuously absent.

Why does the Torah deviate from the terminology established in the verses regarding Pesach and Shavuot?

The Shechinah Rests on the Succah

Rav Yerucham Olshin cites *Chessed L'Avraham* and *Sfas Emes* who note that the halachah taught in the *mishnah* in *Succah* that the minimum height of a *succah* is ten *tefachim*, handbreadths, is predicated on the teaching of the Gemara that the *Shechinah* never descends within ten *tefachim* from the ground. Thus, the *succah* has this

height requirement so that the *Shechinah* may attach itself to it.

This facet of the mitzvah of *succah* requires further analysis. There is no other *mitzvah d'Oraisa* that must be performed at a height of at least ten *tefachim* from the ground so that the *Shechinah* can rest on the mitzvah item. Let us determine why the *succah* is specifically intended to be the resting place of the *Shechinah*.

Hashem, Please Rebuild the Fallen Succah of David

On Succos we add *HaRachaman* in *Bircas HaMazon*, asking Hashem to rebuild *Succas David hanofeles*, the fallen *Succah* of David HaMelch, a reference to the Beis HaMikdash.

The *HaRachaman* we add on Shabbos is most appropriate because Shabbos is considered *me'ein Olam Haba*, a semblance of the World to Come. We therefore add the request that Hashem bequeath to us the day that is totally Shabbos and peace forever, referring to *Olam Haba*. The *HaRachamans* that are added on Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, and Rosh Hashanah all reflect the characteristic of the day. But why is the *HaRachaman* of *Succas David hanofeles* added to the *bentching* on Succos? There is no obvious connection between the Yom Tov of Succos and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash.

To explain this difficulty as well as to illuminate the unique spiritual quality of Succos, the *Shem MiShmuel* introduces us to a concept that is fundamental to our understanding of this Yom Tov. The *succah*, he writes, is a model of the Beis HaMikdash. This small structure that we construct outside of our homes is itself a microcosm of the *Mishkan* and the Beis HaMikdash. (For an in-depth analysis of this concept, see pages 293-306 of the book.)

Yaakov Avinu Is the Counterpart of Succos

The Tur writes a fascinating comment in the name of his brother, stating that Avraham Avinu is *kneged* Pesach, as he hosted the *malachim* on Pesach. Yitzchak Avinu is *kneged* Shavuot, as the *shofar* of Har Sinai came from the ram of Yitzchak. Yaakov Avinu is *kneged* Succos because he made “succos” for his

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Rav Yerucham Olshin

THE SUCCAH IS A MODEL OF THE BEIS HAMIKDASH.

cattle. The Belzer Rebbe adds an additional dimension: Yaakov Avinu symbolizes Succos because he was the only person who was able to achieve *kedushas Beis HaMikdash* in a location other than the Har HaBayis. When Yaakov went to sleep, the *Makom HaMikdash* came to him and he achieved *kedushas haMikdash she-lo b'mikomo*. This is exactly what the *succah* is: *Kedushas Mikdash* in a location other than the Har HaBayis.

Utilizing this new perspective of the *succah*, Rav Yerucham answers the question of the *Meshech Chochmah* that we asked above. Why, when teaching us about Pesach and Shavuos, does the Torah tell us that the Beis HaMikdash serves *lishakein shmo sham*, so that Hashem can dwell there, while in the discussion of Succos this phrase is omitted? It is because on Succos the Mikdash is not a requirement for *hashra'as haShechinah*, because the *Shechinah* is present in our own *succah*! The *succah* is, in essence, a model of the Mikdash, and therefore *lishakein shmo sham* applies to our own *succah*! We still go to the Mikdash for the mitzvah of *aliyah l'regel* and to bring *korbanos*, but the element of *lishakein shmo sham* does not apply on Succos, since that can be achieved at home, in our very own *succah*.

With this understanding, it is clear why the most appropriate *tefillah* on Succos is that Hashem should build *succas David hanofeles*. We were *zocheh* to build a *mikdash me'at*, the *succah* in which Hashem dwells and which is a microcosm of the Mikdash. We *daven* that in the *zechus* of our efforts, the Ribbono shel Olam should bless us to see the restoration of the ultimate Mikdash, the Third Beis HaMikdash, speedily in our days! 🌟

Mazel Tov!

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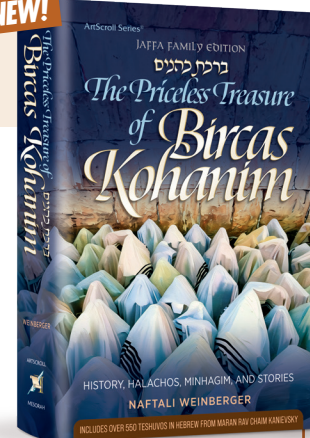
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In Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, New Jersey, during the lifetimes of the yeshivah's distinguished founder, R' Aharon Kotler, and his son R' Shneur, the yeshivah would daven Shacharis (including the Torah reading) and Mussaf, make Kiddush, and then have *hakafos*. Since there was no Kiddush before Mussaf (and therefore no concern of intoxication), the Kohanim performed Bircas Kohanim only during Mussaf, as on every Yom Tov.

At some point, the yeshivah switched to holding the Kiddush and *hakafos* between Shacharis and Mussaf. When that change was implemented, opening the possibility of people becoming intoxicated before Mussaf, Bircas Kohanim was moved to Shacharis. However, there were those who preferred the original schedule, and several "side" minyanim were formed, in which Kiddush was not made before Mussaf. The question now arose: Should Bircas Kohanim in those minyanim be performed during Shacharis or Mussaf?

R' Yaakov Ephraim HaKohen Forchheimer, esteemed *posek* of Beth Medrash Govoha, attended one of those minyanim, and upon his sug-

gestion the decision was made to perform Bircas Kohanim during both Shacharis and Mussaf. (R' Forchheimer is of Yekkish descent and davened for many years in Khal Adas Yeshurun of Washington Heights, where he *duchaned* on Simchas Torah during both Shacharis and Mussaf, in accordance with the German custom.) This practice continues until today in various minyanim of Beth Medrash Govoha (most notably the

SHOULD BIRCAS KOHANIM BE PERFORMED DURING SHACHARIS OR MUSSAF?



R' Yaakov Ephraim Forchheimer

minyan of R' Yehoshua Krupenia, a son-in-law of R' Shneur Kotler).

This author spoke to R' Forchheimer, who clarified that his ruling was only for Simchas Torah, not other Yamim Tovim, and is meant only for minyanim that were newly established or that took place in private residences; it is for the purpose of satisfying all the differing customs among the congregants as to whether Bircas Kohanim should be

performed during Shacharis or Mussaf. Also, it is applicable only if there is no Kiddush before Mussaf.

One Simchas Torah, I davened at a *netz* minyan in Lakewood that took place in a private residence, and there was no break for Kiddush between Shacharis and Mussaf. As might be expected, a lively discussion erupted as to when Bircas Kohanim should be performed. The organizer of the minyan asked me to clarify the position of R' Chaim Kanievsky on this matter, and when I later discussed the question with R' Chaim, I mentioned the ruling of R' Forchheimer. R' Chaim agreed with that ruling and added that in the case of a newly formed minyan that did not have an existing custom, it would be permissible to perform Bircas Kohanim on Simchas Torah (but not other Festivals) during both Shacharis and Mussaf, provided that there is no concern of intoxication. If the minyan already has an existing *minhag*, however, they should not change it. 📖

THE YOMI SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEKS OF SUCCOS TO NOACH:

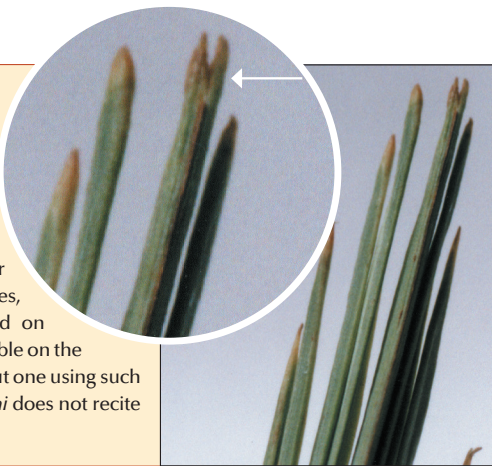
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DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 114	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 115	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 116	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 117	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 118	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 119	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 120	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 121	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 122	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 123	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 124	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 125	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 126	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 127	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 128	DAF YOMI: Bava Basra 129
YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 28	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 29	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 30	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 31	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 32	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 33	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 34	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 35	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 36	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 37	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 38	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 39	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 40	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 41	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Orlah 42	YERUSHALMI DAF YOMI: Bikkurim 1
MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 6:8-7:1	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 7:2-3	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 7:4-5	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 7:6-7	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 7:8-9	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 7:10-11	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 8:1-2	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 8:3-4	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 8:5-6	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 8:7-8	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 8:9-9:1	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 9:2-3	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 9:4-5	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 9:6-7	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 9:8-9	MISHNAH YOMI: Bava Metzia 9:10-11
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										KITZUR SHULCHAN ARUCH YOMI: 3:2-End					
										KITZUR SHULCHAN ARUCH YOMI: 4:1-5:1					
										KITZUR SHULCHAN ARUCH YOMI: 5:2-8					
										KITZUR SHULCHAN ARUCH YOMI: 5:9-16					

teyomes is glued together, the lulav is perfectly acceptable.

The law regarding a cracked shofar seems to support this opinion. *Shulchan Aruch* (586:8) cites an opinion that disqualifies a shofar with a lengthwise crack of any size, because the force of blowing into the shofar will tend to lengthen the crack. However, if the crack is tightly bound so that it will not lengthen, the shofar is kosher. Apparently, the same can be said regarding a split *teyomes*. According to R' Auerbach (in a conversation with R' Rubin, as related by the latter to the author), this applies only to an ordinary split, not to the *הַמְנָק* [*himnak*] split discussed in the next paragraph.

A *himnak* split

If the two parts of the *teyomes* leaf are split and separated (in the shape of a Y or a V), so that they appear like two separate leaves, the lulav is disqualified on the first day but acceptable on the other days of Succos (but one using such a lulav on *Yom Tov Shenit* does not recite the *berachah*).



נִסְדָּק כְּהַמְנָק / A *Himnak* Split

We have established in the previous section that a partially split *teyomes* is kosher, and the lulav is disqualified only when a majority of the *teyomes* is split. This applies only if the two sides of the *teyomes* remain close to one another. If, however, the two sides of the *teyomes* are separated, so that they look like two separate leaves, the lulav is disqualified (*Shulchan Aruch* 645:7). This separation is called *nisdak k'himnak*, "split like a *himnak*," and one should be very careful to avoid it (*Mishnah Berurah* §32).

As long as the two sides of the *teyomes* are close together and continue to look like a single leaf, even if the split is clearly evident, it is not considered a *himnak* split (see *Maharsham*). In certain circumstances (quite uncommon today) the weight of the leaves causes the two parts of the *teyomes* to seem quite far apart. In such a case, if the two parts come together and no longer look like a *himnak* split when the lulav is laid on its side, the lulav is kosher (*ibid.*)

According to *Magen Avraham* (§6) the disqualification of *himnak* is based on a lack of "completeness", so it applies to the first day only, and does not disqualify the lulav on the other days (although one using such a lulav on *Yom Tov Shenit* does not recite the *berachah*). Most authorities rule accordingly (although *Mishnah Berurah* does not cite this ruling of *Magen Avraham*).

Size of a *himnak* split that disqualifies

A *himnak* split of any length disqualifies the lulav.

There is some disagreement, however, regarding how separated the two leaves may be.

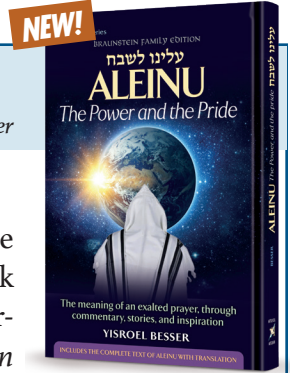
Meiri describes the tips of a *himnak* split as "... point[ing] in opposite directions like a compass whose ends are split into two directions." Other *Rishonim*, including *Rif*, *Rambam*, *Re'ah*, *Aruch*, *Rosh*, and *Tur*, seem to agree.

There are later authorities, however, who ruled more stringently in this matter. For instance, *Pri Megadim* (§9) writes, "Separated like a *himnak* disqualifies, even if it is a small amount [in length], and much scrutiny is necessary because it is very common, and care must therefore be taken." *Levushei Serad* writes, "Generally, when the top is split, even if it separates only a little, it is considered a *himnak*." *Chayei Adam* states, "If the split is wide enough to be visible, that is what the Gemara considers a '*himnak* split.'"

Maharsham disagrees with the *Levushei Serad*, and writes that it is apparent from all the *Rishonim* that to be considered "split like a *himnak*" the two parts must be significantly distant from each other.

An alternate form of *himnak* split

Shaar HaTziyun (§33) cites *Magen Avraham* who writes that even when the *teyomes* is not split at all, but the (doubled) leaves on each side are separated so that they appear to be separate leaves, that too is considered a *himnak* split. *Shaar HaTziyun* (*ibid.*) writes that according to this opinion, a person examining the integrity of the *teyomes* must make sure to hold the lulav in a way that will not split the adjacent leaves. Nevertheless, the implication of the later *poskim* is that they disagree with *Magen Avraham*. See also *Arbaas HaMinim* (p. 166) who asserts that the implication of the other authorities is that even *Magen Avraham* himself only disqualifies such a lulav if the adjacent leaves are split completely down to the *shidrah*. 📖



לראות מהרה בתפארת עוֹד — *That we may soon see Your splendid might.*

Rav Elya Lopian compared this part of *tefillas Aleinu* to two men walking in the vicinity of a royal palace.

The palace is under renovations, so the walls are covered by tarp that makes it impossible to see beyond them. One passerby concludes that this is not a palace at all, but just an assortment of sheets hanging from all sides. “I do not know what people find so impressive here,” he says.

The other man laughs. “This is not the finished palace,” he explains, “but the palace in the middle of being remodeled. If it was so magnificent even before the work started, it will certainly be splendid once the work is done!”

Some people see this world and are perturbed by the pain and confusion. There are so many questions. In despair, they conclude that there is no plan at all, just piles of unfinished work.

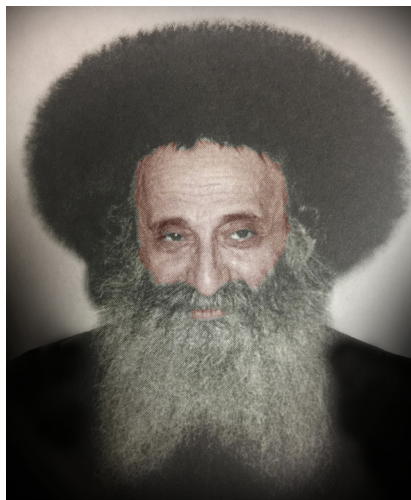
A discerning person sees this world, with its precision and beauty, and reasons that it is under construction, with details coming together for a future that will be even more glorious.

We, Klal Yisrael, look around. We see the questions, but we understand that this is a world preparing for its destiny, so we anticipate the moment *that we may soon see Your splendid might.*

Rav Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, the Veitzener Rav, was charged with leading and inspiring Yidden during

one of the darkest periods in our history. In the Auschwitz concentration camp, he answered complex halachic questions, and there, in the valley of death, he blew shofar and led the *tefillas* of the Yamim Noraim, filling the hearts of people with a sense that maybe there would be a tomorrow.

He would quote a thought from



The Veitzener Rav

**THEY TRIED
TO SAY
SHEMA
YISRAEL, BUT
WERE SO
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BY EMOTION
THAT THEY
COULD
BARELY
SPEAK.**

the Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk, on the *pasuk*: *mascheini acharecha narutzah* — *Draw me, we will run after you (Shir HaShirim 1:4).*

Chazal teach us that there are two ways to demonstrate ownership of an animal through the *kinyan meshichah*: “How is an animal acquired through pulling? If he calls it and it comes, or if he hits it with a stick and it runs before him” (*Kiddushin* 22b).

The difference between these two forms of *meshichah*, says the Tiferes Shlomo, is that one — “he calls it and it comes” — is done when standing in front of the animal; the other — “he hits it with a stick and it runs before him” — is done while standing be-

hind it. In the *pasuk*, we ask Hashem to perform a *kinyan meshichah* with us: *Mashcheini* — but *acharecha*, do it from in front of us, Ribbono shel Olam, with Your people following from behind. Acquire us through the form of *meshichah* that involves calling us and we will come!

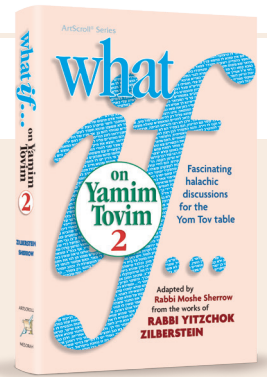
The Veitzener Rav applies this idea to the words of this *tefillah*. We know that Hashem is in control of the world and that His glory is in its every corner, but here, we ask that we merit *lir'os*, *that we may soon see Your splendid might.* Certainly, during this long journey through *galus*, we believe that

it is there and our faith is strong and true, but here, we are asking to behold that glory with our eyes, His kindness obvious and apparent to all.

The splendor of His glory is always there, but it is not always visible. In *galus*, we merit glimpses of His glory, but no more than that. In *galus*, it is difficult to feel a connection with the Creator and to perceive the effects that our every act can have in *Shamayim*.

There are moments, however, in which it becomes clear, when the *neshamah* is able to sense the truth, and in those moments, the soul longs for *kedushah*!

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Q: Rabbi Miller's class was very excited that their rebbi had published a *sefer*, and they wanted to arrange a celebration in the classroom to mark their rebbi's accomplishment. The *talmidim* were divided as to when to make the party. One group wanted to make the party immediately, in honor of the *sefer* being published. The rest of the class felt that first they should learn the *sefer* for a few months so they would have a true appreciation for their rebbi's masterpiece, and then their celebration would be so much more meaningful.

Which opinion is the right course of action?

A: The Dubno Maggid asks, since the Torah was given on Shavuos, wouldn't it make sense to hold Simchas Torah then? Why do we wait to celebrate Simchas Torah at the conclusion of Succos, more than four months later? He answers his question with a parable:

There was once a king who had an only daughter. When she reached marriageable age, she requested that her father find her a husband from a simple and modest

family, as she did not want a husband who was haughty and who would lord over her. The king sent his advisor to seek an ordinary person to marry the princess. The advisor set off on his mission, and he began his search in a far-flung village. Within a short time, he met a young man with ex-

emplary character who made a very favorable impression on him. The advisor approached the youth and informed him that the king would like to meet him. The king was delighted with the young man, and he was convinced that he would make a good match for his daughter. A meet-

ing was arranged between them, and soon afterward, the couple married amid great pomp and ceremony.

Months passed, and the king's son-in-law approached him with a peculiar request. He wanted to arrange another wedding feast to celebrate his marriage. The king patiently reminded him that *continued on page 14*

THE KING'S SON-IN-LAW APPROACHED HIM WITH A PECULIAR REQUEST

REVEALING THE SPLENDOR

continued from page 8

An entire class of seventh graders at a secular school in Eretz Yisrael was approaching the age of bar mitzvah. The school administrators felt that this milestone should be recognized somehow, and they agreed to ask a rabbi to come address the boys.

They agreed on Rav Aryeh Levin, who exuded *ahavas Yisrael* and appreciation for every sort of Jew, and felt that he would be a good choice to speak with the boys about the responsibility that comes along with maturity.

Most of the students had never before seen a rabbi with a large hat and long white beard, and the boys were transfixed by the image of their saintly visitor.

Rav Aryeh, who had served as the rabbi of the Jewish prisoners during the years of British rule over the Holy Land, told a story about two particular prisoners. Moshe Barzani and Meir Feinstein were members of the Irgun underground movement, and after taking part in acts of violence against the British government, they had been captured and sentenced to death. Before they were taken out to be hanged, the two young men were allowed a final visit by Rav Aryeh.

Rav Aryeh looked around at the boys in this secular school, and he asked if any of them could guess the final request of these prisoners. "What they wanted," Rav Aryeh told the boys, "was to wear *tefillin* one last time."

He described the final moments of Moshe and Meir, how they wrapped *tefillin* around their arms,

affixed them on their heads, and began to tremble. They tried to say the words of *Shema Yisrael*, but they were so overcome by emotion that they could barely speak.

"Dear children, you will soon be turning thirteen years old, and then, you will have the privilege to wear *tefillin*," Rav Aryeh said, and then he paused.

"Children... let your first time putting on *tefillin* be like their last time!"

And all the boys started to cry. The teachers cried. The principal cried. They all understood that wearing *tefillin*, even once, is an act of immeasurable significance.

In this *tefillah*, we ask that all of Klal Yisrael should be able to perceive this truth, seeing clearly that this — the fulfillment of His will — is the purpose of Creation. 📖

Rav Chaim related that every year, he would go with his father, the Steipler Gaon, to the home of R' Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz to choose an esrog from his tree. He added that the Steipler would insist, every year, on paying for the esrog.

There was an interesting story behind R' Michel Yehudah's esrog tree, as his grandson relates:

One morning, after Shacharis in the *beis midrash* of the Chazon Ish, the last of the congregants left the *beis midrash*, but R' Michel Yehudah lingered a bit, to absorb more of the rarefied atmosphere in the presence of the Chazon Ish. On that day, as the Chazon Ish headed to his room, he turned to R' Michel Yehudah and asked him to accompany him. Trembling, R' Michel Yehudah escorted him to the room, and to his surprise, the Chazon Ish went to the icebox in the corner of the room, opened it, removed a paper envelope, and handed the envelope to R' Michel Yehudah.

"These are seeds from the esrog over which I recited a *berachah* on Succos," the Chazon Ish told him. "Take them, plant them in the yard of your house, and grow from them a tree that will produce *mehudar* esrogim."

R' Michel Yehudah did not ask the Chazon Ish about the source or pedigree of these seeds. ("What difference did it make?" he once replied to a student who asked him from where the seeds had come. "The Chazon Ish gave me these seeds because he wanted people to make a *berachah* over these esrogim.")

Another time, however, when R' Michel Yehudah accompanied the Chazon Ish on his daily walk, the Chazon Ish instructed him to water the tree plentifully, and, seeing that

this was an auspicious time, R' Michel Yehudah was bold enough to ask, "How can we know with certainty that these esrogim are not grafted?"

Later, R' Michel Yehudah recorded in writing the Chazon Ish's response, and R' Michel Yehudah acknowledged that he was somewhat uncertain whether the Chazon Ish said that his knowledge was as absolute as if he had a tradition in this regard, or whether it had the halachic status of such a tradition.



Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz Credit: Kuvien Images

TO R' MICHEL YEHUDAH'S SURPRISE, THE CHAZON ISH WENT TO THE ICEBOX, REMOVED A PAPER ENVELOPE, AND HANDED IT TO HIM

When the Chazon Ish gave him these seeds, R' Michel Yehudah was mystified. "I have no idea how to tend to them," he said. "I don't know how to get them to sprout, I don't know how to plant them, and I certainly don't know how to provide the devoted care that delicate esrog trees require!"

The Chazon Ish reassured him, in a calm and confident tone, "*Mit ein vinteleh* — with one wind that Hashem sends, the tree can grow and bear fruits."

Reverently, R' Michel Yehudah handed the seeds to his rebbetzin, who devoted herself to tending to them. She placed them on a bed of

moist cotton to germinate, planted them in the ground, and kept a careful eye on them, watering them when necessary and removing weeds and stones from the area around them. With time, a seedling began to grow and flourish.

One year passed, and another, and then the last year of *orlah* passed. During the tree's fourth year — the year of *neta reva'i* — the tree began to produce beautiful fruits, even though it had received no professional care, in keeping with the Chazon Ish's promise, "*Mit ein vinteleh.*"

During that entire period, the Chazon Ish would inquire about "his" tree: How is it developing? Is it growing taller? Are branches emerging? Are blossoms appearing? Is it giving fruit yet? And from time to time he would urge R' Michel Yehudah to water the tree generously.

After four years, as Succos 5708/1948 approached, there was great excitement in the home of R' Michel Yehudah: The Chazon Ish himself was coming to the house! The Chazon Ish entered the yard and began to examine the tree, bending down under the tree like a young boy as he searched for a *mehudar* esrog. As the minutes passed, the people stood around, watching him in suspense: Would he find what he was looking for? Finally, the Chazon Ish crawled out, his face radiant, a beautiful esrog in his hand.

R' Michel Yehudah saw this project of growing esrogim as a holy mission that the Chazon Ish had assigned to him, in order

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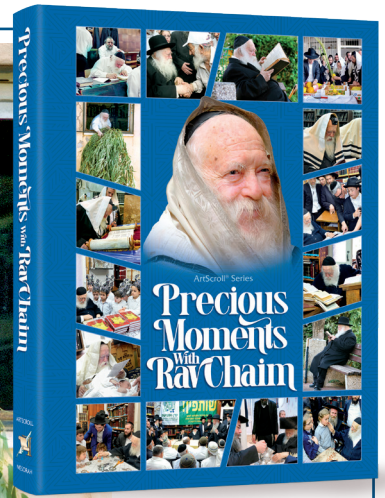
Loving Mitzvos

There's a lot to do before Yom Tov. Rav Chaim tried to do everything by himself, when he could. That's why he cut his own *s'chach* during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.

When he rested a little while piling up the *s'chach*, he read from a *Sefer Tehillim*. When people came to him during these moments of rest — to ask a question, to get a *berachah* — Rav Chaim smiled and gave them his time. No matter that around him was a hubbub as people got their *s'chach* ready, it was as if Rav Chaim was sitting in his quiet room.



For years, Rav Chaim went to pick his own *s'chach* (branches used for the roof of a succah). He'd bring it home, pass it through the window, and cover his succah with it. While the *s'chach* was being cut, among the trees and the branches, people came to ask him questions.



R' MICHEL YEHUDAH'S ESROG TREE continued from page 10

to perpetuate the mitzvah of esrog for future generations in a kosher, *mehudar* manner. Therefore, when people asked him to take seedlings from his tree to grow in other places, he happily and generously gave them these seedlings, seeing this as part of his mission. He gave seedlings not only to private individuals, but also to commercial esrog growers who then boasted that their esrogim were of the "Chazon Ish variety." All these esrogim originated in the tree growing in R' Michel Yehudah's yard.

R' Michel Yehudah carefully guarded the pedigree of his esrog tree, refraining from fertilizing it with chemical substances for fear that they contained ingredients from other trees, and if his esrog tree would

draw nourishment from them, it might entail some halachic concern that would deem the esrogim grafted.

Every year, the Steipler Gaon would take an esrog from R' Michel Yehudah's tree. Already during the winter, he would ask how the tree was growing, and whether it seemed that it would produce nice esrogim. From the beginning of the summer, whenever he met R' Michel Yehudah, he would inquire, "*Es vet zein a gutter esrog? Will it be a good esrog?*"

Two months before Succos, on Tu B'Av, he would come to R' Michel Yehudah's home, where a selection of esrogim was placed before him. He would choose two of them, one for himself and one for his widowed daughter, Rebbetzin Barzam, who lived next door to him.

In appreciation for this opportunity for *hiddur mitzvah*, the

Steipler would pay R' Michel Yehudah a significant sum, much more than R' Michel Yehudah generally charged for his esrogim and even more than the market price for esrogim. One year, R' Michel Yehudah refused to take money from him, and the next day, the Steipler came to him holding two volumes of his *Kehillos Yaakov*, on *Masechtos Berachos* and *Chullin*, as payment for the esrogim. After that, R' Michel Yehudah no longer refused to take payment from him, but he would stipulate a small sum, and the Steipler would insist on paying more, saying, "You are giving me everything, and what am I giving you in return? Nothing." The Steipler considered the fulfillment of a mitzvah, which is eternal, to be "everything," as compared to money, which is fleeting and "nothing." 📖

it lasts a very short time before he begins to feel an urge for something new.

In fact, a person can be so hungry for things that when someone else has something good that he doesn't, he absurdly begins to feel as though that person has "stolen" it from him.

The *Chovot HaLevavot* is saying that in the minds of nearly every person in this world, we are about one item away — perhaps two or three at most — from being truly happy.

Some of these things are not trivial. There are plenty of singles out there who think, *If I would only be married, I would be happy*. Couples struggling with infertility think, *If we would just have a child, we would be happy*. A businessman thinks, *If I would only be able to finalize this deal, I would be happy*. And the list goes on and on: *If only I would get into this school; if only my son would be more helpful...*

And every one of these thoughts is false.

How can I assert that with such certainty?

Because there are loads of people who have *that one thing*, and are unhappy nonetheless.

The way Hashem made us is that there will always seem to be something that is blocking us from being happy in life. Our challenge is to be happy with our lot in life despite that obstacle.

It Starts With a Bike

If you think back, you'll realize that this starts from the youngest age.

When we were young, it was the bike that we wanted so desperately and our parents refused to buy. And we were certain that if we would just have that bike, like all of our friends did, life would be perfect. *How could I be unhappy*, every little boy thought, *if I would have the bike I've been waiting to have for six months!*

As we know, however, when we got that bike, we felt satisfied for a brief period, and we needed something else.

And as we grow older, the toys just get more expensive. First it's a car that we *must* have. And which sixteen- or seventeen-year-old would be unhappy with a car?

Yet a few weeks after he gets the car, he's still un-

happy.

What happened?

Oh, it must be that I needed a nicer car, he thinks to himself. *If I would have gotten that other model, then I would have been happy*.

Then the person grows old enough that life becomes real, and so do his needs — marriage, having children, as we mentioned earlier.

It's always going to be *something*. And unless a person learns how to be happy *without* that *one thing*, he will never be happy.

The Muddy Shoes Rebellion

There's a *pasuk* that at first seems impossible to comprehend: אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיִךָ לֹא זָכְרוּ, *Our fathers in Egypt did not contemplate Your wonders, they were not mindful of Your abundant kindnesses* (Tehillim 106:7).

What did Bnei Yisrael do wrong as a result of their lack of gratefulness? The *pasuk* continues: וַיִּמְרוּ עַל יָם סוּף, *they rebelled by the sea*, בַּיָּם סוּף, *in the Sea of Reeds*.

The Midrash (*Shemot Rabbah* 24:1) wonders why it has to say the word *sea* twice, and answers that there were actually two rebellions: one at the shore of the Yam Suf and one inside it.

On the shore, when Moshe Rabbeinu instructed Klal Yisrael to go into the Yam Suf, no one heeded the call. Everyone just stood around trying to honor everyone else with being the first to jump. Finally, the tribe of Yehudah surged forward, as we say in Hallel: בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעָז, *When Yisrael went out of Egypt, Yaakov's household from a people of alien tongue*, הַיְהוּדָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ, *Yehudah became His sanctuary* (Tehillim 114:1-2).

Yehudah's willingness to be the first ones to jump in cemented their role as the future kings of Klal Yisrael. The fact that no one else wanted to enter was considered the first rebellion.

What rebellion happened *in* the Yam Suf?

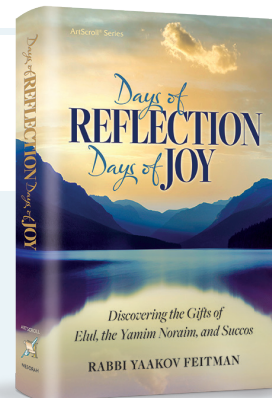
Klal Yisrael was in the midst of experiencing one of the most phenomenal miracles in all of history. Imagine looking out your window while driving on the Verrazzano Bridge, when you suddenly see the Atlantic Ocean develop walls of water with dry lanes in between, with people taking a leisurely stroll through those lanes. And this miracle enabled them to escape from the Egyptians, who were about to attack and wipe them out. What could lead them to rebel *continued on page 14*



Rabbi Meyer Yedid

THE UNITY AND THE UNIQUENESS: A SUCCOS PERSPECTIVE

Days of Reflection, Days of Joy by Rabbi Yakov Feitman



One of the special qualities of Succos is the multiplicity of mitzvos we are privileged to perform. In addition to all the common features of Yom Tov, such as *simchah*, *seudos mitzvah*, and the like, there are numerous mitzvos to elevate us each day. We sit in the succah, shake the *Arba Minim*, are uplifted by the *tefillos* of Hoshana Rabbah, celebrate the joy of Simchas Torah, and much more.

Each aspect of this amazing Yom Tov carries its own unique quality, but two of the major components of Succos seem to contradict each other. The halachah teaches the Four Species must belong to us exclusively, at least on the first day. Regarding the succah, however, not only may we eat in each other's succah, but the Gemara (*Succah* 27b) teaches, "All of Klal Yisrael are [potentially] capable of sitting in one succah." This statement is a reference to the fact that in the original succah in the desert, all of Klal Yisrael did in fact dwell inside one great Cloud of Glory (see, for instance, Rav Yonasan David, *Kuntres Succos* 31:7). Why this dichotomy in the heart of two of the essential mitzvos of this Yom Tov?

I believe that the answer may be found deep in the essence of being a Jew itself. Let us begin with the importance of *achdus* in *Am Yisrael*. The Gra (commentary on *Mishlei* 6:19) and Rav Yitzchok Isaac Chaver (*Derush* for *Parashas Shekalim*) both speak eloquently about the *sine qua non* of Jewish unity for the *Shechinah* to dwell in our midst. Rav Chaver concludes, "Just as the soul does not attach itself to one organ by itself, so is Hashem not called *Elokei Yisrael* — the G-d of Israel — unless the entire nation is unified, so that He dwells with the complete nation as one."

Separate and Together, Together and Separate

The Maharal (*Netzach Yisrael* 53, 54) also teaches us that Aharon HaKohen, the great unifier of Klal Yisrael, helps to connect us to our Father in Heaven as well. Rav Dovid Cohen, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Chevron (*Zman Simchaseinu*, p. 82) adds that for this reason, the *Ananei HaKavod* — Clouds of Glory — were in Aharon's merit. Since he brought Klal Yisrael together by making peace between individuals, he also effectuated *hashraas haShechinah* in the nation.


On the other hand, as is well known, the *Arba Min-*

im represent four different types of Jews. The Gemara itself tells us so (*Menachos* 27a), and the Midrash elaborates (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30:12): The hadassim have a good smell but no taste, like Jews who have good deeds but no Torah. The aravos have no taste or smell, like Jews who have neither Torah nor good deeds. The esrog, which has a good taste and a good aroma, represents the highest possible achievements of both Torah and *maasim tovim*. The lulav comes from a date palm which has good taste but not a smell, representing Jews who have Torah but no good deeds.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (651:11) insists, however, that we must combine the other three species with the esrog and hold them together when we perform the mitzvah. The Gra (*Biur* to this halachah) explains that holding the species as one symbolizes the *achdus* of the people of Israel. Before anyone claimed the phrase for education or politics, we knew that "no Jew can be left behind" as Klal Yisrael welcomes the *Shechinah* into our midst.

This is the magic of Succos, when we can all fit into one succah, yet we retain our individualities and singular

qualities, as alluded to in the obligation to use our own *Arba Minim*. The *parashah* that introduced the New Year, *Nitzavim*, stressed this unity immediately from the beginning: The greatest and the most seemingly minor are mentioned together, just as the esrog must be waved simultaneously with the other species.

Yet the esrog, which represents the leaders, such as the Sanhedrin and *gedolei Yisrael*, must be both together and separate. For the *naanuim* we hold them together, but the esrog remains in the other hand, to symbolize that we must always revere the *zekeinim* as our role models, just as they must always be above the fray and the vicissitudes of life. Thus, even when we are separate, we are together, and even when we are together, some distinctions will remain. On the level of Klal Yisrael, everyone counts. On the individual level, some accomplish more than others. Still, every Jew matters; each is precious to Hashem and to each other. 



Rav Dovid Cohen

**ONCE WE WERE A
NATION, EVERYONE
WAS ABSOLUTELY
NECESSARY**

while this was going on?

The Midrash says that when they first entered the Yam Suf, there was mud at their feet, which was only natural considering that just a few minutes earlier, it was full of water. Reuven turned to Shimon and said, “In Egypt we were working with mud, and now we’re back to dealing with mud. In Egypt we were working with mortar, making bricks, and now we are back to mortar.”

The first rebellion is perhaps understandable. If someone told you to jump into the Atlantic Ocean with your entire family, I think you would be hesitant as well. But this second rebellion is really hard to understand. There they are, walking through the Yam Suf, with the most incredible sights surrounding them, and while this is going on, they suddenly stop and say, “Well, this would be nice, but there’s mud on my shoes.” When you say *Az Yashir* each morning and talk about the tremendous miracles of Keriat Yam Suf, do you envision people complaining bitterly about the mud and mortar? I’m not sure how many people actually did this, but if the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* makes mention of it, and says that this happened to “our fathers in Egypt,” it must not have been just one isolated ungrateful person who couldn’t get past his muddy shoes.

How could this happen? And what are we meant to learn from this?

There is a very pertinent message here: This can happen to each and every one of us. No matter how

miraculous the events surrounding us actually are, we are fully capable of noticing the one thing that’s just not the way we want it to be, and focusing on nothing other than that.

We have to wonder, however: Couldn’t Hashem get rid of the mud? Couldn’t the very same stiff wind that made the water stand up also dry the seabed immediately so that it would be completely dry? Maybe there could even be some nice, lush carpet grass for everyone to enjoy! Why not make the miracle more complete?

Perhaps it’s because Hashem was trying to impart the message that this is not what real life is about. Yes, they were experiencing miracles, but they were still humans who had to live a human life. And part of life is that you can’t have *everything*. There will always be something that’s not perfect. It might be a muddy shoe, a spouse who is not meeting your expectations, a child who is not living up to his or her potential, a health issue, financial struggles — the list is endless. This is what life is all about.

People who are constantly focused on doing away with any struggle will look at something as minor as mud on their shoes, while experiencing the most amazing miracle, and use it as an excuse not to be happy.

Had Hashem made the miracle at the Yam Suf *perfect*, that would not have been real life. Because to live means that there’s always at least one wall standing between you and happiness. And unless you decide to ignore that wall and find happiness nonetheless, you will never be happy. 🖼️

TRUE APPRECIATION

continued from page 9

they had already celebrated their wedding. Why would the young man request a second feast? The son-in-law explained: During the first wedding, everyone was dancing joyfully, but deep in his heart, the groom felt very uncertain and worried. He wondered why the king would choose a simple villager for his only daughter. The only explanation he could imagine was that the princess was deficient, either physically or mentally. Therefore, the groom’s joy was marred. Now

that he had been married for some time, he realized that the princess was perfect in every way. Now his happiness was complete, and therefore he wished to hold another wedding celebration.

The king was very moved by his son-in-law’s words, and was overcome with admiration for his sincerity.

When the Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah on the day of Shavuot, they privately worried that perhaps the Torah would contain mitzvos that would be difficult to fulfill. However, once they had had time

to actually learn the Torah, they saw that all of its ways are pleasant and its paths are peace. The Torah is *sweeter than honey and drippings from the combs*. When Simchas Torah arrives, Klal Yisrael are ready to truly celebrate the fact that they accepted such a wonderful and perfect Torah.

In our case as well, after the *talmidim* have learned Rabbi Miller’s *sefer* and have marveled at the treasures it contains, then they will appreciate how much they truly deserve to celebrate. 🖼️

During the years of the Holocaust, the Nazis made use of six primary death camps, also known as extermination camps: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Belzec, and Treblinka.

But it's important to know that the tens of labor camps also brought about many hundreds of thousands of deaths. Labor camps were death camps, as well. Don't be fooled by the name.

Some of the labor camps are well known, others not so well.

One such camp was Hasag.

The camp was filthy and food was scarce. It was not unusual to see dead bodies all over the camp.

Somehow, though, the inmates maintained a vestige of *shemiras hamitzvos*. It wasn't every day and it wasn't all mitzvos. But they tried hard to observe some semblance of any mitzvah they could, especially those connected to Yom Tov.

Before Succos, they found a corner between two factory buildings. Providentially, there was some lumber piled up right there, perfect for the walls of their *succah*. Not only that, but they came across some branches that seemed to have fallen from Heaven. They would serve as the *s'chach*.

On Succos, the inmates took turns, clandestinely slipping into the *succah* with a morsel of bread, so they could fulfill the mitzvah.

It was a far cry from home. There was no fresh *challah* or hot soup, no joyous camaraderie, no hanging decoration, no *divrei Torah*. However, those few stolen moments in the *succah* gave them a feeling of hope, a feeling of life.

But with Simchas Torah coming up, they were at a loss. Where would they find a Sefer Torah? After all, what was Simchas Torah without one?

Certainly, it would not be easy to muster up the joy of the day. Adding to the difficulty was the fact that Simchas Torah marked the one-year anniversary of the liquidation of the Czestochowa Ghetto, and many of the inmates hailed from Czestochowa.

Still, if only they could find a Sefer Torah...

Their prayers would be answered through the most unlikely of heroes.

He was a cobbler, a shoemaker.

It was rare for the Nazis to show appreciation to any of the inmates. Most were treated like vermin or worse. But Mendel was an expert shoemaker. More specifically, he crafted the most

beautiful boots. Thus, the cobbler, who created shiny boots for the Nazis, was elevated by the Nazis to privileged status, and usually went straight from his work right outside the camp to the camp kitchen, where he received a generous portion of food. But one day of Chol HaMoed, he finished his day job and instead of heading for the kitchen, headed straight toward his barracks.

Whispers and rumors began to circulate. Soon enough, the word was out. Mendel had a Sefer Torah!

But how? How did he manage to obtain it? And how did he smuggle it into the camp?

The Nazis had confiscated *tashmishei kedushah* and stored them near the cobbler's workplace. A short while earlier, he had smuggled a shofar into the barracks. Now, to obtain the Sefer Torah, he used the only effective form of bribery he knew; he offered one of the Nazi guards a custom-made pair of boots. Those were the magic words. A short while later, the Sefer Torah was in his hands.

And since it was a small one, he was able to wrap it around his body. Though it made him look bulky, with his loose-fitting prison garb, he pulled it off.

Little did Mendel know that the Sefer Torah had been in a pile with hundreds of other items that were scheduled to be destroyed the next day. He had saved it from going up in smoke.

Now, he had to hide it. A *minyan* gathered every Shabbos in one of the quieter barracks. Mendel petitioned the group, "Who wants to hide the Sefer Torah?"



WHISPERS AND RUMORS BEGAN TO CIRCULATE. MENDEL HAD A SEFER TORAH!

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Two volunteers stepped forward. One of them held onto the Sefer Torah, clutching it closely, while the other one removed a board from the head of one of the wooden cots, placing the Sefer Torah gently inside the hollow space.

A buzz spread throughout the camp. *We will be celebrating Simchas Torah with a Sefer Torah!*

The skeletal inmates finally found purpose and reason to live.

The day arrived.

No flags. No candy. No children on shoulders.

But they had a Sefer Torah!

Of course, they didn't sing loudly; they didn't dance by stomping on the boards. In fact, they didn't even hold the Sefer Torah. Instead, they quietly and gingerly walked around the plain wooden cot, because, for the moment, it was worthy of honor; it contained the Sefer Torah. As they passed the head of the cot, the inmates kissed the wooden board above the Sefer Torah.

It's not that they were afraid to die; they were afraid that if they removed the Sefer Torah from its hiding place, perhaps it would be destroyed — and that, to them, was more frightening than death.

And so, they "danced" for hours, singing the same song over and over. "*Sisu v'simchu b'simchas Torah ki hi lanu oz v'orah* — Rejoice and be glad in the gladness of the Torah, because it is our strength and light!"

Oz v'orah. Strength and light.

The Torah lifted their spirits that night and gave them the strength and inspiration to continue to live.

After years of suffering and loss, the war finally ended.

The Torah survived.

And so did its people.

Sitting in the aron of the Gerrer Beis Chasidim in Bnei Brak, among other holy Torah Scrolls, is a tiny Sefer Torah with a story to tell. Once a year, on Simchas Torah, this Sefer Torah is held tightly by a nation that loves it dearly.

And refuses to ever let go. 📖

that being a *malshin* and reporting innocent people to the authorities is a very severe *aveirah*. He told Reuven to learn *mussar* daily to improve himself.

"But the main people from whom you need to ask *mechilah* are the *chassan* and *kallah*; it was their wedding that you ruined."

He gave Reuven their home number, and a few minutes later, the rabbi's daughter-in-law called him in tears. "I wish I could forgive," she sobbed, "but it's just too painful."

Rabbi Isseroff told her an inspiring story about forgiving, and how Hashem forgives those who forgive others. Then he quoted a statement that he read in the *Zohar HaKadosh* (*Parashas Vayeira*): When Hashem sees that a person has a *middas hadin* on him — a decree — he will send the person an opportunity to do a deed of mercy or kindness. That will invoke a *middah k'neged middah* from Hashem to abolish the decree and bestow kindness on the person instead.

"Please think about it over Shabbos," he said.

On Motzaei Shabbos, Reuven called the rabbi, crying. "Your son and daughter-in-law just called and forgave me with a full heart!" he said. He praised the rabbi for the excellent *chinuch* he had given his children.

The next night was Yom Kippur.

On Tuesday afternoon, Rabbi Isseroff got a terrifying phone call, informing him that his expectant daughter-in-law had just been involved in a high-speed, three-car collision, and was being rushed to the hospital.

He feared the worst. *B'chasdei Hashem*, she was released the next morning without a scratch, and the baby was totally fine. Her car was totaled, but she and her unborn child were unharmed.

When another relative heard this story, she decided to forgive someone she hadn't even been able to look at for twenty-six years.

The power of forgiveness is amazing. Hashem, indeed, gave her an opportunity to remove the *middas hadin* from herself, but it goes much further. Looking back, we can see that when the policemen entered the wedding hall and seemed to ruin the evening, that was Hashem, seven months in advance, setting up the circumstances to give this woman an opportunity to forgive, just days before that dreadful car accident.

Perhaps this is another explanation of the flimsy *s'chach* representing Hashem's protection. Hashem is always protecting us. Sometimes it appears that He's not, and then we ask, why is Hashem doing this to us? Or, why isn't He helping me? During those times, Hashem, *kaviyachol*, is saying: If you only knew how I was protecting you, you wouldn't question. Even what appears to be a so-called flimsy protection is, in essence, Hashem's loving hand, helping us with exactly what we need. 📖

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל קַיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לְךָ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ (בראשית ד:ו)

...And Hashem said to Cain, "Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen?"

Kayin and Hevel, the first siblings in history, engaged in the first sibling rivalry in history. Kayin, who cultivated crops, offered a *minchah* (meal offering) of flaxseed to Hashem, and Hevel, who raised animals, offered a sacrificial lamb. When Hashem turned to Hevel's offering and disregarded Kayin's, "This annoyed Kayin exceedingly, and his countenance fell" (Bereishis 4:5).

We can understand Kayin's reaction. It hurts to have your goodwill gestures ignored, especially by the Almighty. The next *pasuk* is therefore a bit perplexing. "And Hashem said to Kayin, 'Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen?'"

We already know why Kayin was seething. What was Hashem asking Kayin?

The *shochet* of Brisk entered Reb Chaim Brisker's *beis din* carrying parts of an animal that he had just slaughtered. Upon examining the lungs, the *shochet* had found a problem that might render the bovine a *tereifah* (unkosher). The Dayan of Brisk, Reb Simchah Zelig, examined the lungs and determined that it was indeed a *tereifah*.

Nowadays, a *tereifah* does not actually result in great financial loss to the owner of the slaughterhouse, because *tereifos* are sold to non-kosher affiliates at a minimal loss. In those days, however, a *tereifah* meant a huge financial loss for the *shochet* — virtually nothing could be done with the dead animal that would mitigate his financial outlay. To

the *shochet's* credit, he handled the setback stoically, leaving the court without uttering a sound in protest.

Several weeks later, the *shochet* arrived in *beis din* again, this time to adjudicate a financial dispute with another resident of the city. The sum under dispute was negligible in comparison to the cost of the *tereifah*. Upon hearing the two sides of the story and after some careful deliberation, the *dayanim* ruled against the *shochet*.

The *shochet's* face turned a deep shade of red, and he began to spew invective in all directions. He had some choice words for the *dayanim*, including the same Reb Simchah Zelig who had ruled his animal invalid several weeks earlier. The *shochet* stormed out as Reb Simchah Zelig and the other members of the court sat in stunned silence.

Could this be the same man who had accepted a financial setback several times more costly just a short time earlier without comment?

Reb Chaim Brisker understood the difference. "When the *shochet* brought in his animal for a *halachic* ruling, there was no individual opposing him. When it was rendered a *tereifah*, he did not 'lose' to his animal. In this instance, it was not the loss of the sum of money that bothered this man so much. It was the fact that his opponent had won, and he had lost."


Kayin was upset that Hashem ignored his gift in favor of Hevel's. Being rejected by Hashem is a valid reason to be hurt, and if the rejection was the basis for Kayin's reaction he would have been justified. If, how-

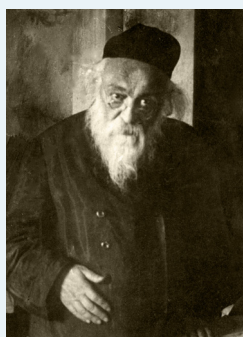
ever, his anger stemmed from the feeling that there was a contest between Hevel and himself — the first competitive "game" in history, if you will — and he *had* to win, then his annoyance was improper.

Hashem asked Kayin, "Why are you annoyed?" Hashem knew that Kayin was fuming because his offering was rejected, but He wanted to teach Kayin, and us, that when we are upset we have to gauge our emotions to ascertain why we feel indignant. Are we hurt because of our own failure, or because someone else did better than we did?

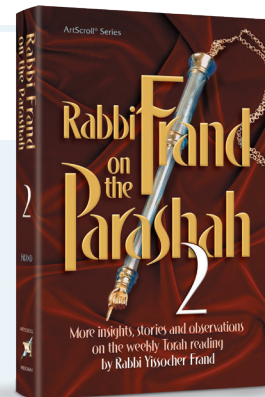
This message is relevant nowadays more than ever before. So much of what we do is rooted in competition. We vie to be the best in business, we feel triumphant when our home team wins, and, in all honesty, many of us even feel a certain pride when our children outperform their peers.

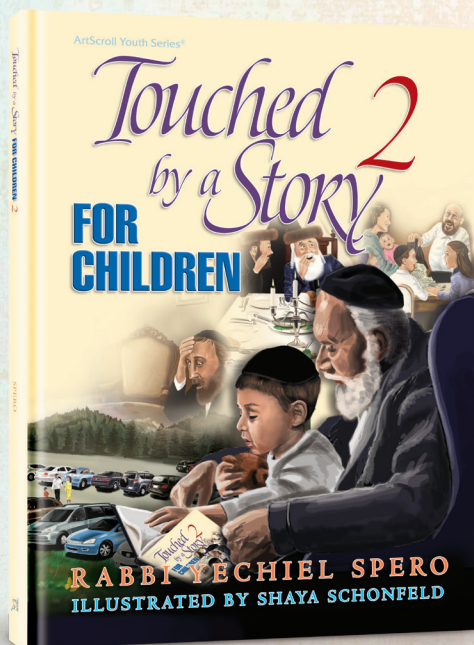
In such a competitive society, when we find ourselves insulted or angry, we must judge the source of our emotions: Is our annoyance subjective, or objective? If we are upset only because we are pitting ourselves against others, and we feel not so much that we lost but that they won, then we are wandering into dangerous territory. The story of Kayin and Hevel proves that such emotions are destructive; our efforts will not be focused on improving ourselves, but on besting the competition.

If, however, our hurt is objective — stemming from our own lack of perfection, regardless of the success of others — then we have the ability to strive to grow and do better in the future. 



Rav Chaim Brisker





THE NICEST ONE IN THE STORE



he hustle and bustle of buying the nicest *lulav* and *esrog* were in full swing. Shloimy Chait, a well-known *mocheir* (seller), was busy with the constant flow of customers going in and out of his store. These were experts of the *lulav* and *esrog* shopping season.

They knew exactly what they were looking for

and were willing to pay top dollar for it. They wanted a “clean” *esrog*, one that had no *pintelach* (little dots) or *bletlach* (spots). Shloimy would walk into the back room where he kept his *esrogim* and search through the boxes to find the perfect one. When he walked back into the sales room he would hand the *esrog* over with such care that one would think he was handling a fancy jewel. Then the customers would look at the *esrog* to see if they could notice anything that might be wrong. Finally, when the buyer was sure that he had found the perfect *esrog* he was looking for, he would hand over up to \$300 to pay for it and its equally beautiful *lulav*.

As Succos drew near, the supply of *esrogim* decreased, and Shloimy prepared to do what he always did — send his unsold *esrogim* to a market where they would be sold for much lower prices. People who were last-minute shoppers or were unable to afford the top-priced *esrogim* would be sure to find a bargain. As a precaution, each year when he shipped off the remaining *esrogim* he always held a few back, just in case someone in his neighborhood needed one for some reason just before Yom Tov.

The day before Succos, as he was about to take a short nap, there was a knock at the door. When he opened it he saw a little boy no older than 5 or 6, with beautiful brown eyes that shone with the excitement of the coming Yom Tov. He was carrying a brown paper bag, holding it carefully with both hands. “Are you still selling *esrogim*? I would like to buy one.”



Shloimy recognized the boy and knew that the family was quite poor. “How much do they cost?” the child asked.

Shloimy tried to keep the price as low as possible. “\$15,” he replied.

The boy looked up shyly and put his paper bag on the table. Out came nickels, dimes, and quarters that spread all over the table. He sat down and began to count. Shloimy did not know whether he should smile or cry. On the one hand, it was so sweet to see how serious this boy was about buying an *esrog* for himself. On the other hand, it was so sad because that the boy had probably spent much time and effort to gather enough money for this important purchase.

As the young boy finished counting he had come up with only a little more than half the required amount. “All I have is \$7.90.”

He looked down, disappointed and very sad.

Shloimy’s heart nearly broke with pity for the child.

“Don’t worry. You can have it for that price. Here.”

Suddenly the boy’s eyes lit up. “Really? Thank you so much!”

He ran out the door quickly, as he could hardly control his excitement. Jumping down the steps, he hurried down the block and as Shloimy watched he saw the boy present his *lulav* and *esrog* to a young man and then run back toward his own home just a few houses away.

Curious as to what had just happened, Shloimy immediately called the boy back and asked him, “Wasn’t that *esrog* for you?”

“We don’t have a lot of money in our house,” explained the child, “but my father rewards us with coins every time we learn, to show us how much we should value learning Torah. Sometimes he gives us nickels, sometimes dimes, and every once in a while a quarter. Well, I decided that I wanted to save up the money I made from the learning in order to buy myself a *lulav* and *esrog* this year. But a few weeks ago my sister got married. When I asked my new brother-in-law where he was buying his *lulav* and *esrog*, he didn’t really answer. I realized that he wouldn’t be buying his own set because it was too expensive So I decided to give him mine I’m sorry. Did I do something wrong?”

Shloimy looked down into the boy’s face and smiled.

He wondered if the young boy’s brother-in-law knew that he had just received the nicest *esrog* in the entire store.

Or for that matter ... any store. 📧



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One who studies halachos each day is assured that he
is destined to the world to come (Niddah 73a).

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