



TAL

SUCCOT
5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Succot

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



The festival of Succot is a happy festival. We celebrate the fact that Hashem took us out of Egypt and sheltered us in booths, as well as placing us in a special defence force of Ananei Hakavod – Clouds of Glory. These surrounded the Jewish nation in the wilderness and protected them from their enemies.

The Tur – Rabenu Yakov Ben Asher- is famous for codifying Jewish law. In his book, he asks why we celebrate Succot now at this time of year. Surely, if we are celebrating the fact that Hashem protected us in the wilderness and the booths that the Bnei Yisrael built, the correct time to celebrate should be Pesach. In fact we should really be eating Matza in a Succah!

Our Sages state that there is a process of repentance that begins in Elul and ends on Hoshana Rabah (the last day of Succot).

In Elul we say Selichot, at Rosh Hashana we are all judged, ten days later at Yom Kippur we are forgiven and stamped, yet Hashem is all Merciful and there is still time to do Teshuva until Hoshana Rabah, when the Petakim go out – the angels are sent with their mission in their hand to enact the edicts.

The Ben Ish Chai relates that the whole process is a total of 51 days and is hinted at in the word Hosha – NA (numerical value 51) – for Hashem saves us in these 51 days.

When the Bnei Yisrael reached the Mountain of Sinai and prepared themselves to receive G-d's Torah, they emphatically stated those famous words Naaseh Venishma - We will do and we will listen. They stated their unequivocal belief in Hashem and His Torah.

Furthermore, it was not just a few people that made this statement. Rather we are told Vayichan Yisrael – the entire nation stood there like one man with one heart (Rashi). There was unity.



Our Sages (Gemara Shabbat) state that the Bnei Yisrael achieved such a high level of spirituality that Paska Zuhmatan – they were no longer susceptible to death. Their unity and faith in Hashem led them to the highest achievable level being that of Adam before he sinned.

It is to this level that we must try and aspire as a nation.

Looking back in history, at what point did the Jewish Nation achieve their highest level?

But it seems so difficult. How are we going to achieve the unity and the faith necessary?

Hashem in His great Mercy has implanted in creation a way for us to achieve this level yet again.

There is a famous Gemara that tells us of the rewards of the two different types of repentance.

Resh Lakish said: Great is repentance, for because of it, **premeditated sins** are accounted as errors (**unintentional sins**). The Gemara brings another quote by Resh Lakish that seems to contradict this. Resh Lakish said that repentance is so great that **premeditated sins** are transformed into **merits**. The Gemara reconciles these stating that there no contradiction: One refers to a case [of repentance] derived from **love**, the other to one due to **fear** (Yuma 86b).

Rav Dessler explains that when a person repents out of fear, they are able to cleanse themselves of their sins, but only to a level of unintentional sin. However, when a person repents out of **love** of Hashem, then their original sin is a vehicle for their repentance and ends up acting as a **merit** in their favour!

Throughout the Yamim Noraim – we are in fear of Hashem. The Shofar is blown to instil trepidation in our hearts, to awaken us to our current situation. On Yom Kippur, we fast and cry to Hashem begging for mercy. We come to a realisation that we are nothing and that Hashem the Great and Almighty G-d is in charge. In effect we repent out of fear.

Yet there is a further additive to this process and that is Succot.

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On Succot, we come together in a much happier atmosphere. Succot is at a time when the farmers are bringing in their produce, counting their blessings. It's at a time when we unite as a unit and celebrate our newly forgiven status.

It is a time ripe to appreciate Hashem and all that He does for us and hence repent out of love.

We take the Lulav Etrog Hadasim and Aravot that represent the different members of our community and bring them together in unity. We enter our Succot to show our faith. No matter

what the weather (unless we are Mitsaer – harmed by it) we go out, leaving the luxury of our homes entering a temporary dwelling for seven days.

We are surrounded by the Succah representing newly found Kedusha. As our Sages note the numerical value of the word Succah is 91 which represents Hashem's Name (written plus pronounced). We are sitting in Hashem's shadow.

Pesach time is a time of spring, the birds are out, the sun starts to shine, and people might get carried away

and lose sight of the real reason we enter the Succah. Therefore, Hashem placed Succot at a time of year, when people are generally preparing to enter their houses not leave them, in order that we show our faith. More importantly, it comes at a time when we have achieved our repentance of fear and we can now build on that to gain repentance out of love, thus terminating a process that began 51 days earlier.

Succot Insights

David Joseph

The Pasuk in Amos (3-8) says "The lion has roared, who will not fear?" Our Sages state that the word Aryeh - Lion stands for Elul (aleph), Rosh Hashana (reish), Yom Kippur (yod), Hoshana Rabbah (hey).

During this intense period, we ask "who is not afraid?" Within the onset of Elul for thirty days we reflect on wrongdoings and begin the process of forgiveness. From Rosh Hashana, we enter the new year with unmitigated judgement, Yom Kippur is a day of pardoning of sins and on Succot we re-establish our relationship with Hashem.

There was once a city that owed a king a large sum of money in taxes. As a result of the resident's failure to pay, the king marched against the city with an armed garrison. Prior to reaching the city, a delegation consisting of the elders of the community was sent to appease the king. After meeting with the delegation the king discharged one-third of the debt, but still continued to advance. Fearing for their safety, the city sent a second delegation comprised of common-folk to meet with the king. They succeeded in convincing him to discharge another one-third of the debt. However, the king continued to advance towards the city. Finally, all the residents of the city emerged from their homes to beseech the king, who

had already reached the city gates, to deal with them kindly. Moved by this display, the king discharged the remaining one-third of the debt.

Similarly, the Jewish people amass a large number of sins throughout the year. On Rosh Hashana the men of distinction fast and Hashem absolves the nation one-third of the sins. During the "Aseret yamei teshuva" - ten days of repentance- another one-third of the sins are absolved. The entire nation fasts on Yom Kippur, absolving them of their remaining transgressions.

'Our life in this world is temporary, just as our dwelling in the Succah.'

On Succot, we mark a change of mood, a holiday which we are commanded to rejoice. Succot is marked by a unique mitzvah to live in the Succah, - which is meant to be our dwelling place for the duration of the holiday. The Chida, R'Chaim Yosef David Azoulay, says this sends a message to us. We have just celebrated the holidays of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; on these days we have spoken about how spiritual matters should be primary in our lives. We have dedicated ourselves to Hashem instead of our passions. We have asked forgiveness for our pursuit of earthly pleasures. The Succah highlights what we have just experi-

enced. It reminds us that our life in this world is temporary, just as our dwelling in the Succah. When we sit in the Succah we are to strengthen our resolve to forge that closeness with Hashem, and by reminding ourselves that our aim is to accomplish for life in Olam Haba. The great joy we experience on Succot comes as a result of the purity which Bnei Yisrael attains through repentance and forgiveness on Yom Kippur, for purity is the key to perfect happiness.

The Ben Ish Hai brings a beautiful remez to the word Succah. The gematria of Succah is 91 which is the same combined holy names of Havaya which is 26 or כ"ו and Adnut which is 65 or מ"ה. When we combine the letters that form the above numbers and they are rearranged we get the word סוכה.

Additionally the rules in building a Succah are hinted in the word itself. The Halachah states the Succah should have 4 walls similar to the letter ס. A Succah with 3 walls is also acceptable, like the letter כ. Even a Succah with 2 complete walls and a third wall of a few inches length, if built correctly, is proper, can be hinted to word ה.

Dwelling in the Succah is intended to assist us in clarifying our outlook on life. We remember that life in this world is only temporary. We remember that we can't take it with us. We remember that everything we have is a gift from Hashem.

Succot is a sanctuary of spirituality.



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Two Mighty Blows!

Guest Writer

In the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot it is worth bearing in mind a fantastic parable from the Ohel Yaacov.

He tells a tale where a young man grew up in a wealthy home and was extremely lazy. He wouldn't lift a hand to help anyone and spent his days as a couch potato. Weeks turned into months as his father begged him to get a job and earn a respectable living, but to no avail. Every time he thought about working, it became a thought too many. The mere thought of working made him tired.

Any job that meant he had to work simply wasn't for him.

One day, the family candelabra broke and his father asked him to take it to the local silversmith for repairs. Reluctantly, he dragged his feet to the repairs man and handed in the broken silver piece. The aged man looked at the silverware and brought out his hammer. He hit them twice with mighty blows wrapped it carefully in a cloth and placed it in the back of the shop. He told the young man to return at the end of

the week with the money and it would all be ready. The man went home lost in thought. It all looked so easy, and whereupon he promptly told his father that he had a job prospect. He would need a shop front and an initial cash outlay but he assured his father that he would work hard and bring home an income.

This was music to his ears and he let his son have whatever he required to get started.

On the first day of opening his shop displayed a sign that he was a silversmith who would repair silver at cost price. The demands for this service were excessive and just as the elder silversmith had done, he did the same.

Imagine his surprise when after a week, his customers returned and after he carefully unwrapped his items, he saw that they hadn't changed.

Initially he was shaken, surely the silversmith had done just the same, but after asking his father to foot the bill, he ran to the elderly village silversmith and demanded an explanation. The elderly man looked at him sympathetically and explained that indeed it was easy and visible to see the blows of his aged hammer, but

there was a lot of expert work that took place behind closed doors. That was the most difficult part of all. A humorous story but very relevant to us. Aren't we all too similar.

On Yom Kippur we strike ourselves on the chest and convince ourselves that we are Tzadikim, righteous individuals, and deserving of all the blessings of the Torah.

Yet, that is the easy part. The real part starts now. In the days following Yom Kippur as we busy ourselves with Mitzvos in these frantic days

- days where we are too preoccupied with serving Hashem, to sin, is the time to start showing how we meant what we said when we cried the Viduy.

The Rishiner Rebbe zatzal used to describe the lulov as the hand on the clock face. If the hand is bent, then one cannot get a true idea of the time. It requires a straight hand to aid us.

This is the meaning of this Yom Tov. Come prepared with a set of Arbah Minim, a vision for the year ahead, a plan of straightening our bent ways and a will to repair that we damaged. Surely, with this we will merit the truest form of Simcha - which is only possible on the Chag of Sukkos.

Let us repair and enjoy true and everlasting happiness coupled with satisfaction of accomplishment.

TAL Communal Selichot @ Od Yosef Hai



Halachot of Sukkot

Rabbi Dov Levy



Sukkah Decorations

It is a mitzvah to decorate the Sukkah with pictures, fine rugs; as well as hanging fruit and decorations from the sechach. Once they have been put in the sukkah it is forbidden to use them for any other purpose during the whole Chag. Furthermore, because of this prohibition, they become muktzeh on Yom Tov and so must not be moved.

How long are sukkah decorations forbidden for?

Technically you are not allowed to make use of them for other uses during Sukkot itself. This would be until the end of Hosha'ana Rabba. However since there is an overlap into Bein Hashemashot of Shemini Atzeret the decorations become muktzeh for Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. This year they will be muktzeh until after Shabbat Bereshit.

What exactly can't I do with them on the days of Yom Tov?

They are muktzeh, meaning they should not be moved. You cannot intentionally knock, move or straighten them. You can, however, enjoy the smell of nice smelling fruit or herbs you hung up.

What if they fell down?

You should move them out of the way but no more.

How about Chol Hamoed?

On Chol Hamoed they are not muktzeh in terms of moving them. However since they are still set aside for a mitzvah they cannot be used for other purposes. Therefore you can reattach decorations on Chol Hamoed.



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"He who did not see the rejoicing of Beit Hasho'eivah, never saw rejoicing in his lifetime." (Succah 51a)

QUESTION: What was so special about the rejoicing of Simchat Beit Hasho'eivah?

ANSWER: In describing the details of Simchat Beit Hasho'eivah the Gemara (Succah 51a) says that everyone — men and women — would gather in the Beit Hamikdash. "There were golden candelabras fifty cubits high with four golden bowls for oil on top of each and four ladders to each.

Young Kohanim would climb up each ladder carrying a pitcher containing thirty lug of oil...and when they lit the lamps the entire city of Jerusalem became illuminated. Heads of yeshivot, members of the Sanhedrin, pious men, and men of good deeds would clap, sing, and act joyously and the general populace would come to watch and listen."

Indeed there are many simchat in the Jewish community where the setting is exquisite, the palate is treated to the most sumptuous and exotic foods, the ears are regaled by the most lively music, but still the simchah is incomplete. After careful analysis, one can see the fragmentation of the community. One cannot help but notice that not all

segments of the community are participating, and still others are present as a result of coercion. The youth does not respect the elders and the elders do not have a common language with the youth. The "simchah" may evoke anxiety and apprehension rather than happiness and unity.

At Simchat Beit Hasho'eivah the people who set the mood were the rashei yeshiva, chassidim, and men of good deeds, and the young illuminated the area under their tutelage and guidance. Simchah in which unity and respect are evident is profound and true simchah.

Everyone Has a Right to Rejoice

On *Simchat Torah* we conclude the annual cycle of reading the Torah in public and start anew from *Bereishit*. This milestone is celebrated with much joy and festivity, and all Jews, men and women, young and old, learned and illiterate, participate. One may wonder, with what justification does the one who did not learn Torah throughout the year rejoice on *Simchat Torah*?

A popular explanation offered to this query is the following: A scholar who once witnessed an ignorant and non-observant Jew dancing and singing with all his strength on *Simchat Torah*, asked him, "Why are you rejoicing so much? Did you involve yourself with the Torah study throughout the entire year?" The man in all sincerity replied, "While you are right that I was remiss in my involvement with Torah throughout

the year; nevertheless, if I am invited to my brother's wedding, isn't it appropriate for me to dance and sing? Thus, though my brother is really the *ba'al simchah* today, I am actively rejoicing with him."

As intriguing as this explanation may be, it is somewhat lacking, since after all, *Simchat Torah* is everyone's *simchah* and everyone is a *ba'al simchah* and not just a stranger attending a relative's affair.

The processions with the Torah are called "*hakafot*." Superficially the name "*hakafot*" originated from the fact that we circle around the *bimah* and it is from the same root as the word "*makif*" which means "circling around." However, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn Zt'l, offers a more profound explanation of the word "*hakafot*." He

says that it means, "the extension of credit" as we say in *Pirkei Avot* (3:16), "*Vehachenvani makif*" — "the shopkeeper extends credit." When one applies for credit and is notified that his application has been accepted he is indeed very happy. Likewise, on *Simchat Torah*, the "shopkeeper" — Hashem — says to every Jew, "I give you permission to rejoice with My Torah though your record for Torah study and observance for the past year may not be exactly up to par, but dance today on credit, because I trust that you will make good during the coming year." When Hashem personally extends the Jew credit, his joy is overwhelming.

The Clouds Of Glory

Rabbi Joseph Pearlman



The Gemara in Sukah 11b brings an argument between Rebbe Eliezer and Rebbe Akiva as to whether the Passuk (Vayikra 23.43) is telling us that Succot represents the Ananay Hakavod (clouds of glory) or the physical booths which the Bnei Yisrael occupied in their travels through the wilderness. Targum Onkelos followed by Rashi on the Passuk and the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch (625:1) all follow the view of Rebbe Eliezer that Succot represents the clouds of glory (and it is an interesting side issue as to why this view was chosen in preference to that of Rebbe Akiva). The question has been asked why was this Yom Tov given to us to commemorate the clouds of glory, but we do not appear to have anything for the equal great miracles of the well of Miriam or the manna from heaven. Surely these were equally great, if not greater, miracles. Several answers have been suggested, and we shall list them here:

1. The spring of Miriam was water to drink and the Mon was basic food. These are essential for life itself and Hashem would not have been able to sustain the Jews in the wilderness without them, as a person has to eat and drink, whereas the cloud cover was for protection and extra comfort but not absolutely essential. Therefore the clouds show the special love that Hashem has for

his people in that he gave them additional comforts over and above the minimum requirements, and it is to recognise that love that we celebrate the Succot festival.

2. My great-grandfather *Zatzal*, the Kamenitzer Magid, answered that we do not find in any other miracle the expression "Hashem goes before them". He led the way in majestic fashion all by Himself. This shows the unique nature of the clouds of glory and for which it is appropriate to celebrate Succot.

3. He gave a further answer which I believe is also in the writings of the Hida, that we encounter sin in connection with the Mon (Shemot 16.27) where the people went out to collect it when they shouldn't have done so, and so too in the case of the water (Ibid 15.24), where they complained about the lack of water and Moshe Rabbenu himself was punished in the episode at the well. Thus it is not possible to have absolute love in their connection. However the clouds of glory did not entail any sin whatsoever and therefore constitute perfect reciprocal love.

4. Another possible answer is that whereas the Be'er was in the merit of Miriam and the Mon in the merit of Moshe, the Ananay Hakavod were in the merit of Aharon as we are told in Taanit 9a. We also know from Pirkei Avot that Aharon's particular excellent Midah was that he was *Ohev Shalom* and *Rodef Shalom*. He

sought peace wherever he could. The Ananay Hakavod represent this wonderful quality and we know that shalom is the seal of Hakodosh Baruch Hu (Megilla 18a). That is why we conclude the Amidah and many of our other prayers with the concept of shalom. So it is the Ananay Hakavod which have pride of place on Succot to teach us this vital lesson of Gadol Hashalom.

5. My nephew, Rabbi Ephraim Mett, mentioned another approach to our problem. He says in fact both the Mon and the Be'er are also represented on Succot, the latter by the Nisuch Hamayim and the former by the Arba Minim which represent Parnasa. It is well known that by shaking the lulav, we invite beneficial (and prevent bad) dewes and winds (Succah 37b). See also Succah 45a, where we are told that if a person takes the four species together it is as if he has built the *mizbeach* and offered on it a *Korbon*. Now it is known that the purpose of *Korbonot* is to bring Parnasa to the world (see Succah 55b), so there is a representation of the Mon and the Be'er and Succot in tandem with the Ananay Hakavod.

6. Finally may I suggest that the Ananay Hakavod were chosen as they represent *Ruchniut*, whereas the Mon and the Be'er are for *Gashmiut* and physicality. On Yom Tov of Succot at the conclusion of the Yomim Noraim period we strive for the former to achieve the true *Kedushah* that this entails so we look heavenward to the Ananay Hakavod

The Fox and the Vineyard

A sly fox passed a lovely vineyard. A tall, thick fence surrounded the vineyard on all sides. As the fox circled around the fence, he found a small hole in the fence, barely large enough for him to push his head through. The fox could see what luscious grapes grew in the vineyard, and his mouth began to water. But the hole was too small for him. So what did the sly fox do? He fasted for three days, until he became so thin that he managed to slip through the hole.

Inside the vineyard, the fox began to eat to his heart's content. He grew bigger and fatter than ever before. Then he wanted to get out of the vineyard. But alas! The hole was too small again. So what did he do? He fasted for three days again, and then just about managed to slip through the hole and out again.

Turning his head towards the vineyard, the poor fox said: "Vineyard, O vineyard! How lovely you look, and how lovely are your fruits and vines. But what good are you to

me? just as I came to you, so I leave you . . ."

And so, our sages say, it is also with this world. It is a beautiful world, but—in the words of King Solomon, the wisest of all men—just as man comes into this world empty handed, so he leaves it. Only the Torah he studied, the mitzvot he performed, and the good deeds he practiced are the real fruits which he can take with him.