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ולעילוי נשמת אברהם יחזקאל בן ישראל שמעון הלוי, זצ"ל

חג הסוכות

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE AND DEEPER  
INSIGHTS TO CHAG HASUKKOS



FROM THE SHIURIM OF  
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Part 1: The Practical Guide and Deeper Insights to Chag HaSukkos (5763)

## THE DUALITY OF SUKKOS

*Sukkos* is called *zman simchaseinu*. The *simchah* of *Sukkos* is a dual *simchah* because *Sukkos* has a dual role. Number one, *Sukkos* is the end of the *Yamim Hanora'im*, the end of the Days of Awe that began with *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. *Sukkos* is the conclusion of those days, culminating with *Hoshanah Rabbah* which is called the גמר חתימה הדין. Number two, *Sukkos* is also the culmination of the *shalosh regalim*, beginning with *Pesach*, *Shavuos*. The fact that *Sukkos* is the *zman* of *shleimus*, of completion, of culmination, is what grants it its unique *simchah* status.

The Rambam (Hilchos Shofar, Sukka, Lulav; 8:12) says: even though on every *mo'ed* מצוה לשמוח בהם, but בחג הסוכות היתה במקדש יום שמחה יתרה.<sup>1</sup> The underlying reason for the *simcha* is that a person who has a *shaychus* to the *Yamim Nora'im*, on *Sukkos* is granted *ritzuy* (“winning favor”). This is what you get on *Sukkos*. Even the *kapparah* on *Yom Kippur* does not necessarily grant this. After forgiving somebody who wronged you - that doesn't mean he becomes your favorite person. You don't get favored status. “I forgive you, I'm *mochel* you, we are back to square one but I still remember what you did.” The *pshat* of *Sukkos* is that it's the *zman* of *ritzuy*. That's what *Sukkos* is about and that is the greatest desire of all *tzaddikim*. That's what they yearn for. Rabbeinu Yonah (Sha'arei Teshuva) asks: what is the ultimate desire of a *tzaddik*? What is the greatest *hatzlachah* that he could aspire to and yearn for? He says, the greatest *hatzlachah* is to be favored by *Hashem*.

## ASPIRING TO BEING FAVORED

Some like to think that *Hashem* favors *resha'im* like He does *tzaddikim*, but that is a misnomer; it's incorrect and a falsehood. *Hashem* has people that He favors. It is possible for a person to become a *baal teshuvah*, to do *teshuvah* and never be favored by *Hashem*. Being favored by *Hashem* is something that you aspire for, it's a much higher level of the relationship. That's called חיים, as Rabbeinu Yonah calls it. It's called הארת פנים, it means an “enlightened face” from *Hashem*. It's when *Hashem* looks at you in an enlightened way and thereby showers you with *chochmah*. He brings you

<sup>1</sup> אף על פי שכל המועדות מצוה לשמוח בהן. בחג הסוכות היתה במקדש יום שמחה יתרה שנאמר (ויקרא כג ז) "ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבעת ימים".

closer, you get amazing *siyata dishmaya*. That is what *Sukkos* represents. *Sukkos* represents the ability for a person to get *ritzuy*, a favored status. *Hashem* says, "After I've given you *kapparah*, you can come live with Me in My room together." It's called spending time in *Hashem's* house, leaving your own house, and spending time in *Hashem's* house.

## SIMCHAS YOM TOV CURES DEPRESSION

There is a famous *Abarbanel*, Reb Yitzchok Don Abarbanel, who in his commentary on the *Torah*, writes as follows. The *passuk* says *והיית אך שמח* (Devarim 16:15). Literally that means, *והיית*, you should be, *אך שמח*, only happy. Now, the *mitzvah* to be happy, or *simchas Yom Tov*, applies to all *Yamim Tovim*. But there is a special *mitzvah*, which the *Torah* writes about in the above *passuk*, that specifically applies on *Sukkos*. He says, you know why? *להבטיחו* to guarantee you *שמח*, that if a person will rejoice on *chag haSukkos*, he will be *שמח וטוב*, that if a person will rejoice on *chag haSukkos*, he will be *שמח וטוב* *לב כל השנה*. Now, you have to know that this idea is based on a famous principle. The *Yamim Tovim* are called *zmanei simchah*. The *Kuzari* explains that if you go to these 'wells' you get an infusion of *simchah*. All the *simchah* you have during the year comes from *Yom Tov*. That's why people aren't too happy on *Yom Tov*, because the *yetzer hara* makes sure that you get into fights with your wife, you get bored, you get angry with the kids, you are homebound. Whatever it is. This diminishes your infusion of *simchah*. And then you get just a tiny little drop, a milliliter, of *simcha*. So you smile two or three times a year and that's the extent of your *simchah*. But it's not only *simchah* that you get on *Yom Tov*. It's *tov lev*, you feel good, says the *Abarbanel*. *Tov lev* is an inner feeling of "I feel good." It's an inner feeling of good. He says that if a person is depressed at the beginning of the year, *בעצבון האכלה* - you will be filled with depression that year - *כי כן טבע המציאות* - *כי כן טבע המציאות*. He says an amazing *shtikel*, that a principle in *simchah* is that someone who is *שמח בחלקו*, that itself creates a foundation to get more *שמחה*. Somebody who is sad without a good cause, *יענוק דום כל ימים* he will give himself unhappiness all his days. It is a consequence, he says. This is how *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* made the *briah*.

Rabbi Dr. Yakov Greenwald used to say, "Depression is a sin." Why is it a sin? Because it leads to more depression. I didn't know where he got this from, but now I know: he got it from this *Abarbanel*! This is also brought down in the *sefer Pele Yo'etz* (R' Eliezer Papo, 1785-1828). Under his *erech* called *Sukkah*, he writes that there is a specific *mitzvah* to be in a state of joy, *בשמחה של מצוה* - that's the key here, it has to be *שמחה של מצוה* - and he says it is *סימן טוב לכל השנה*. He quotes it in the name of the *talmidim* of the *Arizal*. One who is *שמח וטוב לב* and is not *mitza'er* on *Yom Tov*, *מובטח לו* that he will have a *shanah tovah*. And he says another amazing thing there: if you are able to go through the whole *Sukkos* without being sad - you could get so much *simchah* that *יהיה לעולם שמח*.

## FOCUSING ON SIMCHA

So therefore, a person has to really go out of his way to try to maintain his *simchah* level. Then, in the dead of winter when you come home one day from work, you will be feeling up and you won't know why. Your wife

will say, "What's going on with you?" And you'll say, "I'm just feeling good." "What did you eat today?" And you'll tell her, "No, I had a good *Sukkos*." You should know that it all comes from *Sukkos*. This is an amazing thing. You're going to come home one day from work and you won't feel like such a *schlep*, you won't act like such a nudge. You will come home happy, you will be happy, you'll see. But you should know, it doesn't come easy. You don't get 365 days of happiness for seven days of happiness, just by sleeping it off for seven days. It means you have to take a proactive stance to create *simchah*. Now, it doesn't mean you are not going to get challenges, but every challenge that you get, take that challenge *besimchah*. You will be challenged. Your wife will somehow become hormonal, maybe your kids will get on your nerves, your sons-in-law will get on your nerves, your daughters-in-law will get on your nerves. Whatever you have, your guests, everybody will get on your nerves, but you should take that in stride and be *besimchah*.

### THE "SECRET SAUCE"

What should we be focusing on to bring ourselves to *simchah*? What should we be thinking about? Let me just give you a little bit of what the focus of the *simchah* should be. Rabbeinu Bachaya writes in the *sefer* called *Kad Hakemach* that a person, especially on *Sukkos*, should think: "What is the appreciation, and feeling of *simchah* that I should have for the opportunity to do *avodas Hashem*?" When you walk into the *sukkah* tonight, you should be jumping up and down. You know why you're not jumping up and down? Because you are a *shtikel kofrim*, you don't really believe in *Hashem*. As much as you say you do, you don't. Because if you believed in *Hashem* and you believed in the *mitzvos*, when you walked into a *sukkah*, you would be *shikkur*. A few years ago, you had a bag over your head, you didn't know what a *sukkah* was, a *sukkah* meant nothing to you, *mitzvos* didn't mean anything to you, even if you were somewhat *frum*, it meant just a cute little house you make in the backyard. And now, here you are - you're able to put your whole body with one dip in a *sukkah* and you are in the shadow of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*! Your entire body is involved in such an easy *mitzvah*! You are getting *kedushah* every second you are sitting in a *kosher sukkah*! You are getting such a *mitzvah*. That's an amazing opportunity! You went from a comatic state, a vegetable state to a state of a human being, that's a *nes niglah*. That's a bigger *nes* than going from a baby in the stomach to coming out. Because the baby in the stomach is at least sitting in the *yeshivah shel maaleh*, and when he comes out it's a downgrade, but a couple of years ago we were all downgraded and now we're upgraded. We don't appreciate that. You have to think about all the things that we are able to do. That's number one.

### COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Second of all, you are supposed to think about all the blessings that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gave you, because *Sukkos* is *Chag Ha'asif*. A person has to look back at the last year and say to *Hashem*, "You know, I'm so sorry for complaining. I had so much. Why should I have deserved more than I needed,

Hashem? What's so special about me, that I deserved three big meals each day?! I had such a comfortable bed, I had heating in the winter. I never had a night without heat. I had light." In *Eretz Yisrael* many people don't have heating. Many people live in poverty. So we have to thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for all these things, but we don't thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* enough. You don't appreciate that you could come into the house, take off your shoes, pitter patter around the house, and you don't have to worry about stepping on bugs, and getting bitten by the mice. That's an amazing *brachah* you should know, and a person has to realize that. That's what the *simchah* of *chag haSukkos* has to be. You have to thank *Hashem* that He gave you a *Rosh Hashanah* and a *Yom Kippur*, and maybe you got some *kapparah*. This is the *ikar* in the *chag haSukkos*. You should know that.

## APPETITE CONTROL

I will tell you about an interesting *gemara* in *Sukkah*.<sup>2</sup> A lot of people over *Yom Tov* like to indulge in food. The *emes* is, the *gemara* in *Sukkah* talks about this. There is a *gemara* in *Sukkah* ב"ה עמוד דף that says כל העושה איסור לחג anyone who makes for himself an איסור לחג באכילה ושתייה מעלה עליו הכתוב *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* considers him כאילו בנה מזבח as if he built the *mizbei'ach* והקריב עליו קרבן. What is the meaning of the word *issur*? So Rashi says, איסור לחג - אגודה לחג באכילה ושתייה, But the Maharsha explains that over here it means literal *pashut pshat*. That means, you don't eat *achilah gassah* and you don't drink unlimited amounts. You do it *leshem Shamayim*. So you should know, he says, that extra amount that you did not eat and drink, that's considered you're building a *mizbei'ach* and you're *makriv* on it *leshem Shamayim*! That's the הקרבת קרבן. You know why? You want to hear the logic? It's amazing logic. What is a *korban*? You know what a *korban* is? A *korban* means you are *makriv* your נפש הבהמי to *Hashem*. So here, if a person controls himself and he doesn't eat more, even though he wants to eat more, that person is *makriv* a *korban*. That's the general *simchah* of the *chag*.

## WHAT TO THINK ABOUT ON THE FIRST NIGHT

Now, we will take a look at the *mitzvah of yeshivah besukkah*. You should know, people don't realize, you are *mechuyav al pi halachah* everyday to eat *bassar* and to drink *yayin* in the *sukkah*. Now, most of us can't do that, because we overeat the first couple of days, and we cannot look at meat after that. It's funny. During the year you have no problem eating *bassar* every night. If your wife would serve you *milchigs* you would get very agitated: "Milchigs? That's for lunch. I want to have some dinner here. What is this?!" All of a sudden, when it comes to a *mitzvah* on *yom tov* - meat every day? "Ah, I can't think of that. That's too much!" You see the *yetzer hara* has you *mamish* wrapped up so tight!

<sup>2</sup> כל העושה איסור לחג באכילה ושתייה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו בנה מזבח והקריב עליו קרבן, שנאמר: "אסרו חג בעבותים עד קרנות המזבח" [יהודיש אנדות: כל העושה איסור לחג באכילה כו' לפרש'! לשון איסור לא ידעתי לפרש ולולי פירושו נראה דאיסור כמשמעו שעושה לו איסור וגדר במצות אכילה ושתייה בחג דהיינו שלא לאכול אכילה גסה ושלא ישתכר יותר מראי שאינו לש"ש והרי אותו מותר שלא אכל ושתה נחשב לו כאילו בנה מזבח והקריב עליו קרבן ועד' ז' אמרו בפ' הרואה פתח במזבח וסיים בשלחן מה מזבח מכפר אף שלחן מכפר כו' כמפורש בחידושנו ס"פ ה"ח]

You have to know that you have a *chiyuv* to eat *bassar* every single day of Sukkos. Chicken is not *bassar*, by the way. So come home to your wife and tell her, “Dear, it has to be a little piece, that’s all. Just give me a *kzayis*, I don’t need more than a *kzayis*, save it from the day before.” But everyday it has to be a *kzayis*.<sup>3</sup> You should know it’s brought down in *Shulchan Aruch* in תקכ”ט; even *bezman hazeh* you have to do it.<sup>4</sup> The *Shaagas Aryeh* talks about this. You have to drink wine every day and that’s what you do. A little wine, you don’t need to drink a lot of wine. You need to drink a little cup of wine. Some *shitos* hold a *revi’is*, 1.1 oz is according to some *shitos* a *revi’is*. But all of a sudden, a guy is like, “I can’t drink wine.” The *mitzvah* to eat *bassar*, you have to know, is a clear Rambam in *Sefer Hamitzvos*<sup>5</sup> [and also in *Hilchos Yom Tov* (6:18)<sup>6</sup>]. Just so you know the facts: Rambam *Sefer Hamitzvos* and *Shulchan Aruch* תקכ”ט, and if you have a *Shaagas Aryeh*, ס”ט to סימן ס”ה, he discusses this subject there. Take a look at *Vayikra*, פרק כ”ג פסוק מב-מג, that’s where the *passuk* says the *mitzvah* of sitting in the *sukkah* for seven days. It says everybody in *Klal Yisrael* should sit in *sukkos*. Analyze this *passuk*. The *passuk* (ibid) says, do you know why we sit in the *sukkah*? למען ידעו דורותיכם - so that all your generations should know, כי בסוכות, that, I, *Hashem* made you dwell in *sukkos* when I took you out of *Eretz Mitzrayim*. There is a *machlokes* in the *gemara* in *Sukkah*, דף י”א עמוד ב, What *sukkos* did *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* put us in when we went out of *Mitzrayim*? What *sukkos* does *Hashem* want us to know about? One opinion (Rabbi Eliezer) holds that it was the *ananei hakavod*. Another opinion (Rabbi Akiva) says it was *mamish* the literal *sukkos* where *Hashem* saved them from the sun. When they were in the *midbar*, *Hashem* protected them from the elements. Rashi says: מפני שכיבדו את השמש וקלות אלא הוללות וסכלות על נצטנינו על ההוללות והסכלות אלא על שמחה שיש בה עבודת היוצר (שלחן ערוך, אורח חיים תקכ”ט)

## FAVOR US AGAIN, HASHEM!

Now, the first thing you are supposed to be thinking about is the *ananei hakavod*. So I’m going to tell you the viewpoint of the Vilna Gaon. The Vilna Gaon explains that we are not talking about the general *ananei hakavod*. We are talking about the *ananei hakavod* that they lost when they sinned with the golden calf and that they got back after they were forgiven on *Yom Kippur*. The

<sup>3</sup> כתוב בס' רבבות אפרים (ה"א סי' שג) ח"ל: "אבל מו"ר הרה"ג ר"מ פיינשטיין שליט"א אמר לי בפירושו שבין" צריך לאכול לפחות כזית בשך לצאת המצוה ורק בפורים אפשר לצאת בבשר עוף ולא ביום טוב."

<sup>4</sup> חייב אדם להיות שמח וטוב לב במועד הוא ואשתו ובניו וכל הנלוים אליו כיצד משמחו הקטנים נותן להם קליות ואנשים ונשים קונה להם בגדים ותכשיטין כפי ממונו וחייב להאכיל לגר ליתום ולאמנה עם שאר עניים. אדם אוכל ושותה ושמה ברגל ולא ימשוך בבשר ובבין ובשחוק וקלות ראש לפי שאין השחוק קלות ראש שמחה אלא הוללות וסכלות על נצטנינו על ההוללות והסכלות אלא על שמחה שיש בה עבודת היוצר (שלחן ערוך, אורח חיים תקכ"ט)

<sup>5</sup> היא שצונו לשמח ברגלים, והוא אמרו יתעלה ושמחת בחגך, וכו', וכבר התבאר שמשפטי מצות זו גם כן בחגיגה, ובכלל אמרו ושמחת בחגך מה שאמרו גם כן לשמח בס' במניי שמחה ומה לאכול בשר ולשתות יין וללבוש בגדים חדשים ולחלק מיני פירות ומיני מתקה לקטנים ולנשים. ולשחוק בכל נינוו ולרקוד במקדש לבד והיא שמחת בית השואבה, זה כולו נכנס באמרו ושמחת בחגך. ומה שיתחייב מהם יותר שתיית היין לבד, כי הוא יותר מיוחד בשמחה. ולשון גמרא (פסחים ק"ט) שחייב אדם לשמח בנו ובנותיו ברגל במה משמחו בבין, ושם אמרו תניא רבי יהודה אומר בזמן שביטל המקדש קיים אין שמחה אלא בבשר שנאמר וחתת שלמים עכשיו אין שמחה אלא בין שנאמר ויין ישמח לבב אנוש, וכו' (ספר המצוות, מצוות תכ"ד)

<sup>6</sup> שבעת ימי הפסח ושמונת ימי החג עם שאר ימים טובים פלס אסורים בהספד ותענית. וחגיגת אדם להיות בקו שמשח וטוב לב הוא ובניו ואשתו ובני ביתו וכל הנלוים עליו שצאמר (דברים טז די) "ושמחת בחגך" וגו'. אף על פי שהשמחה האמורה כאן היא קרבן שלמים כמו שאנו מביאין בהלכות חגיגה יש בכלל אותה לשמחה האמורה וכו' וכו' פירוט כל אחד פיראיו לו. כיצד? הקטנים נותן להם קליות ואנשים ומגדנות. והנשים קונה להן בגדים ותכשיטין נאים כפי ממונו. והאנשים אוכלין בשר ושותין יין שאין שמחה אלא בבשר ואין שמחה אלא בבין, וכו'. (משנה תורה, הלכות שביעית יום טוב ר, יז-יח)

day following *Yom Kippur*, they started collections to build the *mishkan* and on the first day of *Sukkos*, the clouds of glory returned. The uniqueness of the clouds of glory that we celebrate on *Sukkos* is related to the *simchas haritzuy*, it was the sign that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* favored us. *Hashem* was *meratzeh* us. It came back on the first day of *Sukkos*. So when we sit tonight and we are in our *sukkah*, we should think: “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I want to thank You for *Rosh Hashanah*, I want to thank You for *Yom Kippur*. You went out of Your way to come up with an idea to give the ‘little me’ and all of *Klal Yisrael* a *kapparah*. I appreciate that, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. There are so many *goyim* who never have that *kapparah* and there are so many of our brothers who don’t appreciate it. I appreciate it *Hashem*, even if I don’t show my appreciation, I do appreciate it.” When you sit tonight in the *sukkah*, say to *Hashem*, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, You once forgave our forefathers for doing a terrible sin, for the *chet ha’egel*. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, have *rachmanus* on us once again. I am sitting in this *sukkah*, I am remembering the *ananei hakavod* that You gave to show Your favor to us, please *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* once again, favor us!” That’s what you should think.

## THOUGHT NUMBER TWO

Thought number two. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* You sat us in *sukkos*. Now, all the *mefarshim* ask, what difference does it make if we sat in *sukkos*, or in teepees or tents? Why does *Hashem* want us to remember that forever? And the answer is that the *sukkos* that we are thanking *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for are not the physical structures. What were the *sukkos* made up of in the *midbar*? The *ananei hakavod*.<sup>7</sup> *Hashem* was *mashgiach* on *Klal Yisrael* that they should not be subjected to the elements. They were not subjected to heat, to cold, to mountains - everything was straight. There were no bugs or scorpions. All the dangers that are found in the desert were not present. That’s what the *sukkah* in the *midbar* represented. So when we go into a *sukkah*, we are supposed to also think, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I acknowledge it’s not my home that protects me, it’s not the physical walls that protect me. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, what I want is to feel the divine *hashgachah* hovering over me. I want to feel Your protection over me. I acknowledge that You have protected me in the past. You protected our forefathers for 40 years in the *midbar*, physically.

## TWO WAYS TO ACQUIRE BITACHON

And these two aspects really represent the duality of *Sukkos*. Insofar as *Sukkos* is the end of the *Yamim Nora'im*, it represents the spiritual *ananei hakavod* - i.e. the return of the *ananei hakavod*, or *ritzuy* of the *teshuvah*. But insofar as *Sukkos* represents the time of harvest, the end of the culmination of the planting season, putting away everything for the winter, it represents the

<sup>7</sup> Ed. note: a number of commentators (Meromei Sadeh and others) point out that, of course, R’ Akiva agrees with R’ Eliezer, that *ananei hakavod* surrounded *Klal Yisrael* during their travels in the desert. Rather R’ Akiva’s opposing opinion that *Klal Yisrael* built actual *sukkos* during their encampments teaches us a much deeper lesson - i.e. that it wasn’t these wooden huts that protected *Klal Yisrael* from the heat, but *ananei hakavod*, that surrounded them from all sides. Thus, according to R’ Akiva, the commandment to build a *sukkah* as an eternal reminder throughout our generation is to teach that any natural *hishtadlus* done by a person - even something that’s made for our protection - is nothing more than a mere *hishtadlus*. What actually protects us and brings us *hatzlaacha* are “*ananei hakavod*,” i.e. *Hashem*’s constant *hashgacha* (See *Derash Dovid* on *Sukkos*)



physical *hashgacha pratis*. We say to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu* don’t leave us. So any thoughts that you can have or say about this matter is praiseworthy. But I’ll tell you what the problem is. Most of us would like to have some *bitachon* but we don’t have *bitachon*. Yes, we have *bitachon*, we have lots of *bitachon*, as long as our bank account is full. Then we have lots of *bitachon* in *Hashem*! When my wallet has \$1000, I have *bitachon* that when I go to the store, I’m not going to get caught short. But if I have \$50? I have no *bitachon*.

My grandfather (HaRav Avigdor Miller, zt”l) said a very interesting thing. There is famous *passuk* in *Tehillim* 91 that says ‘אומר לה’, Dovid Hamelech said, “I said to *Hashem*, *מחסי ומצודתי*, you are my *מחסה* - my refuge, my protection, *ומצודתי*, and You watch over me, *אלקי אבטח בו*, You are my *Hashem*, I will have *bitachon* in Him.” So my grandfather asked a question. He said: “Why does it say, ‘אומר לה’ - what kind of statement is that? He is talking to *Hashem*, right? ‘אומר לה’, I am going to say *Hashem*, what does it mean “I’m going to say”? It should say, *ה’ מחסי ומצודתי*. So he said that Dovid Hamelech is teaching us one of the big principles of *avodas Hashem*. Dovid is teaching us how to acquire *bitachon*. You see, there are two ways to get *bitachon* and you need both ways.

The hard way is that you sit and you study *Shaar Habitachon* in *Chovos Halevovos*, you study all the *pesukim* and incidences in the *Torah* about *bitachon* and you analyze it and you think about it, and you educate yourself to acquire *bitachon*. That’s the slow, arduous, and strenuous path. And then there is a way called the ‘easy way’ and it’s called using your mouth. The first way is *derech hapnimiyus*, an internal method. Then there’s the *derech hachitzoniyus*, an external method. And that is you just say the words of *bitachon*. If you say it excitedly, if you say, “*Hashem* You are my protector, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* watch over me, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, who will look out for me, if not You?” and you can say those things over and over, you acquire some *middah* of *bitachon*. That’s what you have to know. It’s a very important principle. So Dovid Hamelech said to *Hashem*, ‘אומר לה’ - I am saying to You *Hashem* *מחסי ומצודתי*.

So tonight when you are sitting in your *sukkah* and you’re thinking to yourself: “What can I accomplish? It’s not so comfortable in my *sukkah*. What should I think?” You have to say to yourself ‘אומר לה’, “*Hashem*, I want to say to You” and think all these thoughts that we mentioned. All the thoughts you could think of.

## BUILDING BITACHON BY WORKING LESS?

There is a *sefer* called *Mitzvas Habitachon* by Rav Shmuel Houminer (1914-1977). It’s a small *sefer* about \$3, a wonderful *sefer*, but in the beginning of that *sefer* he has all the *pesukim* of *bitachon* from the *Torah* and *Navi* written out. He writes in the beginning of that *sefer*, quoting the Maharal, that one of the most amazing ways to acquire *bitachon* is by saying these *pesukim*. Now, we are fools because if we wanted to get *bitachon*, a person has to be a *tipish* and a *shoteh*

to work eight hours a day.<sup>8</sup> I can't imagine a human being who wants to work eight hours a day. If you can work seven hours a day, why not work seven hours a day. So you have to teach yourself, train yourself how to work less. How do you do it? The answer is: by acquiring *bitachon*. First you work seven hours and 45 minutes, seven and a half hours, seven hours 15 minutes. You go slowly, you work your way down, you don't go drastic steps. You read those *pesukim* of *bitachon*. And by reading those *pesukim* of *bitachon* daily, it will give you, infuse you with *bitachon* like you never saw! You know how that works? That's the *derech hachitzoniyus*. That's what we are talking about. The author doesn't bring it down but that's the *derech hachitzoniyus*. Because you are saying the words of *bitachon* to get *bitachon*, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says, "I will give you that confidence in Me." But if you believe what all the fools have to say and you believe every *shoteh* that says you've got to work, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, *Hashem* doesn't provide for you. "Yeah, Rabbi, it's easy talk, it's baloney, '*Hashem* helps those who help themselves.' You should know, this lingo - this anti-*bitachon kefirah* lingo - becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, because whatever you want, that's what it turns into.

## CONCENTRATION REQUIRED

Now, you should know that this *kavanah* is very important, because we *pasken* in all *mitzvos* כוונה מצות צריכות כוונה, that's what the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim)* *paskens* in 'סימן ס'.<sup>9</sup> All *mitzvos* need *kavanah*. The *kavanah* has to be, "I am being *mechaven* to be *mekayem* the *mitzvah* of *Hashem*." That's all. But there is no obligation to be *mechaven* the reasons for the *mitzvah*. However, in this particular *mitzvah* of *sukkah* - when the *Torah* itself writes the reason, למען ידעו דורתיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל - the *Bach (Orach Chaim 625:1)* writes there's actually an obligation upon a person to have this in mind and to remember that *Hashem* took you out of *Mitzrayim*. It's a very important thing to know, and you should be aware of this.<sup>10</sup>

Now, regarding *halachah lemaaseh* - it's a *shaaleh* who we *pasken* like. Do we *pasken* like the *man de'amar* who says we have to remember the *ananei hakavod* or like the *man de'amar* who says סוכות ממש? So if you're thinking about both of them, it's wonderful, but *lemaaseh* the *Tur paskens*, you only have to think about *ananei hakavod*, that's the way the *Tur paskens*. That's what the *Pri Megadim* says as well. So you should definitely have these thoughts. Now, this applies to *tzitzis* also, by the way. By *tzitzis* also it says you are supposed to remember all the *mitzvos* of *Hashem*. It says 'והזכרתם את כל מצות ה'. By *tefillin* also, it says, למען תהיה,

<sup>8</sup> Ed. note: needless to say, this would only be applicable to someone who is a business owner (and can take a few hours off), and/or an employee with an explicit permission from his employer to work less hours or have alternative work arrangements, etc.

<sup>9</sup> 'א שאין מצות צריכות כוונה ו"א שצריכות כוונה לצאת בעשיית אותה מצוה וכן הלכה  
<sup>10</sup> בסוכות תשבו וגו' תלה הכתוב כי 'איכא למידק בדברי רבינו שאין זה מדרבנן בחבורו זה לבאר כוונה לשום מקרא שבתורה כי לא בא רק לפסוק חוראה או לחרות מנהג ופה האריך לבאר ולדרוש המקרא דבסוכות תשבו ויראה לי לומר בזה שסובר דכיון דכתוב למען ידעו כי לא קיים המצוה כתיקונה אם לא ידע כוונת מצות הסוכה כפי פשטה ולכן ביאר לפי המצוה בישיבת הסוכה שיזכור יציאת מצרים זה הטעם בעצמו לרבינו ז"ל במ"ש בה' ציצית בסימן ח' ויכוין בהתעטפו שצונו המקום וכו' וכן בה' תפילין בסי' כ"ה כתב ויכוין בהנחתם שצונו המקום להניח כדי כו' מה שלא עשה כן בשאר הלכות כי לא כתב שיכוין שום כוונה בעשיית המצוה כי המקיים המצוה כדינה יוצא בה אעפ"י שלא היה לו שום כוונה אבל בציצית שכתב בהן למען תזכרו וגו' וכן בתפילין כתוב למען תהיה תורת ה' בפניך שפשוטו הוא שהתפילין הם אות וזכרון כדי שיהא תורת ה' שגור בפיו כי ביד חזקה הוציאך יראה שלא קיים המצוה כתיקונה אם לא יכוין אותה הכוונה ולכן כתב בהלכות אלו ויכוין כו' וכן גבי סוכה שכתוב למען ידעו וגו' משמע ליה ג"כ שצריך שיכוין בשעת ישיבת הסוכה הטעם המכוין במצוה (ב"ה, אורח חיים תרכ"ה:א)

בפיק. תורת ה' בפיך. You have to have that thought in mind.

## HOW CAN YOU KNOW IF HASHEM FAVORS YOU?

How do you acquire a feeling of *ritzuy* on *Sukkos*? The *ananei hakavod* represents the *ritzuy*, the *teshuvah*, and the *ananei hakavod* also represents the *hashgacha pratit*, the physical *hashgacha pratit*.<sup>11</sup> The fact that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gave you a *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, that's *Hashem* telling you that even you have the opportunity to be favored. Every Jew who is aware of the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* and is aware of the *ritzuy*, is able to attain this *ritzuy*. You want to know something? I used to say to friends and family: "Excuse me, do you have any awareness of what *sukkah* has to do with *ritzuy*?" They'll look at you, like what, "What's *ritzuy*? Is that something you chew? What is it?" He doesn't know what that is even. So that's how *Hashem* makes a person not aware of the *ritzuy*. For him, he's not aware of it. There are so many things that you and I are not aware about and as we grow we become aware of them. There are many things I became aware about as I grew up and I share it with others. I see that some things, at times, don't stick with me either. I may see it 10 times and every time I say, "Wow, what a *chiddush*!?" Then I say, "Wait, I just saw this *chiddush* a few months ago." So it was last year's *chiddush*. So it takes time until it sticks. You can't acquire something just because you want to acquire it. You don't buy *madreigos*, you earn *madreigos*. I will give you an example. Within our *tefillah*, I guarantee you that one person had a *zechus* that one time he thought about the meaning of 'ברוך אתה ה' maybe twice, another person thought maybe four or five times, another person 10 times and some never thought about it. What happened? They didn't want it? No, they wanted, but they didn't have the *zechus*. *Hashem* just shut their brain down. *Hashem* "closed" their brain.

So it's the same thing here. We are learning these *yesodos* of *Sukkos* today. Some of us will chap it, and some of us won't. If you are aware of the *ritzuy* when you are sitting in the *sukkah* and you are aware that *Sukkos* is connected with *ritzuy*, that's *Hashem* letting you know that you are connected to *ritzuy*. Connected to *ritzuy* means it's something you should aspire for. Aspire for *ritzuy*. *Ritzuy* comes in little droppers. You get one dropper *ritzuy*, you get a milliliter of *ritzuy*, or you get a milli-milli-milliliter of *ritzuy*. Even if a person has a difficult year, how a person handles it, that a person [himself] determines. Let's say two people have backaches. One person lives with the backache, but for the other person, it destroys him. That's two different *parshiyos*. If a person would be able to be *besimchah* on *Sukkos*, he would be able to handle all the difficulties *besimchah*. If he is not going to have *simchah* on *Sukkos*, then any difficulty that hits him during the year, is going to depress him.

## DISPOSABLE DISHES

Now you also have to remember that the *sukkah* should be your *dirah*. Attempt to have in mind that *Hashem* wants you to make this *sukkah* your

<sup>11</sup> Ed. note: the following paragraph is in response to an audience member's question, that if someone, chas v'shalom, did not have a favorable din on Yom Kippur, whether for life, health, parnassah, etc, how can one then acquire *ritzuy* on *Sukkos*? In other words, how do we really know if *Hashem* can or will "favor" anybody?

*makom dirah* for seven days. The halacha says, if you have nice things, you should bring them into the *sukkah*. Some people just like paper plates. In their house they use regular, but in their *sukkah* they use paper plates. That's contrary to the *halachah*. The *halacha* says a person should make his *sukkah* like his house, and you should know the more you appreciate it the more you are fulfilling the mitzvah. Let's say your wife says, "I don't want to do that." You know what you say to yourself? "*Hashem* this is my opportunity." You could fight with your wife. The *yetzer hara* says, "See, your wife doesn't want to help you; you want to *shteig*, and your wife is trying to knock you down all the time." So you know what? You can tell your wife off, and destroy your *Sukkos*. Or instead, you can say to yourself, "No, my wife didn't hear the shmooze, my wife didn't hear all this *Torah*. For her *Sukkos* is a pain, so pity is on her, she's still in a coma, she doesn't know what *Sukkos* is. So, either I'm going to enlighten her, or since I am aware of the opportunity, I am going to do it myself." So you say the following to your wife, "Dear, it's on me, I'm going to bring out the dishes. I'll take care of it. Is that okay?" She'll say, "What's going on with you?!" So you say, "I know it sounds strange, but I have come to an awareness of *Sukkos*. I really want to have a nice year. *Sukkos* is going to determine the level of my joy for the whole year. So if I extend myself a little bit for *Sukkos*, this will be a *simchadige* year. So you bring the paper plates in for yourself, I'll bring the dishes in for myself." You should know that those little things could go a long way in extending the *brachah*. - how much you get and what you get. Don't sit there feeling like a grouch and thinking *Hashem* is going to pour *simchah* on you. He's going to pour something else on you, not *simchah*. He's going to turn the hose on you.

Also, it's best to eat all things in the *sukkah*. If you have the chance to sleep in the *sukkah*, the opportunity presents itself, *ashrecha*, get yourself a decent bed. Find yourself an arrangement and do it right.

### **DON'T LEAVE OUT ANY USHPIZIN THIS YEAR!**

Now, I want to tell you about another aspect of *Sukkos*, and that is the *Ushpizin*. It's not a *halachic* aspect, it's a *kabbalistic* aspect, but it does help a person enhance his sense of *kedushah*. Every night we invite *Ushpizin* to the *sukkah*, which literally means *orchim*, guests. There are seven shepherds of *Klal Yisrael* and we invite them into our *sukkah* to spend the *Yom Tov* with us. This *minhag* comes from the Zohar. What he says is as follows. A *sukkah* is a shadow of *emunah*. It's *emunah* for *teshuvah*, it's *emunah* that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* takes care of me. And when a person is dwelling in the shadow of *emunah*, what happens is the *Shechinah* spreads its wings over a person. Meaning When you go into *emunah* mode in your mind, the *Shechinah* all of a sudden connects with you. The Zohar says, in what fashion does the *Shechinah* spread its wings over you? The *shivas haro'im* (seven shepherds), Avraham and the five *tzaddikim* and Dovid Hamelech now stand by your side - they are with you! That means, you now have access to the *koach* of their *zechusim*, to the "energy" that they create in the world! That's what the Zohar says. You have

access to that *koach* by your awareness of the *tzel* of the *emunah*. For many years I've been asking people, "Why do we say *Ushpizin*?" They say, "It's a *minhag*." Then I ask, "But what do you do with it? What does this stuff mean?" They say, "Who needs to know what it means, you've got to say it, that's all." But really the secret of getting the *koach* of it, is by thinking of the *tzel* of the *emunah*, that's the main thing to think about. That's how you connect to that *koach* - through the *tzel* of the *emunah*. The passuk says בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים - You should sit in the sukkah for seven days. Now it doesn't say בסוכות תשבו בשבעת ימים or לשבעת ימים, - it says שבעת ימים. So the Zohar says the *kavanah* is that there are seven *sefiros*, which means that there are seven ways, or seven lights that *Hashem* refracts into this world. This means that I could connect to *Hashem* in seven main ways. Each one of those ways was developed and represented by one of the *shivah haro'im*. So you are not connecting to Avraham, but rather you are connecting to the *sefirah* called *chessed*. But ultimately and by default you are connecting to *Hashem*, that's what you are connecting to. So here we all had a picture in our mind of Avraham coming into our *sukkah*. No. The picture that should be in your mind is of *Hashem*'s light shining into your *sukkah*! There's *chessed*, there's *din*, there's *tiferes*. There are all kinds of *sefiros* and in the *Ushpizin* you are supposed to mention them, and that is what gives a person the *simchah* of these *orchim*.

## GUESTS AND SEFIROS

So we invite these guests. If not for Avraham we would not have the *middah* of *chessed*. Avraham was *kovei'a* the *middah* of *chessed* in the world. He brought the light of *Hashem*, of *chessed* to this world. Yitzchok brought *gevurah* to the world, the presence of *Hashem* in that fashion. And Yakov brought the *middah* of *tiferes*. Now, the way to accomplish this is that you have to be *mazmin* (invite them) verbally. In the Zohar it says that when a person stands by the door of his *sukkah*, he should say, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I want to invite all of the guests - i.e. all of Your *sefiros*, all of Your lights that You put into this world - and I want to connect to them through my *emunah*. (That's what I'm having *emunah* in) I am having *emunah* that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, You placed Yourself in this world, not directly, but indirectly through seven *sefiros* and I would like that to be present in my *sukkah*." So every night some people think about this. The first night, they'll talk about *chessed*. Tonight is *Shabbos*, what a wonderful opportunity to talk about *chessed*! And you'll think about what *chessed* represents in the world. *Chessed* is not just one of the *sefiros*, *chessed* is the crossbeam of all the *sefiros*. Everything, the whole world is founded on *chessed*, עולם חסד יבנה. A person brings guests into his house on this night and you should have the *kavanah*, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I want to thank You for the opportunity to bring guests into my house." That's what a person should have in mind. And if you do that, it means you are connecting to and exercising the *middah* of *chessed*.

And if you don't have guests, then you go out of your way to help your wife. I mean it seriously. Your wife becomes your *middah* of *chessed*. Now if you're

doing it because you're scared of her, and she's going to nudge you and you want to get something out of her, that's a waste of time. But if you do it because you say, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I want to work on the *middah* of *chesed*," then you can practice this *middah* wherever you are - you could be at your in-laws, you could be a guest in somebody's house. You want to practice this *middah* because that's what connects you to that light of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. This is a very important *yesod*.

There is a difference between the *Ashkenazim* and the *Sefardim* when it comes to the order of the *Ushpizin*. The *minhag Ashkenaz* is to list them in the order of their birth: Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov. That's why Yosef is before Moshe. But according to *minhag Sefard*, they are mentioned in the order of the *sefiros*, so Moshe comes before Yosef. There is a hierarchy in the *sefiros*: There's *netzach*, there's *hod* and there's *yesod*. Moshe represents *netzach*, Aharon represents *hod* and Yosef represents *yesod*. So the order is Moshe, Aharon and then Yosef. We've spoken about what each *middah* means, and that drasha is not for now, but if you could find out something about it, it would help a little bit; but even if you don't know what it means, you say, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, make them work!"

## THINKING ABOUT ARBA'AH MINIM

Now, there is another *mitzvah* called the *mitzvah* of *arba'ah minim*. When you take the *arba'ah minim* you should have in mind that this is a *mitzvah*. This year we are not going to take it on the first day, we will take it the second day.<sup>12</sup> You should have in mind you are fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Hashem* because *Hashem* gave the *Chachamim* the *koach* to institute *mitzvos d'rabannan* as a *zecher lemikdash*. You should have in mind the following: "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, this is a *zecher* of the *mikdash* and it's a *mitzvah d'rabannan*." You should also think and hope that the *Beis Hamikdash* will be rebuilt. You have to know that the four *minim* represent the duality. They represent the *nitzachon*, the conquest of *Klal Yisrael* having been *zocheh badin*. That's what *Chazal* tell us. It is not related necessarily to the *Chag Ha'asif* but it's related to the *Yamim Hanora'im*. In *Vayikra* (23:40), if you take a look at that *passuk* which we discussed already, there is a *Daas Zekeinim Mibaalei Tosafos* who writes that the *lulav* that we take *beyom rishon* is a *siman* that we were <sup>13</sup>זוכה בדין ביום הכיפורים and everybody will then know, *שזכיתם בדין* that you were *zocheh badin*. A person should have that thought. And if you don't feel like you were *zocheh badin*, take the *lulav* and tell *Hashem*, "Please help me feel like I am *zocheh badin*." That's what you want to have in mind. Another thing you want to have in mind is that each of the four *minim* represents a different part of *Klal Yisrael*. And when you wave it, you are saying to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, "All my parts and all the parts of *Klal Yisrael* should be for You, *Hashem*." When you are *moilech*

<sup>12</sup> This shiur was given in 5763, when the first day of Sukkos fell on Shabbos.

ביום הראשון. הלולב שאנו נוטלין ביום ראשון הוא סי' שזכינו בדין ביום הכיפורים ושי"ה או ירננו עצי היער מלפני ה' כי בא לשפוט את הארץ במי הכתוב מדבר <sup>13</sup> בישראל ובאומות העולם שהקב"ה דן אותם ביום הכפורי' אלו ואלו נכנסין לדון ואין אנו יודעין מי מהנזחין במיור הקב"ה סלו לולביכם בידכם והכל יודעי' שזכיתם בדין משל לשני בני אדם שנכנסו לדון לפני המלך ולא היו יודעין הבריות מי נצח אלא מי שהוא יוצא במקל לבן או תפוח בידו או יודעין שהוא יצא זכאי מלפני המלך

to the east, in front of you, to the side of you, to the back of you, all directions, you are saying, “*Hashem*, we testify with this *lulav*, with this branch that we are loyal and we want to be dedicated and committed to your *avodah*.” That’s the *pashute* thought that you should have.

### ASKING HASHEM TO HELP US THINK

You may be familiar with the fact that the *esrog* represents the *lev*, the *lulav* is the *shedra*, the *hadassim* is the eyes and the *aravos* the mouth. These are all the *keilim* that a person has to serve *Hashem* with. This represents your *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshamah*. You have to know this, it’s a very important thing. Your spine represents your *nefesh*, the *lev* represents the *neshamah*, and then you have the eyes, represented by *hadassim*. You have a mitzvah that you should not stray after your eyes, so try to say the following when you are looking at the *hadassim*: “I’m going to keep my eyes focused where they are supposed to be focused.” Any positive thoughts you are going to have, you will probably find in *Chazal*. For example, when you hold the *esrog*, you should think about your heart and say: “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, may this be a *kaparah* for all the thoughts of my heart. May this be *mechazek* my heart.” You look at the *hadassim* and you say, “May the *hadassim* be *mechazek* my eyes. Give my eyes the strength not to stray.” You look at the *aravah* and say, “May the *aravah* give my mouth the ability to speak more *divrei Torah* and less *loshon hora*. You look at the *lulav* and you say, “*Hashem*, let my body, my *guf*, have the strength to stand and may it serve as an atonement so that I can do whatever I have to do to get someplace and accomplish something in this world. That is what you should be thinking. You have to give these thoughts some practice and hopefully *Hashem* will open your mind to enable you to think them. It’s a big *brachah* when *Hashem* opens your mind and helps you think about something. Most of us try to think and only come up with blanks. When we think, we come up with stock quotes, insurance quotes and other such *naarishkeik*. So you also have to ask *Hashem* to help you think. This is the most wonderful *Yom Tov* and hopefully on this *Yom Tov* you will have tremendous *hatzlachah*, a change of year, and you should have *brachah* and *gevaldige hatzlachah*. Wishing everyone a great *Yom Tov*!

Part 2: The Deeper Insights Into Hoshana Rabbah (5765)

### THE KAPPARAH STILL CONTINUES

Tomorrow is the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Sukkos, Hoshana Rabbah.<sup>14</sup> That day stands out from amongst the other days of Sukkos from a *halachic* aspect. However, practically speaking, there isn’t any major difference between the first six days and the last day. On all of them you are *chayav* in the mitzvah of *sukkah*; on all the days you are *chayav* in *simchah* and *hallel*; on all of them you are *chayav* in *arba minim*.

The Rishonim established that Hoshana Rabbah is a *hemshech* (continuation) of the *yamim hanora'im*. Hoshana Rabbah is a *hemshech* of the

<sup>14</sup> The shiur was given on 20 Tishrei, 5765.

*yemei hadin*, when everyone in the world has to give a *din vecheshbon* on their *ma'asim*. Our *kadmonim* also gave a *remez* from the *passuk* of ירא לא אריה, *Alef* is Elul, *Reish* is Rosh Hashanah, *Yud* is Yom Kippur and the *Hey* is Hoshana Rabbah. This is one of the days that, so to speak, calls out to a person to check his ways and do *teshuvah*. One of the great hasidic leaders, the Bnei Yissaschar, Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov (1783-1841), says that this idea is also alluded to in the *passuk* (Tehillim 22:22): הושיעני מפי אריה - *save me from the pi of the aryeh* ("mouth of the lion"). The *aryeh* refers to these five days. The *passuk* expresses a *tefillah*, "Help me that my *mekatregim*, my prosecutors, should not judge me on these days of judgment."

The Midrash Tehillim (17:5) explains the source for the age-old *minhag* of circling the *bimah* on Hoshana Rabbah.<sup>15</sup> Says the Midrash: בראש השנה באין כל. On Rosh Hashanah all the *ba'ei olam*, all the people in the world, come before Hashem like "sheep." Even Bnei Yisrael came before Hashem. And all the *malachim* of the *umos ha'olam* say, אנו נצחנו וחינו בדין, "We win." They say, "We won. Klal Yisrael is not going to raise its head again and be *menatze'ach* (victorious)." So the *emes* is, we don't know who is *menatzei'ach* - Yisrael or the *umos ha'olam*. But when the *yom tov rishon* of the *chag* comes, and all of Yisrael, the *gedolim* and the *ketanim*, take their *lulavim* in their right hands and their *esrogim* in their left hands, immediately everybody knows at that point: שישאל נוצחין בדין - *Yisrael were victorious in the judgment!*<sup>16</sup>

And then, says the Midrash, on Hoshana Rabbah, they take the *arvei nachal* and circle the *bimah* seven times. The *chazzan* of the *beis hakenesses* stands like a *malach Elokim* with the *sefer Torah* in his arms. The congregation goes around him, *k'dugmas hamizbei'ach*. Immediately, the *malachei hashareis* are *smeichin*, they are happy, and they say: נצחו ישראל, נצחו ישראל, וגם נצח ישראל לא ישקר. Even during the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, there was something special about this day as it says in the Mishnah in Sukkah (45a): "Everyday they used to go around the *mizbei'ach* one time, and on this day they went around the *mizbei'ach* seven times." The *shaileh* (Sukkah 43b) was only whether they went with the *aravah*, or with the *lulav*. In *halachah* we maintain that they went around the *mizbeach* holding the *lulav*. There is a *minhag hanevi'im*, that they used to bang the *aravos* on the floor, and we practice this *minhag* nowadays.

## THE GREAT GIFT OF KAPPARAH

The *shaileh* is: what kind of name is Hoshana Rabbah? Hoshana means "salvation," and Rabbah means "great": "A Great Salvation." What does that mean? In the *Sefer Mateh Moseh*, one of the famous *sefarim* on *halachah*, written by R' Moshe Met (1550-1606), it says as follows: יום השביעי הוא הושענא רבה. Why do

<sup>15</sup> ח"ל בדברי המדרש: בראש השנה באין כל באי עולם ועוברין לפניו כבני מרון, ואף ישראל עוברין לפניו עם כל באי עולם, ושירי אומות העולם אומרים אנו נצחנו וחינו בדין, ואין אדם יודע מי נצח, אם ישראל נוצחים או אומות העולם. עבר ראש השנה, וכל ישראל באים ביום הכיפורים ומתענים בו, ולובשים בגדים לבנים ונאים. עבר יום הכפורים, ואין אדם יודע מי נצח אם ישראל אם אומות העולם. כיון שהגיע יום טוב הראשון של חג, וכל ישראל גדולים וקטנים נוטלין לולביהם בימינם ואתרוגיהם בשמאלם, מיד הכל יודעין שישאל נוצחין בדין, וכיון שהגיע יום 'הושענא רבה', נוטלין ערבי נחל ומקיפין שבע הקפות, וחזן הכנסת עומד כמלאך אלקים, וספר תורה בזויע, והעם מקיפין אותו דוגמת המובח, שכך שנו רבותינו בכל יום היו מקיפין את המובח ואומרים: 'אנא ה' הושיעני נא, אנא ה' הצליחני, וביום השביעי היו מקיפין שבע פעמים, וכן מפורש על ידי דוד מלך ישראל שנאמר: 'ארצתי בנקיון כפי וסבבה את מבחתי ה', ומיד מלאכי השרת שמחים ואומרים: נצחו ישראל נצחו ישראל, וגם נצח ישראל לא ישקר ולא ינחם'.

<sup>16</sup> וכן כתוב לעיל בדתת קונים על יקרא (ביג"מ), ד"ה ביום הראשון



they call it Hoshana Rabbah? אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לאברהם אני יחיד ואתה יחיד *Hashem said to Avraham Avinu, I am a yachid and you are a yachid*, וזוהו הושענא רבה *I am going to give Bnei Yisrael, your children, a special day to have kapparah on their avonos and that is Hoshana Rabbah*. What's the *pshat* in this great gift?<sup>17</sup>

The *Mateh Moshe* explains as follows: one of the names of Hashem is *Alef, Hey, Yud, and Hey - Eheke* - which has the *gematriya* of 21. The number 21 is featured in a few other places: Avraham Avinu was the 21st generation from the beginning of *brias ha'olam* and Hoshana Rabbah is also the 21st day of Chodesh Tishrei. HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Avraham: "If there won't be a *kapparah* for your children on Rosh Hashanah, then I will give a 'back up' and that is Yom Kippur. And if they do not merit a *kapparah* on Yom Kippur, then it will be on Hoshana Rabbah." Just like Avraham Avinu's light began to shine in the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> *dor* following *brias ha'olam* (creation of the world) so too, the *light* of Yisrael will shine on Hoshana Rabbah, which is the 21<sup>st</sup> day from Rosh Hashanah, the day of *brias ha'adam*" (creation of a man). Rabbeinu Bachya also says that there is a *Shem* of Hashem called *Yud, Hey, and Vav*, which is also *gematriya* 21, which represents the *hanhaga* of Hashem. That *Shem* operates on Hoshana Rabbah, he says, which is called, "*yom hachosam hagadol*, the day of the "great signing." This day, Rabbeinu Bachya says, is the *tachlis hachag*. So what is so special about this day?

## TOO HOLY TO FULLY COMPREHEND

In the *sifrei Kabbalah*, Rav Chaim Vital (1543-1620) explains the uniqueness of Hoshana Rabbah. On Sukkos, we are *makriv parei hachag*, we bring a total of 70 *parim* (bulls). These *parim* of the *chag* are getting less and less and less (i.e. 13 *parim* on day 1 of Sukkos, 12 *parim* on day 2 of Sukkos, 11 *parim* on day 3, etc). It is a *kapparah* for the *umos ha'olam*. That means to say, that through these *korbanos*, we want to diminish the *koach* of *ra* that the *umos ha'olam* have. On Hoshana Rabbah, when they finish bringing the *korbanos* of the 70 *umos*, it is a *remez* to the end of the *ra* of the 70 *umos*. *Gog umagog* is the *gematria* of 70. The 70 *umos* are the ones who are going to do *milchamah* with Klal Yisrael, and when Klal Yisrael has a *yeshuah* from the *umos*, that is called Hoshana Rabbah, a great salvation. For this reason, this day represents the potential for giving us a great Hoshana Rabbah, a final salvation. Rav Chaim Vital writes over there, that you cannot fathom the greatness of this day לפה כי אם על ידי קבלה מפה לפה, you can't put it into written words. Actually Rabbeinu Bachya (1255-1340) says this as well in his famous sefer called, *Kad HaKemach*.<sup>18</sup> He was writing at a time when

<sup>17</sup> כתוב במטה משה ס"ק תתקנ"ז: אמר הקב"ה אברהם אני יחיד ואתה יחיד אתן לבניך יום המיוחד לכפר בו עונותם וזוהו הושענא רבה, פירש שמי אחי"ג כ"א ואתה בכ"א, עשרה דורות מאדם ועד נח ה' דורות מנח ועד אברהם והושענא רבה כ"א ימים לחודש תשרי. אמרו לו הקב"ה לאברהם אם אין כפרה לבניך ברה"י יהי ב"כ ואם לאו יהי בחושענא רבה. וזוהו יחידותי על שמי. וסוד החתימה שהיא בליל הושענא רבה ולא ב"כ יהי לה לחיות בציון, אבל הכוונה בזה דע כי ב"כ הוא ב"כ לחודש, וז"ט של סוכות אתר ה' ימים הרי ט"ו יום, והושענא רבה אתר ה' הרי כ"א. תרבע ב"א פעמים כ"א, יעלה תמ"א למפרע הוא אמת, וחותמו של הקב"ה אמת ולזה החתימה הוא בליל ה' ויעוד כי ב"כ הוא ב"כ לחודש כנגד ל' של שם. ואחר ה' ימים הוא סוכות כנגד ה'. והושענא רבה אתר ה' ימים הרי תשלום שם ד' ה' אחרונה כפולת

<sup>18</sup> וצריך אדם שיתבונן בגודל כח היום הזה שהוא יום כ"א ויום כ"ו יום תשלום על פרים כנגד שרי האומות, כי כל כחות עתידים שישבו לסבתם הראשונה והוא ג"כ יום החותם הגדול העליון מלבד החתימה הראשונה של יום התפורים כי כל הדברים האלה שי ויש עקרים גדולים וישרשים עצומים לא יוכלם לב חושב ולא יעלו בידו מצד עינו אלא אם כן קבלם מפה אל פה וזה בידו מסורת החכמה, נמצאת למד שהקפה שהיו ישראל מקיפים את יריחו בכל יום פעם אחת ובשבעינ' ז' פעמים חבל היה רמז לשכינה שהיא כלולה בשש קצוות ולכן חבל מרת הדין על יריחו ונפלה החומה תחתיה, וכן הווי ישראל במקדש מתכפרים על ידי המזבח ומרת הדין היתה חלה על האויבים ולא היה להם רשות לבא כנגד ישראל, וכן לעתיד תחזור השכינה לבית קדשי הקדשים ותחלו מרת הדין בשונאייה של ישראל אשר הציקום ושעדיהם. והקפה שאנו עושין בזמן הזה הוא סימן ורמז לעתיד תחפול חומת ארם והיו כלים ואבדוים מן העולם שכן התנבא דניאל על החיה הרביעית (דניאל ט"ז) עד די קטילת חיותא והובד גשמה ויהבת לקיאת אשא. ואז ישמה הר ציון וירושלים שנקראו מדבר רציה שנאמר (ישעיהו ס"ד:ט"ז) ציון מדבר היתה וירושלים שגמה, וכן (התנבא ישעיהו שישמחו ציון וירושלים על פורענות ארם הוא שאמר (שם לה:א) יששום מדבר רציה ותגל ערבה ותפרח כחבצלת (כד הקמה, ערבה א'

the *Sefer HaZohar* wasn't accessible.<sup>19</sup>

He says *וּצְרִיךְ אָדָם שִׁתְּבוּנָן בְּגוּדֵל כַּח הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה שֶׁהוּא יוֹם כ"א וְיוֹם כ"ו*, a person has to understand the greatness of this day, which is the 21st and 26th day. We all know that *brias ha'olam* was five days before *brias ha'adam*, which was on Rosh Hashanah. The *brias ha'olam* was on *כ"ה אלול*. So it turns out that Hashana Rabbah is the 26th since the creation of the world, a day of *פְּרִים כְּנֶגֶד שְׂרֵי הָאוֹמוֹת* and it is the *chosam hagadol* ("great seal") following the *chasimah harishonah* ("the first seal"), which is Yom Kippur.

He adds that the *hakafah* we make on this day is a *siman*, is a *remez* (a hint) *לְעֵתִיד שְׁתִּפּוּל חוֹמַת אֶרֶם*, to when the "wall of Edom will fall down." And they will be *כְּלִים וְאֲבוּדִים* - utterly destroyed. This is not a personal *hoshana*. On Yom Kippur, we daven for ourselves, for a personal *kapparah*. Hoshana Rabbah is more about a national *kapparah*. Now that we had a *kapparah* on Yom Kippur, we should be *zoche* to bring out the *koach* of Klal Yisrael as one. After going through the Yom Tov of Sukkos, we should bring forth this *koach* of national *kapparah* through *achdus* on Hoshana Rabbah.

The Zohar says that a person should do *teshuvah* on Hoshana Rabbah, since there is an idea that on Hoshana Rabbah, Hashem is *moser* the *petakim* ("delivers the final notes"). For this reason, we say "*piska tava*." *Piska tava* means that we should get a good *petek*, a good note. It means Hashem gives the *petakim* to the *malachim* and He tells the *malachim* to take these *pesakim* and go carry out the *din*. It means the *chasimah* was done on Yom Kippur, but Hashem waits before He carries out the *din*. The Zohar (quoted by Arizal in *Sha'ar Kakavonos*) says: *וְנִיתְּנִים עִתָּה בְּיַד הַשְּׁלּוּחִים עַל עוֹשֵׂי הַפּוֹרְעַנְיוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם*. The instruction for the *din* is only sent forth on the night of Hoshana Rabbah, at hatzos.

## GRABBING THE LAST CHANCE

The Arizal (in *Sha'ar Kakavonos*) points out that there are two different *ma'amarim* in the Zohar regarding the idea of giving over the *petakim*. In one place the Zohar says that the *mesirus hapetakim* takes place on *leil Hoshana Rabbah*. In another place it seems that it takes place on Shemini Atzeres. The Arizal explains that the *emes* is that the *ikkar hadin* is *nigmar bechatzos harishonah shel leil Hoshana Rabbah*. The *ikkar din* of Hoshana Rabbah is done on that night, and *be'eis chatzos halaylah nigmar hachosam*, the *din* is completed. That is why many people have a *minhag* that they stay up the whole night. Even if you don't stay up the whole night, but you stay up part of the night, it is definitely a good time to say Tehillim. Everyone is different. Some people read *Sefer Devarim*, which is like reading the whole Torah. What is the *din* on? They are *moser* the *petakim* of those people who were sealed on Yom Kippur, and did not do *teshuvah* all those days from Yom Kippur until Hoshana Rabbah.

<sup>19</sup> Ed. note: given that Rabbeinu Bachya writes that these lofty concepts about Hoshana Rabbah can only be understood if one received them as part of an oral [kabbalistic] tradition, it is plausible that he was one of the select, few talmidim of that messora (Zohar was first printed in 1550's); however, as Rav Brog clarified, the opposite may also be true, namely, that Rav Chaim Vital saw this idea brought down in Rabbeinu Bachya, but Rabbeinu Bachya himself didn't have access to the Zohar.

Everybody promised Hashem they were going to be good boys and then they proceeded to forget about it - they were not interested. At this point the messengers hand over the judgment, and they hand over the *petakim*, to activate the *din lemishpat*, so the judgment will become a sentence. But even though the *petakim* are already in their hands, they don't actually have the *reshus* to effect the *mishpat*, the sentence, and the *onesh*, retribution, that are written in the *petakim* until Shemini Atzeres, in order to give a little more time for the sinners to do *teshuvah* on the day of Hoshana Rabbah. Even at that point, if they do *teshuvah*, Hashem will take back the *petakim* from the hands of the messengers. If not, אין עוד תקנה בתשובה מאז ואילך - *teshuva* doesn't help after that point. The Arizal goes on to explain that even though the Zohar says that once the *petakim* are given, Hashem doesn't take it back, that's talking about the normal circumstances. That means, under normal circumstances, a guy who didn't do *teshuvah* from Yom Kippur until Hoshana Rabbah, the chances of him doing *teshuvah* on Hoshana Rabbah are very slight, so it's only a theoretical possibility that he would do *teshuvah* then. Practically, most people who haven't done *teshuvah* by then, are probably not going to do *teshuvah* at that point. Not that it's not *shayach*. For sure if a guy will do *teshuvah*, they will be *korei'a gezar dino*, they will tear up his sentence. He even brings a *ra'aya* for this from the Rikanti, one of the Rishonim.

So although it may otherwise be very unlikely for someone to be moved to do *teshuva* on Hashana Rabbah (if he hasn't already done so beforehand), this is precisely why Chazal gave us yet another chance. Its name is Hoshana Rabbah to make us aware that this day carries an incredible potential for *teshuva*! Therefore he says, כל יום הושענא רבה יש בו קצת דינים, לפי שעדיין הדין תלוי עד יום שמיני עזרת, there are still some judgements that "hover" somewhat throughout Hoshana Rabbah, since the final judgment is pending until the day of Shemini Atzeres, to see if the sinners are doing *teshuvah*. And because of this fact, one should conduct himself accordingly throughout this awesome day.

A person should be aware and מכוון דעתו במאד מאד בתפילת יום הושענא רבה ובכל מעשיו ביום ההוא. He should focus and concentrate very much during the tefillos of Hoshana Rabbah and all of his actions on that day, because there is still *takanah* (rectification) at that point, but afterwards there is no *takanah* anymore. This is the *din* of the *chosam hagadol* and this is the day when a person should seize his last opportunity!

The word *hoshana* is "*hosha Nun Alef*." Hoshana Rabbah is 51 days from Rosh Chodesh Elul. Also נא is *lashon bakashah*. Everything is dependent on the *tikkun* therefore a person should be *mechazek* himself throughout the 51 days until this last day! Wishing everyone a good Yom Tov and a *piska tava*!

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