

B'S'D'

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Sukkot 5757 - "Festival of the Temple's dedication"

The Weekly Internet  
P A R A S H A - P A G E

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The Sukkot Parasha-Page has been dedicated by Simmy Friedman in memory of his grandmother, Chaya bas Reb Yaakov, whose first Yartzeit was on the 8th of Tishrei. \*\*\* Please contact me if you would like to dedicate a Parasha-Page. Spread Torah through the farthest reaching medium in all of history!

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SUKKOT - FESTIVAL OF THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei) when you gather into your silos the year's produce, you shall celebrate the holiday of Hashem for seven days.... In Sukkot (literally, protective tents) you shall reside for seven days... in order that the generations to come shall know that I provided Sukkot for the Bnei Yisroel when I took them out of Egypt. (Vayikra 23:39-43)

"I provided Sukkot for the Bnei Yisroel" -- Rabbi Eliezer explained, the Sukkot of the verse were the Clouds of Hashem's Glory. (Seven divine clouds surrounded the Bnei Yisroel throughout their travels in the desert. The clouds leveled the rugged desert floor and shielded the Bnei Yisroel from the scorching sun,

besides protecting them from predators and enemy ambushes -- see Rashi Bamidbar 10:34, Devarim 25:18, Gemara Berachot 54b, Targum Yonatan Bamidbar 33:5. -ed.) Rabbi Akiva translated the verse literally. The Bnei Yisroel made themselves tents in the desert, and it is to these tents that the verse refers. (Gemara Sukkah 11b)

In what way were the Sukkot that the Bnei Yisroel built in the desert related to the fifteenth day of Tishrei? The Bnei Yisroel entered the desert, and enjoyed the protection of their tents and the Clouds of Glory, during the hot month of Nisan -- six months before Tishrei. Why do we wait half a year and celebrate the protection of these Sukkot in Tishrei?

II

Accepting Rebbi Akiva's interpretation of the verse (that the Sukkot were actual tents), there are a number of ways to link the Jews' Sukkot to the Tishrei season. (1) The Ibn Ezra and Ramban (Vayikra 23:43) explain that the tents of the Exodus from Egypt were not meant to protect the Bnei Yisroel from the blazing sun (-contrary to Rashi's assumption in Gemara Sukkah 11b) since the Clouds of Glory already provided full protection from the sun. Instead, the tents were built to protect them from the chill of winter. Since the cold season begins towards the end of Tishrei, it is then that we commemorate the Jews' tents. (The weak point of this hypothesis is the fact that the Sukkot \*we\* build are designed specifically for casting shade and not for granting warmth -- see Sukkah 2a, 8b, 12a.) (2) The Rashbam (Vayikra ibid.) suggests that although our fathers' Sukkot were not built in Tishrei, it is necessary for \*us\* to remember their Sukkot specifically in Tishrei. Tishrei is the month during which we gather into our houses the produce of our land. When we assay the year's produce we may become arrogant, gloating in the accomplishments of our toil. We must therefore remind ourselves that the land we live on, and its produce, were granted to us by Hashem in His kindness.

The Sukkot built in the desert symbolize our homeless wandering to Eretz Yisroel. By moving into Sukkot in Tishrei, we remind ourselves that we originally owned no land at all. Hashem miraculously delivered Eretz Yisroel and its inhabitants into our hands, and it is He Whom we must thank for all that we have.

III

These suggestions, however, are only valid according to the opinion of Rebbi Akiva. According to Rebbi Eliezer, the Sukkot of the desert were the Clouds of Glory. The Clouds surrounded the Bnei Yisroel immediately upon the Exodus, in Nisan (see Targum Yonatan Bamidbar 33:5). Also, these clouds represent our miraculous salvation from the hands of the Egyptians, not our homeless wandering. According to Rebbi Eliezer's interpretation (which is accepted halachically, see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 625:1, Bi'ur HaGra ad loc.) the question may be raised once again -- why aren't we commanded to build our Sukkot during Nisan?

The early commentators suggest a number of approaches to this question, however none of them intrinsically relate the commemoration of the Clouds of Glory to the Tishrei season. Instead, they associate Sukkot with Tishrei merely for practical considerations: Sukkot is celebrated in Tishrei in order to remember the miracles of the Egyptian exodus during the other half of the year, or in order to make it obvious that our Sukkot are built in commemoration of our past rather than for personal comfort, or in order to commemorate something else besides the Clouds of Glory. (See Ramban Vayikra 23:43, Tur O.C. 625, Chizkuni Vayikra Ibid.)

A late medieval commentator, HaRav Moshe Alschich (c. 1500), suggests a novel approach to this question in his commentary to the Torah (Vayikra 23:33). First, the Alschich poses another question: Why do we commemorate the Clouds of Glory any more than the other miraculous escorts that attended the Jewish People in their journey through the desert? Why don't we commemorate the spring that poured forth from a rock, or the Manna -- the heavenly food that rained upon us in the desert? (See also Birkei Yosef Orach Chayim 625.) We can only conclude, says the Alschich, that the Clouds of Glory represent more than just another miracle that occurred to our fathers in the desert.

A Divine Cloud often represents Hashem's presence (see Bereishit 22:4, Shemot 13:2, 19:16, Vayikra 16:2, and Rashi ad loc.). The Clouds of Glory represent the fact that Hashem caused His presence to rest upon us in the desert. Although Hashem caused His presence to rest upon us when we left Egypt, the Alschich continues, when we sinned and worshipped the Golden Calf He removed His presence from amongst us (as we find in Targum Shemot 33:3. Perhaps the Clouds of Glory also departed at that point -- see Shemot 32:25, "Ki Pharua Hu...", Vilna Gaon Shir Hashirim 3:1). The sin of the Golden Calf was forgiven on Yom Kippur (see Rashi Shemot 34:29), and it was then that Hashem returned His presence to the Jewish encampment. On Sukkot we celebrate the permanent return of Hashem's presence and His Clouds of Glory to our encampment. It is indeed appropriate to commemorate the Clouds of Glory immediately after Yom Kippur!

The Vilna Gaon (quoted in Kol Eliyahu #84) further develops this theme. The Gaon demonstrates that Sukkot should not merely be celebrated "shortly after Yom Kippur," but rather exactly \*five\* days after Yom Kippur, just as is prescribed by the Torah.

The Clouds of Glory, suggests the Gaon, may not have returned immediately upon Moshe's return with His message of atonement on Yom Kippur. After all, full atonement came only with the building of the Mishkan ("Hashem said, 'Let the gold of the Mishkan atone for the gold used in the Golden Calf!' " -- Tanchuma Terumah, 8). The Divine Presence returned to the Bnei Yisroel only after the commencement of the building of the Mishkan.

When did the Bnei Yisroel start to build the Mishkan? Since Moshe was commanded to build the Mishkan on Yom Kippur (Tanchuma, ibid.), we can assume that he passed this Mitzvah on to the Bnei Yisroel the following day, on 11 Tishrei -- as Rashi in fact contends (Shemot 35:1). At that point, the Bnei Yisroel started to donate materials towards the construction of the Mishkan. Their donations continued to arrive for two consecutive mornings (the 12th and 13th of Tishrei), as the Torah states, "They brought Moshe contributions \*morning\* after \*morning\*" (according to Rav Yochanan, Shmot Rabba 41:2). If we allow Moshe another day to distribute the materials among the various craftsmen (to prevent theft, all the materials had to be meticulously weighed upon being given to the craftsmen), the actual construction of the Mishkan began not on the day following the arrival of the donations but rather \*two\* days later. It is on that day -- the 15th of Tishrei -- that the Clouds of Glory returned, and so it is on that day that we commemorate them by sitting in Sukkot!

My brother, Harav Elimelech Kornfeld, pointed out that according to the Gemara in Shabbat 97b it is even more obvious why the building of the Mishkan could not commence on the day following the arrival of the last donations. The Torah tells us that after the second day of donating, Moshe announced throughout the camp that no more donations should be brought (Shmot 36:6). It would seem that enough donations had already been provided. However, the Gemara in Shabbat tells us that this was not the basis for the announcement. The announcement was made because Shabbat was about to begin, and it is not permitted to carry donations to the Levite encampment -- where Moshe and the builders of the Mishkan were to be found -- on Shabbat.

If so, it is obvious why the building of the Mishkan could not have started on the following day (14 Tishrei). As Rashi (Shmot 35:2) tells us, it was not permitted to build the Mishkan on Shabbat. The commencement of the Mishkan's construction had to wait for the 15th! (The Gaon's "day of distribution" hypothesis is necessary only according to Rabbenu Chananel [see Tosafot ad loc.], who rejects Rashi's reading of the above Talmudic passage and contends that Moshe indeed ordered the halt of donations on the 14th only because enough material had already been collected.)

#### IV

According to the Gaon's approach, on Sukkot we not only celebrate Hashem's dwelling amongst us, we also celebrate the building of the Mishkan, through which Hashem's presence came to rest amongst us. Support for this thesis can be drawn from a number of sources. (1) First of all, the Beit Hamikdash -- the Mishkan's successor -- is often referred to as a

"Sukkah" in Scriptures (see Tehillim 76:3, Eichah 2:6 -- see also Amos 9:11). "Sukkah" is indeed an appropriate name for a tent that represents that holy place. (2) Secondly, when King Solomon completed the construction of the Beit Hamikdash, the Bnei Yisroel celebrated its dedication during the seven day period immediately preceding Sukkot (Melachim I:8:65). The Gemara (Mo'ed Katan 9a) tells us that they would have preferred to celebrate it during the Sukkot festival itself, but for certain halachic considerations. According to the Gaon's reasoning, Sukkot is certainly a proper time to celebrate the building of the Beit Hamikdash. (3) Also, the Gemara in Sukkah (5a-b) concludes that the holiday Sukkah must be at least ten Tefachim high because "the divine presence does not lower itself below ten Tefachim." Similarly, it relates these ten Tefachim to the ten Tefachim of empty space between the wingtips of the Golden Keruvim [~Cherubim] and the cover of the Holy Ark -- the exact place in the Mishkan where the Divine Presence "dwelled" (Shmot 25:22). The Sukkot we build are apparently a dwelling place for the Divine Presence as well, symbolizing that each and every one of us is fit to be a dwelling place for His Presence (see Shemot 25:8; Rashi Vayikra 20:3; Yirmiyah 7:4)! (4) Finally, the Gemara in Sukkah (43b) proves that we are obligated to eat in the Sukkah at night (and not only by day) by making a comparison between the Mitzvah of Sukkah and Aharon's induction period (Vayikra 8:35). Perhaps our seven day stay in the Sukkah is symbolically inaugurating us to serve the Divine Presence that dwells amongst us.

May we merit to witness the building of the final Beit Hamikdash and the return of the Divine Presence to Yisroel!

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YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT  
(VBM)

#### THE DUAL NATURE OF THE CHAGIM by Menachem Leibtag

\*\*\*\*\*  
This shiur is dedicated to the memory of Audi Stanleigh, whose untimely death touched us all. - The TVI Tzevet & the Hanahalal Artzit of Bnei Akiva

This shiur is dedicated to Jay (Yaakov Ben-Zion ben Mordechai) Taller, whose Yahrzeit is on the first day of Sukkot. - Connie and Gerald Steinberg Please pray for a Refuah Shelema for Asher Zelig ben Sara (Zelig/Stuart Sontag).

\*\*\*\*\*

Parshat Emor is famous for its lengthy presentation of the "chagim" (the Jewish holidays). These same holidays are also described in the other books of Chumash:

- \* in Sefer Shmot: Parshat Mishpatim & Ki-tisa;
- \* in Sefer Bamidbar: Parshat Pinchas; and
- \* in Sefer Dvarim: Parshat Re'ay. It would seem logical for ALL the laws concerning the chagim to be presented together in ONE parsha. However, Chumash prefers to separate them, allowing each Sefer to focus on a different thematic aspect of the "chagim".

This week's shiur contains two parts. Part One provides a general overview of the Chagim in Chumash. Part Two examines the double nature of the presentation of the chagim in Parshat Emor.

[As the shiur is very textual (more than usual), it is essential that you follow it with a Tanach at hand. Various questions which will arise in the shiur will be dealt with in the further Iyun Section.]

#### BACKGROUND / A DOUBLE CALENDAR

Before we begin, a quick note regarding the Biblical calendar.

The holidays in Chumash are described in terms of BOTH a solar AND a lunar calendar. The solar calendar is based on the 365 day cycle of the sun, and contains the four seasons of the agricultural year ("tkufot ha'shanah"): the spring and fall equinox; the winter and summer solstice. The lunar calendar is based on the monthly cycle of the moon (roughly 29.5 days). However the

precise day on which each month begins is determined by "bet-din" (i.e. "kiddush ha'chodesh"). These two calendars are correlated by the periodic addition of an 'extra' month (i.e. "ibur ha'shana").

Chumash employs BOTH the lunar and solar calendars in its description of the chagim.

#### PART ONE - THE CHAGIM IN CHUMASH

In Chumash, there are two 'sets' of chagim (holidays when work is forbidden):

- A) The Shalosh R'galim: Chag ha'Matzot, Shavuot, & Succot; (the three pilgrimage holidays).
- B) Y'mei Hadin: Rosh ha'Shana, Yom Kippur & Shmini Atzeret; (Days of Judgement/ better known as "Chagei Tishrei").

The Shalosh R'galim (A), as a unit, are presented twice in Sefer SHMOT and once in Sefer DVARIM:

- (1) in Parshat Mishpatim (Shmot 23:14-19) before Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the first Luchot (tablets);
- (2) in Parshat Ki-tisa (Shmot 34:18-26) when Moshe Rabeinu ascends Har Sinai to receive the second Luchot;
- (3) in Parshat Re'ay (Dvarim 16:1-17) while describing the special laws of "ha'makom asher Yivchar Hashem l'shakeyn shmo sham": the site where the Mikdash is to be built.

In each of these three instances, the dates on which these "r'galim" fall are described ONLY by the agricultural time of year in which they are celebrated, i.e. the SOLAR calendar:

- Chag Ha'Matzot: "b'aviv" - in the spring;
- Chag Ha'Katzir: the wheat harvest - in the early summer;
- Chag Ha'Asif: the fruit harvest - in the fall.

In each of these three 'parshiot', the primary mitzvah discussed is the obligation of "aliyah l'Regel" - to make a pilgrimage to the central location where the Mikdash is located (see Shmot 23:17, 34:23-24, Dvarim 16:2,6,11,15,16).

In contrast to Shmot and Dvarim, Sefer VAYIKRA (chapter 23/ Emor) and Sefer BAMIDBAR (chapters 28->29/ Pinchas) describe BOTH the "shalosh r'galim" (A) AND "Chagei Tishrei" (B).

Parshat Pinchas presents the chagim in order of the specific month and day when each holiday is to be celebrated, i.e. by the LUNAR calendar. The chagim in Parshat Emor follow the same basic order.

Parshiot Emor and Pinchas actually complement each other. When introducing each holiday, Parshat Emor states: "v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem" - ["and you shall bring an offering to God"/ see Vayikra 23:8,25,27,36], but does not specify the precise offering. In Parshat Pinchas we find exactly what that offering is to be, i.e. the special additional korban (Musaf) which is to be offered on each holiday. [A more precise title for this parsha would be Korbanot Ha'Tmidim v'ha'Musafim - as it details the korban Tamid and Musaf brought throughout the course of the entire year, including Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh! / We read from this 'parsha' for maftir on every chag, and we quote from it in tfilat Musaf.]

It is only in Parshat Emor (Vayikra 23:1-44) that we find the details of the unique mitzvah of each holiday:

- Chag Ha'Matzot - the special "omer" offering (barley);
- Shavuot - the special "shte ha'lechem" offering (wheat);
- Rosh Ha'Shana - "Yom Truah" - blowing the shofar;
- Yom Kippur - fasting;
- Succot - sitting in the Succah;
- and the "arba minim" (lulav and etrog etc.).

Based on this analysis, one could summarize as follows: \* Sifrei Shmot and Dvarim present the shalosh r'galim in relation to their common purpose as a time for "aliyah l'Regel" during the critical times of the agricultural (solar) year. \* Parshat Pinchas details the specific korban Musaf of each chag (according to the lunar date of the holidays). \* Parshat Emor describes the unique mitzvah of each chag

(using both lunar and solar).

#### PART TWO - THE DOUBLE NATURE OF THE CHAGIM IN PARSHAT EMOR

Parshat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the chagim in order of their LUNAR dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different. When introducing the special mitzvah to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the SHALOSH R'GALIM, the agricultural season (i.e. the SOLAR date) is mentioned as well:

##### CHAG HA'MATZOT

Omer: "When you enter the Land... and YOU HARVEST the fields, you must bring the "omer" the FIRST HARVEST to the Kohen (23:10); SHAVUOT

Shte Ha'lechem: SEVEN WEEKS LATER - "and you shall bring a NEW flour offering..." (23:16); SUCCOT

Arba Minim: "On the 15th day of the 7th month WHEN YOU GATHER THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND... and you shall take on the first day a 'hadar' fruit..." (23:39).

##### DOUBLE DATES

As a matter of fact, a careful examination of Parshat Emor shows that the agricultural aspect of each of the "shalosh r'galim" is presented in a manner entirely INDEPENDENT of the lunar date!

For example, the mitzvah to bring the korban "ha'omer" and "shte ha'lechem" is presented in a separate 'dibur' (23:9-22) which makes no mention at all of the lunar date! Similarly, the mitzvah of the "arba minim" (23:39-41) is presented independent of the mitzvah to sit in the succah (23:33-38). [Compare these two parshiot carefully!]

Why must the structure of Emor be so complicated? Why doesn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates? Why are the agricultural mitzvot presented independently?

To answer these questions, we must return to the opening psukim of Vayikra, chapter 23.

##### A DOUBLE 'HEADER'

The first four psukim of chapter 23 form a problematic introduction: "And God told Moshe, tell Bnei Yisrael...

'Moadei Hashem' (fixed times), which YOU shall call 'mikraei kodesh' (a sacred gathering) -

These are the 'MOADIM':

SIX days work may be done, but the SEVENTH day shall be a SHABBAT SHABBATON 'mikra kodesh'...

THESE are the 'MOADEI HASHEM'...:

On the 14th day of the first month - Pesach

On the 15th day of the first month - chag ha'Matzot...

(23:1-6)

Is shabbat to be considered one of the 'moadim'? If yes, why does pasuk 4 repeat the header "ayleh moadei Hashem"? If not, why is it mentioned at all in the first three psukim?

Furthermore, there appear to be two types of 'mikraei kodesh' in Parshat Emor. (1) MOADIM - those that Bnei Yisrael declare: "asher tikru otam [that YOU shall call] - mikraei kodesh" (23:2) (2) SHABBAT - which God has set aside to be a 'mikra kodesh' (read 23:3 carefully!).

This distinction, and the repetition of the header "ayleh moadei Hashem" in 23:4, indicate the first three psukim can be considered a 'double' header: MO'ADIM / SHABBATONIM.

This 'double header' is reflected in the overall structure of the parsha. First, each chag is presented in Parshat Emor by its lunar date, followed by a statement that this 'moed' should be a mikra kodesh, the prohibition to do work ("kol mlechet avodah lo taasu"), and the mitzvah to offer a korban Musaf ("v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem").

(1) THE MO'ADIM - MIKRAEI KODESH  
OPENING PASUK: "AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM... ASHER TIKRU..." (23:4)

CHAG HAMATZOT : 23:6-8

SHAVUOT: (Interestingly enough, this holiday lacks a lunar date and the phrase "v'hikravtem...")

ROSH HA'SHANA: 23:25

YOM KIPPUR: 23:27-28

SUCCOT & SHMINI ATZERET: 23:33-36 CLOSING PASUK:  
"AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM ASHER TIKRU OTAM..."

Intertwined in this parsha, we find a second aspect of each chag, one which relates to the concept of SHABBATON- the second header. In relation to the Shalosh R'galim, the SHABBATON aspect always relates to the special agricultural mitzvah! Each time this aspect is mentioned, the concluding phrase: "chukat olam l'doroteichem [b'chol moshvoteychem]" is found (23:14,21,31,41).

Therefore, the second header 'SHABBAT' relates to this aspect of the Chagim:

## (2) SHABBATON

Chag Ha'MATZOT - "mi'mochorat ha'SHABBAT" (23:11)

SHAVUOT - "ad mimochorat ha'SHABBAT ha'shviit..." (23:16)

ROSH Ha'SHANA - "SHABBATON, zichron truah..." (23:24)

YOM KIPPUR - SHABBAT SHABBATON hi lachem..." (23:32)

SUCCOT & - ba'yom ha'rishon SHABBATON...

SHMINI ATZERET - u'bayom ha'Shmini SHABBATON" (23:39)

Note, that when this aspect is first introduced in relation to Chag Ha'Matzot, it contains a separate 'dibur' and the notating of the agricultural date (23:9-14)

"And God spoke to Moshe saying... When you ENTER THE LAND that I am giving you REAP ITS HARVEST, you shall bring the OMER - the first sheaf of your harvest to God. This OMER shall be waived in front of God... on the day after SHABBAT the Kohen shall waive it..."

[This analysis could explain Chazal's understanding that here, SHABBAT refers to the first day of chag ha'Matzot as opposed to the tzdukim (Sadducees) who argued that it actually refers to first Shabbat after Pesach. It is now obvious that Chazal's interpretation reflects a much deeper understanding of the entire parsha.]

The most explicit example of this pattern is found in the psukim that describe Succot. First, the Torah refers to this holiday as a MIKRA KODESH in relation to its lunar date:

"On the 15th day of the 7th month Chag Succot seven days:

on the first day there shall be a MIKRA KODESH... and on

the eighth day a MIKRA KODESH..." (23:35-36)

[As this is the last 'moed', the next pasuk summarizes all of the chagim: "ayleH Moadei Hashem..." (23:37-38)].

Then, in a very abrupt fashion, AFTER summarizing the moadim, the Torah returns to Succot again, but now calls it a SHABBATON:

" 'ACH' - on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you GATHER THE HARVEST OF YOUR FIELD, you shall celebrate for seven days, on the first day - a SHABBATON, and on the eighth day - a SHABBATON." (23:39)

To summarize, we have shown that the entire parsha exhibits a double nature, as reflected in its 'double header' and the use of both the solar and lunar calendars in the description of the chagim.

What is the meaning of this double structure?

## THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT

As mentioned above, Parshat Emor details a special agricultural related mitzvah for each of the shalosh r'galim: Chag ha'Matzot:

The Korban Ha'Omer- from the first BARLEY harvest. Shavuot:

The Korban ShteI Ha'lechem, from the first WHEAT harvest. Succot:

Taking the 'Arba Minim', the four species -

[the lulav, etrog, hadas and arava]

These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural season in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is

harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Yisrael, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which is consumed during the entire year is harvested during this short time period.

The 'arba minim' which are brought to the Mikdash on Succot, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest ("pri eytz hadar v'kapot tmarim") at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season ("arvei nachal").

It is specifically when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot that these holidays are referred to as SHABBATONIM. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the days of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun (the 365 day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons).

As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Bet HaMikdash and offer special korbanot from our harvest. Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of gods, as the Canaanim did, we must recognize that it is God's hand behind nature and we must thank Him for our harvest. [ This is the challenge of Judaism, to find God while working and living within the framework of nature. This is reflected in the blessing we make over bread: "ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz". Even though we perform 99% of work in the process of making bread (e.g. sowing, reaping, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking etc.), we thank God as though He had given us bread directly from the ground!]

## THE HISTORICAL HOLIDAYS

Even though the agricultural calendar provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds HISTORICAL significance as well to these seasonal holidays:

The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of Matan Torah. During the fruit harvest we recall our supernatural existence in the desert under the "annanei kavod" (clouds of God's glory) in the desert.

Just as the Torah employs to the 'solar' date of the chagim in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the lunar date of these chagim in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing Chag Ha'Matzot which commemorates the historical event of Yetziat Mitzraim, the lunar date of the 15th day of the first month is used (23:6). Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succot as a Mikra Kodesh, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzvah of sitting in the succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in succot during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43).

Specifically, the lunar calendar contains historical significance, for we count the months in commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history. This is reflected in the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish nation in Sefer Shmot: "ha'chodesh ha'zeh lachem ROSH CHODASHIM..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... (see Shmot 12:1-3).

## REDEMPTION IN THE SPRING

From the repeated emphasis in Chumash that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring ("chodesh ha'aviv" /see Shmot 13:2-4 and Dvarim 16:1-2), it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, God desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. [For a similar reason, it would appear that Hashem desired that Bnei Yisrael enter the Promised Land in the first month of the spring (see Yehoshua 4:19 & 5:10).]

One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at Yetziyat Mitzraim should be understood as only the INITIAL stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and the fruit harvest in the late summer, so too our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history.

Thus, counting seven weeks from chag ha'matzot until chag ha'shavuot (sfirat ha'omer) emphasizes that Shavuot (commemorating the Giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at Yetziat Mitzrayim, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the spring.

By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we not only thank Hashem for His providence over nature but we also thank Him for His providence over our history. This is an extremely important concept, that not only is Hashem the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many gods. In an atheistic society, man fails to see God in either. According to Chumash, man must recognize God's providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature.

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FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. WHY IN VAYIKRA?

Why is this parsha that describes the special mitzvot of all the chagim located specifically in Sefer Vayikra?

Based on last week's shiur, we can suggest an answer. We explained that the second half of Vayikra 'translates' the concentrated level of the shchina dwelling in the Mishkan to norms of behavior in our daily life in the "aretz" (into the realms of kedushat ha'aretz and kedushat zman, and kedushat Makom). The special agricultural mitzvot of the chagim are a manifestation of how the Kedusha of the Mishkan affects our daily life. By bringing these special korbanot from our harvest, the toils of our daily labor, to the Beit HaMikdash we remind ourselves of God's Hand in nature and in the routine of our daily life.

B. Does the mitzvah of Succah relate to the historical aspect (yitziat mitzraim) or to the agricultural aspect (temporary booths built by the farmers in the field collecting the harvest) - or both? 1. Use the two psukim which describe succot (23:34,42-43) to base your answer. [Relate also to Succah 11b, succah k'neged ananei kavod or succot mamash.] 2. Note also the use of "chukat olam b'chal moshvoteychem" - see 23:14,21,31 in relation to Shabbaton. Note also 23:3! Now note 23:41, based on the above pattern, what word is missing? Now look at pasuk 23:42 - "ba'succot TAY'SHVU..."! Can you explain now why 'that word' is missing in 23:41? 3. Why is the word "ezrach" used in 23:42? Relate to Shmot 12:49! [How does "moshvoteychem" relate to the word "shabbat"?]

C. Chagei Tishrei and agriculture:

We noted earlier that Parshat Emor also included chagei Tishrei, and each is referred to as a shabbaton, as well as a mikra kodesh.

As explained in our shiur on Rosh HaShana, these three holidays, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret, relate to the forthcoming year. A new agricultural year is about to begin, and we must recognize that its fate is not a function of chance or the whims of a pantheon of gods, rather a result of our acceptance of God's kingdom and the observance of His mitzvot. [Note from Parshat Pinchas, that these three chagim share a common and unique korban musaf! (1-1-7/1) Note also that Succot stands at the agricultural crossroads of last year's harvest and next year's rainy season. Thus, we say "Hallel" in thanksgiving for the previous year, and say we "Hoshanot" in anticipation of the forthcoming year.]

D. The sun, we explained, relates to the agricultural aspects of chagim, while the moon to its historical aspect. 1. Relate this to the waxing and waning feature of the moon and God's hashagacha over our history. 2. Relate this to the concept of "hester panim" 3. Relate this to the fact that succot and pesach fall out on the 15th day of the lunar month (full moon), while rosh hashana -yom din- falls on the first of the month (b'kesheh lyom chageinu) 4. Relate this to the concept and korbanot of Rosh Chodesh. 5. Why do you suppose that the sun serves as a symbol of 'nature'?

E. Note the emphasis on the number 'seven' throughout this parsha. How and why does the number seven relate to the solar calendar, and the agricultural holidays. Relate your answer to the first perek of Sefer Breishit and shabbat!

F. Why are the mitzvot of Aliyah L'regel emphasized in Sefer Shmot?

A theme in the second half of Shmot is the function of the Mishkan as a perpetuation of Har Sinai. "Aliyah l'regel", a national gathering at the Mishkan on the holidays, can re-enact certain aspects of Ma'amad Har Sinai. G. Compare carefully 23:1-4 to Shmot 35:1-4 and notice the amazing parallel! How does this enhance your understanding of this parsha, shabbat, and of the Mishkan?]

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/drosho.html>

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Dvar Torah: Succot, 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

(Adapted from R. Yechiel Michel Kossowsky, Toafot Hari"m)

USHPIZIN

Originally delivered in Calgary, Succot, 5753

There is a beautiful custom on Succot of inviting guests to join us in our Yom Tov meals in the Succah. Now, obviously there is a practical consideration, to provide meals in a Succah for those who may be unable to build their own. But surely there must also be a deeper significance to this custom. After all, during the year, who would not be embarrassed to invite company to a meal in a small wooden hut? Yet on Succot, our beautiful roomy houses remain empty, while we invite scores of people to squeeze into little wooden booths. I suspect part of the reason is because Succot reminds us that we ourselves are guests. We are visitors in G-d's world. One week a year, we leave our lovely, expensive homes, to live in temporary, flimsy, simple structures. We demonstrate that all that we have is fleeting. We rely on G-d for everything - our protection, sustenance, spiritual support. On Succot, we become guests, rather than hosts. And so we can invite everyone to join in our Succah, as guests, without embarrassment or self-consciousness.

In addition to our invited guests, however, there are 7 special guests who traditionally visit us in our Succah's on each of the days of the holiday. They are the USHPIZIN - Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon David

Why these seven? What about King Solomon? What about the prophets, Isaiah, Yehezkel, Yirmiyahu? Why should Yosef be singled out from amongst all the tribes? What about the Judges, Samuel, Elisha...? The list goes on. And why on Succot? What do they have to do with this holiday? Perhaps it is because these 7 individuals in particular define the unique and critical stages in the development of our People. And they each share a unique message with the holiday of Succot.

ABRAHAM - Faith in G-d.

Abraham forged the path. He was the first to declare a faith in one, invisible, all powerful, ever-present G-d, G-d of Creation and History, G-d Who cares about mankind, G-d of Vengeance and G-d of Love. Abraham was the first to live a life in total devotion to G-d. His trust, faith, and dedication were the hallmarks of the backbone of Judaism. He was truly the "father of the Jewish People."

The first lesson of Succot: we trust in G-d. We recognise that all life, and all prosperity comes from Him, and we are willing to put our lives and our wealth into His Hands. As our forefather Abraham lived his life, Succot teaches us to live ours - in total commitment and trust in G-d.

Our first "visitor" on Succot, therefore, is AVRAHAM AVINU.

ISAAC - The Critical Link

But what good is a new faith, a new direction for mankind, as long as Abraham remained childless, as long as his beliefs and values would one day be buried along with him? All would be lost if there would not be a next generation!

Isaac was that critical link. He represented the continuation of the traditions of Abraham. He was the guarantor that this new phenomenon which Abraham had started would be more than a fleeting instant in history. It would be the beginning of a historical process, a process which would live on

to eternity. Isaac guaranteed that the message of Abraham would transcend time and place, because he represented the continuous transmission of Judaism from one generation to the next.

This too, is an important lesson on Succot. All too often we try to hide our Jewish identity. We keep our traditions hidden in the private comfortable seclusion of our own homes. On Succot, however, we take our Judaism OUTSIDE. It is a tremendous statement: Our home is temporary, but Judaism is ETERNAL! Over time, we ourselves may move from one home to another, from one country to another country, from one generation to the next, but in each place and time - Judaism survives. Judaism is lived both in the home and outside it. It is a life-embracing experience.

And it is Isaac, the "second generation" Jew, who comes to teach us this aspect of Succot.

JACOB - No one is Excluded

But we are not called Children of Abraham, nor Children of Isaac. We are called Children of Israel, or Ya'akov. Because Abraham and Isaac were both individuals, and there is only so much that one individual can achieve. But Jacob was a family. He had twelve children, all part of the new tribes of Israel. Jacob represented a new stage in our history: a tzibur, a congregation, or community. We gained strength by virtue of our numbers.

But even more than simple mathematics - Jacob taught us a vital lesson: Until Joseph could be found, the family was incomplete. Every Jew counts. No one can be excluded from the community. UNITY was the key to our survival.

This too, is a theme of Succot, and is expressed in a beautiful Midrash, which compares each of the four species to a Jew of different religious strengths and weaknesses. The Etrog, which both smells beautifully and has a pleasant taste, represents one who does good deeds, and studies Torah, while the Arava, possessing neither taste nor smell, represents one who does neither, and so on. The Midrash ends: "On succot, let us take all four and bind them together." The message is clear: regardless of our background, commitment, or learning, we are all part of the Jewish People, children of Ya'akov. No one is left out.

Jacob comes to teach us this message of the 4 Species, and the importance of achdut, of brotherly love amongst all our people.

JOSEF - Nation of Israel

Then came the period of Josef's leadership in Egypt, where we developed from a community, into a nation. It was Joseph who gave us the key to survival in exile. What would maintain our identity in Egypt? What would inspire us and give us hope, even in the depths of despair? Joseph's answer: the knowledge that we would one day return to the Land of Israel, and build home identity there. PAKOD YIFKOD ETCHEM "G-d shall surely Redeem you." It was Joseph who made sure the Jews never forgot where they truly belonged. Joseph was their tie to the Land of Israel, even through exile.

This message was to become critical in every exile to come. It became our source of inspiration, courage, and tenacity throughout the long years of our dispersion, whether in Babylonia, Europe, or here in Canada or America. The words of Joseph cry out to us: Remember the Promised Land. Remember where we belong.

And yes, this too is the message of Succot, the Harvest festival in Israel. It is a celebration of the goodness of the Land, and the gift of the Almighty. We take the species of the Land of Israel, just harvesting at this time, and through them are reminded where we truly belong, and yearn to be.

Joseph inspires us to remember our precious Eretz Yisrael, and therefore visits us on this holiday.

MOSES - Torah

Moses the Lawgiver. The Midrash, in describing the giving of the Torah, tells how the nations of the world will one day come to G-d and complain: why didn't you give us the Torah? You didn't even give us a chance. And G-d will respond: "Try one Mitzvah - sit in the Succah." Each gentile then built himself a Succah on his rooftop, and the moment it became too hot, they kicked the Succah down and walked out. That was their test, and they failed. Succot represents our commitment to the Torah. For the Jew, no matter how "hot" it gets in the Succah, or "cold", as the case may be, we stay. For us Judaism is not a luxury - It is our life. We are committed through thick and

thin, good times and bad. We survived exile, persecution, sovereignty, destruction and rebirth, exile again, and so on. We have had our ups and downs, and, through it all, remain committed. That is why G-d gave us the Torah, and no one else.

And who can testify to our commitment better than Moses himself, who time and time again defended us to G-d. "They are a stiff-necked people", said Moses, and therefore deserve Your mercy. For their very stubbornness will be the key to their survival.

And so, Moses comes to us on Succot, to remind us of this lesson. The Succah is our demonstration of our unyielding commitment to G-d and to Judaism.

AHARON - Divine Providence

What could be more central to the themes of Succot than the notion that we live under the Providence and Protection of the Almighty? And this was the essence of the service in the Temple - the Divine Presence here in this world, Guiding and Protecting us. That is why the Dedication of the first Temple took place on Succot. That is why on the day corresponding to Succot work began on the construction of the Tabernacle in the desert.

Aharon, the first High Priest, represented the world of the Temple. He visits us on Succot to remind us that the Succah is a small Temple, where we express our trust in the Protection of the Almighty.

DAVID - Messianism, "Celebrate Succot"

Which brings us to the final, and most beautiful chapter in the history of our people, and the lessons of Succot: King David, the forerunner of the Messiah. Messianism is a message to the world. It says, come and recognise what the Jewish People have been espousing since the time of Abraham: belief in One, Universal G-d of Creation and History. It is an invitation for the nations of the world to share our dedication to G-d, and to celebrate with us, in the Temple in Jerusalem.

In the Haftorah, we read of that day when the nations of the world will come to the Temple to pay homage to G-d, and will celebrate the holiday of Succot. No other holiday is mentioned. No other ritual is described - only Succot, with its universal message of G-d's Providence over the world. That is the Messianic vision.

And so, our final guest, the last of the USHPIZIN, is King David. Because he sums up all of Jewish history, and all that is Succot.

We sit in the Succah, not for one reason, but for 7 -

We declare our faith in G-d, as did Abraham.

We carry that faith with us from place to place, and pass it on from generation to generation, as did Isaac.

We unify all Jews together, and sit together in the Succah as one people, a lesson we learnt from Jacob.

We celebrate joyously the gift of our precious Land of Israel. We yearn for her, while in exile, and dedicate our lives to building her when we return - a lesson we learnt from Joseph.

We are committed to this path with our very lives. For the Torah is our heart and our lifeblood. This we learnt from Moses.

We sit in the Succah under G-d's Providence. Our relationship with G-d is a dynamic, and meaningful one - who could show us this better than Aharon?

And finally, we cry out to the world:

Hear our declaration of faith

Testify to our continuity

Learn from our unity

Be inspired by our commitment

Be uplifted by our joy

Be secure in the Providence of G-d

Celebrate Succot with us in the Temple of King David.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Josef, Moses, Aharon, and King David - Very special guests, with very special messages. Chag Sameach.

For more information about Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel or any of the programs or services of the Synagogue, please contact Rabbi Moshe Shulman (ShulmanM@Cadvision.com)

<http://www.ou.org/torah/ti/>

Torah Insights for Shabbat Succot 5757 September 28, 1996

In the halachot of Succot, a clear distinction is made between the walls of the sukkah and its covering, the schach. The Rama holds that one must first build the walls of the sukkah prior to arranging the schach atop them.

If one reverses the order and puts the schach up first (upon a frame, for example) and then places walls around it, it is debatable whether he has built a kosher succah. While some permit using this sukkah to fulfill the mitzvah, others disqualify it.

While the crux of this dispute lies in the complexities of the Talmudic discourse, perhaps one can glean from it a certain symbolic insight into the meaning of the succah and the holiday of Succot.

The walls of the sukkah must be strong enough to withstand normal weather conditions. But the schach above must not be piled on so thick as to lock out the elements.

The walls of the succah represent the barrier between us, the Jewish people, and the nations of the world, who are outside the sukkah. The walls must be strong; we must be protected from all outside forces and influences. Only when fortified in such a manner is it possible to develop a relationship with Hashem.

But our succah cannot be so self-contained that rays of spirituality from above cannot penetrate it. The schach must be sparse enough to allow in sunlight.

The first time the Torah notes the building of succot is when Yaakov and Eisav part company following their peaceful reunion. Eisav wishes to travel with Yaakov, but Yaakov begs off. After Eisav returns to Sei'ir, Yaakov builds sukkos for his animals and even calls the area Sukkos. Immediately thereafter, Yaakov's family must deal with Shechem.

Dealing with this outside threat was not easy; the family was not of one voice on how to handle it. The separation between the young Jewish nation and her enemies had been breached and needed to be strengthened.

The Talmud relates that the non-Jewish world failed to prove themselves worthy of a special relationship with G-d. They bolted from the succah. Was it because they could not tolerate the succah or because the succah could not tolerate them?

The succah not only consummates our special union with G-d, but also upholds our unique station as G-d's chosen people -- to the exclusion of the non-Jewish world. All three pilgrimage festivals -- Succot, Pesach, Shavuot -- contain this theme: the exclusion of the non-Jew as a prerequisite to our becoming close to the A-mighty.

The need for the succot's walls to be established before the schach is in place highlights the importance of establishing ourselves as a unique nation, not one that emulates the ways of the non-Jewish world. Once that is accomplished, we can reach for higher levels of holiness and develop our relationship with Hashem, thereby earning his eternal protection.

-Rabbi Edward Davis

Rabbi Davis is Rabbi of the Young Israel of Hollywood and Ft. Lauderdale, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

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Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Succot 5757

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## KOHELLET AT A TIME OF JOY

by Rabbi Yehudah Shaviv

The main characteristic of each of the holidays is summarized in a short phrase in the prayers for each one. Thus, Pesach is "the time of our freedom" and Shavuot is "the time of giving of our Torah." Succot is "the time of our joy," based on the mitzvah: "Be happy on your holiday ... you shall be happy" [Devarim 16:14-15].

Various reasons have been given for the custom of reading Kohellet during Succot. For example, the Magen Avraham writes [409:8]: "Kohellet is read,

since these are days of joy, and Kohellet contains the passage, 'What is the good of happiness?' [2:2]." However, this passage does not praise joy, just the opposite: it is questioning its value. A similar atmosphere is evident from many passages in Kohellet, which lead to a feeling of dejection and despair because of the vanity and pointlessness of the world. Thus, it is hard to accept that Kohellet corresponds to the required mood of the holiday.

One possible answer can be seen from the way the Talmud explains an apparent contradiction between two passages of Kohellet [Shabbat 30b]. While the passage quoted above disparages happiness, another passage notes, "I have praised joy" [8:13]. According to the Talmud, joy of a mitzvah is worthy of praise, while joy not connected to a mitzvah is to be avoided. It is specifically during the holiday, when it is required to be joyous, that one must be careful which type of happiness to seek.

Other aspects of joy have to do with the past or the future. People sometimes have nostalgic feelings about the past, which can cast a shadow on the present, even if objectively the current time is satisfactory. To counteract this, Kohellet warns, "Do not claim that the earlier days were better than now, this is not a wise saying" [7:10]. On the other hand, the present can sometimes pale in relation to our hopes for the future, when all will be joy and happiness. Such feelings might be especially strong after the Days of Awe, when we have spent so much time praying for final redemption. Right after these emotion-filled days, we return to the same world as before, a situation which could put a damper on our desire for joy. In answer to this feeling, Kohellet advises: "What happened in the past is what will be in the future ... there is nothing new under the sun" [1:9].

In order to feel happiness, it is sometimes necessary to ignore dreams of the future and memories of the past, and to concentrate on the good things of the present, such as a successful harvest. At such times, one must take joy from the blessings of G-d, such as they are.

COMMENTS ON THE "SEFAT EMET": Succot in the Context of the Holidays by Rabbi Eliezer Gur-Arieh

The mitzvah of Succah is unique in that in addition to performing the act itself it is also necessary to be aware of its significance, as is written: "So that your future generations will know, that I settled Bnei Yisrael in succot when I took them out of Egypt" [Vayikra 23:43]. The Tanaim disagreed on the interpretation of this passage. "What kind of booths were there in the desert? Rabbi Eliezer says, this refers to the Honor Clouds; Rabbi Akiva says, there were real succot" [Succah 11b]. In his commentary, the Sefat Emet gives a different meaning to the words:

"So that your future generations will know" -- This refers to what is written, 'And I carried you on the wings of eagles' [Shemot 19:4]. As Rashi explained, this means that he moved them in a very short time from Raamses to Succot. That is, the way that they were transformed in a short time from slaves of Pharaoh to the influence of the Honor Clouds is not natural, and this great kindness is referred to in the passage, 'I settled Bnei Yisrael in Succot' [Succot, 1881].

Thus, the Sefat Emet interprets "Succot" in the passage as the place where Bnei Yisrael went from Raamses. At this site, G-d settled them; before this, they were slaves, but they were now transformed into a nation led by the Honor Clouds of G-d. Pesach is a holiday celebrating the act of leaving the slavery of Egypt, while Succot is in celebration of being gathered together under the protection of G-d.

What is the significance for later generations? "We perform this act every year after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when we are redeemed from the evil inclination, to be transformed and enter under the shadow of the Almighty. Thus, 'that you should dwell in Succot,' means that Bnei Yisrael have been given permission to sit in a succah. This is what is referred to in the prayer, 'He who opens the gate to those who come in repentance.'" In the same way that the nation was redeemed from Egypt, everyone of Yisrael is redeemed each year from the clutches of the evil inclination. But this must be followed by arriving at a place of safety. This consists of entering the succah. In a historical sense, Succot follows in succession after Pesach and Shavuot, but on a personal level Succot comes after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and finishes an annual transformation of the

spirit.

There is also another way that Succot is a continuation of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: "After the Days of Awe it is difficult to achieve a spirit of joy, except for the help of the Almighty, who sends happiness to the hearts of Yisrael during this time." The Days of Awe are fraught with a spirit of fear and judgement, as is implied by their name. It is necessary to have help from G-d to achieve joy just a few days later. "And the Almighty gives joy to Bnei Yisrael during these days, as is written, 'And you shall be happy.'" Since the Jews have come to rest in the protection of His shadow, "the host must greet his guests pleasantly, as is written, 'Ashrei -- Happy are those who dwell in your house' [Tehillim 84:5]. This refers to a succah, which is called the house of the Almighty."

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"You Shall Make for Yourself the Festival of Sukkot"

by Rav Yair Kahn

I.

"An old sukka (an already existent sukka not made specifically for Sukkot): - Beit Shammai rule unfit (for fulfilling the mitzva of dwelling in a sukka) and Beit Hillel rule as suitable." (TB Sukka 9a)

According to Rashi, the argument between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel concerns whether a sukka needs to be "lishma" or not (i.e., whether or not it needs to have been erected specifically for the fulfillment of the mitzva). However, in the Yerushalmi we find that even according to Beit Hillel: "It is necessary to add a new element to it." The Beit Yosef (OC 636) is of the opinion that without this 'new element' the mitzva cannot be fulfilled.

The implication of all this, is that EVEN Beit Hillel require that a sukka be specific for the festival. The distinction between their opinion and that of Beit Shammai being, that whilst Beit Shammai require constructing the whole sukka explicitly for the festival, Beit Hillel rule that it is sufficient merely to introduce something new - even after the construction of the sukka is complete. (The Shulchan Arukh rules according to Beit Hillel in 636:1.)

We must now examine what issue is at the basis of Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel's disagreement.

The above-mentioned gemara continues: "What is Beit Shammai's reasoning? There is another verse: 'You shall make for yourself the festival of Sukkot for seven days' (Deut. 16:13) - it is necessary that the sukka be constructed specifically for the festival. And [what do] Beit Hillel [do with this verse]? They apply this verse to the matter of making a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed. Beit Shammai, however, follow R. Eliezer's opinion that one may not make a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed."

Further in the gemara (27a-b) there is a discussion of R. Eliezer's opinion: "We have learnt: R. Eliezer says - you cannot go out from one sukka to another, and you cannot make a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed ... what is R. Eliezer's reasoning? 'You shall make for yourself the festival of Sukkot for seven days' - that is, that you must construct a sukka that is fit for seven days ... It is learnt, R. Eliezer says - just as a person cannot fulfill his obligation (of taking the four species) on the first day of the festival with a lulav that belongs to another ... so also a person cannot fulfill his obligation (of dwelling in a sukka) in the sukka of his fellow! As it is written: 'You shall make FOR YOURSELF the festival of Sukkot' - of your own."

The relationship between these rulings of R. Eliezer must be investigated:  
a) You cannot go out from one sukka to another; b) You cannot make a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed; c) A person cannot fulfill his obligation in the sukka of his fellow.

It would appear that R. Eliezer disagrees with the Chakhamim not only with regard to the act of dwelling in a sukka, but also with regard to the actual definition of what constitutes a "sukka."

R. Eliezer learns from the verse "You shall make for yourself the festival of Sukkot for seven days" that the mitzva of sukka requires a person to construct an alternative abode for the seven days of Sukkot, and within it to perform the act of dwelling. Therefore, R. Eliezer obligates being an owner similar to a person's permanent abode - and that this dwelling place shall actually serve a person as such for all seven days of the festival.

According to R. Eliezer one cannot leave his specific dwelling place for the festival, and move to a different sukka. Likewise, it is impossible for one to fulfill the mitzva in another person's sukka, since it is not HIS special abode for the festival. A sukka that is constructed in the middle of the festival - on Chol Ha-mo'ed - cannot therefore be defined as a person's dwelling for ALL the days of Sukkot.

Beit Shammai follow the same track, learning from this same verse that an 'old' sukka is unsuitable to fulfill the mitzva. This is since, according to this opinion, the requirement of building "specifically for the purpose of the festival" is no mere minor-side-ruling of "specific intent," but rather an integral factor in the very definition of the "cheftza" of the sukka - i.e., the dwelling place for the festival. In short: According to Beit Shammai the sukka must be constructed specifically for the period of the festival, for if this were not so, it would not be defined as a sukka at all. Additionally, the possibility of defining it as a sukka AFTER its construction would be viewed as a negation of the principle of "create it - and not previously constructed."

Beit Hillel argues that the definition of a "sukka" is not based on the festival of Sukkot. Rather, the "sukka" according to them is defined in common everyday terms. A "sukka" is a shed, which is a temporary construction whose primary function is protection from the sun - as it is written in Isaiah "And a sukka shall be for shade in the day." According to Beit Hillel, the principle "create [it] and not previously constructed" (which would render a sukka unfit for use in fulfilling the mitzva) applies to a sukka that was NOT constructed to provide shade. In any case, Beit Hillel permit a sukka that was not constructed specifically for the festival.

The Chakhamim follow the opinion of Beit Hillel, allowing one to go from one's sukka to another; to build a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed; and to fulfill one's obligation in another person's sukka. This is because, according to Chakhamim's definition, a sukka is not a dwelling place which is made specifically for the duration of the festival, but anything that, in everyday life, fulfills the normal function of a sukka. And even if Beit Hillel and Chakhamim require that a sukka be for the sake of the mitzva (as is inferred from the Yerushalmi), this requirement is not part of the definition of a sukka, and thus they do not require construction specifically for the sake of the festival. Rather, it is sufficient to merely introduce some new element after construction, specifically for the mitzva.

II.

Even according to Beit Hillel, who rule that an old sukka is fit for performing the mitzva, there IS halachic significance to a sukka that was constructed specifically for the sake of the mitzva.

In the Yerushalmi (1:2) it is taught that: "One who builds a sukka for himself, what does he say? - 'Blessed are You ... who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to make a sukka.'" Inferred from this is that there is fulfillment of a mitzva in the mere building of a sukka. (And so explains Rashi in TB Makkot 8.) It is clear that the mitzva of constructing a sukka applies only to constructing a sukka FOR THE SAKE OF THE MITZVA.

Concerning the rule of sanctity inherent in a sukka, the Rashba writes (in his novellae on TB Beitza 30b): "I have a difficulty in that since we rule that a sukkat GNB"Kh and a sukkat RKB"Sh (examples of sukkot not made specifically for the mitzva) is fit for use, why should holiness pertain to it for all seven days of the festival? Just because a person enters it and eats once or sleeps there should there be a holiness to it for all seven days? It was not made for the purpose of the holiness of a sukka! [For this reason] it is possible that a sukkat GNB"Kh and a sukkat RKB"Sh are simply considered mere booths, [and as such have no holiness]."

Rashba is claiming that even though a sukka not made specifically for the mitzva is sufficient according to Beit Hillel, nevertheless the special sanctity



which pertains to a sukka exists only for a sukka that was made for the specific purpose of the mitzva.

If this is so, we can see even in the opinion of Beit Hillel there is halakhic significance in building a sukka for the sake of the mitzva, even though they also declare an 'old sukka' fit for use. Beit Hillel consider the building of a sukka for the sake of the mitzva as an actual act of mitzva, and according to the Rashba, this action is what imbues the sukka with its holiness.

### III.

"The Rabbis have taught, GNB"Kh - sukkot not made specifically for the mitzva - are fit [for use in performing the mitzva] as long as its covering is according to the law. What does 'according to the law' mean? [Rashi - what does it come to teach us? If it is deficient in one sense, i.e. that it was not made for the sake of the mitzva of sukka, does that mean that we can do away with all the other requirements of sukka?] Answered Rav Chisda: It means that one has to make it for the SHADE of the sukka." (Sukkah 8b)

Rav Chisda's answer to the gemara's question must be understood. Even a sukka that was constructed for the purpose of the mitzva needs to have been constructed for the purpose of providing shade. If so, it is obvious that a sukkat GNB"Kh needs to have been built for the purpose of shade; why should we have assumed that just because it was not built for the sake of the mitzva, that it also does not have to be constructed for the sake of shade?

There is a further difficulty arising from the passage in Sukka 2b. It is implied that only R. Zeira requires shade, on the basis of the verse in Isaiah "And a sukka shall be for shade in the day." The Amoraim who argue with R. Zeira sideline this source as "being written concerning the days of the Messiah." Rashi there explains that "in the Messianic Age, those sukkot will be to provide shade ... but the sukka which fulfills the mitzva is not for the purpose of shade." If this is so, why would Rav Chisda require a construction for the purpose of providing shade? It is unsatisfactory to say that Rav Chisda followed the opinion of R. Zeira since R. Yosef Karo in the Shulchan Arukh rules in favor of Rav Chisda in chapter 635, while he rules against R. Zeira in chapter 633. (And so it would be impossible for Rav Chisda to be basing himself on R. Zeira.)

The Rosh cites an alternative interpretation of Rav Chisda's words: "Rabbeinu Tam explained that it was constructed only for the purpose of shade and NOT so thick-roofed as to provide protection from the rain."

The Bach (R. Yoel Sirkis) exacts from the words of the Rosh and the Tur that a sukkat GNB"Kh that is thick-roofed enough to provide protection from the rain is halakhically unsuitable for performing the mitzva, whilst a similarly thick-roofed sukka that was constructed specifically FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERFORMING THE MITZVA is perfectly fit for fulfilling one's obligation.

To explain concisely all of the above, it is possible to say that according to Beit Hillel, there are two tracks concerning the creation of something that will be termed a sukka: 1) by constructing what is, in actuality, a sukka, a shed whose function is to provide protection from the sun; 2) by constructing a sukka for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzva, even though it is not meant to provide protection from the sun.

It is possible that these two rules are learnt from two different verses: "For seven days you shall dwell in booths" (Lev. 23:42) teaches that there is a sukka in actual terms, in which one must abide during the festival. However, Beit Hillel (parallel to Beit Shammai) learn from the verse "You shall make for yourself the festival of Sukkot for seven days" (Deut. 16:13) that it is possible to construct a sukka for the specific purpose of fulfilling the mitzva even when it is not a sukka on the functional plane (i.e., while halakhically it is considered a sukka, functionally it has no other purpose). Beit Hillel learn from this verse that it is possible to construct a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed, and may also learn from the apparent superfluity of the verses that one may fulfill his obligation with a sukka that was constructed for the sake of the mitzva even if it was NOT built to provide shade.

In light of the above, everything now falls into place. Rav Chisda's ruling that requires the construction to be for the purpose of providing shade, exists solely in regard to a sukkat GNB"Kh that was created on a functional plane. However, a sukka that was constructed for the purpose of the mitzva does

not need to have been built in order to provide shade. The requirement that is specific for a sukkat GNB"Kh (only) is "that its covering be according to the law."

The conclusion of the passage on 2b is that a sukka constructed for the purpose of the mitzva which is not to provide shade does NOT negate Rav Chisda's requirement that a sukkat GNB"Kh DOES need to be for the sake of providing shade. The Bach's distinction fits nicely here - that according to the Rosh, ONLY a sukkat GNB"Kh whose thick roof provides protection from the rain is halakhically unfit, since it has no comparison to a real, functional sukka which was built in order to provide shade. However, a sukka which was constructed for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzva is perfectly fit even if it was NOT built to provide shade, and will also be perfectly fit even if it is so thick-roofed that it provides protection from the rain.

### IV.

At the very beginning of our discussion, we mentioned the dispute between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel concerning an 'old sukka' (one that had already been built). The gemara (9b) connects this argument to the argument between R. Eliezer and the Chakhamim regarding the construction of a sukka on Chol Ha-mo'ed. As has been shown, these arguments relate to the very definition of a sukka. According to R. Eliezer and Beit Shammai, a sukka is an alternative dwelling place constructed for the duration of the festival of Sukkot. Beit Hillel, however, are of the opinion that the definition of a sukka is a functional one, a shed which provides shade.

It is possible that these two definitions are based on another argument, between R. Eliezer and R. Akiva regarding the nature of the sukkot in the wilderness: "It is taught in a beraita: 'For I provided the children of Israel with sukkot' - R. Eliezer says that [the sukkot here] were the clouds of glory, whilst R. Akiva is of the opinion that God made for them actual booths" (TB Sukka 11b).

According to R. Akiva the mitzva requires normal, actual sukkot (booths), for this will facilitate a re-enactment of the religious-historical phenomenon upon which the mitzva is based. However, for R. Eliezer a regular, functional sukka will not suffice. In his opinion, the mitzva is an attempt to re-enact the supernatural sukkot - the clouds of glory. This attempt requires sukkot made specially for the duration of the festival. The mitzva demands of us that we leave our houses every year and move into a temporary abode whose entire essence represents and re-enacts the dwelling in the shadow of God - underneath the clouds of glory.

We suggested that according to Beit Hillel there are two possible tracks in the creation of a sukka. a) the functional track (mentioned earlier) b) the specification of the sukka as being for the purpose of the mitzva.

In the Torah, the passage in the parasha of Emor relates to sukkot of the functional type, in order to re-enact the actual sukkot that had existed in the wilderness, according to R. Akiva. In the parasha of Re'eh, there is no mention of the sukkot that were in the wilderness - the entire parasha focuses on the notion of the Divine Presence residing amongst the Jewish people 'in the place which God will choose.' "But to the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, there you shall seek Him, at His dwelling, and there you shall come." (Deut. 12:5) In relation to the festival of Sukkot, it is written: "Seven days you shall keep a festival to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord shall choose ..." (Deut. 16:15). The parasha concludes, in relation to all the festivals: "Three times a year, all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He shall choose" (verse 16).

In connection to the verse "You shall make for yourself the festival of Sukkot for seven days" (verse 13) from which the Sages learn not only making the festival, but also the construction of the sukka itself - there is no relationship to the sukka as a re-enactment of the sukkot in the wilderness; rather, it relates to the sukka as an encounter (as it were) between the Jewish people and their Father in Heaven. This sort of sukka, even according to Beit Hillel, cannot be a merely functional sukka, but rather a special sukka that makes possible such a meeting - that is, a sukka constructed specially for the fulfillment of the mitzva. It turns out, therefore, that according to

Beit Hillel, there are two different sources that teach about two different processes, coming together to create a "sukka."

A sukka, therefore, is also a remembrance of the past, of those sukkot which God caused us to dwell in upon our exodus from Egypt. Even according to the view that it was actual sukkot - booths - that God made for them, "the remembrance that they will know and remember, that they were in the wilderness, they did not come into any house and did not come across any inhabited settlement for forty years, AND GOD WAS WITH THEM, they lacked nothing" (Commentary of the Ramban on Lev. 23:43). That is to say, there is here a reminder of the special providence that characterizes the period in the wilderness. On the other hand, there exists also a sukka in the present, that within it, the Jewish people and the Divine Presence (as it were) meet - a mysterious and wondrous encounter.

All of this hopes and turns towards the future sukka - the sukka of the Messianic Era which "will be for shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge and a hideaway from storm and from rain." (Translated by Robin Harding. A fuller version of this article will appear in Hebrew in a volume celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the yeshiva's founding.)

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#### Sukkot and the Attribute of Justice by Rav Amnon Bazak

A. "On Rosh Ha-shana it is written, and on the fast of Kippur it is sealed"

If we compare the way in which the festivals in the month of Tishrei are treated by the Torah and by Chazal (the Sages), we arrive at an interesting observation: the impression one gets from the Torah's description is of days of joy and happiness, in apparent contrast to the dimension of justice so strongly emphasized by Chazal. In last year's Rosh Ha-shana email package (1) we dealt with the fact that the day of "remembrance of blowing [the shofar]" mentioned in the Torah (Vayikra 23:24) refers principally to the promise of remembrance by God through the shofar blasts, and to our complete faith that this remembrance will be for the good: "Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages and send portions for those who have nothing, for it is a holy day to our Lord, and do not be saddened, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nechemia 8:10 - Nechemia's words to the nation at the conclusion of the assembly on the first day of the seventh month.) The same can be said of the unconditional promise in the Torah with regard to Yom Kippur: "For on this day He shall atone for you to purify you; you shall be purified of all your sins before God" (Vayikra 16:30), with no mention of the individual's obligation of teshuva (repentance) before this atonement takes place.

We explained, following in the footsteps of Rav Kook in his article entitled "The Development of Jewish Concepts," that this difference in approach originates in the fact that when the Shekhina (Divine Presence) departed from the nation following the destruction of the First Temple, exile "shattered and destroyed to its foundations the ruined national idea." As a result, Am Yisrael no longer stands before God as a single body. Rather, each person is judged on his own individual merits, and the days of Rosh Ha-shana have thus become - in a very real sense - the "Days of Awe," with fear and trepidation taking the place of our joy. The individual is no longer able to hide himself in the camouflage of the community - he stands alone, facing the King of Justice.

B. "And the Festival of the Gathering at the End of the Year"

It seems that a similar attitude exists with regard to the festival of Sukkot. According to the literal understanding of the Torah, Sukkot is the festival which represents the changeover from one year to the next, according to the agricultural calendar (as opposed to the historical calendar, which was instituted at the time of the Exodus from Egypt as the special calendar of Am Yisrael and which begins with the month of Nissan).(2) And, as we know, gathering is the final stage in the agricultural process. It is followed immediately by the activities of ploughing and sowing through the winter months until spring, the wheat and barley harvest during the Omer, figs and grapes in summer until the conclusion of the gathering on Sukkot.

For this reason the Torah refers to Sukkot thus: "And the festival of the

gathering at the end of the year (be-tzet ha-shana)" (Shemot 23:16), and later, "the period of the year (tekufat ha-shana)" (3) (ibid. 34:22). We can also understand now why the "hak'hel" (assembly) ceremony takes place specifically "at the time of the Shemitta year, on the festival of Sukkot" (Devarim 31:10), as a conclusion to the seven-year cycle.

The timing of Sukkot at the end of the working year explains the dimension of joy, which is particularly emphasized on this festival - "the time of our rejoicing."

Already by the time we reach the festival of Shavu'ot, at the time of the harvest, there is a certain measure of joy - "And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God..."(Devarim 16:11), but this joy is experienced in double or even triple measure on Sukkot, when all the fruits of the year have finished being gathered (4), for the mitzva of rejoicing is mentioned three times in connection with Sukkot (Vayikra 23:40, Devarim 16:14-15).

The centrality of this festival in the life of the nation is also revealed in King Yerovam's fear of the nation making its pilgrimage to the Temple on Sukkot. We may assume that Yerovam understood that the date of Pesach could not be "moved" because it is bound up with the memory of a singular, unique historical event. For this reason it was easier for him to "stretch" the date of the gathering, which is less well defined (changing from year to year depending on the solar year and the variegations of the weather), and to declare a different date for this central festival: "And Yerovam made a festival in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival that was in Yehuda" (Melakhim I 12:32). (5)

C. "And the rain shall not be upon them"

However, Sukkot is also influenced by the concept of reward and punishment which so strongly characterizes the two festivals which precede it. For there can be no festival celebrating the end of the year which does not at the same time begin a new year, and together with the joy and satisfaction over the fullness of the year that has passed, we experience doubt and concern as to the year that is to come. And first and foremost among our thoughts, both conscious and sub-conscious, one word rests on the Jew's mind as he sits in the sukka, one request dominates his prayer to God - rain!

The land of Israel, as we know, depends on Divine grace for its rainfall: "...the land drinks water from the rain of the heavens. It is a land which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are upon it always, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year" (Devarim 11:11-12). One of the most serious punishments with which Am Yisrael is threatened, should they turn away from God and serve other gods, is that "the anger of God will burn against you, and He will shut up the heavens and you will have no rain" (ibid. 11:17), while if the nation listens to God's commandments, then "I shall give the rain of your land in its time; the early rain and the late rain" (11:14).

Here, too, while Am Yisrael dwells in its land and serves God, the joy of the festival of the gathering and the thanks to God for the year that has passed are complete, without the slightest shadow of worry haunting them. Without doubt, the remembrance of Am Yisrael for the good on Rosh Ha-shana, "Yom Ha-zikkaron" (the day of remembrance), and the atonement and forgiveness on Yom Kippur, ensure that "God will open for you His storehouse of goodness; the heavens to give rain to your land in its time, and to bless all the work of your hands" (Devarim 28:12). In the days to come, at the time when "on that day God will be one and His name One" (Zekharia 14:9), this vision will become universal in its scope: "And it will be that all those who remain of all the nations who came against Jerusalem, will ascend each year to prostrate themselves before the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the festival of Sukkot" (ibid. 14:16).

However, "whoever does not come up of all the families of the earth to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, upon them shall be no rain!" (ibid. 14:17). And meanwhile, during the time of the destroyed national idea, when we view ourselves more on an individual basis than as integral parts of the Jewish Nation, there can be no such complete faith. The joy of the gathering is accompanied by fear in the face of the new year.

D. "O save the land from curse"

The prayers for rain on Sukkot have therefore become a central motif in

the celebration of the festival. The two special mitzvot of Sukkot which are not mentioned in the Torah - the water libation (nisukh ha-mayim) and the waving of the willow branches (arava) - occupy an important position in the Sukkot ritual, and both are strongly connected to this particular festival: "God said: Pour water before Me on the festival [Sukkot], so that the rains of the year will be blessed for you" (Rosh Ha-shana 16a).

The mitzva of the four species, too, has also undergone a certain measure of change in character. Originally, this mitzva was connected with the essence of the festival: "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day... and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God..." (Vayikra 23:40). The individual, satisfied with his lot, brings the finest of his produce before God, thanking Him for the strength which He has bestowed in order to perform all this work.

"And it seems to me that the four species which comprise the lulav symbolize the joy of their leaving the desert - which was a land devoid of seed, figs, grapes and pomegranates, with no water to drink - for a place with fruit-bearing trees and rivers. And in remembrance of this, we take the most beautiful of all fruit and the most pleasantly fragrant, and the most beautiful of all leaves and the best of the grasses - by which I refer to the willow of the brook." (Rambam, Guide to the Perplexed III:43)

But with the addition of the dimension of justice to the festival of Sukkot, even the nature of this mitzva changes: "Rabbi Eliezer said, 'Since the whole point of the four species is only to appease [God] for the sake of water, and just as these four species cannot exist without water, so the world cannot exist without water.'" (6)

E. "And where would they wave?"

We find a special expression for the various aspects of the festival in the mitzva of na'anu'im (wavings) on Sukkot. (7) The mishna in Sukka (37b) says, "And where [i.e. at what points in the prayer] would they wave? In 'hodu la-Hashem' at the beginning and the end, and in 'ana Hashem hoshi'ana' - according to Beit Hillel...." The Amora'im were divided as to the

procedure for these waving motions:

"Rabbi Yochanan said: 'One stretches out [the lulav] and then brings it back towards him - towards He who owns the four winds. [Then] He raises and lowers it - towards He who owns the heavens and the earth. In the west, they learned as follows: Rabbi Chamma son of Ukva said in the name of Yossi, son of Rabbi Chanina: he stretches it out and then brings it back - in order to stop the evil winds. He raises and lowers it - in order to stop bad rains."

The two traditions of the Sages of Eretz Yisrael are not contradictory, but rather complement one another. The explanation of the wavings according to Rabbi Yochanan - who perceives in them an expression of joy and thanks to God, to whom the four directions and heaven and earth all belong - is appropriate for the biblical period. The second explanation - which embodies concern for the new year - reflects the dimension which was added to the content of the festival.

In effect, both aspects exist. We wave the lulav both during "hodu la-Hashem ki tov" - in praise of God and thanks for what has already come to pass - as well as in "ana Hashem hoshi'ana," in supplication and beseeching for the year to come.

This is not the place to expound further on the additional aspects of the attribute of justice (middat ha-din) on Sukkot, e.g. in the hoshana'not, on the Day of Judgement of Hoshana Rabba (when the issue of rain is particularly emphasized in the liturgy), and in the prayer for rain on Shemini Atzeret. Let us simply conclude with a prayer to He who makes the wind blow and the rain fall, that the coming year should be one of blessing and not of curse, of satiety and not of dearth, of life and not of death - for us and for all of Israel.

Footnotes:

(1) "From a Day of Joy to a Day of Judgement." This article appears on our webpage in the Holiday Archives section. It also appeared in Hebrew in "Daf Keshet" no. 301 (Elul 5751). This article is recommended reading in order to provide a complete picture.

(2) For more about the different dates for the New Year see Rav Mordechai Breuer's article, "Four New Years", in his book "Pirkei Mo'adot", vol. 2, pp.

492-502.

(3) The expression refers to the time when the cycle of the previous year comes to an end and the cycle of the new year begins. See Yeshayahu 29:1 - "Add year to year, let the festivals come round (yinkofu)", and Iyov 1:5 - "and when the days of their feasting were gone about (hikifu)".

(4) Rav Breuer (ibid.) in his article "The Festival of Sukkot", p. 570.

(5) The festivals of Sukkot and Pesach stand opposite one another, exactly half a year apart, with each of them representing a different concept: the joy of individual labor on one hand, and the guarding of the national memory on the other. Many conceptual and halakhic links connect these festivals and what they represent, but that subject is beyond the scope of this essay. It should merely be noted that each of these two festivals falls in the seventh month, counting from the other festival. We might even dare say, learning out from this fact, that it is no coincidence that God created the world in such a way that the year divides into twelve months, for it is only thus that a festival could be placed at the beginning of each half-year, such that it also falls in the seventh month from the other festival...

(6) See also Vayikra Rabba, Parashat Emor, parsha 30: "Rabbi Yehuda in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi said, 'Hear, my son, and take heed' - I have commanded you many things in order to increase your merits... I told you, 'and you shall take for yourselves on the first day' etc. - in order to increase their merits, IN ORDER THAT I SHALL PROVIDE RAIN FOR YOU."

(7) Dr. Nachum Wahrman expounds on this in his book, "Chagei Yisrael U-mo'adav", pp. 68-69.

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The holiday of Sukkos will soon be upon us, and it pays to dwell on the relevance of the festival to our lives. We are very fortunate to have all of the precious commandments of the Torah. Each one is brimming over with meaning and relevance. Our deeds have a direct and profound influence on our

attitudes. As much as what is in our hearts matters, we must come to understand that the Jewish heart is molded and shaped by studying and observing the commandments of the Torah. Let us look into the words of Rabbi

Chaim Freidlander, of blessed memory to gain insight into the commandment to dwell in a Succah-hut for seven days.

The passage in Psalms (16:8) reveals to us one of the foundations of the commandment to live for seven days in a Succah (a hut covered with branches or some other plant-derived substance). "I have placed G-d always before me, He shall surely be at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (18th century) writes that there is a direct relationship between the segments of the verse. "I have placed G-d always before me", and as a result G-d complies, and "He shall surely be at my right hand", and consequently, "I shall not be moved." That is to say that the more a person comes to realize the interaction G-d has with the world, and more specifically, in his/her own life, the more G-d takes a specific role in his/her life. One merits a closer interaction with G-d in a more custom-made type of providence. As the Chovos HaLevovos (Rabbainu Bachya Ibn Pekuda)

explains (Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh, HaCheshbone HaAsiri) that on its highest

level continual G-d-awareness brings a person to a level of transcending the limitations of human ability.

The purpose of the Succah is to put ourselves in a place which will cultivate this awareness. The verse (Leviticus 23:43) tells us that we should dwell in a Succah "so that your generations will know that I caused

the Children of Israel to dwell in Succos...". Knowing means connecting to the awareness on an experiential level. How? By realizing that our situation is really the same as the generation of Jews who wandered through the wilderness for 40 years, just the background has changed. We are still just as dependent on G-d for our needs as they were for the manna that they ate, and the water they drank. The illusion is that we do everything for ourselves, but in reality, it is just that, an illusion.

The festival of Succos falls right after the in-gathering of the harvested grain. This is specifically a time when a person can be filled with thoughts of being in total control. The storehouses are full after a season of hard work, and s/he is patting her/himself on the back. Good work! S/he can forget that s/he is benefiting from the blessings of HaShem. However, the Torah says "From (the by-product of) your granary, and your wine press" you should make your Succah. Don't think your security comes from the product of the granary and wine press, but even the by-product gives us security. Why? Because we come to realize that we are truly dwelling in the shelter of HaShem---at all times. It is not a direct consequence of our efforts that we achieve security. Nothing is permanent; people win and lose fortunes literally every day, but one who acquires this attitude is constantly benefiting from the closeness and providence of HaShem.

Our Talmudic sages, of blessed memory, have provided us with the tools to understand the depth of our commandments. One of the life-lessons of the commandment to dwell in the Succah is deriving trust and security from awareness of HaShem in our lives. However, living with that attitude for one week is not really enough. Our sages have provided us with a way to carry these healthy attitudes into the rest of the year. They instituted the recital of 100 blessings every day. "Boruch Atau HaShem" "You are the source of all blessing G-d." We speak to G-d as if we are standing before Him and we say "You are the source of all blessing." "All of our blessings come from You." Every blessing continues "our G-d, (Who is) King of the Universe." In every blessing we recognize that G-d is King, and we are receiving blessing from Him as the servants of the King of the Universe. We stand before Him, and we accept upon ourselves His sovereignty. Needless to say, one who rushes through a blessing without thinking accomplishes little in this regard, but taken seriously, 100 times a day we can reinforce the attitudes and life-lessons which we acquire from the festival of Succos. Chag Somayach!

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daf-hashavua 1st Day Succot 5757/1996  
Sukkot-5757 U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N  
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Simchat bet Hashoevah by Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Finchley Synagogue,  
London

"And you shall present...fourteen he-lambs of the first year" (Bemidbar  
29:13)

The Torah instructs us here to bring fourteen lambs on each one of the days of Succot. Rashi explains that the total of ninety-eight serves to protect Israel from the ninety-eight curses mentioned in the Tochecha of Pashat Ki Tavo. The Shem MiShmuel adds that the Tochecha can come as Divine retribution for an absence of joy in our service of Hashem, as it states "because you did not serve the Lord your G-d with joy and gladness". (Devarim 28:47). Therefore, he says, the Torah mentions joy with reference to Succot more frequently than any other festival; the days of Zeman Simchatenu are

designated to enhance our capacity to "serve the Lord with joy, come before Him with exulting" (Psalm 100).

The destruction of the Temple brought in its wake the cancellation of the principal means, whereby the injunction "and you shall be exceedingly happy" (Devarim 16:15) was fulfilled. This had been through the rejoicing associated with nisuch hamayim (the Libation of Water). For a period of fifteen and a half consecutive hours on everyday of Succot, a multitude of men, women and children gathered for the pouring of three measures of the "waters of creation"- waters not affected by human effort. The festivities accompanying the Water-Libation ceremony were called Simchat Bet Hashoeva - The rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing. The water was drawn from the pool of Siloam, or Shiloach in the city of David, thereby fulfilling "and you shall draw waters with joy from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 2). The Shiloach is known as the well of salvation since the kings of the Royal house of David were anointed there, and through them salvation came to Israel.

The intense joy experienced during this celebration prompted our Rabbis to comment "He who has not seen the rejoicing at the Simchat Bet Hashoevah has not seen rejoicing in his life".

The unparalleled joy that was attained drew significant spiritual dividends for the participants. Indeed, says the Gemara, "There the spirit of holiness was drawn" (Yerushalmi Succah, ch. 5) and adds: "Yonah ben Amitai would go up to Jerusalem for the Pilgrim Festivals. When he participated in the Simchat Bet Hashoevah, the Holy Spirit rested upon him and he became a Prophet - to teach you that the spirit of holiness rests only on a heart filled with joy.

The Talmud (Succah 53) provides us with a bountiful supply of anecdotal references to the Simchat Bet Hashoevah. The most prominent among them is the most perplexing. "During the rejoicing of the drawing of water, Hillel would declare: "If I am here, everyone is here!"

Such a vain thought seems to be totally out of character, seeing as Hillel's legendary humility was his most outstanding quality.

Furthermore, the sentiment he expressed is surely diametrically opposed to the very essence of the beauty of the ceremony.

Eliyahu Kitov in Sefer Hatoda'ah describes Hashem's response to the Water-Libation: "All the offerings you bring Me throughout the year are precious to Me, but this offering of the water which you pour on the altar during Succot is especially precious - this offering requires neither planting nor reaping; neither pressing nor purifying. It is pure of the slightest taint of conceit."

Hillel's comment can best be understood as a practical application of his teaching "If I am not for myself, who will be for me, and if I am only for myself, what am I?" (Avot 1:14).

While acknowledging that people who are wrapped up in themselves make small parcels, Hillel highlights the importance of self-respect and self-sufficiency, which are essential for human dignity. Thus, the slave who preferred to remain in his master's service beyond six years underwent a degrading ritual (Shemot 21:5) and was given the title of opprobrium "the servant with the bored earlobe". There is something radically wrong with a philosophy of life that accepts the pre-eminence of slavery over freedom. When dependence is preferred to independence, it is considered unmanly and shameful - if I am not for myself, who will be for me?

This is what Hillel had in mind when he declared: "If I am here everyone is here." His paradoxical aphorism emphasises the importance of "self": If I am imbibing this holy spirit, becoming inspired and uplifted; if my soul is achieving its fulfilment, then surely "all is here" - the rejoicing has fulfilled its purpose.

In addition, Hillel implied as well, that if every person would be in a position to say "I am here", then everyone would be present. The lesson that emerges goes well beyond the Simchat Bet Hashoevah. In pursuit of our collective spiritual goals, if each individual will reach the zenith of his capability, the aggregate will take care of itself. The Jewish people is the sum total of the quality of Jewish life experienced by each individual in the community. No wonder the Simchat Bet Hashoevah was a spectacle of unmatched joy, for

no one shirked from his responsibility to fulfil his personal mitzvah "You shall rejoice on your festival and be exceedingly happy" (Devarim 16:15).

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Drasha Yom Kippur / Sukkos 5757 Wake up and Smell the Esrog Volume 2 issue 50 -- 9/22/96

There is something definitely very different about Yom Kippur. Even before the revered Kol Nidrei is chanted, a special supplication is recited. The community stands before the Almighty and asks permission to be allowed to pray together with the sinners. It may be quite difficult for those who come to synagogue day after day, week after week, month after month, to be deluged with an onslaught of those who seek a temporary asylum for three short days. Our sages knew the feeling. The first words of the Kol Nidrei entreat the righteous to stand together with the not-so-righteous and begin their prayers as one.

Yom Kippur is not the only holiday that invokes a societal acceptance of wrongdoers. All Jews are symbolically accepted if not heralded during the holiday of Sukkos. On Sukkos, there is a mitzvah to shake four distinct species. The four species must be taken together as one, or the mitzvah is invalid. The four species have unique attributes. The lulav (palm) has taste but no smell, the hadas (myrtle) has smell but no taste. The esrog (citron) has both taste and smell, yet the arava (willow) has neither taste nor smell. As children we were taught that taste represents Torah knowledge and a good smell represents good deeds. There are Jews, explains the Midrash that have both Torah knowledge and good deeds. There are those who are charitable and righteous but have no Torah. Then there are those who have Torah but unfortunately have no good deeds. And finally there are those who have neither Torah nor good deeds. They are all bound together as one. In this manner they all can support each other. But, why do the holidays of Yom Kippur and Sukkos herald unity and outreach more than any other Yom Tov? My parents moved to the Five Towns of Long Island before the first Sputnik was launched and before I was born. At that time, the Five Towns, a current haven of kosher eateries, amenities and synagogues was a spiritual wasteland. My three sisters had a difficult time adjusting to the move from their small apartment in East New York to the vast open fields of suburbia. They had to cope with the spiritual aspects, too. My youngest sister, Shoshana, became best friends with Beth, a child who hardly knew what being Jewish meant. On her third Shabbos in Woodmere, my sister was out early on her way to the synagogue that my father had just established a few blocks away.

Beth stared at her friend who was dressed up for no apparent reason. "Where ya going, Shawnee?" she asked.

"To shul." My sister looked down at her frilly pink Shabbos dress and repeated, "I'm going to shul."

"Shul?" Beth repeated incredulously. "What's shul?"

"Shul?" asked Shoshana "What do you mean, 'what's shul?' Shul is shul!" The conversation bounced back and forth for a minute, until Beth's father came out of the house dressed in overalls and carrying gardening tools.

"Dad?" asked Beth. "What's shul?"

"Oh, Beth!" he exclaimed. "Shul is temple!"

My sister's eyes widened in uneasiness. "Temple?" she repeated incredulously, "what's temple?"

As we begin a new year, a strong message of brotherly love reaches out to us both in the liturgy of the synagogue and the liturgy of the harvest -- the four species. Jews must realize that whether it is the reflectious times of Yom Kippur or the rejoicing of Sukkos, we are one people. There are saints and sinners among us. There are those who are filled with the delicious taste of Torah and the sweet fragrance of good deeds. And there are those of us who are as prosaic as a willow. Yet, both in trepidation and in jubilation we must join together as Jews. We must find each other. If we do not include the bland and tasteless willow, our observance is unacceptable. On both Yom Kippur and Sukkos the esrog must look for the arava. It is a wonderful time to find someone missing either the smell, taste, or both and have him wake up and smell the sweet scent of the esrog. Best wishes for a

G'mar Chasima Tova & A Chag Sameach.

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Sukkos Topic: Sukkos- Zman Simchaseinu, The Time of Our Happiness

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Throughout the works of our Sages, we find that the holiday of Sukkos is referred to as "Zman Simchaseinu," "The time of our happiness." While it is true that the other of the Shalosh Regalim (Pilgrimage Festivals) are referred to by similar descriptions, the connection between their common names and the description is more readily apparent than by Sukkos. Pesach is called "Zman Chayrusainu," "The time of our freedom, as it celebrates our freedom from Egypt. Shavuot is called "Zman Mattan Toraseinu " The time of

our receiving the Torah," as it celebrates the day on which the nation of Israel received the Torah. However, what joyous occasion does Sukkos commemorate? What connection is there between happiness and building and dwelling in a Sukkah?

The Vilna Gaon addresses another question. There is an opinion in the Talmud

(Sukkah 11b) that the Sukkah we build represents the Clouds of Glory, Ananei

HaKavod. These clouds surrounded the entire nation of Israel, and acted as a protective barrier. (See vol. I: 46 for further information.) The nation of Israel first became protected by the Ananei HaKavod, in the month of Nissan.

Why then, the Gaon asks, do we commemorate this gift of protection in the month of Tishrei? He answers that when the nation of Israel sinned by constructing the Egel HaZahav, the Golden Calf, the protective clouds were removed. The clouds did not return until after Moshe had secured the complete atonement of the nation of Israel, and the nation began to construct the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. The date Moshe returned to the camp of Israel was Yom Kippur, the 10th of Tishrei, and the nation began the construction of the Mishkan on the 15th of Tishrei. For this reason, the Gaon writes, we celebrate Sukkos on the 15th of Tishrei.

From this, we see that we are celebrating not just the gift of the protective clouds, but the return of the clouds after the nation of Israel had sinned. Indeed, one could understand that this would be a joyous time: a miraculous form of protection which had been revoked was now returned. Furthermore, one could understand why we are celebrating the holiday of Sukkos at the time we do: after we have just experienced Yom Kippur, and we have been forgiven for our sins, we celebrate the gift of the protective clouds which were returned

to Israel after they sinned. The events concerning the clouds happened at this time of the year, and therefore we celebrate Sukkos at this time of the year. Hence, there is a joy connected with the clouds, and the holiday is aptly named the time of our happiness.

However, this leaves us with another question: If the clouds were taken away from the nation of Israel because they sinned, why then did the clouds not reappear when they were forgiven, on Yom Kippur? Why did the clouds return

only five days later?

Rabbeinu Yona, in his work Sha'arei Teshuva, writes that there is more to forgiveness than meets the eye. It is possible that a person may have begged G-d for forgiveness with all of his might, and that G-d forgave that individual. That individual will receive no punishment for his wrongdoing. However, this does not mean that this person has now once again found favor in the eyes of G-d. G-d may not desire the prayers of this person, nor any further gestures of devotion towards Him. In order to reach this next level of forgiveness, a person must continue beseeching G-d's kindness and mercy.

He must continue to pray, to perform mitzvos, and increase his devotion to G-d. A person will know that G-d has fully forgiven him when he finds himself

presented with the opportunities to do Mitzvos. When a person discovers that Hashem is lending him a hand when it comes to listening the word of G-d, that

his urges to do wrong are not as powerful, that his desire to act correctly has increased, he knows that his repentance has been accepted.

After G-d forgave the nation of Israel for the sin of the golden calf, He wanted to finalize the forgiveness. He wanted to give the nation a commandment where they would be able to demonstrate how great their closeness was to Him. He commanded the nation to build the Mishkan. The construction necessitated donations of personal wealth and of manual labor. Everyone was able to contribute in some manner, shape, or form to the cause of the Mishkan. Everyone did contribute, thereby demonstrating their dedication to and love of Hashem. When the time came to actually construct the Mishkan, one thing was clear: the nation of Israel had truly repented, and had made a

great effort to come close to G-d. It was at this point that the final forgiveness came. Hashem returned the protective clouds to the nation, and they began the construction of the Mishkan.

The joy that the nation of Israel experienced at this time was overwhelming. They knew that their repentance had been completely accepted. They were presented with an opportunity to serve G-d, to build the Mishkan. They had the protective clouds back. They knew that they had again found favor in the eyes of G-d. When we celebrate Sukkos, we are not merely commemorating the

joy experienced by our forefathers upon the return of the protective clouds.

We are in a time of joy ourselves! We have just gone through a repentance process, and hope that we have found favor in G-d's eyes. Soon after the holiest day of the year, G-d gives us an opportunity to perform many mitzvos: to take the Lulav, to sit in the Sukkah, and to sanctify the holiday. We ourselves should be overjoyed to find ourselves presented with all these opportunities - it indicates that G-d has found favor with us!

For this reason, the Talmud in the tractate of Sukkah (28b) compares the situation of rain during Sukkos to a servant who comes to pour a drink for his master, and the master throws the water in the servant's face. Why is this situation when we are unable to perform a Mitzvah different than any other time when we are unable to perform a Mitzvah, to the extent that rain during Sukkos is called a curse? It is precisely because of the fact that if we are not presented with the opportunity to do this Mitzvah right after Yom Kippur, it means that G-d is not happy with us. We have yet to find favor in the eyes of G-d, and we therefore need to increase our prayers and repentance efforts. We are not able to experience the same joy that our forefathers did. Sukkos, as we know, is called the time of our happiness. This happiness is one that our forefathers were privileged to experience. It is a time for us to experience this same happiness. It is a time when we all can feel assured that our prayers on Yom Kippur were fully accepted. It is a time when we can rejoice as we perform the many Mitzvos associated with the holiday. We should all take this opportunity to rejoice, to serve G-d with great happiness and merriment. Sukkos should truly be the time of happiness for each and every one of us.

(From Sefer Matnas Chaim)

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Friday, September 27, 1996  
SHABBAT SHALOM: Rejoice!  
By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN  
(September 26) Each of the three major festivals is identified with a concept

central to Judaism - freedom, Torah, and rejoicing. Freedom is indelibly linked to Pessah because of the exodus from Egypt, and Torah is linked to Shavuot because of the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. But when it comes to Succot, why does the Torah emphasize it is specifically this holiday in which "you shall rejoice," and why does the Prayer Book refer to this festival as "the time of our rejoicing"?

This question may seem surprising. After all, when the festival arrives, who doesn't love to sit (and even sleep) underneath the stars? But with only a slightly different focus, Succot can be explained as a festival in somber harmony with the High Holy Days.

The arrival of Elul before Rosh Hashana ushers in not only the daily blast of the shofar, but also the 27th Psalm: "To David, the Lord is my light and my salvation," which is recited twice daily until the last day of Succot, thereby linking the entire period.

The connection can also be seen in the fact that the service of Hoshana Rabba, the seventh day of Succot, is structured to parallel aspects of the Yom Kippur service, including the liturgical chants, and encourages all officiants and congregants to wear the white Yom Kippur kittel.

Furthermore, what's so cheerful about leaving one's home and spending seven days in a cold, fragile hut? True, the Jewish people have turned this into a beloved experience, especially because of the children. But from a purely objective point of view, few would consider an "eviction" from one's home a joyful experience!

Even the Four Species are actually a testament to the frailty of the vegetative world: the willows are the first to go, and all too often brown spots appear on the etrog before the festival is over; even the spine of the palm frond begins to show signs of wear and tear by the end of the week.

And if this isn't enough evidence, all we have to do is turn to the extra Hagiograph reading on the Shabbat of Hol Hamo'ed Succot, the Scroll of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit has a man of all his labor wherein he labors under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes: but the earth abides forever"

Of all the possible choices, why introduce the words of Kohelet into the festival of "our rejoicing?" Unless, that is, Succot is not so joyous after all. Perhaps a Talmudic passage in Tractate Brachot can teach us the true meaning of the joy of Succot. There we are given a formulation of the steps needed to grapple with the evil inclination. The first measure is to learn Torah. If that doesn't work, the Sh'ma should be recited. And if the Sh'ma doesn't work, one should contemplate the day of his death. Now if the order of the advice tells us that the last suggestion is the foolproof method, why not turn to it immediately? The truth is that such somber contemplation may be too powerful a medicine, whose side-effects may lead to despair. Hence our Sages suggest milder doses to begin with. Only if these do not work do we turn to the third prescription, remembering the day of death.

I'd like to suggest that the period from Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur through Succot parallels the basic steps of the Sages in defeating the evil inclination. Rosh Hashana is linked to Torah. On Rosh Hashana, God looked into the Torah and created the world, as the Holy Zohar teaches. On a simple level this means that Torah must precede creation because the essential purpose of creation is Torah; because through Torah, we are divinely charged to transform and perfect the world. Moreover, the Rosh Hashana prayer is suffused with verses from the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets, a profound learning experience teaching us the fundamental philosophy of Judaism: Malchuyot, Zichronot and Shofarot - creation, revelation and redemption. The shofarot emphasize the fact that it is by means of God's Torah revealed at Sinai (amid the sounds of the shofar) that the nation of Israel will eventually repair the world by teaching ethical monotheism.

Yom Kippur can be considered from any number of perspectives, but given that the words with which we end the fast are a tumultuous Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, it could be said that the entire purpose of this day is to bring us to an inner state of wholeness.

But what if we went through Rosh Hashana (Torah) and Yom Kippur (Sh'ma) and still feel like failures? Not to despair because we still have Succot, the

foolproof method. The succa speaks to every Jew - religious, secular, masorati, haredi; everyone can relate to this fragile hut, a metaphor for the fragility of our lives.

Now all the symbolic aspects of Succot, from the temporary nature of the succa itself to the slow-but-sure decay of the Four Species, to the sobriety of Kohelet all reminding us that in this world we are merely guests stopping by for a night. Hence we would best dedicate our lives to ideals of permanence, to God and Torah, continuity and compassion.

But realizing the fragility of our lives should not lead to despair. On the contrary, only from the perspective of a fragile succa unable to withstand even a casual rainstorm, do we truly come to realize the importance of every day and every experience. Only when we understand that we are living in the shadow of death do we begin to savor every moment.

Every minute is a gift from God, and must be lived to the fullest. Hence Succot has not only given us the final weapon in our battle against the evil impulse, but it teaches us how to truly live joyously, how to see life in proper perspective, how to enjoy every moment and every possibility. Shabbat Shalom & Chag Sameach

Rabbi Riskin, dean of the Ohr Tora institutions, is chief rabbi of Efrat.

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Succos

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz  
Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotsk explains the well-known words of our Sages

(Succah 25b) "Rav Abba bar Zavda said (in the name of) Rav 'One who is uncomfortable (or suffers or is irritated by being there) is exempt from (the obligation of living in) the Succah."

In order to understand the nature of this precious mitzvah, which (nevertheless) exempts someone who is even slightly uncomfortable from living in the Succah, (we can) explain that the essential characteristic of living in the Succah is to forsake one's permanent dwelling - that is a person must forsake all his (worldly) affairs and annul himself completely to HaShem Yisborach.

A person who truly nullifies himself to HaShem Yisborach to the ultimate degree will not be able to feel any discomfort, for he does not sense his (own) existence and being.

Thus, if one (feels) discomfort, it is a sign that he has not completely nullified himself to HaShem Yisborach. So he is not fulfilling the mitzvah with it's proper intention, and so he has no affinity to the mitzvah of living in the Succah.

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The Chidushei HaRim observes that the Tur (Orach Chaim 625) asks why we do not have (the mitzvah of) Succah in (the month of) Nissan, for (it is) then that the Children of Yisroel came out of Mitzraim. (Since the Succah is a remembrance of the Clouds of (D-ivine) Glory which surrounded us when we came out of Mitzraim, - see Rash"i VaYikra 23,43 and the Tur - Nissan would

be the most appropriate time for this remembrance DR).

He answers that the Torah says "You shall dwell in Succos for seven days in order that your generations shall know . . ." (VaYikra 23,43). This shows that (the mitzvah of) Succah requires da'as (knowledge - in it's Cabalistic connotation).

During the course of the year, everyone is full of transgressions, and (our Sages have taught us) that a person does not transgress unless a spirit of stupidity enters him (Sotah 3a). (When this happens) he has no da'as (as stupidity is the antithesis of da'as DR).

However, (Succos is immediately) after Yom Kippur which atones for all transgressions, and Succos is the first (day) of the reckoning of transgressions. (The Midrash Rabbah - VaYikra 30,7 - says: "From Yom Kippur to the Festival (Succos) they occupy themselves with mitzvot, this one with his Succah and this one with his Lulav, and on the first day of the

Festival

the whole of Yisroel stand before HaKadosh Boruch Hu with their Lulavs and their Esrogs for the sake of HaKadosh Boruch Hu, and He says to them 'What has gone has gone; from now will begin the reckoning (of transgressions).'" Thus at this time we have da'as. For this reason, the Torah commanded (us) to make (our) Succos then (in Tishri), even though it is not the time (when we came out of Mitzraim).

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Succot 15-16 Tishrei 5757 Saturday-Sunday, September 28-29, 1996  
Guest Rabbi: Rabbi Dovid S. Plaut Young Israel of Greater Buffalo, New York

A physics teacher of mine tells a story about a professor who walked into class and proceeded to write a blackboard full of equations.

Quickly reviewing his work and glaring at his class, he casually said, "this should be fairly obvious." After a short moment of silence, someone, from the stunned class boldly asked, "Why?"

The professor, seemingly caught off guard, stared intently at the blackboard for a while. He scratched his head and left the room.

After a few long minutes, he returned, looking somewhat relieved, and announced proudly to the class, "Yes, it is obvious." Sometimes the obvious is anything but evident. The Gemorah (in Succah 11) says that according to Rabbi Eliezer we sit in a Succah to remind us of the Anani HaKavod -- clouds of glory -- while according to Rabbi Akiva we are reminded of the makeshift booths we made in the desert. The Pasuk says: "BeSuccot teishvu shivat yomim." What is the simple explanation of the word Succah in this pasuk? Does it mean "clouds of glory" as per Rabbi Eleizer's opinion? Or does it mean "booths" in accordance with Rabbi Akiva's opinion?

This too, it would seem, is in dispute. The Rashbam argues that the simple meaning of the word Succot is "booths," whereas the Ramban and Rashi say that it refers to clouds of glory. Certainly both interpretations are true, but saying that two completely different interpretations are both the simple meaning of a pasuk means that the pasuk is not as simple as we think. Let us try to frame these two interpretations so that they both could indeed be the simple meaning. The Rashbam explains that a Succah is commonly made in the early fall because it is the time of harvest. During that time people feel secure and accomplished. A full storehouse gives a person the illusion of stability and permanence. The Torah says build a Succah and remember how HaShem took you out of Egypt and into the desert, where you lived without a land and without any permanence for forty years. The Succah we build is to relearn the old lesson of dependence on HaShem, and to unlearn the lesson of my power and the strength of my hand.

The Ramban, on the other hand, tells us that the lesson of Succot is to remember the great miracles and deeds HaShem did for us in the desert. We must appreciate and review all the kindness and closeness He had for us during the forty years of wandering.

We should reexperience being led and provided for directly by HaShem. These are two important and different perspectives about Succot. Perhaps the simple approach to the pasuk depends on which perspective we adopt.

The typical Galut Jew feels unsettled and insecure. He may at times even feel helpless and abandoned. For him the simple meaning of Succot is that we are always surrounded by the Clouds of Glory. We are never abandoned by HaShem even temporarily. The Galut mentality needs to be uplifted by relearning this lesson of the desert; namely, how HaShem is always with us even if difficult to see and comprehend, like a cloud. For him the Ramban's definition of Succah will be the simple approach.

A Jew in Eretz Israel, in a situation of relative Geulah, feels a natural bond with HaShem. In Eretz Yisroel, the Hand of HaShem is plain for everyone to see. There, our test is not to be too proud of our success. When we achieve marvelous results, the danger is that "these achievements are MINE." In this situation the lesson to learn is the Rashbam's Succah: Remember that at one time you didn't have anything and that situation could return again. So the variation of the Ramban and the Rashbam would be dependent on the Galut or the Geulah Jewish mind set.

Perhaps we can go one step further and reduce this difference between the Galut and Geulah into a common experience shared by all. Really Galut and Geulah are two stages of one continuum. By definition, every Geulah must be preceded by a Galut. Just as night proceeds day, and Olom Hazev precedes Olam Haba, so, too, the concept of Galut comes before Geulah.

When speaking about the development of anything, we can call the first stage of development the "Galut" stage. Each person and each event undergoes these two stages in maturing, and these two stages are represented in the two opinions of what Succot is all about.

According to Rabbi Eliezer, who says that Succah refers to clouds of glory, we learn the basic requirements of Schach (the covering of the succah) from the pasuk... Ve'eid Yaaleh Min Haaretz (B'reishit 2:6). Here the Schach is compared to a rain cloud, and not just any rain cloud, but the cloud that watered the Garden of Eden at the beginning of time.

According to Rabbi Akiva, who says that Succah reminds us of the temporary structures, the Gemorrah concludes that the source for Schach is a comparison to the waste of processing grapes and olives. In contrast to the Eid, this is the end of the food cycle. At that stage, the waste is only good for fertilizer. The essential Succah according to Rabbi Akiva is the end of the food chain.

There are two vital lessons here. One at the beginning stages of life and one at the end stages of life. Succot as the Clouds of Glory represent the initial stages of Galut, where the key to survival is to cling to HaShem by realizing that He surrounds us wherever we are.

Succot as booths teach us the lessons of Geulah. At the successful conclusion to our endeavors we must never forget that what we accomplished is not through our own efforts.

The Yom Tov of Succot is located at the crossroads of the Jewish calendar. It is the end of the series of three Regolim and the culmination of the Tishrei Yomim Tovim.

At the same time, Succot is a Yom Tov that looks forward to the new year. The harvest has been gathered in preparation for the coming year. The pasuk calls the Yom Tov of Succot "the first day." Succot is considered the first day of the new accounting of sins. Furthermore, on Succot we pray for rain for the coming year.

So Succot contains elements of both past and future. Therefore the two views of Succah expressed by Rabbi Eleizer and Rabbi Akiva and the Ramban and Rashbam both mirror the lesson for the past and the lesson for the future.

prayers, and may all of K'lal Yisrael enjoy a Peaceful Succot.  
The National Council of Young Israel

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From: "kenblock@dorsai.org" yitorah@jer1.co.il"

URGENT \*\* URGENT \*\* URGENT

Thursday Sept. 26, 1996

The Israeli Chief Rabbinate has asked us to forward their request that every concerned individual recite Tehillim (Psalms) specifically because of the current turmoil in Israel.

The passages are: 12, 83, and 130.

May our brothers and sisters living in Israel be strengthened by our