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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org
date: Mon, Oct 6, 2014 at 8:48 PM subject: Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky - The
Harvest Festival: A Spiritual Perspective
Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

The Harvest Festival: A Spiritual Perspective
The celebration of Sukkos is a culmination of several cycles that occur every year. It is the last of the Shalosh Regalim, and Hashem now rests His Divine Presence on us completing the process of Yetzias Mitzrayim and kabbolas haTorah. Sukkos is also referred to in the Torah as the Chag Ha'asif - the Harvest Festival - thereby completing the agricultural year that had begun during the previous planting season. We also conclude the month of Tishrei, with its spiritual highs of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, by celebrating Sukkos.

It appears that the agricultural aspect of Sukkos is merely physical in nature, and yet when analyzed more carefully there is a spiritual dimension even to the Harvest Festival. This celebration is closely linked to the post Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur aspect of Sukkos. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva perek 9) elaborates on the relationship between blessing and success in this world and our ultimate reward for mitzvah observance. True reward for performance of mitzvos cannot take place in this world; the benefits of mitzvah observance are spiritual and thus are only appropriate in the spiritual setting of the next world. If so, why does the Torah elaborate upon physical things such as bountiful harvests as a reward for mitzvah performance? The Rambam explains that the promises are not as a reward but rather a mechanism to further mitzvah observance. We cannot serve Hashem properly without the physical blessings bestowed on us. These blessings are only significant as they enable us to continue in our performance of mitzvos.

Based on this Rambam, we can understand an otherwise strange tefillah recited by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. After experiencing the most intense spiritual encounter with Hashem, as he leaves the Kodosh Hakodoshim, the Kohen Gadol offers a fervent prayer. We would have expected this prayer to be spiritual in nature, and yet he prays for seemingly

very materialistic blessings. Requests for bountiful crops and economic prosperity seem out of touch with the spiritual dimension of the day. However, if we understand the role of physical blessing as the enabler for future spiritual success, this prayer fits perfectly into the tone of the day.

The celebration of Sukkos as the Harvest Festival is not just about physical produce. By marking the bountiful harvest on the heels of the Yomin Noraim we are confirming our belief as to why Hashem grants us these seemingly materialistic blessings: our harvest is only meaningful if it furthers the spiritual goals attained during the weeks preceding Sukkos.

Today, most of us are not directly involved in the world of agriculture and it is difficult for us to relate to the notion of a Harvest Festival. Yet, the message of the role of physical bounty in the service of the spiritual is as true today as it was for our forefathers. As we celebrate Sukkos and express our thanks to Hashem for our bountiful physical "harvest," let us focus on its true worth as a way of enabling us to attain the spiritual "harvest" of Torah and mitzvos. With this mindset, the celebration of Sukkos is truly fitting as the culmination of the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur experience.

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Sukkos – An Overview

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

As everyone is busy building their Sukkah in preparation of the impending Yom Tov, it is important to realize that we must prepare in other ways too. We should be reading and reviewing what is unique about Sukkos – in order to gain the maximum from this beautiful Yom Tov. Below we find a number of important fundamentals.

SUKKOS — A TIME OF ALIYAH L'REGEL

One of the aspects of the Yom Tov of Sukkos is the mitzvah of aliyah l'regel. Three times a year the Jewish nation visited the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim to greet the Presence of the Shechinah. Nowadays, most authorities hold that this mitzvah is not obligatory because, unfortunately, there is no Beis HaMikdash. The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni on Yeshayah explains that in the future Geulah the mitzvah will not only be three times a year, but actually once a month!

HASHEM'S LOVE FOR US

But there is something else of interest to us in regard to aliyah l'regel. The Gemara (Yuma 54a) tells us that when the Jewish nation would be olei regel, they would open the paroches and reveal the Keruvim smiling and facing each other. Then the Kohanim would declare to the olei regel, "See how much Hashem loves you." This is also a thought that we declare before we recite the daily Shema, and one that should be reinforced. When we realize how much Hashem loves us, we look at events in our life differently. We appreciate what we have been given to a greater extent, and we also come to value and understand the hashgachah pratis, the individual attention, that we receive from Hashem. This perspective will, in turn, allow us to fulfill the special avodah of Sukkos: simchah — spiritual joy.

SIMCHAH, THE SPECIAL AVODAH

Each of the Yamim Tovim has its own special avodah, method in which to serve Hashem and become ever closer to Him.

The Gemara above tells us that it is reciprocal; Hashem comes ever closer to us on the Yom Tov. When we perform the special avodah of Sukkos, let us have this in mind.

Pesach is called Zman Cheruseinu, the time of our freedom. Shavuos is called Zman Mattan Toraseinu, the time when we received our Torah; and Sukkos is called Zman Simchaseinu, the time of our joy. Although all Yamim Tovim are times of simchah, Sukkos is singled out as the one in which Zman Simchaseinu is the essence of the holiday. Why?

The Nesivos Shalom explains that the Sukkah is a manifestation of "Heviani haMelech chadarav — the King has brought me into His inner room" (Shir HaShirim 1:4). After the Yamim Nora'im, during which Klal Yisrael has been elevated and purified, Hashem has given us the mitzvah of

Sukkah. The sukkah's holiness is a revelation of Hashem's intense love for His people, a love comparable to the love demonstrated when He was with us in the Beis HaMikdash itself.

This is why Sukkos has an extra dimension of simchah to it. We are a nation whose very essence thrives upon dveikus Bashem — closeness to Hashem. This is our true simchah. Indeed, the Gemara tells us (Sukkah 51b): "One who never witnessed the Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah (the all-night celebration on Sukkos) never saw joy in his [or her] life." The Gemara cites Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah (Sukkah 53a) whose words bear out that the simchah, the joy, was so captivating that no one slept in a bed on Sukkos.

SEEING ONE'S TEACHER

Another aspect of the avodah on Sukkos, as on the other Regalim, is to see and greet one's teacher. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 16b) tells us, "Chayav adam le'hakbil pnei rabo ba'Regel." A somewhat fascinating observation can be made. It is a mitzvah on Sukkos to visit one's teacher. Shluchoi mitzvah (people on a mitzvah mission) are technically exempt from the mitzvah of Sukkah (Shulchan Aruch OC 640:7) while on the road.

We see how very important it is to visit and develop a bond with one's Torah teachers! We also see that this is part of the Divine service of the three holidays known as the Regalim. Seeing one's teacher helps connect one to the chain of Mesorah that connects to our birthright of Sinai. This will further our "cleaving to G-d" — dveikus Bashem — which is one of the themes of the three Regalim. Many people specifically try to see their teacher on Sukkos.

EFFECTS OF THE SUKKAH

Dwelling in the sukkah can make another change within us as well. The Gedolei HaMussar have explained that the sefer Mesillas Yesharim, written by Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato (the Ramchal), can be learned on many levels. The sefer carries the reader through different levels of spirituality. Each time one studies it carefully, one rises in that particular trait. Some of the traits that are discussed in sefer Mesillas Yesharim are:

zehirus (watchfulness), zerizus (alacrity), kedushah (holiness), and also Ruach HaKodesh (Divine wisdom).

Chazal tell us that the sukkah does this as well, to a degree. It can infuse us with a level of Ruach HaKodesh.

THE MITZVAH OF SUKKAH

The mitzvah of Sukkah is that one must dwell in the sukkah for seven days. This is the meaning of the verse "Ba'sukkos teishvu shivas yamim." Dwelling means eating, drinking, sleeping and performing all our activities there. This would include talking on the phone as well. The Gemara expounds "teishvu k'ein taduru — dwell as you live."

There is also a concept of "mitztaer patur min ha'sukkah — if one is suffering, then one is exempt from the sukkah." Therefore, if it is raining one is exempt from being in the sukkah. On the first night, however, one should try to make Kiddush in the sukkah when it is not raining.

The schach of a sukkah must be under the sky and not under a house or tree. The Shoel U'Meishiv explains that the fundamental essence of the mitzvah of sukkah is to expand our bitachon, our trust in Hashem. If there are intermediaries of shelter in between, the effect of the sukkah would thus be lost.

The schach must have grown from the ground and should not be touching or held up by anything that is mekabel tumah (even susceptible to becoming impure). Thus, it may not be nailed down or even held up by something made of metal.

The sukkah must have walls; this is a halachah that we have learned Halachah l'Moshe MiSinai. The walls must be able to withstand a ruach metzuyah (a normal ordinary wind). If it cannot stand in such a wind, then the sukkah is not kosher — even if it is still up.

The minimum size of a sukkah is 7 tefachim (handbreadths) by 7 tefachim. A tefach, according to Rav Moshe Feinstein, is 3.54 inches. The maximum height of a sukkah is twenty amos. An amah is 21.25 inches, according to Rav Feinstein.

Women are exempt from this mitzvah as it is a time-bound mitzvah, a mitzvas assei sh'haz'man garma. Nonetheless, they gain all the benefits of the mitzvah each time they eat in it. Since the meals of Yom Tov should be eaten together as a family, the Ch'sam Sofer would make room for the women and girls in the Sukkah.

A boy over the age of 7 must eat any mezonos food in the Sukkah. It is a debate among the poskim, but the Mishna Brurah (640:5) holds that it is forbidden to feed a boy this age a mezonos meal outside of the Sukkah.

WHEN IT RAINS ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF SUKKOS

Generally speaking, the halachah states that one should leave the sukkah and go back into the house when it rains. This may not be true, however, on the first night of Sukkos.

Let's understand why that is, exactly. Pesach celebrates the exodus from Egypt and Sukkos celebrates the immediate aftermath. Yet they are connected even more deeply. The Gemara tells us that many of the halachos that apply to Pesach also apply to Sukkos through the notion of a gzeiras shaveh. A gzeiras shaveh is l'havdil, like a "hypertext" in computer language — connecting two words in the Torah to each other. The laws of one section of the Torah thus can be connected to and derived from the other section of the Torah. There is just such a connection between the words "the fifteenth" stated in Pesach and "the fifteenth" stated on Sukkos.

Just as there is a mitzvah to eat matzah on the first night of Pesach, there is also a mitzvah to eat a k'zayis of bread on the first night of Sukkos. And we must eat it in the sukkah. It must also be eaten at night.

The question arises as to whether this "hyper-text" is dealing with a new aspect of the obligation of Sukkos, or is it an extension of the mitzvah of Sukkah that we knew already? According to the Ran, it is a new obligation, and therefore the general laws of Sukkah don't apply here. Therefore, even if one is mitztaer, uncomfortable, in the sukkah, one must still eat in the sukkah. According to the Rambam, it is the same obligation of the general laws of Sukkah that is being discussed. The exemption of rain, according to the Rambam, still exists.

The Rema (Orach Chaim 639:5) rules like the Ran. The Vilna Gaon rules like the Rambam. The Mishnah Berurah rules that we must make an effort to wait in order to avoid any doubts. How long should we wait? Rabbi Abraham Gombiner, author of the Magen Avraham, writes that we should wait until the very last moment, midnight, just like on Pesach! The Mishnah Berurah, however, rules in accordance with other authorities that the waiting time has not been quantified and it depends upon each and every person.

Therefore, on the first night of Sukkos, a family should wait approximately one hour to see whether or not the rain will stop. If the rain does not stop, they should go into the sukkah and recite Kiddush with Shehecheyanu but without Leishev BaSukkah. Everyone should wash and say HaMotzi and eat a k'zayis of challah in the sukkah. They should then continue the meal in the house. If it stops raining, one should enter the sukkah and eat a k'beyah of challah in the sukkah and recite Leishev BaSukkah. Even if the meal has ended, one should wash again and recite HaMotzi and Leishev BaSukkah. One should do this until chatzos at night.

On the second night, one may start the meal in the house immediately, without waiting that hour, although the Mishnah Berurah rules that it is also preferable to wait. Kiddush is said with the Shehecheyanu in the house, with the stipulation in mind that a k'zayis of challah may be eaten in the sukkah at the end of the meal. At the end of the meal, before bentching, one should still go into the sukkah and eat a k'zayis of challah, then one can come back and bentch in the house. While in the sukkah, do not recite a Leishev BaSukkah unless it has stopped raining. Once again the timing is until chatzos. If it stops raining before this time, wash and recite the berachah of Leishev BaSukkah in the sukkah. Why? Because the k'zayis eaten in the rain does not count according to the Rambam; we must try again until chatzos.

Let's not forget once again that the Sukkah is a manifestation of "Heviani HaMelech chadarav — The King has brought me into His inner room (Shir HaShirim 1:4)." After the Yamim Nora'im, during which Klal Yisrael has

been elevated and purified, Hashem has given this mitzvah of Sukkah. The sukkah's holiness is a revelation of Hashem's intense love for His people, a love comparable to the love demonstrated when He was with us in the Beis HaMikdash itself. We should therefore make every effort to fulfill this mitzvah in all the details explained above.

USHPIZIN

The Zohar (Emor 103a) tells us that the Kedusha of the Sukkah is so concentrated that the souls of the seven great leaders of Klal Yisroel actually leave Gan Eden and come to bask in the light of our Sukkos down here. On account of this Zohar, many have the custom to recite an invitation to these Ushpizin – guests.

The seven guests are Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yoseph and Dovid HaMelech. Each day of Sukkos, one of the seven leads their six. Not everyone, of course, has this Minhag, and one must follow one's family customs.

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date: Mon, Oct 6, 2014 at 6:34 PM

subject: Weekly Torah Message from Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald
by Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald

Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov was one of Israel's most prolific and acclaimed religious writers. His monumental Hebrew work, Sefer Ha'toda'ah, known in English as The Book of Our Heritage, has become a standard reference guide. Rabbi Kitov also wrote extensively on the weekly Torah portion. His works are truly unheralded masterpieces.

In his weekly analysis of the Torah portion, on parashat Emor, in Sefer Ha'parashiyot, Rabbi Kitov presents an in-depth analysis of the festival of Sukkot. The entire chapter of Leviticus 23 in Parashat Emor focuses on the Jewish festivals, beginning with Shabbat, followed by Passover, Shavuot, the counting of the Omer, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and finally the festival of Sukkot.

Regarding the festival of Sukkot, the Torah in Leviticus 23:42-43, states, בַּסֹּכֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, כָּל-הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשֵׁבוּ בַסֹּכֹת. לְמַעַן יָדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם, כִּי בַסֹּכֹת בָּרַבְּרַת יֵשְׁבוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאֵי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. You shall dwell in booths for a seven day period; every native in Israel shall dwell in booths. So that your future generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them from the land of Egypt; I am the L-rd, your G-d.

The imagery of the Sukkah is analyzed at great length in rabbinic literature. There is even a debate in the Talmud as to whether the "Sukkah" in which the people of Israel dwelled during the sojourn in the wilderness was an actual physical Sukkah or a spiritual Sukkah, in which the Al-mighty wrapped the People of Israel, as a gesture of love.

Citing the interpretation of the Zohar, Rabbi Kitov notes that the Torah's repeated emphasis on the mitzvah of dwelling in a Sukkah comes to affirm that those who sit in a Sukkah on the festival are actually sitting in the shadow of heavenly faith. By leaving their homes and dwelling in an insecure Sukkah, Jews demonstrate immense faith in G-d, Who protects His people. When sitting in the Sukkah, the people can dwell without fear, because they have been rendered impervious to harm. Those who leave their homes to dwell in a flimsy hut, exposed to the raw elements, become part of this exclusive coterie of faith.

An additional reason for the ritual of dwelling in the Sukkah at this particular season is because the festival of Sukkot took place at the time of the ingathering of the harvest. When farmers saw their storehouses and homes filled with the abundant produce of the field, there was concern that they would become arrogant. Dwelling in a temporary and flimsy Sukkah made the farmers realize that it was not their "hands and might that accomplished all this," but rather the Al-mighty Who gave them the rich crops, and endowed them with all the good that their fields have yielded.

That is why all Jews, even small children, are instructed to dwell in the Sukkah, and bless the Al-mighty whenever they eat in the Sukkah.

Rabbi Kitov cites an interesting Midrash that traces the origins of the Sukkah to the time of the exodus from Egypt. The Midrash maintains that the enslavement of the people ceased six months before the actual exodus. During that six month period, the Israelites dwelled in their secure and peaceful homes, together with the abundant riches that the Egyptians had showered upon them. During this time, all the Egyptians, even the evil Pharaoh and his servants, tried to persuade the Jewish people not to leave the blessed land of Egypt.

When the day came for Israel to be redeemed, the Torah, in Exodus 12:37 records, וַיֵּצֵאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעְמֶסֶם סֹפְתָהּ, כִּשְׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף רַגְלֵי הַגְּבָרִים, לְבָד, the Children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, aside from the children. This huge assemblage, consisting of about three million individuals, left their homes and their cities with all the good that they had amassed in Egypt, to follow G-d into the wilderness. On faith alone, they marched with the Al-mighty to a place without shelter, shade, food, or water, populated by snakes and scorpions. Despite the unknown destination, the people never hesitated or questioned G-d about their final destination, seemingly unconcerned about where they would find shelter from the burning heat during the day and the frigid cold at night, or from where their food and sustenance would come.

The Torah notes that the people traveled a distance of about 125 miles, "From Rameses to Succoth." A trip of this magnitude would normally take a single individual at least three days. For three million men, women, children, sheep, cattle and flocks, a journey of this length would take six or seven days or more. Nevertheless, the Torah reports that the people of Israel reached Succoth in but a single day. To emphasize the exalted level of faith to which the people had risen in their relationship with G-d, the Torah in Exodus 19:4 records, "And I carried you on the wings of eagles." This comes to teach, that those who travel at the behest of G-d, who place their faith fully in the Al-mighty, will not be forsaken. If necessary, G-d will happily perform miracles for such a faithful flock.

As a reward for the people's spiritual devotion and uncompromised faith, G-d remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and took the people out of Egypt with an outstretched hand.

G-d declared to the Jewish people, "My beloved son, you are not Pharaoh's servants. You are not servants to their gods or committed to their faiths. You are My servants. I took you out from the hand of Pharaoh, and I redeemed you from all the meaninglessness of Egypt. Leave your homes and your fortified shelters and come under the security of My wing. This will be your true security. Their castles and fortresses are nothing compared to the unremitting love of the Divine clouds that have enveloped you."

It was not long after, at Sinai, that the Al-mighty betrothed the Jewish people, entering them under the Chuppah, under the shade of G-d's Sukkah. It was there that G-d acquired His people, forever and for eternity.

May the festival of Sukkot that we celebrate at this time, serve as a renewal of the nuptial vows of old, between G-d and His people. May we all soon dwell in the Al-mighty's ultimate Sukkah in good health, peace and tranquility.

May you be blessed.

The first days of Sukkot will be observed this year on Wednesday evening and all day Thursday and Friday, October 8th, 9th and 10th, 2014. The intermediary days (Chol HaMoed) are observed through Wednesday, October 15th. On Wednesday evening, the festival of Shemini Atzeret commences, and is celebrated on Thursday, October 16th. The final day of the festival, Simchat Torah, begins on Thursday evening, October 16th and continues through Friday, October 17th

From: **Yedidye Hirtenfeld** yedidye@att.net

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Succos - Shmini Atzeres

In booths you shall dwell seven days (Vayikra 23:42) Why does the Torah use the plural booths instead of booth? Because the verse contains a double meaning: A person who observes the mitzva of suka in this world merits to observe it in the World to Come - in the suka that will be made from the skin of the Leviathan. (Nachalat Tzvi)

That your generations may know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths (Vayikra 23:43) According to Jewish law, if a person experiences discomfort while sitting in the suka (i.e., from cold, rain, etc.), he is not obligated to stay there. One reason is that when someone is upset he is unable to think straight. Preoccupied and ill at ease, he is therefore incapable of observing the mitzva of knowing that G-d "caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths." (The Rebbe of Koritz)

Sukkot and guests are both reminders of our temporary status. The Chofetz Chaim said that the mitzva of being hospitable to guests benefits the host in a spiritual way. The guests remind the host that every person is only a guest in this world. The holiday of Sukkot is also a reminder that we are only in this world temporarily. This awareness should be a constant reminder to make the best use of the time we have in this world to accomplish as much good and mitzvos as we can. (Growth Through Torah)

The Gemara (Sukkah 11b) offers two explanations for the Mitzvah of Sukkah: either that our ancestors actually lived in Sukkah-like structures during their sojourn in the temporary dwelling place; a person is obligated to move from his permanent home into a suka to impress upon him that true security is provided by G-d. A person who harvests an abundant crop may forget the true Source of his wealth. Dwelling in a suka reminds him that affluence and success are temporary, and he is dependent on G-d. (Klei Yakar)

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are one holiday - in fact, in Israel they are celebrated on the same day - but they are not part of Sukkot. Technically, therefore, none of the Mitzvot of Sukkot apply on these days. Many communities, however, have the custom that all or part of one or both of the Shemini Atzeret meals is held in the Sukkah. The reason for this goes back to the time when the timing of the holidays depended on the sighting of the new moon, and new month had begun. Many communities in the Diaspora had no timely means of learning when the new month had begun, and therefore, observed two days of every holiday. Today, although we are fortunate to have printed calendars, the custom of our ancestors has already taken the force of law, and all our holidays have two days. It follows, by the same logic, that the day which we observe as Shemini Atzeret should also be observed as the final day of Sukkot. (It should be noted, however, that many people did not adopt this custom of eating in the Sukkah on Shemini Atzeret, and each person is obligated to follow the custom of his ancestors.) The reason for this holiday is given in the Midrash by a parable: The children (Jews) of the king (G-d) came from around the world to spend a week (Sukkot) with their father. At the end of the week, the king said, "I enjoy your company, please stay another day (Shemini Atzeret)."

R' Shlomo Yosef Zevin writes that there are two types of joy in this world. He calls them simply, "direct joy" and "indirect joy." "Direct joy" is that happiness which is achieved without any suffering beforehand. "Indirect happiness" is that which comes after prolonged preparation and agony. Most of this world's joys, says R' Zevin, are of the latter type. For example, a baby is born only after difficult labor pains. Even more so, there are times when the agony is present, but the likelihood of an eventual joyous outcome is not obvious to all. Here the suffering one undergoes is even greater than in the case of childbirth, says R' Zevin, where we know that a happy outcome may be expected. In reality, we take on faith that all that transpires will ultimately work out for the best. For this reason Chazal enjoined us that, "One is obligated to bless Hashem for the 'bad' as well as for the 'good'." (Berachot 54a) We also take on faith that all will be explained to us at some future time, and then we will experience true joy. When we have been purified from the state which nearly forces us to see all

events in a very shortsighted way, we will see clearly what Hashem holds in store for us, and we will understand the meaning of true joy. On Simchat Torah, we get a taste of this happiness. The joy of Sukkot, culminating of the last day, is not the outgrowth of agony and suffering. It is the result of the purifying effect of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. On Simchat Torah we may experience only joy. (L'Torah U'L'Moadim)

And you should take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a citron tree, the branches of date palms, twigs of a plaited tree, and brook willows, etc. (Vayikra 23:40) Midrash Tanchuma (Emor 22), quoted by Tur (Orach Chaim 581), asks: "And is it [really] the first? But it is the fifteenth, yet it is being called the first! Rather, it is the first to the calculation of sins." The commentators (Bais Yosef (s.v. Ve'aha), Bach (s.v. Vechi), and Taz, among others) ask: Certainly, the Torah could have been referring to the first day of the holiday [of Succos], as the Torah itself states in the preceding pasuk, "The first day is a rest day and the eighth day is a rest day." Taz answers that whenever it is stated "first," it either follows that there is a second, or there is some other calculated reason for the use of an ordinal number (see Bereishis Rabbah 1:9, quoted by Rashi to Bereishis 1:5). Here too, the term "first" can be easily justified in the preceding pasuk, for "and the eighth day is a rest day" follows right after. But in the pasuk of "And you should take for yourselves on the first day," there is no connection to any of the following days, for according to the Torah there is no obligation to take the lulav on any of the other days. Thus it became necessary to explain why the pasuk uses the expression, "on the first day." Hence the explanation, "the first to the calculation of sins." We must still clarify why the first day of the holiday is called "the first to the calculation of sins." After all, are there no aveiros committed during the days between Yom Kipur and Succos? Tur cites the continuation of the Midrash, that from the eve following Yom Kipur we are preoccupied with the preparations for the mitzvos of sukah and lulav, "and don't commit sin." It is therefore that the first day of Succos is also the first opportunity for sin. Taz questions, however, Tur's quotation of the Midrash, that we don't sin during these days. For this phrase is not to be found in Midrash Tanchuma, nor in Midrash Rabbah (Vayikra Rabbah 30:7). Perhaps there is an alternative explanation to the Midrash's statement, "it is the first to the calculation of sins:" For one must preoccupy himself with the four species immediately on the first day after Yom Kipur. We find a similar concept regarding the korban pesach which was offered in Mitzrayim on the eve of the exodus, that they were busy with its preparation four days beforehand - from the tenth of the month of Nisan (Shemos 12:3). Therefore, the Torah instructs us, "And you should take for yourselves" - this excludes the use of four species which are borrowed or stolen (Sukah 41b and 43a). We must be careful not to use that which is stolen, starting from the first day, i.e. from the first day after Yom Kipur, coinciding with the time to begin preparations and be busy with the mitzva of sukah and the four species. If one is not careful, this day can, Heaven forbid, become the first to the calculation of sins. As Midrash Rabbah adds, "And from Yom Kipur until the holiday, all of Yisrael are busy with mitzvos; this one is busy with his Sukah, and this one with his lulav. And on the first day of the holiday, all of Yisrael are standing before the Holy One, Blessed is He, with their lulavim and esrogim, in honor of the name of the Holy One, Blessed is He. And He says to them, 'What passed already passed; from here on begins a new accounting [of sins]. Therefore, Moshe is warning Yisrael, 'And you should take for yourselves on the first day.'" We have thus automatically answered the question regarding the days between Yom Kipur and Succos. It is no longer necessary to explain that they do not commit any sins because they are preoccupied with the mitzvos of sukah and lulav, as stated in Tur. Rather, the Midrash's intention is that since they are preoccupied during this time period with the mitzvos of sukah and lulav, it is therefore that they must be warned regarding them, already at the conclusion of Yom Kipur, when they begin their preoccupation. Thus it is certainly appropriate to refer to the mitzva of lulav as the first to the calculation of sins," for the morrow of Yom Kipur the first day of preparation for the mitzvos of the four species. Thus, the four species are the first of the things with which one must be careful not to err..(Romoh Bayom from my father Rabbi Meir Hirtenfeld z"l)

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Tue, Oct 7, 2014 at 5:48 PM
OU Shabbat Shalom Weekly

October 7, 2014 **OU Kosher presents frequently asked questions to-date on the OU Kosher Hotline** (212-613-8241) by consumers in preparation for Sukkot. Questions may also be submitted to kosherq@ou.org.

The questions below were answered by **Rabbi Eli Gersten**, rabbinic coordinator and halachic recorder. The responses were reviewed by **Rabbi**

Yaakov Luban, OU Kosher executive rabbinic coordinator. Rabbi Moshe Zywic, OU Kosher executive rabbinic coordinator, supervises the OU Consumer Relations Department.

Are there any rules as to where a sukkah may or may not be located? The sukkah should not be located in an area that has a bad smell¹. It cannot be placed under a tree or awning. It should preferably be built on a patio, deck or driveway and not on the grass².

What are the minimum dimensions for a sukkah? A kosher sukkah must have at least 3 walls, and each wall must have a minimum length of 28 inches (7 tefachim x 7 tefachim)³. The walls of the sukkah must extend at least 40 inches high⁴, and the walls may not be suspended more than 9 inches above the ground⁵ (this is a common problem with fabric sukkahs).

Is it a problem if my sukkah walls blow with the wind? The walls of a sukkah should be tied tight so they do not move with the wind⁶. If this cannot be done, then one should install a series of tight belts or ropes that will not blow in the wind that wrap around the sukkah. The first belt is placed within 9 inches of the floor and the next within 9 inches of the first, and so on, until this series of belts reaches above 40 inches. Thus, with four or five parallel belts, one can create a halachic wall that does not blow with the wind.

What is the story with schach mats? Years ago, “putting up schach” referred to the tedious process of placing hundreds of single stalks of bamboo or lath across the top of one’s sukkah. Today, this task has been greatly simplified due to the proliferation of schach mats. However, mats that are made for sitting are not kosher for schach⁸. Because these mats are made in a part of the world where it is common to make mats for sitting, it is imperative that one’s schach mat comes with a reliable hashgacha.

Who can place the mats on top of the sukkah? The mats should be placed on the sukkah by a Jew l’sheim mitzvah (for the purpose of the mitzvah). If it is necessary to have a non-Jew assist with the laying of the mats, a Yisroel should raise the mats slightly and lay them back down⁹. This may be done with a pole.

How should the schach be supported? One should not rest schach directly on metal or plastic, but rather on wooden beams placed on top of the metal poles¹⁰. If one’s mats are woven with plastic wire, they must make sure that the schach is placed perpendicular to the wooden beams; otherwise the stalks are being supported exclusively by the plastic wire.

Can one tie their schach mats to the sukkah with string? Schach mats are notorious for blowing off of the sukkah. Therefore, the mats should be tied down. However, one should not tie the schach with wire or synthetic strings, but rather they should use cotton or hemp string or place heavy 2x4s on top of the schach to weigh it down.

What must be eaten in the sukkah? All meals that involve bread or mezonos must be eaten in the sukkah. However, if one is only eating fruits and vegetables, or less than a k’beitza (volume of an egg) of mezonos then a sukkah is not required¹¹. It is meritorious to eat and drink exclusively in the sukkah¹². One only recites the blessing “leishev ba’sukkah” if there is an obligation (i.e. a meal of bread or mezonos). During a meal, one may not eat anything outside of the sukkah, even fruits and vegetables¹³.

Who is obligated to eat in the sukkah? Men are obligated to eat in the sukkah. Boys from the age when they can eat independent of their mothers (approximately 5-6 yrs old) are obligated to eat in the sukkah¹⁴. Foods that require a sukkah, may not be given to a child to eat out of the sukkah¹⁵. Women are not obligated to eat in a sukkah, but if they do so, they fulfill a mitzvah, and according to Ashkenazik tradition they may recite the blessing¹⁶.

REMEMBER TO MAKE AN ERUV TAVSHILIN. For more information see *An Eruv Tavshilin Primer*.

Sources 1. Mishna Berurah 630:4 2. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 336:3) 3. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 634:1) 4. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 633:8) 5. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 630:9) 6. See Yechaveh Daas 3:46 for sources that any amount of movement will pasul 7. Beis Yosef O.C. 630 based on Mishna in Eiruvin 15b 8. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 629:6) 9. See Mishna Berurah 636:8 10. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 629:7) 11. Shulchan Aruch

(O.C. 639:2) 12. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 639:2) 13. See Mishna Berurah in Sha’ar Ha’tzivun 639:29 14. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 640:2) 15. Mishna Berurah 640:5 16. Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 589:6)

from: Office of Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com date: Tue, Oct 7, 2014 at 6:21 PM subject: Erev Sukkot 5775 - Rabbi Berel Wein

Home In My Opinion SUKKOTH Rabbi Wein’s Weekly Blog SUKKOTH

After the tension filled solemnity of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the holiday of Sukkoth arrives with its many inspiring rituals and its message of joy and rejoicing in the service of God. It is regarding Sukkoth that the Torah instructs us “to be joyful on your holiday.” Now, joy, like almost all other emotions is not something that can be turned on and off like a faucet. A person either feels joyful or not. You cannot tell a person who is sad and depressed to just feel joyful and expect that that should somehow happen. The traditional commentators have already remarked that since we have just passed through the cleansing processes of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and feel relieved, forgiven and confident in our faith and in our relationship to our Creator, it is only natural to expect that we will feel joyful at this time of the year. But, to a certain extent, this type of answer really only begs the question. It is quite difficult for anyone to feel completely satisfied with one’s self and one’s actions after undergoing a thorough, honest and often painful self-examination. We are now privy to our faults and failings and even though we are confident that Heaven’s goodness has forgiven us, we are still well aware of the problems that remain within us and limit, if not even prevent, any feelings of overwhelming joy to take hold. And yet the Torah insists that we be joyful and of good cheer on this holiday of Sukkoth.

The rabbis have given a markedly different perspective to the emotion of joy and it is this perspective that I feel the Torah is speaking of when commanding us regarding the holiday of Sukkoth. The rabbis in the Talmud stated that there is no joy comparable to the joy one feels when doubts have been resolved and clarity and reality reign. Much of the sadness that exist in life is based on its uncertainty, in the plethora of options and choices, the consequences of which are never clear to us and in the difficulty we face in placing our lives and their events into proper perspective. A flash of clarity, an insight of perspective, a moment of confident decision can truly bring about a feeling of joy. Sukkoth can provide us with that clarity and perspective. It teaches us that our physical home and house is not quite as important as we may think it is. It instructs us in the beauty of nature, the necessity for Heaven’s blessing of rain and productivity and in the realization that even though our lives and existence are indeed fragile, we should treasure every breathing moment and see it in the perspective of our immortality and eternity. Sukkoth engenders within us the appreciation of correct priorities in our lives and the achievement of a proper balance between the illusory and reality. It provides us with a most necessary dose of humility – one that can allow a person to see things in proper perspective. The Jewish people throughout our long and many times difficult years and experiences have always realized that we are living in a sukkah. That realization alone was sufficient to allow individual Jews and Jewish society generally to function, survive and even prosper. By absorbing this lesson of the sukkah – its beauty, its fragility, its temporary nature, its serenity and its relationship to nature and the world we live in, we immerse ourselves in God’s perspective, so to speak, of the world and our place in it. That alone should awaken within us an emotion of joy and satisfaction. In Temple times, the libation of water on the holy altar of the Temple in Jerusalem on the holiday of Sukkoth created a national emotion of joy and rejoicing. It is interesting to note that water, which most of us take for granted, is not nearly as expensive a commodity as an animal sacrifice or an offering of gold or silver would have been. Nevertheless, it was the offering of water that occasioned the the great celebrations of joy in ancient Jerusalem. Simply because it was almost a relatively mundane offering, it emphasized the

perspective of life that Sukkot was meant to convey. One can be joyful even with plain water if one realizes the blessings of nature and of the benevolence of God. In a world of excess and the pursuit of luxuries, Sukkot comes to remind us of our true priorities and of the necessity of a healthy balance in our lives and behavior. Chag sameach Rabbi Berel Wein

from: YUTorah <office@yutorah.org> subject: Sukkot Shiurim and Resources on YUTorah
Yeshiva University • The Benjamin and Rose Berger Torah To-Go Series • Tishrei 5774

Chanukat ha-Mikdash: A Sukkot Celebration **Rabbi Menachem Penner**

Dean, RIETS • Rabbi, Young Israel of Holliswood

The haftarat for chag Sukkot seem to have little to do with Sukkot. Several deal with wars be-acharit hayamim, the end of days, and one—the haftarah chosen for the second day in the Diaspora—takes us back to the inauguration of the Temple in the days of King Shlomo. I invite you to spend a few moments studying the latter and to grapple with me as to why this haftarah (Melachim Alef 8:2-21) was chosen for Sukkot.

With the work on the magnificent Temple completed, Shlomo invited the people to what was the largest celebration in Jewish History—the completion and inauguration of the Mikdash. The celebration took place (verse 2) “be-yerach ha-eitanim”—understood by the commentators to be the month of Tishrei—“be-chag”—on the holiday of Sukkot.

Well, there you have it. Someone looking for but a surface connection between haftarah and holiday is welcome to stop here. Doesn't it make sense that each year, on the anniversary of the inauguration, we should mark the day? Perhaps. But this approach sidesteps a larger question: why, after all, was the Temple inauguration held on Sukkot? Was that simply the day that the final bricks were laid? The final permits from the Department of Buildings came through? The Talmud (Bavli, Moed Katan 9a) rejects that possibility. Chazal suggest that the Temple was completed some 11 months earlier—in Cheshvan; however, the celebration was not held until Sukkot. Why wait until the following fall? And why Sukkot?

A similar delay seems to have occurred with the Mishkan. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:2) points out that the Mishkan was ready to open on the 25th day of Kislev, but that its inauguration was delayed until the first of Nisan. One inauguration was pushed to nearly coincide with Pesach—the next, to overlap with Sukkot. Why? And why was the Mishkan celebrated in Nisan and the Mikdash in Tishrei?

Ramban (Shemot 40:2) explains that Nisan ushers in the spring (at least in Eretz Yisrael and the Northern Hemisphere!) and represents beginnings. G-d took us out of Egypt in the spring because there is no more appropriate time to inaugurate the Jewish nation. It is not that Pesach is in the spring because that's when G-d freed us from slavery; instead, G-d chose the spring for Pesach because their themes overlap.

What then does Tishrei—the fall—represent? And why is Sukkot commemorated in the fall? The author of Arba'ah Turim and others have already pointed out that Sukkot, which marks the miraculous journey of the Jewish people through the desert, truly belongs right after Pesach! The Tur (Orach Chayyim 625) explains that if Sukkot were celebrated in warm weather, one might mistake the retreat to the sukkah as something done for shade alone. Ramban (ibid) suggests a deeper answer. If the spring represents beginnings, the fall is about making preparations for a long process of continuity, after which a fading world can be rejuvenated and come back to life. Fall is not about glorious beginnings—it's about the struggle for survival and rebirth.

The Jewish people were taken out of Egypt in the spring. But their survival in the brutal wilderness was far from secure. The sukkot represent the ongoing Divine protection, both in the desert and through the wilderness of history that allows us to survive, and one day reach the Promised Land. The

theme of Sukkot parallels the theme of the fall. There will be a time of uncertainty, of travelling through a sort of wilderness. But G-d assures us that another spring will come.

Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch develops this idea further in Horeb (2 Eidot, chap. 23). He explains that Pesach marks the birth of our physical existence as a nation. Its “atzeret,” Shavuot, marks the creation of our spiritual relationship with Hashem. In the same way, on Sukkot, we celebrate the continued preservation of Klal Yisrael, while on Shemini Atzeret we thank Hashem for our continued spiritual existence.

Rabbi Yissaschar Yaakovson, most famous for his five-volume work on tefillah (Netiv Binah), points out the parallel between Mishkan and Mikdash (Sefer Chazon le-Mikra, pp. 399-401). The Mishkan was our first shared home with G-d. It was new and exciting—but insecure and temporary. As Ramban points out earlier in Shemot (introduction to Parshat Terumah), the Mishkan allowed us to continue the “spark” and connection with G-d that was present at Sinai. And yet—the Mishkan—our traveling temple—was always destined to find a permanent home in Israel. That permanent home for G-d's presence is celebrated not in Nisan, but in Tishrei, the time of the year that the natural world comes to a state of rest.

The careful reader is left with one final concern. I seemed to have pulled a “fast one” over on you. On the one hand, I have explained that the sukkot, which travelled through the desert, represented the lasting protection of G-d for His people. At the same time, the Mishkan, which also traveled through the desert, becomes the model of a temporary relationship! How can Rav Yaakovson have it both ways?

The answer lies in the difference between the galut and geulah experiences. The sukkah represents the kind of permanence that we can achieve in the exile. The journey through the desert was long and arduous. A full redemption it was not. And yet, there was no doubt that even in the wilderness, G-d was watching over us. The galut experience—wandering through the wilderness of the Diaspora—will never allow us the protection of a sturdy home. And yet, hiding above the schach of our temporary dwellings, Hashem makes sure that our perilous journey continues through history.

The redemptive experience of Eretz Yisrael is as different from galut as the freedom of the desert was from the Egyptian slavery. Our permanent spiritual home is so much more than just a portable sanctuary. The Mishkan allowed us to continue the Sinai experience for hundreds of years—but did so as a bridge to bring us to Eretz Yisrael. The Mikdash is the final step of a long process.

May we merit moving from our temporary sukkot to the Sukkat David in Jerusalem.

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalists@shemayisrael.com> to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Tue, Oct 7, 2014 at 6:26 PM subject: [Parshapotpourri] Parsha Potourri by Oizer Alport - Sukkos/Parshas Bereishis - Vol. 10, Issue 1 Compiled by **Oizer Alport**

U'lekachtem lachem ba'yom ha'rishon pri eitz hadar kapos temarim v'anaf eitz avos v'arvei Nachal u'smachtem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem shivas yamim (Vayikra 23:40) In his sefer Derech Hashem (4:8), the Ramchal writes that when we fulfill the mitzvah of taking the four species on Sukkos, it inspires fear in the hearts of gentiles who see us holding them, as the Torah says (Devorim 28:10), “All of the nations of the world will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you,” as the four species correspond to Hashem's 4-letter Ineffable Name. Although the Gemora in Menachos (35b) interprets this verse as referring to the mitzvah of tefillin and the fear that it inspires in non-Jews, the Ramchal extends this concept to the four species as well.

The Ramchal's insight is supported by the wording of the Yehi ratzon (may it be Your will) prayer that many have the custom to recite prior to taking the

four species, in which we say, "The nations of the world will know that the Name of Hashem is called upon me, and they will be afraid to approach me." While this is a fascinating explanation, it begs the question: What in fact is so intimidating about the four species and tefillin that inspires fear in gentiles when they see us performing these mitzvos?

Additionally, the Medrash teaches (Vayikra Rabbah 30:2) that on Rosh Hashana, the Jewish people and the nations of the world come before Hashem for a court case. There is no way for us to discern who won, but when the Jewish people emerge carrying their lulavim and esrogim, this indicates that they were victorious. This Medrash is difficult to understand. On Rosh Hashana, Hashem judges each individual based on whether he has done more mitzvos or more sins; similarly, each nation is judged, and so too the entire world. However, no mention is made of a judgment between the Jewish people and the nations of the world. What is the nature of the court case between them on Rosh Hashana?

Rav Yehuda Wagschal of Yeshivas Mir in Yerushalayim explains that the court case is rooted in a much earlier disagreement which dates back to Yaakov and Eisav, who fought over the blessings that their father Yitzchok intended to give. Eisav felt that he was entitled to receive them, but Rivka recognized that Yaakov deserved them and helped him scheme to receive them, which caused Eisav to hate him and to want to kill him. What was the subject of the disputed blessings? They were material in nature, as Yitzchok blessed Yaakov, "May G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth, and abundant grain and wine" (Bereishis 28:28). Why did Yaakov, who spent his time engrossed in Torah study, need to be blessed with physical bounty instead of with spiritual success?

Rav Wagschal explains that Yitzchok was well aware of Yaakov's superiority to Eisav. Nevertheless, he wished to give the blessings to Eisav with the intention that he would channel his material success to help support Yaakov in his service of Hashem. Rivka didn't disagree in concept with Yitzchok's plan, but she recognized that Eisav viewed physical pleasures as an end to be enjoyed unto themselves, and if he received his father's blessings, he would keep all of the bounty for himself. Therefore, she had no choice but to arrange for the blessings to be given to Yaakov, who understood that material success is not an end, but a means of enabling a person to better serve Hashem. This is the fundamental dispute between the Jewish people, who embrace Yaakov's worldview that the pleasures of this world are a vehicle for spirituality, and the nations of the world, who follow Eisav's path and seek to live an Epicurean existence. On Rosh Hashana the two sides present their claims to Hashem.

In addition to commanding us to take the four species on Sukkos, the Torah instructs us to rejoice with them before Hashem in the Temple. In explaining the rationale behind this mitzvah, the Sefer HaChinuch (324) writes that the mere sight of the four species engenders natural feelings of happiness; the Torah commands us to elevate these feelings and use them for spiritual rejoicing. Similarly, we refer to Sukkos in our prayers as z'man simchaseinu - the time of our happiness - as it is celebrated at the time of the gathering of the crops. Therefore, the Torah commands us to channel the natural feelings of joy that we experience upon seeing the successful harvest and direct them toward the performance of mitzvos.

With this introduction, Rav Wagschal explains that the reason that non-Jews become afraid when they see us holding the four species is that on a deeper level, the four species represent a challenge to their entire worldview. The nations of the world follow in the ways of Eisav, who viewed the physical world as an end unto itself, and when they see us rejoicing with the four species and elevating them by using them in our service of Hashem, their very essence feels threatened, as they realize that this world belongs to us as Yaakov's descendants.

The mitzvah of tefillin serves a similar purpose, as we say in the Yehi ratzon prayer prior to putting on tefillin: l'shabed b'zeh ta'avos u'machshavos libeinu la'avodaso - tefillin serves to subjugate our desires and thoughts to the service of Hashem, not to eradicate our desires, but to elevate them to a

higher purpose. Therefore, the Gemora teaches that when non-Jews see us wearing tefillin, they become frightened.

Each Rosh Hashana the Jewish people and the nations of the world come before Hashem to litigate their dispute about who rightfully deserves this world and its associated blessings. The Medrash teaches that the result of this judgment is only clarified when the Jewish people emerge with their lulavim and esrogim, which symbolize the triumph of our worldview of elevating the physical world by channeling natural pleasures for the service of Hashem.

Although the Torah equally commands us to take all four species, in practice the lulav, hadasim, and aravos are bundled together, while the esrog is held separately and is brought together with the other three species only to perform the mitzvah of shaking them. Why isn't the esrog somehow bundled with the other three species? The Vilna Gaon explains that Hashem doesn't want us to simply tie the four species together and hold them, but rather He wants the Jew who is taking the four species to himself become part of the bundle, as he connects the esrog to the other three species.

Similarly, Rav Wagschal points out that the tefillin shel rosh contains the letters shin and dalet from Hashem's name Sha-dai, while the tefillin shel yad has the letter yud. It is only through the wearer's body that all three of the letters are linked and joined together to complete Hashem's name. Because the mitzvos of taking the four species and wearing tefillin enable our physical bodies to be uplifted through becoming an integral component of the mitzvah fulfillment, they therefore inspire fear and trepidation in the nations of the world.

Vayar Reishis lo ki sham chelkas mechokeik safun (Devorim 33:21) Just prior to Moshe's death, he blessed each of the twelve tribes. In the blessing that Moshe gave to the tribe of Gad, he invoked the fact that they saw and requested for themselves the first portion (a reference to the territory of Sichon and Og, which was the first part of the land of Israel that was conquered), because they knew that that is where Moshe's burial plot would be hidden.

However, in Parshas Mattos (Bamidbar 32:1-5), the Torah explicitly records that the reason they wanted this portion of land was because it was well-suited for grazing their abundant livestock. How could Moshe say that their motivation was based on the fact that he would be buried there when the Torah gives a completely different explanation and says that it was due to their animals? Further, Moshe himself alluded to the fact that his actual burial spot would remain hidden, in which case it would be impossible for future generations to go there to pray. Why did the tribe of Gad want to have Moshe buried in their portion of the land if they would never know where he was actually buried?

Rav Yisroel Belsky explains that during their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness, the Jewish people became very dependent on Moshe, who led them on a daily basis and taught them Torah. As they prepared to enter Eretz Yisroel, they grew concerned about how they would manage in his absence. They decided that the only way to continue was to understand the secret behind Moshe's greatness and to emulate him. After contemplating the source of Moshe's growth and development, they recognized that the period of his life in which he worked as a shepherd was a critical prerequisite to his being selected as the redeemer and leader of the Jewish people.

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains (Shemos 3:1) that working as a shepherd gives a person time alone to think. Focusing on the magnificent world of Hashem which surrounds him will lead him to focus his thoughts on Hashem, which is conducive for prayer and prophecy. Being around people often leads to sin, while separating from them as a shepherd does can help keep a person pure and holy. Additionally, a shepherd develops feelings of compassion and empathy for others, as he is concerned about the welfare of his sheep.

When the tribe of Gad requested the land on the east side of the Jordan River in order to pasture their livestock, their intentions were not mundane and materialistic as they would appear at first glance. Rather, they were motivated by a genuine desire to emulate their soon-to-depart leader Moshe

by following in the path that made him great. In this light, Rav Belsky novelly suggests that the two seemingly disparate explanations given for their request are in reality one and the same. When Moshe mentioned in his blessing to the tribe of Gad that they desired the portion in which he was "hidden," Moshe was referring not to his burial plot which would be hidden, but rather to the hidden secret behind his success and accomplishments that they wished to emulate, namely his work as a shepherd.

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CENTER 1710 BEACON STREET BROOKLINE, MA 02445 Rosh
Hashana Prepared as a community service by Grand Rabbi Levi Y.
Horowitz The Bostoner Rebbe, zt'l

EREV SUCCOS - SUCCOS Be careful not to construct the Succah below a tree. Even if the Succah is located within the premises in which you reside, unless there is a city Eruv, you cannot carry from the house into the Succah on Shabbos if the area is not fenced in or if the building is shared by others. An Eruv can be made in most cases. Consult your local Rabbi for more information. On Succos, the Challahs are round, as Succos commemorated the offerings of the traditional seventy nations of the world. The lighting of the candles is done in the Succah. It is the Minhag, to do the kindling of the Yom Tov candles at night before Kiddush rather than before sundown, as is done before Shabbos. Even though a person is exempt from eating the Seudah in the Succah in case of rain, one is obligated to eat in the Succah during the first night under all weather conditions, with all Brochos recited. In case of rain, one may make Kiddush, wash, eat a double K'zayis and complete the meal indoors. In case one forgets to say the Brocho "Laysheiv Basuccah" you can say it anytime during the meal or even at the conclusion. Women, enter the Succah to hear Kiddush. They are not obligated to eat in the Succah, but they should make the Motzi in the Succah on the first and second evenings. On the first day of Succos, it is important that the Brocha on the Esrog be recited as early as possible and it should be done in the Succah, if at all possible. From the second day on (unless the first day is Shabbos), men recite the Brocha on the Esrog, in the Succah of Shul, if possible, prior to the saying of Hallel. Women recite the Brocha at their convenience.

HOSHANAH RABBAH You have five rings on the Lu'av, one of which is the Kayshe! or holder. The other ring keeps the holder tight and the other three rings are on the Lu'av itself. You remove the three rings on the Lu'av, prior to the saying the Hoshanahs on Hoshanah Rabbah. During the services the Hoshanah is taken. It consists of willow twigs same as those used with the Lu'av and known as Arovah. On this day, it is called Hoshanah because of the special prayers that are recited. The Lu'av contains two willow twigs, the Hoshanah contains five willow twigs. On Hoshanah Rabbah, the top of the Challah is adorned with the shape of hands receiving the Kvite! of life. **HOSHANAH RABBAH** After the Kaddish of Shacharis you are to strike the ground five times with the Hoshanas.

SHEMINI ATZERES We bid farewell to the Succah just prior to going to Shul on Erev Shemini Atzeres, by eating a Mezonos, saying the Layshayv BaSuccah, for the final time. Some also repeat the shaking of the Esrog and the Lulav at that time. The container of oil that decorates the Succah should be used for oil used on Chanukah. The dried fruits that decorate the Succah should be eaten on Chamisha Osor B'Shevat.

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The Succah of Redemption

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In the Grace after Meals (Birkhat Hamazon) recited during the holiday of Sukkot, there is a special prayer inserted Horachaman Hu Yakim Lanu Es Succas Dovid Hanofales - beseeching G-d for the restoration of "the fallen succah of Dovid." The reference is to a verse in the prophetic book of Amos (9:11) that states, in connection with the

redemption of the Jewish people, Bayom Hahu Akim Es Succas Dovid Hanofales - at that time, I shall erect the fallen succah of David." Many of the classical commentators, such as Rashi and the Radak, explain that this is a reference to the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy. But what does that have to do with the holiday of Sukkot, in which we sit in huts to commemorate the clouds of glory that protected us in the desert after we departed from Egypt?

In the recent treatise Inyano Shel Yom by Rabbi Dovid Falk (Moadim, page 27), the author writes that he posed this question to the great sage Rabbi Chaim Kaniefsky of B'nei Brak. Rabbi Kaniefsky responded in characteristically succinct fashion that since the word succah appears in this recitation, it is therefore an appropriate prayer for the holiday of Sukkot.

While this response may indeed explain the origin of the insertion of this prayer on Sukkot, there is a well-known principle that "minhag yisroel Torah hi" (see Tosafot, Menachot 20b, s.v. "nifsal")—established customs become part of the corpus of Torah. The special insertion for Sukkot in the Grace after Meals has been an established custom for hundreds of years (as demonstrated by R. Tzvi Ron, Hamayan, Tishrei 5773). Accordingly, a number of commentators have probed other Torah sources in order to suggest a deeper connection.

The Maharal, in the book Netzach Yisroel (chapter 35), offers two explanations of the connection between the succah and the Kingdom of David. First, he observes that a succah needs to be a temporary dwelling, impervious to the physical permanence of this world. In this sense, the succah parallels the Kingdom of David, which is linked to Divine providence and to the supernatural destiny of the World-to-Come, as opposed to having its permanent place in this world. Upon fulfilling the mitzvah of sitting in the succah and being freed from the shackles of the mundane world of our physical houses, we can aspire for the time when the Messiah will emerge from the Davidic dynasty and elevate us to spiritual majesty. Along these lines, the Talmud actually describes the Messiah as "bar nafl" (the fallen one) and explicitly links the Messiah in this regard to the "fallen succah of David" (Sanhedrin 96b). What emerges from this insight of the Maharal is a counter-intuitive message pertaining to the Sukkot holiday. Only in impermanence can there be an appreciation for genuine permanence. All too often in the hullabaloo of daily life we can lose sight of the teaching in Pirkei Avot (4:16) that "this world is akin to an antechamber before the World to Come." The succah reminds us that what appears permanent in this world is truly fleeting, and that which has no permanence in this world, namely the spiritual structures that are primarily intended for the World to Come, are the only matters that have eternal significance. In the same way that the succah serves as a reminder of the antechamber nature of this world, so too the "succah of David," representing the eternal Kingdom of the House of David, awaits its ultimate realization in the future world of salvation and deliverance.

In his second explanation, the Maharal explains the comparison in a different manner. The distinguishing feature about the succah is that even when it falls down, it is easy to reassemble precisely because it is built in a slipshod fashion. Thus it never loses its identity, but remains the same succah, waiting to be propped up again. In this sense, a fallen succah is somewhat reminiscent of the old-time commercial jingle "weebles wobble but they don't fall down." So too, argues the Maharal, the Kingdom of David, even when it is in the current state of being "the fallen succah of David," retains its identity as the "succah of David" and remains poised to be resurrected at any moment. Furthermore, just as a fallen succah still contains usable schach (succah covering materials) that can be re-employed, so too the Kingdom of David has continued to keep its "pieces" through significant communal leaders in every generation who descend from the tribe of Judah.

According to this explanation of the Maharal, the succah is the symbol of Jewish resilience. By virtue of its simplicity, the succah represents the elasticity of our survival. Even when the succah falls down, it maintains its components and its character. Thus, the succah serves as a reminder that no matter how many times the Jewish people have been exiled and persecuted, the essential components of our legacy and our people have survived, and our sovereignty can therefore be easily and naturally restored at any moment. In this sense, the recent events of the restoral of the Jewish nation to the land of Israel validate and reinforce this optimistic national perspective. Even when there are continuing setbacks in our path to redemption, we remind ourselves through the message of the succah that salvation is always within our grasp.

Interestingly, the Mahari Kara offers a different explanation of the meaning of "the fallen succah of David" in his commentary to Amos. According to the Mahari Kara, the succah is a reference to the Beit Hamikdash, to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed. Accordingly, our prayer denotes a yearning toward the restoration of the Holy Temple. Is there a clear connection between the succah and the Holy Temple?

Perhaps the connection can be gleaned from a passage in the Talmudic tractate of Succah (11b) indicating that the clouds of glory originated at the time of the creation of the world, when a "mist arose from the earth" (Bereishit 2:6; Targum Yonatan ad locum) forming the clouds above that "watered the whole face of the ground." Inherent

in creation itself were these clouds, established from the purity of the earth, thus providing the Talmudic basis for the law that the sukkah covering must similarly be made from items from the earth that cannot contract impurity. It would seem, based on this passage that the sukkah, which commemorates the clouds of glory, symbolizes the pristine state of pure reliance upon the Almighty that existed at the time of creation.

The Talmud states that the Heavens rejoiced on the day of the building of the Tabernacle as if the world was created on that day (Megillah 10b). The Holy Temple, which represents a fulfillment of the mitzvah to build a tabernacle in the Land of Israel (see Rambam, Mitzot Aseh 20, Hilchot Beit HaBechira 1:1, and Kesef Mishneh ad locum), serves as a manifestation of the return to a state of spiritual perfection that existed at the time of creation. The sukkah, through its evocation of the original clouds of glory that hovered over the world during that time, provides the same opportunity to connect to that state of spiritual perfection as the Holy Temple itself. Hence the association of the sukkah with the “sukkah of David” representing the Holy Temple becomes perfectly understandable.

This association of the sukkah with the Holy Temple also helps to explain why the sukkah structure is endowed with Divine sanctity (Sukkah 9a), and why the mitzvah of “living” in the sukkah precludes any kind of activity that is not respectful or dignified (Orach Chaim 639:1), similar to the requirement of maintaining dignity in the area of the Holy Temple (see, e.g., Yevamot 6b). Through the observance of the mitzvah of sukkah which enables us to relive the pure, unadulterated state of devotion to G-d at the time of the creation of the world, we are able to focus our aspirations upon the rebuilding of the “sukkah of David”—the Holy Temple— which represents the spiritual pinnacle of creation.

In similar fashion, Rabbi Meir Zvi Bergman writes (Sha’arei Orah 1:318-319) that the comparison of the sukkah to the Holy Temple is a reference to the spiritual essence of the Holy Temple. The proof is that the Temple is described as the “sukkah of David” when in fact the Temple was built by his son King Solomon. The reason the Temple is attributed to King David rather than to his son is because, as indicated in the Talmud (Shabbat 30a), the gates of the holiest chambers of the Temple only opened up for Solomon in the merit of his father, who conceived the idea of building the Temple during his lifetime. King David thus represents the spiritual essence of the Temple, as opposed to King Solomon who represents its physical manifestation. When we pray for the restoration of the sukkah of David, we demonstrate our yearning for the spiritual closeness with the Almighty that is achieved through the essence of the Holy Temple.

The connection with the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple also helps to explain the timing of the celebration of Sukkot. The Vilna Gaon (commentary to Shir Hashirim 1:4)- in response to the question posed by the Tur (Orach Chaim 625) regarding why Sukkot is celebrated in Tishrei as opposed to Nissan when the exodus from Egypt took place and the clouds of glory began to protect the Jewish people- explains that the holiday of Sukkot was timed to coincide with the date of the beginning of the construction of the Tabernacle. Moses delivered the second set of Tablets to the Jewish people on the 10th of Tishrei and taught them the laws of the Tabernacle on the 11th of Tishrei (Rashi, Shmot 35:1). Afterwards, the Jewish people gathered materials for construction on the 12th and 13th of Tishrei (based on Shmot 36:3 that the donation period consisted of two days), and Moses then dispensed the materials on the 14th of Tishrei to the artisans who would engage in the construction. Thus, the actual construction of the Tabernacle commenced on the 15th of Tishrei, which is the first day of Sukkot. Similarly, the Bible recounts that the dedication of the Holy Temple by King Solomon took place immediately prior to the time of the Sukkot holiday (Melachim 1, 8:2, 65-66).

There is also another possible connection between the sukkah and the Holy Temple. The Talmud (Sukkah 27b) states:

[The verse states] “All the residents of the Israelites will sit in the sukkah” (Vayikra 23:42); this teaches us that all of the Jewish people are eligible to sit in the same sukkah.

The Sefat Emet (Sukkot) explains that this is meant to refer to the unity of the Jewish people that exists after Yom Kippur when the entire nation becomes an “agudah achat,” a united assembly. The Second Holy Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred (Yoma 9b). In order to restore the Holy Temple, it is necessary for the Jewish nation to rectify this sin and join together in unconditional love for each other. The concept of sukkah is intertwined with the notion of everybody being able to join together in one sukkah, much in the same way that the Holy Temple is the central place of worship for the entire nation. In order to merit the rebuilding of the Temple, it is necessary to create an atmosphere where the entire Jewish people will feel comfortable sharing one sukkah in a spirit of mutual respect and affection.

With this understanding we can appreciate why Sukkot is the holiday of the “ushpizin”—of the inviting of the honored guests (Zohar, Emor 103-104). The purpose of the sukkah is to create a spiritual haven that is open and welcoming to all members of the Jewish nation in a demonstration of unified spirit. This may also explain why the

classical sukkah of the Torah only has three walls (Sukkah 2a, 6b)—in order to ensure that one side always be open to an endless stream of guests.

Perhaps in this sense, all of the various explanations regarding the sukkah of David coalesce. Through the ushpizin, in which we usher in the forefathers from the time of creation through the building of the Holy Temple, beginning chronologically with Abraham and ending with King David (and according to some traditions, ending with King Solomon), we connect the sukkah not only to the entirety of the Jewish people in our time, but to the entirety of the Jewish people throughout history. The rebuilding each year of the sukkah, which evokes the clouds of glory of creation, and the Holy Temple as the spiritual pinnacle of creation, propels the Jewish nation to become united and worthy of the future redemption that will usher in the Kingdom of David for eternity. Furthermore, as the Maharal indicates, we are blessed with the ability to bring about this ultimate sukkah of redemption in a heartbeat. All we need to do is come together, click our heels, and acknowledge that there is “no place like the sukkah” to cast aside the artificial walls of this temporal and tempestuous world and to unite as a people of eternal destiny.

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-Tefillin of Chol Hamoed, from Volume 10 Number 27: Tzav-Pesach

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Tefillin on Chol Hamoed by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction There are three prevalent customs regarding wearing Tefillin during Chol Hamoed. Some do not wear Tefillin, others wear Tefillin and recite the Beracha (albeit quietly), and others compromise and wear Tefillin but do not recite the Beracha. In this issue, we will explain the basis for each of these practices.

Why We Should Not Wear Tefillin on Shabbat and Yom Tov The Gemara (Menachot 36) presents a dispute whether one should wear Tefillin on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The accepted opinion is that we do not wear Tefillin on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The Gemara presents two Braivot that present reasons why we should not wear Tefillin on these days.

The first Braita cites a Pasuk (Shemot 13:10), which states that one should wear Tefillin Miyamim. Literally, this means “from among the days.” The Braita explains that this means that on some days we wear Tefillin and on others we do not. Shabbat and Yom Tov are days that we do not wear Tefillin.

The second Braita notes that the Torah in a number of places writes that Tefillin serve as an Ote, a sign. The Braita explains that one wears Tefillin only on those days when one requires an Ote. One does not wear Tefillin on Shabbat and Yom Tov because Shabbat and Yom Tov constitute an Ote.

Next, we shall present the arguments regarding wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. We shall focus on the arguments that Tosafot (Moed Katan 19a s.v. Rabi Yosi) presents.

The Argument for Not Wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed The Behag (cited by Tosafot Moed Katan 19a s.v. Rabbi Yosi) rules that we are forbidden to wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. Many Rishonim agree with the Behag’s assertion. These Rishonim include the Rambam (as interpreted by the Kesef Mishna to Hilchot Yom Tov 7:13), the Rashba (Teshuvot 1:690), and the Ri (cited by the Haghov Maimoniot Hilchot Tefillin 4:9). These authorities believe that if Yom Tov is excluded from wearing Tefillin, Chol Hamoed should also be excluded from wearing Tefillin. They believe that Chol Hamoed constitutes a Yom Tov, and therefore constitutes an Ote.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Shiurim L’zeicher Abba Mori Zal 1:118-120) further explains this opinion. The Rav notes that there are four components of the Kedushat Hayom (the holiness of the day) of a Yom Tov. These are the Korban Mussaf, the unique Mitzvot of the day (such as the Mitzva to eat in a Sukkah or to avoid Chametz), the obligation on individuals to bring the Korbanot of the Festivals (Re’iya, Chagiga, Shalmei Simcha), and the prohibition to engage in Melacha (forbidden labor). All four components pertain to Chol Hamoed. Although certain Melacha is permitted on Chol Hamoed, the Rav explains that fundamentally, the prohibition to perform Melacha applies to Chol Hamoed. However, the Gemara (Chagiga 18a) explains that the Torah permits us to engage in certain Melacha on Chol Hamoed. Hence, Chol Hamoed enjoys the full status of Yom Tov. The Rav cites Rav Chaim Soloveitchik’s assertion that Chol Hamoed is as holy as any Yom Tov. There merely exists permission to engage in certain Melacha on Chol Hamoed.

The Argument for Wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed Many Rishonim, on the other hand, believe that one must wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. These authorities include the Rosh (Hilchot Tefillin 16), Or Zarua (1:589), and the Maharam of Rothenberg (cited by the Mordechai). They argue that Chol Hamoed does not constitute an Ote, since we are permitted to perform certain Melacha on Chol Hamoed. This argument is particularly cogent according to the Rishonim who believe that on a Torah level all

Melacha is permitted on Chol Hamoed and the restrictions that exist in regard to performing Melacha on Chol Hamoed were instituted by Chazal.

Moreover, they argue that the word in the Torah Miyamim excludes only Shabbat and Yom Tov where the prohibition to engage in Melacha profoundly distinguishes these days from all other days. A ramification of the permission to perform certain labor on Chol Hamoed is that the difference between Chol Hamoed and other days is not pronounced.

These Rishonim cite as proof to their position the fact that the Gemara permits writing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. They argue that Chazal would not have permitted writing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed had there been no use for the Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. The other group of Rishonim argues that this passage in the Gemara represents the rejected opinions that believe that one may wear Tefillin on Shabbat and Yom Tov.

The Compromise View — Tefillin and No Beracha Both sides of the arguments presented by the Rishonim are compelling. Thus, we already find Rishonim that advocate adopting a compromise view — to wear Tefillin but to refrain from reciting the Beracha. The Tur (Orach Chaim 31) notes that there are a number of Rishonim who are uncertain whether one must wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed and therefore advocate wearing Tefillin but refraining from reciting a Beracha. These authorities include the Ritva (Erubin 96a), the Smak (153), and the Meiri (Moed Katan 18b). The advantage of this compromise is that one avoids violating very serious transgressions. Chazal write that not wearing Tefillin (see Rosh Hashana 17a and Tosafot ad. loc. s.v. Karkafta) and reciting an unnecessary Beracha (see Berachot 33a and Shavuot 39a) are very serious violations of Torah Law. It is possible that the potential prohibition to refrain from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed is more severe than a potential prohibition to wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed.

Shulchan Aruch and Commentaries The Bait Yosef (O.C. 31 s.v. V'cholo) notes that all Sephardic Jews refrain from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. He cites at length from the Midrash Hane'elam to Shir Hashirim that presents a Kabbalistic explanation for refraining from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. In fact, the Zohar strongly advocates refraining from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. We should note that many Kabbalistic themes have been incorporated into the Halachot of Tefillin. For example, see Shulchan Aruch 25:2, 25:11, and 25:13.

Accordingly, Rav Yosef Karo rules in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C.31:2) that it is forbidden to wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. The Rama, however, records that the universally accepted practice among Ashkenazic Jews is to wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed and to recite the Berachot. The Rama adds, though, that the custom is to recite the Berachot on Tefillin quietly on Chol Hamoed. The Mishna Berura (31:8) writes that this is to avoid fighting since the issue of reciting the Berachot on Tefillin is embroiled in controversy. There might be Kabbalistic reasons for this practice as well.

The Taz (O.C. 31:2) encourages one to refrain from reciting the Berachot on Tefillin during Chol Hamoed in deference to the authorities who forbid wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. The Vilna Gaon (Biyur HaGra O.C. 31:2 s.v. V'yesh Omrim) rules in accordance with the Rishonim who believe that one should refrain from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed.

Late Codifiers and Current Practices The Mishna Berura (31:8) and the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 31:4) follow the recommendation of the Taz, to refrain from reciting the Berachot when wearing Tefillin during Chol Hamoed. The Aruch Hashulchan concludes, however, that one should follow the practice of his ancestors in this regard.

The Aruch Hashulchan notes that “recently” a practice among some Ashkenazic Jews has developed to refrain from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. He is referring to the practice of Chassidim, which was also the practice at the famed Volozhiner Yeshiva (as recorded by the Rav, Shiurim L'zeicher Aba Mori Zal p.119). The Rav (ibid.) also records that Rav Chaim Soloveitchik did not wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. In Eretz Yisrael, the ruling of the Vilna Gaon to refrain from wearing Tefillin on Chol Hamoed has been universally accepted. One who publicly dons Tefillin during Chol Hamoed in Eretz Yisrael is inviting a strong protest from his fellow worshippers.

Interestingly, both the Mishna Berura and the Aruch Hashulchan rule that there should not be disparate practices regarding this matter in one prayer hall. They write that such a disparity violates the prohibition of Lo Titgodedu. This refers to the prohibition against allowing disparate ways of observing the Torah to coexist in one locale (see Yevamot 14a). Nevertheless, in many North American congregations on Chol Hamoed, some wear Tefillin and others do not wear Tefillin in one Minyan. Are all these congregations disregarding the Mishna Berura and the Aruch Hashulchan?

One might respond that they are not ignoring these eminent authorities. The Gemara (ibid.) states that the coexistence of Shnei Batei Din Be'ir Echad — two distinct communities maintaining disparate practices in one community — does not violate Lo Titgodedu. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 1:158 and 159) notes that in this country Jews have gathered from the various sections of Europe and continue the Halachic practices of their former communities. Subsequent generations continue the practices of their parents. Rav Moshe asserts that American Jewry constitutes “a

massive Shnei Batei Din Be'ir Echad” and we do not violate Lo Titgodedu. For example, the Rama (O.C. 493:3) writes that disparate observances of the Omer mourning period in a single community violate Lo Titgodedu. Rav Moshe writes, though, that this does not apply in cities like Brooklyn and Manhattan where the situation of Shnei Batei Din Be'ir Echad pertains. The same might apply to the dispute regarding Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. The Mishna Berura and Aruch Hashulchan addressed a situation in Europe, which radically differs from the situation in North America, as explained by Rav Moshe. However, it appears that one violates Lo Titgodedu if he wears Tefillin in public in Israel on Chol Hamoed.

Conclusion The Rishonim and Acharonim debate whether one should wear Tefillin on Chol Hamoed. This debate has not been resolved and the various practices regarding this issue persist. This author heard from the Rav that one should follow his father's practice in this regard. Gerim and Baalei Teshuva should consult their Rav for guidance on which practice to adopt. Either he might advise wearing Tefillin without reciting the Berachot or he might advise following the dominant practice in the local community.