



VOLUME 16, ISSUE 37

15TH OF TISHREI 5787/SEPTEMBER 26TH 2026

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THIS ARTICLE IS
DEDICATED BY THE
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*"In honor of our
children, **Aaron,
Aliza, and Chaim.**
We are proud of
them and may they
continue to give us
much Nachas!"*

SUKKOS INSIGHTS – PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS INVESTMENT OF PURITY

After 40 years of hard work, Joe retired with \$5 million, which he had gained through courage, diligence, initiative, skill, devotion, thrift, efficiency, shrewd investment, and a rich uncle who had left him \$4,999,999.50.

There are all types of investments in the business world. Some entail a certain amount of risk and carry with them a potential for high reward. Others have low risk, but the reward is usually commensurate. Occasionally, we find a surefire investment and if we just protect it, a great benefit awaits us at the end. The investment in Teshuvah we made on Yom Kippur just a few can pay tremendous dividends if protected through the Yom Tov of Sukkos, as we shall see.

At the end of the first bracha of Shemonei Esrei, we describe Hashem's relationship with mankind, namely that He is "Melech ozer moshia umagen" which means Hashem is the "King, Helper, Savior, and Shield". The Midrash makes a fascinating connection in explaining this phrase. When we say that Hashem is Melech, it refers to the time of Rosh Hashana, when we proclaim Hashem as the Ruler, which is a depiction of our Creator's relationship with the Jewish nation on Rosh Hashana. When we call Hashem Ozer, it refers to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, when Hashem lowers Himself and assists the Jewish people in the process of return. During that time, Hashem makes Teshuvah easy and convenient. Moshia (savior) refers to Hashem's role on Yom Kippur, when He gives us atonement for our sins, repairing the damage they caused and gifts us with a clean slate. He saves us from the repercussions and punishment that result from our transgression. Finally, Magen refers to Sukkos when Hashem is the Protector and the Shield of the Jewish people. What is it about Hashem's attributes that lead us to describe Him as a Protector on Sukkos specifically?

Rav Aharon Kotler, ZT"l, (in the *Mishnas Rav Aharon*), offers two answers. The simple one is - as the Pasuk (Tehillim 22:5) – that Hashem envelops us in our Sukkah. We leave the security and comfort of our home and surround ourselves with His Protection. Hashem shelters us from the elements and potential dangers, and we are enshrouded in complete Bitachon (trust) when we sit in our Sukkah. No one can protect us except Him, and this point is highlighted during this special time.

Perhaps we can suggest a deeper answer, writes Rav Aharon (as heard from **Rabbi Aryeh Kirzner**). There is a dimension of Magen that exists and applies specifically on Sukkos. After we go through Rosh Hashana, Aseres Yemei Teshuva, and Yom Kippur, we have hopefully honed and developed our Middos (character traits) and improved on our deficiencies. Rav Aharon says that Sukkos is the time for our Protector to protect the growth that we have gained over the past few weeks. Once we have achieved in Avodas Hashem, on Sukkos we take that inspiration and concretize it. We should allow all our spiritual gains to penetrate and change us in a permanent and sustainable way. We are different people now with an elevated status and we need to work now to protect our investment.

Sukkos is considered the happiest time of the year, but the Yeitzer Hara is out to dampen the joy and often succeeds by sucking us into petty squabbles and issues of no significance. These range from inclement weather to packed Chol Hamoed outings, from finding an irrelevant dot on an Esrog to not getting enough help with Yom Tov preparations from family members. How do we ensure that we keep our cool and not let such "challenges" sidetrack us from the joy that we ought to be feeling?

The answer can be found in a mashal (parable). Pretend that you have just discovered that you have won the Mega millions jackpot and will not have to work another day in your life. When you go to collect the check, you park illegally and when you come out, you realize that you got a parking ticket. Will it even matter in the grander scheme of things? This is how we are supposed to look at all annoyances currently. We just hit the jackpot of getting a clean slate; why sully it so fast with inconsequential matters? As such, let's try to hold on to our state of purity as long as we possibly can!

YOM TOV PERSPECTIVES ON SUKKOS: **"MY LONG FLIGHT TO HONG KONG"** **BY RABBI HILLEL EISENBERG**

Yom Tov is supposed to be a time of simcha (joy). We're told, again and again, to be happy - "v'samachta b'chagecha" (Devarim 16:14). Great. Got it. Simcha. So, we whip out the wine, pull out the steaks, sit in the Sukkah, and enjoy ourselves. Now, here's what's strange. On this exact same Yom Tov, we sit down, and we crack open Koheles - and the very first thing it tells us is: "hevel havalim... hakol hevel" - everything is futile, all of it, every last bit (Koheles 1:2).

So, which is it? Am I supposed to be eating and drinking and dancing, or am I supposed to be having a full-blown existential crisis that everything around me is hevel? But maybe we're asking the question wrong. Maybe Koheles isn't coming to ruin Sukkos. Maybe Shlomo is coming to tell us what kind of happiness we're supposed to be looking for, because there's a huge difference between having things that make you feel good and being happy - and maybe that's exactly why Koheles is sitting next to us in the Sukkah.

Koheles isn't telling you to cancel the simcha; it's telling you to audit it instead. "Hakol hevel" doesn't mean that "nothing matters." It means that "most of what you think is making you happy, doesn't." Before you're allowed to celebrate, Koheles wants you to make sure the thing you're celebrating is real happiness, and not just a convincing decoy.

I once had a moment that made this very real. I was recently flying from New York to Hong Kong with my two kids - one was four, the other was one. This was already a bold life decision. We got on the plane, and I was feeling optimistic. Maybe they'll sleep. Maybe I'll even have a minute to think, to write, or feel like a human being. Yet, two minutes in, a flight attendant comes over to us and says: "We're very sorry, but your kosher meals were not loaded onto the flight." Sixteen hours with no food. I need to take a deep breath. Before I can even process that, one of my kids decided that now would be a great moment to start screaming like we're under attack from North Korea, while the other one suddenly needs a very specific pacifier that is nowhere to be found.

Then, something spills, shoes come off, then go back on, then come off again, and then, the grand finale, one of the kids throws up. At this point, I gave up getting anything done. I was not thinking deep thoughts but trying to keep everyone alive and reasonably contained. So, I picked up my kid and started pacing the aisle, and I ended up near first class. I struck up a conversation with a guy sitting there.

Just to be clear: first class on Cathay Pacific from New York to Hong Kong is not your average upgrade. You're basically flying in a hotel room, eating food that can rival the finest restaurants. The guy is sitting there calm and relaxed, sipping something that didn't come in a plastic cup. We start schmoozing, and slowly, his story comes out. He's Jewish. Ran away from everything years ago. Got into trouble. Had kids with a woman in Vietnam, who then disappeared and now he's flying to Vietnam to track her down - not to rebuild a family, but to convince her to take the kids back, because he doesn't want to raise them. →

DEDICATED BY JODI NATHANSON IN MEMORY
OF NAT NATHANSON – NACHUM BEN
ELIMELECH, WHOSE YARTZHEIT IS THE SECOND
DAY OF SUKKOS

That's his life. We finish talking. He goes back to his fully reclining, ten-thousand-dollar seat. I go back to mine, in the rear of the plane, covered in Bamba crumbs, no food, two exhausted kids, and a smell I'm actively trying not to identify. I'm sitting there thinking: who's happier? Me - with the chaos, the noise, the insanity, but a loving wife, beautiful kids, a real home, and a meaningful life? Or him - sitting in first class, in a life that's completely falling apart? The answer was obvious. That is Koheles - "Hevel havalim." Not everything in life is meaningless, but a lot of the things we think bring happiness are a total illusion. You can be sitting in first class and be miserable. You can be sitting in the back of the plane, exhausted and overwhelmed, and actually be happy.

Maybe that's the real message of Sukkos. We spend so much of our lives trying to improve the seat we're sitting in. We want a bigger house, a nicer car, a better vacation, more money, more comfort, and more convenience. Of course, there's nothing wrong with enjoying those things. Yet, Sukkos comes along once a year and says: Get out of the illusion of first class. Go sit somewhere temporary, uncomfortable, where the walls are thin, the chair wobbles, and the weather outside introduces itself to you every few minutes - and yet, you sit there with your family, and you actually have a meaningful conversation. You enjoy a warm meal, a song, a thoughtful idea, or a story. You talk about history. You dance with Dovid Hamelech. You hold onto the hand of Yosef Hatzadik. You watch your grandchild beam with pride as he watches his grandfather say Divrei Torah that make him feel proud. Then, while holding a piping-hot coffee, you ask yourself: Am I happy? Because if the answer is yes, you've discovered something incredibly liberating. It means your happiness is not dependent on where you sit. The guy in first class had the better seat - but I had the better life.

Sukkos comes along and reminds us that those are two very different things. You can spend your entire life upgrading your seat and never actually improve your life. Or you can sit in a simple Sukkah, surrounded by people you love, and suddenly realize: "I don't need a better seat - I just need to appreciate the one I'm already sitting in." That's the difference between simcha and hevel. Maybe that's why the Torah tells us on Sukkos, "V'hayisa ach sameach" - not just to be happy, but to be completely happy. Because true simcha isn't when everything around you is perfect. True simcha is when you finally realize that happiness is - more often than not - found in the back of the plane.

Hillel Eisenberg, is an author of several books and sefarim and the host of multiple popular podcasts and series, including The Parshah on Fire, Judaism on Fire, The World on Fire, Moadim on Fire, Judaism Without Apologizing, and TorahAnytime's Behind the Lens. Through his writing, speaking, and storytelling, Hillel explores Torah, Jewish identity, history, and the world around us with a fresh and engaging perspective. He travels extensively across the globe, inspiring Jews wherever he goes while drawing inspiration himself from the remarkable people, stories, and Jewish communities he encounters along the way.

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The Torah tells us (Vayikra 23:40) to take "a Lulav and Esrog on the first day". This is an incorrect statement, as it should have said it on the "fifteenth of the seventh month," as this is how we refer to all the holidays (Rosh Hashana is called the first of the seventh month). The sages tell us that Sukkos is the first day that one has a chance to do an aveirah, because we are so busy after Yom Kippur. People are busy building the Sukkah, shopping for the Four Species, shopping, and cooking for Yom Tov.

There are people who manage to be busy with all the Mitzvos and still manage to do Aveiros. We mean people who are banging and drilling at one o'clock in the morning, waking all their neighbors. We mean people who go to the Esrog salesman and ask to borrow four Esrogim so they could show them to their Rav, and then they forget to return it until after Yom Tov where the Esrog market collapses.

The concept, though, is the following. If one prepares themselves during Elul and does what is intended on Rosh Hashana, the Ten Days of Teshuvah, and Yom Kippur, one comes out on a high. The force that carries one through should carry a person straight till Sukkos, as the excitement is there, and one doesn't get to the Aveira stage.

If one does not maximize those times, then yes, one will likely end up doing an Aveirah. For one who uses the time correctly, the transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkos can be truly elevating. We should all merit to this level and have a great Yom Tov.

The Land of Israel is praised in the Torah for seven species (Devarim 8:8): “A land of wheat and barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey”. The Jewish calendar, meanwhile, contains seven festivals. It is a fascinating exercise to notice that each of these seven species corresponds to one of the seven festivals.

On Pesach, we bring the Omer offering, which comes from barley. On Shavuot, we bring the *Shtei HaLechem* - the two loaves - made from wheat. On Sukkos, we take up palm branches, from the tree that produces dates: “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a beautiful tree, branches of date palms, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook...” (Vayikra 23:40). Chanukah is when we kindle olive oil. Purim is when we drink wine, made from grapes. And one of the central symbols of Rosh Hashanah is the pomegranate, a fruit crowned like royalty, carrying overtones of malchus - kingship. That leaves only Yom Kippur unmatched, alongside the one remaining species: the fig. What could possibly connect the two?

Yom Kippur and the Fig

The word kippur comes from the verb *lechaper* - to atone. That root carries several distinct meanings, and each one turns out to carry its own resonance with the idea of atonement. One of those meanings is simply “to cover over” - atonement, in this sense, covers over the sin. This is the very meaning behind the name of the covering that sat atop the Ark in the Mishkan (the Tabernacle), which is called the *kapores* - the covering. The first sin in human history was Adam and Chava's eating from the Eitz Hada'as. What did they use to cover themselves after that sin? A belt made from the leaves of a fig tree. What can be learned from this? Looking closely at the Pasuk describing how these belts were made reveals, almost word by word, a blueprint for repairing the damage sin causes.

Let's do a close reading of the Pasuk (Bereishis 3:7): “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves belts.”

- “The eyes of both of them were opened” - The root of the word for “opened” here does not simply mean “open”; it carries the connotation of insight and awareness. Genuine repair requires da'as - real knowledge and clarity - not blindly carrying on with one's head in the sand.

- “Both of them” - Someone else was there with me. I am not doing this alone. There is comfort, and even strength, in having support - and in being able to offer support to another.

- “And they knew” - This awareness, this da'as, has to lead somewhere: to real conclusions, and to a higher level of understanding.

- “That they were naked” - Nakedness here signals loss, and regret: I have lost something; I should not be like this; this is not who I truly am.

- “And they sewed” - The precise legal definition of “sewing,” in Jewish law, is bringing separate pieces together into one. This is *deveikus* - cleaving, attachment - the process of reconnecting with our Source, and with the essential core within ourselves.

- “Leaves [of a fig]” - The Hebrew word used, *aleh*, is written in a form that also carries the sense of “rise” or “ascend” — as if to say: raise yourself up. You are capable of so much more. This entire process echoes a later Pasuk (Devarim 30:14): “For the matter is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it”.



Fittingly, the leaves of the fig tree grow close to the ground, easily within reach - unlike, say, the branches of a palm tree, which grow high overhead. The fig itself carries several more layers of meaning here. The Gemara (Berachos 40b) notes that fig trees bear fruit throughout the year - a reminder that genuine repentance is not confined to Yom Kippur alone but is available at any time. The fig is also full of seeds, even more so than the pomegranate - a symbol of the merits we already possess, and of the self-worth that is essential to real repentance. Also, figs have a natural tendency to stick together: dried figs (*grogros*) are pressed into a single cake (*deveilah*). They are, in that sense, a fruit of *deveikus* - of binding together - which makes it especially fitting that fig leaves, of all things, were the material used for that first act of “sewing.”

Finally: “and they made for themselves” belts - this act was for their own benefit, the text implies, not something done for Hashem's sake, and the belts themselves mark a boundary: a recognition that one's essential self is the spiritual self, distinct from the physical - a dwelling, so to speak, in a reality set above nature itself.

A Higher Level: Sukkos and the Palm

Yet, there is a level of Teshuva that stands even above the level represented by Yom Kippur and the fig tree. That level belongs to Sukkos and to the palm. Yom Kippur represents *teshuvah mi'yirah* - repentance motivated by awe, or fear. Sukkos represents *teshuvah me'ahavah* - repentance motivated by love. It is the moment when we rejoice with Hashem as though standing beneath the canopy of our own wedding - a canopy that, fittingly, is often woven from palm fronds. *Teshuvah me'ahavah* is a far more demanding achievement than repentance born of fear. And where the fig's leaves grow low and easily reached, palm fronds grow high overhead. Love-based repentance, in other words, is that much harder to reach.

One Heart

The Gemara (Sukkah 45b) offers two related teachings that place the palm tree at the very center of this idea of unity and devotion. “Rabbi Levi says: [Israel is] like a date palm. Just as the date palm has only a single heart [a single central growing core], so too Israel has only a single heart, directed toward their Father in Heaven” Another Gemara (Berachos 57a) states: “One who sees a lulav [palm branch] in a dream is assured that he has only a single heart directed toward his Father in Heaven”. The **Sefer Me'or VaShemesh**, in its section of hints for Shavuos (s.v. *bachodesh*), develops this idea further through gematria, the numerical value of Hebrew letters: it notes that the higher spiritual faculties are associated with Divine names whose numerical value equals *chayim*, “life” — and that *chayim* shares that same numerical value with the word *lulav*, which itself hints at unity, precisely as the sages taught: one who sees a lulav in a dream has only a single heart toward his Father in Heaven.



MILK'N'HONEY FROM JERUSALEM
(CONTINUED FROM THE FIRST PAGE)

For this reason, the text explains, a lulav whose leaves have split apart is invalid for ritual use - because there must be no division whatsoever, only a single heart, like a single person, undivided. (A marginal question is appended to the text at this point, apparently in the author's own hand: doesn't Halacha in fact rule elsewhere that a lulav with separated leaves remains valid? The contradiction is left standing as an open question.)

There is something fitting, too, in a small biological detail about the date palm itself: it is a well-known dioecious species - meaning individual trees are either male or female. The male palm produces pollen; the female palm produces the fruit, the dates themselves, but only once pollinated by a male tree. Put more simply, and not without a smile: the male and the female need each other to bear fruit together.

The Palm That Longed

The Midrash captures this same idea of longing in a striking story: *"Rabbi Tanchuma said: 'There was once a date palm standing in a place called Chamtan that would not bear fruit. They grafted it again and again, and still it produced nothing. Someone told them this palm can somehow perceive a male date palm all the way in Yericho, and it longs for it in its heart. So, they brought a graft from that tree in Yericho and grafted it onto this one - and it immediately bore fruit. So, too, all the longing and the constant looking-forward of the righteous is directed toward the Holy One, blessed be He'"* (Bamidbar Rabbah 3:1 and 41:1).

The Midrash uses the image of a female date palm yearning for her distant male counterpart to describe something deeper: the way a person feels incomplete without closeness to Hashem. The metaphor captures both the yearning itself and the fulfillment that answers it once the connection is finally made.

Sweetness

From the date palm, finally, comes devash - honey, the sweetest of foods. And teshuva me'ahavah, repentance rooted in love rather than fear, is precisely how we arrive at the sweetest possible relationship with Hashem.



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SHALOM BAYIS AND THE PARSHA BY RABBI YITZ GREENFIELD
SUKKOS: WAITING PATIENTLY CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

When we dwell in a Sukkah, it is reminiscent of the Sukkos that Klal Yisroel dwelled in while in the Midbar, which were surrounded by the Ananei Hakavod. The Torah tells us (Bamidbar 9:17-18): "And when the cloud rose from the tent, only then Bnei Yisrael journeyed forth. At the place where the cloud settled, there Bnei Yisrael camped. At the word of Hashem B'nei Yisrael journeyed, and at the word of Hashem they camped; as long as the cloud was on the Mishkan they remained encamped." According to **Rav Sampson Rephael Hirsch**, ZT"L, Hashem used the Ananei Hakavod like the staff a shepherd lovingly uses to guide his sheep. Hashem, the Shepherd of Yisroel, used the Ananei Hakavod to guide Klal Yisrael in which direction they were to go and when. The Pesukim (Bamidbar 9:19-20) make it clear that the intention of Hashem's guidance was unpredictable. Even when the cloud remained over the Mishkan for many days, the B'nei Yisrael guarded the wishes of Hashem and did not journey.

Rav Hirsch explains that from this experience Klal Yisrael learned for all time to follow Hashem's guidance with devotion and trust, no matter how incomprehensible it might've seemed to us. Sometimes, Hashem requires us to remain steadfast in a distressing or trying situation. At times, Hashem guides our lives and directs us to leave something or someone we love, or to continue in an uncomfortable situation. From the Ananei Hakavod we learn to accept and fulfill with joy whatever Hashem commands us. It is in this listening, in this acceptance, that we will always find happiness because it is the manifestation of our Emunah and Bitachon. How can we apply this lesson to our marriages?

There are two applications we can take away. First, Hashem planned for each person to be married to his/her EXACT spouse. If our spouse is a "yeller" and that triggers us because we grew up in a home with a yeller, let us have the patience we need to be there for our spouse. Instead of judging our spouse and getting annoyed, we can daven to Hashem to help our spouse overcome his/her Middah. No one wakes up in the morning and says, "At whom should I yell today?" One of the best tools to help our spouse is to wait until our spouse is calm. When our spouse is calm, we should compliment them on their display of self-control; this can only encourage them. Even if they controlled themselves for only a few minutes, we want to notice and appreciate it. Why doesn't it work to point out mistakes instead? Once our spouse is on the defensive, they can never change because they are too busy defending themselves.

Trust that Hashem has designed every challenge especially for you, with love, and He has given you the ability to handle the situation you are in. The second lesson we can take away is that waiting patiently is a gift. When we wait patiently for our spouse, we are giving them the gift of our time. Whether it's a Simcha, an errand, or a trip you are taking, Hashem plans the exact moment that everything in life happens. We can humble ourselves instead of getting annoyed and use the time we wait with intention. Grabbing a sefer or something else we enjoy will help us give the gift of patience to the people we love. May Hashem bless our efforts to recognize His mastery over our lives and to follow his lead with trusting humility. May we be able to overcome our impatience and give our spouse the gift of waiting patiently. May the time we spend in the Sukkah this year be filled with the light of Shalom Bayis. Gut Yom Tov!

SUGAR RUSH ON THE 613 MITZVOS BY R'ELI REIT
MITZVAH # 229 - EXECUTION BY STONING

Certain sinners are to be executed by way of stoning, as the Pasuk (Devarim 22:24) says *"you shall stone him, and he will die"*. First the sinner is thrown off a rooftop. If he does not die from that, then he is stoned. The witnesses to his sin are the first to put a large boulder on his chest. There must be a minimum of two adult male witnesses by the crime and the court must interrogate the witnesses before accepting their testimony.

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BEN KLONYMUS KALMAN

THIS MAGAZINE SHOULD SERVE AS A ZECHUS FOR A REFUAH
SHELEIMA FOR LEEBA MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH

1. The first night of Sukkos is different from any other time on Sukkos. There is a מצוה דאורייתא (Biblical obligation) to eat a כזית [preferably a כביצה] of bread in a Sukkah. Since this must be done at night, one should not start his meal (i.e., Kiddush) until it is certainly night – צאת הכוכבים (generally accepted as 40 – 50 minutes after sunset; some wait until 72). In addition, the bread must be eaten before halachic midnight, [which is either the midpoint between sunset and sunrise or when the sun is directly above head]. To ensure that one eats this with an appetite, Chazal said that one may not eat a meal on the eve of Sukkos from three hours before sunset. For this law, a meal is more than a כביצה of bread or pastries. One may eat lots of fruit, vegetables, drinks, etc.

2. According to many Rishonim, the obligation of eating bread the first night differs from the rest of Sukkos. In that there is no exemption of “discomfort”, and even if it is raining, one must say Kiddush with the Beracha שהחיינו eat a כביצה [or at least a כזית] of bread, and then go indoors for the remainder of the meal. Although we are stringent like these Rishonim, the Beracha לישב בסוכה is not said because of ספק ברכות להקל. [It is preferable to wait even a couple of hours (if people will not fall asleep) before starting the first night’s meal to see if it stops raining.] If one ate in the rain and it later stops raining (since, according to some Rishonim, he did not yet fulfill his obligation), he should return to the Sukkah, recite the Beracha of לישב בסוכה, and eat a כביצה of bread. Since he may have fulfilled his obligation, the Beracha may only be said when eating a כביצה. If he has already laid down to sleep, he doesn’t need to get up to return to the Sukkah (because if he wasn’t יוצא it is because “discomfort” may exempt on the first night, too, in which case it is now considered “discomfort” to get up and go to the Sukkah).

3. If it’s raining on the second night, one may make Kiddush and eat the whole meal indoors, but at the end of the meal, he should eat a כזית of bread in the Sukkah. It is good to wait a short time on the second night to see if the rain stops before eating his כזית in the rain. If one is awake when the rain stops, he should return to the Sukkah to eat a כביצה of bread and say the Beracha of Leishev Basukkah.

4. Kiddush on a regular Yom Tov night consists of first the Beracha הגפן, then the Brachah of קדוש, and on the first nights the Beracha שהחיינו. On Sukkos the Beracha לישב בסוכה is added before the Beracha שהחיינו. The reason that it is inserted before the Beracha שהחיינו is that the Beracha שהחיינו is referring to the Yom Tov itself and to the actual Mitzvah of Sukkah. If the order is switched, nothing is repeated. If, on the first night, one makes Kiddush outside the Sukkah, the Beracha לישב בסוכה is omitted, but the Beracha שהחיינו is said for the Yom Tov. The Beracha שהחיינו should be said again the first time one will eat in a Sukkah (i.e. the first meal eaten when it’s not raining, or any subsequent meal if it was forgotten by the first meal) for the Mitzvah of Sukkah.

5. If, on the second night, one makes Kiddush out of the Sukkah (i.e. it was raining), the Beracha לישב בסוכה is omitted, but the Beracha שהחיינו is said for the Yom Tov. However, as long as the Beracha שהחיינו was said once in a Sukkah (i.e., the first night or day meal), it should not be repeated when eating in the Sukkah the next time. The reason for the difference between the two שהחיינו Berachos is as follows. Regarding Yom Tom, the first two days are each considered the first day since there was a doubt at one point in history as to which day was really the first day, thus requiring a new שהחיינו the “second” night regardless of whether it was said on the first night or not. However, concerning the שהחיינו said on the Mitzvah of Sukkah, it is irrelevant whether it was said on or before Sukkos because, technically, it may be said from the time the Sukkah is put up.

According to most אחרונים when saying Kiddush on the second night, the Beracha שהחיינו should be said before the Beracha לישב בסוכה [if he already said שהחיינו a Sukkah] because the שהחיינו is referring to the Yom Tov, and not to the Sukkah. Some Acharonim say that the order should not be switched. Although the generally accepted custom is to switch the order on the second night, if one is in a Sukkah where there are others saying Kiddush, one should not deviate from their custom.

6. When saying Kiddush during the day, according to some אחרונים the Beracha לישב בסוכה should be said immediately after the Beracha הגפן. According to other אחרונים, it should be said immediately after the Beracha המוציא. One may do as he chooses. If, however, one is not eating bread after Kiddush but is eating pastries instead, then everyone agrees that he should say the Beracha לישב בסוכה with the Beracha of הגפן.

Years ago, many people gathered outside the apartment of **Rabbi Elazar Shach, ZT”L**, having come from across the country to discuss important matters with him. While Rav Shach was learning in his study before the meeting, a young boy somehow slipped past everyone and ran into his room. “Rebbe! I have no *geshmak* (excitement) in my learning. I learn all day and try as hard as I can, but I just don’t grasp what’s going on. What should I do?” he asked. Rav Shach told him to sit and asked which masechta he was learning. “Bava Metzia,” the boy answered. Rav Shach took out two Gemaras and began learning with him. After going through the sugya once, Rav Shach asked, “Do you understand?”

The boy said no. “Let’s go through it again,” Rav Shach said, and they learned it again. Fifteen, thirty, forty-five minutes went by, and everyone outside was growing increasingly impatient. After their third round of going through the Gemara, the boy suddenly exclaimed with tears rolling down his cheeks, “Rebbe, I understand!” He jumped with his face glowing and ran out smiling. Later, Rav Shach’s assistant asked why he had delayed such important meetings to tutor one boy. Rav Shach replied, “This wasn’t just about understanding a sugya. It was about his relationship with Torah. Someone who doesn’t find a *geshmak* in learning Torah will look for it in other places. This was about the boy’s entire future.”

Comment: One of the main themes of Sukkos is our deep connection with Hashem. We go out into the elements to eat, drink, and sleep under the canopy of Hashem, to show our faith and reliance on Him. After spending much time around ba’alei teshuva, I’ve learned that helping people find a “geshmak” in their Yiddishkeit is much stronger than philosophical proofs. More important than the knowledge we convey are the meaningful memories we imbue in our children and students.

SUGARY SAYING BY RAV MENACHEM LOMNER

“Check your calendar for the year 2200; it will still say candle lighting time.”

On Sukkos, we bring many animals for a korban. The cows are brought daily in descending order. On the first day we bring 13, the following day 12, and so on. Rashi says that this is to symbolize that the nations, who are compared to the bulls, will be finished. However, 14 sheep are brought for the karbon each day. This is to symbolize that the Jewish people - who are compared to the sheep - will remain forever.

When the New York Times put out a centennial paper, they made a 2100 edition, and they put in Shabbos candle lighting time. Their logic was that of all the things that they guess will be around in the year 2100, this they know will be around. This is comforting for our nerves. Hashem has our back; we will not be destroyed.

The intermediate days of Sukkos are reserved for the Simchas Beis Hashoeva, when water was drawn from the Shiloach spring and brought with great festivity into the Beis Hamikdash. The Mishna (Sukkah 5:1) teaches that this celebration was an occasion of particular joy and celebration. The Gemara (Sukkah 50b) emphasizes the joy (and lack of sleep!) that accompanied these festivities, whereas the Yerushalmi introduces more esoteric and symbolic resonances. Tosafos on the Gemara cites the Yerushalmi that the Navi Yonah received his unexpected infusion of prophecy while celebrating the Simchas Beis HaShoeva in Yerushalayim.

This is understood to be a consequence of the tremendous joy that filled him in that moment, as we learn elsewhere from the Gemara (Shabbos 30b) that Ruach HaKodesh and Simcha (i.e. joy) only come through joy, and never sorrow. Indeed, elsewhere in our Gemara we learn of the separation of the men and the women in the Mikdash that began in the time of Chazal because, unfortunately, the spiritual level of that generation led to “lightheartedness” (קלות ראש) amid great joy. However, the Gemara (Sukkah 52a) goes on to explain how much greater the corruption and the power of the yetzer hara is when we are afflicted with sorrow or misery. It distinguishes between two types of Tzaddikim - those who have been righteous since their childhood and can celebrate the precocious wisdom of their youth, and those who have repented later in life and rejoice that their later wisdom has overcome their early foolishness.

As for those who have yet to repent, the Gemara (ibid. 53a) invites them to join the celebration and be inspired to repent their transgressions so they, too, may be forgiven. This is one of the primary sources for the tradition that those who are judged unfavorably have until Hoshana Raba to repent and be pardoned. The connection that the Yerushalmi makes between drawing the water and eliciting Divine inspiration is a clever play on the word ושאבתם, to draw, but it seems it might also be arbitrary and poetic. The **Mareh Hapanim** explains that for this reason the Navi Yeshayahu (12:3) stated the water is drawn joyfully - the drawing dictates the halacha, and the joyfully implies prophecy.

Similarly, **Ohr Layesharim** reads this pasuk as an allegory for the wellsprings of prophecy. Torah is compared to water; with Ruach Hakodesh, it flows freely; it is drawn from the spring of salvation - meaning the Beis Hamikdash. The **Maharal** associated this untrammelled effusion of abundance with the holidays of Tishrei and with Sukkos specifically. He explains (see Gevuros Hashem, 176b) that the festival of gathering (i.e. Sukkos) celebrates mundane gathering and elevated gathering - meaning that all of Israel becomes gathered under Hashem's Divine protection. Moreover, on Sukkos, the Jewish people achieve the pinnacle of joy at the conclusion of the annual festival cycle, but over and above that we are endowed with Ruach Hakodesh, citing the Yerushalmi above.

Furthermore, in Netzach Yisrael, the Maharal taught that when the Torah (Vayikra 23:40) instructs us “to take on the first day (the lulav)” the implication is that as we unify the four species, we achieve unification of ourselves within ourselves and with Hashem. The first day here is the fifteenth day of Tishrei - as most holidays fall on the 15th of the month, but in Tishrei our celebrations began on the 1st. However, for the purpose of this elevated, transcendent sanctity that we achieve only on Sukkos - this is truly the first day of the year, the first day of the conclusion and the consummation of our annual cycle.

The account of Yericho in Yehoshua (Chapter 6) describes the Jewish people circling the city once each day for six days, and then seven times on the seventh day, after which the Shofar was sounded, and the walls fell. The connection between Hoshana Rabbah and Yericho is explicitly found in the Gemara (Yerushalmi, Sukkah 4:3) where it explains that the seven circuits performed on Hoshana Rabbah commemorate the miracle of Jericho.

The **Rokeach** (Hilchos Sukkah/Hoshana Rabbah) gives a Yericho-based explanation for the seven hakafos. He adds that Yericho was the first of the wars in Eretz Yisroel and that all “firsts” go to Hashem (e.g. - Challah, the Bechor, Bikkurim, Reishis Hagez) Indeed, after we captured the city of Yericho, we did not keep any of the spoils of war for ourselves but dedicated all of it for Hashem in the form of *Cheirem* (something set apart). Achan, who violated the Cheirem and took the spoils of war for himself, was put to death.

The **Avudraham** (Seder Sukkos Hoshana Rabbah) also makes the connection between the seven circuits on Hoshana Rabbah that are connected to the seven circuits around Yericho. Yericho isn't simply an arbitrary miracle from Tanach that happens to involve seven circles. It represents the first confrontation between Klal Yisroel and the forces preventing them from conquering the Land, Artzeinu Hakedosha. Hoshana Rabbah's seven Hakafos symbolically reenact the breaking of those barriers. The Rokeach makes another remarkable observation. He connects the Yericho story to the fact that Hoshana Rabbah is fundamentally a day of prayer for rain.

This is especially significant because Sukkos itself is the beginning of the season in which Jews begin turning to Hashem for rain. On Shemini Atzeres, we begin reciting “*Mashiv Haruach Umoirid Hagashem*”. The battle of Yericho was the very first battle the Jewish nation waged at G-d's command, when entering Eretz Yisrael. The process of battle with Yericho very much mirrors the process of the Hakafos throughout Sukkos, culminating in the seven hakafos and blowing of the Shofar on Hoshana Rabbah (in some circles).

In the battle of Yericho, Hashem commanded Yehoshua and the Jewish people to circle the city every day for six days. Seven Kohanim were to carry seven Shofaros, in addition to carrying the Aron. Then on the seventh day, which was Shabbos, they would circle the city seven times with the seven Kohanim carrying the seven Shofaros. They would blow Shofar once each day and on the seventh day which was Shabbos they would blow Shofar seven times. Then the wall surrounding Yericho came crashing down. This all transpired without any physical warfare; it was totally miraculous.

The **Radak** points out the obvious significance of the number seven and says there are deep *sodos* (secrets) to the number seven. This is why the number seven is a recurring number found repeatedly across the Torah. Interestingly, Yehoshua put a curse on anyone who would rebuild the city of Yericho and when it was eventually rebuilt in the days of Achav by Chiel, and his sons Abiram and Seguv, were killed like Achan was for violating the Cheirem against Yericho.

The **Rambam** (Moreh Nevuchim 3:50) explains that Yehoshua forbade anyone from rebuilding Yericho so that all future generations would be able to view the sunken wall and recognize the magnitude of the miracle that Hashem performed for them. In fact, the Gemara (Brachos 54a) says that one who comes across the wall of Yericho swallowed into its place, makes the Bracha of “that Hashem did miracles for our forefathers in this place.” Yericho was essentially dedicated to Hashem as the first conquest of the Land. Rebuilding it could therefore be seen as undoing something that Hashem had deliberately devoted to destruction. May we all merit to soon experience what Hoshana Rabah represents: The barriers separating us from Hashem come crashing down, thus enabling us to experience the ultimate state of *Kirvas Elokim Li Toiv* (closeness to Hashem).

SUKKOS GEMS AND PARABLES BY RABBI NAFTALI KARP

I love Succos! Here are some of my favorite ideas to help get us in the spirit.

“G-d Is in Town”

What a whirlwind! There is no time to sin before Sukkos begins - another amazing gift! A child who wasn't great at keeping in touch got a call from his parents. “Guess what, we'll be in town soon for a convention and would love to see you!” the parents tell him. The day arrives, and the child makes a quick ten-minute trek to the hotel, waves, smiles, and says, “Hi Mom! Hi Dad!” The understanding parents then call back: “The convention was extended for another week, and we can't get a flight out until the day after. We have a whole extra day to spend together if you wish!”

This is the progression of the High Holidays. Hashem “comes to town”, and we hopefully say hello. Yet, Hashem wants to spend even more time with us, knowing we want that, as well. As such, He gave us Sukkos and Simchas Torah. Sukkos is a great opportunity to enjoy our beautiful heritage and “spend time in G-d's House,” the Sukkah, with family and friends!

“Time of Our Joy!”

We continue the roller coaster of this season, moving from the pinnacle of Yom Kippur to the festivities Hashem labels as the time of our joy. What are we so happy about? One reason is that we walk away from the High Holidays knowing that we matter. During this time, Hashem inspects every detail of what we have done. If it didn't matter, why would Hashem (so to speak) “waste His time”? The fact that we have a purpose, and that our actions truly count, is extremely gratifying. There is no better place to ponder this than in the Sukkah!

“Hooray - I Found It!”

How does Hashem expect us to be so happy for nine straight days? The holiday is designed with endless details to create an environment of joy, but I want to focus on one point. When a child compliments you, it feels great to know someone thinks you are important. We all need to feel important; it genuinely makes us happy. If there is one clear message from the High Holiday season, it is that we are important, unique, and worthy of attention. Knowing that, we should be bouncing up and down with joy! Have an incredible Shabbos Chol Hamo'ed on the festival of our joy!

“Don't Worry; Be Happy”

Before his passing, Moshe tells the Jewish people that the Torah is not an empty thing; rather, it is our very life. His parting message is that the point of our existence is to walk with Hashem. When everything in life is celebrated through the wisdom of the Torah, true happiness exists. This is why Sukkos is called the time of our joy. We enter Hashem's house for a full week, showing that our day-to-day activity is with Him. This relationship is not relegated to the synagogue. Enjoy this most happy and special time of year!

Shemini Atzeres/Simchat Torah

Our happiness climaxes with Simchas Torah - a day of unbridled dancing and joy. What is this day all about? Imagine buying a new device but losing the manual. You get frustrated because you can't benefit from it, and it just takes up room. Yet, if you suddenly locate the manual, the device becomes incredibly useful! As we end this period of introspection, we focus on our manual for life - the Torah. When we ignore it, it can feel like it's getting in our way. However, when we realize the Torah is the manual to a rich, meaningful life, we experience intense excitement. Simchas Torah is that exact joy! Wishing you an exciting Sukkos and Simchas Torah overflowing with happiness!

Naftali Karp is the director of Project Shores. To contact him or to subscribe to his weekly brief parsha email and/or “Holy Healthy Habit Hack” email, contact: nkarp@projectshores.com. You can also check out: [The Rabbi Karp Show at jewishpodcasts.fm/rabbikarp](http://TheRabbiKarpShowatjewishpodcasts.fm/rabbikarp)

OUR ARBA MINIM – TOOLS FOR UNITY, CONNECTION, AND INTROSPECTION **BY RABBI BOB BAROCAS**

When we take our arba minim on Sukkos, we are doing far more than bringing a few plants and fruit together to fulfill a Mitzvah. In **Sha'ar HaKavanos** (Inyan Sukkos, Drush 5), the **Arizal** takes us on a kabbalistic quest that helps us appreciate the profound significance of the Mitzvah. He explains that each of the arba minim represents one of the four letters in the *Shem Havaya* (Hashem's four-letter name).

The hadassim symbolize the yud. The leaves of the hadassim even look like small yud-like ink blots, and the letter yud, when spelled out in full, is composed of three letters (yud, vav, and daled). These three letters directly relate to the triplet of leaves found on the hadassim and explain why we hold three of them. The two aravos correlate to the second letter in Hashem's Name: hei. When the letter hei is written out, it contains two letters (hei and hei). This is indicative of the two aravos that we hold. The lulav is related to the third letter in Hashem's Name: vav. A kosher lulav, which must be straight, looks like a large vav. The final letter in Hashem's Name, hei, is associated with Malchut - and so too is the esrog.

The ideal way to perform the Mitzvah of taking our arba minim is by binding all four species together (**Shulchan Aruch**, Orach Chaim 651:11-12). When we bring these four species together - with each representing one of the four letters in the *Shem Havaya* - we are bringing Hashem's Name together (**Beis Yosef**, Orach Chaim 651, citing the *Recannati*). Make no mistake: although to us it only looks like we are physically holding our arba minim together, we are spiritually participating in the unification of Hashem's Name. What does this mean, and how can we relate to such a lofty idea?

For starters, unifying Hashem's Name means bringing the reality of His Oneness and sovereignty into tangible expression within the physical world through our actions. To better understand how that relates to our arba minim, we must recall the final words we uttered (and possibly shouted) at the end of Neilah on Yom Kippur: “*Hashem, Hu HaElokim* - Hashem, He is G-d.” At this critical moment, as the Gates of Heaven were closing and our judgment was being sealed for the year, we declared seven times that Hashem is our G-d. Implicit within this articulation is that He, and He alone, is our King. He runs the world, and we want our will to align with His Will - not the reverse.

Only a few days later, we take the very message we so fervently vocalized during Neilah and joyously bring it down into our world by taking our arba minim on Sukkos. It is not a coincidence that we uttered “*Hashem, Hu HaElokim*” seven times and physically express what that entails by binding together all seven components of our arba minim (three hadassim, two aravos, one lulav, and one esrog), with all four species directly corresponding to Hashem's name.

In doing so, we are not merely remembering Hashem's Oneness - we are actively expressing it through the Mitzvah we are performing. Ultimately, taking our arba minim on Sukkos becomes the quintessential demonstration of the truth we proclaimed on Yom Kippur - and a powerful idea worth “holding on to” all year round. This year, as we take our arba minim, we should pause to appreciate the profound depth and meaning hidden within this familiar Mitzvah.

IF YOU ENJOY TORAH SWEETS, PLEASE SHARE IT WITH THOSE WHOM YOU THINK WOULD BENEFIT FROM IT. CHAG SAMEACH!

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CHAYA BAS ALEXANDER**