

## Yaakov's Yerusha: Sukkos

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

Our Sages suggest two rationales for the observance of *Sukkot*. First, these temporary shelters are to remind us of the actual temporary shelters we resided in during our forty years in the desert. Second, it is meant to remind us of the clouds of Glory with which Hashem protected us in the desert. Additionally, the Tur notes that *Sukkot* is associated with Yaakov who "journeyed to *Sukkot* and built himself a house, and for his livestock he made shelters/*sukkot*; he therefore called the name of the place *Sukkot*." Throughout history, Esau is associated with the Satan, always trying to lead us to sin to our destruction, a goal he was not able to achieve with his brother Yaakov. The Shvilei Pinchas notes that when we dwell in the *sukkah*, it protects us from the Satan whom we have just defeated on *Yom Kippur*, just as Yaakov defeated Esau and his guardian angel. Hashem wants to rejoice with us, Yaakov's descendants, as He rejoiced with Yaakov in his home. But our past victory through the teshuvah process does not guarantee that the Satan will not return. Hence, we are grateful for Hashem's protection.

Adam was not only created on *Rosh Hashanah* but sinned by eating the forbidden fruit on that very day. With that he brought death into the world. Every death since then, is one for which Adam is held accountable, albeit it was similar to an "accidental killing." Adam was exiled from Eden, just as later the inadvertent killer would be forced into exile into a city of refuge. The Zohar implies that Yaakov was a reincarnation of Adam, and therefore was forced into exile in Choron to continue the atonement for Adam. Similarly, each of us carries within us some responsibility for Adam's sin, as Adam's soul contained within it every soul. Each of us has that same battle, whether to follow Hashem's command unquestioningly or substitute our own judgment for His. When we enter our *sukkot*, we are symbolically going into exile, as did Adam, and receiving Hashem's protection.

The Gemara suggests that the materials for the schach be the leftovers from the vines or from the wheat, for our Sages have identified the forbidden fruit as either grapes or wheat. When we use these for a *mitzvah*, we are rectifying the sin of Adam. Similarly, *Kiddush* over wine and *Hamotzi* over wheat bread on *Shabbat* also serve as our continued atonement for Adam's sin.

When *Bnei Yisroel* stood at Har Sinai and proclaimed, "We will do and we will listen," accepting the *Torah* without question, they returned to the pure state of Adam before the sin. When they sinned with the golden calf, they hoped that having a physical representation of God would enhance their ability to worship Him. Their reasoning was flawed, as was Adam's, for Hashem had not commanded this. It was then that Hashem removed the Clouds of Glory that had protected them. But when *Bnei Yisroel* sought atonement and Hashem commanded them to build the Tabernacle, they accepted these commands joyously. Then Hashem responded by returning the Clouds of Glory to surround *Bnei Yisroel*. Our observance of *Sukkot* celebrates the return of this protection, notes the Gra, not the initial protection of when we first left Egypt. Similarly, when we followed Hashem into the desert, completely dependent and faithful to Him, it was further proof of our unquestioning loyalty, continues the Chazon Lamoed, and is also an atonement for Adam's sin and cause for celebrating. We followed Hashem with the same temimut and purity that our Patriarch Yaakov, the *ish tam*, is known for.

An important part of the Yom Kippur service during the time of the Temple was the ritual of the two goats. One would be sacrificed to Hashem on the altar while the other was sent with a designated priest into the desert where it would be thrown off a cliff to the jagged stones below. The goat in Hebrew is a *sa'ir*, another name for Esau. The Matnas Chaim

notes that just as Esau represents the materialism of this world and the negation of the world to come, so does this goat represent that philosophy. We distance ourselves from this by throwing it away from us into the abyss. We pray for the connection to Hashem, a connection Esau tries to sever through his continued influence over our materialistic human desire. Our leaving our homes to dwell in the *sukkah* reminds us of the impermanence of this world and its comforts, writes Rabbi Kanatopsky z"l. True joy lies in our relationship with Hashem rather than in more possessions.

Rabbi Heiman cites the Baal Haturim who notes that the spelling of *Sukkot*, missing a "vov," appears only in two instances in the Torah. Here with Yaakov arriving at *Sukkot* and building *sukkot*, and when *Bnei Yisroel* left Egypt and traveled from Ramses to *Sukkot*. When Yaakov was approaching Esau, he was experiencing his *Rosh Hashana* moment, would he live or would he die. Upon surviving this ordeal, with Esau expressing love for him and then leaving him, Yaakov wants to express his gratitude to Hashem. He calls the place *Sukkot* in gratitude and full faith that he can now sit without fear. This is the same faith that *Bnei Yisroel* exhibited when they arrived at *Sukkot*. They were able to sojourn there without the fear that the Egyptians would immediately pursue them. The Clouds of Glory were Hashem's response to *Bnei Yisroel*'s faith in blindly following Him and implicitly following Him into the desert. Our *sukkot* on *Sukkot* are a reflection of Yaakov's faith and of the faith of *Bnei Yisroel*, and a testament that we recognize that this world is but temporary, a portal to the Eternal World.

May we merit to feel Hashem's protection and embrace, and to build our bayit and our *sukkot* as places where Hashem can reside with us in joy.

## Megilat Kohelet: Perek 7

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

"A good name is better than good oil and the day of death is better than the day of birth." This seems to be a strange comparison. Why compare a good name to good oil? The simple meaning is that the good oil refers to the oil that was used for anointing. When a person is born into a high position, it means their starting point is different than someone born into a lower position who must reach a higher level on their own. A king who is the son of a king is at a different position than the very first king. But, however a person starts and however sanctified their beginning point is, what's important at their ultimate judgment is where they end up.

Chananya, Misha'el, and Azarya, allowed themselves to be thrown into the fiery furnace rather than bow down to Nevuchadnezzar. Hashem saw their self-sacrifice and saved them. In contrast, Nadav and Avihu, in a

moment of religious ecstasy, went into the most sanctified part of the *ohel moed* to offer incense without the appropriate preparation. They were consumed by a fire sent by Hashem and weren't miraculously saved. This shows us that a person who develops their *madreiga* (spiritual level) on their own and does it fully, ends up better than someone who was the son of the high priest, but doesn't put themselves fully under Hashem's authority. Their last day is different.

"It's better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting because that is the end of all men and those who live shall place this on their heart." It's certainly more enjoyable to go to a party than to a house of mourning. There's ambience, warmth, and good food. But there's more to be gained in a house of mourning. What's spoken about is what was lost with the person's death and

what he meant to others. One learns more what life is about there, than what one will ever learn at a party.

After the funeral of the Holtzbergs who were killed in Mumbai, the non-Jewish woman who saved their little boy was interrogated. They asked her where the couple had kept their personal things. She answered that they had none. Everything was accessible. Their home and hearts were open to all. When you hear something like that you learn much more about what reality could be then at a party. This is meant to affect us emotionally so that our yearnings and strivings have enduring meaning, not things that are transient.

## Derech Hashem: Divine Intervention

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

Hashem's *hashgacha* (divine providence) affects everything. There's nothing in this world that Hashem is unaware of and he set forth rules through which everything operates. If we don't follow them, there are repercussions. The more our response are in tune with Hashem's will the closer we become to him. There are different *hashpaat* (influences) Hashem will send to keep things intact. Our *middot*, responding correctly, are a key factor. The human condition is such that materialism and darkness is inherent within us. Hashem takes this material, very limited, self and puts into it knowledge and clarity. This is similar to the creation story where Hashem formed Adam from the dust of the earth and blew into him a soul. The body came first. So too our first and basic sense of who we are is our body. When a baby is born his self-awareness is completely physical. We all start out with a great deal of superficiality and foolishness and little ability to make choices. The

older a child gets, the more his sense of discernment develops. This is part of Hashem's plan. The more of His self He allows to flow down to a person, the more aware of his reality he is. This is true for people in general and for each individual. As a person grows and understands, the part of Hashem within him is revealed. Physicality and ego make a person unaware of His presence. This is the root of good and evil. It is dependent on Hashem's influence. How much does he show His goodness and how much does He conceal it? Each person's reality and Hashem's response to that reality and the way He leads that person is very complex. It's futile when other people ask you to interpret their lives. One shouldn't even try to find rationalist answers. We are so small and Hashem is so big and we really don't know. Hashem's revelation manifests creativity, prosperity, purity, and honor. When He is concealed, lack and coarseness emerge. We all have faults

and lacks but we also have places that are very beautiful, deep, and good. In the very same person there could be a reason for revelation and concealment. In the same person there could be a place that's coarse and vulgar and a place that's pure and good.

There was a Lubavitcher chassid who had a factory. In Russia, his life had been brutal and it affected him, but he was a kind person. The Lubavitcher Rebbe wanted him to donate coats for the yeshiva boys. He told him, "*Du bist mein general* (You are my general)." You could see this person's definition of self metamorphosis. There's more to life than money, profit, and loss. He could be the Rebbe's general.