

Yaakov's Yerusha: Sukkot

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowtiz-Stein

Our Sages suggest two rationales for the observance of *Sukkot*. First, these temporary shelters remind us of the temporary shelters we resided 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, Esav 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 Esav 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 Hashana 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 Charon to continue the atonement for Adam. Similarly, each of us carries within us some responsibility for Adam's sin, as Adam's soul is contained within every soul. Each of us has that same battle, whether to follow Hashem's command 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.

At Har Sinai, *Bnei Yisroel* returned to the pure state of Adam before the sin. When they sinned with the golden calf, 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, 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* that our Patriarch Yaakov was known for.

An important part of the *Yom Kippur* service was the ritual of the two goats. One would be sacrificed to Hashem on the altar while the other was sent with a *kohen* into the desert and thrown off a cliff. The goat in Hebrew is a

sa'ir, another name for Esav. The Matnas Chaim notes that just as Esav represents the materialism of this world and the negation of the world to come, so does this goat. We distance ourselves from this by throwing it into the abyss. We pray for the connection to Hashem, a connection Esav tries to sever through his materialistic influence. Leaving home 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 twice 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 Esav, he was experiencing his *Rosh Hashana* moment, would he live or would he die. Upon surviving this ordeal, 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 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.

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Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb

Sukkot is not about an event, but about our relationship with Hashem and being enveloped in His presence. For most of us who are observant, Hashem is always in the background. Why do we need to go out to the *sukka* to sense Him? A person might admit that Hashem is there, but he might not believe that He loves him enough to give him what he needs and therefore he can't sit back and must take care of himself. People can also forget Hashem because he's intangible in contrast to the physical world which is very

visible. In addition, many people feel despair and anger when things don't go the way they want. There's a little voice that says this isn't how it should be. And because you believe in Hashem it will take you to despair thinking that you must have done something terrible either in this life or in another life. All these factors are enemies of *bitachon*. *Bitachon* doesn't mean believing in Hashem. It means developing a sense of Hashem's tangible immediate beneficence and presence in your life.

In *Chovos Halevovos* there are several premises given to be able to trust someone. He must care about you, be able to do what he promises, put you before anything else, and do whatever he sets forth to do. Only Hashem can do this. Humans have a need to trust and the only one we can trust is Hashem. How can we build our *bitachon*? The first way is to notice all the times that we as a people survived against all odds and moving that into our own life. Surely there were times when things happened, that if it wasn't for Hashem's

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help, could never have happened. The *sukka's* qualifications demand its fragility. It can't be a permanent structure to teach us that this world is transient and the only one who can protect us is Hashem. Money can give you freedom and pleasure, but it can't buy happiness. When you uplift physicality for spiritual purposes, it becomes eternal and that evokes true joy. This is the message of the *sukka*. Recognizing that we've survived for years without any observable means of self-protection and that Hashem who is intangible does things for us to sustain us, is the beginning of trust in Hashem.

One of the qualifications of the *sukka* is that it must be covered with *sechach* placed close together so that there's more shade than sun, but enough space to discern the stars. The embitterment and darkness in this world is meant to make us participants in our own self

creation. People give birth to themselves constantly through their choices. The darkness is functional. In the next world, we will have only one complaint -why was my life so easy. Real achievement always come at the price of struggle.

In order to have *bitachon* we need gratitude. How do we develop it? The Zemach Zedek used to say, "Think good and it will be good." People take this to the wrong direction leaving Hashem out of the picture. Hashem will give you what's good for you whether this is what you ordered or not. If you think positive, you'll see everything in your present life as positive.

In order to do that, you have to learn to control your mind. All of the obligations of the heart in the Torah are based on this assumption. You can't fulfill the *mitzva* of loving your fellow man or Hashem if your full of hatred and jealousy. Achieving *bitachon* is recognizing that you could be wherever you want to be. The next

time you feel angry ask yourself, "Is this really where I want to be?" If the answer is no, then decide not to be there. Choose a different focus.

You have to take control of your thoughts, but you have to replace it with something. This is where prayer comes in. Prayer has two components, content and words. The *Chovos Halevovos* says the main thing is the content, but the words give you channels to let the content flow through. If our hearts were in the davening and the words were just a conduit, we wouldn't be afraid of life.

Living in the *sukka* all year is feeling the fragility of this world by recognizing the enormity of Hashem. It's understanding that this world is about facing challenges because when you make the right choices you become bigger, stronger, and more divine like.

Succot- Service of the Heart

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

In Shir Hashirim, King Shlomo movingly depicts Hashem's profound love for the Jewish people. "*B'tzilo chimaditi v'yashavti...- I desired his shade and I have dwelt there, his fruits are sweet to my palate.*" According to the Midrash, this refers to the *mitzvot* of *sukkah* and *lulav*, which are our key ways by which we connect to Hashem on *Sukkot*. Why did Hashem give us these two *mitzvot* on this holiday?

The Shem MiShmuel explains that man is a dual combination of mind and heart. This is reflected in the ten *sefirot*, which are expressed on both intellectual and emotional levels. Moshe, the paragon of intellect, and Aharon, the embodiment of emotion, were the founding fathers of the Jewish nation. Moshe's role was primarily *moach*, intellect, bringing Torah to Jewry, Aharon's purpose was *lev*, emotion, achieving harmony between man and Hashem. His prayers and service in the *Mishkan* were the focal point of Yom

Kippur. Additionally, he pursued peace and mended troubled relationships between people.

The Torah emphasizes, "*Hu Aharon U'Moshe,*" the role of Aharon was equal to Moshe's. The Shem Mishmuel notes that perfection of intellect is intertwined with perfection of emotion. Both are needed to attain *sheleimut* (completion). Indeed, when we examine the lives of our Torah giants we see this combination of wisdom, mind, and heart.

The Gemara writes that the *mitzva* of *sukkah* serves as a remembrance to the Clouds of Glory, which were given in the merit of Aharon. The *sukkah* signifies the life and essence of Aharon. Aharon personified peace, fulfillment, humility, and total subservience to Hashem. This is the *sukkah* - modesty, harmony and completion. The *lulav* represents the teachings of Moshe. It is a straight line that corresponds to the direct intellectual logic of Torah. Both

mitzvot help us tap into the dual essence of the holiday.

Rosh Hashana is the head of the year. It signifies a new beginning and corresponds to the soul of Moshe, who personified intellect. It is a day to think about our past deeds, make a personal reckoning, and plan for the future. Yom Kippur is *lev*, emotion. It symbolizes *Aharon Hakohein*. The *Torah* writes, "*B'zot yavo Aharon el hakodesh.*" It links Aharon specifically with the service in the *Mishkan*. Rav Soloveitchik notes that the essence of *Yom Kippur* was the service of Aharon, who was the paragon of *Ahavat Hashem* and *Ahavat Yisrael*.

On Rosh Hashana we rededicate our intellect to Hashem. On *Yom Kippur* we reignite our souls to *Ahavat Hashem*. All this culminates with *Sukkot* - the pinnacle of joy and completion as we celebrate the melding of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual purification.