

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS**

### A Breath of Life

**T**he sedra of Emor outlines the festivals that give rhythm and structure to the Jewish year. Examining them carefully, however, we see that Sukkot is unusual, unique.

One detail which had a significant influence on Jewish liturgy appears later on in the book of Deuteronomy: "Be joyful at your Feast . . . For seven days celebrate the Feast to the Lord your G-d at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your G-d will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete." (Dt. 16: 14-15)

Speaking of the three pilgrimage festivals – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot – Deuteronomy speaks of 'joy'. But it does not do so equally. In the context of Pesach, it makes no reference to joy; in that of Shavuot, it speaks of it once; in Sukkot, as we see from the above quotation, it speaks of it twice. Is this significant? If so, how? (It was this double reference that gave Sukkot its alternative name in Jewish tradition: zeman simhatenu, 'the season of our joy'.)

The second strange feature appears in our sedra. Uniquely, Sukkot is associated with two mitzvot, not one. The first: Beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the Lord for seven days . . . On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and willows of the brook, and rejoice before the Lord your G-d for seven days. (Lev. 23: 39-40)

This is a reference to the arba minim, the 'four kinds' – palm branch, citron, myrtle and willow leaves – taken and waved on Sukkot. The second command is quite different: Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths, so your descendants will know that I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your G-d. (Lev. 23: 42-43)

This is the command to leave our house and live in the temporary dwelling that gives Sukkot its name: the festival of Tabernacles, booths, huts, an annual reminder of portable homes in which the Israelites lived during their journey through the wilderness.

No other festival has this dual symbolism. Not only are the 'four kinds' and the tabernacle different in

character: they are even seemingly opposed to one another. The 'four kinds' and the rituals associated with them are about rain. They were, says Maimonides (Guide for the Perplexed, III: 43), the most readily available products of the land of Israel, reminders of the fertility of the land. By contrast, the command to live for seven days in booths, with only leaves for a roof, presupposes the absence of rain. If it rains on Sukkot we are exempt from the command (for as long as the rain lasts, and providing it is sufficiently strong to spoil food on the table).

The difference goes deeper. On the one hand, Sukkot is the most universalistic of all festivals. The prophet Zekhariah foresees the day when it will be celebrated by all humanity: The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day the Lord will be one, and His name the only name . . . Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. (Zekhariah 14: 9, 16-17)

The sages interpreted the fact that seventy bulls were sacrificed in the course of the festival (Numbers 29: 12-34) to refer to the seventy nations (the traditional number of civilizations). Following the cues in Zekhariah, they said that 'On the festival [of Sukkot], the world is judged in the matter of rain' (Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1: 2). Sukkot is about the universal need for rain.

At the same time, however, it is the most particularist of festivals. When we sit in the Sukkah we recall Jewish history – not just the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, but also the entire experience of exile. The Sukkah is defined as a 'temporary dwelling' (dirat arai). It is the most powerful symbol of Jewish history. No other nation could see its home not as a castle, a fortress or a triumphal arch, but as a fragile tabernacle. No other nation was born, not in its land, but in the desert. Far from being universalist, Sukkot is intensely particularistic, the festival of a people like no other, whose only protection was its faith in the sheltering wings of the Divine presence.

It is almost as if Sukkot were two festivals, not one.

It is. Although all the festivals are listed

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together, they in fact represent two quite different cycles. The first is the cycle of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. These tell the unique story of Jewish identity and history: the exodus (Pesach), the revelation at Mount Sinai (Shavuot), and the journey through the wilderness (Sukkot). Celebrating them, we re-enact the key moments of Jewish memory. We celebrate what it is to be a Jew.

There is, however, a second cycle – the festivals of the seventh month: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are not only about Jews and Judaism. They are about G-d and humanity as a whole. The language of the prayers is different. We say: 'Instill your awe upon all Your works, and fear of You on all that You have created.' The entire liturgy is strikingly universalist. The 'Days of Awe' are about the sovereignty of G-d over all humankind. On them, we reflect on the human, not just the Jewish, condition.

The two cycles reflect the dual aspect of G-d: as creator, and as redeemer. As creator, G-d is universal. We are all in G-d's image, formed in His likeness. We share a covenant of human solidarity (the Noahide covenant). We are fellow citizens of the world G-d made and entrusted to our care. As redeemer, however, G-d is particular. Whatever His relationship to other nations (and He has a relationship with other nations: so Amos and Isaiah insist), Jews know Him through His saving acts in Israel's history: exodus, revelation and the journey to the Promised Land.

No sooner have we identified the two cycles than we see what makes Sukkot unique. It is the only festival belonging to both. It is part of the cycle of Jewish history (Pesach-Shavuot-Sukkot), and part of the sequence of the seventh month (Rosh Hashanah-Yom Kippur-Sukkot). Hence the double joy.

The 'four kinds' represent the universality of the festival. They symbolize nature, rain, the cycle of the seasons – things common to all humanity. The Sukkah / tabernacle represents the singular character of Jewish history, the experience of exile and homecoming, the long journey across the wilderness of time.

In a way not shared by any other festival, Sukkot celebrates the dual nature of Jewish faith: the universality of G-d and the particularity of Jewish

existence. We all need rain; we are all part of nature; we are all dependent on the complex ecology of the created world. Hence the 'four kinds'. But each nation, civilization, religion is different. As Jews we are heirs to a history unlike that of any other people: small, vulnerable, suffering exile after exile, yet surviving. Hence the Sukkah.

Humanity is formed out of our commonalities and differences. As I once put it: If we were completely different, we could not communicate. If we were all the same, we would have nothing to say. Sukkot brings both together: our uniqueness as a people, and our participation in the universal fate of mankind. *This article was originally published as Rabbi Sacks' 'Covenant & Conversation' piece for parsha Emor 5769. ©2014 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org*

**RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

## Shabbat Shalom

**T**his magnificent three-week festival period – Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot – may be viewed and experienced in two dimensions simultaneously; the universalist, nationalist dimension, and the particularistic, individual – family dimension. Rosh Hashanah is the day of which the world was born, when the sigh-sob truah sound of the shofar cries out against the tragedies and injustices of an imperfect world and the sharp, joyous tekiyah sound reminds us of our responsibility – and ability – to help perfect the world in the Kingship of G-d by conveying the moral message of ethical monotheism, a G-d who demands justice, compassion and peace. On Yom Kippur the Almighty declares His readiness to forgive the nation Israel of its great sins – the idolatrous golden calf, the faithless cowardice of the scouts with the vision of our Holy Temple reaching out to all of humanity, "For My house is a House of Prayer for all nations". (Isaiah 56: 7)

Sukkot is the climax of the season, taking us out of our egocentric, partisan lives and ordaining that we surround ourselves with fruits of the Land of Israel living beneath a roof of vegetation through whose spaces we look up at the stars. Seventy bullocks were sacrificed in the Holy Temple during the Sukkot Festival symbolizing the seventy nations of the world. Finally, Shemini Atzeret announces the onset of the rainy season: rain is after all a gift of G-d to the world.

Shemini Atzeret moves into the uninhibited joy of Simhat Torah – the Rejoicing of the Law, when all Torah Scrolls are taken out of the Holy Ark and become the focus of frenzied dancing not only in the synagogues but also outside, in the streets- the public domain to imbue the world with its message of "Thou shalt not murder" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

However, Judaism understands only too well that one dare not focus on humanity without

concentrating on individuals. One cannot be a concerned universalist without hearing the cries of one's next door neighbor. Yes, it is the Jewish mission to convey the message of ethical monotheism to a world. The people of the covenant must perfect the world in the Kingship of our G-d of justice, compassion and peace. But first we must perfect ourselves: not only our nation, but our community, not only our community but our family, and not only our family but ourselves.

A disciple once approached Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, (1800-1870) founder of the Ethicist (Mussar) Movement in Judaism, seeking permission to spread the ethical and moral message of the Master to Germany and Austria. The rabbi responded: "And is the City of Salant so imbued with my teachings that you can afford to leave Lithuania? And is the street on which you live so morally inspired that you can teach in another community? And is your own family so careful in their conduct that you can preach to other families? And what about you, my beloved disciple? Are you on such a high level of ethical integrity that no one could criticize you?"

And so Rosh Hashanah ushers in a ten-day period of repentance and introspection when we must be mindful of the need to perfect the world, but we must first attempt to perfect ourselves. Rosh Hashanah is the day on which the world was born, but it is also the "day of judgment," when everyone passes before the Almighty to be evaluated and judged, when each of us must evaluate and judge ourselves from the perspective of Divine standards.

Yom Kippur may be a historic and national day of forgiveness, a day on which we invoke our Holy Temple as a "House of Prayer for all nations," but it is first and foremost a day in which the individual stands in isolation from the world in the presence of the Divine. No food, no drink, no sexual relationship – with almost the entire day to be spent in G-d's house. Each of us rids ourselves of all materialistic encumbrances, separates ourselves from physical needs and blandishments, enters a no-man's land between heaven and earth, between life and death, dons the non-leather shoes worn by the mourner, and in effect feels what it's like to mourn for oneself asking what legacy would I leave, were I to be taken from the world today?

And then comes Sukkot. For one week leave your fancy surroundings, go back to basics. Spend seven days with your family in a simple hut. Remember that "when familial love is strong, a couple can sleep on the edge of a sword; but when familial love has gone sour, a bed of sixty miles does not provide sufficient room" (B.T. Sanhedrin 7a). Forget the televisions and videos; bring the special guests of the Bible into your simple but significant space, commune with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Lea, Miriam, Deborah and Ruth.

Introduce them – rather than Michael Jackson and Madonna – to your children, and sing and speak and share together. Remember – and communicate – that important is values not venues, content not coverings, inner emotions and not external appearances. And let the sukkah lead you to Simhat Torah to the love and joy of Torah, which will help form the kind of individuals and families who can build communities and ultimately change the world. ©2014 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

#### RABBI BEREL WEIN

### Wein Online

**A**fter 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 G-d. 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 G-d'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 Sukkoth was meant to convey. One can be joyful even with plain water if one realizes the blessings of nature and of the benevolence of G-d. In a world of excess and the pursuit of luxuries, Sukkoth comes to remind us of our true priorities and of the necessity of a healthy balance in our lives and behavior. ©2014 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)

**RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY**

## TorahWeb

**T**he 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 Kodsh 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. ©2014 Rabbi Z. Sobolofsky & The TorahWeb Foundation, Inc.

**RABBI AVI WEISS**

## Shabbat Forshpeis

**S**ukkot is the only festival referred to as zeman simhateinu, the time of happiness in our liturgy.

The Torah in its last description of the festivals, mentions the word simcha twice when discussing Sukkot. (Deuteronomy 16:14, 15) This in contrast to Shavuot where it appears only once. (Deuteronomy 16:11) On Passover, the word is totally absent. (Deuteronomy 16:1-8) Sukkot is described in the liturgy as the days of happiness, as the term simcha is most associated with this holiday. Why is Sukkot deemed as the ultimate holiday of happiness and joy?

On a historical level, Sukkot is the culmination of the three festivals. Passover is the holiday of physical freedom. Yet, freedom without purpose is void of happiness; hence the word simcha is not linked to Passover. Shavuot gives meaning to our freedom since on that day, we received the Torah. Hence simcha is mentioned in reference to Shavuot. Sukkot takes us to another dimension. Real joy occurs when one is able to sustain meaning in life well beyond the dramatic moments. As Sukkot is a commemoration of the fragile homes in which we lived during the 40 years in the desert, this holiday represents the maintenance of belief, even beyond the experience at Sinai. So, the Torah mentions simcha twice relative to Sukkot.

On an agricultural level, Sukkot teaches another important lesson about happiness. The ultimate holiday of gathering our produce is Sukkot. Thus, the festival is called Hag ha-asif. The Torah, immediately preceding the laws of the holidays in Deuteronomy, mentions the laws of giving tithes. (Ch. 14:22) This serves as a reminder that true happiness is achieved when one takes of what one has gleaned and gives it to another. Most people believe that happiness is achieved by taking more. The reverse is true. The more one gives, the more one experiences exhilaration of having given of themselves to others. In the end, happiness is a feeling. Giving, on the other hand, is an action. While one cannot automatically achieve an emotion, each of us has it in our power to act. Through action, feelings emerge. In the case of Sukkot, from giving of our produce, happiness surfaces.

Not coincidentally, Sukkot comes on the heels of Rosh Hashanah, when we wish each other Shana Tovah. Shana Tovah is commonly translated, "have a happy year." This translation, in fact is a take-off of the American New Year, when happiness is the only goal. In truth, Shana Tovah does not mean "happy new year," but "good new year." In fact, not everything that is happy is good and not everything that is good is happy. When we wish each other a Shana Tovah, what we are really saying is, "may you have a year of doing good." By experiencing a High Holidays of tov, of goodness, and internalizing the message of Sukkot, we can

ultimately realize the description of Sukkot as found in our prayers-zman simhateinu, the time of true joy.  
© 2011 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

**RABBI DOV KRAMER**

## Taking a Closer Look

**T**he Talmud (P'sachim 71a, Succah 48a) tells us that even though the Torah tells us (D'varim 16:14-15) that on Succos we should rejoice for seven days, we are also supposed to rejoice on the night of the eighth day (the night after the seventh day ends, when Sh'mini Atzeres starts). This is learned from the extra mention of "rejoicing" (in 16:15), a mention that includes an exclusionary term that teaches us that we are not required to rejoice on the first night of Succos.

What about on the eighth day itself? In P'sachim, Rashi tells us that the mitzvah to rejoice, which is fulfilled by bringing an offering to G-d in the Temple and partaking of its meat, does not apply to the eighth day, since the Torah says -- twice -- that we should rejoice for seven days, with the implication being only for seven days, not eight. However, in Succah, Rashi tells us that we are required to rejoice on the eighth day as well, as the day is more important than the night, and if we are required to rejoice on the night of the eighth, we are surely required to rejoice during the eighth day too. How can Rashi say in one place that the eighth day is excluded from the requirement to rejoice yet in another place tell us that the eighth day must surely be included in the requirement?

It is quite common for Rashi to explain each piece of the Talmud "locally," i.e. presenting the most straightforward way of understanding what the Talmud is saying even if it seems to contradict something the Talmud says elsewhere. Typically, Tosfos will raise such issues by referencing what the Talmud says elsewhere, often offering an alternative understanding of what the Talmud is saying in order to resolve these inconsistencies, but Rashi does not usually deal with such things in his explanation. Therefore, whenever Rashi explains what seems to be parallel Talmudic discussions differently, the first step is to look at the context of the Talmud in each citation; if the context of one lends itself to one explanation and the context of the other lends itself to a different explanation, Rashi will likely present differing explanations in order to present the most straightforward explanation of each -- independent -- Talmudic piece.

In P'sachim, the Talmud's focus is on Rabbi Elazar's contention, based on D'varim 27:7, that the meat consumed in order to fulfill the Torah's requirement to rejoice must be slaughtered when the requirement to rejoice is active. If, however, the animal

was slaughtered before the requirement started, which in our case means before Succos, eating its meat on Succos would not fulfill the requirement. The Talmud then quotes a Tannaic teaching that seems to support Rabbi Eliezer's view, that the mitzvah to rejoice does not apply on the first night of Succos. Since offerings cannot be brought at night, the only way one can "rejoice" (read: eat the meat of an offering) is if the offering was slaughtered before Succos started. But if the mitzvah to rejoice cannot be fulfilled with an offering slaughtered before the mitzvah could be done, obviously there is no way for there to be a requirement to rejoice on the first night of Succos.

Although the Talmud rejects this line of thinking, as there are other reasons why there is no requirement to rejoice on the first night and there is a requirement to do so on the eighth night, it is within his explanation of the Talmud's attempt to support Rabbi Elazar that Rashi tells us there is no requirement to rejoice on the eighth day. And it would seem that according to Rabbi Elazar, this has to be true, as if there was a requirement to rejoice on the eighth day too, why would the Torah only tell us (explicitly) to rejoice for seven days? Normally, we would say that the Torah first mentioned seven days of rejoicing followed by an extra mention of rejoicing -- along with an exclusionary term -- in order to exclude the first night from the requirement while including the eighth day, but according to Rabbi Elazar, we don't need to specifically exclude the first night, as it is automatically excluded based on (from his perspective) the verse that tells us we cannot rejoice with meat slaughtered before Succos started; even had the Torah told us explicitly to rejoice for eight days, the first night would have been excluded. According to Rabbi Elazar, if the Torah wanted us to the rejoice on the day too, it could have said so explicitly. Therefore, when explaining the Talmud's attempt at supporting Rabbi Elazar, Rashi had to say that, according to him, there is no requirement to rejoice on the eighth day.

Ultimately, the Talmud concludes that there is no need to slaughter the offering during the time that the mitzvah to rejoice applies, so there is no need for Rashi to stick with the way he explained things according to that rejected opinion when he explains the same Tannaic teaching elsewhere. But more than that, Rashi has to explain the Talmud in Succah differently, as the point of the Talmud there is to understand the Mishnah's requirement to rejoice for eight days! Even though the Torah only mentions seven days explicitly, since there is an extra mention of "rejoicing," the eighth day is included as well. The mechanics of how we get to a requirement of rejoicing for eight days includes the exclusionary term that is applied to the first night of Succos, which is why we are first told to rejoice for seven days before part of that period is excluded and another day (or day-part) is added. And once part of the

eighth day was added to the requirement to rejoice, the whole day is included. The limitation on including the eighth day that Rashi had to incorporate when explaining Rabbi Elazar does not apply here, and in order to explain the Talmud's presentation of why we must rejoice for eight days, he had to explain how the eighth day was included as well. ©2014 Rabbi D. Kramer

**RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY**

## Somebody's a Nobody

One of the most joyous customs associated with the holiday of Succos is the celebration of Simchas Bais Hashoaevah. In the times of the Bais HaMikdash, a water libation accompanied the customary offerings. Simchas Bais Hashoaevah, literally, the Joy of the Water Drawing, was observed with a most ebullient celebration. It included a marvelously varied array of harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets, among other instruments. The greatest sages and most pious of rabbis performed acrobatics and antics that would have normally been below their dignity. In fact, the sages in Tractate Sukkah 51, note that, "one who has not seen the celebration of the Bais Hashoaevah has never seen true joy."

Rambam (Maimonides) discusses this aspect of exuberance and adds that "one who in his insolence restrains himself from serving Hashem in a joyous manner is a sinner and fool." Yet the Rambam adds a caveat. "But this joy was not performed by the ignorant ones and by anyone who wanted (to dance). Only the great sages of Israel, the heads of Yeshivos and the Sanhedrin, the pious, the elders and men of righteous action would dance, clap, and sing in the Bais haMikdash on Succos. Everyone else, men and women would come to watch and listen" (Rambam Hilchos Lulav 8:14).

This passage begs explanation. Why shouldn't everyone, even the most profane of men, sing and dance and make merry in celebration of the L-rd? Further what does the Rambam mean by not including "those who want to dance"?

Ultimately, anyone who ended up dancing, even the most pious of sages, obviously wanted to dance. What, then, does he Rambam mean when he said that this joy was not performed by anyone who wanted to dance? A classic story circulates in all Jewish humor anthologies.

Before the start of the Ne'eilah service, the holiest and final supplication of Yom Kippur, the rabbi rose from his seat and bolted toward the Holy Ark. He spread his hands toward heaven and cried out, "Ribbono Shel Olam, Master of the Universe, I am a total nothing before you! Please inscribe me in the book of life!"

All of a sudden the chazzan (cantor) ran toward the Aron and joined the rabbi! "G-d Almighty," he shouted, "please forgive me, too, for I am truly a

nothing before you!" There is an awed silence amongst the congregants.

The shammas (sexton) then followed suit. He, too, ran up toward the ark and in tearful supplication pronounced, "I too am a nothing!"

Mouths around the congregation dropped open. The President of the synagogue's men's club, Ed Goldstein, a large man, was also caught up in the fervor of the moment. Suddenly, he, too, bolted from his seat in the back, and lumbered toward the front of the shul. With great eagerness he prostrated himself in front of the Ark and cried out at the top of his lungs. "Forgive me Oh L-rd he shouts, for I too am a nothing! Suddenly a shout from the back of the synagogue was directed toward Goldstein's hulk of a figure. It shouted with incredulity. "Harrumph! Look who thinks he's a nothing!"

Rambam teaches us that whoever runs to dance and sing and make himself crazy is not truly lowering himself before the Almighty. If someone inherently likes to cavort wildly, then he is not dancing for the sake of lowering himself before the Almighty, rather he is having a wonderful time. When King David liberated the Ark (Ark of the Covenant) from the Phillistines, he danced in front of it as if he were a lowly slave. When confronted by his wife, Michal, for dancing like a servant, he retorted. "I would make myself even lower before Hashem."

When rejoicing during the festivities we must bear in mind our true reasons for enthusiasm -- who we are, and why we dance. Because in order to be a nobody, you gotta be a somebody. ©2014 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky & torah.org

#### MICHA BERGER

## Aspaqlaria

**W**e sometimes find that the Torah, instead of spelling the halachah out, uses a more poetic— if less direct—phrasing. One example is in the mitzvah to take an esrog. Instead of just calling it an "esrog", we are told to take a "p'ri eitz hadar", a fruit of a tree that is superior.

From a legal perspective, something is lost in this wording. We need to rely on Torah sheBa'al Peh to know that the pasuk refers to an esrog in particular. The description, though, can tell us something of the why. More is conveyed on the level of aggadah, instead of writing out the halachic detail.

The gemara (Succah 35a) explains, "'P'ri eitz hadar'—that its fruit tastes like the tree." Aggadah makes a distinction between an "eitz oseh p'ri", a tree that makes fruit, and when the two words are juxtaposed to make "eitz p'ri" or "p'ri eitz". In the latter case, it refers to either a tree or a fruit, respectively, where the fruit and the tree share the same taste.

A famous medrash (Breishis Rabba 5:9) comments on the language of the creation of trees.

Hashem orders the earth on the third day to produce "eitz p'ri oseh p'ri", fruit trees that bring forth fruit, yet the land actually produces only "eitz oseh p'ri". Between the commandment and the fulfillment, something is lost. Instead of the norm being that the wood of the tree would taste like the fruit, this is now the exception. Somehow, the earth "disobeyed".

What does this medrash mean? Does the earth have free will, that it can choose to disobey G-d? Rav A.Y. Kook explains:

"At the inception of creation it was intended that the tree have the same taste as the fruit. All the supportive actions that sustain any general worthwhile spiritual goal should by right be experienced in the soul with the same feeling of elation and delight as the goal itself is experienced when we envision it. But earthly existence, the instability of life, the weariness of the spirit when confined in a corporate frame brought it about that only the fruition of the final step, which embodies the primary ideal, is experienced in its pleasure and splendor. The trees that bear the fruit, with all their necessity for the growth of the fruit have, however, become coarse matter and have lost their taste. This is the failing of the "earth" because of which it was cursed when Adam was also cursed for his sin.

"But every defect is destined to be mended. Thus we are assured that the day will come when creation will return to its original state, when the taste of the tree will be the same as the taste of the fruit. The "earth" will repent of its sin, and the way of the practical life will no longer obstruct the delight of the ideal, which is sustained by appropriate intermediate steps on its way toward realization, and will stimulate its emergence from potentiality to actuality." (Orot HaTeshuva 6:7, Translation by B. Z. Bokser)

To R. Kook, this enigmatic medrash defines the nature of kidushah. In the metaphor of this medrash, "fruit" refers to the goal, and the "tree" is the means. In the ideal world, the tree would share the taste of the fruit, that is to say, the means for achieving a spiritual goal would generate the same excitement as the goal does. The soul doesn't feel the same spiritual high because the earth, the physical world, separated itself from the soul. The "new earth and new heavens" (Yeshiah 65:15) [a reference to RSRH's concept of meaning of the number eight developed in chapter 3. - mi] of the messianic age will come when this rift is healed.

Returning to esrog, it by saying "p'ri eitz", the Torah is telling us that the esrog is chosen in part because it exemplifies this ideal. It represents the underlying unity of secular and sacred.

However, the gemara continues, this does not uniquely identify the esrog! Don't pepper plants also taste like peppers? Interestingly, the gemara elsewhere (Succah 32b) ascribes the same property to hadasim. After proving this point, the gemara looks to the next

word, hadar, to provide more stringent criteria.

Rav, after some clarification, indicates that the word should be read as though it were "hadir", the stable. Just as a stable has large livestock and small, so to an esrog tree bears both large fruit and small. This describes the esrog, which continues growing on the tree from one season to the next. At any time, there are young fruit as well as larger ones that have been growing from previous seasons. Rav Avohu presents the same idea slightly differently. He reads the word as "ha-dar", that which lives, a fruit that lives on the tree from one year to the next.

"R. Yochanan haSandlar says: Any congregation which is for the sake of heaven will end up being permanent." (Avos 4:14) "Any debate which is for the sake of heaven will end up being permanent." (Avos 5:16) The key to permanence is in using the day-to-day in service of the sacred. By using means toward their intended ends.

The last opinion offered is Ben Azai's. He finds in "hadar" a reference to the Greek "hador", water. (Cf. the English "hydraulic", "hydroponics", etc...) The esrog requires far more water than other trees. "Water is never anything but Torah". The way in which one learns how to properly unify the secular and the sacred is the Torah. The entire concept of a halachic lifestyle is to bring sanctity to our daily activities.

This provides two approaches to the concept of hadar. To Rav and Rav Avohu, the esrog is more of a p'ri eitz than most because it shares more properties with the thing a p'ri eitz represents. Hadar means that esrog is a superior metaphor. To Ben Azai, what is important is not merely the concept, what is hadar is that it carries an implied imperative—that one should act to heal this flaw.

Rav Kook describes the relationship between chol and kodesh as a consequence of the connection between the means and the purpose. Chol, the physical world, exists to be the means for achieving kidushah. When we looked at tum'ah and taharah, we spoke about freeing the ruach from the influence of the

### Parsha Puns!

**It CITRONsting that it'S CHACHtually  
easier 2 BRANCH out in a new direction  
than 2 WILLOW around complaining!  
HaW A VEry ELLOWquent Shabbos!**

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nefesh. But being free is not enough. Freedom only has value if we use it to seek some purpose. The ultimate purpose is the spiritual, the drives of the neshamah.  
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### RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ

## Shabbat Shalom Weekly

**M**oshe pleads to the Almighty to "make known to me Your ways." The Almighty commands Moshe to carve two stone tablets to replace the Tablets that Moshe destroyed bearing the 10 Commandments. Moshe carves them and ascends Mt. Sinai. The Almighty descends in a cloud and reveals to Moshe the 13 Attributes of Divine Mercy which are constantly repeated in the Yom Kippur prayers. Moshe asks the Almighty to "forgive our transgressions and make us Your Heritage".

The Almighty responds that He shall seal a covenant with us. The Almighty then warns the Jewish people against idol worship (idolatry is believing that anything other than the Almighty has power). The reading ends with the Almighty commanding us to keep the Festivals -- Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. © 2014 Rabbi K. Packouz and aish.com

### YITZ WEISS

## Divine Embrace

**O**ne of the themes of Sukkot is to recognize that G-d is our protector. We go out of our permanent homes into a temporary dwelling and expose ourselves to the elements. In so doing we recall that G-d was our guardian when we left Egypt into the desert and remains our protector today.

The minimum requirement for a kosher sukkah is not four walls, but two walls and a tefach (a handbreadth). If we were to construct a sukkah based on the minimum, we would really be exposed to the elements! Two walls and a bit don't seem to offer much protection! How are we to feel secure?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l compares the sukkah measurements to an arm: two "walls" - i.e. from the shoulder to the elbow, and from the elbow to the wrist, and a tefach - the hand. Rav Auerbach says that sitting in the sukkah one is literally in the embrace of G-d!

May this year be one where we see the protection of G-d on a daily basis and the coming of Moshiach! Have a great yom tov! *This dvar torah was told by Rabbi Aaron Cohen in Cong. Tifereth Israel, Passaic, NJ © 2014 Y. Weiss*

