

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 125

Sukkot | A Heavenly Gift – Shalom Bayit



MESILLOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

חג סוכות | אנגלית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Sukkot

Give and Take

About fifty years ago, there was a young man in the Ponevezh Yeshiva who didn't find satisfaction in Torah study. He found his calling in a religious youth movement, engaging in activities and guidance. The yeshiva demanded full dedication to Torah study; the young man refused and found himself outside its walls.

He enlisted in another yeshiva, but he continued his involvement in the youth movement, leading to conflicts with the yeshiva administration. His friend, who feared the consequences, consulted with the Chazon Ish and asked for permission to bring the young man to him. The Chazon Ish agreed, and the friend persuaded the young man to accompany him to meet the Chazon Ish.

The Chazon Ish greeted them warmly, inquiring about what they were currently studying in

the yeshiva. The young man struggled to provide a satisfactory answer. The Chazon Ish, in his gentle manner, acknowledged this and began discussing Talmudic topics and the methodology of Tosafot, making the conversation enlightening and joyful.

Suddenly, the Chazon Ish posed a profound question about a Tosafot passage. The young man, who had expertise in this area, attempted to answer but was unsuccessful. The Chazon Ish comforted them, saying, "It's not a problem. Return to the yeshiva, contemplate this matter, consult with your rabbis, and come back next week with your answer."

They left his presence with his blessing. When they returned to the yeshiva, the young man hurried to investigate the challenging question. His friend hurried back to the Chazon Ish and entered his

Sukkot - They Suffered – You Can't Enter

room again and exclaimed, “Rabbi, didn't I bring him to you because of his involvement with the youth movement, which jeopardized his yeshiva studies? Why didn't you mention it, not even hint at it?”

The Chazon Ish replied with a key principle, “You cannot take something away from a person without offering something in return.”

If you remove him from the world of the youth movement without giving him an alternative, even if he listens and obeys, he will

eventually fall into neglect and desolation. That is not the way. You must redirect his passion, transform it into a passion for Torah study, an appreciation for the sweetness of Torah. This is done through the art of questioning, expecting answers, engaging in discussion, and posing the next question.

And that is how, today, that young man serves as the Rosh Yeshiva.¹

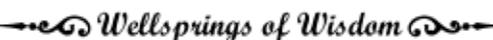
In truth, we find a source for this approach in the holy words of the Talmud...

They Suffered – You Can't Enter

On the sixth day of creation, Hashem created man, and in Parashat Bereshit, the process of his creation is described as follows, “Hashem Elokim formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Bereshit 2:7).

The Gemara raises the following question:² Why is the word יִיָּצַר (formed) spelled with two *yuds* (י) when it could have been written as יִצַּר with just one *yud*?

Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi responded, “Woe unto me from my Creator (מִיוֹצֵר), and woe to me from my inclination (מִיִּצְרִי).”



1. Maayan HaShavua (Bamidbar, p. 130)

2. Brachot 61a

A Jew is a remarkable creation, the only creation that combines both divinity and physicality. The divine soul within a Jew is literally a part of Hashem, while the animalistic soul is purely physical.

Since this is the case, a Jew's life is filled with an inner battle between their two inclinations, the good inclination (*yetzer hatov*) and the evil inclination (*yetzer hara*). This duality of the soul is expressed in the word יְיָצָר (formed) with two *yuds*: one *yud* for the creation of the good inclination and another for the creation of the evil inclination.

Therefore, when a person is

faced with a test, whether to sin or not, both inclinations within them awaken and begin to struggle. This internal battle creates intense inner turmoil, and one's soul is stretched to its utmost limit. At this moment, the person raises their eyes to the heavens and thinks, "Woe to me from my Creator - if I fail." Simultaneously, they think, "Woe to me from my inclination - if I do not fail, for it torments me to the utmost."

For young and simple individuals, this battle may be small.³ However, the greater the soul and the more souls that depend on it, the more intense the battle becomes.

~*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*~

3. *Chazal* say (Eicha Rabbah 2:13), "Wisdom among the nations - believe, Torah among the nations - do not believe!"

In Hashem's conduct, there is a measure called "wisdom," and there is a measure called "knowledge." The Torah represents the level of knowledge.

Chazal revealed to us that among the nations, there is wisdom, but there is no Torah within them. Even though wisdom can be found among the nations, Torah cannot be found among them, and this is a

fundamental distinction. So, what is unique about the Torah that is not found in wisdom?

The uniqueness of the Torah lies in its ultimate purpose: it is entirely directed toward rectifying this world. Just as Moshe Rabbeinu said to the angels when they disputed over who should receive the Torah, "Do any of you have an evil inclination? Do you have theft among you? Do any of you have envy? Do any of you struggle with daily life, with the never-ending trials that Hashem places before a person?"

Sukkot - They Suffered – You Can't Enter

In such a situation, the expression 'ויצַר' (formed) with two *yuds*, representing both inclinations, takes on a tremendous significance. During a test, permission is given to the evil inclination to utilize all of its weapons: the faculties of temptation, the stirring of emotions, the blurring of reason, the dimming of vision, the weakening of the heart and body, and more.

For us, the small and feeble, there is no understanding of such

powers. Therefore, we should not speak of them.

Now, after this introduction, we turn to the Talmudic story in tractate Bava Metzia:⁴

During one of his journeys, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi (commonly known as “Rabbi”) arrived in the town of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

The entire town gathered to honor Rabbi, and he conversed

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

The special aspect of being Jewish in the world is to connect Hashem’s conduct, which is the Torah, to the reality of this world, to the materiality of this world. Each person does so according to the trials they encounter. This connection, bridging heaven and earth, is achieved by going through the breaking process. In the middle of this, a person is in a constant state of breaking. Why is this middle point considered a breaking point? Because it is the middle ground between two completely opposite ends – the Torah on one side and materiality on the other. The person who chooses is positioned by Hashem between these two opposites to make a choice. Any situation that is not a situation of choice is not a human standing. Therefore, being a human being means being a chooser, and being

a chooser between these two opposites, is a state of never-ending breaking.

Why did Hashem specifically place us in this terrible state between these two opposing forces? It carries a deep meaning, unique to Hashem. One can learn this in the “Derech Hashem” of the Ramchal.

The nations do not choose. Material reality places them between two possibilities – one is more comfortable, and the other is less comfortable, and they “choose” the more comfortable option. But this is not a real choice. Even animals know where the greener grass is. But at the breaking point of true choice, they do not want to stand. That is why they did not accept the Torah.

- HaChaim Tafkid (p. 13)

4. Bava Metzia 85a

Sukkot - They Suffered – You Can't Enter

with them about town matters. In the course of their conversation, he asked them, “Does Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (who had already passed away), have a son?”

The people of the town replied, “Yes, he has a son who lives among us, and his name is Yosi. However, he has the evil inclination of a horse, and it is very difficult for him to maintain his sanctity.”

Rabbi was distressed, and he thought, “You cannot take something away from a person without offering something in return.”

So he asked, “Please, bring him to me.”

The son came, and Rabbi said to him, “You are the son of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai! I want to place my trust in you for a position of leadership.”

Yosi rode on a decorated, swift, and restless steed with four white horses to the central synagogue. There, before the entire town, he was dressed in an embroidered robe with silver and

gold threads, and a precious crown was placed upon his head.

The coronation ceremony concluded, and Rabbi called Yosi and said to him, “I have arranged a fine *chavruta* for you, Rabbi Shimon the son of Isi ben Lakonya.”

Yosi accepted the proposal, but within him, he felt the intense struggle of his two inclinations. The battle raged within him, and his internal conflict was palpable.

Rabbi Shimon, his *chavruta*, noticed his inner turmoil, the pain, and the trembling, as the battle unfolded within him. He knew that “you cannot take something away from a person without offering something in return,” and he extended a loving hand, full of appreciation, onto Yosi’s shoulder. Rabbi Yosi lifted his eyes and beheld his mentor.

“Rabbi Yosi, come with me.”

They got up and went together. They entered a house, and Rabbi Shimon placed Rabbi Yosi in front of a mirror.

“Look, Rabbi Yosi, gaze upon this reflection. Do you realize what

Sukkot - They Suffered – You Can't Enter

level you've reached? You are dressed in rabbinical clothing, and you bear the seal of Rabbi's court! Do you want to lose all of this?!"

Rabbi Yosi looked at his reflection, and he saw a radiant figure, graceful and charming. "Is this how I appear, with such strength?" he wondered.

Rabbi Yosi then averted his gaze and turned his thoughts to his evil inclination. Suddenly, from the depths of his contemplation, a dark and ominous figure emerged, wrapped in a black, veiled cloak, and beneath the hood, a pair of eyes glared with hatred and cruelty.

Rabbi Yosi approached the figure and said, "This is it! We're finished!" He grabbed it by the collar, and with one kick, he cast it out beyond the boundaries of his mind. Then he sealed the mental barriers, ensuring no foreign thoughts could enter.

Rabbi Yosi resumed his studies with zeal and enthusiasm.

Years passed, and Rabbi

Yosi grew and consecrated himself, ultimately attaining the status of a Tanna! At that point, he left his hometown and went to study in the academy of Rabbi.

Rabbi sat in his place, engrossed in his studies, when suddenly, his ears caught a familiar voice, a voice that transported him back to earlier years when he had taken the reins of leadership. "This is the voice of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Rabbi Yochai..."

Sitting beside him, someone remarked, "Rabbi, that's the voice of his son, Rabbi Yosi."

Rabbi was filled with excitement, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and one who acquires souls is wise" (Mishlei 11:30).

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life" - this is Rabbi Yosi, the son of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon who is his father's "fruit" and became a "tree of life," meaning he became a Torah scholar, all due to the merit of his righteous father.

Sukkot - Sukkah – Temporary Dwelling

“and one who acquires souls is wise” - this refers to Rabbi Shimon the son of Isi ben Lakonya, who taught Torah to Rabbi Yosi, and thus “acquired a soul,” as he is now considered his spiritual son.

The Gemara continues: When Rabbi Yosi passed away, they brought him to the burial cave of his father and grandfather (the cave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron).

They approached the cave’s entrance, but an enormous, threatening snake was waiting for them there, with a raised tail,

blocking their way. “No entry!”

Those accompanying the bed turned to the snake and said, “Allow us to bury the son next to his father.” However, the snake didn’t agree, and they were forced to bury him elsewhere.

Although Rabbi Yosi had achieved an exalted and sublime spiritual level, he was not permitted to enter the cave because he hadn’t suffered the same hardships as the cave’s inhabitants...

And now, after this introduction, we will move on to the holiday of Sukkot...

Sukkah – Temporary Dwelling

The holiday of Sukkot is a festival rich in unique mitzvot. Today, we have four main mitzvot associated with

Sukkot: dwelling in the Sukkah, taking the four species, rejoicing in the water-drawing ceremony (Simchat Beit HaShoeva),⁵ and the

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

5. There is a special mitzvah to rejoice during the holiday of Sukkot. Therefore, every night we hold celebrations and dancing, reminiscent of the joy that was present in the Beit HaMikdash - the “Simchat Beit HaShoevah,” which *Chazal* testified about, saying (Sukkah 51a), “One who has not seen the rejoicing at the Simchat Beit HaShoevah has never seen true joy.”

In this context, we found a story in the book *Maayan HaMoed* (Sukkot, p. 324):

It is told that students of the Vilna Gaon zt”l once asked him, “Rabbi, what is the most difficult mitzvah in the Torah?”

Shabbat, for example, is not a difficult mitzvah. While it has many laws, it is a regular occurrence, and, on the contrary,

Sukkot - Sukkah – Temporary Dwelling

“This day is for Israel light and joy.” It is a wonderful gift from the Creator. On Pesach, the careful avoidance of leaven might be considered challenging. Perhaps one of the most frequent mitzvot, like the love and fear of Hashem, “I have placed Hashem before me always.” Maybe the prohibition of diverting one’s attention from tefillin. Perhaps the mitzvah of, “Love your fellow as yourself,” “as yourself,” with no exceptions, no distinctions, no tricks and schemes. “As yourself,” exactly!

His astounding response left them astonished: The most difficult mitzvah to fulfill, is, “And you shall rejoice on your festival, and you shall be exceedingly happy” (Devarim 16:14).

The students were amazed. Isn’t joy a delightful and easy thing? But upon reflection, they realized how difficult it truly is. After all, it is an obligation from the Torah to be joyous for an uninterrupted span of eight days, about 200 hours, about 12,000 minutes! With many children, an upset wife, an interfering mother-in-law, a blemished lulav, cooled-off food, a broken-down car, and an electricity bill due - and you must not be upset, you must not grieve. Not only that, but it is incumbent upon you to make everyone around you happy, as the wife depends on her husband for joy, and you must make the children happy!

In this context, there is a true story that is moving and evokes a sense of wonder.

World War II broke out. Jewish blood was spilled like water. Jewish refugees concentrated in the United States, and for

all of them, family members in Europe were going up in flames. Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz, the Bostoner Rebbe zt”l organized a festive meal for Simchat Torah. He ignited the attendees, who burst into magnificent song. Suddenly, a voice of protest was heard from a torn and agitated heart, the heart of a devout Jew regarding the fate of his parents, “Rebbe, in Europe, Jewish blood is being spilled, and here you’re singing?!”

Immediately, the singing ceased, and everyone was ashamed, embarrassed at themselves. Indeed, how could they forget their tragedies? How could they divert their minds from their suffering and the agony of their family members?

In the stillness that ensued, the voice of the Rebbe was heard, quoting orally the words of the Rambam at the end of the Laws of Lulav (8:15), where he mentioned the joy of the Simchat Beit HaShoevah:

“**The** joy with which one should rejoice in fulfilling a mitzvah and the love of Hashem Who commanded them, is a great service.”

He quoted it - and wondered: Is joy work, toil, and effort? Isn’t it spontaneous, exuberant, with feet dancing in a joyous dance?

But the intention of the Rambam was only for our time and our era, he said. For times of darkness and concealment, sorrow and sighs, troubles and distress. Or at times when the eyes tear, the heart is heavy, the throat chokes, and sighs burst forth. Then, joy is indeed a service, a great service. And Jews, who have dedicated their lives to the

Sukkot - Sukkah – Temporary Dwelling

striking of the willow branches
on Hoshana Rabbah.

The obligation to sit in the Sukkah every day of the holiday is derived from the verses, “You shall dwell in Sukkot seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall dwell in Sukkot, so that your generations may know that I caused Bnei Israel to dwell in

Sukkot when I took them out of the land of Egypt, I am Hashem your G-d” (Vayikra 23:42-43).

The Gemara explains⁶ the words, “You shall dwell in Sukkot seven days,” as follows: The Torah said: One must leave their permanent dwelling and live in a temporary dwelling for all seven days.” This means that the Sukkah

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

service of Hashem in all generations, shall dedicate their lives to... rejoicing and celebrating! Come, Jews, let us sing to our Creator. And the merit of this mitzvah will break through with an entreaty in favor of our loved ones, to lead them toward life...

And the singing that was interrupted resumed. A song of joy - and supplication...

This is a true story, touching and arousing admiration. The warmth of holy, righteous Jews, “Who are like you, O Israel!” Let us thank Hashem that we live in a time of kindness, and that Baruch Hashem, joy isn’t categorized as “a great service,” but “a small service,” to overcome the narrowness of the soul and sorrow, of hardship and sadness, of troubles and grief, and to fulfill it in its simplicity, “And you shall be exceedingly happy.” Let us be happy and make others happy!

A small lesson for us - because some believe that the Torah only demands the

fulfillment of mitzvot, “do this” and “do not do that,” and if you pay “the tax,” you are not required to change. They do not consider individuality and emotions. But from this mitzvah, we see that the mitzvot also relate to a person’s emotions and demand absolute self-control over one’s feelings, even to the extent of prohibiting even a slight sadness for a whole week!

Furthermore, the Creator does not demand more from us than we are capable of, and He does not act tyrannically with His creations. Therefore, the wicked cry when they see that they had the ability to overcome their desires, and they are justified in judgment since the judgment is true.

And since it is so, this mitzvah is within our capability to fulfill!

Let’s try - and we will succeed!

6. Sukkah 2a

Sukkot - Shade of The Sukkah

must be constructed in a way that it can serve as a temporary dwelling for the entire holiday. A Sukkah with a roof higher than twenty cubits from the ground is invalid, as it resembles a permanent dwelling rather than a temporary one.

The Sukkah must be constructed under the open sky. Building a Sukkah under a balcony or under the branches of a tree connected to the ground renders the Sukkah invalid. If someone lacks a balcony or courtyard to build their Sukkah and constructs it in the street, they must be cautious not to disturb passersby.

Throughout the year, a Jewish person lives within the comfort of their home, a sheltered and well-equipped space where everything they need is at their

fingertips. Then comes the holiday of Sukkot, and the holy Torah commands them to step outside and build a Sukkah. Besides the physical discomfort, the Sukkah is often located in the street, so people passing by can see how one eats, sleeps, and converses inside. All this is done without the usual comforts and privacy that one enjoys in their home.

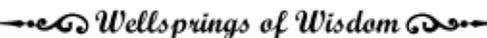
It seems that during Sukkot, Hashem takes away some of our comfort. But, as we've learned, "It is impossible to take something away from a person without giving them something else in return." The question is, what does Hashem give us in return for the discomfort of the Sukkah?

Before we delve into this question, let's pose another one.

Shade of The Sukkah

When the Gemara sought to describe sitting in the Sukkah, it used the term "shade." Thus, it says,⁷ "A person sits in the shade of a Sukkah."

Similarly, when the Zohar sought to describe sitting in the Sukkah, it also used the concept "shade." It says,⁸ "A person should see themselves



7. Sukkah 2a

8. Zohar HaKadosh (Parashat Emor 103a)

sitting beneath the shade of
emuna.”

When Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz zt”l learned this, he wondered:⁹

The Sukkah is a structure with hollow spaces that can accommodate a person inside. The Sukkah creates two types of shade: one for those inside the Sukkah and another extending outward from the Sukkah.

Despite the commonality between these two shades, there’s a difference when it comes to referring to a person’s location:

Avraham - Man of Love

Hundreds of years have passed since the creation of the world, millions of people were born and passed away, generations came and went... Yet, throughout that entire period, there wasn’t a single person worthy of being called a “Man of Kindness.”

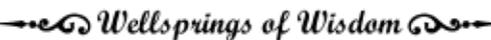
The essence of the Sukkah is its roof covering (*schach*), not the shade. Therefore, when we talk about a person sitting inside the Sukkah, we say they are sitting beneath the Sukkah, which is the primary aspect.

But what about a person sitting outside the Sukkah, enjoying the shade cast by the Sukkah? Can we say that they are sitting in the shade of the Sukkah? And if so, why did our sages refer to someone sitting in the Sukkah as “sitting in the shade of a Sukkah?”

Before we answer these two questions, let’s return to the Book of Bereshit...

Hashem looked down and saw that there was no one, and He said,¹⁰ “How long shall the world be conducted in darkness? Let there be light!”

In the year 1948 from the creation of the world, the soul of Avraham Avinu descended into



9. Zera Kodesh (Vol. 2, 56a)

10. Bereshit Rabbah 2:3

the world. This soul succeeded in strengthening human beings and encouraging them with words of love, caring for their success, and having them in his mind and heart constantly.

Rivers of love flowed from his heart to all people, wellsprings of compassion gushed forth from his pure eyes, and he carried them all on his mind and in his heart, arousing compassion upon them, sweetening judgments from upon them, and ensuring their spiritual and physical sustenance...

All the hosts of heaven trembled and rejoiced when they witnessed Avraham's acts of kindness. One single and solitary person succeeded in enlivening and sustaining countless human beings...

The sole purpose and delight of his life were to perform acts of kindness in the world, both spiritual and physical kindness as one. "You will give truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham" (Micha 7:20) – he was the symbol of kindness for all the inhabitants of the world. His home, a royal palace, was open wide to all

passersby, both important guests and seemingly ordinary travelers. Avraham provided for them not only to satisfy their hunger but more than Shlomo HaMelech's feasts in his time. And not only for important people but even for those who seemed insignificant...

At the age of 99, Avraham received the mitzvah of circumcision, and he fulfilled it with joy.

On the third day after his circumcision, Avraham sat exhausted and weakened at the entrance of his tent, waiting for guests. He yearned for visitors, but Hashem had no desire for Avraham to exert himself in receiving guests. He caused scorching heat and immense humidity to fill the world...

Avraham had never experienced such a day before, a day without any visitors at all, not even a single guest! He was filled with immense sorrow... not physical but moral distress. "I have no one to perform kindness with! At this moment, I am living without any act of kindness!"

Sukkot - Three Gifts

Seeing his distress, Hashem sent him three angels in the guise of men to fulfill the mitzvah of hospitality. Avraham ran to greet them and said, “Please come into my home, and I will prepare a small meal for you with water and bread, and then you can continue on your way.” And they agreed.

He said to them, “Let a little water be brought and bathe your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. I will get bread

and you will sustain your heart. Afterwards you will continue on your way” (Bereshit 18:4-5).

The Midrash says¹¹ that for every word he said to them, Hashem rewarded him. And through his saying, “and rest yourselves under the tree,” we merited the mitzvah of the Sukkah! Thus, the mitzvah of the Sukkah was created through an act of kindness with others...

Let’s jump ahead about 400 years...

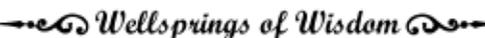
Three Gifts

The years of slavery in Egypt came to an end, and Hashem sent His messengers, Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam, to redeem His children. “For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, and I sent before you Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam” (Micha 6:4).

The Targum explains why three messengers were needed, saying, “I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and I redeemed

you from the house of bondage. I sent before you three prophets: Moshe to absolve your judgments, Aharon to atone for your nation, and Miriam to provide a shining light for the women.”

Thus, the main task of Moshe Rabbeinu was to teach the Torah to Am Israel. The primary role of Aharon HaKohen was to atone for Am Israel (through his service in offering sacrifices and his holy prayers). Miriam the prophetess’s primary



11. Bereshit Rabbah 48:10

Sukkot - Aharon HaKohen

role was to impart holiness and purity to the women of Am Israel and to instruct them in matters related to their mitzvot.

Therefore, three messengers were needed because each of them had their unique qualities.

The Gemara further elaborates and says,¹² “Three precious gifts were given to Am Israel in their (Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam’s) merit: the well, the cloud, and the mann.

The well - through Miriam’s merit.

For all forty years that Bnei Israel wandered in the wilderness, there was a rock that accompanied them, and water flowed from it.

This rock, called “the well,” was provided through Miriam’s merit.

The cloud - through Aharon’s merit.

The pillar of cloud that went before Bnei Israel in the wilderness to guide them and make their path straight was provided through Aharon’s merit.

The mann - through Moshe’s merit.

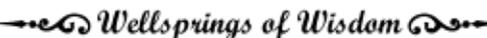
The mann that descended for them to eat was provided through Moshe’s merit.

We won’t go into detail on this now, but we will focus on the clouds that came through Aharon’s merit...

Aharon HaKohen

The Zohar testifies regarding Aharon HaKohen as follows,¹³ “Throughout his entire life, Aharon endeavored to increase peace in the world!”

Similarly, it is brought in Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah,¹⁴ “So should a person do, making peace between each person and their fellow, and between a man



12. Taanit 9a

13. Zohar HaKadosh (Parashat Emor 88a)

14. Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah (ch. 31)

Sukkot - Aharon HaKohen

and his wife. And thus did Aharon HaKohen; he intended and made peace: Between Israel and their Heavenly Father, between Israel and the sages, between one sage and another, between Israel and each other, and between husband and wife...”

Many details of his tremendous work in bringing peace are not in our hands, but we do have one Midrash:¹⁵

In Aharon’s time, there were thousands of couples among Bnei Israel who wanted to separate from each other. As soon as Aharon HaKohen heard about

such a couple, he would hurry to them and say, “I absolutely disagree with this in any way. If you respect me, you will make peace between yourselves.” Out of their shame before Aharon HaKohen and their love for him, they would make an effort and make peace between themselves. Then, after some time, when they had a child, they would name him “Aharon” in his honor, because this child was born only thanks to Aharon HaKohen’s efforts to make peace.¹⁶

The Midrash continues and says, “On the day of Aharon

 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

15. Masechet Kallah Rabbati (ch. 3)

16. The following story took place in Jerusalem, about thirty years ago.

A young man from the old settlement became associated with some bad influences, and they led him astray. Gradually, he removed all the clothing that he wore in accordance with his family’s tradition. Even the *shtreimel* that he would wear on Shabbat (as is the custom in Jerusalem, where even young men wear a *shtreimel* on Shabbat) was removed from his list of clothing, and everyone was saddened to see the “offshoots” wither and fall.

One day, as he stood at the beginning of the chapter of *ish mekadesh*, he realized that in this manner, he would not find a bride through a regular family. Therefore, he began to slowly return to the path of his ancestors. Among other things, he started wearing his family’s traditional clothing again, except for the *shtreimel*.

Even after he married a woman and established a faithful Jewish home, he did not return to wearing the *shtreimel*.

As his marriage blossomed beautifully and his household found great success and peace, he gradually distanced himself

Sukkot - Aharon HaKohen

from his bad companions. He attached himself to good friends and naturally returned to the path of righteousness and goodness. He “returned to his family and the inheritance of his ancestors,” even in terms of clothing, except for the *shтреimel*, which he didn’t put on his head.

However, the time came when that too came back. He bought a *shтреimel* for two thousand dollars. He brought it home, but his wife was shocked and not happy at all with this “treasure.” She said, “I have already gotten used to seeing you without the *shтреimel*, and I don’t want you to change now from what we’ve been accustomed to until now.”

In response, her husband said, “But I’ve already spent so much money on this.” The *shalom bayit* was shaken. She cried over it, and he accused her, and so on...

Unhappy with the situation, he turned to Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l and poured out his heart, seeking a fair solution.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach said to him, “For the sake of two thousand dollars, will you disrupt the peace in your home and send away the Shechina that dwells in your home? You know very well that in all your spiritual matters, you rely on your righteous and capable wife, who has supported you all along, and now, for the sake of one *shтреimel*, you will ruin all the good in your home?”

In response, the husband said, “But what should I do with such a significant financial loss?” (Because he was an *avrech* engaged in Torah study full-time).

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach went to his own closet, took out two thousand dollars, gave it to the husband, and said to him, “Agree to sell me the *shтреimel* in question, for my *shтреimel* has already worn out, and it is no longer suitable for me to wear on Shabbat and other special occasions.”

Needless to say, the husband gladly sold it to Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach for the specified amount. It goes without saying that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach did not measure the *shтреimel* to see if it was of the right size for his head.

Thus, this “deal” ended with great joy, and peace and harmony were restored in the home.

On the following Friday evening, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach happily put on the new *shтреimel* with great joy and celebration and went to the synagogue for the Friday night prayers. The *shтреimel* was significantly larger than Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach’s head, and every so often, he had to hold it from the other side so that it wouldn’t fall off his head...

When Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach came home, he was asked, “Even if you wanted to bring peace to that man’s home and spent a lot of money on it, why would you still make a mockery of yourself and wear the *shтреimel* that’s much bigger than your head?”

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach shook his head and said with joy, “A *shтреimel* like this, which has brought peace to a Jewish home, I would wear it

Sukkot - The Blessing

HaKohen's passing, thirty-two thousand young men (named Aharon after him) accompanied his bed. These young men were born thanks to the peace that Aharon HaKohen had created between their parents."

The Zohar (ibid.) continues and says, "Because Aharon HaKohen endeavored throughout his entire life to increase peace in the world, Hashem chose him to draw down from the heavens kindness to the world!"

The Blessing

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes:¹⁷

The purpose of lighting the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash was to shine light unto the world. The person most suitable for this holy task was Aharon HaKohen because his primary trait was the trait of kindness, a good, loving heart, full of the desire to give, and as Chazal say,¹⁸ "Aharon HaKohen would love peace and pursue peace, love humanity and draw them closer to Torah." This is what lighting the menorah symbolized, spreading light and kindness.

This is why Aharon HaKohen also merited serving as a channel to draw down blessing on all of Am Israel with the mitzvah to bless them in the *Birkat HaKohanim*. For the impact of the blessing depends on the goodness of the heart and the eye of the blesser, as it says, "[A person with] a good eye יְבָרֵךְ (is blessed)" (Mishlei 22:9), and Chazal say¹⁹ that we shouldn't read it "יְבָרֵךְ" (is blessed), but, "יְבָרֵךְ" (will bless), that is, has the power to bless. Thus, since Aharon HaKohen excelled in this trait in an extraordinary

 *Wellsprings of Wisdom* 

even in the middle of the week. Not only that, but I would want to be buried with it, for the greatness of bringing peace to a Jewish home is immeasurable."

- Umatok HaOhr (Nissuin, p. 643)

17. Imrei Noam (Parashat Behaalotcha, Maamar 1)

18. Pirkei Avot 1:12

19. Sotah 38b

Sukkot - The Blessing

way, he merited that the key to drawing blessing down unto Am Israel be given to him and his descendants after him for eternity.

We meet this trait of a “good heart” later on in the parasha regarding Aharon HaKohen’s brother, Moshe Rabbeinu, when Yehoshua told him that Eldad and Maydad were prophesying in the camp and requested to stop their prophesying in Moshe’s honor. Moshe Rabbeinu then said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? May all of Hashem’s people be prophets, and that Hashem place His Spirit upon them!” (Bamidbar 11:29). From the goodness of Moshe Rabbeinu’s heart, he was happy at the fact that another two Jews merited receiving prophecy. He didn’t take it as a slight to his honor in any way. On the contrary, he rejoiced!

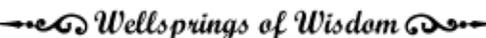
Therefore, these two tzaddikim, as well as all the tzaddikim throughout the generations who followed in their path, were

blessed by Hashem to perform open miracles, changing all the laws of nature by the decree of their mouths. For the nature of flesh and blood is to care, first and foremost, for themselves, and their primary joy is in their own success.

On the other hand, this aspect of goodness of the heart and one’s joy in another’s success, as well as the desire to be concerned about others more than oneself, is the very opposite of human nature. And since these tzaddikim merited changing their human nature and attaining the trait of a “good heart” towards others, measure for measure, Hashem gave them the power to change the laws of nature of the world.

According to the above, we can also understand what Chazal say,²⁰ “Anyone who teaches Torah to the son of someone unlearned, even if Hashem issues a harsh decree, He nullifies it for his sake.”

That is, naturally, a son continues in the ways of his



Sukkot - The Blessing

father, and if the father is unlearned, then his son will be so as well. If so, someone who teaches Torah to the son of someone unlearned and helps him ascend and become a Talmid Chacham, he thus changed nature! Therefore, his reward, measure for measure, is that Hashem will change the laws of nature according to his decree, and even the decrees of Hashem Himself, he has the power to nullify.

This is the primary *avodah* of every Jew – to remove the evil human nature inherent within oneself, and to develop the sublime trait of a “good heart” towards others, until one rejoices with all their heart in the happiness of the other and is concerned about

them just as one is concerned about themselves and even more so, as well as to give others from what Hashem has given them, as the chassid says, “Mine is yours, and yours is yours.”²¹

A relevant point to emphasize is that after one understands HaRav Yoram’s words, one might think, “Indeed, by focusing on others, one can illuminate the world. But I am willing to forgo this virtue and focus only on myself, thereby illuminating myself.”

Such a person should understand that without relating to others, one does not reach anything!²²

After we understand Aharon’s *avodah*, we will understand why the clouds came in his merit...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

21. Pirkei Avot 5:10

22. **The** ultimate goal is to cultivate inner appreciation for others. However, even if this level is currently distant from us, we are not exempt from trying to improve ourselves.

In this context, we found the following story:

In a certain European town where there was no mikveh, there is no need to detail the great harm and sorrow caused by this. Eventually, a tzaddik arrived there and decided to address the issue. He asked the residents who could help with funding the mikveh, and he received an answer that, indeed, there was a wealthy Jewish man in the town, but there was

Sukkot - The Blessing

no point in approaching him, neither about Jewish matters nor donations. The tzaddik declared that with Hashem's help, a solution would be found.

After a few days, the wealthy man approached the tzaddik privately, stating, "I cannot stand my wife; my life is gehinom. I request that the rabbi pray for her to die." The tzaddik responded that he doesn't pray for Jews to die, but he could offer advice. He quoted a passage from the Gemara (Shabbat 32b), "Because of vows, a man's wife dies." If you make a public vow and don't fulfill it, your wife will die. So, I suggest you publicly vow to build a mikveh in the town, and it will be evident that you don't intend to fulfill it. Thus, your problem will be solved.

The wealthy man was pleased with this advice and immediately went to the synagogue's podium, declaring that he would build a mikveh in the town. After several weeks, he returned to the tzaddik with great agitation, saying, "My wife is getting worse; there is not even a sign of progress. What is the purpose of the rabbis' decree? You told me this would solve my problem, but it hasn't worked." The tzaddik replied, "What is written in the Gemara is meant as a punishment. To receive that "punishment," you must act as if it is a genuine desire. You need to behave kindly towards your wife, show her respect, and speak to her kindly, as if you genuinely want to make the relationship better. Then, heaven will see this as punishment, and hopefully,

the advice I gave you will be fulfilled."

The wealthy man left, followed the advice, and started treating his wife with kindness.

After several more weeks had passed, the wealthy man returned to the tzaddik in great distress, saying, "My wife is deteriorating rapidly; I fear for her life. Please, help me..." The tzaddik responded in amazement, "But this is what you initially requested. Now, the remedy is beginning to work, just as I told you. Please wait a little longer; I believe it won't take much time..."

The wealthy man, frustrated, exclaimed, "You don't understand, rabbi! I no longer want my wife to die. After following your advice and starting to show respect and kindness to my wife, her behavior has changed. I now enjoy being with her; I'm no longer in gehinom but in Gan Eden. I refuse to part with my wife in any way. Please, do something!" The tzaddik replied, "If that's the case, there's no other option. You must fulfill your vow and build the mikveh."

This story teaches us how deep change can occur as a result of external changes made by one party. The wealthy man's kind behavior towards his wife, done in the hope that it would lead to her death, was enough to make her feel the change and modify her own behavior. This story emphasizes that if we strive to be better, respectful, and loving in our relationships with genuine intentions to improve them, there can be significant benefits.

In Aharon's Merit

The holy sages of the Zohar sat and delved into the teachings of the holiday of Sukkot, with each one expounding his own novel insights granted to him by Hashem.

When the turn of Rabbi Yehuda came, he said as follows:²³ All those years that the Jews spent in the wilderness under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu were years of kindness.

The conduct of Hashem with Am Israel during these years was characterized by acts of kindness, and there were many different types of lights emanating from various forms of kindness upon the Jews.

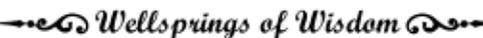
However, the highest form of kindness that was revealed during this time was the manifestation of the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the entire camp of Israel. This kindness (which brought about the Clouds of Glory) emanated from the supreme level of kindness.

We merited this supreme kindness through the *avodah* of Aharon HaKohen. Only through his merit did we have the privilege of being enveloped by the Clouds of Glory.

The reason for this is that Aharon was a man of kindness, and every cloud is an aspect of kindness, as it says, "And the cloud of Hashem was upon them by day" (Bamidbar 10:34), and "by day" refers only to kindness, as it says, "In the **day**, Hashem will command His **kindness**" (Tehillim 42:9).

The Zohar continues and says, "That same supernal light that shone then, in the merit of Aharon, returns and illuminates anew each year during the seven days of Sukkot, within the space of the Sukkah..."

After this lengthy introduction, we can address the second question: Why did our sages refer to dwelling in the Sukkah as "sitting in the shade of the Sukkah?"



23. Zohar HaKadosh (Parashat Emor 102b) according to the commentary of *Matok M'Dvash*.

Sukkot - The Heavenly Shadow

In this merit, many blessings will pour down on them just as we find that one who gives tzedakah to the poor and encourages and brings them joy from their good and merciful heart is blessed abundantly.

We find an allusion to this in the verse, “The act of tzedakah shall be peace and the *avodah* of tzedakah, serenity and sureness forever” (Yeshayahu 32:17) – This

verse speaks of the reward of tzedakah and chesed to others. The source of the verse is the book of Yeshayahu, chapter לב (32), verse יז (17), which alludes to the trait of a “good heart” (chapter לב – the word לֵב meaning “heart,” verse יז – which is the gematria of the word טוב meaning “good”), and as a result of this trait, a person will merit an abundance of blessing...

The Heavenly Shadow

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zt”l* writes:²⁴

There exists above an exceedingly exalted heavenly Sukkah, derived from the Supreme Emanator, and His blessed light radiates within it.

This heavenly Sukkah casts its shadow over all the Jews

who sit in a kosher Sukkah. That is why we refer to someone dwelling in the Sukkah as “sitting in the shade of the Sukkah,” and this shade is none other than the shade of the heavenly Sukkah!

Now, let’s return to the first question...

The True Reality of The Home

Indeed, during the seven days of Sukkot, we willingly forego our physical comforts.

However, in return, Hashem grants us an invaluable gift!

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

He bestows upon us the ability to encompass the reality of others in general and the reality of our spouses in particular.

For further clarification:

The term “home” has two meanings, one external and one internal. The external interpretation of home refers to a place where the body can find rest and replenish its strength. It’s a place where the body is shielded from the storms and harsh elements of the outside world.

The internal interpretation of home is a place where people live together in peace and unity. It’s where the souls dwelling within are completely unified.

During the festival of Sukkot, Hashem commands us to leave our external homes, to forego our physical comforts, and to enter the Sukkah. Hashem doesn’t take away from a person without giving something in return. Underneath the external home, He provides us with tools and abilities to enter the inner sanctum of the home !...

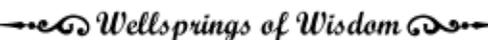
The Kaf HaChaim (Sofer) writes²⁵ that whoever is meticulous in observing the mitzvah of Sukkah and fulfills it as prescribed is guaranteed that there will be no arguments in their home that year. This is hinted at in the verse, “You conceal them in the Sukkah from the strife of tongues” (Tehillim 31:21).

Let’s delve even deeper...

Aharon HaKohen merited, through the attribute of peace, to encompass the reality of others and to understand his own soul. This power is drawn down from heaven upon every Jew, especially upon a husband and wife.

A husband and wife have two entirely different soul qualities, and when they marry, they merge two entirely different worlds. They both come from different families, different parents, and have distinct natures.

Therefore, after the wedding, the work begins...



Sukkot - Shalom Bayit

To merit living a life of perpetual peace requires tremendous effort.

Hence, the gift of the days of Sukkot is a significant one...

Shalom Bayit

Many people approach me and say, “Rabbi, bless me with *shalom bayit*.” And I want to help them, but I know that a blessing for *shalom bayit* isn’t just granted!

A blessing for *shalom bayit* is like a person wandering the streets, hungry and thirsty, searching for a place to eat. While wandering, they see an ultra-Orthodox Jew walking down the street, they approach him, and say, “Rabbi, bless me to be satisfied.”

The man replies, “Such blessings won’t help you in the street. Come with me to my home, and there I will bless you.” He leads them to his home, sets a table before them, and provides a hearty meal...

Exactly the same goes for *shalom bayit*; to succeed, you need to take action.

Those who don’t invest shouldn’t expect results. To invest means to learn to listen to one another. A good husband is one who knows how to listen and can understand and empathize with his wife. A good couple doesn’t let a day pass without having a shared conversation.

When I hear couples saying phrases like, “We stay together for the sake of the children,” I feel deep sorrow in my heart. I regret the pitiful state they’ve reached. Instead of accepting and understanding one another, they’re fighting like children. The husband must learn to recognize the good qualities in his wife and to thank Hashem for the woman whom He gave him with wonderful and precise wisdom.²⁶

Hashem adjusts to each person exactly to their needs. Whatever is

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

26. There is a story told about a Sultan from Istanbul who once said to the Chief

Rabbi in his kingdom, “You Jews claim that Hashem arranges marriages, and

Sukkot - Shalom Bayit

lacking in them, Hashem gives to his wife so that through this, they can truly unite in mind and heart, reaching the highest level of unity in their hearts and souls. Through this unity, they will attain the great gift where their strengths are shared. All her qualities will be engraved in his

soul, and his outstanding qualities will be engraved in her soul.

Such a couple can always succeed in understanding each other. In such a couple, you will never see a problem of *shalom bayit*. You will never hear arguments. Each one will love the

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

flesh and blood cannot do so. However, I believe that flesh and blood can indeed arrange marriages, and I can do it too.”

The Rabbi replied, “If you think you can arrange marriages, then go ahead and try. But I assure you that you will not succeed.” The Sultan said, “I am willing to try, and I am confident that I will succeed.”

After a few days, the Sultan met a young and attractive unmarried woman. He gave her a letter and instructed her to deliver it to one of his ministers who was also unmarried, promising her a hundred gold coins in return. The Sultan wrote in the letter that the minister was commanded to marry the woman who gave him the letter. The young woman, however, encountered an elderly and needy woman on her way, who asked for charity to buy food. Touched by the old woman’s plight, she gave her the letter and told her to go to the designated minister, saying that he would give her a hundred gold coins. The elderly woman was delighted with

this offer and went to the minister, handing him the letter.

Sometime later, the Sultan held a banquet and invited all his ministers. Various delicious desserts were served on the table. Surprisingly, the Sultan noticed that one of his ministers took a piece of halva and put it in his pocket. The Sultan asked him in astonishment, “Why are you putting this food in your pocket?” The minister replied, “I have an elderly wife who cannot chew hard food, so I am taking this soft halva for her.”

The Sultan was puzzled and asked, “But isn’t your wife a young woman?” The minister replied, “My lord, I did as you commanded me. I married the elderly woman who delivered the letter to me.”

The Sultan investigated the matter further and realized what the young woman had done. He immediately went to the Chief Rabbi and said, “Moshe is true, and his Torah is true. Only Hashem can arrange marriages!”

- Avraham Yagel (Chupah V’Kiddushin, p. 255)

Sukkot - Shabbat Shalom !

other more than themselves. The other will be more precious to them than themselves. Usually, these are healthy people, and their approach to raising children is a healthy one. These are characteristics of people who do not treat building a home as child's play.

It's important to clarify: The

intention is not that couples need to be "identical," as they are different people, but they need to be "harmonized" - where all their actions stem from unity of heart and teamwork.

And if we can merit all this in the merit of the Sukkah, what are we waiting for...

Shabbat Shalom !





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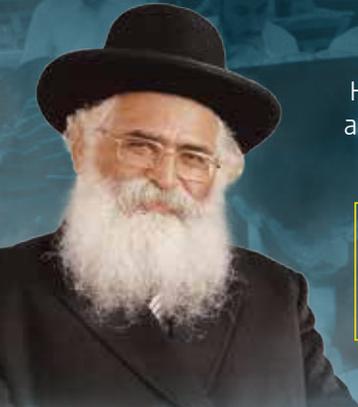
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Shabbat Times Sukkot

15th of Tishrei, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	6:24 pm	7:20 pm	7:53 pm
Miami	6:52 pm	7:43 pm	8:21 pm
Los Angeles	6:23 pm	7:16 pm	7:51 pm
Montreal	6:21 pm	7:21 pm	7:49 pm
Toronto	6:44 pm	7:43 pm	8:13 pm
London	6:25 pm	7:30 pm	7:54 pm
Jerusalem	6:12 pm	7:00 pm	7:43 pm
Tel Aviv	6:09 pm	6:57 pm	7:39 pm
Haifa	6:08 pm	6:56 pm	7:38 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:09 pm	6:57 pm	7:39 pm

Pathways to the Heart

*From the Words of
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

When a Jew studies Torah, they become close to Hashem. There is no greater acquisition in the world than this closeness, for one whom Hashem is with, lacks nothing; they have everything.

Therefore, Hashem says: Study My Torah, by which you will be close to Me, and thus I shall be with you, I will never forsake you.

Hence, when a person studies and/or upholds the Torah, they, too, acquire this closeness to Hashem, and through this they merit that all their descendants will be Bnei Torah.



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