

Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future
Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

Sukkot To-Go

5771

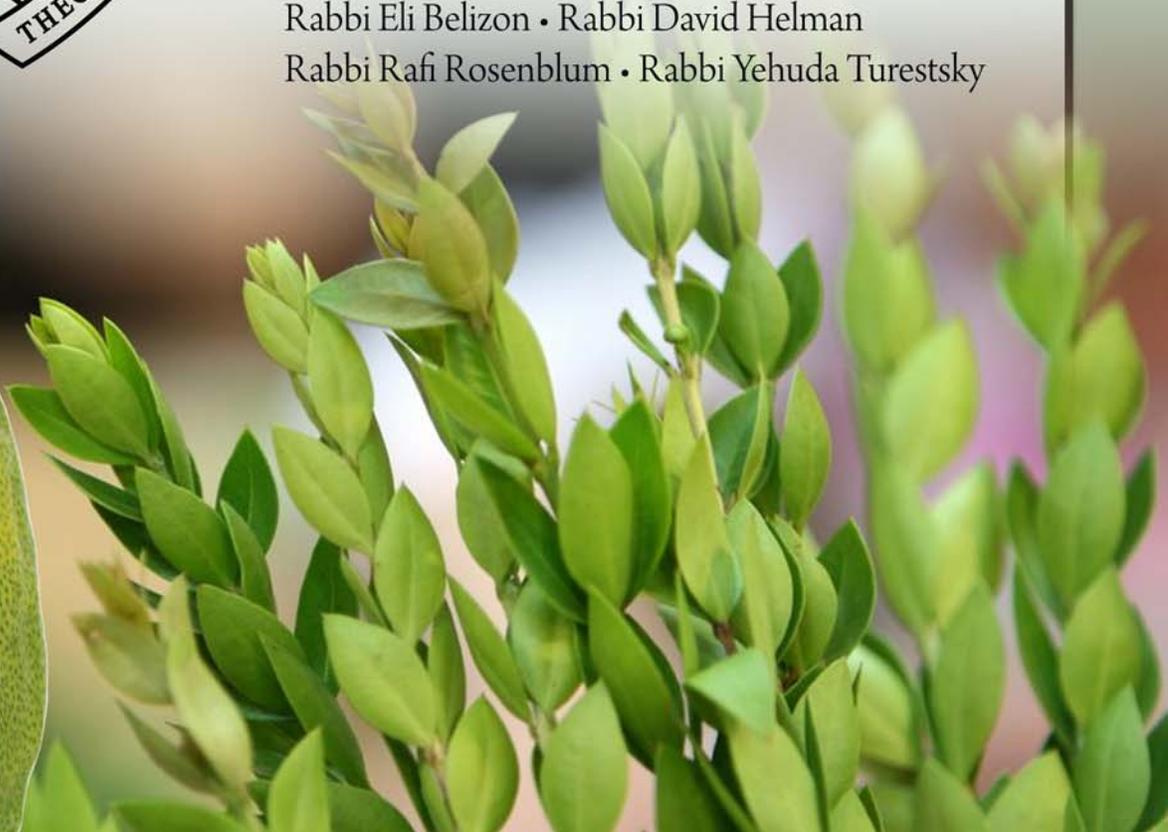


Featuring Divrei Torah from

Rabbi Elchanan Adler • Rabbi Azarya Berzon
Rabbi Kenneth Brander • Rabbi Joshua Flug
Ms. Miriam Krupka • Mrs. Chaya Batya Neugroschl
Mrs. Deena Rabinovich • Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Plus a collection of insights from members of the YU RIETS Kollel Elyon

Rabbi Eli Belizon • Rabbi David Helman
Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum • Rabbi Yehuda Turetsky



The Marcos and Adina Katz
YU Torah Online
 A Project of Yeshiva University
 Center for the Jewish Future

Speakers & Authors | Contact Us | Publications | Sponsorship | Daf: Shevuos 44

Shiurim on Sefer Tanya
 Rabbi Zev Reichman

Contemporary Medical Ethics
 Rabbi Kenneth Brander

YU Torah.org

A Project of Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future

Daily Shiur • Daf Yomi • Parshat HaShavua • Halacha • History • Machshava • and much more!

Over 35,000 shiurim and articles and growing every day. All materials available for download completely free. Subscribe to a podcast or e-mail subscription of your favorite speaker or series. There's something for everyone on the largest web site for Jewish learning online.

New Features:

- Comment on a shiur
- Contact a speaker or author with a question
- Download more than one shiur at a time
- Save your browsing history
- And stay tuned for more!

About Us
 YU Torah Online is made possible by the generous support of the Marcos and Adina Katz and the Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future.

Popular Search Terms
 111- 5769 adif Aids amalek avudraham ba'alav b'ay bava burack carlebach Century Chazon Chullin dating David eicha Elul EREZ excrement fava HaKipurim halacha Haib Hashmita responsa Tochacha" isaacson joshua flug Kinot Kohanim Laining life minel non-jews parsha pesach PTA rosnor shabbat shelach Shemel minute halacha "The Halachot three tisha tisha bay tisha wieder Yeshaya

Recently Viewed
 Shlomo Schachter: Sanhedrin 27 Chazara 6
 Jason Sacks: Inyonei Pesach
 Hollman: SAR Video Shiurim
 Han Balk: The Obligation to Respect the Wife...

Recently Uploaded
 Yehonatan Ehrman: Chaye Sarah: When Learning And Kn...
 Yeh Leibowitz: Shevuos Daf 44 - Mashkon/Shome...
 Nachem Kagan: Shevuos44-Michael Fruchter
 Yehonatan Ehrman: Kibbud U'mora Aviv Vi'atshes Aviv

Most Popular Shiurim
 R' Aharon Kahn: Ahava and Yitahlonim
 R' Lawrence Hajoiff: Oy it Hurts
 R' Zvi Sobolofsky: The Power of the
 R' Shalom Rosner: Mamiechat Kohanim

Recent Shiur Yomi
 R' Michael Rosensweig: 9-asham
 R' Baruch Simon: The Halachot of
 R' Hershel Schachter: Shiur #38 David Shatz
 R' Zvi Sobolofsky: When is one

Richard M Joel, President, Yeshiva University
 Rabbi Kenneth Brander, The David Mitzner Dean, Center for the Jewish Future

Rabbi Robert Shur, General Editor
 Rabbi Michael Dubitsky, Editor

Copyright © 2010
 All rights reserved by Yeshiva University

Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future
 500 West 185th Street, Suite 413, New York, NY 10033
 office@yutorah.org • 212.960.5400 x 5313

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with appropriate respect.
 For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Andrew Goldsmith at 212.960.5852 or agoldsm1@yu.edu.

Table of Contents

Sukkot 2010/5771

Yom Kippur and Sukkos: Twin Symbols of Jewish Unity Rabbi Elchanan Adler	Page 5
Travelers on Succot Rabbi Azarya Berzon	Page 10
Scribing our Covenant: A Vision for Orthodoxy Rabbi Kenneth Brander	Page 16
The Transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkot Rabbi Joshua Flug	Page 22
Moshe Rabbeinu: An Angel Amongst Men Ms. Miriam Krupka	Page 28
Zman Simchateinu: Understanding the Happiness of Sukkot Mrs. Chaya Batya Neugrosch	Page 36
The Season of Holidays and the Dedication of the Mikdash Mrs. Deena Rabinovich	Page 39
The Beauty and the Least Rabbi Moshe Taragin	Page 47
Sukkot Insights from Members of the RIETS Kollel Elyon Rabbi Eli Belizon, Rabbi David Helman, Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum, Rabbi Yehuda Turetsky	Page 55

Dear Friends,

It is my sincere hope that the Torah found in this virtual ספר may serve to enhance your יום טוב (holiday) and your לימוד (study).

We have designed this project not only for the individual, studying alone, but perhaps even more for a חברותא (a pair studying together) that wish to work through the study matter together, or a group engaged in facilitated study.

With this material, we invite you to join our *Beit Midrash*, wherever you may be, ולהאדירה להגדיל תורה (to increase and enjoy the splendor of Torah) and to engage in discussing issues that touch on a most contemporary matter, and are rooted in the timeless arguments of our great sages from throughout the generations.

Chag Sameiach,

Rabbi Kenneth Brander

The David Mitzner Dean

Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future

Yom Kippur and Sukkos: Twin Symbols of Jewish Unity

Rabbi Elchanan Adler

Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

Motifs of Unity in Sukkos

One of the central motifs of Sukkos is Jewish unity. The midrash depicts the *arba'ah minim* as representative of different categories of Jews. The *esrog*, which has a good taste along with a pleasant aroma, symbolizes the Jew who is brimming with Torah and *maasim tovim* [good deeds]. The *lulav*, which has a taste but no smell, typifies the Jew who is knowledgeable in Torah but deficient in *maasim tovim*. The *hadass*, which has a sweet aroma but lacks taste, corresponds to the Jew who excels in good deeds but is bereft of Torah knowledge. Lastly, the *arava*, which possesses neither taste nor smell, personifies the Jew who lacks both Torah and *maasim tovim*. Based on this typology, the midrash concludes:

Said Hakadosh Baruch Hu: to destroy them is impossible; rather, let them come together as one group and they will atone for one another

Vayikra Rabba 30:12

אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לאבדם אי אפשר אלא יעשו
כולן אגודה אחת והן מכפרין אלו על אלו
ויקרא רבה ל:יב

The connection between Sukkos and Jewish unity is also alluded to in a Talmudic comment on the verse “*Kol ha’eizrach be’Yisrael yeishvu ba’Sukkos*” – “every native in Israel shall dwell in booths” (*Vayikra* 23:42). Chazal infer from the language of the verse that one *sukkah* theoretically suffices for all of Israel to discharge their individual obligations:

This teaches that all Israel is worthy of dwelling in one sukkah

Sukkah 27b

מלמד שכל ישראל ראויים לישב בסוכה אחת
סוכה כז:

While the halachic significance of this derivation is that one may dwell in a Sukkah that is owned by another, the hashkafic import of “all of Israel is worthy of dwelling in one Sukkah” points to a link between Sukkos and collective Jewish identity. Why does the theme of *achdus* figure so prominently in the holiday of Sukkos?

Motifs of Unity in Yom Kippur

The answer may lie in the nature of the relationship between Sukkos and Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur, like Sukkos, accentuates the theme of *achdus*. While to solicit forgiveness from someone we have wronged is desirable all year long, there is a specific mitzvah to do so on *erev Yom Kippur*, as codified in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 606). Seemingly, the reason for

engaging in this practice is because receiving forgiveness from one another is indispensable to receiving Divine atonement (see Yoma 85b). However, a passage in the Yom Kippur *machzor* (found just after the *Seder Avoda*) suggests another dimension as well. After listing the various halachic restrictions which characterize Yom Kippur, the *machzor* includes two additional features:

<p><i>A day of establishing love and friendship; a day of abandoning jealousy and competition</i></p>	<p>יום שימת אהבה ורעות, יום עזיבת קנאה ותחרות</p>
---	---

Apparently, Jewish unity is as defining an aspect of Yom Kippur as are the basic restrictions. It is no wonder, then, that our Yom Kippur preparations require us to make amends with those whom we have wronged.

The heightened sense of *achdus* which characterizes Yom Kippur serves as a basis for equating the Jewish nation with the angels in heaven, as suggested by the following midrash:

<p><i>Just as amongst the angels there is peace, so the Jewish nation on Yom Kippur</i> (Tur OC, 606, based on Pirkei de'Rebbi Eliezer).</p>	<p>מה מלאכי השרת שלום ביניהם כך ישראל ביום הכיפורים (טור או"ח, סימן תרו, בשם פרקי דר"א)</p>
--	---

Moreover, the Yom Kippur liturgy begins (just before commencing *Kol Nidrei*) with a declaration of license to pray along with the *avaryanim* – unrepentant sinners.

Yom Kippur – “The Day of One”

The centrality of Jewish harmony to Yom Kippur may be understood on a deeper level in light of the following midrash:

R. Yanai said: From the beginning of creation Hashem foresaw the deeds of the righteous and the deeds of the wicked. “And the land was astonishingly empty” – refers to the deeds of the wicked; “And G-d said: ‘Let there be light’” – refers to the deeds of the righteous; “And G-d separated between the light and the darkness” – between the deeds of the righteous and those of the wicked; “And G-d called the light ‘day’” – refers to the deeds of the righteous; “And to the darkness He called ‘night’” – refers to the deeds of the wicked; “And it was evening” – refers to the deeds of the wicked; “And it was morning” – refers to the deeds of the righteous; “One day” – that Hashem gave them one day, which is Yom HaKippurim”

Bereishis Rabba 3

א"ר ינאי מתחלת ברייתו של עולם צפה הקב"ה מעשיהן של צדיקים ומעשיהם של רשעים, והארץ היתה תהו אלו מעשיהם של רשעים ויאמר אלהים יהי אור אלו מעשיהן של צדיקים, ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החושך בין מעשיהן של צדיקים למעשיהן של רשעים, ויקרא אלהים לאור יום אלו מעשיהן של צדיקים, ולחושך קרא לילה אלו מעשיהן של רשעים, ויהי ערב אלו מעשיהן של רשעים, ויהי בקר אלו מעשיהן של צדיקים, יום אחד, שנתן להם הקב"ה יום אחד ואיזה זה יום הכפורים
בראשית רבה, פרשה ג

The midrash interprets the series of dichotomous expressions which appear in the *pasuk* as alternate references to the deeds of *tzadikim* and the deeds of *resha'im*. After a string of contrasts,

the verse concludes with an allusion to Yom Kippur, depicted as *Yom Echad* – the singular day of the year.

The midrashic commentator, *Maharzu* (R. Zev Wolf Einhorn), explains the allusion to Yom Kippur in the following way:

For it should have stated “the first day” [rather than “one day”], therefore he interpreted it as a reference to Yom Kippur through which Israel becomes one nation like the angels, bound together with harmony between them. And the wicked, through repentance, become righteous.

שהיה לו לומר יום ראשון ... על כן דרש
על יום הכיפורים שבו נעשים ישראל גוי
אחד כמלאכי השרת אגודה אחת ושלוש
ביניהם, והרשעים על ידי תשובה נעשים
צדיקים.

In other words, “one day” is interpreted as a “day of oneness” – an allusion to the angelic unity exemplified by the Jewish nation on Yom Kippur. The redemptive power of the day has the capacity to transform the iniquities of the wicked into merits.

Jewish Unity as Emblematic of Hashem’s Unity

On a deeper level, the unity of the Jewish nation, as well as the harmony of the angels, is meant to parallel the oneness of G-d Himself. The same midrash, a few lines later, cites an additional interpretation of “*Yom Echad*” – as a reference to G-d:

R. Yudin said: for on it Hashem was a single entity in the world, because there was nothing in the world except for Him.

א"ר יודן שבו היה הקב"ה יחידי בעולמו, שלא היה
בעולמו אלא הוא

The link between the oneness of G-d and the unity of the Jewish people is also emphasized in our liturgy:

Guard the one nation, guard the remnant of the one nation, let not perish the one nation that unifies your name [through declaring] Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is one

Daily Tachanun prayer

שומר גוי אחד שמור שארית עם אחד ואל יאבד גוי
אחד המיחדים שמך ה' אלקינו ה' אחד
תפלת תחנון

You are one; your name is one; and who is like your nation Israel, one nation in the land

Amida for Shabbos Mincha

אתה אחד ושמך אחד ומי כעמך
ישראל גוי אחד בארץ
עמידה לשבת מנחה

Yom Kippur is the day that epitomizes the unity of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* - a day when the Satan is powerless and all barriers to G-d are removed. It is the quintessential “*Yom Echad*” – “the day of the One and Only [Hashem]”, Whose unity permeates all strata of creation – not merely the celestial realms but also the earth below via, first and foremost, His chosen nation Israel – the “*goy echad*” whose mandate is to serve as G-d’s ambassador to the world at large. It is thus axiomatic that the nation which bears witness to the Divine symphony should exude a spirit of internal harmony.

Sukkos: Harbinger of the Messianic Era

Sukkos carries within it the theme of Jewish unity because, like Yom Kippur, it is representative of the oneness of G-d. Sukkos is replete with eschatological undertones, as evident, for example, in the first day's *haftara* reading from the Prophet Zechariah, depicting the Messianic war of *Gog u'Magog*. While many of the finer details of the narrative remain shrouded in mystery, the outcome of the battle is unambiguous:

*Hashem will be the King over all the land; on that day
Hashem will be One and His Name will be One*
Zechariah 14:9

וְהָיָה ה' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִי
ה' אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד
זְכוּרִיָּה יִד, ט

The *sifrei kabbalah* explain that the offering of 70 bullocks, in decreasing order, during the seven days of Sukkos, is symbolic of the ultimate triumph of good over evil (as symbolized by the 70 nations), and the subsequent revelation of G-d's Majesty in all of Its glory. Furthermore, it is explained that the unbridled sense of joy associated with the festival of Sukkos foreshadows the experience of "*az yimalei sechok pinu*" (Tehillim 126:2) – a state of ecstasy characteristic of the Messianic age (see *Avoda Zara* 3b).

Vayakhel Moshe: Fusing Yom Kippur and Sukkos

Perhaps there is an allusion in the Torah to this commonality of Yom Kippur and Sukkos. The opening verse in *Parshas VaYakhel* states:

Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the children of Israel
Shemos 35:1

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עֵדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
שְׁמוֹת לְהָא

The central purpose of this grand assembly was an appeal for materials needed for constructing the *mishkan*. (Indeed, the *parsha* goes on to describe the generous spirit in which the contributions were brought in the subsequent days.) Rashi notes the timing of this assembly: *Motza' ai Yom HaKipurim* - the morrow of Yom Kippur (when Moshe had descended with the second set of *luchos*). The Vilna Gaon explains that we celebrate Sukkos in *Tishrei*, rather than in *Nisan*, to commemorate the return of the *ananei ha'kavod* – pillars of glory - which departed as a result of the *chet ha'eigel*. Their restoration, according to the *Vilna Gaon*, coincided with the onset of construction of the *mishkan*, which was the fifteenth of *Tishrei*, a few days after Moshe's appeal. In light of what we have seen, it is most apropos that the mass assembly of "*Vayakhel Moshe*" ("And Moshe gathered") coincided with the morrow of Yom Kippur, the first of the days bridging Yom Kippur and Sukkos. It was none other than *Moshe Rabbeinu* who imbued these days with the spirit of Jewish unity that subsequently became their hallmark.

Moreover, the first lesson taught by *Moshe Rabbeinu* at that historic assembly was the mitzvah of Shabbos, a weekly reminder of "*Yom shekulo Shabbos*" – the eschatological Sabbath where G-d will reign supreme in unparalleled glory. Next, Moshe singled out one of the 39 categories of prohibited labor – kindling a fire:

*You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings
on the Sabbath day.*

לֹא תִבְעֵרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

The *sefer Beer Moshe*, and other Hassidic works, interpret this prohibition as a metaphoric warning against kindling the flame of *machlokes* - divisiveness and inter-personal strife. Indeed, as implied by the traditional Shabbos greeting “*Shabbat Shalom*”, the Sabbath is a day which bespeaks peace and harmony. How appropriate, then, that this message was conveyed on the calendar day marking the transition between Yom Kippur and Sukkos.

Experiencing the Unity of Sukkos

How do we internalize, in a practical sense, the concept of unity that permeates these days? For Yom Kippur, experiencing unity comes naturally. The somber crisis mode which casts its pall over the tense-filled days of the *yamim noraim* season, the quest to attain personal forgiveness, the withdrawal from physicality which is the hallmark of Yom Kippur, all condition us to feel kinship and solidarity with our fellow Jews. For Sukkos, however, whose overt emphasis is on festivity and material blessings, the challenge is far greater. What can be done to help us embrace the spirit of unity which is intrinsic to Sukkos?

Perhaps the answer lies in appreciating the paradox inherent in the very holiday of Sukkos. On the one hand, Sukkos' designation as a *chag ha'asif* – festival of the ingathering of the harvest – focuses on the worldly blessings associated with the agricultural bounty. On the other hand, the retreat to a temporary abode from the comfortable confines of one's home suggests a trivialization of the material comforts afforded by the physical world. How are these dichotomous themes to be reconciled?

Apparently, the message of the Sukkah serves as the ideal backdrop through which to experience the celebration associated with the harvest. Accentuating man's fragility and ephemeral existence assures that rejoicing in the harvest stems from a heartfelt appreciation of G-d's largesse rather than from a narcissistic smugness. The harvest ingathering, however much or meager, ought to be infused with the joy of one who is “*samei'ach bechelko*” – genuinely content with his lot. With such an attitude, it becomes relatively easy to include others in our circle of celebration, and to access the angelic unity that underlies this beautiful holiday. (For further elaboration, see *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, Vol. 2. pp. 106-110.)

Travelers on Succot

Rabbi Azarya Berzon

Scholar in Residence, Zichron Dov Yeshiva University
Kollel Mitziyon Toronto Community Beit Midrash

Is the traveler obligated in the mitzvah of Succah when he's on the road? Must he find a Succah to eat and sleep in when he arrives at his temporary quarters for the night? If he cannot find a Succah must he build one? These questions are addressed by the Gemorah in Succah (26a). The *Meiri* quotes a dispute about the nature and scope of the exemption from Succah granted to travelers, and adopts the view that the traveler enjoys a far-reaching exemption despite the fact that he is not on his way to do a mitzvah. We will attempt to understand the opinion of the *Meiri*. We will begin by analyzing the nature of mitzvah obligations in general and the mitzvah of Succah in particular.

Many mitzvot require an object and an action performed with that object. Such mitzvot entail a dual obligation. First, one must do whatever necessary to obtain the object, be it the etrog, shofar, matzah, etc.; second, one must implement the mitzvah act with the object.

The question arises: are these two obligations equal in status, or is the obligation to perform the mitzvah-act primary, whereas the obligation to acquire the object is secondary? To formulate the problem in conceptual terms, is the obligation to obtain the object an essential part of the obligation to perform the mitzvah and hence of equal weight, or is the essence of the mitzvah the action itself and the obligation to obtain the object of lesser status?¹

We can answer this question by investigating the halachot that apply to situations of exemption. In the domain of mitzvot in general, halacha operates with a variety of exemption rules. How do these exemptions apply to the two obligations described above? Do they apply in the same way to both obligations, or is there a difference between the two?²

¹ The *Tzlach* (Psachim 3b) claims that one who is “far away” before the obligation of *Korban Pesach* arrives is not required to “come close” before the moment of obligation. The *Minchat Chinuch* (Mitzva #5) disagrees and claims that certainly one is required, even before the obligation of *Korban Pesach* arrives, to “come close” so that he be included in *Korban Pesach*. He writes, “Would anyone entertain the possibility that one need not acquire a lulav or a shofar before the holiday so that he can perform the mitzvah in its proper time?” It is possible that the *Tzlach* would concede that one is absolutely obligated to acquire a lulav in advance of the *Chag* as an essential ingredient of the mitzvah of lulav. However “kiruv makom” in the case of *Korban Pesach* is a condition that produces this mitzvah and one is not required to actively guarantee that the condition necessary to generate a mitzvah-obligation be fulfilled. However both the *Tzlach* and the *Minchat Chinuch* might agree that the obligation to obtain a lulav is secondary to the primary obligation of “netilat lulav”.

² I believe we can demonstrate the difference between the two obligations with the following example. Insofar as the first obligation often involves financial expenses [i.e. “chovat mamon”], whereas the second involves a physical act [i.e. “chovat ha’guf”], a poor person may, under certain circumstances, be exempt from obligation to purchase the object – i.e. a lulav - but if he has one, he is obligated to implement the mitzvah act of “netilat lulav”.

It is this issue that lies at the heart of the matter regarding travelers on Succot.

Travelers, “*holchei drachim*” who are on the road but **not** for the sake of a mitzvah, but rather for a “*reshut*”, are exempt from Succah while they are travelling. This is clear from the *braita*:

The Rabbis taught: Those travelling during the day are exempt from Succah during the day and obligated at night; those travelling during the night are exempt during the night and obligated during the day. Those who are on their way to perform a mitzvah are exempt both during the day and at night.

Sukkah 26a

תנו רבנן הולכי דרכים [לדבר
הרשות] ביום - פטורין מן הסוכה
ביום, וחייבין בלילה. הולכי דרכים
בלילה - פטורין מן הסוכה בלילה,
וחייבין ביום. הולכין לדבר מצוה -
פטורין בין ביום ובין בלילה.
סוכה דף כו עמוד א

It is explicit in the *braita* that the traveler is exempt from dwelling in a Succah as long as he is on the road. But what is his status when he arrives at a way-station, say at an overnight inn? It is clear that he is required to dwell in a Succah, but how is he meant to find one? And if he cannot, must he build one?

The mitzvah of Succah entails a dual obligation. First, one must build his own Succah or obtain permission from his friend to use his Succah; second, once he has a Succah, he must fulfill the mitzvah-act of dwelling in the Succah. If we grant the possibility suggested above, namely, that there is a difference between the primary obligation to perform the mitzvah-act and the secondary obligation to organize the object of the mitzvah, the law of the traveler – while resting at his way-station - may be understood in a new light. The Halacha establishes that the traveler is exempt from *obtaining* a Succah yet still remains obligated to *dwell* in one. What this means in practice is that the traveler would be required to dwell in the Succah if there was one immediately accessible to him, but would not be obligated to expend energy on finding a Succah or on building one himself.

The *Meiri* addresses this issue:

Some say that those travelling for a purpose other than a mitzvah are obligated in the mitzvah of Succah when they retire at night even to build a Succah, for [if one would argue that they are only obligated to sit in a Succah] if one is accessible to them, then even one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah is obligated since dwelling in a Succah which is accessible will not undermine the fulfillment of the mitzvah he is on the way to perform.

יש אומרים שהולכי דרכים
לדבר הרשות חייבים בשעת
הנחתם אף לעשות סוכה
מתחילה שאם בסוכה מצויה
אף לדבר מצוה כן כל שאין
בטול אצל המצוה בכך.

The logic of this opinion is clear. The *braita* distinguishes between the traveler and one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah and presents a sliding scale. Whereas the traveler has a limited exemption which only applies as long as he is on the road, the “mitzvah-traveler” enjoys a total exemption that applies even when he settles down for the night. But clearly even the “mitzvah-traveler” is not exempt from the second obligation, i.e., the act of dwelling in the Succah if doing so entails no effort on his behalf and will not detract from the performance of his mitzvah. The principle which states that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from a second mitzvah” does not negate the second obligation entirely but rather establishes a priority for the complete

fulfillment of the first mitzvah. Granted we cannot require that the “mitzvah-traveler” run around trying to find a Succah, nor that he expend the major effort necessary in building a Succah. That would impinge on his ability to fulfill his mitzvah. But if there is a Succah there in front of him, surely he would be obligated to dwell therein. Conceptually, we can say that while he has the obligation of the mitzvah-act of *dwelling* in the Succah (to the extent that doing so will not interfere with the performance of his mitzvah), he is exempt from the obligation to *obtain* a Succah. The non-mitzvah traveler on the other hand, with his limited exemption, is obligated to *obtain* a Succah when off the road and at rest, which will likely mean that he must build one.

The *Meiri* disagrees with that opinion, and presents a different opinion:

In our opinion one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah is exempt from the act of dwelling in the Succah even if doing so entails no effort on his behalf, i.e. even if he has simple access to a Succah. The traveler, on the other hand, although obligated to dwell in a Succah if he has access to one there at his inn, is not required to expend energy to try to find a Succah and certainly is exempt from making the effort of building a Succah.

אנו מפרשים שלדבר מצוה
אף בסוכה מזומנת להם כן
ולדבר הרשות אין שם חיוב
אלא בשיש שם סוכה במקום
חנייתם לא שיהו חייבים
לעשותה מתחלה

Thus with regard to the non-mitzvah traveler, the *Meiri* establishes a difference between obligation a) to “obtain” the mitzvah object, i.e. the Succah, and obligation b) to implement the mitzvah-act, in this case the act of dwelling in the Succah. The traveler is exempt from a) but not from b). By contrast, one who is on the way to perform a mitzvah is exempt from both a) and b). Therefore even if he has simple access to a Succah he need not dwell there.

In sum, the *Meiri*, like the anonymous first opinion, is operating with a sliding scale. Since the mitzvah-traveler is exempt from both obligations, the non-mitzvah traveler must be exempt from one of the two obligations, namely the obligation to build a Succah.

Why does the *Meiri* exempt the mitzvah-traveler from dwelling in the Succah even if a Succah is easily accessible? Apparently the *Meiri* operates with a different definition of the rule that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah.” This rule is more than just a technical one designed to grant priority for the first mitzvah. A rule of this nature can be derived from *svara* (logic) and needs no scriptural source. Yet the Gemorah (Succah 25a) derives this principle from the passage in the *parsha* of *Kriat Shma* “and when you go on your way” - this exempts one who is on the way to perform a mitzvah. This rule establishes a new halachic exemption (“*p’tur*”) that completely suspends the obligation of the second mitzvah as long as one is involved in the first. Hence it matters not whether the second mitzvah will interfere with the first.

It would seem, however, that this interpretation of the *Meiri* is incorrect. In an earlier paragraph, the *Meiri* defines the nature and scope of the principle that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah”. He writes:

The principle that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah” only applies if engaging

כל שביארנו בעוסק במצוה שפטור מן
המצוה פירושה שבעוד שהוא עוסק בה או
טרוד בה פטור ממצוה אחרת המזדמנת לו שאי

himself in the second mitzvah will undermine the fulfillment of the first mitzvah or impede its execution. But if one can fulfill the second without hindering the first, the principle does not apply.

Meiri Succah 25a

אפשר לו לעשותה א"כ במגיעתה של זו או בעכובה אבל כל שהוא מקיים מצוה ובקיומה יכול לעשות אחרת המזדמנת לו שהוא חייב בה לא נאמר בזו שפטור עליה בית הבחירה למאירי מסכת סוכה כה.

It is explicit in the words of the *Meiri* that he accepts the anonymous first opinion with regard to the definition of the principle of “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah”, namely, that this is a rule of priority and not a new Halacha of exemption from the second mitzvah. How then can the *Meiri* say that one who is on the way to perform a mitzvah is exempt from Succah even if he has easy access to a Succah?

We conclude, therefore, that the exemption from the mitzvah of Succah of one who is on the way to perform a mitzvah is not merely an application of the general rule that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah”, but rather is a special halacha with regards to the mitzvah of Succah. This is based on the principle of *תשובו כעין תדורו*, namely, that “one dwells in his Succah just as he would dwell in his home”. Indeed in his interpretation of the *braita* quoted above, Rashi writes:

Travelers are exempt from Succah because one dwells in his Succah just as he would dwell in his home, hence just as he would not hesitate to leave his home to travel for business, so too during the days of Succot he is not required to restrain himself from travelling.

הולכי דרכים ביום פטורין מן הסוכה ביום - דכתיב בסוכות תשובו - כעין ישיבת ביתו, כשם שכל השנה אינו נמנע מלכת בדרך בסחורה - כך כל ימות החג שאינו יום טוב לא הצריכו הכתוב למנוע.

The *Meiri* does not limit the principle that “one is required to dwell in his Succah just as he would dwell in his home” to the nature of the act of “dwelling” excluding situations of rain in the Succah, extreme cold, etc., but rather expands it to produce a *פטור גברא*, an exemption status for the individual. This exemption applies to one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah and extends beyond the scope of the universal principle that “one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah”, applying even when dwelling in the Succah will not undermine the fulfillment of the first mitzvah or impede its execution³.

Although the *פטור גברא* that applies to one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah does not apply to the non-mitzvah traveler, nevertheless he still enjoys a new status of exemption. This exemption applies to the obligation to obtain the object, i.e. to find a Succah or build one. As we have suggested, the obligation to perform the mitzvah-act is primary and cannot be relieved without a complete *פטור גברא*, whereas the obligation to obtain the object is of a lesser status and more disposed to exemption. The *Meiri* postulates a sliding scale. Anyone on the road – for whatever purpose - is subject to the exemption of “one dwells in his Succah just as he would dwell in his home”. In the case of one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah, where the *פטור גברא* applies, the exemption is complete and extends even to the act of dwelling in the Succah. In

³ Compare this approach of the view of the *Meiri* to the Rav's analysis of the position of the Rambam as presented in *Ha'rerei Kedem*, Vol. I, page 177, par. אלא דצ"ע בזה.

the case of a traveler for a “reshut” where the complete גברא פטור is lacking, the exemption is limited to the obligation to obtain the object of the mitzvah, but does not extend to the act of dwelling in the Succah. Hence, the non-mitzvah traveler will only be required to dwell in the Succah should he find one readily accessible⁴.

The principle that “one dwells in his Succah just as he would dwell in his home” applies to the non-mitzvah traveler on the road. This principle applies whenever the individual would normally leave his home to embark on a journey for whatever the purpose. The strict opinion taken by a number of Poskim [see *Shut Yechaveh Da’at*, 3:47] with regards to tourists, who travel on *Chol HaMoed* for pleasure, is not reflected in the approach we have taken in the understanding of this *sugya*.

Succah and Yishuv Eretz Yisrael

We find two mitzvot in the Torah which are defined by the act of dwelling (“yeshiva”), dwelling in the Land of Israel (yeshiva b’Eretz Yisrael), and dwelling in the Succah (yeshiva b’succah). The similarity between the two extends beyond the basic obligation of an act of dwelling; a certain quality of “yeshiva” is required.

As a general rule, we are obligated in mitzvot despite the difficulties and hardships one must face in their fulfillment. Yet, in the case of the obligation to live in Eretz Yisrael, we find a number of exemptions that result from adverse conditions, such as eking out a living, finding a marriage partner or a Torah teacher, and the inability to honor one’s elderly parents who cannot settle in Israel. It seems that the mere act of dwelling in the Land is insufficient to fulfill this commandment. A particular quality of “yeshiva” is necessary. The dwelling must lend itself to joy and contentment.

With regard to the command to dwell in a Succah, we find a similar phenomenon. המצטער פטור מן הסוכה. One who suffers from discomfiture is exempt from this mitzvah. Apparently the quality of “yeshiva” required is one of contentment conducive to joy.

Both these mitzvot of dwelling require joy and contentment not merely to beautify the mitzvah, but as part of their very nature. We would suggest that in both cases the essence and goal of the mitzvah is a close relationship to *Shechina*. The Land of Israel is the Land of *Shechina*. And the *schach* under which one dwells in his Succah represents the protection of the *Shechina*. It is for this reason that the Zohar calls the shade provided by the *schach* דמהימנותא צילה, symbolic of the clouds of honor that protected the people of Israel in the wilderness.

⁴ The *Levush* (Levush HaChur, OC 640:8) rules that travelers are only obligated at night if they reach a place where a succah already stands. According to the *Levush* the traveler need not build a succah, “because there is no greater trouble and pain than this, to obligate him to build a succah in the field or amongst the gentiles.” The view of the *Levush* should not be identified with that of the *Meiri*. Whereas the *Levush* is operating with the concept of “*mitzta’er*,” the discomfort exemption, the *Meiri* is not. The *Meiri* integrates the Halacha of the traveler with that of one who is on his way to perform a mitzvah and compares the two “*peturim*”. For the *Levush*, the question will be “what constitutes “*mitzta’er*”? This question is irrelevant to the *Meiri*.

As the Rav *zt"l* pointed out, whenever we find the concept of “simcha” in the Torah it is always associated with “lifne HaShem” (standing before God). One who dwells in the presence of HaShem experiences genuine joy.

It is for this reason that a traveler is exempt from “yeshiva b’succah”. Had the halacha prohibited him from leaving the Succah to embark on his journey, he would feel confined by the walls of the Succah and would be lacking the sense of joy which is conditional to the fulfillment of this commandment.

Scribing our Covenant: A Vision for Orthodoxy⁵

Rabbi Kenneth Brander

David Mitzner Dean, Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future

This summer is the fifth consecutive summer in which twenty-two students traveled to the impoverished community of Dimona in Israel. These students participated in Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future Counterpoint Summer Program. Through this program Yeshiva University college students have the opportunity to work with children and teenagers in the development town of Dimona, where many of the children live beneath the poverty level and many would be hanging out on the streets if not for the summer program that we run. Most of the students are recruited from the *Otzma* classes, special classes for teens in the Dimona public schools who have behavioral issues. One of the goals of the summer camp includes helping develop the campers' self esteem by teaching various skills, including a better knowledge of English. Each day, the counselors teach the children fifteen new vocabulary words. These words are then communicated in the various sessions and activities that take place throughout the day.

Last year, one teenager who was part of the summer program had a severe stutter. At the same time, there was a YU counselor who also spoke with a stutter. We asked the counselor if he would work with the boy and show him that it is possible to overcome this challenge. When the counselor met the camper for the first time and explained that he also faced challenges from stuttering, the camper ran away from the counselor. The boy was angry to meet another person who stutters.

A few days later, the camper began to form a connection with the counselor and did not leave his side until the end of camp. He literally followed the counselor around everywhere, not only during camp, but also on Shabbat, and every night after camp was over. At the end of the summer, the boy gave the YU counselor a beautiful thank you note written in Hebrew. With the exception of two lines, each line of the note was composed of three vocabulary words that he had learned that summer. The first line read: *silence, past, fear*. The second line read: *future, courage,*

⁵ This drasha was delivered, on *Parshat Eikev*, as part of the Yeshiva University ChampionsGate Weekend Leadership Conference. The conference was attended by lay and rabbinic leaders from 80 communities across North America as well as leaders from Israel and South America. Due to numerous requests for the drasha, Rabbi Brander has written it as an essay. A complete list of the sources used to develop the ideas of the drasha can be obtained by emailing Rabbi.Brande@yu.edu

hope. This letter sits on the counselor's desk at YU so he can be reminded each day of his capacity to change the world around him.

This summer, several Yeshiva University RIETS Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky, Rabbi Herschel Reichman, and Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh, spent time in Dimona working with our Yeshiva University students. While they came to inspire others, they themselves were inspired. Rabbi Sobolofsky had a wonderful conversation with a group of teenagers who had never before interacted with a Rabbi. Rabbi Reichman had a beautiful *kumzits* with our young men and women from YU. They were unexpectedly joined by 100 of the campers; and when the *kumzitz* was over, a 14 year old girl, approached Rabbi Reichman and asked if he was the Rav of these *madrichim* (advisors). When he responded in the affirmative she said 'If you're the Rav of these *madrichim* then I'd like a *bracha* (blessing) from you,' and as her friends saw that he was giving her a blessing, 15 more lined up for a blessing from Rabbi Reichman.

Why are these stories important? Because we find ourselves today reading from the book of *Devarim*. Over a dozen sources in early Rabbinic literature call Sefer *Devarim* by another name, *Mishneh Torah*. The Talmud states:

Mishneh Torah (Deuteronomy) is meant to amplify
Chulin 63b

מכדי משנה תורה לאוסופי הוא דאתא
חולין סג:

Yet, we struggle to understand the unique features of *Devarim* in virtue of which it is called *Mishneh Torah*? The Ramban, writes:

This book (Devraim) its purpose is known, it is [called] Mishneh Torah; Moshe our teacher explains, to the generation entering the land [of Israel] the commandments which are pertinent to the land of Israel
Introduction to the Book of Devarim

הספר הזה ענינו ידוע שהוא משנה
תורה יבאר בו משה רבינו לדור
הנכנס בארץ רוב מצות התורה
הצריכות לישראל
הקדמה לספר דברים

The Ramban suggests that the structure of *Mishneh Torah* is organized around Moshe's preparing the Jews to enter the land of Israel. It is the repetition of many of the laws found in this book that gives it the name *Mishneh Torah*. Yet Ramban must deal with the fact that many of the commandments in *Devarim* are new commandments, and quite a number of them have nothing to do with laws specifically pertaining to the land of Israel, but are focused on personal observance.

Abarbanel dedicates pages in his introduction to the book of *Devarim* challenging the thesis that the Ramban puts forth.

And [I question] with wonderment the wisdom of the Torah commentators how they did not alert us [about the challenges to Ramban's approach]

ותמהתי מחכמת מפרשי התורה איך
לא העירו על זה

Yet neither does he really offer a better definition of what *Mishneh Torah* means.

There are dialogues in the Talmud that suggests a fascinating understanding of *Mishneh Torah*. The texts are extremely exciting and thoughtful, even while theologically challenging.

And R. Levi says: Come and see that the attributes of God are not the attributes of man. God blessed Israel [in Vayikra] with twenty two verses and cursed them with eight [verses]. And Moshe our teacher [a man] blessed Israel [in Devraim] with eight verses and cursed them with twenty two [verses].

Baba Batra 88b

Abaya says: [interrupting the Torah reading of the admonitions by adding an aliyah is forbidden] in the Book of the Priests (Vayikra); but [during the reading of] the admonitions in Mishneh Torah (Devarim) [it is permitted] to interrupt. Why is there a difference? Those [in Vayikra] were said in the plural and Moshe recited them exactly as God stated. And those [in Devarim] are expressed in the singular and Moshe stated them himself.

Megillah 31b

According to the Talmud the reason that the book of *Devarim* is called *Mishneh Torah* is that *Mishneh Torah* means it is a Second Torah. The book of *Devarim* is written by Moshe. In fact, the *Zohar* treats it the same way:

This book [of Devarim] is called Mishneh Torah because Moshe said it by himself.

Va'etchanan no. 22

האי דאקרי משנה תורה משה מפי עצמו אמרן
וּאֲתַחֲנַן כּב

What are the Talmud and *Zohar* trying to communicate? It seems that there are two models of "God Speak." The first four books of the Torah are spoken by God and written by Moshe, and therefore the Torah is communicated in the third person. However, in the fifth book of the Torah, *Sefer Devarim* is spoken by Moshe, approved by God, and written by Moshe. Thus while *Sefer Devarim* is still choreographed by God, the role that Moshe plays is so much more significant. If the Torah is to be the eternal book that celebrates the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people, both participants must play active roles for the relationship to succeed.

This lesson is not confined to *Devarim*. It is taught in the very first chapters of the Torah. When God creates the world and puts Adam and Chava into the Garden of Eden, Adam and Chava live passive existences and the relationship between man and God falters and flounders. The Garden's existence leads man and woman to rebellion. Only later, when Adam and Chava are banished from the "idyllic environment" of Eden and are forced to struggle, do they attain a connection with God.

ואמר רבי לוי: בוא וראה שלא
כמדת הקב"ה מדת בשר ודם;
הקב"ה ברך ישראל בעשרים
ושתים וקללן בשמונה ...
ואילו משה רבינו ברכן
בשמונה וקללן בעשרים
ושתים
בבא בתרא פח:

אמר אביי: לא שנו אלא
בקלות שבתורת כהנים, אבל
קלות שבמשנה תורה פוסק.
מאי טעמא? הללו - בלשון
רבים אמורות, ומשה מפי
הגבורה אמרן. והללו - בלשון
יחיד אמורות, ומשה מפי עצמו
אמרן
מגילה לא:

It is only when they are fully engaged, when they need to struggle, that they create the first entity in partnership with God- light. Every Motzei Shabbat in the act of Havdala, we remember when Adam and Chava were banished from the Garden of Eden and that in exile is the first time that they are able to create an entity that dispels darkness from the world.

When God fashions the *luchot*, they are fashioned from a backdrop of *Kolot U'vrakim* (thunder and lighting), with tremendous pomp and circumstance. Yet these first *luchot* fail. Moshe, representing humankind, ascends the mountain a second time and is told by God to fashion a second set of tablets—on his own, by his own hand. There is a struggle to connect to God, and only from that struggle is Moshe able to establish an everlasting connection with God.

The idea of a *Mishneh Torah*, spoken by Moshe, approved and edited by God, and written by Moshe, is a recognition that within the parameters set by God there needs to be “human elbow grease” to guarantee the immortality of the covenantal commitment. That is why every Jewish king must write his own *Mishneh Torah*. Anyone who understands that a person’s role is to partner with God, to create out of the darkness of this world a luminous *Beit Elokim*—any such individual must be willing to scribe his or her own *Mishneh Torah*.

What type of book are we, this community, scribing? What does our *Mishneh Torah* include? Whose vision illuminates our quill? Whose ideals soften our hearts and sharpen our minds so that we can work the parchment? Who serves as the empowering guide and the one who validates the *Mishneh Torah* we wish to scribe? I believe the answer to that question is Rav Soloveitchik. It is the Rov, who tells us in Halakhic Man:

When God created the world, He provided an opportunity for the work of His handsman-to participate in His creation. (101).

The Creator, as it were, impaired reality in order that mortal man could repair its flaws and perfect it... (ibid.)

Man’s task is to “fashion, engrave, attach, and create,” and transform the emptiness in being into a perfect and holy existence, bearing the imprint of the divine name. (ibid.)

The principle of “and thou shalt walk in His ways” (imitatio Dei) flows from halakhic man’s normative relationship with the world. We can know God’s ways only through studying the cosmos, for it is in the cosmos that there stand revealed before us the glorious and resplendent attributes of action. (64)

This is our vision of the world and our Torah. For us, wholeness is achieved when we are able to merge the ethereal and the mundane. We are part of a community that does not believe in the bifurcation of *Kodesh* (sacred) and *Chol* (everyday). For us, *Shleimut* is achieved in the synthesis of the spiritual and the physical. It is the *Pesukim* in this week’s Torah portion that remind us of our mission in life: לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו , “To walk in God’s ways”, *Imitatio Dei*. The verses of Ekev reminds us that holiness is found in the material world, and that the God-given bounty of this world enables us to be conduits of change. Our Promised Land is referred to by the seven

material species found in this world. We must realize that our approach, our *Mishneh Torah*, is not a compromise, but a true Torah perspective.

For our approach to work in the real world, our students must be taught that *Ve'halachta B'drachav* entails that there is no such thing in our Yeshiva day school vocabulary as Jewish “vs.” secular studies. There are Jewish studies of Talmud, Tanach, Halacha and Haskafah, and Jewish studies of literature, science, mathematics and history. College preparatory studies are not *bitul* (negation of) Torah when they are taught with rigor and not by rote. Rather, they are conduits of communicating rich Torah concepts often seen in world literature. Without math one cannot build an *Eruv*. Without understanding human physiology one dare not answer questions of *Taharat Hamishpacha*. But the study of science and math offers much more than that. Without the study of science and math one cannot appreciate the wonders of the world.

It is the Rov too, who shares with us in *Kol Dodi Dofek* that we must be connected to the fate and destiny of our people. We must connect with all segments of our community irrespective of whether they embrace traditional values. It is why our students spent their winter break, this past year, in Israel interacting with the larger community in Israel, even with those who may not observe Shabbat the way we do. It is why they spent time with Dr. Ruth Gavison and Rabbi Yaakov Medan discussing a proposed social covenant which would allow Jews in Israel to interact with civility and respect toward one another. It is why we send the largest contingent of students to the GA and send our students to Limmud. For we believe we must engage with serious Jews who happen not to be Orthodox, and we must allow our students to recognize the role they can play in the larger Jewish community.

As we scribe our *Mishneh Torah* and focus on our *Avodat Hashem* and *Devekut ba-Shem*, love of God and cleaving to God, recognizing that the dust has not settled on certain issues with which the Jewish community grapples; we have moved the bar in the area of women’s learning. Many of our students spent this summer in a Beit Midrash for women, so they could grow in their knowledge of Talmud as well. Under the leadership of Dean Bacon and Rabbi Shmuel Hain, we are finding halakhically appropriate ways for women to play roles in the community in unprecedented ways, with synagogues accepting educational interns and hosting women as Scholars-in-Residence. This, too, expresses our vision.

It is in our understanding of *va-ahavtem et ha-ger*, “you shall love the stranger,” that we recognize the responsibility not to ignore the plight of any human being. This is what moved our students to raise money for Haiti, and this is why our students accompanied our *Mashgiach Ruchani* (spiritual advisor) Rabbi Blau, to El Salvador to work in a small village installing outdoor plumbing. And this is why our students are not just concerned with non-Jews around the world, but people around the corner as our students tutor in the local Washington Heights public schools.

It is our recognition not just of the centrality of Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel, but of Medinat Yisrael, the Jewish State, that an alumnus of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, was inspired to begin *Nefesh b’Nefesh* and for our community to produce the largest number of Olim.

These ideals are found in *Mishneh Torah*. It is the way *Sefer Devarim* is written and the vivid, central role of Moshe that compels us to recognize our responsibility to be involved in the scribing of our covenantal relationship.

Yet, there are real concerns about the future of our vision. My primary concern is not the limited numbers in our community. My chief concern is the fragility of our approach. As Rav Aaron Lichtenstein has pointed out; our challenge is not in the values of our vision, but in our fidelity to its observance. To employ Brisker terminology: our challenge is not in the *Cheftza* of our vision, but with the *Gavrah* that wishes to scribe this as an appropriate Torah perspective. Our embrace of these ideals is more often than not driven by pragmatism, reflecting a tepid commitment, instead of being energized by passion and exuberance. Our vision demands that the community institutions that celebrate the above ideals be strongly supported with both time and money – yet often they are not. Our vision demands that our intellectual mother ship, Yeshiva University, without which the scribing of this *Mishneh Torah* is impossible, not be viewed as a commodity that we can casually choose to purchase or forgo, but as a precious and critical institution worthy of our warm and enthusiastic support. It should be the presumed choice of where our children will be nurtured as they actualize their potential to be agents of change and scribes of a covenant.

When we decide to live this complicated lifestyle, it demands of us that we determine which parts of society we will embrace and which we will filter out. How can we expect to create a new generation that celebrates these ideals when the Beatles trump *Bereshiet*, when *Bekius* [knowledge of] in Miley Cyrus is superior to acquaintance with *Mishnayot*, when Justin Bieber is better known than Joseph Soloveitchik, and when Lady Gaga is often heard more than Nehama Leibowitz. We need to make our heroes—and many of them *roshei yeshiva*, *rabbanim*, community professionals, and lay *kodesh* (leaders) who are in this room- the champions of the *next* generation. Our vision of Orthodoxy cannot be Orthodox lite, where we as a community are willing to accept as a norm the observance of some commandments and the negation of others. We believe in a nuanced, textured vision, one that creates life in multi-color. The question we need to ask ourselves is this: Are we willing to engage in scribing this type of covenant together?

The Transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkot

Rabbi Joshua Flug

Director of Torah Research, Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future

There are only four days from the end of Yom Kippur until the beginning of Sukkot. While the Torah provides no explicit connection between the two holidays, one cannot ignore the close proximity of the two holidays. There is a well known tradition that connects Yom Kippur and Sukkot recorded by R. Moshe Isserles (Rama, 1520-1572):

Those who are meticulous begin building the sukkah immediately after the conclusion of Yom Kippur in order to go from mitzvah to mitzvah.

Rama, Orach Chaim 624:5

והמדקדקים מתחילים מיד במוצאי י"כ בעשיית הסוכה כדי לצאת ממצוה אל מצוה.
רמ"א אורח חיים תרכד:ה

Rama's comments are found at the end of his glosses on the laws of Yom Kippur. He repeats this idea in his first gloss on the laws of sukkah with one slight variation:

There is a mitzvah to fix the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur because once a mitzvah becomes available one should not let it spoil.

Rama, Orach Chaim 625:1

ומצוה לתקן הסוכה מיד לאחר יום כפור דמצוה הבאה לידו אל יחמיצנה.
רמ"א אורח חיים תרכה:א

In his glosses on the laws of Yom Kippur, Rama states that one should begin construction of the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur so that one can go from mitzvah to mitzvah. In his glosses on the laws of sukkah, the reason is so that one should not let the mitzvah opportunity spoil. In this article, we will present an approach to the relationship between Yom Kippur and Sukkot that explains Rama's rationale for providing two different reasons for the practice of beginning the Sukkah-building process immediately after Yom Kippur.

The Themes of Yom Kippur

Let's begin by discussing the themes of Yom Kippur and Sukkot. Regarding Yom Kippur, the Torah states:

However, on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; there shall be a holy convocation unto you, and you shall afflict your souls; and you shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

Vayikra 23:27 (adapted from JPS translation)

אך בעשור לחדש השביעי הזה יום הכפרים הוא מקרא קדש יהיה לכם ועניתם את נפשתיכם והקרבתם אשה לה':
ויקרא כג:כז

One of the themes of Yom Kippur is *inui* (affliction). Yom Kippur is the archetypal fast day. It is a complete refrain from the physical. We recite the phrase "*Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto* etc. (Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom)" aloud because on Yom Kippur, we consider ourselves to be similar to angels.⁶ Yom Kippur can be categorized as a day that is purely spiritual.

By contrast, Sukkot is a holiday that involves many physical activities. The Torah, in describing Sukkot, highlights the physical elements of the holiday:

39 However, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruits of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord seven days; on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. **40** And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. **41** And you shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year; it is a statute forever in your generations; you shall keep it in the seventh month. **42** You shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; **43** That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Vayikra 23:39-43 (adapted from JPS translation)

(לט) אך בחמשה עשר יום לחדש השביעי באספכם את תבואת הארץ תחגו את חג ה' שבעת ימים ביום הראשון שבתון וביום השמיני שבתון: (מ) ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמחתם לפני ה' אלהיכם שבעת ימים: (מא) וחגתם אתו חג לה' שבעת ימים בשנה חקת עולם לדרתים בחדש השביעי תחגו אתו: (מב) בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסכת: (מג) למען ידעו דרתים כי בסכות הושבת את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלהיכם: ויקרא כג: לט-מג

The two most prominent mitzvot of Sukkot are the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah and the mitzvah of taking the four species. The mitzvah of sukkah is not merely a mitzvah that involves use of a physical object. The mitzvah redefines one's physical way of life by requiring one to live in a temporary dwelling. Similarly, the Torah assigns special significance to the mitzvah of taking the four species in stating that those species are used to rejoice before G-d.

The Torah also highlights the physical elements of Sukkot by introducing it as a time when one is gathering the fruit of the land. Why isn't Yom Kippur also introduced as a time when one is gathering the fruit of the land? Aren't they only five days apart? On a simple level, one can suggest that Yom Kippur is a completely spiritual day and the fact that it occurs at a time when one is gathering the fruit of the land is irrelevant to the day. Sukkot involves physical elements and there is significance in the fact that it occurs at a time when one is gathering the fruit of the land.⁷

⁶ R. Ya'akov ben Asher, *Tur*, O.C. no 619, writes that throughout the year we recite this phrase silently because this phrase was borrowed from the angels. On Yom Kippur, when we are considered angels, we may recite it aloud.

⁷ Ramban (1194-1270), *Vayikra* 23:39, notes that Sukkot is a celebration of thanksgiving for all of the produce that one will collect. This is why the theme of *simcha* is highlighted on Sukkot.

The Torah also declares that the seven days of Sukkot are days of feast (*chag*). This command to feast is presented twice in the section dealing with Sukkot (verses 39 and 41) and does not appear at all regarding the other holidays. This highlights the physical nature of the holiday.

There is another practice that exhibits the physical nature of the holiday:

He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life. At the conclusion of the first festival day of tabernacles they descended to the court of the women where they had made a great enactment. There were golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders to each, and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil containing one hundred and twenty log which they poured into the bowls. From the worn-out drawers and girdles of the priests they made wicks and with them they kindled the lamps; and there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water-drawing. Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises.

Mishna Sukkah Chapter 5 (Soncino Translation)

כל מי שלא ראה שמחת בית השואבה, לא ראה שמחה מימיו. במוצאי יום טוב הראשון של חג, ירדו לעזרת נשים, ומתקנין שם תקון גדול. ומנורות של זהב היו שם, וארבעה ספלים של זהב בראשיהן וארבעה סלמות לכל אחד ואחד, וארבעה ילדים מפרחי כהנה ובידיהם כדים של שמן של מאה ועשרים לג, שהן מטילין לכל ספל וספל. מבלאי מכנסי כהנים ומהמיניהן מהן היו מפקיעין, ובהן היו מדליקין, ולא היתה חצר בירושלים שאינה מאירה מאור בית השואבה. חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו מרקדים לפניהם באבוקות של אור שבידיהן, ואומרים לפניהן דברי שירות ותשבחות.
משנה סוכה פרק ה'

The celebration that took place in the *Beit HaMikdash* on Sukkot was an elaborate celebration.

Rambam explains why there such an elaborate celebration:

Even though there is a mitzvah to rejoice on all of the festivals, on Sukkot, there was added joy in the Temple as it states "You shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days."

Rambam, Hilchot Lulav 8:12

אף על פי שכל המועדות מצוה לשמוח בהן בחג הסוכות היתה במקדש יום שמחה יתירה שנאמר ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבעת ימים.
רמב"ם הל' לולב ח:יב

Sukkot is not merely a holiday of indulgence in the physical. Sukkot is a holiday of extreme *simcha* (rejoice). There are many physical attributes of Sukkot and they are all channeled through our obligation of rejoicing before G-d.

Affliction and Rejoicing: Polar Opposites

Affliction and rejoicing seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum. Affliction involves shunning the physical world, whereas rejoicing involves embracing the physical world. Which approach is more effective in pursuing our spiritual goals?

The Gemara quotes a *Beraita* that shunning the physical can constitute a transgression:

R. Eleazar ha-Kappar Berabbi, as it was taught: And he [the nazir] shall make atonement for him, for that he sinned against a soul. Against which 'soul' then has he sinned? But it is because he afflicted

ר' אלעזר הקפר ברבי אומר וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש וכי באיזו נפש חטא זה אלא שציער עצמו מן היין

himself through abstention from wine. Now, does not this afford an argument from the minor to the major? If one, who afflicted himself only in respect of wine, is called a sinner: how much more so one who ascetically refrains from everything. Hence, one who fasts is called a sinner.

Nedarim 10a (Soncino Translation)

והלא דברים ק"ו ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מן היין נקרא חוטא המצער עצמו מכל דבר על אחת כמה וכמה מכאן כל היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא. נדרים י.

Judaism is not a religion that embraces asceticism. The Torah brands the *nazir* as a sinner for shunning one physical item⁸ and this is certainly true for one who shuns all foods. Therefore, one who fasts unnecessarily is considered a sinner. How then does Judaism view the physical?

In fine, Holiness consists in one's clinging so closely to his God that in any deed he might perform he does not depart or move from the Blessed one, until the physical objects of which he makes use become more elevated because of his having used them than he descends from his communion and from his high plane because of his having occupied himself with them.

Mesillat Yesharim Chap. 26 (Feldheim Translation)

כללו של דבר, ענין הקדושה הוא שיהיה האדם דבק כל כך באלקיו עד שבשום מעשה אשר יעשה לא יפרד ולא יזוז ממנו יתברך עד שיותר יתעלו הדברים הגשמיים אשר ישמשו לאחד מתשמישיו במה שהוא משתמש בהם ממה שיורד הוא מדביקותו ומעלתו בהשתמשו מדברים גשמיים. מסילת ישרים פרק כו

According to R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal, 1707-1746), one of the highest spiritual levels one can attain is the ability to sanctify the physical items in this world without the physical having a negative impact on oneself. We live in a physical world and many of the mitzvot are physical in nature. Our response to the physical world is not to shun it but to sanctify it.

The concept of *simcha* on Yom Tov epitomizes this idea. It is arguable that one who reflects on the blessings that one has received can achieve a state of rejoice without the use of any physical items. Yet, the *Beraita* states that such a reflection is insufficient:

Our Rabbis taught: A man is in duty bound to make his children and his household rejoice on a Festival, for it is said, And you shall rejoice on your festival, [you and your son, and your daughter, etc.] With what does he make them rejoice? With wine. R. Yehudah said: Men with what is suitable for them, and women with, what is suitable for them. 'Men with what is suitable for them': with wine. And women with what? R. Yoseph recited: in Babylonia, with colored garments; in Eretz Yisrael, with ironed lined garments. It was taught, R. Yehudah b. Beteyra said: When the Temple was in existence there could be no rejoicing except with meat, as it is said, And you shall sacrifice peace-offerings, and shall eat there; and you

תנו רבנן חייב אדם לשמח בניו ובני ביתו ברגל שנאמר ושמחת בחגך במה משמחם ביין רבי יהודה אומר אנשים בראוי להם ונשים בראוי להן אנשים בראוי להם ביין ונשים במאי תני רב יוסף בבבל בבגדי צבעונין בארץ ישראל בבגדי פשתן מגוהצין תניא רבי יהודה בן בתירא אומר בזמן שבית המקדש קיים אין שמחה אלא בבשר שנאמר וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם ושמחת לפני

⁸ See R. Ya'akov Etlinger (1798-1871), *Aruch LaNer, Keritut* 25b, who notes that only a *nazir* who became impure is considered a sinner. He explains that a *nazir* has an opportunity to become holy and that outweighs the consideration that he is shunning wine. If he becomes impure, the opportunity to become holy no longer exists and all that remains is his affliction from wine. Therefore, he is considered a sinner.

shall rejoice before the Lord your God. But now that the Temple is no longer in existence, there is no rejoicing except with wine, as it is said, and wine that makes glad the heart of man.

Pesachim 109a (adapted from Soncino Translation)

ה' אלקיך ועכשיו שאין בית
המקדש קיים אין שמחה אלא ביין
שנאמר ויין ישמח לבב אנוש.
פסחים קט.

Simcha requires one to sanctify the physical. It is only through the sanctification of physical that one can achieve the proper state of *simcha*.

Yom Kippur and Sukkot seem to be holidays with opposing themes. Why then is Sukkot observed immediately after Yom Kippur? R. Yitzchak Abuhab (14th century) provides the following suggestion⁹:

God commanded rejoicing on Sukkot after the days of repentance to teach us that He does not desire that we afflict our bodies throughout the year, only when there is a need for us to subdue our hearts and return to the righteous path, and even then [on condition] that we return to rejoicing in our hearts and [cause] our family [to rejoice] for the observance of mitzvot ... Do not think in your hearts that I gave you this festival [of Sukkot] to fast like Yom Kippur. Rather you should eat, drink, offer peace offerings and voluntary offerings in order to rejoice for seven days. In order that nobody think that this is [merely] a celebration of gluttony, it states "The festival of Sukkot is seven days for God," meaning that the entire celebration should be for the sake of heaven.

Menorat HaMaor no. 146

וחג הסוכות צוה הקב"ה לשמוח בו
לאחר ימי התשובה ללמדנו שאינו חפץ
לענות גופנו כל הימים אלא כשהיה
צורך להכניע לבבנו לשוב לדרך ישרה
ועם כל זה שנשוב לשמח לבבנו ולאנשי
ביתנו לדבר מצוה ... אל תחשבו
בלבבכם שנתתי לכם חג זה להתענות בו
כמו בי"ה אלא שתאכלו ותשתו
ותקריבו שלמים וגדבות לשמוח שבעת
ימים. ולפי שלא יחשוב שום אדם שזאת
השמחה היא של מילוי כרס ע"כ כתיב
חג הסוכות שבעת ימים לה' כלומר כל
זאת שמחה לא תהא אלא לשם שמים.
מנורת המאור ס' קמו

Yom Kippur provides one with an opportunity to reach great spiritual heights. One might erroneously conclude that Yom Kippur is the only way to achieve those great spiritual heights and that living a life of asceticism is the ideal. Therefore, Sukkot comes as a counterbalance to Yom Kippur where one has the opportunity of reaching great spiritual heights by sanctifying the physical.

Now that we understand the themes of Yom Kippur and Sukkot, we can resolve the apparent discrepancy in Rama's writings. Rama's statement in the laws of Yom Kippur was intended for someone studying the laws of Yom Kippur in preparation for the day. It was written for someone with a Yom Kippur mindset. As such, Rama's focus is on the purely spiritual aspects of the mitzvot. Therefore, one should build a sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur simply because it is an additional opportunity to be involved in a mitzvah. By contrast, the laws of Sukkot were written for someone with a Sukkot mindset. As such, the language reflects the need to sanctify the physical. For this reason, Rama stresses that one should begin building the sukkah immediately following Yom Kippur because one should not allow a mitzvah opportunity to spoil. This indicates that the mitzvah of sukkah is something special and that there is great

⁹ R. Simcha Zissel Ziv (1824-1898), *Ohr Rashaz* no. 443, presents a similar idea.

excitement about the upcoming holiday. It is not merely another opportunity to perform a mitzvah but rather an opportunity to become physically involved in a mitzvah and reach the same great spiritual heights that one reached on Yom Kippur.

Moshe Rabbeinu: An Angel Amongst Men¹⁰

Ms. Miriam Krupka
Faculty, The Ramaz Upper School

Simchat Torah is arguably one of the happiest days of the Jewish calendar. It would seem to be incongruous, therefore, with the joy of the day, to be discussing issues of death and mourning. However, the central Torah reading of Simchat Torah, more specifically the final eight pesukim of Parshat VeZot Habracha, and thus, of the Torah itself, are a description of the death of (34:5-7), mourning for (8-9) and eulogy of (10-12), Moshe Rabbeinu. In fact, many of the piyyutim composed for the day of Simchat Torah are, in essence, *hespedim* for Moshe.¹¹

Of course, reflections upon Moshe's death on Simchat Torah are quite appropriate. Historians refer to the time period that the Jews spent in the desert as the "Mosaic period", for after all, Moshe is the key element in the Torah's revelation and the ubiquitous protagonist of 4/5 of the Torah.¹² In fact, God Himself declares that the Torah will be known for eternity by Moshe's name, as *Torat Moshe*.¹³ It is fitting that the text of the Torah should end with his death and in essence, by doing so, Moshe's personal narrative is tied to that of the Torah itself. The question, therefore, is *not* why Simchat Torah is an appropriate day to celebrate the life and mourn the death of our great liberator, leader and lawgiver. What is compelling, however, is the way in which the Torah, and the various canons of *aggadot* treat the personhood of Moshe.

The Issue of Moshe's Celestial Status

By ending *chamisha chumshai Torah* with Moshe's death, the text strongly implies that the life and death of a single human being is the center or paradigm of the nation's revelatory experience

¹⁰ I would like to thank my colleagues at the Ramaz Upper School for their insightful comments on the earlier drafts of this article. In addition, I would specifically like to thank my friend Sefi Kraut for her astute and comprehensive review of the ideas contained herein.

¹¹ Hundreds of these piyyutim have been written across history and geography. One of the more renowned ones is the *piyut* written by Avraham Ibn Ezra, entitled "Ashrecha". It can be found in the Artscroll Sukkot machzor on page 1347. For a comprehensive compendium and analysis of these piyyutim, see Leon Weinberger's "The Death of Moses in the Synagogue Liturgy" (Brandeis University Ph.D, 1963)

¹² On a purely nominal level, his name appears over 600 times throughout Tanach. No other biblical figure has that much exposure, with the possible exception of King David. In addition, with Sefer Devarim, Moshe has more actual speaking time than any other figure in Tanach.

¹³ Malachi 3:22, see Talmud Bavli, Masechet Shabbat 89a for the verse's background.

and relationship with God as a whole.¹⁴ In fact, the Torah explicitly refers to Moshe's uniqueness in numerous places. Moshe had a prophetic status like no other,¹⁵ he was able to experience the Heavenly spheres,¹⁶ and somehow, his very physical existence was changed by that experience.¹⁷ In fact, these descriptions hint to an almost transcendental image of Moshe, an elevation of a human being to a status that borders on metaphysical. Along these lines, the Rambam states in Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 7:6 regarding Moshe, that "His mind was [always] connected to God, and God's glory never left him at all; light emanated from his face, and he was holy like an angel."

On the other hand, the Tanach constantly refers to Moshe as *האיש משה*¹⁸ and as *עבד ה'*.¹⁹ These descriptions highlight his frailty; the first emphasizes that he is a human being and the latter, that he is a man who serves a greater power.²⁰ There are numerous examples which illustrate that Moshe also clearly views himself as a tool of Hashem. Moshe's speeches and prayers throughout the Torah leave no doubt that he is a mere emissary of the Creator and in no way acting on any sort of independent spiritual power. However, emissary status notwithstanding, this two-fold image of Moshe as, on the one hand, a Godly being, and on the other hand, clearly of flesh and blood, creates a theologically grey area; was Moshe more than human?²¹

The ambiguity surrounding Moshe's humanity is most especially apparent in the last eight pesukim of Devarim: on the one hand, Moshe the man clearly experiences death (verse 5), but on the other hand, his burial place is concealed from human knowledge and contact (v.6), which insinuates a divine sort of demise.²² He is the paradigmatic mortal²³ in the fact that he dies at the age of 120 (v7), yet he is more than human in that his "eyes never dimmed nor his natural strength abated" (ibid) – an implication that Moshe didn't age. The miracles he accomplished in his lifetime and the occurrence of his death are tied, respectively, to the fact that "שלוהו ה'" and that they occurred "על פי ה'". These two phrases clearly tie all that Moshe accomplished to God's influence and decree. Yet he experienced God face-to-face,²⁴ which connotes a relationship with the *Ribono Shel Olam* that was certainly supra-human.²⁵

¹⁴ In fact, it would seem to be more appropriate to end the Torah with Moshe's blessings to the tribes in Devarim, Perek 33, as they are an inspirational tribute to the nation's individual strengths and communal unity (and include a distinct eye to the future).

¹⁵ Devarim 34:10 *ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו ה' פנים אל פנים*

¹⁶ Shemot 19:3

¹⁷ Shemot 34:29 *ויהי ברדת משה מהר סיני ... קרן עור פניו בדברו אתו*

¹⁸ Shemot 11:2, Devarim 33:1

¹⁹ Devarim 34:5, Yehoshua 1:1 and 12, and 8:31

²⁰ Such as in our pesukim in 34:11.

²¹ This is a tension or confusion that has the potential to lead to practical religious consequences. Perhaps the most telling example lies within the story of the Golden Calf. According to many commentators, the people were motivated to create the calf because without Moshe as God's stand-in, they could not imagine a relationship with God. Here, it is Moshe's enhanced prophetic leadership that allows them, mistaken as they were, to almost substitute him in their minds for a relationship with God. See Shemot 37:1 where the nation's request for a new **God** is necessary because **Moshe** is gone.

²² In addition, the word "ויקבר" in the singular, as Rashi points out, signifies burial by the hands of God Himself.

²³ See Bereishit 6:3 – the mortality of man is described as "his years are 120".

²⁴ Devarim 34:10 *ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו ה' פנים אל פנים*

Though the text of the Torah represents both aspects of Moshe, the *aggadot* take this “divine/human” tension within Moshe and intensely emphasize the incorporeal side of him, unabashedly raising him to an almost angelic, or celestial, rank. There is a well-known *midrash* that states that Moshe did not eat or drink for the full forty days that he spent in the heavenly court, as he took on the status of angels who have no bodily needs.²⁶ Along these lines, Moshe consistently interacts and argues with, often besting, the angels. For example, just as he struggled with the angels before they enable him to pass to give the Torah to Yisrael,²⁷ so too he defeats the Angel of Death when the angel comes to take his soul.²⁸ There is a powerful *midrash* that paints a picture of the angels all refusing to be involved in taking Moshe’s soul because they see him as their superior.²⁹ Even more spectacularly, there are *aggadot* that discuss the question of Moshe’s general immortality,³⁰ and how he lost his humanity when he ascended to Har Sinai,³¹ and even how he had the status of “spouse” to the *Shechina*, allowing him to annul the vows of God and change His decree.³² He is “larger than life” in his height of ten cubits³³ and in the fact that he was created from separate material than the rest of mankind.³⁴ There is much discussion of nature itself being subordinate to Moshe; the sun refuses to set on the day of his death, the dust refuses to cover his body and the heavens and earth themselves beg God to spare his life.³⁵ However ambiguous the Biblical text may be regarding Moshe’s status, the *aggadot* leave us with no doubt; Moshe was distinctly transcendental.

In his *Iggeret haNechamah* to the Jews of Fez,³⁶ R’ Maimon ben Joseph, the father of the Rambam, echoes these *aggadot*. He writes that upon Moshe’s death, his soul was “united with the angels on high and entered the body of an angel ... this was not something new for him

²⁵ An interesting example of this tension is the term “איש האלקים”, which is often used to describe Moshe (Yehoshu 14:6, Ezra 3:2). On the one hand, man. On the other hand, one with an atypical relationship with the Divine.

²⁶ Shemot Rabbah 47:5. See also Shir haShirim Rabba 8:11 in which God argues with the angels about the logic of giving the Torah to humankind. God’s argument is that the Torah is meant for mortal man who eats and drinks. It is interesting, therefore, that for Moshe to ascend to the Heavens to bring the Torah down to mankind, he must, at least temporarily, almost lose his human status.

²⁷ Shabbat 88b

²⁸ Pesikhta De’rav Kahana S1:10, Sifre on Devarim 305, Bava Batra 17a and Midrash Petirat Moshe Rabbeinu

²⁹ Midrash Petirat Moshe Rabbeinu

³⁰ Sotah 13b - “Others declare that Moshe never died; it is written here, “So Moshe died *there* (*Devarim* 34:5)” and elsewhere it is written, “And he was *there* with the Lord (*Exodus* 34:28)”. As in the latter passage it means standing and ministering, so also in the former it means standing and ministering.” In other words, Moshe’s burial spot is unknown because he never died. Rather, he rose to Heaven to serve God as one of the ministering angels.

³¹ Shemot Rabbah 28:1

³² Pesikhta de’Rav Kahana S1:9

³³ Berachot 54b

³⁴ Zohar 21b

³⁵ Many of these *aggadot* have been incorporated into the piyyutim of Simchat Torah that eulogize Moshe’s death.

³⁶ In 1159, Maimon emigrated with his family to Fez, then under Almohad Muslim rulership. The letter was written as encouragement to the Jews of Fez who were not only under severe religious persecution, but were being persuaded that Islam was God’s substitute for Judaism and that Mohammed was God’s replacement for Moshe. Hence, the emphasis in the letter on Moshe’s exceptional and everlasting holiness.

because when he was still living in the body of a human being, he was active among the angels ...”³⁷

While this is not the forum for a full-length discussion on the glaringly polemic issue of human beings having a divine status,³⁸ it is worthwhile to contemplate why it is that these sources accentuate Moshe’s holiness so emphatically. The Torah explicitly states that as a man, Moshe was the greatest prophet who ever lived. Are these *aggadot* simply using spiritual superlatives to confirm Moshe’s holiness as a leader and prophet? Or are the angelic descriptions of Moshe intended to add a substantive additional dimension to the image and personality of Moshe Rabbeinu?

Of Angels and Prophets

To encounter this issue, we must contrast two concepts that at first blush, seem glaringly distinct; the prophet and the angel. The initial comparison seems obvious; they are both agents of God but one is a man of flesh and blood and the other is celestial. But at a deeper glance, neither of these assumptions is perfectly true. Let us deal firstly with the issue of their respective missions. True, they are both agents of God, but they function very differently in that capacity. The prophet experiences the words and “desires” of God and then communicates them to the people. (If and how the people change their actions as a result is the hoped for next step – but is independent of the job the prophet himself must do.) The prophet fulfills his duty by communicating the message. The angel’s mission, however, is only fulfilled when he accomplishes a set objective, when he achieves a definite practical outcome. Whether it’s the destruction of a city (the angel sent to destroy Sodom,) a punishment (the angel sent to afflict Avimelech for his kidnapping of Sarah,) the extrication of someone from a physically harmful situation (Daniel was protected from the lions by the angel Gavriel, as were Chananya, Mishael and Azaryah) or an actual “push” in a certain direction (Yosef was told by an angel to follow his brothers,) the angel has a “job” to get done. That is his purpose; he acts upon something.³⁹ As a *shaliach*, his job is to change something so that it creates a different reality. **He fulfills his mission only when that change occurs.** The prophet, on the other hand, cautions, cries, cajoles, and convinces, with the *hope* of effecting change, but whether or not that change occurs is then dependent on his audience; will they listen to God’s word or will they ignore it?

This essential difference can possibly explain Moshe’s elevation to “angel” in the *aggadah*. It is a reflection of the events and work of his lifetime and of how he fulfilled his mission as God’s agent. The people responded to his prophecy so well, the Torah and its mitzvot were practically incorporated into our lifestyle; we were transformed from a slave people to a Godly one **so effectively** that it’s **as if** Moshe acted as an angel; the practical outcomes of his work were readily apparent. Reality was changed.

³⁷ Similar descriptions appear in Avot de’Rabi Natan 157 and Sotah 13b.

³⁸ It seems that R’ Maimon is trying to solve a theological difficulty (the struggle against Mohammed’s legitimacy) by referencing a theological enigma of our own – did Moshe have a status that was more than human?

³⁹ To highlight this, the famous statement that “One angel does not perform two missions” (Bereishit Rabbah 3:2), is a reflection of the idea that the ultimate identity of the angel is the fulfillment of the job that he has been charged with.

This can be understood on a deeper level when one takes into account the Rambam's definitions of the "angel" and the "prophet."⁴⁰ According to the Rambam, angels do not exist as celestial beings at all; they are incorporeal or "intelligences without matter."⁴¹ More simply, an "angel" is the way in which we refer to the will of God to change something in this world. The term "מלאך" is essentially a metaphor for Divine Providence. When God sends forth a "force" to put His will into effect, that force is an "angel."⁴² It is God's will, something incorporeal, taking place in and acting upon the world of nature and physicality. Compare this to the Rambam's definition of the prophet. A prophet is someone who achieves a level of intellectual and imaginative perfection that is so elevated, that he can begin to reach an "understanding" of God. In other words, a prophet is a man of flesh and blood, of the natural world, who is able to ascend to God and "touch" the heavens.⁴³ Herein lies the intrinsic similarity: **the angel and the prophet are both representative of a bridging of the gap between the Heavens and the Earth.** They differ on the point of departure. One is the Heavens itself reaching downward to change our earthly reality and one is a material human being who "touches" the Heavens.

The Rambam's definitions now become the key to our understanding of Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was the greatest prophet who ever lived.⁴⁴ The *aggadot* raise him to the status of an angel. By doing so, they are adding to his exalted prophetic status. What these *aggadot* are depicting for us is that in his journey to fulfill the role of prophet, he played into the role of an angel by effectively fulfilling a mission for God. After all, the corporeal world was forever changed by the nation he liberated, the Torah he introduced to them and the forty-year journey he led them on. **While the prophet is on a level in which he can offer the possibility of change; the angel is change itself. The prophet is the impetus for an act; the angel accomplishes the act itself. Moshe Rabbeinu was both.** The descriptions of Moshe as "angelic" are not mere accolades or just testaments to his status as a holy, righteous person.⁴⁵ They are a description of the very unique spiritual footprint he left on this physical world, on how the gap between heaven and earth was bridged in his time.

Rav Soloveitchik describes Moshe's personhood using a very similar analysis. In *The Emergence of Ethical Man*, in discussing the different classifications of prophets, he states that Moshe is unique in that he "... introduces a new motif into the God-man fellowship, namely that of *shelihut* - agency. He becomes the divine angel who acts on behalf of God and represents Him.

⁴⁰ The Rambam discusses the nature of the prophet in Moreh Nevuchim II:32 and in Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah 7.

⁴¹ Moreh Nevuchim I:49 – angels can appear as physical forms in a vision, but they are not, in reality, physical beings. In the Moreh II:6, the Rambam elaborates on the idea of angels as Godly "forces", like the forces of nature, for example.

⁴² For instance, the Rambam explains that images of angels "flying" or possessing wings, are allusions to a mission being set into motion or happening quickly. (Moreh Nevuchim 2:4)

⁴³ And is, therefore, able to help humanity to understand God's will.

⁴⁴ According to the Rambam in Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah 7:6, part of Moshe's uniqueness as a prophet was in his ability to comprehend his prophecies not only while awake and with absolute clarity, but as if he was a "friend" or "confidant" of God; i.e. without fear and at any time.

⁴⁵ By the Rambam's definition of the angel as a force, and not a formed celestial being, they are certainly not theologically problematic descriptions either.

‘...and sent an angel, and brought us out of Egypt’ (Num. 20:16).⁴⁶ The angelic role - that is to say, the role of agent - of the charismatic personality was assigned for the first time to Moses....”^{47 48}

This helps us to more clearly understand the *sefer hayom* of the Torah readings on *Simchat Torah*. We read the portion of *VeZot Habrachah* and then we loop back to the story of creation. What better way to celebrate the “angelic” accomplishments of Moshe Rabbeinu and his effect on this world, than to start again with the story of creation; the story of the beginning of physicality, of the natural world! *Maaseh Bereishit* is a story of raw material being created. In addition, it is the story of the separation of the heavens and the earth, for on the second day of creation "וַיִּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרַקִּיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם מֵעַל לְרַקִּיעַ". According to the Kli Yakar, both physically, and metaphorically, God created a gap between the physical world and the Heavenly spheres.⁴⁹ The Talmud in Shabbat 88b tells us that when Moshe “went up to the heavens to bring the Torah down,” Moshe acted as the agent who began to make that gap a bit more narrow. **He did so prophetically by reaching a level in which he could comprehend God and His will, and he did so angelically, by his ability to fulfill his mission of bringing God’s Presence down to our world.**⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:3 tells us that on the second day of creation, the angels were created as well. In other words, on the same day that God separated between heaven and earth, He also created the “agents” that would reach down to connect the two.

In Sefer Devarim, Moshe tells B’nei Yisrael the following:

11 For this commandment which I command you on this day, it is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. **12** It is not in heaven, that you should say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' **13**

(יא) כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה היום לא נפלאה הוא ממך ולא רחקה הוא: (יב) לא בשמים הוא לאמר מי יעלה לנו השמימה ויקחה לנו וישמענו

⁴⁶ In translating this use of the term “angel” as a reference to Moshe, the Rav is echoing the Abarbanel, as well as various other commentators.

⁴⁷ “*The Emergence of Ethical Man*”, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, ed: Michael Berger, KTAV Publishing House, Inc. Jersey City 2005, p183-184. The Rav goes on to compare Moshe to Avraham Avinu, explaining that Avraham may have discovered an intimacy with God but that “whatever he preached he did on his own. He never represented God as his emissary.”

⁴⁸ Note the polemic footnote on p184 - “Christianity could not solve the meaning of divine agency and converted God’s apostle into a deity. We, however, refused to do so. Moses remained a human figure in all his idiosyncrasies. The angelic task is human through and through.” This footnote is directly in line with the Rambam’s view of Moshe as well; Moshe never transcends his human body. He is unique in that he uses his humanity to forge a more powerful relationship between God and His people.

⁴⁹ It is for this reason that the command to create the *רקיע* to separate heaven and earth is not followed by its fulfillment (יהי רקיע...ויהי רקיע) in the same way that the creation of light was followed by its fulfillment. The Kli Yakar explains that the events of day two did not occur immediately upon God’s command because “אין פתגם הרעה” - “נעשה מהרה” - Statements or commands that contain negative consequence (i.e. the separation of the heavens from the earth), do not happen expeditiously.

⁵⁰ In fact, Moshe is credited completely with the completion of the *Mishkan* (rather than its architect, Bezalel ben Uri) because it was through his efforts and merit that the *Shechinah* could dwell within the *Mishkan*. See Bamidbar 7:1 - “וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כִּלּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְהַקִּים אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן” - “And it was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the *Mishkan*...”. See *Pesikta De’Rav Kahana* for this interpretation of this attribution.

Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say: 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' **14** But the word is very close to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

Devarim 30:11-14

אתה ונעשנה: (יג) ולא מעבר לים הוא
לאמר מי יעבר לנו אל עבר הים ויקחה
לנו וישמענו אתה ונעשנה: (יד) כי
קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיהך ובלבבך
לעשותו:
דברים פרק ל

In the weeks before his death, Moshe encourages his people to continue in his prophetic and angelic path, to endeavor to close that gap, and not to see the heavens as something distant and unattainable. Corporeal nature can become divine; Torah can descend upon the earth. The last two *pesukim* of the Torah, Devarim 34: 11-12, are a testament to the man who was able to do just that, who was “הַשְּׁמַיְמָה יַעֲלֶה לָנוּ”, who reached the Heavens and brought it down to us... and then we turn back the pages to where it all began, to remind ourselves that we must continue to accomplish God’s mission for us, by putting His will into effect on the blank slate that is the physical world.

The text itself links Moshe’s death at the end of *Chamishah Chumshei Torah* with its opening episode of *Maaseh Bereishit*, the creation story. In these last two *pesukim* of *VeZot Habrachah*, the verb “עשה” is used twice to describe Moshe’s leadership. It appears in pasuk 11, “אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח ה’ וְלָכַח לְהַמּוֹרָא הַגְּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מִן־שָׁמַיִם לְעַיְנֵינוּ כָּל־” and then again in pasuk 12 “וַיִּשְׁרָאֵל”. The verb “עשה” also appears numerous times in the description of *Briyat Ha’olam* – appearing for the first time in 1:7 - “וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ”. In differentiating between the verbs “עשה”, “יצר” and “ברא”, the Ramban⁵¹ states that “יצר” is creation *ex nihilo*, “ברא” is the structuring of that initial matter into actual forms, and “עשה” is the taking of the finished creation and establishing it in its place, or fixing and preparing it, for its proper role. Moshe was in no way a creator – but his status as “angel” implies that he was someone who took God’s creations and “prepared them” for their role by pushing, pulling and prodding his people towards a closer relationship with their Creator through fulfillment of His will. He is leaving them now, but he is leaving them with the tools and experiences that they will need to encounter their future. Hence, we move from the end of the story, i.e. the accomplished, perfected “עושה” by Moshe at the end of Devarim, to the initial “עושה” of God’s will in creation. The verbal connection is as follows; in *Bereishit*, God creates the natural world and equips it for its future role, and in Devarim, Moshe has done the same for *Klal Yisrael*. In truth, both are examples of God’s desires impacting the physical world. In other words, both are examples of “angels.” God creates from scratch, and it is then our job to “נעשה”, to transform that creation and develop it towards perfection.

Moshe’s *prophetic* greatness was his ability to understand that the purpose of mankind lay in fulfilling God’s will. But as every prophet quickly discovered, there is only “so much” one can do in effecting actual change. The prophet may receive the message, but establishing that message depends on numerous factors of his audience; emotional reactions, physical desires and external events to name a few. Moshe the prophet, as we know, encountered quite often in the Jewish

⁵¹ See the Ramban on *Bereishit* 1:7 and 1:26 as well as here in Devarim 34:12. The Ramban’s final comment in Devarim is on the words “אשר עשה משה” in which he explains “עשה” as “רק הכין אותם” – “he had merely made them ready”.

people, the obstacles of human obstinacy to the will of God. His *angelic* greatness lay in the fact that despite these obstacles, God's will took place. The Heavens touched the earth.⁵² Man acted as agent, as God's *shaliach*, on this world.⁵³

Moshe is granted angelic status by the *aggadot*, not because he was superhuman, but because as a human being, he was able to wholly accomplish a *shlichut* of the Divine will. It is no wonder then that the Torah ends on the words “לעיני כל ישראל”. As a prophet, he experienced God's presence “פנים אל פנים”; but as an angel, he was able to bring that contact down so that humankind could experience it. He may have been a prophet like none other, but “לעיני כל ישראל” is the testament to how he was able to use his greatness to activate God's will by effecting an entire society. For through Moshe's agency, *Am Yisrael* saw and experienced God's Presence, and was changed, transformed and renewed by it. And if each angel exists only to fulfill its particular mission, then Moshe's death at the end of our *parsha* is a significant symbol that his mission was complete and that his people were ready for their future.

“...ולכל המורא הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל...בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ...” – what better way to celebrate the joy of the day than to pay tribute to the life and death of Moshe Rabbeinu ... and then to flip the pages back to the renewal of his mission, and of our mission; to close the gap between heaven and earth by, as prophets, working to recognize God, and as angels, striving to do His will.

⁵² In fact, *Am Yisrael* too experienced the roles of both angel and prophet. At the splitting of the Red Sea, all of *Klal Yisrael* became prophets (Mechilta, Beshalach 3), and at Har Sinai, the nation was considered to be on the level of the angels. To be termed prophet, one must have an elevated understanding of God. To be termed angel, one is playing an all-encompassing part in accomplishing a mission, a *shlichut*, of Hashem. At the sea, the nation “saw” God, they experienced Him, and they understood that He was their Father, their Savior and their Creator. They reached the level of prophets. At Har Sinai, however, they are described as angels, because as we accepted the *ol* of Torah, each Jew became an agent, sent on a mission.

⁵³ Or, as Rav Soloveitchik (*Ethical Man*, p184) points out, that in reality, this is a new aspect of the covenant introduced at Har Sinai; the fact that “... the covenant not only involves God in the human historical occurrence of His chosen people, but **draws man into the historical divine performance**. God wanders with His chosen friend or friends, and shares in their destiny. **Man coordinates his activities with divine planning and co-participates in the realization of great promise.**”

Zman Simchateinu: Understanding the Happiness of Sukkot

Mrs. Chaya Batya Neugroschl

Head of School, Yeshiva University High School for Girls

While the common rabbinic names associated with the Shalosh Regalim are usually clearly connected to the events they commemorate, with regard to the common name of Sukkot, referred to as Zman Simchateinu, the connection is less apparent. In addition to the practical mitzvoth which are unique to Sukkot we have an additional command of Visamachta “and you shall rejoice.” When it comes to Sukkot we need to wonder, what are the particular roots of this simcha? How is simcha linked to the events of Sukkot? What joy are we commemorating and revisiting in our observance of Sukkot? And in turn, how is it that we are able to achieve this component of the Chag – what does it look like?

Indeed the peshat of the pesukim (Devarim 16:13-16) indicates a very reasonable and natural explanation for the emphasis on joy during Sukkot. Visamachta can be understood as an expression of our gratitude for the abundance of our crops and harvest. Although the agricultural cycle is often connected to the commemorations of the Shalosh Regalim, alone, this does not characterize the chag and must not be the sole source of Visamachta. An examination of the meaning of zman simchateinu should, however, include an historical and philosophical foundation for this aspect of Chag HaSukkot.

The holiday of Sukkot is also characterized by a number of unique commandments, commemorating the experiences of Klal Yisrael in the midbar. The primary mitzvah is that of dwelling in Sukkot - temporary dwellings, as mentioned in Vayikra (23: 42-43) "In booths you are to dwell for seven days ...so that your generations will know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them from the land of Egypt...." The two components of the mitzvah are significant to note. Sukkot have a particular form and the chag has a unique teleological purpose. The Sukkot we build and move into each year are intended to connect us to a specific period in our nation's history, when in the desert as a newly liberated nation we lived in Sukkot.

What these “booths” are referring to is, however, debated in the tractate of Sukkah (11b). According to Rabbi Eliezer these booths are a reference to the miraculous "Ananei HaKavod,"

the "Clouds of Glory," with which God surrounded the Israelites throughout their forty year journey in the desert after having left Egypt. These clouds represent the miraculous shield that protected the Israelites from the elements and guided them through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains, however, that these "booths" refer to the actual booths or temporary houses that the Israelites built while in the desert.

The Aruch HaShulchan (Orech Chayim 625) wonders about the vast difference in these interpretations and its significance for our understanding of the Chag. Since Rabbi Eliezer's booths were manifestations of God's protection and the miracles performed for the Jews in the desert, they certainly merit commemoration. However, Rabbi Akiva's interpretation is most puzzling in light of the commandment to dwell in the Sukkah. What is the significance of the huts that the Jews lived in while in the desert?

The Aruch HaShulchan suggests that the differing opinions are actually united in the way they understand the significance of commemorating the "booths." While Rabbi Eliezer focuses on the greatness of God and his miraculous protection of Am Yisrael, according to Rabbi Akiva, the Sukkah commemorates the greatness of the Jewish people and their enduring faith. Although beset with struggles, they traveled into the uninhabitable desert following God's command. The booths of Sukkot represent the faithful efforts of Am Yisrael in the face of great vulnerability and physical deprivation. Under these conditions, their dependence upon God was complete and their commitment was immeasurable. In this light, both Rabbi Eliezer's and Rabbi Akiva's interpretation of the "booths" whether physical or metaphorical, point us towards the impermanence of our dwelling in this world and the dependence upon our relationship with God. Thus, our observance of the commandment of Sukkot is connected to God's miraculous protection of the Jews during their forty year sojourn through the desert on route to the land of Israel. Is this the source of Zman Simchateinu? Wouldn't Hoda'a (gratitude) be just as appropriate an association to commemorate the miracles of God and the faith of the Am?

According to Maimonides, in Hilkhos Yom Tov, the simcha of simkhat Yom Tov is not about an individual's emotions. Instead, what emerges from the Rambam's directives is that simcha shel mitzvah is a state of being; a mindset that emerges when there is an alignment of the individual's performance of a mitzva and divine command. The requirement of this form of simcha is fulfilled when the experience of simcha is essentially a transformative occurrence. In the fulfillment of a mitzvah with intentionality, a sense of purpose, and a clarity of priorities, the individual becomes more than the sum total of himself and his actions; he joins a divine collectivity. Therefore, according to Rambam, simcha shel mitzvah is only possible as a community based experience. Simcha shel mitzvah is achieved only when a family rejoices together and extends their celebration of the chag to include others in need. (Hilkhos Yom Tov 10:16-18)

Consider how this understanding of simcha impacts our appreciation of the events we are commemorating on Sukkot. It isn't merely celebrating our individual relationship with God, our heightened appreciation of God's protection, guidance and blessings that we are commemorating. Instead it is a simcha that is rooted in the covenantal community. Our simcha is fulfilled only as an expression of our connection to the destiny of Knesset Yisrael.

The Vilna Gaon supports this understanding of the significance of simcha on Sukkot. He suggests that the simcha of Sukkot is not only connected to the dependence of Knesset Yisrael on Hashem. Instead, Sukkot has an enhanced element of Simcha because the Ananei Hakavod were actually returned, for the first time since the sin of the Golden Calf, precisely on the 15th of Tishrei. On this date, when the construction of the Mishkan began, we have an added degree of simcha. The Gaon concludes that this is why the 15th of Tishrei was designated for Sukkot, Zman Simchateinu. Only then did the community recognize that they had returned to a status deserving the divine presence of the Ananei Hakavod. That confirmation of their identity as a covenantal community is the source of the *Visamachta* of Sukkot.

As we construct our Sukkot and commemorate our continual dependence on God let our celebrations center around the bounty and blessings of belonging to a covenantal community that is guided and protected by the “Clouds of Glory.”

The Season of Holidays and the Dedication of the Mikdash

Mrs. Deena Rabinovich

Faculty, Stern College for Women

The narrative arc that culminates in the dedication of the Beit Hamikdash by Shlomo ha-Melekh begins with the expression of intent by his father David to build a permanent abode for the Aron Elokim. David felt blessed by all that God had granted him and deemed it inappropriate for the king of Benai Yisrael to live in a magnificent palace while the Holy Ark rested in a rustic tent.

The king said unto Nathan the prophet: 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.'

Shmuel II 7:2

ויאמר המלך אל נתן הנביא ראה נא אנכי יושב בבית
ארזים וארון האלהים ישב בתוך היריעה:
שמואל ב ז:ב

As was his custom before undertaking any important venture, David consulted with the court prophet to secure God's approval and receives a positive reaction from Natan:

And Nathan said to the king: 'Go, do all that is in thy heart; for the Lord is with thee.'

Shmuel II 7:3

ויאמר נתן אל המלך כל אשר בלבבך לך עשה כי
ה' עמך:
שמואל ב ז:ג

It would seem, however, that Natan misspoke, and God directs Natan that very night to correct his error⁵⁴.

4 And it came to pass the same night that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying: 5 'Go and tell My servant David: Thus saith the Lord: Shalt thou build Me a house for Me to dwell in? ... 12 ... I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I

(ד) ויהי בלילה ההוא ויהי דבר ה' אל
נתן לאמר: (ה) לך ואמרת אל עבדי
אל דוד כה אמר ה' האתה תבנה לי
בית לשבתי ... (יב) ... והקימתי את
זרעך אחריך אשר יצא ממעיך
והכניתי את ממלכתו: (יג) הוא יבנה

⁵⁴ Why the rush? Rashi and Radak (I Samuel 7:4) quote a midrash that emphasizes David's alacrity. Unless he is called off at once, he may utter a vow such as not to eat or drink until the Temple is built. Or perhaps he will hire contractors to build the Temple and will need to pay them even if the project is called off. To prevent either of these scenarios, Natan must return to David at once, and tell him that the project must be deferred.

will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Shmuel II 7:4-13

While David is denied permission to build the Mikdash, he is promised that his son and successor will be the one to do so. Overcoming or suppressing any feelings of disappointment, David responds to Natan's message by thanking God for continuing to shower him with kindness.

18 Then David the king went in, and sat before the Lord; and he said: 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that Thou hast brought me thus far? **19** And this was yet a small thing in Thine eyes, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this too after the manner of great men, O Lord God. **20** And what can David say more unto Thee? For Thou knowest Thy servant, O Lord God. **21** For Thy word's sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou wrought all this greatness, to make Thy servant know it. **22** Therefore Thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. **23** And who is like Thy people, like Israel, a nation one in the earth, whom God went to redeem unto Himself for a people, and to make Him a name, and to do for Thy land great things and tremendous, even for you, (in driving out) from before Thy people, whom Thou didst redeem to Thee out of Egypt, the nations and their gods? **24** And Thou didst establish to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever; and Thou, Lord, becamest their God.

Shmuel II 7:18-24

David, craving some involvement in the process, raises funds and gathers raw materials for the Mikdash.

14 Now, behold, in my straits I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. **15** Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all men that are skilful in any manner of work; **16** of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.' **17** David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son: **18** 'Is not the Lord your God with you? And hath He

בית לשמי וכננתי את כסא ממלכתו
עד עולם:
שמואל ב ז:ד-יג

(יח) ויבא המלך דוד וישב לפני
ה' ויאמר מי אנכי אדני ה' ומי
ביתי כי הביאתני עד הלם: (יט)
ותקטן עוד זאת בעיניך אדני ה'
ותדבר גם אל בית עבדך למרחוק
וזאת תורת האדם אדני ה': (כ)
ומה יוסיף דוד עוד לדבר אליך
ואתה ידעת את עבדך אדני ה':
(כא) בעבור דברך וכלבך עשית
את כל הגדולה הזאת להודיע את
עבדך: (כב) על כן גדלת אדני ה'
כי אין כמוך ואין אלהים זולתך
בכל אשר שמענו באזנינו: (כג)
ומי כעמך כישראל גוי אחד
בארץ אשר הלכו אלהים לפדות
לו לעם ולשום לו שם ולעשות
לכם הגדולה ונראות לארצך
מפני עמך אשר פדית לך
ממצרים גוים ואלהיו: (כד)
ותכונן לך את עמך ישראל לך
לעם עד עולם ואתה ה' היית להם
לאלהים:

שמואל ב ז:יח-כד

(יד) והנה בעניי הכינותי לבית ה'
זהב ככרים מאה אלף וכסף אלף
אלפים ככרים ולנחשת ולברזל
אין משקל כי לרב היה ועצים
ואבנים הכינותי ועליהם תוסיף:
(טו) ועמך לרב עשי מלאכה
חצבים וחרשי אבן ועץ וכל חכם
בכל מלאכה: (טז) לזהב לכסף
ולנחשת ולברזל אין מספר קום
ועשה ויהי ה' עמך: (יז) ויצו דוד
לכל שרי ישראל לעזור לשלמה
בנו: (יח) הלא ה' אלהיכם עמכם

not given you rest on every side? For He hath delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord, and before His people. **19** Now set your heart and your soul to seek after the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.'

Divrei Hayamim II 22:14-19

והניח לכם מסביב כי נתן בידי את
ישבי הארץ ונכבשה הארץ לפני
ה' ולפני עמו: (יט) עתה תנו
לבבכם ונפשכם לדרוש לה'
אלהיכם וקומו ובנו את מקדש ה'
האלהים להביא את ארון ברית ה'
וכלי קדש האלהים לבית הנבנה
לשם ה':
דברי הימים א כב:יד-יט

Talents of gold and silver, immeasurable quantities of copper and iron, wood and stone: David even lines up the masons, stone cutters and other artisans qualified to construct the Temple and instructs the leaders of the nation to assist the new king. Like Moshe Rabbeinu on the summit of Har Nebo looking out over the Holy Land in which he will not set foot, David strains to see into the future Temple.

During the month of Ziv (Iyar), in the fourth year of Shlomo's reign, construction began on what would become the Beit Hamikdash (1 Kings 6:1). Seven years later, during the month of Bul (Cheshvan) the building is complete (1 Kings 6:38)⁵⁵. Shlomo contracts with Hiram, king of Tyre, for raw materials and for artisans. Only with the completion of the building does Shlomo send for the spoils of war gathered by his father, David, which David had presented to his son for the purpose of building the Temple.⁵⁶

The time had come to put the finishing touch on the Beit Hamikdash, to move the Ark from the City of David to its final resting place in the Kodesh Kedoshim of the new Beit Hamikdash. Shlomo invites the elders, he invites the heads of the tribes, and he invites the entire Jewish people, to watch as the kohanim carry the Aron Kodesh. The event, described in Chapter Eight of Kings 1, takes place during the month of Eitanim, the seventh month, and lasts for seven days.

65 So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entrance Hamath unto the Brook of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. **66** On the eighth day he sent the people away, and they blessed the king, and

(סה) ויעש שלמה בעת ההיא את החג
וכל ישראל עמו קהל גדול מלבוא
חמת עד נחל מצרים לפני ה' אלהינו
שבעת ימים ושבעת ימים ארבעה
עשר יום: (סו) ביום השמיני שלח את
העם ויברכו את המלך וילכו

⁵⁵ Radak I Kings 6:38

הוא מרחשון כמו שאמר הוא החדש השמיני ונקרא כן מפני הגשמים שמתחילין בו ענין מבול ובדברי רז"ל בירח בול שבו העלה נבל והארץ עשויה בולות וירח שבו בוללין לבהמה מתוך הבית כלומר שמאכל הבהמה כלה מן השדה ודעת יונתן בזה שתרגם בירח מוסף אבביא:

The names familiar to us for the months are, of course, post-exilic and are not found in the Torah, nor in the early prophets. Thus "Nissan" is employed only in Esther 3:7 and Nehemiah 2:1. Since we now equate Pesach with the month of Nissan and Tishrei with the Yamim Noraim and Sukkot, I have utilized those names in what follows and the reader, I trust, will forgive my anachronisms.

⁵⁶ I Kings 7:51

א ז,נא ותשלם, כל-המלאכה, אשר עשה המלך שלמה, בית ה', נבא שלמה את-קדשי דוד אביו, את-הכסף ואת-הזהב ואת-הכלים--נתן, באצרות בית ה'.

The Midrash Pesikta Rabbati suggests that Shlomo was reluctant to use these spoils, a reading that intrigued many of the rishonim such as Rashi, Radak and Abravanel.

went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown unto David His servant, and to Israel His people.

Melachim I 8:65-66

לאהליהם שמחים וטובי לב על כל הטובה אשר עשה ה' לדוד עבדו ולישראל עמו:
מלכים א ה:סה-סו

We are not given the date on which the dedicatory ceremonies opened, but we are given a strong hint: immediately following the week of dedication of the Mikdash, Bnai Yisrael begin to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot. As we know Sukkot begins on the fifteenth day of the month; if the dedication began seven days earlier that brings us to the eighth of Tishrei. That means that from the eighth day of Tishrei, through the fourteenth, Bnai Yisrael were eating and drinking and celebrating the opening of the Beit Hamikdash. This included, as Rashi notes, the Tenth of Tishrei, otherwise known to us as Yom Kippur.

We find that that year they ate and drank on Yom Kippur.

Rashi Melachim I 8:65

שבעת ימים - חג הסוכות נמצא שאכלו ושתו ביום הכיפורים:
רש"י מלכים א ה:סה

What, we wonder, could have given Shlomo an incentive to select, of all weeks, one that included Yom Kippur? Work had been essentially completed eleven months earlier. Why the long delay and why arrange for the Mikdash to open just in time for the festival of Sukkot? What justification, moreover, could there have been for overriding the proscriptions associated with Yom Kippur?

In fact, there was precedent for Shlomo's decision. Radak, citing chazal, suggests that Shlomo based this on the week-long dedication of the Mishkan in the desert during which time peace-offerings (shelamim) were brought daily, even on Shabbat, in spite of the fact that this would normally constitute a stoning offense. (Certain sacrifices are, of course, to be brought on Shabbat in the normal course, but not these.)

Chazal understood that they did in fact eat on Yom Hakippurim that year, for it was within the days of rejoicing, and they based it on the case of the dedication of the Mishkan, for in that case they brought shelamim sacrifices on Shabbat, even though normally that would carry a penalty of stoning, so Yom Hakippurim, which carries a [lighter] penalty of karet, certainly it would be permissible to bring shelamim sacrifices. And Chazal questioned that while they may have sacrificed the shelamim on Yom Hakippurim, perhaps they didn't eat the meat, and they answered that there is no true rejoicing without eating and drinking, and that is what is meant by the passuk "and they went to their tents happy and glad of heart.

Radak Melachim I 8:65

את החג - אבל רבותינו ז"ל אמרו כי אכלו אותו יום הכפורים כי בכלל ימי השמחה היה ולמדו זה מחנוכת המשכן מה שם עשו שלמים בשבת אף על פי שהוא באסור סקילה יום הכפורים שהוא אסור כרת לא כל שכן... והקשו ואמרו ושמא עשו ביום הכפורים זה שלמים ולא אכלו ותרצו אין שמחת הגוף אלא באכילה ושתיה וזהו שאמר הכתוב וילכו לאהליהם שמחי וטובי לב.
רד"ק מלכים א ה:סה

If one may bring a peace offering on Shabbat ha-Miluim, Shlomo reasoned, one may certainly eat and drink on Yom Kippur that falls during the dedication week for the Mikdash (the penalty for this is “karet,” formally a lighter penalty than stoning).

Strikingly, there is a second parallel between the two dedications that Chazal noticed. Just as Shlomo delayed the dedication for nearly a year after the primary construction was completed, Moshe delayed the dedication of the Mishkan. In both cases, Bnai Yisrael are concerned with the delay and suspect a defect- either in the building (with the Mishkan) or in the builder (with the Temple). And in both cases, God had to “compensate” the original month with another holiday.

Rabbi Chanina said: “On the twenty-fifth day of Kislev the construction of the component parts of the Mishkan was concluded and it remained disassembled until the first day of the month of Nissan... and during the entire time the Mishkan was disassembled, Bnai Yisrael were muttering about Moshe, suggesting that perhaps Moshe had not erected the Mishkan due to a defect. But Moshe wished to connect the happiness of the Mishkan with the month in which Yitzchak had been born, for Yitzchak was born in Nissan. How do we know this? For when the angels came to Avraham, Avraham instructs Sarah to knead the cakes, and the angels inform Avraham that “I will return the same time “. What is “ke’et chayah?” Rav Zavdi ben Levi says that they scratched a mark onto the wall and said that “ke’et chayah” will be when the sun will return to cast its mark on the same place. Once the Mishkan was erected the muttering ceased. Since Kislev lost out on the dedication of the work that was completed in its month, God said it behooves on Me to repay it. How did God repay the month of Kislev? The Chanukah (dedication) celebration of the Hasmoneans. Similarly, Shlomo finished the work in the month of Marchesvan ... Why is the month called Bul? It is the month in which God brought the mabul (the flood). The Temple remained locked for twelve months and everyone was muttering about Shlomo to say that he was not the son of Batsheva, and therefore how could God agree to rest His Presence on the Temple that he (Shlomo) had constructed.

Psikta Rabti 6

ותשלם כל המלאכה... אמר רבי חנינא בעשרים וחמשה בכסליו נגמרה מלאכת המשכן ועשה מקופל עד אחד בניסן ... וכל זמן שהיה מקופל היו ישראל מלמלאין על משה לומר למה לא הוקם מיד שמא דופי אירע בו, שחשב לערב שמחת המשכן בחודש שנולד בו יצחק, שבניסן נולד יצחק, ומניין אלא כשהמלאכים באים אצל אברהם מהו אומר לוישי ועשי עגות (בראשית י"ח ו') שהיה פסח ואמרו לו שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה והנה בן לשרה אשתך (שם/בראשית י"ח/י') מהו כעת חיה אמר ר' זבדי בן לוי סריטה סרטו לו על כותל כשתבא השמש לכאן, לא עשה אלא כיון שבא ניסן והוקם המשכן עוד לא לימלם אדם אחר משה, ומעתה הפסיד כסליו שנגמרה מלאכה בו, לאו, מהו ותשלם אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא עלי לשלם לו, מה שילם לו הקדוש ברוך הוא הנוכת בית חשמנאי, אף שלמה גמר מלאכת המקדש בחודש מרחשון ובשנה אחת עשרה בירח בול כלה הבית (מלכים א' ו' ל"ח), מהו בירה בול בירה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא את המבול, ונעשה נעול שנים עשר חודש, והיו הכל מלמלאין על שלמה לומר לא בנה של בת שבע הוא היאך הקדוש ברוך הוא משרה שכינתו לתוך מעשה ידיו (בית המקדש) פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פסקא ו

The dedication of the Mishkan took place in Nissan, months after the building of the components had been completed, for symbolic reasons – perhaps the anniversary of the birth of

Isaac, perhaps to connect the Mishkan to the symbols of freedom, represented by the month in which we were released from bondage in Egypt.

If Shlomo was following Moshe's lead, though, why did he not also select Nissan as the appropriate month to dedicate the Mikdash? Why choose Tishrei, a month already chock full of Moadim? Part of the answer is hinted at in the continuation of the midrash.

(Just as God wanted to connect the inauguration of the Mishkan with Yitzchak,) He wished to connect the inauguration of the Mikdash with Avraham and the month in which he has born, the month of Eitanim, which is the month of Tishrei.

Psikta Rabti 6

ותשלם כל המלאכה... והאלקים
שחשב לערב שמחת בית המקדש
בחודש שנולד בו אברהם בירח
האתנים (מלכים א' ח' ב') זה חודש
תשרי.
פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פיסקא ו

There are fundamental differences between the two months and the two holidays. If Nissan, with the holiday of Pesach, represents both the release of the Hebrews from slavery and the molding of the nation, Tishrei, with the holiday of Sukkot, reflects a more universalistic set of concerns. We celebrate the holiday of Pesach behind close doors. We celebrate the holiday of Sukkot outside where all can see. We bring the same number of korbanot every day of Pesach. On Sukkot, the number of bull offerings varies daily and, as Chazal stress, the sum total over the course of seven days is seventy, representing the seventy nations of the world and our responsibility to them. This comparison extends to the fundamental difference between Yitzchak and Avraham. Yitzchak, offered as a sacrifice on Har HaMoriah, remained in the Land of Israel and his focus remained inward. While he has some interactions with Avimelech, by and large his influence does not extend to the surrounding nations. Avraham, on the other hand, the father of many nations, interacts constantly with the outside world and dedicates his life to the spreading of God's word.

This helps to characterize the fundamental difference between the Mishkan and the Mikdash. To be sure, both the Mikdash and the Mishkan serve as symbols of the covenantal agreement executed by God and Bnai Yisrael at Har Sinai, as noted by the Ramban.

After God had given the Ten Commandments directly to Yisrael and instructed them with a sampling of the mitzvot (i.e. Parashat Mishpatim)... and Bnai Yisrael accepted these laws and entered a covenant (24:1-11)... behold they became His nation and He became their God, as was originally stipulated (with brit mila and at Har Sinai)... Now "they are worthy to have a house - His dwelling - in their midst dedicated to His Name, and there He will speak with Moshe and command Bnai Yisrael... Now the 'secret' ('sod') of the mishkan is that God's glory ('kavod') which dwelled on Har Sinai will now dwell (instead) on the mishkan 'be-nistar' (in a more hidden manner, in contrast to

כאשר דבר השם עם ישראל פנים
בפנים עשרת הדברות, וצוה אותם
על ידי משה קצת מצות שהם כמו
אבות למצותיה של תורה ...
וישראל קבלו עליהם לעשות כל
מה שיצום על ידו של משה, וכת
עמהם ברית על כל זה, מעתה הנה
הם לו לעם והוא להם לאלקים
כאשר התנה עמהם מתחלה...
והנה הם קדושים ראויים שיהיה
בהם מקדש להשרות שכינתו
ביניהם. ולכן צוה תחלה על דבר
המשכן שיהיה לו בית בתוכם
מקודש לשמו, ושם ידבר עם משה

But the Mishkan, given to Bnai Yisrael during their sojourn in the desert, remains the provenance of Bnai Yisrael and reflects their personal quest to communicate with God. The Mikdash, given to Bnai Yisrael once they have conquered the Land of Israel and made a mark for themselves amongst the other nations, reflects their mission to spread the Name of God to the world at large. The Mishkan embodies the month of Nissan and the personality of Yitzchak, the Mikdash personifies the month of Tishrei and the personality of Avraham.

Shlomo does not rely on subtle hints. He explicitly states this message when delivering the tefila at the Chanuka HaBayit.

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; **23** and he said: 'O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like Thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants, that walk before Thee with all their heart; ... **30** And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when Thou hearest, forgive. **31** If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be exacted of him to cause him to swear, and he come and swear before Thine altar in this house; **33** When Thy people Israel are smitten down before the enemy, when they do sin against Thee, if they turn again to Thee, and confess Thy name, and pray and make supplication unto Thee in this house; ... **35** When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, when they do sin against Thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin, when Thou dost afflict them; ... **37** If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; ... **41** Moreover concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for Thy name's sake-- ... **44** If Thy people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatsoever way Thou shalt send them, and they pray unto the Lord toward the city which Thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Thy name; ... **46** If they sin against Thee--for there is no man that sinneth not--and Thou be angry with them,

(כב) ויעמד שלמה לפני מזבח ה' נגד כל קהל ישראל ויפרש כפיו השמים: (כג) ויאמר ה' אלהי ישראל אין כמוך אלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת שמר הברית והחסד לעבדיך ההלכים לפניך בכל לבם: ... (ל) ושמעת אל תחנת עבדך ועמך ישראל אשר יתפללו אל המקום הזה ואתה תשמע אל מקום שבתך אל השמים ושמעת וסלחת: (לא) את אשר יחטא איש לרעהו ונשא בו אלה להאלתו ובא אלה לפני מזבחך בבית הזה: ... (לג) בהנגף עמך ישראל לפני אויב אשר יחטאו לך ושבו אליך והודו את שמך והתפללו והתחננו אליך בבית הזה: ... (לה) בהעצר שמים ולא יהיה מטר כי יחטאו לך והתפללו אל המקום הזה והודו את שמך ומחטאתם ישובון כי תענם: ... (לו) רעב כי יהיה בארץ דבר כי יהיה שדפון ירקון ארבה חסיל כי יהיה כי יצר לו איבו בארץ שעריו כל נגע כל מחלה: ... (מא) וגם אל הנכרי אשר לא מעמך ישראל הוא ובא מארץ רחוקה למען שמך: ... (מד) כי יצא עמך למלחמה על איבו בדרך אשר תשלחם והתפללו אל ה' דרך העיר אשר בחרת בה והבית אשר בנתי לשמך: ... (מו) כי יחטאו לך כי אין אדם אשר לא יחטא ואנפת במ

and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far off or near;

Melachim I 8:22-46

ונתתם לפני אויב ושבום שביהם
אל ארץ האויב רחוקה או קרובה:
מלכים א ח:כב-מו

Shlomo tells Bnai Yisrael, you will come here when you have sinned and need to bring a korban ... when you are being attacked by an enemy ... when there is a drought or a hunger... and even before you go out to war. But also, adds Shlomo, you will not be the only ones to use this house. The nachri, the non Jews, will also come here when they hear of the greatness of God and come to pay homage to God.

Avraham, too, never ceased his efforts to teach all of mankind of the greatness of God. He was born in Tishrei and during that month we constantly beseech God to remember the merits of the Avot and forgive us for our sins. During that month we look beyond our society to the world at large. That broader perspective was what motivated Shlomo to select that month to dedicate the mikdash closing the book, we might say, on the Exodus from Egypt that occurred 480 years earlier.

Just as Sukkot concludes the circular cycle of pilgrim holidays and relates back to Pesach, the dedication of the Mikdash caps the linear history leading back to the events of the Exodus.

The Beauty and the Least

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Ra"m, Yeshivat Har Etzion

Most chagim are defined by a *primary* mitzvah – a central mitzvah that both anchors the halachik experience and infuses the day with its primary symbolism. It is difficult to overstate the central role of shofar on Rosh Hashana just as it is impossible to ignore the heavy impact of chametz and matzah upon Pesach. Though admittedly, most chagim carry ancillary mitzvot, such as korbanot and tefilot, it is usually the one central mitzvah which captures the theme of the day. More often than not this central and dominant mitzvah lends the chag its Biblical name. Rosh Hashanah is referred to by the Torah as Yom Hazikaron because of the effect of the shofar which elicits the merciful attention of the Ribbono Shel Olam. Similarly, Pesach is referred to by the Torah as Chag Hamatzot in recognition of the matzah and chametz experience which lies at this core of this experience symbolizing the rapid exodus from Egyptian bondage.

In this respect the chag of Sukkot is a bit unusual in that it spotlights two seemingly *equal* mitzvot. The mitzvah of the arba minnim and the mitzvah of sitting in a Sukkah appear to play equivalent roles in the experience of the holiday of Sukkot. Each is mentioned once and only once (in Parshat Emor) and each applies m'doraita. To be sure there is a fundamental inequality in the "range" of the mitzvah; the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah extends throughout the entirety of Yom Tov whereas the mitzvah of daled minim only applies – at least from the Torah - to the first day. Originally, the daled minim were only taken on the first day, except in the Beit HaMikdash, where they were taken all seven days. After the Mikdash was destroyed, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai extended the mitzvah of daled minim to the entire seven days thereby equalizing it to the range of the mitzvah of Sukkah.⁵⁷ However, even though the mitzvah of Sukkah is more time-extensive than the mitzvah of daled minim, they would appear to be equivalent in their functionality and impact; they each brace the experience of the chag of Sukkot. A second difference of scope pertains to whether the respective mitzvot apply at night; the mitzvah of Sukkah applies during evening whereas the mitzvah of daled minim is limited to the daytime. But again it would seem that this difference is incidental. In as much as the mitzvah of daled minim is a formal act, it is framed within daytime hours, as most acts of mitzvot are (tefilin, shofar etc.) The mitzvah of Sukkah is not a formal act but a comprehensive experience of *living* in the Sukkah; as such it extends to evening hours as well. Once again this difference seems

⁵⁷ Succah 41a

incidental to the actual relationship between the two mitzvot. Fundamentally the two mitzvot appear to be equal factors in the fabric of Chag Sukkot.

Though daled minim and the mitzvah of sukkah appear to play equal roles they emit very different messages about the religious experience. The mitzvah of daled minim is described in elegant and stylish terms.⁵⁸ The first min is described as פרי עץ הדור, with the accent upon the aesthetic beauty of the fruit. The gemara in the 3rd perek of Sukkah carefully catalogs the parameters of hadar, setting requirements about the color, moistness and shape of the etrog. Though the Torah applies the hadar clause solely to etrog, the Gemara unanimously extends the requirement to all the minim.⁵⁹ Though the other minim do not exhibit the same aesthetic sensitivity as etrog, it is clear that each must be beautiful and experientially pleasing in their own fashion. For example, the Gemara disqualifies a particular branch as an arava since it is poisonous and thereby defies the concept of דרכיה דרכי נועם, that mitzvot should be forces of peace and supporters of life.⁶⁰ Though this concept that mitzvot cannot be poisonous seems to be a general clause and is applied globally, it is difficult to ignore the *particular* relevance to the daled minim. By nestling the word hadar within the description of etrog the Torah demands ornate and pleasing species for all the minim, underscoring the role of aesthetics and style in the performance of the mitzvah of daled minim.

Beyond the inclusion of the word hadar, the overall textual description of the daled minim is very stylish and 'floral' from a purely semantic standpoint. The Torah uncharacteristically describes each of the species, affording botanical and geographical tags to 'help' us identify the individual specie. The overall flavor of the pasuk is very lavish and even luxurious. The etrog is described as פרי עץ הדור, while the lulav, effectively the top leaf of a tree, is presented as כפות תמרים. Simple branches of shrubbery or riverbed reeds are described in colorful and stylistic fashion, ענף עץ אבות וערבי נחל. Ironically, the effusive description of the daled minim actually partially *disguises* their identity forcing the Gemara to labor in deciphering the exact botanical specie from the coded textual description.⁶¹ This effort is so strained that the Rambam suggests that the true identity of the daled minim is in reality a non-textual halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai and the textual tags are merely asmachtot, textual allusions which affirm an already established halachik fact.⁶² Be that as it may, there is no question that the Torah uncharacteristically indulged in the description of these minim even at the expense of 'clarity'. The grand shofar of Rosh Hashanah isn't even mentioned (instead its identity is derived from comparisons to Yovel) yet the garden samples of daled minim are enumerated in almost flamboyant manner.

Not surprisingly, the execution of the mitzvah is also described in eminent fashion. When describing the mitzvah of daled minim the Torah commands v'lakachtem, in the plural, rather than v'lakacht, in the singular, which would have been more appropriate given the *individual*

⁵⁸ Vayikra 23:40

⁵⁹ Succah 31(a)

⁶⁰ Succah 32(a)

⁶¹ See for example Succah (35a) regarding Etrog

⁶² Rambam in his introduction to פירוש המשניות

nature of the mitzvah. The Gemara⁶³ (see Sukkah 37a and Menachot 27a) expands this term to require לקיחה תמה, a full and complete discharge of the mitzvah. For example, the Gemara disqualifies taking a lulav while wearing a glove since the barrier separating your hand from the lulav compromises the integrity of the mitzvah and renders a flawed taking. Evidently, not only must the daled minim be aesthetically pleasing but the action of the mitzvah must be executed in full and complete fashion.

To summarize, the Torah casts the mitzvah of daled minim as an experience of luxury, beauty and style. The species are characterized as “beautiful” and “elegant” and they are described in floral and lavish language. The actual raising of the daled species, a seemingly banal activity, is described in a manner which implies a superior form of hoisting.

Apparently, the mitzvah of daled minim highlights the importance of beauty and splendor within avodas Hashem. A person who approaches Hakadosh Baruch Hu must do so with a sense of the grandeur of the encounter with the Other. A human being who encounters the Divine must raise the level of experience as he expands his level of consciousness. This encounter demands upgrading the overall environment and in the case of daled minim clutching the most comely and attractive items from our gardens. The daled minim are not indigenous to most northern hemisphere communities and historically their acquisition was associated with hardship and struggle. In Eretz Yisrael, however, they are all quite abundant (though not necessarily under modern conditions) and represent the *choicest* produce of human gardening. Their beauty and elegance mediates the rendezvous between human and Divine. It reflects the ascent of a human to higher ground so that he may encounter a Higher Being.

Though the beauty of a mitzvah object is necessary to launch the religious encounter in general avodas Hashem, it certainly has particular relevance to the experience of daled minim. Beyond the mechanical aspect of the mitzvah, the daled minim formulate a non-verbal form of praise to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The Rav zt”l commented on the importance of acknowledging the futility of any attempts to capture the Ribbono shel Olam with human tongue. Aware of our limited capacity to glorify Hakadosh Baruch Hu we employ alternate media to facilitate and intermediate our praise. Offering praise and more so thanksgiving on Sukkot is *particularly* poignant as the harvest season has concluded and financial gains are assessed and enjoyed. The beauty of the daled minim is absolutely vital in lending splendor and resonance to our praise during Sukkot.

In fact, several halachot demonstrate the hallel function latent within the performance of daled minim. The integration of the daled minim with the mitzvah of hallel is only the most striking manifestation of the role of the daled minim in sounding praise and thanksgiving to Hashem. The application of the principle of מצוה הבאה בעבירה, the disqualification of a mitzvah object that is acquired through an act of sin,⁶⁴ to daled minim may also reflect the unique hallel component of the daled minim. According to several baalei haTosfos the מצוה הבאה בעבירה disqualification only applies to korbanot or to mitzvot which serve to sound hallel. Evidently, if

⁶³ Succah(37a), Menachot (27a)

⁶⁴ Succah (30a)

מצוה הבאה בעבירה applies to daled minim, it represents a form of hallel. Finally, the requirement that all daled minim be alive rather than desiccated and dead may also be based upon the need to utilize these species to recite a wordless hallel. Based upon a verse in Tehilim 115, *the dead can [no longer] praise G-d*, we can infer that only live species are viable for daled minim and for the hallel it induces.⁶⁵ These major halachot, along with more minor issues all underline the function of daled minim in assisting man to utter the unutterable - praise and glory for the King of kings. Recognizing the ineffectiveness of capturing the Almighty through human tongue we replace words with symbols from nature. As the Midrash Tanchuma notes - *אז ירננו עצי היער* - Nature in all its glory exclaims the beauty and majesty of its Creator.⁶⁶ By seizing the choicest of these objects we harness that streaming praise and incorporate it into our Divine encounter. It is obvious that the quality of this praise is highly dependent upon the caliber of these minim. Selecting *elegant and beautiful* species assures that the current of our praise is both potent and eloquent.

However, to fully appreciate the function of beauty and elegance within the mitzvah of daled minim a global view of Sukkot must be taken. Indeed, these qualities of beauty and style are vital to avodas Hashem in general and to hallel and praise in particular. Beyond these general functions though, beauty and splendor possess specific relevance to the holiday of Sukkot. The Midrash contrasts the hoisting of the daled minim and a very different “lifting” – a lifting performed once in history by an impoverished nation on the cusp of redemption. That first night in Egypt, on the verge of liberation, the still enslaved Jews selected simple reeds (*אגודת אזוב*) and painted their doorposts with a very visible sign of faith.⁶⁷ Financially challenged, they could barely afford the splendor and elegance of daled minim and their mitzvah was capped at the more affordable level of reeds harvested from the banks of the Nile. The Midrash notes the impressive development of the Jewish people since those initial moments. With maturation and liberation came financial potency – the ability to upgrade their mitzvah performance with greater affluence and aesthetic. This financial maturity is “indexed” by the transformation of *אזוב לקיחתם לזכרון*. The elegance of the daled minim showcase the prosperity of the Jewish people and the rewards of being G-d’s chosen people. The splendor of these minim both celebrates our freedom and additionally provides a nostalgic recall of that magical night of faith, when we couldn’t afford the magnificence we currently display.

In addition to announcing our newfound prosperity, the elegance of the daled minim serve as a triumphant coda to the awe and fury of the High Holidays. A very well known Midrash portrays a scene of several subjects emerging from court with each being handed a verdict. The victorious are identified by their swords raised to heaven in obvious demonstration of triumph. Similarly, the Midrash reasons, all of humanity is judged during the Days of Judgment. By raising the daled minim the Jewish people are expressing their confidence in their national vindication. The magnificence and regality of the daled minim clearly accentuates the sign of victory and national confidence. It is clear that a “pure” taking, unobstructed by intervening materials, indicates this

⁶⁵ Yerushalmi Succah (3:1)

⁶⁶ Vayikra Rabbah 30:4

⁶⁷ Vayikra Rabbah 30:1

triumph more effectively.⁶⁸ Effectively, the elegance of the daled minim reflects our national transformation from slavery to nobility while also finalizing a successful experience of the Day of Judgment.

To summarize, the first mitzvah of Sukkot, the mitzvah of the daled minim, is characterized by elegance and aesthetics, both in form and function. The required species emit beauty and style and the manner of *performing* the mitzvah is equally superior. Without question the mitzvah of daled minim stresses the importance of beauty and elegance in enriching religion and capturing the grand encounter between man and G-d. If we hope to even partially praise the Ribbono shel Olam we must significantly transform our base human voice with a more torrential voice of nature. The lavishness of this bouquet of garden flowers reminds us of where we began the Jewish journey and how far we have come. Finally, the hoisting of aromatic and attractive minim is a show of confidence that – at least as a people- we have successfully navigated the terror-filled experience of Divine judgment.

In steep contrast to the mitzvah of daled minim, the complementary mitzvah of Sukkot, sitting in the Sukkah, is described in diametrically opposed terminology. Unlike the lavish and indulgent description of the daled minim, the structure of the Sukkah is barely described. In fact, the Torah merely states *בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים* and expects us to decipher the halachik guidelines of a Sukkah. The Gemara in Sukkah is even uncertain about the number of walls necessary to construct a halachik Sukkah.⁶⁹ Even the most basic parameter of this structure is omitted from the textual description! This vacuum leads to a well known debate about a detail which if not unanimous should at least be addressed. Based on different strategies for reading the word "סוכות" we may require four walls or might suffice with three. Either way the Torah's modest description opens the door for dispute. Notably no similar dispute ever occurred regarding the number of minim necessary; the Torah was quite specific in enumerating each one.

The vacuum of information about a Sukkah is filled by a series of halachot l'Moshe m'Sinai. Without question the laws of Sukkah construction exhibit the greatest assortment of halachot l'Moshe m'Sinai of *any* halachik area. Invariably, these halachot l'Moshe m'Sinai all reduce the requirements of the Sukkah architecture. One halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai – perhaps the most basic one – reduces the requisite number of Sukkah walls from three to effectively two (actually two complete walls and a miniscule projection in place of a complete third wall). Another halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai allow gaps between the walls and the connecting sechach (dofan akuma) to be filled by non-sechach material. Effectively the sechach and walls do not have to intersect perpendicularly. Yet a different halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai allows four corners bracketing an area to serve in place of walls (pasei bira'ot). Basically a Sukkah must encompass a designated space, even if that space designation isn't accomplished through actual walls! Walls may be vertically raised (gud asik) or lowered (gud achit); a person doesn't have to actually sit within a wall-space as long as he sits within the overall vector which protrudes from the wall. Finally the Gemara

⁶⁸ Vayikra Rabbah 30;2

⁶⁹ Succah 6(b)

even considers the possibility that the edge of a beam can be extended downward to form a wall (pi tikrah yored v'sotem).

This concentration of Sukkah leniencies, sponsored by the halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai, produces varieties of Sukkah structures which barely resemble an actual residence. At several points the Gemara questions the validity of these virtual structures built with halachik duct tape!⁷⁰ Without question the halachik Sukkah is quite “diminished”. The description is ‘bare-bones’, the base amount of walls isn’t clearly articulated and the series of halachot l'Moshe m'Sinai further dismantle this structure by granting unprecedented leniencies! If daled minim exhibit maximalist demands, the Sukkah is quite minimalist.

Perhaps the most compelling contrast between the lavishness of daled minim and the minimalism of the Sukkah is detected by a phrase describing the *timing* of Sukkot but one which Chazal decipher as a reference to the *materials* qualified to serve as sechach. In parshat Re'eh the Torah describes the holiday of Sukkot as occurring *מגרנך ומיקבך באספך*, when the grains and vineyards are harvested.⁷¹ The terms *באספך* is phonetically and semantically related to the term *פסלת* - wastes or leftovers. Consequently, Chazal claim that sechach must be formed from ‘wastes’ rather than from edible or usable items.⁷² Hence, sechach may not be composed of edible materials (ochel) or objects of utility (utensils which are candidates for tumah conveyance). Effectively, the Torah envisions a Sukkah being crafted from leftover wastes of the harvest. From this standpoint the Sukkah is the diametric opposite of the daled minim. The daled minim are supplied by the choice species of the garden while the Sukkah is a mere hut fashioned from otherwise wasted material taken from the harvest of the wheat fields. The holiday of Sukkot is a hybrid of the grand and the elegant alongside mitzvot fashioned from leftovers!

Without question, the mitzvah of Sukkah serves to correct against the possible excesses of the mitzvah of daled minim. Beauty and design can greatly enrich avodas Hashem. However they can also distract a person from religious focus, fixing his eye solely upon flair and externals. Art and aesthetic may enhance religion just as they may overwhelm it. Instead of mediating a glorious encounter with an invisible G-d, beauty can fasten the human mind to the fleeting and ephemeral; infinity and transcendence is replaced by vanity and transience. The more *reductive* mitzvah of sitting in a understated Sukkah affirms that the essence of a mitzvah – or for that matter of religion - has little to do with external appearance and more to do with the ‘raw’ experience of Divine encounter. A temporary house of G-d can be fashioned from unattractive materials as long as a religious spirit infuses that location. In fact, often the humble and the ordinary allows for a *purier* religious interaction, unadulterated by the excesses of human conceit. The token description of the Sukkah coupled with the further diminishing of a Sukkah by halachot l'Moshe m'Sinai affirm that the spirit of G-d doesn't require vaunted or elite settings. The Divine presence can be infused in the *ordinary* and the *common*. If anything, those settings are sometimes more uncontaminated or uncorrupted by human vanity. At a different stage the

⁷⁰ See for example Succah 3(b)

⁷¹ Devarim 16:13

⁷² Succah 12(a)

Gemara⁷³ derives laws governing sechach material from a pasuk describing a primordial fog which lifted from the ground and irrigated the earth: ואד יעלה מן הארץ והשקה את כל פני האדמה. This watering of land ‘fertilizes’ the earth from which Human beings are created. The Gemara reasons that just as this fog wasn’t edible or an item of human utility, so must sechach be non-ochel and non-keilim. The roof of a Sukkah is cast as a pre-human material, a primal and primitive mass which is fresh and untainted by the excesses of humanity and human history. Withdrawing into the Sukkah is an escape into a refuge of purity bristling with the Divine spirit. If the daled minim celebrates the grandeur of man and channels that grandeur toward religion, the mitzvah of Sukkah divests human artifice and yields a purer religious moment.

In fact, the contrast between the beauty of the daled minim and the simplicity of the Sukkah corresponds to very different features of the religious cycle. The daled minim remind us of exalted moments of higher religious ground when man approaches Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Without question these moments must be enhanced by the best of the human realm and the beauty of human elegance. Anything less would be insulting and even bordering upon the heretical. When a human being steps out of their routine and approaches Hakadosh Baruch Hu the choicest and grandest features of the human environment must accompany that journey. The daled minim are a geographically independent mitzvah, but without question the *primary* mitzvah is rooted to the Mikdash. As stated earlier, according to the Torah the seven day mitzvah only applies within the Mikdash. The Mikdash is the site to where a human being travels when he steps out of his daily shell to encounter Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That journey is only possible if some tribute is offered. Whether in the form of a sacrifice or daled minim, the entry into the realm of G-d must elicit some resonant human response. The absence of some higher medium would empty this encounter of its nascent glory and awe.

However, religion must also extend beyond the grand moments of higher consciousness. It must *innervate* the entirety of the human condition – both the spectacular and the routine. It must be an all encompassing experience which percolates through the totality of the human condition; the spirit of Hashem must be sewn into the fabric of day-to-day experience. If the experience becomes too ‘special’ and too vaunted it can become isolated from the human routine and insulated from human experience. As my Rebbe, Harav Yehuda Amital zt”l always cautioned us, religion cannot become autistic. Unlike daled minim which is an entry into a different realm, the mitzvah of Sukkah is merely a gloss to the day-to day. As the Gemara⁷⁴ constantly affirms, תשבו כעין תדורו, experience the Sukkah as you would experience the average routine. Unlike walking into the Mikdash with daled minim, the mitzvah of Sukkah directs man to walk into his own crafted home and realize the spirit of Hashem within the human structure. It is not a special or unique activity but rather a continuum of the overall human routine lived in the presence of G-d. It is precisely for this reason that the mitzvah of Sukkah is not limited to day as is the mitzvah of daled minim. The mitzvah of daled minim is a unique moment, punctuated by a specific action. That action occurs once and is framed within the daytime hours – the primary framework for mitzvah performance. Sukkah is not a specific action but rather an overarching identification.

⁷³ Succah 11(b)

⁷⁴ Succah 27(a)

There can be no difference between night and day regarding this mitzvah. This experience cannot be characterized by the ornate or the spectacular; it must be simple and ordinary, but also common and constant.

Ultimately it is the stark contrast between daled minim and Sukkah which lends this chag so much energy. Both as a summation to the Day of Judgment as well as a climax of the Three Festivals, it offers final commentary on the religious identity which has been quietly brewing as these dual processes have unfurled. As the religious experience is complex, so is the religious summary of Sukkot. As our encounter with Hakadosh Baruch Hu cannot be reduced to one modality so the symbolism of this holiday cannot be monochromatic. It takes two mitzvot and the dynamic of their contrasting styles to encapsulate this final moment of standing before G-d.

Sukkot Insights from Members of the RIETS Kollel Elyon

The Tent in the Middle of Two Worlds

Rabbi Eli Belizon

Wexner Kollel Elyon Fellow, RIETS

Every time the Torah refers to the holidays of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, it groups them together. Although there is much similarity amongst the psukim which refer to these holidays, the Torah differentiates between them in a few subtle ways. The first of the discrepancies is found in Parshat Emor. Both Shavuot and Pesach are called a "*chag la'Hashem*" whereas Sukkos is coined as "*chag Hashem*." It sounds as if Sukkos is the holiday that Hashem celebrates whereas Pesach and Shavuot are holidays for Klal Yisrael to celebrate by sanctifying and focusing the holiday towards Hashem. Additionally, the Meshech Chachma points out that when discussing the holiday sacrifices of Shavuot and Pesach, the Torah states that they should be brought "*bamakom asher yivchar Hashem lishakein shmo sham*," in the chosen home of Hashem where his shechinah resides. However, with regards to Sukkot the passuk states *bamakom asher yivchar* and omits *leshakein shmo sham*. Does the Bais Hamikdash lose its unique status on the *regel* of Sukkot? What is the basis of the differentiation in the psukim between Sukkos and the other holidays?

To explain these discrepancies one needs to understand the essence of Sukkos. The Alshich understands that the laws, structure and dimensions of the Sukkah all symbolize lessons that show the way we must lead our lives. The sukkah must consist of two complete walls and a third which only needs to be the length of a tefach. These three walls form the shape of the letter heh, ה. The Alshich explains that this is based on the Gemara in menachot 29b which states⁷⁵ that this world was created with the letter heh. The Sukkah enables us to reflect on our perspective on this world. The Gemara writes that on sukkot we leave our *dirras kevvah*, our permanent dwelling, and enter into a *diraas aray*, a temporary dwelling. The Sukkah reminds us that this world is a temporary dwelling place and a pathway leading towards the ultimate

⁷⁵ אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם, אל תקרי בהבראם אלא בה"י בראם, [הוי אומר: העולם הזה בה"י, והעולם הבא ביו"ד].

dwelling in the world to come. The walls, which symbolize *olam hazeh*, have no restrictions as to which materials they are permitted to be created from. This represents the fact that this world is a physical entity made up of various materials. The dwelling in the sukkah for seven days is tantamount to the seventy years of man's life in this world. On the eighth day, on Shemini Atzeres, Hashem requests from us to stay with him one more day. This alludes to the afterlife after the seventy years when we will merit to dwell in Hashem's presence.

The roof of the sukkah, the *schach*, symbolizes our connection in this world to the spiritual world above us. The schach cannot be created from something which is susceptible to impurity. A schach which carries impurity represents a life of sin which creates a barrier and separation between this world and the spiritual world. The halacha dictates that there should not be spaces of over three *tefachim* between pieces of schach. This hints to a sin which was transgressed three times. A transgression committed once or twice does not break the overall tent of merits which influences our lives. However, once a person commits the same transgression three times, he becomes accustomed to that transgression and it creates a leakage and break in the positive shade on our lives. The schach that influences our lives should not be *mechubar lekarka*, connected to the ground. This reminds us that we should not allow materialism and physicality to be the focal points of our lives. Additionally, the schach must be created from *gedulei karka*, a substance that grows from the ground. Such is our spiritual journey in this world, a journey which is laden with potential to grow. The height of the succah is limited to twenty amos. The Gemara explains that '*lo shalta bah ainah*,' one's eye can only see up to twenty amos and thus we must make sure that these messages are recognizable to man. On a deeper level, one should not wait and begin his spiritual journey at the age of twenty, once he is responsible and punishable for his actions, but rather one should begin his journey from an earlier stage as the succah is valid from a mere ten tefachim. Chazal dictate that the width of a Sukkah must provide sufficient space for a table. The shulchan, table, symbolizes wealth. Chazal wanted to ensure that everything, including our pursuit for livelihood and wealth, fit under the umbrella of spirituality.

This world creates a constant struggle between physicality and spirituality, between the body and the soul, the walls of the sukkah and the schach. The Avnei Nezer explains that this struggle takes place six days a week. Our body pulls us downward toward the physical and mundane parts of the world whereas the soul tries to pull upwards, towards *shamayim*; each side tries to influence the other. When Shabbos comes, this struggle ends peacefully and the body is influenced by the spiritual *neshama*. It is because of the sense of shalom between the body and soul that we sing "barchuni l'shalom," bless me for peace, on Friday night. The description of shalom is also used by the concept of sukkah. In tefilas Maariv we ask that G-d should spread upon us His peaceful sukkah, "ufros succat shlomecha." The sukkah generates a similar ability to create a state of shalom in this world by allowing the schach, the spirituality to influence the walls, the physicality.

The Ribono shel Olam searches for a resting place in this world. It is only when we internalize the message of the sukkah and create this state of shalom that He can reside in this world. It is based on this that we can now understand the difference between Sukkot and the other regalim. Sukkot is actually a "chag Hashem" because it is through the experiences of Sukkot

that Hashem finds an area in this world to dwell in. Based on this we can understand why Sukkot is the only holiday that the Torah does not specify that G-d rests his shechina "*bamokom asher yivchar leshaken shemo sham.*" It is during this unique chag that Hashem not only rests His presence in the makkom hamikdash but also in each one of our dwellings, our personal sukkahs. It is through understanding and internalizing these messages of the sukkah that we can achieve shalom in our sukkah and invite Hashem to reside with us.

The Joy of Drawing Water

Rabbi David Hellman

Wexner Kollel Elyon Fellow, RIETS

The Rambam (Lulav 8:12) writes that in the days of the Beit HaMikdash, the joy and celebrations of Sukkot surpassed those of the other chagim. The highpoint of these celebrations was the simchat beit hasho'eiva, the grand celebration on the grounds of the Beit HaMikdash. The Mishnayot (Sukka, fifth perek) describe in detail the many golden menorahs that would light up the courtyards of all of Jerusalem, the instruments of the levi'im that were too numerous to count, and the singing, dancing, and juggling of the great sages and tzaddikim that the crowds watched in rapture. The Mishna unequivocally states that "someone who hasn't witnessed the simchat beit hasho'evia hasn't seen joy in his lifetime." Rashi (Sukka 51a) writes that this unique celebration surrounded the nisuch hamayim, the special water libation on the mizbeach that occurred at no other time of the year. In fact, the Gemara says that the source of the name "*simchat beit hasho'eiva*" is the pasuk "*ushe'avtem mayim b'sason,*" "and you will draw water with joy" (Yeshayahu 12:3).

While at first glance this name seems very appropriate, after giving it some more thought it is very strange indeed. The drawing of the water was merely a practical necessity, but was seemingly not part of the mitzvah at all. The event that everyone joyously anticipated was the pouring of the water on the mizbeach in this once a year mitzvah. Wouldn't it have made a lot more sense for the celebration to be called the "*simchat beit hanisuch*" or "*simchat beit hash'ficha*," "the celebration of the libation" or "the celebration of the pouring"? Why would chazal name the celebration after the drawing of the water?

Sukkot focuses on the simcha that should pervade the performance of our mitzvot and the Torah lives we lead. The name "*simchat beit hashoeiva*" teaches us a fundamental idea regarding this simcha. True joy in serving Hashem is not found in the results or the outcomes. Our spiritual satisfaction should not be dependant or commensurate with simply the total number of dapim we learn, or perakim of tehillim we recite, or acts of kindness we perform. Rather, the profound simcha of avodat Hashem stems from the time and effort we pour into our commitment to the Torah and its mitzvot. It is the process of preparation and anticipation that makes the fulfillment of a mitzvah a moment of happiness. Studying the laws and ideas of the mitzvah beforehand, taking the time and mental energy to ensure the mitzvah will be without blemish, and spending extra money to perform the mitzvah in a more beautiful manner all add to the preciousness and simcha of a mitzvah.

In other words, a person cannot expect to find fulfillment or joy by doing nothing more than the required performance of the mitzvah, “the pouring of the water;” rather, a person will find a wellspring of happiness and inspiration in the time and effort he commits to the preparation and anticipation of the mitzvah, “the drawing of the water.” Chazal chose the name *simchat beit hasho’eiva* to teach us this most critical lesson: it is the drawing of the water, not the pouring, that is the true source of our *simcha*. May we all merit to achieve the level of “*ivdu et Hashem b’simcha*,” serving Hashem in joy on this Sukkot and beyond.

Sitting in the Succah on Shmini Atzeres

Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum

Wexner Kollel Elyon Fellow, RIETS

The Gemara (Succah 47a) clearly states that on Shmini Atzeres in *chutz l’aretz* one should sit in the succah, but not make a *bracha*. While the Rishonim deal with this strange dichotomy,⁷⁶ it doesn’t appear that there is any discussion about the obligation to sit in the succah. This makes the custom of many not to sit in the succah all the more intriguing. In the subsequent paragraphs, I hope to bring a number of reasons that will hopefully explain the basis for this somewhat prevalent yet perplexing *minhag*.⁷⁷

Tosfos in Succah (*ibid.* s.v. *Misav*) ask the following question. Why is it that we sit in the succah on Shmini Atzeres, because of *sfeka d’yoma*, but we don’t take the *lulav* and *esrog* for the same reason? They answer that since the *daled minim* are *muktzah* on Shabbos and Yom Tov, the only reason that we can take them on Yom Tov is because we are obligated in the mitzvah of taking them. If we would take them on Shmini Atzeres, it would be obvious that we are doing so due to the *safek*, and it would look like a violation of *baal tosef*, the prohibition of adding on to a mitzvah. However, when it comes to the succah, there are many times that we enjoy sitting outside on the porch. Therefore, it isn’t obvious why we are sitting there, and we are therefore obligated to do so because of the *safeka d’yoma*. The Tosfos Rabbenu Peretz writes that there was a custom for people to eat in the succah only during the day on Shmini Atzeres, but not at night. The reason for this may be because at night it is very cold and it is obvious to all why they are sitting in the succah, whereas during the day it could just be that they enjoy eating outdoors. This is echoed by the *Korban Nisanel* (4:7), who writes that if it is a cold or windy day, one should refrain from eating in the succah on Shmini Atzeres. It is for this reason that R’ Yaakov Kamanetsky rules in the *Emes L’Yaakov* on *Shulchan Aruch*, that if someone forgot to leave a light on in the succah on Shmini Atzeres which falls out on

⁷⁶ See the explanation of the Ritva and the Ran in Succah *ibid.* in the opinion of the Rif. Also, see the Mordechai (772), the Meiri, and the Rambam (*Teshuvos P’eir Hador siman 26*) where these Rishonim offer different answers to the question.

⁷⁷ Note: this article is not meant to condone the practice of eating outside of the succah on Shmini Atzeres. Rather, the purpose is to gain an understanding to why the *minhag* exists, and what it is based on.

Shabbos,⁷⁸ he should eat his meal in the house, because otherwise it would be obvious that he is eating outside to fulfill his obligation.

Another line of reasoning not to require eating in the succah on Shmini Atzeres comes from the reading of the Gemara that the obligation is based on. The Yichusai Hatanaim V'Amoraim says that there are those who say to follow the second opinion of the Gemara like we do in most instances in Shas. The second opinion states that there is a machlokes if you should sit in the succah on Shmini Atzeres, and we paskin that you don't need to sit in the succah. These people hold like the second opinion in the Gemara, even though the Gemara clearly writes that the halacha is that you should sit in the succah and not make a bracha, because they understand that line to have been added by the Baal Halachos Gedolos, and they disagree with it. Another defense of this practice which is based on the reading of the Gemara is found in the S'fas Emes. He writes that when the Gemara writes that one should sit in the succah on Shmini Atzeres, it doesn't mean that he has to eat in the succah, rather, he is allowed to sit there. Since there is no obligation to sit in the succah, the Gemara says that you sit there, but don't make a bracha. Accordingly, someone who doesn't want to sit in the succah, doesn't need to.

The minhag of eating inside for both meals is but one of the minhagim that we have nowadays. There are those who eat inside only at night, and those who eat in the succah only at night. The important thing for us to remember is that like the minhag of eating inside for both meals, these minhagim are based on credible sources in the Rishonim and Achronim.⁷⁹ By recalling this, it will be easier for us to accept and relate to people whose minhagim are different than ours.

Sukkot – Can We Really Handle Another Holiday?

Rabbi Yehuda Turetsky

Beren Kollel Elyon Fellow, RIETS

Sukkot's place in the Jewish calendar raises a basic question, one many explicitly articulate and others intuitively feel. Is there really a need for another holiday after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur? After ten days dedicated to repentance and growth, a grueling time period where we strive for greater spiritual heights, is it really necessary to have another holiday so close to the days of awe?

The question is even stronger according to the Tur. He writes (O.C. 625) that a more natural time to observe Sukkot is the spring, the time when we initially left Egypt. The only reason why Sukkot is observed in the fall is to show that our true intention for sitting in the Sukkah is to fulfill God's command and not because it provides us with shade on a hot day. For him, there appears to be no reason why Sukkot needs to be kept specifically when it is; any time

⁷⁸ Presumably in a manner that he would be required to eat in the succah during Succos, because if he wouldn't need to eat there on Succos, like the Rama (siman 640 seif 4) paskins, then of course he wouldn't need to eat there on Shmini Atzeres.

⁷⁹ See the Tur (siman 668) and the Bais Yosef and Bach (ibid.) who discuss the minhag of eating in the succah for the day and not the night. See the Taz (siman 668) where he talks about sitting in the succah only at night.

outside the summer months would be appropriate. If so, why keep Sukkot now? Is there a lesson we can learn from its peculiar placement in the Jewish calendar?⁸⁰

Moreover, there are so many beautiful themes and ideas related to Sukkot. It is a time when we recall God's love for us, and it is when we contemplate our relationship with nature. Would not a longer break enable us to better prepare for and gain from Sukkot? The Talmud even implies that one should begin preparing for an upcoming holiday thirty days before it begins.⁸¹ But how is that possible when the sheer physical exhaustion of these three weeks is so great, the spiritual toll so demanding, that adequate preparation seems unfeasible? Indeed, Rama (O.C.624:5, 625:1) even instructs us to begin building our Sukkah on the very night Yom Kippur ends. Is that really necessary, and what do we gain from it?

A variety of answers have been offered to this general question, many of which highlight the special and complimentary connection between Sukkot and the days of awe.⁸² It seems possible, though, to suggest an additional perspective. Maybe one idea derived from Sukkot's placement in the Jewish calendar, even if it is not the primary motivating factor, is what all of these holidays teach us about ourselves.

The three weeks from Rosh HaShana through Sukkot are not, nor are they intended to be, easy. They test us physically, teach us what we can achieve, and inspire us to new heights. We learn how much we are capable of doing. We see that we are able to set aside time despite our busy schedule, and push ourselves in the face of fatigue. We realize how committed we are to the Jewish tradition and how much we are willing and able to sacrifice – physically and emotionally – for its ideals.

We do not, though, only learn about the limits of our physical strength; we also learn about our spiritual stamina.⁸³ We gain insight into our ability to balance the seriousness and at times fear of the days of awe with the happiness and joy of Sukkot. We balance different emotions and different ways of connecting with God, and in the process we cultivate a more complete religious personality. Despite the feelings of exhaustion, the Torah wants us to continue to push ourselves, to gain from each holiday without it coming at the expense of the other, and to better understand what it means to be a complete Jew.

In truth, Sukkot's placement on the Jewish calendar may seem a bit out of place. It is, though, through observing Sukkot immediately after the days of awe that we gain so much. We learn about our ability to push ourselves for that which we value, to invest physically and thereby benefit spiritually. As a result of the Jewish calendar, we begin to build the ideal religious personality, with the desire to invest all of one's strengths for God. Through juxtaposing

⁸⁰ There are those that question Tur's logic and assume that Sukkot needed to be celebrated when it is. See Vilna Gaon, commentary to Shir haShirim (1:4). Accordingly, Sukkot needed to be observed directly after Yom Kippur, regardless of the difficulty involved.

⁸¹ See Talmud Pesachim (6a) and Beit Yosef (O.C. 429) for a discussion of the precise impact and scope of this law.

⁸² See, for example, Aruch HaShulchan (O.C. 625:5).

⁸³ See the article by Rav Michael Rosensweig on torahweb.org about the relationship between Yom Kippur and Sukkot for a similar idea.

Sukkot to the days of awe, the Torah teaches us to connect to our creator through love and fear, through fasting and feasting.

At the end of these three weeks, we may feel tired and exhausted, but we leave inspired and exalted. We now know what we are capable of and how great we are. אשריך ישראל ואשרי חלקיך, praiseworthy are you Israel and praiseworthy is your portion.

The Aaron and Blanche Schreiber Torah Tours

Simchat Torah

5771

A Project of Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future

The Aaron and Blanche Schreiber Torah Tours, currently in its third decade, shares the Torah knowledge and enthusiasm of Yeshiva University and RIETS students with Jewish communities throughout the world. This year teams of 4 to 6 young men and women will be spending Simchat Torah in over 80 communities across North America. The 400 plus students participating on Torah Tours will teach classes, lead singing and dancing, meet with synagogue youth, and create a fun and spirited Yom Tov experience. For more information about the Aaron and Blanche Schreiber Torah Tours program please visit www.cjfapps.com/torahtours

Participating Communities

Allentown, PA • Baltimore, MD • Bayside, NY • Binghamton, NY • Bloomington, IN
Boynton Beach, FL • Brookline, MA • Buffalo Grove, IL • Buffalo, NY • Charleston, SC
Cincinnati, OH • Columbus, OH • Cote St-Luc, QC • Dallas, TX • Denver, Co • Dewitt, NY
East Brunswick, NJ • East Windsor, NJ • Edison, NJ • Elizabeth, NJ • Elkins Park, PA
Ellenville, NY • Fair Lawn, NJ • Flushing, NY • Forest Hills, NY • Great Neck, NY
Houston, TX • Las Vegas, NV • Lido Beach, New York • Linden NJ • Livingston, NJ
Long Branch, NJ • Lowell, MA • Mamaroneck, NY • Memphis, TN • Merrick, NY
Milwaukee, WI • Montreal, QC • Mt. Kisco, NY • New Haven, Connecticut
New Rochelle, NY • Newton Centre, MA • Newton, MA • Overland Park, KS
Palm Beach, FL • Palo Alto, CA • Parsippany, NJ • Passaic, NJ • Philadelphia, PA
Pittsburgh, PA • Poughkeepsie, NY • Providence, RI • Richmond, VA
Roslyn Heights, NY • San Francisco, CA • Savannah, GA • Schenectady, NY
Silver Spring, MD • Skokie, IL • Springfield, NJ • Stamford, CT • Staten Island, NY
Toronto, ON • Washington, DC • Wesley Hills, NY • West Hartford, CT
West Hempstead, NY • Westmount, QC • Westport, CT • Wilkes Barre, PA • Williamsville, NY



Yeshiva University
CENTER FOR THE JEWISH FUTURE

The Yeshiva University Medical Ethics Society and Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future Present
The Fifth Annual Medical Ethics Society Conference

A Beautiful Mind

Jewish Approaches to Mental Health

October 31, 2010
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, WILF CAMPUS
500 West 185th Street, New York, NY 10033

Suicide and Depression
Addiction and Substance Abuse
Eating Disorders
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Bullying and Harassing

CME Credits Pending
Limited Sponsorships Available

Pre-Registration required. Go to www.yumedicalethics.com
For more information, contact us at medicalethics@yu.edu



ROBERT EINSTEIN College of Medicine
OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY



Yeshiva University
CENTER FOR THE JEWISH FUTURE



**OPEN HOUSE and ISRAEL FAIR
for Undergraduate Men**

WILF CAMPUS

Yeshiva College/Sy Syms School of Business

Sunday, November 21, 2010



**OPEN HOUSE and ISRAEL FAIR
for Undergraduate Women**

BEREN CAMPUS

Stern College for Women/Sy Syms School of Business

Sunday, November 14, 2010

Office of Admissions

Early Decision Application Deadline • November 1, 2010



Yeshiva University
OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

www.yu.edu/admissions

PERCEPTION, MEET REALITY.

www.yu.edu/nowyouknow