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# Toronto Torah- TISHREI EDITION

## Shabbat Chol Hamoed 5786 -שבת חוה"מ סוכות ה'תשפ"ו

**Dvar Torah- Rabbi Yehuda Mann, Rosh Beit Midrash (ymann@torontotorah.com):**

**Angels Are Awesome! Humans Are Better...**

There's a well-known vort that asks a penetrating question. On Yom Kippur, we rise to the level of *malachim*(angels). It is a day of pure kedushah—no eating, no drinking, no yetzer hara. We wear white like angels, and most famously, we declare "*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto Le'olam Va'ed"* out loud just like angels.

But there's an obvious difficulty. At the very **beginning** of the fast—when we are still full from *seudah mafseket* and haven't even started davening—we already say "Baruch Shem" out loud like malachim. Yet at the **end** of Yom Kippur, after an entire day of fasting, crying, teshuvah, and elevation, we suddenly go back to whispering it like regular people. Why?

The classic answer is beautiful: A person is not measured by his current level, but by the direction he is heading.
Imagine the following *mashal*- Two sons leave home. One has gone far away, one is still nearby. But the one far away turns around and heads back toward his parents—he is the one who is truly closer! Because although he is geographically further from his parents but he is heading back home- longing and anticipating the see his parents once again- he is emotionally and spiritually closer.
At the beginning of Yom Kippur, we are turning toward holiness and connection, so we are considered like *malachim*. At the end, even though we are on a high level, our minds are already turning back to the physical world, so we return to the status of human beings.

It's a nice thought, but if we're honest—it feels a bit discouraging. Does it mean that everything we gained on Yom Kippur disappears the minute we break the fast? All the growth, the spiritual fire, the tears—gone with the first bite of bagel? That can't be the message.

There is something deeper and far more uplifting. Yes, on Yom Kippur we become like malachim. But the moment the shofar blows at Ne'ilah, we rise even higher. We reach a level greater than angels—**a truly elevated human being**.

And this is the breathtaking insight of the Alexander Rebbe (Yismach Yisrael).
When Moshe Rabbeinu went up to the heavens to receive the Torah, the angels protested: "Hashem, what is a human being doing here? He has a yetzer hara! He sins! The Torah belongs to us!"
Hashem tells Moshe, "*Echuz b'Kisei Kevodi v'hachzer lahem teshuvah*." Most explain that Hashem told Moshe to think of an answer. But the Alexander Rebbe says something revolutionary: Hashem was giving the answer Himself. What was the answer? Teshuvah. "Hold onto My Throne"—because "Gedolah teshuvah she'mage'at ad Kisei HaKavod- and give them the answer, which is- Teshuva!" Only teshuvah can reach the Throne of Glory!
Hashem was saying: Angels are perfect, but they can't do teshuvah. Only human beings, who fall and get back up, can reach even higher than malachim. That is why the Torah belongs to them!

This changes everything. Being an angel sounds lofty—but it has no growth, no struggle, no victory. A human being faces temptation, sometimes fails, but rises, returns, and keeps choosing Hashem again and again. That journey makes us greater than angels! This is the essence of Yiddishkeit: Hashem doesn't want perfection—He wants connection. Not malachim, but human beings who fight, love, grow, and come back stronger.

And that is why right after Yom Kippur comes Sukkot. Yom Kippur pulls us out of the physical; Sukkot brings holiness into the physical. On Yom Kippur we separate from the world. On Sukkot we are obligated and commanded to sit in a sukkah,

eat, sleep, sing, rejoice—and every moment becomes a mitzvah. Yom Kippur teaches us how high we can soar. Sukkot teaches us how to bring that holiness back down into real life.

Being an angel for one day is great. But Hashem believes in something far greater: a human being—who struggles, who grows, who does teshuvah—and reaches all the way to the Kisei HaKavod.

May we take the inspiration of Yom Kippur into Sukkot, grow as true servants of Hashem, bring holiness into everyday life, and use our struggles to rise even higher.

## Halacha- Rabbi Yehuda Mann, Rosh Beit Midrash (ymann@torontotorah.com):

### Sitting in the Sukkah on Shemini Atzeret – What's the Real Halacha?

**Question:** My family custom (in Chutz La'aretz) is *not* to eat in the sukkah on Shemini Atzeret. My friend who just came back from yeshiva told me that we have no basis for this. Is he right?

**Answer:** The Gemara (Sukkah 47a) rules clearly, and the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 668:1) brings it without dispute: **in Chutz La'aretz one should sit in the sukkah on Shemini Atzeret**, but **without making the berachah of "leishev ba'sukkah."**

But this raises a big question. If Shemini Atzeret is a **"safek yom shevi'i shel Sukkot"** (maybe the seventh day of Sukkot), then why don't we make a berachah like we do every other Yom Tov Sheini? We make Kiddush and daven the special Yom Tov prayers—so why skip the berachah on the sukkah?

The **Mordechai** gives a fascinating answer: On Shemini Atzeres, being strict and sitting in the sukkah could actually lead to a **major halachic problem**—a possible violation of **bal tosif**, adding to the Torah's commandments! If we make a berachah, it looks like we're treating this day as an *eighth day of the mitzvah of sukkah*, which the Torah never commanded. So Chazal said: sit in the sukkah, but **no berachah**, so it won't look like we're extending the mitzvah.

This also explains something else:
Why don't we take lulav on Shemini Atzeret? Because no one takes lulav "just for fun." If someone is holding daled minim, it's obviously for the mitzvah—and that looks like adding an extra day! But sitting in a sukkah could just be eating outside because it's nice—so it doesn't automatically look like a mitzvah.

Based on this logic, the **Korban Netanel** writes: if it's **cold outside** and people normally *wouldn't* eat outdoors, then sitting in the sukkah is obviously for the mitzvah—and that once again looks like bal tosif! Therefore, in such conditions, **one should not sit in the sukkah on Shemini Atzeret**, because it appears like you're adding to the mitzvah.

The **Piskei Teshuvot** explains that this is the reason **many European and North American communities did not sit in the sukkah** on Shemini Atzeret—usually it was too cold, so sitting in the sukkah was clearly for the mitzvah, and that raised the bal tosif concern. However, he emphasizes: **this leniency should only be relied upon by those with a clear family or communal minhag.**

**Bottom line:**
The straightforward halacha is: **one should eat all meals of Shemini Atzeres in the sukkah (without a berachah).**
However, there are legitimate explanations for those who have the minhag not to.

**Practically?**
Ask a rav who knows *you* and your family's minhagim, and he will guide you what to do.