

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
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Succos



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Torah Wellsprings - Succos

Between Yom Kippur and Succos

The Shelah Hakadosh (Succah, Torah Or, 2) teaches, "During the four days between Yom Kippur and Succos the Jewish nation serves Hashem: They build the *succah*, buy the four *minim*, and prepare for Yom Tov עם התעוררות הלב, with an inspired soul," and this brings about their atonement.¹ The sefarim explain that these days are like an extension of Yom Kippur because the atonement of Yom Kippur continues during these days. They are special days, and we should therefore fill them with holiness.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 20.) says השמן is *gematria* 364. This is because the Satan can prosecute the Jewish nation 364 days a year, but on Yom Kippur, the 365th day (because a lunar year has 365 days) the Satan must be silent.

The Yaaras Dvash (2:10) points out that תשמן (without the prefix ה') is *gematria* 359. This implies that there are six days a year that the Satan can't speak against the Jewish nation. This refers to Yom Kippur, and the four days between Yom Kippur and Succos, including the first day of Succos.

Shulchan Aruch (624:5) teaches, "One doesn't say *Tachanun*... from Yom Kippur until Succos..." Magan Avraham adds that one shouldn't fast during these days. He explains, "They are joyous days because the *Chanukas Hamizbeiach* in the times of Shlomo took place during these days." It is also because of the atonement that we can achieve during these days.

Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* teaches: It states in *Tehillim* (60:8), אלקים דיבר בקדשו מעליוה, אחלקה שכם ועמק סוכות אמרד. This can be translated

1. It is known among chassidim that the preparation for a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself. Rebbe Dovid of Tolna *zt'l* said that this concept is learned from the four days that are between Yom Kippur and Succos, when people are buying the *arba minim*, preparing the *succah*, etc. and they have atonement, but during Succos, when they perform these mitzvos, they don't have atonement. (For the first day of Succos is called יום הראשון "the first day for the counting of sins." This shows that the preparation for a mitzvah, is greater than the mitzvos themselves.

The Imrei Emes *zt'l* proved this concept from the *simchas beis hashoeivah* in the Beis HaMikdash, which celebrated the preparations for the mitzvah of גיבוך המים, to pour water on the *mizbeiach* before Hashem. The primary joy was by the preparation. Furthermore, Chazal say that at this celebration they drew (שואבה) *ruach hakodesh*. The Gemara doesn't say that they had *ruach hakodesh* when the mitzvah was performed, rather when they prepared the mitzvah. This proves that the preparation of a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself.

Some buy an *esrog pushka*, a silver *esrog* box, for a *chasan*. The *hidur mitzvah* implied in this gift is different than most *hidur mitzvah*. For example, a silver Chanukah menorah becomes part of the mitzvah. A silver *becher* for Kiddush and *havdalah* becomes part of the mitzvah. But the silver *esrog* box is used before and after the mitzvah, and not during the mitzvah. This is because the *esrog* represents the heart, and the heart of a mitzvah is expressed primarily in the preparation before, and by the joy that one feels after the mitzvah was performed.

Chazal say (*Yoma* 29), הרהורי עבירה שין מעבירה, thinking about an *aveirah* is worse than doing the *aveirah*. The Sfas Emes (בחוקתי תרמ"ד) writes that similarly, thinking about the mitzvos is greater than the mitzvah itself. "Because the correction of the soul comes from thinking a lot and desiring to serve Hashem."

It states (*Hosheia* 14:10), צדיקים ילכו בם ופושעים יכשלו בם. The *pasuk* is hinting that tzaddikim prepare for the mitzvos, but the *resha'im*, יכשלו בם, just fall into the mitzvah, without any prior preparation

as follows: אעלו, Hashem said, אלקים דיבר בקדשו – ה', I rejoice with the five days of atonement -Yom Kippur plus the following four days.

שכח, I divide these five days, אהל-ה', *gematria* 360, from the other 360 days of the year. Because the Satan can speak against the Jewish nation 360 days a year, but not on these five special days that Hashem has prepared for the atonement of Bnei Yisrael.

Rebbe Yissachar Dov continued: The Gemara writes that a *succah* may be up to 20 *amos* high. Considering that a *succah* is made of at least three walls, and each *amah* is six *tefachim*, the calculation becomes $20 \times 3 \times 6 = 360$. The dimensions of the *Succah* imply that this mitzvah brings sanctity to the other 360 days of the year. These five days of the year are holy days of atonement when Hashem forgives Bnei Yisrael. The rest of the year receives its holiness from the *Succah*, whose dimensions represent the 360 days of the year.

This is the explanation of the *pasuk* (stated above): ועמק סוכות אמרד, the measurements of the *succah* projects holiness to the rest of the year, so the entire year should be holy.

Rebbe Yissacher Dov's son, Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l*, added that this is the intention of the *pasuk*, הנה מפחות נתת ימי (Tehillim 39:6), that the days of the year receive their spirituality from מפחות, the 360 *tefachim* of the *Succah*.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 119) writes, "The world exists in the merit of the Torah study of children. Rav Pappa asked Abaya, 'and what about my Torah, and what about your Torah?'

"Abaya replied, 'We cannot compare the voice [of a child] who never tasted sin, to the voice of someone who has tasted sin.'" Children never sinned, and therefore their Torah is so precious; it sustains the world.

The Kozeglover Rav *zt'l* in his *Sefer Eretz Zvi* writes that on the four days between Yom Kippur and Succos, adults are also clean of sins. Therefore, during these days, their Torah study holds up the world.

Furthermore, an adult is a מצווה ועושה, obligated to study Torah (while a child isn't), and the value of an obligatory mitzvah is greater. Therefore, during these days, the value of adults Torah is exceptional.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* was extremely happy during the four days after Yom Kippur because all of his sins were forgiven. He was so ecstatic; he wasn't able to focus on Torah. Therefore, during these days, he composed songs and poems to express his yearning and gratitude to Hashem (collected in *Sefer Shiras Moshe*).

We aren't on that level. We are able to study Torah after Yom Kippur. Therefore, we should, especially since it is such a holy time, and we are freed from all our aveiros.

It is written דרשו ה' בהמצאו "Search for Hashem when He is near" (*Yeshayah* 55). When is Hashem near? The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 18) teaches אלו עשרה ימים שבין ראש השנה ליום הכיפורים, "These are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur."

If you translate these words literally, there is a question. As the Shelah HaKadosh (*Succah, Torah Or* 70) asks, why does the Gemara say that there are ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? There are only seven days between them?

The Shelah answers that although the Gemara is referring to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, the time when Hashem is near, on a deeper level, the Gemara is also hinting to the ten days between Yom Kippur and *Hoshanah Rabba* because Hashem is close during those days too. He explains:

Yom Kippur is called Rosh Hashanah² and *Hoshanah Rabba* is called Yom Kippur.³

2. As it states, בראש השנה בעשר לחודש (*Yechezkel* 40).

3. This is because similar to Yom Kippur, on *Hoshanah Rabba* we receive the חתימה טובה a good seal for the new year.

In between, there are ten days. About these days it is written, *דרשוה' בהמצאו*, search Hashem when He is near. They are days similar to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah when Hashem is close to us.

G-t's Numen

The day after Yom Kippur is called *G-t's numen*, "Hashem's name" (*ג-מ'ם נאמען*). Why?

The Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* said that on this day we begin saying *הא-ל הקודש* once again. That's why this day is called *G-t's numen*, "Hashem's name."

Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* taught: On Yom Kippur, the nation heard the *cohen gadol* say the *shem hameforash* (Hashem's name *הוי"ה*, as it is written). The *Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* 3:7) teaches that immediately after Yom Kippur, everyone forgot how to pronounce the name since the correct pronunciation of Hashem's name must remain a secret, known only to a select few people (see *Kiddushin* 71.). On the morning after Yom Kippur, everyone asked each other, "Do you remember how the *cohen gadol* pronounced Hashem's name?" (but no one remembered). And since everyone was asking about *G-t's numen*, the day after Yom Kippur is called *G-t's numen*.

My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai Lelover *zt'l*, gave a third explanation as to why this day is called *G-t's numen*, based on a story that happened to his grandfather, Rebbe Dovid of Lelov:

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zy'a* once heard a *melamed* say to a young child, "Sometimes, the Chumash doesn't spell out Hashem's name. This is because Hashem's name is very holy, and we must be cautious that the paper doesn't get ripped, *chalilah*, or desecrated in some other way. Therefore, the *Chumash* writes two *yuds*. These two *yuds* should be read as Hashem's name."

When the *melamed* reached the end of the *pasuk*, the student asked, "There are two *yuds* here (the two dots at the end of the *pasuk*). Why don't you read it as Hashem's name?"

The *melamed* replied, "When two *yuds* are next to each other, it's Hashem's name. But when one *yud* is higher than the other, it's a *סוף פסוק*, a separator between one *pasuk* and the next one."

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov said he learned from this the following lesson: When two Yidden (two *yuds*) feel equal, and no one feels more important than the other one, Hashem's name is there. But when one Yid feels higher than the other, it's a separator, and Hashem's name doesn't reside there.

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai repeated this story and said: After Yom Kippur, everyone is cleansed from sins, and all Yidden are on the same level. That's two *yuds* side by side, and Hashem's name is there. This is the reason the day after Yom Kippur is called *G-t's numen*. Hashem's name is there.

The first day of Succos is called *יום ראשון*, *להשבון עוונות*, the first day of counting the sins because the purity of sin of Yom Kippur extends until the first day of Succos. On this day, we take an *אתרוג*, which *tzaddikim* said is *roshei teivos* for *אל תביאני רגל גאווה*, "don't bring me to arrogance." By taking the *esrog*, we hint that we should remain equal with all Yidden, we should always be pure from sins. It should never be that one feels higher than another, and then Hashem's name will always be with us.

Erev Succos

Rebbe Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l* (who was extremely generous to the poor every day of the year) increased the amount of *tzedakah* he gave on *erev Succos*, distributing large amounts of money to the poor. He said that there isn't a nicer *גוי סוכה*, *succah* decoration than the *tzedakah* one gives on *erev Succos*.

The Shaarei Teshuvah (625) writes: "It is proper to give a lot of *tzedakah* on *erev Succos*. Reb Chaim Vital would distribute the *tzedakah pushke* to the poor on this day."

Ushpizen

The Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah writes: “Erev Succos is the time to distribute tzedakah. It is the right day to look for good guests who are *B'nai Torah*, for *yom tov*.”

Why is it important to have guests on Succos?

The *Zohar* teaches that on Succos the seven *ushpizen*: Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid come to our *succos* to celebrate together with us. When they arrive, they look if there are guests present. If there are guests, they remain in the *Succah* and bless all the participants. But if there aren't any guests, they leave. Therefore, it is important to have guests on Succos.⁴

Rebbe Eliezer of Dzikiv *zt'l* was careful to have a guest on the first day of Succos because the first day of Succos is the *ushpizen* of Avraham Avinu, who excelled in *hachnassas orchim*.

One year, on the first day of Succos, the Dzikiver Rebbe didn't have a guest, so he asked his son (the Imrei Noam *zt'l*) to go outside and look for someone who needed a *yom tov* meal. The son walked around the streets until he found a homeless, drunk person. “Come with me,” he said to the pauper. “My

father wants you to eat the *seudah* with him.”

The Dzikiver Rebbe rejoiced with his guest and served him fish, meat, and other delicacies. The Rebbe said: “Avraham Avinu didn't have more respectable guests. But Avraham cared so much about people that he was eager to bring home anyone who desired a meal. At least, on this day, we should emulate Avraham Avinu's ways...”

Unity

One of the themes of the *yom tov* Succos is unity. The *Succah* and the four *minim* represent the unity of the Jewish nation. After we made peace on erev *Yom Kippur* (and we asked forgiveness from those we harmed), it is an appropriate time to rejoice with our unity.

Furthermore, the *Sfas Emes* (*Yom Kippur* 651) explains, “All *neshamos* are united; it is sins that draw people apart.” After the atonement and forgiveness of *Yom Kippur*, all *Yidden* can have *ahavas Yisrael* and unity, without any feelings of division and discord.

One of the themes of the *mitzvah* of *Succah* is unity. As it states, *כל האזרה בישראל ישבו במכות*. The *Gemara* (*Succah* 27) explains, “all *Yidden* can dwell in the same *succah*” (*Succah* 27)⁵. This hints that the *Succah* is, *מכות שלום*, a

4. The *Gemara* (*Avodah Zorah* 3) tells us that in the future, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will give the nations one more chance to keep the Torah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say to them, “I have a simple *mitzvah*; it is called *succah*. Keep this *mitzvah* [and you will be rewarded together with the Jewish nation]!”

The *Gemara* relates, “Immediately, everyone will go and build a *succah* on his rooftop. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will have the sun shine brightly, and it will become extremely hot. They will all kick their *succos* and leave.”

The *Gemara* explains that a *Yid* will also leave the *succah* if it is very hot, but a Jew never kicks the *succah* when he leaves. The nations of the world kick the *succah* in disdain, and thereby they don't deserve reward.

B'derech tzachus we can say, why will the nations of the world build their *succos* specifically on their rooftops? It is because they don't want guests to come. They don't want people knocking at their door, asking for a meal. Contrarily, the Jewish nation seeks to have guests on Succos.

5. According to its simple meaning, this tells us that a borrowed *succah* is also kosher (or a guest by someone's else's home). It doesn't have to be your own *succah*.

place where we increase peace and where we cast away all divisions. All Yidden are united and can live under the same roof.

The Midrash teaches that the *esrog* (which has a pleasing scent and a good flavor) represents Torah scholars who do good deeds. The *lulav* (from a date tree) has flavor but no smell (because dates have a taste and no smell). This represents the Torah scholars who don't perform good deeds. *Hadasim* have a good smell, but no flavor. They represent the Yidden who do good deeds but don't study Torah. The *aravah* has neither scent nor flavor. They represent the Yidden who lack both qualities.

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, tie them together in one bundle so their sins will be forgiven together" (*VaYikra Rabba* 30:12). The Midrash tells us that the four minim represents the union of all Yidden, of all levels, on Succos.

Even tzaddikim and Torah scholars have to unite with other Yidden – including the lowly ones. This is derived from the *esrog*, which isn't valid unless together with the other three species. As the *Beer Heitev* (645:9) writes "*Esrog* is *gematria* 610. When combined with the other 3 species, the *gematria* is 613." Perfection is when all four categories of Yidden unite with achdus, and respect for one another.

Many people who lived in Yerushalayim would bring their four minim to Reb Shimon Ahron Polonski *zt'l*, the Tepliker Rav, to ask him whether they were kosher and *mehudar*. In return for this service, he asked them to donate some money to the poor of Yerushalayim so that he could help them with the yom tov expenses.

One person told him, "After I buy the four minim, I won't have money left to help the poor."

The Tepliker Rav told him, "Who says you have to buy the four minim? You can borrow the four from someone else and

perform the mitzvah that way. However, if a poor family is sad on yom tov because they couldn't afford to buy a meal, and if they shed even just one tear, that creates a *kitrug* (complaint) in heaven, which is very hard to amend."

One time The Tepliker Rav acted on this advice. One year, on the first day of Succos, the Tepliker Rav asked someone to lend him his *esrog*. He had a *lulav*, *hadasim* and *aravos*, but he didn't own an *esrog*. This is what happened:

On *Erev Succos*, the Tepliker Rav heard shouts and cries coming from his neighbor's home, so he knocked on their door to see what was going on and if he could help.

It was a broken family. The father had died, and the children were orphans. Although the mother remarried, things still weren't smooth in the family.

At the door, they told him that one of the children had broken the pitom on the step-father's *esrog*. "The step-father is now in the mikvah, but we are worried about what his reaction will be when he finds out what happened." The Tepliker Rav understood what they meant. He might rebuke the orphan very harshly for breaking the pitom, and he might be angry with his wife, too, for allowing the child to get close to the *esrog*. The Tepliker Rav told them, "When your step-father comes home, tell him that I asked to see the *esrog*, and I ruled that it was *pasul*. You don't have to tell him that it broke. Instead, I will bring you my *esrog*..."

Therefore, that year, the Tepliker Rav didn't have an *esrog*. Someone else's *shalom bayis* and *simchas yom tov* were more important to him than owning his own four minim.

A similar story happened with Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz *zt'l*. Throughout the year, Rebbe Mordechai put aside money to buy the four *minim*. One year, as he was going to buy an *esrog*, he saw a simple Yid,

crying bitterly. "What's the matter?" he asked.

The man told him that his horse had died. "I'm a delivery man. The horse was my source of *parnassah*, and I don't have money to buy another one."

Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz gave him money to buy a horse, and with the leftover money, he purchased an *esrog*. It wasn't the most beautiful *esrog*, but it was all he could afford to buy with the leftover money.

When he came home, he said to his family, "This *yom tov*, everyone else is going to make a *brachah* on a beautiful *esrog*, while we will make a *brachah* on a beautiful horse..."

That Succos, Rebbe Mordechai davened in the *beis medresh* of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zt'l*. Rebbe Elimelech said, "I smell the scent of Gan Eden coming from your *esrog*."

Staying Focused

The doctor's waiting room wasn't air-conditioned; neither was it well furnished. It was evident that the worn-out tiled floor hadn't been washed for quite a while. And, as always, the doctor was behind schedule.

Most of the people waiting for their appointment accepted these discomforts in silence. It wasn't their first time here, and they were accustomed to these matters. They kept coming back, despite these hardships, because the doctor was from the best in his field.

A first-time patient was waiting for his turn to see the doctor, and he was very upset with the service. Unlike the others who accepted it in silence, he spoke out loudly. "I never saw anything like this in my life. A doctor should care about his patients. Why isn't the air conditioning? Why are the chairs uncomfortable? Why is this room so dingy? And why can't this doctor keep to his schedule? My appointment was supposed to

be an hour ago! I used to go to Dr. Ploni. He is a specialist in the same field... He has a waiting room as it should be. He invests in the most modern furniture, the room temperature is always comfortable, controlled by an automatic air conditioning system, and he keeps to his schedule."

The people in the room asked him, "Is he a good doctor? Are his patients happy with him?"

"I never heard that anyone was happy with him. I wasn't either, and that's why I changed doctors. He isn't the wisest guy around if you know what I mean. I don't know how he ever graduated from medical school. But the waiting room is first class..."

The *nimshal* is: Succos is approaching. We will sit in the *Succah*; we will take the four *minim*. The *Succah* will be beautifully decorated, and the four *minim* will be the most precious set. All is good and well, but what about the performance of the mitzvos? How will they be performed? With joy and desire? With a connection to Hashem? Or with sadness and disinterest? We must keep focus and perform the mitzvos in the best way we can. Everything can be perfect, externally, but it is essential to make the mitzvos perfect internally, too. The heart and the intention are the main parts of the mitzvah.

On the topic of keeping focus, we share another *mashal*:

A man arrived at the border in a new Mercedes, and he wanted to cross the border. The border police checked his luggage to see whether he was bringing undeclared merchandise across the border, and all they found were buckets of soil. "What is this for?" they asked.

"I'm building a new home, and the earth I need for the building is cheaper in the other country. So I go there and fill up buckets with dirt..."

They didn't believe him. It was strange that one would import soil, just to save a few pennies. So they sifted through the earth expecting to find something hidden there, but they didn't find anything, and they let him pass.

The following day, he came to the border again, riding in his brand new Mercedes. The border patrol sifted through the soil, didn't find anything suspicious, and let him go on his way. This happened every day for months. After a while, they stopped sifting through the earth because they saw that there was nothing there.

One day, he came to the border and told the guards that he wouldn't be coming anymore. "I finished building my house, so there's no reason for me to bring more earth."

The border police couldn't contain their curiosity any longer, and they asked him, "Why were you bringing earth every day? Was it just to save a few pennies?"

He replied, "I'll tell you if you promise that you won't arrest me and that you won't report me to the government."

They promised. He said, "I was importing Mercedes cars. Every day, I drove a new Mercedes. The soil was just a coy..."

The soil caused the police to focus on that and to lose sight to a greater felony that was happening. If he would have driven through with just the Mercedes car (without the soil), they would probably suspect that he was importing the vehicle.

The nimshal is, there is a lot to focus on these days. We can focus on being happy, on the greatness of the mitzvos, on the lessons of the mitzvos, on Torah and tefillah, etc. But then something trivial happens, and people tend to turn all their focus to that. We have to remember that we don't have time for that. There are greater things to think about at this time.

The Mitzvah of Succah

The Gemara (*Succah* 3) teaches that when one sits in Succah, it must be ראשו ורובו ושולחנו בתוך הסוכה, his head, most of his body, and table are inside the *Succah*.

Therefore, the minimum size for a *succah* is seven *tefachim*, because that is enough room for ראשו רובו ושולחנו.

The Sfas Emes explains that these dimensions hint that one's entire being – heart and soul – should be in the *Succah*. His head, most of his body, and his table should be in the *Succah*. He shouldn't be in *Succah*, and his head and heart are elsewhere. He should be totally *there*.

The table represents his family – his wife and children. They must also be in the *Succah*. This means the head of the family must bring them to appreciate and feel the ambiance and joy of the *Succah*.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (625:1) states, "When one sits in the *Succah*, he should think that Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded us to sit in *succos* to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* and to remember the ענני כבוד, clouds of glory, which Hashem wrapped around us in the desert to protect us from the cold and heat. One should think these thoughts, and in this manner, he will be keeping the mitzvah properly. However, *bidi'eved*, one has accomplished the mitzvah even if he only thought about that he is performing a mitzvah."

Generally, the reasons for the mitzvos are not part of the mitzvah. For example, one doesn't need to know why Hashem commanded us to take the four *minim* or why Hashem commanded us to hear the shofar. But on Succos, it is important to think about the reason why we have this mitzvah. This is because one should keep the mitzvah of *Succah* with his whole being. He should be thinking about what he is doing and be connected with the mitzvos. As the Sfas

Emes taught, ראשו רובו ושולחנו, one's entire essence should be inside the *Succah*.⁶

for this mitzvah... כי מאד גדלה מעלת מצות סוכה, because the mitzvah of *succah* is very great..."

The *Succah* is for Everyone

The Yesod v'Shores HaAvodah writes, "When a person learns about the greatness of this mitzvah and its great reward, and about the seven exalted *Ushpezin* who visit him in the *succah*, he will yearn intensely

The *Succah* is an extremely holy abode, as we will explain. But first, before we get into the beautiful, amazing details, let us clarify that the holiness is for everyone. You

6. Every mitzvah has endless reasons (some of them are revealed in the holy *sefarim*). When one performs the mitzvos with these intentions in mind, it raises the value of the mitzvos performed.

It states, עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך עבדך אני הבניני (*Tehillim* 119). The Meiri explains: עת לעשות לה', when one keeps the mitzvos solely because the time (עת) arrived for the mitzvah, then הפרו תורתך, it is as though he is transgressing the Torah *chalah*. This isn't what Hashem wants. עבדך אני הבניני, "I am Your servant, therefore teach me the reasons behind the mitzvos so I can perform them properly."

The Meiri explains, "If a person eats matzah on Pesach and sits in a *succah* [on Succos], he is like a donkey that carries wheat during the harvest season and grapes during the grape picking season...." Time shouldn't be the only factor and reason we keep the mitzvos. We should study what the *sefarim* teach us about the mitzvos, and we should perform the mitzvos with those lofty reasons in mind.

The Meiri concludes, "This also applies to the simple folk who don't know the reasons for the mitzvos... With their limited understanding, they should keep the mitzvos with inspiration. They should think about that they are doing Hashem's will Who commanded them and that they are bringing Him honor..." Having that simple thought in mind raises the deed from being mediocre to being a special mitzvah before Hashem.

Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* told a story that happened in his hometown. A gentile child was murdered. False witnesses were hired to testify in court that a Yid killed the child and to claim that he used the blood for making matzos.

The Yidden explained to the judge that these were false witnesses, and the judge suspected that it was so. However, even after cross examining the witnesses, they never contradicted one another. The lives of all Jews in the area were in danger.

One wise yid said to the judge, "Nowadays, there is a new method to determine who is guilty. Modern courts use trained bloodhounds. The dog smells the blood and is able to determine who the murderer was."

The judge agreed to put it to test. By the judge's decree, all the townspeople had to gather in the town square. (The Yidden were also there, with their *Tehillims* in their hands, as they prayed for a miracle.) The blood-stained clothing of the murdered child was brought to the dog. The dog sniffed at it and went directly to the true murderer. No one was surprised, because the murderer was renowned for his cruelty and dishonesty. This is how the yidden of this town were saved from the blood libel.

Reb Eliyah Lopian said, "Did the dog know what he was doing? Did it realize that it was saving Yidden from a pogrom? The dog didn't know anything. It only knew to smell the blood, and to go to the person with the same scent. When we keep the mitzvos," Reb Elyah Lopian explained, "when we take the *lulav* and *esrog*, and when we sit in a *succah*, we should know what we're doing. We shouldn't do the mitzvos without intentions, just because we have an obligation."

We should strive to know the reasons behind the mitzvos. And even when one doesn't know the reasons, he should focus on the concept that he is doing a mitzvah before Hashem, and that he is bringing Hashem pleasure. These thoughts are essential, and they greatly enhance the reward, and the pleasure that Hashem receives from the mitzvos.

may feel that you are on a low level, and you don't deserve this closeness with Hashem. You may feel like you are too distant from this holiness, but Hashem thinks differently. The holiness of the Succah is for everyone.

Reb Avraham Yaakov of Sadegeira zt'l said that this is the reason a succah is made from פסולה גורן ויקב, the leftover branches and grass stalks of the vineyard and of the crops (see Succah 12.). This hints that the Succah is for even those who are like פסולה, leftover, disregarded, and unimportant.

Chazal (Succah 22.) also say, המעובה כמין בית, כשרה, if the schach on the Succah is very thick, and it looks like a house, it is also kosher. Tzaddikim said that this hints to the Yidden who are מעובה כמין בית, very thick, very coarse and *gashmiyosdig*. The Succah is for them too.

This is also hinted to by the lulav, which one shakes in all directions (see Succah 37:, מוליד, ומביא מעלה ומוריד). This indicates that even those who are מוליד going away from the kedushah, can מביא, return, because on Succos, everyone can return to Hashem.⁷

One of the tzaddikim of Tzfas saw a chassid who was afraid to walk into the Succah. He said, "The Succah is filled with Hashem's names. How can I walk on it?"

The tzaddik replied, "A Yid is also comprised of Hashem's names. *Sheimos* may go on top of *sheimos*."

Rebbe Yechiel of Alaxender zt'l said, "It is truly a wonder how one can enter a succah. But every Yid is a חלק אלוקי ממעל, a part of Hashem. Hashem's name is within him. Therefore, he may enter the Succah."

The Torah says (*Vayikra* 23:42), בסוכות תשבו, "Dwell in succos..." The word תשבו has the same letters as בושה, shame. The Yeivev Lev (*Yeitav Panim Succos* 10) explains that one should feel embarrassed to enter the holy Succah. How does he have the courage to enter this holy abode? The answer is with thoughts of *teshuvah*. As the *pasuk* continues, כל האורה. The translation of האורה, "I will shine." It is in the future tense. It means: Although right now, I am not worthy of entering the Succah, in the merit that I will improve my ways, I can come into the Succah. As Chazal (*Kiddushin* 40.) say, "When one has a good thought, Hashem considers it as though he did it already."

The *pasuk* concludes, כי בסוכות הושבתני את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים, "Because I placed them in succos when I took them out of Mitzrayim." When they left Mitzrayim, they weren't worthy, but in the merit that they will receive the Torah in the future, they could sit in the Succah. Similarly, since I will improve my ways, I have the right to enter the Succah.

In Hashem's Presence

The Zohar (vol.3 103:) states, "When a person dwells under the shadow of Emunah [the succah] the Shechinah spreads out His wings above him."

The Rema, beginning of Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 1:1) states, "One should always remember that he is in Hashem's presence, as it states שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד. This is a great rule in Torah, and it is the *madreigah* of the tzaddikim who go before Hashem. Because the way a person sits, moves, and works when he is alone in his home aren't the same as when he is before a great king. The way a person speaks freely when he is with family and friends isn't the same as when he

7. Chazal say (Succah 25:) מצמער פטור מן הסוכה, that if someone has distress in the succah, he is *patur*, exempt from this mitzvah. The Kotzker zt'l explained, he is sitting in the holy succah. The joy is so intense. How can he feel any distress there? He should be so happy, unyil he doesn't feel any discomfort at all. If he feels the discomfort, that's a sign that he is *patur*, detached from the reality where he is in.

is in the presence of a king. Therefore, certainly, when a person thinks about how the great king, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, whose honor fills the entire world, is there before him, and He sees all of his deeds, as it states, 'אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאם ה', 'If a person hides in a hidden place, won't I see him?' says Hashem.' [When a person thinks about this], he will be immediately grasped with immense fear and humility before Hashem..."

These ideas apply for every day of the year, and for all people. However, it is all the more so true when he sits in a succah. Remember that Hashem is with you, watching all your deeds, so act accordingly.

The Reishis Chachmah (Shaar HaKedushah ch.4) writes, "This was the custom of my rebbe [the Remak zt'l]; he wouldn't speak in the Succah throughout the holiday, other than words of Torah. The Succah contains such holiness that even the schach of the Succah has *kedushah* all seven days (see Succah 9.)."

Similarly, the Mishnah Berurah (תרל"ט סק"ב) writes, "Since the holiness of the Succah is so great, it is proper to speak less *divrei chol*, mundane talk, there. Rather, speak holy words of Torah. Certainly, be cautious that you don't speak *lashon hara* there or other forbidden words."

The Shelah warned that one shouldn't get angry in the Succah. The holiness is great, we are before Hashem, and we must act accordingly.

The Holiness of the Succah

Let us now review some sources that speak about the *kedushah* of the Succah:

One of the laws of the Succah is that it must be at least ten *tefachim* high. The Gemara (Succah 4:) says that the source for this is the Shechinah, Who never descended to this world beneath ten *tefachim*. For example, in the Mishkan, the Shechinah dwelled over the aron, which was ten *tefachim* high. But we never find the Shechinah descended lower than that. Therefore, the Succah must be at least ten *tefachim* high.

The Chesed L'Avraham and the Sfas Emes (תרמ"ב ד"ה כתיב) say that this alludes to the holiness of the Succah. The Shechinah resides on the Succah; therefore it can't be too low.⁸

According to Halachah, the walls of the Succah must be at least two full walls and one smaller wall, which can even be the width of a *tefach*. The holy sefarim explain that this represents an arm, which has two large parts and then the *tefach*, the hand. The Succah has these dimensions because it represents the idea that when we are in the Succah, we are being hugged by Hashem.

Keviyachol, in heaven, Hashem dwells in His innermost chamber and in His outside chamber. The innermost chamber is a place of joy. As Chazal say, after the churban Hashem cries in His outer chambers, and He is happy in his innermost chambers. Going into the Succah is like entering Hashem's innermost chambers in heaven, a place of joy. As it states (Shir HaShirim 1:4) הביאני המלך הדריו, "The king brought me into His [innermost] chambers. בך, נגילה ונשמחה בך, "I will rejoice with You."

The schach is called צל. For example, the Zohar calls the succah צילא דמיהמנוחא, the shade (or shadow) of Emunah. The Ropshitzer Rav

8. The Chidushei HaRim zt'l taught that Hashem treats us during these days in the same manner a mother cares for her children. On Rosh Hashanah, בלאזט מען אונו אפ, Hashem blows on us, and blows away the bad. On Yom Kippur, וואשט מען אונו אפ, Hashem washes us, as it says, וורקתי עליכם מים טהורים, "I will throw onto you purifying waters" (Yechezkel 36). And on Succos, דעקט מען אונו צו, Hashem covers us and swaddles us.

zt'l (זרע קודש ליל א' סוכות) explains that a shadow mimics a person's movements. Similarly, when we sit under the schach, it is a shadow image of something much more significant transpiring above in heaven. As we sit in the Succah below, Hashem is bringing us into His innermost chambers of heaven.

There are different customs regarding saying Shalom Aleichim Friday night during Succos. We begin with those who don't say it. The Shem MiShmuel explains that the kedushah of the Succah is so great, the malachim can't enter.

For those who do say Shalom Aleichem, there is a question regarding what one should recite first? Should he begin with Shalom Aleichem to greet the malachim, or should he start with the invitation to the Ushpizin?

Someone told the Satmer Rebbe zt'l that he thinks we should invite the malachim first, because of the rule תדיר ושאינו תדיר תדיר קודם, whatever is more common goes first. We say Shalom Aleichem every Friday night of the year. It is more common than calling the Ushpizin, and therefore Shalom Aleichem should be first.

The Satmer Rebbe disagreed. He said that although the words of the Shalom Aleichem are the same each week, they aren't the same. Because the malachim that come to him are dependent on his deeds and his preparation for Shabbos during the six days before Shabbos. Therefore, the Satmer Rebbe said, "In my opinion, the Ushpizin should be invited first, because the Ushpizin are tzaddikim, and tzaddikim are greater than malachim.

It is impossible to speak about the holiness of the Succah sufficiently. Yet, we will bring a few more sources that discuss the holiness of the Succah.

The Yesod Yosef (ch.77) writes, "When one sits in the succah, and he learns and davens there, he is *mamash* in the upper worlds..."

The Yaaras Dvash (vol.1 drush 6) writes, "Above the Succah is Hashem's cloud. Although we don't see it, nevertheless, it is certain and true that whoever sits in the succah *leshem shamayim* and he studies Torah there, and he is happy with the holiday, and with the mitzvos, Hashem's cloud hovers above him."⁹

The Shem MiShmuel (5673) teaches:

Rashi tells us that the animals came on their own to Noach's *teivah*, but only the animals that didn't sin were Lable to enter the *teivah*. Those who sinned were banished from the *teivah*.

Similarly, everyone sits in the *Succah*, but only those who are worthy can experience its great joy and holiness.

The Shem MiShmuel writes, "If the *Succah* accepted him, he will experience a very good feeling being in the *Succah*. But, *chas veshalom*, if the *succah* doesn't accept him, he will not be happy there... If one enjoys the *Succah* very much, this indicates that the *Succah* accepted him immensely. This is something that cannot be seen. It is in the feelings of the heart, and is only revealed to Hashem."

In the *yotzros* of the second day of Succos we say, "ואנכי היודע ועד כי עמי קיימו מצותיה, I [Hashem] know and testify that My nation kept the mitzvos [and that they sit in a *succah*, etc.]." The Shem MiShmuel asks, why does Hashem need to testify this? Isn't it something that everyone can see?

The Shem MiShmuel answers that it is obvious that we keep the external aspect of the mitzvos. Hashem testifies that we keep

9. Tzaddikim were careful that a gentile shouldn't enter the *succah*, because of the great sanctity that is there.

the inner spirit as well. Not only did we sit there, but we experienced the joy and holiness of the *Succah* too.

The Shem MiShmuel adds that Succos comes after Yom Kippur because one needs to be *tahor* from all sins to be accepted into the spirituality of the *Succah*.

The Keren l'Dovid writes, "When one sits in the *succah leshem shamayim*, he feels the holiness with *hislahavus*. He experiences the light of the mitzvah, and he knows that it is true that the ענני כבוד surrounded us. This is something that cannot be explained with words, but someone who experienced it knows that it's true."

The Sfas Emes (5643) also writes, "[The *Succah*] is like Gan Eden. Man was created to live in Gan Eden, the place of true joy, as we say, כשמחך יצריך בנן עדן. Adam was banished from Gan Eden. Nevertheless, there are times when a spark of Gan Eden shines... This is the reason people are happy when they are in *Succah*..."

Similar to the Beis HaMikdash

There are several comparisons between the *Succah* and the laws of the Beis HaMikdash.

The Pri Megadim states: One mustn't use a *succah* as a shortcut. Definitely, one may not spit there because the *Succah* is holy and has laws similar to the laws practiced in the Beis HaMikdash.

The Arizal teaches that the table in the *Succah* should have four legs, to resemble the Shulchan of the Beis HaMikdash that had four legs.

We repeat this not necessarily so people should do so, instead get an idea of the holiness of the *Succah*, which resembles the Beis HaMikdash.

Chazal had a הוּא אִמִּינָא, a thought, that a *succah* must be built on Har HaBayis, alongside the Beis HaMikdash. Chazal

afterward disproved that theory. Nevertheless, a הוּא אִמִּינָא, an initial thought of Chazal, also has significance. It hints to us just how holy the *Succah* is.

The Four Minim

The Beis Yosef (651) tells the following story:

"In a dream, the Rikanti saw Rabbeinu Yitzchak Ashkenazi writing Hashem's holy name, but he wrote the final *heh* slightly apart from the first three letters. The Rikanti didn't know how to interpret the dream. The next day, he saw Rabbeinu Yitzchak Ashkenazi carrying the *esrog* distant from the *lulav*. Then he understood the meaning of the dream. He told Reb Yitzchak Ashkenazi that the four *minim* represent the four letters of Hashem's name...and the *esrog* represents the final *heh* of Hashem's name. One must hold them together, so the final *heh* be connected with the first three letters."

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zy'a* adds that although the four letters have to be near each other, there needs to be some space between the letters. This is the reason we use *koishelach* (*lulav* holders). They serve as a separator between the four *minim*, so they can represent the four letters of Hashem's name הוּי"ה, being together, with the proper amount of space between the letters.

The Midrash (quoted in *Ramban Vayikra* 23:40) states: "The *esrog* is Hakadosh Baruch Hu, as it states... The *lulav* is Hakadosh Baruch Hu as it states... *Hadassim* are Hakadosh Baruch Hu... The *aravos* are Hakadosh Baruch Hu..." The Midrash brings *pesukim* to prove it. Once again, this is because the four species represent the four letters of Hashem's holy name *Havayah*.

Based on these ideas, Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zy'a* explains the *pasuk*, ה' לִי לֹא אֵרָא, "Hashem is with me and I am not afraid." He teaches, ה' לִי, "Since Hashem is in my hands [as I hold the, four *minim*] לֹא אֵרָא, I

have nothing to fear," because Hashem will give me all my needs and whatever I request.

This idea is beyond our understanding. We only quote these holy words so we should have a small indication of the greatness of the mitzvah of the four *minim*, and the potential of our *tefillos*, as we say *Hoshanos* holding the four *minim* in our hands.

Reb Shimon Deitsh *zt'l* (*Imrei Shefer*) writes, "My teacher, the Chasam Sofer *zt'l*, would [hold the four *minim* throughout the entire *tefillah*]. He said that since he loves the mitzvah, holding them helps him daven with *kavanah*. He said that he has more *kavanah* on Succos while holding the four *minim*, than he has on Yom Kippur."

The Midrash teaches that the four *minim* represent the human body. The *esrog* represents the heart, the *lulav* the spine, the *hadassim* the eyes, and the *aravah* the mouth. We shake them. The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that when you want to awaken someone, you shake them. Similarly, we shake the four *minim*, representing the person, to awaken him to *ruchniyus*. On Shabbos, we don't need to shake the four *minim*, because Shabbos itself awakens us.

The Shevet Mussar explains that *yavash* (dried out *esrog* and *lulav*) are *pasul*, because one needs to be fresh and alive when he serves Hashem, not shriveled up. And, indeed, that is the *segulah* of the four *minim*, to awaken us so we can serve Hashem with *chiyus* and vigor.

The Value of an *Esrog*

Tzaddikim said that if people knew the value of the *esrog*, they would spend all the money in the world to acquire it.

Chazal say, "If Yidden aren't prophets, they are minor prophets (בני נביאים)" because for generations, Yidden intrinsically know the *esrog's* value and importance, and they spend a lot of money buying an *esrog*.

Esrogim don't grow in Eastern Europe; they had to be imported from Italy or other countries. Thus, some time ago, there was only one or two *esrogim* per community, and they were costly. The Jewish community would save up money for this purchase, sometimes months in advance, because it was expensive. But they did so with joy because they wanted to keep this precious mitzvah.

This custom of spending money for an *esrog* goes back to the times of Chazal. The Gemara (*Succah* 41) tells us that Raban Gamliel once paid one thousand *zuz* for an *esrog*. "This teaches us how much they loved the mitzvos."

Once, the Vilna Gaon *zt'l* gave his students a lot of money to buy an *esrog*. It seems that *esrogim* weren't coming to their country, and the students weren't able to find one. At last, they found someone who had an *esrog*, but he wasn't a merchant, and he wanted the *esrog* for himself. The students offered him an enormous sum, but he refused to part with his *esrog*. However, when he heard that the Vilna Gaon wanted to buy the *esrog*, he agreed to sell it, on condition that the reward of the mitzvah would go to him.

The students agreed to the condition because they didn't have any other choice. But they were afraid that the Vilna Gaon wouldn't be pleased.

However, when the Vilna Gaon heard the details of the agreement, he was delighted. He said that this would be the first time in his life that he can keep a mitzvah completely *leshem shamayim*, without interest in the reward.

Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz's *zt'l* would also spend a lot of money on a beautiful *esrog*. By the testimony of his student, Reb Hirsch of Hessin *zt'l*, Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* would buy an *esrog*, and then, if he found a more beautiful one, he would buy that one. And then, if he found a more beautiful *esrog*, he would buy that one. His *Succah* was also

decorated with costly items. His students write about these matters and conclude that "All his money was valueless to him when it came to love Hashem and His mitzvos."

There is a well-known story which demonstrates Yidden's love for the four minim, and the readiness to give away a lot of money to fulfill it. There are different versions to this story, and I will write it as I received it:

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev *zt'l* was very poor. Somedays, there wasn't even food in his home. They had one item of value: the tefillin of Reb Michel's holy father: Reb Yitzchak of Derohovitz *zt'l*.

Many times, the Zlotchever Rebbetzin *zt'l* asked her husband, Rebbe Michel, to sell the tefillin so that they could support their family, but he didn't want to part with the precious tefillin.

Once, a wealthy person came to Zlotchev and offered a lot of money for the tefillin. Rebbe Michel turned him down; the precious tefillin weren't for sale.

Eventually, Reb Michel of Zlotchiv sold the tefillin, but it wasn't to support his family. He sold it to buy an esrog. That year, there were hardly any esrogim in Eastern Europe. A merchant came to Zlotchev, he had one esrog for sale, but he asked for an exorbitant sum, more than anyone could afford. "What will be?" Reb Michel thought to himself. "Could it be that this year we won't be able to keep this precious mitzvah?"

He sold the tefillin, and with that money, he bought the esrog for fifty *reinish*.

Rebbe Michel's joy was endless. He had a beautiful *esrog* for the upcoming Yom Tov. His Rebbetzin wanted to know how he got the money to buy the esrog. Reb Michel didn't want to reply, but she asked again, and he told her that he sold the tefillin. She bit into the esrog, rendering it *pasul*. She said, "So many times I asked you to sell it

for the family, and you didn't want to. And now you sold it for a mitzvah?"

Rebbe Michel raised his eyes heavenward and said, "Ribono Shel Olam! I don't have the tefillin anymore. I don't have an *esrog* either. Should I also become angry?"

That night, he saw his father in his dream. His father told him, "Your second deed was greater than your first. Your ability to control your anger was more precious in the eyes of Hashem than your *mesirus nefesh* to buy an *esrog*. Because of your restraint, many *gezeiros raos* [harsh decrees] were annulled."

Another story is told about a year when there were very few esrogim for sale. In one town, everyone chipped in towards buying an esrog - and each person gave as much as he was able to. However, one wealthy person refused to contribute. He was a miser, tight with his money, and figured that the community would manage without his contribution.

The community managed to buy the esrog...but it wasn't easy. The merchant saw that they were slow to come up with the money, and he warned them that if they don't pay the full price, he will take the esrog elsewhere. The rosh hakahal paid the difference, and they managed to buy the esrog, without the help of the wealthy miser.

The four minim were in the rosh hakahal's home because he had paid for most for the esrog. On Yom Tov morning, the people of the town lined up in front of the rosh hakahal's home, and each person was given a moment to make a brachah and shake the four minim. The wealthy miser was also standing in line, but when it was his turn, the rosh hakahal didn't give him the four minim. "Because of you, we almost didn't have this esrog. I won't give it to you."

The wealthy miser left the rosh hakahal's

Later that morning, the rosh hakahal was walking to the beis medresh for shacharis, proudly holding the four minim. The

wealthy miser ran over to him, shouted the brachos על נטילה לולב and שהחיינו, and he lifted the rosh hakahal, and shook him to all six sides. He figured that this was the only way he would be able to fulfill the mitzvah of shaking the four minim. The community's rav saw this and told the *rosh hakahal* to allow this wealthy man to hold the *esrog* and *lulav* in his hands.

When the miser man died, his deeds were weighed in heaven. The scale tipped to the side of sin. One compassionate malach asked, "Did you place the mitzvah of the four minim that he performed that year on the scale?"

"We did," the court replied, "and we placed his shame on the scale, too, because he felt humiliated when the *rosh hakahal* didn't permit him to shake *lulav*, but it still isn't sufficient. The scale is tipped to the sin of guilt."

The *malach* said, "But you should also put onto the scale the weight of the *rosh hakahal*, because he lifted him to keep the mitzvah."

The *rosh hakahal*'s weight was put on the scale, and the scale tipped to the side of virtue, and he was granted entry to Gan Eden.

The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* explained בדרך צחוק what we can gain by spending a lot of money on the four *minim*:

At the time of the judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Satan wants to speak of the aveiros of the Jewish nation. Good malachim challenge the Satan and say, "The Jewish nation isn't guilty of their sins. You (the Satan) are guilty because you convinced them to sin."

"Why did they listen to me?" The Satan replied. "They are a wise nation; they didn't have to fall for my enticements."

"They aren't as wise as you think," the malachim reply. "Just wait a few days, and I will show you just how gullible they are."

A few days later, they pay a lot of money for an *esrog*, a citrus fruit, which costs only a few cents. The malachim say, "You see, they are easily tricked." And with this claim, their sins are forgiven, and they are prescribed a good year.

The Bardichiver Rav *zt'l* once met the Satan and noticed that the Satan was very sad. "What's the matter?" the Bardichever Rav asked him.

"A shipload of *esrogim* is arriving, and the Gemara (*Succah* 38.) says that when Yidden shake the four *minim*, it is like arrows in my eyes."

Sometime later, the Bardichever Rav found the Satan; this time the Satan was happy. "What happened that you are happy?" the Bardichever Rav asked.

The Satan replied, "The ship with all the *esrogim* sank. Now, they won't have the opportunity to keep the mitzvah."

Chol HaMoed Succos, the Satan was sad again. The Bardichever Rav asked him about that." The Satan replied, "This year most Yidden didn't shake *lulav*, that's true. Nevertheless, they all yearned immensely for the mitzvah, and their yearning is very precious to Hashem. Additionally, a few Yidden somehow found a way to buy *esrogim* for a very high price, and they were extremely joyful with the mitzvah. The desire, the price, plus the joy are very precious before Hashem, even more precious than had all the *esrogim* arrived..."

Simchah

One of the mitzvos of Succos is the mitzvah to be happy. Unfortunately, some people don't have the proper understanding and appreciation for the mitzvah of being happy on Yom Tov.

When it comes to buying the four minim they study the halachos, cautiously choose the four minim, and then bring it to a rav to check it.

The same is with the mitzvah of sitting in Succah. This precious mitzvah is also kept scrupulously. No one would consider eating mezonos or hamotzi outside the Succah. But there's another mitzvah on Succos, the mitzvah to be happy. How much effort do we put into keeping this mitzvah?

The Rambam writes, "There is a mitzvah to be happy on all holidays, but there is special importance to be happy on Succos, as it states [about Succos], ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך, שבעת ימים "rejoice before Hashem your G-d for seven days" (*VaYikra* 23).

There is also a mitzvah to make your wife and children happy. As it states, ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנך ובתך... והיתום והאלמנה אשר בקרבך והיית אך שמחה, "Be happy in your holiday, you, your son and daughter... the orphan, widow that lives among you, and you shall be very happy" (*Devarim* 16: 14 - 15).

And, it states in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 529:2): "A person is obligated to be happy and in a good mood on Yom Tov, him, his wife and children and everyone who is associated to him (וכל הנלוים עליו). How? Give nuts and roasted grains to the children (or in today's world, give them candy and other special foods that kids enjoy); for the women, buy clothing and jewelry, according to your abilities...."

Yet, who can say they are careful with this mitzvah, and that they give it a focal place in the holiday, similar to the lulav and esrog or the mitzvah of yeshivas Succah? Being happy is a mitzvah of the Torah, just like sitting and Succah or taking the four minim, so why shouldn't we give it the honor and the dedication it deserves? Perhaps it is because it so hard to be happy, people don't even try. But even a drop of joy is still far better than nothing at all (as we will explain).

Furthermore, we can daven for simchah. The Tzemech Tzedek (Lubavitz) *zt'l* proved that one should pray for *simchah* from Dovid HaMelech who prayed (*Tehillim* 86:4) שמה נפש עבדך "Gladden your servant's soul."

Emunah and Bitachon are segulos for happiness. Believe that everything is exactly as it should be, and trust in Hashem that things will become better, and you will be happy with your lot.¹⁰

The Or HaChaim (*Shemos* 22:6) writes, "There isn't a single moment when Hakadosh Baruch Hu isn't working for each individual." Keep this in mind, and you will be happy.

We don't always understand how everything is for the good, but we believe it is so.¹¹ With these thoughts in mind, we can be happy on *Yom Tov*.

10. Sometimes people say they trust in Hashem, but they are all always worried and uptight. That's a sign they don't truly trust in Hashem. We can explain (*Yirmiyahu* 17:7), ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה', who is the blessed person who trusts in Hashem? מביטחו' והיה ה' מביטחו', the sign is happiness. והיה means happiness. If he is a happy person, this proves he has genuine *bitachon*.

It says about Yisro, וישמח יתרו זהו פשוטו, ומדרש אנדה נעשה בשרו חרודין חרודין (*Shemos* 18:19). *Rashi* writes:

For our purposes, we give the following translation: זהו פשוטו, when one has אמונה פשוטה, he will be happy. ומדרש אנדה, but when one doesn't have simple *emunah*, rather he tries to rationalize and to understand everything, נעשה בשרו חרודין חרודין, he is always worried and he feels like his flesh is being pierced all over, because of his distress.

11. We make the *brachah* on the *esrog* מיטן פיתום אראפ, with the *pitom* facing down. The words מיטן פיתום אראפ is also an expression which people use to refer to when everything is spiraling downwards and nothing is working out as he wants. But we make a *brachah* when it is מיטן פיתום אראפ, because we believe that although we don't understand, everything is good.

The Sfas Emes (תרמ"ג ד"ה ימי) zt'l writes that we should be happy on Succos because "due to the purity that Bnei Yisrael achieved on Yom Kippur, there is immense joy in heaven. Therefore, we should be happy with Hashem's joy..."

Similarly, the Alshich (Emor) discusses the day the Mishkan was built, and he writes, "From the day the world was created until the day the Mishkan was built, Hashem was never so happy with His creation... Also, in every generation, Hashem isn't so happy as He is on Succos, for then Bnei Yisrael are clean from all sins because they attained the purity of Yom Kippur. The succos that we dwell in is our sign that we attained this purity..."

The Shelah (סוכה נר מצוה סוף אות ט) writes, "A person must be happy every day [of Succos], his face should beam with joy because of the holy Ushpizin who dwell with him."

Another approach for happiness on *Yom Tov* is to be happy that we can perform these precious mitzvos.

In *Hilchos Lulav* (8:15) the Rambam writes, "The joy one has when he performs mitzvos... is a great service. Whoever refrains, he deserves to be punished."

In Yerushalayim, there was a jewelry store next to a shop that sells esrogim and lulavim, etc. A scholar went into the jewelry store, and a simple person went into the shop of the four minim. They met outside

The Alter of Slobadka zt'l said: When the Rambam leaves out a halachah from his *sefer*, scholars remain up all night, trying to understand why the Rambam left it out. So when something is missing in your life – be it *parnassah*, or any other matter – why don't you also believe that it was done purposely, for a reason?

A Holocaust survivor was complained against Hashem in front of the Chazon Ish. The survivor couldn't make peace with the tragedies he witnessed. This man knew how to learn Torah, so the Chazon Ish showed him a Tosfes and asked him to explain it. The man didn't understand the Tosfes.

The Chazon Ish told him, "If you don't understand a few line of Tosfos, how do you expect to understand Hashem's ways, which are concealed from all mankind.

We say in *Tehillim*, "מה גדלו מעשיך ה' כולם בחכמה עשית.. איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת, Hashem.. A fool doesn't understand them..."

Why does the *pasuk* say that a fool doesn't understand Hashem's ways? Also the wise can't grasp Hashem's ways! We can answer that the *pasuk* should be read like this: "מה גדלו מעשיך ה' , Hashem... מאד עמוק מחשבותיך, Hashem's thoughts are so deep, we can't fathom them. but the fool isn't aware of the depths of Hashem's thoughts, and he thinks everything should be logical to his mind.

In contrast, the wise know they can't understand. When something happens to them that doesn't make sense, they aren't surprised, because they know it is impossible to grasp Hashem's ways. The *pasuk* is saying "מה גדלו מעשיך ה' , Hashem... מאד עמוק מחשבותיך, Hashem's thoughts are so deep, we can't fathom them. but the fool isn't aware of the depths of Hashem's thoughts, and he thinks everything should be logical, as he understands things should be.

Someone came to Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l, bemoaning his plights in life. Reb Shlomo Zalman told him, "I know a yid who needed an operation, and ever since then he is deaf in one ear. He is also a widower, r'l. He also has three children who never bore children. Despite all his troubles, he is always happy and he always has a smile on his face."

The man said, "I can't believe that there is such a person. How can he be happy, after suffering so much? It can't be true."

Reb Shlomo Zalman told him that he was speaking about himself.

the stores, each carrying their purchase in their hands. The simple person said, "I made a much better purchase than you because I bought a mitzvah."

The scholar replied, "You bought a mitzvah *derabanan* (because that year Succos began on Shabbos, and lulav began on the second day of yom tov and was *miderabanan*), while I bought a mitzvah *de'oraysa* (because he would give this gift to his wife, so she will be happy on yom tov).

We don't know how to measure the mitzvos, but what we must know is that being happy on Succos isn't merely a good idea, a Chassidic concept, a proper attitude, a good idea, etc., rather an obligation of the Torah.¹²

Benefits of Simchah

Everyone wants to be happy. What is the way to attain happiness? One primary method is to be joyful on Succos. This causes happiness the entire year.

Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl *zy'a* said that this is the reason Succos is called *יומן* שמחתנו. One translation of *יומן* is to prepare. On Succos, we prepare and we store simchah for the entire year.

The Abarbanel teaches this lesson from the words, ושמחת בהגך... והיית אך שמח. He writes, "The *pasuk* is giving us a guarantee: If you are happy Succos, you will be joyous the entire year."¹³

At the beginning of the year, we make simanim for a good year. We do so primarily on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, but we also make simanim after Rosh Hashanah, too, such as the custom to dip the challah in honey throughout Succos. The Pela Yoetz *zt'l* says that this is one of the benefits of joy on Succos. Joy creates a good siman for the upcoming year. He writes, "We are commanded to be happy, שמחה של מצוה, which is a good omen for the entire year. The Arizal's students write that someone who is joyous and has a happy heart, without any distress, on this holy holiday, it is certain that he will have a good year, and he will be happy throughout the year."¹⁴

12. From the Torah, the mitzvah of lulav is on the first day of Succos, but the mitzvah to be happy on Succos is for all seven days. The Imrei Noam *zt'l* says that this is to tell us that Hashem loves it when His nation is happy and in good spirits, therefore he made this mitzvah for seven days.

How much effort Bnei Yisrael invest to get the four minim! Some spend hours, seeking the best they can find. Let this be a sign to how much effort we should invest to be happy, for this is a mitzvah from the Torah for all seven days of Succos.

13. See also the Ibn Ezra on the *pasuk* ושמחת בהגך (Devarim 16: 14-16). He explains that the joy of the holidays extends to the future, enabling him to be happy throughout the entire year.

14. The Meshech Chachmah (אמור ד"ה אך) notes that when the Torah discusses the holidays, the word אך is written twice: once by the fast of Yom Kippur and once regarding Succos. About Yom Kippur it states (Vayikra 23:27) אך בחמשה עשר יום לחודש השביעי... הוא, and about Succos it states (ibid. 23:39) אך בחמשה עשר יום לחודש השביעי... תחוגו את חג ה'. The Meshech Chachmah explains that we blow shofar on Rosh Hashanah to rouse people to teshuvah (see Rambam Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4). Afterwards, due to our teshuvah, we are atoned for all our sins on Yom Kippur, and then we rejoice on Succos. So, these three holidays are connected, as they are about teshuvah, atonement, and then rejoicing. One might think that if he didn't do teshuvah on Rosh Hashanah he doesn't keep Yom Kippur. Therefore it states (regarding Yom Kippur) אך, implying that under all conditions, even if you didn't do teshuvah on Rosh Hashanah, you must fast on Yom Kippur. If someone didn't fast and he didn't do teshuvah on Yom Kippur either, perhaps he doesn't keep Succos. Why should he rejoice on Succos if he didn't attain atonement? Therefore, it states אך by Succos, to imply that under all conditions, we keep the holiday Succos with all its mitzvos.

Yet another benefit of simchah is that it is a means to maintain the purity from sin that we acquired on Yom Kippur. The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l was at a chasunah, keeping the mitzvah of שמחה חתן וכלה, and someone asked him, "Why are you taking part in this mitzvah? It seems that no one is as happy as a chasan and kallah? Wouldn't it be better to use this time to bring joy to those who are going through hard times?"

The Chozeh explained:

It is known (see Yerushalmi Bikurim 3:3) that all one's aveiros are atoned for on the day of his chasunah. The chasan and kallah are worried and concerned: How can they be sure that they will remain pure, without sin, the rest of their lives? What will be in the future? So, we dance before them, and we make them happy. This tells them, "If you want to remain pure from sin, be happy. Your joy will protect you from falling into the abyss of sin."

Similarly, on Yom Kippur we become purified from all our sins, but how can we maintain this purity after Yom Kippur? The answer is joy. Therefore, we have a mitzvah of שמחה בחגיך on Succos. This is delivering a message: If you will be happy, you will be able to maintain your purity from sin throughout the year.

Aveiros are about being sad. As it states by the egel (Shemos 23:4) ויחאבלו, "they mourned." And after Adam and Chavah's sin, it states (Breishis 3:16-17) בעצב תלדי בנים... בעצבון, "You will give birth with atzvus... You will earn your parnassah with atzvus..." Because aveiros are about sadness, and joy is protection from sin.

The joy of Succos also annuls the 98 klalos, curses, written in parashas Ki Savo. Rashi (Bamidbar 29:18) writes that 98 sheep are sacrificed on Succos to combat the 98 curses and annul them. The Avnei Nezer zt'l explains that the curses are nullified with the joy of Succos. This is because the Arizal teaches that the 98 klalos came because they didn't serve Hashem with joy. As it states (Devarim 28:47) תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה, "Because you didn't serve Hashem with joy." Thus, serving Hashem with joy on Succos atones and annuls the 98 curses, which came from the lack of joy.

The Beis Aharon (p.156.) says, "By the yomim nora'im, bounty opens with our fear, and Succos they open with our joy."

The Proper Joy

There are different kinds of joy. The joy that we want on Succos is a holy joy, joy with the mitzvos, and not a joy related to emptiness and frivolity.

As it states in *Shulchan Aruch* (529:3), "One eats and drinks and is happy on the holiday. But he shouldn't be involved just in the meat, wine, laughter, and lightheadedness, because laughter and lightheadedness aren't joy. That's silliness and foolishness. We aren't obligated with levity and foolishness, only with *simchah* that is for Hashem's service..."

The Rambam (*Hilchos Lulav* 8:14) writes, "[The dancing at the *simchas beis hashoava*] wasn't done by the *amei ha'aretz* or just by anyone else who wanted to dance. Only the *gedolim*, *chachmei Yisrael*, and the *roshei yeshivos*, the heads of Sanhedrin, chassidim,

The Meshech Chachmah is speaking in the realm of halachah. With פקד, the Torah is saying that the laws of Yom Kippur and Succos should be kept, regardless to how we celebrated the holidays prior to them.

We take this to a different realm, to the realm of chassidud, and show its Chasidic implication. If Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur passed without teshuah, without spiritual growth, one might think that he doesn't have any reason to be happy on Succos. The Torah says פקד, regardless of what happened until now, be happy on Succos.

elders, and *anshei ma'aseh* danced. They danced, clapped their hands, played music, and were happy in the Beis HaMikdash during Succos, but the rest of the nation, men and women, came to see and to listen."

The Ritv"א (*Bava Basra* 121.) explains that the average person wasn't permitted to perform stunts and dance, so the joy should remain holy and it shouldn't turn into הוללות, levity.

Similarly, the Sfas Emes explains that והיית שמח, and אך means limited (מיעוט). This is because we want the true joy on Yom Tov, and not frivolity.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* teaches that we read *Koheles* on Succos to remind us that joy isn't the product of the *hevel havalim*, the frivolities of this world. True *simchah* is attained when one is connected to Hashem with Torah and mitzvos.

People sing the song ושמחת בחגך והיית אך שמח, and they repeat the word אך many times. *Bederech tzachus*, Reb Yosef Chaim Zonnefeld *zt'l* said that this is based on the Chazal, אין מיעוט אחר מיעוט אלא לרבות, that whenever there are more than one מיעוט, limitations, expressed in the Torah, it means that we should increase rather than decrease. Therefore, we sing והיית שמח, and we repeat the word אך because we should increase our joy, and not decrease it at all.

Or, it can be explained this way: If you can't be 100% happy, but you can be 20% happy or 5% happy, do so. Be as happy as you can. It isn't all or nothing. As the Torah says והיית אך שמח, and אך is a מיעוט, implying to a small amount of joy that is also a good accomplishment.

Another approach is that אך is a limitation, and it refers to when things aren't good for him. The Torah says והיית אך שמח, even then you shall be happy.

Segulos

Chazal praise some *amora'im* and *tana'im* for not walking four *amos* without Torah or without wearing *tefillin*.

Regarding most people of our generation, it can be said, "They don't walk four *amos* without their cell phone." Who doesn't have a cell phone, and who doesn't have it on them every moment of the day?

Believe it or not, there are still some people among us who don't own a cell phone. Reb Baruch Buxbaum of Boro Park is such a person. He doesn't have a cell phone, for he found it greatly disturbs his Torah and *tefillah*. But, he admits, not owning a cell phone in this generation isn't a simple matter, because it is so hard for others to contact him.

His business partner is Reb Sender from Williamsburg. Reb Baruch calls Reb Sender every morning from his landline house phone, and they make up where and when they will meet that day.

One morning, Reb Baruch called his business partner, Reb Sender: "I will be on 42nd St. in Manhattan in an hour... Can we meet there?"

"Certainly, but tell me, did you finally buy a cell phone? I see a cell phone number on the screen..."

Reb Baruch replied, "I didn't buy a new cell phone, and, as you know, I'm not planning to do so. I borrowed the phone from Reb Mendel Rosenberg, the head of the Boro Park *chevrah kadishah*..."

An hour later, Reb Sender was standing on the corner of 42nd St., as they made up, but Reb Baruch wasn't there. (He couldn't call him, since Reb Baruch didn't own a phone.) Reb Sender thought that maybe he misunderstood where to meet him, so he walked around the street a little bit, hoping to find him.

Suddenly, he heard someone calling, "Rabbi! Rabbi!" Reb Sender turned and saw an older woman, hurrying towards him. She told him that she needs advice. She said, "My husband is Jewish - I'm not, and now he is in the hospital. The doctors don't expect him to live. Can I ask the doctors to pull the plug and let him die?"

Reb Sender told her that it was forbidden to kill even an old, dying person.

She said, "My husband used to be religious, but he became irreligious, and he married me. He committed many white-collar crimes and was in prison for several years. It was in prison that he began to do *teshuvah*. He had permission to go home for the holidays, but he told me that in prison there was a *succah* and the four *minim*. He wouldn't have them at home, so he preferred to remain in prison. A few weeks ago, he suffered a stroke, and he's been in the hospital since then. The doctors say he won't make it.

"What should I do when he dies? Can I call a priest and bury him in a Christian cemetery?"

"Don't do that," Reb Sender told her. "He should be buried as a Jew."

"But I don't know who to contact. I don't know how to arrange these matters."

Reb Sender remembered that he had the phone number of Reb Mendel Rosenberg, the head of the Boro Park *chevrah kadishah*, since Reb Baruch had just called him from that number. He gave her the number and told her that when her husband is near his death, she should contact Rabbi Rosenberg.

She was very grateful for all the advice she received.

Soon afterward, Reb Sender found Reb Baruch waiting at a different corner. (They had indeed misunderstood each other.)

This story shows *hashgachah pratis*. If Reb Sender hadn't been waiting for Reb Baruch, he wouldn't meet this woman, and she wouldn't know how to deal with her dying husband. She may have even pulled the plug and killed him before his time, and then have him buried in a Christian cemetery. Also, by Hashem's providence, Reb Sender had the *chevrah kadishah's* phone number on him that day, because Reb Baruch called him from that phone. All these steps were arranged by Hashem, to help this *baal teshuvah*.

We can see from this story how precious *teshuvah* is to Hashem. Many miracles and *hashgachah pratis* happened, so this *baal teshuvah* could live out his life and then have a proper Jewish burial.

Perhaps it was also in the merit of *Succah* and the four *minim* that this Yid kept, at the end of his life, with *mesirus nefesh*. He refused a leave from prison to keep the mitzvos of *Succah* and the four *minim*.

There's a *tefillah* to say when going into the *Succah*: זכנו לשבת ולחסות בסתר צל כנפך בעת פטירתך, "May I merit to dwell and be protected under the shade of Your wings when the time comes for me to depart this world." Thus, the mitzvah of *Succah* may have helped that Yid be buried according to halachah so that he could reside in heaven under the *Shechinah's* wings.

A *tefillah* said for the four *minim* is: בזכות מצוות ארבעה מינים אלו תאריך אפך שנוכה לשוב אליך, "In the merit of the four *minim*, hold off Your anger until I merit to repent before You." This mitzvah may have helped him die at his right time and complete his *teshuvah* (which wouldn't have happened if she would have allowed the doctors to pull the plug).

We've seen a couple of *segulos* for the mitzvos of *succos*, and there are countless more.

Emunah

One of the segulos of Succah is Emunah. The Chidushei HaRim taught that when one sits in the *Succah*, he can merit attaining clear *Emunah*. Because it states, ... בסוכות תשבו שבועת ימים... למען ידעו, "Live in succos for seven days... so you will *know*..." And the knowledge is knowledge and Emunah in Hashem.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that Succos follows Yom Kippur because one needs to be cleansed from sins to truly grasp *Emunah*. As it states, עונותיכם מברילים ביניכם לבין, אלקיכם, "Your sins separate between you and Hashem" (*Yeshayah* 59:2).

Therefore, when we sit in the *Succah*, it's an ideal time לדעת, to think about *Emunah*, and to strengthen our awareness of Hashem.

The Yerushalmi (*Succah* 2:3) teaches that *lechatchilah*, one should be able to see the stars through the *s'chach*. One reason for this is so one can look up to heaven and train himself to trust in Hashem.

Before the Satmar Rebbe's *zt'l chasunah*, his father told him, "Why is the chuppah outside, under the sky? To remind the *chassan* and *kallah* to turn to Heaven for all their needs. They shouldn't rely on their parents or in-laws or anyone else - only Hashem. This is also the reason a *succah* is outdoors. Seeing the sky through the *schach* helps us remember to trust in Hashem."

The Gemara (*Avodah Zarah* 3) tells that in the future, the nations of the world will beg Hashem to give them another chance to keep the mitzvos so they can earn Olam HaBa. Hashem will tell them to sit in *succos*. They all build their succos on their roofs. But then Hashem will put out a very hot sun, and all the nations of the world will kick their succos and leave. Thereby, they will lose their portion in Olam HaBa.

We can explain this Chazal as follows:

The hot sun represents the hardships of life, and the *Succah* represents the belief in

Hashem. The non-Jews are prepared to have *emunah* in Hashem when everything is good for them. But when the hot sun shines brightly, which represents hard times, they kick the *Succah*, which means they no longer believe in Hashem. The Jewish nation, in contrast, believes and trust in Hashem under all circumstances.

Luxuries

The mitzvah of dwelling in a *succah* teaches us a lesson: We are commanded to leave our comfortable homes and spend a week in the *Succah*. One purpose of this mitzvah is to remind us that luxuries shouldn't be our goal in life. We can live with less, just fine. Try it for a week, and you will know.

On the *pasuk*, ויה' ברך את אברהם בכל, "Hashem blessed Avraham with everything." The Midrash states that בכל, "everything" is the mitzvah *succah*.

What is the Midrash teaching us? Why is *Succah* considered having everything?

The Chozeh of Lublin (*Avnei Zikoron* 662) *zt'l* explains, *Succah* is our reminder that luxuries aren't as essential as people make it out to be. When we know that, we have הכל, everything because even if he has little, he feels he has everything he needs.

Some people live in beautiful mansions, but are they happier than those who live in small houses? Not necessarily. More important than the size and decoration of the home is the vibes of peace and love that permeate the home.

Some people go on long, exotic vacations, but are they leading a better life than those who never go on vacation because they can't afford it? Not necessarily. More important is the attitude of being satisfied with your portion. If you aren't happy with your portion, you can travel the entire world and still be miserable.

This is the lesson of Succah, to know that external matters aren't needed for joy. When you know that, you have הכל, literally everything.

It states (*Bereishis* 25:8), ויגוע וימת אברהם בשיבה, טובה זקן ושבע, "Avraham died at a ripe old age; old and satisfied..."

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya explains:

"This *pasuk* is teaching us Avraham's good *middos*. He left this world feeling totally fulfilled. He didn't need more. As it is also stated about Dovid HaMelech (*Tehillim* 21:3), תאות לבו נתתה לו. Dovid received all his desires, and he didn't want more. This is unlike most people, about whom it's written (*Koheles* 5:9), אודהב כסף לא ישבע כסף, 'one who desires money will never have enough money.' And Chazal (*Koheles Rabba* 1:32) say, 'A person doesn't leave the world with half of his yearnings fulfilled. If he has a hundred, he wants two hundred. If he has two hundred, he wants four hundred.'¹⁵ But Avraham was זקן ושבע ימים; he didn't lack anything. He was satisfied and happy with what he had. Because, as we explained, Hashem blessed Avraham with בכל, the awareness that luxuries aren't essential for attaining happiness. It may be less than what others have, but it is enough for you.

Rebbe Yonoson Eibshitz (6:1) teaches that living with less is ideal. Those who don't have luxuries lead better lives. He writes, "The one who fears Hashem won't only have *succos* during the holiday of Succos. Throughout the entire year, he will remember that life is temporary, and he's living here as a guest. One should sleep in the shade of the *Succah* and leave his permanent home... He should look up at the stars and place his trust in Hashem. He shouldn't build expensive houses decorated with gems and diamonds, just for pleasure. This will lead him to desire more money and other sins, even to steal so he can fill his fortress and be proud, and he will forget Hashem who created him. Remember Yundav ben Rechev's precious, ethical will (*Yirmiyahu* 35:6), for he told his children that they shouldn't live in houses. They should only live in tents, which are temporary dwelling places, one day living here, and another day living somewhere else. This is what our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov did, for they dwelt in tents. This gave them long life because they weren't afraid a fire might burn their castle down, and they weren't fearful of enemies, hunger, or plague, since they could quickly undo the strings of their tents and travel to a different country."¹⁶

15. This Midrash is difficult to understand, because it states that a person doesn't even get half his desires, and then it states that if he has a hundred, he desires two hundred. So it seems he did get half of his desires.

We can answer that when someone has a hundred, he thinks: "I'm not happy with my lot, but if I will have two hundred, then I will be satisfied." He wants two things. He wants another hundred and he wants happiness. This means he desires more than double the amount that he has now.

16. The Yaaras Dvash teaches that avoiding luxuries and living with the minimum is *mesugal* for *arichus yammim*, long life. He proves this from the forefathers who lived in tents, and therefore they lived long, too.

The Yaaras Dvash also proves this from the Mishkan, which was made from יריעות, skins and woven cloth, and the Mishkan lasted for 480 years (counting the years the Mishkan stood in the desert and later in Eretz Yisrael, until its last location in Nov and Givon). Whereas the Beis HaMikdash that Shlomo HaMelech built from stone and gold only stood 410 years. The second Beis HaMikdash also only stood for 420 years, and during those 420 years, there was the Greek conquest, and the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed several times. So we see that where there are fewer luxuries, things last longer.

"When Bilaam saw the Jewish nation dwelling in tents he said, *מה טובו אהליך יעקב*, 'How good are your tents...' He was referring to their tents, specifically, because we are people who dwell in tents... and then it will be good for us in this world and the next world. But when we build houses made from lime and stone, the stones will shout out all the sins: theft, pride, temptation, desires... This is the meaning of the *pasuk* *בסוכות תשבו שבועת ימים*, (*Vayikra* 23:42)." Dwell in *succos* and learn the message *succos* teaches us.

The Kli Yakar (*Vayikra* 23:42) writes, "After people harvest the crops, they want to go home and live in a permanent dwelling. The Torah feared this might lead to arrogance... Therefore the Torah says *בל האזרה*, whoever has plans to live in this world as a permanent resident, *ישבו בסוכות*, he must leave his permanent home and dwell in a temporary *succah*, so he will not forget his humility. He mustn't forget that he is like a stranger in this world; he isn't a permanent resident here. And then, he won't trust in the walls of his home; he will only trust in Hashem..."¹⁷

On the *pasuk*, *בסוכות הושבתי*, למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי (*Vayikra* 23:43), the Rashbam writes, "According to the *pasuk*'s simple translation, "*succos*" stated in this *pasuk* means literal huts, and this is the reason for this mitzvah: [The Torah obligates us] to make *succos* at a time when you harvest your crops...so you shall remember that for forty years the Jewish nation lived in huts in the desert. Think about this, so you will thank Hashem for giving you property and houses filled with goodness. Don't say you got all of this by your own might... This is the reason Hakadosh Baruch Hu established the holiday of Succos at a time when the crops and the vineyard are being harvested,

so you shouldn't become proud with all the goodness you have, and you shouldn't think that you earned all of that on your own."

Retaining Succos after Succos

The *piyut* of Shmini Atzeres (*מערבית לשמ"ע*) states, *פונים מסוכה לביתם לישב צקון לחשם הקשב*, "For those who leave the succah [on Shmini Atzeres] to go to their homes, listen to their prayers." The Shiniver Rav *zt'l* asks: Wouldn't it make more sense if it would say, "Listen to the *tefillos* of those who dwelled in a *succah*?" Why do we pray that Hashem should listen to the *tefillos* of those who *leave* the *Succah*?

The Shiniver Rav *zt'l* answers that we should remain with the lessons and the kedushah of the Succah throughout the year. The prayer is implying that Hashem should listen to the prayers of those who take the atmosphere of Succah with them, and they bring it with them into their homes.

The Satmar Rebbe (*Divrei Yoel*) *zt'l* taught, *bederech remez* (*Bereishis* 33:17) *ויעקב נסע סוכתה*, when Yaakov sat in succos, *ויבן לו בית*, Yaakov made the atmosphere of succos as something permanent like a home, so it will remain with him even after the Yom Tov passes.

Similarly, it states, *בסוכות תשבו*, "You shall dwell in *succos*..." The Satmer Rebbe explains that a *הקש*, connection between two words and concepts, is expressed here. Because *תשבו* means one's home, where one dwells in a permanent manner. *בסוכות* is the temporary dwelling of a succah. The Torah puts them together so we should compare them and make the Succah like a home. As the Gemara on this *pasuk* states, *תשבו כעין תדורו*, live and set up your Succah in a comfortable way, as you live in your own home.

17. The *Sfas Emes* (5645) writes, "The mitzvah of *succah* is the mitzvah of *bitachon*. As Chazal say, *צא מדירה*, 'Go out of your permanent house...' and stop trusting in your assets and begin trusting in Hashem alone... Succos is *זמן שמחתנו*, 'the time of our happiness,' because no one is happier than the one who trusts in Hashem..."

There is a rule אין הקש למהצה, when the Torah compares two concepts, we should compare them in both directions. Based on this principle, the Satmer Rebbe said that just as we want the Succah to be similar to the home, we should also want that the home should be similar to the Succah. Thus, במכות השבו tells us that even when we return home, we should take with us the atmosphere of the Succah.

The Gemara (*Avodah Zorah* 3) calls *Succah*, מצוה קלה, a light and easy mitzvah. The expression קלה is also stated in (*Gittin* 56), בריה קלה (in reference to the small creature that entered Titus HaRasha's head, and afflicted him, until he died). The Gemara explains that the insect is called קלה, because it only eats; it doesn't have a bowel movement.

We derive from this that מקלה means to take in and not to give out. Reb Avraham Yehoshua Friend of Nasod zy'a hy'd explained that *Succah* is called מצוה קלה because one should only take in the light and the holiness of the *Succah*, and it should never depart from him.

In the Yom Tov *tefillah* we say, והנחילנו ה' מועדי קדשך, אלקינו... "Hashem gave us as an inheritance...the holy *Yomim Tovim*..." An inheritance, the Sfas Emes noted, is something that remains forever. It isn't something that leaves after a few days pass. So too, the holidays should always stay with us, even after the holiday is over.

A chassid of the Beis Aharon of Karlin zt'l returned home after spending a *yom tov* together with his Rebbe. People asked him, ווי אזוי איז אריבער די יום טוב, "How did the *Yom Tov* pass?"

The chassid replied, די יום טוב איז נישט אריבער. די, "The *Yom Tov* didn't pass by. It entered." The *Yom Tov* became part of him. He will now bring the spirituality that he acquired into his daily life.

Once, after *Yom Tov*, Rebbe Dovid of Tolne zy'a asked one of his chassidim how

he will return home. The chassid replied, "The same goy that drove me here will take me back."

The Rebbe wondered, "You're going back with the same goy?" In other words, we shouldn't go back after *Yom Tov* with the same goy in us as before. We should change and become someone new.

The Dubno Magid related the following *mashal* to explain why people cry by *Neilah*, and likewise, it is associated with our subject:

A king had an only daughter who he loved dearly. When it was time to marry her off, a matchmaker told the king, "I have a good *shidduch* for your daughter. He lives distant from here, but he is the son of a great king, he has a lot of money, and has all good qualities..."

The king agreed to the match, and his daughter was married. Shortly after the royal wedding, the groom told his wife that he wants to live in his home country. She didn't want to go there, so distant from her father. But when she saw how important it was for her husband, she agreed to go there.

In that foreign land, she discovered that the shadchan lied to them. Her husband wasn't the son of a king, and he wasn't wealthy; it was all a lie. Furthermore, her husband was cruel to her. He didn't act like a royal prince, trained with good *middos*. He acted like the lowest of people.

She was too distant from her father to complain, so she suffered silently.

One day, the king sent them a letter: "I miss you so much. Since you are not coming to visit me, I decided I will take the long trip to visit you." The king wrote them the date he expects to arrive.

The husband realized that he needs to make some quick changes. He hired many workers to clean and decorate his home so that it would appear like the house of a prince. He also began behaving nicely to his

wife. He didn't want the king to see that there was a problem between them.

The king was with them for some time, and he was very pleased with what he saw. He believed he chose the correct partner for his daughter.

The king was about to leave, and the princess realized that this was her last opportunity to tell her father what was really happening. She called her father to a private room, and amidst tears, she said to him that her husband isn't the son of a king and that he acts cruelly to her.

The *nimshal* is, when Rosh Chodesh Elul arrives, *keviyachol*, Hashem announces that He is going to visit us during the days of judgment. Throughout Elul, people are busy cleaning up their deeds, so the King shouldn't see that something is amiss. The body makes peace with the *neshamah*, to conceal from the King what is happening throughout the year.

But then we daven *Ne'ilah*, and the King is about to leave, the Yid cries to Hashem and says, "I suffer so much from my body. When You came to visit, the body acted nicely with me, because it didn't want You to know what is really happening. But now that You're about to leave, I must tell You that the body is cruel to me, and it draws me to sin. I don't want to be with the body anymore."

This is the end of the Dubno Magid's *mashal* and *nimshal*, but some add the following:

The king thought of a solution:

"I will live here together with you. In my presence, your husband will act properly with you at all times."

The *nimshal* is, by *Ne'ilah*, when we cry that we don't want to be with the body, throughout the year, Hashem replies: "Build a *succah*, and I will live together with you. In my presence, the body won't disturb you.

And even after Yom Tov, you can take the atmosphere of the Yom Tov with you, and I will remain with you. And in My presence, the body will not disturb you from serving Hashem."

Hoshanah Rabbah

As its name portrays, on Hoshanah Rabba Hashem bestows salvations to the Jewish nation. We should look forward to this day and fill the day with many heartfelt tefillos because we can earn so much on this day.

After one's demise, the court in heaven asks him, *צפית לישועה*, "Did you wait for the salvation?" (Shabbos 31.). The Imrei Emes of Gur *zt'l* explains that he is asked *צפית לישועה*, did you wait and look forward to Hoshana Rabba, the day Hashem bestows salvations?

If you would know that seven days from now, for example, someone will give you a fortune of money, wouldn't you look forward to that day? And if in seven days you or your child will get the shidduch you were waiting for, or the refuah you needed, or the success you hoped for, etc., wouldn't you look forward and count the days for that day? That is how we should look forward to Hoshanah Rabba, the day Hashem gives His salvation to His nation.

Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Yom Kippur, and many days of Succos passed, and we prayed on these holy days for a good year. We feel that was sufficient, and that we don't need to pray on Hoshana Rabba to earn a good year. But we didn't finish the process yet; we are still in the midst of the procedure. Hoshanah Rabba is a critical day to earn a good year.

The Dubno Magid *zt'l* explained this concept with a *mashal*:

Two neighboring countries fought over a large city that shared a border between them because each country claimed that that city was theirs. For decades, perhaps centuries,

many wars were fought over this city. It seemed that there was no end to the debate.

Then, one day, both countries decided that they would make a contest, and whoever wins it would be the rulers of that city. Two strong people - one from each country - will wrestle near a deep pit. The one who throws his opponent into the pit wins the battle, and the city would forever belong to his country.

People of both countries stood on the border to watch this contest. The people of one country cheered as their player overpowered his opponent as he gradually dragged him towards the pit. At the last moment, everything turned around. The losing wrestler suddenly became strong. He picked up his opponent, even as he was lying on his back, and he flipped his opponent over his head and dropped him into the pit.

At the victory party, the king said to the warrior, "At first you were losing the fight. We all were so worried. And then everything turned around at the last moment. How did that happen?"

The warrior explained, "I let him drag me all the way to the pit because I knew that he was getting weaker in the process, while I was reserving my strength for the most crucial moment when I tossed him into the pit."

The *nimshal* is, sometimes, the *yetzer hara* allows us to win a battle or two, and then

when an essential and important battle comes around, we are weak, and we don't put in so much effort. We assume that since we won so many wars until now, it doesn't matter if we fail a round. We don't realize that everything depends on this final battle.

The lesson is related to Hoshanah Rabbah. Many people feel they invested enough energy for the new year (with their tefillos from Elul on), and they don't need to invest anymore. But now its Hoshanah Rabba, the salvation we await is dependent on this day. We can't let this day pass idly. We can't lose this final battle for the success of the new year depends on it.¹⁸

The Divrei Yoel of Satmar *zt'l* would daven for a very long time on Hashanah Rabbah. Once, Hashanah Rabbah was on a Friday, and it was almost Shabbos when they were still in the middle of the *tefillos*. The *gaba'im* of his beis medrash announced that the women should go home to light Shabbos candles.

At that time the Satmar Rebbe told the following *mashal*:

There was once a city that sinned against the king and the court ruled they would all be killed. The people of the city sought counsel, and they were told that on a particular day, the king would pass through a specific garden. They can go there on that day and plead before the king and beg him for forgiveness.

18. Hoshanah Rabbah is the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbe Dovid Moshe of Tchoortkov *zt'l*. He would say that Hoshanah Rabbah is named after the '*amen yehei shmei rabbah*.' Chazal say, "Whoever answers *amen yehei shmei rabba* with all his might, his [negative] judgment is ripped up." Reb Yochanan says, "Even if one has the sin of *avodah zorah*, he is forgiven" (*Shabbos* 119). Hashanah Rabba therefore means that our salvations come because we say *amen yehei shmei rabba*.

During World War II, the Yidden of Yerushalayim made a *kabalah* to improve their *amen yehei shmei rabba*. They began saying it with all their might and with *kavanah* to mitigate the destruction. When the Nazi general, Romel *ym's*, was in Mitzrayim with the intention to come to Eretz Yisrael, Rebbe Shlomke Zvhiler *zt'l* said to his *gabai*, "I sense that the *resha'im* won't succeed to conquer Eretz Yisrael because the Yidden improved on how they say *amen yehei shmei rabba*."

The elders of the city went to that garden on the designated date, and they waited for the moment when the king will come, but one hour passed, and then another, and they didn't see the king. The day was almost over. One of the wise men said, "It is the custom of the kings of this country to pass through this garden on this day. Therefore, the king is certainly here. It must be that he is wearing regular clothes and that's why we don't recognize him. But he is definitely here. Let's call out to the king, and request that he save us. He will hear us, and he will forgive."

The Satmar Rebbe said, "Soon, the day will be over. We think the King isn't here, but we know that Hoshana Rabba Hakadosh Baruch Hu is here, waiting for our prayers. Let's shout together, *הושע נא והושיע נא אבינו אתה*!"

The Satmar Rebbe concluded, "Last year, there were people among us who aren't alive anymore. It's possible that if they prayed

some more on Hoshanah Rabbah, they would have annulled the decree." Everyone present cried when he said these words, and they prayed that Hashem should inscribe them for a good year.¹⁹

Simchas Torah

The Midrash says that after seven days of Succos, Hakadosh Baruch asks us to wait one more day. *קשה עלי פרידתכם*, "because it is hard for Me when you leave." The Imrei Emes adds that the Jewish nation should also feel reluctant to leave the *yomim tovim*.

Some opinions say that Shemini Atzeres isn't called a *הג* (see *Shulchan Aruch* 668). The Rema MiPano explains that *הג* means a circle. All holidays are like a circle, going around a primary point. The primary point, he says, is Shemini Atzeres. Therefore, Shmini Atzeres isn't a *הג*.²⁰

19. The last year of his life, the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* said, "I passed the judgment of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. But I didn't manage to pass the judgment of Hoshanah Rabbah."

The early *sefarim* don't reveal that Hoshanah Rabba is a day of judgment. For example, the Gemara calls Hoshanah Rabbah "Yom Aravah" the day when we take the *aravah*. There is no mention that it is a day of judgment. Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l* explained that in the early generations, the fear of judgment was so great, if people would know that Hoshanah Rabbah is also a day of judgment, it would take away from their *simchas yom tov* and they wouldn't be able to keep the mitzvah of *ושמחת בחגך*. In later generations the fear isn't as great, and therefore, the *sefarim* reveal to us that there's a judgment on Hoshanah Rabbah too, so we can daven and do *teshuvah* and give *tzedakah*, and annul all harsh decrees.

Reb Shlomo Zalman adds that there is one indication to the judgment of Hoshanah Rabbah in the Gemara and early *sefarim*. Because Chazal say, *בהג נידונים על המים*, "Succos we are judged for rain [how much it will rain this year]," and the Levush writes, "Therefore, people light more candles in the beis medresh on Hoshanah Rabbah, similar to Yom Kippur, because it is the final day for the judgment for rain." Reb Shlomo Zalman explained that in the past, rain meant life. If it didn't rain, people would die. Today things have changed, because counties have reservoirs of water, and if needed, water can be transported. [The Chazon Ish said that we don't fast for rain anymore, because lack of rain isn't a tragedy like it used to be.] Therefore, years ago, it was sufficient for people to know that they were being judged for rain, and this would arouse them to *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah*. Today, people wouldn't be so inspired to improve their ways for rain alone. This is the reason why in later generations, more aspects of the great judgment were revealed to us.

20. The Sfas Emes says the *s'chach* of the *succah* resembles a wedding chuppah. After the chuppah, comes *yichud*, an even greater unity. That is Shemini Atzeres.

It states, *עין והדר לבושה ותשחק ליום אחרון*. The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* explains: *עין* is Rosh Hashanah, because Hashem judges us with His might. *והדר* is Succos, the day we take a *הדר*. *פרי עץ הדר*. And then is Shemini Atzeres, as it states *ותשחק ליום אחרון*. The final day is a day of happiness.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 7) discusses גדול יום הגשמים "How great is the day it rains!" The Avodas Yisrael *zt'l* explains that the Gemara is referring to the greatness of Shemini Atzeres, the day we daven for rain (גשם).²¹

The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* teaches us that Shemini Atzeres is greater than Yom Kippur because on Yom Kippur we become close to and connect with Hashem through afflicting ourselves (by fasting, not washing, etc.) and on Shemini Atzeres we draw close to Hashem through joy, which is a much more intense connection. As it states (*Shir HaShirim* 7:7) מה יפת מזה, "How beautiful it is when the love is with pleasure and joy."

The Chasam Sofer notes that there is no special mitzvah on Shemini Atzeres (unlike most yomim tovim that have a particular mitzvah, like shofar on Rosh Hashanah, fasting on Yom Kippur, Succah and lulav on Succos, matzah on Pesach etc.). "This is because the holiness of Shemini Atzeres comes from people's joy. They experience pleasure by connecting with Hashem..."²²

Shemini Atzeres is also a day for tefillah. The *Zohar* states, "On Hoshanah Rabba, their judgment was completed, and now [on Shemini Atzeres] their blessings begin. For, on the following day (*Shemini Atzeres*) the Jewish nation celebrate with the King and receive blessings for the entire year. At that celebration, only the Jewish nation are present, and when one sits with the king, in solitude, whatever he asks for will be given to him."

Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l* teaches: "Be extremely careful with the *tefillos* of Shemini

Atzeres to say them with immense *kavanah*, because in addition to being the day that completes the *tefillos* from Rosh Hashanah, and everything is dependent on this day, there is no better day and no greater *eis ratzon* than this day, when Hashem desires to hear our *tefillos*."

Shemini Atzeres, Simchas Torah, is also a day for receiving Hashem's bounty.

The Yesod Yosef writes, "The custom is to take out all the *sifrei Torah* from the *aron kodesh*... Because when a father loves his son, he opens up all his treasures for him and doesn't withhold anything. Similarly, Hashem bestows on us immense goodness..."

The Kotzker *zt'l* said that Shemini Atzeres is the *gzar din* (the decree) for *parnassah*. His son, Rebbe Dovid *zt'l*, used to daven *beyichidus* (by himself). On Shemini Atzeres, the Kotzker called for him, and he told him that on Shemini Atzeres it is vital to daven with a *minyan* because on this day it is decreed how much *parnassah* he will have this year. The hint is in the *pasuk* והיית אך שמח, which the Gemara says refers to Shemini Atzeres, and the final letters spell חתך, the name of the *malach* appointed over *parnassah*.

We read וזאת הברכה, the *brachos* Moshe gave Bnei Yisrael, and as we read them, we receive those *brachos* again. Rebbe Henech of Alexander *zt'l* said that this is why there isn't *birchas cohanim* Simchas Torah. We are receiving Moshe Rabbeinu's *brachos*, and we don't need anything more than that.

21. Reb Aharon Chernobler *zt'l* said that *benching* גשם on Shmini Atzeres is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

22. The *Chinuch* (324) writes that we don't take the four *minim* on Shemini Atzeres because the four *minim* are to remind us to direct our joy (of the gathering of the crops) to Hashem. Shemini Atzeres we don't need this reminder because, יום השמיני כולו לה', "The eighth day is solely for Hashem." The day was designated to be with Hashem, so we don't need any reminders to help us focus our hearts to Hashem.

The Ramban (*Emor*) explains, אינו צריך כי הוא ענמו הדר, "One doesn't have to take the four *minim* on this day, because there's no need, as the essence of Shemini Atzeres is הדר [as in הדר עין הדר]."

Dancing with the Torah

The Yesod v'Shoresh HaOvadah (ch.16) writes, "Whoever is careful to be happy with the Torah on this day it is guaranteed that his children and descendants will always be Torah scholars."

The Shlomei Chagigah (p.292:, printed year תק"נ) writes, "On Simchas Torah, fortunate are those who are happy with the Torah, for this will rectify his soul for the times that he disgraced the Torah. Additionally, there's a guarantee from early scholars that whoever is happy with the Torah on this day, he will have offspring who will always be studying the Torah. There was a rav who used to be very happy on Simchas Torah, and for three generations, his descendants were renowned scholars, one after the other. Everyone knew that it was because he was so happy with the Torah on Simchas Torah in a way that wasn't seen by other rabbanim and gedolei Yisrael. Despite his prestige and rabbinic position, he would jump and dance before the Torah and he roused others to do the same. He would tell them *שמחו בה' וגילו צדיקים*, 'Rejoice with Hashem and be happy, o' tzadikim...'"

The Shaar HaKavanos from Reb Chaim Vital zt'l states, "My teacher (the Arizal) went around the bimah before or after the sefer Torah and he danced and he sang with all his strength. On motzei yom tov [there is only one day yom tov in Eretz Yisrael] he went from beis medresh to beis medresh to dance with the Torah, and he did this for many hours."

Maaseh Rav states that the Vilna Gaon zt'l "would go before the sefer Torah very happily, with immense joy, his face was like a burning fire, and he would clap and dance with all his strength before the Torah."

People were amazed by the effort and strength the Satmer Rebbe zt'l danced, although he was a weak man. When they asked him about this, he replied, "Chazal (Succah 48.) say, *שמעוני עצרת רגל בפני עצמה היא*. He was saying that on Shemini Atzeres everyone gets another *רגל* to help him dance. (The literal

meaning of the Gemara is that it is that Shemini Atzeris is its own holiday, and it isn't part of Succos.)

Dancing with the Torah on Simchas Torah is also mesugal for children. The Yismach Yisrael zt'l learns this from Michel, Dovid HaMelech's wife, who was disgusted with Dovid when she saw him dancing with all his might before the aron (see Shmuel 2, 16:23). She was punished that she couldn't bear a child. We understand that if one is happy with the Torah, he will be rewarded with children.

There is someone from our chaburah who didn't have children, and on one simchas Torah he danced with all his might, not caring about his own honor. Nine months later, he bore his first child. The next Simchas Torah, he did the same, and he bore another child nine months later. A friend of his heard about this, and he wanted to do the same. So, he went to an old-age home, a place where no one knew him, and he wouldn't be embarrassed to dance with all his might. He danced and honored the Torah immensely, and nine months later, in Tamuz, he bore his first child.

The Chida wrote a prayer that some say before the hakafos. This prayer states that by dancing on Simchas Torah, we bring down all the iron walls that separate us from Hashem.

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt'l said in the name of his father, Rebbe Shalom of Belz zt'l, "I can't tell you what the hakafos are about. But this I can tell you: All tefillos that didn't go up the entire year go up by the hakafos."

The Beis Aharon zt'l (Pesach p.94.) writes, "Dancing on Yom Tov is like the highest form of tefillah... For it is with all one's limbs. Similar to the highest prayer, which is *בל עצמותי*, with all one's essence."

The Ateres Yehoshua (ד"ה במאמר) explains the Mishnah (Negaim 12:1) *בית עגול אינו מממא בנגעים*, that due to the *עגולים*, dances that we do on Simchas Torah, all plagues and all troubles go away.

The Rebbe Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l said in the name of his father, the Rebbe Reshab zt'l, "We must consider precious every moment from the 48 hours of Shemini

Atzeres and Simchas Torah, for in these days we can draw buckets of spiritual and material bounty. We get these by the dancing..."