

Succot

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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Succah – an Easy Mitzvah with Great Reward

The Haftarah of the first day of Succot talks about the war of Gog and Magog that will take place at the end of days. We are told how Hashem will fight against the nations who oppressed Am Yisrael and then subdue them in front of Yisrael's own eyes. It also says (Yechezkel 39: 12) that Hashem commanded us to bury Gog and his warriors in the ground. What is the connection between the subject of this Haftarah and the festival of Succot?

One can explain that Gog is a descendant of Yefet son of Noach, and Rashi writes (Bereishit 9:23) that in the merit of Yefet covering his father's nakedness when he became drunk, his children merited burial. The reward was measure for measure, for just as Yefet covered the nakedness of his father who was born circumcised, and as we know Hashem's Name of Shakai is hinted to in the word 'מילה', circumcision, so Hashem rewarded Gog and Magog, descendants of Yefet, that they will merit burial and their souls will be covered by the earth and not roll in the streets. One who delves deeper will see that the word 'סוכה', Succah, has the same root letters as 'כיסה', to cover. From here we can derive a kal v'chomer (a fortiori). If for the small mitzvah of covering his father, all Yefet's descendants merited burial, all the more so if a Jew fulfills the important and precious mitzvah of Succah, where his entire body enters the Succah (which alludes to the Seven Clouds of Glory with which Hashem surrounded Bnei Yisrael in the desert), and is enveloped in the Holiness of His Names, this will certainly serve as a merit for him to be showered with an abundance of immense radiance and he will grow in Torah and fear of G-d.

Chazal tell us (Avodah Zara 2b) that in the future when the nations of the world will see that Hashem gives reward to the righteous, they too will come and demand their reward. They will say to Hashem, "we built bridges and paved roads and we did all this to enable Bnei Yisrael to fulfill the mitzvot, therefore we too are worthy of receiving reward that is reserved for those who do Your will." In answer to this claim and demand of reward, Hashem will tell them, I have a small mitzvah called Succah. Go now and fulfill it and after that I will see if you are truly deserving of reward.

This requires explanation. Why did Hashem choose particularly this mitzvah of Succah and not challenge the nations with a more difficult mitzvah like observing Shabbat or laying Tefillin?

The answer could be that Succah only appears to be an easy mitzvah, but in fact, all the foundations of the Torah and the existence of the Jewish people are dependent on this mitzvah. With this mitzvah, we show our love for Hashem and complete trust in Him, to the extent that we leave our homes in exchange for a temporary dwelling. The nations will have to understand on their own that if in the merit of their ancestor Yefet covering Noach, his children merited burial, all the more so must a person glorify the mitzvah of Succah which is derived from the word 'כיסה', covering, and thereby merit great reward. The mitzvah of Succah should serve as a lesson that just as one's body

is placed within the Succah which symbolizes the Seven Clouds of Glory, so one must surround one's body with mitzvot and thereby draw upon oneself from the "infinite light".

Furthermore, Chazal say (ibid) that in the future when the nations will enter their Succot, Hashem will remove the sun from its sheath, and this will cause them to kick at the Succah and quickly return to their homes. The explanation is that the nations will assume that they are burning due to the heat of the sun that was removed from its sheath, but in fact the heat that they feel is from the heat of the mitzvah of Succah that they subsequently kicked. For every single mitzvah has its own individual warmth, a heat that is formed from the value that we attach to the mitzvah and from the love and self-sacrifice with which we fulfill it. Since the nations are unable to fathom this concept of fulfilling a mitzvah with love and self-sacrifice, they cannot tolerate the heat that is formed through fulfilling the mitzvah, and they will hurry to escape from the Succah and return to their homes thinking that this heat they experienced is from the exposed sun.

Hashem will test the nations of the world particularly with the mitzvah of Succah so that they should be aroused to remember the reward that was given to Yefet their ancestor for covering his father's nakedness. Even though Yefet did not put any effort into covering his father as did his brother Shem, nevertheless his descendants merited being covered by the earth and being brought to burial. Instead of Yefet's descendants learning a lesson from the deeds of their ancestor and being aroused by the mitzvah of Succah (the numerical value of the two middle letters of Succah is 26, while the two outside letters have a numerical value of 65) which contains messages of faith and trust in Hashem and a connection to the Names 'א-ה-ו-ה' and 'א-ד-נ-י', (which have a numerical value of 26 and 65 respectively) and instead of being inspired by the heat of the mitzvah and fulfilling it with great love, they will hurry to kick at it and will therefore lose their reward in the Next World.

According to this, we can understand why we read the Haftarah that talks about Gog and Magog on the Festival of Succot. We wish to remember that because of the small mitzvah of Yefet covering his father Noach, measure for measure his descendants merited being covered by the earth and being brought to burial. Although the mitzvah of Succah does not require much toil and effort, it contains many segulot since many matters of holiness are intertwined in it and it has the power of showering the "infinite light" on those who enter the Succah. Yet when Hashem will allow the nations to fulfill the mitzvah of Succah, they will quickly take leave of it and no longer desire to fulfill this mitzvah.

We should learn and be aware that from this 'small' mitzvah that Bnei Yisrael observe with joy on Succot, they merit a revelation of Hashem through His Holy Names, and He showers them with love just like a Merciful Father, by delivering them and blessing them with a good life and with peace.

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Hillulah of
Tzaddikim

15 – Rabbi Mordechai Leifer, the Admor
of Nadvorna

16 – Rabbi Moshe Zakut, author of
'Shorshei Hashemot'

17 – Rabbi Aharon Cohen Tanug'i,
Dayan in Tunis

18 – Rabbi Betzael Ranshbourg

19 – Rabbi Yosef Moshe Adass, of the
Rabbanim of the 'Porat Yosef' Yeshiva

20 – Rabbi Eliezer Papo, author of
'Pele Yo'etz'

21 – Rabbi Shimon Montilia, of the
Teveria Sages



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

A Prophetic Vision

One year, after Yom Kippur, a pitiful woman came to see me. She had lost her entire family and suffered from additional problems. However, materialistically speaking, she lacked nothing.

This woman had mystical leanings and dabbled in the hidden areas of the Torah, such as Kabbalah and other spiritual matters. But instead of channeling her spiritual tendencies to Torah and mitzvah observance, she was drawn to Buddhism. She had never had a proper Jewish education to set her on the right path.

This woman went to India to satisfy her religious yearnings. According to protocol, she removed her shoes before the Buddha, immersed herself, and requested to be accepted to that religion.

That night, she had a dream. A tzaddik appeared to her and said, "Look at me. Have you ever heard of Elijah the Prophet? I am he, standing before you. Leave this defiled place immediately and return to your home and your heritage!"

The woman awoke in a cold sweat. The very next day, she left India and returned home, physically and spiritually.

She told me that in the merit of her dream she returned to Judaism. This year, she merited observing her first Yom Kippur as a true Jew.

She continued showing interest in Judaism and asked how to do complete teshuvah.

Of course, I showed her the path to teshuvah. I realized that her dream was a message from Above. Hashem was, so to speak, telling her, "My daughter, you are making a fatal mistake. I am the only G-d. Why do you bow to stone? Come, pray to me. Learn about your rich heritage and return to your Heavenly Father."

This will be the goal of Eliyahu Hanavi in the future, as the verse says (Malachi 3:24), "And he will return [to Hashem] the hearts of fathers with [their] sons." The hearts of the wayward sons will be returned to their Heavenly Father. Hashem will draw closer to us and we will draw closer to Him.

The Haftarah

The Haftarah of the First Day of Succot: **"Behold, a day is coming"** (Zechariah 14)

The connection to the Chag: In the Haftarah, the Navi Zechariah prophesizes about the punishment of the nations of the world who do not go to celebrate Succot in Yerushalayim. This is connected to the Torah reading which talks about the Festival of Succot.

Guard Your Tongue

He Should Not Condemn Him

Even if a certain matter seems most likely something negative, it is correct to leave the matter unresolved in one's mind and consider it as a doubt, and one should not condemn the person.

When the matter seems most likely something positive, it is certainly a Torah prohibition to condemn the person. If he nevertheless denounces him, besides transgressing "with righteousness shall you judge your fellow", he has also transgressed the prohibition of speaking lashon hara.



In Our Father's Path

Do You See, Little One?

Our great leaders, Gaonim and holy ones throughout the generations, prepared themselves extensively for the mitzvah of sitting in the Succah so that they should be fitting to absorb its holiness and sublime influence.

Out of their great love for the holy Succah, the tzaddikim almost never left the Succah throughout the Festival. Rabbi Eliyahu David Rabinowitz Teumim zt"l, author of 'Aderet', stated that if one prays alone in one's Succah without a minyan this is not held against him, for sometimes a person longs so much for the Succah that he does not wish to leave it. He prefers to pray in his Succah by himself rather than leave it and go to the Beit Midrash to pray with a minyan. But, he added a condition that these words should not be printed in his sefer, so that one who is too lazy to go to the Beit Midrash should not use this as an excuse and pretend that he is doing something lofty.

The Gaon Rabbi Simcha Rabinowitz shlita, author of 'Piskei Teshuvot', related: One year we had a baby boy on the Holy day of Yom Kippur. The Brit took place eight days later on one of Chol Hamo'ed days of Succot. The actual Brit did not take place in a Succah but in a Beit Midrash, in accordance with the ruling that one should be careful not to make a Brit in a Succah out of fear that splinters and leaves from the s'chach might fall onto the baby and endanger him.

During the seudah which later took place in the Succah, my grandfather the 'Chelkat Yehoshua', the holy Rebbe of Biala zt"l, took the baby in his hands, held him lovingly, and in front of all the astonished participants turned to the baby and began speaking to him as if he could understand: "Do you see, little one? This is the s'chach, this is the Succah, and these are the decorations with which we beautify the Succah." He also showed him the Four Species that were lying on the table.

All the participants were taken aback by the sight of my grandfather talking to the baby until my esteemed father zt"l plucked up the courage and turned to my grandfather: "Father, he is a tiny baby, what does he understand of all these things?"

"You are correct, he does not understand," my grandfather replied, his face alight with a holy light, "but his neshama comprehends. I am speaking to his neshama, so that already now these things should be engraved in his heart."

The Rav shlita added that this incident reminded him of the opinion of Beit Shammai on the Mishna (Succah 2:8), where it says that Shammai Hazaken opened the roof and put s'chach over the bed of a day-old baby. And even though the Shulchan Aruch rules that a baby that needs its mother is exempt of the mitzvah of Succah, nevertheless this Mishna shows us that the mitzvah of sitting in the Succah is also relevant to a day-old baby.



Pearls of the Chag

Horses Are Decorated When They Parade in the Streets

The mitzvah of Succah as described by the Torah, "You shall make the festival of Succot for a seven-day period, when you gather in from your threshing floor and from your wine cellar" (Devarim 16:13), is a lesson in how a person must conduct himself after being blessed by Heaven with all this abundance and filling his store-houses for the year with the profusion of produce that grew during the summer.

Chazal tell us (Chagiga 9a) that poverty is fitting for Yisrael. The tzaddik of Parmishlan zya"l says that the custom of adorning horses is only when they are taken out into the streets, but inside the stables, they are not adorned with the red decoration, and this is how it should be. Conversely, "poverty is fitting for Yisrael" refers to an outward show only, so that other people should think that Yisrael is poor, whereas inside the homes there should be abundance and much good.

The mitzvah of Succah alludes to this idea. An external look shows s'chach that is made from threshing floor and wine cellar refuse (see Rosh Hashana 13a), and the walls too are constructed from simple boards. However, the inside of the Succah is adorned with the Seven Species with which Eretz Yisrael is praised and all kinds of other decorations. "It is the blessing of Hashem that enriches" (Mishlei 10:22), should only be on display within the home and not to the outside world, because then, G-d forbid, one's wealth will be to one's detriment.

Perfection in Faith, Repentance, Health and Redemption

Why are we so particular that the Eetrog should be of exclusive quality, more than with the other species?

Because the word 'אתרוג', Eetrog, is an acronym for 'אמונה, תשובה, רפואה, גאולה' (faith, repentance, healing and redemption), and with these four matters there must be perfection, just as we ask and say "I believe with complete faith", "return us to You in perfect repentance", "bring complete recovery for all our ailments", "redeem us with a complete redemption speedily for Your Name's sake".

Partial faith, repentance, healing and redemption is also a possibility, but we ask that we should merit the ultimate. ('Belahavat Eish')

Unity and Joy Symbolize the Essence of the Chag

What is the source of the extra joy that is present particularly on Succot?

Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky explains that Chazal say that the mitzvah of Arba Minim where we bind together four different species, symbolizes unity among Am Yisrael.

Furthermore, the foundation of unity exists particularly on Succot when we leave our permanent homes and thereby annul the significance of materialism and establish in our hearts the temporariness of This World. Unity is an automatic outcome of annulling materialistic desires, as Rabbeinu Yonah explains on the verse, "One who isolates himself seeks his own desire, he disdains all competence" (Mishlei 18:1). Whoever wishes to pursue his desires and cravings, becomes separated from all friends and colleagues, for loved ones and acquaintances will distance themselves from him, since there is division among different people's desires and middot.

In the absence of unity among Am Yisrael joy cannot exist. Therefore, the festival of Succot merited this extra joy due to the unity that symbolizes the foundation and essence of the Chag.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaadik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



The Mitzvah of Building the Succah

The Poskim rule that it is commendable to begin building the Succah immediately after Yom Kippur ends.

This seems puzzling. Why must we go and occupy ourselves particularly with the mitzvah of building the Succah as soon as this holy day leaves us? On this night we pray the evening prayer of Motzei Yom Kippur and also recite the prayer for the Sanctification of the Moon with Shem U'Malchut, which is compared to welcoming the Shechina. If so, why are these mitzvot not enough that we must go and engage ourselves in the building of the Succah?

One can answer according to the Gra who writes on the verse "Then His Tabernacle was in Yerushalayim, and His Dwelling in Tzion" (Tehillim 76:3), that the only mitzvah that one fulfills with one's entire body, including all limbs and sinews, is the mitzvah of Succah. Therefore, there is nothing more suitable than engaging in this mitzvah on Motzei Yom Kippur which is a pure and holy time, so that one's entire body and soul will absorb the spirit of the holy mitzvah. In this way he will begin the year, following this holy and awesome day, with the sanctity of this mitzvah.

When a person fulfills a mitzvah that is connected to eating or other physical pleasures, it may be hard to discern whether he is fulfilling the mitzvah for the sake of Heaven or not. Maybe his intention is more for physical pleasure than to give pleasure to Hashem. Therefore, particularly as this Holy Day leaves us, when we sanctified our body through abstaining from eating and drinking and in this way rectified all that went in and came out of his mouth throughout the year, we immediately go and concern ourselves with the mitzvah of Succah in which one's entire body participates with the absence of any physical pleasure. One's sole intention is to cause pleasure to the Creator. Likewise, this mitzvah of building the Succah is done with such immense joy since a person waits in anticipation to welcome the Holy Ushpizin who will come and spread the shelter of their peace over our Succah, and we also look forward to Hashem sheltering us in the shade of His faith.

Since Succah is a mitzvah that we fulfill only for the sake of Heaven while sanctifying and purifying one's entire body with all its limbs and sinews, Hashem combines a person's good intentions to all his deeds that will follow, that they too should be fulfilled only for Hashem's sake and G-d forbid, not out of a desire of personal pleasure. The mitzvah of Succah has the power to shower an abundance of holiness and purity on man, that all his deeds from now on and throughout the year should also be carried out in holiness and purity, with the intention of giving spiritual pleasure to the Creator.

This is why the mitzvah of building the Succah is given such great importance, since it is done with all one's 248 limbs and 365 sinews, with one's entire body being consecrated for Hashem.

With a prayer that just as now we subdued the Yetzer Hara, so may we be successful in subduing him throughout the year, strengthening ourselves in Torah and mitzvot and fulfilling them with untainted intentions for the sake of Heaven, and "One who wishes to purify himself is blessed with Heavenly assistance".



TIMELY MESSAGE

Constructing the Succah and decorating it was a special time of the year for the Rosh Yeshiva, Hagon Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Mann Shach zt"l. Much has been written and told about those who assisted with building Maran's Succah, who merited deliverance after receiving a blessing from Maran zt"l, which was his way of expressing his deep appreciation to all those who assisted in the preparations.

Maran was unique in his meticulousness not to benefit from the service of others and despite his old age, he would trouble himself to search for a long time for the Rambam or the Rashba on Masechet Succah, rather than asking for help from the smallest of his talmidim. It seemed that he actually recoiled from bothering people and using their services. An exception to this was when it came to building his Succah, for the simple reason that this effort was beyond his limited strength. But even then, he wished to repay them with his appreciation and sincere thanks. The 'payment', in the form of salvation for those who were delivered through him, was generous and substantial. Those who turned to him experienced salvation, sooner or later.

One of his close talmidim who followed the matter closely, relates: Most of the bachurim became engaged within that year. Very few returned to Maran the Rosh Yeshiva the next Erev Succot. We are talking about hundreds of Jewish sons and daughters every year. This is how the 'payment' turned into a goal in and of itself. The assistance that was Maran's original request, became something sought

after by all those who wished to find their marriage partner or be blessed with children. They asked to help so as to merit salvation, to give so as to be blessed by Maran, until everyone knew: Whoever had come of age and had not yet found his zivug, was sent to help with putting up Maran's succah.

The tradition of assisting with building Maran's Succah had its roots in his original home in Yerushalayim. It seems that it was at the initiative of his Rabbanit a"h, who took care of the matter and asked that bachurim from the Chevron Yeshiva come and help with building the Succah.

"And how will I repay them?" Maran asked his wife the Rabbanit a"h, once the Succah was erected, with an apparent look of satisfaction and appreciation. The Rabbanit replied that there were several older bachurim among the volunteers who had come of age yet had not found their destined partner. "You can bless them", suggested the Rabbanit.

Maran was pleased with the idea. It is possible that he himself was not aware of his power and did not know to what extent his blessings were accepted on High, but the fact is that those he blessed became engaged that year. In fact, Maran himself ascribed the realization to the honor of the Rabbanit. Throughout his life, he credited the fulfillment of his blessings to the Rabbanit a"h.

Motzei Yom Kippur was the time when they immediately began building the Succah, not pushing it off for any later. This was Maran's wish. That same night they finished erecting the Succah, and the next day the regular volunteers would come and hang the decorations. Already then, the next morning, Maran would ask that the tablecloth be put on the table. So on the eleventh of Tishrei, the table already looked festive, as if it was Erev Yom Tov, complete with the challah cover that waited for the moment it would cover the fresh challot.

Once the Succah was ready, Maran would go to get an impression. This was a rare opportune time. With his face wreathed in a special joy and his entire being expressing delight, he would survey the walls. He was particular that the s'chach should be very thick. No decorations were hung from the s'chach, neither near nor far, big or small. Their place was on the walls alone. Then Maran would return to his room full of joy and bless the bachurim who had helped build the Succah and were now waiting in his room. It was a rare occasion, one of those extraordinary moments of chessed in their revelation. Often Maran even drank a 'l'chaim' with the young builders. The type of blessing and also the way he addressed them, differed for each boy. To some, he gave blessings that they did not ask for and were not even aware that they required this salvation.

Sometimes Maran did not have enough strength and asked to postpone the blessings for later. If the helpers could not return later, they would write their names and requests on a paper which they handed to a family member who later gave it to Maran. Then Maran would take the list of names in his hand and recite several chapters of Tehillim with intense concentration. Maran could often be seen on Motzei Yom Tov Rishon saying Tehillim.

With the approach of the Chag, after Maran lit the Yom Tov candles or after Kiddush, he sat and prayed for the salvation of all those names that were written on the list.

Maran was particular that all the decorations that were brought to him should be hung in the Succah. It was not an easy feat, but Maran found the time to invest thought so as to satisfy everyone. He himself attached importance to the place where the decorations were hung, and 'difficult problems' were hung according to his instructions right above his place or his table.