

# Darkei HaChizuk

ארבעה צריכים חיזוק (ברכות לב:) - שיתחזק אדם בהם תמיד בכל כחו (רש"י)

A Sichah from Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita* . **Sukkos 5783**

505

## B'Tzeila D'Miheiminusa

### Collected Sichos about the Importance and Sanctity of Mitzvas Sukkah

#### Feel the Kedushah

I remember when we came to Eretz Yisrael, my father *zt"l* told us that he feels like he's sitting in a sukkah, because you feel *kedushah* in a sukkah, you're surrounded by *kedushah* — you're sitting *b'tzeila d'miheiminusa*, in the shadow of *emunah*, as the Zohar says. And in Eretz Yisrael, you can feel the *kedushah* too, *kedushas haAretz*.

It's well known that the Gra explains the *pasuk* "And His Sukkah was in Shalem and His dwelling place was in Tziyon" as follows: There are two mitzvos that one fulfills "*b'Shalem*" — with his entire body: Sukkah and his dwelling place in Tziyon, i.e., the mitzvah of sukkah and of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*. And my father **felt** the kedushah surrounding him.

#### The Special Sanctity of Sukkah

Sukkah is a special mitzvah; there is no other mitzvah like it. The sukkah's wood is *assur b'hana'ah* for the entire week of Sukkos (*Sukkah* 9a). We learn this from the *pasuk*, "*Chag HaSukkos*" — the word "*chag*" hints to the Korban Chagigah, and the sukkah's wood is like a Korban Chagigah. Just as the Korban Chagigah is *hekdash* and it is forbidden to benefit from it, so too, the sukkah's wood is *assur b'hana'ah*. This is something special about the mitzvah of sukkah — the *cheftza*, the object used for the mitzvah has *kedushah* like a *korban* and is *assur b'hana'ah*.

How does it become *kadosh*? According to Abaye, "*hazmanah milsa hi*" (*Sanhedrin* 47b), designation creates the sanctity, since we designated the sukkah wood specifically for the purpose of sukkah. According to Rava, "*hazmanah lav milsa hi*," and the sanctity occurs only once a person sits in the sukkah — that is, the actual act of performing the mitzvah is what makes the sukkah *kadosh*. Tefillin, for example, is different, because the tefillin themselves are *parshiyos* of *divrei Torah* and writing the *parshiyos* makes them *kadosh*. Here, however, we are not talking about *divrei Torah*; the sukkah is made of simple wood and once the wood is used for the mitzvah of sukkah, the mitzvah act creates the *kedushah* and sanctifies the sukkah with the holiness of a *korban*.

#### Surrounded by Kedushah in the Sukkah

So who makes the sukkah *kadosh*? The person who sits there! After that, once the sukkah is sanctified, the person himself becomes sanctified when he sits there because he is sitting inside *kedushah*; he's in a holy place. As we said, the sukkah has the sanctity of a *korban*, and according to the Rambam (*Hilchos Sukkah* 6:15) even the walls of the sukkah are *kadosh* and are *assur b'hana'ah* — and the *s'chah* is surely *kadosh*. If so, when a person sits in the sukkah, he is surrounded by sanctity, because he is inside *kedushah* and in a *kadosh* place, like in the Beis HaMikdash.

A similar concept is found regarding *kedushas haAretz*. A person in Eretz Yisrael is surrounded by *kedushah*, and *kedushas* Eretz Yisrael has an influence and even changes a person's essence — as it states in *Nedarim daf 22* that in Eretz Yisrael, people attain better *middos*. The *kedushah* of a sukkah is even greater, as the sukkah's wood is *assur b'hana'ah*, and the mitzvah of sukkah not only sanctifies man, it even sanctifies the sukkah's wood.

#### A Zechus for a Chasimah Tovah on Hoshana Rabbah

On the last day of Sukkos, Hoshana Rabbah, one can merit a *gmar chasimah tovah*. Even though there already was inscription and sealing on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, one can still change for the better, or *chas v'shalom*, probably, the opposite. But in any case, changing for the good is surely possible. If a person was not found meritorious on Rosh Hashanah, Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, or Yom Kippur, can be *zocheh* on Hoshana Rabbah by increasing his *zechuyos* over Sukkos.

Even though there is special *siyatta d'Shemaya* for *kirvas Hashem* during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, as Chazal say (*Rosh Hashanah* 18a), "Seek Hashem out when He is found..." These are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur," it's possible to earn even more *zechuyos* throughout Sukkos, which comes on the heels of all the preparation of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Even

though there was such great spiritual upliftment of teshuvah and *kapparas avonos*, there is still room **to increase one's merits on Sukkos throughout the seven days of Sukkos while sitting in the kedushah of the sukkah. One merits renewed strength to add even more *maasim tovim***, thus meriting a *gmar chasimah tovah* on Hoshana Rabbah.

### Leave Your Permanent Home

The concept of sukkah is explained at the beginning of the *Masechta*: “Leave your permanent dwelling place and sit in a temporary home.” This is the *hisorerus* and the *remez* of the mitzvah of sukkah: to always remember that this world is merely a temporary dwelling place. During the seven days of Yom Tov, a person should wake up and remember that he lives in a temporary dwelling place all year long — his permanent home is in Olam HaBa.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (2:19): “All men of heart should consider this world like a temporary home, and should only use it for serving the Exalted Creator, and prepare provisions for their soul.” All worldly pleasures and needs are merely means for *esek haTorah* and mitzvah observance. And that's how one reaches his goal, his permanent dwelling place in Olam HaBa.

### Sitting in the Sukkah: Galus

The Rishonim wrote (*Sefer HaManhig Esrog* 38; *Orchos Chaim*, *Tefillas HaMoadim* 16), “Hoshana Rabbah is the main atonement, as they've already been afflicted from Erev Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur and all their intentional sins have been forgiven. Now, those who are liable for the death sentence due to unintentional sins exile themselves from their homes to the Sukkah, which is a temporary dwelling place, and exile atones for this.”

That is, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, one's intentional sins are forgiven, but the unintentional sins are

still unaccounted for, because the repentance was teshuvah out of fear, which transforms intentional sins into unintentional sins (*Yoma* 86b), and we still need atonement for the unintentional sins. If there's no atonement, we will be punished for the unintentional sins as well, as it states in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (4:15), “For the unintentional sinner will surely be punished.” And on Hoshana Rabbah we are *zocheh* to atonement for unintentional sins too.

This is because on Hoshana Rabbah, “they exile themselves from their homes to *sukkos*, which are temporary dwelling places.” On Sukkos, we sit in the sukkah which is not as comfortable as our homes, and this involves the challenges and difficulties of exile. Exile atones for unintentional sins, as we find regarding the unintentional murderer. It's not only an atonement for murder; it's for all unintentional sins — when a person sends himself into exile, the exile is an atonement. It's well known that tzaddikim would go into *galus* to atone for their unintentional sins.

Therefore, even though our intentional sins have already been atoned for on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur through *hisorerus* and teshuvah, we still need another atonement for our unintentional sins. **And the atonement for unintentional sins occurs when one exiles himself from his home to a sukkah for the seven days of Sukkos, coming to a realization that this world is only temporary.** This is the *inyan* of exile and sitting in a sukkah, as Chazal say (*Sukkah* 2a), “Leave your permanent house for all seven days and sit in a temporary dwelling place. This is a parable, to inform us that we live in a temporary place and that we shouldn't value this world, we should only value Olam HaBa. And thus, we will merit atonement on Hoshana Rabbah.



## Hoshana Rabbah: A Day of Judgment

Hoshana Rabbah is a day of judgment and the *gmar hachasimah*, the final sealing of judgment. The *kesivah* took place on Rosh Hashanah, the *chasimah* on Yom Kippur, and the *gmar hachasimah* is on Hoshana Rabbah. This means that even if someone did not merit being inscribed on Rosh Hashanah or sealed on Yom Kippur, he can still merit a *gmar chasimah tovah*, being sealed for the good, on Hoshana Rabbah. How is this possible? If he performs additional *maasim tovim* and changes, he will merit a *gmar chasimah tovah* based on his condition on Hoshana Rabbah — even though there had been a different *chasimah* previously.

This is similar to how a human court is conducted. Even if a person is sentenced to death, if new evidence is found for the defense, someone will come and defend him. As long as

he hasn't been killed, his sentence can be rescinded. Therefore, the *chasimas hadin* depends on a person's behavior during the days between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah, and his *gmar chasimah* will be based on who he is on Hoshana Rabbah.

The truth is, the *nusach* of davening for Hoshana Rabbah is similar to the Yamim Noraim *tefillos*. We recite more *pesukei d'zimrah*, say “*Kadosh v'nora*,” and use the Yamim Noraim tunes. It truly is a Yom Din and the *gmar chasimah*.

The *sefarim* write that there are ten days between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah. Yom Kippur is on 10 Tishrei and Hoshana Rabbah is on 21 Tishrei — there are ten days between them, corresponding to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. These

ten days are an auspicious time to become more elevated; to improve and correct our behavior, in order to merit a *gmar chasimah tovah*.

The Mashgiach Rav Yechezkel Levenstein *zt"l* (cited in *Yarchei Kallah* on *Maseches Sukkah*) quoted the Alter of Kelm, who said that Hoshana Rabbah is *mamesh* like Yom Kippur. Except that on Yom Kippur there is a prohibition to eat and the other *inuyim*, afflictions, whereas on Hoshana Rabbah not only are there no *inuyim*, we actually have a mitzvah to be happy. However, it is still a Yom Din, and we must feel it, like we do on Yom Kippur.

### **The Difficulty of Fulfilling Simchas Yom Tov Properly**

However, since Hoshana Rabbah — and all the days preceding it — is a Yom Tov, the mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov* can serve as a merit and turn the scales. This mitzvah, which can only be performed on Yom Tov, can add many *zechuyos*, but only on the condition that it is performed *b'sheleimus*, according to the halachah of *simchas Yom Tov*.

It's known that the Gra says that *simchas Yom Tov* is a very difficult mitzvah to fulfill. *Lichorah*, why should it be hard? The Gemara (*Pesachim* 109a) tells us that the joy of *simchas Yom Tov* is “for men by eating meat and drinking wine,” that's the primary *simchah*. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, the mitzvah was fulfilled through eating *korbanos*, and nowadays, through meat and wine. If so, what's so difficult about this?

We must explain this based on the Rambam. He writes (*Hilchos Yom Tov* 6:20): “When a person eats and drinks and is happy on Yom Tov, he shouldn't be drawn after wine, laughter, or frivolity and claim that anyone who does more of this will increase his mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*. Inebriety, profuse laughter, and lightheadedness are not joy; they are emptiness and foolishness.” That is, increased eating and drinking can cause a person to act with lightheadedness and laughter, and this is not the mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*.

The Rambam goes on: “We were not commanded to act with emptiness and foolishness — we were commanded to act with the joy of serving Hashem, as it states (*Devarim* 28:47): ‘Since you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy and gladness of heart.’ This teaches us that serving Hashem must be with joy.” The joy of *simchas Yom Tov* must be the type of joy that is *avodas Hashem*, joy that brings us to *avodas Hashem*. This is what *simchas Yom Tov* is all about. Of course, meat and wine are necessary too, but the purpose and goal of wine and meat is to lead to serving Hashem, to *simchah shel mitzvah*.

### **Simchah and Hiddur Mitzvah — Must Be Heartfelt**

As we've already discussed in the past, this joy is the *simchah* of doing a mitzvah, because the actual mitzvah

makes us happy, and *avodas Hashem* brings us joy. This is the right type of joy, and this is the primary mitzvah of *simchah*. And the reward for acting this way is tremendous, as Rabbeinu Yonah writes: “The reward for joy over performance of a mitzvah increases and grows tremendously,” because the *simchah* of doing a mitzvah is the result of a deep, inner understanding of the importance of a mitzvah, and the primary *maalah* of mitzvos depends on the person's heartfelt intentions; to what extent do they value the mitzvah.

The Gemara says the following about *hiddur mitzvah* (*Bava Kama* 9b): “[The amount spent on] *Hiddur mitzvah* can be up to one-third of the mitzvah's value.” There is a mitzvah to spend up a third of the mitzvah's value for *hiddur*. This is a rabbinic obligation, not a Torah obligation. The Gemara there states that if a person increases his expenses and pays more than a third for *hiddur*, the amount he paid up to a third is his, and the rest is HaKadosh Baruch Hu's. Rashi and Tosfos explain there, What does it mean “it belongs to HaKadosh Baruch Hu”? The answer is, he enjoys the dividends in this world, and the principal awaits him in the World to Come. The reward for all mitzvos is only given in Olam HaBa, as Chazal say (*Kiddushin* 39b): “*Sechar mitzvah b'hai alma leicha*,” There is no reward for performance of mitzvos is in this World,” aside from a few personal mitzvos. However, when it comes to *hiddur mitzvah*, when a person adds more than he is obligated and glorifies the mitzvah more, as a result he merits seeing dividends in this world as well!

The reason is that *hiddur mitzvah* is a sign that the person values the mitzvah; deep inside his heart he values the mitzvah and that's why he glorifies it and spends more money than he is obligated to. Since this stems from his inner feelings and *kavanas ha-lev*, it is more important than the actual mitzvah. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that a person's joy over completing a mitzvah reflects how important the mitzvah is to him, and that's why his reward is greater.

So our *simchas Yom Tov* must be the result of the realization of the importance and value of Yom Tov. When we feel how important and valuable Yom Tov is, it makes us happy. This is the *sheleimus* of the mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*. While meat and wine are certainly important components in our joy, and there must be joy of food and drink — because without it, the joy will be lacking — one's happiness must be the result of understanding and feeling the importance of the mitzvah.

This does not reflect human nature, as the *Yerushalmi* states (*Moed Katan* 2:3) that the main prohibition of performing *melachah* on Chol HaMoed is so that people should be *osek baTorah*, but the reality is that when people spend time eating and drinking, they become careless and lightheaded. And that's why the Gra said that it is difficult to fulfill the mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*, because the body is naturally drawn toward happiness of lightheadedness, and it's not very easy to rejoice with true *simchah shel mitzvah*. It's a great *madreigah* for a person to be able to feel the importance of the mitzvah so profoundly that it brings him to joy.

Actually, the *maalah* of *sheleimus ha'adam* depends on his inner self — how much does he value Torah and mitzvos, and what does he value more: this world or the World to Come, *ruchniyus* or *gashmiyus*. What more valuable; what's more important to him? If *gashmiyus* takes center stage, this is not *sheleimus*, but if *ruchniyus* is primary and *gashmiyus* is secondary, that is *sheleimus*.

### Joy in Mitzvos on Yom Tov and All Year Long

We are approaching the Yom HaDin of Hoshana Rabbah. If we have fulfilled — with *sheleimus* — *simchas Yom Tov*, the mitzvah special to these days, by feeling the value and importance of the mitzvos so profoundly that it brings us joy, this is surely a great *zechus* for a *gmar chasimah tovah*.

Of course, the concept of *simchah shel mitzvah* and serving Hashem with joy is applicable all year long. The *pasuk* states (*Tehillim* 100:2), “Serve Hashem with joy,” and failing to do so is mentioned in the *Tochachah*, as the Rambam explains the *pasuk*, “Since you have not served Hashem with joy and gladness of heart.”

But during the year, this is not a mitzvah; it's a general advantage in mitzvah observance to fulfill mitzvos with joy. If one performs mitzvos without the requisite joy, the mitzvah is still a mitzvah, it's merely deficient in this advantage and in *sheleimus*. On Yom Tov, on the other hand, there is a positive mitzvah of *simchah*, and if one does not fulfill it, he is nullifying the positive mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*. That's the gravity of *simchas Yom Tov*.

### Making Others Happy on Yom Tov

There is another side to *simchas Yom Tov*. Aside from the obligation to feel the importance and value of mitzvos and Yom

Tov, Chazal tell us in *Pesachim* that a person is obligated to make his children and members of his household happy on Yom Tov, as it states (*Devarim* 16:14), “And you shall rejoice on your Festival.” The *pasuk* then continues: “You and your son and your daughter, and your servant and maidservant, and the Levi and the convert, and the orphan and widow who are within your cities.” There is a special mitzvah on Yom Tov to bring joy to others. If someone is not happy, it's important to make him happy, and this is included in the mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* writes (mitzvah 488) that if someone does not bring joy to others on Yom Tov, he has not fulfilled the mitzvah *b'sheleimus*. “The Torah has warned us to similarly involve the indigent, the converts, and the vulnerable, as it states, ‘You... and the Levi and the convert, and the orphan and widow...’ One who transgresses this and does not bring joy to himself, his family members, and the indigent according to his means, for the mitzvah's sake, has nullified this positive commandment.”

This concept of making others happy is important all year long as part of the mitzvah of *chesed*, and not only is it important, it is extremely important. Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (3:13), “A person is obligated to go out of his way to benefit his fellow Jews and to toil over improving his fellow's lot, regardless of whether he is poor or wealthy. This is one of the gravest, most important matters required of man, as it states (*Michah* 6:8): ‘He has told you, man, what is good, and what Hashem demands of you: to do justice and loving-kindness.’” Throughout the year, this is a very important mitzvah and failing to fulfill it is grave indeed. On Yom Tov, however, there is a specific mitzvah to make others happy, due to *ahavas habriyos* and *ahavas chesed*. This is a mitzvah of the *Shalosh Regalim*.

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The *sichos* are transcribed and translated from a weekly *va'ad* in Rav Gershon Edelstein's home.