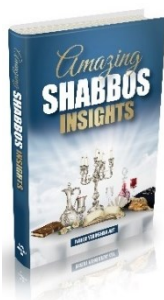


# Fascinating INSIGHTS

יב' תשרי תשפ"ג  
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### Sharing an Esrog

In the 1700s there was a community that had only one Esrog<sup>1</sup> during Succos although they had many Lulavim. In a community that was 40 hours travel away there were no Esrogim at all. During Succos this community sent a messenger to the community with the Esrog pleading with them for the Esrog as they relied on them each year for the four species. They reasoned that since the other community already fulfilled the Biblical Mitzva, which is on the first day, and even days after that, they should now receive the Esrog so that the Mitzva shouldn't be

completely missed. This brought about a disagreement in the city as some said to send it whereas others said don't. Since they were in doubt they didn't send it. R' Dovid Pardo<sup>2</sup> (1719-1792) was asked what should have been done.



He replied that the Esrog should've been sent so that they shouldn't be lacking the Mitzva completely.<sup>3</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> The Chassam Sofer (in his Chidushim to Mesachta Succa 36a) writes that the many times an Esrog is used which causes spots (נימורים)... makes it הדר (beautiful) since it came about through a Mitzva that is its splendor and beauty.

<sup>2</sup> שו"ת מכתם לדוד, Orach Chaim, 6.

<sup>3</sup> The Chassam Sofer was asked the following: There was a person who had an extra Esrog and hung it in his Succa as a decoration. Then on Yom Tov someone from a village came where he couldn't find an Esrog to buy. Is it Muktzah or can this Esrog be given to this person so that he and his family can fulfill the Mitzva of the four species? The Chassam Sofer ruled

explained that the Mitzva of the four species after the first day is Rabbinical whereas Gemilus Chassadim is a stringent Biblical Mitzva.<sup>4</sup>

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### Dissolving Dissonance

The natural tendency of people is that they become irritable as a result of hunger. There is even a word for this — “hangry.” It is a contraction of the words “hungry” and “angry.”

Avoiding hunger can prevent one from becoming angry. This is clearly expressed in the pasuk והיה כי ירעב והתקצר, when he will be hungry, he will be angry.<sup>5</sup> So let’s follow the advice of the rhyme, “Eat some food so you’ll be in a good mood.”

A gabbai of a large shul in New York related that during a period of time there were a number of cases of discord and contention transpiring in shul. He noticed that all these conflicts began after 10:30 (shacharis there began at 9). And so he figured that food was the missing ingredient. With the Rav acquiescing, a 15-minute kidush would take place prior to Krias Hatorah. It turns out that the kidush is what did the trick as there were no disputes anymore.<sup>6</sup>

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### Great Salvation!



The Zohar tells us that Hoshana Rabba is סיומא דידינא דעלמא ופתקין נפקין מבי מלכא, the end of the judgement of the world and the decisions of judgements come forth<sup>7</sup> from the house of the king.<sup>8</sup> Through Tefila we can save ourselves. Indeed, it is for this reason that we have many Tefilos in the Hoshana Rabba davening. To even the lowest of Jews who may feel they have no hope does this apply and as it says דלותי ולי יהושיע, even those who are low can

that it is permitted to take this Esrog. Although on Yom Tov it is Muktzah, on Chol Hamoed it is permitted as it is only forbidden on Chol Hamoed for benefit since it was designated for a Mitzva (ש"ת התם סופר, Orach Chaim 184).

<sup>4</sup> See Baba Kamma 100a. Also Peah 1:1. אוצר פלאות התורה, Vayikra, pp. 1,085-6.

<sup>5</sup> Yeshaya 8:21. A Jewish poet once wrote:  
When you are hungry for bread you will kill, but when you are hungry for G-d, you give life.

When you are hungry for bread you will steal, but when you are hungry for G-d you give.

When you are hungry for bread you will lie, but when you are hungry for G-d you will tell the truth.

When you are hungry for bread you are so empty, but when you are hungry for G-d you are so full.

When you are focused on the physical the outcome is negative, but when you are focused on the spiritual the outcome is positive.

<sup>6</sup> A speaker once suggested that if you are in a bad mood, ask yourself, “Am I tired or hungry?”

<sup>7</sup> We start reciting the Hoshanos on Hoshana Rabba with אמיתך since this is the היום החותם, the day the judgement is sealed and the seal of Hashem is אמת (Shabbos 55a. See Bnei Yisosschar, Tishrei 12:8).

<sup>8</sup> Zohar Tzav 31a. See Arizal in Shaar Hakavanos, Succos, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Tehillim 116:6.

<sup>10</sup> Tehillim 102:1.

<sup>11</sup> See Orach Chaim 664:4.

have a salvation.<sup>9</sup> Where do we find an indication of this? תפלה לעני כי יעטף<sup>10</sup> — even a Jew who feels like he is an עני, impoverished in spirituality, can be saved if he wraps himself in Tefila.

This is shown to us in Hoshana Rabba as it is the day of the Arava.<sup>11</sup> The Midrash<sup>12</sup> tells us that the Arava signifies a Jew that has no Torah or Maasim Tovim. So, even he can daven on this day,<sup>13</sup> as this is what the Arava refers to, the lips.<sup>14</sup> Through using the power of his mouth with Tefila, he can be saved.<sup>15</sup> In fact, Hoshana Rabba is the Ushpizin of Dovid Hamelech, the one who expresses תפלה.<sup>16</sup> With this, explains the Sefas Emes,<sup>17</sup> we can grasp why it is called הושענה רבה since even the lowest of Jews can be saved on this day (as הושענה רבה means great salvation)!

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### A Unifying Day

Rashi tells us that Shemini Atzeres is the idea of קשה עלי פרידתכם, your departing is difficult for me.<sup>18</sup> This seems difficult to comprehend since we always have a connection to Hashem.<sup>19</sup>

One theme of Succos is unity. Indeed, it is called הג האסוף.<sup>20</sup> אסף means gather, a term used for unity. This idea is also shown to us in the Midrash<sup>21</sup> that states that the four species of the Lulav represent the four types of Jews: Those with... Torah and Maasim Tovim, Torah without Maasim Tovim, no Torah but have Maasim Tovim, no Torah or Maasim Tovim. Taking the four species and shaking them together displays unity.

So, after the Yom Tov of Succos, the unity dissipates. That is hard for Hashem — קשה עלי, the separation of Jews — פרידתכם.

In this way we can explain the episode with the non-Jew who came to Hillel and said convert me on condition that you will teach me the entire Torah when I stand אחת תהיה רגל אחת, on one foot.<sup>22</sup> Hillel responded ... מאן דעלך סני, that which you hate don't do to others. Another explanation is that רגל אחת refers to Shemini Atzeres which is dubbed עצמו, a Yom Tov unto itself.<sup>23</sup> The response of ... מאן דעלך סני is an appropriate reply as it is a phrase that relates to unity.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of four books including the recently released Amazing Shabbos Insights, in addition to being the host of The Fascinating Insights Podcast. His writings, some of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

<sup>12</sup> Vayikra Rabba 30:12.

<sup>13</sup> An allusion to this is found in הר יקראו (Devarim 33:19), as הר is an acronym for הושענה רבה, since on this day we should especially call out to Hashem.

<sup>14</sup> Zohar 3, 32a, Sefer HaChinuch, 324.

<sup>15</sup> A hint to this is shown in the Gematria of ערבה (277) as it is identical to that of עזר, help, since even an “ערבה” Jew can be helped.

<sup>16</sup> Tehillim 109:4. ערבה is related to תערובת, mixture, because even a low Jew can change his destiny on this day and attach himself to Hashem. Then we can say about him that he is sweet and pleasant in his ways as this is what ערבה can mean as in והערב נא.

<sup>17</sup> Succos, תרם, s.v. ערבה.

<sup>18</sup> Vayikra 23:36.

<sup>19</sup> Another question asked on קשה עלי פרידתכם is the following: What does this one extra day solve since the following day we also have this issue? Whenever we depart from Hashem we have this problem. One answer given is that through this day of Shemini Atzeres, we think of קשה עלי in all that we do. This then brings to a yearning for Hashem. The result: there is no פרידה! So through taking the lesson of Shemini Atzeres we have no issue with departing from Hashem because we will have that strong yearning for Hashem (see Divrei Chizuk, Breishis, 5759).

<sup>20</sup> Shemos 23:16.

<sup>21</sup> Vayikra Rabba 30:12.

<sup>22</sup> Shabbos 31a.

<sup>23</sup> Succa 47a.