



The Weekly Parsha Shiur of Maran, Rosh HaYeshiva, the righteous Kabbalist,

Our Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli, Shlit"a

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In another half a year, it will not be possible to enter into a sukkah.

And now we merit to enter the festival of Sukkot. The festival of Sukkot is called "the time of our joy," because this is the festival of joy, this is the time for joy. Therefore, throughout all the days of Sukkot, one needs to be immersed in immense joy, and in this way draw treasures of joy. And one should search for ways and advice on how to attain this joy.

And why is now the time of joy? The answer is, as we have discussed, that the Maggid said to Maran the Beit Yosef: the great holiness of Yom Kippur protects us even four days after Yom Kippur, so that on these days as well there is great holiness leading up to the festival of Sukkot.

And therefore there is immense joy on this festival! For when is a person in a state of joy? When he is clean of sins, because sins cause a person sadness. Consequently, when there are no sins—there is no sadness, and there is a desire to go and engage in the holy Torah!

The festival of Sukkot is a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. When we left Egypt, the Holy One, Blessed be He, led us through the wilderness. And there is a dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva regarding what the festival of Sukkot

commemorates: Rabbi Eliezer says that "booths" (sukkot) commemorates the Clouds of Glory with which the Holy One, Blessed be He, sheltered the nation of Israel; while Rabbi Akiva says that the Holy One, Blessed be He, made actual physical booths for us in the wilderness, and to commemorate this we observe the festival of Sukkot.

Now, this requires understanding: practically speaking, we should have observed the festival of Sukkot during Passover, because that was when we left Egypt and when the Holy One, Blessed be He, made booths for us. If so, why do we observe it now?

There are several resolutions to this: there is the resolution of Rashbi in the Holy Zohar that, in principle, due to the immense significance of the sukkah and the resting of the Divine Presence (Shechinah), we do not have the capability to sit in the shade of faith (*Tzila D'Mahemno'tha*)—in the shadow of the Shechinah. However, now—after thirty days of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Repentance, and the mighty day among the days of the year, Yom Kippur...

For all the merits of these days ascend during the Ne'ilah prayer, and come before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and say to Him: "Look at this human being, how he behaves—he has become another person."

Only now, says Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, after a person has been sanctified and purified during these holy days, only now can he enter the Sukkah, and therefore it is impossible to do this on Passover, because on Passover a lot of time has already passed since the Days of Awe; therefore, one must celebrate the festival of Sukkot immediately now after Yom Kippur!

Sukka or an Orchard with Large Windows

And there is an answer according to the plain meaning (*Pshat*): the reason that the holiday of Sukkot is now—it is written in the *Tur* that this is to show that one performs the commandment for the sake of Heaven; because if you do it on Passover, it does not look like you are performing the commandment for the sake of Heaven. Why? Because in the past, after all, they did not have air conditioners, and when the summer began, a person would leave the house, go and sit in the field, arrange nice flowers and fragrant trees, and make himself a sort of orchard with large windows, everything open, getting air, natural air conditioning... That is what everyone used to do at the beginning of the summer: leaving a permanent dwelling and going to a temporary dwelling that has air, where a person can breathe air.

But now on Sukkot, as the rainy season begins and it starts to get chilly, everyone returns from the temporary dwelling and enters the house, going to a place that is warmer. Therefore, if we were to celebrate Sukkot on Passover, which is the spring, it would not look like we are going out to the Sukkah for the sake of the commandment, but rather for the air. However, when we build a Sukkah now—when everyone is coming inside, we are going outside—it shows that we are doing it for the sake of Heaven!

Yalkut Shimoni also answers this question as to why we go to the Sukkah now and not at the time we went out of Egypt, explaining that now was the great and awesome Day of Judgment, and it is possible that exile was decreed upon a person to leave his home. The Holy One, Blessed be He, says: "Do not worry; if you became liable for some exile, I am taking you out to a temporary dwelling, and you are leaving the house and sitting in the Sukkah, and this will be considered for you as if you went into exile."

What Came on Passover Did Not Last Very Long

The Vilna Gaon writes a very strong answer regarding this: On Yom Kippur, the forty days came to completion during which Moshe ascended to the High Realm for the third time to bring the second Tablets, and pleaded before the Holy One, Blessed be He, to forgive the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf. And during these forty days from the 1st of Elul until the 10th of Tishrei, the Jewish people surrounded the mountain and were weeping and fasting, eating only at night. On the last day of the forty—the 10th of Tishrei—knowing that this was the day Moshe was due to descend, that night they fasted through the night as well, weeping and crying out to the Holy One, Blessed be He. The next day, Moshe descended from the mountain and told them, "And Hashem said: 'I have forgiven according to your word'"—the Holy One, Blessed be He, forgave.

And Moshe told them, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded me: 'And they shall make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them'—now the Holy One, Blessed be He, has commanded me to make a Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) and its vessels." And immediately the next day—on the 11th of Tishrei—they announced in the camp that anyone who wishes to bring silver, gold, whatever there is to donate to the Tabernacle, blessing shall come upon him. And immediately everyone opened their wallets! And on the 15th of Tishrei, Moshe told them, "Enough (*Khalas*)..." No more is needed, there is enough and more than enough; the people of Israel are holy, and then what joy there was in the world—they already had enough, and on the 15th of Tishrei they already began building the Tabernacle.

And behold, until the sin of the Golden Calf, clouds of glory were over the nation of Israel and the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) rested upon them; but at the sin of the Golden Calf, the Divine Presence fled—it pained her greatly and she fled from the people of Israel. But when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said "I have forgiven according to your word" and the nation of Israel began to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), then the clouds of glory returned, the Divine Presence returned, and what joy there was in the nation of Israel, and from then on the Divine Presence rested upon the nation of Israel always.

And therefore, says the Vilna Gaon, the festival of Sukkot, which is in memory of the clouds of glory, is celebrated now and not on Passover; for the clouds of glory that came on Passover departed at the sin of the Golden Calf, but now after Yom Kippur, they returned to us permanently! And thus it turns out that now is the main joy over the clouds of glory and the resting of the Divine Presence, and this is a very strong matter.

Noah's Ark

And the holy Zohar also says that the Sukkah is "Noah's Ark"; and just as Noah's Ark saved Noah from the Flood and from everything that occurred back then during the Flood, the Sukkah saves a person from the entire flood washing outside—and not necessarily a flood of water: there is a flood of missiles, there is a spiritual flood of other problems, and it saves from everything.

And this is hinted at in the word "Sukkah" (סוכה) "for Noah's Ark had dimensions of 300 cubits length, 50 cubits width, and 30 cubits height. And the word Sukkah has a numerical value) *Gematria* (of 91, corresponding to the gematria value of *Havayah*) *Y-H-V-H* (and *Adnut*) *A-D-N-Y* .(And *Havayah-Adnut* [interwoven] contains :*Yod-Aleph* ,*Hei-Dalet* ,*Vav-Nun* ,*Hei-Yod* .And if we multiply them—for example ,*Yod-Aleph* :we multiply *Yod* (10) times *Aleph* ,(1) which equals 10; and *Hei-Dalet* :we multiply *Hei* (5) times *Dalet* ,(4) which equals 20; together this is 30, corresponding to the height of the Ark. And likewise in this manner ,*Vav-Nun* :*Vav* (6) times *Nun* (50) equals three hundred, the length of the Ark. And *Hei-Yod* :*Hei* (5) times *Yod* (10) equals fifty, the width of the Ark. Thus Sukkah hints at Noah's Ark! For the Sukkah has this special power of "spread over us the shelter of Your peace"—that a person is saved in it from all external forces and from all problems.

That It Should Be Pleasant in the Sukkah

But one must know that not everyone merits to sit in the Sukkah; whoever merits it, fortunate is he and fortunate is his lot; whoever does not, it is a sign that the Sukkah repels him outward. Therefore regarding the commandment of Sukkah, "anyone who is worthy of it—finds taste in it and enjoys it," as Rashi says in Genesis, and anyone who is not worthy of it does not enjoy it, feeling: "I have nothing to do here..."

Therefore, it must be pleasant in the Sukkah: there should be a good scent in the Sukkah, and also air conditioning—how can a person sit in the heat?! And also not to burden much with dishes, but rather to bring disposable tableware [today there is the Shamai company, you take one and two... and there is no need to wash and labor]. And you can also buy all the delicacies.

And one must also come to the Sukkah with an appetite and eagerness, as it is written that on the eve of the festival during the day, one does not eat, so that at night one can eat with an appetite. And in the books it is also written not to sleep on the eve of the festival, so that at night one will sleep with relish in the Sukkah. Provided that one wakes up early... to perform the *Lulav* with the wavings... what spiritual lights! What merits!

The Ushpizin and the Sefirot

Rashbi in the Zohar asks regarding the verse: "*In sukkot you shall dwell seven days*" [Leviticus 23:42]. Seemingly, it should have written: "*In sukkot you shall dwell **for** seven*"

days." What does "*In sukkot you shall dwell seven days*" mean—which can be interpreted as if telling seven days themselves to dwell in the Sukkah?

Rashbi says that according to the esoteric wisdom (*Sod*), the explanation is that the "seven days" refer to the higher *Sefirot*:

- **First day** – *Chesed* (Loving-kindness)
- **Second day** – *Gevurah* (Might/Severity)
- **Third day** – *Tiferet* (Beauty/Harmony)
- **Fourth day** – *Netzach* (Eternity/Victory)
- **Fifth day** – *Hod* (Splendor/Humility)
- **Sixth day** – *Yesod* (Foundation)
- **Seventh day** – *Malkhut* (Kingship)

And the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to the higher *Sefirot*: "*In sukkot you shall dwell, seven days*"—meaning, "You, the seven days—the higher *Sefirot*, *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, etc.—shall dwell in sukkot."

And therefore, the *Ushpizin* (exalted spiritual guests) come to be each with his corresponding *Sefirah*:

- **Avraham** – *Chesed*
- **Yitzchak** – *Gevurah*
- **Yaakov** – *Tiferet*
- **Moshe** – *Netzach*
- **Aharon** – *Hod*
- **Yoseph** – *Yesod*
- **David** – *Malkhut*

For example, our patriarch Avraham, who is the man of *Chesed*, comes to be together with his *Sefirah*.

And therefore Rashbi says that before a person enters the Sukkah, he should stand outside at the entrance of the Sukkah and he shall invite the *Ushpizin*: "Enter, seven exalted holy guests." And what requests are there in the *Leshem Yichud* (prayer recited before performing a mitzvah), that we come to fulfill the positive biblical commandment to sit in the Sukkah: "*In sukkot you shall dwell seven days; all who are native in Israel shall dwell in sukkot.*"

According to this, the holy Zohar resolves another difficulty: Why does it initially write "*In sukkot you shall dwell [tishvu - 2nd person plural] seven days*"—in direct address / second-person—and afterwards it is written "*all who are native in Israel shall dwell [yeshvu - 3rd person plural] in sukkot*", where "shall dwell" is in indirect address / third-person? Rather, says the Zohar, "*In sukkot you shall dwell*" refers to the exalted guests, who are the higher *Sefirot*, the higher lights, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, with whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, speaks directly in second person. And afterwards, the verse speaks about Israel: "*all who are native in Israel, they shall dwell in sukkot*"—after

you have invited the *Sefirot*, only then can all the natives of Israel sit in sukkot. Therefore, Rabbi Abba says in the Zohar that one must stand at the entrance of the Sukkah and invite the seven *Ushpizin*: "Sit, sit, holy guests"—to invite them.

Who Deserves a Citizenship Card?

It is written: "*All who are native in Israel shall dwell in sukkot*" [Leviticus 23:42] — the Zohar says: Anyone who is from the holy root and lineage of Israel sits under the shadow of faith (*Tzila D'Mehimnuta*). But anyone who is not from the side of holiness, does not! Always the Rosh Yeshiva (Dean), Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka (may peace be upon him), used to warn us: Do not buy an apartment if there is no possibility for a Sukkah in it, because "only one who has a Sukkah has a citizenship card," as the Torah says, "*All who are native in Israel shall dwell in sukkot*" — if he is a citizen of Israel, he has a Sukkah; if he does not have a Sukkah, it is a sign that he is not a real citizen. How will "all who are native in Israel dwell in sukkot"? They will fulfill the commandment of Sukkah. Therefore, there is no such thing as a person buying a home without a Sukkah!

Four Bowls, Four Ladders, and Four Youths

The Mishnah in Tractate Sukkah (page 51a) relates that every night during the days of the festival of Sukkot, they would hold a great celebration in the Temple. The Mishnah states: "He who has not seen the celebration of the Place of Water-Drawing (*Simchat Beit HaShoavah*) has never seen celebration in his life."

At the conclusion of the first festival day, they would descend to the Women's Court and make a "great amendment" (*Tikkun Gadol*)—ensuring the women were above and the men below. There were golden menorahs there, with four golden bowls atop each menorah, four ladders, and four young men from the priestly lineage. The boys would climb the ladders holding jars containing 120 *log* of olive oil, pour the oil into the bowls, and light the wicks of the menorahs.

The Gemara says that the light bursting from the menorahs was so immense that "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the light of the Simchat Beit HaShoavah." So much so, that a woman in a courtyard in Jerusalem could sift wheat by the light of these menorahs. "The night shines as the day, darkness is as light..."

How Did the Light from the Temple Menorahs Reach Every Courtyard in Jerusalem?

When we were children, right here, at Rabbi Sharabi's place—his Sukkah was here, right where we are sitting. The Rabbi would deliver a sermon in the Sukkah, quoting the Gemara: "There was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the lights of Simchat Beit HaShoavah."

And one might ask: How is it possible that all the courtyards of Jerusalem were lit by menorahs in the Temple that merely had four bowls of olive oil with wicks? How could

such torches illuminate all of Jerusalem? How could that be? True, Jerusalem was not as large as it is today, but still, how could the lights from the Temple illuminate all of Jerusalem to the extent that a woman could sort wheat by this light?

Rather, our Master, Rabbi Sharabi, told us [when we were children, and I remember "...this], that it is not talking about physical light, but about spiritual light! When they lit the menorahs in the Temple during Simchat Beit HaShoavah, a great spiritual light descended from Heaven, illuminating our Holy Temple and our glory, and it was an immense light that shone from there over all of Jerusalem.

And through this light, every person who was in Jerusalem received understanding and wisdom, and saw life in a different way. He would see that all matters of this world are vanity of vanities, that everything is nonsense. [And this is the meaning of "sifting wheat," that they understood what is essential and what is nonsense], and then the person became spiritual, and experienced great joy.

After all, why is a person sad? Because he lacks something, or because he has some problem in the matters of this world. But if a person is happy in Torah and spirituality, he is not sad about anything! And this light that arrived from the Temple purified and cleansed them. And this was the reason for the great joy."

Is It Possible to Snatch the Notes?

And now, with Hashem's help, **on Thursday evening we have Hoshana Rabbah**. It is the day of "**Hosha-Na**" (save us, please, where the Hebrew word for please has a gematria of 51), "Save the **51st** day" [counting from the first of Elul] which is Hoshana Rabbah. And it is a **very holy day**, a day on which prayers are accepted.

On Hoshana Rabbah there is the "**External Seal**"—as it is called by the Kabbalists. That is to say, during the Neilah prayer on Yom Kippur there was the "**Internal Seal**" in which all of the Jewish nation was sealed, each person according to his merits.

But the Holy One, blessed be He, still waits for us to repent until the day of Hoshana Rabbah. If we repent, good; and if not, there is the "External Seal" on Hoshana Rabbah, which is called the "Mishneh Seal". Therefore, on this night we read *Mishneh Torah* (Deuteronomy).

And therefore on Hoshana Rabbah night, a person needs to finish **the entire Book of Deuteronomy**, called "Mishneh Torah", before midnight. And the moment he finishes it, through this the "External Seal" is made, which determines for a person what will happen with him and what will be with him during that year. **And in the morning**, on Hoshana Rabbah, **the notes are handed over to the messengers**, and there is no longer much that can be changed.

However, **our Master the Ari (Arizal)** says that despite all this, even after midnight, when this seal has already been made, nevertheless it is still possible to take the notes from the hand of the messengers. And one who has not yet repented and repents now,

it is possible. But our Master the Ari says that this is a far-away possibility. If a person has not repented until now, it is a far-away possibility that he will repent now. And despite all this, there is such a thing—that it is possible to take the notes. Until when?
Until Simchat Torah!

The "Keter" of Musaf on Simchat Torah

The entire process that we began on Rosh Hashanah continues until we say the **"Keter" (Crown) prayer of Musaf on Simchat Torah**. When we say "Shema Yisrael", **that is where the matter is concluded!** We finish all the work that we began on Rosh Hashanah! It is all one process. All the Sukkot, the wavings—it is all **one string**. And when is everything sealed? On Simchat Torah, and then we make a celebration for the completion of the Torah.

"But the great spiritual work before Simchat Torah is on the day of Hoshana Rabbah, and therefore on Hoshana Rabbah one should increase prayers for forgiveness and ask for mercy, and it is possible to change everything on the day of Hoshana Rabbah."

"Dismiss the Lawyer"

It is told about a Jew named R' Yosef Kaufman from London, owner of an insurance agency. One day the authorities raided his office, conducted a search, and found things that according to them constituted a violation of the law. An indictment was filed against him, and the prosecution requested to impose a sentence of 14 years imprisonment upon him.

During that period, a rabbi of a synagogue from Rosh HaAyin came to him, and told him that he wants to build a ritual bath (mikvah), and is in need of a proper donation for this purpose. R' Yosef told him that he currently cannot donate large sums, as he has a court case and must pay enormous legal fees in the hope that they will manage to rescue him from the heavy punishment hovering over his head. The initial assessment was that the legal defense in such a case would cost around a million pounds.

That rabbi was not intimidated, and promised him: **"Donate to me the money for the establishment of the mikvah, the entire million pounds, and I promise you that you will win in court and will not need to pay anything to lawyers."** R' Yosef hesitated and sent the question to **Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky**.

Rabbi Chaim answered briefly: "He should dismiss the lawyer, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will be his lawyer." The Jew, who heard such words from Maran Rabbi Chaim and with faith in the sages burning in his heart, picked up the phone that very moment to his lawyer and notified him that he was dismissed. The money was donated instead to the construction of the mikveh in Rosh HaAyin. Afterward he asked what to do nevertheless, whether any effort (hishtadlut) was required of him, and Rabbi Chaim answered that he did not need to do anything.

"I Don't Believe in This Case"

After some time, when the court saw that he was not represented by a lawyer, they sent him a public defender, but the Jew refused to speak with him. He explained that his rabbi was located in Bnei Brak, and the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself and in His glory would be his lawyer. His father, who was his business partner and was also required to cope with a portion of the trouble, was terrified by his son's actions and turned to the Head of Gateshead Yeshiva, Rabbi Avrohom Gurwicz: "Someone needs to talk to my son, he is acting illogically, they will put him in prison for 14 years Heaven forbid!" **Rabbi Avrohom Gurwicz** asked to see the recording of the conversation with Rabbi Chaim, and when he saw that Maran Rabbi Chaim said his lawyer would be the Holy One, blessed be He, he said to the worried father: **"If Rabbi Chaim says so, that is what will happen. Your son does not need a lawyer."**

The Jew's strange behavior aroused great interest, until he was invited for a conversation with the Chief Prosecutor of London, who told him: "I have been doing this work here for 33 years already. It doesn't matter what your rabbi told you: with a good lawyer you have a chance to reach a plea bargain, without representation you will go to prison for many years!" But R' Yosef Kaufman stood his ground and refused to receive representation. When the court date arrived, he called me to receive guidance, and I told him that Maran Rabbi Chaim said he could go to the court, but anyway there would be no trial.

He arrived on time, sat on the defendants' bench, the judge entered, and the prosecutor in the case stood at the podium. But at that very moment a wondrous thing happened: **the prosecution representative said to the judge: "I don't know what happened, but I don't believe in this case. I feel that we are hounding a person for no reason, and I ask to withdraw from the case."** The judge postponed the opening hearing to the next day, hoping the prosecution might find another prosecutor who does believe in the case.

The next day, he met the Chief Prosecutor himself there—the very one who had warned him to go with a good lawyer. It turned out that other people in the prosecution didn't believe in the case either. The Chief Prosecutor told him: "I could find a prosecutor who would prosecute you, but I see that something wondrous is happening here that has never occurred by us. There is an offer I have for you: I am willing to drop the indictment, but promise me that you will arrange a meeting for me with your Rabbi in Bnei Brak. **If he is such a man of wonders, I must see him and shake his hand**"... **This is the great power of faith in the Sages (Emunat Chachamim)!**

Will He Go to Sleep? Crack Sunflower Seeds?

If a person has learned the Five Books (Chumashim) of the Torah well, he can make a completion (*Siyum*) of the Written Torah. True, this is not the entire Written Torah, as there is the rest of the Tanakh, but at least **he has something to rejoice about**—he has the Five Books of the Torah in his hand. What great joy, **what great wealth!**

And after a person knows the Five Books of the Torah, he can also study **Mishnayot**, and when he knows the six orders of the Mishnah, **he is even happier**. And afterward he can

study and know the entire Talmud (Shas), and after that he can study and know all of Rambam (Maimonides)!

It is not difficult! All of us can know! Whoever wants to can study and know, and when he toils, in Heaven they see him, and "the laboring soul labors for itself." Even if right now **he does not understand**, they will open the gates of Heaven for him. After all, it is just like when you see that your son wants so much to know, wouldn't you open the gates that he should know? Of course you would!

So too, the Holy One, blessed be He, wants to see that we truly want to, and then He will open the gates for us. If you knock and knock, the Holy One, blessed be He, will **open for you!** And even if a person's **head is completely blocked**, the Holy One, blessed be He, opens the gates, as he studies and studies, **until suddenly he sees** that he understands—he has transformed into a different person, the gates are opened for him. There is no such thing as a person who gives up! One must never give up!

"Yet they seek Me day by day"—what shall a person do? **Will he go to sleep? Crack sunflower seeds?** No! He will be serious! And this will also give him great joy. But one who slacks off and does not study—he will not know what is written, and that is the greatest shame of all.

All Doors Are Opened!

"Torah, Moshe commanded us, an inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov"—one must merit the great light of the Torah, to rejoice and dance. And a person must do everything in his power in order to merit the Torah.

And one must know that **Torah scholars** have a virtue that is impossible to describe. **Our teacher, Chacham Ben Tzion Abba Shaul**, when we studied under him at Yeshivat Porat Yosef, used to tell us that in Heaven, there is no virtue higher than that of a Torah scholar! And what is his virtue? That after one hundred and twenty years when he ascends Above, **there is no place that is locked before him!** It is impossible to say to him: "You cannot enter here," but rather wherever he arrives, the doors open before him!

And he used to say that they do not act this way in Heaven with anyone else! Not with a righteous person (*Tzaddik*), and not with a pious person (*Chassid*), but only with someone who is a Torah scholar—everything is open before him. Imagine to yourselves what the virtue of a Torah scholar is!