

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF MOHOROSH ZT”L
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SUKKOS
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CHIZUK for YOM TOV

MITZVOS WITH JOY

וְלִקְחֶתֶם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר... וְשִׂמְחֶתֶם לִפְנֵי ה'

You shall take for yourselves the fruit of the citron tree... and rejoice before Hashem.

The tzaddik R' Baruch'l of Mezhibuzh related the following story:

One year in the month of Tishrei, Shlomo Hamelech met the yetzer hara looking downcast. "Why are you so unhappy?" Shlomo Hamelech asked.

"This is a miserable time of year for me!" The yetzer hara responded. "All through the month of Elul everyone does teshuva, and my work from the entire year is wasted. Immediately afterwards is Rosh Hashana, when they blow the shofar and I get all confused (Rosh Hashana 16b). Then, on Yom Kippur they become like angels and I can't prosecute them in the Heavenly court (Yuma 20a). And it doesn't stop there! For the next few days, they are so busy with mitzvos in preparation for yom tov: building the sukkah, buying arba minim, etc. But Sukkos itself is even worse! They take the lulav and esrog and stab me repeatedly each day (Menachos 62a)! How can I not be sad when I am being tortured so...!?"

Exactly a year later, Shlomo Hamelech met with the yetzer hara again. To his surprise, the yetzer hara was in a joyful mood. "What happened now?" Shlomo Hamelech asked. "Last year you were bemoaning your fate during Elul and Tishrei – what changed?"

The yetzer hara explained, "I figured things out. An enormous ship with thousands of esrogim was en route to a huge Jewish metropolis for Sukkos. I had a great idea – I made a hole in the ship and promptly sent it to its watery grave... along with all of its holy cargo. Now the Jews will be arba minim-less for Sukkos! My suffering is over!"

But on Sukkos, the yetzer hara looked despondent once more. "Why are you sad again?" Shlomo Hamelech wondered. "Didn't you sink the ship with all the esrogim?"

"Oh, but you don't know what happened next," the yetzer hara responded glumly. "Somehow, the Jews of the city managed to procure just one esrog. Hundreds of thousands of people, young and old, waited on line for hours just to be able to shake the lulav and esrog. Their joy at being able to perform the mitzva was indescribable, and their love for mitzvos hurt me this year more than ever..."

The Rebbe teaches (Likutei Moharan 1: 25) that through simcha shel mitzva, we destroy the forces of evil that seek to annihilate us. Sukkos is a time of unique and beautiful mitzvos, yet while we expend much effort to do the mitzvos of Sukkos in the most mehudar way possible, we must maintain our focus: וְשִׂמְחֶתֶם לִפְנֵי ה'. In this way, we will be'ezras Hashem be zoche to an uplifting and joyous yom tov.



MOHOROSH SPEAKS

סוכות

“ In Jewish homes worldwide, joy is mounting as preparations for the upcoming yom tov of Sukkos reach a feverish pitch. The highlight of Sukkos is, of course, the sukkah itself. This mitzva is unique in that it involves the entire body. Even seemingly mundane acts of eating, drinking and sleeping are elevated to a spiritual plane, simply by virtue of being performed in the sukkah.

In the cozy confines of the sukkah, we are completely surrounded by Hashem's presence. The passuk says (Yeshaya 26:20) that when a person sits in the sukkah, he is likened to one who is locked into a room with Hashem Himself. Each word of tefilla uttered in these private moments is cherished by Hashem, and we can attain all our dreams by using this opportunity to talk to Him.

The Shulchan Aruch rules (Orach Chaim 639:4) that a person can choose to daven either in or out of the sukkah. The poskim explain (Magen Avraham 14) that a person who

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The disciples of the Vilna Gaon zt"l once asked him, "What is the hardest mitzva to fulfill?" To which the tzaddik responded, "Being joyful on yom tov."

We can all relate to this, especially as we anticipate the upcoming yom tov of Sukkos. It's a family yom tov, a time when we spend our days and nights in a (sometimes rather cramped) *sukkah* and devote many hours on quality time with the children on Chol Hamoed. These factors, as well as simply being out of one's regular routine, provide many opportunities for a person to lose his temper and subsequently lose the great mitzva of *simchas yom tov*.

How can one maintain a serene and joyful state of mind throughout the entire eight days of yom tov?

First and foremost, one must daven to Hashem to assist us in this very holy mission. As much as we try to remain upbeat, only Hashem can ensure that we stay happy through the entire duration of yom tov, no matter what hitches or triggers we face. It is only He who can help us remain positive and spread our feelings of happiness to the entire family.

Another proven method for achieving an unshakable inner joy is Torah learning. When a person learns Torah each day, his *emunah* is strengthened and he becomes a serene person who does not get upset easily. Therefore, this is an appropriate time of year to renew one's commitment to regular Torah learning.

On Simchas Torah, all Jews will exult "חוק חזק ונתחזק" as the entire Torah is completed once more. However, how many can truly join along and honestly say that yes, they have learned all 54 *parshios* of *chamisha chumshei Torah* in the past year? It isn't just a nice thing to do – it's an explicit *halacha* that one must review the *parsha* each week, *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* (*Orach Chaim 285:1*). As we near the beginning of another cycle, the key question remains: will **you** join along next year?

The wisest course of action is not to wait until the last minute, but rather to be *maavir sedra* all through the week: Sunday until *sheini*, Monday until *shlishi*, and so forth. Halachically, one can review the *parsha* from the beginning of the week (*Orach Chaim 285:3*); likewise, the *Mishnah Berurah* says that the Gra zt"l used to be *maavir sedra* a little each day.

Join with the rest of *klal Yisrael* this year. Jump on the *maavir-sedra*-each-day bandwagon and you will reap the benefits it brings.

Kuntres Yom Tov Sukkos



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can remain calm and focused in the *sukkah* should daven there, but if there is a *shul* in his city, he should preferably daven in *shul*. This gives rise to a question: Which

Torah-observant Jew actually lives in a city lacking a *shul*? And why is the calm of a *sukkah* preferable to other locations for *tefilla*?

This *psak* teaches us that *tefilla* should take place both in *shul* and in the *sukkah*. For the standard daily *tefillas* of *shacharis*, *mincha* and *maariv*, one is required to daven in *shul* with a *minyan*. But for the *tefillas* spoken from the heart, the *sukkah* is the perfect location. When a person sits in the *sukkah* and allows himself to feel enveloped in Hashem's loving embrace, he is filled with a sense of calm and connection and his heart opens up to talk to Hashem.

A Time for Salvation

The yom tov of Sukkos is an auspicious time for *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*. Every person carries his personal baggage of challenges, and the only way to rid oneself of struggles and pain is to talk it out with Hashem. *Hisbodedus* is calming, gratifying, and actually makes a difference. Choose a quiet time and place to talk to Hashem – pour out your heart, describe your pain, and explain all the challenges you're going through.

Many people feel comfortable baring their hearts to a close friend or mentor, but turning to Hashem is the only real solution as He is the sole source of salvation. Every word we speak to Him is eagerly awaited and cherished, and those who turn to Hashem for help are never turned away empty-handed. There is no need to omit embarrassing details or hide any dark secrets, since our loving Father knows us intimately and accepts us unconditionally, despite our imperfections.

More specifically, Sukkos is a golden opportunity for those who have not yet found their intended match. The Torah commands us בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים (*Vayikra 23:42*), on which Chazal teach (*Eiruchin 3b*) that one should sit in the *sukkah* with his wife just as he sits in his home with his wife. This can be the baseline for a single's perfect defense. "Hashem, I'm here! I did mine and am sitting in the *sukkah*. Please do Your part and send me a proper spouse!" Likewise, the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:48*) that the mitzva of *sukkah* is a *segula* for children. Therefore, being in the *sukkah* is a potent opportunity to daven for a *shidduch*, the prerequisite for bearing children.

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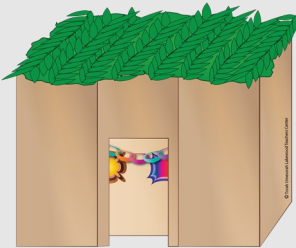
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Although *hisbodedus* is something we can and should do at any time of the year, on Sukkos we feel so much closer to Hashem and it is easier to talk to Him. Let's use this time wisely and pour out our hearts to Hashem, and then, when we will bid farewell to the *sukkah*, we will be *zoche* to bid farewell to our problems, too.

Proper Preparation

We spend so much time and energy in our preparations for the *yom tov* of Sukkos. How can we ensure that our efforts will not be for naught and that we will experience a meaningful and uplifting *yom tov*?



R' Nachman of Tulchin was a close disciple of R' Nosson of Breslev. One year, he spent the entire erev Sukkos building R' Nosson's sukkah. Sitting in the finished sukkah on the first night of yom tov, he mused, "After spending all day toiling over the sukkah, one feels a completely different taam in the mitzva."

R' Nosson responded, "Clearly, you haven't yet tried this: spending all day beseeching Hashem, 'Please allow me to feel a connection to the mitzvah of sukkah' and the taam one feels thereafter..."

The Jewish calendar is replete with *yamim tovim* and special occasions which we all want to maximize. We try so hard to prepare ourselves to properly utilize these times, but we are often unaware as to how to go about it, and the *taam* of *yom tov* is lost in the hectic activity of the time. Taking the time to talk to Hashem is the best possible preparation for every *yom tov* or special *mitzva*. We must plead with Him to give us a *taam* in the time and ask Him for help in doing all His *mitzvos* properly and with joy.

We cannot fathom the tremendous impact we make in *shamayim* by simply opening our mouths to speak to Hashem. All heavenly gates are thrown open in merit of our *tefilla*, showering us with abundant blessings and goodness.

Kuntres Yom Tov Sukkos



Torah" – understanding one's learning and the resulting *simcha*. **Learning Torah without understanding is a crucial first step.**

When a person toils in learning, saying the words of Mishnayos and Gemara even if he understands very little of what he is learning, his words of Torah are exceptionally precious to Hashem. The Zohar says about such a person (*Kedoshim 85b*) that every word of his Torah learning goes straight up to Hashem, Who rejoices with them. Hashem then plants these words of Torah near a stream, and beautiful *arava*-trees bloom from them. The Zohar continues that this applies even to a person who makes countless mistakes as he learns due to his lack of understanding, as the *passuk* says (*Mishlei 5:19*) באהבה תשגה תמיד – in his love for Torah, he learns even with many errors.

Once a person overcomes the initial difficulty of learning Torah without comprehension, he will be *zoche* to understand and reap enormous pleasure from his learning. As the Rebbe once remarked to a *talmid* (*Sichos Haran 17*), "Once the Torah reveals her face to a person, he will no longer need anything else."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah #1*, page 186

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HOW CAN THE SEDER DERECH HALIMUD BE THE WAY TO LEARN?



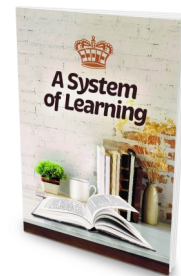
Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

Thank you for the *shiurim* and *chizuk* which are so uplifting, and specifically for the weekly newsletter which is distributed here in my town.

My question is regarding the *seder derech halimud* (learning Torah without a strong focus on comprehension), which the Rosh Yeshiva often talks about. It is written in many *sefarim* that learning Torah isn't supposed to be easy and one must toil for Torah; if so, how can the *seder derech halimud* be the proper way to learn when it is so effortless to achieve?

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

I received your letter.

I'm assuming that you haven't yet tried to learn with the *seder derech halimud* and that's why you are under the impression that it is 'so effortless to achieve'. True, the *pas-suk* says (*Vayikra 26:3*), "אם בחקתי תלכו", on which Rashi explains, שתהיו עמלים בתורה – that one should toil in learning. However, if you will try the *seder derech halimud* and start learning without a strong focus on understanding, you will realize that it takes great effort.

In fact, no one struggles more for the sake of Torah than he who learns despite his lack of comprehension. The Yismach Yisroel teaches (*Parshas Bechukosai 2*) that when a person understands what he is learning, he feels immense satisfaction in his studies and therefore, it cannot be called toil. Real עמילות בתורה is when a person learns בגירסא – by

just reading the words of Torah. This is what can truly be referred to as יגיעה ועבודה ועמל, because when a person learns this way he does not taste the sweetness and satisfaction of learning Torah.

The Rebbe teaches this same concept, drawing a parallel between Torah learning and the *yamim tovim* of Hoshana Rabba and Simchas Torah. He says (*Likutei Moharan 1:74*) that there are two ways to learn Torah: at times, one learns and understands what he is learning, but other times he doesn't grasp it at all. Hoshana Rabba corresponds to דיבור בלא דעה – saying the words of Torah **without** comprehension, (signified by the *aravos* which resemble lips), and Simchas Torah corresponds to דיבור בדעה – learning **with** comprehension. Only after "Hoshana Rabba" (just saying the words) can a person achieve "Simchas

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