

The Sukkah – A Fresh Breath of Emunah and Bitochon

The *Zohar HaKodash* calls the *Sukkah* “*Tzelah deMeheim’nusah* – the shadow of faith”. The entire spirit of *Chag HaSukkos* is to instill in us *Emunah* and *Bitochon* in the Almighty. We abandon the comfort of our homes and erect a simple hut, covered in foliage. Given that the *Sukkah* is a temporary dwelling we do not affix any *Mezuzos* to its doorposts and are reminded that this entire world is, in fact, a temporary dwelling. Every single physical pleasure is transient and all of a person’s accomplishments and failures in this world depend exclusively on the Will of the Almighty. If a person’s efforts and exertion are not blessed by the Creator, they will amount to nothing. If they are, the person’s efforts will bear fruit. *Chag HaSukkos* irradiates this very spirit of faith and trust in *HaShem*.

A young child has no worries regarding what he or she will eat, what clothes he or she will wear and who will pay for his or her education, for they know that their parents will take care of their needs. When a parent tells a child that they will go on a trip somewhere, the child will not show any doubts regarding whether or not they will have a place to sleep, who will pay their travel expenses or what will they eat, the child knows that all of these matters will be taken care of by the parent.

We are the children of the Almighty and, therefore, our approach to life should be the same, with the same level of simple and basic *Emunah* and *Bitochon* in our Father. We should strive to achieve the level where we sincerely believe that after an appropriate *hishtadlus* – the amount of effort incumbent upon us all – the end result is really up to the Almighty’s decision. He knows what’s best for us, just like we know what’s best for our young children.

Often times one feels that one’s requests are not being answered, that one is not receiving what one is asking from *HaShem*. In reality, when that happens, we should realize that He may in fact be sparing us from greater *nisyonos* – tests. How can we be totally sure that what we are asking for is what’s best for us? How can we be sure it would not turn us into arrogant beings?

Says *Shlomo HaMelech*¹: “*Osher shamur liba’lav lera’atoh* – richness is kept for its owner for his bad”. Explaining this *posuk* Rash”i brings the example of *Korach* who was greatly harmed by his wealth and arrogance.

Regarding our *hishtadlus*, the amount of effort required will vary according to the spiritual level of different individuals. When someone is on a very lofty spiritual level, he will require less of an effort to attain his material goals. Moreover, he is enjoined to worry much less about his own *hishtadlus* as his faith and trust in the Creator should be his guarantee of succeeding.

In this context we know that *Yosef HaTzadik*, given his lofty spiritual status, failed a test by overexerting himself in his efforts to attain his freedom and was, therefore, punished with staying

¹ Koheles 5:12

in jail for an additional two years. Rash'i explains to us that this happened because *Yosef* placed his trust in Pharaoh's minister and, as such, the minister simply forgot about *Yosef* until the Almighty Himself decided that he should remember him. Regarding this incident we find the following *posuk* in *Tehillim*²: "*Ashrey hagever asher sam HaShem mivtachoh – Fortunate is the man who places his trust in HaShem...*"

In the *Sefer Tiferes HaYahadus* the *Sukkah* is compared to a human lung. Just like a human being breathes air into his lungs and, through a process known as hematosis the lungs are able to infuse our blood with oxygen, which is then taken to the whole body. So too, during *Chag HaSukkos* a Jewish person is infused with a fresh breath of *Emunah* and *Bitochon*, which should continue to be felt throughout the year, thanks to the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah*.

In the *Sefer Beis Avrohom*, the Rebbe of Slonim explains that the essence of the *Sukkah* lies in the fact that Jewish people abandon their place of residence and shelter themselves in a Holy refuge, in order to be alone with the Creator.

The *Sefer Nesivos Sholom* further clarifies the concept of a Holy refuge mentioned by the *Beis Avrohom* and explains a very important concept about the seven Holy *Ushpizin* – guests (*Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, Dovid*) who grace us with their presence during *Sukkos*. These seven guests do not come to visit us during *Pesach, Shavuos* or *Shabbos*, they only come on *Sukkos*. Why is that? Why this predilection for *Sukkos* over any other time? Explains the *Nesivos Sholom* that the truth of the matter is that they are in the upper realms of lofty spiritual worlds and, as such, they are completely unable to descend into the lowly world in which we live. However, all of this changes on *Sukkos*, for the *Sukkah* itself is NOT in this world, and is rather a portal that transports us to the very realm where the aforementioned *Tzadikim* reside. It elevates us above this world and helps us transcend into the loftiest of planes. That's the reason why they are able to visit us in our *Sukkah* during *Chag HaSukkos*, for we have ascended to their level and not the other way around.

So, go into the *Sukkah* and take a deep breath of *Emunah* and *Bitochon* in the company of the *Heilige Shiv'a Ro'im*. *B'ezras HaShem* it should give us all *Emunah* and *Bitochon* to last, at least, until *LeShanah Habaah B'Yirushalayim HaB'nuyah*.

Wishing you a Gut Yom Tov

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² 40:5