



Parashat Sukkot 5770

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On Sukkot -

The Unity of the Four Species and the Nation of Israel

[Opening words from Ha-Rav's radio show]

There is a famous teaching of our Rabbis (Vayikra Rabbah 30:12) that there are four types of Jews. There are some Jews compared to an etrog, which has a good taste and a good smell, and these Jews possess both Torah learning and mitzvah observance. The Lulav (palm branch) has a good taste but no smell representing the Jews who learn Torah but do not observe the mitzvot. And there are some Jews like the Hadas (myrtle) which has a good smell but no taste. These Jews fulfill the mitzvot but do not learn Torah. And then there is the Aravah (willow) which has no smell and no taste like the Jews without Torah or mitzvot. The midrash concludes that these groups join together – when we hold the Four Species together - and one atones for the other. The Ramchal explained in his book "Mesilat Yesharim" (end of chap. 19) that Hashem does not want Jews to separate from one another. One group atones for

the other. Thus, if you are an Etrog you should not place yourself above others and say that they are no good. You are an Etrog – full of Torah and mitzvot – for all of the Nation of Israel.

There is a story found in the Beit Yosef (Orach Chaim 651) that Rabbi Menachem Rakanti once had a dream in which he saw Hashem's four-letter name written with the first three letters together and then the last letter of its own. He woke up quite bothered and did not understand the meaning of the dream. In the morning, he saw that there was a guest who held the Lulav, Hadas and Aravah in one hand and the Etrog in the other hand and did not join them together. He then understood that according to the mystical teaching the Four Species correspond to the four letters of Hashem's Name. One who separates the Four Species, separates the letters of Hashem's Name. We can go even further to say that one who causes discord and fragmentation among the Nation of Israel also causes a separation among the letters of Hashem's Name. This idea is found in the teachings of Rabbi David Tabil of Minsk, the author of "Nachalat David" (Beit David, darash 6 quoted in Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 468). This is also written in the midrash about the Four Species which we mentioned that Hashem says: If you become one united group, I will be elevated. Everything is dependent on the Nation of Israel uniting.

We will not cease speaking about the importance of the unity of the Nation of Israel. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah would repeat himself over and over regarding important matters.

People occasionally say: The time has arrived to unite the camp. Baruch Hashem, we have finally reached an ideal upon which everyone can agree. Only one small detail remains: Who is this camp? There are obviously many camps and each marches with its large flag and small trumpets. And each camp thinks it possesses the entire truth, and the other camps are members of a different religion. Since everyone is suggesting a camp, I will also give my suggestion. The camp I suggest is the entire Nation of Israel. This is the true camp. Do not be confused into thinking that you have the entire truth. This is contained within the entire Nation of Israel and everyone is needed. It does not help that the Etrog is better than the other species, since you cannot fulfill the mitzvah with four Etrogim. You need all four species. The Master of the Universe spread all of the talents among the entire Nation. Therefore, if you see someone who looks empty, perhaps he is not. After all, our Sages say (Sanhedrin 37a) that every the empty ones in the Nation of Israel are full of mitzvot like a pomegranate.

Rav Aviner on...

Happiness Doesn't Feel Happy

[Translated from the book "Happy Women" by Chana Jenny Weisberg, the creator of the Jewish MomVideo Series that can be viewed on her popular website: JewishMom.com]

Lest you should say, "It's true that there is a commandment to perform mitzvot with joy, but what can I do if I simply don't feel any joy?" This is an important question, and the answer is just as important: you can be happy without feeling happy, and you can feel happy without being happy. Of course, I have nothing against feeling happy, but this is not the same thing as happiness. Happiness is not the same thing as enjoyment; happiness is a feeling of internal satisfaction from doing good things, and from fulfilling our obligations. It is similar to a feeling of joy. Pleasure, from eating delicious food for example, is fleeting. Enjoyment is felt for a moment and after that it disappears, and sometimes the pursuit of pleasure even turns into a disease.

Western society is a society of pleasures, brimming with delicacies, but its citizens are miserable, and this situation is not new. For several hundred years the great Western writers have been describing miserable and suffering human beings, to whom the pleasures of the world do not bring happiness. People are in despair, broken, disgusted by life, nauseated by life, vomiting life. The French philosopher Sartre wrote a book called "Nausea." This is the constant emotional state of the Western human being – a nausea from life. Another existentialist philosopher from Germany named Heidegger, described how a person has a feeling of *Geworfenheit* – having been thrown into the world. In other words, people feel thrown into a world devoid of meaning, and all of the pleasures of the world cannot fill the void within them with happiness.

Our Sages compare the verse "And also the spirit will not be filled" (Kohelet 6:7) with a princess who marries a townsman who presents her with many luxuries, but her heart yearns for the palace of the king (Kohelet Raba). The soul is the princess, and food and drink cannot fill her: the soul has different aspirations altogether.

The happiness of performing a mitzvah is closer to the concept of joy. Joy is a constant experience that comes from the knowledge and from the internal consciousness of human beings that they are honest and good – and that if sometimes they fail, they can repent.

We all know the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" We won't respond to that question at the moment. We will only present what our Sages teach us, that in a certain sense there is no such thing as bad things happening to good people. Righteous people, Tzaddikim, are joyful. They might be sick and impoverished, exiled from their homeland and beaten, but this does not cause them unhappiness. Also the notion of "good things happening to bad people" does not exist. A person can have treasures and palaces, but if he is a bad person nothing will bring him happiness.

The happiness of the mitzvah is the internal consciousness, the internal awareness of people that they are good and honest, and that they therefore lack nothing. They do not require any reward for this. "The reward for a mitzvah is a mitzvah" (Avot 4:2) They are happy that they have performed a mitzvah, and they yearn to perform yet another.

Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Sukkot

Our Rabbi would remind his students of the importance of sleeping in the sukkah. When he was in Switzerland in the cold and snow, he would not forgo even one night of sleeping in the sukkah.

A student related: "On Sukkot, great Rabbis sat in our Rabbi's sukkah, and I brought my younger girls to visit so that he would know who they were. Suddenly my youngest daughter said out loud: 'What an ugly sukkah, it is not kosher at all!' Everyone stared, and I was embarrassed. Our Rabbi asked: 'Who said that?' I wanted to hide my daughter, but she answered: 'I did!' 'Come here," the Rav said, 'What do you have to say about the sukkah?' 'This is a sukkah? It is just boards!' 'What do you want?' 'Shach, greenery, trees, leaves. This is not kosher at all!' Our Rabbi said: 'Perfect innocence.' This is what he said about her."

It happened one time that some people brought our Rabbi a schach mat (when they first became available): he examined it to see if it was kosher, and he was satisfied. Another time, some people brought him schach; he spent a long time investigating to be certain that it was taken from a permissible area and there was no fear of it being stolen. He requested that they check with the municipality that it was permissible to take them.

When he needed to leave the sukkah (in the year 5740), when it was raining hard, he said: "It seems that there is a greater need for rain than our mitzvot" (this was after a

few years on drought, and afterwards this year was a year of blessing). (Gadol Shimusha P. 102)

One year our Rabbi pointed out with joy, that the etrog came to him from Kefar Ha-Roeh (Gadol Shimusha pg. 94).

When he would take the etrog he would kiss it (ibid.).

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'a Lot*

Magdil, Migdol

The same verse appears twice in the Tanach with a minor change. In the Book of Tehillim (18:51), it is written "Magdil" (meaning "He is magnifying [magdil] the salvation of His King [David]"), while in the Book of Shmuel (2 22:51) it says "Migdol" (meaning "He is a tower [migdol] of salvation to His King"). The Book of Shmuel is part of the "Prophets," which were said through prophecy. The Book of Tehillim is part of the "Writings," which were said through the Divine Spirit. Our Sages teach that there is a difference between "To David, a Psalm" and "A Psalm of David": "'To David, a Psalm' teaches that first the Divine Presence rested on him and then he recited that song; 'A Psalm of David' teaches that he first recited the Psalm and only then the Divine Presence rested on him" (Pesachim 117a). At times he began to sing and the Divine Presence rested on his song. This is the Divine Spirit. At other times, the Divine Presence rested on him, and, on account of this, we began to sing. This is prophecy. Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, therefore explained that on the days of holiness like Shabbat and holidays, we use the more exalted version, "Migdol," and on weekdays the simpler version, "Magdil." The meaning of "Magdil" is that the Master of the Universe is the One who brings about the process of the magnification of the Salvation. "Migdol," is that He, may He be blessed, is the Infinite Essence of greatness.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



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