



Parashat Sukkot - #300

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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 who compare to an Etrog, which has a good taste and a good smell, and these Jews possess both Torah learning and Mitzvah observance. There are others who are similar to the Lulav (palm branch), which has a good taste but no smell, representing the Jews who learn Torah but do not observe the Mitzvot. And then there are Jews who are like the Hadas (myrtle) which has a good smell but no taste. These Jews fulfill the Mitzvot but do not learn Torah. And finally there are those who resemble the Aravah (willow), which has no smell and no taste, and is thus likened to a Jew without Torah or Mitzvot. The Midrash concludes that when we hold the Four Species together, we join these groups 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 on 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 above, for Hashem says: If you become one united group, I will be elevated. Everything depends upon the Nation of Israel uniting.

We will not cease talking 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 else is suggesting a camp, I will also give a 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 even the empty ones in the Nation of Israel are full of Mitzvot like a pomegranate.

Rav Aviner on...

The Nation of Israel and the Secret of Cholent

[Talk in the Yeshiva during Lunch]

Some people worry about the future of the Nation of Israel from various perspectives, and they ask: What's going to be?

Some say that the strength of the Charedim is increasing due to their high birthrate. Certainly that is a good thing, for these are G-d-fearing people. Yet – so goes the complaint – they have two shortcomings: 1. Many of them don't go to the army, and even if those who do go do not perform enthusiastically and devotedly in elite units or even in the fixed army. 2. Many of them do not work. As for those who do work, they are not involved in important, creative fields of endeavor. A situation is created in which the secular learn professions in university and work as engineers and such, whereas the Charedim work as clerks or salespeople. They do not constitute a strong force in our economic creativity. These are two problems that have no solution.

There is another type of people, constituting a considerable segment of the population – the immigrants from Russia. They are another type of Jews. Most of them are irreligious. Our tradition does not interest them. Moreover, four hundred thousand of

them are non-Jews. They are intellectual, inquisitive and critical people. They are highly talented, hard working, suspicious and strong, for in Russia either you were suspicious and strong or you perished. They are powerhouses of doing and building even if they are not at all religious and not Zionists in the historic sense of the word. Straight and simple, they're just here in Eretz Yisrael, and they're leaving a strong stamp.

There is another type of people, plain old Joes, jokester youths uninterested in all the things mentioned above. There are hundreds of thousands of such youths roaming the streets by night. They're a considerable percentage of the population. When they get married, they straighten out, because their wives tell them to stop their nonsense, but even then, they are not strong participants in building the Nation.

Then there are the people with the knit-Kippot, and they aren't so successful at taking hold of political power, because they are divided, and don't manage to unify. Most of the National Religious don't vote for National Religious parties, and those who do vote for those parties have split themselves between two parties, with each of those two parties splitting into several sub-parties. Each of those parties says that the other parties don't understand what's going on. Even the Rabbis don't succeed in sitting together. Each Rabbi thinks that he has all the truth and all the justice, and that everyone else is mistaken.

In addition to all of this, all the rabbinical posts and rabbinical judges' posts are being taken over bit by bit by the Charedim. The parties need the religious in the coalitions, and all that the Charedim ask for is money for Yeshivot and rabbinical posts. For the large parties, that's a small price to pay. What do they care if the Charedim receive the rabbinic postings? And money to Yeshivot is relatively minor. But the National Religious, on the other hand, have political demands, and that is something bothersome.

So, what's going to be?

The answer is simple. G-d takes all of these people, puts them all in a pressure cooker, locks the lid and makes them all into a sort of Cholent. That is G-d's secret: Cholent. Cholent is a Jewish wonder. The Talmud long ago asked (Shabbat 119a), "Why does our Shabbat dish have such a pungent fragrance?"

The Jews, being poor, took a dry bone, moldy potatoes, a bit of beans, a little water, a few moldy vegetables, a piece of tasteless meat, and they cooked it together for hours and hours, until what ultimately emerged was Cholent, with its heavenly flavor – the Paradise of poor Jews.

And it's the same here in the State of Israel.

G-d takes all the different sorts of people and He turns them into a marvelous Nation. He already did this in the iron crucible of Egypt.

Rabbi Zerachiah Ha-Levi, author of "Ba'al Ha-Ma'or" (Ha-Ma'or Ha-Katan, Shabbat 16b on the Rif), wrote: "Some say that making the Shabbat enjoyable by means of Cholent is based on a Rabbinical enactment, and anyone who does not partake of Cholent should be investigated to see if he is a heretic... whereas whoever arranges to cook for the Shabbat, to make it pleasurable to eat well is the true believer who shall merit the end of days." (See Rama, Orach Chaim 257:8. Mishnah Berurah #49, who quotes the Ba'al Ha-Ma'or.) From here comes proof that the redemption will come by way of Cholent. G-d takes all the various elements and builds Himself a marvelous Nation.

Even the four hundred thousand non-Jews who came from Russia will ultimately either undergo legitimate Jewish conversions, or leave. We hope that by dint of the

Cholent they will become Jewish. The Jews, themselves, have to be transformed as well, so that they increase Torah learning.

Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook said that the same thing happened in the times of Ezra and Nechemia when there were a lot of substandard Jews, a lot of Jews with non-Jewish wives, a lot of Shabbat violators and a number of people who had sold their own siblings into slavery. Yet in the end it all was rectified, and after hundreds of years the Sages of the Mishnah and Talmud, those who built up the Oral Law, emerged from those very same Jews (Igerot Ha-Re'eiyah, Part 1 #311. And see Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, Bereshit, pp. 283-383, who said: G-d has made us into a Cholent, and now the iron crucible is in the Land of Freedom).

The question is: What do G-d fearing Jews contribute to this Cholent?

We contribute “light” to the Cholent. In his work “Orot”, Rav Kook explains that this light is composed of two segments: love and faith. That is our contribution to the Cholent. It may well be that this is the Cholent's main ingredient, because love and faith are the force that transform the disparate elements into one. That force brings a blessing to the entire Nation. That is why we learn Torah. We learn the love of Israel, which is a very profound science, and we learn faith, which includes the Written Torah, the Oral Torah, and our medieval and later authorities.

And just as the Master-of-the-Universe juggles all those historic processes of the rebuilding of the Land, the establishment of the Jewish State, Israel's wars, the Israeli economy and more, so too, are our inner struggles divine processes as well. No group can take control over the Nation. Each one has to contribute what he considers to be the most important element.

We contribute love and faith. We lack in our hands all of the forces we need to build up the entire Nation. We are in this respect impoverished. Every group is impoverished and lacks a great deal. Yet all of us together create something marvelous and delicious which, like Cholent, which warms the heart and soul.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Preserving the Four Species throughout Sukkot

Question: How does one preserve the Four Species throughout all of Sukkot?

Answer: This is what one should do to preserve the Four Species so that they do not dry out:

1. Lulav (palm) - One should store it in a cool place such as on the floor. Do not place it in water after it is open, rather wrap it in a slightly damp cloth. If the cloth is too wet, the lulav will become spoiled. Wrap it around the holder so that it will not become spoiled within the holder.

2. Hadasim (myrtle) - Place the lower end in water. Wrap in a slightly damp cloth (not too wet, as we mentioned), or in a damp newspaper, and place in the refrigerator or any other cool place.
3. Aravot (willow) - Wrap in up in a damp cloth. Placing the lower end in water will not help.
4. Etrog - Wrap it and keep it in a shady or cool place.

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