

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## SUKKOS

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Yaakov Exempts His Descendents from Exile

"יבזכות צאתי מבית החוצה...חשב לי זאת כאלו הרחקת נדוד, והרב כבסני מעוני ומחטאתי טהרני" (מתוך תפילה קודם קיום מצות הסוכה)

The source of this *tefillah* is the *Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Emor, end of remez 653)* that sitting in the *sukkah* completes the process of the atonement for sins, which began during the Yamim Nora'im that preceded the festival. If, *chalilah*, we were judged to go into exile, then the fact that we are "exiled" from our homes into the *sukkah* is as though we were exiled to Bavel.

It is puzzling however: if distress and suffering are part of the mitzvah of *sukkah*, when why did *Chazal* exempt a "mitzta'er", one for whom it is very difficult, from fulfilling it (*Sukkah* 25b)? Wouldn't it seem that on the contrary, the more difficult it is for him, the more he will be atoned? Rav Shlomo Gantzfried, the author of *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, explains:

In the words of defense that Moshe Rabbeinu offered about Bnei Yisrael after the sin of the *Eigel*, he said (*Shemos* 32:13): "Remember for Avraham, for Yitzchak and for Yisrael Your servants," and *Chazal* explain (*Tanchuma Ki Sisa* 24): "Moshe said: Ribono shel Olam, if they are deserving of being burned – remember Avraham who was *moser nefesh* to be burned to sanctify Your Name in Ur Kasdim; if they are deserving of being slaughtered – remember Yitzchak their forbear who gave his neck to be slaughtered for the sanctity of Your Name. If they are deserving of exile – remember Yaakov their forbear, who was exiled to Charan."

It is known (see *Tur, Orach Chaim* 417) that the Three Regalim correspond to the three Avos, with Succos corresponding to Yaakov, as alluded to in the *passuk (Bereishis* 33:17): "And Yaakov traveled to Succos and built himself a home and for his cattle he made *succos*, that is why he called the name of the place Succos." According to this *Midrash* we can understand that sitting in a *sukkah* is not considered exile because of the distress involved, but because it evokes the merit of Yaakov Avinu, who was exiled to Charan, and that is what makes it like an exile that atones for his descendents.

Aperion, Parashas Emor

#### Succah in the Secret of Amen

In the introduction to his *sefer Bikkurei Yaakov* on the *halachos* of *sukkah*, the *Aruch Laner* writes:

"And they should be very careful to fulfill the mitzvah of *sukkah*, whose numerical value is 91, equal to the two Holy Names, whose numerical value is 'amen.' The holiness is doubled and when one fulfills it in accordance with *halachah*, then his reward from Above will be doubled."

The Rebbe **Harav Shlomo of Bobov** added: In *Sefer Tehillim* (34:9) it says "*Taamu ur'eu ki tov Hashem ashrei hagever yecheseh bo.*" This *passuk* refers to the mitzvah of *sukkah*, as those who sit in the *sukkah* are basking in the Shadow of Hashem. The words "*yecheseh bo*" are numerically equivalent to 91, which is amen, to teach us that while sitting in the *sukkah*, one should have in mind the holy Yichud that is concealed in the word amen.

Milin Yakirin, Tehillim 34:9

#### Teishvu K'Ein Taduru

"ברוך אתה... אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לישב בסוכה" (ברכת מצות הסוכה)

Why did the wording of the *brachah* mention specifically the matter of *yeshivah*, sitting? Isn't a person obligated to do in the *sukkah* everything he does at home, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, learning and more?

The *Ramban* explained: This language was established based on the words of the *passuk (Vayikra* 23:42): "*Besukkos teishvu shivas yamim.*" Indeed, the *Gemara (Sukkah* 27a) explains that the word "*teishvu*" in the *passuk* means "*taduru*," you should live, referring to all the activities that a person is used to doing in his home, and not necessarily just sitting.

Chiddushei Haramban, Pesachim 7a

#### Netilas Lulav Symbolizes the Victory of Yisrael

"ברוך אתה... אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת לולב"

There is a well known question: Why do we say "*al netilas lulav*" and not "*al lekichas lulav*" as the *passuk* says (*Vayikra* 23:40): "*Velakachtem lachem beyom harishon...*"?

**Harav Baruch Epstein of Pinsk** offers a beautiful explanation for this: The *Midrash (Tanchuma Emor* 18) explains that each year, during the Yamim Nora'im, Bnei Yisrael enter a court case with the nations of the world, and no one knows who will win, until Yisrael emerges on Succos with their *lulavim* and *esrogim* in hand, like victors, who customarily wave palm fronds as a sign of their victory.

According to this we can understand the *nusach* of the *brachah*: because raising the *lulav* is a symbol to all that we have won the court case against the nations of the world, therefore, we make the *brachah* with the words "*netilah*", which means raising in pride. (*Yeshayah* 63:9)

#### Pure Kavanos During the Na'anuim

The **Shefa Chaim** of Sanz was on a lofty spiritual level already as a young child. When he was a young boy, his father purchased the four *minim* for him. During *Hallel*, the father was surprised to see that his son was taking a long time to perform the *na'anuim*. For fear that he was doing it as just an imitation of others, the father asked his son what he was doing. He was most surprised at the answer: "With every move that I make with the *na'anuim* I have in mind to annul the control of the *yetzer* and his accusations against Bnei Yisrael... and therefore, I daven for them in my heart that Hashem should gather them together quickly from where they are to the Holy Land. That is why it takes me so long."

Lapid Ha'eish, Vol. 1, p. 40

#### Tefillah From a Clean Mouth is Accepted

"הושענא למענך אלקינו הושע נא" (מתוך סדר הושענות)

Why did *Chazal* establish that we recite so many *tefillos* and *hoshanos* on Succos?

The **Imrei Emes** explained: In the days after Yom Kippur, the time of our atonement, our words are clean and pure from any trace of sin. Therefore, it is worthy that we utilize this time for *tefillah* and pleading, because *tefillah* that emerges from a pure mouth is surely received and accepted more.

An allusion to this can be found in the *pesukim* of *Tehillim* (19, 14-15): "*Venikeisi mipesha rav: yihiyu leratzon imrei fi*" – when I am clean of sin, then my words will rise up and be accepted.

Likutei Yehudah Succos



On Tuesday, the fifth day of Chol Hamoed Succos, is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Eliezer Papo, zy" a, author of **Pele Yoetz**, who wrote in his *sefer Chessed L'Alafim (Orach Chaim* 56 1):

"It is worthy for each person to try and run and wait to answer amen; and may it be that they should make the effort to answer amen like they do for a profit of a few pennies. About this it is said (*Mishlei* 2:4): "If you seek it like money and search for it like a treasure, then you will understand Yiras Hashem."

Chessed L'Alafim, Orach Chaim 56 1

"אם תבקשנה ככסף; אז תבין יראת ה'" (משלי ב ד-ה)



## Tefillas Geshem

At the height of Shemini Atzeres—and Simchas Torah in Eretz Yisrael—the *tzibbur* temporarily tempers the festive atmosphere and for a short time, dons the mantle of solemnity. Toward this end, the *shaliach tzibbur* puts on the *kittel* of the Day of Judgment and begins to sing in the tunes of the Yamim Noraim, “*Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei Rabba...*”

*Tefillas Geshem* is the poignant *tefillah* in which we plead, with lofty words, for rains for the coming year. One who peruses the writings of the Ari HaKadosh and his disciples will find many secrets concealed in this *tefillah*. The *seforim of gedolei Torah* and *chassidus* also expounded its lyrics.

Why is this *tefillah* said specifically on this day, and what connection does it have to the Yamim Noraim? The answer to that, and more, is explained in this segment:

## Tefillas Geshem – After Succos

Although the *Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 2 1)* explains that during the holiday of Succos, the world is judged over water, we do not ask for rain until Shemini Atzeres (*Taanis 2a*), because rain is a cursed sign on the festival (*Sukkah 28b*), and in order that rains should not fall on the festival, the *tefillah* asking for rain is delayed until afterwards. (*Rashi* *ibid* beginning with the word “*siman*”)

Based on this, the *Levush* writes (*Orach Chaim 114 1*) that this is why it was established that we recite *Tefillas Tal* specifically on the first day of Pesach, and *Tefillas Geshem* specifically on the last day of Succos, even though it doesn't make sense to say that the rainy period begins and ends specifically on these days. However, because *Chazal* wanted us to ask for mercy that all three *regalim* should pass with no rain, because aside for rains being a cursed sign on Succos, they could disturb us from performing the mitzvah of *simchah* on the holidays as is worthy. Therefore, they arranged that we should ask for the rains to begin after Succos and to stop at the beginning of Pesach.

Other reasons for postponing *Tefillas Geshem* until after Succos are explained by the Acharonim:

1. The main judgment for rains – if they will be abundant or sparse – is made on Succos, but the final ruling – if there will be *gishmei brachah*, with tranquility and without harming people, and if they will fall on settled areas or on the sea, is only on Shemini Atzeres. (*Mateh Moshe 571*)

2. The *Mishnah (Taanis 3 8)* explains that when there was a drought, the sages chose Choni Hameagel to daven for rain, because he was accustomed to coming before Hashem like a child before his father. It is explained from this that in order to ask for rain, we have to be on the level of a son before his father. Therefore, in the second passage of *Krias Shema*, the Torah put the words “*L'ahavah es Hashem Elokeichem ul'ovdo bechol levavchem*” right near the words “*venasati metar artzechem*.”

On Shemini Atzeres, all of Klal Yisrael rises to the level of being the children of Hashem. It is compared to a king who summoned his sons for seven days of feasting and when they came to bid him farewell he asked them to tarry for one more day. “*Kashev alai preidaschem*, your departure is difficult for Me” (*Rashi Vayikra 23:36*), and therefore, it was established to ask for rain specifically on this day, when we are all considered “like a repentant son before his father.” (*Rinas Yitzchak, Moadim*, p. 97)

3. From the words of the *passuk (Vayikra 26 3-4)* “*Im bechukosai teleichu v'es mitzvosai tishmeru v'asisem osam: venasati gishmeichem b'itam*” *Chazal* learn that the *brachah* of rain is contingent on toil in Torah (see *Rashi* *ibid*). Therefore, it is worthy that we should daven for it specifically on Simchas Torah, when we most express our love for the holy Torah. (*Avnei Nachal* p. 135)

## Why It Was Placed in Tefillas Mussaf

In light of these reasons, we have to understand why we wait to daven for rain until *Mussaf*. Would it not have been preferable to recite the *tefillah* on the eve of Shemini Atzeres? This question is presented in the *Yerushalmi (Taanis 1 1)* and see *Bais Yosef (Orach Chaim 114)*, who cites several answers.

By way of *drush*, Harav Yissachar Dov of Belz explains: In *Parashas Bereishis (2:5)* it says: “*Vechol siach hasadeh terem yihiyeh b'aretz vechol eisev hasadeh terem yitzmach ki lo himtir Hashem Elokim al ha'aretz v'adam ayin l'avod es ha'adamah*.” *Rashi* explains: “Why did He not bring down rains? Because “there was no person to work the land,” and Adam did not recognize the goodness of the rains. Once he realized that the rain is a necessity for the world, he davened for it and it came down, and the trees and the grass grew.”

When did Adam Harishon offer this *tefillah*? From the words of the *Midrash* (see *Yalkut Shimoni Pinchas remez 782*) it is explained that it was in the seventh hour of the first day of Creation. Because that is the hour that is closest to *Mussaf* (see *Brachos 26 1-2*), it was established that we, too, should pray for rain at this hour, which is the time that is auspicious for it. (*Aleph Ksav* Vol. I, letter *aleph*)

## The Chazzan Wears a Kittel

It is customary that the *chazzan* wears a *kittel* when reciting *Tefillas Geshem*, and he offers the prayer in a poignant tune, as opposed to one that expresses the joy of the Yom Tov. That is because on this festival we are judged regarding water, and thus, this *tefillah* is like that of the Day of Judgment (*Shaarei Chag Hasuccos, Shaar 12, chapter 2:19*). Another reason for wearing a *kittel* is cited in *Minhagei Yeshurun (Vilna 5659, 111)*: When wearing a white garment, such as the shrouds that the deceased are placed in, we seek to arouse the heart of the nation to the fact that we are about to pray for the main principle of life, because the life of a person is contingent on his *parnassah*, his sustenance.

On Shemini Atzeres, at the *minyana* where Harav Yisrael Salanter davened with his leading disciples, one of them was sent before *Tefillas Geshem* to bring the *kittel*, as was customary. But for some reason, he took a very long time coming back. The disciples came over to their Rebbe and asked, perhaps they should forego the custom of wearing a *kittel* because of the *tircha*, the inconvenience, to the *tzibbur*. Rav Yisrael replied: “But what else do we have left today besides the *kittel*...” (*Kisvei Hasaba MiKelm*, Vol. II, p. 787)

## For a Brachah and Not a Klalah, Amen

*Tefillas Geshem* concludes with three requests that are cried out by the *chazzan*, and to which the congregation replies amen: “*Livrachah velo liklalah...lechaim velo lema'ass, to life and not to death...lesova velo leratzon*, for satiation and not for wanting.”

This is the place to mention the rebuke of the *Chemdas Yamim (3 7 19)* who said that while people are so scrupulous about shouting amen after “*Hayom T'amtzeinu*”, it is worthy that they do the same regarding answering amen after these three requests: “Many of the ignorant people who are lax in the honor of Hashem will answer amen so loudly when the *shaliach tzibbur* says *Hayom T'Amteinu* that the land will split, and they hasten themselves and their little children to answer amen. But when they hear *brachos* and *Kaddish*, there is no sound. I call them “*banim lo eimun bam*” (*Devarim 32:20*) – “*lo amen bam*”, as they have made the trivial into the principal and trivialized the principal.”

## The Healer for All My Ailments

Throughout the days of Succos, Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, *zt”l*, the Rav of Yerushalayim, would rise very early at dawn and recite *Tehillim* in a pleasant voice, with deep emotion and poignant song.

Several residents of the city who also arose early would gather outside his modest sukkah to listen to the beautiful singing. They felt at the time as though they were standing in the Azarah and observing the Kohanim doing the service of the *Korban Tamid* of the morning, and the Levim standing on the *duchan* and accompanying the service with their magnificent singing.

One year, the daughter of Rav Avigdor Ender, one of the erudite residents of the city, fell ill. On the first day of Succos, her fever began to rise, and her condition deteriorated from day to day.

One night of Chol Hamoed, her condition deteriorated drastically. Rav Avigdor hurried to the Misgav Ladach Hospital near his home to summon a doctor to examine the child. But to his horror, the doctor could not find a remedy for her ailment. Moreover, he told the father, that if within twenty four hours, the fever went down, then there was hope for her life. But if the fever would remain, then the calamitous outcome was more or less inevitable.

Rav Avigdor recoiled at these words, yet he never lost hope. As a believing Yid, he ran in panic to the Kosel, from where the Shechinah never moves, and davened fervently to his Father in heaven to have mercy on his daughter and save her life.

Dawn was already breaking when Rav Avigdor turned back to head home. On his way, he stopped in the Batei Machseh neighborhood, where Rav Sonnefeld lived, in order to ask the Rav to arouse Heavenly Mercy for his child and to give him a *brachah* for a *refuah*.

At the time, Rav Yosef Chaim was already saying his *Tehillim*, as was his custom, his pleasant voice resonating from within his sukkah and filling the small alleyway with an ethereal holiness and purity. Rav Avigdor entered the sukkah with awe and stood before his rebbe. A moment passed until the Rav saw him, but even then, he did not invite the guest to sit; he continued

reciting the holy passages for several long moments.

Only after he finished reading did the Rav turned to his guest and invite him to sit down next to him. He asked for the reason for the visit, and Rav Avigdor couldn't hold himself back and burst into wracking sobs. He could hardly utter a word, but managed to convey to the *rebbe* his daughter's dire condition and the doctor's dismal prognosis.

The Rav listened patiently to Rav Avigdor's tale of woe, and when he finished he raised his eyes and fixed him with a piercing gaze as he declared firmly: “Calm down, Reb Avigdor and go home. Be calm, because your daughter's condition has improved. Her fever has broken and she will recover quickly.”

With his heart filled with confidence and *emunas chachaim*, Rav Avigdor hastened home. Indeed, as he entered, his children greeted him with the joyous news that a short time earlier, the fever began to break, and the color began to return to his daughter's pale face.

Rav Avigdor inquired as to what time exactly the turnaround had occurred and realized that it was exactly during those moments that he stood silently in his Rebbe's sukkah, listening to the *Tehillim*.

After recovering a bit from the surprise, Reb Avigdor joyfully returned to his *rebbe's* sukkah to inform him of the change. Deep down he was curious to know how the Rav had been so confident that his daughter's condition had already improved, which had actually happened. Rav Yosef Chaim was not known for prophecy or *moftsim*...

When he entered the sukkah, the Rav immediately sensed his surprise and explained with a smile: “The minute you entered my sukkah, I was saying the *passuk* “*Harofeh lechol tachalu'oychi*” (*Tehillim 103:3*); I realized right away that this was a sign from Above, and it was not for naught that it had been ordained from Above that you should enter at that very moment, to hint to me that your daughter would recover from her illness and return to the land of the living. Which is exactly what happened...”

*Ikvei Chaim*, p. 81; *Tiferes Banim on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, p. 491