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The Sukkah

Tape #614

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The Sukkah

Transcribed from Tape #614

*Bruchim Haba'im. Welcome everyone.
We are about to begin, b'ezras Hashem, number 614*

ARISTOCRATS ARE CHAYAV

We read in the *possuk* the following words: כל האזרח בִּישְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת סֻכּוֹת - "Every citizen in *Yisroel* must dwell in *Sukkos*" (Va'yikra 23:42). This is an unusual introduction to a *mitzvah*; mentioning אזרח, a citizen, is peculiar. So you see that the *Torah* is emphasizing that even important people who are aristocrats, who have belonged to the *Am Yisroel* since the days of *Avraham Avinu* - they can trace their pedigree all the way back to the beginning of our people - that's what אזרח means; even they, must dwell in *sukkos*.

And immediately we learn a fundamental principle about the *sukkah*. It's function - one of its functions - is to humble the people. Even the important ones - those that dwell in big homes, in palatial residences - must move out of their homes and go into this flimsy dwelling, in order to learn humility. That's a lesson of the *sukkah* as we'll explain soon.

Now when we say humility, it can be explained with two *peirushim*, two explanations, and both of them are true. First we will study one *peirush* - what is intended by the כְּנִיעָה, by the humility of the *sukkah*.

WHY DOES A SUKKAH HAVE TO BE FLIMSY?

The *sukkah* as you know must be a **דירת ארעי**, a temporary dwelling. It has to be built in such a way that it could be a temporary dwelling. It can be of stone; you can even have a steel sukkah. But you cannot make it of so high a construction that you will be forced to have sturdy walls. If it's more than a certain height it's *possul*, it's not a kosher *sukkah*, because a certain height requires sturdy walls. And we want a **דירת ארעי**, something that at least is *possible* to be flimsy. That's a fundamental halacha of building a sukkah.

So we see it's not merely a leniency. It's not merely that the Torah gives you a *kulah*, making it easier for you, so that you can get by with a less expensive sukkah. No, **דירת ארעי** is not a leniency. The Torah is insisting on a **דירת ארעי**. Hashem says that your Sukkah *must* be a temporary dwelling.

Also, the Torah insists that the *s'chach* cannot be a regular roof. It cannot be like a **בית של כל השנה**, like your home that you use all year long. Even if the year-round roof is made of **גידולי קרקע**, of things that grow from the ground which is a requirement of *s'chach*, it still won't be kosher for the mitzvah of sukkah. Wooden beams grow from the ground. Planks grow from the ground. Heavy logs grow from the ground. And still, if it's made in a such a way that it is a *permanent* construction, like a regular roof, then it's *possul*. It has to be something that is not a **דירה של כל השנה**. So again we see that there is an insistence on this theme of something that is temporary and flimsy, a dwelling which humbles the one who dwells there. You can't be too important, too arrogant, if you're living in little booth made of almost nothing, exposed to the neighbors and the elements.

YOU'RE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOU THOUGHT

In the Torah (D'varim 6:10) we find the following warning: When you come into Eretz Canaan, after you disinherit the previous inhabitants, you will dwell in **בתים טובים אשר לא בנית** - "in good homes that you didn't build yourselves." There is an emphasis here on good homes. So you must beware of **ורם לבבך** - "your heart will be proud, arrogant," and **ושכחת את השם** - "and

you will forget Hashem.” Strong and secure homes, filled with good things, can easily cause one to forget Hashem.

So we see now, that one function, one purpose, of this requirement of sukkah, the requirement that it should be a **דירת ארעי**, a weak form of construction, is to teach us that we are not as important as we imagined. While we dwell in that **דירת ארעי**, we are to remind ourselves of that. You have to get that into your head on *Sukkos*: you are not as important as you imagine. And even though you are an **אזרח**, an important burgher, an established citizen, and you know your *yichus*, you’re aware of your pure pedigree. And you have of course your own palatial home – and other things too – still you must move out. **צא מדירת** **קבע ושב בדירת ארעי** – “You must leave your permanent home, and dwell in that temporary and flimsy hut” (Sukkah 2a). We already see here a purpose: in order that people should remind themselves that they’re not so important. You’re not as important as you think!

YOM TOV: TIME TO VISIT YOUR LANDLORD

Now, actually, when you think about yom tov in general, you’ll understand that every yom tov, to some extent, has that function. **שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכרך את פני האדון השם** – “Three times a year every male must present himself before the Master Hashem” (Shemos 34:23). If you’ll study this *possuk* carefully you’ll see something remarkable. Three times a year every *zachar*, every male, must show himself before the Master, Hashem. Now the word **אדון**, Master, is not used ordinarily when describing Hashem – even *aleph daled nun yud* is rarely used. *Yud kay vav kay* is what’s used. Now if the word *Adon* is used here, you have to know that it is emphasizing a basic function of yom tov. Every yom tov the whole Am Yisroel left their homes. That was the old time system of celebrating a yom tov. They left their homes and they all went up to the Mishkan in Shiloh, and later to the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. And what’s the purpose? **יראה את פני האדון השם**: To show yourself before the Master of the land. To demonstrate that you are only a tenant.

Because the Torah says (D'varim 4:25), **כי תוליד בנים ובני** - "When you will have children and then grandchildren and you become old in the land; you get accustomed to dwelling on your land." **והשחתם** - "You'll become corrupt." You begin to believe that the land is yours, that it belongs to *you*. "You'll forget that it is My land," says Hashem. That's a corruption of character. And so, in order to remind yourselves that you are only a visitor here, **כי גרים ותושבים אתם** - "You are only visitors here with Me" (Va'yikra 25:23), therefore you must come on every occasion of the *shalosh regalim* to show yourself before the Landlord. It's like a declaration that **כי לי הארץ** - "I am the one who owns the land" (Va'yikra 25:23). I'm the *macher* here, not you. So we see that is the purpose, the function, of all the yomim tovim in general.

Of course, every yom tov has more purposes than that. If it is a *chag* of *chag hamatzos*, or if it is *zman matan toraseinu*, whatever it is, that is in addition to this fundamental principle of **אדון**, of recognizing the Master. Because whatever else it may be, this certainly is a function of yom tov, to demonstrate that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the Owner, **כי לי הארץ** - not only that He owns Eretz Yisroel. He owns America too. **כי לי הארץ**.

And that's the purpose of *Shemitta* and *Yovel* too. **והארץ לא תמכר לצמיתות** - "You can't sell the land outright forever" (Va'yikra *ibid.*). When Yovel comes, the land reverts back to the previous owner. He has no right to transfer ownership of the land to someone else permanently. It's not his. "Who do you think you are?! **כי לי הארץ**. It's My land!" says Hashem. "You're just a visitor, a tenant, in this world. It's not your land to sell forever."

ONLY OTHER PEOPLE DIE

And so we see that the purpose of these arrangements is to teach humility. It shouldn't be **ורם לבבך**. You shouldn't be arrogant and feel that you are here forever. Now of course anyone who has a little bit of understanding, anyone who thinks a little bit, understands that nobody is here forever. **לפניו יכרעו כל יורדי עפר** - "Before Hashem kneel all those who go down to the grave"

(Tehillim 22:30). What does that mean “all those who go down to the grave” that *they* are the ones who kneel before Hashem? It means this: It’s because we know that someday we are going down to buried in the *affar*, you’re going to be lowered into the ground one day, *that’s* why we kneel before Hashem right now.

If you remember always where you are heading, then you’ll kneel before Hashem always, because you’re always thinking about that great day when you’ll be standing in front of Him. But most people are forgetful; most people never think about that. As far as they’re concerned they’re going to live forever. Deep down, that’s what people think, that they’ll be around forever - only other people die. And therefore, in order to remind us, Hashem gives us certain *mitzvos* so that we should keep in mind always that He is the owner, and that we are only visitors passing through.

THE COMMON MEANING OF AN ANAV

And now we begin to understand what *בניעה* really means, what *ענוה* really means. It was explained many times here, that when you look in mussar seforim, and you study the subject of *ענוה*, humility, you see it is *שם הכולל*, a general term that includes many good *middos*. An *anvasan*, a humble person, has many good *middos*. Not only is the *anvasan* not arrogant but he is kindly, and he is patient. Many good *middos* are in *anavah*. But you’ll notice that always the seforim emphasize *בין אדם לחבירו* - the humility that one is supposed to feel towards his fellow man. Because that is the most usual understanding of humility. Against whom are people arrogant? Against other people! And therefore that is the definition that we usually think of - to be an *anav*, a humble fellow, to everybody.

And that is a very great achievement, to learn to be humble towards all people. Like it says, one of the questions they will ask a man in the next world, *המלכת את חברך עליך בנחת רוח* - “Did you make your *chaver* reign over you with your gentleness?” (Reishis Chochma Sha’ar Ha’yirah 12). Did you make him a ruler over you by your gentleness? Instead of being a ruler over him by opening a big mouth, you spoke gently to him, and you

recognized him as important! That's a question that will be asked. המלכת את חברך עליך בנחת – "Did you make your fellow man reign over you with your gentleness." You're going to have to answer that question on the great day of judgment. Did you or didn't you?. Now that is how the *seforim* talk about humility. And it's valuable, it's important.

THE CHOVOS HALEVAVOS'S EXPLANATION OF AN ANAV

But the Chovos Halevavos, as you already know if you were here before, speaks about humility in a different sense. He talks about humility not in a sense of *bein adam l'chaveiro* alone, but in the sublime sense of being *an anav* towards Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Now most people will think, "Is that really necessary to tell me, to be an *anav* to Hashem?" But the Chovos Halevavos considers it *extremely* necessary! That is the *true* כניעה – to be humble towards Hashem.

And the truth is that this *middah* of being humble before Hashem is the example of Moshe Rabeinu: והאיש משה עניו מאד (Bamidbar 12:3). Moshe Rabeinu is praised for his quality of humility. No other *middah* is spoken about as it is in the case of *anavah*. מכל האדם. More than all human beings, Moshe Rabeinu was the most humble. Now, Moshe Rabeinu, you have to know, was not a *nebuch'el*. He was not a milktoast. He was a strong man, and he spoke "with teeth" when he had to speak. ויקצוף משה על פקודי החיל. Moshe Rabeinu was angry at the commanders of the troops" (Bamidbar 31:14). Moshe showed anger when he had to.

Or when the שעיר החטאת was burned. דרוש דרש משה והנה שרף. It says there that the *korban* was burned, and Moshe demanded, "What's the reason you burned the *korban*?! Why didn't you eat the *korban*?!" ויקצוף על אלעזר ועל איתמר. Moshe Rabeinu demanded! He was tough!

IS THE BIG OX HUMBLE?

Of course, we understand that a man who is an *anav* doesn't have to be a *b'heima*. Like the Chovos Halevavos says that a *b'heimah* is also an *anav*. A big ox, you see is being driven down the road by a little boy. A little boy is driving a big ox. Now the ox

could step on him and mash him. So the ox is an *anav*?! No, it's not an *anav*; just that the ox has no *seichel*. It doesn't know its powers, its own capabilities.

But a man who knows who he is, like Moshe Rabeinu – he knew he was Moshe Rabeinu. He didn't yield to Korach or anybody else. He was the leader that Hakodosh Boruch Hu appointed and he knew his worth. And still, he was an *anav* towards men. Certainly he was humble towards people – when it was in the right place. Everything has its right place and its right measure. Yes, he was certainly a humble man **בין אדם לחבירו**. He certainly dealt with his fellow man in a most humble manner when it was called for.

AUTOMATIC HUMILITY

And nevertheless, when Moshe Rabeinu was praised for his humility it wasn't that aspect of humility that the Torah is describing. Moshe Rabeinu was an *anav* in a completely different sense: he was praised for his *anavah* chiefly because **ותמונת השם יביט** (Bamidbar 12:8). Moshe Rabeinu saw before him, more than anybody else, the image of Hashem. As much as a human being could see, he saw. And just like when a man sees a *melech*, a king, standing in front of him, he automatically lowers his head and keeps his mouth closed, that's how Moshe Rabeinu always felt. If you're standing in front of a king you automatically become an *anav*. You don't have to study it in the *seforim*; it's not something that you have to imagine. If you know you're standing in front of someone important, and you have even a little bit of *seichel*, you'll feel a sense of humility. So the more you are Aware of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the more of an *anav* you become.

So we are learning here that true *anavah*, the true humility that Hashem desires, is actually based on *hakarah*, the recognition, that you're standing always before Hashem. Humility is dependent on your clarity of *emunah*; the more *dei'ah* you have, the more understanding that you're in the presence of Hashem all the time, the more of an *anav* you become.

The *possuk* says: **השם משמים השקיף על בני אדם** – “Hashem is looking down on human beings constantly” (Tehillim 14:2). He’s looking at you all the time. And Pirkei Avos teaches us that we need to live with this understanding. **דע מה למעלה ממך** – “You have to know what’s above you,” **עין רואה** – “An eye is looking at you” (Avos 2:1). **דע** means that you have to know it, feel it with all your being. And the ones who keep that in mind, they become the true *anavim*, they become the truly humble people, because they are *humbled before Hashem*.

HUMILITY BEFORE HASHEM IS EVERYTHING

As has been mentioned many times here, that’s why all those who serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu and believe in Hashem implicitly are called *anavim*. Like Dovid Hamelech said **בהשם תתהלל נפשי ישמעו** – “My soul takes pride in Hashem because He came and saved me from all kinds of troubles during my career,” **ענים וישמחו** – “Let the humble listen and let them rejoice” (Tehillim 34:3). “I am going to tell you now how Hashem came to my help when I needed Him,” said Dovid, “and you people, *you humble people*, should listen and rejoice.” Now, where does humble come in here?! All of a sudden he is calling them humble? It could have been **ישמעו צדיקים** or **ישמעו יראים**. “Listen you *tzadikim*,” or “Listen you ones who fear Hashem.” Maybe **ישמעו מאמינים וישמחו**, “Listen up, you faithful ones.” Why did Dovid say **ישמעו ענים**, “All you humble ones should listen to me”?

And the answer is this: **עניוּת**, humility, is everything! The **ענים**, the ones who are humbled before Hashem, they are the real *ma’aminim*. They are the ones who believe implicitly in Hashem. It’s not merely to sign on the dotted line, **הנני מאמין** – “I am a *ma’amin*.” You sign off that you believe in Hashem and that’s all. No, that’s not a *ma’amin*. A real *ma’amin* is one who feels the presence of Hashem so strongly that he is *nichna* before Him. He actually feels *hachna’ah*, humility, because he knows, he actually knows and senses that he is standing before Hashem. When he’s walking, when he’s eating, always. And that’s the **כניעה** of the Chovos Halevavos – when you’re *nichnah* through the feeling of being in the Presence of Hashem.

And so now we come back to the subject of Yom Tov. We are told to come three times a year to the Beis Hamikdash to show ourselves **אל פני האדון** – in front of our Master, Hashem. We come to Yerushalayim for the purpose of standing before our Master. And this is done in order that we should feel His Presence even more. We reinforce this feeling every yom tov, besides for all the other significances that this Yom tov has. We travel all the way to the Beis Hamikdash. We are going to show ourselves to our Master! The whole nation travelled from all corners of the land to show themselves before their **אדון**. And that trek to Yerushalayim, and the going up to the Beis Hamikdash, reinforces our feeling that we have a real Master.

WE ARE ALL JUST “GEIRIM” HERE

And now, when we come to Sukkos, we understand that these days are *especially* dedicated to this principle. We move out of our affluent homes into a place where there’s almost nothing, a flimsy roof, some paper ornaments hanging from the ceiling, whatever it is. And even though you’ll spend money to beautify the *sukkah*, but it’s nothing like your home. And you’re reminded that this world is only a **בֵּית אֶרֶץ**, a temporary dwelling.

Even the palace where the millionaire lives is nothing but a temporary dwelling. **צֵא מִדִּירְתְּ קִבֵּעַ וּשֵׁב בְּדִירְתְּ אֶרֶץ** – “Leave your home, and go into the temporary dwelling” (Sukkah 2a). That’s why it’s kosher with just two walls and a *tefach*. Two walls and a flimsy roof?! That’s a very weak protection against the elements. If a cold wind is blowing on Sukkos and you have two walls and a *tefach*, you’ll need an overcoat. And even if it’s not cold, the people passing by won’t give you much privacy there. You can’t sit like a *melech*, like a king, when you’re in a place that has two walls and a *tefach*.

And then you're exposed to the rain. The rain comes in and suddenly you'll discover how good it is to have a roof over your head. You never appreciated a roof until you sit in the *sukkah* and it starts raining. And all that is for the purpose to let you know that you have a Master. That’s the purpose of *sukkah*, the purpose of feeling *nichnah*, to let us know that there’s an Adon.

בטרם כל יציר נברא. אדון עולם אשר מלך. He is in charge of the world. Before anyone appeared in this world, He was in charge already. And we are just latecomers; We came on the last day and we are not here to stay long. And therefore, we should never forget the great principle of גר אנכי בארץ - "I am only a sojourner in this world."

THE WEALTHY MAN WHO LIVED IN TENTS HIS WHOLE LIFE

Now we can understand something about the practices of Avraham our father. Avraham was a wealthy man. ואברהם כבד - "He was very heavy with wealth, very wealthy" (Bereishis 13:2). He had silver and gold and cattle. And he had *avadim* and *sh'fachos*. You know Avraham had three hundred and eighteen *avadim* who could bear arms. When he went to war, he had three hundred and eighteen *avadim*. And he had older ones and younger ones, and they all had wives, and they all had children. He had a מחנה גדול, a very large camp. With common calculation, you understand that he had more than a thousand *avadim*. In those days, people had children! And certainly, the masters encouraged their *avadim* to have more children. He had at least a thousand slaves.

And besides that, he had כסף וזהב. He had trunks full of money. He had huge herds, huge flocks. Avraham was a very wealthy man! And he could have built himself a beautiful home. Anyplace. He could have bought a plot and built himself a beautiful house surrounded by gardens and orchards. So it's interesting that Avraham always dwelt in a tent.

Now you could say, there was a reason for the tent. Because Avraham was always on the move, הלך ונסוע (Bereishis 12:9) it says about Avraham. He was always moving around. Because he had a purpose; and that was to preach to everyone that there is an אדון העולם, a Master of the World. Wherever he went, that was his business. ויקרא בשם השם א-ל עולם (Bereishis 21:23). He called out, he spoke to people, he taught people. He went from place to place proclaiming to anybody who would listen that Hashem is the Master. He's the Master of the whole world. That

was Avraham's business. He went around from place to place speaking about Hashem. So you could say that he couldn't build a palace for that reason; because he was always on the move.

LOT GIVES UP HIS TENT

But that wasn't the only reason. There was something much more important than that. Not living in a home, a permanent residence, was a principle of Avraham's. It was a principle that he should never become arrogant. He should always remind himself that he's only a visitor in this world. An important principle! It was only Lot who finally broke from his *rebbe*, Avraham, and went away to Sedom. At first it says וַיֵּאָהֶל, he made tents. He also pitched his tent just like he had learned in the home of Avraham. But finally he gave up Avraham's way of life and he moved into a house. Ohhh, to give up that great principle of recognizing that you're only a visitor in this world, that you're only here temporarily. That was the big mistake of Lot. We know that in Sedom he lived in a house. It says openly that he lived in a house in Sedom. So he gave up the ways of his *rebbe*.

But Avraham and Yitzchak, they dwelt in tents. Even Yaakov, who built a house, moved out soon and went back to the tents. They lived in tents always. And so we see that it was a principle of the Avos that they should never forget this great principle that they're just visitors in this world.

LET'S LEARN PESHUTO SHEL MIKRAH

Now, when we come to Sukkos, the Torah tells us specifically the reason for this mitzvah of building a sukkah. And we have to pay attention to the plain words without going into any *sodos*, any secrets of the Torah, or going off into fanciful explanations, *drushim*. We have to learn פשוטו של מקרא, the plain meaning of Hashem's words. And the possuk says למען ידעו דורותיכם - "You should dwell in sukkos, in order that your generations should know, כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל, that I caused the *bnei Yisroel* to dwell in sukkos. Not that they dwelt in sukkos; rather I caused them to dwell in sukkos! הושבתי - "I seated

them in *sukkos*,” בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים – “When I took them out of the land of Mitzrayim.”

We think according to what we learned when we were little children and we started chumash, that the entire episode of the *Dor Hamidbar*, was nothing but a punishment because of the *meraglim*. It was only because of the *meraglim* that they were sentenced to wander around for forty years.

THE REAL REASON FOR FORTY YEARS IN THE MIDBAR

And it's certainly not false to think so, but it's certainly not enough. Because *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, you should know, had a plan that He had foreseen from the beginning. And the plan was that there had to be a *hakdamah*, a preparation, to *Eretz Yisroel*. *Eretz Yisroel* was זבת חלב ודבש. It was flowing with milk and honey and all good things. לא תחסר כל בה. It was lacking nothing. It was a new kind of existence, an existence of luxury. It was a land of ואכלת ושבעת, a land of eating and becoming satiated. Especially in the early days when they entered the land, the fruit were fabulous. This we know from the possuk about the ענבים, that needed a bunch of people to carry one bunch of grapes. The *peiros* were fabulous. The Gemara is full of stories how huge the *peiros* were. How luscious they were! The dates used to split because they were so fat, and the honey dripped out all over. Figs were so swollen by the sweetness inside, that they burst, and the juice spread out on the ground!

And it was a very great peril, this kind of existence. But *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* was giving the Am Yisroel an opportunity that was a big test. It's a big opportunity to achieve, but also a big opportunity to fall into error. That's the opportunity of wealth and conveniences.

Great happiness is a form of serving *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* with the utmost success. תחת אשר לא עבדת את השם אלקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל, you were supposed to serve Hashem *b'simcha*, ובטוב לבב מרוב כל, with a happy mind, because of the abundance of all good things that He provides you (D'varim 28:47). The greatest form of *avodas Hashem* is when you're wealthy, and you

have plenty to eat, and you're enjoying it, and you serve Hashem in the midst of this happiness; that's the greatest success. Like I always say, to do *teshuva* while you're eating watermelon or ice cream, is the best kind of *teshuva*. The *Chovos Halevavos* says that.

And so they were given an opportunity when they entered *Eretz Yisroel*, to achieve more than any other situation could afford them. Opportunity in the midst of luxury, to become so grateful to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, to sing to Him all their days, and to shout in happiness to Him; that's the highest form of *avodas Hashem*.

YOU HAVE TO PREPARE FOR GOOD TIMES

However, you can't just suddenly plunge people into such a test without some preface. You needed a big *hakdamah*, and the *hakdamah* was ויענך וירעיבך ויאכילך את המן. For forty years, they had the opposite! They didn't have everything; they were very limited! They didn't have בתים טובים; they didn't have any homes at all! They didn't have any *menucha*! Every day they had to be on the alert, maybe they'll hear the *chatzotzros*, the sound of the trumpets, that summon them to pull up the stakes of their tents and start moving.

They never had any kind of security in the midbar that they would remain in one place for longer than a day. It's true, in one place they remained eighteen years. But the entire eighteen years, every day, they were in trepidation. Every minute the trumpet might sound and say: get moving!

You understand what a disturbance that is for חיי עולם הזה, for a normal feeling of security in this world. Let's say you move into a home. But you know that at any moment you might be summoned to leave, with you and your family, and never come back. You wouldn't do anything! You won't try to make any repairs, nothing. Any minute, you might get a notice to move out! And even if you lived there fifty years, you never had a minute of *menuchas hanefesh*!

MUSSAR SEDER BEFORE EATING MANN

The purpose in the *midbar* was ויענך. "I afflicted you!" said Hashem. He afflicted us! וירעיבך ויאכילך את המן - "And I starved

you, and I fed you only *mann*." And they were limited. Very limited. For breakfast and supper, it was *mann*, always! Of course, we know what *chazal* tell us, that they were able to feel various tastes in the *mann*. But don't be deceived by that. These tastes were very hard to achieve. You needed a lot of *emunah*! You had to sit down before the *seudah*, and say הני מוכן ומזומן to feel a taste of meat in this *mann*. You had to work on *mussar* before sitting down to the *mann*.

And many times you learn *mussar* and it has no effect on you. You have to learn a lot of it, until it enters your mind! And then when they sat down to eat with *emunah sh'leimah*, so they were able to have a taste. But suppose somebody was late; he came late to the *mussar seder*. And he just sat down to eat, without the preparation. "This *mann* again?!" The לחם הקלוקל again! That's what they called it, the insubstantial, light, bread. נפשינו קצה בלחם "Our souls are disgusted with this nothing food" (Bamidbar 21:5). Every day the same old stuff! Some people were lazy, and they didn't enjoy life at all there. And even the good ones, it's a little bit tiresome! They would like to sit down to בשר במש. A red steak, some wheat bread! Real food! But the *mann*? Always, day after day, to eat something that just your mind is telling you tastes good? That's very difficult! It was an affliction. It says it openly, ויענך - "He afflicted you," וירעיבך - "And He made you hungry."

But the good ones, and most of them were good, passed the test. But the achievement of all this was to humble them! ויענך means, "He made you low," He made you an עני. He gave you ענוה, humility. ענוה and עני are the same word you know. An עני is an עניי, absolutely. An עני can never feel too important, too arrogant.

And therefore, the purpose of the *sukkos* in the *midbar* was to humble our people. They sat under a roof that couldn't protect them. The walls were pretty flimsy and it could be that many of the huts were only two walls and a *tefach*! They certainly weren't walls of brick. Who's going to waste effort building a brick building if the next minute he might hear the חצוצרת, the trumpet

blast telling them to pack up again and move on? And so they didn't have any conveniences; they were never settled. And the purpose was, that it *shouldn't* be **ורם לבבך ושנחת את השם** - "That your mind will become arrogant and you will forget Hashem."

WE HAVE IT TOO GOOD TODAY

Now we have to realize what a great disadvantage we are suffering today. And that's because we have all of these conveniences, and in addition, we have the idea that we're here forever! Who doesn't think that he's here in this world for the next ten thousand years? Everybody imagines so!

There was a man once who moved in next door to me. He wasn't a young man this new *shachein* of mine. He put up a big iron fence, a fancy wrought-iron fence, with a big "P" in the middle - that was his initial - a big "P" in iron. A fence like that would stand for a thousand years! The black man who owns the house now still has the "P" on his gate! The black man next door has a big fancy wrought-iron fence with a big "P". The man who made the "P", didn't last long.

We are at a big disadvantage today. There's nothing to remind us that we're not going to be here for a very long time. And so people put everything they have into the house, all types of luxuries; and of course expensive rugs. It'll last forever! "We'll be here forever!" That's what we think, and that's a very great impediment to success.

AFTER THE MIDBAR NO ONE FORGOT HASHEM

But in the *midbar*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu was preparing His people for a career of success - that they should be able to utilize the opposite of **ויעניך**; when they would leave the wilderness and go into permanent homes; when they would eat whatever they desire. They needed this preparation for when they would enter into Eretz Yisroel. Because here there would be a very big temptation to forget *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. And so He prepared them in the *midbar*, in the *sukkah*, to learn the *middah* of *anavah*.

So when they came into Eretz Yisroel, and they saw all the plenty that was waiting for them; the beautiful homes that were

טוב מלאים כל טוב, full of all good things, they moved in humbly. They moved into these big beautiful houses of stone humbly: "Ahhh," they said. "*Baruch Ato Hashem*. It's not ours. Thank You for giving us this!" And as soon as they could, they were *oleh regel* to *Shilo*, to the *Mishkan*: יראה כל זכורך את פני האדון השם. They came to the Master, and they declared to the Master, "You're our Master! We're only tenants!"

WE NEED A YEARLY REMINDER

But how long would that last? *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* wanted it to last forever! למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם כימי השמים על הארץ. You should be on the land, like the heavens are over the land, forever. I want it forever! Only, that you have to keep on working very hard to retain that feeling of *anavah* before *Hashem*. You have to constantly remind yourself.

So every *Sukkos* they reminded themselves. Everybody moved out of his beautiful home that he had found when he moved into the land. He left everything, and went into the *sukkah*, a flimsy little building and he sat there. "Ah! כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל. This is where our forefathers sat for forty years, and they prepared themselves to remember *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* even when they would be sitting in their big beautiful homes in Eretz Yisroel. And we will also keep that in mind." "We'll never forget!" they said. At the beginning that's what they said. But it's a very big danger. כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים - "You'll have children, and your children will have children," ונשנתם בארץ - "And you'll be long in the land," והשחתם - "You're going to be spoiled!"

It doesn't mean you *have* to be spoiled, and it doesn't mean everybody was spoiled. Not everybody was spoiled. However, it's not easy. It's very difficult to have conveniences and to remember *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. And that's why every added convenience that you get, makes it a requirement that you learn more and more *yiras shamayim*. There's no question that it's a *sakanah*, a very big danger. A rich man has to keep the *Mesillas Yesharim* open on his table all the time! Because he's sure to fall into the pitfall; it's a snare. Any kind of wealth is a *sakanah*.

BEWARE OF FORGETTING YOUR BENEFACTOR

And the *sakanah* is ורם לבבך – You'll become conceited, ושכחת את השם – And you'll forget Hakodosh Boruch Hu. An open *possuk*! It says: You'll eat well, and you'll build beautiful homes, and then ורם לבבך, your heart will be proud, ושכחת, you'll forget Hashem!

You'll forget Hashem?! That's impossible! They never forgot Hashem in Eretz Yisroel! But it means, you won't think about Him as your benefactor! You'll forget that He is the One who gave it to you. Certainly you'll daven every day. And you'll say *kriyas shema* everyday and you'll mention *yetzias Mitzrayim* every day. Certainly! But you'll "forget Hashem." It's possible to do all these things, and still to forget that Hashem is the One that gave you all these things that you have.

And therefore the *sukkah* is a דירת ארעי, a flimsy, temporary dwelling, and it's a glorious opportunity once a year, to go out in the *sukkah* and remind ourselves that we dwelt in the *midbar* in such flimsy habitations. And we sit there for seven days in order to teach us that כל האזרח, even though you're an aristocrat, an important fellow, and you own many things of your own; still every Jew must ישוב בסוכות, to teach us that nobody has anything. We're only visitors here, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the Landlord.

Now, since we're on this subject, that the *sukkah* has to teach us this great principle – by the way, that's not the only principle, we'll soon see another important principle – but that's one of the very great lessons. So you must understand: Why is it that the *sukkah* cannot be very high? We learned one reason so far: Because if it is a very tall *sukkah*, then it must be built with sound and solid construction and then it won't be a דירת עראי. You can't make a flimsy building that's very high. It would have to be a strong building. And we don't want to be sitting in a strong *sukkah*.

SHIVISI HAS'CHACH L'NEGDI TAMID

There's another reason however; and the other reason is, so that you should be able to see the *s'chach*. If the *s'chach* is high,

you won't crane your neck to look at it that way. But if the *s'chach* is not too high, you can be sitting in the *sukkah* and still see it. למען ידעו דורותיכם. You should remember when you sit in the *sukkah* what the *sukkah* is for. If you sit in the *sukkah*, but you don't think what it's about, it's a *rachmanus* on you! The Torah says a reason for this mitzvah, בני בסוכות הושבתי את ישראל – "In order that you should remember that we once sat in *sukkos* in the *midbar*! So you see that the purpose of sitting in the *sukkah* is to remind yourself. So when you sit in the *sukkah*, immediately the first result should be, you're נכנע, you're humbled before *Hashem*. It's very important to keep that in mind when you come into the *sukkah*.

THE SUKKAH WARNING: KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLOSED

And one of the most important means of כניעה, one of the most necessary demonstrations of כניעה is to keep the mouth closed. You have to be careful what you say in the *sukkah*. You cannot fool around, you can't joke in the *sukkah*. No place for *leitzanus*. A מושב לצים in the *sukkah* is entirely contradictory to the purpose of being humbled before the Presence of *Hashem*. The purpose of the *sukkah* is *anavah* – you have to be humble in the *sukkah*. And an *anav* doesn't open a big mouth.

That's what the Rambam says: לעולם ירבה אדם בשתיקה – "A person should always produce a lot of silence." Not only in the *sukkah*, but always. In this *sukkah* of *Olam Hazei* where we are – we are only temporary visitors here. לעולם ירבה אדם בשתיקה. You know what that means? A man should always produce a lot of silence. Not just to keep quiet. You have to produce silence. That's what you have to produce in this world. It doesn't say לעולם ישתוק – that you should always be quiet. It says ירבה בשתיקה – that means that you should produce a lot of silence. Silence is an achievement. Now, why is it that silence is such an achievement? You're just keeping your mouth closed! What's the big achievement there?

And the answer is this: Because silence is *anavah*. Silence means that you know that you are standing in the presence of

someone. חכם אינו מדבר בפני מי שגדול הימנו. – If you're a chochom, a wise man, you won't talk when you know that someone bigger than you is in front of you (Avos 5:7). And therefore *sh'tikah*, silence, is a golden achievement. To be silent because you know that you're standing in front of Hashem is a greatness of character.

THE BEST PROFESSION: A MUTE

Of course *divrei torah* is something else. The Gemara says (Chulin 89a): מה אומנותו של אדם – What is a man's profession in this world? יעשה עצמו כאלם – He should make himself like an אלם, like a mute fellow, as if he cannot talk. That is a man's profession in this world. And you have to learn that profession. Just like you go to school to learn how to be a doctor, to be an accountant, you have to go to school to learn how to keep your mouth closed too. You have to learn that.

מה אומנותו של אדם. What's a man's profession in this world? יעשה עצמו כאלם. He has to make himself as if he cannot talk. It's a profession! It takes a lot of work! It doesn't mean he shouldn't talk. יעשה עצמו – He should make himself *as if he couldn't talk*. He has to talk but whatever he says, he is talking like an אלם. That means he is limited in what he talks. You have to say good Shabbos. Good *yomtiv*, you have to say. You can't be stupid, a mute mamash. But you have to be like an אלם.

Then the Gemara says: יכול לכל – I might think that for everything you have to be quiet. תלמוד לומר צדק תדברון – Righteousness, *divrei Torah* you should speak. Yes, words of *Torah* you can speak. Words of *chesed*, kindness, you can speak. Otherwise in this *Sukkah* of this world, we don't talk. We have to remind ourselves that we are only visitors here. Producing quiet means producing *anavah*. And so, in *Olam Hazei*, in this great *Sukkah* of *Olam Hazei*, the job is to learn כניעה. And especially when you enter the *sukkah* on the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos*, it's important to keep in mind the great opportunity to learn this מידה טובה of humility in front of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*.

ONE LESSON OF SUKKAH IS HUMILITY

And so, we'll sum up the first lesson of the the *sukkah* with one word - *anavah*, you're humbled before Hashem. And if you want your *Sukkos* to be a successful one, you'll make sure to keep that in mind every time you walk into the *sukkah*. At least for one minute, for the first minute, be sure to think these thoughts. Even one minute a day, and you're a great success. Add another minute, and another minute, you're even greater.

A SECOND LESSON: HASHEM IS TAKING CARE OF US

Now there is another important lesson that we should thinking about when sitting in the *sukkah*. And that is that our only true security is *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. They didn't have walls around the *machaneh*, around the camp in the *midbar*. Everyone else, all the nations, had walled cities. But the *Am Yisroel* were vulnerable to attack. And yet in the forty years in the *midbar* they were more safe than at any time in their history! There wasn't a single instance of anybody attacking them; and nobody would even dare! Overhead were the ענני כבוד. There was *Moshe Rabeinu* leading us, and *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* was standing guard over the *Am Yisroel*.

And that's the symbolism of the *sukkah*: that we don't need anything to protect us, because Hashem is watching over us! That's why the *s'chach* is so flimsy. Because what is the *s'chach* a symbol of? The ענני כבוד that protected us. We sit outside in an exposed hut, with flimsy *s'chach* in order to reenact that journey in the *midbar* where we sat for forty years exposed to all the nations and all the elements. But we were more secure than any other people, because we were sitting under the watchful eyes of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*.

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOUR SUKKAH WILL PROTECT YOU?!

So the *sukkah* says *bitachon*. The *sukkah* says *emunah*. *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* is protecting us. When a man moves into a substantial home, he thinks his *home* is what stands between him and the cold. He thinks it's *his home* that protects him from the rain. But suppose a man is in a *sukkah*, then only *Hakodosh*

Boruch Hu can protect him against the cold and the rain. He knows that it's only Hashem.

And that's what happened! The enemies couldn't do a thing to them. And they were sitting there for forty years, day after day, night after night, and learning the lesson that **ברוך הגבר** אשר יבטח בהשם והיה השם מבטחו. Hashem is the only trust of human beings. All else is self-deception. That's the great lesson that they studied for forty years.

They didn't have any fields to cultivate; what would they eat? They should have starved to death in the *midbar*! Where would they find food? And it fell from the sky! **לחם מן השמים**. It was unbelievable that people could exist in a place where nothing grew. **ארץ וצמאון אשר אין שם מים**. Even water you couldn't find. And who was there? It wasn't one person; one traveling Arab. It was a nation of millions. And it didn't happen for one day. It happened for forty years! For forty years we lived in a wilderness where food and water were not available, and where danger lurked at any moment. And yet this nation of millions was protected and sustained!

And so, **למען ידעו דורותיכם**, we have to sit in *sukkos* in order that your generations should know **כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל**, that the *Am Yisroel* were seated in *sukkos*; in *sukkos* and nothing else! And still they were safe. For forty years! And as we sit in the *sukkah* we're learning the lesson of bitachon.

KEEP AWAY FROM THE TRAP

And that lesson is that even though we do everything to protect ourselves – and you should; you should have locks on your doors, and you should have alarms if necessary. You should do everything. On the contrary, it's a *chiyuv* to protect yourself. But while you are doing all these things, you must beware of falling into the trap of thinking that *you* are protecting yourself.

כי חיוק בריחי שעריך - He is the One who fortified the bars of your gates. So you see that there were bars on the gates of the cities. They had bars. But Dovid Hamelech told them, "When you are lowering those heavy bars in place and you retire for the night

and you feel secure behind the walls of the city; forget about it! It's Hashem Who is protecting you. **כי חיוק** - "Because He is the One who is strengthening those bars."

THE DANGEROUS LESSON

Otherwise, it's like the man who came into his house, and locked the door and went to bed with security. All night he slept soundly; he knows he has a strong iron door, not a plain wooden door so he slept well. He got up in the morning, walked outside to go to shul, and he saw that his keys were sticking in the door from the outside. He had left his keys sticking in the door from the outside! "That's how I slept all night with security?!!" (*On a different tape, the Rav revealed that he himself was the man in this story*) Oh, it was a glorious opportunity, a real lesson in bitachon. And it's always that way. It's only imagination.

Of course, you have to do the mitzvah. **ושמרתם את נפשתיכם**. You have to watch yourself. Next time don't do such a stupid thing; don't leave your keys in the door! But it was a glorious lesson. I slept *geshmak* last night! Oh, it was a pleasure. I was so secure. But it was nothing; it was only a dream. I wasn't secure at all because of my iron door. **כי חיוק בריחי שעריך**. Certainly I was secure! Because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is my security!

And so when you get into the *sukkah*, that is one of the great lessons to study. And even though we must do everything, we must guard our health, we must protect our homes, we have to go out and look for *parnassah*; yet we are still in the *midbar*. It's still *mann* that falls from the sky. The check that your boss gives you every week is nothing but *mann*. The food that you buy in the store, it's Hakodosh Boruch Hu, not the grocer is handing you the food. **נותן לחם לכל בשר**. He is the One that is handing you the food. **כי לעולם חסדו**. All kindness is from Him.

FORTY YEARS OF TRAINING

Of course, it needs a lot of training to get our minds out of the habit of *gashmiyus*, but that's what's necessary. And therefore because they had such a *hachanah*, they were prepared for forty years in the *midbar* to realize it's Hashem that's doing everything.

Forty years of training that Hashem is doing everything and we are nothing. We don't have any farms in the *midbar*. We don't have any homes in the *midbar*. We don't have any springs of water. We have nothing! And still we existed for forty years. We did more than exist. We increased and multiplied, and nobody could harass us. We were one hundred percent safe.

So now we are going into *Eretz Yisroel*, and we are going to have walled cities, and we are going to have stone houses. We'll have farms and orchards and vineyards and everything else. Ahhhhh, now we are going to be on guard not to deceive ourselves. We were prepared for this test. That forty years of living in *sukkos* was the lesson, that was the *hakdamah*.

So don't think that being in the *midbar* was just a punishment alone, like we learned in *cheder*. It was a very important preparation for a career of success. And the warning was **כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים ונושנתם בארץ**. You might start thinking that you are the author of your happiness. After all, you plow your fields every year. You plant grain every year. The trees are producing the fruits every year for you after your work in the orchards. So you could forget that behind all this is a Hand of Hashem; that He is the One that is giving you all this. And so you have to remind yourself constantly.

OLAM HAZEK IS A DIRAS AR'AI

And therefore on *Sukkos* we have two big tasks that the *sukkah* is supposed to teach us. One is the job of learning how weak we are, how unimportant we are. That we are standing in the Presence of Hashem and that in this world we are only visitors in His Sukkah. We have nothing of our own.

We have to work on that, and understand that we are living in a **דירת ארעי**, a temporary world. And we are *nichmah* in this **דירת ארעי**. We learn **כניעה**, humility, *anavah*. We keep our mouths closed as much as possible, and open them only for Torah and chesed – especially in the *sukkah*. And also in this *Sukkah* of this world, the *Sukkah* of *Olam HazeK*, **דע לפני מי אתה עומד** – We

remember at all times that we are standing in the Presence of Hashem. And we're careful before we say anything.

HASHEM IS THE ONE DOING EVERYTHING!

And the second lesson we learn is to remind ourselves that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is supplying us with all that we have. Everything comes from Him. Everything! And as you walk to the refrigerator - a refrigerator is a big benefactor; it keeps your food fresh, you think. No, it doesn't keep your food fresh! It's *Hashem* Who is keeping your food fresh. Forget about the refrigerator. It's only a dream.

You have gas ranges, and they cook tasty meals, and you think what a good thing it is to have such a stove. In the olden days when they wanted to cook something they had to build a fire of wood and put over it some bricks. And now, look, you press a button and the flame springs out and it starts cooking efficiently. No, that's just a deception. Nothing is being done by the gas range. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing everything!

You have a degree, a profession, or you have a store that's supplying you with *parnassa*, you have some sort of business - forget about it. It's nothing but *mann*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is giving you everything. And only Hakodosh Boruch Hu! That's how we have to train ourselves as we sit in the *sukkah* and learn the lesson of *bitachon* in Hashem.

GET EXCITED ABOUT HASHEM!

Now this brings us to understand a little bit better the *inyan* of Hallel. As an example we will speak about the first *mizmor* of Hallel. הללויה - Praise Hashem. Now the word הלל means specifically something more than just praise. Hallel means to be excited about Hashem. To be excited!

How do I know? Because the word הולל means "wild." אמרתי להוללים אל תהוּלו - "I said to those who are jovial and wild, 'Don't be wild'" (Tehillim 75:5). "Hallel" means to be wild. And the word is what you call onomatopoeic. It's a word that it expresses itself through the sound of the word itself. "Hallel!" It's a word of excitement and shouting! When people get drunk they

say *Hallel* – only that it's not to Hashem. They are shouting "HALLEL! HALLEL!" about all the wrong things. The word "*hallel*" is suited to shouting.

WE ARE JUST AN IMAGINATION

So Dovid Hamelech says, "Yes, you have to shout in this world! You have to shout with happiness. But to whom should you shout? הללויה - Shout out in wild *simcha* only to י-ה, only to Him. Shout out in happiness and gratitude only to *Hashem*. It means this: If you're happy, then He's the One to express your gratitude to. He is the author of your happiness. And י-ה means an abbreviation of יהיה, הוה, היה. He is the One who is around always, י-ה means "Being, the One that has true existence." We don't have any true existence. We're only imaginary; we're only the imagination of Hashem.

Of course, we like this imagination. We want to keep up this imagination for a long time, but still we're only imagination. He is the only one that has true being. And therefore, He is the one Who is providing you with everything you have. He is the only One. The words השם אלוקים אמת, the Rambam says it means הוא לבדו אמת - He is the only One who is really true. We are only a dream that Hashem dreamed up into existence.

DANCING DURING BIRCHAS HASHACHAR

And so we say הללו עבדי השם - "You, who are the servants of *Hashem*, should be wild over *Hashem*" (Tehillim 103:1). The word עבד means those who are humbled before *Hashem*. You are נכנע before *Hashem*. So your job in this world is - if you're an עבד השם do you know what your job is in this world? Your job is to הללו את שם השם - Call out in excitement to give thanks to *Hashem*" (ibid.). Now, listen to that. Your job is to הללו את השם. What does this mean? It means that an *eved Hashem* has his work cut out for him in this world. In this world your job is to praise *Hashem*! All the time, to attribute everything to *Hashem*. Everything!

You have two good eyes? "I have two good eyes," you think. "I'm born with two good eyes." No, you're not born with two good eyes! You have two good eyes that are given to you

every day by Hashem. Every day, it's a special gift; Two good eyes! That's how to think, if you're an *eved Hashem*. And you have to say every day, ברוך אתה השם אלוֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם פּוֹקֵחַ עִיּוּרִים "You open up the eyes of the blind." Why don't you say "I thank You that You gave me two good eyes"? No! You have to act like you're blind, and now you got two good eyes. Ohhhh!! A blind man who suddenly gets two good eyes, he wouldn't say "muh-muh-muh-muh" (*the Rav mumbled the bracha and laughed*). No! He would say it with dancing! He would be *meshugah*! He would be drunk with happiness! He would shout! He'd say *hallel*! Not half *hallel* – the whole *Hallel*! And that's how you have to say the bracha of פּוֹקֵחַ עִיּוּרִים – "He opens up the eyes of the blind."

And that's the function of *avdei Hashem*. You have to thank Hashem for everything that you have. You have teeth? Most of you have teeth, don't you? Your own teeth. Ahhhhhh! Ah ah ah! How lucky you are! You have to thank Hashem for that great gift. Teeth are a great gift! Now, people say that's silly. They think, "You came here for such foolish talk?! You came here to say this?! You came here to say *sodos*, and *sisrei torah* and *chidushim*! But such things – thanking Hashem for your teeth – you can't waste your time with that." But you have to know that what I'm telling you now is the biggest *chiddush*. To thank Hashem that you have teeth! And if you don't, then you have to know that you're not an *eved Hashem*.

HALLELU-KAH!! Who? Who has the function of הללויה? *Avdei Hashem*, You the servants of Hashem. הללו עבדי השם! That's your job in this world. Thank Him for your teeth! It's the first time you heard it?! Then you're lucky you came tonight!

NO, CLOTHING IS NOT FOR DOGS

Now, why does it say "*Sheim Hashem*"? הללו שם השם. "*Sheim*" means whatever we heard about Hashem. We heard a lot of things. We heard that he took us out of *Mitzryaim*. We heard that He created the world. We heard that He gave us the *mann*. We also heard that He causes the sun to shine every day. Yes, we

heard that He causes the sun to shine every day. We heard that He gives us our garments. We heard that as well.

“And Hashem made for Adam and his wife garments for their skin, to cover their skin, and He clothed them” (B’reishis 3:21). How do you get garments? Hashem gave us garments! *Rabeinu Sadya Gaon* says that this *passuk* means that Hashem caused linen to grow and wool to grow. Why should linen grow? You can’t eat linen. If the world is made only for animals, like the scientists say, and man is only an accident that came along later, so what do you need linen for? Linen is not something animals can eat. Animals can’t eat wool. You know that don’t you? Animals don’t need wool.

So you see that it’s made especially for human beings who want clothing. Ooooooh! *ויעש אלוקים כתנות עור לאדם ולאשתו וילבישם* – Hashem gave garments for their skin, to cover their skin. So it’s a *neis*. It’s a miracle that wool grows on sheep’s backs. Why should wool grow on a sheep’s back? What do you need wool for? It’s a miracle! And therefore, everything is the *sheim Hashem*. It’s the “name of Hashem,” – everything that we hear and see, proclaims, “It’s Me, Hashem!” His name fills the world!

THANK HASHEM IN SIGN LANGUAGE

And so you say *יהי שם השם מבורך מעתה ועד עולם* – The name of Hashem should be blessed forever and ever” (ibid. 103:2). How often should you do this? On *Rosh Chodesh*? Once a month you should say *Hallel*? No! You should say *Hallel מעתה ועד עולם* – forever and ever. And if you do it in this world, then you’ll continue to do so in the next world as well!

That’s our job as *avdei Hashem*. We have to attribute everything that we have to Hashem. If you’re able to walk – look how many people cannot walk. How many people need wheelchairs? How many people have walkers? Or crutches? Or canes? And you’re able to walk! And even those who have canes have to thank Hashem. Even those who have crutches have to thank Hashem. Even those who have wheelchairs have to thank Hashem. As long as you can open your mouth and say something,

you have to thank *Hashem*! Because there are many people who can't even talk – they know sign language, that's all. And even with sign language you have to thank *Hashem* in sign language. At least you have hands to make the motions.

And so we have our job open for us for our whole lifetime. מעתה ועד עולם! It's a career for a lifetime. It's not just a figure of speech, some nice words to make a *niggun*, and then you forget about it. No. It's a career for your whole life.

That's the truth of what *Sukkos* is saying. That's the lesson of *Sukkos*. Only that everything else in the world is saying it too. And therefore, *Hallel* keeps on going. It says ממזרח שמש עד מבוא – מהלל שם השם – “From the rising of the sun until the setting of the sun, *Hashem's* name is to be praised.” That means, that there's so much to be said in this world – if you look around this universe, this world and outside of the world, the sun, the moon, the planets, the far off stars. There are so many wonderful things for our benefit, that there is never an end to this task of praising *Hashem*.

FROM A PILE OF MANURE TO A PALACE

Now *Dovid Hamelech* says – I'll skip something to save time – מקימי מעפר דל – He raises the poor man up from the dirt. The poor man was sitting on the dirt; he had nothing. And now he is raised up, he became wealthy. מאשפות ירים אביון – “He raises the poor man from the dung heaps.” A poor man was finally evicted from his cottage because he couldn't pay the rent. So he went and sat on the dung heaps. It's a pile of manure and it's not a very pleasant place to sit. But at least he's sitting there. He has someplace to sit. So he's waiting, and finally what happens?

להושיבי עם נדיבים – “*Hashem* seats him with the nobility,” עם נדיבי עמו – “With the nobility of the land.” So he thinks, “How did I get here?” Something happened in between. He got busy, he invested, he bought a little business, he got rich, he bought a bigger business, and finally he's sitting in the palace, with all the wealthy people of the country, עם נדיבי עמו.

So what is he thinking? He's thinking, "Look, I worked hard. It pays to work hard. I got up early, I saved my money instead of wasting it. I invested." No, he's not saying that! He's saying, **מקימי מעפר דל** – "It's You Hashem, *You're the One* who did this." That's what happened to this rich man. A rich man is sitting in his palace and he remembers that he was sitting on the dirt once. He was a poor boy once, sitting on the dung heaps, with nothing in his pockets. And he was thinking, "Where will I get my next meal from?" And today he is a millionaire! So his job is to remember that always, and to say *Hallel to Hakodosh Boruch Hu* **מעתי ועד עולם**. And it's not only the millionaire. It's all of you as well. Everything you have is only from *Hashem*.

THE "BARREN" SIXTEEN YEAR OLD

A woman that is childless, **מושיבי עקרת הבית** – "A woman with no children in the home." So *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* made her **אם הבנים**, a mother of a lot of children. What does that mean? It doesn't mean a woman is barren and suddenly she has six or seven children at once. No, it didn't happen that way. She was a barren girl when she was fourteen years old. She was barren; she didn't have any children. She got married, let's say, at sixteen, and she got busy having babies, one after the other. Now she has a big family. *Baruch Hashem, Baruch Hashem!* And her sons and daughters are married, and she has granddaughters, grandsons, and great-grandchildren. And she sits at the weddings of her grandchildren and she looks around. Huge family pictures are being taken. She and her husband are in the middle, her daughters and sons are here, and sons-in-law and daughters-in-law next to them, the granddaughters and grandsons next to them, and the great-grandchildren are next to them. It's a tribe! Where did this tribe come from? And she says, "Well, I was interested in having a big family" No! That's *not* what she says. She says, "*You Hashem!* It was *You!* **מושיבי עקרת הבית** – You took a barren woman and you made her **אם הבנים שמחה**. And therefore, I am going to praise You forever and ever."

That's how we have to live! if you're an *eved Hashem*, then you must attribute everything to *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. That's what

that first *mizmor* of *Hallel* is saying. So therefore, הללו means not only to thank *Hashem*, but thank *only Hashem*, and remember always that whatever you have, *Hashem* gave you.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU COULD'VE BEEN

That's what it says: *Hashem pokeach ivrim, Hashem malbish arumim, Hashem matir asurim. Hashem, Hashem, Hashem.* Without *Hashem*, a man would be lying paralyzed in bed. There are so many people lying in bed, they can't even move. They have to be turned over in order to diaper them in bed. But you're not that way. So you must remember that really, you ought to be that way. It's only that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* changed the situation and gave you the ability to walk and to take care of yourself!

And therefore, "*Hashem zokef kifufim*" doesn't mean that you were once bent over, you were a cripple, a hunchback, and then by a miracle He straightened you out. No! You always were straight, but you were straight only because *Hashem* straightened you. So as you walk in the street, with a straight and erect stature, and you see somebody walking like this in the street [the Rav bent himself over], you should think, "If not for the *chesed Hashem*, that would be me."

And therefore, you have to praise *Hashem*, all your life, for everything. That's our big job. Don't think that you'll do it once in a while, and then you've fulfilled your obligation. You have to remind yourself all the time about this career of yours. השמר לך פן תשכח את השם אלוך - Be on guard always, lest you forget *Hashem* your G-d. And that's what *Sukkos* comes along to tell us. Remember what you once didn't have. You dwelled in *sukkos* and now *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* gave you בתים טובים, beautiful and spacious palatial homes. He gave you an ארץ זבת חלב ודבש.

So forever and ever, in this blessed land, your function is to do one big thing, and that is to say *Hallel* always to *Hashem*. *Hallelu Avdei Hashem!!* You, the servants of *Hashem*, forever and ever that's your job, to say *Hallel* to *Hashem*.

But if you neglect that, if you aren't *avdei Hashem* in this sense that I explained to you now; let's say you keep the *Torah*, but

you forget to thank *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* for all that He gave you. So then it says, תחת אשר לא עבדת את השם אלוֹקִיךָ בשמחה ובטוב לבב, מרוב כל. Ay-yai-yai! תחת, instead, אשר לא עבדת את השם – You weren't *avdei Hashem*, מרוב לבב ובטוב לבב – then you went into *galus*, where you didn't have anything. And now you look back, and you're reminded of what you were remiss in doing when you had everything.

HALEVAI THAT WE COULD SAY HALLEL ALL DAY LONG

And so, when people are still young and still healthy, and you still have *parnassa*, and more or less things are going well, it's your job to use the lesson of *Sukkos*, to be constantly aware that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* is showering you with numberless gifts. And therefore we have to say *hallel* all the time! Not only during the set times of *tefillah* – we must say *hallel* all day long!

טוב להודות להשם להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות. From the morning till the evening, and all day in between, that's the job of the *avdei Hashem*. And this is one of the functions of sitting in the *sukkah*. So for a little while we retire from our palatial homes, and we sit in the דירת ארעי, to remind ourselves, that soon we'll go back to our rugs from wall to wall, to our telephone, and to our air conditioner, and to every kind of convenience that we have. But we should remind ourselves now, while sitting in the *sukkah* where we don't have all these things, and soon we are going to go back and have them again, that it's הללו עבדי השם.

MAKE USE OF YOUR YOM TOV

And these ideas we spoke about tonight are the two big functions of the *sukkah*. One is to learn to be נכנע at all times because we are aware of the *Presence of Hashem*. And that we must keep our mouths shut as much as possible and produce as much silence as we are capable of producing because of this *Awareness of Hashem*. And the second is to produce *bitachon* and to be aware that *Hashem* alone is the One that is giving us everything. And therefore we are going to thank Him and be His servants always. And that's called *avodah*, the gratitude that you express to *Hashem* all your life, and all day long.

And the person who uses the *sukkah* remind himself of these two great principles is making use of the yom tov in the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu planned. And that's the person who Hashem loves, the one who will be *zoicheh* to stand before Him when he finally leaves this *דירת ארעי* of Olam Hazei, and say, "Hashem, I learned the lesson of the *sukkah* and I used the world to become aware of You and to sing to You, just as You intended."

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Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

We have a tradition that Avraham Avinu will be coming as a guest to our Sukkahs on the first night of Yom Tov. How is it possible for Avraham Avinu to be in thousands of Sukkahs at one moment?

A:

Avraham Avinu is in Gan Eden. He's not מלא כל הארץ כבודו. You have to understand that. So what does it mean that Avraham Avinu will be our guest? It means that the *shem tov*, the *dugmah*, the example, the influence of a man is just like the man himself. Avraham's influence should come into our Sukkah and be *mashpia* upon us.

Avraham was a big *oived Hashem*. He was a tremendous *baal chesed*. Avraham was ready to sacrifice his son. So what we want is that all the *shleimus* of Avraham Avinu should come into our Sukkah and influence us. That's more important than Avraham Avinu coming into our Sukkah. If he came and we didn't think about anything, if we didn't think about who Avraham Avinu was, it would be a waste of time - a waste of a visit. But when Avraham's influence comes, that's more important than Avraham himself. And that's the *ikar*.

Now, when we say that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is in the Sukkah that's a different story. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is in the Sukkah and you have to know that. *Vi'shuchanti bi'soch Bnei Yisroel. Asher ani sho'chein bi'sochum*. "I dwell among you," says Hashem. And it's true. It's true that wherever the Jews come together, Hashem is there too. And that is 100% true. But when we say Avraham is in our Sukkah, it means that Avraham's example and influence is in our Sukkah. When we invite Avraham into our Sukkah we are being *misparallel* to Hashem that we should be *zoicheh* to impress upon our minds the influence and the ideals of this great man.

TAPE # E-202 (September 1999)

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