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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

חג הסוכות

אתה בחרתנו מכל העמים, אהבת אותנו, ורצית בנו... ותתן לנו ה' אלקינו באהבה, מועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון. (שמו"ע של שלש רגלים)

You have chosen us from all the peoples; You loved us and found favour in us; ... And You, Hashem, our G-d, gave us with love, appointed Festivals for gladness, Festivals and times for joy. (Yom Tov Shemoneh Esrei)

R' Yitzchok Meltzen, in his commentary on the Siddur, Siach Yitzchok, explains how the three expressions listed in the *tefillah* of בחרתנו אתה correspond to the שלש רגלים:

1. אתה בחרתנו refers to Pesach when we were chosen as a nation and saved from Mitzrayim.
2. אהבת אותנו refers to Shavuot and Kabolas HaTorah, with Hashem's love for us displayed by giving us the Torah.
3. ורצית בנו refers to Sukkos, when Hashem's appeasement with Klal Yisroel after the sin of the *egel* was displayed with the return of the הכבוד.

He further explains that we find the Yomim Tovim being given three titles: מועדים, חגים and זמנים, with the first being a cause for שמחה and the others for ששון. What are the meanings of these different terms and how do they relate to various types of joy?

The Vilna Gaon explains the difference between שמחה and ששון based upon what we say in davening (*Birkas Krias Shema of Shabbos*): שמחים בצאתם וששים בבואם, *Glad as they go forth and exultant as they return*. He explains that when the sun and moon are going out to perform their task, they are שמחים, *glad*, that they are setting out to do the will of Hashem. When they return, they are ששים, *exultant*, over the fact that they have accomplished Hashem's mission. שמחה connotes happiness based upon contemplating what is going to be in the future while ששון is joy based upon contemplating a past experience.

Every Yom Tov is a מועד, an established time of coming close to Hashem. The source of the word מועד is from the term וועד, a time to meet with Hashem. When a person utilises these times by coming closer to Hashem, he can look forward to further closeness from Him in the future and knows that Hashem will guide him in the right way. This is מועדים לשמחה as the closeness we experience over Yom Tov brings us feelings of happiness and joy in contemplating future closeness to Hashem.

The term חג refers to an incident which occurred in the history of Klal Yisroel, with the *Shalosh Regalim* commemorating three different events. Additionally, each Yom Tov occurs in a different זמן, a different period and season of the year, related to the produce of the land. Pesach is the time when we recall Yetzias Mitzrayim, and it falls during the spring when the produce is beginning to grow. Shavuot reminds us of receiving the Torah at Sinai and falls at the time of harvesting. Lastly, Sukkos recalls ישראל בני – כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל – how Hashem gave Klal Yisroel the Heavenly clouds whilst being in the *midbar*, and occurs during the time of gathering in the produce. Accordingly, all the *Shalosh Regalim* are חגים וזמנים לששון. Both remembering past momentous events (חגים) and feeling

satisfied over the progress of the development of the produce (זְמַנִּים) engenders שְׂשׂוֹן, feelings of joy over what has already transpired.

The Siach Yitschok takes this idea even further. There is a corresponding connection between each Yom Tov and the season of the year it finds itself in. 1) Pesach is, as explained, אֶתֶּה בְּחֶרְתְּנוּ when Klal Yisroel began as a nation, like the time of spring when crops are beginning to bud and flourish. 2) The milestone Klal Yisroel reached with receiving the Torah on Shavuot is akin to the harvesting stage. Harvesting takes place once the produce has finished growing and is complete, resembling the perfection we acquired when we obtained the Torah. 3) Produce in the fields is vulnerable and unprotected from animals and thieves, and requires being brought into storage. So too, without Sukkos, the Torah would be left unprotected and open to being disregarded since all experience *nisayonos* in life. However, Sukkos brings about an amazing *shemirah* for the Torah. How? The *Meforshim* explain that our Yom Tov inspires and teaches us *bitachon*. In the *midbar*, Klal Yisroel were not only granted the bare essentials such as food and water. They also merited an extra - the עֲנִי הַכְּבוֹד to protect them from the elements, which teaches one to trust in Hashem to provide all one needs. For this reason, Sukkos is described as שְׂמֵחָתֵינוּ, since living with *bitachon* in Hashem, automatically generates a life of *simchah*.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* expounds that the *mitzvah* of Sukkah teaches: צֵא מְדִינַת קִבְעַ וְשֵׁב בְּדִירַת עֵרָא, to leave our permanent homes and dwell in temporary ones, which helps us develop *bitachon* in Hashem. By understanding that this world is just a preparation for the next, we can lower our expectations and better handle life's disappointments. Furthermore, acknowledging the transient nature of our world fosters *bitachon* and helps to contextualize challenges, as temporary needs diminish in importance.

The Mishnah (*Sukkah* 1:1) teaches that a Sukkah cannot be built more than twenty *amos* high. One of the reasons the Gemara (2a) provides for this is that a Sukkah higher than twenty *amos* requires very firm and strong walls, classifying it as a דִּירַת קִבְעַ which is disqualified. The Gemara questions that accordingly one should not be able to build a Sukkah with iron or other strong materials, and the Gemara answers that it doesn't need to actually be a temporary dwelling; rather, it suffices if the dimensions are able to be temporary. What is the lesson to be learned from this?

R' Elyah explained from R' Simcha Zissel of Kelm that there is a lesson for life in this teaching. A person is allowed to seek a livelihood and work the land doing whatever is necessary throughout the seasons, although this results in him being occupied the whole year. However, this is only allowed when the dimensions are עֵרָא. If someone becomes so engrossed in his livelihood and pursuit of wealth that they cannot give it up even when it presents a contradiction to what Hashem wants, then this is no longer acceptable within the boundaries of עֵרָא and is no longer permissible.

May we strive to strengthen our *bitachon* in Hashem by absorbing the lessons of Sukkos, which will guarantee us a future of true *simchah* and closeness to Hashem.

גוט יום טוב

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