



WHAT AROUSES JOY?

Why is Sukkot the most joyous holiday? Is it related to agriculture and economics or perhaps to our failures? The Torah tells us about the happiest Sukkot in Jewish history, and the Rebbe derives a practical lesson from it.

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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At the end of seventy years of Babylonian exile, Ezra led the Jewish people back to Jerusalem where they celebrated Sukkot with great joy, “for it had not been celebrated since the days of Joshua.” (Source 1)

How can it be said that the Jews did not celebrate Sukkot until then? The commentaries explain that for all those earlier years it wasn’t done in the most optimal manner, and that is why there was great joy in the time of Ezra. (Source 2)

The Rebbe asks: Why wasn’t Sukkot celebrated with such joy in the days of King David and Solomon, and only in Ezra’s time, when they weren’t even completely liberated yet?

B. The Meaning of the Primary Festivals.....7

There are two central festivals in the year: Sukkot, concluding with Shemini Atzeret, and Passover, which ends with Shavuot.

Passover represents the Divine service of the always-righteous person; Passover was the “conversion” of all the Jewish people, and we derive laws of conversion from this event (Source 3). A new convert is compared to a newborn child (Source 4) and is thus on the level of the always-righteous (Source 5). Sukkot, however, symbolizes the Divine service of the penitent; historically, it followed the sin of the golden calf and the Jews’ repentance over it, and annually, it follows the Ten Days of Repentance.

This is why the Jews are divided into four kinds specifically on Sukkot, as the Midrash explains the meaning behind the mitzvah of taking the Four Kinds (Source 6). On Passover, the Jews were like newborns, and at that point, when they were all just starting out in life, they were all equal. On Sukkot, however, after the sin and repentance for the golden calf, there were different levels of penitents, and accordingly, different kinds of Jews.

The Rebbe emphasizes that all four kinds of Jews repented completely and received G-d’s forgiveness, but were at different levels depending on the magnitude of their sin and the level of their repentance. Quoting the Zohar and the Midrash, the Rebbe says that all kinds of Jews are accepted by G-d. (Source 7)

C. A Joyous Holiday.....17

The Yalkut Shimoni observes that the Torah doesn’t use the word “joy” once for Passover, but uses it three times for Sukkot. (The simple explanation is that Sukkot is more joyous because of the people’s economic standing. At that time of the year, the crops are sufficiently dried to be taken into the storehouses [Source 8]).

According to what we learned, we can now understand on a deeper level why Sukkot is so joyous: the repentance increases the joy. The verse states “peace, peace to the far and near,” and the Sages expound that G-d blesses everyone with peace, but first blesses those who were far and drew near. When the far become close, this elicits special joy.

This explains the great joy of Sukkot for those returning to Israel from exile. When the Jews entered Israel during Joshua’s days, they were on the level of the always-righteous, and they celebrated Sukkot accordingly. When Ezra came up to Israel after the destruction of the First Temple due to severe transgressions, the Jews repented and brought G-d's presence down again, causing the tremendous joy they experienced.

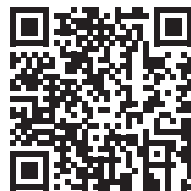
Introduction

The Torah tells of a historic Sukkot celebration in the days of Ezra, noting that it was so joyous because Sukkot hadn’t been celebrated since Joshua’s times. Is that so? Did kings David and Solomon not celebrate Sukkot?

השיעור לחג הסוכות

משיחת שמחת בית השואבה ה'תשכ"ד
הנחה בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם כרך ל"ח עמ' 79

[לשמיעת השיחה:](#)



2:20 ואילך

A. Historical Background

After seventy years of Jewish exile in Babylon, Cyrus, the Persian ruler, called on the Jews to return to Israel and rebuild their land and lay the foundations for the second temple. Some 42,000 exiles followed Ezra the Scribe to Jerusalem.

Over the next few years, they rebuilt the Holy Temple, but they experienced difficulties in constructing a wall around the Temple. Only after much tension with the surrounding nations did Nehemiah, one of their leaders, succeed in completing the wall. Building the wall symbolized a strong Jewish settlement and put an end to the opposition of the nations around them. All this took place close to Rosh Hashanah. Now was the perfect opportunity to thank G-d and mark the holy day with all the Jews gathered at the Holy Temple. Ezra led the people and spoke about the day before the assembled crowd.

Source 1 Nehemiah 7-8 (excerpts)

Student's
pg. 3

These are the people of the land who went up from the captivity of exile, exiled by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. They returned to Jerusalem and to Judea, each to their own city.

The complete group numbered 42,360.

The seventh month arrived, and the Children of Israel were in their cities. All the people gathered as one to the square before the Water Gate, and they told Ezra the Scribe to bring the scroll of the law of Moses, which G-d had commanded Israel.

On the second day, the heads of the tribes, the priests, and the Levites, gathered with Ezra to understand the words of the Torah. They found written in the Torah that G-d had commanded—by the hand of Moses—that the Children of Israel dwell in Sukkot on the festival in the seventh month. They should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain and bring olive leaves and leaves of oil trees, myrtle leaves, date palm leaves, and willow branches, to make Sukkot, as it is written."

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Ezra reads the verses in the Torah commanding the Jews to dwell in Sukkot during the upcoming festival.

אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי הַמְּדִינָה הָעֵלִיִּם מִשְׁבֵּי
הַגּוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ
בָּבֶל, וַיָּשׁוּבוּ לִירוּשָׁלַם וְלִיהוּדָה
אִישׁ לְעִירוֹ.

כָּל הַקְּהָל כָּאֶחָד אָרְבַּע רְבּוּא,
אֲלָפִים שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וְשָׁשִׁים.

וַיַּעַז הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעָרֵיהֶם. וַיֵּאָסְפוּ כָל הָעָם כְּאִישׁ
אֶחָד אֶל הָרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר
הַמַּיִם, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְעֹזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר
לְהֵבִיא אֶת סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה ה' אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי נֶאֱסְפוּ רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת
לְכָל הָעָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם אֶל
עֹזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר, וְלִהְשִׁיבֵל אֶל דְּבָרֵי
הַתּוֹרָה. וַיִּמְצְאוּ כְּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה ה' בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה, אֲשֶׁר יֵשְׁבוּ
בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּסֻכּוֹת כְּחָג בְּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁבִיעִי. וְאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמִיעוּ וַיַּעֲבִירוּ
קוֹל בְּכָל עָרֵיהֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר:
"צִוָּה הָהָר וְהֵבִיאוּ עָלַי זֵית וְעֵלִי
עֵץ שִׁמֹן וְעֵלִי הָדָס וְעֵלִי תְּמָרִים
וְעֵלִי עֵץ עֵבֶת לַעֲשֹׂת סֻכַּת כְּכַתוּב."

Student's pg. 3
The people went out and made Sukkot for themselves, each one on his roof and in their courts and in the courts of the House of G-d, and in the square of the Water Gate, and in the square of the Gate of Ephraim. The whole company that had returned from exile built sukkot and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this; their joy was very great.

וַיֵּצְאוּ הָעָם וַיִּבְיְאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם סֻכּוֹת אִישׁ עַל גַּגּוֹ וּבְחֻצְרוֹתֵיהֶם, וּבְחֻצְרוֹת בַּיִת הָאֱלֹהִים, וּבְרְחוֹב שַׁעַר הַמַּיִם, וּבְרְחוֹב שַׁעַר אֶפְרַיִם. וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל הַקְּהָל הַשְּׂבִיִּים מִן הַשְּׂבִי סֻכּוֹת, וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת. כִּי לֹא עָשׂוּ מִיָּמֵי יִשׁוּעַ בֶּן נֹון בֶּן נֻנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עַד הַיּוֹם הַהוּא, וַתְּהִי שִׂמְחָה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד.

That year everyone observed the Sukkot holiday and great joy filled Jerusalem.

>> The Rebbe

Sukkot Wasn't Celebrated Since Joshua?

Student's pg. 4
The verse tells us about the Sukkot celebrated by the Jewish people when they returned to the Land of Israel from exile with Ezra: "The whole company that had returned from exile built sukkot and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this; their joy was very great."

מסופר אודות חג הסוכות שעשו בני ישראל בשובם מגלות בבל - שכאשר בא עזרא עם כל "העולים משבי הגולה"¹, "כל הקהל כאחד ארבע רבוא וגו"², אזי "ויעשו כל הקהל השבים מן השבי סוכות וישבו בסוכות, כי לא עשו מימי ישוע בן נון כן בני ישראל עד היום ההוא ותהי שמחה גדולה מאד".

This is very difficult, as the Talmud asks in Tractate Arachin: "could it be that they didn't make sukkot in the time of King David? They didn't make sukkot during the time of King Solomon? Only when Ezra came around?"

ולכאורה אינו מובן כלל - כקושיית הגמרא במסכת ערכין³: "אפשר בא דוד ולא עשו סוכות, בא שלמה ולא עשו סוכות"⁴ - עד שבא עזרא!?"

Sukkot Was Celebrated, But Not Like This

Student's pg. 4
The commentators explain that the verse doesn't mean that the Jewish people hadn't observed the mitzvah of sukkot at all, G-d forbid. Rather, it is stating that at the time of Ezra they observed the mitzvah in the optimal manner, and they celebrated with great joy as a result.

ומבואר במפרשי תנ"ך, שהפירוש שלא עשו כן מימי יהושע בן נון עד היום ההוא הוא (לא בנוגע לכללות קיום המצוה חס ושלום, אלא) שאז "עשו המצוה מן המובחר", ולכן "ותהי שמחה גדולה מאד", "על אשר קיימו המצוה בתקון רב"⁵.

4. כניסת שיטה מקובצת על הגליון.
5. מצויד עה"פ.

1. נחמ"ז, 1.
2. שם, סו.
3. לב, ב (בפרש"י).
4. שם, סו.
5. שם, סו.

Source 3 Metzudat David, Nehemiah 8:17

Student's **Had not celebrated:** Meaning, they observed the mitzvah in the optimal manner, which had not been done since Joshua.

pg. 4

Great joy: Over fulfilling the mitzvah in such a proper manner.

כִּי לֹא עָשׂוּ. ר"ל עָשׂוּ הַמִּצְוָה מִן
הַמְבָחָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָשׂוּ בֶּן מִיָּמֵי
יְשׁוּעָה בֶּן נֹון.

וַתְּהִי שִׂמְחָה. עַל אֲשֶׁר קִיָּמוּ
הַמִּצְוָה בְּתַקוּן רַב.

Metzudat David explains that the verse doesn't mean that Sukkot was not observed from Joshua's days until Ezra, a period of 900 years. Rather, during that time it was not observed meticulously, with the active participation of the entire people, as it was in the time of Ezra. Several other commentators concur.

>> The Rebbe

Student's Now we need to understand why Sukkot wasn't celebrated with such joy during the eras of David and Solomon, but only during the time of Ezra. When the Jewish people returned from exile with Ezra it wasn't a complete redemption, they were still subjected to foreign rule. So why was it specifically then that Sukkot was celebrated with such great joy?

pg. 5

וצריך להבין: מהו הטעם שבימי דוד
ושלמה לא חגגו את חג הסוכות מתוך
שמחה גדולה מאד, ודוקא כאשר עלה
עזרא מן הגולה - שאז לא היתה גאולה
שלימה, אלא "עדיין עבדי אחשוורוש
אנחנו" - חגגו את חג הסוכות מתוך
שמחה גדולה מאד?

During the time of Joshua, the Jewish people enjoyed full independence, but when they returned from Babylonia they were still subject to Persian rule. Why then was their celebration of Sukkot during the later era so much more joyful than in the former?

B. The Meaning of the Primary Festivals

>> The Rebbe

Two Major Festivals

Student's To understand this we must first
pg. 6 explain the general theme of Sukkot.

There are three major festivals, during which a pilgrimage is made to the Temple: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. The Midrash tells us that these festivals can be grouped into two, as Shavuot is considered an extension of Pesach, similar to the way Sukkot concludes with the festival of Shemini Atzeret. The theme of Pesach is the Exodus from Egypt, and its culmination is on Shavuot, when we received the Torah. As the verse states, "When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship G-d on this mountain," and the Midrash explains, "in what merit were they taken out of Egypt? In the merit of the Torah."

Pesach - Festival of the Righteous

Student's The festivals of Pesach and Sukkot both
pg. 6 occur on the fifteenth day of the month, in Nisan and Tishrei respectively. They share much in common, and a number of laws are derived from their similarity. But there is also a key difference between these two festivals:

פירוש והבנת הענין - בהקדם ביאור כללות ענינו של חג הסוכות:

בנוגע לשלש הרגלים, פסח, שבועות וסוכות - הרי מצינו במדרש⁷ שחג השבועות לגבי חג הפסח הוא כמו שמיני עצרת לגבי חג הסוכות, והיינו, שכללות הרגלים הם (לא שלש רגלים, אלא) שני רגלים: חג הסוכות (כולל גם שמיני עצרת, סיומם ותכליתם של שבעת ימי חג הסוכות), וחג הפסח, שסיומו ותכליתו בחג השבועות, כמו שכתוב⁸ "בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה", כפי שמובא במדרש⁹: "באיזה זכות אוציאם ממצרים . . בזכות התורה."

והנה, שני החגים האלו, חג הסוכות בחמשה-עשר בתשרי וחג הפסח בחמשה-עשר בניסן - אף שהם שונים, ועד שמצינו בהלכה בפועל שלמדים כמה ענינים מיום טוב אחד לחבירו¹⁰ - יש ביניהם חילוק עיקרי:

9. שמו"ר פ"ג, ד. פרש"י עה"פ. וראה בארוכה לקו"ש חל"ו ע' 7 ואילך.
10. ראה לדוגמא - סוכה כז, א.

7. ראה שהש"ר פ"ז, ב. סה"מ תרפ"ט ע' 56 ואילך. תו"מ סה"מ תשרי ע' רי ואילך. וש"נ.
8. שמו"ג, יב.
9. ראה שהש"ר פ"ז, ב. סה"מ תרפ"ט ע' 56 ואילך. תו"מ סה"מ תשרי ע' רי ואילך. וש"נ.
10. שמו"ג, יב.

Student's pg. 7 Pesach, “the time of our freedom,” represents the Divine service of fully righteous people. Pesach was effectively the conversion of the Jewish people, and the Talmud derives a number of the laws of conversion from the conduct of our ancestors in Egypt, A convert is considered like a completely new person, perfectly righteous with no blemish. Such a person can proceed confidently to “worship G-d on this mountain.”

Source 3 Yevamot 41a

Student's pg. 7 The sages taught: Rabbi Eliezer says that a convert who circumcised but did not immerse is a valid convert, as we see that the forefathers circumcised but did not immerse. What about one who immersed and did not circumcise? Rabbi Yehoshua says such a person is a valid convert, as we see that our female ancestors immersed but did not circumcise. The sages ruled that one who did not immerse and circumcise is not considered to be converted until they do both.

חג הפסח, "זמן חרותנו" - הוא ענין עבודת הצדיקים, שהרי בחג הפסח היתה הגירות של בני ישראל, כפי שמצינו במסכת יבמות¹¹ שלמדים כמה דיני גירות (מילה וטבילה כו') מהנהגת אבותינו במצרים, והרי "גר שנתגייר כקטן שנולד דמי"¹², שזהו מעמד ומצב של צדיק, שאין עליו כתמים חס ושלום, והולך לבטח דרכו בהנהגת "תעבדון את האלקים גו".

תנו רבנן: גר שִׁמְלוּ וְלֹא טָבַל, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: הָרִי זֶה גֵר, שֶׁכֵּן מְצִינוּ בְּאֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁמְלוּ וְלֹא טָבְלוּ.
טָבַל וְלֹא מָל, רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר: הָרִי זֶה גֵר, שֶׁכֵּן מְצִינוּ בְּאֲמָהוֹת שֶׁטָבְלוּ וְלֹא מָלוּ.
וְחֻקִּים אוֹמְרִים: טָבַל וְלֹא מָל, מָל וְלֹא טָבַל – אֵין גֵר עַד שֶׁיִּמּוּל וְיִטְבּוֹל.

The sages are debating whether both immersion and circumcision are required for conversion, or whether just one of the two suffices. In explaining their positions, the sages compared the conversion process to the actions our ancestors undertook before leaving Egypt. This demonstrates that before celebrating Passover, our ancestors underwent a process of conversion.

Source 4 Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Laws of Forbidden Relations 13:10

Student's pg. 7 A gentile who converts to Judaism and a slave who is freed are considered like newborn children.

עַפּוּ"ם [עובד כוכבים ומזלות] שֶׁנִּתְּגַר וְעֶבֶד שֶׁנִּשְׁתַּחֲרַר הָרִי הוּא כְּקָטָן שֶׁנּוֹלַד.

Source 5 Rashi on Vayishlach 36:3

Student's pg. 7 The Midrash names three whose sins are all pardoned: a new convert, one who attains a new position of stature, and a bridegroom.

מְצִינוּ בְּאֲגַדַּת מִדְרַשׁ סֵפֶר שְׁמוּאֵל: גֵר מוֹחֲלִים לָהֶן עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶן, גֵר שֶׁנִּתְּגַר, וְהַעוֹלָה לְגִדְלָהּ וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אִשָּׁה.

11. מו, א-ב.
12. שם כב, א. וש"נ.

There's a novel idea in the laws of conversion. A new convert is essentially reborn, like a child just entering this world. As a new person, they are not the same person who did those past sins; those sins are pardoned, turning the convert into an always-righteous person.

Thus, at Passover time, all the Jews had just undergone conversion, and were all pardoned from their sins—like newborn babies who are without sin—making them all always-righteous.

>> The Rebbe

Sukkot - The Festival of Penitents

Student's
pg. 8

The festival of Sukkot is observed in the seventh month, Tishrei. The Midrash explains that Tishrei means “forgive” in Aramaic, “forgive (tishrei), release, and atone for the debts of Your people.” Sukkot comes after we have observed ten days of repentance, beginning with Rosh Hashanah and concluding with Yom Kippur. The four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot are a continuation and completion of the Yom Kippur theme of atonement, and immediately thereafter we enter the “first day of our new account of sins.”

In light of this, the theme of Sukkot is the Divine service of penitents, not the service of the completely righteous, the theme of Pesach.

Pesach represents the completely righteous, while Sukkot represents a person that has repented for their transgressions.

Firstly, this was the historical background of those days. Between the Exodus on Pesach and receiving the Torah on Shavuot the Jewish people were completely righteous. But shortly thereafter they committed the sin of the golden calf. They were punished for this sin, and then repented and asked for forgiveness. Their forgiveness was finally granted by G-d on Yom Kippur. When Sukkot came around a few days later, they were penitents.

The same is true every year. During the month of Elul and the first part of Tishrei, we occupy ourselves with prayer and repentance, and then on Sukkot we are penitents.

ואילו חג הסוכות - שהוא בחודש השביעי, שנקרא בשם “תשרי”, על שם “תשרי ותשבוק ותכפר על חובי עמך” [= סלח, הנח וכפר על חובות עמך]¹³ - בא לאחרי עבודת התשובה בעשרת ימי תשובה שתחילתם בראש השנה וסיומם ביום הכיפורים, כולל גם ארבעת הימים שלאחרי זה שהם המשך וסיום לכפרה של יום הכיפורים, ולאחרי זה מתחיל “ראשון לחשבון עוונות”,

כך, שענינו של חג הסוכות הוא (לא עבודת הצדיקים, כמו חג הפסח, אלא) עבודת בעלי תשובה.

¹³. ויקר' פכ"ט, ח.

Four Types of Penitents

Student's This is also the reason why specifically on Sukkot
pg. 8 we emphasize the division of the Jewish people into four groups.

וזהו גם הטעם שדוקא בחג הסוכות
מצינו שבני ישראל נחלקים
לארבעה סוגים:

In addition to dwelling in the Sukkah, there's another mitzvah on Sukkot: the Four Kinds. The Torah says to "take for yourself ... a beautiful fruit (Etrog) palm fronds (Lulav) branch of a braided tree (Haddasim) and willows of the brook (Aravot)." The mitzvah is to bind them together and wave them each day of the holiday, except for Shabbat.

What is the significance of binding these four species? The Midrash explains:

Source 6 Vayikrah Rabbah 30:12

Student's **Beautiful fruit:** This represents the Jewish
pg. 8 people. Just as the Etrog has a taste and a scent, so too there are Jews who study Torah and do the mitzvot.

פרי עץ הדר – אלו ישראל. מה אתרוג
זה יש בו טעם ויש בו ריח, כך ישראל
יש בהם בני אדם שיש בהם תורה ויש
בהם מעשים טובים.

Palm fronds: This represents the Jewish people. Just as the date has a taste but no scent, so too some Jews study Torah but do not do mitzvot.

פפת תמרים – אלו ישראל. מה התמרה
הזו יש בו טעם ואין בו ריח, כך הם
ישראל יש בהם שיש בהם תורה ואין
בהם מעשים טובים.

Student's **Branch of a braided tree:** This represents
pg. 9 the Jewish people. Just as the myrtle has a scent but no taste, so too some Jews do mitzvot but do not study Torah.

וענף עץ עבת – אלו ישראל. מה הדס
יש בו ריח ואין בו טעם, כך ישראל יש
בהם שיש בהם מעשים טובים ואין בהם
תורה.

Willows of the brook: This represents the Jews. Just as the willow has neither scent nor taste, so too some Jews neither do mitzvot nor study Torah.

וערבי נחל – אלו ישראל. מה ערבה זו
אין בה טעם ואין בה ריח, כך הם ישראל
יש בהם בני אדם שאין בהם לא תורה
ולא מעשים טובים.

What does G-d do? G-d says "Bind them all together and some will bring clemency for the others ..."

ומה הקדוש ברוך הוא עושה להם?
אלא אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא יקשרו כלם
אגדה אחת והן מכפרין אלו על אלו...

This Midrash teaches us the incredible virtue of each and every Jew, no matter what they do or who they are. Just as one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of taking the Four Kinds if any kind is absent, so too if even one kind of Jew is missing, the Jewish people are not complete.

>> The Rebbe

Student's
pg. 9

On Pesach, when the Jewish people are in the state of new converts—who are like newly born children—we don't have a division into four categories. At that time, every Jew is at the beginning of their Divine service, "this is the day you became a nation." Sukkot, however, came after undesirable events had transpired and the Jewish people had ultimately achieved forgiveness. In their state as penitents, there were varying levels among the people—there were varying levels of culpability in their sin, and there were varying levels of achievement in their Divine service. As a result, by then the Jewish people could be divided into four categories, which are alluded to by the four kinds taken on Sukkot, the etrog, lulav, hadas, and aravah.

בחג הפסח, שאז נמצאים בני ישראל במעמד ומצב של גר שנתגייר כקטן שנולד דמי - לא מצינו חלוקה לארבעה סוגים, כיון שכל אחד אוחז בהתחלת העבודה, "היום הזה נהיית לעם"¹⁴; אבל בחג הסוכות, לאחרי שעברו הענינים הבלתי-רצויים, עד שפעלו שיהיה "סלחתי כדברך" - הרי בבעלי תשובה יש חילוקי דרגות, הן ביחס לענין שעליו היתה צריכה להיות התשובה, והן ביחס לשינוי טבעו על ידי העבודה שהורגל בה במשך הזמן, ובהתאם לכך הנה לאחרי עבודת התשובה יש בחג הסוכות ארבעה סוגים בבני ישראל, שמרומזים בארבעת המינים אתרוג, לולב, הדס וערבה.

When children are born they all start out at the same place, equally pure and holy. When they grow up and make mistakes, express regret, and repent, differences emerge between them. The magnitude of the error, the sincerity of the repentance, and the effect it had on the soul of the penitent. All these variables create different categories of people.

This is why there are no Four Kinds on Pesach, as then all of the people were righteous, and of one kind. During Sukkot, after enduring bitter experiences and repenting, different categories are created, and we have the mitzvah of the four kinds to unite everyone together.

All Accepted By G-d

Student's
pg. 10

The differences between them notwithstanding, all of the Jewish people were completely forgiven by G-d. The Zohar teaches that the Four Kinds are alluded to by the verse "I said let me climb up (aaleh) the date palm (tamar)." The word "aaleh" serves as an acronym for the Hebrew words

אף-על-פי שכולם נמצאים במעמד ומצב של בעלי תשובה, ובאופן של "סלחתי כדברך", כפי שביקש משה רבינו, תכלית הסליחה ומחילה וכפרה, שלכן מרומזים ארבעת המינים בפסוק¹⁵ "אמרתי אעלה בתמר", "אעלה" ראשי תיבות אתרוג ערבה לולב הדס (כמובא בזהר¹⁶ ובתקוני

16. ח"ג רפג, א.

14. תבוא כז, ט.
15. שז"ש ז, ט.

Student's *etrog, aravah, lulav, and hadas.* This teaches us that the combination of these four kinds—and only when they are all together—causes that “the righteous one flourishes like a date palm,” which the Midrash explains alludes to G-d.

pg.10

זהר¹⁷), היינו, שהקב"ה אומר שעל ידי ארבעתם (ודוקא על ידי ארבעתם) נעשית אצלו תכלית העליה של "צדיק כתמר יפרח"¹⁸, כמובא במדרש¹⁹ שזה מתייחס לקב"ה, צדיקו של עולם.

The Rebbe emphasizes that while on Sukkot there are different levels among the Jewish people, all four categories of Jews have repented properly and were all forgiven by G-d. The Rebbe quotes from the Zohar and Midrash to this effect, that G-d welcomes all of the four kinds.

Source 7 Song of Songs 7:9

Student's "I said 'I will climb up the date palm.' "

pg.10

אֲמַרְתִּי אֶעֱלֶה בְּתֶמֶר.

The Zohar says that the word "Aaleh" (I will go up) is an acronym of **E**trog, **A**ravah, **L**ulav, **H**adas and this verse alludes to the mitzvah of the Four Kinds. What does go up the date palm mean? Another Midrash explains that G-d is called a date palm. If so, G-d is telling us that with the Four Kinds, the four types of Jews, we go up to, and are accepted by G-d.

In summary, Passover represents the Divine service of the always-righteous while Sukkot represents the service of the penitent.

19. ויק"ר פ"ל, ט.

17. תי"ג (כט, א).
18. תהלים צב, יג.

C. Sukkot - The Festival of Joy

>> The Rebbe

Joyous Festivals

Student's pg. 11 The Midrash points out that “joy” is not mentioned even once in the Torah in connection to Pesach. Regarding shavuot, the completion of Pesach, “joy” is stated once. In the context of Sukkot, however, “joy” is mentioned three times. Repetition of something three times creates a chazakah, a state of permanence that has halachic ramifications.

מובא בילקוט²⁰: “בפסח אין אתה מוצא שכתוב בו אפילו שמחה אחת”, ורק בסיומו ותכליתו, בחג השבועות, “אתה מוצא . . שמחה אחת”, ואילו בחג הסוכות - “אתה מוצא שלש שמחות” - ו”בשלשה פעמים זוהי חזקה”²¹, לכל הדעות ובכל העינים .

The Economy

Source 8 Yalkut Shimoni, Vayikra

Student's pg. 11 There are three mentions of joy: The verse says regarding Sukkot “You shall rejoice in your festivals” “You shall be very joyous” and “You shall rejoice before your G-d for seven days.” Why? During Passover, the future crop yields are being determined and nobody knows if this year will be a good harvest or not, thus joy is not mentioned during Passover.

אתה מוצא שלש שמחות: פתיב בְּחַג וְשִׂמְחָת בְּחַגְּךָ, וְהֵייתָ אִתָּךְ שִׂמְחָה, וְשִׂמְחָתְכֶם לְפָנַי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שְׂבַעַת יָמִים.

Regarding Shavuot, the verse makes one mention of joy: “You shall celebrate Shavuot for your G-d and you and your family shall rejoice.” Why only one mention of joy? Because the crops are already being brought in from the fields. Joy is not mentioned twice because the fruit trees are still being judged.

אָבַל בְּפֶסַח אֵין אַתָּה מוֹצֵא שְׂפָתוֹב בּו אֶפְלוֹ שִׂמְחָה אַחַת. לְמָה? אַתָּה מוֹצֵא שְׂבַעַת הַתְּבוּאָה גְּדוּגִית וְאֵין אָדָם יוֹדֵעַ אִם עוֹשֶׂה הַשָּׁנָה תְּבוּאָה אִם אֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה לְפִיכָךְ אֵין כְּתוּב שָׁם שִׂמְחָה.

וְכֵן אַתָּה מוֹצֵא שְׂאֵין כְּתוּב בְּעֶצְרָת אֶלָּא שִׂמְחָה אַחַת, דְּכַתִּיב: וְעִשִׂיתָ חַג שְׂבַעֹת לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשִׂמְחָת אַתָּה וּבִיתְךָ. וְלָמָּה כְּתוּב בָּהּ שִׂמְחָה אַחַת? מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַתְּבוּאָה נִכְנָסָת בְּפָנִים. וְמָה טַעַם אֵין כְּתוּב שָׁם שְׂתֵי שִׂמְחָוֹת לְפִי שְׂפָרוֹת הָאֵילָן גְּדוּגִין.

Student's pg. 12 On Sukkot, however, the crops and fruits are already in the storehouses, and joy is written three times: “Rejoice in your festivals; You shall rejoice before your G-d; You shall be very joyous.”

אָבַל בְּחַג, שֶׁהַתְּבוּאָה וּפְרוֹת הָאֵילָן בְּפָנִים, לְפִיכָךְ כְּתוּב שְׁלֹשׁ שִׂמְחָוֹת, וְשִׂמְחָת בְּחַגְּךָ. וְשִׂמְחָתְכֶם לְפָנַי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. וְהֵייתָ אִתָּךְ שִׂמְחָה.

20. יל"ש אמור רמז תרנד (בתחלתו).
21. ראה ב"מ קו, ריש ע"ב. וש"נ.

The Yalkut Shimoni explains that the economic state of the nation is the reason for so much joy. On Passover, the harvest is just beginning and nothing is certain yet. On Shavuot, some crops are already being gathered, but the fruits aren't ready yet. On Sukkot, everything is stored away and the Jews can be very joyous.

>> The Rebbe

The Answer

Student's
pg.12 We can now understand the liturgy arranged by the Men of the Great Assembly for the festivals. While all festivals are termed by the Torah "festivals for rejoicing," the appellation "the time of our rejoicing" is only said in the prayers for Sukkot.

This is because repentance creates great joy.

The sages teach that "even the perfectly righteous cannot stand where penitents stand." The verse states "peace, peace, for those far and near," and the sages explain that this refers to those who were initially far and then drew near. As a result, their joy is immeasurably greater.

G-d blesses us all with peace. But first He blesses those who were far and drew near, and only then does he bless those that have always been close. When someone that was distant has drawn near this creates special joy.

Different Joys

Student's
pg.12 We can now understand the simple meaning of the verse "The whole company that had returned from exile built sukkot and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like

ועל פי זה מובן גם הנוסח שקבעו אנשי כנסת הגדולה בנוגע לימים טובים - שאף על פי שכל הימים טובים הם "מועדים לשמחה", מכל מקום, הנוסח "זמן שמחתנו" קבעו (לא בחג הפסח, ואפילו לא בחג השבועות שבו "אתה מוצא . . שמחה אחת", אלא) דוקא בחג הסוכות . וההסברה בזה - שמצד עבודת התשובה אזי השמחה היא גדולה ביותר:

אמרו רבותינו זיכרונם לברכה²² "מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין, שנאמר²³ שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב, לרחוק בתחילה ולאחר מכן לקרוב". וכיון שכן, הרי השמחה שלהם היא שלא בערך גדולה יותר.

וזהו גם הביאור בפסוק "ויעשו כל הקהל השבים מן השבי סוכות, וישבו בסוכות, כי לא עשו מימי ישוע בן נון כן . . עד היום ההוא, ותהי שמחה גדולה מאד" - על פי פשוטו של

22. ברכות לד, ב.
23. ישעי' נז, יט.

Student's
pg. 12

this. Their joy was very great.” The verse should be understood as focusing on the great joy with which the returnees celebrated the festival, joy that surpassed even the joy at the time of Joshua.

מקרא, שמתייחס לגודל שמחת חג הסוכות אצל העולים משבי הגולה, שלא היתה כמוה מימי יהושע בן נון:

The Rebbe explains that the words “from the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this” does not refer to the building of sukkot, and should not be understood as saying that the mitzvah of sukkot had previously not been observed, or observed in a less than optimal manner. Rather, this passage is referring to the great joy with which they celebrated the festival, joy that surpassed even the joy at the time of Joshua.

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pg. 13

When the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel in the time of Joshua, they were completely righteous, as the generation that had sinned had already perished in the desert. Before entering Israel they had accepted the covenant with G-d in the Plains of Moab.

בכניסה לארץ בימי יהושע בן נון, היו בני ישראל במדריגת צדיקים - שהרי כבר "תמו כל אנשי המלחמה גו"²⁴, וזה עתה קיבלו על עצמם את הברית בערבות מואב.

Since the Jews at the time of Joshua were penitents only in a very subtle way, their joy wasn't as great. The Rebbe gives a parable for this:

The Joy of The Returnees from Babylonia

Student's
pg. 13

It is clear that this joy can't compare to the joy experienced by the returnees from Babylonian exile. This return came after the Temple had been destroyed due to the people committing the three cardinal sins of idol worship, forbidden relations, and murder. They had then repented so thoroughly that they brought G-d's presence back into their midst by rebuilding the Temple and re-sanctifying the Land of Israel like Joshua had originally. This joy was incredibly great, immeasurably greater than the joy during the time of Joshua.

ומובן, ששמחה זו אינה מגעת לשמחת חג הסוכות אצל העולים משבי הגולה - שכיון שהיתה לאחרי חורבן מקדש ראשון ש"חרב מפני שלושה דברים . . עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים" (כפי שמובא בגמרא במסכת יומא²⁶), ולאחרי כן חזרו בתשובה באופן כזה שפעלו הענין של "ושכנתי בתוכם"²⁷ על ידי זה שבנו את בית המקדש מחדש, וקידשו את הארץ בדוגמת קדושת יהושע - לכן "ותהי שמחה גדולה מאד", שלא בערך לגבי השמחה שהיתה בימי יהושע בן נון.

We now understand why the joy of the returnees from Babylonia was so great. The theme of the festival is repentance, and this resonated deeply with these people who had returned after such a long and difficult period of sins and exile. When they returned and G-d's presence was once again among them, their joy was incredibly great, unlike anything ever seen before. This is why the Torah describes that Sukkot as the greatest celebration since the Jewish people had come to Israel.

משיחת שמחת בית השואבה ה'תשכ"ד
הנחה בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם כרך ל"ח עמ' 79