

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

כי בסוכות הושבתי

I caused them to dwell in succos

טיב המערכת

ושמחת בחגך

You shall rejoice on your festival

Rosh Hashanah has already passed, Yom Kippur has also come and gone, and now the festival of Succos has arrived, which is called 'זמן שמחתנו' - "the time of our rejoicing." Just as we clarified how to make the most of the days of repentance, so too we want to know how we should make the most of the days of Succos.

We are familiar with the parable told by the parable-makers about a certain king who announced that on a particular day he would open all his treasures, and anyone who wished could come and take whatever he wanted. Of course, everyone wanted to come and take as much as possible. But when the great day arrived and all the people came to grab from the king's treasures, they found there every type of pleasure in the world, every kind of musician, and all kinds of artists who captivated the eyes of everyone who saw them with wondrous displays. There was also an abundance of food that, as soon as one smelled it, was impossible to resist.

Of course, everyone who had come there in order to grab treasures became delayed among all the various stalls and completely forgot the purpose of his arrival. Only a few managed to overcome all the distractions and reach the king's treasury.

The Torah says (Vayikra 23:40), 'ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון' - "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day," and Chazal expounded on this: "The first for the accounting of sins." Many ask: Why is it necessary now to make an accounting of sins?

The Kedushas Levi explains that although during the Days of Judgment we repented, it was teshuvah out of fear. But now we return to teshuvah once again, and this time it is teshuvah out of love. Chazal taught that through teshuvah out of fear, deliberate sins are transformed into inadvertent transgressions, whereas through teshuvah out of love, deliberate sins are transformed into merits. Therefore, now we need to make another "accounting of sins," because through teshuvah out of love, many merits have been added, and we need to count everything again from the beginning.

It is true that Succos is a very joyful festival, and that is how we love it. But we should remember that our true goal is to continue the teshuvah that we accomplished during the Days of Awe, and now to continue with teshuvah out of love.

This does not contradict the mitzvah of 'ושמחת בחגך' - "And you shall rejoice on your festival" (Devorim 16:14) at all. On the contrary, when we continue along the path of teshuvah together with joy, we thereby demonstrate to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that our teshuvah was not merely lip service, and not merely so that we would be inscribed in the Book of Life. Rather, we are returning in teshuvah from the depths of our hearts, and our desire is to merit closeness to Hashem at every time and in every situation.

Tiv HaPeninim - Succos

זכר לענני הכבוד *A remembrance of the Clouds of Glory*

The mitzvah of succah is a remembrance of the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the Jewish people for forty years as they traveled through the desert. When a person sits in the Succah, he fulfills at every moment the mitzvah of *BaSuccos teishvu* - "You shall dwell in succos," because "in succos I settled the Children of Israel."

Here the child asks: What mitzvah did the Jewish people fulfill throughout all forty years that they traveled in the desert beneath the Clouds of Glory?

The mitzvah that the Jewish people fulfilled in the desert was the mitzvah of faith in Hashem. For all forty years, they fulfilled the mitzvah of *al pi Hashem yisau, ve'al pi Hashem yachanu* - "According to the word of Hashem they traveled, and according to the word of Hashem they camped." They believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant, and every time they were commanded to travel or to camp, they did so.

They thereby merited that every moment of traveling and every moment of camping was itself a mitzvah. The Clouds of Glory were given to them as a gift because they fulfilled the mitzvah of *al pi Hashem yachanu ve'al pi Hashem yisau*. The Jewish people fulfilled this mitzvah in the desert at every moment, even while they slept or ate. Every moment during their stay in the desert was lived with the fulfillment of *al pi Hashem*.

על פי ה' *According to the word of Hashem*

These ideas correspond with the words of Maran the Chazon Ish, zt"l, in his letters, where he writes that before everything he does, he consults the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries. He conducts himself and carries out his actions according to them.

The Jewish people, during their stay in the desert, did everything *al pi Hashem*. They did not move from their place without a command and directive from Hashem.

When a person conducts himself in this manner, he merits the Clouds of Glory, whose purpose was to remove all the snakes and scorpions. They would straighten the path and remove all obstacles, so that "the crooked shall become straight." All the confusion and *kelipos* disappear from a person who does everything *al pi Hashem*.

All the great Torah leaders throughout the generations who conducted themselves and proceeded in every matter *al pi Hashem* merited Clouds of Glory that went before them to illuminate their path and guide them along the straight road, burning before them all the snakes - meaning the *kelipos* and the *sitra achra*, which are descendants of the primordial serpent.

This is the lesson and the mussar that we must learn from the days of Succos, the days when we sit in the *tzila deMeheimanusa*, "the shade of faithfulness," days during which we fulfill a remembrance of the Clouds of Glory.

During these days, we are required to awaken ourselves to the fact that the will of Hashem is that all our actions should be *lishmah*, for the sake of Heaven, *al pi Hashem* - whether we travel or whether we camp. In every matter, we must clarify and ask: Is this pleasing in the eyes of Hashem?

And All His Actions Should Be for the Sake of Heaven

My father, the great and righteous tzaddik, zt"l, author of *Madaney HaShulchan*, would contemplate before every action whether HaKadosh Baruch Hu would derive satisfaction from what he was about to do. For this is the way a Jewish person should conduct himself: all his actions should be solely *al pi Hashem*.

This is similar to what is ruled in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 231): that all of one's actions should be for the sake of Hashem, as it is written, "In all your ways, know Him" — in eating and drinking, in conversation, in walking, and in bathing. In this manner, a person in our own times can also merit the Clouds of Glory, which will protect him and

assist him in walking along the upright path. Indeed, according to halachah, when fulfilling the mitzvah of succah, one must think and have in mind that he is fulfilling the Torah mitzvah of dwelling in a succah. In addition, one should have in mind to fulfill the aspect of remembering the Clouds of Glory, because this idea is the primary purpose underlying the entire fulfillment of this mitzvah: to remember that we are to conduct everything as represented by the Clouds of Glory, so that all our actions should be for the sake of Heaven, at every time and in every situation, and that everything we do should be done *al pi Hashem*.

הישיבה בסוכה – מצוה - Dwelling in the Succah — A Mitzvah

Every moment that we sit beneath the branches of the succah during the festival of Succos, we are fulfilling a Torah mitzvah.

My father, the great and righteous tzaddik, zt"l, author of *Madaney HaShulchan*, would say that there is a great advantage to Succos over the other festivals, because every moment that you are in the succah, you have a mitzvah from the Torah in your hands — whether you are sitting and learning, eating, or even when you are not sleeping in the succah. At every moment, we are fulfilling a Torah mitzvah.

אמונה שלימה - Complete Faith

To understand these matters, let us consider the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. Regarding them it is said (Yeshaya 55:6), 'דרשו ה' בהמצאו' - "Seek Hashem when He is found; call upon Him when He is near." On Yom Kippur, which is the final day of the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, HaKadosh Baruch Hu forgives us and pardons all our sins, as we say in the wording of the blessing: מלך מוחל וסולח לעוונותינו ולעוונות עמו בית ישראל ומעביר "A King who pardons

and forgives our sins and the sins of His people, the House of Israel, and removes our guilt every year." For the very essence of Yom Kippur brings atonement.

The atonement of Yom Kippur is connected to faith. A person must believe that on Yom Kippur, HaKadosh Baruch Hu truly atones for all his sins. Only someone who believes this will display a great change between his conduct before Yom Kippur and his conduct in the days afterward. For someone who believes in the atonement of Yom Kippur does not hasten to sin again and soil his soul and neshama with transgressions.

The reality that we see before our eyes is that the majority of people conduct themselves on Motzaei Yom Kippur exactly as they did on Erev Yom Kippur. This is a clear result and proof that we do not believe strongly enough that Yom Kippur itself brings atonement and that HaKadosh Baruch Hu pardons and forgives all our sins.

If we believed this one hundred percent, it is clear that we would not remain where we were. Certainly, we would improve and strengthen ourselves greatly in avodas Hashem. We would be fearful of committing sins until the first day of Succos, as Chazal expound, "But on the first day — the first for the accounting of sins."

תבואנה בהיכל מלך

May They Enter the Palace of the King

Now, after we have emerged pure and clean of sins, based on the faith that we have that all our sins have been pardoned and forgiven, the festival of Succos arrives. On Succos, we merit entering into the *tzila deKudsha Brich Hu* — the shade of the Holy One, blessed is He. We can enter the home of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

For we are clean of every sin and transgression, and we are worthy of entering the palace of the King, HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

has the numerical value of the **סוכה** The word names **Havayah** and **Adnus**, which together have the numerical value of ninety-one. The succah is the *tzila deMeheimanusa*, the shade of faith. It is comparable to a mother's apron, beneath which her children hide and take

shelter. This is how we are in the succah. In the writings of the Arizal, it is brought that the succah has six sides: the four directions, above, and below. Each side corresponds to one of the Names of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Accordingly, when we enter the succah, we are actually walking upon a Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

The holy Rebbe, the author of *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz, zt"l, was afraid to enter the succah, and he had a reason for this: "How can I enter a

holy place filled with His holy Names?"

A tallis also surrounds a person, but it is not beneath a person's feet. In the succah, however, we actually step with our feet upon the Names of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. For this reason, we need complete and wholehearted faith that on Yom Kippur all our sins were atoned for.

Therefore, the holy Rebbe of Sanz, zt"l, would explain that he entered his succah in the merit of the acts of charity that he performed, as it is well known that he would distribute large amounts of money to tzedakah.

Based on these ideas, we can understand that during the days of Succos, we are much closer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu than we were during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. During the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, it is said, "Call upon Him when He is near." Here, on Succos, we enter the palace of the King. We are in the King's own private home. We walk and stand upon His Names and take shelter in His shade.

ארבעת המינים - שמו של הקב"ה

The Four Species — The Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu

In addition, we are commanded to take the four species, and the four species also allude to the Name of Havayah. Each species corresponds to one of the letters of the Name of Havayah Baruch Hu.

When we wave the four species in the succah or in the shul, we are, so to speak, holding HaKadosh Baruch Hu in our hands and waving Him in all six directions.

ומלאה הארץ דעה

And the Earth Will Be Filled with Knowledge

Regarding Succos, it is said, "So that your generations will know that I settled the Children of Israel in succos." For Succos contains the wondrous aspect of, "The earth will be filled with knowledge of Hashem." There is an aspect of *daas* here — clear knowledge that we are, so to speak, actually holding Hashem in our hands and beneath our feet from every direction. We are surrounded by His holy Names Baruch Hu.

Therefore, we must take a personal accounting. Only a few days ago, we were full of sins, transgressions, and iniquities, and now we merit entering the palace of the King, being connected to and holding His holy Names.

For this reason, a person must conduct himself accordingly and adjust his actions to the place where he finds himself. A person's conduct during the festival of Succos, and inside the succah, should reflect the fact that he is in the place and home of the great King.

Vzos HaBracha - וזאת הברכה

מדרגות הקדושה בזכות שמירת הדיבור *Levels of Holiness Through Guarding One's Speech*

הַאֲמֵר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רָאִיתִי וְאֶת אָחָיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת בָּנָיו לֹא יָדַע כִּי שָׁמַר
אֶמְרָתְךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ יִצְרָן: (לג, ט)

**The one who said of his father and mother, 'I did not see him,'
and his brothers he did not recognize, and his children he did not
know, for they guarded Your word and preserved Your covenant.
(33:9)**

It is brought in Sefer Yetzirah (6:8) that the covenant of the reproductive organ corresponds to the covenant of the tongue. The more a person guards the holiness of his speech, the more he is also protected from blemishing the holy covenant.

We find a hint to this in the posuk before us, which says, "For they guarded Your word and preserved Your covenant." "Your word" refers to speech, while "Your covenant" refers to guarding the covenant. The posuk says, "For they guarded Your word" — when a person guards the words of his mouth so that they are of the highest degree of holiness, he merits "and they preserved Your covenant" — that the well-known covenant, the covenant of the reproductive organ, will also be preserved in holiness.

This is what Shlomo HaMelech said (Koheles 5:5), 'אל תתן את פִּיךָ, - "Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin." A person desires to give his mouth complete freedom and to say whatever he wishes, without distinguishing between good and evil. Therefore, Shlomo warns him, "Do not let your mouth" fulfill its desire, because by doing so, you also give it the ability "to cause your flesh to sin," Rachmana litzlan, and you can thereby stumble into the most serious of sins.

The well-known words of the holy Rebbe, Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmistrivka, explain this concept through the first five signs of the Seder. He said: "Kadesh" — if a person wants to be protected in holiness, "Urechatz" — and also merit cleansing himself from the filth of his sins, the advice is "Karpas" — an acronym for Klal Rishon Peh Sagur, "the first rule is: keep the mouth closed," meaning that he should close his mouth from speaking forbidden words. In order to merit this, a person must train himself to speak as little as possible, even when what he wishes to say is permitted. This is "Yachatz" — the breaking into two. "Maggid" — what you speak with your mouth. In other words, even regarding things that you are permitted to say, you should endeavor to speak as little as possible and speak only what is truly necessary. In this manner, one indeed merits being protected in holiness and purity.

Come and see what is written in the holy Zohar (III, 183a), which brings teachings that awaken us to the severity of the sin of one who does not pay attention to the matter of speech. On the other hand, it speaks of the holy level attained by one who is careful not to stumble in any of the prohibitions connected to speech. Here are its words, with additional explanation: Rabbi Yitzchak opened by explaining the posuk, 'וידבר העם באלקים ובמשה' - "The people spoke against Hashem and against Moshe" (Bamidbar 21:5). As an introduction, he first found it appropriate to explain the meaning of the posuk in

Megillas Esther (Esther 5:1), 'ויהי ביום השלישי ותלבש אסתר מלכות' - "And it came to pass on the third day that Esther clothed herself in royalty." Before explaining the posuk, he introduced the following point: Is not Megillas Esther said through Ruach HaKodesh, and for this reason it is included among the Kesuvim? Since it is part of the twenty-four books of Tanach, there must necessarily be a lesson in it for future generations. Therefore, the posuk should be explained as follows: "And it came to pass on the third day" of her fast, "when the strength of the body had weakened" — at that point the strength of her body had become weak, "and she existed in spirit without a body" — she was in a state in which the body had been subdued, as though she had become a spirit without a body. "Then" — at that point she attained a spiritual level, and this is the level to which the posuk refers when it says, "and Esther clothed herself in royalty."

The Zohar explains that it is necessarily referring to a spiritual level. "What is 'royalty'?" What does the word "royalty" mean? If you say that it refers to "precious garments and purple" — expensive garments and royal purple — "that is not what it is called." Such garments are not ordinarily referred to by the name "royalty." Rather, it is necessarily understood that the meaning of "and Esther clothed herself in royalty" is that "she clothed herself in the Supernal Holy Royalty," which is a spiritual and holy garment. As we said earlier, she certainly clothed herself in Ruach HaKodesh.

"Why did she merit this level?" What was the reason that she merited this spiritual level specifically at that time, while she was in the house of Achashverosh? "Because she guarded her mouth from revealing anything." She merited this because she guarded her mouth from uttering undesirable words. This is what is written: אין אֵין Esther did not reveal her nationality," and so forth. "And we learn from this" that "anyone who guards his mouth and his tongue" — anyone who guards his mouth and tongue — "merits being clothed in the spirit of holiness." "And anyone who turns his mouth toward an evil word" — anyone who directs his mouth toward speaking lashon hara — "that evil word rests upon him." That evil speech itself rests upon him to punish him. "And if not" — if the speech itself does not punish him — "then afflictions or tzaraas that burn like a snake come upon him." The holy Zohar concludes: "And they have already established this" — our Sages have already revealed these matters elsewhere. These are the words of the holy Zohar. From them you can see the great goodness that awaits one who is careful with his tongue, and the severity of the punishment of one who desecrates his speech.

The Prohibition of Speech — The "Object" and the "Person"

Since we are already awakening people to the obligation of guarding their speech, it is also appropriate to awaken people to pay attention to the fact that guarding one's speech involves both an issur cheftza and an issur gavra — a prohibition inherent in the speech itself, as well as a prohibition upon the person because of the circumstances.

We are aware that there are forms of speech that are forbidden because of what they are. The prohibition against uttering them is because the words themselves are forbidden, such as lashon hara, falsehood, slander, onaas devarim, vulgar and obscene speech, and anything similar, where the prohibition is inherent in the words being spoken.

But we do not always pay attention to the fact that there are also forms of speech that are not inherently forbidden but are forbidden for a person because of the particular time at which he is speaking.

For example, speaking while the tzibbur is davening, especially when they are answering "Amein" and "Yehei Shemei Rabbah," and so forth. As we frequently see, people are careless and speak at

such times.

We must know that this is a very serious prohibition. According to the words of Rashbi in the holy Zohar (II, 131b), one who speaks during davening is considered, Rachmana litzlan, as though he is a denier.

The Power of Amen and Yehei Shemei Rabbah

It is brought in the sefer of Rebbe Yishmael Kohen Gadol — a sefer in which Rebbe Yishmael Kohen Gadol recorded his ascents into the Upper Worlds and what he perceived when he spoke with the ministering angels — that during one of his ascents to the heights of Heaven, he encountered a certain angel.

This angel said to him, “Come, and I will show you something.”

He took him to a certain place, where Rebbe Yishmael saw terrible and unusual decrees that had been issued against the Jewish people.

Rebbe Yishmael burst into tears and said, “How will the Jewish people be able to endure such terrible suffering?”

But the angel did not stop there. He asked Rebbe Yishmael to return the following day.

The next day, when Rebbe Yishmael arrived, the angel showed him additional terrible suffering, many times worse than what he had shown him the previous day.

When Rebbe Yishmael learned that these too were destined for the Jewish people, he once again burst into tremendous tears.

The angel said to him, “Know that every single day, terrible decrees such as these are issued against the Jewish people. But when they come to the shul and answer ‘Amein’ and say ‘Yehei Shemei Rabbah,’ the gates are locked, and these troubles are not allowed to emerge into reality.”

These words correspond to the teaching of the Gemara (Shabbos

119b): “Whoever answers ‘Amein, Yehei Shemei Rabbah’ has his decree torn up.”

Perhaps these decrees are renewed, Rachmana litzlan, every single day because every sin in which a person stumbles places him in the category of rebelling against the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no need to explain the severity of the punishment of one who rebels against the king.

Therefore, terrible decrees are issued against the enemies of Israel. But when they come to shul and answer “Amein,” they thereby demonstrate that they desire that His great Name should be magnified and sanctified. Similarly, when they say “Yehei Shemei Rabbah,” they demonstrate that they desire that His glory should be revealed.

If so, this is evidence that the sin was not committed because of a lack of concern for the honor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather, it was because of the yetzer hara that provokes them and brings upon them a spirit of foolishness, Rachmana litzlan. Since this is the case, the judgments are sweetened.

But this yetzer hara, which does not desire the benefit of the Jewish people, tries to cause them to stumble. Specifically, when they come to shul, at the time when the congregation is answering “Yehei Shemei Rabbah,” it causes them to stumble through their speech.

And then the very act itself constitutes a rebellion against the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, it is not enough that the judgments are not sweetened; he actually adds sin to sin and judgment upon judgment, Rachmana litzlan.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to pay close attention to this matter and be extremely careful not to speak in shul while the congregation is davening. In this merit, may we merit preventing all troubles and also attaining the exalted level of Ruach HaKodesh.

‘שלח לחמך... כי ברוח הימים תמצאנו’

‘Send forth your bread... for after many days you will find it’

I was already an older unmarried man, and my wedding date was approaching. I was happy about a good job that HaKadosh Baruch Hu had arranged for me, renovating a shul. When it was completed, I would have enough money left over to comfortably cover all the wedding expenses.

But alas, an unpleasant surprise awaited me: the final payment was never made. A con artist stole the suitcase containing the cash, including the three hundred thousand dollars that had been designated for me. The rabbi and the donor who had given the donation claimed that they themselves had been cheated and had no way of coming up with the money.

All my hopes were shattered. With no alternative, and with a great deal of embarrassment, I called a very wealthy acquaintance and asked for his help.

He heard my story and said, “Send me all the bills that need to be paid, and I will take care of paying them.”

That is exactly what I did. I sent him all the bills for the hall, the orchestra, and everything else involved. Without making a fuss, quietly and discreetly, he paid for the entire wedding in the most dignified manner imaginable.

Two years later, I called him and told him that, Baruch Hashem, I was now in a position to repay the loan for the wedding expenses. But he responded firmly, “As far as I am concerned, it was not a loan. It was a wedding gift!!!”

With that, the conversation ended.

A few years later, I was privileged to move with my family to Eretz Yisrael and help rebuild the Land of Israel, and my connection with him became almost nonexistent.

Twenty years later, I received a phone call from that same man. He asked if I could help him sell a piece of property that he owned.

I asked about his situation, and I discovered that he had lost most of his wealth and was almost reduced to having nothing to eat. At every place of employment, he was told that he was too old and they were not interested in hiring him, despite his exceptional talents.

I said to him, “Instead of selling your house, let us find someone who will appreciate your abilities!!!”

I approached a multimillionaire friend, who looked into his background. He discovered that he truly was an exceptionally talented person in his field.

He recognized his potential and opened a new company in that field, appointing him as the president of the company and giving him a partner-level salary. This meant that, within a short time, with Hashem’s help, he would once again become even wealthier than he had been in the past!!!

The employment package included a luxurious home and living accommodations adjacent to the offices, so he would not even need to take out loans to cover the rent until he began receiving his salary and profits.

I felt that a circle had been completed, and I thanked Hashem for giving me the merit that his salvation should come through me!!!

נ.מ.

טיב **ההשגרה**

The Daas Zekeinim authored by Baalei Tosafos at the end of Parashas Re'eh (Devarim 16:15) explain the reason for this. Although the obligation of rejoicing applies equally to all three pilgrimage festivals, nevertheless the Torah repeats the command of rejoicing regarding Succos three separate times.

In Parashas Emor it states (Vayikra 23:40), וְשִׂמְחֶתֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם - And you shall rejoice before Hashem your God.

And at the end of Parashas Re'eh (Devarim 16:13-15) it states: חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים... וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בְּחַגְךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ... שִׁבְעַת יָמִים - You shall make the festival of Succos for yourself for seven days... and you shall rejoice in your festival, you, your son, and your daughter... Seven days shall you celebrate unto Hashem your God... and you shall be truly joyful.

From all these repeated expressions it is evident that the Torah was not satisfied with commanding joy only once, as it does regarding the other festivals. Rather, it repeatedly emphasized the joy of Succos again and again.

From here emerges a clear source that one must increase and magnify the joy of this festival more than all others. See also Sefer Hachinuch (mitzvah 324).

Likewise, the Rambam rules (Hilchos Succah 8:12): "Although there is a mitzvah to rejoice on all the festivals, on the festival of Succos there was an especially great rejoicing in the Beis Hamikdash, as it says: And you shall rejoice before Hashem your God for seven days."

We likewise learned in the Mishnah in Perek Hachalil, concerning the celebration of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah (Succah 51a): מִי שֶׁלֹא רָאָה שְׂמִיחָה - "Whoever did not witness the rejoicing of the Water Drawing Celebration never witnessed true joy in his entire life!"

The commentators already noted the precise wording: "never witnessed joy in his entire life." This implies that no joy in the world can compare to the joy of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah.

No matter how great or intense worldly joy may be, regardless of what type of happiness exists in the world, the Mishnah still declares: "[He has] never witnessed joy in his entire life." Whatever joy one may experience, no matter how lofty or magnificent it may be, no worldly joy can attain the level of the joy of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah. For the Mishnah unequivocally establishes that the exalted joy of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah represents the highest possible level of joy, beyond comparison to any other happiness in existence.

How far-reaching was this extraordinary joy of Succos?

We can learn this from the words of Tosafos (Succah 50b, beginning with "Chad Tani Sho'eivah"): "The Yerushalmi explains that from there they would 'draw' ruach hakodesh [Divine Inspiration] for the Shechinah rests only amidst joy, as it is states (Melachim II 3:15), וַיָּבֵהוּ, - And it happened, that when the musician played, that the spirit of Hashem rested upon him."

The Yerushalmi then relates the incident of

טיב המעשיות

A Season of Joy

וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בְּחַגְךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְעַמְּךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהַיָּתוֹם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ. שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּחֲגֵל לִה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּג', וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ שִׂמְחָה (דברים טז, יד-טו).

And you shall rejoice in your festival—you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your maidservant, the Levite, the convert, the orphan, and the widow who are within your gates. Seven days shall you celebrate unto Hashem your God... and you shall be completely joyful. (Devarim 16:14–15)

The mitzvah of rejoicing on the festival of Succos is greater and more emphasized than at all other sacred times and festivals. Therefore, Succos is called: "The Season of Our Rejoicing."

Yonah ben Amitai, who was among the pilgrims ascending to Yerushalayim, and during the joy of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah the Shechinah rested upon him.

From the words of Tosafos we learn the immense spiritual power of Simchas Beis Ha'sho'eivah during Succos—to the extent that people would literally draw forth wellsprings of ruach hakodesh, something unattainable except through joy.

Moreover, Tosafos explains based upon the Yerushalmi that Yonah ben Amitai merited becoming a prophet solely through this joy. Since he participated among the pilgrims and the Shechinah rested upon him during Succos, from that point onward he became a prophet for the rest of his life.

Thus we see how exalted the joy of Succos truly is—that one can even draw ruach hakodesh from it, and through its power undergo such a tremendous transformation as to become a prophet of Hashem!

"And you shall rejoice in your festival — and you shall be truly joyful!"

Visiting the Gedolim during Yom Tov

A trustworthy Jew from Yerushalayim once related to me that Heaven blessed him with extraordinary success in the spiritual upbringing of all his children. Although he himself was not a great Torah scholar, but rather a simple, upright, God-fearing man who earned his livelihood honestly through the labor of his own hands, all his sons succeeded greatly in Torah and fear of Heaven.

In the course of conversation, he mentioned almost casually that on every festival he customarily takes his sons to visit the great Torah leaders of Jerusalem during Chol Hamoed, bringing them to receive blessings for the festival. He explained that he had witnessed the same conduct in his own father.

This follows the teaching in the Gemara (Succah 27b), that a person is obligated to visit his

teacher on the festival. The Gemara derives this from the Shunamite woman who went to greet the prophet Elisha.

The Aruch La'ner explains there that the reason this mitzvah applies specifically on the Yamim Tovim is because "greeting one's teacher on the festival resembles greeting the Shechinah itself; therefore, it parallels the pilgrimage ascent to Jerusalem."

This is the meaning of the pasuk concerning the Shunamite woman: וְאִרְצָה עַד אִישׁ הָאֱלֹקִים - And I shall run to the man of God. (Melachim II 4:22) For indeed, beholding the face of the tzaddik and receiving his presence was considered by her akin to beholding the Shechinah itself.

From our conversation I understood that his children constantly observed his tremendous joy regarding this practice. He eagerly awaited the arrival of every Yom Tov so that he could once again visit the homes of the great Gedolim and Torah leaders and bask in their spiritual radiance.

In this manner he implanted within his children a profound reverence for our Gedolim and a deep love for our holy Torah. Growing up in such a home, they absorbed an appreciation for the greatness and importance of Torah.

As a result, an immense love for Torah entered their hearts, together with a proper appreciation for Torah scholars and those who dedicate themselves to learning. Through this, he achieved remarkable success in educating his children.

The Correct Way to Celebrate Yom Tov

A serious mistake has taken hold among many people, who imagine that the proper "celebration" of the festivals consists of Chol Hamoed outings to parks, zoos, nature walks and making barbecues, and all the countless attractions of modern life—as though without these things their Yom Tov is incomplete. I have already elaborated elsewhere on the gravity of degrading the sanctity of the Yamim Tovim in such ways.

These sacred days, when directed properly and utilized according to the will of Heaven, possess a unique opportunity for success in educating children and grandchildren.

From the parents' perspective, the Yamim Tovim are times of joy and serenity, when they possess greater patience for their children. At the same time, the hearts of the children are more open because of the holiness of the Yom Tov itself. These are especially conducive moments for absorbing holiness and the joy of Torah, and one can achieve tremendous success in the spiritual education of children during these days. For this reason, it was the ancient custom of the people of Yerushalayim to visit their Torah leaders during the festivals.

Likewise, it was the custom of my revered father zt"l, to visit the Gaavad of Yerushalayim every Yom Tov. So too was this the custom of the gaon Rav Zundel Kroizer zt"l, author of Ohr Hachamah. Once he explained to me that he did so because of the obligation: "A person is obligated to greet his teacher on the festival." Through this, one stands in service before his Creator and fulfills His will with joy. Indeed, this was the well-

known custom among many of the residents of Yerushalayim.

This path—and others similar to it in holiness and uprightness—is the proper form of celebrating the joy of the festival together with sons, daughters, grandchildren, and granddaughters.

Such conduct implants within the tender hearts of children faithful seeds of proper education: love of Torah, appreciation for Torah, and joy in Torah. It plants within their hearts enduring pathways of uprightness, joy in Torah, fear of Heaven, and refined character traits, Amen.

Top of Form

Joy in Fulfilling the Will of Heaven

The immense joy of our revered teacher, the righteous gaon Rav Raphael David Auerbach zt"l, rosh yeshivah of the holy Shaar Hashamayim Yeshivah in Yerushalayim, in his sacred task of leading the yeshivah, was beyond description.

He devoted himself with complete self-sacrifice and extraordinary joy to the exalted mission entrusted to him by his illustrious father, the mekubal and rosh yeshivah Rav Chaim Yehudah Auerbach zt"l, to uphold and sustain the holy yeshivah of the mekubalim, Shaar HaShamayim.

Toward this purpose he toiled and exerted all his strength constantly, dedicating body and soul to the preservation and strengthening of the yeshivah, with a joy impossible to describe or measure. He cast aside all personal considerations tirelessly and without pause for the flourishing of the yeshivah.

Regarding him the pasuk was fulfilled (Mishlei 27:18), נֹצֵר תֹאכֶה יֹאכֵל פְּרִיָּהּ - He who guards the fig tree shall eat of its fruit.

The financial situation of the yeshivah was often extremely difficult. Yet he paid no heed to these trials. He gave over his life, body, and resources not only to sustain the yeshivah itself—which was already tremendously difficult—but, with complete faith and unwavering trust in the Almighty Who sustains and provides for all, he would exert himself with even greater joy to expand the study hall and increase the number of worthy students and distinguished talmidei chachamim studying the wisdom of kabbalah.

He cast his burden upon Hashem with powerful faith and trust firm as a rock. On the contrary, he rejoiced over every worthy student who joined the holy yeshivah.

When I spoke with him during such difficult periods, he would often remark humorously that Heaven assists the Shaar Hashamayim Yeshivah by ensuring that people do not know the enormous debts he carried on behalf of the institution...

"For if they knew," he would say, "they would consider me completely bankrupt—and no one would lend me another cent." Yet despite everything, he remained constantly serene and joyful, strengthening himself and others with his trust in Hashem. One phrase was always upon his lips: "I am certain that Hashem will help."

This sentence flowed naturally in every conversation regarding the state of the yeshivah. Through it he strengthened, encouraged, and infused all around him with his great joy, enabling us to continue the sacred work.

During the final Succos of his life in this world,

when I went to visit him as was my custom—approximately one month before his passing to the Heavenly realms—he again turned to me with a radiant smile and shining countenance, requesting that I endeavor to bring more worthy students into our holy yeshivah, despite the fact that there was virtually no remaining space in the beis midrash.

This remarkable scene repeated itself during the final Thursday night of his life, at the beginning of the winter term. He was already bedridden in weakness, yet with his graceful smile and noble countenance he asked me:

"So, how many students entered the yeshivah this new term?"

I answered, "Two students."

"Only two" he responded with pained astonishment?

The rosh yeshivah was renowned as an extraordinarily great gaon in Torah. Yet even more than he loved the Torah, he loved the Giver of the Torah. Because he understood clearly his obligation in this world, he recognized that the will of Hashem for him was to bear upon his shoulders the immense responsibility that the Torah of kabbalah should never be forgotten. For this lofty purpose he joyfully accepted the crushing burden of enormous financial obligations. I personally knew and recognized how much he sacrificed even from his own spiritual pursuits for the benefit of the yeshivah.

From this great and faithful tzaddik we can learn how far true joy in fulfilling the will of Heaven can reach—through complete self-sacrifice and unwavering devotion. I have already elaborated elsewhere on this subject.

Thanks to Hashem, even today his grandson, the distinguished Rav Yaakov Yosef Schlaf shlit"a, continues sustaining the institutions in the very same spirit and path.

May blessing come from this to him, to his household, and to his entire family, with success and Heavenly assistance, to increase and glorify Torah, Amen.

The immense joy in Torah of the righteous gaon Maran Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach zt"l, rosh yeshivah of Ponovezh, was renowned and widely known. The holy Torah and its study were the entire delight of his life. He rejoiced over every new Torah insight he merited to discover as though he had never before originated a single insight in Torah.

As the Midrash states (Bereishis Rabbah 97:3), וְיִדְגּוּ לִבָּי - And let them multiply abundantly like fish... (Bereishis 48:16), "Just as fish grow in water, and when a single drop falls upon them from above they receive it thirstily as though they had never tasted water in their lives, so too Yisrael grows through the waters of Torah. Whenever they hear a new Torah teaching, they receive it thirstily as though they had never heard a word of Torah in their lives."

His famous lectures and countless public discourses were delivered with extraordinary joy and with a blazing fire of holiness, as is well known. As it says (Tehillim 19:8-11), תִּנְיִמָה מִשִּׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ... פִּקּוּדֵי ה' יִשְׁרִים מִשְׁמַחֵי לֵב מִצִּוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינָיו... מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה אֶמֶת צִדְקוֹ יִחְדָּו:

הַנִּחְמָדִים מְזֶה וּמִפֶּן רַב וּמִתּוֹקִים מְדַבֵּשׁ וְנִפְתָּ צוּפִים - The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul... the precepts of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart... the commandment of Hashem is pure, enlightening the eyes... the judgments of Hashem are true, righteous altogether. More desirable than gold and abundant fine gold, sweeter than honey and dripping combs.

One of the many incidents through which people tangibly witnessed this quality in the rosh yeshivah was related to me by a trustworthy individual who personally observed the event.

As is well known, the Rav maintained extensive relationships with wealthy benefactors overseas. As a leader of Klal Yisrael, he tirelessly acted on behalf of the Torah world and the world of the yeshivos, striving constantly to increase and glorify Torah.

One of the famous philanthropists and magnates from Toronto, Canada, shared a particularly deep connection with the rosh yeshivah, serving as an enthusiastic supporter of the holy yeshivah and the many charitable causes Rav Shach conducted publicly and privately. This generous man faithfully followed every directive of the Rav and was deeply attached to him.

At the conclusion of one of his visits to Eretz Yisrael, before returning to his magnificent home in Toronto, he came as usual to the residence of the rosh yeshivah on Raavad Street in Bnei Brak in order to receive a farewell blessing before departing to the airport.

This follows the ruling in the Mishnah Berurah (110:28): "It is customary to seek permission from great Torah leaders and receive their blessing before setting out on a journey. There is support for this from the words of Chazal that they would consult the Sanhedrin before traveling, and Rashi explains that they sought permission so that the sages would pray for them."

While the philanthropist sat in the waiting room awaiting his turn, a certain avreich entered together with his young son, approximately fourteen years old, seeking a berachah from the rosh yeshivah.

Seeing the distinguished benefactor waiting there, the father approached him and pleaded:

"Please allow us to enter for just a brief moment. We have nothing particular to discuss—we merely came for a berachah for my son."

"Alright," replied the wealthy man.

He assumed that the rosh yeshivah would likely wish to converse with him for a few moments, as was customary, asking about his welfare and family. Whereas this fellow merely wanted a simple berachah and would presumably enter and leave immediately. Therefore, he graciously surrendered his turn.

The father and son entered the room. Yet after two minutes, the door suddenly closed behind them—and their stay inside dragged on longer and longer.

The philanthropist waiting outside grew increasingly disappointed by the unexpected delay. He kept hoping that at any moment they would emerge, but time continued passing without any movement.

The clock hands advanced steadily toward

the departure time of his flight. Ultimately, the wealthy man was forced to leave in great disappointment and travel this time without receiving the Rav's berachah. He asked the attendant to apologize on his behalf to the rosh yeshivah—who had been entirely unaware that he was waiting outside—and explain that he had no choice but to depart due to fear of missing his flight.

After two-and-a-half hours, the door finally opened. The father and son emerged glowing and radiant, their faces shining brilliantly. Immediately upon their exit, the attendant angrily confronted the father: "What have you done here? That wealthy man is one of our greatest supporters and benefactors! He was deeply upset that he had to leave without saying goodbye to the rosh yeshivah!"

The man apologized sincerely and replied: "Believe me—I asked for nothing! The rosh yeshivah himself suddenly decided to close the door."

It then became clear what had happened. The father had indeed entered merely "for a blessing" for his son, who had lost all desire and joy in learning Torah. But the moment the rosh yeshivah heard what the issue was, his heart ignited like a burning flame.

"For such a matter," he declared, "a blessing alone is not enough... We must restore his joy in Torah and his desire to learn!" Immediately, the elderly and physically weak rosh yeshivah turned lovingly to the boy and asked him warmly:

"So, what are you learning now?"

"Bava Metziah," the youth answered happily.

At once, the aged and frail rosh yeshivah rose from his place with renewed strength. He removed two volumes of Bava Metziah from the bookshelf, closed the door behind them, and sat down to learn with the boy calmly, joyfully, and with complete serenity—as though the entire world stood before him with nothing else demanding his attention.

They learned together with sweetness and delight. The young boy was overwhelmed that the great rosh yeshivah himself was learning with him as a chavrusa, setting aside an entire world merely for his sake.

The Rav guided him deeply into the intricacies of the sugya [Talmudic discussion] according to the boy's level of understanding.

After two and a half full hours of studying a difficult sugya together with his father and the rosh yeshivah, the boy's enthusiasm and joy in learning had returned seventy-sevenfold.

Together they clarified the sugya thoroughly, until the Torah shone forth brightly and joyfully as though newly given at Sinai.

That boy later testified that he could never forget those exalted and holy two-and-a-half hours. They accompanied him throughout his entire spiritual life, and he constantly longed to recapture that sweetness and joyous yearning for Torah which he experienced during those precious hours.

From this we learn the true nature of the joy of Torah: that in order to instill joy and yearning for

Torah into one fourteen-year-old boy, the great Rav set aside all his affairs.

The instant a young boy arrived who needed to regain his love and excitement for learning, the Rav closed every door around him in order to bring him into the innermost chambers of our holy Torah—which lies available in every corner for every Jew, as the Gemara says (Kiddushin 66a): "Whoever wishes to learn may come and learn."

Through this was fulfilled within him the declaration recited in Kedusha Desidra: בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּרָאנוּ לְכַבֹּדוֹ, וְהִבְדִּילנוּ מִן הַתּוֹעִים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ תוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַי עוֹלָם נֶטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ - "Blessed is our God Who created us for His honor, separated us from those who stray, and gave us the Torah of truth, planting eternal life within us."

May the continuation of that prayer likewise be fulfilled within us: הוּא יִפְתָּח לָבֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ, וְיִשָּׁם לָבֵנוּ אֶהְבֵּתוֹ וְיִרְאַתוֹ, וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּלִבָּב שְׁלֵם - "May He open our hearts to His Torah, place within our hearts love and fear of Him, so that we may perform His will and serve Him with a complete heart." Amen.

The Secret of True Joy With Hashem

The secret of genuine joy with Hashem lies in maintaining constant happiness with every form of conduct through which Hashem guides a person—whether what appears good or what appears difficult.

Even suffering itself must be accepted with gratitude before Hashem and received with joy, for hidden and concealed within it is great goodness and a precious gift.

As we learn in the Mishnah (Perek Ha'roeh; Berachos 9:5): חַיֵּב אָדָם לְבָרֵךְ עַל הַרְעָה בְּשֵׁם שְׁהוּא: מְבָרֵךְ עַל הַטּוֹבָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים ו, ה) 'וְאֶהְבֵּת אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ' בּו', בְּכָל מְדָה - וּמְדָה שְׁהוּא מוֹדֵד לָךְ הוּא מוֹדֵד לוֹ בְּמֵאד מְאֹד - "A person is obligated to bless Hashem for the bad just as he blesses Him for the good, as it says (Devarim 5:6), And you shall love Hashem your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might ... 'With all your might' means: with every measure that He measures out to you, thank Him exceedingly."

And the Gemara concludes there (Berachos 60b): "This teaching was necessary only to teach that one must accept suffering with joy." Rashi explains: "One must bless for adversity with a complete heart."

Although during suffering itself we do not always clearly perceive the goodness and kindness hidden within it, nevertheless we are believers, children of believers, filled with sincere trust in the Rock of our salvation, knowing with certainty that the Compassionate One, source of all mercy, does everything for the good.

This concept brings to mind the pasuk (Shmuel II 22:4-5): וּמֵאֵיבִי אִנְשֵׁעַ - כִּי אֶפְכָּסִי, מִהֲלֵל אֶקְרָא ה' - I call to Hashem with praise—and from my enemies I am saved. For the breakers of death surrounded me. Why do I call to Hashem with praise? Because the breakers of death surrounded me.

Simply understood, the meaning is that he was surrounded and then saved from them. But at times, it is precisely through the very breakers

of death themselves that one comes to call to Hashem with praise! When one merits accepting suffering with love, one may eventually discover and recognize that those very painful crises and terrible agonies were themselves the entire cause of his salvation.

This can be illustrated by the following remarkable incident....

A trustworthy individual related to me a wondrous miracle that personally happened to him. One bright day, while riding a bicycle, he suddenly crashed violently to the ground. He suffered severe injuries and fractured his skull.

Naturally, he was rushed immediately by ambulance to the trauma ward of the hospital, and from there sent directly into emergency surgery after doctors determined that he urgently required a major head operation.

However, to his immense shock, during a routine scan conducted before surgery, one of the doctors suddenly noticed a frightening suspicion: a foreign growth developing inside his head.

Immediately, a frantic series of emergency examinations began. The patient was rushed through advanced imaging procedures and specialized testing from every angle—biopsies, CT scans, and numerous other examinations. The results confirmed the worst fears.

Quite incidentally, the doctors had discovered a severe cancerous tumor growing inside his head. At that point, the emergency operation became ten times more urgent. Repairing the fracture in the skull became merely a secondary matter within the surgery.

For many long hours, the senior medical staff labored primarily to uproot and excise the terrifying cancerous tumor together with all its dangerous spread, until the head could be completely cleansed from every trace of disease. Thanks to Hashem, the surgery was highly successful. After a lengthy recovery process and an exhausting series of follow-up examinations, the professor's face finally lit up with relief.

Turning to the patient—still astonished by the unbelievable chain of events—he said: "You should know that a tremendous miracle occurred to you through this bicycle accident and the fracture to your skull. Because of that simple injury, we discovered the severe cancer and the dangerous tumor in your head."

This is a particularly uncommon and highly malignant form of cancer. Its greatest danger is that initially it produces virtually no symptoms whatsoever. It develops silently inside the body with almost no warning signs or pain. A person can live for years with this tumor growing inside him without realizing that a destructive cancer is steadily developing within his body.

The danger of this condition is far greater than many others, because over time the cancer spreads more and more, until suddenly, without warning, it attacks with tremendous force and severely damages vital organs. It can kill a person almost immediately."

The doctor continued: "In your case, this exact type of tumor was developing inside your head without giving any prior signs whatsoever. Day

by day it continued growing and spreading. Had things proceeded naturally, sooner or later it would have reached your brain and caused catastrophic damage from which a person can die instantly. But now, because you fractured your skull and we performed these scans, we discovered the malignant tumor threatening your life. Thanks to Hashem, all the tests now show that the surgery succeeded completely. Your head is entirely clean. Great miracles were performed for you!"

This is precisely what King David, the sweet singer of Yisrael, meant in his song, For the breakers of death surrounded me —for that very reason itself— I call to Hashem with praise! For those very sufferings and crises can themselves become the cause of a person's salvation, as was tangibly revealed in this remarkable story. And even when such goodness does not become openly visible, we remain believers, children of believers, knowing that the entire purpose of suffering is solely for a person's ultimate benefit. Even if its goodness is presently hidden and concealed, still, at every moment: I call to Hashem with praise — one must accept it with joy.

A beautiful and cherished memory remains with me from the period when my revered father, the holy gaon and tzaddik, author of the great work Maadanei Hashulchan, was composing his monumental sefer. On one occasion he encountered a particularly difficult and obscure sugya, and struggled greatly to arrive at a clear halachic conclusion. He sought to present the matter with lucid clarity and arrange it elegantly upon the pages of his sefer, in his customary style of explaining profound matters in language accessible to every Jew.

When he saw how entangled and difficult the matter had become, he turned to my dear brother, the distinguished Rav Elchanan Hakohen, who regularly sat with him while preparing his holy works, and said: "Come, let us go seek out the joy of a chasan and kallah, and in that merit we shall receive Heavenly assistance." For Chazal taught us in the first chapter of Berachos: "Whoever gladdens a bridegroom and bride merits the Torah that was given with five voices." Indeed, the righteous Rav together with his son went that very evening to a wedding celebration taking place in the neighborhood. He participated there with great enthusiasm in honoring the joy of the occasion, and gladdened the groom and his companions properly and wholeheartedly.

Immediately upon returning home, he sat back down to the very sugya with which he had struggled earlier — and merited to behold wonders in Torah. Suddenly the wellsprings of wisdom opened before him, and he arranged the entire matter with clarity and great joy — the joy of Torah!

A beautiful custom was practiced in the home of one of the great rabbanim of Jerusalem. Whenever a member of the family completed a masechta, they would hold a festive siyum meal in honor of the Torah in the rabbi's home, investing it with exceptional dignity and importance.

All the family members — sons, sons-in-law, and grandchildren — would gather together for the celebration marking the completion of Torah study. An honorable table would be prepared with a white Shabbos tablecloth spread upon it, while the rebbetzin together with her daughters and daughters-in-law exerted themselves to prepare a splendid feast in royal fashion, in fulfillment of the spirit of the Gemara: "I prepare a festive day for the scholars."

The members of the rav's family already knew well that such a meal was not to be missed. It was conducted with joy and merriment, with love and unity, accompanied by many zemiros and abundant words of Torah.

One day toward the end of the month of Shevat, the rav's son-in-law merited to complete Maseches Arachin with thorough study and deep understanding, after months of diligent labor in its learning. As was their custom, the entire family was invited to the siyum meal, which was scheduled during the afternoon break in the rav's home.

During that period there was a certain young man who frequently wandered about the rav's home. Because of various hardships and complications in life, he had abandoned Torah and mitzvos and cast them behind his back, chas veshalom. For quite some time he had stopped attending davening in shul, trampled upon the foundations of religion, and had even fallen into public desecration of Shabbos and similar matters. May Hashem have mercy upon those broken souls who drift away from the holiness of Israel.

Having found no rest for either body or soul, and long removed from the yeshivah world, he likewise found no peace in his own home. Thus he would come to the rav's house, where the rav endeavored to draw him close with affection and warmth, hoping to return him to his Father in Heaven.

In that home he felt like a member of the family. There he received a measure of warmth and encouragement for his wounded soul and heart — nourishment more essential to him than air itself. At the same time, he was also given a warm and satisfying lunch, though out of respect he would first ask the rav before eating whether perhaps there was a pair of tefillin available for a few minutes.

That afternoon, when the young man arrived at the rav's home as usual, he was surprised to find the house beautifully arranged with unusual elegance. Members of the extended family were arriving one after another, their faces radiant with holiness in honor of the joy of Torah.

Perplexed, he asked: "What is reason for this celebration? What is different today? Why has such a festive meal been prepared?"

The rav explained to him their longstanding custom of holding a joyous celebration upon the completion of a masechta. "Today we are celebrating my son-in-law's completion of Maseches Arachin," the rav said warmly, "and we would all be very happy if you would join us for the meal."

The young man gladly accepted the invitation. Beyond the delicious meal that his hungry body

lacked, he needed even more the joy of spirit and closeness of heart that such a gathering bestowed — feelings that penetrate deep into the soul like cool water upon a weary spirit.

He remained throughout the entire meal from beginning to end, enjoying greatly the beautiful zemiros and the many Torah thoughts interwoven with the traditional recitation of the hadran. At the conclusion of the meal, the beloved young man turned to the rabbi with heartfelt emotion and said: "Dear rabbi, I cannot express in words the joy and inspiration I felt at this siyum. But now I have a request, though I am somewhat embarrassed to ask it... If I were to complete a masechta, would the rabbi also come participate in my siyum meal?"

"Certainly, certainly!" the rav answered immediately with great joy. "You are very dear and important to me, and I would gladly participate in your celebration!"

Several days later, when the young man again appeared at the rav's home, he announced festively that he had taken the rav's response with complete seriousness — and had already begun studying Maseches Beitzah.

"To be sure," he admitted, "it is not easy for me at all, especially in my current state, so distant from Torah. But with Hashem's help, I too will make a siyum on a masechta!"

Half a year passed. Toward the end of the month of Menachem Av, that precious young man merited to complete the entirety of Maseches Beitzah from beginning to end.

The joy in his home was immense. A grand festive meal was arranged in royal fashion, naturally attended by the great rav himself, who delivered an inspiring discourse there in honor of the joy of Torah and in honor of the young "groom" of the Torah.

The boy's father, mother, and entire family were deeply moved by the tremendous transformation that had taken place within their son through that siyum. Together they rejoiced as one heart and one soul before their Father in Heaven, with joy and gladness over the completion of Torah study.

After the young man recited the siyum with overwhelming emotion, the rabbi pointed out the sacred Jewish custom that immediately upon completing one masechta, one begins another. Just as on Simchas Torah the Jewish people immediately begin Bereishis anew, so that one should always remain engaged in Torah and never, chas veshalom, exist even for a moment without it. Every "completion" immediately gives birth to a fresh "beginning."

As the young man's heart opened with the joy and awakening of his soul, he declared at once: "I hereby now begin the study of Maseches Taanis!" Indeed, he applied himself diligently to its study as well, eventually meriting another splendid siyum. In this way he rose steadily upon the proper path, beginning and completing many masechtos and sefarim, to the glory and splendor of Torah.

Rejoice! Rejoice in the joy of Torah!

Rejoice on your Yom Tov — and you shall be only joyous!