

Succos 2012

1.

(This written content also includes additions and elaborations to the Nachlas Tzvi.)

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“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Festival of Succos, a seven-day period for Hashem.” (Vayikra 23, 34)

"דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר בחמשה עשר יום לחדש השביעי הזה חג הסוכות שבעת ימים לה'."

The question arises; why is this holiday called ‘Succos’ as opposed to ‘Daled minim’ (four species)? Furthermore and similarly, why do the first two perakim of mesechas Suka discuss the halachos of the Suka while only afterwards do the next two perakim discuss the halachos of the daled minim? Why are the halachos of the Suka discussed before the halachos of the daled minim? Lastly, why is the Mesechta itself called ‘Suka’ and not ‘Daled Minim’? The words “a seven-day period for Hashem” stated in the aforementioned pasuk implies continual without any interruption. Meaning, **we are obligated to eat (certain foods items) in the Suka, regardless as to whether it is day or night. The daled minim differ in this regard. We only make the beracha and take the daled minim during the day.** The pasuk states “You shall take for yourselves on the first day etc.” (23, 40) "ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון." Parenthetically, nowadays when there is no Beis Hamikdash, there is only a Torah obligation to take the daled minim on the first day. **Since the mitzvah of Suka is constant, therefore the holiday and Mesechta are called Succos.** This is why the Gemara first relates the halachos of the Suka and only afterwards relates the halachos of the daled minim.

This shtims (coincides) with the Gemara in Berachos (51b). The Gemara says when there is something common and something uncommon, the common precedes. (תדיר ושאינו תדיר, תדיר קודם.) This Suka is more common than daled minim; therefore the holiday and Mesechta are called Succos. This is also why the Gemara first relates the halachos of the Suka and only afterwards relates the halachos of the daled minim.

2.

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“You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a citron tree, the branches of date palms, twigs of a plaited tree, and brook willows; and you shall rejoice before Hashem, your God, for a seven day period.” (23, 40)

"ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדור כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נהל ושמתם לפני יקוק אלהיכם שבעת ימים."

The Medrash Tanchuma (parshas Emor siman 23) asks the following question; do we take the daled minim on the first of the month? We take the daled minim on the fifteenth. Why then does the pasuk say the first? The simple answer to the Medrashes question is that the Torah is referring to the first day of Succos. (See also Pesachim (5a)) The Medrash answers that Succos is the first day that sins are accounted for. ("ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון." וכי ראשון הוא, והלא יום חמשה עשר הוא?) (אלא מאי ראשון? ראשון לחשבון עונות.)

What is the explanation of this Medrash? Why is the first day of Succos specifically the first day that sins are accounted for? Furthermore, why does the pasuk list the esrog before the other minim? Furthermore, why do we specifically take the esrog as opposed to any other fruit? Furthermore, what should our kavana (intent) be when we take the daled minim? Lastly, what lesson/s can we derive from the daled minim? The Torah doesn't inform us what tree Adom ate from in order not to embarrass that tree and essentially prevent us from consuming its fruit. The Gemara in Berachos (40a) relates a machlokes amongst the Tanaem what fruit Adom ate from. According to Rebbi Meir, it was a grape tree. According to Rebbi Nechemya, it was a fig tree. According to Rebbi Yehuda, it was a wheat tree. Rebbi Yehuda is of the opinion that wheat is a tree. The Berashis Raba (15, 8) quotes Rebbi Aba who says that it was an esrog tree.

Hashem commanded us to specifically take the esrog as opposed to other fruits in order to demonstrate that because of the esrog sin started to be accounted for. This sin triggered and caused a ripple effect of other sins. With this we can answer all of the aforementioned questions. **The first day of Succos is specifically the first day that sins are accounted for because it is the first time our sins can properly be atoned for. We take the esrog in order to atone for the sin of Adom.** This could only be done on Succos when we take the daled minim. We specifically take the esrog because this is how Adom sinned. We want to fix his sin. **When we take the daled minim we should realize that we aren't just shaking random items, rather we are fixing the sin of Adom. The lesson of the esrog is that we must fix sins that were transgressed.**

3.

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“You shall dwell in Succos for a seven day period; every native of Israel shall dwell in Succos.”
(23, 42) "בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים כל האזרה בישראל ישבו בסכת."

Why does the pasuk state Succos in the plural tense? One answer is as follows; someone who sits in a Suka in this world will merit being in a Suka in the next world. Another answer is as follows; the Magan Avraham states that travelers are exempt from being in Succos. However, when one stops traveling, he is obligated to be in a Suka. The Gemara in Suka (11b) relates a fundamental machlokes (argument). Rebbi Eliezer is of the opinion that the Succos that the Jews in the desert sat in were the clouds of glory. Rebbi Akiva is of the opinion that the Succos that the Jews in the desert sat in were actual Succos. One of the reasons we must be in a Suka once we stop travelling is because the Jews in the desert sat in Succos when they weren't traveling. With this information we can answer the original question. If the pasuk would have said Suka in the singular tense then we could have incorrectly concluded that we are only obligated to be in a Suka when we are at our house, however when we travel, even after we stopped traveling, we would be exempt from being in a Suka. **The pasuk therefore needed to state Succos in the plural tense in order to allude to this concept and halacha that we are not only obligated to be in a Suka when we are at our house, but we are also obligated to be in a Suka when we stop traveling.**

4.

Nachlas Tzvi page 310

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"ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדור כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמחתם לפני יקוק אלהיכם שבעת ימים."

Before this pasuk the Torah already discusses matters pertaining to Succos and its korbanos (sacrifices). The Gemara in Pesachim (109a) quotes Rabbi Yehuda ben Besara who says that when the Beis Hamikdash was around simcha (joy) was acquired through bringing korbanos. (תניא רבי יהודה בן בתירא אומר בזמן שבית המקדש קיים אין שמחה אלא בבשר.) Based on this Gemara **why didn't the Torah mention rejoicing earlier when the Torah discussed the korbanos? Furthermore, parshas Emor discusses other holidays as well, such as Pesach and Shevuos. Why isn't simcha mentioned by these other holidays?** The sefer Lekach Toy (Yamim Noroyim chalek beis page 216) explain that the Torah relates the mitzvah to rejoice on Succos three times. However, the Torah only relates the mitzvah to rejoice on Shevuos once and on Pesach the Torah doesn't mention rejoicing at all. **Why are we obligated to rejoice on Sukkos more than other holidays? What area should we try to fix on Sukkos? Furthermore, why is Succos the only holiday that we sat in davening 'שמחתנו'/'time of rejoicing'? Lastly, why, on Succos, do we leave our comfortable and permanent houses and sit in temporarily shake like structure commonly referred to as Succos?** The Gemara in Pesachim (49b) quotes Rabbi Akiva who says that when he was a ignoramus, aka before he began to diligently learn Torah, he said bring me a talmid chacham and I will bite him like a donkey. His talmidim asked why he didn't say bring me a talmid chacham and I will bite him like a dog. He responded when a donkey bites he breaks the bone unlike dogs. אמר רבי עקיבא כשהייתי עם הארץ אמרתי מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם ואנשכנו כחמור. אמרו לו (תלמידיו רבי אמר ככלב! אמר להן זה נושך ושובר עצם, וזה נושך ואינו שובר עצם.) Tosfos (Kesubos 62b) explains that Rabbi Akiva didn't hate talmedai chachamim, rather he thought that they were arrogant because of the Torah that they knew. לאו משום שהיה שונא תלמידי חכמים אלא משום שהיה סבור שמתגאין על (עמי הארץ מפני תורתן והיו תלמידי חכמים שונאים אותם וגם משום שלא היו מניחין אותם ליגע בהם כדאמרינן (חגיגה דף יח:)) The Marsha explains that Rabbi Akiva didn't actually want to break the bones of the talmedai chachamim, rather he was upset with the talmedai chachamim and wanted to harm them. When someone is angry at someone else, he might grind his teeth. This is how Rabbi Akiva felt. אין דרך השונא לנשוך ממש ובשבירת עצם כדמסיק אבל (ר"ל שהייתי מתרגז עליו להרע לו שכן דרך המתרגז על חברו הוא נושך שיניו זה על זה כמ"ש חורק עליו שניו ובשבירת עצם (כחמור היינו להרע לו הרבה.) The Ben Yehoyadah explains similar to the explanation of the Maharsha that Rabbi Akiva didn't want to bite them; rather he wanted to damage them. Why then did the Gemara state that he wanted to bite them and break their bone? The Yalkut Reuvanei (parshas Vayechi) explains that some vessels are made out of the human bones. The deceased whose bones are being used, will never completely rest. This is precisely what Rabbi Akiva meant. Not only when the talmedai chachamim were living did Rabbi Akiva want to break their bones, but, even after they died he wanted to break their bones in order that they wouldn't have complete rest. The Yad Yosef quotes the Haflaah who explains that the ignoramuses in previous generations differ from the current ignoramuses. The ignoramuses in previous generations didn't recognize Hashem; therefore they hated the talmedai chachamim. Conversely, the current ignoramuses recognize Hashem; therefore they don't necessarily hate the talmedai chachamim. Based on all of the aforementioned information we clearly see that there was a lot of hatred between the talmedai chachamim and the ignoramuses. The Vayikra Raba (30, 12) relates that

the daled minim correspond to four different types of people. The esrog smells good and taste good. It therefore corresponds to talmedai chachamim who also perform good deeds. The lulav taste good, but smells bad. It therefore corresponds to talmedai chachamim who don't perform good deeds. The hadasim smell good, but taste bad. It therefore corresponds to ignoramuses who perform good deeds. The aravos smell bad and taste bad. It therefore corresponds to ignoramuses who don't perform good deeds. What should be done with the aravos? They can't be destroyed or left out, because all daled minim are necessary. Rather, they should all be tied together and they will atone for each other. The esrog will help the aravos. The hadasim will help the lulav. The lulav will help the hadasim. (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 כפות תמרים אלו ישראל מה התמרה הזו יש בו טעם ואין בו ריח כך הם ישראל יש בהם שיש בהם תורה ואין בהם מעשים טובים וענף עץ עבות אלו ישראל מה הדס יש בו ריח ואין בו טעם כך ישראל יש בהם שיש בהם מעשים טובים ואין בהם תורה 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 ומה הקדוש ברוך הוא עושה להם לאבדן אי אפשר אלא אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא יוקשרו (כולם אגודה אחת והן מכפרין אלו על אלו).

The Tana Debi Eliyahu Raba (perek 11) compares the Jews to a ship with a hole. If there is one small hole in someone's room then the ship will sink. So to every Jew must help other Jews. This is what happened when they conquered Yerico. They were commanded not to take any spoils. One person took spoils, Achan. Consequently, they were all held accountable. **Since we take the daled minim in order to increase unity amongst us, therefore simcha is mentioned and emphasized specifically by the daled minim.** The pasuk (Shemos 19, 2) states "Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain." "ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר." Why is this pasuk in the singular tense, seemingly it would be much more logical for this pasuk to be in the plural tense after the fact that this pasuk refers to approximately 3,000,000 camping by the mountain? Rashi quotes the Mechilta that answers and explains that the Jews were like one person with one heart (כאיש אחד בלב אחד). **It is for this reason that simcha wasn't mentioned by the korbanos, but was mentioned by the daled minim. The simcha of the daled minim is greater than the simcha of the korbanos. This is a chiddush (insight) because the aforementioned Gemara stated that simcha was acquired through bringing the korbanos. This is also why simcha is mentioned more times on Succos than every other holiday; because the most simcha is on Succos. We must strive to the best of our abilities to be joyful and unified. This is the message of the daled minim. This is why we go to the Suka, a temporary dwelling. The sefer Lekach Toy (Yamim Noroyim chalek beis page 217) explains that we are leaving the physicality's of this world that sometimes prevent us from attaining true unity. Spirituality causes unity. Learning in a Yeshiva, davening in a Shul and sitting time in the Suka together causes unity.**

Another reason why we are commanded to rejoice on Succos more than any other holiday is because we will be naturally happier on Succos. The reason for this is at the time of Pesach the produce isn't gathered yet. Similarly, at the time of Shevuos, even though the produce is reaped, nevertheless, it still isn't brought into the house. This is why simcha is mentioned once by Shevuos because at least the produce is reaped. Conversely, on Succos, the produce is reaped and brought into the house, therefore simcha is mentioned thrice.

Another reason why we are commanded to rejoice on Succos more than any other holiday is because the Suka commemorates that Hashem forgave us for the sin of the golden calf. The clouds of glory returning on the fifteenth of Tishrei demonstrated Hashem's forgiveness. The Gra (commentary on Shir Hashirim (1,4)) explains that even though it would

be fitting for Succos to be during the month of Nison when the clouds of glory began to protect the Jews, nevertheless, since when they sinned with the golden calf and the clouds of glory were removed, we don't celebrate Succos during Nison. Rather, we celebrate Succos during Tishrei, when the clouds of glory returned.