

BITACHON LESSON FOR SUKKOS

חג הסוכות תשפ"ז

דָּרְשׁוּ ה' בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיטּוֹ קְרוֹב

Seek Hashem when He is found, call Him when He is near (Yeshayahu 55:6)

The Gemara (Rosh Hashana 18a) teaches that this is a reference to Aseres Yemei teshuva, the ten days from Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur, when Hashem is extremely close to us.

So, what happens after Yom Kippur?

Do we start spiraling downward, back into "regular life"? Do we slide back into "normal" mode? That seems very disheartening. We put in so much effort into our Elul, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and now what? Back to the sad reality of "Business as usual"?

Of course not!

Yom Kippur may be the climax of the Yemei Teshuva, but it is far from the pinnacle of our growth, and far from the high point of this auspicious time period. The peak of Yom Kippur propels us to something even higher and more exalted: Chag HaSukkos!

Chag HaSukkos is on a whole different level; it's a totally different playing field.

During the Aseres Yemei Teshuva we ascended higher and higher into Hashem's world. As we stood by *Ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur we climbed into the Heavens; our Teshuva took us right to the *Kisei Hakavod*. We called out to Hashem - קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיטּוֹ קְרוֹב - and He heard us! Truly incredible.

Now, we enter the world of Sukkos – the world of וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם. We are no longer climbing into Hashem's world; now we bring Hashem into our world!

We no longer have to "call out" to Hashem to reach Him; He is with us! When we walk into our Sukkah, He is there waiting for us!

On Yom Kippur only the Kohen Gadol was able to walk into the Kodesh Hakodoshim, the holiest of places. To "see" Hashem on that level was reserved for the Kohen Gadol only!

On Sukkos, however, every single Yid can walk into the Sukkah, and "see" Hashem!

The Gemara (Sukkah 9a) teaches

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בְּתֵירָה אוֹמֵר כָּשֶׁם שֶׁחַל שָׁם שְׁמִים עַל הַחֲגִיגָה כִּדְּחַל שָׁם שְׁמִים עַל הַסּוּכָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "חַג הַסּוּכוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לָהּ" מָה חַג לָהּ אִף סוּכָה לָהּ

Just as the name of Hashem takes effect upon the Korban Chagiga and makes it Kodesh, so too, the name of Hashem takes effect upon the sukkah and makes it Kodesh.

The Sukkah is Hashem's *Mishkan* on this world – in our world!

The Vilna Gaon teaches that this is an even higher level of holiness than the Kodesh Hakodoshim on Yom Kippur!

שָׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא זֶה רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה. וְחַנּוּנִי וְעֻנִּי זֶה יוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים. אֵל תַּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי זֶה סוּכּוֹת

On Rosh Hashana Hashem hears us; on Yom Kippur Hashem responds to us; on Sukkos Hashem reveals Himself to us!

The Vilna Gaon is telling us that on Sukkos the *Hester Panim* is lifted. The mask of Hashem is off! On Sukkos Hashem is with us! He is ours - וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם! We take Hashem to us; we "see" Him; we "feel" Him - חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת - שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לָהּ

Along these lines, the Vilna Gaon (cited in Siddur HaGra) explains the following words, of the *Shalosh Regalim* Tefilos:

אַתָּה בְּחֵרְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים - זֶה חַג הַפֶּסַח
אֶהְבֶּתָּ אוֹתָנוּ - זֶה חַג הַשְּׁבִעוֹת
וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ - זֶה חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת

Being chosen by Hashem is remarkable. Being loved by Hashem is extraordinary. Being desired by Hashem - וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ - is next level amazing! It's the highest level possible! It's the level of Sukkos!

All we have to do is open our eyes and "see" Hashem in everything around us.

A life of closeness to Hashem, a life of Emunah and Bitachon is within our grasp. All we have to do is take advantage of the opportunity that is given to us on Sukkos, and reach out; Hashem is there for the taking! וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם

גוט יום טוב!