



"אנו לי"ה ועינינו לי"ה" An Explanation of the Proclamation The Mitzvah of Succah Shaped Like the Letter "Hei" Complements the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah Corresponding to the Letter "Yud"

In honor of the auspiciously approaching festival of Succos, it is fitting that we focus on the mitzvas asef of sitting in the succah. It is written in the Torah (Vayikra 23, 42): "בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים כל האזרח בישראל ישבו" בסוכות, למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתני את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלקיכם." **You shall dwell in Succos for a seven-day period; every native in Israel shall dwell in Succos. So that your generations will know that I caused the Bnei Yisrael to dwell in Succos when I took them from the land of Egypt; I am Hashem, your G-d.**

With regards to the Shalosh Regalim—**Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos**—we find that the first two are celebrated in their respective months alone, whereas **Succos** is celebrated in the month of Tishrei along with Rosh HaShanah, Yom HaKippurim, and Shemini Atzeres. We will endeavor to explain what prompted HKB"Y to place these four holidays together in the month of Tishrei.

In Sha'ar HaKavanos (Rosh HaShanah 1, Succos 3), the Arizal provides us with an intriguing insight. He asserts that the twenty-two days extending from Rosh HaShanah through Shemini Atzeres—which include Rosh HaShanah, the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, Yom Kippur, Chag HaSuccos, and Shemini Atzeres—constitute a single chain of kedushah devoted to the service of Hashem and making amends. The goal is to make amends for the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as" committed by Adam HaRishon and all the neshamos within him, which occurred on Rosh HaShanah.

It behooves us to explain the practical significance and unique role of each of these four holidays—**Rosh HaShanah, Yom HaKippurim, Chag HaSuccos, and Shemini Atzeres**—in a way that is relevant to each and every one of us. Thus, we can make amends for our culpability in the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as" and also the sins we committed during the past year. We will show how they function together like four wheels of a chariot that will transport us while serving Hashem throughout the entire auspicious year to come.

Simchas Beis HaShoeivah Consoles and Gladdens the Crying Lower Waters

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by considering the tremendous joy associated with Chag HaSuccos in the times of the Beis HaMikdash. Our blessed sages called the celebration **Simchas Beis HaShoeivah**, because they drew water to libate on the mizbeiach. Now, throughout the year, when a korban-olah or a korban-shelamim was offered, they were accompanied by a wine libation. During the seven days of Succos, however, when the morning korban-tamid was offered, in addition to a wine libation, a water libation was also poured on the mizbeiach. This is taught in the Mishnah as follows (Succah 51a):

"מי שלא ראה שמחת בית השואבה לא ראה שמחה מימיו... חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו מרקדין בפניהם באבוקות של אור שבידיהן, ואומרים לפניהם דברי שירות ותשבחות, והלויים בכינורות ובנבלים ובמצלתיים ובחצוצרות ובכלי שיר בלא מספר, על חמש עשרה מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים, כנגד חמש עשרה שיר המעלות שבתהלים, שעליהן לויים עומדין בכלי שיר ואומרים שירה."

Whoever did not see the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah never saw rejoicing in his life . . . Chassidim and men of good deeds would dance before them with flaming torches in their hands and utter before them words of songs and praises. And the leviim, with their harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and countless other musical instruments, stood on the fifteen steps that led down from the “Ezras Yisrael” to the “Ezras Nashim,” which corresponded to the fifteen “Shir HaMa’aloss” in Tehillim. For on them the leviim would stand with their musical instruments and utter song. The Mishnah also teaches us that when the people of Yisrael exited the Beis HaMikdash: **היו שוננין ואומרינן אנו ליה וליה עינינו**—they would repeat and say, **“We are for “yud-hei” (G-d’s name יה), and toward “yud-hei” are our eyes.”**

Now, Chazal teach us that the water libation on the mizbeiach on Chag HaSuccos was a consolation to the lower waters, who cried at the time of creation, because they were separated from the upper waters and located farther away from Hashem. As it is written (Bereishis 1, 6): **“ויאמר אלקים יהי רקיע בתוך המים ויהי מבדיל בין מים למים, ויעש אלקים את הרקיע ויבדל בין המים אשר מתחת לרקיע ובין המים אשר מעל לרקיע ויהי כן.”** **“G-d said, ‘Let there be a firmament between the waters, and let it separate between water and water.’ G-d made the firmament, and He separated between the waters which were beneath the firmament and the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so.”**

We learn that the lower waters were consoled from the following passuk (Vayikra 2, 13): **“וכל קרבן מנחתך במלח תמלח ולא תשבית מלח ברית אלקיך מעל מנחתך, על כל קרבנך תקריב מלח—every korban minchah of yours shall be salted with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your G-d’s covenant from upon your minchah offering—on all of your korbanos shall you offer salt.** Rashi comments: **For a covenant has been made with salt since the six days of creation; for the lower waters were promised to be offered on the mizbeiach in the form of salt and during the water libations on the festival (Succos).** Rashi’s source is the Midrash presented by Rabeinu Bachayei in parshas Vayikra (ibid.). After citing Rashi, he writes:

And this is what they said in the Midrash: The lower waters are referred to as “weeping waters.” Why are they called “weeping waters”? Because when HKB”H divided the waters, He placed these above and these below. The lower waters began to weep . . . They lamented the fact that they did not merit to remain above in close proximity to the Creator. In an attempt to appease them, HKB”H told them that since you acted out of respect for Me, the upper waters are not permitted to utter their song until they first obtain permission from you . . . and furthermore you (the lower waters) are destined to be offered on the mizbeiach as salt and water libations—affording you distinction and honor.

Clearly, the lower waters’ lament—**“we wish to be in the presence of the King”**—deserves further explanation. If HKB”H created them and intended that they should remain down below on earth, who are they to complain and question His decision? Should He have altered the order of creation on account of their dissatisfaction? Furthermore, it is one of the principles of our faith, as expressed by the song of the heavenly seraphim (Yeshayah 6, 3): **“קדוש קדוש קדוש ה’ צבאות מלוא כל הארץ כבודו”**—**“Holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory.”** He is everywhere; so, even down in this world, the lower waters are in the presence of the Glory of the King. So, what were they crying about? Additionally, we must endeavor to explain why Succos differs from all of the other festivals. Why did HKB”H choose to appease the lower waters with libations poured on the mizbeiach specifically on Chag HaSuccos?

The Upper Waters Represent the Pleasures of Olam HaBa the Lower Waters Represent the Pleasures of Olam HaZeh

I had a fascinating idea! I would like to clarify the enigmatic words of our sages based on what Rabeinu Chaim Vital, zy”a, writes in Sha’arei Kedushah (Part 1, Sha’ar 2) in the name of his mentor, the Arizal. He discusses the four basic elements a human being is comprised of: **fire, wind, water, dust.** All negative human traits arise from them. He specifies how each of the midos emanates from the four basic elements. With regards to water, he teaches: **“יסוד המים ממונו תאוות התענוגים,**

—the desire for pleasure stems from the element of water. Water gives rise to all sorts of pleasures.

So now, I would like to propose a wonderful chiddush with the utmost reverence and devotion: The “upper waters”— “המים העליונים”— allude to the spiritual pleasures awaiting tzaddikim in Olam HaBa. Let us refer to the Gemara (Berachos 17a): “העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא פריה ורבייה ולא משא ומתן ולא קנאה ולא שנאה ולא תחרות, אלא צדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה.” In Olam HaBa, there is no eating, no drinking, no procreation, no business negotiations, no jealousy, no hatred and no competition. Rather, tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Shechinah. In contrast, the “lower waters”— “המים התחתונים”— allude to the pleasures of Olam HaZeh.

Understood in this light, we can comprehend the crying and discontent expressed by the lower waters: “We want to be in the presence of the King.” They also long for human beings to use all the pleasures of Olam HaZeh l’shem shamayim. For, the halachic ruling in the Shulchan Aruch states (O.C. 231): “בכל מה שיהנה בעולם הזה לא יכוין להנאתו אלא לעבודת הבורא יתברך כדכתיב בכל דרכיך דעהו ואמרו—whatever a person derives pleasure from in Olam HaZeh, he should not do so for his own pleasure but rather for the service of the blessed Creator, as it is written (Mishlei 3, 6): “In all your endeavors know (emulate) Him.” And our sages said (Avos 2, 12): “All let all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven.”

Rosh HaShanah Yom HaKippurim and Chag HaSuccos Represent the Name י"ה with which Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa Were Created

With this introduction, we will proceed to explain the fantastic, practical relationship between the four holidays of Rosh HaShanah, Yom HaKippurim, Chag HaSuccos, and Shemini Atzeres. We will begin by introducing the words of the divine Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the Zohar hakadosh (Ha’azinu, Idra Zuta 288a). On the day that he departed from Olam HaZeh, he expounded before his holy entourage on the following passuk (Tehillim 115, 17): “לא המתים יהללו—neither

can the dead praise י"ה, nor any who descend into silence. But we will bless י"ה from now and forever, Halleluyah! Here is a loose translation of the passage in the Zohar:

Rabbi Shimon wrapped himself in his tallis and sat down. He began and said: “Neither can the dead praise י"ה, nor any who descend into silence.” The first part of the passuk: “Neither can the dead praise י"ה” is definitely referring to those who are called “dead” (i.e., reshaim are called dead even while they are alive) . . . And the last part of the passuk states: “Nor any who descend into silence.” This refers to those (reshaim) who died and were handed over to Dumah (a malach who is the Prince of Gehinnom), they will remain in Gehinnom. This is in contrast to those who are called “alive” (namely, tzaddikim), since HKB”H wants them to be honored.

It appears that we can suggest a reason for Rashbi expounding on this passuk on the day that he passed away based on what they expounded in the Gemara (Menachos 29b) on the passuk (Yeshayah 26, 4): “כי—for in “Kah (yud-hei),” Hashem, is the strength of the worlds. They deduce that HKB”H formed the two worlds with the name “Kah”— י"ה; Olam HaBa was created with the letter “yud,” and Olam HaZeh was created with the letter “hei.” The Gemara proves that Olam HaZeh was created with the letter “hei” from the passuk (Bereishis 2, 4): “אלה תולדות השמים—These are the generations of the heavens and the earth בהבראם.” Do not read the word as (it is actually written) בהבראם but rather as בה' בראם (meaning that He created the heavens and the earth with the letter “hei”).

We can suggest that the reason HKB”H created the two worlds with the name י"ה was to emphasize the advice proffered by the Tanna, Rabbi Yaakov (Avos 4, 16): “העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור בפני העולם הבא, התקן עצמך— Rabbi Yaakov says: Olam HaZeh resembles an antechamber to Olam HaBa. Prepare yourself in the antechamber, so that you will be able to enter the banquet hall. This teaches us that either world in and of itself has no value. Olam HaBa without preparation beforehand in Olam HaZeh only corresponds to the letter “yud.”

Olam HaZeh alone, not serving as a preparation to enter the banquet hall of Olam HaBa, only corresponds to the letter “**hei**.” Only the collaboration of the two worlds unites the two letters that form the name ה”י with which HKB”H created both worlds.

Therefore, on the very day that the divine Tanna Rashbi completed his mission in Olam HaZeh—which merely served as his antechamber to Olam HaBa—he expounded to his holy entourage on the passuk: “לא המתים יהללו יה” —that the “dead” referred to are the reshaim. Since they wasted their lives in Olam HaZeh on foolishness and nonsense, they were considered “dead” even during their lifetimes. Hence, they are not privileged to enter the banquet hall of Olam HaBa, nor are they able to praise the name ה”י—the Creator of both worlds.

This explains the conclusion of the passuk very nicely: “ולא כל יורדי דומה”. After all, they are doomed to descend to Gehinnom, where they will be under the authority of the malach Dumah, the Prince of Gehinnom. Since they will not be allowed to enter Olam HaBa, they will not be privileged to praise G-d with the name ה”י. Tzaddikim, however, who serve Hashem in Olam HaZeh, so that they will be allowed to enter the banquet hall of Olam HaBa, of them the passuk says: “ואנחנו נברך יה מעתה ועד עולם הללויה”.

During the “Yud” Days from Rosh HaShanah until Yom HaKippurim We Renew Olam HaBa that Was Created with the Letter “Yud”

This explains magnificently the precise order of the four holidays: **Rosh HaShanah, Yom HaKippurim, Chag HaSuccos, and Shemini Atzeres**. On Rosh HaShanah, man was created, the culmination of the creation. So, HKB”H renews creation annually on Rosh Hashanah, preparing the antechamber for the banquet hall of Olam HaBa. Therefore, on Rosh HaShanah, we coronate HKB”H as King of the entire world with our tefilah: “מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך”—**reign over the entire world with Your glory**. Subsequently, during the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah—the Ten Days of Repentance—we reestablish the amazing connection with Olam HaBa, which was created with the letter “**yud**,” whose gematria is ten.

For this reason, HKB”H established Yom HaKippurim on the tenth of Tishrei corresponding to the letter “**yud**,” with which Olam HaBa was created. As it is written (Vayikra 16, 29): “והיתה לכם לחוקת עולם בחדש השביעי בעשור לחדש” תענו את נפשותיכם... כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה'” **This shall remain for you an eternal decree: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves . . . For on this day, He shall provide atonement for you to purify you; from all of your sins before Hashem shall you be purified.** This explains very nicely why the Torah prohibited us from eating and drinking on Yom Kippur. It is related to Olam HaBa and eating and drinking are unnecessary in Olam HaBa. This is discussed by the Shela hakadosh (Maseches Yoma 2) in the name of the divine kabbalist, the Ramak, zy”a, in his siddur (Seder Avodas Yom HaKippurim). Here is a translation of his sacred words:

Now, there is no eating on Yom HaKippurim itself, since it is necessary to afflict the physical body and to strengthen the spiritual—namely, the “nefesh, ruach, and neshamah.” The food of Yom HaKippurim is the food of Olam HaBa. Therefore, it is necessary to afflict (restrict; weaken) this animalistic part of our being, and to fortify the spiritual part of our being with the bounty of Olam HaBa. For this reason, the nourishment of Yom HaKippurim is to delight in the splendor of the Shechinah.

Clearly, he is alluding to the aforementioned teaching in the Gemara: **In Olam HaBa, there is no eating and no drinking . . . Rather, tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Shechinah.** Hence, on Yom HaKippurim, which is related to Olam HaBa, there is no eating or drinking. In the words of the Zohar hakadosh (Mishpatim 116a), Yom Kippur is “עלמא דאתי”—**the World to Come**—namely, Olam HaBa. It explains there that for this reason eating and drinking are prohibited.

On Chag HaSuccos the Fifteenth of Tishrei Corresponding to the Name ה”י a Jew Enters the Temporary Dwelling of Olam HaZeh

After the intimate connection with Olam HaBa—which was created with the letter “**yud**”—has been renewed

during the ten (“yud”) days from Rosh HaShanah to Yom Kippur—HKB”H gave us Chag HaSuccos on the fifteenth of the month, corresponding to the name ה”ה. This consolidates the connection between Olam HaZeh, created with the letter “**hei**,” and Olam HaBa, created with the letter “**yud**.” To clarify the matter, let us refer to what Rava expounds in the Gemara (Succah 2a) on the passuk (Vayikra 23, 42): **בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים, אמרה תורה, כל שבעת הימים צא מדירת קבע ושב בדירת עראי.** **“You shall dwell in Succos for a seven-day period.” The Torah said: For all seven days you should abandon your permanent dwelling and sit in a temporary dwelling.** The Alshich hakadosh says that the holy Torah is teaching us a valuable lesson. We should view these seven days as representative of the seventy years of a man’s life in Olam HaZeh. Our life here is only temporary; it is not permanent.

With this in mind, he explains why Olam HaZeh was created with the letter “**hei**.” It is because the letter “**hei**” alludes magnificently to the shape of a succah. We are taught in the Gemara (ibid. 6b) that the minimum requirements for a kosher succah are two proper walls and a minimal third wall that measures at least a handsbreadth (“tefach”). This exactly describes the shape of the letter “**hei**”; it has two complete, intact sides—its roof and its right side. Its third side is a small leg like a “tefach.” This parallel comes to teach us that Olam HaZeh, which was created with the letter “**hei**,” is merely a temporary dwelling place like a succah.

Let us tie this into our current discussion. During the ten days spanning from Rosh HaShanah to Yom Kippur—“yud” Tishrei—the creation of Olam HaBa is completed. Therefore, immediately afterwards, on Chag HaSuccos, we leave our permanent dwellings to sit in a temporary dwelling. In this manner, we demonstrate that we believe that Olam HaZeh is only an antechamber leading us into the banquet hall of Olam HaBa. Thus, we complete the project of teshuvah performed during the month of Tishrei. For, the word תשובה can be broken down to תשובה. We can interpret this as a message to sinners to perform teshuvah by returning the letter “**hei**” with which Olam HaZeh was created and reuniting it with the letter “**yud**” with which Olam HaBa was created.

We can now begin to appreciate the amazing connection of Chag HaSuccos with the name ה”ה. First of all, this festival begins on the **fifteenth** of the month; this is the gematria of the name ה”ה. Additionally, regarding the song of the leviim at Simchas Beis HaShoeivah, the Mishnah cited above teaches: **על חמש עשרה מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים, כנגד חמש עשרה שיר המעלות שבתהלים, שעליהן לויים עומדין בכלי שיר ואומרים שירה—on the fifteen steps that led down from the “Ezras Yisrael” to the “Ezras Nashim,” which corresponded to the fifteen “Shir HaMa’alos” in Tehillim, on them the leviim would stand with their musical instruments and utter song.** The same Mishnah also teaches us that when the people of Yisrael left the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah in the Beis HaMikdash, they would say, **“We are for ה”ה, and toward ה”ה are our eyes.”** In keeping with what we have learned, this declaration refers to the union of Olam HaZeh—the letter “**hei**”—with Olam HaBa—the letter “**yud**”—to form the name ה”ה.

All of this is connected with the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah. We celebrate the joy of the **“lower waters,”** which represent the pleasures of Olam HaZeh. We pour them on the mizbeiach as libations to symbolize that the avodah of Chag HaSuccos is to elevate all matters of Olam HaZeh exclusively for the sake of Hashem. This is precisely the significance of the name ה”ה (gematria 15)—the union of the “**yud**” and the “**hei**.” Hence, during the festivities, it was the function of the leviim to unite these two letters by standing with their musical instruments on the **fifteen** steps and singing the **fifteen** Shir HaMa’aloss. Correspondingly, all of Yisrael expressed their joy by declaring: **“We are for ה”ה, and toward ה”ה are our eyes.”**

Completing the Avodah of the Seven Days of Succos on Shemini Atzeres

Continuing on this sacred journey, we will now explain how the festival of Shemini Atzeres completes the four holidays in the month of Tishrei. The Gemara above says: **“You shall dwell in Succos for a seven-day period.” The Torah said: For all seven days you should abandon your permanent dwelling and sit in a temporary dwelling.** Our sacred sefarim teach that HKB”H commanded us to vacate our permanent dwellings to sit in the shade of the succah immediately

after Yom Kippur, because all sins are attributable to the persuasive tactics of the yetzer. It convinces a person to believe the false doctrine of: "כוחי ועוצם ידי"—that all of my success and good accomplishments were due to my own powers, skills, and efforts. As it is written (Devarim 8, 11): "השמור לך פן תשכח את ה' אלקיך לבלתי שמור מצותיו... פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת, ובקרך וצאנך ירביון וכסף וזהב ירבה לך וכל אשר לך ירבה, ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים... ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה, וזכרת." **"Take care lest you forget Hashem, your G-d, by not observing His mitzvos . . . lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle, and your cattle and sheep increase, and you increase silver and gold for yourselves, and everything that you have will increase—and your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery . . . And you may say in your heart, 'My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!' Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth."**

Sitting in the security of one's house, beneath a solid roof, a person is liable to feel and believe in the false, delusive reality, chas v'shalom, of "כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה". Therefore, HKB"H commanded us to vacate those premises and dwell in the tentative shade of the succah, beneath the vault of heaven. This is meant to instill in our hearts the understanding that we are living in Olam HaZeh under the governance of HKB"H. In other words: **"You shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth."**

Then, after accomplishing this tikun during the seven days of Succos—which represent the seventy years of a human lifespan in Olam HaZeh—HKB"H gives us a special day—Shemini Atzeres. We return to our homes infused with the brilliant, illuminating light of the mitzvah of succah. Thus, we remember even there that all of Olam HaZeh is nothing more than a temporary dwelling place, and we will be cautious not to be swayed by the yetzer hara to adopt the false conviction of "כוחי ועוצם ידי".

This explains fantastically the teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Tzav 32a) that on Shemini Atzeres, HKB"H sits alone with Yisrael. Every person may request whatever he wants for the entire year, and HKB"H will grant his request. Here is the actual language of the Zohar:

"וּמֵאֵן דִּיתִיב עִם מְלָכָא וְנִטְל לִיה בְּלַחְדֵּיהּ, כֹּל מַה דְּבַעֵי שְׂאִיל וְיִהִיב לִיה."

Let us elaborate. On Chag HaSuccos, we are inculcated with the understanding and awareness that Olam HaZeh is merely a temporary dwelling; it is the passageway preparing us and enabling us to enter the banquet hall of Olam HaBa. Upon returning to our homes secure with this essential knowledge, we are entitled to request of HKB"H anything that we want, since there is no longer any risk of being enticed by the yetzer's misleading suggestion of "כוחי ועוצם ידי". Instead, we take care to use all matters of Olam HaZeh exclusively for the sake of Hashem. In this merit, we will be privileged to receive all the good that Olam HaZeh has to offer, so that we may use it for matters pertaining to Olam HaBa. Thus, we will successfully consolidate the name י"ה and fulfill the words of the passuk: **וְאֵנַחְנוּ נְבָרֵךְ י"ה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם הַלְלוּהָ—but we will bless י"ה from now and forever, Halleluyah!**

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