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YOM KIPPUR

The Journey from Yom Kippur to Sukkot

The very last Halacha in the Yom Kippur section of the Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim* 624) states: “The pious begin building the Sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur, in order to go from one Mitzvah to the next Mitzvah”. Additionally, the next chapter which begins the laws of Sukkot (*Orach Chaim* 625:1) the very first Halacha is: “It is a Mitzvah to build the Sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur, following the general rule stating: ‘A Mitzvah that comes your way do not miss the opportunity to perform it’ “.

The repetition of virtually the same law (back-to-back) in the *Shulchan Aruch* is certainly an anomaly. It would appear that there is some sort of symbiotic relationship between Sukkot and Yom Kippur, a blended theme whereby the Sukkah (and for that matter the *Arba Minim*) connect these two *Yamim Tovim*.

Rav Hutner (*Pachad Yitzchak* Rosh Hashana 10) points out that there are two different cycles of *Chagim*, the *Yamim Nora'im* and the *Shalosh Regalim*. He explains strikingly that Sukkot following Yom Kippur and beginning the *Shalosh Regalim* is actually related to both cycles thematically and is the bridge between

them. This would explain why the *Shulchan Aruch* would conclude its discussion of Yom Kippur with the building of the Sukkah.

Additionally, the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30) links the theme of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur with the *Arba Minim*. Metaphorically when the Jew comes out of court holding his Lulav high it is an indication that he was victorious in his judgement. A clear blending of the two cycles.

What about the Sukkah itself?

The Talmud (Sukkah 26a) rules that one who is in pain or discomfort is exempt from dwelling in the Sukkah. This in fact is a Halacha (*Orach Chaim* 640). Another anomaly that requires explanation.

Why is the Mitzvah of Sukkah different from other Mitzvot which are not exempt even if one were to be “uncomfortable” performing them? On the contrary, the rule of *לפום צערא אגרא* “more pain, more gain” applies, whereas in relation to Sukkah, the fact that one is uncomfortable exempts him entirely from the Mitzvah.

The solution to this anomaly lies in the words of the Kotzker Rebbe (*Amud Haemet*):

When one exits the protected environment

of his home and enters the physically unprotected Sukkah “this is total surrender and submission to God. Therefore, one who is uncomfortable [while sitting in the Sukkah] is exempt from this Mitzvah since the fact that he feels uncomfortable indicates that he is not totally submitted to God. Consequently, since his being in the Sukkah is not achieving the anticipated effect on his persona he is therefore exempt since he is not truly connected to his Sukkah”.

This journey of surrender and submission to the creator begins with Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur where one accepts *Malchut Shamayim* (God’s Kingship). He internalizes the notion that sin is detrimental and that he must repent and become closer to God, surrendering himself before Him.

Immediately following Yom Kippur, one transits into the Mitzvah of Sukkah. It is for this very reason that the Halacha of building a Sukkah appears at the end of the laws of Yom Kippur and at the beginning of the laws of Sukkot.

This also explains the two different reasons for building the Sukkah offered by the *Shulchan Aruch*. In the laws of Sukkah, the reasoning given relates to the general rule that when an opportunity to fulfill a Mitzvah arises one should not postpone its performance. The reasoning given however in the laws of Yom Kippur speaks of the **transition** from Mitzvah to Mitzvah which is focused on the unique **connection** between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, highlighting the nexus between the two holidays.

And then there are the almost magical four purifying days between Yom Kippur

and Sukkot. In the words of the Midrash: “And from Yom Kippur to Sukkot, all of Israel is involved in commandments. This one is involved with his sukkah, that one is involved with his Lulav. And on the first day of the festival, all of Israel stand in front of the Holy One, blessed be He, [with] their Lulavs and Etrogs for the sake of the Holy One, blessed be He. And He say to them, “What is past is past. **From now, let us start a [new] reckoning.**” Hence, **Moshe warns Israel (Leviticus 23:40), “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day.”** (Vayikra Rabbah 30:7)

Practically speaking the Midrash is expressing the idea that God begins the new annual counting of one’s sins only from the first day of Sukkot onwards (although the new year started with Rosh Hashana). In essence, this means that the *Kapparah* and renewal is clarified during these four days and finalized on Sukkot.

The *Shela HaKadosh* explains that the *Kapparah* renewal of Yom Kippur extends via these four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

The clarifying journey from Yom Kippur to Sukkot provides us with a renewed relationship with the Almighty. And let’s not forget Simchas Torah, the celebration continues!

Gmar Chatima Tova... Chag Sameach ■

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