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Sukkah - In The Merit of Avraham Avinu

The Sages state in the *Midrash* that because Avraham Avinu enabled his guests to sit under the shade of a tree and be shielded from the sun's heat, his descendants (the Jewish nation) merited the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, where we sit in the shadow of the *sukkah*. From these words of our Sages we see that the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* is rooted in Avraham Avinu.[\[2\]](#)

If we reflect further into this, we find an additional connection between Avraham Avinu and *sukkah*. The Sages state that on the day that Avraham Avinu was ill from circumcision, Hashem removed the sun from its sheath, so that Avraham Avinu would not be disturbed by guests.[\[3\]](#)

The concept of Hashem removing the sun from its sheath is found elsewhere as well. The Sages teach that in the future, the nations of the world will request that Hashem give them the *mitzvos* so that they can earn reward. Hashem will give them an easy *mitzvah*, the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* to the gentiles, and then He will take the sun out of its sheath, where the temperature will become so hot that the gentiles will kick the *sukkah* and run out of it.[\[4\]](#)

Sukkah and The Sun's Shade

What is the connection between the sun being removed from its sheath, and *sukkah*?

In the future, the righteous will merit to dwell in a *sukkah* made of the leviathan skin, and the rest of the skin will be spread out over the walls of Yerushalayim, and its light will shine from one end of the world to the other.[\[5\]](#) From this we see that the *sukkah* of the future will be totally different than the *sukkah* we have nowadays. The *sukkah* of the future will be entirely light, whereas the *sukkah* we have today is required to have in it more shade than sunlight[\[6\]](#). The *sukkah* of nowadays is all about being in the shadow or shade (*tzeil*) of the *sukkah*, whereas the *sukkah* of the future will be entirely light, with no shadow.

Additionally, Rashi[\[7\]](#) states that *sukkah* is from the word *s'chach*, the mat that covers the *sukkah*, which is a covering that is made to shield us in the *sukkah* from the sun.

Let us think into the depth of these concepts.

Sukkah of Nowadays: Dwelling In The 'Shadow' of Emunah

The words of the Zohar[\[8\]](#) are well-known: *sukkah* is called the *tzeila d'mehemenusa*, "the shadow of

emunah (faith)". There is *emunah*, and there is *tzeil ha'emunah*. The complete level of *emunah* is called *emunah*, whereas the incomplete level of *emunah* is called *tzeila d'meheimenusa*, or *tzeil emunah*. Thus, the *sukkah* of nowadays, which is called *tzeila d'meheimenusa*, represents a level of incomplete *emunah*, in contrast to the *sukkah* of the future, which will reflect the level of complete *emunah*.

Avraham Avinu was the first person to reveal *emunah* onto the world. Avraham is called "Ezrachi", from the word *zerichah* (to shine), because he shined the light of *emunah* upon the world. Thus Avraham Avinu is the one who brought the *tzeila d'meheimenusa* onto the world, and that is why we were given the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* in Avraham Avinu's merit.

The *sukkah* of nowadays requires us to sit in its shadow because in the current era, we are only able to enjoy a partial level of *emunah*, and not the complete level. We are only in the "shadow" of *emunah*, not in the *emunah* itself. Only in the future, where the complete level of *emunah* will be revealed, will there be no requirement of *tzeil*\shadow in the *sukkah*. That will be the *sukkah* of the leviathan, which will be a light that shines stronger than the sun – it will be the reality of *emunah* itself, and not merely in the "shadow" of *emunah*.

The Difference Between Emunah and 'In The Shadow' of Emunah

Now let us try to understand, with *siyata d'shmaya*, the difference between the levels of *tzeil emunah* and *emunah*.

Tzeil emunah is an offshoot of *emunah*, it is a partial revelation of *emunah*, but does not reveal actual *emunah* as it is. This is the level of *sukkah* we have nowadays, which is entirely about the *tzeil emunah*.

In contrast, the level of actual *emunah*, which will be revealed in the *sukkah* of the future, is described in the words of the Sages: "In the future, Hashem will remove the sun from its sheath, where the righteous will be healed from it, and the wicked will be judged from it".^[9] How will the righteous be healed, and how will the wicked be punished? The Gemara says that one who shames a Torah scholar cannot be healed^[10]; elsewhere, the Gemara says that ignoramuses will not be resurrected with the dead^[11], and the Gemara there says that the only way for them to merit rectification is to attach themselves to Torah scholars. The *Yismach Moshe*^[12] explains this in the name of the *Bach* that one who shames a Torah scholar cannot be healed in the sense that he will not be resurrected with the dead, and this is because one who has shamed a Torah scholar is missing *bittul* (self-nullification) to the Torah scholar; only through nullifying oneself to a Torah scholar can one merit resurrection in the future. In contrast, the righteous will be healed in the future from the sun's rays, because they have nullified themselves [to Hashem].

Thus, *bittul* (self-nullification) is the key to recovery from all spiritual maladies. When the soul of a person is not nullified to its higher source, the abilities in the soul remain mixed and unsorted, and this is the root of all spiritual sickness. But when the soul nullifies itself to its higher source, all of the abilities in the soul are then nullified and returned to their root, where no sickness can take hold.

When Hashem will remove the sun from its sheath in the future, this can be understood on a deeper level as the revelation of the level of total *emunah*, which is above the level of being 'in the shadow' of *emunah*. There will be no more 'shadow'. Each person will react differently to this revelation. The non-Jewish nations will kick the *sukkah*, as the Gemara says, and this includes all of the wicked people in the world; whereas the righteous will nullify themselves to its light.

When Yonah was spit out of the whale, Hashem caused the sun to beat down on him very hard,

whereupon he fainted. Yonah said to Hashem that he would rather die than be exposed to this heat.[\[13\]](#) This can be understood on two different levels. Either it can be a cause for *mesirus nefesh* – giving up one’s soul to Hashem and being prepared to die for Hashem, which is a holy kind of death – or it can mean, *chas v’shalom*, an expression of rebellion towards Hashem, as Esav said, “Behold, I am going to die; for what do I need the firstborn rights for?”[\[14\]](#) – Esav ‘kicked’ at his firstborn status.

When the sun is taken out of its sheath, and there is no shade from the sun, either this will cause a person to nullify himself to Hashem, or it will cause him to kick and rebel, *chas v’shalom*. If one lived a life of *bittul* towards Hashem, he is more in touch with the great spiritual light of the future, and he will be able to achieve a greater level of *bittul* in the future, to the point that he will be able to totally nullify his existence to Hashem. In contrast, one who did not live a life of *bittul* towards Hashem during this current lifetime will not be able to survive the revelation of the future. It will be way above and beyond his perception, so he will kick at it.

When a great spiritual revelation is revealed to a person, either one of two reactions will ensue. Either the person will recognize its exaltedness and he will nullify himself to it, willing to give himself up for it; or he will oppose it and rebel and kick at it.

Based upon the above, we can now understand that righteous will be healed in the future from the sun being removed from its sheath, because since they were used to a life of *bittul*, they will receive a complete healing, whereas the wicked will be judged by this powerful revelation, because since they will not be able to handle its light, they will instead kick at it. They will kick at it because they will feel a tremendous contradiction in their souls, and this is the depth of the punishment that is called “*Kaf HaKela*”.

Our Avodah In The Current Era

In the future there will be no more shade from the sun; there will be no more *tzei*\shadow. Nowadays, however, the *avodah* of a person involves ‘shadow’. In other words, in our current era, the light of the future is currently hidden; any spiritual ‘light’ that we do have today is on a level of ‘*ohr ganuz*’ (the hidden light). In a similar context, Shabbos is referred to as ‘hidden’ treasure.[\[15\]](#) In the future, when it will be revealed “the day that is entirely Shabbos”, the Shabbos will no longer be a ‘hidden’ treasure, for it will be fully revealed.

Thus, the *sukkah* that we have nowadays is meant for us to reveal the spiritual light precisely through ‘shadow’.

Here we learn a deep and profound concept. There are two aspects of our *avodah* – we have an *avodah* to reveal spiritual light onto the world through ‘shadow’, and we have a more inner aspect of our *avodah*, where we reveal spiritual light that has no shadow. The entire concept of shadow began after Creation, where Hashem created light and darkness and separated them. The heavens were created from the original light that was around before Creation.[\[16\]](#) That original light of before Creation is the absolute level of Hashem’s oneness, and it will be revealed in the future.

But we also remember this original light on some level even in our current era. As an example, there is a *halacha* that when building a *sukkah*, we must first build the walls and only after that do we place the *s’chach*[\[17\]](#); the depth of this is that we first reveal a *sukkah* where there is entirely sunlight and no shadow, and after that we have a *sukkah* with *s’chach*, where there is sunlight and shadow.

In Conclusion

The *sukkah* of the future will essentially be a dwelling of the *Shechinah* (Hashem’s Presence) that will fill the entire world, where the entire Creation will achieve unity, bound together by the light of the

Shechinah. This is the perfected *sukkah* which we hope, await, and long for. In the future, we will see how even all of the 'darkness' that we see in the world can really be attributed to a source of light, which is where darkness is created from.

It will not just be the 'shadow' of *emunah* – it will be *emunah* itself. It will be the *sukkah* that is *emunah* itself, and not just a '*tzeila d'meheimunsa*' that it is nowadays. The *sukkah* of the future will be the *sukkah* where we will finally see how all 'darkness' really stems from 'light', for ultimately, light and darkness are originally one undivided creation. We will be able to see how darkness itself can be the light of *emunah*, which we cannot understand through human logic.

This will be the *sukkah shleimah*, the perfect *sukkah*, which we express in the words, "And spread upon us the *sukkah* of Your completion" (ופרוס עלינו סוכת שלומיך). May we merit from Hashem to have the light of the *sukkah* of the future to shine upon us, and to merit it on its complete level, may it come speedily in our days.

[1] Editor's Note: This translation is a summary of the original Hebrew *derasha* printed in **sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh - Sukkos**. The bulk of this adaptation has been taken from pages 10-14 and page 26 of *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh - Sukkos*. The material of this *derasha* is esoteric, thus it was too difficult to adapt the entire *derasha* into English; here we have tried to present a summary which discusses the main highlights of the *shiur*.

[2] *Beraishis Rabbah 48:10*

[3] *Rashi to Beraishis 18:1; Bava Metzia 86b*

[4] *Avodah Zarah 3a; Tanchuma Shoftim 89*

[5] *Bava Basra 75a*

[6] *Shulchan Aruch: Orach Chaim 631*

[7] *Rashi to Sukkah 2a*

[8] *Zohar III Emor 103a*

[9] *Avodah Zarah 3b*

[10] *Shabbos 119b*

[\[11\]](#) Kesubos 111b

[\[12\]](#) Yismach Moshe, parshas Ki Seitzei

[\[13\]](#) Yonah 4:8

[\[14\]](#) Beraishis 25:32

[\[15\]](#) Shabbos 10b

[\[16\]](#) Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer 3, Nusach Teiman (mentioned in Moreh Nevuchim II: 26)

[\[17\]](#) Rema: Orach Chaim: 635

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