

# SUCCOS THE JEWS INNER SELF

Based on the original Hebrew shiur  
סוכות 007 לגלות הפנימית הנעלמת בסוכות תשסח

## *The Jew's Inner Self*<sup>1</sup>

### *Sukkah and the Four Species – The Dual Natures of Man*

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On *Succos*, we have two *mitzvos*: to sit in the *succah*, and to shake the Four Species. These two *mitzvos* represent the two sides of man. The Four Species, which we shake around and move, represents the concept that man is always in movement. We are full of various *retzonos* (desires), and all of these desires are a kind of movement. The *mitzvah* of sitting in the *succah* represents a totally different side to us than this: in a *succah*, we don't move – we just sit there.

We find that Hashem is mainly called by two names. The lower name of Hashem is “*adonoy*” - He is our *adon*, our master. This refers to how we serve Him with the *mitzvos*. The higher name of Hashem is the four-letter name of *havayah*, and this refers to the simple recognition of His existence. These two names of Hashem reflect the two sides of our life's mission. On one hand, we “move” constantly by doing all the *mitzvos*. This is how relate to Hashem as our Master, Whom we serve; that He is *adonoy*. But the inner essence to our life is that we recognize his existence and integrate our own existence as a part of Hashem. This is how we relate to Hashem with his higher name, *havayah*. It is the deeper part of our life.

The fact that Hashem exists is not just a fact about life, but it is something which we can connect ourselves to. The *mitzvah* of sitting in the *Succah* is entirely about this concept – to sit in Hashem's Presence, with no need to move around, and instead to connect to Hashem's Endlessness.

In this discussion, the intention is not merely to say a nice *dvar Torah* for *Succos*, but rather, to define the very essence of *Succos*: accessing our innermost point of our self – our point of non-movement – when we integrate with Hashem. It is also a concept that has ramifications to our entire life. It is the way how we can prepare for the future, when we will sit in the *succah* made of the *leviathan* skin.

The depth of our *avodah* on *Succos* is to combine the two sides of mankind and integrate them together: the Four Species, which represents our *mitzvos*/movement, and the *mitzvah* of sitting in the *Succah*, which represents our recognition of Hashem/non-movement.

### *Our Actual Essence vs. The Outer Layers of the Self*

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We will try to explain this, as much as Hashem allows us to understand it.

The most complicated thing in the world is our self. Anything else we recognize are all superficial aspects of reality: the clothing we wear, the house we live in, the street that we live on, the country we live in. The entire world surrounding us is also superficial to our existence. If a person can only recognize these externalities, he lives a very superficial kind of existence, for he

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<sup>1</sup> סיכום 007 לגלות הפנימית הנעלמת בסוכות תשסח

spends his entire life on the outside. He is thinking all the time about things that are outside of himself.

When a person begins to look for his inner essence, he is apt to think that he “is” what he “does.” He identifies himself based on his actions, on his emotions, and on his thoughts [“I *am* what I do”, or “I *am* what I feel” or, “I *am* what I think”, etc].

For example, a person has an affinity to do *chessed* (kindness). How does he think of himself? He may see himself as a “good person”, because he sees that he is drawn towards doing good things. But, with this perspective, his view of himself may change, such as when he has to reprimand his children sometimes. He may feel terrible about himself as he is scolding his children, because he cannot be nice to them right now, and he may view himself now as a “bad person”, and he feels that he is acting cruel to his children, etc.

If a person is deeper, he knows that there is more to him than the actions that he does. He is aware that he also has his thoughts, so he may identify himself based on the kinds of thoughts that are taking place in his mind. Yet this is not either a correct self-identification, because a person is not defined by his thoughts.

Our actions, our emotions, and our thoughts are just outer layers that cover over our essence. They are called “garments” that clothe our soul.<sup>2</sup> There is more to who we are than just our actions, our emotions, and our thoughts. How can a person identify who he really is?

To be honest, there is almost no one who truly knows and recognizes who he is, and there is almost no one as well who truly knows and recognizes Hashem. If a person doesn't know he really is, he can't either recognize Hashem. There are many people who are searching to find Hashem. But, it is written “*From my flesh I see G-d*”<sup>3</sup> - in other words, we need to know who we are in order to be able to recognize Hashem.

### ***Only By Recognizing Our Self Can We Recognize Hashem***

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We will expand more upon these words, because it is a very fundamental concept which needs to be understood well.

There isn't any person person who has no self-knowledge at all, of himself. All of us know ourselves to a certain extent, besides for those who have become mentally ill (may G-d have mercy upon them). But the way we understand ourselves is generally a superficial understanding. We recognize ourselves based on the outer parts of our self, such as our actions, our conversations, our emotions, and our thoughts. These are outer layers to our soul, the garments that cover over our actual soul, and therefore these factors are not the real way to identify ourselves.

When a person only has a superficial understanding of himself, he will also have a superficial relationship towards G-d. It is written, “*From my flesh, I see G-d*”, so if a person doesn't properly

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<sup>2</sup> See *Tanya* chapter 4, and *Tzidkas Hatzaddik* 263.

<sup>3</sup> *Iyov* 19: 26

recognize his own “flesh”, his real self, he won't come to really identify Hashem either. As a result, he will never form a deep bond with the Creator, because he never comes to genuinely conceptualize the Creator's existence in the first place.

We can compare this to a person who wishes to grind flour but he has no home appliance to grind it with. The “I” in a person is a tool for one to recognize the Creator of the World, because “The Holy One and Yisrael are one”. If someone recognizes his own “Yisrael”, the Jew inside himself – in other words, his beginning point, for Yisrael is called “the beginning” (see *Rashi Beraishis 1:1*) - then he can come to recognize the beginning of his own beginning, the Creator, Who is the Ultimate Beginning. But if a person never got to his own beginning, and he only knows of the ‘branches’ of his beginning – i.e. his various abilities – then not only is he missing a bond with the Creator, but he is missing his own “Jew” within. The essence of the Jew is that he is a Yisrael - thus, if a Jew does not recognize that he is Yisrael deep down in his soul, he is missing self-recognition.

How indeed can a Jew attain self-recognition? It is not written in any sefer/book in the entire world. A book is an outer entity, and thus it impossible for the actual “I” to be described in any book! If the “I” could be written about in a book, that would be releasing the “I” from its inner chamber out into the open world, and that itself would be impossible.

The only one who can reveal the “I” is Hashem Himself. “*I am Hashem your G-d.*” The word *anochi* (I) stands for the words “*Ana Nafshai Kesavis Yehavis*, “I Myself can write this.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, the only one who can write about the “I” is Hashem. Hashem has given us the tool in how we can recognize Him: the more we recognize our self, the more we recognize Him. If we have only a superficial self-recognition, then our recognition of Hashem will also be superficial. If we recognize what our essence is, then we will be able to recognize the essence of Hashem.

The Torah begins with the letter *beis*, in the word *Beraishis*. The Ten Commandments began with the letter *aleph*, in the word “*Anochi.*” The depth of this is that Hashem reveals Himself in the letter *Aleph*, which is the beginning letter. If we come to our letter “*aleph*” in our soul – our point of beginning – then we will be able to come to the total level of *Aleph*, the Absolute One, the Absolute Beginning – the One who existed, exists and will always exist: the Creator. But if man doesn't recognize who he is, then he won't be able to recognize his Creator.

What is the most hidden thing in Creation? Hashem's Name is never pronounced. Whenever the Name of *havayah* is used in the Torah, we read it as “*Adonoy.*” The actual “I” of Hashem, even when it is written, is never read. And when we do read a name of Hashem, it is not written there. This is not only a fact about reading Torah. It is a perspective to have towards the Creation, and it is a perception of our soul.

There in inner kind of “writing” of our soul which cannot be read. If we could read it, we would be in the state of *Moshiach's* times, which we are not in right now. When we all will be able to pronounce the Name of *havayah*, *Mashiach* will come. Nowadays, only a few individuals are allowed to use the Name of *havayah*. Our *avodah* is for us to reach the Name of *havayah* of Hashem, which we do not currently recognize.

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<sup>4</sup> *Yalkut Shimeoni: Shemos 20: 226*

We usually relate to Hashem with the fact that we must do the mitzvos He commanded us with. However, there is an inner aspect to our relationship towards Hashem which we start out being unaware of, and we must discover it. It is the fact that we are not just servants of our Master, but rather, our whole existence is connected with Him.

That is the difference between the lower name of Hashem, *adonoy*, and the higher name of Hashem, which is *havayah*. The lower name, *adonoy*, represents how we must do the *mitzvos*, for He is our Master. The name of *adonoy* implies that our relationship with Him is dependent on the actions we do. The higher name, *havayah*, reflects that we are all integrated with Hashem, regardless of what we do or not, because the connection is intrinsic. “A Jew who sins is still a Jew.”

The point of *havayah* – our true existence, in which we are integrated with Hashem – is the point that is hidden away deep in the soul. When we do the *mitzvos*, it builds the outer layers of our soul, but it doesn't build the point of *havayah* in the soul.

When a person performs a *mitzvah*, he is doing an action. The root of all action is the power of *ratzon*, the will. The will represents man's nature to always be in movement; *ratzon* comes from the word *ratz*, to “run”, to move. If a person considers his *ratzon* to be the deepest part of himself, he identifies himself with the power of movement, of action. He is at the level of the Four Species, which move in all six directions of the world – but he hasn't yet gotten to his own self. He hasn't yet gotten to the “*succah*” inside himself – to the “Yisrael” inside him, his true “I.”

With a poor sense of self-recognition, even a person sitting in the *succah* doesn't grasp what the concept of *succah* is. Although it appears as if he's reached the point of non-movement, because he's sitting in the *succah* – he's only there physically, but he doesn't see himself as being in the *tzeila d'meheimenusa*, the “shadow of faith” that the *Succah* is. He's doing all the mitzvos for His Master, but he hasn't yet reached *emunah* – the *succah* that is all about *emunah*, recognizing Hashem's existence.

Thus, there are essentially two stages in our bond with Hashem: first we become His loyal servants by doing all his *mitzvos*. At a later stage in life, we must eventually enter the second, inner stage, which is to recognize Him with our *emunah*. These two stages are represented by two great events that our people went through: the exodus of Egypt and the Giving of the Torah. By the exodus, we were released from Pharaoh's servitude and now we became *servants* of Hashem. By Sinai, Hashem revealed Himself with the giving of the Torah, and now we reached a new level: we *recognized* Hashem.

When Hashem revealed Himself by the Torah, He did not reveal Himself with His lower name, *adonoy*, but rather with His higher name, *havayah*. This shows us that the Torah is essentially the higher name of Hashem, *havayah*.

For this reason, we never really begin to learn the actual Torah, because we are not connected to *havayah*. And surely, we never finish it, for that reason. “*The Torah of Hashem is wholesome, it settles the soul.*” The Baal Shem Tov said that the Torah is wholesome and perfect because no one has ever begun to learn it and complete it. What is the meaning of his statement? No one ever begun to learn the Torah?! The meaning is that the Torah throughout the generations until the end of time is not yet the actual Name of Hashem to us, and this is the deep reason why the Name of Hashem is not allowed to be pronounced.

When a person recognizes his real essence, he merits to truly learn the Torah – the essence of the Torah. Through his learning, he can then come to recognize Hashem – not just the actions and *middos* of Hashem, but an actual recognition of Hashem Himself, so to speak, in the same way that he recognizes his own essence.

Only a person who feels his own essence can come to feel the reality of Hashem. Of course, anyone will claim that he can feel himself as existing, not just a Jew, but any non-Jew as well, and even animals, can feel they exist. But as we explained, most people never arrive at true self-recognition, and they only are aware of the outer layers to their existence.

### *Summary*

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To summarize: If we want to define the purpose of Creation, the definition is clear. The purpose of Creation is to recognize the reality of Hashem. The way to get there is through self-recognition. The self is the point in a person which never ceases, for Hashem and Yisrael are one; just as Hashem is eternal, so is a soul of Yisrael eternal. If a person views himself as an entity that can cease, then in turn he views his bond with Hashem with the same superficial perspective.

The soul of a Jew is a “piece of G-d from above”, and therefore, one can come to recognize Hashem through the recognition of himself. A Jew is the only nation on this world which is capable of feeling the inner self and thereby sense the Creator with just as much clarity.

This is the lesson of *Succos*. We have two *mitzvos* – to sit in the *Succah* and to shake the Four Species. We have both of these *mitzvos* because we are meant to integrate both of the lessons they represent together. The Four Species represents how we must move to do all the *mitzvos*, the actions through which we serve our Master with. The *mitzvos* are the way for us to get through to our **heart** and reveal it. “The heart is pulled after the actions.”<sup>5</sup>

What is it that we must reveal from our heart? It is not limited to the great exalted feelings of love and fear of Hashem. It is not about becoming awe-struck from elation. It is about reaching our essence, our “I.” The point of doing all the *mitzvos* is so that we can use all these actions to reach our “I” and reveal it. In this way, we integrate *adonoy* with *havayah*.

The “I” can be reached in several ways. There is way to reach it directly, but only the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur knew the secret of how to do it. The other way is the way which we generally take, and that is through doing all the *mitzvos*. **Through the mitzvos, we can get through to our essence, and recognize the Creator as a result. But when we do the mitzvos, our underlying focus should not be on the external actions themselves of the mitzvos, but rather on the goal, which is to come to our essence.**

### *Reaching Our Point of Menuchah/Serenity*

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Understandably, the words here are very deep, but they are the secret about life.

All of us want to grow higher, to become elated and elevate ourselves. Yet, elation is still being superficial. Life is not just about feeling more elated. Elation is movement, and movement is only the outer layer of our existence. For this reason, there is almost no one who reaches what he wants in life, because a person keeps evading his main goal, in spite of his many aspirations to grow and become more elated in spirituality.

There is a well-known parable that illustrates this message. A man dreams that there is buried treasure underneath the bridge of his town, while in reality, there is buried treasure sitting underneath his house all along.

The lesson we can learn from this is that even when a person seeks spirituality, he might very well be running away from his real “treasure” all along. For example, if he thinks that Hashem is in Heaven, while he is merely on this lowly earth, then all he will know of is the *mitzvos*, and his entire life will be limited to performing superficial actions. The truth is that Hashem is found everywhere (*Zohar III 225a*) – He is found inside a person! **Our *avodah* is to uncover our true existence, and then we will find Hashem there.**

Of course, it will require a lot of “movements” to get to that inner place in ourselves, but we must at least aspire to reach this point of serenity, which is called *menuchah*. When a person reaches the place of *menuchah* in himself, Hashem is truly revealed within him, because *menuchah* represents Shabbos, the point of non-movement and the cessation from all labor. One who attains *menuchah* on this world will be able to recognize the Creator, and he attains this recognition now in the same way that all of us will eventually recognize Hashem in the future. In contrast, if someone never reaches the point of *menuchah* in himself, the “Shabbos” in himself, then he will not come to the recognition of the One who created the world.

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