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The Hoshanos Contains All Aspects of Torah

There are two different kinds of “aravos” (willow branches) that we take on Succos. We take *aravos* on the first six days of Sukkos, with the Four Species that we shake, and on the seventh day of Sukkos (“*Hoshanah Rabbah*”) we take another pair of *aravos*, which are called the “*hoshanos*”. In the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, they would encircle the Altar with these *aravos* and bang them on the side of the Altar.

The Gemara says that the custom of *hoshanos* in the *Beis HaMikdash* was either a *minhag neviim* (a custom of the prophets) or a *yesod neviim* (firmly established by the prophets). According to Rabbi Yochanan, *hoshanos* are a *halacha l’Moshe m’Sinai* (oral law received from Sinai which was not recorded in the written Torah), which was forgotten and later remembered. According to a third opinion in the Gemara, *hoshanos* are a *minhag neviim*.

The depth behind this argument is that *hoshanos* includes all the levels of the Torah – Biblical law, Oral law, Rabbinical law. The Sages weren’t just arguing if *hashanos* are a *halacha l’Moshe m’Sinai*, *minhag neviim* or *yesod neviim*. Rather, the depth of this matter is that the concept of the *hoshanos* “unifies” together all of the levels of the Torah – Torah law, *Halacha L’Moshe M’Sinai*, and *minhag neviim*.

Let us try to understand how the *aravos* [the *hoshanos*] “unify” together all the parts of Torah.

Yishmael Was Judged With Water: The Judgment of Hoshanah Rabbah On Water

The Gemara teaches that there are four times a year where the world is judged^[1]; on the festival [of Succos], there is a judgment on water. Where else do we find judgment with water? We find the world was judged with “a lot” of water, and times where there is judgment involving “a little” water. The world was judged with “a lot of water” by the Flood, where the world was sentenced to become filled with a lot of water. We also find an instance where someone was judged to have “a little” water: Yishmael. When Yishmael was sent out of Avraham’s house into the desert, Avraham sent him with a little flask of water. In this sense, Yishmael was “judged” with “a little” water.

Sarah wanted to expel Yishmael from the home, when she realized that Yishmael was fooling around with Yitzchok and laughing with him. Chazal explain that Sarah foresaw that Yishmael would be the cause of making the Golden Calf. Yitzchok represents the concept of *tzechok d’kedushah*, holy

laughter (as Yitzchok is from the word *tzechok*), whereas Yishmael is associated with *tzechok d'kilkul*, evil laughter.

Yishmael was the evil offspring of Avraham. Avraham represents the element of water, for Avraham epitomized kindness, and kindness is symbolized by water, which nourishes and sustains. Thus Yishmael is the "ruined water" who came from Avraham. Here we see further how Yishmael is further associated with water – the evil, impaired, ruined kind of water.

Avraham was afraid to send away Yishmael, but Hashem told him to listen to Sarah, telling him that only Yitzchok is the main son, and not Yishmael. Sarah saw through *ruach hakodesh* (and this is also the root of how there was *ruach hakodesh* by the *simchas beis hashoeivah* on Succos) that Yishmael would be a bad influence on Yitzchok, and Hashem agreed with her view on the matter, and told Avraham to listen to Sarah's opinion on the matter. Since Sarah's vision was the root of the *ruach hakodesh* on Succos, the time of Succos is when the world is judged with water, which Yishmael was judged with.

Chazal say that the verse "*And his leaves will not wither*" refers to Avraham Avinu, whose "leaves" did not wither – whose offspring remained righteous, including Yishmael. From here, we learn that Yishmael did *teshuvah* at the end of his life. Even though Avraham sent Yishmael away from his home, sending him away with only a little water that would not be enough to keep him alive, and even though Yishmael was expelled from the home because of his bad influence on Yitzchok, we see that Yishmael still did *teshuvah*.

On Succos, the world is judged with water, and this judgment is more specifically on Hoshanah Rabbah. On Rosh HaShanah, the judgment is "written", on Yom Kippur it is "sealed", and on Hoshanah Rabbah there is a *chotam b'toch chotam*, a "seal within a seal". This is also hinted to by the *cheimas mayim* (jug of water) which Avraham sent with Yishmael, which stands for the acronym of "*chotam b'toch chotam*".

The well-known time to do *teshuvah* is in between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, but there is also another time to do *teshuvah*, as explained by the *Arizal* and others: between Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeres. The day immediately preceding Shemini Atzeres is Hoshanah Rabbah; thus, Hoshanah Rabbah is where the sealing takes place. Yishmael did *teshuvah* at the end of his life, and so is Hoshanah Rabbah the end of the year. Thus, Hoshanah Rabbah is the time that shows us that even Yishmael can do *teshuvah*.

This reveals a new facet to *teshuvah*. Clearly, the *teshuvah* of the Ten days of Repentance is a different level of *teshuvah* than the *teshuvah* of Hoshanah Rabbah. During the Ten Days of Repentance, it is a time of *teshuvah* uniquely for the Jewish people. Only the nation of Yisrael receives atonement on Yom Kippur, and not the other nations. But Hoshanah Rabbah is a day where we have increased *tefillah* (prayer), which is the trait of Yishmael, for Yishmael increasingly prayed with his mother Hagar in the desert to be saved; this is the *teshuvah* (and subsequent atonement) that the nations of the world can attain – through increased prayer.

Therefore, there is a concept that the gentiles can do *teshuvah*, which began with Yishmael, who did *teshuvah*. Yom Kippur is a time for *teshuvah* only for the nation of Yisrael, whereas *Hoshanah Rabbah* is a time of *teshuvah* for the nations of the world, symbolized by Yishmael's *teshuvah*.

Yishmael – The Root of the Erev Rav

Sarah saw that Yishmael was laughing with Yitzchok. Chazal explain that when Sarah saw Yishmael laughing and trying to be of bad influence to Yitzchok, she saw a vision of the future, where the "*Erev*

Rav" (Mixed Multitude) will influence the Jewish nation to fashion the golden calf.

How did the *Erev Rav* mix with the Jewish people in the first place? Chazal state that the members of the *Erev Rav* married women of the tribe of Shimon. The word "Shimon" has the same root as the word "Yishmael" [because they are both from the term *shemiah*, to "hear"]. On the side of holiness, in the Jewish people, there was "Shimon", and on the side of evil, there is "Yishmael". When Sarah saw Yishmael laughing with Yitzchok, she saw that the *Erev Rav* will come through the tribe of Shimon, the descendants of Yitzchok, because once Yishmael could mix with Yitzchok, she knew that it would produce a descendant with similarities to Yishmael. Through Shimon, the *Erev Rav* was allowed to enter and influence the Jewish people, thus, Shimon was like a force of "Yishmael" within the Jewish people.

Teshuvah - Returning All of The Disconnected Parts To Hashem

What indeed is the connection between the concept of *shemiah*\hearing, with the concept of mixing in foreign influences? Hearing is *shemiah*, which can also mean to "gather", to connect and unify people together. Yishmael did *teshuvah* at the end of his life, and Hashem also "heard" his prayers in the desert, "*b'asher hu sham*", "for he is there" - these are both rooted in the same matter. The connection is, that when something becomes separated from its root, it can be returned to its root. That is the concept of *teshuvah*: returning the separated parts to their root.

The word "*teshuvah*" is from the words "*tashuv hei*", "return to *hei* (Hashem)", and the letter "*hei*" is also equal to the number 5, alluding to the 5 *aravos* that we take on Hoshanah Rabbah and bang them on the ground. That is the "*tashuv hei*" that is revealed on Hoshanah Rabbah.

On Yom Kippur, this concept is also revealed, with the 5 *tefillos* on Yom Kippur. On Hoshanah Rabbah, this concept is revealed through the 5 *aravos**hoshanos* we take, and this symbolizes the *teshuvah* of Yishmael, where Yishmael returns to his source. On Yom Kippur, the Jewish people returns to Hashem, through the 5 *tefillos* of Yom Kippur, and on Hoshanah Rabbah, through the 5 *hoshanos*, there is another kind of return to Hashem.

Hoshanah Rabbah Symbolizes a Deeper Mutual Connection in the Jewish People

During the first days of Succos, we take the Four Species together, in one *agudah* (cluster). Each of the four species symbolize four different kinds of Jews (those strong in Torah and in good deeds, those strong in Torah but not in good deeds, those strong in good deeds but not in Torah, and those who have neither Torah nor good deeds). What connects all Jews together? Chazal state that the *agudah* (cluster) binds all of the Four Species together. On Succos, all of the Jewish people become bound together, symbolized by the knot that binds together the *lulav*, *esrog*, *hadassim* and *aravos*; and it reveals the concept that all the Jewish people are in one "*agudah*", one cluster, who all wish to do the will of Hashem with a complete heart.

Concerning Hoshanah Rabbah, though, it is brought in *Shulchan Aruch* that we take off the upper knot from the *lulav* on this day. What is the reason for this custom? The reason for this is because on Hoshanah Rabbah, we do not need the *agudah* to unify us all together.

On Hoshanah Rabbah, instead of taking the Four Species together, instead, we take only the *aravos*. Why do we replace the four species with only the *aravos*? We put aside the four species and take the *hoshanos*, according to one opinion; and according to another opinion, we shake the *aravah*. But in either case, on Hoshanah Rabbah we take the *aravos* alone. The deep understanding behind this is because it is really the *aravah* which unifies all of the Jewish people together. The *aravah* reflects the concept of *areivim zeh l'zeh*, that the Jewish people are all mixed with each other; that there is a

mutual unity between all of the Jewish people.

During the first six days of Succos, the unity of the Jewish people is expressed in taking all of the four species together, in one cluster. On Hoshanah Rabbah, the unity of the Jewish people is expressed through just the *aravos* alone, the *hoshanos*, which shows us that there is a deeper level of unity.

The Reason For Increased Prayers On Hoshanah Rabbah

What is this deeper unifying power that is contained in Hoshanah Rabbah? It is because on Hoshanah Rabbah, we are all united together, through the power of the *aravah*\hoshanos alone, which parallels the concept of *shemiah*\hearing, in the sense that Hashem is especially attentive to hearing our prayers on this day.

Thus, on Hoshanah Rabbah, we make sure to pray especially with fervor, with an audible voice, so that we can be “heard”. For this reason, on Hoshanah Rabbah, we have increased prayer. The increased prayers of Hoshanah Rabbah are because the One Who hears us all is unifying us all together. When Hashem listened to the voice of Yishmael praying, “*b’asher hu sham*”, “for he is there” – it shows that He “hears” all of the nations [when they pray to Him].

Hoshanah Rabbah Reveals a Unity Between All the Nations

This is another way to understand how the festival of Succos reveals a connection between all of the nations in the world [there are many other correlations as well]. This is how Succos unifies everyone together: the concept of Hashem listening to Yishmael, “*b’asher hu sham*”, when He heard his prayers, reflects the level of *teshuvah* on Hoshanah Rabbah, where all the nations of the world can return to their Source and thereby become unified again, under their Source, when they are all being heard together.

The fact that Yishmael did *teshuvah*, which is the concept of the unique level of *teshuvah* on Hoshanah Rabbah, reveals to us a new facet of understanding about Succos. It shows us that there is a deep dimension where the Jewish people, the nation of Yishmael, and the rest of the nations, can all become unified together.

Everyone in the world comes from Avraham Avinu, who epitomized kindness, who is symbolized by the element of water. Avraham sent Yishmael with a little jug of water. Sarah expelled Yishmael from the home because she foresaw that he would be of bad influence to Yitzchok. But Yishmael did *teshuvah*, and he returned to his root. This shows us that Succos is a time to have a unique revelation of *emunah*.

Hoshanah Rabbah Is Above the Level of Succos

There is a *Mishnah* in Tractate Succah which states that on Hoshanah Rabbah, we do not take away the *sukkah*, but we take away the utensils from inside the *succah*, to show that it is the final day of the festival. If there are no utensils in the *succah* to remove, the Gemara says that one should remove the *s’chach* of the *succah*, to remind himself that he will not be eating in the *succah* for the second days of Succos.

Thus, Hoshanah Rabbah reveals a level that is above the level of *succah*. During the first six days of Succos, we shake the *lulav* in the six directions, parallel to the six directions of the *succah*; and on Hoshanah Rabbah, we remove the knot on the *lulav* and we remove the *s’chach* from the *succah*, which symbolizes a new revelation, as follows.

Succos Represents the View of Sarah Imeinu, and Hoshanah Rabbah Represents the View of Avraham

Avinu

We mentioned earlier that the concept of Succos is rooted in the *ruach hakodesh* of Sarah, who was called *Yiskah*, from the words “*sakah b’ruach hakodesh*”, she “saw through the holy spirit”, which is a hint to the word *succah*. Sarah told Avraham to expel Yishmael from the home, because she saw he will be of bad influence. But why didn’t Sarah foresee that he would do *teshuvah*? If she had *ruach hakodesh*, why couldn’t she see the end of Yishmael, which ended with *teshuvah*?

The answer to this is that her *ruach hakodesh* was showing her a lower dimension, which sees up to six dimensions, and therefore all she could see was the fact that Yishmael would be of bad influence to Yitzchok. Indeed, she was correct. But through the seventh day of Succos, which is above Succos\the six directions – the day of Hoshanah Rabbah, which reveals a seventh dimension that is above the normal six directions – there is a point where Yishmael returns to Avraham Avinu, where Yishmael does *teshuvah*.

This was the depth of why Avraham was afraid want to send away Yishmael; he saw this deeper seventh dimension, where Yishmael will do *teshuvah*. Avraham’s fear of sending away Yishmael was actually a sign that Yishmael would be returned to him. Hashem told Avraham to listen to Sarah, but that doesn’t mean that Avraham was completely wrong. Both Avraham and Sarah were correct. Sarah’s view towards Yishmael represents the level of the first six days of Succos, parallel to the normal six dimensions. Avraham’s view towards Yishmael, his fear of sending him away, was actually a catalyst that helped Yishmael do *teshuvah*. Yishmael eventually influenced Hagar, when she became known as Keturah, whom Avraham remarried after she repented.

The Teshuvah of Yishmael Reflects the Teshuvah on Hoshanah Rabbah

This idea that Yishmael did *teshuvah* was enabled by the unique power of *teshuvah* that is on Hoshanah Rabbah. Yishmael returned to his root, Avraham Avinu, when his prayers were heard by Hashem.

That is the power of Hoshanah Rabbah, which reveals a new level of hearing\connection. What enables this connection? The descendants of *Yishmael* are called *aravim* (Arabs), from the word “*aravos*” – and as explained above, it is the *aravos\hoshanos* we take on the seventh day of Succos which reveals a power to unify. This is the point where the ruined offspring of Avraham Avinu, Yishmael, can be rectified and returned to the house of Avraham, to holiness.

Chazal state that the verse “*And his leaves will not wither*” refers to Avraham, whose offspring did not wither, for even the “leaf” that fell from him, Yishmael, did *teshuvah*.

We bang the *aravos* on Hoshanah Rabbah, until the leaves fall off (either totally, or mostly). With the regular *aravos* we take on Succos, which we do not bang, we want the leaves to stay. Yishmael represents the leaf that fell away from Avraham, for he was sent out of Avraham’s home. The regular *aravos*, where we want the leaves stay, represents how Yishmael is the leaf that can still remain connected, even after it has become separated from its source. Yishmael will ultimately be returned to holiness, because he is still connected to Avraham, through his *teshuvah*.

The Depth of Banging the Hoshanos on the Ground and the Teshuvah of Yishmael

Even more so, we find that Yishmael did *teshuvah* at the end of his life, but this was after Avraham was *niftar*. Avraham was his source, his wellspring of “water”, which enabled him to survive in the desert. We bang the *hashanos* on the ground because only after Avraham went into the “ground”, when he was buried, did Yishmael do *teshuvah*. Yishmael did *teshuvah* and returned to his root only after Avraham left the world. Therefore, Yishmael’s return to holiness is only when the *hoshanos* are

banged onto the ground. But why is this so? And why is the banging of the *hoshanos* considered to be the "*teshuvah*" of Yishmael?

Chazal say that Yishmael was circumcised when he was 13, therefore, he merited to dwell in Eretz Yisrael, especially in the final days. Yishmael is represented by the *aravah*, which are called *arvei nachal* (willows that grow by the stream). In a person's body, the *nachal* (stream) is represented by the *Bris Kodesh* (his place of circumcision), for *Bris Kodesh* is a person's source of life, his inner wellspring. Yishmael has a merit in the land of Eretz Yisrael, in its earth, because he only did *teshuvah* when Avraham died and went back to the "earth"; because Yishmael only merits *teshuvah* when he is banged on the "earth" through the *hoshanos*.

The fact that "*Yishmael*"\aravos\hoshanos is banged on the earth, by the time of *hoshanos*, is to show that he has a merit in the "earth" of Eretz Yisrael; Yishmael merits Eretz Yisrael because he was circumcised [soon, it will be explained the nature of Yishmael's connection to Eretz Yisrael and why it is incomplete].

The Depth Behind The Differing Customs of How The Hoshanos Are Banged On The Ground

When banging the *aravos*, there are differing customs. The *Tur* says to bang it inside a "*kli*"\vessel, but the *Arizal* says to bang it on the ground without a *kli*\vessel. What is the deep meaning behind these two views?

Eretz Yisrael is called "*Eretz HaTzvi*", "land of the deer", because it is a land which will expand in the future, just a deer runs, which is a kind of expansion. Yishmael only merits Eretz Yisrael on a level of "*kli*"\vessel [an external connection to Eretz Yisrael], and therefore, Yishmael's connection to Eretz Yisrael is only to the "*kli*" of Eretz Yisrael, which is limited, and not to the "*Eretz HaTzvi*" aspect of Eretz Yisrael, which is its eternal and unlimited aspect.

This is the deeper reason of why the *Tur* says that the *hoshanos* must be banged only in a *kli*\vessel, and not directly on the ground. Just as a *kli* is measured and thus limited, so is Yishmael's share in Eretz Yisrael limited, for he is only connected to the "*kli*" aspect of Eretz Yisrael. For this reason, Yishmael only has temporary control over Eretz Yisrael, because Yishmael can only connect to the "*kli*" of Eretz Yisrael, its limited aspect, and not to its unlimited aspect, "*Eretz HaTzvi*" (which only the Jewish people received, through Yitzchok).

When Avraham remarried Hagar as Keturah, who was brought to him by Yishmael, what was Hagar now to Avraham? She was only a "*kli*" to him. Avraham did not continue through Yishmael, he continued only through Yitzchok, as Hashem said to him, "*For Yitzchok shall be called your offspring*", and Yishmael was no longer regarded as the offspring of Avraham. Therefore, Hagar's children were not a continuation, and even after she later married Avraham as Keturah, she was still not a continuation to Avraham, so she was nothing more than a *kli* to Avraham. The Gemara says, "A woman does not consent to be betrothed by a man unless she first makes herself into a *kli* ("container") to him". But all she could be to him was a *kli*.

But Yitzchok, who was called the offspring of Avraham, unlike Yishmael who was expelled, is the eternal continuation of Avraham. Sarah, therefore, who bore Yitzchok, was therefore not just a *kli* to Avraham as any woman is to her husband, but a source of continuation for him, for she is the mother of Avraham's continued descendants.

Thus, when we bang the *hoshanos* on the ground, according to the *Tur* that it must be banged within a *kli*, this reflects Yishmael, and according to the *Arizal* that it is banged directly on the ground, this reflects Yitzchok. Either of these opinions is true and holy. The *Tur*'s custom that *hoshanos* should

only be banged within a *klivessel*, is referring to the lower level, "Yishmael", who can only be a *klivessel* to the "ground" of Eretz Yisrael, its "limited" aspect, and not more than that. The *Arizal's* custom is reflecting the higher level, "Yitzchok", who has the intrinsic connection to Eretz Yisrael, to its unlimited and "expanded" aspect [which will be in the future, when it will expand], and that is why the *Arizal* says to bang the *hoshanos* directly on the ground, without being inside a *klivessel*.

We explained here that *aravos* on Hoshanah Rabbah represents a connection between Avraham and Yishmael. The Jewish people began with Avraham, and they also separated from Avraham, through the separation that occurred between Yitzchok and Yishmael. We have explained that on Hoshanah Rabbah, through the concept of the *hoshanos*, there is a return to this connection of Yishmael to Avraham, rooted in the fact that Yishmael did *teshuvah*.

On the other hand, on Hoshanah Rabbah, we also bang the *hoshanos* on the ground until the leaves fall off, to show that the nation Yisrael is ultimately separated from the nations.[\[2\]](#)

Hoshanah Rabbah on Shabbos: A New Dimension of Teshuvah

Hoshanah Rabbah is called "*shvii shel chag*", the seventh day of the festival of Succos, but is not just the seventh day of the festival. The Talmud [in *Sukkah 32b*] says that the *aravah* taken on Shabbos is called "*aravah shel shiva*". The *lulav* is not taken on Shabbos, but the "*aravah shel shiva*" was taken on Shabbos, because we are not concerned that a person will carry it outside the *techum Shabbos* (boundary to carry within, on Shabbos). So on Hoshanah Rabbah it's possible to have *aravos* without *lulav*, when it's Shabbos.

This shows us that Shabbos reveals a concept of *aravos* without the *lulav*. In a regular Shabbos, there is *eruv techumin*, where one may only carry within the *techum*. But when Hoshanah Rabbah falls on Shabbos, the *aravah* may be taken and there is no reason to suspect it will be carried out of the *techum*, and the deeper understanding of this is because it is within its own *techum* (boundary), like a *techum* within a *techum*, similar to the term "*chotam b'toch chotam*" (seal within a seal) which is Hoshanah Rabbah.

Hoshanah Rabbah, which is called the "*chotam b'toch chotam*", "seal within a seal", reveals a level where there is no reason to suspect that one will leave the *techum shabbos* with his *lulav*. This is the unique power of the "*aravah*" on Hoshanah Rabbah. When Hoshanah Rabbah falls on Shabbos, where *aravah* was practiced, it reveals a new facet to Shabbos. The seventh day of Succos, when it falls on Shabbos, reveals this new dimension on Shabbos.

The word "Shabbos", besides for meaning rest, is also from the word "*teshuvah*", "return". When Hoshanah Rabbah falls on Shabbos, the *hoshanos* were taken on Shabbos because there is as special power of *teshuvah* on Hoshanah Rabbah, and in this level of *teshuvah*, there is no concern that a person will sin, and that is the depth of why he may take the *hoshanos* on Shabbos and there is no concern that he will carry outside the *techum*.

This level of *teshuvah* revealed on Hoshanah Rabbah, where there is not even a suspicion that a person will sin, is a reflection of the level of the *teshuvah* of Yishmael, and the return of the nations, where all the nations including Yishmael return to the house of Avraham where they come from; Avraham made converts from the nations, and this shows us that all the nations are unified under Avraham.

The Teshuvah of Hoshanah Rabbah: Returning To the Perfect Shabbos

The *teshuvah* of Hoshanah Rabbah is the time that is called "*chotam b'toch chotam*", "seal within a seal", where everything becomes "sealed"; it "seals" all that has come after Rosh Hashanah, Yom

Kippur, and Succos. What does it accomplish?

It is a return to the Shabbos of *Olam HaBa* (the World To Come) which Adam never reached, because of the sin. It is a return, a "*teshuvah*", to the Shabbos of *Olam HaBa*, had Adam never sinned, which would have been the complete "seventh" day of Creation.

That perfected level of Shabbos is for the Jewish people as well as all the nations. A gentile who keeps Shabbos is liable to capital punishment, but that is only in the current level of Shabbos. In contrast, the future Shabbos will be kept by even the gentiles.

The Atonement on Hoshanah Rabbah: The Place Itself Atones

The *aravos*\hoshanos on Hoshanah Rabbah are banged on the ground, which is like a "return" to their place. The *hoshanos* remain in their place, and they are not shaken, in contrast to the Four Species, which are shaken. The Four Species are shaken and moved, in contrast to the *hoshanos*, which were placed on the side of the Altar, and the place itself beside the Altar atoned. Moving and shaking the Four Species, as well as encircling the Altar with the *hoshanos*, reflects a lower level of atonement, where the place itself does not atone. Placing the *hoshanos* on the side of the Altar, where the place itself atones, reflects the higher level of atonement, which is the *teshuvah* of Hoshanah Rabbah.

The *teshuvah* of Hoshanah Rabbah reveals the *teshuvah* which began on Rosh Hoshanah. The *hoshanos* are not shaken like the *aravos* on the *lulav*; rather, they were placed on the side of the Altar, and they are like the "*aravah shel shiva*" that could be taken on Shabbos, the *aravos* of *teshuvah*, from the word *Shabbos*, and *teshuvah* returns one to his place. Thus the *hoshanos* were put on the side of the Altar and remained there, in place, to symbolize this idea.

There is a *halachah* on Motzei Yom Kippur to immediately start building the *succah*, to show that we are going into exile. The *succah*, and the first six days of Succos, is compared to the situation of exile. But this is from the perspective of the six thousand years we are in, which is the exile, represented by the six directions we shake *lulav* in, on the first six days of Succos. But Hoshanah Rabbah reveals the seventh dimension, which will be after these six thousand year years, where there is no exile, no six directions; where we remain in place, and the place itself atones, with no need to move from place.

Thus, the six directions of Succos reflects the exile, which is an atonement achieved through movement; in exile, we move from place to place. But Hoshanah Rabbah is a deeper level of atonement, where the place itself atones, where there is no exile, and this is the *teshuvah*\return to the perfect Shabbos.

"B'Asher Hu Sham" - "For He Is There"

This idea, that on Hoshanah Rabbah, the very place itself atones - reflects the concept of "*b'asher hu sham*", when Hashem judged Yishmael for being "there", in a place where he was repenting. That is the power of the *aravah* on Hoshanah Rabbah - a new level of atonement for the Jewish people, where the place alone atones.

This is a deep revelation about the atonement of Hoshanah Rabbah. The atonement of Yom Kippur is possible because the Satan has no permission on this day; the evil inclination has no control. On Hoshanah Rabbah, there is an evil inclination, but the place itself atones. This is a higher level of atonement than on Yom Kippur. On Hoshanah Rabbah, there is a rectification even for the wicked, through the *aravah* of Hoshanah Rabbah, which represents the wicked. The *aravos* represent the Arabs - Yishmael - who was judged "*b'asher hu sham*", for where he was, when Hashem accepted his *teshuvah*.

The word "Yishmael" is also from the word "*sham*", "there", alluding to how Hashem judged him in the place he was in - "*b'asher hu sham*". There, in that place, he did earnest *teshuvah*; in spite of the fact that his descendants would later cause suffering to the Jewish people, Hashem accepted his *teshuvah*, because in that place where he did *teshuvah*, he was with Hashem, and Hashem looked at this "place" alone, which atoned for him. That is the unique atonement and *teshuvah* of "*b'asher hu sham*", which is the very concept of the *teshuvah* available through *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

The Depth of Praying on Hoshanah Rabbah For Rain

This concept is also what enables us to pray for rain, on Hoshanah Rabbah.

On Hoshanah Rabbah, when we pray especially to receive rain, on a deeper level, we are praying from the level of "*b'asher hu sham*" - "there" - we are referring to the source of the waters, and not where the waters come to. If we are praying from the place where the waters descend to, which is here on this earth, then we are not deserving. But if we are praying to receive the waters from the source where they come from, "*sham*", "there", where the upper waters are, in Heaven - we are then deserving.

Since the *aravos* on Hoshanah Rabbah contains this special atoning power of "*b'asher hu sham*", we are able to *daven* for rain on Hoshanah Rabbah. We are not *davening* on Succos for rain from the place we stand in on this world. If we would be, that would not be the level of *b'asher hu sham*, and we wouldn't be deserving. Rather, we are asking for rain from where it comes from in Heaven, which is "*sham*" - there, not here.

[There are higher waters, which are rain of blessing, and lower waters, which are destructive rain]. On Succos, when the world is judged for water, this is not referring to the "lower waters", but the "higher waters". The "higher waters" we pray for on Succos are waters of blessing, unlike the "lower waters", which are waters that bring destruction, of which Chazal say are cursed waters that ruin the festival. We are praying to receive the "higher waters", which refers to the level of "*b'asher hu sham*", for the higher waters are "*sham*" (there) in Heaven.

Praying From Our Soul's Root - Our Point of Mutual Unity In The Jewish People

When we *daven* to Hashem, we *daven* with our mouths, from our lips. But there is also a deeper way to *daven*: when we *daven* from our "*shoresh haneshamah*", the "root of all the [collective] soul" [from the point where the entire Jewish people are unified together].

The two *aravos* we take together with the *lulav* on Succos are parallel to the two lips; thus the level of Succos represents the normal level of prayer, where we *daven* from our lips. But there is a verse, "*With their lips they honor Me, but their hearts are far from Me.*" Therefore, praying with our lips alone is the incomplete level.

But on Hoshanah Rabbah, the *aravos* are all taken together, alluding to the unity of the Jewish people, "*areivim zeh l'zeh*", for all Jewish souls are rooted in one unit. When we pray from this unified place, it is the level of "*b'asher hu sham*", where our prayers are not coming from our lips, but from our unified essence, the root of all our souls. With such prayer, a person's prayers may be answered by Hashem even before he calls out to Hashem, as in the verse, "*Before they call out, I answer.*"

This is the level of the higher unity, called "*areivus*", revealed through the *aravos* of Hoshanah Rabbah. This is the depth of the connection between Hoshanah Rabbah and water, where we pray for water, from its source, alluding to the concept of *b'asher hu sham*, "there". This is the "seal within a seal" on Hoshanah Rabbah - it refers to the concept that Hashem judges us based upon the place we are in, "*b'asher hu sham*", for being "there", in our original, upper, heavenly source. There, in the

source, everything is pure, clean, and good – thus when one is “there”, everything will be good.

The Rectifying “Waters” of Hoshanah Rabbah

Moshe was saved by water, which symbolizes the “higher waters” of Heaven that can save a person; unlike the “waters of strife” which prevented Moshe from entering the land. The waters that saved Moshe’s life alludes to the rectifying “waters” of Hoshanah Rabbah which can save a person, which is the “sham” (there) of “*b’asher hu sham*” – for a person to return to his upper, heavenly source, “there”. It is that place which reveals the highest level of atonement which seals the entire Jewish people for a good year.

[1] Rosh HaShanah 16a

[2] See the derashah of ***Succos 038 - Hoshanos - Separating From Erev Rav***

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/succos-039-atonement-hoshanah-rabbah-yisrael-yishmael>