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## Bilvavi Part 5 - 277 Succos and Koheles

בלבבי ח"ה. עמ' רעז - מאמר סה' סוכות

### ***Koheles - Everything Is "Hevel Havalim"***

#### ***"Moed" - A "Meeting" With Hashem***

Yom Tov is called *moed*. *Moed* comes from the word *vaad*, which means "gathering" or "meeting." Who are we meeting with? With Hashem! When a person makes up to meet with his friend, they make up that they will meet in a certain place. Where is the place that Hashem would meet us in? In the *Beis Hamikdash*. In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, there was a mitzvah three times a year to go up to the *Beis Hamikdash*. It was an eye-to-eye meeting with Hashem, just like when two friends meet each other and make eye contact.

Nowadays, we have no *Beis Hamikdash*. Where then can we meet with Hashem?

Yom Tov is our meeting with Hashem. It continues to exist, long after we no longer have a *Beis Hamikdash*.

Hashem is fully ready to meet us - He is everywhere. Nothing is holding Him back. The only thing that prevents a person from meeting with Hashem is his very *self*. If a person manages to remove the barrier holding him back - his very self - he would then be able to meet Hashem, wherever he is. *The Mesillas Yesharim* [1] writes that a person who is constantly connected with Hashem is considered to always be walking with Him, even as he lives here on this physical world.

When a person is always connected to Hashem in his life, even though he has no *Beis Hamikdash* to meet with Him, he himself has become like a *Beis Hamikdash* - and he can meet with Him.

Every Yom Tov has an inner power in it that enables a person to meet with Hashem. A person has to receive the inner point of each Yom Tov which will connect him with Hashem.

On Sukkos, what is that inner point of Yom Tov that can connect a person with Hashem?

#### ***Removing the Barriers***

On Shabbos of *Chol HaMoed Sukkos*, Chazal established that we read the book of Koheles. [2] This is not a coincidence that we read Koheles specifically on Sukkos. There must be some connection between the book of Koheles and the theme of Sukkos; otherwise, why would Chazal establish that we

read Koheles on Sukkos?

Shlomo Hamelech begins the book of Koheles with, "*Hevel havalim* ("futility of futilities"), so says Koheles; *hevel havalim*, everything is *hevel havalim*." Rashi brings from Chazal the following: "Koheles is making an announcement and saying that all of Creation is futile; he says "*hevel*" seven times in the possuk, corresponding to the seven days of Creation. The commentators are perplexed: How could Shlomo HaMelech say such a thing?! How could he say that Hashem's Creation is all futility and vanity?"

The depth of the matter appears to be as follows. The world is called "*olam*", from the word "*he'elam*" - "concealment." This world really conceals Hashem from being revealed to us. The world - this world of *he'elam* - was created in seven days; in other words, there are seven levels of *he'elam*. A person's job on this world is to remove all the *he'elam* - to remove all the barriers between him and Hashem - and come to reveal Hashem. All of a person's avodah is essentially to show how all of creation is one big *he'elam*.

When a person comes to really feel that all of Creation is *hevel* - in that it conceals Hashem from us - he personally reveals Hashem in his life. He essentially enters the state of before Creation, in which there was no *he'elam* yet; he will be able to become constantly attached to Hashem as a result.

Anything which deters a person from being attached with Hashem is a kind of *he'elam*. When a person manages to remove that barrier from upon himself - he views everything as *hevel*, since it's all getting in the way of revealing Hashem onto the world - he will be able to always become attached to Hashem.

This is the inner point that one can reveal on Sukkos. This is the way how one meets with Hashem on the Yom Tov of Sukkos.

Reb Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l once said that it's not enough for a person to read the book of Koheles written by Shlomo Hamelech; every single person has to write the words "*Hevel havalim...everything is hevel havalim*", and these words have to be ingrained in one's blood. A person has to feel clearly in his heart that this world is completely *hevel* - it leads us astray from Hashem. This is the Avodah of Sukkos: write your own personal *sefer* Koheles!

### ***Before and After the Beis Hamikdash***

When the *Beis Hamikdash* was around, a person had special Heavenly assistance to reach utter closeness with Hashem and get past all the barriers of this world. He would bring the korbonos (sacrifices) and eliminate the physical aspect of the animal, transforming the physical into the spiritual. He would reveal G-dliness in what was previously something totally physical, something that was a kind of *he'elam*.

Now that the *Beis Hamikdash* isn't around, we have to accomplish this very same goal, but through the abilities of our soul. We need to eradicate the *he'elam* of this world and instead to come meet with the Creator of the world - the state of total attachment with Him that existed before creation, when there was no *he'elam* yet.

**[2]** *Ecclesiasties*

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**Source:** <https://bilvavi.net/english/bilvavi-part-5-277-succos-and-koheles>