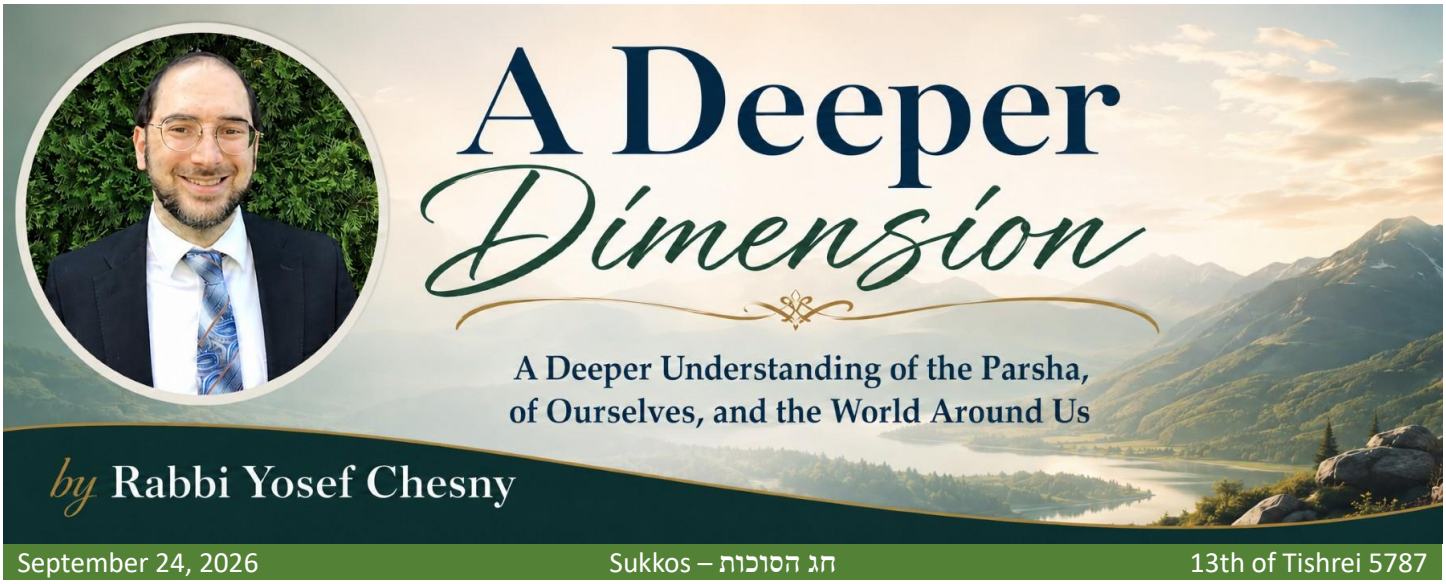


September 24, 2026 | Sukkos – חג הסוכות | 13th of Tishrei 5787

Sukkos: Celebrating Hashem's Yom Tov

Sukkos; there is no Yom Tov like it! Sukkos is the only Yom Tov that the Torah refers to as חג ה'; it is Hashem's Yom Tov that we are celebrating. What does this mean? In what way is it Hashem's Yom Tov more than all the others? What is it that Hashem is celebrating?

The *Alshich* (*Parshas Emor*) explains it as follows. Hashem created the world so that He could connect to us. As the *Medrash* states, "Hashem desires to dwell with those who live in the lower world (our physical world)". When Adam sinned, Hashem retreated to a higher spiritual realm; as each ensuing generation sinned, Hashem receded to a higher level of the Heavens. Hashem's desire to dwell amongst us was not being fulfilled.

Avraham Avinu was able to reverse the trend; with his service of Hashem he was able to bring Hashem one step closer to the physical realm. Each ensuing generation continued this progress, until the 7th generation, Moshe's generation, when Hashem was finally ready to dwell amongst us. However, before we received the first *Luchos*, we sinned with the *Egel* and were deemed unworthy. Once again Hashem's desire was hindered. Finally, on Yom Kippur, Hashem forgave us and He gave Moshe the second *Luchos*. Moshe came down from the mountain the following day and the plans for the *Mishkan* began; finally, Hashem would be able to dwell amongst us; His desire was coming to fruition.

This is the Yom Tov of Sukkos, the time when the world was deemed worthy of connecting with Hashem. Reflecting this spirituality, the *Ananei HaKavod*—the Clouds of Glory that shielded the Jews during their 40-year desert sojourn—reappeared on the first day of the festival. This marked the return of the divine protection we had previously lost after making the *Egel* (Golden Calf).

The *Alshich* adds that we experience a similar process annually. Throughout the year we sin and are deemed unworthy of connecting with Hashem. Yom Kippur comes along and cleanses us from our sins. We are now deemed worthy of connecting with Hashem. This is what Sukkos comes to celebrate.

Sukkos is Hashem's Yom Tov; He invites us to join Him in the celebration.

Seforim say that a sukkah possesses, to an extent, the *Kedushah* of the *Beis HaMikdash*; it is an abode where we can connect to Hashem.

In the sukkah we are not merely absorbed in spiritual activities; to the contrary, the Torah instructs us to eat, drink, and sleep in the sukkah. The sukkah is where we are uplifted to the extent

that we can connect to Hashem even while performing our everyday life activities.

On Sukkos we are visited by the seven *Ushpizin*. Each of these leaders served as a physical manifestation of one of Hashem's seven *Middos* by virtue of their actions and their essence. They join us in the sukkah to aid in this connection to Hashem.

It is specifically on Sukkos that we *daven* הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד הנופלת. According to many commentaries, we are davening for the third *Beis HaMikdash* to be rebuilt. We are declaring, "*Hashem, we are ready to connect to You*." Sukkos is when we can merit this. Indeed, the Gr"a (אבן שלמה י"א) states that the *Beis HaMikdash* will be rebuilt during Sukkos.

On Sukkos it is not merely us celebrating with Hashem, but we invite all the elements of nature to join with us. When we take the four species, we shake them in all directions. The *Zohar* (as quoted by the *Rosh* סוכה פ"ב כ"ו as well as the *Beis Yosef* in תרנ"א) says that it is a fulfillment of the *pasuk* that we say in davening אז ירננו כל עצי יער, "*Then all the trees of the forest will sing a song before Hashem Who has judged the land*." When the world is vindicated in judgment and is found worthy of connecting to Hashem, the trees of the forest sing a song.

Seforim say that the four species represent the four elements with which the world was created: fire, water, earth, and air. Accordingly, all the elements of nature are celebrating that Hashem can now connect to us as He desires.

We shake the *lulav* in all directions to show that we recognize Hashem's kingdom in the entire world; this weakens the power of the dark side, as it can only exist within a vacuum of *Kedushah*.

At what point in *Hallel* do we shake the *lulav*? By *Hodu* and by *Ana Hashem*. The *Medrash* explains that the verse following אז ירננו is ואמרו הושיענו, and then *Ana Hashem*. Thus, this signifies that we should shake the *lulav* by these two verses. This means that through our shaking the *lulav*, all the elements of nature are singing out their thanks to Hashem, and saying, "*Save us; bring us the final redemption. The world is ready for it*."

Each time we shake the *lulav*, how many times do we shake it? The *Tur* says that we shake it three (3) times while moving it away from us and three (3) times while bringing it back, in all six (6) directions. This amounts to a total of thirty-six (36) shakes at each junction. What is the significance of this?

Thirty-six (36) is the amount of hours that the אור הגנוז, the hidden light, illuminated at the creation of the world. This was a spiritual light through which we were able to sense Hashem. This is the message of the *lulav's* shaking; we sense Hashem's presence in the world.

This is the spiritual energy of Sukkos. We are celebrating Hashem's Yom Tov.

