

# A taste of Shabbat

Sukkot 5778

Rav Mordechai Elon

Translated and edited by his students

## An easy mitzvah?

### A general month

The month of Tishrei is a general month that acts as an introduction to the whole year. The special mitzvot of the month are general instructions for the whole year. We "crown" God every day many times, every time we say " *Blessed are you, Lord* " , and every day we ask for forgiveness in the Shmonah Esrei saying " *סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו* " "*Forgive us father for we have sinned*". The fear and Awe of Rosh Hashana are a general theme that give us strength and insight to be implemented during the year.

We can also see Sukkot as a "general mitzvah", the whole year we are commanded to be happy to serve God and to do his commandments happily.

### Surrounded by the sukkah

Our Rabbis call Sukkot "an easy mitzvah", explaining

*ואמאי קרי ליה מצוה קלה? - משום דלית ביה חסרון כ"ס.*

*Why is it an easy mitzvah? Because there is no expenditure keeping it*

This is rather difficult to see after buying a set of arba minim or a new sukkah! But we can actually keep the mitzvah from agricultural leftovers and old planks, things we would usually see as worthless.

The deeper explanation is that we see ourselves in God's service constantly on sukkot, we eat drink and

sleep in the sukkah, surrounded by it, even entering it is a mitzvah.

There are other mitzvot on Sukkot, but its name comes from the sukkah, as it encompasses us. This is unlike the shofar or the lulav, that once we put them down we have finished with them and the mitzvah. The mitzvah of sukkah is with us for the whole chag, the obligation doesn't end after breakfast in the morning. All the time we are in the sukkah we are doing a mitzvah, the mitzvah surrounds us all the time. It is perhaps the happiest and easiest mitzvah because there is no need to stop and then do the mitzvah again, it continues without a break. Ending a mitzvah and the need to return to it are a challenge, an opening for doubt and the opposite of happiness.

### A reflection of happiness

This is the pinnacle of the month. Rosh Hashana, the ten days, Yom Kippur are days of fear, of atonement and bitterness, but with an inner happiness. Sukkot reveals this happiness, it is a reflection of the true meaning of the whole month. Hassidut explains that on Rosh Hashana there are one hundred blows of the shofar, divided into sixty tekiot, twenty shvarim, and twenty terurot – this is reflected in the word סַכַּךְ sechach, in gematria "60-20-20"

The most important part of Yom Kippur is when the Kohen Gadol enters the Kodsh Hakedoshim with



incense. Hassidut connects the cloud of incense to the clouds of glory that encompassed us in the desert, clouds that connect heaven and earth, like the shofar that we blow from below and blasts up to heaven. All these ideas are in sukkot ,the 60-20-20 of the sechach, and the clouds of glory that according to our rabbis are the basis for the sukka.

It is easy but also challenging to be happy, when we are happy the world is wonderful, but when you are not, then despite that fact you have everything, you feel you have nothing.

The Seven days connecting Rosh Hashana, the shofar, to Yom Kippur, the cloud of incense represent and come to repent for the weeks of the last year. The week of sukkot comes to teach us happiness for the year to come, the first day for all the Sundays, the second for Mondays , etc etc.

#### **An all encompassing happiness**

This happiness encompasses all, even the meat we eat, the wine we drink, and our deep sleep at night. We are inside, not a cloud rising up to heaven, but a cloud surrounding. Not hearing a hundred blows of the shofar, but being in it, under the schach. From inside the mitzvah we experience awe and happiness. How easy, but also how difficult!

*May we all experience a great happiness!*

For more details of Rav Elon's Shiurim and to receive "A taste of Shabbat" weekly  
[www.haravelon.co.il](http://www.haravelon.co.il) hithabrut613@gmail.com