

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

The holy Rebbe of Ruzhin, זי"ע, said: The sukkah is called a temporary dwelling, and it alludes to exile. Even the halachos connected with the mitzvah of sukkah allude to the life of a Jew in exile.

According to halachah, the sechach may not be attached to the ground (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 631). This hints that Jews in exile have no firm ground beneath their feet.

A sukkah that is ten tefachim high, even though one cannot stand upright inside it, is also kosher (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 633). This is because in exile, Jews do not walk with an upright posture. (Vayakhel Moshe, p. 75)

“One whose head and most of his body were inside the sukkah, while his table was inside the house...” (Sukkah 28a).

The holy Rebbe Shmuel of Kaminka, זי"ע, once asked a man who was among the chassidim of the holy Rebbe of Ruzhin to repeat some Torah teachings from his Rebbe.

The chassid told him that the holy Rebbe explained the Mishnah as follows: “One whose head and most of his body were inside the sukkah”, if a Jew’s head and most of his body are in holiness,

but “his table was inside the house”, when it comes to eating and drinking he is “inside the house,” meaning, Heaven forbid, that he is not in holiness, then “he has not fulfilled his obligation.”

The holy Rebbe of Kaminka responded: “Is that his novel interpretation? That is surely how the Tanna himself taught it to him when he learned this Mishnah.” (Kisvei HaRav HaKadosh R. Y. z”l)

It is related about the tzaddik of Ruzhin, זי"ע, that a man once asked him: How can it be that a cowshed and calf pen, which served as a stable throughout the entire year, can now be made into a sukkah for the festival of Sukkos?

He answered: “It is not the place that honors the person, but the person who honors the place.”

If a person enters it, it becomes a sukkah. But if someone enters it in the form of a calf, then it remains a stable.

Luach Eretz Yisrael, Avos (manuscript).

Summary:

R.Y.R. brings several teachings from the Rebbe of Ruzhin showing how the sukkah reflects the condition of a

הרה"ק מרוז'ין וצ"ל אָמַר: כּי הַסֵּכָה נִקְרָאת דִּירַת עֲרָא, וּמְרֻמָּת עַל הַגָּלוּת, וְגַם הַדִּינִים הַקְּשׁוּרִים עִם מִצְוַת סֵכָה מְרַמְזִים עַל חַיֵּי הַיְּהוּדִי בַּגּוּלָה.

כּי עַל פִּי דִין אֵין הַסֵּכָה רִשְׁאִי לִהְיוֹת מְחַבֵּר לַקֶּרְקַע (ע"י שו"ע או"ח סי' תרל"א), רְמִז שְׁהַיְּהוּדִים בַּגּוּלָה אֵין לָהֶם קֶרְקַע תַּחַת רַגְלֵיהֶם.

וּסֵכָה שֶׁהִיא גְבוּהָה עֲשָׂרָה טְפָחִים וְאֵין יְכוּלִים לַעֲמוֹד בָּהּ בְּקוּמָה זְקוּפָה גַם כֵּן כְּשֶׁרָה (ע"י ש"ס סי' תרל"ג), כּי בַּגּוּלָה אֵין יְהוּדִים הוֹלְכִים בְּקוּמָה זְקוּפָה. וַיִּקְהֵל מִשָּׁה (עמ' עה).

מִי שֶׁהָיָה רֹאשׁוֹ וְרַבּוֹ בַּסֵּכָה וְשִׁלְחָנוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הַבַּיִת (סֵכָה כח).

הרה"ק רבי שמואל מקאמינקא זי"ע בְּקֶשׁ פְּעַם מֵאִישׁ אֶחָד שֶׁהָיָה מְחַסֵּדִי הרה"ק מרוז'ין שִׁנְגִּיד לוֹ אֵיזָה דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה מֵרָצוֹ.

וְאָמַר לוֹ הַחֲסִיד שֶׁהרה"ק פָּרַשׁ כְּוֹנֵת הַמִּשְׁנָה כֹּךְ: "מִי שֶׁהָיָה רֹאשׁוֹ וְרַבּוֹ בַּסֵּכָה" - אִם אֶל יְהוּדֵי הָרֹאשׁ וְרַב הַגּוּר נִמְצָא בְּקִדְשָׁהּ,

"אֲבָל שִׁלְחָנוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הַבַּיִת" - בְּשַׁעַת הָאֲכִילָה וּשְׁחִיזָה הוּא נִמְצָא בְּבֵית ר"ל שֶׁאֵינוֹ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ, אוֹי "לֹא יִצָּא יְדֵי חוּבָתוֹ", עכ"ל.

וְעָנָה לוֹ הרה"ק מְקַאמִינְקָא: וְכִי זֶה חֲדוּשׁוֹ, הֲלֹא כֹךְ לִמַּד אוֹתוֹ הַתַּנָּא כְּשֶׁלֶּמַּד מִשְׁנָה זֹאת בְּתֵבֵי הרה"ק ר"י ז"ל ז"ל.

מִסְפָּרִים מֵהרה"צ מרוז'ין וצ"ל שֶׁאִישׁ אֶחָד שָׁאַל אוֹתוֹ אֵיךְ יְכוּל לִהְיוֹת כּוֹאֵת שְׁמֶרֶפֶת בְּקָר וְעֵגֶל שֶׁהָיָה כָּל הַשָּׁנָה רֶפֶת, יַעֲשׂוּ עִתָּה סֵכָה בְּחַג הַסִּפּוֹת.

וְהַשִּׁיב, שֶׁאֵין הַמָּקוֹם מְכַבֵּד אֶת הָאָדָם אֶלָּא הָאָדָם מְכַבֵּד אֶת הַמָּקוֹם,

אִם נִכְנָס לְתוֹכָה אָדָם אוֹי הִיא נַעֲשִׂית סֵכָה, וְאִם נִכְנָס לְתוֹכָה אָדָם בְּצוּרַת עֵגֶל הִיא רֶפֶת.

לוח אר"י, אבות (כ"י).

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Jew in galus. The sukkah is a temporary dwelling, just as Jewish life in exile lacks permanence and security. Its sechach may not be attached to the ground, hinting that in galus a Jew often feels that there is no firm ground beneath him. Even a sukkah too low for a person to stand fully upright can still be kosher, reflecting how exile prevents the Jew from living with complete spiritual dignity and openness. RYR then brings a deeper interpretation of the Mishnah, "his head and most of his body are in the sukkah, but his table is inside the house." A person may appear spiritually connected in most areas of life, but if eating, drinking, and material involvement remain outside kedushah, then his avodah is incomplete. Finally, the Rebbe of Ruzhin teaches that holiness is not determined only by the physical history of a place. A barn can become a sukkah because a person can elevate the place through the way he enters and uses it.

Practical Takeaway:

The sukkah teaches a Jew not to measure spiritual life by external stability. A person can be physically unsettled yet spiritually rooted, and can take an ordinary or even coarse environment and transform it into a place of kedushah. At the same time, holiness must include the "table," not only prayer, learning, and obviously spiritual moments. Eating, drinking, business, comfort, and daily habits must also become part of serving Hashem. The question is not only where a person is standing, but what kind of person is entering the space.

Chassidic Illustration:

A chassid once complained that his surroundings made spiritual growth difficult. He lived among distractions, worked long hours, and felt that he could serve Hashem properly only in a beis midrash or among other chassidim. His Rebbe told him, "A sukkah may stand in a courtyard that was used all year for ordinary things, yet when a Jew enters it for the mitzvah, the same place becomes holy." The chassid understood that he had been waiting for his surroundings to change before beginning his avodah. The Rebbe was teaching him the opposite: when the person changes the way he enters the world, the world around him can also be elevated.

שְׂמִיחַת בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה

Hillel says: "If I am here, everything is here; but if I am not here, who is here?" (Sukkah 53a).

הֵלֵל אוֹמֵר אִם אֲנִי בָּאֵן הַכֹּל בָּאֵן, וְאִם אֵין אֲנִי בָּאֵן מִי בָּאֵן (סֻכָּה נג.).

"Ani" is called the aspect of yirah (Pardes, Shaar 23, ch. 1).

"אני" נִקְרָא בְּחִי הִירָאָה (פְּרִדָּס ש"ג פ"א),

When a person has yirah, he has everything.

כְּשֶׁאֲדָם יֵשׁ לוֹ יִרְאָה יֵשׁ לוֹ הַכֹּל,

But "if Ani is not here," when he lacks yirah,

אֲבָל "אִם אֵין אֲנִי בָּאֵן" - בְּאֲשֶׁר אֵין לוֹ יִרְאָה,

even if he occupies himself with Torah and tefillah and fulfills all the mitzvos,

אֲפִלּוּ עוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה וּמִצְוֹת כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת,

"who is here?" Of what value is all of this considered for him?

"מִי בָּאֵן" - לְמָה נִחְשָׁב לוֹ זֹאת.

However, "Mi" is called the aspect of teshuvah (Zohar HaKadosh, vol. 3, 185).

אֲדָ "מִי" נִקְרָא בְּחִי הַתְּשׁוּבָה (זוהר"ק מ"ג קפה),

A person must, at the very least, return himself to his root, to the supernal source. This is sufficient for one who understands.

שְׂצָרִיף הָאָדָם ע"פ לְהַחְזִיר אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְשׁוֹרֶשׁ לְמִקּוֹר הָעֲלִיּוֹן, וְד"ל.

Summary:

Hillel's statement, "If I am here, everything is here; but if I am not here, who is here?" is understood as a

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

teaching about yirah and teshuvah. “Ani” represents yirah. When a person possesses genuine yiras Shamayim, his Torah, tefillah, and mitzvos have an inner foundation, and he truly “has everything.” Without yirah, even abundant spiritual activity can remain lacking at its core. Yet the teaching does not end there. “Mi” represents teshuvah. Even when a person recognizes that his yirah is deficient, he can still return himself to his root and reconnect to the higher source from which his soul comes.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should not measure his spiritual condition only by how much he learns, davens, or performs mitzvos. He should also ask whether those actions are accompanied by awareness of Hashem and genuine yirah. If he realizes that this inner connection has weakened, the response is not despair. The path of teshuvah remains open: stop, return inward, and reconnect to the source. Even a person who feels spiritually distant can begin again by turning back toward Hashem.

Hillel says: “If I am here, everything is here; but if I am not here, who is here?” (Sukkah 53a).

הלל אומר אם אני כאן הכל כאן, ואם אין אני כאן מי כאן (ספ"ה נג.).

“If I am not here” means: when the “I” is not present here,
when there is no trace of “I,” meaning pride and self-importance,

אם אין אני כאן, פירוש כְּשֶׁאֵין “אני” כאן,
אז קין אֵיךְ אֶזְנִיטֵעַ, מִי כאן, וְעַד קֵין מִיר עָפָם
מְצַלְצֵל זֵיין אֶזְנִיטֵעַ אֶזְנִיטֵעַ אֶזְנִיטֵעַ.

then “who is here?” Who is present who can disturb me in my
avodas Hashem?

] = “אם אין אני כאן” פירוש אם לא נמצא כאן שום
שְׂמִיךְ שֶׁל “אני” - גֵּאוּת,

For if the ego is not here, there is no one here who can interfere.

“מי כאן” אֵיזִי מִי נִמְצָא כאן שֶׁיִּכְוֹל לְצַלְצֵל אוֹתִי
מְעֻבְדֵת ה'.

In other words, when a person removes the sense of self and
gaavah, the obstacles that distract him from serving Hashem lose
their hold over him.

הֲלֹא לֹא נִמְצָא כאן שׁוּם מְפָרִיעַ].

Kisvei HaRav R. Yoshia Shochet u'Bodek (ch. 21, sec. 46).

כְּתִבִּי הֲרִי"ר יֵאֵשִׂיא שׁו"ב (כ"א אות מ"ו).

Summary:

Hillel’s words are interpreted here as a teaching about removing the ego from avodas Hashem. “If I am not here” means that the sense of “I,” meaning gaavah and self-importance, is absent. When a person is no longer centered on himself, then “who is here?” What remains that can disturb or pull him away from serving Hashem? Many spiritual obstacles gain their strength from wounded pride, self-consciousness, personal ambition, and the need to protect one’s sense of importance. When that “I” is diminished, those disturbances lose much of their power.

Practical Takeaway:

When something unsettles a person in his avodas Hashem, he can ask whether the disturbance is coming from the situation itself or from his own ego. Sometimes the strongest distraction is not external at all, but the feeling that “I was ignored,” “I was embarrassed,” “I deserve more,” or “I need to be seen a certain way.” By loosening that attachment to self, a person becomes freer to continue serving Hashem without being controlled by every insult, disappointment, or challenge.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

ד' מינים

“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day” (Vayikra 23:40).

וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בְּיוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן (ויקרא כג, מ).

The Midrash says (Vayikra Rabbah 30:7): “On the first day” means the first day for the accounting of sins.

אימא במדרש (ויק"ר ל, ז) ביום הראשון - ראשון לחשבון העונות.

This is difficult to understand, because the term “accounting” applies only when one reckons together with what came previously, for example, one, two, and so on.

והדבר יפלא, דלשון חשבון אינו שייך רק אם חושבים גם את מה שהיה מקודם, למשל א' ב',

But after Yom Kippur, when all sins have already been forgiven, how can the term “accounting” apply here?

אבל אחרי יום הכפורים שאז כבר נמחלו כל העונות, איך שייך כאן לשון חשבון.

However, the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (3:1) says: “Know... before Whom you are destined to give judgment and accounting.”

אכן אימא במסכת אבות (ס"ג, מ"א) דע וגו' לפני מי אתה עתיד ליתן דין וחשבון,

We must understand the apparent repetition of “judgment and accounting.” If there is judgment, why is an accounting also necessary? And if there is an accounting, why is judgment necessary?

ויש לדיק על כפל הדברים "דין וחשבון" מה הוא ענינו ופירושו, דאם יש דין אזי למה צריכים גם חשבון, ואם יש חשבון למה צריכים דין.

The explanation is that “judgment” refers to a person being judged for the actual sin itself, for having acted improperly and transgressed the laws of the Torah.

אכן הפירוש הוא, כי "דין" היינו מה שהאדם נידון על עניו העבירה גופא מה שעשה שלא כהוגן ועבר על דיני התורה.

In addition, he is judged for the time during which the sin was committed. During that time, he could have performed a mitzvah or engaged in Torah study, but did not do so.

ועוד הוא נידון על הזמן של העבירה, שצאחה הזמן שעשה העבירה הנה יכול לעשות מצוה ולעסוק בתורה ולא עסק,

This is the meaning of “accounting”: he must give an accounting for the time that he spent in emptiness and in neglecting Torah, when he could instead have performed a mitzvah.

וזהו "חשבון", שנותן חשבון על הזמן שפוצלה להכל ומבטל מדברי תורה והנה יכול לעשות מצוה במקומה.

For this reason Rosh Hashanah is called the Day of Judgment, because at that time a person reflects upon his earlier deeds and the sins he committed.

ולכך נקרא ראש השנה יום הדין, כי אז חוהה האדם על הראשונות ועל העבירות שעשה,

He now regrets them and performs teshuvah for those sins, and is judged for them from the standpoint of “judgment.” Therefore it is called the “Day of Judgment.”

ומתחרט עתה ועושה תשובה על העבירות שעשה ושינוי עליהם מצד הדין, ולכך נקרא "יום הדין".

Yet the “accounting” still requires rectification, meaning the time in which he committed the sin, during which he could have performed a mitzvah.

אף עדין צריכים לתקן החשבון, היינו הזמן שעשה בה עבירה שהיה יכול לעשות בה מצוה,

The baal teshuvah cannot easily rectify this, because he must now use his time to perform teshuvah and rectify the “judgment,” meaning the sin itself.

ובעל התשובה לא יכול לתקן זה, כי הלא הוא מקרה לעשות תשובה בזה הזמן לתקן את הדין, דהיינו העבירה שעשה.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Therefore, HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave us the mitzvah of the Four Species, through which on Sukkos a person performs four mitzvos at one time.

וזהו נתינו לנו הקב"ה מצוות ארבעה מינים שצולל, כדי לעשות בסכות בפעם אחת ארבע מצוות,

Ordinarily, a person is not obligated to perform four mitzvos simultaneously. He could first perform one mitzvah and afterward another, one mitzvah at a time, thereby rectifying the "judgment."

דהרי אין אדם מחייב לעשות גבבת אחת ארבע מצוות, כי הלא יכול לעשות מקודם רק מצוה אחת בלבד ואח"כ עוד אחרת, בכל פעם מצוה אחת, שצוה יתקן את הדין.

But Hashem, in His abundant kindness, gave the mitzvah of the Four Species together at one time, in order to rectify both the judgment and the accounting, including the mitzvah that could have been performed during the time of the sin.

אך השי"ת ברב חסדיו נתן מצוות ד' מינים גבבת אחת כדי לתקן את הדין וגם את החשבון, מה שהיה יכול לעשות מצוה במקום העבירה באותה הזמן.

This explains the Midrash on the verse, "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day": "the first day for the accounting of sins."

ובזה מבואר המדרש הנ"ל על הפסוק "ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון", ראשון לחשבון העונות,

In truth, on Yom Kippur all the sins that a person actually committed were forgiven and erased.

פירוש, כי באמת ביום הכפורים נמחלו ונמחקו כל העונות שעשה בפעל,

However, there still remained the sin of wasted time, the neglect of Torah and mitzvos that he could have performed during those same hours.

אבל עוד נשאר עון בטול הזמן של בטול תורה ומצוות שהיה יכול לעשות באותה שעה,

On the first day of Sukkos, the "accounting" of the sins is also rectified. Then everything, both the judgment and the accounting, is forgiven. This is sufficient for one who understands.

וביום הראשון של סכות נתקן גם החשבון של העונות, ואז נמחל לו הכל הדין והחשבון, וד"ל.

Knesses Yisrael, p. 54; sec. 27.

פנחס ישראל (נד); כ"ז.

Summary:

The teaching explains the Midrash that calls the first day of Sukkos "the first day for the accounting of sins." At first this seems difficult, because Yom Kippur has already brought forgiveness. The distinction is between "din" and "cheshbon," judgment and accounting. "Din" refers to the actual aveirah itself, while "cheshbon" refers to the time that was lost while committing it, time that could have been used for Torah or another mitzvah. Through teshuvah, a person can repair the sin itself, but the lost opportunity still requires rectification. Hashem therefore gave the mitzvah of the four species, in which several mitzvah-elements are performed together at one time. In this way, Sukkos completes what Yom Kippur began, repairing not only the wrongdoing itself, but also the spiritual potential of the time that was wasted.

Practical Takeaway:

Teshuvah is not only about regretting what was done wrong. It also means becoming more conscious of what could have been done with the same time, energy, and ability. A person should not become trapped in regret over lost opportunities, but should respond by filling the present with more Torah, more mitzvos, and more purposeful action. The four species teach that Hashem gives a person ways to rebuild efficiently, allowing one moment of sincere avodah to repair more than one dimension of the past.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Chassidic Illustration:

A chassid once came to his Rebbe deeply upset about years that he felt he had wasted. "Even if I do teshuvah for what I did," he said, "what can I do about all the hours in which I could have learned, davened, or helped another Jew?" The Rebbe pointed to the mitzvah of the four species and said, "Hashem does not show you the past in order to make you remain there. He gives you mitzvos in the present so that one moment can carry many forms of holiness at once." The chassid understood that true regret must lead to greater use of the time he still had. He could not recreate yesterday, but he could make today fuller, and through that fullness begin to repair what had been missing before.

"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day..."
(Vayikra 23:40).

וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן וְגו' (וַיִּקְרָא כג, מ).

Once, during Sukkos, the holy Rebbe of Ruzhin, זי"ע, was sitting on the night of the Ushpizin of Aharon HaKohen.

פעם ישב מרן הס"ק מרוז'ין זי"ע בִּסְכוֹת בְּלֵיל אוֹשְׁפִיז אַהֲרֹן כְּהֵנָּא,

He mentioned the well-known teaching of the holy Rebbe of Berdichev, זי"ע (Kedushas Levi, Parashas Haazinu),

וְהִזְכִּיר אֶת דְּבָרָיו הַיְדוּעִים שֶׁל הַר"ק מִבֶּאֱרֵיטְשׁוֹב זי"ע (קְדוּשַׁת לֵוִי פָרָשַׁת הָאָזִינוּ),

concerning the Midrash (Tosafos, Parashas Emor, sec. 22) on the verse, "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day," meaning, "the first day for the accounting of sins."

עַל הָא דְאֵימָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ (תּוֹסָפוֹת פ' אֶמֹר אוֹת כ"ב) עַל הַפְּסוּק וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן - רִאשׁוֹן לְהִשְׁבּוֹן עֲוֹנוֹת.

At first glance, this requires explanation. What about the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, and why specifically is the first day of Sukkos called the first day for the accounting of sins?

שְׁלֹכְאוּרָה אֵין לוֹ בִּיאור, דְּמָה עִם הַיָּמִים שְׁבִין יוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים לְסְכוֹת, וּמִדּוּעַ נִקְרָא דִּקְוָא הַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁל סְכוֹת רִאשׁוֹן לְהִשְׁבּוֹן עֲוֹנוֹת.

He answered that during the days from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur, certainly every person repents and corrects his deeds because of the fear of the Day of Judgment.

וְתִירֵץ, שְׁבִימִים הָאֵלוּ מִרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה עַד יוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים בּוֹדֵאֵי כָּל אֶחָד שֶׁב וְתִיקֵן מַעֲשָׂיו מִפְּנֵי פֶחַד יוֹם הַדִּין,

However, this teshuvah is called teshuvah out of fear.

אוּלָּם תְּשׁוּבָה זוֹ נִקְרָא תְּשׁוּבָה מִיִּרְאָה,

After Yom Kippur, however, when the Jewish people occupy themselves with the mitzvos of sukkah, the Four Species, and kindling lights, and serve Hashem with joy and a good heart,

אוּלָּם אַחֵר יוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים כְּשִׁישְׁרָאֵל עוֹסְקִים בְּמִזְוֹת סִפָּה וְד' מִיָּנִים וְדִלְקָה וְעוֹבְדִים אֶת ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְעוֹב לֵב,

this teshuvah is called teshuvah out of love.

אֲזִי תְּשׁוּבָה הַזֹּאת נִקְרָא תְּשׁוּבָה מֵאַהֲבָה.

It is known that Chazal taught (Yoma 86b) that through teshuvah out of fear, intentional sins are transformed into unintentional sins,

וַיְדוּעַ מֶה שְׁאָמְרוּ חֲזו"ל (יוֹמָא פו':) שֶׁע"י תְּשׁוּבָה מִיִּרְאָה הַיְדוּנוֹת נִהְפְּכוּ לְשִׁגְגּוֹת,

whereas through teshuvah out of love, intentional sins are transformed into merits.

וְע"י תְּשׁוּבָה מֵאַהֲבָה הַיְדוּנוֹת נִהְפְּכוּ לְזֻכוֹת,

HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His abundant mercy and kindness, seeks ways to benefit those who return in teshuvah.

וְהַקב"ה בְּרַב רַחֲמָיו וְחֶסֶדְיוֹ הָרוּאֵה בְּתַקְנוֹת הַשֹּׁבִים,

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Therefore, on Sukkos, when we come to take shelter under the protection of Shaddai through mitzvos and good deeds performed out of love for Hashem,

על כן ברחג הסוכות נשאנו באים להסות כלל שדי ע"י מזות ומעש"ט מאהבת השי"ת,

only then does He count the sins, in order to determine how many mitzvos will replace those sins.

מונה רק אז את העונות כדי לדעת כמה מזות יהיה חילוף העונות,

Before Sukkos, however, when the teshuvah was still primarily out of fear, those sins are not counted, since they have only been transformed into unintentional sins.

משא"כ עד סוכות שעשו אז רק תשובה מיראה אז לא ימנו אותם העונות כלל, שעדיין הם שגגות.

This is the meaning of the first day of Sukkos being called "the first day for the accounting of sins."

וזהו הפירוש שיום ראשון של סוכות נקרא "ראשון להשבון העונות",

On that day, teshuvah out of love is performed, and only then does Hashem count and enumerate the sins so that they can all be transformed into merits and become good advocates for the Jewish people.

שעושים בו תשובה מאהבה, ולכן רק אז השי"ת מונה וסופר את העונות, כדי שיהפכו כלם לזכות ויהיה מלינים טובים על ישראל, עכ"פ"ד.

This also explains the verse: "Hashem your God was unwilling to listen to Bilaam, and Hashem your God transformed the curse into a blessing for you, because Hashem your God loved you" (Devarim 23:6).

וזהו מה שאמר הכתוב (דברים כג, ו) ולא אבה ה' אלקיך לשמע אל בלעם ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את הקללה לברכה כי אהבה ה' אלקיך.

There are times Above when no accusation against the Jewish people is desired to be heard, Heaven forbid. These are the Yamim Noraim, because the service then is primarily through fear.

דהנה ישנם זמנים למעלה שאינם רוצים לשמע אז שום קטרוג על ישראל ח"ו, וזה בימים הנוראים, מחמת שאז העבודה היא מיראה,

Through that form of teshuvah, the sins are not yet completely transformed into merits. This is the meaning of, "Hashem your God was unwilling to listen to Bilaam."

ובדרך זה לא יתהפכו העונות לגמרי לזכיות, והיינו מש"כ "ולא אבה ה' אלקיך לשמע אל בלעם".

There are other times Above when all the accusations against the Jewish people, including their intentional and unintentional sins, are desired to be heard,

אולם יש זמנים למעלה שאז רוצים לשמע כל הקטרוגים שעל ישראל, כל הזדונות והשגגות שעשו ח"ו,

because they are then transformed into merits. This time is Sukkos, "the season of our rejoicing," when the Jewish people perform teshuvah out of love.

כדי להפכם לזכיות, וזה הזמן הוא ברחג הסוכות - זמן שמחמנו, כשישראל עושים תשובה מאהבה,

This is the meaning of, "Hashem your God transformed the curse into a blessing for you": on Sukkos, HaKadosh Baruch Hu transforms the intentional sins of the Jewish people into merits.

וזה שאמר הכתוב "ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את הקללה לברכה", שבחג הסוכות מהפך הקב"ה לישראל הזדונות לזכיות,

And the reason is, "because Hashem your God loved you," meaning, on Sukkos, when the Jewish people perform teshuvah out of love.

והטעם "כי אהבה ה' אלקיך" היינו ברחג הסוכות כשישראל עושים תשובה מאהבה.

It is written: "However, on the tenth day of this seventh month, it is Yom Kippur..." (Vayikra 23:27).

והנה כתיב (ויקרא כג, כז) אף בעשור לחדש השביעי הזה יום הכפורים הוא וגו',

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Rashi writes that every instance of “ach” and “rak” in the Torah comes to limit something.	וְכָתַב רִשְׁ"י כָּל אֲכִיו וְרַקִּיו שֶׁבְּתוֹרָה מֵיעוּטֵין הֵן,
Yom Kippur atones for those who repent, but does not atone for those who do not repent (Shevuos 13a).	מְכַפֵּר הוּא לְשָׁבִים, וְאֵינוֹ מְכַפֵּר לְשֹׂאֵינָם שָׁבִים (שְׁבוּעוֹת יג).
Accordingly, there is a difficulty, for regarding Sukkos it likewise says: “However, on the fifteenth day of the month, when you gather in... you shall celebrate the festival of Hashem for seven days...” (Vayikra 23:39).	וְלִפִּי זֶה קוּשָׁה, שֶׁכֵּן כְּתוּב לְגַבִּי חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת (שָׁם, לט) אֲךָ בְּחֻמְשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֲדָשׁ מִחֻגּוֹ אֶת חַג ה' שֶׁבָּעַת יָמִים וּגו',
What limitation does the word “ach” teach there?	וְמָה בָּא לְמַעַט.
He related in the name of his father, the holy Rebbe R. Shalom Shachna of Prohobisht, זי"ע,	וְסִיפֵר מֵאֲבִיו הֵרָה"ק רַבִּי שְׁלֹמֹה שַׁכְנָא מִפְּרֹהֹבִישֵׁט זי"ע,
that in his youth he once visited his uncle, the holy Rebbe R. Mordechai of Chernobyl, זי"ע,	שֶׁבְּצַעֲרֵירוֹתָיו הָיָה פַּעַם אֶלֶל דּוֹדוֹ הֵרָה"ק רַבִּי מֹרְדְּכַי מִמְּשֻׁעַרְנָאבִיל זי"ע,
and they discussed the meaning of the word “ach” mentioned concerning Sukkos.	וְדָבְרוּ מֵעֲנָנָן הֵ"א אֲךָ" הַמְזַכֵּר לְגַבִּי חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת,
He said in the name of his father, the holy Rebbe R. Avraham HaMalach, זי"ע,	וְאָמַר בְּשֵׁם אָבִיו הֵרָה"ק רַבִּי אַבְרָהָם הַמַּלְאָךְ זי"ע,
that the “ach” of Sukkos depends upon the “ach” of Yom Kippur.	כִּי הֵ"א אֲךָ" שֶׁל חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת תְּלוּי בִּ"אֲךָ" שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים,
The Zohar HaKadosh teaches (vol. 3, Raaya Mehemna 100) that the root of the joy of Sukkos is that on Yom Kippur the accuser departs and leaves the Jewish people,	דְּאִימָא בְּזוּה"ק (ח"ג רע"מ ק): כִּי שָׂרֵשׁ הַשְׂמֻחָה שֶׁבְּחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת הוּא מִחֻמַּת שָׂבִיּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הֵלֵךְ לוֹ הַמְקַטְרֵג וְעִזָּב אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
and HaKadosh Baruch Hu forgives the sins of Israel.	וְהַקֵּב"ה מַחֵל עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, ע"ש.
This is the meaning of the verse, “However, on the fifteenth day of the month... you shall celebrate.”	וְעַל זֶה אָמַר הַכְּתוּב "אֲךָ בְּחֻמְשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֲדָשׁ מִחֻגּוֹ",
When can you truly rejoice and celebrate Sukkos wholeheartedly?	אִימָתַי אֵתָהּ יָכוֹל לִהְיוֹת בְּשֻׂמְחָה וְלַחֹג אֶת חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם,
Only when you fulfilled the “ach” of Yom Kippur properly and performed genuine teshuvah.	רַק אִם קִיַּמְתָּ אֶת הֵ"א אֲךָ" שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים בְּהִלְכָתָהּ וְעָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּבָה כְּרָאוּי,
For Yom Kippur does not atone for those who do not repent, and for them the accuser has not departed.	וְדִהְרִי יוה"כ אֵינוֹ מְכַפֵּר לְשֹׂאֵינָם שָׁבִים, וְלִכֵּן אֵלּוּלֵי לֹא סָר הַמְקַטְרֵג,
But one who returns with complete teshuvah can rejoice on Sukkos, because the accuser has left him and all his sins have been forgiven.	אֲבָל מִי שֶׁשָּׁב בְּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה יָכוֹל לִהְיוֹת בְּשֻׂמְחָה בְּסֻכּוֹת, כִּינֵן שֶׁעִזָּב אוֹתוֹ הַמְקַטְרֵג וְהֵלֵךְ לוֹ וְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו נִמְחָלוּ.
The holy Rebbe of Ruzhin continued: One who serves Hashem out of love stands on a far higher level than one who serves Hashem out of fear, as explained above.	וְהַמְשִׁיךְ הֵרָה"ק מֵרוֹז'ין לְפָרֵשׁ, דְּהִנֵּה הָעוֹבֵד אֶת הַשֵּׁ"ת מֵאַהֲבָה הוּא גְבוּהָ מֵעַל גְּבוּהָ מִהָעוֹבֵד אֶת ה' מִיִּרְאָה כַּפ"ל,

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

It is likewise known that the measure of goodness is incomparably greater than the measure of punishment (Sanhedrin 100b).

ובן ידוע (פנהדרין ק): אשר מדה טובה מרבה ממדת פורענות עד אין ערוך,

Observe that throughout the Torah “ach” normally signifies limitation.

פוק חזי שבכל מקום בתורה "אך" מיעוטא הוא,

Even on the holy day of Yom Kippur, a day of unparalleled greatness and holiness, called “Shabbos Shabbason,” its “ach” limits its effect,

אפלו ביום הקדוש שאין לה יום גדול וקדוש כמוהו הנקרא "שבת שבתון", ואעפ"כ ה"אך" שלו מיעוט הוא,

for it atones only for those who repent, as Chazal taught.

ומכפר רק לשבים כמו שדרשו חז"ל.

The reason is that on Yom Kippur the primary avodah is through fear.

והטעם הוא, מחמת שעובדים את ה' ביוה"כ רק מיראה.

On Sukkos, however, when Hashem is served through love and joy, Chazal expound (Sukkah 48a) upon the verse, “And you shall be only joyful” (Devarim 16:15),

אולם בחג הסוכות שבו עובדים את השי"ת מאהבה ובשמחה, דרשו חז"ל (ספ"ה מח). ממה שכתוב (דברים טז, טו) והייתם אך שמחים,

that it comes to include the night of the final Yom Tov in the mitzvah of rejoicing.

לרבות לילי יום טוב האחרון לשמחה.

That is, specifically the final night is included, rather than the first night (see the Gemara there and Rashi).

כלומר, שמרבים דוקא ליל האחרון ולא ליל הראשון (ע' בסג"א שם ובפירש"י),

From this we learn that on Sukkos the mitzvah of rejoicing on Yom Tov can be fulfilled through many forms of joy.

ולמדנו מזה שבחג הסוכות יכולים לקיים המצוה של שמחת יו"ט בכל מיני שמחות,

When the Beis HaMikdash stood, even a person obligated to bring a korban chatas or asham could bring that offering during Chol HaMoed and receive atonement for his sin.

כי בזמן שבית המקדש היה קיים אפלו כשאדם היה חייב להביא קרבן חטאת או אשם, היה יכול להביא אותו הקרבן בחול המועד ולכפר על חטאו,

At that same time, he could fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah, eat there, and participate in the joy of the festival.

ובאותה שעה היה יכול לקיים מצות סוכה, ולאכול שם ולקחת חלק בשמחת החג,

This is because on Sukkos teshuvah is performed out of love, with joy and a good heart, and through this the sins themselves are transformed into merits.

מחמת שבסוכות עושים תשובה מאהבה, בשמחה ובטוב לב, ומתפכים ע"י העונות לזכיות.

This is also the meaning of “ach sameach.” The word “sameach” contains the letters of “chamesh,” five,

וזהו הענין של "אך שמח", כי "שמח" הוא אותיות "חמש",

while “ach,” as explained above, comes here to add, meaning one more than five, together making six.

ואך הרי בא לרבות כנ"ל, דהיינו אחד יותר מחמש, שהם ביחד שש,

This alludes to the movements of the Four Species, which are waved toward six directions,

וזהו רמז לנענועי הארבע מינים שמנענעים אותם לששה קצות,

in order to awaken the descent of Divine influence from Above to below through teshuvah out of love and the joy of the festival.

כדי לעורר ירידת השפע מלעילא לתתא ע"י התשובה מאהבה ושמחת החג.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

He further said: Today is the Ushpizin of Aharon Kohana Kadisha, who corresponds to the attribute of Hod (Zohar HaKadosh, vol. 2, 276b).

ואמר עוד: היום הוא האושפיזין של אהרן כהנא קדישא, שהוא בחינת הוד (וה"ק ח"ב רעו:),

This is drawn from the “hod and hadar before Him” (Tehillim 96:6).

הנמשך ממהוד והדר לפניו ית"ש (תהלים ז, ו),

Therefore, the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah, which commemorates the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the Jewish people in the merit of Aharon HaKohen (Taanis 9a),

ולכן מצות ישיבת סכה שהיא זכר לענני הכבוד, שהקיפו את בני ישראל בזכותו של אהרן הכהן (תענית ט),

is drawn from the quality of hod and hadar.

נמשך מבחינת הוד והדר,

Likewise, the esrog is associated with hod and hadar, as it is written: “the fruit of a hadar tree” (Vayikra 23:40).

וכן האתגר נמשך מבחינת הוד והדר כדכתיב (ויקרא כג, מ) פרי עץ הדר.

Therefore, among the tzaddikim of the generation one could see genuine hod and hadar,

ולכן אצל צדיקי הדור ראו עליהם הוד והדר אמיתי,

both while they fulfilled the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah, corresponding to hod,

בין בשעה שקימו מצות ישיבת סכה שהיא בחי' הוד,

and while taking the lulav and performing the naanuim, corresponding to hadar.

ובין בשעת נטילת לולב והנענועים שהוא בחי' הדר.

Summary:

This teaching explains why the first day of Sukkos is called “the first day for the accounting of sins.” During the Yamim Noraim, a Jew returns to Hashem primarily through fear and awe. Chazal teach that teshuvah from fear transforms intentional sins into unintentional ones, but teshuvah from love transforms those sins into merits. After Yom Kippur, the Jewish people enter Sukkos with mitzvos, joy, and love of Hashem. Only then does Hashem “count” the sins, because now they can be transformed into merits. The teaching further connects the word “ach” used both by Yom Kippur and Sukkos. On Yom Kippur, “ach” expresses limitation, since atonement applies to those who repent. On Sukkos, however, “ach” is interpreted as an inclusion of additional joy, reflecting the greater power of avodah through love. Even matters that once stood as accusations against a person can now be transformed into sources of merit. The teaching concludes by connecting Sukkos to Aharon HaKohen and the middah of Hod. The sukkah recalls the Ananei HaKavod that came in Aharon’s merit, while the esrog is called “pri eitz hadar.” Thus, both the sukkah and the Four Species express hod and hadar, the spiritual beauty and radiance that become visible when avodas Hashem is filled with love and joy.

Practical Takeaway:

Yom Kippur teaches a person to confront what is wrong, but Sukkos teaches him how to move beyond guilt into love. Teshuvah is not complete when a person merely fears repeating his mistakes. Its deeper goal is to bring him to a renewed relationship with Hashem in which Torah and mitzvos are approached with joy, affection, and desire. A person should therefore not remain spiritually defined by the sins and failures he has already regretted. Through sincere teshuvah and joyful avodah, the same past can become the force that drives him closer to Hashem.

Chassidic Illustration:

A chassid once spent the Yamim Noraim overwhelmed by regret. He examined every failure, cried during the

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

tefillos, and entered Yom Kippur determined never to repeat his mistakes. After the fast, however, he remained weighed down and could not understand how he was supposed to become joyful only a few days later. His Rebbe told him, "On Yom Kippur you learned how serious distance from Hashem is. On Sukkos you must learn something greater: how precious closeness to Hashem is." The Rebbe explained that fear can make a person run away from sin, but love makes him run toward Hashem. When the chassid entered the sukkah that year, he tried not to think only about what he had escaped from, but about Whose presence he was now entering. His regret had not disappeared, but it had been transformed into gratitude and desire. That change itself became part of his teshuvah.

Summary on R. Avraham HaMalach chiddush:

The central chiddush of R. Avraham HaMalach is his reading of the two appearances of the word "ach," one by Yom Kippur and one by Sukkos. By Yom Kippur, "ach" limits the atonement: Yom Kippur brings kapparah only to one who actually does teshuvah. R. Avraham HaMalach then says that the "ach" of Sukkos depends on the "ach" of Yom Kippur. In simple terms, the joy of Sukkos is not disconnected from Yom Kippur. A person can enter the full simchah of Sukkos specifically because he first passed through the teshuvah of Yom Kippur.

His deeper point is that the emotional and spiritual movement changes from one Yom Tov to the next. On Yom Kippur, the primary movement is away from sin, through yirah, seriousness, and regret. On Sukkos, the movement becomes toward Hashem, through love, joy, mitzvos, and closeness. According to the Zohar brought in the teaching, the joy of Sukkos comes because the mekatrig has departed and the sins of Yisrael have been forgiven. Sukkos is therefore not simply "the happy holiday after the serious holiday." Its joy is the result of the purification that came before it.

The Novelty of R. Avraham HaMalach:

His chiddush is that the word "ach" of Sukkos is conditional upon the "ach" of Yom Kippur. The verse says, in effect, that the joy of Sukkos becomes spiritually complete when the teshuvah of Yom Kippur was real. Yom Kippur removes the barrier. Sukkos reveals the relationship that was underneath it.

This also changes how we understand simchah. The joy of Sukkos is not an escape from teshuvah. It is teshuvah reaching a deeper stage. First a person says, "I do not want to be far from Hashem." Then he reaches the higher point: "I want to be close to Hashem." Yirah can stop the wrong action, but ahavah creates a new positive direction.

Simple Breakdown:

Yom Kippur says: "Stop. Look at what went wrong. Return."

Sukkos says: "Now come close. Sit with Hashem. Rejoice in the relationship."

Teshuvah from fear can make a person careful not to fall again. Teshuvah from love makes him want to build something new. That is why Sukkos is filled with active mitzvos: sukkah, lulav, esrog, simchah. The Jew is no longer only cleaning up the past. He is creating a new present.

Therapeutic Psychological Integration:

A person can change behavior for two very different reasons. One is fear: fear of consequences, fear of

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

repeating a mistake, fear of losing something important. That kind of motivation can be powerful, but it often leaves the person psychologically connected to the failure. His identity is still organized around what he is trying not to do.

The second kind of change comes from love and positive attachment. Here, the person is not merely avoiding an old pattern. He is moving toward something he values. Psychologically, this is a deeper form of integration because the new behavior is connected to identity, meaning, and relationship rather than only control.

R. Avraham HaMalach's teaching can therefore be read as a movement from shame-based correction to relationship-based growth. Yom Kippur confronts the rupture. Sukkos teaches the person to live after the rupture has been repaired. The goal is not to remain forever in self-criticism. Once responsibility has been taken, the next stage is to rebuild trust, closeness, and joy.

There is also an important psychological distinction between guilt and identity. Healthy guilt says, "I did something wrong." Toxic self-definition says, "I am wrong." Sukkos moves the person away from being defined by the aveirah. Once teshuvah has taken place, the person is invited back into the sukkah, into closeness, belonging, and joy. The past is acknowledged, but it no longer has to remain the center of the person's identity.

Therapeutic Takeaway:

Real change has two stages. First, face what happened honestly and take responsibility. Second, do not build your whole identity around the mistake. Move toward the values, relationships, and behaviors you actually want to live by. Fear may help someone stop, but love gives him somewhere to go.

Modern Story:

A man realized that he had been emotionally absent from his family for years. He worked constantly, came home distracted, and often responded impatiently. After a painful conversation with his wife, he felt intense guilt and promised himself that he would stop behaving that way. For several weeks he became extremely careful, watching every word and criticizing himself whenever he slipped.

But he was still tense. His whole focus was, "Do not mess up again."

Eventually he realized that avoiding mistakes was not the same as becoming the husband and father he wanted to be. He began changing the question. Instead of asking only, "How do I avoid hurting them?" he started asking, "How do I show them that I love being with them?" He put his phone away at dinner, planned time with his children, listened more carefully, and began creating positive experiences with his family.

The guilt had helped him wake up. But love taught him how to rebuild. That is the movement from Yom Kippur to Sukkos.

"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day..."
(Vayikra 23:40).

וְלָקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן וּגו' (וַיִּקְרָא כג, מ).

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

The holy Rebbe of Berditchev, זי"ע, would say that both through the blowing of the shofar and through the waving of the Four Species, we proclaim HaKadosh Baruch Hu as King throughout all the worlds.

הרה"ק מבארדיטשוב ויע"א ה'ה' אומר, שגבין בתקיעת שופר ובין בנענועי הארבע מינים ממליכים את הקב"ה בכל העולמות, ע"כ.

The Rebbe of Berditchev was renowned for his holy avodah during the blowing of the shofar, when he would advocate righteousness on behalf of all of Klal Yisrael in a manner without equal.

הנה, הרב מבארדיטשוב ה'ה' מפרסם בעבודתו בקדוש בשעת תקיעת שופר, שהיה אז מלך יושר על כלל ישראל, שלא היה כדגמתו.

Yet during the naanuiim, the waving of the Four Species, he would spend considerably more time.

אולם בשעת הנענועים האריף הרבה יותר זמן.

The explanation is that there are the klipos of orlah (Tikkunei Zohar, sec. 36),

והענין הוא, שיש חלמא קליפין דערלה (תיקוני"ז סי' לו, עמ').

and it is likewise taught (Pardes, Shaar 25, ch. 4) that Lilith receives from nine levels of kelipah,

וכן אמרו (פרדס שכ"ה פ"ד) דלילת מקבלת מט' מדרגות דקליפה 17,

and this is three times three.

ונה חלת פעמים חלת,

Therefore, according to Torah law, one already fulfills the mitzvah of shofar with nine sounds.

ולכן מדאורייתא כבר יוצאים ידי חובת תקיעת שופר בט' קולות,

Through the nine sounds of the shofar, the power of the nine klipos is nullified, one corresponding to the other.

פי ע"י הט' קולות של שופר מבטלים כח הט' קליפות זה בנגד זה,

Were the klipos and the force of tumah able to spread beyond nine, Heaven forbid, there would be no endurance for Yisrael.

ואלו היו הקליפות וכח הטמאה מתפשטין יותר מתשע, לא היתה ח"ו תקומה לישראל.

However, after those who truly understood the teruah, meaning those who genuinely knew the holy yichudim and kavanos, became fewer,

אמנם לאחר שנתחשו יודעי תרועה, היינו מיעדי היחודים והכנוות הק' באמת,

Chazal already in the days of the Tannaim instituted the additional order of tashrat.

תקנו חז"ל עוד בימי התנאים לתקע תשר"ת.

And after the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah instituted the Mussaf prayer of Rosh Hashanah, including ten verses each of Malchiyos, Zichronos, and Shofaros,

ואחרי שאנשי כנסת הגדולה תקנו להם לישראל להתפלל מוסף בראש השנה ולומר עשרה פסוקי מלכיות זכרונות ושופרות,

and the shofar blasts arranged according to those brachos, it was certainly necessary to blow more than nine sounds.

ולתקע על סדר הברכות, ודאי בענין לתקע יותר מט' קולות,

Nevertheless, the essential root of the shofar blasts remains the nine sounds mentioned above.

אבל עיקר ושרש התקיעות הם ט' קולות כנ"ל,

Through these nine sounds, the three klipos of orlah, corresponding to the kelipah-levels of Kesser, Chochmah, and Binah, are nullified,

ובאלו הט' קולות מבטלים הג' קליפין דערלה [בחי' פתר חכמה ובינה דקליפה],

and within them are included the ten sefiros of tumah mentioned above.

שנקללו בהם העשר ספירות דטמאה כנ"ל.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

On the side of kedushah, however, the Four Species are waved toward the six directions.

משא"ב בצד הקדושה מונענעים הארבע מינים לששה קצות,

Three times six equals eighteen, corresponding to “Chai HaOlamim,” the Life of the Worlds.

וג' פעמים ו' הם ח"י, נגד "חי העולמים",

Four times eighteen equals the numerical value of the Divine Name of seventy-two.

וד' פעמים ח"י עולה כמנן שם ע"ב.

Therefore, the Four Species are waved three times in each of the six directions, and no more.

ועל פן מונענעים ג' פעמים בכל צד מהששה קצות ולא יותר,

This constitutes the rectification of the three klipos of orlah mentioned above, because the primary avodah is the positive rectification on the side of kedushah, the aspect of Chai HaOlamim.

דוהו התקון לתלת קליפין דערלה הנ"ל, ומפני שעיסקר העבודה הוא התקון שבצד הקדושה, בחי' חי העולמים.

This is also the meaning of the mitzvah of milah, to remove the orlah.

וזהו גם ענין מצות מילה להסיר הערלה,

The essential rectification of the holiness of Yisrael is to remove the three klipos of orlah.

כי זה עיקר התקון של קדושת ישראל להסיר התלתא קליפין דערלה,

Therefore, a Jew is specifically called by the name “Yud” only after his bris milah, once the kelipah of orlah has been cut away.

ולפיכך נקרא הישראל בשם "יוד" דוקא אחרי שנימול, כשנכרת ממנו קליפת הערלה,

Within that orlah were included ten levels of tumah, and through its removal ten levels of the holiness of Yisrael are revealed within him.

שנכללו בה יו"ד מדרגות של טמאה ונתגלו בו יו"ד מדרגות של קדושת ישראל.

This is what is taught (Mikra Kallah; Baal HaTurim) regarding the verse, “Who will ascend for us to the heavens?” (Devarim 30:12): its initial letters form the word milah, and its final letters form the Name Havayah.

וזה מה דאיתא (מיקרו קלא, ובעה"ט) על הפסוק (דברים ל, יב) מי יעלה לנו השמימה, שהוא ר"ת מילה וס"ת הוי"ה,

Through milah the kelipah is cut away, and within every Jew the holiness of the Name Havayah, blessed is He, is revealed.

שעל ידי המילה נכרת הקליפה ונתגלה בכל ישראל קדושת שם הוי"ה ב"ה.

Based on Mesilos, issue 24, p. 21, sec. 100.

ע"פ מסילות (גליון כ"ד, עמ' 21) ק.

Summary:

This teaching explains the deeper connection between the shofar of Rosh Hashanah and the Four Species of Sukkos. Both are acts of crowning Hashem as King throughout all the worlds, but they operate in different ways. The shofar is directed primarily toward breaking and nullifying the forces of tumah. Its essential root is in nine sounds, corresponding to nine levels of kelipah. The Four Species, by contrast, represent a more positive stage of avodah. They are waved in six directions, three times in each direction, producing eighteen movements, corresponding to “Chai HaOlamim,” and four times eighteen equals the numerical value of the Divine Name of seventy-two. The emphasis of Sukkos is therefore not only on removing impurity, but on actively extending kedushah into every direction.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

The teaching then connects this idea to bris milah. Milah removes the orlah, but the deeper purpose is not merely the removal of something negative. By cutting away the kelipah, the hidden kedushah of the Jew is revealed. This is why the verse “Mi yaaleh lanu hashamaymah” is associated with milah and with the Name Havayah. The removal of the obstruction allows the Divine holiness already rooted within the Jewish soul to become revealed.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual growth has two stages. First, a person must identify and remove the habits, distractions, desires, and patterns that block his connection with Hashem. But removing the negative is not the final goal. The deeper avodah is to fill the space that has been cleared with kedushah. The shofar represents breaking through obstruction; the Four Species represent taking that newly opened space and directing holiness into every part of life.

A person should therefore not define success only by what he has stopped doing. The more important question is what has now taken its place. If a distraction has been removed, has the time become Torah? If anger has been restrained, has it been replaced with patience? If pride has been weakened, has humility and awareness of Hashem grown? The purpose of removing the “orlah” is to uncover what was waiting beneath it.

Chassidic Illustration:

A chassid once complained to his Rebbe that he had spent years fighting one particular middah. “Baruch Hashem,” he said, “I finally feel that it no longer controls me as it once did.” The Rebbe asked him, “And what did you put in its place?” The chassid was silent. The Rebbe explained, “Cutting away the obstruction is only the beginning. A field cleared of thorns is still not a garden.” The chassid understood that his struggle had prepared the ground, but his real task was now to plant something holy there. From then on, whenever he succeeded in overcoming a negative tendency, he immediately looked for a positive mitzvah, middah, or form of avodah to cultivate in its place.

The holy Rebbe of Ruzhin related to the members of his household:

סיפור הרה"ק מרדכי'ן לאנשי ביתו:

While he was imprisoned, a non-Jew entered to see him. And this was truly a non-Jew, not someone merely dressed like one.

בהיותו שרוי בבית האסורים נכנס אליו גוי אחד וזה היה גוי מממש! - לא אחד בלבוש גוי,

He brought him an esrog and said: “Behold, with this fruit Adam HaRishon damaged Creation.”

והביא לו אחרוג ואמר, הנה בתפוח הזה קלקל אדם הראשון את הבריאה,

As it is taught (Bereishis Rabbah 15:7), the tree from which Adam HaRishon ate was an esrog.

[בדאיתא בראשית רבה טו, ז] עץ שאכל אדה"ר אחרוג הזה]

“And you are considered the tzaddik and sage of the generation. Please see to it that you rectify what he damaged.”

ואתם הנכם צדיק וחסיד הדור, ראו נא לתקן מה שהוא קלקל.

The holy Rebbe concluded: “Have you ever in your lives seen such a clever non-Jew?”

וסים הרה"ק: הכי ראיתם מימיכם גוי פיקח כזה.

Maamar Mordechai (Maareches Ruzhin, 48); Beis Yisrael (8).

מאמר מרדכי (מערכת ריוז'ין, מח); בית ישראל (ח).

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin

Yirin Kedishin

Sukkos

Summary:

This short story carries a much larger idea. While the Rebbe of Ruzhin was imprisoned, a non-Jew brought him an esrog and connected it to the Midrashic opinion that the fruit eaten by Adam HaRishon was an esrog. He then told the Rebbe that since Adam had damaged Creation through that fruit, the tzaddik of the generation should now use it to repair what had been damaged. The Rebbe was struck not merely by the gift itself, but by the depth of the statement coming from someone entirely outside the Jewish world.

The deeper point is that a mitzvah is not only a private religious act. It can participate in tikkun, the repair of Creation itself. The same physical world that became associated with concealment, failure, and distance from Hashem can become the very vehicle through which holiness is revealed again. The esrog therefore becomes a symbol of reversal: what once represented damage can now become an instrument of repair.

Deeper Meaning:

There is a profound pattern here. Torah does not always ask us to escape the place where something went wrong. Very often, the repair comes through that same arena. Food can become a mitzvah. Physical pleasure can become oneg Yom Tov. Money can become tzedakah. Speech can become Torah and tefillah. The body itself can become an instrument of avodas Hashem.

That is why the connection to Adam HaRishon is so powerful. The first sin represents the misuse of the physical world. Sukkos, and especially the mitzvah of the Four Species, teaches that physical objects are not rejected. They are lifted. The answer to misuse is not abandonment, but sanctification.

There is also something striking about the fact that this insight comes from a non-Jew while the Rebbe is imprisoned. Externally, the Rebbe appears powerless, confined, and cut off. Yet precisely there, an esrog arrives and he is reminded that even in a place of constriction, a Jew can still participate in cosmic repair. The prison limits the body, but not the capacity for avodah.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should not assume that something connected to past failure is permanently ruined. Sometimes the deepest repair comes when the very area that once caused distance becomes a place of holiness. A difficult relationship can become the place where patience is learned. Wasted time can become disciplined learning. Material ambition can become generosity. A weakness can become the doorway to humility and dependence on Hashem.

The question is not only, "What did this once become?" but also, "What can I make of it now?"

Chassidic Illustration:

A chassid once told his Rebbe that there was one area of his life he wished he could simply erase because it reminded him of years of poor choices. The Rebbe answered, "Why erase the page if you can write kedushah on it?" He explained that teshuvah does not always mean running from the past. Sometimes Hashem gives a person the opportunity to return to the same type of situation with a different heart, different choices, and a different purpose. The place that once represented weakness can then become the place where his strongest avodah appears.

Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin
Yirin Kedishin
Sukkos

The esrog in the prison tells the same story. The fruit associated with the earliest damage in human history becomes a mitzvah in the hands of a tzaddik. What was once connected with descent can become part of ascent.