

י"ד תשרי (ערב סוכות) תשע"ט

A LASTING HAPPINESS

The טובים of סוכות, at its core, is about שמחה. While you can say that about all of the טובים, and you would be right, סוכות has no other emphasized element to it. We see this in the liturgy of the טובים. On פסח, we say זמן חרותינו. On שבועות, we say זמן מתן תורתנו. Yet on סוכות, we say זמן שמחתנו. This is also why חג סתם in the משנה and גמרא refers to סוכות. It is pure celebration; a pure happiness.

One of the main manifestations of this pure שמחה is the השואבה, or the water-drawing ceremony done throughout חול המועד in the המקדש. The משנה¹ tells us that one who was never זוכה to witness the experience of the השואבה has never seen true שמחה. How is it that we can reconcile this משנה with our emotions? At times we have felt immense happiness, yet we seem to be told here that really it was all a mirage! To analyze this enigmatic שמחה, let's take a look at other שמחות in Judaism, and see if we do anything different.

First, we have the שמחה of a newborn baby. The גמרא² tells us that for a baby boy, the parents make the ברכה of הטוב והמטיב. The פוסקים³ therefore deduce that the ברכה for a girl is שהחיינו, which is the same ברכה made on not seeing a friend for a long time. However, there is a שיטה out there (I don't remember who exactly) who says we should say דיין האמת. The reason for this is because the opportunity of having a child who would be obligated in all of the מצוות is now "dead". However, even though we don't פסקין like this, we do see a fundamental difference between the birth of a boy, and that of a girl. The parameters of הטוב והמטיב are if the news benefits others, while שהחיינו is only for the benefit of the one making the ברכה.⁴ In each case, both the husband and wife make the ברכה. The difference is the benefit of the rest of ישראל. We only say כלל ישראל benefits as a whole by a baby boy, as he does מצוות and is part of the ציבור.

When two Jews get married, which is supposed to be the happiest day of their lives, we break a glass to commemorate the destruction of the המקדש. Right in between the חלות of the marriage and the party celebrating said marriage, we break out into the melancholic melody of אם אשכחך. Before we go out and eat, dance, and party till our hearts' consent, we take time to reflect upon what it is that we're missing. The new husband and wife are finally able to move into their new place. They have all of the furniture and appliances they need, but something is still missing. A small area of every house must be left unpainted and unfurnished, again commemorating the חסרון in our lives.⁵

Perhaps the reason we specifically diminish the שמחה of the wedding and the home is so we realize that as much as we engage in the material pleasures of life, we have to infuse them with קדושה. We have to bring הקב"ה into our everyday lives, even when we're not learning, davening, or doing other "religious things". On סוכות, we add the תפילה of "הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד הנופלת" תפילה, asking that הקב"ה should re-inaugurate the fallen סוכה of דוד המלך. I recently saw an idea that סוכות is the bridge from the ימים נוראים to the חול. It is imperative upon each and every one of us to channel the passion, devotion, and commitment from these holy days, and take it with us throughout the year.

Why is the בהמ"ק referred to as a סוכה? Also, if שלמה ended up building it, why is it attributed to דוד? We see in the גביא⁶ that דוד had a burning desire to build the המקדש, but was ultimately denied in favor of שלמה. When שלמה completed the construction of the בהמ"ק and wanted to bring down the

1 סוכה נא.

2 ברכות נט:

3 משנה ברורה רכג.

4 עין שו"ע או"ח רכב.א.

5 עין בבא בתרא ס:

6 שמואל ב פרק ז

י"ד תשרי (ערב סוכות) תשע"ט

A LASTING HAPPINESS

he davened to the merit of דוד and wasn't answered until he invoked the merit of דוד. Also, we see throughout ספר תהילים that דוד always incorporated the merit of דוד into his life. The bone in between the brain and the eye on each side is called the temple. דוד המלך is telling us that even if we don't have the Temple, we have to bring קדושה into our temples, our minds.

Although paling in comparison to those of yesteryear, the שמחת בית השואבה has something unique to it that each of the previous שמחות do not. There is no חסרון in the שמחה. The destruction of the חסרון isn't incorporated, because the whole essence of the day is the exact antithesis of having the חסרון! This is why whoever didn't see the real שמחת בית השואבה never saw true שמחה; he was never able to be on a physical high and still take it with him through the year in a spiritual manner. This חג, we should merit not only to take the spiritual high of the ימים נוראים to guide our everyday lives, but that our שמחה should be so elevated that it'd be impossible not to take anything out of it. With that, we should be זוכה to see the real שמחת בית השואבה, in ירושלים עיר הקודש, speedily in our days.