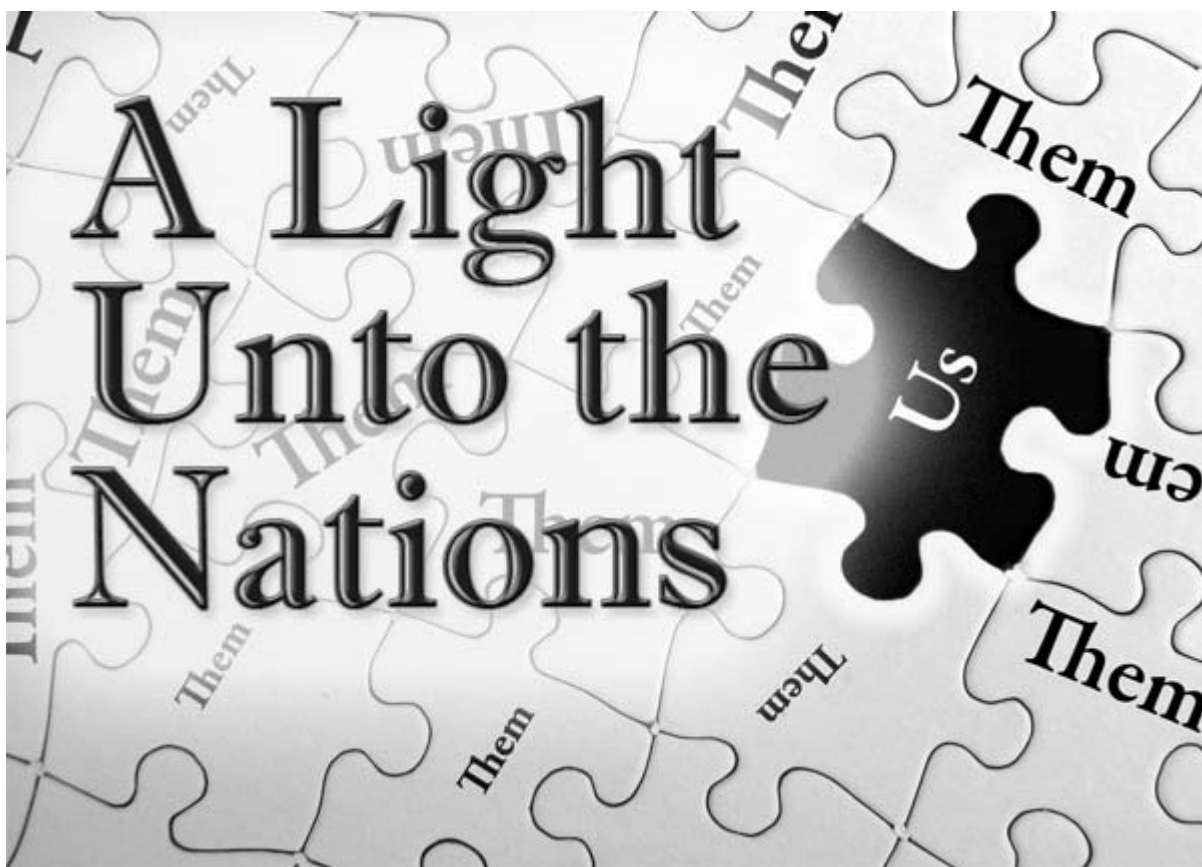


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Sukkot *To-Go*

5768

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the Center for the
Jewish Future



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Rabbi Kenneth Brander, *Dean, Center for the Jewish Future*

Dear Friends,

It is my sincere hope that the Torah found in this virtual ספר may serve to enhance your יום טוב (holiday) and your לימוד (study).

We have designed this project not only for the individual, studying alone, but perhaps even more for a חברותא (a pair studying together) that wish to work through the study matter together, or a group engaged in facilitated study.

With this material, we invite you to join our *Beit Midrash*, wherever you may be, להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה (to enjoy the splendor of Torah) and to engage in discussing a matter that touches on a most contemporary matter, and which is rooted in the timeless arguments of our great sages from throughout the generations.

בברכת חג שמח,

Rabbi Kenneth Brander

Isaac Shalev, Editor

Please direct questions and comments to yutorah@yutorah.org

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1. Time of Meaning

By Rabbi Meir Goldwicht

Transcribed by Rabbi Robert Shur

On *Motzei Yom Kippur*, a *Bat-Kol* calls out to say "לך אכל בשמחה לחמך ושתה בלב" – טוב "ינך כי כבר רצה האלקים את מעשיך" – "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works" (Kohelet 9:7) – because we have been judged for life at the close of *Yom Kippur*. For many people, this is the end of the *Yamim Noraim*. However, *Chazal* tell us that the *Yemei HaDin* don't end with the sound of the *Shofar* after *Yom Kippur*, they continue until *Hoshana Raba* – what is that the significance of this, and what exactly does it mean?

In *Tanach*, the name of a person or place is not just a name, but rather the essence of that place or person. The first named place the Jewish people encountered when they came out of Egypt was Sukkot. Additionally, when Yaakov departed from his brother Eisav for the last time, he first came to Sukkot. What is the special significance of this place called Sukkot?

The *Gemara* (*Brachot* 4b) says that one needs to connect mentioning the *geula* in the *Bracha* of *Ga'al Yisrael* to the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shacharit*. The *Gemara* asks: Why don't we connect the two directly in *Ma'ariv* as well, rather than inserting the *Bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* in between them? The *Gemara* answers that the *Bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* is considered an extension of the the *Bracha* for *Geula* – it is a *Geula Arichta*. What is the *Gemara* trying to teach us?

Whenever Hashem brings the Jewish people to a position of *Geula*, redemption and freedom, it is always in danger of being lost. Therefore, our need for Hashem's protection does not end once we achieve redemption. We also need the power to maintain that state of *Geula* that we are in. This protection, this power, this *Shemira*, is the *Sukkah*!

The *Sukkah* is a completely open place – it is open to the heavens, and open to visitors. On *Sukkot* we are commanded to leave our secure homes and bring the house to the *Sukkah*. This demonstrates our belief that our protection comes not from the bricks

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and wood of the house, but rather directly from Hashem; even in the open, flimsy *Sukkah* we are completely secure.

Looking back at Yaakov Avinu and Bnei Yisrael, we now understand that they went from redemption to Sukkot in order to gain the protection of the *Sukkah* for the new state of *Geula* that they found themselves in. We can now understand the *Gemara's* ruling regarding the *Bracha* of *Hashkiveinu*. In that *Beracha* we say "*U'fros Aleinu Sukkat Shlomechā*" – 'and spread over us your *Sukkah* of peace" – we ask that Hashem not only grant us *Geula*, but also a *Shemira* for the *Geula* – a *Geula Arichta!*

The covering for the *Sukkah* is called *Schach*. In *Gematria*, *Schach* has a numerical value of one hundred. That is the same as the number of *Brachot* we are required to say every day, and the one hundred *Shofar* blasts we blow on *Rosh Hashana*. The concept of a *Bracha*, a blessing, is *Ribui*, expansion. When we recite a blessing, we expand our perspective on the world and realize that the blessings we have are from Hashem. We are then ourselves expanded and are in a position to bring Hashem into our lives.

The one hundred *Shofar* blasts are also a call to bring Hashem into our lives, as Rambam famously explains, "wake up, sleepers from your slumber!" The message of the *Schach* is the same. It reminds us to wake up and reevaluate everything, and to make sure we are including Hashem in our lives. If we are to be an *Or LaGoyim*, a light unto the nations, we first need to be a light unto ourselves, and to do what we need to ensure that we bring that light into our daily lives.

This concept of gathering strength to be a light unto the nations is particularly appropriate to *Sukkot*. *Sukkot* marks the end of two cycles. It is the last of the three *Regalim*, *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*. It is also the end of the High Holidays of *Tishrei*, *Rosh Hashana*, *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot*. *Sukkot* is the time that we sit with Hashem in the protective embrace of the *Sukkah*, but it's also a holiday for the nations of the world, a time when we bring *Korbanot* in the *Beit Hamikdash* for the protection and well-being of all the nations.

The *Shalosh Regalim* are specifically given for the Jewish people to come to Jerusalem and be close with Hashem in His place. However, the *Yamim Noraim* are not just a time of judgment for the Jewish people, but rather for the whole world, as we say "the entire world passes before You like the *Bnei Maron*".¹ *Sukkot* is the time when those two cycles come together, both to strengthen ourselves and our relationship with the rest of the world.

What is our opportunity to strengthen ourselves during *Sukkot*? Maharal points out that the word *Emunah* is mentioned three times in the Torah.² The first time it appears is when Moshe Rabbeinu comes to tell the Jews about the imminent *Geulah*.

1. Time of Meaning

1.

And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had remembered the children of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Exodus 4:31

וַיֵּאֱמָן, הָעָם; וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כִּי-פָקַד יְהוָה
אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְכִי רָאָה אֶת-עַנְיָם,
וַיִּקְדּוּ, וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

שמות ד:לא

The second time it appears is at K'riat Yam Suf.

2.

And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD; and they believed in the LORD, and in His servant Moses.

Exodus 14:31

וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה, אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם,
אֶת-יְהוָה; וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ, בִּיהוָה, וּבַמֹּשֶׁה
עַבְדּוֹ.

שמות יד:לא

The third time it appears is at Har Sinai, on *Erev Kabbalat HaTorah*, .

3.

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever.' And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

Exodus 19:9

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, הִנֵּה אֲנִי בָא
אֵלֶיךָ בְּעָבַיִם הָעֲנָן, בְּעָבֹר יִשְׁמַע הָעָם
בְּדַבְרֵי עַמְךָ, וְגַם-בְּךָ יֵאֱמִינוּ לְעוֹלָם;
וַיַּגֵּד מֹשֶׁה אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הָעָם, אֶל-יְהוָה.

שמות יט:ט

Maharal explains that these three *Emunot* constitute the foundation of Judaism. The first belief, when the Jews are told they will be redeemed, is belief in *Hashgachah Pratit*—the idea that Hashem watches specially over the Jewish people. Hashem remembered and watched over them, even in the depths of bondage in Egypt. The second belief, at the

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parting of the Sea of Reeds, is the belief that there is none other than Hashem, Who is all-capable and all-powerful. Hashem showed his mastery over nature and the world when He miraculously split the sea. The third belief, at the giving of the Torah, is the belief that the Torah is from heaven – a gift from God.

These three *Emunot* are manifested in the holidays of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkos*. On *Pesach*, the holiday of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and *K'rias Yam Suf*, the *Emunah* of Hashem being all-capable and all-powerful is manifested; on *Shavuot*, the *Emunah* of Torah coming from *Shamayim* is manifested. On *Sukkot*, when millions of people are *Oleh La'Regel* and participate in the *Simchat Beit HaShoevah*, the *Emunah* of *Hashgachah Pratit* is manifested. It is therefore appropriate that we dwell in the *Sukkah*, which commemorates the *Ananei HaKavod*, and symbolizes the *Hashgachah Pratit* that Hashem exercised in watching over the Jews during their travel through the desert. Because of the fundamental beliefs realized and celebrated on *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, these three *Chagim* are called *Regalim*, legs – the legs on which Judaism stands.

Historically, more people would travel to Jerusalem on *Sukkot* than the other two *Regalim*. It is specifically at this time, when millions of people are spending the *Yom Tov* together, that we reinforce the belief that Hashem's presence and protection rests on every single Jewish person. The *Gemara* says that during the *Simchat Beit Hashoeva* celebrations in the *Beit Hamikdash*, Hillel would say "If I am here, all are here".³ What Hillel said was not an expression of ga'avah, haughtiness! Rather these were words of *chizuk* for the nation, reminding them that each person is unique, and the bearer of unique abilities that no one else has. Every single person must discover his uniqueness and share it with the rest of *Klal Yisrael*.

Pesach is considered the moment of the birth of the Jewish nation, and *Shavuot*, when we received the Torah and its mitzvot, is considered the *Bar Mitzvah* of the Jewish nation. Finally, *Sukkot*, when we dwell in the *Sukkah* with Hashem, is the wedding of the Jewish nation with Hashem. That is the time in which we strengthen our relationship with Hashem and His Torah. It is specifically at this time, when our relationship is strongest, that we can realize our potential as an *Or LaGoyim*, an example to the nations of the world. It is our relationship with Hashem and our bond with the Torah that gives us the identity to be a model for others. Without this bond to Hashem and His Torah, we have nothing else to make us the *Or Lagoyim*. That is why *Sukkot* is the appropriate finale to the period of the High Holidays and the judgment of the entire world.

May we all merit feeling Hashem's embrace when we step in the *Sukkah* and as we step out into the world.

1 The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashana* 18a) offers three possible translations: a flock of sheep, people ascending a steep and narrow hill-path, or like soldiers of the house of David, who had written out *Gittin* to their wives before going into battle, so as not to be distracted by thoughts of home white at war.

2 *Gevurot Hashem*, Chapter 47

3 *Gemara Sukkah* 53a

2. *Sukkot*, Judaism and Universalism

By Rabbi Dr. David Horwitz

Parshat Chayei Sarah begins with Avraham's request to acquire a burial site among the Hittites for his recently deceased wife Sarah. The language he uses in describing himself is *ger ve-toshav*.

1.

And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke unto the children of Heth, saying: 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.'

Genesis 23: 3-4

וַיָּקָם, אַבְרָהָם, מֵעַל, פְּנֵי מֵתוֹ; וַיְדַבֵּר
אֶל-בְּנֵי-חֵת, לֵאמֹר. גֵּר-וְתוֹשָׁב אָנֹכִי,
עִמָּכֶם; תָּנוּ לִי אַחְזַת-קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם,
וְאֶקְבְּרָה מֵתִי מִלְפָּנַי.

בראשית כג:ג-ד

What does this phrase mean? Why are the two terms separated by a *vav*? Are the two terms *ger* and *toshav* synonymous? A strict *peshuto shel mikra* reading can yield the conclusion that the two terms are indeed synonymous, and that *ger ve-toshav* conveyed the exact same meaning as *ger toshav*. Indeed, a verse in *Parshat Bechukotai* uses both *ger toshav* and *ger ve-toshav* interchangeably.

According to this explanation, the *vav* in *ger ve-toshav* does not serve to distinguish

2.

And if a stranger who is a settler with thee be waxen rich, and thy brother be waxen poor beside him, and sell himself unto the stranger who is a settler with thee, or to the offshoot of a stranger's family,

Leviticus 25:47

וְכִי תִשָּׂיג, יָד גֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ, וּמִן
אֲחִיךָ, עָמוּ; וְנִמְכַר, לְגֵר תוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ,
אוֹ לְעֶקֶר, מִשְׁפַּחַת גֵר.

ויקרא כה:מז

between the two terms. Thus the proper English translation of *ger ve-toshav* is “resident alien,” *not alien and resident*.¹

Rashi, however, following *Bereshit Rabbah*, interprets *ger* and *toshav* as two distinct terms. According to Rashi, when Abraham declared, “I am an alien and a resident among you,” he was either stating that he *was* an alien *ger* from another land who had *subsequently* settled as a *toshav* among the Hittites, or he was saying that he would agree to buy the land as an alien *ger*, but if forced to, he would take the land by virtue of his rights as a resident *toshav*.²

The distinction between the alien *ger* and the resident *toshav* has been used by various Jewish thinkers throughout the ages. For example, in the Medieval period, the Provençal thinker R. Levi Avraham ben Chaim (c. 1245–c. 1315), in his poem *batei ha-nefesh ve-ha-lehashim*, uses these two terms in the context of expressing the notion that man’s pure soul is encased and trapped in a physical, material body, but it longs to escape and ascend up high, from where it had come. “*Ve-sham nehsav ke-ger zar, lo ke-toshav*.” “And there [in a man’s body] it is considered a foreign *ger*, not a native *toshav*...”³

Maran Ha-Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *z”l*, also interpreted the opposition between *ger* and *toshav* in his homiletic explanation of the encounter between Avraham and the Hittites. Rabbi Abraham Besdin summarized the Rav’s ideas on this score as follows:⁴

3.

“We study the narrative of the patriarchal period as though these Jews were lifted out of the ordinary concerns which affected their non-Jewish neighbors. In fact there is no *purely* covenantal historical experience. The reason is obvious. Abraham lived among various people of divergent faiths. When he negotiated with the sons of Heth (of the Hittites) for a burial plot for his wife Sarah, he defined his status: “I am a stranger [immigrant] *and* a resident among you” (Gen 23:4). He was basically declaring that the sectarian faith he was propounding did not preclude his commitment to further the welfare of the general society. Indeed, the *Midrash* teaches: “Great are the righteous of the world for occupying themselves with the habitation of the world.”

2. Sukkot, Judaism and Universalism

The categories that the Rav drew are instructive in framing an appropriate understanding of the universalistic and particularistic aspects of *Chag Ha-Sukkot*. On the one hand, in *Sefer Vayikra*, the laws of *Sukkot* are presented with the same particular focus on *klal yisrael* as the laws concerning the other holidays.

Now, it goes without saying that the specific laws of *Sukkot: sukkah, lulav, etrog*,

4.

And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. Seven days ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD; on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD; it is a day of solemn assembly; ye shall do no manner of servile work... And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year; it is a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall keep it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23: 33-36, 40-43

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר
אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֵאמֹר: בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר
יוֹם, לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה, חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, לַיהוָה. בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן,
מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ; כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה, לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ. שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, תִּקְרְבוּ אֵשֶׁה
לַיהוָה; בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ
יְהִי לָכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֵשֶׁה לַיהוָה,
עֲצֵרֶת הוּא--כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה, לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ... וְלִקְחֶתֶם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן,
פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים, וְעֵנֶף עֵץ-
עֲבֹת, וְעֵרְבֵי-נַחַל; וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם, לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם--שִׁבְעַת יָמִים. וְחִגַּלְתֶּם
אֹתוֹ חַג לַיהוָה, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
בַּשָּׁנָה: חֲקַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם, בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁבִיעִי תַחֲגֹלוּ אֹתוֹ. בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ,
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים; כָּל-הָאֲזֹרַח, בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל,
יֵשְׁבוּ, בַּסֻּכּוֹת. לְמַעַן, יִדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם,
כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: אֲנִי,
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

ויקרא כג:לג-לו, מ-מג

etc., are *mitzvot* that fortify the uniqueness of the Jewish people as the nation forever bound by God and His commandments. Yet, at the end of the prophetic book Zechariah, we find an astounding set of verses. These verses come after the prophet's depiction of the plague at the end days that shall befall the people that war against Jerusalem:

5.

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, they shall have no overflow; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.⁵

Zechariah 14: 16-19

וְהָיָה, כָּל-הַנּוֹתֵר מִכָּל-הַגּוֹיִם, הַבָּאִים,
עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם; וְעָלוּ מִדֵּי שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה,
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְמֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, וְלַחֹג,
אֶת-חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת. וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יַעֲלֶה
מֵאֵת מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָרֶץ, אֶל-יְרוּשָׁלַם,
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת, לְמֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת--וְלֹא
עֲלִיהֶם, יְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם. וְאִם-מִשְׁפַּחַת
מִצְרַיִם לֹא-תַעֲלֶה וְלֹא בָּאָה, וְלֹא
עֲלִיהֶם; תִּהְיֶה הַמִּגְפָּה, אֲשֶׁר יִגַּף יְהוָה
אֶת-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲלוּ, לַחֹג אֶת-
חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת. זֹאת תִּהְיֶה, חֲטָאת
מִצְרַיִם; וְחֲטָאת, כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא
יַעֲלוּ, לַחֹג אֶת-חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת.

זכריה יד: טז-יט

In other words, Zechariah declares that at the End of Days *all* the nations of the world will come to Jerusalem and observe the festival of *Sukkot*. Moreover, those non-Jews who do not observe this festival will be punished!

Why was *Sukkot*, among all the holidays, chosen to be the universal holiday, the one on which (at least in the future), non-Jews will join with Jews in the service of God? Wouldn't *Rosh Hashanah* have been a more obvious and appropriate choice?

Rashi (commentary on Zecharia 14:16) connects this notion with a famous *Aggadah* in *Masechet Avoda Zara* (3a-b):

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6.

The nations will then [at the End of Days] plead. 'Offer us the Torah anew and we shall obey it.' But the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to them, 'You foolish ones among peoples, he who took trouble [to prepare] on the eve of the Sabbath can eat on the Sabbath, but he who has not troubled on the eve of the Sabbath, what shall he eat on the Sabbath? Nevertheless, I have an easy command which is called *Sukkah*; go and carry it out... Straightaway will every one of them betake himself and go and make a booth on the top of his roof; but the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause the sun to blaze forth over them as at the Summer Solstice. and every one of them will trample down his booth and go away.

Avoda Zara 3a-b

אמרו לפניו רבש"ע תנה לנו מראש
ונעשנה אמר להן הקב"ה שוטים
שבעולם מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל
בשבת מי שלא טרח בערב שבת
מהיכן יאכל בשבת אלא אף על פי כן
מצוה קלה יש לי וסוכה שמה לכו
ועשו אותה... מיד כל אחד [ואחד]
נוטל והולך ועושה סוכה בראש גגו
והקדוש ברוך הוא מקדיר עליהם
חמה בתקופת תמוז וכל אחד ואחד
מבעט בסוכתו ויוצא

עבודה זרה ג.

Yet the *Gemara* there only writes that God will give the Gentiles a one-time test, whereas the verses in Zechariah state that "all those nations...shall make a pilgrimage year by year."⁶

In his commentary to Zechariah 14:17, Rashi draws the connection between *Sukkot* and water. The reason God will punish the non-Jews for not making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on *Sukkot* is, he writes, due to the fact that the commandments that pertain to *Sukkot* deal with (requests for) rain; both the four species and the libations of water. Those who reject the commandments of *Sukkot* are consequently punished with the withholding of water. Perhaps this explains the primacy of *Sukkot* over *Rosh Hashanna*. The human need for water lies at the basis of survival. Before the non-Jews can turn to the elevated moral duties of *Rosh Hashanna*, they are first obligated to pray for the water that their very lives depend upon.

Could Rashi's connections between *Sukkot* and water serve as a justification for the reason why non-Jews also will eventually observe *Sukkot*? One must be cautious and note that Rashi only attempts an explanation as to why non-Jews will be *punished* in the

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future for *not* observing *Sukkot*. His comment need not be construed as the reason *why* non-Jews would have to observe the holiday in the first place.

Radak (R. David Kimhi, in his comment on Zechariah 14:16) explains that as the great power of God will be manifest through the wars of the Messianic period, in every year a day will be set aside to commemorate the wondrous acts of God. According to this view, however, there is nothing special about *Chag Ha-Sukkot per se*.

Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren z"l, in his book *Torat Ha-Mo'adim*, after discussing Rashi and Radak's views, presented his own approach.⁷ He suggested that the future observance of *Hag Ha-Sukkot* by non-Jews is connected with a well-known Talmudic tradition that establishes the following link: the seventy bulls that are brought to the Temple, slaughtered and sacrificed during the seven days of *Sukkot* (Numbers 28: 12-34) correspond to the seventy nations of the world.

The *Gemara* states the following:

Another source adds the following note:⁸

7.

R. Elazar stated: To what do the seventy bulls (that are offered during the seven days of *Sukkot*) correspond? To the seventy nations (of the world). To what does the single bull (of the eighth day of *Shemini Atzeret*) correspond? To the unique nation (of Israel)

Sukkah 55b

אמר רבי [אלעזר] הני שבעים פרים
כנגד מי - כנגד שבעים אומות. פר
יחידי למה - כנגד אומה יחידה.

סוכה נה:

Moreover, *Midrash Shohar Tov*, the *Midrash* on *Tehillim*, poignantly points out

8.

On the Eighth Day You Shall Have A Solemn Assembly (Num. 29:35): This bears on what Scripture says: *In return for my love they are my adversaries: but I am all prayer* (Psalms 109:4). You find that on the Tabernacles festival Israel offers to Him seventy bulls as atonement for the seventy nations. Israel says: 'Sovereign of the Worlds!' Behold, we offer for them seventy bulls and they ought to love us, yet they hate us.' The Holy One, blessed be He, in consequence, said to them: 'Now therefore, offer a sacrifice on your own behalf: *On The Eighth Day You Shall Have A Solemn Assembly: You shall present a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the L-rd: One bull, one ram* (Num. 29:36).

Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 21:24

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the lament of the Jews and adds the connection between the sacrifices on behalf of the non-Jewish world and the universal need for water:⁹

Rav Goren suggested that it is biblical mandate to offer the seventy sacrifices on behalf of the nations of the world that formed the basis of the Zechariah vision

9.

In Return For My Love They Are My Adversaries (Psalms 109:4)...The people of Israel said to the nations of the earth: Because of us, the Holy One, blessed Be He, does all these things for you, and yet you hate us, as is said In Return For My Love They Are My Adversaries. At the festival of Tabernacles we offer up seventy bulls for the seventy nations and we pray that rain will come down for them. Yet In return for my love they are my adversaries: Still I am all prayer (Psalms 109:4).

Midrash Shohar Tov 109:4

concerning non-Jews and the *Chag* of *Sukkot* at the End of Days. That is, this concern with the nations of the world, the concern that was biblically expressed with the seventy bulls, will be expressed in the future period (and at least to a certain extent, requited) as well. Some non-Jews might very well fail the test. Such is the position of the *Gemara* in *Avoda Zara*. If they pass the test, they realize that they also are ultimately dependent upon the One God, who beneficently bestows water to all human beings.

It is important to notice that according to this approach, the sacrifices in the Jewish Temple on behalf of the nations of the world continue whether or not the non-Jews join us. Moreover, they continue even though the non-Jewish world may be adversarial towards us. Such a situation is truly unfortunate, but the basic orientation of sacrifices on behalf of the nations of the world remains the same.

One can easily subsume the universalistic aspect of the sacrifices on *Sukkot* with the "*toshav*" aspect of the Jews' stance towards the rest of humanity as explained by the Rav. By the same token, the particularistic aspect of the *korbanot* of *Shemini Atzeret*, which represents the unique relationship of the Jewish people with God, fits with the "*ger*" aspect of Jewish existence in the world. Although we fully participate in the endeavors of mankind, we also have concerns of our own, as members of the unique covenantal community of Jews, bound to a *brit* with God.

Concern with sacrifices for the nations, for all that it is a universalistic concern, does not mark the end boundary of Jewish involvement with the non-Jewish world. As will be seen from this concluding quote from R. Besdin's summary of the Rav's notion of the universal and the covenantal, Jews are also enjoined to involve themselves in relieving the physical suffering and depredations of non-Jews and to better the world at large:¹⁰

10.

The modern Jew is entangled in the activities of the Gentile society in numerous ways—economically, politically, culturally, and on some levels, socially. We share in the universal experience. The problems of humanity, war and peace, political stability or anarchy, and pollution transcend the boundaries of ethnic groups...Jewish concerns are not exclusively parochial. It is our duty as human beings to contribute our energies and creativity to alleviate the pressing needs and anguish of mankind and to contribute to its welfare.

1 For examples of this interpretation, see *Sefer Bereshit, Da'at Miqra*, Vol. II (Mosad Ha-Rav Kook Press, Jerusalem, 2000), Gen. 23:4, p. 139 (Hebrew); *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia., New York and Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 157-58.

2 Rashi to Genesis 23:4. Rashi (ad loc.) writes that his second interpretation is *midrash aggadah*.

3 J. Davidson, The First Chapter of the Book 'Batte hannefes we-hallehasim' es we-hallehasim' by Lewi ben Abraham ben Hayyim," *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem*, Vol. V (Schocken Jewish Publishing Company, Berlin and Jerusalem, 1939) (Hebrew), p.30.

4 Abraham R. Besdin, *Man of Faith in the Modern World: Reflections of the Rav, Volume Two* (Ktav Publishing House, Hoboken New Jersey, 1989), Chapter VIII ("The Universal and the covenantal"), pp. 74-75. The italics are mine. The Midrash the Rav cited can be found in *Midrash (Ha-)Hefetz to Genesis 26:18*, the verse that describes the wells that the patriarch Isaac dug.

5 According to many commentators, since Egypt is watered by the overflow of the Nile River and does not need rain, the nature of its punishment must perforce differ than that of other nations and does not consist in the suspension of rain water. See Rashi, *Massekhet Sotah* 13a, s.v. *kedei*. Rashi to Zechariah 14:18 interprets the punishment as follows: the Nile River will not overflow, for the Nile serves as the analogous "rain source" of Egypt.

6 For this point, see R. Yitzhak Sorotzkin, *Rinat Yitzhak: Zechariah* (Hebrew) (Wickliffe Ohio, 1998), p. 379.

7 Shlomo Goren, *Torat Ha-Moadim*, (Avraham Zioni, Tel Aviv 1964).

8 *The Midrash Rabbah*, Vol. III: Numbers, translated into English by Judah J Slotki (The Soncino Press, London, Jerusalem and New York, 1977) p. 851. I have modified the translation slightly.

9 *The Midrash on Psalms*, Vol. II, translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by William G. Braude (Yale University Press, New Haven 1959), pp. 203-04.

10 *Man of Faith in the Modern World*, p. 75

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

By Rabbi Joshua Flug

As Jews living in the modern world, we are often confronted with the question of how we want to be perceived in the eyes of non-Jews, as well as non-observant Jews. Every day we are faced with the question of whether we want to appear Jewish outwardly, by wearing certain clothing – most notably a *yarmulke* – or whether we want to conceal our identity as Jews. We also face this decision in choosing names for our children and in our manner of speech. In this section, we will present some of the rabbinic literature that addresses the question of whether we may blend in or whether we should stand out.

As a point of departure, let's begin with the following Midrash:
Another Midrash states:

1.

Another explanation why three varieties of burnt-offering are mentioned is that they allude to the three good characteristics which Israel possessed in Egypt and by virtue of which they were redeemed: They did not change their names, they did not change their language, and they fenced themselves off against unchastity.

Numbers Rabbah 13:20

למה נאמר ג' מיני עולה כנגד ג'
מדות טובות שהיו בידן של ישראל
במצרים ובזכותן נגאלו שלא שינו
את שמם ולא שינו את לשונם
ושגדרו עצמם מן הערוה.

במדבר רבה יג:כ

2.

'And I will bring you out, and I will deliver you, and I will redeem you, and I will take you' in correspondence to the four merits that they possessed – that they did not change their language, nor did they change their garments, nor reveal their secret... and they did not cancel the covenant of circumcision.

Midrash Lekach Tov Exodus 6:6

והוצאתי אתכם, והצלתי אתכם, וגאלתי אתכם, ולקחתי אתכם, כנגד ד' זכויות שבידם, שלא שינו את לשונם, ולא חילפו את שמלותם, ולא גילו את סודם ... ולא בטלו ברית מילה.

מדרש לקח טוב שמות ו:

According to Rashbam (and other commentators), the idea that the Jewish People did not adopt Egyptian clothing is referenced in the *Haggadah* by the phrase "מלמד שהיו מצויינים שם" – 'this teaches that they were outstanding there.' Rashbam comments:

3.

That they were distinctive in their dress so that they would not become mixed in with [the Egyptians].

Rashbam's Commentary on the Haggadah

שהיו מצויינין במלבושיהם כדי שלא יתערבו בהם.

פירוש רשב"ם להגדה

R. Menachem Mendel Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah* (Appendix to *Parshat Shemot* no. 3), notes that there is a version of a *Midrash*, which was available to some *Rishonim*, that states that the Jews merited the redemption because they did not change their names, their language and their style of dress.¹

There is certainly a common denominator in all three of these behaviors: they are the foundation of Jewish identity. Maintaining these Jewish features is what prevented the Jewish people from blending with Egyptian society and assimilating into it. If these behaviors were considered valuable enough to merit the redemption, a number of questions arise:

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1. Are there any *halachic* strictures regarding names, clothing and language? Were the Jewish people praised for following the law or were they praised for acting above and beyond the letter of the law?
2. What are the parameters of not changing one's name, language and clothing? For example, did the Jewish people wear clothing that was exclusively "Jewish" or did they primarily wear Egyptian clothing but identified themselves as Jews with one or two garments?
3. Are these behaviors inherently valuable or were they only valuable while the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt?
4. Aside from preventing assimilation, are there other values in having unique names, language and clothing?

Please take a moment to think about these questions before proceeding.

The Letter of the Law

There is a prohibition known as *chukat akum*, following the ways of idol worshippers:

4.

After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes.

Leviticus 18:3

כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם-
בָּהּ, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ; וְכַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְבִיא אֲתֶכֶם שָׁמָּה, לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ, וּבַחֲקֵיתֵיהֶם, לֹא תֵלְכוּ.

ויקרא יח:ג

5.

And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

Leviticus 20:23

וְלֹא תֵלְכוּ בְּחֻקֵי הַגּוֹי, אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי
מְשַׁלֵּחַ מִפְּנֵיכֶם: כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי עֲשׂוּ,
וְאֶקְצֵץ בָּם.

ויקרא כ:ג

Rambam formulates the prohibition as follows:

6.

We should not follow the customs of the gentiles, nor imitate them in dress or in their way of trimming the hair, as it is said, "And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nations," and "Neither shall we walk in their statutes," and "Take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them." These texts all refer to one theme and warn against imitating them. **The Israelite shall, on the contrary, be distinguished from them and recognizable by the way he dresses and in his other activities, just as he is distinguished from them by his knowledge and his principles.** And thus it is said, "And I have set you apart from the peoples." **He shall not put on a garment like that specially worn by them** nor let the lock of his hair grow in the way they do, etc.

Maimonides, Laws of Idolatry 11:1

אין הולכין בחקות העובדי כוכבים ולא מדמין להן לא במלבוש ולא בשער וכיוצא בהן שנאמר ולא תלכו בחקות הגוים, ונאמר ובחקותיהם לא תלכו, ונאמר השמר לך פן תנקש אחריהם, הכל בענין אחד הוא מזהיר שלא ידמה להן, אלא יהיה הישראל מובדל מהן וידוע במלבושו ובשאר מעשיו כמו שהוא מובדל מהן במדעו ובדעותיו, וכן הוא אומר ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים, לא ילבש במלבוש המיוחד להן ולא יגדל ציצית ראשו כמו ציצית ראשם וכו'

רמב"ם הל' עבודת כוכבים יא:א

Rambam not only presents the specific activities that are prohibited, he also presents an overall theme that a Jew should be recognizably separate in his clothing, and his actions.

There is a dispute regarding the nature of the prohibition of *chukat akum* that further sheds light on the parameters of the prohibition, and on the overall theme.

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

7.

For even if the Jewish people were accustomed to wearing one type of clothing and the non-Jews were accustomed to wearing a different type of clothing, if the Jewish clothing does not represent something specifically Jewish or a higher standard of modesty than the non-Jewish clothing, there is no prohibition for a Jew to wear clothing that the non-Jews are accustomed to wearing since it is just as appropriate as the Jewish clothing ... And that which those who are stringent cite the opinion of R. Moshe (Rambam) who states that "The Israelite shall, on the contrary, be distinguished from them and recognizable by the way he dresses," there is no proof whatsoever from his statement for it is obvious that R. Moshe did not require one to dress in a totally different fashion than the non-Jew. [One can deduce this from] that which he wrote afterwards, "He shall not put on a garment like that specially worn by them." [If Rambam's intent is to require one to dress in a totally different manner,] why did he write "specially worn by them" and not 'one should not wear clothing that is similar to their clothing.' Rather, one must conclude that [the] only [prohibition is regarding] clothing that is unique to the non-Jews and the Jewish people refrained from wearing them because of [lack of] modesty ...

Maharik, Siman 88

דאפילו הנהיגו ישראל במלבוש אחד והגויים במלבוש אחר אם אין מלבוש הישראלי מורה על היהדות או על הצניעות יותר מאותו שהגויים נוהגים בו אין שום איסור לישראל ללבוש לבוש הנהוג בין הגויים מאחר שהוא בדרך כשרו' וצניעותו כאותו של ישראל ... ואשר נשענו האוסרי' על דברי רבי' משה שכ' שיהיה הישראל מובדל מהם במלבושיו ושאר מעשיו וכו' אין משם ראיי' כלל דפשיטא דר' משה לא חייב להשתנות מן הגוי עכ"פ מדכתב אח"כ וז"ל לא ילבש במלבוש המיוחד להם ולמה לו לומר המיוחד להם לימא לא ילבש במלבוש הדומה למלבוש' אלא ודאי דלא נאסר אלא במלבוש שכבר נתיחד אליהם ופרשו הישראלים ממנו משום צניעות ...

מהרי"ק ס' פח

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According to Maharik, the only type of clothing that Rambam prohibits is the type of clothing that Jews have refrained from wearing because it does not represent modest attire or wearing it constitutes a transgression. Clothing that Jews would consider appropriate but has not gained popularity among the Jewish people is not included in this prohibition. Rama codifies Maharik's ruling in *Yoreh De'ah* 178:1.

The Vilna Gaon disagrees with Maharik:

8.

Anything that we would have done, had they not done it [first] is permissible. The same applies to clothing. However, any clothing that is unique to them is prohibited ... Nevertheless, clothing that we would have worn otherwise (if they had not done so first) is permissible. Therefore, all of the proofs presented by Maharik are not compelling because all of the cases are regarding clothing that was not specifically unique to them. This is what Rambam states, "unique to them," and the same applies to everything (i.e. things other than clothing). The comments of Maharik don't appear [acceptable] at all.

Be'ur HaGra, Yoreh De'ah 178:1

כ"ד שהיינו עושין זולתם מותר וכן במלבושים אבל כל שלובשין מלבוש המיוחד להם אסור ... אבל מלבוש שהיינו לובשין בלא"ה מותר לכן ל"ק כל ראיות מהרי"ק הנ"ל לפי שלא היה מיוחד להם דוקא וכ"כ הרמב"ם המיוחד להם וכן בכ"ד ודברי מהרי"ק אינן נראין כלל.

ביאור הגר"א, יר"ד קעח:א

According to the Vilna Gaon, any clothing design that Jews would wear, regardless of whether it is popular among the gentiles, is permissible. The prohibition of *chukat akum* applies to clothing that is designated for non-Jews, such that Jews would not adopt wearing such clothing, regardless of whether the reason is necessarily modesty.

It's possible to explain that the Jewish people in Egypt merited the redemption because they did not violate the prohibition of *chukat akum* (even though they were not yet commanded to do so).² Accordingly, one can emulate the actions of the Jews in Egypt by simply following the rules of *chukat akum*.

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

Chukat Akum in Adopting Jewish Names

If the Jewish People were praised for following the rules of *chukat akum*, one should logically conclude that the prohibition of *chukat akum* should apply to adopting a name.

Question: How should one apply this prohibition? Should the same parameters that apply to clothing be applied to names or should one apply a different standard for names?

If the parameters for clothing and names are the same, then according to Maharik, as long as the name is not something that is reminiscent of idolatry or other inappropriate behavior, any name should ostensibly be permissible. According to the Vilna Gaon, the name must be one that the Jewish People might have adopted on their own had it not been first adopted by the non-Jews. If the parameters are different, what should they be?

R. Moshe Schick addresses the issue of using names that are not uniquely Jewish:

9.

That which you asked regarding people who call themselves non-Jewish names ... There is certainly a biblical prohibition in doing so as Rambam states in chapter eleven of *Hilchot Avodah Zarah*. For there is an explicit verse at the end of *Parshat Kedoshim* that states, "and [I] have set you apart from the peoples." And from this verse, the *Sifti* teaches us that we are prohibited from being similar to them in any way and anyone who does something in order to be similar to them violates what it states in the Torah that we are prohibited from being similar to them. Just as it is prohibited to be similar to them in regards to their clothing and their ways and manners, so too and certainly it is prohibited to be similar and adopt their names.

Continued...

אשר שאל בני אדם שמכנים עצמם בשם הגוים ... כי בוודאי יש בזה איסור דאוריית' כמ"ש הרמב"ם בפ' י"א מהלכו' ע"ז דמקרא מלא נאמר בסוף פ' קדושים ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי ומשם ילפינן בספרי דאין רשאין לדמות להם בשום אופן וכל שהוא עושה לדמות להם עובר על מה שנאמר בתור' דאסור לנו לדמות להם וכשם שאסור לנו להדמות להם במלבושם ובהילוכם ובשאר מנהגיהם ה"ה וכ"ש דאסור לדמות להם בשמם ועלינו לעשות כמו שעשו אבותינו שנאמר בהם ויהי שם לגוי גדול ודרשו חכז"ל מלמד שהיו ישראל מצויינים שם.

שו"ת מהר"ם שיק יו"ד ס' קסט

9. (continued)

It is our duty to do what our forefathers did as it states "and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous," which our rabbis interpret as teaching that the Jewish people were outstanding (when they were in Egypt) ...

Responsa of Maharam Schick Yoreh De'ah Siman 169

Question: Why does R. Schick prohibit using these names?

One can explain that he is following the opinion of the Vilna Gaon, and therefore, it is prohibited to adopt a name for the purpose of assimilation.³ Alternatively, one can explain that R. Schick is of the opinion that aside from the technical parameters of the prohibition of *chukat akum*, there is an overall theme that we should not assimilate among the non-Jews, and one who attempts to do so violates the prohibition even if he does not violate the letter of the law.

R. Yosef Rozen (known as the Rogatchover) addresses this issue as well:

10.

Regarding those who call themselves non-Jewish names [See the responsa of Maharam Schick, *Yoreh De'ah* no. 169, that this is considered a biblical prohibition.] Regarding names, see *Gittin* ... and the Tosefta at the end of *Gittin* that there are those who translate their Hebrew name into another language, for example Aryeh, and in another language the name is a translation of Aryeh (i.e. lion), this is permissible. Many Sefardic names as well as Arabic names are a translation of a Hebrew name ... Nevertheless, it is only permissible when it is a translation of a Hebrew name. To use a different type of [non-Jewish] name is prohibited.

Responsa of Tzafnat Paneach (New York Printing) Siman 275

ע"ד האנשים המכנים א"ע בשמות הגויים [ע' בת' מהר"ם שיק יו"ד סי' קס"ט דזה איסור דאורייתא]. בגדר שמות, עי' גיטין ... ותוספתא סוף גיטין דיש מתרגמין השם של לה"ק כמו הפירוש בלשון אחר, כמו אריה ובלשון אחר כמו ביאור על שם ארי' זה מותר. וכן הוי כל שמות הספרדיים כן בלשון ערבי תרגום של לה"ק ... עכ"פ רק דהיכי דמתרגם שמו של לה"ק בביאור שאר לשון לא איכפת לן כלל אבל אם משנה לשם אחר ודאי אסור.

שו"ת צפנת פענח (דפוס נוא יארק)
ס' רעה

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

R. Rozen permits adopting a name that is the translation of a Jewish name. For example, the name Leon, which is a translation of Aryeh, is permissible.

Question: Is R. Rozen's position consistent with any of the positions regarding *chukat akum* on clothing?

Perhaps R. Rozen is of the same opinion as the Vilna Gaon. Any name that the Jews might have conceived of themselves is permissible. R. Rozen considers any name that is a translation of a known Jewish name to be included in this permissible category. However, if the name is not a translation of a known Jewish name, one should assume that it is not a name that the Jews would have otherwise adopted.

Beyond the Letter of the Law

R. Moshe Feinstein posits that the actions of the Jewish People in Egypt are praiseworthy because they went beyond the letter of the law:

11.

Regarding that which people adopt non-Jewish names, it is certainly something very inappropriate being that the rabbis praised [not changing their names] and considered it among the things that allowed them to merit the redemption from Egypt. However, we have not found an actual prohibition regarding this. It is similar to that which they did not change their language, which is also among the four things that are listed there, that although there is a mitzvah to speak Hebrew ... nevertheless, there is no prohibition [to speak another language] for we see that the Jewish people have always spoken in the language of other nations since we have been exiled due to our sins among the nations. And even great Torah leaders and pious individuals did not speak Hebrew.

Continued...

ומצד עצם הדבר שמשנים את שמותיהם לשמות נכרים ודאי הוא דבר מגונה מאד מאחר שחז"ל שיבחו זה וחשבו זה מהדברים שבשבילם נגאלו ממצרים, אבל איסור ממש לא מצינו בזה. והוא כמו לא שינו את לשונם דג"כ הוא מהארבעה דברים שחשיב התם, שחזינון שאף שהוא מצוה לדבר בלה"ק כדאיתא בספרי ס"פ עקב והובא ברש"י בפ' החומש שם על הפסוק לדבר במ, מ"מ אינו איסור דהא כל ישראל מדברים בלשון חול של האומות מזמן שגלינו בחטאינו בין האומות, ואף גדולי תורה וחסידים עולם לא דברו בלה"ק ... ולכן כיון שאינו איסור רק מעלה גדולה לא הועילה הצויחה.

שו"ת אגרות משה אהע"ז ג:לה

11. (continued)

Therefore, since there is no actual prohibition, rather it is merely an appropriate thing to do, any protest [against the practice of adopting a non-Jewish name] was unsuccessful.

Responsa Igrot Moshe Even HaEzer 3:35

R. Feinstein makes two important points. First, there is no halachic prohibition against adopting a non-Jewish name, but it is highly inappropriate to do so. Second, adopting a non-Jewish name can be compared to adopting a secular language that has become widespread among Jews throughout Jewish history. Although it is not appropriate to speak in this language, the rabbis were never able to limit the practice because there is no halachic prohibition involved.

In a later responsum, R. Feinstein presents a further justification for the practice of many Jews who have adopted non-Jewish names:

12.

There is room to say that that which the rabbis in *Vayikra Rabbah* [chapter] thirty-two praise [those who lived at the time of the] exile in Egypt that they didn't change their names, applies to [those who lived] prior to the giving of the Torah when there was no significant distinction [for them to be unique] through the observance of the Noachide laws, and specifically since a large portion of the Jewish people worshipped idols and most did circumcise their children until immediately prior to the redemption when then they were circumcised by Yehoshua in order that they may eat the *Korban Pesach* ... and therefore, because of their

Continued...

והנה יש מקום לומר דזה ששיבחו חז"ל ויק"ר ל"ב בגלות מצרים שלא שינו את שמותן הוא לקודם מתן תורה שלא היה היכר גדול בשביל קיום המצות דבני נח ובפרט שחלק גדול מישראל עבדו ג"כ ע"ז ורובן לא מלו את בניהם עד סמוך להגאולה כשהיו צריכין לאכול הפסח שמל אותן יהושע ומשמע שהיה רוב גדול לבד שבט לוי שהם מלו את בניהם כדכתיב ובריתך ינצורו בברכת משה ואף שפרש"י על אלו שנולדו במדבר היה זה גם במצרים כמפורש במדרשות, שלכן בשביל האמונה שיגאלו ורצו שיהיו ניכרין שהם ישראל הנהיגו להקפיד שלא ישנו את שמם ולא ישנו את לשונם ומטעם זה שייך זה להגאולה משום שבשביל אמונת הגאולה הקפידו על זה, אבל אחר מתן תורה אין לנו חיוב מדינא וגם לא מעניני זהירות

המשך...

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

12. (continued)

faith in the redemption and their desire to be recognizable as Jewish people they made sure to retain their Jewish names and their language. And for this reason, this only applied to the Exodus because their insistence [on not adopting non-Jewish names or language] was for the purpose of redemption. However, after the giving of the Torah, we have no obligation from the letter of the law nor is there any punctiliousness or piety in practicing anything but that which we were commanded in the six-hundred and thirteen mitzvot for all generations as well as some temporary mitzvot that are listed in the oral law. Therefore, our rabbis did not insist on this, for even ideas that relate to punctiliousness and piety were said at Sinai, see the beginning of Avot and the Bartenura, and after the giving of the Torah [the idea of not changing one's name or language] was not part of this tradition. Rather on this merit our forefathers merited the redemption which one can explain was only relevant and beneficial to them as has been stated, but not after the giving of the Torah. And even though this is logical, I am fearful to make this conclusion without great proofs [to this idea.]

Responsa Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim
4:66

ומוסר אלא מה שנצטוינו התרי"ג מצות לדורות והמצות שנצטוו לשעה וכפי שנאמרו בתורה שבעל פה ולכן לא הקפידו ע"ז רבותינו דהא אף עניני זהירות ומוסר ומעלה נמי נאמרו מסיני עיין בריש פרקי אבות ברע"ב ולא היה זה בקבלה שכן איכא מעלה גם אלאחר מתן תורה אלא שבזכות זה נגאלו אבותינו שאפשר לפרש שהיה מעלה ודבר טוב רק אצלם כדלעיל ולא אחר מתן תורה. ואף שמסתבר כן מסתפינא לומר זה בלא ראיות גדולות.

שו"ת אגרות משה או"ח ד:סו

Sukkot To-Go 5768 / 2007

According to R. Feinstein, it is possible that there is no longer a value to maintain Jewish identity through names, language and clothing. While the Jewish People were in Egypt there were no mitzvot to observe; therefore, this was their means of maintaining Jewish identity. Nowadays, the mitzvot themselves serve that purpose.

R. Feinstein's approach assumes that the value of the actions that the Jewish People were praised for is entirely practical in nature. It is possible to use R. Feinstein's logic and still suggest that there is value in maintaining one's Jewish identity through names, language and clothing, albeit without requiring one to do so. For example, R. Asher Weiss, *Minchat Asher, Shemot* no. 1, suggests that since the purpose of this mandate is to maintain Jewish identity it may be sufficient if one adopts a Jewish name or language or clothing, but not necessarily all three. A similar and perhaps more lenient approach is implied by Ritva:

13.

They are recognizable in their clothing and their ways. For example, *tzitzit* on their clothes etc.

*Ritva Commentary on the Haggadah,
S.V. 'V'ehi Sham l'Goy Gadol'*

שהם ניכרים במלבושיהן ובענייניהם
כמו ציצית בבגדיהם וכיוצא בו.

פירוש הריטב"א להגדה
ד"ה ויהי שם לגוי גדול

Ritva implies that the Jewish people did not necessarily wear Jewish clothing exclusively. Rather, they had one garment (i.e. a garment that contained *tzitzit*) that distinguished them from the Egyptians.

Questions for further discussion:

We have seen two basic approaches regarding non-Jewish names, languages and clothing. One approach is that this whole discussion is a halachic issue focusing on the prohibition of *chukat akum*. The other approach is that the Jewish People were praised for doing something above and beyond the letter of the law. How do you think these two approaches would apply to the following questions? [Note: one should not draw any halachic conclusions from these questions. Their purpose is for discussion only.]

1. Is it sufficient to have a name, language or attire that another Jew can recognize as Jewish, or must the distinguishing features be apparent to a non-Jew as well?
2. Is it permissible to hide these features and "blend in" on a temporary basis?
3. Does this discussion include one who has a Jewish name, but decides to use a non-Jewish name for certain activities?

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

Jewish Identity and the Big Picture

There is an additional consideration regarding Jewish identity that is not part of the discussion of *chukat akum* or the attributes of the Jewish People at the time of the Exodus. This consideration relates to the opportunity for *kiddush Hashem*.

We are all familiar with the concept of *kiddush Hashem*, sanctifying God's name, and *chilul Hashem*, desecrating God's name. Rambam, in his *Mishneh Torah* describes these mitzvot as follows:

14.

All the members of the house of Israel are commanded to sanctify the great Name of God, as it is said "But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel." They are furthermore cautioned not to profane it, as it is said "Neither shall ye profane My holy Name." How are these precepts to be applied? Should an idolater arise and coerce an Israelite to violate any one of the commandments mentioned in the Torah under the threat that otherwise he would put him to death... This rule applies to all the commandments, except the prohibitions of idolatry, in chastity and murder. With regard to these: if an Israelite should be told "transgress one of them or else you will be put to death," he should suffer death rather than transgress... When one is enjoined to transgress rather than be slain, and suffers death rather than transgress, he is to blame for his death. Where one is enjoined to die rather than transgress, and suffers death so as not to transgress, he sanctifies the name of God...

Continued...

כל בית ישראל מצווין על קדוש השם הגדול הזה שנאמר ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל, ומוזהרין שלא לחללו שנאמר ולא תחללו את שם קדשי, כיצד כשיעמוד עובד כוכבים ויאנוס את ישראל לעבור על אחת מכל מצות האמורות בתורה או יהרגנו יעבור ואל יהרג ... במה דברים אמורים בשאר מצות חוץ מעבודת כוכבים וגלוי עריות ושפיכת דמים, אבל שלש עבירות אלו אם יאמר לו עבור על אחת מהן או תהרג, יהרג ואל יעבור ... כל מי שנאמר בו יעבור ואל יהרג ונהרג ולא עבר הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו, וכל מי שנאמר בו יהרג ואל יעבור ונהרג ולא עבר הרי זה קידש את השם ... וכל מי שנאמר בו יהרג ואל יעבור ועבר ולא נהרג הרי זה מחלל את השם.

רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה ה:א-ד

14. (continued)

Where one is enjoined to suffer death rather than transgress, and commits a transgression, he has profaned the name of God.

Maimonides Laws of the Fundamental Principles of the Torah 5:1-4

Rambam's description of *kiddush Hashem* and *chilul Hashem* clearly focuses on situations where one must decide between one's life and the performance of mitzvot. However, at the end of that chapter Rambam adds:

15.

There are other things that are a profanation of the Name of God. When a man, great in the knowledge of the Torah and reputed for his piety does things which cause people to talk about him, even if the acts are not express violation, he profanes the Name of God. As, for example, if such a person makes a purchase and does not pay promptly, provided that he had means and the creditors ask for payment and he puts them off; or if he indulges immoderately in jesting, eating or drinking, when he is staying with ignorant people or living among them; or if his mode of addressing people is not gentle, or he does not receive people affably, but is quarrelsome and irascible. The greater a man is the more scrupulous should he be in all things, and do more than the strict letter of the law requires. And if a man has been scrupulous in his

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ויש דברים אחרים שהן בכלל חילול השם, והוא שיעשה אותם אדם גדול בתורה ומפורסם בחסידות דברים שהבריות מרננים אחריו בשבילם, ואע"פ שאינן עבירות הרי זה חילל את השם כגון שלקח ואינו נותן דמי המקח לאלתר, והוא שיש לו ונמצאו המוכרים תובעין והוא מקיפן, או שירבה בשחוק או באכילה ושתיה אצל עמי הארץ וביניהן, או שדבורו עם הבריות אינו בנחת ואינו מקבלן בסבר פנים יפות אלא בעל קטטה וכעס, וכיוצא בדברים האלו הכל לפי גדלו של חכם צריך שידקדק על עצמו ויעשה לפנים משורת הדין, וכן אם דקדק החכם על עצמו והיה דבורו בנחת עם הבריות ודעתו מעורבת עמהם ומקבלם בסבר פנים יפות ונעלב מהם ואינו עולבם, מכבד להן ואפילו למקילין לו, ונושא ונותן באמונה, ולא ירבה באריחות עמי הארץ ושיבתן, ולא יראה תמיד אלא עוסק בתורה עטוף בציצית מוכתר בתפילין ועושה בכל מעשיו לפנים משורת הדין, והוא שלא יתרחק הרבה ולא ישתומם, עד שימצאו הכל מקלסין אותו ואוהבים אותו ומתאווים למעשיו הרי זה קידש את ה' ועליו הכתוב אומר ויאמר לי עבדי אתה ישראל אשר בך אתפאר.

רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה ה:יא

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

15. (continued)

conduct, gentle in his conversation, pleasant towards his fellow-creatures, affable in manner when receiving them, not retorting, even when affronted, but showing courtesy to all, even to those who treat him with disdain, conducting his commercial affairs with integrity, not readily accepting the hospitality of the ignorant nor frequenting their company, not seen at all times, but devoting himself to the study of Torah, wrapped in *Talith* and crowned with phylacteries, and doing more than his duty in all things, avoiding however, extremes and exaggerations – such a man has sanctified God, and concerning him, Scripture saith “And he said unto me, ‘Thou are my servant O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’”

Maimonides Laws of the Fundamental Principles of the Torah 5:11

Question: If Rambam defines the mitzvot of *kiddush Hashem* as one who gives his life in order not to violate the three cardinal transgressions and *chilul Hashem* as one who violates one of these transgressions and doesn't give his life, how does Rambam's description of proper behavior for a scholar fit in to those definitions?

Perhaps Rambam's description of the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* in his *Sefer HaMitzvot* sheds light on the issue:

16.

[And the ninth commandment is that] we are commanded to sanctify God's Name. It is contained in His words, *But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel*. The purport of this Commandment is that **we are in duty bound to proclaim this true religion to the world**, undeterred by fear of injury from any source. Even if a tyrant tries to compel us by force to deny Him, we must not obey, but must positively rather submit to death; and we must not even mislead the tyrant into supposing that we have denied Him while in our hearts we continue in

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והמצוה התשיעית היא שצונו לקדש השם והוא אמרו ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל. וענין זאת המצוה אשר אנחנו מצווים לפרסם האמונה הזאת האמתית בעולם ושלא נפחד בהיזק שום מזיק. ואע"פ שבא עלינו מכריח גובר יבקש ממנו לכפור בו יתעלה לא נשמע ממנו אבל נמסור עצמנו למיתה ולא נתעהו לחשוב שכפרנו ואע"פ שלבנו מאמין בו יתעלה. וזאת היא מצות קדוש השם המצווים בה בני ישראל בכללם רוצה לומר מסירת נפשנו למות ביד האונס על אהבתו ית' ואמונת יחודו.

רמב"ם ספר המצוות מצות עשה ט

16. (continued)

In our belief in Him (exalted be He). This is the Commandment concerning the Sanctification of the Name which is laid upon every son of Israel: that we must be ready to die at the tyrant's hands for our love of Him (exalted be He), and for our faith in His Unity.

Maimonides Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Commandment 9

In *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Rambam describes the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* as an obligation to publicize throughout the world belief in God and dedication to that belief. We can now understand that when Rambam in his *Mishneh Torah* describes the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* as sacrificing one's life in order not to violate one of the three cardinal transgressions, he is not defining the mitzvah. He is stating that the most extreme method for publicizing dedication to belief in God is to give one's life for this belief – but only when forced to do so. However, one can publicize this belief in other ways, above and beyond the observance of mitzvot. Therefore, Rambam states that there is an opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* merely by behaving like a "mentsch."

R. Naftali Z. Y. Berlin (commonly known as Netziv) teaches an important lesson regarding publicizing belief in God to the nations of the world:

17.

This book is referred to as *Sefer Shemot* by the authors of the Midrash. Ramban [in his commentary] at the end of the book called it the book of redemption. The author of *Halachot Gedolot* at the end of his book calls it the second book as he refers to the Five Books of Moses as "The Book of Genesis," "The Second Book," "The Book of Cohanim," "The Book of Numbers," and "Mishneh Torah (the review of the Torah)." He should have either called them all by number: "The Second Book," "The Third Book," etc. or [he should have referred to it as] "*Chumash Shemot*."

Continued...

זה הספר נקרא בפי בעלי המדרש ספר שמות ... והרמב"ן סוף הספר קראו ספר הגאולה זולת רבינו בה"ג בסוף ספרו הקדוש יקראהו ספר שני דקחשיב חמשה חומשי תורה ספר בראשית וחומש שני וספר כהנים וחומש הפקודים ומשנה תורה ... והיה לרבינו לקרוא כולם במספר חומש שני ושלישי וכו' או חומש שמות ... אלא בא ללמדנו דזה הספר ביחוד הוא שני לספר ראשית הבריאה כי הוא חלק שני מזה הספר היינו בו נגמר סדר הבריאה וכמאמרם ז"ל בראשית בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית פי' תכלית העולם בכלל הוא שיהא אומה אחת חלק ה' עמו וזה לא נשלם עד שיצאו ישראל ממצרים ובאו לתכליתם שיהיו ראויים להיות אור לגוים להעמידם על ידיעת אלקי עולם ... נמצא דיציאת מצרים היה גמר הבריאה או מתן תורה.

העמק דבר הקדמה לספר שמות

3. Blending in or Standing Out?

17. (continued)

Rather, what he is teaching us is that this book is specifically the second to the book of the beginning of Creation because it is the sequel to that book for in [*Sefer Shemot*] the Creation was completed, as we find in the statement of the rabbis that it is called *Bereishit* because the purpose [of Creation] was for the Jewish people who are called *reishit* (the first). This means that the purpose of Creation was that there should be one nation dedicated to [serving] God and that was not complete until they left Egypt and reached their purpose of being able to be a light unto the nations to provide them knowledge about the Creator of the world ... For this reason, the Exodus from Egypt or the giving of the Torah are considered the completion of Creation.

Ha'amek Davar, Introduction to Exodus

According to R. Berlin, one can view *Sefer Shemot* as a continuation of *Sefer Bereishit* in that the purpose of creation – to create a nation that is dedicated to the service of God and serves as a light unto the nations to carry out that message – was fulfilled in *Sefer Shemot*.

R. Berlin repeats this idea in a number of his writings. One of his comments relates directly to *Sukkot*:

18.

King Shlomo recited the book of Kohelet on Sukkot while all of the leaders of the nations of the world gathered to stand over the sacrifices whose purpose was to bring rain to the world ... [The purpose of this was that] God wanted the entire world to know God through the Jewish People ... Therefore, King Shlomo provided rebuke in a manner that the nations of the world can understand, for this is the hallmark of man: to fear God and observe His commandments.

Preface of Meitiv Shir to Song of Songs

שלמה המלך אמר ספר קהלת בחג
הסכות באשר אז היו נקהלים גם
חכמי האומות שנשלחו לעמוד על
קרבנות פרי החג שהיה בשביל ירידת
גשמים לעולם ... ורצה הקב"ה בזה
שידעו כל יושבי תבל את ה' ע"י
ישראל עמו ... ועל כן היה שלמה
המלך מוכיח בחקירה מוסרית המובן
גם לחכמי תבל כי זה תעודת האדם
לירא מפני ה' ולשמור מצותיו.

פתיחה למטיב שיר על שיר השירים

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The Gemara, *Sukkah* 55a, states that the seventy *Mussaf* sacrifices that are brought on Sukkot represent the seventy nations of the world. According to R. Berlin, the ultimate purpose of these sacrifices is to have the Jewish People teach the nations of the world about belief in God and his providence over the world. This is why Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) was written on *Chol HaMoed* of Sukkot and this is why we read Kohelet on Sukkot.

Question: How does the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* relate to the question of whether one should blend in or stand out?

The purpose of the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* is to publicize belief in God and dedication to that belief through our actions and our behavior. While one can find justification to blend into society and not be easily identified as a Jew, or at least as an observant Jew, a great opportunity is lost when one does so. The dedication to our faith teaches everyone we encounter a small lesson about the Torah and its ways. If we act properly that message will have a profound positive impact and it will be considered a *kiddush Hashem*, but if we conceal our identities as Jews, that lesson is never taught.

¹ See e.g. Abarbanel's *Zevach Pesach*, s.v. *VaYehi Sham L'Goy*

² R. Moshe Schick, *Teshuvot Maharam Schick, Yoreh De'ah* no. 169, seems to follow this approach.

³ R. Schick is assuming that adopting a non-Jewish name is for the purpose of assimilation – a debatable assumption.

4. *Amira L'Nachri*

By Rabbi Mordechai I. Willig

An important aspect of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews is the roles and boundaries that define how non-Jews can assist Jews in fulfilling ritual responsibilities. In some other articles we have explored the ethical implications in the interaction between Jews and non-Jews. In this piece, we will explore the halachic implications, through the sugya of *Amira l'Nachri*, telling a non-Jew to perform melacha on Shabbat.

May one ask a non-Jew to carry food from the house to the *Sukkah* on *Shabbat* if the *eruv* falls down?

For the sake of a mitzvah, one may instruct a non-Jew to do something that is Rabbinically proscribed for a Jew.¹ An *eruv* is effective only in an area in which one may carry by Torah law. If the *eruv* falls down, a Jew is only prohibited to carry by Rabbinic law. As such, he may instruct a non-Jew to carry, so as to enable the mitzvah of eating in a *Sukkah* to be fulfilled.²

This leniency requires explanation. One may not tell a non-Jew to do a *melacha*, a Torah prohibition, even for the purpose of doing a mitzvah.³ If no mitzvah is involved, one may not instruct a non-Jew to perform even an act that is only prohibited Rabbinically. Why is it that if the prohibition is Rabbinic and a mitzvah is involved, a non-Jew may be instructed to perform some act?

The *Gemara* questions whether the Rabbinic injunction against instructing a non-Jew applies to Torah laws other than *Shabbat*, such as muzzling an ox that is threshing, for example.⁴ Perhaps this question depends upon the nature of the injunction. Do we consider the non-Jew an agent of the Jew who instructs him? If so, the injunction applies to all prohibitions, since an agent is bound to the same laws as the principal who empowered him.⁵

The *Gemara* implies that the source of the injunction is the following phrase.⁶

In particular, the *Gemara* points to the latter part of the *passuk* “nor pursuing thy

1.

If thou turn away thy foot because of the Sabbath, from pursuing thy business on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the LORD honourable; and shalt honour it, not doing thy wonted ways, nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof;

Isaiah 58:13

אִם-תָּשִׁיב מִשַּׁבַּת רַגְלְךָ, עֲשׂוֹת
חֲפָצְךָ בְּיוֹם קֹדֶשׁי; וְקִרְאתָ לַשַּׁבַּת
עֲנוּג, לְקֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה מְכַבֵּד, וְכִבְדֹתוֹ
מַעֲשׂוֹת דְרָכֶיךָ, מִמִּצְוֵי חֲפָצְךָ וְדַבַּר
דָּבָר.

ישעיהו (נח:יג)

business, nor speaking thereof”. One may not discuss a *melacha* that he, or anyone else, plans to perform.⁷ Instructing a non-Jew to do a *melacha* necessarily includes mentioning that *melacha*, which is forbidden. If this problem of mentioning a *melacha* is the only reason for the injunction against instructing a non-Jew, it is limited to *Shabbat* and does not apply to other Torah laws.

The potential dual nature of the injunction affects *Shabbat* as well. One may not tell a non-Jew to do a *melacha* after *Shabbat*. The instruction on *Shabbat* constitutes ‘discussing the forbidden.’⁸ However, if one tells a non-Jew on Friday to do *melacha* on *Shabbat*, no forbidden discussion takes place. Since the non-Jew can still be considered an agent of the Jew, and as we mentioned above, an agent is bound to the same laws as the principal, we may still have a problem. Indeed, this stricter view is accepted, indicating that we are concerned about agency as well.⁹

The *Gemara* ultimately rules that only “seeking your needs” is prohibited.¹⁰ It is permissible to seek the “needs of Heaven”, which presumably includes discussion of the mitzvah needs also. This addresses the first component of our case. The source of prohibition for discussing *melacha* only rules out discussing *melachot* that are not related to doing a mitzvah. Speaking about the *melacha* in question to a non-Jew may appear permitted. The question remains whether asking him to perform is still a problem, based on our understanding of agency law.

The *Gemara* does not resolve the question of agency, giving us no determination as to whether the non-Jew is an agent, and thus bound to the same laws as the Jewish principal.¹¹ Our general rule is that unresolved questions that relate to Torah prohibitions require stringency. Even though the entire concept of agency in this context is only a Rabbinic *chumra*, nevertheless, since the *melacha* itself is a Torah law we adopt the strict view. The end result, as mentioned earlier, is that we may not tell a non-Jew on Friday to do *melacha* on *Shabbat*. When, however, the act that the non-Jew is instructed to perform is only a Rabbinic violation, we may adopt a lenient position with respect to the unresolved question of agency in the *Gemara*. The non-Jew could then be considered an independent actor, not an agent of a Jew, and a Jew could instruct him to perform an

4. Amira L'Nachri

act that is a Rabbinic violation of *Shabbat*. This is the plain reading of the *Rif* in the context of a *milah* on *Shabbat*.¹²

Elsewhere, the *Gemara* prohibits telling a non-Jew to do a Rabbinically forbidden act, seemingly contradicting the *Rif*.^{13,14} To resolve this contradiction, we learn that the *Rif's* ruling is limited to *milah* and other "needs of Heaven," which may be discussed. The *Gemara's* ruling applies to all other situations, including asking a non-Jew to violate a Rabbinic prohibition that is not for the purpose of a *mitzvah*.

The result of the preceding discussion is that telling a non-Jew to perform a Rabbinically prohibited act (*Shvus D'Shvus*) is a forbidden discussion. Instructing a non-Jew to do a *melacha* (that is, a violation of *Shabbat m'deoraisa*) for a *mitzvah* is prohibited since the non-Jew is considered the Jew's agent. Yet a *shvus d'shvus* for the sake of a *mitzvah*, like telling a non-Jew to perform a Rabbinically prohibited act on *Shabbat*, is allowed. The *mitzvah* eliminates the problem of forbidden discussion. The fact that the act is prohibited Rabbinically enables us to rely on the lenient position that the non-Jew is not an agent of the Jew.

Returning to our opening question, if the *eruv* fell down one may ask a non-Jew to carry food to the *Sukkah* on *Shabbat*? First, let's answer the foundational question: May one ask a non-Jew on Friday to perform a Rabbinically prohibited act on *Shabbat*? According to our analysis, it should be permitted. There is no forbidden discussion, and no agency since one may rely on the lenient position regarding Rabbinic violations. Indeed, the *Mishna L'Melech* (6:9) cites such an opinion. But this is not the actual ruling – the leniency should in fact be avoided. We rely on the rule that an unresolved Rabbinic question may be resolved leniently (*safek derabanan l'kula*) only in a case of need. We do not enter into such a situation unless it is unavoidable. Therefore, under ordinary circumstances, we may not tell a non-Jew on Friday to perform a Rabbinically prohibited act on *Shabbat*, even though it is technically permitted.

Similarly, the dispensation of *shvus d'shvus* for a *mitzvah*, which is based on the decision rule of *safek derabanan l'kula*, may be relied upon when necessary. The answer to our question then is that a Jew may ask a non-Jew to bring food to the *Sukkah* on *Shabbat* if the *eruv* has fallen down during *Shabbat*. However, in a place that has no *eruv* to begin with, every effort must be made to reach a different arrangement before *Shabbat*. Only when there is no alternative may a non-Jew be told to perform a Rabbinically prohibited act for the sake of a *mitzvah*.

1 *Rambam Shabbat* 6:9, *Shulchan Aruch* OC 307:5

2 See *Beur Halacha* 364:2

3 *Mishna Berurah* 307:19,24

4 *Bava Metzia* 90a

5 In agency law, the person who dispatches an agent to serve as his representative is referred to as the principal.

6 *Shabbat* 150a

7 *Shulchan Aruch* 307:1

8 See *ibid.* 307:22

9 *Rambam* 6:1, See *Magid Mishna* and *Hagohos Maimoniyos*, and see *Shulchan Aruch* 307:2

10 *Shabbat* *ibid.*

11 *Bava Metzia* *ibid.*

12 See *Rifon Shabbat* 56a

13 *Shabbat* 122a, 150a

14 *Sefer Hamachira* #57

5. *Sukkot* For Families

By Aaron Steinberg

Introduction

On *Sukkot*, Jews around the world leave their homes and venture into the wild. Well, to their backyards, anyway. As they venture out of their homes, however, they are confronted by the outside world. What relationship are we as Jews meant to have with the rest of the world? We are citizens of that world, but we're only .002 percent of the global population. How do we interact with the other 6 billion people? Do we have an *obligation* to interact with the outside world? Is it simply allowed but not required? Maybe we're supposed to have as little as possible to do with non-Jews?

The *Nevi'im* thought about this question, and introduced the concept of *Or LaGoyim*, generally translated as "A Light Unto the Nations." In Isaiah 42:6, the prophet describes how God was not content with *Bnei Yisrael* simply working on becoming a righteous nation; He wanted them to become a "light for the nations, so that [His] salvation may extend to the ends of the earth."

But what does that really mean? How does one become a "light unto the nations?" Generally there are two different understandings of *Or LaGoyim*. The first explains that the Jewish people must create a perfect society unto themselves (The State of Israel), and by setting a good example, the rest of the world will learn how to create their own ideal societies.

According to the second exposition, the Jewish people are commanded to go out into the world and help. That Jews must actively seek ways to improve the lives of Jews and non-Jews alike.

While both theories are valid, the second one has some support in another concept *Chazal* explore called *Darchei Shalom*. In Tractate *Gittin* 61A, the Rabbis teach that a Jew is required to give charity to the non-Jewish poor just like she gives charity to Jewish poor. They also teach that a Jew must visit sick non-Jews the same way he would visit a sick Jew.

When the Torah describes the three festivals *Bnei Yisrael* celebrate each year, it describes *Sukkot* differently than the other two. It mentions the unique aspect of being

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happy. "You shall **rejoice** on your Festival... and you will be completely **joyous**." (Deut. 16:14-15) But how are we supposed to be happy when we know there are people in need around the world? *Sukkot* is a time of the year to increase happiness, and as Mark Twain said, "Whoever is happy will make others happy, too." *Sukkot* is the time to look around the world and see how we can help others and make the entire world a better place to live.

This packet contains mini biographies of four prominent Jews who lived in the last 100 years and dedicated their lives to making the world a better place. Bella Abzug was a successful politician and fighter for equal rights. Joe Lieberman is a United States Senator who was also the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee in 2000. Ruth Messinger is the head of a Jewish organization working to help people around the world. Elie Wiesel is a Holocaust survivor who has dedicated his life to fighting human rights abuses. Allow your children to read the scripts for these leaders during a meal in the *Sukkah* to create an interactive experience.

Also in this packet is an exploration into the symbolic meaning of three *Sukkot* customs. Each of these customs relates to a Jew's obligation to help others, and each comes along with an activity that can be done in and around the *Sukkah*. Learn about these symbols and enjoy the activities throughout the *chag*.

I hope this packet allow you to have an interactive family *Sukkot*, as you explore what a Jew's role in the world is, and put some of those ideas into practice!

Chag Sameach,

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The Center for the Jewish Future
Yeshiva University

5. Sukkot For Families

The Sukkah

“You will dwell in booths for seven days; all natives of Israel shall dwell in booths.” (Leviticus 23:42)

Every year on Sukkot, we leave our homes to go live in what is pretty much a hut. We do this to remind ourselves what *Bnei Yisrael* had to do after they left Egypt and were wandering in the desert. During the day they were protected by God’s Clouds of Glory and at night a pillar of fire protected them. Just like *Bnei Yisrael* trusted that God would protect them from harm and danger while they were in the desert, we also rely on God to keep us safe in the Sukkah.



Believe it or not, there are real people in the world today who have been forced to leave their homes and run for safety. Some of these people come from a place called Darfur, in the western part of the African country of Sudan. Other people in Sudan have attacked people from Darfur, and hundreds of thousands of Darfurians have been forced to leave their homes and enter a desert hoping to stay safe. Many of them are staying in refugee camps to try to stay safe. They are now trying to live in tents and huts, and have to rely on God’s protection to keep them alive.

1.

Mishnah. All seven days of Sukkot, a person makes the Sukkah into a fixed home, and their fixed home into a temporary dwelling. If rain is falling, when are you allowed to return to your home? When the rain is so bad that your porridge is ruined by the water.

Gemara. How do you make the *Sukkah* into your fixed home? If you have nice dishes, bring them into the *Sukkah*. If you have beautiful linens, bring them into the *Sukkah*. You should eat, drink, and relax in the *Sukkah*.

Sukkah 28b

The *Mishnah* and *Gemara* in *Massechet Sukkah* relate the following about living in the Sukkah:

When *Sukkot* time comes around, we are supposed to bring all of our belongings into the *Sukkah*, and abandon our usual home. We know we can always rely on it as a backup, but only when it is very uncomfortable.

It is important to remember that while we have our warm homes to return to if it is raining or very cold, many people who live in huts and tents all year-round don’t have anywhere to go when the weather is poor. We should appreciate what we have, and work together to help those in need all around the world.

Make building the *Sukkah* a family activity. Allow your children to appreciate the

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amount of work that goes into building a makeshift home that will last you for one week. Small children can help when it comes to the decorating, and older children can help with the construction itself.

Make sure that safety comes first, and if there is not someone to watch young children to make sure they don't get hurt, it might be best for them to stay inside for the building process. While the *Sukkah* is a fun week-long campout in the backyard, it can also serve as a lesson in appreciating the value of a home and appreciating the protection we receive from God daily.

For an interesting look at how *Sukkot* might look, check this out:

<http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/jeisholidays/sukkot/naot.htm>

**note: Jewish holidays is misspelled in the url missing the 'w' and the 'h'*

Brief Summary of the Crisis in Darfur

Since early 2003, Sudanese government soldiers and their militiamen, called the Janjaweed, have fought rebel groups in the Western region of Darfur. The government's strategy has been to carry out systematic assaults against civilians of the same ethnic groups as the rebels: the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masaalit. Rebels have committed some attacks against civilians, but the Sudanese military and militia have perpetrated the violence.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians have died from violence, disease, and starvation, and other horrible human rights abuses have occurred. Approximated 2.5 million people have been forced out of their homes, had their villages destroyed and their belongings stolen. Most of those displaced are lacking food, water, health care, and shelter.

The situation in Darfur was deemed a genocide by the United States Holocaust Museum in 2004, and was later determined such by the US government. The term genocide was first introduced in 1944 to describe the Holocaust.

In order to help these displaced Darfurians, countries around the world have to put pressure on Sudan to stop the genocide. China has a good economic relationship with Sudan, but has refused, so far, to demand a cessation of violence. The United Nations has finally decided that they must send peacekeeping forces into Darfur. If they are properly supported, they will be able to make a difference in the lives of millions.

Learning in Action with your Children

Sit down with your children, and teach them about the situation in Darfur. If done correctly, there is an age-appropriate way to talk about Darfur with children ranging from elementary school through high school.

After learning about Darfur with your children, send a message to your congressman to ask them to help the people of Darfur. If your kids are older, help them draft a letter. If

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they are younger, have them draw a picture to accompany a letter you write.

The Arba Minim

On *Sukkot*, we bring together four different species: the *lulav*, the *etrog*, the *hadassim* and the *aravot*. This is the time of the year when we collect the harvest, and we celebrate by incorporating these plants into our prayers. We are appreciative that we have all the plants that we need, so we use the *Arba Minim* to connect to God through nature.



Back in *Gan Eden*, God told Adam and Eve that they had a right to use the land for their own good, but that they also had the responsibility to protect it. It is up to us as Jews not to just consume the produce of the Earth, but also to learn about it and protect it.

When God gives *Bnei Yisrael* the mitzvah that will apply when they conquer the land of Israel, He tells them that it is forbidden to chop down fruit trees. He explains that unlike humans, a tree cannot run away to protect itself (Deut. 20:19). It is up to us to protect it! From this one *pasuk*, the entire concept of not wasting (*Ba'al Tashchit*) arose. The Rabbis forbade us from wasting anything from food to water to even electricity.

Sukkot is the perfect time of the year to connect to the world around us. It is our responsibility to know about the natural world and how we can relate with it. So let's use this *Sukkot* to explore our relationship with the environment, and educate our children as to what they can do to help protect it!

Why Four Species?

Four Different Jews

The four different species represent different types of people. The *etrog* is both tasty and good smelling, and represents a Jew with both wisdom and good deeds. The *lulav*, whose fruit tastes good, but has no aroma, represents a Jew with only wisdom. The *hadassim*, which smell pleasant, but have no flavor, represent a Jew who only does good deeds, and the plain *aravot*, that have neither scent nor taste, symbolize the Jew who is not wise, and who does not do good deeds.

We make an effort to bring together all types of Jews for the holiday of *Sukkot*, and create a sense of unity and happiness amongst the Jewish people.

Four Body Parts

They four species also represent four different parts of the human body. The *etrog* is a

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wonders of the world God gave us. The *aravot* leaves look like lips through which we are able to express our thoughts and feelings.

We bring together these different parts of the body to remember how our entire bodies are put into service and celebration of God on this holiday.

How do we hold them?

In order to hold the four species, we need to use both hands. In the right hand we take the *lulav* that has the *hadassim* and *aravot* tied to them (*hadassim* on the *lulav's* right, *aravot* on its left). In the left hand we hold the etrog. In order to perform the mitzvah, we hold two together and say the *bracha*.

In order to say the *bracha* before we do the *mitzvah*, many people hold the etrog upside down, and then flip it over after the *bracha* is said. But why would it matter if the *etrog* is upside down? Why should it matter which direction it is facing as long as you're holding it?

The *halacha* is that have to hold the four species the same way they grow. If you don't hold it the right way, you are missing out on the whole point that this is a plant. When we incorporate these plants into the service, we have to learn about them and hold them in the proper way.

Explore the Outdoors on Sukkot

Take the lesson of the upside-down etrog that we have to understand a little bit more about nature, and learn about the plants that are around us. Schedule a quick trip out of the *Sukkah* and look around at the nature in your back yard. If you live in an urban area, try to find the nearest park. Go around and try to take a survey of the local foliage. Try to do some research into the area, and learn about native plants to your area.

I-Spy Binoculars

Before a visit to a park, have your child decorate two toilet paper rolls. Staple them together to make mini-binoculars. Take them outside for a game of "I Spy" looking for items from nature. Look for things nearby, in middle range and far away.

Picture Album and Decorations

Take a picture or draw what you see. Find leaves on the ground, and trace them into a notebook. Color them in with all of the colors you can imagine. If you are going to collect anything, make sure that it is not living because usually that involves killing it.

Draw the scenery as you see it around you. Hang up some of those drawings in the your *Sukkah* to serve as decorations.

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Learn and Explore

To learn more about the plants you find in the area, do a little research into what you find.

For information on trees in your area, check out www.arborday.org/trees

To identify leaves you find, check out www.oplin.org/tree/leaf/byleaf.html

If you run into any animals, try www.enature.com

The important this is to get out of the house, look around and explore. You'll be amazed at what you find, and you'll have a great time outdoors with your kids.

Simchat Beit HaShoeva –

Sukkot is the only time of the year when water was included along with the sacrifices in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The water that was used in the ceremony was drawn from the nearby *Shiloach* Pool. The drawing of the water was accompanied by a huge celebration called a *Simchat Beit HaShoeva*. The celebration of incorporating pure natural water into the Temple service connects *Bnei Yisrael* to the world around them.



The *Mishnah* in *Massechet Sukkah* gives the following description of the *Simchat Beit HaShoeva*.

2.

Mishnah: Whoever did not see the *Simchat Beit HaShoeva* never saw rejoicing in their life. At the end of the first day of *Sukkot*, the *Kohanim* and *Levi'im* went down to the Women's Courtyard, where they made a great arrangement. There were golden candelabras there to illuminate the whole thing, and there were four golden bowls on each one to hold the oil. There were four ladders for each candelabrum, and four young *Kohanim* were assigned to pour 120 *lug* of oil into each bowl. They created wicks for the candles from the worn-out trousers and belts of the *Kohanim*, and would light them. There was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the light of the *Simchat Beit HaShoeva*. *Chassidim* and righteous people would dance for the onlookers with flaming torches in their hands, singing the praises of God. The *Levi'im* would play trumpets, harps and other instruments from the 15 steps of the Courtyard... they sounded the *tekiah-teruah-tekiah* of the *shofar*, and would walk to the gate leading to the east... they would turn to the temple, and declare that their eyes were towards God...

Mishna Sukkah 5:1-2

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The occasion was a pure celebration of the connection between the Jewish people and God. The light of the celebration was so powerful that it pervaded every home on every street of Jerusalem. *Sukkot* is a time of celebration, and is important to promote happiness, and spread happiness to others on this occasion.

Host Your Own Simchat Beit HaShoeva

To get your family more in tune with how important water is in our lives, have a *Simchat Beit HaShoeva* in your *Sukkah*.

Here's what you're going to need:

- ◆ Funky music on your boom box
- ◆ Yummy snacks and drinks
- ◆ Water Experiments and Games
- ◆ Water conservation Fact Sheet

The Goal:

What you are trying to do is get your children to care about water conservation, and understand how important water is in our lives. The Torah tells us to celebrate water on Sukkot, and we are going to make sure we don't waste this precious treasure.

Through experiments and games we are going to learn about how water works, and how to conserve water!

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Water Experiment:

With this experiment, you are going to create your own water cycle in a jar. All you need is:

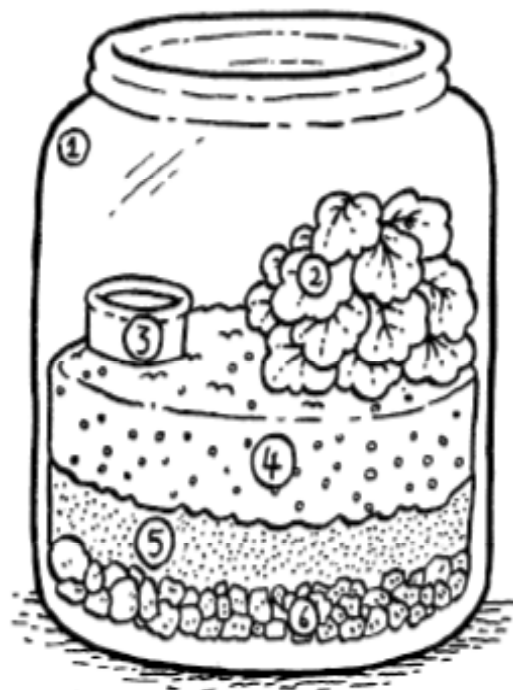
1. Jar
2. Plants
3. Water-filled Bottle Cap
4. Soil
5. Sand
6. Small Rocks.

Step 1:

Fill jar just like in the illustration to the right, and put the lid on.

Step 2:

Put the jar in a sunny place, and see how the water cycle works.



Explain to your children how water evaporates into the air, and then rains down to the ground. Once into the ground it pools and turns into lakes and rivers. The water cycle means that if we let our water get dirty, we're going to get the same dirty water later in the cycle. So let's keep it clean!

Water Challenge:

Warning: This experiment may get you wet. You should probably do this one in the Sukkah.

For this challenge, you will need a bucket of water, an empty aluminum pan, cardboard paper towel rolls, empty milk jugs, building blocks, other random recycled building supplies, and scissors (used by an adult).

Place the bucket of water on one end of the table, and the aluminum pan on the other end. Your bucket is a lake, and your aluminum pan is a town of people who live very far from the lake. Your challenge is to help get water to this town by creating an aqueduct from your supplies.

Only 1% of the earth's water is drinkable, and many people live far from water. It is a challenge to make sure we keep water clean and available for people around the world.

Wacky Water Fact Sheet

There is about the same amount of water on the Earth now as there was millions of years ago.

Nearly 97% of the world's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable. Another 2% is locked in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves 1% for all of our needs.

Water regulates the Earth's temperature. It also regulates the temperature of the human body.

The average total home water use for each person in the US is about 80 gallons a day.

More water is used in the bathroom than any other place in the home.

A dripping faucet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water a year.

Although a person can live without food for a month, a person can only live without water for approximately a week.

The human body is 70% water, and blood is 83% water.

If everyone in the US flushed the toilet just one less time per day, we could save a lake full of water about one mile long, one mile wide and four feet deep.

Six Simple Water Conservation Tips

Turn off the faucet when you're brushing your teeth.

Take shorter showers than you usually would (try an Israeli shower where you turn off the water in the middle to soap up!)

Don't leave the faucet dripping – get it fixed!

Don't do laundry until you have a full load.

Don't use your toilet as a trash can. Throw tissues and dead bugs into the garbage instead of flushing them.

On hot days, go to the local pool instead of playing in your front yard with the hose.

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Acknowledgments

Tanach

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Talmud Bavli

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