YCT Sukkot Torah Reader

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VIBRANT TORAH LEADERSHIP
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Introduction

Rabbi Dov Linzer

President & Rosh HaYeshiva, Norman & Tova Bulow Chair, YCT

Sukkot is a multilayered chag. It is an ending point, the culmination of the planting and harvest season, the last of the three *regalim*. On Sukkot, we look back at the previous year, at our accomplishments and good fortune, and we turn to God to give thanks for all the good that God has given us.

In this regard, allow me to share a teaching of a dear friend and student of mine, Dr. Barbara "Bobbe" Gaims-Spiegel, z"l, who passed away only a few days ago. Bobbe was a lover of Torah, and a pure *neshama* who embodied sincere faith and religiosity in all ways. Whenever someone would say to her that they were lucky--lucky for having met their spouse, or for having the children that they had, or for their job, or for their good health, or for their friends--Bobbe would always lovingly correct them. "You are not lucky," she would say, "you are blessed." It is on Sukkot that we realized that we are blessed. And on realizing this, we cannot but help to share that blessing with others: "You shall rejoice on your holiday, you, your son and your daughter, your manservant and maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow that are within your gates." (Deut. 16:14).

Sukkot is also a new beginning. A time not of looking to the past, but to the future. The *simcha* of Sukkot can be seen as the joyous release coming after the Yamim Noraim period of introspection, repentance, and drawing close to God. We emerge from Yom Kippur feeling cleansed, eager to start afresh and rededicate ourselves to our *avodat HaShem* and the work that we have to do in this world. We launch into a whirlwind of activity—buying the lulav and esrog and building the sukkah--bringing our spiritual yearning of the preceding days and weeks into *doing*, doing with passion, with love and with joy. It is a joy that comes from believing that we can build afresh and start afresh, in our homes and our families, in our relationships with others, and in our relationship with God.

Sukkot, then, is a time of looking backwards at what God has done for us in the past and a time of looking forward to what we can do to make our lives and our world a better place in the days and years to come.

To help you along on this journey, we share with you this YCT Sukkot Torah Reader,

selected from the writings of our *rebbeim* and our alumni--both of our semikha program and our Rikmah leadership training program for rabbis and *rabbaniyot* in Israel. We open with a special *tefilah* composed by Rabbi Avi Weiss – a prayer for Jewish Unity, which is so sorely needed at this time. The *divrei Torah* which follow touch on key themes of this chag: cleansing and starting afresh; vulnerability and growth; inter-dependence and unity; and dreaming, seeking and building. We also present two pieces on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah: a reflection to frame the Yizkor service, and a piece on how the power of the Torah that we celebrate on Simchat Torah can carry us through this coming year.

The Torah and Halakha section begins with a short essay on the mitzvah of eating in the sukkah on Sukkot and the theme of intentional eating that is shared between Sukkot and Pesach. This is followed by a teshuvah by Rabbi Shaul Nathanson on the permissibility of building a sukkah in a publicly-owned space, and particularly in public spaces in Jerusalem. We conclude with two sets of teshuvot that I have answered to our musmachim in the field: one on taking down a sukkah on Chol HaMoed in the face of adverse weather conditions and another on the permissibility of adjusting electric burners and keypad ovens on Yom Tov.

We hope that you find this Reader inspirational, meaningful and instructive. May we all merit this coming year to appreciate God's blessings, to share them with others, and to build our homes and construct our lives so that we may improve our world and find true connection, with family, with others, and with God.

Loving Other Jews: A Meditation

Kavannah L'Ahavat Yisrael – כַּוָּנָה לְאַהֲבַת יִשְׂרָאֵל

Composed by Rabbi Avi Weiss

Founding President, YCT

Hebrew translation by Professor Avigdor Shinan

In the spirit of Sukkot, the *chag ha'asif*, the holiday of ingathering, we share the below prayer for Jewish unity, with commentary, composed by Rabbi Avi Weiss. Rabbi Weiss wishes to express his gratitude to Rabbi Ezra Seligsohn, Gaya Aranoff Bernstein and Rabbi Aaron Frank for their input and encouragement. May God give us the strength and ability over this coming year to work to transcend our differences and to come together in true unity and *ahavat Yisrael*.

A pintele Yid	אַ פִּינְטֶעלֶע יִיד
A lonely Jew	יְהוּדִי בּוֹדֵד
A vulnerable Jew	יְהוּדִי שַׁבְרִירִי
A pintele yud	א פינטעלע יו"ד
A lone mark	סִימָן בּוֹדֵד
A tiny Hebrew letter	אוֹת עִבְרִית זְעִירָה
A yud aside another	נִצָּבֶת יו"ד בְּצַד יו"ד
A Jew beside an other	עוֹמֵד יְהוּדִי בְּצַד אָחִיו
Evokes the Name of God	וּפוֹרֵץ שֵׁם הָאֱ־לֹהִים
In unity, God sees	בְּאַחְדוּת, וַיַּרְא אֱ־לֹהִים
It is good	כִּי טוֹב
Unity is never uniformity	אַחְדוּת לְעוֹלָם אֵינָהּ אַחִידוּת
Uniformity is uni form	כִּי הָאַחִידוּת הִיא
Crushing other views	רִסּוּק שֶׁל דֵּעוֹת אֲחֵרוֹת
Unity is uni tied, united	אַךְ אַחְדוּת הִיא חִבּוּר יַחַד
Despite differences	לַמְרוֹת כָּל הַהֶבְדֵּלִים
Dear dear God	הוֹ, אֱ־לֹהִים הַיָּקָר
Help us to know that	סַיַּע לָנוּ לְהַכִּיר
Am Yisrael is more than	שֶׁעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל
The Nation of Israel	הוּא יוֹתֵר מֵעַם,
We are Family	שֶׁכֻּלָּנוּ בְּנֵי מִשְׁפָּחָה אַחַת

And the test of family
Is not how we love
When we agree
But how we love
When we disagree

וּמִשְׁפָּחָה נִבְחֶנֶת
לֹא רַק בְּאַהֲבָתָהּ
כְּשֶׁכֻּלָּהּ בְּדֵעָה אַחַת
אֶלָּא כֵּיצַד הִיא אוֹהֶבֶת
כְּשֶׁאֵין בְּקִרְבָּהּ הַסְכָּמָה

May we be careful with our words
For while a word is a word
And a deed is a deed
Words we say
Can lead to harmful, fatal deeds

נַקְפִּיד עַל מוֹצָא שְׂפָתֵינוּ
כִּי בְּעוֹד מִלָּה הִיא מִלָּה
וּמַעֲשֶׂה הוּא מַעֲשֶׂה
דְּבָרִים הַיּוֹצְאִים מִן הַפֶּה
עֲלוּלִים לְהָבִיא לְתוֹצָאוֹת נוֹרָאוֹת, אֱיֻמּוֹת

May we not question
The motives of the other –
But instead
Listen to the other
Learn from the other

לֹא נְעַרְעֵר עַל
מְנִיעָיו שֶׁל הָאַחֵר
אַדְּרַבָּא –
נַאֲזִין אֶל הָאַחֵר
נִלְמַד מִן הָאַחֵר

Sing and dance
The Psalmist's dream
"Behold how beautiful how sweet
Sisters and brothers
Together."

נִרְקֹד וְנָשִׁיר
אֶת חֲזוֹנוֹ שֶׁל הַמְּשׁוֹרֵר
"הִנֵּה מַה טּוֹב וּמַה נָּעִים
שֶׁבֶת אַחִים
גַּם יַחַד"

Illuminate the Chassidic vision:
Every Yid has a single light
That begins and ends
But together, our lights fuse
Endless, eternal

הָאֵר אֶת חֲזוֹנָהּ שֶׁל הַחֲסִידוּת:
לְכָל יְהוּדִי אוֹר מְיֻחָד מִשֶּׁלּוֹ
הַנִּדְלָק וְדוֹעֵךְ
אַךְ יַחְדָּיו, מִתְמַזְּגִים אוֹרוֹתֵינוּ
בְּלֹא קֵץ, לְעוֹלָמִים

With You
In unity
As family
In togetherness
With light forever

עִמְּךָ
בְּאַחְדוּת
כְּמִשְׁפָּחָה
יַחְדָּיו
בְּאוֹר נִצְחִי

Help us, help us declare:
I am a *kitzoni* — an extremist Jew.
Not on the right, not on the left,
But an extremist in
Loving Other Jews.

עֲזֹר לָנוּ, עֲזֹר לָנוּ לְהַכְרִיז
כִּי "יְהוּדִי קִיצוֹנִי" אֲנִי
לֹא לְיָמִין אוֹ לִשְׂמֹאל
אֶלָּא קִיצוֹנִי,
קִיצוֹנִי בְּאַהֲבַת אַחֵי הַיְּהוּדִים

Ahavat Yisrael

אַהֲבַת יִשְׂרָאֵל

Explanatory Comments

A pintele Yid: This phrase is normally understood to refer to the spark (nitzotz) in every Jew. No matter how distant, every Yid, deep, deep down, has a Jewish inner soul, with the potential to grow. Here, we take a different approach, understanding pintele as a small, lonely Jew. And yet, two Jews aside each other, no matter how vulnerable, can find relief.

I first heard this thought many decades ago during the first International Conference for Soviet Jewry, held in Brussels. At its close, a tall, young man was given the floor. Sharing that he came from Buenos Aires, where, as a Jew, he felt particularly isolated and alone, like a pintele Yid, he looked out at the thousands in attendance. Through tears he shared, "and now, standing with you in unity, in common cause, I feel like a yud near another yud, together spelling the name of God."

A Jew beside another: The yud, an inanimate letter, is aside another yud. In contrast, a Yid, a person, a Jew, stands beside an *other,* the other being a fellow or sister Jew, with other views, other opinions.

God sees it is good: A play on the Genesis I phrase, "And God saw it was good."

Unity...uniformity: This thought is inspired by the Midrash describing the evil ways of the people of Sodom. As one entered the city, they were placed on a cot. If they were longer, their feet were cut off. If shorter, their feet were stretched. The goal was to create automatons, everyone looking and thinking in absolute sync – in uniformity.

Dear, dear: This in the spirit of the Midrash, which comments that God's calling out to Abraham twice, "Abraham, Abraham," just as he was ready to sacrifice Isaac – is the language of endearment. So, too, "dear, dear."

Help us know: The biblical term "know – yada" speaks to the closest of relationships between people, "And Adam knew his wife Eve."

We are family: Genesis is the story of a broken family that becomes whole. It is when all of Jacob's sons receive blessings that Genesis closes and the Book of Exodus begins. This is the book that deals with the birth of our nation – teaching that the best model of nation is family. In fact, the Genesis covenant, the Covenant of the Pieces, can be called the Covenant of Family – a proper precursor to the Exodus Covenant of Sinai focusing on the nation of Israel. And so, my custom: whenever hearing of a community within the nation of Israel in need, I substitute the word "family" for "nation" and try to act accordingly.

Words we say can lead to harmful, fatal deeds: Of course, improper words themselves can be deeply painful. The old saying, "sticks and stones can break my bones but names can never harm me" is not true. Names, bad words, can hurt.

Today, however, we must be especially careful with our words and slogans as they could lead to violence, to God forbid Jews raising a hand against other Jews.

May we not question the motives of the other: This, in the spirit of Pirkei Avot, reminding us to judge others favorably.

Listen to the other: As one who is hearing impaired, I know, firsthand, the precious nature of this sense. Still, hearing is a far cry from listening, that is, taking words said and integrating them into our deepest selves. When counseling and trying to help another, perhaps, as suggested by many, we should see the word "WAIT" in front of us: Why Am I Talking.

Illuminating the Chassidic vision: Often attributed to the Ba'al Shem Tov and evoked under the chuppah with the lights referring to bride and groom. Here it refers to any two individuals.

With you: A loving call to join God in prayer. The ultimate You, the I-Thou relationship as explicated by Dr. Martin Buber.

But an extremist in loving other Jews: Extremism is often associated with the far right and left; it can, however, also refer to the center. In a world where many are machmir, following the strictest of halachic positions, we should find a way to be absolutely machmir on the mitzvah of Ahavat Yisrael.

Ahavat Yisrael: Of course, ahavat Yisrael does not contradict ahavat habriyot, our responsibility to love humankind. This kavannah, however, is an ahavat Yisrael moment -a moment that, given the difficulties of this past year, is desperately needed.

Building a Nation of Moonwatchers

Rabbi Uri Topolosky (YCT '05)

Rabbi, Kehilat Pardes–The Rock Creek Synagogue & Rav HaKehillah, Berman Hebrew Academy, Rockville, MD

Six years ago, I caravanned from our shul in Maryland down to Charleston, SC, to take in the Total Solar Eclipse, and I am already making plans for April 2024, when the next chance to catch this unique phenomenon crosses the continental US. The experience of totality, when day suddenly turns to evening for a few powerful minutes, far exceeds a lesser eclipse encounter (which would have been seeing 80% of it at home). It is a profoundly spiritual experience, and I believe can be viewed as part of a larger Jewish practice meant to cultivate a people of Moonwatchers.

I have always loved stargazing, and I have especially appreciated the religious invitations we have to gaze upwards in our tradition, such as looking for three stars on Motzei Shabbat, or glimpsing the new crescent on Rosh Chodesh, or basking in the light of the waxing moon at Kiddush Levana. In a similar vein, I deeply relate to the first mitzvah that falls upon us after Yom Kippur: to move out of the synagogue, and begin building our Sukkah. In other words, the introspection of the Yamim Noraim is meant to lift us skywards, which we concretize by living in a home with a roof of stars.

Our forefathers were moonwatchers. After all, it was Avraham, as a child, whom the Rambam describes as wondering nightly about the cosmos and the revolutions of the stars. And it was Yitzchak, whom the Torah records as "meditating in the fields before evening," seemingly accustomed to taking in the sunset and starry nights (Genesis 24:63).

In the opening mishnayot of Rosh Hashanah, we find our Sages outlining a radical, robust system intended to fixate our eyes heavenwards. Witnesses to a new moon on Nissan or Tishrei were urged to violate Shabbat if necessary, to travel to Yerushalyim to ensure that the calendar, with its holidays, was set correctly. Even if dozens of witnesses were seen to be making the trip (all you need is one good pair), and some say, even if blood relatives were among them (normally they could not testify together), everyone was encouraged to make the trip on Shabbat. Those who could not walk could be carried on

Shabbat, and those who feared for their safety could even carry weapons on the holy day of rest. Best of all, when the witnesses arrived in Yerushalayim, the court would prepare a feast to celebrate their commitment, and they would make sure to interview each set, even if a proper pair had already testified.

These bold halakhot certainly demonstrate the importance of Rosh Chodesh, and the cherished responsibility to be spiritual partners with the Divine in fixing our calendar - a value that a people with a slave history can appreciate knowing what it is like not to be masters of our own time. But these laws have a deeper effect as well, in that they transform the entire nation into a people of moonwatchers, constantly looking upwards to build their schedules. It is easy to appreciate the communal inspiration that can flow from looking regularly out into the cosmos. There would be great humility in constantly sensing the vastness of the cosmos, and also a profound sense of nobility of being chosen among that vast sea to carry the Divine name. Our sages believed that stargazers would be dreamers, visionaries, builders, and perspective seekers.

As we learned, the Mishna teaches that witnesses could violate Shabbat to help establish the new month of Nissan. Even though we do not have this practice today, I would encourage you to meditate in your Sukkah, looking up through the schach (you can see stars, right?!), and make a plan to give up your Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan (April 8) this year to travel and take in the total solar eclipse! May we continue to fulfill the dreams of our ancestors, and carry forward the project of inspiring the next generation of holy Moonwatchers.

The Trauma of Rosh Hashana and the Healing of Sukkot

Rabbi Joel Dinin (YCT ’15)

Orthodox Rabbi & Director of Education, MIT Hillel, Cambridge MA

Have you ever thought of the Yamim Noraim as being a traumatic experience?

Perhaps you find the 7 plus hours of davening just for Shacharit to be a challenge, or not eating for 25 hours on Yom Kippur. But these experiences are, at worst, draining. Traumatic? That seems quite a stretch. In fact, Yom Kippur is considered one of the two happiest days of the year, as is stated in Mishna Ta’anit 4:8, by virtue of Hashem forgiving our failings and shortcomings.

Where, then, do we experience trauma? From a lived experience this may not be something each of us can relate to, but the idea behind Rosh Hashanah, in particular, is that our fate is still uncertain. The judgment on our very lives hangs in the balance as the sword of the executioner hangs ready at the back of our necks. Rambam brings this image in his Mishna Torah when describing a mourner, allowing this fear to spur a person to Teshuva and awaken from their slumber, similar imagery that provokes us during Elul and Tishrei. This is not an image I often share with my congregants or students; we always approach Judaism from a sense of love, respect and joy. But life can be scary and challenging.

Rosh Hashanah is a time when our very souls should tremble with uncertainty. Whether we feel it or not, going through the Days of Awe, Yamim Noraim, should leave us in a vulnerable emotional state, shaking us to our core. The power of this time, and the potentially lingering psychological effects of what it means to face our mortality, are not lost on the rabbis. The 15th c. Castilian Rabbi Avraham Sabba in his Tzror HaMor commentary on Parashat Emor explores this idea. He points out that the fear that overcomes Israel during this time is so palpable that people actually become so terrified they do not want to leave their homes. They want to stay locked inside. They become vulnerable, they recognize their failings, and know that they deserve consequences for their broken actions, perhaps even fatal ones. Only locked away, in the fortress that is their home, can they find safety.

But Hashem knows that true growth, true teshuva, is a process that requires a person to lower their guard, to expose their weaknesses

and bare their soul before all. But to leave one so broken and vulnerable would seem cruel. Hashem is approaching this process, that most of us are too afraid to embrace, with love and support. Hashem knows we have to open our wounds to heal, and as soon as the scars begin to sting again Hashem offers us a salve. First there is the mercy and forgiveness of Yom Kippur, but then, and only then, can we begin to truly heal, to feel safe again, to feel joy again, V'samachta b'chagecha v'hayita ach same'ach (Devarim 16:14). This is where Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret come into play, to build us up after we have broken ourselves down, a necessary part of growth! The Tzor HaMor brings this journey and imagery to a beautiful conclusion as he connects it to the temporality and vulnerability of dwelling in a Sukkah:

והרמז בזאת המצוה הוא כי אחר שישראל יצאו ביד רמה מיום הדין שהוא יום ר"ה. והשם יתברך סלח לחטאתם מכח התשובה. ומכח יוה"כ. רצה הש"י להודיע לכל העולם זה החסד הגדול שעשה עמהם לכפר עונותיהם. לפי שעד עכשיו מכח הדין והעון היו ישראל בפחד ובדאגה... אבל עכשיו שנצחו הדין והם בשמחה. רצה הש"י שיצאו מבתיהם בלי פחד. ויצאו השדה לעשות סוכות ולישב שם בלי פחד ויראה. אחר שאין יראים מכח הדין ...

ואינם צריכים להשגב בעיר חומה דלתים ובריח. ולכן נקרא זה המועד חג הסוכות

The idea behind this mitzvah [of Sukkot] is that once Israel has emerged victorious from the Day of Judgment, i.e. Rosh HaShanah, and God has pardoned them on account of teshuvah and Yom Kippur, God wants to make known to the whole world the great kindness that He has done for them by pardoning them. Until now the Jewish people had been afraid and worried due to the fear of judgment and sin … But now that they have been exonerated they are joyous. God wants them to leave their homes without fear. Now they can go out into the fields, build sukkot, and dwell in them without fear or anxiety since they no longer need to fear judgment …

There is no need for walled cities with homes that have doors and locks. This is precisely why the holiday is referred to as the Festival of Booths.

When we feel threatened, triggered, we are defensive, we hide away. If this fear comes from someone attacking us, someone malicious, then it is, of course, an understandable reaction. But when the raw emotional state is part of a restorative process, Teshuva, bringing us back to a place of strength in connection with Hashem and our community, should make us more secure in our faith. Why should we fear the open sky, the rickety walls of a Sukkah when we are so sure of who we are and what we have overcome? No matter what weakness may have been revealed, Hashem is our strength. In that certainty there is no mightier fortress that protects our Neshamot, our souls, than dwelling in the Sukkah of Hashem.

Chag Sameakh!

Moving from Yom Kippur to Sukkot in the thought of Rav Kook

Rabbi Daniel Silverstein (YCT '15)

Founder and Director, Applied Jewish Spirituality, Israel

Yom Kippur is the one day of the entire year when we attempt to leave our bodies behind, as much as possible. We do this in order to allow for the possibility of a transcendent experience – a spiritual elevation, that hopefully includes greater intimacy with the Infinite Source of Life.

As we move, often quite rapidly, from the lofty peak of Ne'ilah to building our sukkot and purchasing our lulavim, the transition can sometimes seem jarring or discordant. However, Rav Kook describes this period as a precious opportunity for important growth and integration, in Olat Re'iyah (2:367):

על ידי ההתעלות של יום הכיפורים
מתרחקים הרבה מהעולם הזה
וצריכים שמירה ממכשולים כשחוזרים
ונפגשים בענייני העוה"ז
וניתנו לנו הימים שבין יוה"כ לסוכות
להינוך-של-חזרה לענייני עוה"ז
בעיסוקינו בדברים שבקדושה
כשקדושת יום הכיפורים מרחפת עלינו
וחופפת על הכל

Through the ascension of Yom Kippur, we become very distant from this world, and when we return to it, we need to be careful when we encounter its practical concerns.

These days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot are given to us, to teach us how to return to practical concerns of this world, by engaging in sacred matters, while the sanctity of Yom Kippur hovers over us, covering everything.

I find this a beautiful, and also helpful, intention for framing the days leading up to Sukkot: *They are a gift, given to us precisely to help us integrate the elevation we may have experienced on Yom Kippur with the very physical world that we exist within*.

Rav Kook continues to expound upon this theme of integrating our physical and spiritual selves, when he writes about Sukkot itself, in Ein Ayah (on Shabbat 103b).

חג האסיף חג הסוכות
הוא החג המקשר את הטבע
עם אותו הכח הפלאי שלמעלה מן הטבע
אשר הופיע בעולם בהתגלות תולדתית
ע"י הופעתם של ישראל
על במתה של התולדה האנושית

The Festival of Ingathering, the Festival of Booths – this is the festival that connects nature with that wondrous supernatural power which appeared in the world by historical revelation through the appearance of Israel on the stage of human history.

Rav Kook continues this passage by pointing out Bnei Yisrael dwelt in sukkot during a journey that was in itself a bridge, both between Mitzrayim and Eretz Yisrael, and between the supernal realm of supernatural miracles, and the natural order of this world. He observes that, over the course of our forty years spent dwelling in sukkot, Bnei Yisrael integrated the overtly miraculous with the this-worldly, suggesting that this was a necessary part of the preparation for our entry into the Land.

This perspective on the festival, as bridging the natural and supernatural, resonates with many of our key teachings about it. For example, consider this famous machloket between our ancient sages about the sukkot themselves (Sukkah 11b):

כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל
ענני כבוד היו דברי ר' אליעזר
רבי עקיבה אומר
סוכות ממש עשו להם

"I made the children of Israel dwell in sukkot" (Vayikra 23:43) these booths were Clouds of Glory – this is the opinion of R' Eliezer. R' Akiva says: They made for themselves actual sukkot.

It seems like R' Eliezer and R' Akiva were proposing two very different narratives, which might lead to two very different kinds of celebration. However, neither of the two opinions from these giants of Torah can be lightly discarded, and Rav Kook's insight, that Sukkot is precisely about the interrelationship between the this-worldly and the heavenly, offers an elegant way to harmonize both.

Not coincidentally, harmony was one of the major motivations and characteristics of Rav Kook's teachings and life's work. He viewed all opposing perspectives and forces as ultimately being bound to unite, not into one undifferentiated organism, but into a wholeness that still contained discreet parts. That was his understanding of Shalom and Shleimut (in Ein Ayah on Brachot 64a), the peace and wholeness which we pray for and which all of our actions are directed toward.

יש טועים שחושבים שהשלום העולמי לא יבנה כ"א ע"י
צביון אחד בדיעות ותכונות
א"כ כשרואים ת"ח חוקרים בחכמה
וע"י המחקר מתרבים הצדדים והשיטות חושבים שבזה
הם גורמים למחלוקת
והפך השלום

ובאמת אינו כן כי השלום האמיתי
א"א שיבא לעולם כ"א דוקא ע"י
תואר של ריבוי השלום הריבוי של השלום
הוא שיתראו כל הצדדים וכל השיטות
שיש בחכמה ויתבררו איך כולם יש להם מקום
כל דבר לפי ערכו מקומו וענינו

Some mistakenly think that world peace will only be built by a uniform tone of ideas and qualities. And so, when they see sages investigating in wisdom and in so doing multiplying views and opinions, they think that they are thereby sowing discord, the opposite of peace.

And in truth this is not so, for true peace can only emerge through the full shape of multiplied peace, which includes all the sides and opinions contained within wisdom, as well as its becoming clear that each has a place, each according to its value, location and content.

For Rav Kook, Sukkot offers a unique manifestation of this Shleimut, precisely because of its place in our calendar, as the culmination of the hard work of this season of Teshuvah (Ma'amrei HaRa'ayah 148).

כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכות
מלמד שכל ישראל
ראויים לישב בסוכה אחת

כל זמן שהעוונות מקשרים את החיים
בכבליהם אי אפשר לקוות לשיווי בדעות
ולאחדות של שלום

אבל אחרי אשר אור התשובה הופיע בעולמנו
על ידי קדושת היום הקרוש יום הכיפורים
וכל ישראל נטהרו מחלאת החטא
אז הטוהר הנשמתי מתגבר בקרבנו
והדעות המופרדות
מתאחדות והולכות

וכאשר בא אחר כך החג הקדוש חג הסוכות
אור תורה זוהר יראת שמים ואהבת אמת
מתפשטים על כל מהותנו
ומאחדים את כל הדיעות והרעיונות

והרינו מתעלים ומגיעים לקראת
האחדות השלמה הראויה להופיע
באור קרושתה על כל פזורי ישראל כולם
וכל ישראל נעשים ראויים לשבת בסוכה אחת

"Every Israelite citizen shall dwell in Sukkot" (Vayikra 23:42) – "This teaches that all Israel should dwell in one Sukkah" (B. Sukkah 27b).

As long as the fetters of our wrongdoings are tied to our lives, it is not possible to hope for harmony between divergent perspectives, or for the unity of Shalom.

But after the light of Teshuvah has appeared in our world, through the sanctity of the holy day, Yom Kippur, and all Israel are purified from the sickness of wrongdoing, the purity of our souls strengthens within us, and the divergent perspectives are unified more and more.

And when the holy festival of Sukkot comes, the light of Torah, the illumination of awe for the Divine and love of the truth suffuse our entire essence, and unify all perspectives and ideas.

And see how we are elevated, until we reach a complete unity, which is designated to manifest, with the light of its sanctity, on all the scattered ones of Israel, hence making all Israel fit to dwell in one Sukkah.

May we each merit to make Teshuvah as described here, that reveals the purity of our souls, unifies all perspectives and ideas while respecting the integrity of each one, and unifies our people until we are truly fit to dwell in one Sukkah.

No Person is an Etrog

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The Rabbis' declaration that all of Israel are worthy to sit in one sukkah (BT Sukkah 27b) gives prominence to the theme of unity in this joyous chag. So too the Four Species, according to Chazal, represent the bond among the different facets of the Jewish community.

The Talmud (Menachot 27a) teaches us that gathering each of the Arabaat Haminim (the Four Species) is an essential condition for fulfilling the mitzvah – no partial measures will be accepted. A Beraita on the same page divides the Four species into two groups and points out their distinguishing features. While the etrog and lulav (date frond) bear fruit, the hadass (myrtle) and arava (willow) do not. Nonetheless, both groups need each other. This parallels Israel, whose prayers will not be accepted unless the nation is bound together, just as the Four Species are bundled together in what is called an agudah.

A second, perhaps more well known, text (Vayikra Rabbah 30:12) is a midrash comparing each of the Four Species to different types of people. The etrog, which has both taste and fragrance, symbolizes the Jewish people who occupy themselves both in Torah scholarship and good deeds. The lulav has only taste, and it therefore represents Jews who have only Torah scholarship. The hadass has only fragrance, which represents those Jews with good deeds and no Torah. Finally, the arava has neither taste nor fragrance and corresponds to those who lack both Torah and good deeds.

The midrash then asks, "And what does God do to them? To obliterate them would be impossible!" Instead, God says that everyone should join themselves into one agudah and each group will atone for the other.

The prooftext in both the above parables comes from the book of Amos, "Who built His chambers in heaven and founded His agudah on the earth" (Amos 9:6). Chazal learns from here that an agudah establishes a strong foundation. Therefore, when Israel is bound together, we grow stronger.

The second source above warrants closer inspection because it is rich in meaning and because it is a midrash I first encountered as a small child. It gives me great pleasure to return to a familiar (even cliché in this case) text and find new meaning in it. Whenever I discover new layers to a well-trodden Jewish source, I am reminded of the infinite nature of Torah interpretation, and that is always a moving experience.

First, I would like to point out my initial discomfort upon reading the seemingly casual way the midrash categorizes people as more and less virtuous. Is the author suggesting that we map out our community according to Torah scholarship and good deeds? Moreover, I wonder if this text is not a recipe for self-satisfaction. As a reader, I cannot resist (consciously or otherwise) ranking myself among the Four Species. How do I fare? Let's see: the very act of reading this midrash is one of Torah study, so immediately I have risen above the hadass and the arava. And I would not say that I was completely bereft of good deeds. It seems that I am an etrog.

Is that what the midrash wants? Does it want us to think of ourselves as the best of the lot? That is hard to believe. If the goal of the mitzvah of Arbaat Haminim is national unity, surely the encouragement of smugness would be counterproductive.

But once I get to the second part of the midrash, which talks about mutual atonement, I realize that there is more to this deceptively simple parable. Why would the etrog need atonement? What help does it need from the other species? Is it not perfect on its own? And yet, just as in the Beraita quoted above, this midrash is clear that all the Four Species are interdependent and not one of them could endure alone.

I would like to claim that the conclusion of the midrash compels us to re-evaluate its beginning, that is the neat presentation of the merits and demerits of the Four Species and their human parallels. Upon a second, closer reading I realize that the parable was not meant to be taken at face value. For it is glaringly obvious that people are not like plants. Plants have immutable traits and are therefore easy to classify into different groups. But people are different; we are constantly growing and changing.

If we speak in terms of avodat Hashem, we could say that we are always trying to improve ourselves and experience both successes and setbacks. Sometimes we have both taste and fragrance, and other times just one and sometimes even none. These labels are not meant to be applied to people as a set definition; rather, they serve as a guideline for which we should be striving for and reflect the inevitable flux we experience. Precisely because no one person can be sure of always mastering both Torah and good deeds, we need the support of a community, an agudah. Together, we can rely on each other, sometimes being in the role of Etrog and sometimes being the Arava.

The proof text from Amos, "Who built His chambers in heaven and founded His agudah on the earth," offers us another insight into the challenge that this midrash set out for us. Read on its own, it appears to be a testament to holiness and firmness of an agudah and the protection it offers us. However, in the context of the book of Amos, another picture emerges. In chapter 9, the book's final chapter, Amos reminds Israel that they are not exempt from punishment, that they have no special protection. "Who built His chambers in heaven and founded His agudah on the earth" is a reminder of God's omnipresence.

While the Rabbis use this verse as a proof of the power of unity to mitigate divine retribution, Amos uses it to emphasize that it

will surely come. One of the themes of Amos's prophecies is that the nation of Israel should not think that it will get preferential treatment from God. For example, the verse the follows the midrash's prooftext tells Israel that they are just like the other nations:

> To Me, O Israelites, you are just like the Cushites —declares the LORD. True, I brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, but also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir (Amos 9:7).

Israel should remember that God redeems other nations as well. However, the tone shifts for the closing verses of the chapter, and we read: "I will set up again the fallen sukkah of David: I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). We can learn a profound message from the midrash's use of this verse, and when contextualized, it is about the consequences of sin. Thinking that we are somehow above punishment was not only a problem in Amos' day. It is something that can plague any community that emphasizes ethical and spiritual growth. The midrash offers a remedy for such a harmful way of thinking: remember that no matter how much of an etrog we think we might be, we all need each other. Unified through a genuine understanding of our interdependence, we will thrive and merit the redemption promised at the end of Amos.

– Chag Sameach

Each of Us is Kenough: On Kohelet, Eden, and Barbie

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Over the summer I had the pleasure of spending some quality time with my wife alone with our 8-year-old daughter Libi. As she is the youngest of four children, moments like this are pretty rare. Her siblings were all off at overnight camp, so we decided to see the new Barbie Movie. I had not heard much about that movie. I just assumed it was something appropriate for a girl of eight who likes to play with dolls. Well, I was very pleasantly surprised.

It turns out that this is really a movie for everyone. It is for those who are young and old. It is for those of all genders. It is actually a rather clever and accessible critique of the patriarchy. In its own way it teases apart the system constructed to make men as a group superior to women as a group.

One thing I enjoyed in the movie was the message that Ken needed to define himself beyond his relationship to Barbie or his power over women. He needed to understand that he was enough. And there was of course the SWAG: tie-dyed t-shirts with the slogan: "I am Kenough."

We do not need to and should not take up more power, space, or resources than what we deserve. We are all equal and need to behave accordingly. What would it take for more people to understand that each of us is **Ken**ough?

I was thinking about this as we get ready for *Shabbat Chol HaMoed Sukkot* when we read Kohelet, Ecclesiastes. Soon after we will celebrate *Simchat Torah*, during which we will start the annual cycle of reading the Torah from the beginning. How do we make sense of this transition from Kohelet to Genesis?

Kohelet is written from the perspective of Solomon. Like *Siddhartha*, Solomon was the king and had everything, but he gave it up to find a life a meaning. There we read:

> I said in my heart: 'Come now, I will try you with mirth, and enjoy pleasure'; and, behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter: 'It is mad'; and of mirth: 'What does it accomplish?' I searched in my heart how to pamper my flesh with wine, and my heart conducting itself with wisdom, how yet to lay hold on folly, till I might see which it was best for the sons of men that they should do under the heaven the few days of their life. I made me great works; I built me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit. (Kohelet 2:1-5)

Solomon has everything, but he realizes that it is not enough. Here in trying to plant every kind of fruit tree it is as if he were trying to recreate Eden itself. There is a profound connection here between Solomon and Adam. As we read in Genesis

> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: 'Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, but of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' (Genesis 2: 16-17)

They could eat the fruit of every tree except for this one. What was that not enough? This speaks to a profound truth to the human condition. Why is it so hard for any of us to be satisfied? It seems that our best worst trait is that we can never have or be enough. If only we could conquer our inner need to have more or be more, we might be happy with what we have and who we are. What is the balance between gratitude and contentment on one side and the drive to be more and have more on the other?

During Sukkot we find interesting ways to return to nature, be it holding the 4 species or moving outside into the Sukkah. In light of Kohelet we see that we are trying to return to Eden. This perennial effort to return to Eden seems futile, itself a "vanity of vanities". While this drive might help me grow and be better, if these actions are at the expense of others, it does not seem like a good endeavor. This year, I want to focus on being grateful for all of the great things I have in my life without wanting more. I am **Ken**ough. Or in Yiddish you could say איך בין קענוג, *ikh bin **Ken**ug*. In the words of Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha, "What could I say to you that would be of value, except that perhaps you seek too much, that as a result of your seeking you cannot find." I am truly blessed and I strive to be content but not complacent. How will I tend my garden of gratitude?

Yizkor

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The two primary paragraphs of Yizkor — the titular "Yizkor" and the well-known "El Maleh Rachamim" — are contrasting devotions.

El Maleh Rachamim requests repose. The key word is *Menucha,* or rest. We ask that God grant our relative's soul "fitting rest … a rest in the Garden of Eden … so that they rest in peace". It is God — whose Presence, Wings, and Mercy are invoked six times — whom we hope shall provide such rest.

But rest, provided by God, is utterly absent from the initial Yizkor paragraph. There, we ask God to remember our loved one, to bind them in the bonds of life, and to place them alongside righteous human heroes, like Abraham and Sarah. *This is a far more active expectation of the afterlife*. Our loved one is mentioned, remembered, and invoked; they are bound in life; they stand alongside Biblical figures whose legacy is anything but restful. Here, God's name is inserted but once, while over 10 separate human figures are invoked.

Our tradition brings two hopes into Yizkor. First, that our loved one finds peace and stillness; that any lingering regrets, anxieties, and unfinished business of their all too human life melt, ultimately, into a place of comfort and understanding. That is a gift that God, master of compassion and source of all comforts, can provide. Second, that our loved one finds renewed vitality and activity, even in death. That they are remembered, that they impact our lives, that they stand to us as enduring models (complex models, perhaps, not unlike our Biblical ancestors) whose memory informs our own future. That is a gift we provide, when we commit to saying Yizkor and commit to Mitzvot and Tzedakka in their memory.

For those for whom you are saying Yizkor:

What do you pray they receive full rest from?

What do you pray they serve as a stronger, more vital influence upon you?

Simchat Torah and the Power of Torah

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Simchat Torah is the second day of Shmini Atzeret. Indeed, in Israel the two are celebrated on the same day. In some Sefardic and Chassidic communities, the themes are also merged to a certain degree. For example, some *shuls* do *hakafot*on the night of Shmini Atzeret and on Simchat Torah. This may come as no surprise as there is certainly room for further definition of Shmini Atzeret.

The Torah makes a clear distinction between Shmini Atzeret and Sukkot – there is no *lulav* or *sukkah* – but it does not tell us anything about its historical or theological significance. All it tells us is, "On the eighth day, you shall have an '*atzeret*,'" but what does this atzeret, or gathering, mean? The Targum Yonatan translates it as "an ingathering from the sukkah into the house." According to him, the nature of Shmini Atzeret is the leaving of the sukkah and the entering of the house. This is supported by the Mishna in Sukkah which states that one must start moving from the sukkah into the house on Hoshana Rabbah, just before the night of Shmini Atzeret. But why should we have a *yom tov* dedicated to moving out of the sukkah?

By this definition, Shmini Atzeret is a yom tov of transition. It tells us that we need to take time to focus on moving from one experience to another. We cannot simply leave one meaningful experience and abruptly put ourselves in another context. We must pause and be thoughtful about the critical moment of transition.

Sukkot concludes a profound period, one that begins in Elul and intensifies through Tishrei. By the end of Sukkot, we have gone through weeks of self-reflection, prayer, *teshuva*, and drawing closer to God. Our time living in the sukkah has reminded us of God's palpable protection in the wilderness, when we only had a flimsy hut for shelter. And we have realized that, even in our firm and stable homes, we only succeed in this world only because of God's help and God's protection …

… And then it is time to move back into our homes. Will we take these messages with us, or will we soon get used to our comfortable routine and lose our sensitivity to God's presence? How will we ensure that the experiences of Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot are not quickly forgotten when the realities of day-to-day living take over? To ask ourselves this question – the first step in answering it – we need to focus on the moment of transition. We need the yom tov of Shmini Atzeret to make us realize that we are in a critical moment, and at this moment we must think seriously about how we can bring

the lessons of the sukkah back with us into the house.

But what is the answer? How will we be successful in this transition? The answer is in the transition of Shmini Atzeret into Simchat Torah. What will keep us sensitive to God's presence as we enter the new year? The learning of Torah. And not just the learning of Torah, the joy of the Torah. The joy of connecting to the word of God through the learning of God's Torah. It is astounding how many *psukim* in Tanakh describe the joy of learning Torah: "How I love Your Torah, all the day it is my delight." Observance of *halakha* is the bedrock of our commitment, but if that is all that we have we can lose connection to the sense of God's presence, to the meaning of it all. Through the learning of Torah and the joy inherent in it, we can not only deepen our understanding of Torah and our commitment to religious life, but we can cultivate, sustain, and heighten our experienced connection to the Ribbono Shel Olam. It is through the *simcha* of the Torah that we can bring the lessons of the Yamim Noraim and Sukkot into the rest of the year.

As we begin again the reading of the Torah with Parashat Bereshit, let us all commit anew to increasing our learning of Torah this coming year. And let us devote ourselves to a learning of Torah that resonates with us, that connects us to the *simchat Torah*, so that we can continue to feel God's presence in our lives throughout the year.

Here are two texts from Sefat Emet that touch on the theme developed above. The first speaks to the connection to Torah as the way to stay in God's presence throughout the year.

בכל מועד יש מצוה מיוחדת. מצה בפסח. סוכה וד' מינים בסוכות. לבד שבועות ושמ"ע אין מצוה. זולת בביהמ"ק שהי' קרבנות המוספין. והענין שב' מועדות האלו הם מעולם העליון. ואין להם התדבקות במצות מעשיות. לכן העצה ע"י התורה. בשבועות מתן תורתינו ובשמ"ע שמחת תורה שבע"פ. שע"י התורה יכולין להתדבק גם במה שלמעלה מהטבע. ז"ש תמימה משיבת נפש שאין לנו בעוה"ז בגלות במה להתדבק ביום טוב הללו. רק ע"י התורה הזאת

Every holiday has its unique mitzvah: matzah on Pesach, sukkah and the lulav on Sukkot. However on Shavuot and Shmini Atzeret there is no ritual mitzvah, with the exception of the musaf sacrifices in the Temple. The reason for this is that these two holidays are from the supernal world, and they have no connection to mitzvot of action. Thus, the way to connect is through the Torah. On Shavuot – the day of the Giving of the Torah, and on Shmini Atzeret, the rejoicing of the Oral Torah. For it is through the Torah that one can connect even to those things that are above nature. This is what the verse means, "The Torah of God is pure, restoring the soul" – for we do not have in this world – in Exile (i.e., in the absence of a Temple) – any concrete way to connect to these holidays, save through the Torah itself.

The second text touches on an additional theme: how all our efforts of religious striving are truly rewarded when we find the divine voice in the Torah and it is given to us as a gift from above.

בפסוק ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם. כי התכלית היא המתנה שניתן משמים. וכל היגיעות לזכות למצוא חן בעיני ה' למתנה זו כמ"ש לעיל בענין וממדבר מתנה. ומתנה זו ניתן לבנ"י שהם יכולין לקבל זאת המתנה בכח התורה שנק' לקח טוב. פי' שע"י התורה נעשין בנ"י כלים לקבל טוב הגנוז.

וזהו ענין שמחת תורה שעושין בשמיני עצרת כי בכח התורה יכולין לקבל המתנה שיהי' דבר המתקיים. וזהו

פי' עצרת שיהי' נקלט בעומק הלב. ואיתא במד' תשא אחר שיגע משה רע"ה עצמו מ' יום לא אכל כו' ניתן לו התורה במתנה.

כמ"ש במ"א ביאור מו"ז ז"ל על המאמר יגעתי ומצאתי תאמין כי כל שכר היגיעה שזוכין אח"כ למציאה ומתנה. כי במה נחשב כל היגיעות שבעולם למצוא איזה הארה מדברי תורה רק במתנה כו' ודפח"ח. ונראה שזה ענין וזאת הברכה שהוא סוף התורה שאחר כל המ' שנה שיגענו במדבר זכינו בסוף לברכה בכח התורה. כמ"ש במד' כשבא משה רע"ה לברך את ישראל באתה תורה כו'. שמרע"ה ידע ששלמו בנ"י את המוטל עליהם ועתה צריכין להשפיע להם הברכה והמתנה. וכן הוא לעולם סוף היגיעה יש ברכה. והתורה התחילה בב' לשון ברכה וכשמיגעין לבסוף מתפשטת הברכה בפועל כמ"ש וזאת הברכה...

ובמשנה איתא התקן עצמך ללמוד תורה שאינה ירושה לך. ונראה שבודאי מקודם צריכין לתקן עצמו להיות כלי מוכן לקבל הברכה והמתנה.

הגם שבאמת התורה ירושה ומתנה הוא אבל היגיעה הוא להיות מוכן לזה... ובימים הקודמין הם ימי עבודה. ובחג האסיף נגמר להיות נק' קהלת יעקב. ואז בשמיני עצרת מורשה היא לנו

"On the eighth day, you shall have an ingathering for yourselves." – For the goal that we strive to achieve is the gift that is given to us from heaven. And all the efforts that we make are in order to find favor in God's eyes to be deserving to receive this gift… And this gift is given to the Children of Israel, for they are able to receive this gift through the power of Torah, which is called a "good purchase," for it is through the Torah that we become vessels to receive the hidden good.

This is the meaning of Simchat Torah which we celebrate on [the second day of] Shmini Atzeret, for it is through the power of Torah that we can receive the gift, that it shall become something of permanence. This is the meaning of the word "Atzeret" – that the Torah becomes something that is "gathered in" – internalized – into the depth of our hearts. As it states in the midrash:" "After Moshe wearied himself for 40 days, and did not eat and not drink, the Torah was given to him as a gift."

Similarly my father, my teacher, writes on the Talmudic statement, that [if someone says,] "I have toiled and I have found it," you should believe him – for the entire reward of all the effort, is that afterwards what we have striven for is given to us as a gift, as if we have found a lost object. For what value is all the effort that we expend in this world to find some light from the words of the Torah, if not to be able to receive it in the end as a gift… As it says in the midrash, that when Moshe came to bless the children of Israel at the end of the 40 years… he knew that they had done all that was their obligation to do, and now they have merited that the blessing and the gift flow out to them from heaven. And this is the way of the world – at the end of all the effort, there is a blessing…

The Mishna teaches: "Prepare yourself to learn Torah, for it is not an inheritance of yours." But the verse states, "Moshe commanded us the Torah, and inheritance to the congregation of Jacob"! The meaning is that we must first prepare ourselves to be a vessel ready to receive the blessing and the gift. While it is true that the Torah is an inheritance and a gift, it requires effort to be prepared to receive it… The days preceding Sukkot are days of [religious] work. And then, on the holiday of "ingathering" we have completed this work and are the "congregation of Jacob." And then on Shmini Atzeret the Torah becomes an inheritance to us.

Standing on Two Regalim: Sukkot and Pesach

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The requirement of "dwelling" in the sukkah for seven days always makes me anxious. If we understood dwelling as sleeping, it might be less so, but the requirement that we eat all our meals there is—for me—particularly onerous. The times that I sleep are rather regimented, especially since my wife is a devotee of a book called *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child*, which establishes an absolutely invariable sleep routine for my children—and, by extension, for me. Thus, aside from my nap every Shabbat afternoon (when the kids are asleep), I only sleep at night, laying down at bedtime and getting out of bed only when it is time to wake up. But for me, eating is entirely different.

The rabbinic focus on *eating* as the paradigmatic act of dwelling is difficult for me because I am a grazer. Where the Mishnah explains (Sukkah 2:4) that Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai would not even consume two dates and a bucket of water outside of the sukkah, Rambam comments (ad loc.), "This vignette comes to teach that eating and drinking nothing outside of the sukkah is praiseworthy, but one is not obligated to do so" (Rambam on Sukkah 2:4). Likewise, even the Mishnah itself explains that Rabbi Tzadok did not hesitate to eat a small quantity of food outside the sukkah. Thus, we are permitted "casual eating" (*akhilat ʿarai*) outside the sukkah, whereas we take our fixed meals (*akhilat keva'*) within its walls. However, for someone like me, who regularly grazes on small amounts of food throughout the day rather than sitting down to formal meals, Sukkot can present a challenge. Because the rabbis not only focus on the substance of our meals but also on the quantity of food when they differentiate between a fixed meal and casual eating, being attentive to the laws of Sukkot can be unnerving.

In the eighth century, *Halakhot Gedolot* follows the Talmudic line in establishing whether one is eating a meal or a snack, again focusing on quantity. Four centuries later, Rambam retains the focus on quantity in the *Mishneh Torah* (Hilchot Shofar, Sukkah, and Lulav, 6:6). But there is an additional wrinkle in his restatement of the law in the very next paragraph which has a radical effect on our experience of the festival: "Eating in the sukkah on the first night of the festival is an obligation; even one who eats merely an olive's bulk **of bread** has fulfilled the obligation" (*ibid*, 6:7; emphasis mine). Here

we see the addition of an additional detail—not only does the quantity matter but so does the substance. We know practically that bread is the basis of our fixed meals, and so it makes sense for Rambam to point out that eating an olive's bulk of bread—the minimum quantity to fix a meal—is sufficient for one to have fulfilled the obligation to dwell in the sukkah. And yet, as we saw in the Mishnah, Rabbi Tzadok ate a larger quantity of food (an egg's bulk) outside the sukkah! Rambam accounts for this by saying that one may eat fruit or roasted grain outside the sukkah. But when one might be eating enough food to satisfy oneself—or, for that matter, even a small meal of bread—one must eat in the sukkah. (See Rambam's commentary to Mishnah Sukkah 2:4, "*ve-akhilat ʿarai*" for the idea that satisfying one's hunger comes into play.)

A little over a century after Rambam, there are still questions about whether it is the quantity or the substance (or both) that determines what must be eaten in the sukkah. In the early fourteenth century, Rabbi Jacob b. Asher writes in the *Arbaʿah Turim* (Orah Hayyim 639) that when one fixes a meal on fruits or cheese that one must do so in the sukkah; the Beit Yosef notes that the thirteenth century sage Rabbi Peretz of Corbeil held that eating fruits would not put one into this situation, but eating meat or cheese could indeed require that one head for the sukkah. After all, the Talmud itself points out (Sukkah 27a) that one could compensate for missing a meal in the sukkah by adding delicacies to one's menu. Yet as codified in the *Shulchan Arukh* (Orah Hayyim 639:2), eating fruit and even drinking wine is permitted outside the sukkah, but we restrict to within the four walls of the sukkah the eating of any cooked dish of the five grains (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye—the very same grains from which we may make matzah). While the *Shulchan Arukh* says that this applies only when one eats the grains as the anchor to a fixed meal, the eighteenth century *Maamar Mordechai* argues that this fixity need not depend on the specific quantity one eats. The *ʿArukh ha-Shulhan* (Orah Hayyim 639:9) goes even farther, explaining that dishes containing the five grains must be eaten inside the sukkah, regardless of quantity and regardless of whether one eats such food as part of a fixed meal or casually.

The force of the *ʿArukh ha-Shulhan*, then, is to produce during Sukkot a heightened awareness of one's eating similar to that one experiences on Pesach. Yet if the restriction of these foods during Pesach is about how we prepare them (that is, avoiding *hametz*), during Sukkot our concern is *where* we consume them. During Sukkot, we apply the very same vigilance and care we utilize in preparing for Pesach and in consuming foods during the festival—that is, in *what* we eat—to the place in which we eat it—the *where*. And just as we shift our diet during Pesach, during Sukkot someone who is a grazer is forced either to shift one's diet or to spend the entire festival living in the sukkah, which is, after all, the point.

Building a Sukkah in the Public Domain

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Jews have always found creative ways to build sukkot. Space was often at a premium, and every possible location would be used to build a sukkah. As one can see already in the Mishnah, it describes sukkot built on wagons, ships, and even animals. However, for many today with large yards, finding a space for one's sukkah is not such a challenge. But what happens if there is none available? Is it possible to build a sukkah on public land in a public place?

At first glance, it appears this question was addressed by the Rambam, who rules (Hilkhot Shofar, Sukkah ve-Lulav 5:25) that a sukkah built in the public domain is kosher, and the Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chaim 637:3) appears to rule similarly as well. However, the Rema adds a caveat based on the Or Zarua that one should not ideally do this, but if one did, the sukkah remains kosher. To explain this position, the Or Zarua cites an anecdote from the Talmud Yerushalmi (Sukkah 3:1) in which it appears that building a sukkah in the public domain is not without its problems. Talmud states: "Gamliel the twin made himself a sukkah on the market. R' Shimon ben Lakish passed by and told him, 'Who gave you permission?'"

Although we are not told why Gamliel builds a sukkah in the market, a public space, he is rebuked by R' Shimon ben Lakish for doing so. Yet, because R' Shimon ben Lakish never stated that the sukkah was prohibited, the Talmudic anecdote still implies it would be kosher. Nevertheless, the Magen Avraham (Orech Chaim 637:3) goes beyond the ruling of the Rema and questions whether this would be the case. He argues that a sukkah built in the public domain would only be kosher and not treated as stolen if all the residents of that particular city would relinquish (*mochel*) their claim to the public domain so that the land would belong solely to the one building the sukkah there. Perhaps, he notes, one could assume that this would take place if the entire city were Jewish, but if non-Jews lived there too, it would be hard to understand why the sukkah would be kosher. In the end, he is willing to allow such a sukkah might be acceptable after the fact (*bediavad*), but one should not make a beracha when eating in it.

In the centuries since, extensive halachic writing has been dedicated to this question, exploring it from various angles. In a teshuvah written by Rabbi Shaul Nathanson (Shoel U'Meshiv Kammah 1:124), a leading 19th-century Polish halachic authority, one finds a novel approach to this issue. First, he notes that the Torah itself appears to provide an explicit answer, as the book of Nehemia describes the building of sukkot throughout the city of Jerusalem, many of which were clearly in public locations. He contends this would not have been recorded if the sukkot were invalid, but he also acknowledges one can argue that these sukkot were built at a time when Jews were the sole inhabitants of the city. If so, perhaps it could be assumed they would forgo

במקרא ימצא כי קדשו את החומה ולא היה דר שם שום עכו"ם בירושלים ואם כן היו שלהם והיו יכולים לעשות להם סוכות והרי סגרו דלתי ירושלים כל יום השבת כמבואר בנחמי' סי' י"ג הרי שהיה כלו שלהם ברשיון המלך כורש ואם כן לא היו חלק להנכרי רק להישראל וישראל מחלו ודינו של המ"א מבואר...

Regarding whether one can fulfill one's obligation through a sukkah in the public domain. The Magen Avraham (Orech Chaim 637:3) explains at length that a sukkah built in the public domain is to be treated as a stolen sukkah…

Before we begin any discussion about this, it appears that the matter is explained by explicit verses in Nehemia (Chapter 8), as it is written there: "So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves sukkot on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate." It is explicit that sukkot were made in the streets of the Gate of Ephraim and the Water Gate, both of which were public gates and in the public domain. Therefore, one must say that the Jews released their claim [to the public domain] and that even the non-Jews living there did the same, for they too had part ownership of Jerusalem. Even here, such a relinquishment [mechila] done by the Jews was effective, and one must understand why this is the case. Though Koresh [the king of Persia] permitted them to build the sukkah in Jerusalem, nevertheless, because non-Jews lived there and had part ownership of the public domain, what right can we assume they relinquished their claim to it? See Tosafot (Rosh HaShanah 13) who wrote that possession in the Land of Israel is passed down from their parents [passed down from non-Jewish parents to their children]. Therefore, they have ownership in [the land] they have sown. If so, non-Jews have partial

their claim to the public domain, as described by the Magen Avraham, so that others could build their sukkot there.

In the end, he argues there is an additional halachic argument for why sukkot built in the public domain of Jerusalem would be kosher, an argument that remains relevant today. He explains that unlike other parts of the Land of Israel, which fell under the rule of a particular tribe, "all Jews were partners in Jerusalem" (Avot D'Rebbi Natan, Chapter 35). Because of this, the public domain of Jerusalem had the status of being owned as a legal partnership (shutafut), and a sukkah that is owned in partnership with others is valid.

The logic of the teshuvah would seemingly apply to the public domains in most municipalities today, where all permanent residents are equal partners in the running of the city, the only exception being if there were explicit laws banning the building of such a structure in that particular location.

שו"ת שואל ומשיב מהדורה קמא חלק א סימן קכד

ענין סוכה ברשות הרבים אם יוצאין בה המ"א סי' תרל"ז ס"ק ג' האריך במה שנהגו לעשות סוכה ברה"ר =ברשות הרבים= והי' סוכה גזולה...

והנה טרם יהיה כל שיח הנה לכאורה הדבר מבואר מקרא מפורש בנחמי' ח' דכתיב שם ויצאו העם ויביאו ויעשו להם סוכות איש על גגו ובחצרותיהם ובחצרות בית אלקים וברחוב שער המים וברחוב שער אפרים הרי מפורש דעשו סוכות ברחובות שער אפרים ושער המים שהיו שערי רבים ורה"ר וע"כ צ"ל דכל ישראל מחלו ואף דנכרים היו שם והי' להם גם כן חלק בירושלים ועכ"פ ברה"ר הי' להם חלק אפ"ה הי' מועיל מחילה של ישראל וצריך להבין באמת מ"ט דאף דכורש הרשה להם לבנות הסוכה מ"מ כיון שעכ"פ הגוים דרו שם והי' להם חלק ברה"ר מי מחל להם ועיין תוס' ר"ה דף י"ג דכתבו דאף דא"י ירושה להם מאבותיהם מכל מקום יש להם חלק במה שזרע ע"ש ואם כן עכ"פ הי' להנכרים חלק ברה"ר שהרי דרו שם והיו צריכין לעבור שם אמנם באמת המעיין

possession of the public domain because they live there and would need to pass through there. However, if one looks closely at the biblical verses, one will see that when they dedicated the wall, there were no non-Jews living there in Jerusalem, and if so, it was entirely theirs [the Jews]. They were able to make sukkot, and behold, they even closed the gates of Jerusalem every Shabbat, as it says in Nehemia (Chapter 13). The city was theirs in its entirety under the sanction of Koresh, and if so, non-Jews did not have any ownership of it, only Jews, and Jews could relinquish their possession [of the public domain] as explained by the Magen Avraham…

ולפ"ז הדרא קושיא לדוכתא בהך דעשו סוכות ברחובות ושווקים ניהו דהיה של ישראל לבד הא לא היה מועיל מחילה אך לפענ"ד נראה דבר חדש דלפי מה שאמרו בב"ק דף פ"ב דירושלים לא נחלקה לשבטים ועיין בתוס' שם ד"ה ואין ובמהרש"א ופ"י שם ואני כתבתי על הגליון של הפ"י שנעלם מהם מקורו של התוס' שהוא בילקוט פרשה וזאת הברכה ובאדר"נ פל"ה דמבואר בהדיא כן ע"ש ולפ"ז כיון שהיו לכל ישראל שותפות בירושלים אם כן הוה סוכת השותפין דאדם יוצא בה ידי חובתו כמבואר בשו"ת הריב"ש סי' שנ"ז וכן הוא בשו"ע א"ח סימן תרל"ז ס"ב וה"ה בזה ומזה ראיה ברורה דשותפות כשר ובזה נראה לפענ"ד היתר חדש לרה"ר דאף שכל בני העיר משותפים ברה"ר מכל מקום הוה כסוכת השותפין שחצי' שלו וחצי' שאולה בידו וכמ"ש הריב"ש שם ובשעה שהוא משתמש היא כלה שלו ואם כן הוה היתר פשוט ודו"ק היטב כי לפענ"ד הוא הערה חדשה ובזה מיושב הא דכתבתי בגליון הש"ע /או"ח/ סימן תרל"ז לתמוה על המג"א...

אחר שכתבתי זאת מצאתי בכפת תמרים למהרמב"ח שכתב בחידושיו לסוכת דף ל"א דמסכך בר"ה הו"ל סוכת שותפין וכמ"ש הריב"ש ולא מנעתי לבי מכל שמחה שזכיתי לכוין לדעתו הגדולה

And because of this, the difficulty has returned once more in that they made sukkot in the streets and markets. This would be fine if they [the public domain] were owned solely by Jews. However, a new answer appears to me according to what is said in Bava Kama 82a that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes. See Tosafot there and the Maharsha and the P'nei Yehoshua. I wrote on the margins of the P'nei Yehoshua that the source of Tosafot was lost to them but appears in the Yalkut Shimoni (Parshat V'zot haberacha) and in Avot D'Rebbe Natan (Chapter 35) where it is explained explicitly thus [that all Jews own Jerusalem]. According to this, since all Jews are partners in Jerusalem, the sukkot built there [in the public domain] would have the status of sukkot owned in partnership through which one can fulfill their halachic obligation [to dwell in the sukkah]. This is explained in the responsa of the Rivash (357) and so too in Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chaim 637:2). From this, there is clear proof that a sukkah owned in partnership is kosher. It appears to me, from this, that there is a new reason to permit a sukkah in the public domain, for all the inhabitants of the city are partners in the public domain, and therefore sukkot built there would have the status of sukkot owned in partnership, in which half is mine and the other half is considered borrowed, as was written by the Rivash. When one uses the sukkah, it is as if it is entirely theirs, and therefore, it is obviously permitted. It appears to me that this is a new idea, which resolves what I wrote in the margins of the Shulchan Aruch regarding my questions on the Magen Avraham…

After I wrote this, I found in Kapot Tamarim of the Maharbach that he wrote in his commentary to Sukkah 31 that one puts Schach on a sukkah in the public domain, it is as if the sukkah is owned in partnership, as was also written by the Rivash. I did not hold back my heart from all the joy I merited in intuiting the opinion of this great rabbi.

Taking Down a Sukkah on Chol HaMoed due to Strong Winds

Rabbi Dov Linzer

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Question:

Given the strong winds that we have been experiencing, is it permissible to take down the *sukkah* on *Hol HaMoed* to prevent it from being damaged or from causing injury? If I do take it down, am I exempt from eating in a *sukkah*, or do I have to find a *sukkah* that is still up?

Answer:

Thank you for your question. Let's look at the two issues you raise in order.

Dismantling a Sukkah on Hol HaMoed

When it comes to taking precautions due to strong winds, the first thing to note is that if the wind is so bad that there is a concern that a flying *skhakh* could hit someone and cause serious injury, then there is no question that the *sukkah* should be taken down immediately, even on Shabbat or Yom Tov. For those that would hesitate to do such, it should be noted that at most we are dealing with a rabbinic prohibition since this is dismantling without the intent to rebuild in the same place (see Shabbat 31b, Rambam Shabbat 10:15, and Arukh HaShulkhan OH 313:6 and 314:5).

When it comes to any risk to public safety, even one much more minor than this, such as a sharp object or ember left in the middle of the street, the *halakha* is that rabbinic prohibitions may and must be overridden (Shabbat 42a and Shulkhan Arukh Orah Hayyim 308:18 and 334:27). If possible, it is of course preferable to have a non-Jew do take the *sukkah* down, and if these conditions are expected, one should do everything possible to make sure that it is taken down before Shabbat or *Yom Tov*.

What if there is no concern of possible injury? Could the *sukkah* be taken down on *Hol HaMoed* in such a case?

This question has already been dealt with by a number of *poskim*. It seems to first have been raised by Rav Tourney in *Ikrei HaDaat* (OH 2:68), who gives arguments both to forbid and permit taking down a *sukkah* on *Hol HaMoed*. And there are some *poskim* who go so far to forbid removing *schach* from one *sukkah* even if it is to be used in another *sukkah* (Shoel u'Mayshiv, fourth ma'hadurah, 3:28 forbids, while Tzitz Eliezer (13:68) permits).

An excellent and clearly written *teshuva* on this topic can be found in *Li'horot Natan*, 7:47-49, written by Rabbi Natan Geshtenter (1932-2010, Bnei Brak), who concludes that it is permissible, even without a strong justifying reason. His arguments are

persuasive and compelling, and I believe that his position is the correct one to be followed. Here's why.

The Problem of being Designated for a Mitzvah

Some have argued that the principle of *huktza li'mitzvato*, that an object set aside for its mitzvah use is forbidden to be used for anything else, would prohibit the taking down of the *sukkah*. This principle is based on Gemara *Sukkah* (9a) which states that the *schach* (and possibly the walls) are considered sanctified during Sukkot. In addition, Gemara *Sukkah* (10a) (as well as Shabbat 22a and 45a, and Beitzah 30b) states that the *sukkah* decorations are forbidden because they are *huktzeh li'mitzvato*, designated for mitzvah use (see Tosafot, *Sukkah* 9a, Beitzah 30b, and Shabbat 22a, as well as other *Rishonim* who explore the differences between the concept of sanctity and *huktzeh li'mitzvato*).

All the sources and poskim make it clear that this restriction means only that someone cannot take the *schach*, or other parts of the *sukkah* away from the mitzvah for the purpose of using it or benefiting from it (Rambam, *Sukkah* 6:15, and Shulkhan Arukh, OH 638:1). It does not mean that it cannot be removed from its mitzvah function. There is thus no problem dismantling the *sukkah* from this perspective.

There is another issue, however, to deal with – does the *sukkah* have to be standing for all 7 days to be valid? The Mishna (*Sukkah* 48a) states that one should not take down the *sukkah* on Hoshana Rabbah, which could be reflecting this idea. Rashi, however, explains that this Mishnah is only articulating a practical concern – you should not take it apart because you might need to use it later in the day. It is thus more advice than a restriction, and regardless, would not apply if the *sukkah* would be destroyed anyway, or, to take another scenario, if the person had another place to eat, for example, if he was travelling to a different state on *Hol HaMoed*. Rashi's explanation is quoted by all the major poskim (Tur, Beit Yosef, Levush, Arukh HaShulkhan and Mishne Brurah on OH 666), and this is the position that we follow as a matter of halakha.

However, it should be noted that Ran explains that the reason for this restriction is a more fundamental concern – that it would define the *sukkah* to not be made for 7 days. Following this, it should not be allowed to dismantle a *sukkah* any earlier than absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, this position is not quoted in poskim, and some explicitly reject it.

One final concern that is raised is the ruling in Shulkhan Arukh (OH 15) that a person may not remove *tzitzit* from a garment unless it is to put them on another garment, because this would be making a garment that requires *tztizit* to be *tztzit*-less. However, there is no restriction against discarding the garment or cutting it up (Mishne Brurah no. 3, based on Magen Avraham, no. 2), and thus no restriction against taking down a *sukkah*: this is no different than removing the *tzizit* and discarding the garment.

Taking Down a Structure on Hol HaMoed (and Yom Tov)

In addition to the issues discussed above, some have raised the concern of *sitrah*, taking down a structure, which should be forbidden on *Hol HaMoed* because it is a *melakha*. But, in fact, this is not a problem at all. When it comes to taking down the *schach*, we are talking only about *stirat ohel*,

removing a roof, not *stirat binyan*, destroying a structure, and *stirat ohel* is just a problem on *Yom Tov* and not on *Hol HaMoed* (Arukh HaShulkhan, OH 638:8-9, Mishne Brurah, Beiur Halakha).

The same would be true when it comes to taking down the walls in most of our contemporary *sukkot* which are not attached to the ground. In such cases there is no *stirat binyan*, and thus it is totally permissible on *Hol HaMoed*. Even in the case of a *sukkah* attached to the ground, if there was a concern of financial loss or potential damage to others, it would be permitted to be dismantled (SA OH 540:1 and Mishne Brurah no. 5.]

Conclusion

One can take down a *sukkah* on *Hol HaMoed* when necessary. Once the *schach* and walls are taken down, they should not be used for other purposes, because they are designated for the mitzvah, and remain so even if the *schach* fell down until the end of the *chag* (OH 638:1).

Eating Outside a Sukkah

If a person has taken down his *sukkah*, he is still required to eat in a *sukkah*, and he must try to find one that is still standing. Anyone who lives in an apartment knows full well that even if you do not have a *sukkah* of your own, you are still required to eat in a *sukkah*.

However, there are two scenarios in which this would not be the case.

1. If it is so cold and windy that eating in a *sukkah* causes discomfort, you may eat indoors. This is the principle of *mitztaer,* a person in discomfort. Ramban explains that this exemption is based on the word *ezrach* "citizen": "every citizen in Israel shall dwell in *sukkot*" (Lev. 23:45), which suggests a sense of being settled and in comfort. More simply, the exemption is based on the word "dwell" and eating in discomfort is not considered an act of dwelling in that place. Since the *sukkah* must serve as your primary residence during the *chag*, if you are in such discomfort that you would leave your primary residence and go to your secondary residence next door because of current conditions, you may also leave the *sukkah* (Rema, OH 639:5). If that is the case here, you are exempt from eating in a *sukkah*.
2. No sukkot are available. If there are no sukkot available in your community, then you are exempt from eating in a *sukkah*. You do not have to travel to find a *sukkah* – travelling itself is a reason to be exempt from the *sukkah*, because it puts you out of the home context! If there are people who have a *sukkah*, but you do not know them well and are reluctant to ask them to use their *sukkah*, this would put you in the *mitztaer* category, since it is so difficult to make this request (OH 640:4 and MB 22). However, the practice is to only follow this ruling when it is particularly difficult or uncomfortable to go to another person's *sukkah* (MB 23). Thus, if it is not a great difficulty, I would encourage you to overcome your reluctance and to ask – people like helping people, and this would let you have the mitzvah of *sukkah*, and let them have the mitzvah of lending you a hand! But if this is too awkward or uncomfortable, then you are exempt from eating in a *sukkah*.

Adjusting Electric Burners and Keypad Ovens on Yom Tov

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Adjusting the Temperature on an Electric Countertop Burner on Yom Tov

Question:

Chicago, IL

If I have an electric countertop burner that I put on a timer for *yom tov*, can I adjust the heat setting while the burner is on? Does it matter if I'm turning the heat up when the burner is already on or down when it's already off (there's a light that says if it's currently heating or not)?

Do you have general guidelines on interacting with electronic devices on Shabbat/Yom Tov?

Answer:

There are two issues here—*havarah*/*mekhabeh* (igniting/extinguishing), and use of electronics.

1. **Regarding *havarah*/*mekhabeh*** (igniting/extinguishing)
One cannot make a new fire on *Yom Tov* or extinguish a fire (*Shulchan Arukh OC* 502:1, *OC* 514:1). This means, that if the heating element (which is not visible) is not red hot, one cannot adjust the knob up if that will lead to it getting to be red hot (fire requires that it give off both heat and light according to *halakha—Maggid Mishnah* on *Mishnah Torah*, Sabbath 12:1:4, s.v. *vehamechamem*, *Kuntres Acharon* on *Shulchan Arukh HaRav*, *Orach Chayim* 495, etc.). Similarly, one cannot adjust the knob down so that it goes from red hot to black (even if it remains on). It is immaterial whether it is in the process of heating up or not (although if it was not red hot but already in the process of getting to be red hot, and you turned the knob even higher, that would not be a problem). So the question that you have to ask is: at what temperature (knob position) is the hidden heating element red hot? Once you know that, you know the line that you have to stay above (or stay under, as the case may be).

[N.B. – There are quite rare cases of stovetop burners—where there are 2 heating elements combined under one burner. In these cases, going up in temperature might take you from being one burn red hot to two burners red hot. I cannot imagine that that is the case here.]

2. **Regarding the use of electronics**
Logically, if you can do *bishul*, *havara*, *lisha* (cooking, igniting, kneading, etc.), on *Yom Tov* for cooking purposes (*Shulchan Arukh OC* 495), there is no good reason that you cannot use electricity other than *uvda di'chol* (weekday activity). In your case, there is basically no *uvda di'chol* because you are

merely turning a mechanical knob, so there is no experience of electricity/electronics, and it feels exactly like what you do on *Yom Tov* to cook food, i.e., no different (experientially) than turning a mechanical knob to raise the gas on a gas stove. That being the case, I cannot see why it should be a problem.

In other words, I think it is permissible to adjust the temperature on the burner, as long as the red LED light is covered well so you don't see it going on and off as a result of your turning the knob (if it won't do this as a result of your adjusting the knob, even if it does so on its own from time to time, then there is no need to cover it).

Adjusting an Electronic Keypad Oven or Stove on Yom Tov

Question:

Can one raise the heat on an electronic pad-entry oven or stove on Yom Tov? I will be leaving the burner on, but just want to know if I can then raise or lower the heat.

Answer:

I have addressed adjusting the heat on an electric stove top, above, which is relevant in some ways to this question.

There are two issues here: (1) making and extinguishing a fire and (2) using electronics. As to the former—since, as you told me, you will be keeping the fire on and just raising and lowering the heat, there is no problem from this perspective. You should be sure that the element remains red the whole time, since going to black from red could be considered making a new fire, and going from red to black could be considered extinguishing a fire.

As to the electronic keypad—it is first important to appreciate that it is quite strange that we do not use electricity for the sake of cooking on Yom Tov. If halakhically I am allowed to knead dough, grind pepper, make a fire, cook, bake, and more—all of which are *melachot d'oraita* (biblically forbidden)--because these activities are being done for the sake of food preparation and eating, why should I not halakhically be permitted to use my food processor for the same reason? If I am permitted to make a fire to heat up the food, why may I not use a microwave to do so as well?

I have not found anyone who has been able to give a good halakhic explanation for this, and the reason is because, from a technical halakhic perspective, there isn't one. The problem here is not a technical one, but an experiential one. Using electronics on Yom Tov, even in the context of food preparation, would be *uvda di'chol*, weekday-like activity. It would pull us out into the world of technology, business, busyness, noise and sound, much more than cooking and making a fire do. Given that the problem is an experiential one, there may be ways to address it.

What is primarily "weekday-like" in our case is the fact that your adjusting of the heat will change the numbers on the digital readout. If you cover the digital readout so you can't see anything, then that would suffice to address this aspect of *uvda di'chol*. As to pushing buttons on the keypad itself and the sound made when "bake" is pushed—once the readout is covered, I believe that the *uvda di'chol* element here would be quite minimal. I would advise using your knuckle so there is a degree of shinui and you'll be fine. [I should note that I would not permit the same approach when it comes to microwave ovens, which, in contrast to heat-based ovens, are deeply enmeshed in the world of electronics and technology and whose use would always be *uvda di'chol*, in my estimation.]

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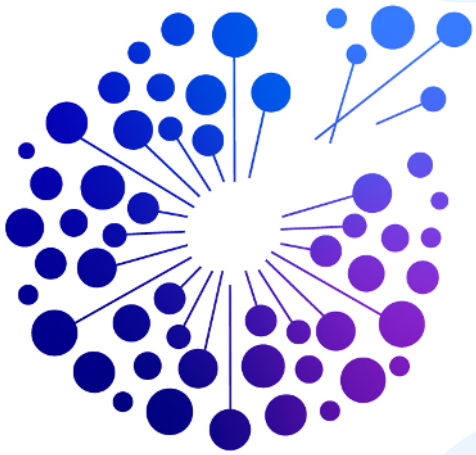

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