



פרשת בראשית
שבת מברכים מרחשון
תשרי תשפ"ג

HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA

The Midrash and Zohar describe how on the day of his creation, Adam gathered together all of the creations and proclaimed Hashem's Kingship. He called out "let us prostrate, bow and kneel be Hashem our Maker".

This is why the Shir Shel Yom for Friday begins לבש גאות מלך ה'.

In Hakhel, the king is required to gather the people together, for the express purpose of inspiring them in the fear of Hashem.

Man, being the highest order of Creation is like a king. Adam gathering the animals together around him, to surrender themselves to Hashem, is like the gathering of Hakhel.

www.kollelmenachem.com.au/hakhel

MONDAY NIGHT CHASSIDUS

After an extended break, the Monday night Chassidus Shiur will be resuming this week.

Learn about the mystical meaning in the Parsha of the week as taught in the Chassidus of the Chabad Rebbeim.

This Week:

The Mystical Meaning of the Rainbow - Reminder of sin or sign of the Redemption?

8:30-9:30pm on Zoom for men and women. Text-based study with Rabbi Y Johnson. Details and link will be shared via email.



In this Edition

Resurfacing the spirit of Moshiach **P.1**

Schach held together with metal wire **P.2**

Resurfacing the Spirit of Moshiach

At the beginning of Creation, when the world was empty and void, the Torah describes how the spirit of Hashem רוח אלקים was hovering over the waters מרחפת על פני המים.

The Midrash teaches that this spirit of Hashem refers to the spirit of Moshiach, concerning whom the Novi Yishayahu says "and a spirit of Hashem will rest upon him".

The Baal Haturim points out that the words ורוח זו רוחו has the same Gematria as מרחפת אלקים מלך המשיח - this is the spirit of King Moshiach.

The spirit of Moshiach precedes Creation because the entire purpose of Creation is to reach the era of Moshiach, when G-dliness will be openly revealed and manifest within Creation.

Before the world was Created, the spirit of Hashem - representing open revelation of G-dliness, was revealed; hovering above the waters.

Through the act of Creation, this light and spirit became hidden, submerged and hidden under the waters which represent the physicality of the world.

Our Avodah in this world is to reveal the G-dly nature of Creation and transform physicality into a vessel that does not conceal Hashem's presence, but reveals it.

Kabbalah and Chassidus place great emphasis on the Avodah of Birurim, refining sparks of G-dliness through our engagements in the world in the service of Hashem and fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos.

These sparks originated in a former spiritual world known as Tohu. Tohu was a world of great and intense G-dly light. Due to the power of this light and the lack of "vessels" sufficient to contain it, the world of Tohu went through a spiritual collapse,

known as "the shattering of the vessels."

The sparks from this collapsed world order 'fell' into our world where they lie trapped within the physical objects in our world.

This shattering of the vessels is alluded to in our verse. The Kabbalists write that there are 288 sparks. The word מרחפת (hovering) is made up of the words מרפ"ח - literally "288 died". This alludes to the falling of these lights, as one who falls in their level is called dead.

When we utilize physicality in the service of Hashem, whether it be the observance of a Mitzvah or engaging in mundane physical activities for the sake of Heaven, we extract these sparks and reconnect them with their lofty G-dly source. In doing so, we elevate the physicality of the world to become a vessel for this great G-dly light.

This is the Avodah of Dirah Betachtonim, which will be realized in the times of Moshiach.

In the Messianic age, the waters of materialism will no longer cover over the G-dly nature of the world. Instead, as the Novi describes, "the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem, like the waters cover the sea."

Even though Tohu was a loftier spiritual world, it could not contain this light because it was transposed top-down from Above without any preparation to generate or receive it. With our actions, we transform the world into a strong and fitting vessel to contain and reveal the great G-dly lights of Tohu and even higher.

As we begin the Torah once more, with the description of Creation and the hint to the spirit of Moshiach, we reconnect to the purpose of Creation and recommit ourselves to our mission.

1. Rabbi Nissin Karelitz
2. Shaar Hatzion 629:20
3. Metal wire is not Mekabel Tumah, but it is invalid as Schach as it does not grow from the ground
4. See Piskei Teshuvos 629:6
5. Being concerned for this is a Midas Chassidus and not because of a genuine Maris Ayin, because even if they don't ensure the correct support, Bedieved the Sukkah is Kosher.
6. cRc
7. This is questionable as the issue of Maamid is only Lechatchilah. Perhaps they are addressing the concern of the bamboo shifting or being spread out and not providing sufficient shade.
8. Rav Elyashiv quoted in Az Nidberu, Tzitz Eliezer 10:29
9. Shevet Halevi 6:74, Az Nidberu, Avnei Nezer 473

The weekly Halacha analysis

Schach held together with metal wire - part 2

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

There has been recent discussion about using bamboo mats as Schach where the strips of bamboo are strung together with metal wires. What is the issue of concern and what is the Halachic status? Part 2

In last week's edition, we presented the background on the issue of being Maamid (supporting the Schach) with something that is Mekabel Tumah or is otherwise invalid as Schach.

After referencing the Gemara and words of the Rishonim and Shulchan Aruch, we presented the opinion of the Ta"z and Magen Avraham, with the Alter Rebbe and most Acharonim ruling like the Magen Avraham, that Maamid is only a concern Lechatchilah.

The opinion of the Bach

In contrast to the Ta"z who is completely lenient, and the Magen Avraham who is lenient Bedieved, the Bach takes a stricter approach and forbids such a Sukkah even Bedieved.

This is based on the explanation of Rashi that the disqualification of being Maamid with something that is Mekabel Tumah, is not because of a Gezeira but rather because the status of the Schach follows that which holds it in place i.e. it is considered as though the Sukkah is actually covered with invalid Schach.

The Acharonim do not adopt the Bach's strict approach.

Definition of Bedieved

The wording of the Alter Rebbe implies that once the Sukkah has already been erected with the Schach supported by something that is invalid, it becomes Kosher Lechatchilah and that there is no requirement (or Hiddur) to take it down and change the supports, even before Sukkos. One who visits such a Sukkah may eat there without any concern.

There are Poskim who take a stricter approach and rule that Lechatchilah one who does not need to, should refrain from eating in a Sukkah that has an invalid Maamid. In family situations one may be lenient for example where one's parents-in-law are lenient¹.

A case of Shaas Hadechak, where there is no other way to secure or support the Schach, is also considered as a Bedieved and one may build the Sukkah in such a manner.

Note: The leniency of Bedieved only applies if the Sukkah was already erected in this manner

this Sukkos. One may not rely on this Lechatchilah to support the Schach in this manner in future years.

When the invalid material is not needed

Even according to the Poskim who adopt the prohibition of Maamid, this is only where the material or object that is Mekabel Tumah (or otherwise invalid as Sechach) is required to support the Schach i.e. without the support, the Schach would not remain in place or would be blown away by a common wind or shift to the extent that the Sukkah has invalidating airspaces or majority sunlight.

Where the Schach is heavy enough to remain in place by itself, or is otherwise secured in place with material that itself is Kosher for Schach, the Sukkah is Kosher even Lechatchilah as the Mekabel Tumah is not functioning as a Maamid.

Even the Bach would permit the Sukkah Lechatchilah in this scenario.

Application to bamboo mats and fencing

The discussion above applies to mats made of light bamboo strips or reeds which are strung together. Maamid will not apply to heavy or large bamboos which are capable of staying in place on their own and are acceptable even if tied together.

Maamid does not apply if the fibre used to hold the Schach is itself kosher for Schach such as a natural material that grows from the ground such as flax, cotton or jute. If the fibre has been spun into thread², Maamid will apply.

The issue of Maamid will apply where the reeds are strung together with synthetic materials such as nylon or plastic, or with other materials that are invalid as Schach such as metal wire³.

Technically if the reeds are well supported from below and weighted down on top with Kosher materials, the fact that they are strung together with invalid materials become irrelevant.

The Schach should be placed with the reeds lying perpendicular to the beams supporting the Schach and there should be sufficient beam underneath to hold the Schach up in place. The support beams on top should also be laid perpendicular to the reeds, with enough beams and weight to secure the Schach in place. This should be tested.

Despite the fact that there are permissible ways to lay such mats and the Din of Maamid is only Lechatchilah, most Rabbonim maintain that it is preferable to purchase mats that are made with fibres that are Kosher as Schach which are sold with a Hechsher⁴. This is especially for Chassidim who go out of their way to be Mehader in Mitzvos.

The reason to be stringent is that many people are not proficient in the Halachos and will not build the correct support. Even if one is proficient in the Halachos, guests visiting the Sukkah may not understand the nuance and will use similar fencing or mats without ensuring the proper support⁵.

Typically, these mats are more expensive. One who faces financial difficulty should seek guidance from a Rov about the possibility of using other types of mats and how to support them correctly.

Another concern raised by some Kashrus agencies⁶ is that bamboo fencing may be spread loosely, leaving gaps that result in there being more sunlight than shade in the Sukkah. This could be overcome by using a double layer of the fencing.

The Chicago Kashrus agency cRc writes:

"Until 2017, the cRc recommended certain readily available fencing material (commonly sold in Home Depot) to be used for schach and provided detailed instructions on how to place them on the sukkah. However, based on feedback from consumers on the sturdiness of those materials and how they were being used, we stopped issuing those recommendations [and also stopped researching these types of products] because we determined that there is a reasonable chance that some people will end up not having kosher schach⁷ for their sukkah. We suggest that consumers use traditional schach material such as bamboo poles, tree branches, or mats specifically certified for sukkah use."

Before concluding, it should be noted that there are Poskim who do not allow the use of any mats for Schach because of the concerns of Gezeiras Tikra (resembling a roof)⁸. Most Poskim are not concerned and write that Gezeira Tikra does not apply to mats. Others⁹ opposed the use of mats as they were a deviation from the custom of our ancestors.

Sources on reverse