

THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF THE YEAR

by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

Sukkos

Pursuit Of Peace

By Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig

Our daily evening prayers contain an interesting petition to the Almighty: "Spread over us the Succah of Your peace." Our Sages explain that the Succah is representative of the six Clouds of Glory that surrounded and protected the Children of Israel throughout their travels in the wilderness. These clouds remained with them through the merit of Aaron, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). The attribute that Aaron epitomized was a lover and pursuer of peace. In what way does the Succah represent peace more than the other mitzvos (Divine commandments)? And what is the meaningful connection between Aaron's loving and pursuing of peace and our observance of this mitzvah?

Rabbi Eliezer Dessler (1) explains that when we leave our houses and move into Succah booths for a week, we remind ourselves how little we really control our circumstances. By leaving the "security" of our brick and mortar homes and subjecting ourselves to the forces of nature, we are reminding ourselves that there is nothing given and absolute in the physical world. All of its structures and pleasures are temporal; only our Torah study and mitzvos have a lasting effect. Our only true control is over the decisions we make in the situations in which we find ourselves.

This was Aaron's unique trait. Aaron was chosen by G-d to be the High Priest, the Divine emissary to connect the Jewish people to G-d. Once the paradigm shifts and spirituality becomes the national priority, the realization soon follows that another's spiritual growth is to my benefit. There is no room for jealousy beyond the physical world. With this achievement, peace is the natural byproduct.

Aaron chased after peace because he understood the "win-win": everyone involved gained spiritually from the process, and the dividend was communal peace.

In our contemporary world of techno-gadgets, the lesson of the Succah is all the more essential to remind us of our limitations and enable our focus on our real priorities. With this may we merit the experience of genuine peace prevailing among us.

Have a Good Shabbos and a Good Yom Tov!

(1) in Michtav Me'Eliyahu, his collected writings and discourses; 1891- 1954; of London and B'nai Brak, one of the outstanding personalities and thinkers of the Mussar movement

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