



A FESTIVAL OF JOY – SHARED

13 Tishrei, 5741-1980

Today we commemorate the Yahrzeit which, by Divine Providence, falls between Yom Kippur and Sukkos.

What kind of days are these? The Midrash states regarding the days preceding Sukkos: "During these days, Jews are preoccupied – this one with his Sukkah and that one with his Lulav," preparing for the Festival.

Something in which the Rebbe Maharash was very openly involved, and this was openly evident was the general situation of Jews in Russia at that time – the country where his primary leadership was, and where the majority of his Chassidim lived.

Because of the conditions there, it was extremely difficult to observe Judaism, as known to those familiar with the Jewish history of that time and place. He endeavored and occupied himself, making many trips within Russia, as well as to other countries, lobbying them to pressure the Czarist government to ease the spiritual suffering of the Jewish people and also to nullify the decrees affecting their material situation.

A small part of his work is known from the stories told by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, describing those trips and meetings, his efforts, etc.

And it is known that his efforts were on both levels: To nullify decrees affecting their material livelihoods, as well as averting decrees, and potential decrees, affecting their spiritual condition.

Travel causes great strain – but this did not stop him from the trips, the meetings, and all the hard work; while traveling, one sacrifices the comforts of his own environment and home.

This theme has something common with the above-mentioned season in which we now stand, when people are busy with their Sukkah and Lulav, the preparations for the Festival of Sukkot.

On Sukkot, as on all Festivals, the theme is "Festivals for rejoicing." When can there be joy? When it includes, "you, your sons and daughters, your servants, maids and the strangers within your gates." The commentators explain: When can there be true joy? G-d built it into human nature that when a person is in a joyful state he cannot be alone, on the contrary, he does all he can to involve others, as well: "Sons and daughters," even "servants and maids," and even "strangers within your gates." This is especially underscored on the Festival of Sukkot.



We see from the ruling and directive to all Jews, and printed in the Siddur for everyone. We say "Festivals of joy," regarding all Holidays, but "the Time of our Rejoicing" is said regarding Sukkot alone. From this we understand the importance of joining with others, because that makes it a true joy.

When you join with many others, whomever you can reach, including those who are merely "within your gates"; not in your home, not near you, not in your courtyard, not in your neighborhood – but at the city gates. One should include this individual as well, and then one is truly happy.

And as mentioned often: The Yalkut notes that regarding Sukkot, 'joy' is stated three times – and "three times makes something established." As we must always derive a practical lesson, this is the message: This narrative underscores – related to the above-mentioned Mitzvot, and based on love for a fellow Jew, the essence of the entire Torah that one must educate oneself, and with love for a fellow Jew, educate others – everyone who you can reach, so that they too, can experience the Festival.

Starting from the basics – see to it that everyone has their festival necessities, so all can experience a joyful Holiday – a bodily joy, as well.

And even more so, for Festival joy 'there must be meat' – as was required in the time of the Holy Temple – as well as wine, which is required from the Torah even nowadays, as the Alter Rebbe quotes in his Code of Jewish Law that it is a positive commandment from the Torah, in our times as well – on the Festivals, Chol Hamoed, Shmini Atzeret, and on Simchat Torah.

This must be arranged, obviously, prior to the Holiday.

So during the days leading up to the Festival, we must ensure that every Jew we can reach should have the necessities enabling them to experience "rejoicing on the Festivals," literally, and in the best way.

All this must be arranged in the days prior to the festival. And during the festival itself, as is the custom in recent years, to bring the holiday joy to Jewish people, wherever they can be reached.

