

א ביסל תורה!

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ט"ו תשרי תשפ"ה · סוכות - שמחת תורה

Face to Face with Greatness

By Avi Abbett '25

As the book of דברים ends and with that the completion of the entire Torah, משה gives בני a final send-off, ending his goodbye that began in פרשת דברים. In the final פסוקים of our משה, פרשה, passes away and the reins are passed on to his apprentice, Yehoshua. The book ends saying "וְלֹא-יָקָם נְבִיא עוֹד" "בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּ ה' פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים מֹשֶׁה, that was like משה, that knew Hashem, face to face." משה was the greatest prophet to ever live and the Torah makes that clear as it comes to a close. But the פסוק ends emphasizing a different point. "That knew Hashem, face to face."

רש"י gives a straightforward yet meaningful understanding of this phrase. When the text says "face to face" it means that משה was familiar with Hashem. Through this familiarity and close bond משה had with Hashem, he spoke to Him whenever he pleased. This was the true greatness of משה. His relationship with Hashem is the closest of anyone, ever. No one just spoke with Hashem, it was always Hashem who came when He wanted to speak but משה was different.

ספורנו explains that no one ever reached the same spiritual status as משה, no one got to the same heights. And from this, we learn that since no one could be at the same level as משה there isn't a higher authority. Meaning, that if one Beit Din decrees something it can't be disregarded or invalidated by another unless proven to be otherwise. ספורנו goes on to interpret the meaning of "אֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּ ה'", what does it

mean to know Hashem? He answers that Hashem gave משה insight, endowing him with so much knowledge in essence turning His face to משה. Receiving insight from Hashem, even a small amount, changes you and makes you an "איש אחר", a different person. This word, ידע, is used in many other places to convey the same type of meaning, to gain insights into Hashem's essence, attributes, and understanding.

פסוק The פסוק makes a point using עוד. The פסוק could've simply said that no prophet has risen like משה, but it adds עוד, again, implying the future as well. No prophet had or would rise and be on the same level as משה. The פסוק also has another interesting addition that can lend us a deeper understanding of משה's greatness. The פסוק adds "בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל" "in Israel". The אור החיים takes this as a hint to understanding the foundation of משה's greatness. Including this word hints that his greatness as a prophet was due to בני. This is supported in the ספרי that when the Jewish people were in Hashem's disfavor, Hashem didn't communicate with משה either.

We can take from the אור החיים and ספורנו that while משה was great himself, he wasn't without others. He is the greatest prophet to have ever lived but still had the support of his nation and of Hashem, building him to further heights. In our lives, we have goals and dreams that we strive to reach but we can learn from משה, ספורנו, and the אור החיים, that what support is what will help us achieve everything and reach greatness.

How can we recognize ה' in our lives during סוכות?

By Maayan Schwartz '28

is an agricultural holiday where we distance ourselves from our permanent homes. Instead, we reside in temporary dwellings to remind ourselves that all of our privileges in life really come from ה'. For the duration of סוכות, when we live in little huts, we are humbled by the majesty of ה'. These סוכות are a strong reminder that everything comes from ה'. רשב"ס:ה' in his commentary on ויקרא כ"ג:מ"ג, says that one of the reasons סוכות falls out during the late harvest season is to remind us that as בני ישראל were traveling in the desert, they owned no property, and therefore, couldn't produce their own food. They were entirely reliant on the care of ה' in order to survive. When we sit in our סוכות, we are surrounded by our family, tasty food and amazing decorations. Yet, in such an impermanent structure, we cannot help but be in awe of all the protection ה' has provided for us and our ancestors.

The מצוה of the מנינים touches on this value too. Once בני ישראל were settled in ארץ ישראל, most people took up jobs in agriculture. On סוכות, their לולבים and אתרוגים would have come from their own produce. They would literally be holding their own hard work. This is a much more intimate way of interpreting the meaning of the לולב and אתרוג than how we do today. If we use this interpretation, when we bench לולב, we are holding a symbol of our livelihood, hard work, and ability to grow produce. This means that the ארבע מנינים is a visual reminder that everything comes from ה'. When we shake our לולבים and אתרוגים around, they show us that everything in this world is from ה'.

Sometimes, it can be easy to take for granted all of the things that ה' provides for us. When those things are taken away, it can often be very shocking to have to live our lives without those essential things. Last year, on שמחת תורה, we had a very jarring reminder of what can happen when we take things like safety for granted. After Hamas attacked Israel, it was a harsh awakening to the fact that not everything is guaranteed. However, we saw how united everyone was.

Another theme of סוכות is אחדות, unity. In מסכת סוכה, the תורה, we are commanded to sit in a סוכה. The תורה uses the words "כָּל הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בְּסוּכוֹת" (ויקרא כג:מב) "How can the entire nation stay in סוכות? The גמרא expands on this, saying that the תורה really means that you are able to fulfill the obligation of sitting in a סוכה even if it's a communal סוכה. This teaches us the value of community, and how even during hard times, ה' is still behind each and everything.

Ultimately, סוכות is an amazing opportunity to remind ourselves to always be grateful to ה' for everything in our lives. Whether we are grateful for our safety, homes, family, or more, we should see ה's hand behind it all. May we have a peaceful סוכות, with our communities, and find ways to be more grateful in this coming year.



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