

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
ד"ה ושאתם מים בששון שבת חול המועד הסוכות תשכ"ז בלתי מוגה  
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## REPENTANCE AND JOY

**A**ND YOU SHALL DRAW WATER WITH JOY, FROM THE FOUNTAINS OF LIBERATION<sup>2</sup>. THE SAGES RELATE THIS VERSE TO THE Joy of the Water Drawing which would take place in the Temple during the nights of the Succot Festival, when crowds of people would gather in the Temple. A balcony was constructed for the women to stand, above the men. The greatest sages of the generation would dance, watched by the crowd. There was beautiful singing. The Talmud<sup>3</sup> says 'one who has not witnessed this joy of the Water Drawing, has never experienced joy in his life'.

What makes this joy on Succot so great? Chassidic teachings explain that joy is expressed when something previously hidden becomes revealed. Precisely this takes place on Succot. We see this in the verse 'Sound the Shofar when [the moon] is hidden, [and this will be revealed] on the day of our Festival [Succot]<sup>4</sup>. This means that all those spiritual aspects which were concealed on Rosh Hashana, the drawing of new life-force into the world for the coming year, are revealed on Succot.

Similarly regarding Yom Kippur: its deepest spiritual aspects are revealed on Succot. For the Sages tell us that the Succah, and particularly its Schach, the leafy covering, represents the Clouds of Glory which surrounded and protected the Jewish people during their journey in the Wilderness. Further, Chassidic teachings explain that the Schach of the Succah is drawn from the most intimate

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<sup>1</sup> Maamar Ushavtem Mayim beSason 5727 (1966). Printed in Dvar Malchut for Succot 5774 (2013), not edited by the Rebbe.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 12:3

<sup>3</sup> Succah 51a

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 81:4

aspect of the Yom Kippur service in the Temple, when the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies with a pan of hot embers, on which he sprinkles incense. A thick fragrant cloud of incense then fills the Holy of Holies. This cloud of incense is the spiritual source of the Schach, the leafy roof of the Succah. Since as mentioned above, joy is felt when the hidden is revealed, from this revelation of the hidden aspect of Yom Kippur comes the Joy of Succot. In fact, in our prayers, Succot is termed 'the time of our joy'.

The key element of Yom Kippur is, of course, Repentance. In truth, all one's days can and should entail Repentance. Nonetheless, there is a special power of Repentance on Yom Kippur. At other times of the year, Repentance can help for most sins, but not for those which are particularly grave. For them one needs Yom Kippur.

Further, the Talmud<sup>5</sup> tells us that Repentance can be from Awe or from Love. Repentance from Awe has the power to transform deliberate transgressions into accidental transgressions. This level can be achieved throughout the year. But Repentance from Love has a greater power: it can transform deliberate transgressions into positive merits. This can take place particularly on Yom Kippur, because then one reaches a higher level of closeness to the Divine.

Hence at Neilah on Yom Kippur one of the prayers is 'You give Your hand to receive those who repent'. The 'hand' figuratively means the Divine power to reach a person who is on the lowest level, deep in the pit of iniquity... This is possible because on Yom Kippur the radiance of the inwardness of Keter is revealed, expressing a oneness beyond number, which can heal even those negative levels which are themselves 'beyond number'.

Through this we can understand the great joy of Succot. The joy comes from the fullness of the atonement on Yom Kippur. It is the closeness which comes after being distant. Like the joy of a wedding: for the groom and bride in their origin were one, but then they were torn apart from each other and were born in different families, and were remote from each other. Then at last in their marriage they are rejoined together. Even greater is the joy of the soul which on Succot is rejoined with the Infinite. The negative actions which separated it are turned into merits, because they are transformed into a radiance which spurs the person to positive action.

This is why the Schach of the Succah comes from the cloud of incense in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. The eleven ingredients of the incense have the power to transform the eleven impure aspects of Kelippah<sup>6</sup> to something positive. This takes place inwardly on Yom Kippur and is revealed openly on Succot, hence the joy, when the hidden is revealed.

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<sup>5</sup> Yoma 86b

<sup>6</sup> Literally 'shells', which are inedible, and which surround the edible and positive kernel. The kelipot are described as the impure spiritual aspects, the key to the negativity in existence.

However the flow from the Schach on Succot is still a surrounding radiance, *makif*. This has to be drawn into the inwardness of the person, and this is achieved by the shaking of the Four Kinds of plant: the Lulav, Etrog, Hadassim (Myrtle) and Willow. Together they express the unity of the Jewish people, and of each individual. This unity draws the radiance of the inwardness of Keter into the Jewish people as a whole, and each person in particular, bringing blessings for the coming year.

A further level of drawing this exalted ‘surrounding’ radiance into the inwardness of the Jewish people and the individual is through the Water libations on the days of Succot. As mentioned at the beginning, the drawing of water took place with great joy. Water in itself has no colour; it assumes the colour of the vessel in which it flows. This aspect of water links it with the exalted spiritual level of the inwardness of Keter, beyond qualities.

The water, spiritually emerging from an exalted realm, flows into the world, and is poured on the Altar. The great joy in the Temple was expressed by the leading figures of the generation dancing publicly, watched by large crowds of men and women.

But our custom of joyful dancing with the Torah Scrolls on Simchat Torah in a sense surpasses even the Joy of the Water Drawing. For in our synagogues, not only the leading Rabbis dance: everyone can dance. This expresses a higher level of unity, drawing the infinite radiance released on Yom Kippur, atoning for even the worst sins, into the minds and hearts and lives of every individual for a year of joy and of goodness, of unity, expressed in every aspect of life.

The ultimate expression of this healing atonement, unity and joy will be with the coming of the Messiah. Then the most exalted levels of Divine radiance will be revealed in our world, bringing Redemption to the Jewish people and peace to all humanity. May this be swiftly, in our days.

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