

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Succos 5784

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The Torah teaches about Succos.

**אַךְ בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַסְפְּכֶם אֶת־תְּבוּאֹת הָאָרֶץ תִּתְּנוּ אֶת־חַג־הָ**  
**שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן שִׁבְתוֹן וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי שִׁבְתוֹן:**

“Except, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, in your ingathering of the grain of the Land, you shall feast a Hashem’s feast day for seven days. The first day shall you rest and the eighth day shall be for rest.” (Vayikra 23:39).

What does the Torah mean by “ach / except?” Is that a word of inclusion or exclusion? What is it including or excluding? Succos is seven days and the eight day is a different chag, Shmini Atzeres. (Ibid 23:36). Why does the Torah now call it the chag of Succos? Is there a connection to tying Succos to the ingathering of grain?

אַךְ ach, but, in the Torah is an inclusion. Primary examples are מצות תאכלו שבעת ימים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ וְאֵךְ בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן “For seven days you shall eat matzos, but, on the first day...” (Shmos 12:15). The “but” there is including that the first day of Pesach is not the first day of eating matzos. The inclusion is erev Pesach not to have chometz after midday (per the Torah, 4<sup>th</sup> hour per Chazal). Another example is וְאֵךְ אֶת־יָדִי וְאַךְ אוֹתְךָ וְאַת־עַמֶּךָ בְּדָבָר “Because now I have sent My hand, but, you and your nation with pestilence...” (Ibid 9:15). The addition in this pasuk is that Hashem not only would destroy Pharoh and his nation but could destroy the entire country of Eretz Mitzrayim. However, Hashem did not. Likewise, וַיִּקְרָא וַיִּקְרָא אַבִּימֶלֶךְ לַיִּצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר אֵךְ הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ הִוא “And Avimelech called to Yitzchok, and he said, ‘But, behold! She is your wife.’” (Bereishis 26:9). Avimelech was adding that not only was she not your sister – Yitzchok trying to protect his family – she is your wife. She could have been unrelated to you and you lied to protect her. However, she was your wife and that truth would have protected her better. Another addition is added with אַךְ אֶת־זֶה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ “But of these that chew its cud you shall not eat.” (Vayikra 11:4). This pasuk includes all the species of hare and camel. Accordingly, the Torah is adding something to this holiday on the fifteenth. But what is it adding?

Succos is also uniquely connected to ingathering of grain. Our pasuk says, “On your ingathering of the grain.” “The chag of Succos you shall make for yourself, seven days, with the ingathering of your grain of your threshing floor.” (Devarim 16:13). Notice how Moshe put the term “ingathering of your grain” when our pasuk says, “your ingathering of the grain.” A couple of pesukim later it says “Seven days you shall feast with Hashem... because Hashem has blessed all your crops.” (Ibid 16:15). When the Torah introduces Succos for the first time it also connects the first harvest to the final harvest. “The feast of the harvest, the first fruits of your work, that you planted in the field, and the feast at the end of the year, on your ingathering of your work from the

field.” (Shmos 23:16). Again, “your ingathering.” Another connection is made on the second time that Moshe ascended Har Sinai. וְהָיָה שְׁבַעַת תְּעָשֶׂה לָּךְ בְּכוֹרֵי קִצִּיר חֲטִיִּם וְחַג הָאֲסִיף תְּקַוְּפֶת. וְהָיָה חֲטִיִּם וְחַג הָאֲסִיף תְּקַוְּפֶת. וְהָיָה חֲטִיִּם וְחַג הָאֲסִיף תְּקַוְּפֶת. “And the Feast of Weeks you shall make on the first wheat harvest and a Feast of Gathering at the turn of the year.” (Ibid 34:22).

From these pesukim the Torah is tying Succos to the harvest and calling it the end of the year. It is the end of the planting year as winter is coming. The purpose of the celebration has to be more than the blessing of the crops. Even though Eretz Yisroel was mainly an agricultural economy was the chag simply a festival of joy of the bounty?

Succos is the last of the Torah chagim with Channukah and Purim added later. In that way, Succos is the end of the year. It is when the planting year goes out and the winter comes in. When the Torah talks about Succos at first it connects it directly to Shavuos. Pesach, however, begins the planting season. It is the festival of springtime. (Shmos 23:15). The winter grains are about to be ripe. The winter grains ripen and there is Shavuos. Then at the end of the summer planting and growing there is the fall harvest. Not only does the planting year connect Succos to Pesach but it is also connected to the spiritual year. תִּקְעוּ בַּחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בְּכֹסֶה לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: “Sound the shofar on the new moon when there is a festival of the full moon.” (Tehillim 81:4). This ties Yom Terura or Rosh Hashanah also to Succos. Succos is the festival of the full moon – the lunar calendar has a full moon on the fifteenth of every month.

In the Torah’s view there is no holiday that is pure feast and without spirituality. Therefore, when discussing Succos, it adds “But” and “on the first day shall be a rest and on the eighth day there shall be a rest.” (Vayikra 23:39). Other times, the Torah said Succos was only seven days. (Bamidbar 29:12, Devarim 16:13,15). Succos is only seven days. However, there is an addition and runs right into Shmini Atzeres. The Torah talks about the chag here and also: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תִהְיֶה לָּכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: “On the eighth day there shall be a special assembly for you, all productive work you shall not do.” (Bamidbar 34). Thus, Shmini Atzeres is really the eighth day of Succos. What’s the connection?

In Bamidbar when it mentions Shmini Atzares it is after introducing Succos as “you shall celebrate a feast for Hashem for seven days.” (Bamidbar 29:12). In this parsha (section) it is introducing the korbanos of the chagim it says Succos is seven days and not mentioned as tied to ingathering of produce. The last day is a special assembly. It is day to celebrate one more day with Hashem. Not because of produce and income but because Hashem wants one more day to celebrate with Bnei Yisroel.

The “ach / but” in our pasuk comes to include the mitzvos of the arba minim. (Vayikra 23:40). “Seven days in the year fest for Hashem...a chag in the seventh month.” (Ibid 23:41). The mitzvos of arba minim are spiritual. Yes, the planting year is tied to the chagim but so is the reason for the plenty – Hashem. “Your ingathering” is what a person does for himself. How he or she worked on himself, the mitzvos that he or she did. It is a personal ingathering and the fields belong to Hashem. The physical result is as Moshe said – the basic human perspective – “the ingathering of your crops.” Its yours after doing the work and mitzvos.

May we all be blessed with a productive year of mitzvos and parnassah.