

Parashat Sukkot- 5775, 2014

Every day, from the first day of Chol HaMo'ed Sukkot, including Shemini Atzeret, the Torah reading is from parashat Pinchas. We read a short (especially here in Israel) portion which lists the special korbanot that were offered that day, and so too throughout the Chag. As a matter of fact on the first day of Chol HaMo'ed, which is the second day of Sukkot, we read three pesukim that list the Temple sacrifices for the second day of Yom Tov. Now these three same pesukim we read for the Kohen, the Levi and two Yisraelim. Four times we read the same three Pesukim, and we do this every day until Shemini Atzeret.

What is most interesting and strange about this daily Torah reading is that nothing about Sukkot as a unique holiday is mentioned; not its name, not the mitzvah of Sukkah, and not the mitzvah of Etrog and Lulav. The Abarbanel notices this and simply says that these Mitzvot were already mentioned in parashat Emor. However, that answer is not that simple. Because throughout Pesach the Keri'at HaTorah does mention eating Matzah, and Bikurim is mentioned for Shavu'ot, as well as Shofar blowing for Rosh HaShana and fasting for Yom Kippur, even though all of these Mitzvot were mentioned in Emor. Leaving Sukkot to be the only Chag in which the Torah reading is devoid of any mention about the theme or Mitzvot of the Chag.

I would perhaps suggest, that every Yom Tov is focused exclusively on us, the Jewish people. Pesach **WE** were liberated from Mitzrayim and on Shavu'ot **WE** received the Torah. But Sukkot is different. True, the Sukkah certainly reflects our acknowledgement to HaShem for our forty year survival in the desert and our eternal survival throughout the exile; while the 4 Species represent our gratefulness for Eretz Yisrael. But the korbanot, namely the seventy parim (bulls) that we read about on Sukkot correspond to the seventy nations of the world. (Gemara Sukkah 55b).

The Torah readings therefore remind us that we have an obligation to pray for the welfare of all nations of the world. We are deeply concerned when nations suffer from floods, fires, earthquakes and blood-shed. We are descendents of Avraham Avinu, who declared at the purchase of land to the people of Chet, I am a GER –VETOSHAV, a foreigner and a resident in your land (Bereishit 23:4). I am different by keeping my own way of life, yet at the same time I am a resident of your community. My uniqueness does not prevent me from fulfilling all obligations of being a productive and useful citizen.

So too on Sukkot, the Torah reminds us that although we are an AM LEVADAD YISHKON, a nation that lives in solitude (Bamidbar 23:9) and not even counted together with them. It is not written that there are 71 nations of the world, but rather, 70 plus 1- we are not counted together with them. But, we are also citizens of the world, we are members in the society of nations and it is our obligation to be mitpallel for all mankind. That is the message of Sukkot. May it be a Chag of Shalom and Simcha for Klal Yisrael.