

# Sukkot As A Tikun

Its beauty is striking, its smell exhilarating. The *etrog* carries deep meaning and valuable lessons. Let us explore the profound message of this special fruit that we are commanded to take as part of the *arba minim* on *Sukkot* and apply its directive to our lives.

*Rabbeinu Bechaye* maintains that the *etrog* was the fruit that *Adam Harishon* ate; taking it on *Sukkot* as part of a mitzvah forms a *tikkun* for this sin.

Rav Shapira in *Chazon Lamoed* explains a deeper significance in this idea. The root of Adam's sin lay in using his own power of reasoning and neglecting to have complete obedience to Hashem. He contended that eating from the tree would be an '*aveirah leshmah*', although he would be defying the word of Hashem he felt it would create a greater *kevod shamayim* in the world. Adam's rationale mirrored that of the ground on the third day of Creation. On that day, contrary to Hashem's command, the ground produced trees whose bark did not taste like the fruit of the trees. The trees asserted that if the bark tasted like the fruit people would

cut down trees to eat the bark and there would be a shortage of trees. The one tree that fully obeyed Hashem's instruction was the *etrog* tree, whose bark and fruit had a similar taste. This tree was the '*etz hadaat*', as the Rosh explains, that should have been a model for Adam to follow Hashem's will unconditionally.

*Am Yisrael* wanted to create a medium for Hashem's Presence to rest in this world since Moshe Rabbeinu had left

In light of this insight we can understand the *segulah* quoted by the *Yaffe La'levav* for women who have difficulty in labor to eat (or bite off the *pitom*) of an *etrog* used for the mitzvah of *arba minim*. The pain and suffering of labor and childbirth is included in Chava's punishment for eating this fruit. When one takes an *etrog* and uses it as a *tikkun* for this sin, the *etrog* then becomes a protection from the fallout of the sin.

The gemara (*Shabbat 88b*) notes that by saying "*naaseh venishmah*" in acceptance of the Torah, the Jewish people likened themselves to the '*tapuach*' tree whose fruit appears before its leaves. *Tosafot*

comments that the ‘*tapuach*’ is a reference to the *etrog* tree. At Har Sinai the Jews returned to the high spiritual level of Adam before he sinned; they once again had the quality of the *etrog* tree, complete ‘*temimut*’ with Hashem, following His ways without question. This level was reduced by the sin of the Golden Calf. In a certain respect, this sin was similar to the sin of Adam. The Beit Halevi explains that *Am Yisrael* wanted to create a medium for Hashem’s Presence to rest in this world since Moshe Rabbeinu had left. Their fault lay in making their own calculation to create a way of serving Hashem, yet it was contrary to Hashem’s will.

Thus we can appreciate the *Mishna Berurah’s* (quoting the *Ari z”l*) mention of the *minhag* to *bentsch* lulav and *etrog* in the *sukkah*. We take an *etrog* that symbolizes the tree that was obedient to Hashem, and do a *mitzvah* with it in the *sukkah*, the place that reminds us of the Jews’ faithful sojourn in the desert, how they followed Hashem unquestionably; “*lechtech acharai bamidbar beeretz lo zarua*”.

Sukkot, a *tikkun* for the sin of Adam and the sin of the Golden Calf, is a time for ‘*temimut*’. On Sukkot, we take the *etrog*, the model of complete compliance to Hashem’s word and use it as part of a *mitzvah*, inspiring us to follow Hashem’s will unconditionally. As we shake the *arba minim* in all directions, we remind ourselves to crown Hashem as King in all areas of our lives; living a life of ‘*temimut*.’ ■

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