

“Holiday” Rental

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“Visamachta b’chagecha v’hayitah ach sameach”—“And you shall rejoice during your festivals and you shall be only joyous.”

The astrological sign associated with the month of Tishrei is a balance scale—the iconic image that expresses the judgment of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when good and bad are calibrated and the direction of the entire year is determined. The festival of Sukkot then falls out on the fifteenth of the month, and during that time we are charged with being joyous. How we act on Sukkot affects our entire year, just like the *teshuvah* of the high holidays determines the course of judgement. The Arizal taught that when we spend the entire holiday in a state of joy, setting aside any worries or problems that would interrupt our happiness, it ensures that

we will be joyous throughout the entire year.

Rebbe Nachman emphasized over and over again that joy is a state of mind, a choice built through my own thoughts, while sadness is a product of delusion. The temporary and provisional nature of the *sukkah* is a tangible demonstration that we are not going to live in this material world forever. Reb Nosson, z"l, explains that when we begin to see that the "causes" of our misery are temporary and meaningless in the big picture, we naturally let go of our attachment to feeling so bad. It is a great mitzvah to always be happy as Rebbe Nachman, z"l, famously taught. What better time to make a concerted effort to construct a joyous attitude than during Sukkot, when we have an extra special mitzvah to rejoice?

Dear G-d. Please give me the power to choose joy over negativity. Show me that the world is transient and that there is no reason to get upset; nothing, no matter how challenging, lasts forever. Help me to spend a lot of time laughing with joy during Sukkot and throughout the coming year!