

Sukkot and Solomon

By Rabbi Yehudah ben Shomeyr

It is traditional to read through the Book of Ecclesiastes during the eight days of Sukkot. One can do this by reading two chapters a day. The book seems so dismal and depressing that it almost did not make it into the canon of Scripture. This is suppose to be a festival of Joy, so what gives!? I mean reading the first few chapters by itself may want to make you scream, "Where's a knife so I can slit my wrists!?" But it was the last few verses of the last chapter that puts the whole book into perspective and the reason why it was included in the Tanak.

Ecc. 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

People are born to one day ask the inescapable questions of life, such as:

"Who am I?"

"Why am I here?"

"What is the meaning of life?"

Well right here it is, in black and white, no poetically mincing of words.

Q: "What is the meaning of life?" Or "What is it that makes life worth living?"

A: "Fear (Revere) God, and keep his commandments (Torah): for this is the whole duty of man."

You see life without meaning, without purpose, without direction, without a focus, without a goal or guidelines, with out G-d is nothing but an existential angst that leaves one feeling insignificant, redundant, confused and hopeless, like a rat in a cage on a wheel; going nowhere fast! Indeed Kohelet is right, "Meaningless! Vanity!" The Hebrew implies here as being useless and flimsy as a puff of wind. Yet this is exactly the point Sukkot is trying to bring across!

Our sukkahs are flimsy temporary dwellings, as is our bodies. A mighty wind can decimate our sukkah. One bullet can decimate our bodies. This is not our real eternal reality! It is flimsy and temporary. Here is not the whole meaning of life, this is not all there is. We have an eternal sukkah, and new and glorified body that awaits us in the world to come that is meant to last forever.

Each mitzvah we perform, each service that is aimed toward and for G-d has a greater meaning than that of just the physical, that of just the here and now. It sets things in motion in the heavenlies that we cannot comprehend here.

This, as Rabbis and Sages of blessed memory have said, is just a waiting room, a training ground for the here after. In G-d every thing we do, every move we make carries with it great significance and eternal meaning and purpose, that is beyond our current comprehension and finite understanding. Only through G-d and His Word do we "mean" something and are "worth" something. Out side of this, as Sholomo Ha Melek said, "It is all Meaningless, Vanity!"

Where does our focus lie? On all this "stuff" we see around us that is flimsy and temporal? Or is it on that here that will translate into something significant and eternal in the World to Come?

Listen to what Yeshua the Messiah said in this regard:

Matt. 6:20-21 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.