



## TORAH 4 TEENS

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NCSY ISRAEL



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### Am Yisrael – Mamlechet Kohanim

Parshat Emor includes many laws that pertain to the Kohanim, the priestly class of the Jewish people. Among these mitzvot is a list of blemishes that disqualify a Kohen from performing the Avodah in the Mishkan. Why would the Torah deprive somebody of the opportunity to take part in Temple service simply because of an external characteristic of his? An answer that has been suggested is as follows: the Kohanim do not only assist the people of Israel in bringing sacrifices to God, but they also act as a symbol of Godliness in the eyes of the people. While God Himself does not discriminate against anybody on the basis of his appearance, human beings can often be superficial and prejudiced against those who look “abnormal.” In order to ensure that the Kohanim – and by extension, God – are held in the

proper esteem by the Jewish people, the Kohanim must appear respectable and royal. This precludes those with physical blemishes from acting as Kohanim with the rest of their brethren. As a nation, the Jewish people are referred to as a “ממלכת כהנים.” Just as the Kohanim represent God to the Jewish people, so too, the Jewish nation is destined to be a beacon of Godliness unto the world. As Jews, it is our responsibility to perfect our actions and remove our “blemishes” in order to represent God’s greatness to the rest of humanity. As we celebrated Yom HaAtzmaut this past week, we are reminded of the incredible privilege of having a State from which to broadcast the values of the Torah to the entire world. ■



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### Yetziat Mitzraim at Sukkot?!?

I wanted to share a thought about



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Parashat Emor. In Perek 23 we find the Torah speaking about Sukkot and the reason why we sit in the Sukkah.

The פסוק says:

"למען, ידעו דרתיכם, כי בסכות הושבתי את-בני ישראל, בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים."

Why does the Torah say that the Sukkah is meant to remind us of homes and put us under the sukkah to remind us of the One above us.

I asked my uncle, Rabbi Jesse Horn for an understanding of this topic and he pointed me to a commentary of the Rashbam that answers this question.

Sukkot is celebrated during the time of year when one is harvesting their crops. This is a time when a person may feel especially proud of his achievements and forget who gave him what he has. The Torah describes this tendency as the mindset "כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה את החיל הזה."

Hashem's response to this mentality is to most literally take us out of our

homes and put us under the sukkah to remind us of the One above us.

We can see how this relates to Yetziat Mitzrayim, by remembering that it was God who brought us out of Egypt and gave us our freedom. The theme of leaving Egypt reminds us of our reliance on Hashem, how He provided for our needs and helps us through challenging times. The unique moral message of "כוחי ועוצם ידי" is eradicated by sitting in the sukkah since it is God who provided for our sustenance as we were wandering through the desert. This also serves as beautiful symbols of the journey we all must take throughout our lives in which God is always at our side.

Shabbat Shalom ■

*NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, and empower teen olim to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at [israel.ncsy.org](http://israel.ncsy.org)*

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