



Chicago Rabbinical Council

מועצת הרבנים דשיקגו

Divrei Torah

SUKKOS, SHEMINI ATZERES & SIMCHAS TORAH 5786



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RABBI HARVEY WELL

The Restoration of the Fallen *Sukkah* of David

Rav Yona Reiss
Av Beth Din



In the *Birkhat Hamazon* recited during the holiday of *Sukkot*, there is a special prayer inserted – הרחמן הוא יקים – beseeching G-d for the restoration of “the fallen *sukkah* of David.” The reference is to a verse in the prophetic book of *Amos* (9:11) which states, in connection with the redemption of the Jewish people, “ביום ההוא אקים את סכת דויד” – at that time, I shall erect the fallen *sukkah* of David.” Many of the classical commentators, including Rashi and the Radak, explain that this is a reference to the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy. But what does that have to do with the holiday of *Sukkot*, in which we sit in huts to commemorate the clouds of glory that protected us in the desert after we departed from Egypt?

In the treatise *Inyano Shel Yom* by Rabbi David Falk (*Moadim*, page 27), the author writes that he posed this question to the great sage Rabbi Chaim Kaniefsky zt”l. Rabbi Kaniefsky responded in characteristically succinct fashion that since the word *sukkah* appears in this recitation, it is therefore an appropriate prayer for the holiday of *Sukkot*.

Of course, there is more that is hinted at in this answer. There is a well-known principle that “*minhag yisroel Torah hi*” (see *Tosafot*, *Menachot* 20b, s.v. “*nifsal*”) – established customs become part of the corpus of Torah. The special insertion for *Sukkos* in the *Birkhat Hamazon* has been an established custom for hundreds of years (as demonstrated by R. Tzvi Ron, *Hamayan*, *Tishrei* 5773). Accordingly, a

number of commentators have probed other Torah sources in order to suggest a deeper connection.

The Maharal, in the book *Netzach Yisroel* (chapter 35) offers two explanations of the connection with the *sukkah* and the Kingdom of David. First, he observes that a *sukkah* needs to be a temporary dwelling, impervious to the physical permanence of this world. In this sense, the *sukkah* parallels the Kingdom of David which is linked to Divine providence and to the supernatural destiny of the World-to-Come, as opposed to having its permanent place in this world. Upon fulfilling the mitzvah of sitting in the *sukkah* and being freed from the shackles of the mundane world of our physical houses, we can aspire for the time when the *Mashiach Ben David* will emerge from the Davidic dynasty and elevate us to spiritual majesty. Along these lines, the *Gemara* describes the *Mashiach* as “*Bar Nafti*” (the fallen one) and explicitly links the *Mashiach* in this regard to the “fallen *sukkah* of David” (*Sanhedrin* 96b).

What emerges from this insight of the Maharal is a counter-intuitive message pertaining to the *Sukkot* holiday. Only in impermanence can there be an appreciation for genuine permanence. All too often in the hullabaloo of daily life we can lose sight of the teaching in *Pirkei Avot* (4:16) that “this world is akin to an antechamber before the World to Come.” The *sukkah* reminds us that what appears permanent in this world is truly fleeting, and that which has no permanence in this world, namely the spiritual structures which are primarily

intended for the world to come, are the only matters that have eternal significance. In the same way that the *sukkah* serves as a reminder of the antechamber nature of this world, so too the “*sukkah* of David” representing the eternal Kingdom of the House of David, awaits its ultimate realization in the future world of salvation and deliverance.

In his second explanation, the Maharal explains the comparison in a different manner. The distinguishing feature about the *sukkah* is that even when it falls down, it is easy to reassemble precisely because it is built in a slipshod fashion. Thus, it never loses its identity, but remains the same *sukkah*, waiting to be propped up again. So too, argues the Maharal, the Kingdom of David, even when it is in the current state of being “the fallen *sukkah* of David,” retains its identity as the “*sukkah* of David” and remains poised to be resurrected at any moment. Furthermore, just as a fallen *sukkah* still contains usable *schach* that can be re-employed, so too the Kingdom of David has continued to keep its “pieces” through significant communal leaders in every generation who descend from the tribe of Judah.

According to this explanation of the Maharal, the *sukkah* is the symbol of Jewish resilience. By virtue of its simplicity, the *sukkah* represents the elasticity of our survival. Even when the *sukkah* falls down, it maintains its components and its character. Thus, the *sukkah* serves as a reminder that no matter how many times the Jewish people have been exiled and persecuted, the essential components of our legacy and our people have survived, and our sovereignty can therefore be easily and naturally restored at any moment. Even when there are continuing setbacks in our path to redemption, we remind ourselves through the message of the *sukkah* that

salvation is always within our grasp.

Interestingly, the *Mahari Kara* offers a different explanation of the meaning of “the fallen *sukkah* of David” in his commentary to *Amos*. According to the *Mahari Kara*, the *sukkah* is a reference to the *Beit Hamikdash*, to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed. Accordingly, our prayer denotes a yearning towards the restoration of the Holy Temple. Is there a clear connection between the *sukkah* and the Holy Temple?



Perhaps the connection can be gleaned from a passage in the *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 11b) indicating that the clouds of glory originated at the time of the creation of the world, when a “mist arose from the earth” (*Bereishit* 2:6) forming the clouds above that “watered the whole face of the ground.” Inherent in creation were these clouds, established from the purity of the earth, thus providing the basis for the *halakha* that the *sukkah* covering must similarly be made from items from the earth that cannot contract impurity. It would seem based on this passage that the *sukkah*, which commemorates the clouds of glory, symbolizes the pristine state of pure reliance upon the Almighty that existed at the time of creation.

The *Gemara* states that the Heavens rejoiced on the day of the building of the Tabernacle as if the world was created on that day (*Megillah* 10b). The *Beit Hamikdash*,

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The Joy of a Rainy Day

Rabbi Eitan Allen

Rabbi - Park Plaza Senior Living



Every year on *Shemini Atzeres* we *daven* for rain in *Tefillas Geshem*. Although we know instinctively that this is a very weighty *tefillah*, as it is one of the few *tefillos* that changes חזרת הש"ץ, perhaps we do not take it seriously enough. As many of us live in the Midwest and on the East Coast, we do not feel the acute need for rain since we get rain year-round and rarely suffer from drought. However, in *Eretz Yisrael* there is a set rainy season, and every drop of rain is precious. No doubt in *Eretz Yisrael* it is easier to feel the intensity of this *tefillah*.

In *Tefillas Geshem*, we acknowledge that *Hashem's Malach* "אפכרי" is in charge of directing the clouds and causing the conditions for rainfall. The *meforshim* point out that "אפכרי" is a contraction of two words אף or anger, and ברי, meaning healthy. Rain can come down in a calamitous way, causing flooding and destruction or אף, or it can come down in a healthy way, light and nurturing or ברי. As we prepare once again to *daven* for rains of blessing, I think of the tragic *Shemini Atzeres* of October 7th and can't help but think that this was a day where we saw the אף or anger, although not in the form of rain.

In truth, although we colloquially call *Tefillas Geshem* the prayer for rain, the true prayer for rain doesn't begin until December when we start saying ותן טל

ומטר in *Shemoneh Esrei*. *Tefillas Geshem* is more accurately a praise of *Hashem* that He creates and makes rain, rather than a formal *bakasha* to have the rain fall. I would like to point out important comparisons that *Chazal* make to rain, to better connect to this special *tefillah*.

In the *Gemara* in *Meseches Taanis* (7) Rabi Aba'hu says that the day of rain is greater than *techiyas hamaisim*. Although the resurrection of the dead seems like a bigger miracle to us than rainfall, Rabi Aba'hu's statement gives us a window to understand how profound the miracle is every time it rains. This is why we insert "משיב הרוח" in the *bracha* of המחיים. In fact, rain is so important that the *halacha* requires a *bracha* upon seeing the first rainfall. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Ohr Hachayim*, 221) states that upon seeing the first rainfall we make either the *bracha* of ההודאות רב, or שהחינו הטוב והמטיב. The Rema comments that in the countries that have frequent rainfall the minhag is not to make this *bracha*. Even in *Eretz Yisrael* where rain is scarce, many people follow the *Pri Megadim* and do not make this *bracha*. Nevertheless, the mere fact that *Chazal* instituted a special *bracha* for rain emphasizes the importance of appreciating rain.

Another way to understand the
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From Awe to Joy: The Light of Rosh Hashana Revealed on Sukkos

Rabbi Levi Notik

Rabbi, F.R.E.E. of Chicago



The Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi) writes in *Iggeres HaKodesh* (Epistel 14): each year on *Rosh Hashana*, a new and unprecedented light shines into the world. It is not repurposed energy from previous years, but rather a brand-new *gilui*, a revelation from Above, distinctive to each year.

On *Sukkos*, that light is revealed and accessible. This is why *Sukkos* is when the treasures of *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*, the coronation of *Hashem* as King, the cleansing and awakening of the *neschama*, manifest into the world in a form we experience. Thus *Sukkos* is *Zman Simchaseinu*, the season of our joy.

On *Rosh Hashana*, we stand before the King of Kings with awe and trembling. There is certainly *simcha* in crowning *Hashem* as our *Melech*, but it is a hidden *simcha* wrapped in *yirah*. *Chazal* describe it as “*gilu b'readah*” (*Tehillim* 2:11), rejoicing with trembling.

Sukkos is when that hidden joy bursts into the open. We enter the *sukkah* and are tangibly surrounded by *Hashem's* loving embrace. The new light which was drawn down on *Rosh Hashana* is now revealed through *simcha*, evident and abundant. *Simcha poretz geder*; that joy breaks down barriers. *Simcha* has the power to push beyond limitations; it pierces obstacles, both spiritual and physical, and draws down *brachos* that otherwise could never reach us.

The *Gemara* in *Sukkah* (51a-b) declares: “*Mi she'lo ra'ah simchas Beis HaSho'eivah, lo ra'ah simcha miyamav*” whoever did not

see the joy of *Beis HaSho'eivah* never saw *simcha* in their life. In the *Beis Hamikdash*, the drawing of the water ceremony was celebrated with dancing, song, and music so intensely it lasted all night, truly indescribable. Even without the *Beis Hamikdash*, we are given the *koach* to celebrate with that same vigor, and perhaps even more. True *simcha* is spiritual, not limited by physical circumstances.

The *simcha* of *Sukkos* is designed to permeate the entire world. The ultimate goal is that the entire world recognizes *Hashem*. Beginning with the original *Rosh Hashana*, Adam *HaRishon* called out to all of creation, “*Bo'u nishtachaveh v'nichra'ah, nivrechah lifnei Hashem oseinu*” (*Tehillim* 95:6): Come, let us bow before *Hashem* our Maker.” On *Sukkos*, the seventy offerings were brought in the *Beis Hamikdash* on behalf of the nations of the world. Our *simcha* must not remain inside the *daled amos* of our *sukkah*. It should spill over until the entire environment is uplifted and inspired. As we say in *Hallel*: “*Hallelu es Hashem kol goyim*” (*Tehillim* 117:1): Praise *Hashem*, all nations.” When *Yidden* live with joy, the whole world is touched by it.

Sukkos teaches us that *simcha* should not remain hidden in the heart. It must be expressed in action, in *niggunim*, in dancing, in celebrating so that it is seen and felt. Each year, our *simcha* must be greater than the year before, until it bursts beyond our *shuls* and *sukkahs* and into the streets.

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The Welcoming Sukkah of Hakadosh Baruch Hu

Rabbi Harvey Well

Past cRc President; former Rav of Congregation Or Torah



As you all know, the wonderful and exciting holiday of *Sukkot* is mentioned in almost every *sefer* of the Torah. Sometimes it is called *Chag Ha'asif* and sometimes it is called *Chag Ha'Sukkot*. Sometimes it is but a brief mention and sometimes it is mentioned within the context of the mitzvot that are associated with it.

An example of the latter is found in *Sefer Devorim*, 16:13-15. There, with an emphasis on the agricultural side of the holiday, the *Chumash* tells us "You shall make the festival of *Sukkot* for a 7-day period, when you gather in from your threshing floor and from your wine cellar. You shall rejoice on your festival-you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservants, the *Levi*, the *Ger*, the orphan and the widow who is in your cities. A 7-day period shall you celebrate to *Hashem* in the place where G-d will choose, for *Hashem* will have blessed you in all of your crops, in all of your handiwork, and you will be joyous."

Rabbeinu Yosef Nechemya, the revered Krakover Rav, a descendant of the Chasam Sofer and the last Rav of Krakow, asked two very insightful questions on these two *pasukim*. First, he asked, why is the obligation to celebrate *Sukkot* for 7 days mentioned twice? It would seem that one statement of holiday length should have sufficed. And second of all, who is the focus of the celebration, the individual or *Hashem*?

In his answer to these questions, Rabbeinu Nechemya, writes that *Sukkot* is really two different holidays, depending on

how you celebrate it. The preferred way is to highlight our relationship with *Hashem*, to feel the *simcha* of having lived through the *Yemai Hadin*, to feel a closeness to *Hashem*, a desire to do *t'shuvah* and to follow His mitzvot.

But not everyone can do that. Not everyone can raise themselves to such spiritual heights. Their *simcha* is in the physical, the ingathering of the bounty, all of which they rightfully attribute to the blessings of *Hashem*. This, too, is a way of celebrating the holiday, not necessarily the optimum way, but acceptable in the eyes of *Hashem*.

So in essence, these verses refer to two different kinds of individuals and two different ways of celebrating the *Chag*, each for 7 days. The first for those who need the physical, the latter for those who feel a special *deveikut* to *Hashem*.

But having said all of that perhaps the main lesson is that everyone has a place
(Continued on page 10)



which represents a fulfillment of the mitzvah to build a tabernacle in the land of Israel (see *Rambam, Mitzvot Eseh* 20, *Hilkhot Beit HaBechira* 1:1, and *Kesef Mishneh ad locum*), serves as a manifestation of the return to a state of spiritual perfection that existed at the time of creation. The *sukkah*, through its evocation of the original clouds of glory that hovered over the world during that time, provides the same opportunity to connect to that state of spiritual perfection as the Holy Temple itself. Hence, the association of the *sukkah* with the “*sukkah* of David” representing the Holy Temple becomes perfectly understandable.

This association of the *sukkah* with the Holy Temple also helps to explain why the *sukkah* structure is endowed with divine sanctity (*Sukkah* 9a), and why the mitzvah of “living” in the *sukkah* precludes any kind of activity that is not respectful or dignified (*Shulchan Aruch*, OC 639:1), similar to the requirement of maintaining dignity in the area of the *Beit Hamikdash* (see, e.g., *Yevamot* 6b). Through the observance of the mitzvah of *sukkah* which enables us to relive the pure, unadulterated state of devotion to G-d at the time of the creation of the world, we are able to focus our aspirations upon the rebuilding of the “*sukkah* of David” – the *Beit Hamikdash* – which represents the spiritual pinnacle of creation.

In similar fashion, Rabbi Meir Zvi Bergman writes (*Sha'arei Orach* 1:318-319) that the comparison of the *sukkah* to the *Beit Hamikdash* is a reference to the spiritual essence of the Holy Temple. The proof is that the *Beit Hamikdash* is described as the “*sukkah* of David” when in fact the Temple was built by his son King Solomon. The reason the *Beit Hamikdash* is

attributed to King David rather than to his son is because, as indicated in the *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 30a), the gates of the holiest chambers of the Temple only opened up for Solomon in the merit of his father, who conceived the idea of building the Temple during his lifetime. David Hamelech thus represents the spiritual essence of the Temple, as opposed to King Solomon who represents its physical manifestation. When we pray for the restoration of the *sukkah* of David, we demonstrate our yearning for the closeness with the Almighty that is achieved through the essence of the *Beit Hamikdash*.

The connection with the *Mishkan* and the *Beit Hamikdash* also helps to explain the timing of the celebration of *Sukkot*. The Vilna Gaon (commentary to *Shir Hashirim* 1:4), in response to the question posed by the *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 625) regarding why *Sukkot* is celebrated in *Tishrei* as opposed to *Nissan* when the exodus from Egypt took place and the clouds of glory began to protect the Jewish people, famously explains that the holiday of *Sukkot* was timed to coincide with the date of the beginning of the construction of the Tabernacle. Moshe Rabbeinu delivered the second set of *luchot* to the Jewish people on the 10th of *Tishrei* and taught the laws of the *Mishkan* on the 11th of *Tishrei* (*Rashi, Shmot* 35:1). Afterwards, the Jewish people gathered materials for construction of the *Mishkan* on the 12th and 13th of *Tishrei* (based on *Shmot* 36:3 that the donation period consisted of two days), and Moses then dispensed the materials on the 14th of *Tishrei* to the artisans who would engage in the construction. Hence, the actual construction of the *Mishkan* was commenced on the 15th of *Tishrei*,

which is when the *Shechinah*, represented by the clouds of glory, which had departed following the sin of the Golden Calf, descended once again upon the Jewish people. Similarly, the dedication of the *Beit Hamikdash* by King Solomon took place immediately prior to the time of the *Sukkot* holiday (*Melachim* 1, 8:2, 65-66).

There is also another possible connection between the *sukkah* and the *Beit Hamikdash*. The *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 27b) derives from the verse כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכה – מלמד שכל ישראל ראויים לישב בסוכה אחת – “all the residents of the Israelites will sit in the *sukkah*” (*Vayikra* 23:42) – “this teaches us that all of the Jewish people are eligible to sit in the same *sukkah*.” The *Sefat Emet* (*Sukkot*) explains that this is meant to refer to the unity of the Jewish people that exists after *Yom Kippur* when the entire nation becomes an “*agudah achat*” – a united assembly. The second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred (*Yoma* 9b). To restore the *Beit Hamikdash*, it is necessary for the Jewish nation to rectify this sin and join through unconditional love for each other. The concept of *sukkah* is intertwined with the notion of everybody being able to join together in one *sukkah*, much in the same way that the *Beit Hamikdash* is the central place of worship for the entire nation. In order to merit the rebuilding of the *Beit Hamikdash*, it is necessary to engender an atmosphere where the entire Jewish people will feel comfortable sharing one *sukkah* in a spirit of mutual respect and affection.

With this understanding we can appreciate why *Sukkot* is the holiday of the “*ushpizin*” – of the inviting of the honored guests (*Zohar, Emor* 103-104). The purpose of the *sukkah* is to create a spiritual haven which is open and welcoming to all members of the Jewish nation in a

demonstration of unified spirit. This may also explain why the classical *sukkah* of the Torah only has three walls (*Sukkah* 2a, 6b) – in order to ensure that one side always be open to an endless stream of guests.

Perhaps in this sense all the various explanations regarding the *sukkah* of David coalesce. Through the *ushpizin*, in which we usher in the forefathers from the time of creation through the building of the Holy Temple, beginning chronologically with Abraham and ending with King David, we connect the *sukkah* not only to the entirety of the Jewish people in our time, but to the entirety of the Jewish people throughout history. The rebuilding each year of the *sukkah*, which evokes the clouds of glory of creation, and the *Beit Hamikdash* as the spiritual pinnacle of creation, propels the Jewish nation to become united and worthy of the future redemption that will usher in the Kingdom of David for eternity. Furthermore, as the Maharal indicates, we are blessed with the ability to bring about this ultimate *sukkah* of redemption in a heartbeat. All we need to do is come together and acknowledge that “there is no place like the *sukkah*” to cast aside the artificial walls of this temporal and tempestuous world and to unite as a people of eternal destiny. May this year’s *sukkah* observance bring us together as a nation united in the service of *Hashem* and elevate us to a state of permanent redemption and relief from the travails of exile.

תהא שנת פדות ורוחה ■



From Awe to Joy: The Light of Rosh Hashana...

(Continued from page 5)

This is the *avodah* of *Sukkos*, to live with such *simcha* that no walls can contain it.

Each night of *Sukkos*, we are blessed with the presence of the *ushpizin*, the holy guests who enter our *sukkos*. Their presence brings special *brachos* and inspiration. And each year, when they return, they come on a higher level than before, showering us with new *kochos* and *brochos*. This reminds us that in *avodas Hashem*, there is no standing still. Every year, every *Sukkos*, we can and must climb higher.

The Frierdiker Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn) analogized the month of *Tishrei* to a great warehouse where we gather spiritual merchandise for the entire year. On *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* we lay the groundwork for the entire year, on *Sukkos* we begin to enjoy the treasures with evident

joy. Throughout the year, we will unpack those supplies, incorporating them in our daily *avodas Hashem*.

Our mission, then, is clear. Let us celebrate *Sukkos* with such genuine *simcha* that all blockades are broken, personal blockades, communal blockades, and the blockades of *galus* itself. Let us dance, let us sing, let us rejoice, until the *simcha* overflows into every corner of our world.

May this *Yom Tov* bring each of you much *bracha* and *hatzlacha*, good health, true *nachas*, and an abundance of revealed reasons to rejoice. May the joy of *Sukkos* remain with us throughout the year, uplifting our homes and our communities, and may it lead to the ultimate *simcha* with the coming of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, *b'karov mamash*. ■

The Joy of a Rainy Day

(Continued from page 4)

importance of rain can be found in the *Gemara Taanis* (7) that we quoted earlier. רב יהודה says that the day of rain is as great as the day the Torah was given. This opinion is proven by the *possuk* in *Parshas Haazinu* “יערוך כמטר לקחי” “My teaching shall drip down like rain.” The word לקחי hints to the famous *possuk*, “כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתי אל” (תעזובו) that the Torah is a good teaching — therefore do not abandon it. Here again, we see the greatness of rainfall in this impressive statement, which compares rain to the giving of the Torah itself.

Perhaps this *Gemara* can help explain the connection between the *Tefillas Geshem* we say and the day of *Simchas Torah*. As we know, in *Eretz Yisrael*, *Simchas Torah* and *Tefillas Geshem* always coincide, as *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah* are on the same

day. When we are praising *Hashem* for rain, we should also be remembering the giving of the Torah, and when we are dancing around with the Torah we should remember the abundant *bracha* that *Hashem* showers upon us when it rains.

We conclude *Tefillas Geshem* with the תפילה that the rain that falls should be for a blessing and not a curse, for life and not death, and finally for plentifulness and not scarcity. We *daven* that the rain for the coming year come in a form of ברי and not אר. May this *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah* be a time of abundant blessing all around, may *Hashem* grant us life, and may Torah remain plentiful in our lives. The next time we have a rainy day let us recognize the great significance of rain, look up and thank *Hashem* for all our *brachos*. ■

The Welcoming Sukkah of Hakadosh Baruch Hu

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in the Sukkah of HaKodesh Baruch Hu. And that making everyone feel welcomed, comfortable and fulfilled, is important to Hashem. The klal coming together in unity is the ultimate goal. As the verse says, "הפורש סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל עמו ישראל."

In a different way but one that is

very significant, the cRc has been a wonderful welcoming sukkah for one and all. Its services, guidance and Torah, encompasses and enriches it, adding a level of simcha and stability to our lives. It should continue to do so for many years to come. Chag Same'ach! ■

Resuming on
Monday, Oct. 20th

FROM THE Dayan's Desk

FEATURING
RAV YONA REISS

Av Beth Din of the Chicago Rabbinical Council

WEEKLY SHIUR FOR MEN

MONDAYS | 8:00 PM | CONGREGATION KINS

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A Prayer for the Soldiers in Israel

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב
הוא יברך את חילי צבא הגנה לישראל,
העומדים על משמר ארצנו וערי אלקינו
מגבול הלבנון ועד מדבר מצרים ומן הים הגדול עד לבוא הערבה
ביבשה באויר ובים.

יתן ה' את אויבינו הקמים עלינו נגפים לפניהם.
הקדוש ברוך הוא ישמור ויציל את חילינו מכל צרה וצוקה ומכל נגע ומחלה
וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיהם.
ידבר שונאינו תחיתיהם ויעטרם בכתר ישועה ובעטרת נצחון.
ויקים בהם הכתוב: כי ה' אלקיכם ההלך עמכם
להלחם לכם עם איביכם להושיע אתכם:
ונאמר אמן



Chicago Rabbinical Council

מועצת הרבנים דשיקגו