

At the end of seven years, at the time of the sabbatical year, on the festival of Succos...gather together the people--the men, the women, and the small children...so that they will hear and so that they will learn, and they shall fear Hashem. (31: 10,12)

everyone came together to hear the word of Hashem, as the king publicly read from the *Torah*. The *mitzvah* of *Hakhel* was performed in such a manner as to include every segment of the Jewish People. Indeed, the *Midrash* questions the need for bringing along the young children. *Chazal* tell us, "The men came to learn; the women to hear; and the infants came to provide reward for those who brought them." We may question the reward provided for those who brought their infants. After all, if there was no intrinsic purpose in bringing the children, why did their parents receive a reward?

Horav Avraham Kilav, Shlita, suggests that the goal of the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel* is to signify that *Am Yisrael*, with all of its branches, is one unified nation. Each individual Jew completes a segment which is otherwise missing. Together, we stand as one unit. *Hakhel* was performed after the *Shemittah* year, when all Jews were equal by design. The fields were open to everyone. No longer was it discernible who was the owner and who was the guest. The festival of *Succos* also carries great significance. During this season, man realizes his impermanence on this world. During other years, *Succos* is a time when the silos are filled with grain and everyone feels good about his success. This feeling does not persist after the *Shemittah* year, when nothing had been planted. This year, the silos and granaries are empty.

Everyone assembles together, regardless of background or station in life, to symbolize unity. This moment of unity is unique in that everyone realizes that they all meld together to create one unit. No one has greater significance than the other. In fact, one's greatest significance, his greatest sense of *shlaimus*, perfection/ completeness, is achieved when he realizes that he becomes complete only through the inclusion of other Jews.