

LAMPLIGHTER

16 Tishrei
Sukkos
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Of all the holidays of the month of Tishrei, it is perhaps the very last, Shemini Atzeret, which best expresses G-d's love for the Jewish people. The name itself, "Atzeret," comes from the Hebrew word "to stop" or "delay." G-d detains us, as it were, for one more day before we return to our regular lives.

The Midrash likens this to a king who holds a seven-day celebration for his sons. On the eighth day, when it comes time for them to leave, he is reluctant to see them go and asks them to remain for one more day of festivities.

A question is asked: How can one more day of celebration make the inevitable departure less painful? What is gained by pushing it off? We must therefore conclude that there is something about this special holiday, Shemini Atzeret, that actually prevents the departure from taking place at all.

This concept is reflected in the precise language of the Midrash. "Your departure is difficult," the king tells his sons, not "our departure."

This alludes to the fact that G-d never abandons the Jewish people; His love for us is constant and eternal. "Your departure is difficult," G-d tells us. G-d doesn't want us to abandon Him; He therefore requests that we celebrate one more holiday together which will serve to strengthen our bond.

The key to maintaining a close connection with G-d is achdut - unity.

When Jews are united with one another our relationship with G-d is strong. When, however, there is strife and division, it forms a wedge between the Jewish people and our Father in heaven.

The entire theme of Sukkot is Jewish unity; indeed, the mitzva (commandment) of the Four Kinds represents the four types of Jews coming together to be bound into one entity. Nonetheless, after Sukkot is over and its positive effect has dissipated, the possibility still exists that the individual elements will revert to their previous separateness and dissociation.

In order to prevent this from happening, G-d asks us to remain with Him a while longer, to celebrate a holiday which will secure our unity in an everlasting manner.

On Shemini Atzeret, a single sacrifice is brought in the Holy Temple, expressing the idea of the indivisible nature of the Jewish people. Furthermore, this concept is also reflected in the way the holiday is celebrated: great scholars and simple people alike dancing with the Torah scroll, without distinction between them.

The absolute unity with which we conclude the holidays of Tishrei thus guarantees that these feelings will carry over into the rest of the year, effectively preventing that we will ever "depart" from holiness, G-d forbid.

Hidden and Revealed

By Yanki Tauber

Sound the shofar on the new moon, in concealment to the day of our festival" (Psalms 81:4). In this cryptic verse lies the deeper significance of Sukkot and its sister-festival, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah.

In the Jewish calendar, the month follows the phases of the moon. The "new moon" -- the point at which the moon emerges from its monthly concealment -- marks the beginning of a new month. The apex of the month is the 15th -- the night of the full moon, when the moon attains the high point of its potential to reflect the sun's light and illuminate the earth.

The month of Tishrei is the most spirituality-rich month in the Jewish year. The festivals and special days-- Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Repentance, Shabbat Shuvah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, Shabbat Bereishit -- follow in succession, with hardly any "ordinary days" in between. It's a time to fuel up on the spiritual resources -- awe, teshuvah, connection, singularity, joy, unity, wisdom, commitment -- that will drive our lives for the rest of the year.

The first of Tishrei is Rosh Hashanah, which opens the "Days of Awe" that characterize the first part of the month, culminating in Yom Kippur on Tishrei 10th. Then the mood and texture of Tishrei shifts dramatically to the "Season of Our Rejoicing" that begins with the festival of Sukkot on the 15th and continues through Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. The first half of Tishrei is marked by solemnity, the second by elation; but the Chassidic masters explain that these are simply the "hidden" and "revealed" dimensions of the same elements.

The essence of Rosh Hashanah is our crowning of G-d as our "king." A coronation, explain the Chassidic masters, is effected by two things -- unity and joy: a people joyously unite to select, accept and submit to an exalted figure who embodies their collective identity and innermost strivings (if the coronation lacks either joy or unity, chassidic teaching explains, it results not in a true king, but merely in a "ruler"). But there is also a third element without which the coronation could not happen -- awe. And the nature of awe is that it eclipses and mutes the joy. Sukkot, then, is simply the revelation of Rosh Hashanah. The joy and unity that are the essence of our commitment to G-d, and which were "concealed" by the awe that characterizes the first days of Tishrei, erupt on the 15th of the month in the form of the festival of Sukkot.

In the words of the Psalmist, "Sound the shofar on the new moon, in concealment to the day of our festival." Our crowning G-d king with the sounding of the shofar on the 1st of Tishrei ("the new moon") remains in concealment until "the day of our festival," the full moon of Sukkot, when it manifests itself in a seven-day feast of joy.

And what Sukkot is to Rosh Hashanah, Simchat Torah is to Yom Kippur. The essence of Yom Kippur is that it is the day we received the Second Tablets, completing the Giving of the Torah (which began on Shavuot) and bringing into our lives the Torah's ultimate essence -- teshuvah. There is nothing more liberating and exhilarating than teshuvah -- the power to "return" to the quintessential core of one's being, transcending time, space, habit and "character," transcending all that circumscribes the soul's truest self and truest strivings. But again, the essence of Yom Kippur is submerged and concealed within the solemnity that accompanies the business of teshuvah doing -- fasting, regretting and confessing our wrongdoings, resolving not to repeat them, praying for forgiveness. It is only on Simchat Torah that the joyous essence of teshuvah is manifestly celebrated.

Slice of LIFE

Sukkot in Voronezh

By Brynie Stiefel

For 25 years, I have spent the holiday of Sukkot eating in a sukkah. And while I can say that I always loved the exotic palm scent that permeates the whole festival, always enjoyed the elbowing and squashing that comes with a sukkah packed to capacity, and the rainwater that cooled and diluted our soup, I can never say I treasured the sukkah. It was a mitzvah that came to me. The sukkah was built by workmen; the sechach, the green leafy branches that cover the sukkah, were ordered and lovingly placed on top by my father. Even when I actually participated by knocking in a nail or two in the one-man sukkah my husband built the first year we were married, I cannot say that I really went out of my way to get it done.

I have seen many sukkot in my time: the ones that dot the neighborhood in my hometown, tiny sukkot perched on top of apartment buildings in Jerusalem, sukkot sailing down the canals in Venice, and tastefully decorated sukkot complete with heating and air conditioning. But this year, I finally have my sukkah.

Living in a large city in the middle of Russia, sukkahs are hard to come by. Apartment living has made it almost impossible to build a sukkah anywhere in town. For months, we thought about what we would do about a sukkah. Our apartment building had no private parking lot, and was ten stories high, so the fenceless roof was out of the question. A sukkah on the street, although it may seem quaint for a few minutes, would probably not last

much longer than that. We briefly thought about erecting a mobile sukkah on a truck and parking it somewhere for the holiday, but worried it would suffer the same fate as would a sukkah on the street. Anyhow, we reasoned, we need a real sukkah, where people could come and eat cold soup, and sit for a long time singing and telling stories. Somehow, a truck just wouldn't do it.

We got to work, and assigned all our friends to the task of finding us a house to rent for the holiday. The house was not important, but the garden was. We needed space to build a sukkah that would not be disturbed for eight days. Nobody knew anyone who owned a house and was willing to rent it out for two weeks. Our friend, a real estate agent, told us he honestly did not think it would happen, and we knew what he meant. It had taken us months to find a home for ourselves; a temporary home for a sukkah in the center of the city was a bit much to ask for. We discussed where we would go if we would have to go away for the holiday. Israel? Europe? We searched the Internet for tickets, but we didn't buy. Maybe tomorrow would bring us our sukkah.

The night following Yom Kippur, when it is a custom to begin building the sukkah or at least to discuss the building of the sukkah, we found it. A friend, who came to pick up a challah to break his fast, mentioned that he would call his friend the following day. She lived in a small home, an hour's walk from the city center. Her sister's husband's paternal grandfather was Jewish. Maybe she would agree to move out of her home for a week so that we could build a sukkah in her small garden and celebrate the holiday. A day or two later, we heard the great news—the woman had agreed, for a price. But we didn't care; we had our sukkah.

The last two days before Sukkot

were a frenzy of measuring, shopping, building, cutting and shlepping way into the night. We had little time to talk to each other as we raced between cooking in our apartment, finding sechach and trucking it to the home, inviting guests and packing. The climax of it all was standing outside our apartment with baby, suitcases, pots and pans in tow, and waiting for the two taxis to arrive to take us to our new home in time for the holiday. We arrived with minutes to spare and a gaggle of people waiting outside to receive their lulav and etrog to bless on the holiday. But that night, as darkness fell outside and we sat in the sukkah with our guests who were sitting in a sukkah for the first time, they commented on the otherworldly atmosphere in the sukkah. And I had to agree that while I had heard many a story of sukkahs built in Siberia, and even of my own husband's grandfather who had built one in a concentration camp, I had never before experienced the true joy of the holiday.

This year, I did not need philosophy or mysticism to explain to anyone the joy of the sukkah. We felt it throughout the holiday as we cheerfully answered our guests, who all entered our sukkah with the same question. "So, we know the story of Passover, and understand what Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are all about, but what is Sukkot?" On Sukkot, we commemorate the forty years we wandered in the desert, under G-d's protection. Simply speaking, G-d took care of us, takes care of us, and we remember this by leaving our homes and sitting in a sukkah. And so we do. Even if we have nowhere to go and live in an un-sukkah-friendly city. G-d takes care of that too. And that is the beauty of our sukkah, and something to sing about.

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

We received your letter and the text of your lecture concerning the publications of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, at the appropriate time. We ask your forgiveness for the fact that because of the large burden of work - particularly at the beginning of the new school term - our reply was delayed until the present. Enclosed is a reply from the editorial board of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch....

To conclude with a matter relevant to these days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos: The Maharil writes: Directly after Yom Kippur, every person should be occupied with making his sukkah. For the days of teshuvah [repentance] have been completed. On the first day where there is the possibility of sin, heaven forbid, he should first begin with involvement in a mitzvah [commandment]. The germ of this concept is quoted by the Rama (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 624:5).

There is a deep concept alluded to here. When a person has repented for his past conduct and he is concerned that he will not sin in the future, the advice given him is: Occupy yourself with a sukkah.

The following mistaken approaches are the most common causes for an upright person to sin:

1. One thinks that the Torah and its mitzvos are relegated for specific times during the day and afterwards, he may do whatever he wants;
2. One thinks that the Torah and its mitzvos are applicable only to one of a person's limbs: his head (according to the understanding of Mussar, that Torah study is sufficient) or the heart ("G-d desires the heart." In this instance, one might err and think that the actual observance of the mitzvos is only secondary and not fundamentally important).

When one focuses one's thought on the mitzvah of sukkah, the first mitzvah which follows the granting of atonement for our sins, one will see that one must dwell in the sukkah as one lives in one's home (Sukkah 26a). For the mitzvah is a person's dwelling. It encompasses his entire body from his feet until his head, including his garments and utensils as well.

With holiday blessings and blessings for a g'mar tov [a good completion (of Divine judgment)].

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Why do Jewish holidays begin at nightfall?

Question: Why do Jewish holidays begin at nightfall? For example, Purim starts this Monday night, and is over Tuesday night, and that is considered one day.

Answer: Your question touches upon a fascinating concept - the passage of time.

According to the Jewish calendar, not only Jewish holidays begin at nightfall, but every day does.

This is based on the story of creation in Genesis, where at the end of each day it says, "And it was evening, and it was morning; day one", "And it was evening, and it was morning; the second day" etc. By mentioning evening before morning, the Torah defines a day as beginning with the evening, followed by the morning.

This definition of the passage of time is not only relevant to how we set up the calendar. It has profound implications as to our attitude to life itself.

Everyone agrees that life is full of ups and downs. We go through periods where the sun is shining upon us and we feel on top of the world, only to turn a corner and be faced with difficulties and obstacles that drag us down. But it isn't long before something pleasant comes our way to pick us up again.

The question is: which one wins the day, the ups or the downs? In other words, is life a series of disappointments dotted by the occasional glimmer of hope, only to be crushed by another surge of gloominess? Or are we on a journey upwards, with challenges along the way to make us even stronger in our quest for enlightenment? Does darkness extinguish light, or does light conquer darkness? Does night follow day or day follow night?

The Jewish view is clear. "And it was evening, and it was morning." First the night, then the day. Darkness is a pathway to the sunrise hiding behind it. A challenge comes our way only to help us tap in to and reveal our inner powers that have until now remained unfathomed.

That's Jewish time - the comfort in knowing that no matter how dark it may seem, it is light that will have the last word.

A WORD

from the Director

This week we celebrate the holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. Sukkot is referred to in the Torah as the "Season of our Rejoicing." Similarly, the theme of joy is present in the holiday immediately following Sukkot - Simchat Torah, "Rejoicing with the Torah."

What is so great about happiness and rejoicing, so much so that on each night of Sukkot it is customary to go out into the streets and dance in remembrance of "Simchat Beit HaShoeiva - Rejoicing of the Water Drawing" which took place each evening during Sukkot in the Holy Temple? And why specifically does our happiness express itself in dancing?

A circle represents infinity; it has no beginning and no end. Traditionally, our most joyous dances are done in a circle, hinting at the infinite and endless joy we will experience in the Messianic Era. This joy will be twofold, for it will include the rejoicing of the Jewish people once they are reunited with G-d and the rejoicing of G-d reunited with His people.

When and why do we truly rejoice? We rejoice when experiencing something new, not just something good, or great or amazing, but something that is also novel.

And example of how vital uniqueness is to true rejoicing would be that of a talking parrot. Most people have friends, relatives, co-workers, with whom they can converse, joke, discuss things, get advice, etc. Thousands of words can be spoken in a single conversation, and yet each word does not bring wonder and amazement and even laughter.

But just watch how people react when a parrot says a phrase, or even a single word. People will laugh and clap and rejoice at the often meaningless prattle of the parrot. Why? Because we expect people to speak, but hearing a bird speak is truly unusual.

The rejoicing that we participate in during the holiday of Sukkot is a foretaste of, and preparation for, the great joy and happiness of the Messianic Era. And it is precisely now, in these last moments of Exile, that we can rejoice freely in the knowledge that the Redemption is imminent.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



The Broken Etrog

By Menachem Posner

It had been a difficult year. Poor weather, dangerous travel conditions and high tariffs had made it almost impossible for the Jews of Ukraine to import etrogim (citrons) for the holiday of Sukkot. The etrogim - waved together with the lulav bundle every Sukkot after the recitation of special blessings - were normally brought from faraway Italy or even the Holy Land, but that year there were almost none to be found.

In the city of Berdichev, home to tens of thousands of Jews, there was but one etrog. Of course, it was given to the town's rabbi, the famed Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, for safekeeping.

Everyone knew the plan. On the first day of the holiday the rabbi would rise early in the morning, immerse himself in the purifying waters of the mikvah, and then make the blessing while holding the etrog and lulav. Then the etrog would be passed from hand to hand, allowing every Jewish person to fulfill the biblical obligation to take the "Four Kinds."

Now, the rabbi had an assistant, a simple fellow who was tasked with overseeing the proceedings. "I know what will happen," said the assistant to himself. "First, the rabbi will make the blessing and wave the lulav and the etrog. Then the learned men will come for their turn to do the mitzvah. They will be followed by the respectable householders. Next will be the simple folk, who will all get their glorious moment. Then, when the sun is about to set and the day is about to fade away, I'll be the very last one to finally say the blessing over the lulav and etrog. Why must I always be the very last?"

"I know what I'll do," he thought. "Early in the morning, on the first day of Sukkot, when the rabbi is out immersing in the mikvah, I'll take the lulav and etrog and recite the blessing over them. No one will know but me."

And so, just after the sun rose, he sneaked into the rabbi's study, took the lulav and etrog in his trembling hands, and was about to chant the required blessings. But then - disaster struck.

Maybe it was because his palms were sweaty. Maybe it was because he was shaking nervously. But for whatever reason, the etrog slipped from his grasp onto the hard

wooden floor below. To the attendant's horror, the etrog's pitom (wood-like protrusion) cracked right off its crown, rendering the fruit invalid.

Oh, he would have given all he had to be swallowed up by the earth. How would he face the crestfallen rabbi? How would he face the disappointed city? How would he face himself?

Every minute seemed like eternity as the attendant waited for his master to return. When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak entered his home, ready to do the mitzvah, the attendant had no choice. Gazing downward, in a trembling whisper, he told the rabbi what he had done.

"Master of the World," cried the rabbi in a booming voice filled with love and wonder, "look how precious Your children are! Even this simple, unlearned son of yours is so eager to fulfill Your commandment that he risked his job to fulfill Your will at the earliest opportunity!"

SUKKOT READING IN A NUTSHELL

The reading begins with an injunction that a newborn calf, lamb, or kid must be left with its mother for seven days; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The reading then lists the annual Callings of Holiness -- the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the 2nd day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the 50th day; a "remembrance of shofar blowing" on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival -- during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the "Four Kinds" -- beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the "8th day" of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

G-d declares the fifteenth day (and the subsequent 6 days) of the seventh month to be a holy convocation, no work shall be done during that time. The reading then describes the Sukkot offerings which were brought in the Holy Temple.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

SUKKOS • 16 TISHREI • 6 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA:	7.20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7.45 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.55 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.10 PM
SIMCHAT TORAH TIMES:		
WEDNESDAY		
HOSHANAH RABBAH:	MINCHA:	7.20 AM
	MAARIV:	8.00 PM
THURSDAY SHMINI ATZERET:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA*	9.51 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.25 PM
	MARIV followed by kiddush:	8.00 PM
	HAKAFOS:	9.00 PM
FRIDAY SIMCHAT TORAH:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.50 AM
	SHACHARIS followed by Farbrengin/Kiddush:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA followed by Farbrengin:	7.25 PM
	MARIV:	8.03 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.10 PM
	MAARIV:	8.00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos		Shemini Atzeres	
	6th	7th	11th	12th
	Begins	Ends	Begins	Lighting
Melbourne	7:11	8:09	7:15	After 8:14
Adelaide	7:05	8:01	7:09	After 8:06
Brisbane	5:33	6:26	5:35	After 6:29
Darwin	6:25	7:15	6:25	After 7:15
Gold Coast	5:31	6:25	5:34	After 6:28
Perth	6:04	6:59	6:07	After 7:03
Sydney	6:43	7:40	6:47	After 7:44
Canberra	5:53	7:50	6:57	After 7:54
Launceston	7:05	8:06	7:10	After 8:11
Auckland	7:11	8:09	7:15	After 8:14
Wellington	7:14	8:15	7:19	After 8:21
Hobart	7:05	8:07	7:11	After 8:13
Byron Bay	6:31	7:25	6:34	After 7:28