

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Tishrei
Shabbos Chol
Hamo'ed Sukkos
1367
28 September
5779/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

We are commanded to rejoice during the festivals. The rejoicing during the holiday of Sukkot reached its peak, in the times of the Holy Temple, in the unbounded joy of the water-drawing celebrations (Simchat Beit HaShoeiva).

During the year, many offerings on the altar were accompanied by a special pouring or libation of wine. On Sukkot, in addition to the regular wine-offering, there was also a unique pouring of water. At that time the assembled crowds broke into limitless, profound, ecstatic rejoicing which continued for three days, and of which the sages said, "Whoever has not seen the rejoicing of the water-drawing has never in his life seen true joy!"

The Sages chose their words with care. They are not merely telling a story, but giving a valuable lesson - that if one has not seen the rejoicing of the Water-drawing, although he may think he has at times participated in unbounded rejoicing, he is in error. His joyous experience was in fact a superficial one. For, since he has never witnessed the water-drawing, he is incapable of experiencing true joy. This is the full significance of the above statement.

What does true joy entail? It entails breaking one's own bounds and inhibitions, exceeding one's own limitations. At the wedding of an only child, a normally reticent and taciturn father may become a voluble and loquacious speaker. If a person has a rational, intelligent reason to be happy, then his happiness is limited by the extent of his understanding. But when he receives a reward or a gift that is "beyond his wildest dreams," that his intelligence could not possibly have foreseen, when he is moved by a cause that stems not merely from his understanding, but from his very essence and being... then the resultant joy is similarly boundless.

In Temple times, wine was used as a libation. It was water, though, which was the main ingredient of the water-drawing ceremony. Wine has a taste, a flavor; water has no intrinsic flavor. Wine and water have their equivalents in spiritual life. When one is motivated to serve G-d by intelligent reasoning and logic, such service is termed "wine"; one savors the "taste" or "reason" for doing the mitzva. Service impelled by a feeling of pure submissiveness to G-d, is called "water"; one cannot relish the "flavor" of rationality in such service.

Truly limitless joy cannot come as a result of one's understanding and intelligence - for they are limited. But when a person realizes that he himself is limited, finite, he nullifies himself, he neutralizes his ego. In a spirit of total submissiveness he becomes one with limitless G-d through the union of the mitzvah. Then he transcends his limitations and can serve G-d with truly boundless joy.

Whoever has not seen the rejoicing of the water-drawing, has never in his life seen true joy. Because the libation of water, as opposed to wine, symbolizes the quality of submissiveness as opposed to the intellect and rationality of wine.

I'm a Jew and I'm Proud

By Levi Avton

The cycle has come to an end. In the past year, as every year, we read and were inspired by the Torah—the story of our nation.

We were awed by Adam (how awesome to be created by G-d and have the world for yourself), sympathized with Noah (poor guy, saw the whole world go down), were impressed with Abraham (first thrown into the furnace, then almost sacrificed his son), were caught up in the sibling rivalry between Joseph and his brothers, and held our breaths at the breathtaking saga of the Exodus.

And then, from when Moses received the Torah on Mount Sinai until his final departure on Mount Nebo, we experienced the tumultuous forty-year journey through the desert. Laws, mistakes, complaints, smashing of the tablets, spies, plagues and the entire gamut of the nail-biting drama which our drama-addicted ancestors lived through on their historic trek from the pyramids to the land of Israel. The Torah reading every Shabbat morning was quite an entertaining and educational experience.

And as we start all over again, we hold our breath, aware of the journey to come. What lessons, insights, and inspiration will we derive from our patriarchs and matriarchs next time around?

But before we roll back the Torah from the Jordan River to 2,500 years earlier, let us reflect for a moment on Moses' final words, uttered just before he went up to the mountain and was buried by G-d. Let his last words linger in our hearts:

"Fortunate are you, O Israel..."

What wonderful parting words. Moses was proclaiming to the Jew of Israel and of Babylonia, the Jew of Tunisia and Spain, of France, Poland, and America:

"My beloved nation and my fellow Jews, how lucky, how fortunate you are. How wonderful it is to be a Jew."

No, being a Jew is not an "eternal damnation."

No, it's not hard to be a Jew; nor is it a burden you must carry.

No, secularism, assimilation, and self-hate are not the way for a Jew.

Rather...

Yes, you are lucky to be Jewish!

Yes, although you may live through hell on earth for the next three millennia, you should – and will – always hold your head high!

Yes, being Jewish is a gift, a cause for joy, a piece of heaven.

Yes, Torah and mitzvot are a blessing. They connect us to our Creator, and transform this world into a better place for all mankind.

Dear friend:

As the month of Tishrei comes to a close and we look back on the most powerful month of the year – accepting G-d's sovereignty on Rosh Hashanah, being forgiven on Yom Kippur, uniting with G-d and our fellow Jews on Sukkot, dancing our souls and soles out on Simchat Torah – it is now the time to declare our pride in our Jewishness.

I am a Jew and I'm proud.

Slice of LIFE

Sukot In Israel

By Matisyahu Granovetter

It wasn't until we moved to Israel that I realized how precious the holiday of Sukot is to the Jewish people.

Back in the States, where my wife Sara and I had become "Baalei Tshuva" (newly Torah observant), it was my impression that only very religious Jews had sukot, and even then it was something small, often behind their kitchen in the backyard where no one on the street could see. Our first suka had been built on our backyard porch - it was easy to construct, since the main wall was in place.

During that first year in Netanya, however, we rented an apartment on the fifth floor of a high-rise, overlooking the Mediterranean. Scenic, but where in the world would our suka go? There was no porch and we high up.

During Rosh Hashana we met Elon, a handyman who fixed sinks and appliances, but most relevant to us, offered to build a suka for us! Elon knew the right suka size and specifications, and his little truck helped him bring wood, nails, curtains and "Schach" branches for our suka roof. And Elon was not even religious!

It was very windy in our parking lot near the ocean, where our suka was to be built, so Elon made it extra strong and secure. He numbered the corners of each piece of wood (like those jigsaw puzzles we did as kids, where each piece is numbered underneath). "I made it so you can put it together yourself next year, Matisyahu." I looked at him in wonderment. "Thanks a lot, I'll just make sure I still have your phone number."

But before we could finish connecting the suka walls, Elon suddenly had to leave. He left the suka panels for me to assemble. What should I do? I ran upstairs and phoned my rabbi in panic.

"Don't worry," said Rabbi Tzvi Wilhelm, the Chabad emissary in Netanya. "Connecting the walls isn't difficult." He came right over with some rope, wire, and a tool to cut the wire. "A rabbi must be a carpenter, too," he said, when he saw my astonishment. "We must do everything to repair the world, even cut wire."

"But Rabbi, this will take forever!"

"Don't worry. It's a mitzva."

By the end of the day, my hands were sore, red and swollen. But the smiles on my children's faces were worth it all. We now had our very own little suka in the parking lot!

Now that the suka was up, we needed basics like a table, chairs, and a light bulb.

I went to the local appliance store. "Suka needs bulb," I tried to say in my best Hebrew.

"No problem," the man responded in his best English. "Here's bulb, here's wire here's extension, here's switch, how many meters?"

In moments he had cut cut the wires, wound them together, tested a new bulb on his voltage machine and priced it at 18 shekels. A real bargain!

We strung the wire from our apartment on the fifth floor all the way down to the parking lot. And it worked! I told the rabbi about my triumph. He said, "Nice, but did you get your arba minim already?"

"My what?"

"The four species. It's a mitzva to hold the lulav, etrog, myrtle and willow branches together and to make a blessing on them during Sukot. You have to go shopping!"

"Shopping? In America the rabbi just orders them for everyone. Can't you just buy it for me, Rabbi, please?"

"Getting them is half the fun." Was his response.

So we visited the "shuk" - several streets lined with makeshift booths and tables selling the four species and suka decorations.

Rabbi Wilhelm helped me find a good etrog. He took the citron fruit out of its protective wrapping and carefully examined it. He put it back.

He took another fruit, turned it up, down and sideways and then someone with a long black coat came over, and examined it with a magnifying glass.

No, no, not good enough. We went on to the next table. At each table people quoted prices for their wares. This etrog was 30 shekels, that one was 90 shekels, and so forth.

To me all etrogs looked the same. We finally secured a lovely yellowish-green one for a bargain: only 110 shekels.

Now for the lulav! The rabbi picked up each lulav and examined it by pointing it outward from his left eye to the sky, while his right eye stayed closed, trying to see if it was straight enough. I wondered if he ever shot pool. After a number of tries, we secured a lulav as well. As for the myrtle and willows, they could wait until the morning before the holiday, so they would be fresh.

By the time Sukot rolled around, our suka walls were secure, the card tables were covered with tablecloths, the candles were placed in the least windy corner, and my kiddush cup was standing and waiting for the wine and a blessing.

My wife, the children and I brought in the food (five floors down, five floors up, lots of exercise) and off we went to shul for the evening services.

Walking home, we were surprised. We noticed sukot everywhere! Through the walls we could see shadows of people making kiddush, eating and singing. Sukot was not just a holiday for the religious in Israel, it was for everyone. Later we saw people staying up late, studying in the suka, talking in the suka, even sleeping in the suka.

Years later, we still had Elon's suka frame. I still got sore, red hands every year. We would build the suka ourselves, matching the numbers in the corners, although one time we messed up and built the suka upside-down!

But it doesn't matter. Sukot is the best time of the year in Israel, when all

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1367

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The Official homepage for worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement that promotes Judaism and provides daily Torah lectures and Jewish insights



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, 5705 [1944]

Greetings and blessings,

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.

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:

One thinks that the Torah and its mitzvos are relegated for specific times during the day and afterwards, he may do whatever he wants;

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

What Does 'Shkoyach' Mean?

Question: My conversion process has been a huge learning curve. One of the many challenges is getting my head around all the terminology. I can finally pronounce Chanukah correctly, and I now know the difference between Kiddush and Kaddish (was embarrassing when I didn't), but there is one word that still confuses me: Shkoyach (spelling?). I hear people shout "shkoyach" after the rabbi's sermon, after someone gets called to the Torah, and sometimes even when I pass the herring at the Shabbos table. What exactly does shkoyach mean and when is the right time to say it?

Answer: According to the Oxford Etymological Dictionary of Jewish Jargon, Shkoyach is a condensed version of the Hebrew phrase Yeyasher Kochacha, literally, "May your strength be directed forward." Ironically, the "forward extension" was shortened, and people didn't have the koach (strength) to say the two guttural 'ch' sounds at the end, so it became Yasher Koach, which when said quickly sounds like Shkoyach.

Shkoyach is a versatile expression. It can be used to say bravo for a great sermon, good on you for being called to the Torah, or thank you for passing the herring. But the meaning is always the same. You have done something good, you should have the strength to do more.

This is much deeper than just saying thank you. Thank you is an acknowledgement of the good deed that has been done in the past. Shkoyach also encourages more good deeds in the future. It is bravo and encore rolled into one.

The message is that no matter how much good we have done, we can always increase. No matter how much we know, we can always learn more. As you know from your conversion process, in Judaism the learning never ends. The Talmud says, "Don't be shy to ask, or you will never learn." So I'm glad you asked. Shkoyach for the question.

A WORD

from the Director

When it comes to joy, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are the high points of the entire month of Tishrei. In fact, our Sages tell us that Simchat Torah is the "reservoir" from which we draw our happiness throughout the rest of the year.

It is therefore somewhat surprising that on Simchat Torah we read the Torah portion of Zot Habracha, which ends with the passing of Moses. Similarly, the haftora begins with the words "And it was after the death of Moses, the servant of G-d."

A question is asked: Why must we be reminded of such a sad topic on a day that's supposed to be the epitome of happiness?

In order to answer it, let's take a deeper look at Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah: Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, which cap off the holiday season, are the "stepping-stones" that connect Tishrei to our regular, post-Yom Tov lives. It isn't difficult to feel a sense of spiritual elevation on Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot; the challenge is to feel the same way six months later, in the midst of our mundane activities. Simchat Torah allows us to extend the spiritual power of Tishrei to all aspects of our lives, regardless of the date on the calendar.

Moses' passing was also a "bridge" of sorts for the Jewish people. While Moses was alive the Jews witnessed open miracles; after his passing, their daily lives became less remarkable, and G-d's miracles became increasingly concealed. Nonetheless, it is precisely the post-Moses era for which the world was created, as it is our job to uncover the G-dliness that exists within creation.

Thus, in essence, Simchat Torah and the Torah portion we read on it share a common theme, for they both give us the strength to counter G-d's concealment, ultimately revealing the light of Redemption.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



Don't Mix!

By Yerachmiel Tilles

(This story is known to us from a chasid and relative of the Tzemech Tzedek (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Sheersohn of Lubavitch) named Asher, who happened to be in Primishlan for the holiday season in the year the following episode took place.)

One year around the time of the High Holidays, the daughter of the well-known tzadik, Rabbi Meir of Primishlan, fell severely ill. As Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur passed, her condition worsened, and she seemed closer to death than life.

On Simchat Torah, Rabbi Meir was fulfilling the commandment to dance and rejoice with the Torah Scrolls, doing so with great enthusiasm, as every year. Great happiness prevailed among all the dancers.

But then, a small delegation of Chasidim burst through the doors of the synagogue in haste, and approached him to disclose that his daughter appeared to be in her final moments, G-d forbid, and he must do something.

The Rebbe hastened home and entered his daughter's room. When he perceived how critical the situation was, he immediately stepped out and stood by himself. Then the Primishlanner (who always referred to himself in the third person by his diminutive nickname, "Meirel") proclaimed:

"Ribono Shel Olam - Master of the Universe! You commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana, so Meirel blew. You commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur, so Meirel fasted. You commanded us to live in a sukkah on the festival of Sukkos, so Meirel lived in a sukkah. You commanded us to be joyous on Simchas Torah, so Meirel is joyous.

"But now Ribono Shel Olam - Master of the Universe: you have made my daughter to be critically sick, and Meirel is obligated to accept this tragedy with joy, as it is written, 'A person is required to bless on something bad that happens to him in the same way as he is required to bless on something good,' and the Talmud explains that this cannot refer to the wording of the blessings since their texts are different, so it must be that our attitude has to be the same - that is, to be joyful towards the bad event just as towards the good. So Meirel accepts his daughter's illness with joy, as You have commanded.

"However, Ribono Shel Olam - Master of the Universe, there is also an explicit law that we are not supposed to mingle one joy with another..."

At that moment, they cried out from the sick room that the sick young woman had broken into a heavy sweat. Before their eyes her condition began to visibly improve.

After a reasonable time she recovered completely.

The Secret of "L'Chaim" Revealed

Rabbi Yisrael of Rizhin once stayed in a town called Sanek during one of his travels. Of course, everybody came out to greet him since the reputation of the tzaddik preceded him wherever he went. Among them were some Jews who were not adherents of the Chassidic path. These Misnagdim (opponents) decided to vent their hostility on R' Yisroel.

"Tell us," they challenged, "it is very difficult for us to understand. Our custom is to arise well before the break of dawn, to pray the morning prayer at sunrise according to the custom of the ancestral pious ones. After we finish praying, we remain for some time in the shul, still wrapped in tallit and tefillin and we learn Chumash and Mishna before we leave. Even as we put away the tallit and tefillin we learn chapters by memory from the Tanach. The rest of the day, we maintain fixed times when we gather for additional study in the shul. For this behavior we are labeled Misnagdim?!"

"You Chasidim, your way is to pray the morning prayer long after the prescribed time for doing so, and immediately after the prayer, instead of dedicating time for study, you race to set the table. Then you bring out cake and brandy, and sit together drinking, eating and singing. For this you are called Chasidim (pious)?! It seems to us to be quite the opposite."

Reb Leib, the attendant of the Rizhiner, after hearing these accusations could not hold himself back. "I'm not surprised," he imputed. "Your whole service is performed with so little heart, in such a calculated, chilly and lifeless manner, it is no wonder that you learn Mishnayot afterwards, for that is what one learns in memory of the dead!"

(Mishna, spelled mem-shin-nun-hei, has the same letters as the word for soul, neshama.) Not so the service of the chasidim. Whatever we do, no matter how much, or how little, we do with devotion, warmth and vitality. Doesn't a living man need a sip of brandy once in a while!?"

He drew a breath to go on, but the Rizhiner interrupted him. "I am sure you realize that he is just joking. I will tell you the real reason for our way of praying and the secret of L'Chayim.

It is well known that since the destruction of the Holy Temple, our prayer takes the place of the sacrifices which were offered there, as it is written, "The prayer of our lips shall replace the oxen of the sacrifice". Our three daily prayers correspond to the daily burnt offerings. Just as a sacrifice was rendered invalid by undirected thoughts, so too is our prayer.

When a man stands in prayer before his Creator, the Evil Inclination wants nothing more than to confuse him and introduce strange thoughts into his head. How is it possible to stand in prayer in face of that? In the end, it is unlikely that we succeeded in replacing the oxen of the sacrifices with our prayers. What did the chasidim discover to remedy the problem, and to battle against the ploys of this Evil Inclination, the Yetzer Hara?

After the Prayer, the chasidim sit together, raise their glasses in L'Chayim, and pour out their hearts in blessing. "Yankele, you should find a proper shidduch (match) for your daughter," exclaims one. "Beryl, your business should have as many customers as the eyes on a potato," exclaims another.

The Yetzer Hara, already regaling in his victory of having confounded the prayer of an entire congregation of Jews, and seeing them eating and drinking, concludes that for the meantime their prayer is indeed finished, and he joyfully retires for the morning.

Now, it is a clear law in the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law), that prayer can be said in any language that one understands. Therefore, when Jews gather together to say L'Chayim, and in the absence of the Yetzer Hara they begin to bless one another from the depths of their hearts, it is the real prayer, and it goes straight to the heart of the Master of the World.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret Torah readings are from Leviticus 22-23, Numbers 29, and Deuteronomy 14-16. These readings detail the laws of the moadim or "appointed times" on the Jewish calendar for festive celebration of our bond with G-d; including the mitzvot of dwelling in the sukkah (branch-covered hut) and taking the "Four Kinds" on the festival of Sukkot; the offerings brought in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem on Sukkot, and the obligation to journey to the Holy Temple to "to see and be seen before the face of G-d" on the three annual pilgrimage festivals — Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot.

On Simchat Torah ("Rejoicing of the Torah") we conclude, and begin anew, the annual Torah-reading cycle. First we read the Torah section of Vezot Haberachah, which recounts the blessings that Moses gave to each of the twelve tribes of Israel before his death. Echoing Jacob's blessings to his twelve sons five generations earlier, Moses assigns and empowers each tribe with its individual role within the community of Israel.

Vezot Haberachah then relates how Moses ascended Mount Nebo from whose summit he saw the Promised Land. "And Moses the servant of G-d died there in the Land of Moab by the mouth of G-d... and no man knows his burial place to this day." The Torah concludes by attesting that "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom G-d knew face to face... and in all the mighty hand and the great awesome things which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel."

Immediately after concluding the Torah, we begin it anew by reading the first chapter of Genesis (the beginning of next Shabbat's Torah reading) describing G-d's creation of the world in six days and His ceasing work on the seventh—which He sanctified and blessed as a day of rest.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

SHABBOS CHOL HAMO'ED SUKKOS • 19 TISHREI • 28 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT: MINCHA 6.10 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS 6.40 PM

SHABBOS DAY: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA 9.03 AM
SHACHARIS 10.00 AM
MINCHA 5.55 PM
SHABBOS ENDS 7.01 PM

HOSHANA RABA: SHACHRIS 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
MINCHA 6.10 PM
MAARIV followed by Kiddush 7.00 PM
HAKOFOS 9.00 PM

SHMINI ATZERES: SHACHRIS 10.00 AM
MINCHA 6.05 PM
MAARIV 7.00 PM
HAKOFOS 9.15 PM

SIMCHAS TORAH: SHACHRIS followed by Kiddush and Farbrengen 10.00 AM
MINCHA followed by Farbrengen 5.30 PM
YOM TOV ENDS/MAARIV 7.04 PM

REST OF THE WEEK: SHACHARIS 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
MINCHA 6.10 PM
MAARIV 7.00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



* Light candles after the prescribed time from a pre-existing flame

	Shabbos		Shmini Atzeres, Simchas Torah		
	Begins	Ends	1st Night	2nd Night*	Ends
Melbourne	6:03	7:01	6:05	7:03	7:04
Adelaide	5:58	6:49	6:00	6:56	6:57
Brisbane	5:29	6:22	5:30	6:23	6:23
Darwin	6:25	7:14	6:25	7:14	7:14
Gold Coast	5:27	6:21	5:28	6:22	6:22
Perth	5:59	6:54	6:00	6:55	6:56
Sydney	5:37	6:33	5:39	6:35	6:36
Canberra	5:46	6:43	5:48	6:44	6:45
Launceston	5:56	6:56	5:58	6:58	7:00
Auckland	6:04	7:01	7:06	8:03	8:04
Wellington	6:05	7:05	7:07	8:08	8:09
Hobart	5:56	6:57	5:58	6:58	7:01
Byron Bay	5:27	6:20	5:28	6:21	6:22