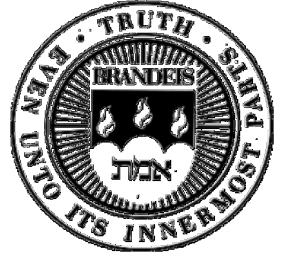




תורת אמת



A Weekly Brandeis Orthodox Organization Publication

15 Tishrei 5770 / 3 October 2009 Vol. XI Issue 6

SUKKOT

Candle-lighting: 6:08 pm
Shacharit: 9 am
Sof Kriat Shema: 9:38 am
Sof Zman Tefilla: 10:37 am
Mincha 6:00 pm
Shkia: 6:20 pm
Motzei Chag: 7:03 pm

Sukkot

Mamash

By Rabbi Kaplowitz

Would You Be Complete?

By Matthew Feinberg '10

Sukkot in a Hut!

The Torah reading is the same for both days.

- Some laws of sacrifices
- The *mitzvah* not to slaughter a cow or ewe on the same day as its children
- *Pesach*
- Waving the *omer*
- The *mitzvah* to count seven complete weeks
- The *mitzvot* of *peah* and *leket*
- *Rosh Hashana*
- *Yom Kippur*
- *Sukkot*

There is an often-cited *machloket* in the *Gemara* over the symbolism and significance of the *Sukkah*. The Torah tells us that the reason we dwell in *sukkot* – temporary huts – is the following: “During [these] seven days you must live in thatched huts. Everyone included in Israel must live in such thatched huts. This is so that future generations will know that I had the Israelites live in huts (*sukkot*) when I brought them out of Egypt. I am G-d your L-rd” (*Vayikra* 23:42-43). In the *Gemara Sukkah* 11b, Rabbi Eliezer asserts that the *sukkot* referred to in the *pasuk* are the *ananei kavod* (clouds of glory). Rabbi Akiva maintains that the *sukkot* referred to are *sukkot mamash* (literal *sukkot*). There are many *poskim* who hold that based on the *pasuk*, we must have *kavanah* for the *mitzvah* when sitting in the *sukkah*. Thus, the debate between Rabbis Akiva and Eliezer may have very real ramifications.

We can well understand the position of Rabbi Eliezer – that the *sukkah* represents our miraculous existence in the desert. For forty years Hashem provided our every need – the *manah* which we ate, the clothes on our backs, and protection from the harsh desert climate. This position also fits well with the miraculous events we celebrate on the other two *regalim* (pilgrimage festivals). On *Pesach* we commemorate the miraculous exodus from Egypt, during which Hashem intervened in the course of history to rescue the Jewish people. Similarly, on *Shavuot*, we mark the revelation at *Har Sinai* – the only time in history that an entire nation heard the direct voice of G-d. It therefore makes sense that on *Sukkot*, too, we would celebrate a miracle of immense proportions.

It is more difficult to understand the position of Rabbi Akiva. Why should we

(Rabbi Kaplowitz continued on page 3)

A wise person once said that ‘for every two Jews, there are three opinions.’ And such is the case when we look at many traditions, rituals, and ritual objects. Many times, for every one thing we do or use, at least two different interpretations can be found to explain why we do it or what it represents. During *Sukkot*, we are commanded to take the *arba minim*, the four species, and “rejoice before the L-rd.” But what do these four species – the *etrog*, palm branch, willow branches, and myrtle – symbolize?

One interpretation is that the four species represent four different parts of the body. The palm branch is long and straight, like the spine; the myrtle leaf is small and oval, much like the eye; the willow leaf is a longer oval and represents the mouth; finally, the *etrog* represents the heart. Individually, these different parts can be used for sin, but united they can be used for *mitzvot*.

A second interpretation is that each of the species represents a different kind of Jew. The willow branch has neither taste nor smell and represents the Jew who does not study Torah and does not do *mitzvot*. The myrtle branch has no taste but has a pleasant smell; it represents the Jew who does many *mitzvot*, but does not study Torah. The palm branch has no smell but does have a pleasant taste and represents the Jew who studies Torah but does no *mitzvot*. Finally, the *etrog* has both a pleasant smell and taste and represents the Jew who studies Torah and does *mitzvot*. None of these kinds of Jews can be complete without each of the others; bringing the four together reminds us of the importance of everyone.

(Matthew Feinberg continued on page 3)

Chag Sameach!

Yir-awe-t Hashem

By Anonymous

For the past 25 hours, perhaps 30 days, our *Yirat Hashem* has manifested into a fear—perhaps the lowest level of *yirah*—in which we look to G-d as our Father who can reprimand us, our King who can exile us, our Beloved that may leave us, our Creator who can take us away. We have been terrified of what our future could hold and beg G-d to save us. The gates of *Neillah* have closed, the decision is sealed, we are relieved. 25 hours of emotional, cathartic prayer have created a euphoric post-atonement state of purity and satisfaction in which we are high off purity and forgiveness. Perhaps this is the year we will be in *Yerushalayim Habnuyah*. Often this sense of accomplishment can spin us into a feeling of closeness to G-d that we have never reached before, and we thank G-d for this opportunity. But we must be careful not to mistaken this closeness to friendship as we will never reach that level and we will only regress in our relationship with G-d. He is our Creator, our Savior, our King. At the end of Yom Kippur, we may shed our fear-driven *Yirah* of G-d, but we must replace that fear with something stronger. It is during *Sukkot* that *Yirat Hashem* transitions from fear to awe—the highest level of *yirah*. We read on the first day of *Sukkot* that G-d commanded us to live in *sukkot* for 7 days to commemorate the cloud and fire protection that G-d created for us in the desert for forty years. We emphasize G-d's powerful, miraculous abilities; *Sukkot* is a time of rejoicing over the wonder of G-d and developing an awe of Him and His Greatness. We are given this week and a half after Yom Kippur to prove ourselves. We regretted, asked for forgiveness, promised we wouldn't sin again (or would do more *mitzvot*), but we have yet to pull through. For this, we are given up until *Hoshana Raba*. Now that we have been forgiven and are 'sealed' for a good 'fate', we do not have the pressure of punishment to force us into *mitzvot*. How do we ensure that we fulfill our promise of behaving better this year beyond the stress of the *Yamim Noraim*? Perhaps one can see a hint of an answer within the Torah portion read on the first days of *Sukkot*. The portion begins not with the holiday, nor with *karbanot*, but with a seemingly irrelevant concept of not killing a mother bird and its baby bird on the same day. What is the significance of beginning with the mother bird and her baby? Ramban explains that professional killers often lose sight of the humanity behind the people they affect. Thus this commandment is brought down to develop in us a sensitivity toward other beings around us to ensure that we, living as Jews, never lose sensitivity to G-d's creatures, whether human or animal. However, it is also interesting to note that in the end, this *mitzvah* is not connected to a reward, punishment, or reason. We do not follow this *mitzvah* because we are afraid of G-d's punishment or our

moral outcome if we become mother-then-baby-bird killers. We follow this *mitzvah* because of our awe of G-d, desire to fulfill his word, and trust that He has created a righteous way of sanctifying His name in this world—this is true *Yirat Hashem*. Our test during *Sukkot* is to see if our awareness of G-d's Greatness alone can compel us to be better Jews, better humans, and better friends.

*First anonymous article of the year!
Shout out!*

Sukkot—The Celebration of Everyday Miracles

By Naomi Bloch '13

In *Devarim* 16:13-15, the Torah tells us that on top of the usual *mitzvah* of *simcha* that we have on the shalosh regalim, we should have an additional measure of *simcha* on *Sukkot*. This is why *Sukkot* is referred to as "*zman simchatanu*" in davening. The question is, why do we have this extra obligation of happiness on *Sukkot*?

In *Vayikra* 23:43, the Torah tells us that we celebrate *Sukkot* because "because I placed them in *Sukkot* when I took them out of Egypt". In *Gemara Sukkot* (11b), Rabbi Eliezer believes that this *pasuk* refers to the *Annanei HaKavod*, the protective clouds that Hashem sent to surround the Jews in the desert. However, Rabbi Akiva, believes that this *pasuk* refers to actual huts that the Jews lived in while wandering the desert.

The other two regalim, *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, celebrate the miraculous occurrence of a specific historic event. On *Pesach* we celebrate the miracle of exiting Egypt and on *Shavuot* we celebrate the giving of the Torah. According to Rabbi Eliezer, *Sukkot* fits into this pattern, because it celebrates the miraculous presence of the *Ananei HaKavod*. But how then does Rabbi Akiva's opinion about celebrating the living in regular huts fit into this pattern of celebrating the miracles of the shalosh regalim?

We often define miracles as an occasion where Hashem does something that breaks the rules of nature. However, if we think about it, Hashem created the world of nature. Therefore, Hashem is behind everything that happens in the world. Is it any less of a miracle that the sun rises every day? Either way, Hashem is behind what we see as natural, or what we see as miraculous.

Perhaps this explains the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. *Sukkot* is the holiday where we celebrate the fact that everything, even mundane things such as living in a hut in the middle of a desert, are miraculous. Since the huts could only provide shelter if Hashem allowed them too, it is most certainly a miracle. *Sukkot* is therefore the holiday that celebrates the everyday miracles that we usually take for granted. This is what causes the extra happiness—everything in life is a miracle, so we should rejoice over the simplest things.

Even though Naomi is from Chicago, she went to Stone!

M O D A O T

- **If your on campus for Sukkot, that means you're awesome!** Find some people you haven't met yet and make new friends!
- **Come to Mussar @ Brandeis! Shabbat Day at 3:30 PM in the Beit Midrash** A Mussar group generally consists of soul-searching individuals who want to develop their Middot. Mussar Group-Study is rooted in the core principles of Juda-

ism's Mussar Tradition. As a follow-up to Mussar Group-Study, practical tools are introduced based on the relevant topics being studied in order to apply the topics to daily living. The goal is to help, guide, and motivate all to improve the quality of our Middot in our interpersonal interactions and, by extension, improve the quality of our souls. Thus, we will be nurturing the good spirit of our souls and bettering this world!

All are welcome to join and bring interested friends! For more information, contact Jacob Chatinover or Daniel Shimansky.

- **Want to write for Torat Emet?** If you're interested in writing for Torat Emet and sharing your words of Torah please contact Lauren or Ronit! Long and short articles are both appreciated!

(Rabbi Kaplowitz continued from page 1)

celebrate the fact that Bnei Yisrael built huts for themselves in the desert? Every nomadic tribe builds some form of shelter; why should we have been any different? How is the construction of huts worthy of celebration?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks offers a beautiful answer to this question. He explains that most accounts in the *Tanach* of our travels in the desert focus on Hashem's graciousness, benevolence and patience with Bnei Yisrael and Bnei Yisrael's quarrels and complaints. Moshe Rabbeinu, our greatest leader and advocate said the following about us:

"Remember and never forget how you provoked G-d your L-rd in the desert. From the day you left Egypt until you came here, you have been rebelling against G-d" (*Devarim* 9:7). Yet, there is one account of the experience in the desert that paints it very differently. The prophet Yirmiyahu writes: "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: 'I remember the devotion of your youth, how, as a bride, you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown'" (Jeremiah 2:2). There is a great miracle in the simple act of constructing huts in the desert – the fact that the Israelites "had the faith and courage to embark on a journey through an unknown land, fraught with danger, and sustained only by their trust in G-d. " Thus, according to Rabbi Akiva we celebrate the miracle of faith – the faith the Jewish people had in Hashem to lead us, without any questions.

As we leave the comfort of our homes to rejoice in our *sukkah*, let us remember the beautiful message of Rabbi Akiva.

Chag Sameach!

Rabbi Kaplowitz Fun Fact: Rabbi Kaplowitz has a pet monkey.

(Matthew Feinberg continued from page 1)

There you have it: same four objects, but two different interpretations for each one. However, there is a common theme; all four must be combined for the full effect, so to speak. Individually the four species don't amount to much, but when held together they are a united force that can be used to do a *mitzvah*. When brought together, the *arba minim* can be waved on all sides to show that G-d is everywhere.

Just as with the *arba minim*, there are objects and people in our lives that can represent different things to us depending on the situation. One day these objects can be very valuable, and the next worthless. One day these people can be a random stranger, and the next our best friend. The unifying factor is that these objects and people like our friends and family define who we are. When brought together these objects and people make our lives complete.

As the festive holiday of *Sukkot* approaches, think of the people and things that are important to you. If one was removed would you still be able to perform *mitzvot* or study Torah? If one was removed would you be able to stand up straight or see properly? If one was removed, would you be complete?

Hail to the Chief!

SHORT VORTS

A Reminder to Celebrate the Hard Parts

By Coretta Garlow '10

Since they worshiped a golden calf, the Israelites who toiled as slaves in Egypt never got to see the land flowing with milk and honey (*Shemot* 33.1-33.3). The dignity of creating a home as free people was not for that generation. Instead they wandered in a great and terrible wilderness with serpents and scorpions, a parched land with no water in it. (*Devarim* 8.15) for forty years, setting up temporary shelters, or *sukkot* (*Vayikra* 23.43).

And we build models of these *sukkot* and celebrate joyously? Why are we feasting about being lost and uprooted as a result of an ungrateful mistake?

To try and answer this I want to tell you something.

After Yom Kippor, I was so grateful for the chance to start over without all the meanness, the quickness to give up, the impatience that was part of Coretta the year before. I was liberated from all those bad habits I had fallen into! But not two minutes later, I was interrupting a friend, and no less snappy about it with that empty stomach in the mix. I have to ask for forgiveness all over again.....and then over again and over again as the week goes on. I find myself wondering this week (for various silly reasons) when life will be easy, when I will get a rest, or at least see some results on the horizon. I consider giving up certain things that are difficult for me, but that I feel are important.

So, *Sukkot* is exactly the holiday I need right now.

It is a beautiful thing to renew our covenant with Hashem on *Shavuot*, to rejoice in being cleansed of our past iniquities and given another chance during the Days of Awe, to commemorate actually leaving Egypt on *Pesach*.

But after the honey moon, after the covenant has been reestablished....now what: The hard work of the relationship. How can we not celebrate that holy work? And hey, if anyone is like me and does not always remember to celebrate this sometimes frustrating journey, the Jewish calendar has us covered with this shout to enjoy the ups and downs of trying to do the right thing every day, May we all continue with our work towards a time of peace, rejuvenated by this *Chag* and this whole glorious month!

"Coretta is one of the coolest people I know." ~ Lauren

Snacking or Napping Outside of the Sukkah

By Jules Levenson '10

Reprinted with permission from *Torat Emet* Volume 7 Issue 6, 18 October 2005 / 15 *Tishrei* 5766.

Sukkos starts tonight and runs through *Hoshanna Rabbah* next Monday (Friday this year). One of the main *mitzvos* that is observed on *Sukkos* is that of dwelling in the *sukkah*. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Sukkah* teaches "*teyshvu k'ayn teduroh*" with regard to observing the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *sukkah*. This means that one should use the *sukkah* as one uses the house during the rest of the year. From this we derive the obligations of eating and sleeping in the *sukkah*. (There are, however, leniencies with regard to both of them.) From this, the *Gemara* then goes on to discuss the permissibility of *achilas arai* (a small snack, consisting of non-*mezonos* food or *mezonos* food less than the volume on one egg) and *shinas arai* (a short nap). The *Gemara* rules that it is permissible to have *achilas arai* outside the *sukkah*, but not *shinas arai*.

Why is this so? It seems that the law regarding a small snack and that regarding a nap should be one and the same! However, this is not the case. To understand why, we look back at *teyshvu k'ayn teduroh*. When one has a small snack, he or she does not necessarily sit down and eat it properly at the table; rather, it is eaten on the go and thus does not require a *sukkah*. Second, one does not gain the benefit of a full meal from it. A nap, on the other hand, is different. First, people lie down in the bedroom when taking a nap and that would entail using the *sukkah*. Another possible reason given is that since one gains a benefit very near to that of a full sleep, it is considered as if he or she had a full sleep, which does necessitate a *sukkah*.

Have a *Chag Sameach*.

Jules originally wrote this article 4 years ago. His byline then was "Jules Levenson of Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh (the Alma Mater of Jon Gradman '06 and Shana Zions '07) becomes the first high school student ever to write for Torat Emet." -Jeremy Heyman"

TE Staff:

Co-Editors: Ronit Broekman '11 and
Lauren Kirschenbaum '10

Staff Writers: Rabbi Kaplowitz '02,
Zahvi Glasenberg '11, Eitan Mosenkis '13 and
Aviva Zadoff '10