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BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה
MITZION מציון
KTM MONTREAL



THE SUCCAH OF PEACE

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

Last week a student asked me about some of the items we include in the “viduy”: They noted how there are sins we may not have committed individually, so why then do we need to ask forgiveness? I pointed out that the viduy is in the plural which indicates how we are not only confessing on an individual level, but on a communal-societal one as well.

The yamim nora'im are not just about each individual and their relationship with Hashem, they are about refining society as well. Our actions don't just affect our “olam haba points”, they also make a tangible difference to what our world looks like. We are meant to come out of the yamim nora'im with an appreciation of our inter-connectedness and mutual dependence.

It is upon this backdrop that we can begin to appreciate the holiday of Succot. The pasuk (Vayikra 23:42) says that:

בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֹשֵׁב בְּסֻכּוֹ.

For a seven day period you shall live in booths. All residents among Israel shall live in booths

From here the Gemara (Succah 27b) derives that:

מִלְמַד שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּיִם לֵישֵׁב בְּסֻכּוֹ אַחַת

This teaches that all of Israel are fit to sit in one Succah

The Succah represents unity. It is a structure that can make space to fit Jews from all walks of life and all backgrounds. It is called “Succat shalom” – the Succah of peace – and represents for us the necessity to seek unity and peace; when we disagree to do so respectfully and never allow for our differences to pull us apart.

Not only does the Succah – that is fit for all Israel – represent unity, but also the Arba Minim that we take on the holiday. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 30:12) teaches:

“This is comparable to Israel: Just as the Etrog has flavor and fragrance, so too does Israel include people who have Torah and good-deeds ... The date branch has flavor but no fragrance like those of Israel who have Torah but no good-deeds ... The

myrtle has fragrance and no flavor like those of Israel who have good-deeds but no Torah ... The willow branch has no flavor or fragrance like those of Israel who have no Torah and no good-deeds. What shall the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He binds them all together as one, and they atone one-for-another.”

The halacha teaches that the Arba Minim are to be bound together (SA OC 651:1). The diverse types of Jews are to be bound together. We are inextricable, inter-connected and inter-dependant. Despite and because of our differences.

Unity doesn't mean uniformity. It doesn't gloss over difference, or create an artificial sense of agreement. We can disagree and still be united. We can be different yet part of one whole. In fact, we must. Jewish history teaches all-to acutely what is at stake when we allow our differences to break-us into factions and allow disagreement to pull us apart. We've travelled down the road of hatred before, and it led us to nearly two-thousand years of exile.

I'm concerned that when we learn about the Jewish in-fighting in the lead-up to the Churban, we point a disapproving finger at them and cite the Gemara (Yoma 9a) to give a title to the crime – “Sinat Chinam”. Then we look at ourselves today and tell ourselves that our situation is different because the future and identity of our nation-state hangs in the balance (or some other self-righteous justification). We fail to realize that the stakes were just as high then – if not higher (after all, they had the Beit Hamikdash). We fail to appreciate the full extent of how radical the Gemara's accusation was: Despite all that was at stake, and how extreme the disagreement, they should never have allowed it to escalate as much as it did. And we run the risk of walking that same path again.

We emerge from the yamim nora'im having reinforced our sensitivity of the klal – the community and society – and realize our inter-dependence. The question is will we then gather together the Arba Minim with all they represent and sit with all Am Yisrael under one Succah.

Chag Sameach!

**SUKKOT
15 TISHREI
SEPTEMBER 30**

**FRIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING:
6:20 P.M.**

**SATURDAY LIGHT CANDLES
AFTER: 7:21 P.M.**

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST
HAVDALAH: : 7:19 P.M.**

THIS WEEKS ARTICLES

**THE SUCCAH OF PEACE
BY RAV ARI FAUST**

**THE SUKKAH OF FAITH
BY DANIELLE WEINBERG**

**LESSONS FROM THE LULAV
BY DAVID WEINBERG**

**JEWISH HEROES: THE RAMBAM
BY MICHAEL SLOMINSKY**

**ISRAEL IN FOCUS: YAKIR
BY REUT DOKOW**

**KTM FAMILY SECTION
BY YAAKOV JACKSON**

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THE SUKKAH OF FAITH

BY DANIELLE WEINBERG

Every year on the holiday of Sukkot, we all sit around the holiday table, the whole family, and my father tells us words of Torah. Usually, he repeats those same ideas, and we listen to them with great attention, as if it's the first time for us.

One of the lessons that stands out to me is the following story from the Talmud: In Masechet Avodah Zarah, (2a), it is recounted that in the future, God will bring the Torah scroll, place it in His lap, and say, "Whoever engaged in Torah study, come and receive your reward." The nations of the world come with complaints before God, claiming that they were deprived of the opportunity to serve their Creator because the Torah was not given to them. In response, God says to them, "I have an easy commandment,

the Sukkah, go and perform it." The Talmud explains that the Sukkah is an easy commandment, as it does not require a significant financial investment. In other words, it is a "home" that is easy to build as a temporary dwelling. The Talmud notes that upon hearing this, everyone rushes to build a sukkah on the roof of their house. God then intensifies the sun's heat like the heat of the summer, and each person kicks down their sukkah and leaves.

This raises a question: Isn't it a known rule that מצטער פטור מן הסוכה - anyone who is distressed is exempt from the obligation to dwell in the Sukkah? So what is the novelty in the fact that the nations leave the Sukkah when they are in distress? The explanation is that while a Jew is exempt from the mitzvah and may leave the Sukkah when distressed, he does not have it in his heart to kick down the Sukkah.

At this point in the story, my father would say to us, "See, this is what is so special about the Jewish people! When a Jew needs to leave the Sukkah, he feels pain. He is pained by the fact that he cannot perform the mitzvah. He leaves the Sukkah but with a broken heart."

Am Yisrael appreciate the greatness and essence of the mitzvah of Sukkot, the צילא דמיהימנותא - 'shadow of faith.' The essence of the holiday is that we leave behind all the material comforts that God has blessed us with: our homes, cars, comfortable sofas – and with a wholehearted and joyful choice, we seek shelter in the shadow of the Almighty, our Father in heaven.

May it be a holiday of true closeness to God for all of us.

Chag Sameach



LESSONS FROM THE LULAV

BY DAVID WEINBERG

The mitzvah of the Arba Minim—lulav, etrog, hadas (myrtle), and aravot (willow)—

holds a unique symbolism within Judaism. Each species represents a different facet of the Jewish people. Taste symbolizes Torah learning, while smell represents good deeds and mitzvot. The etrog, embodying both taste and smell, signifies the tzaddik (righteous person). The lulav, with taste but no scent, represents a learned person without good deeds. The hadas, with a strong aroma but no taste, indicates one with good actions but limited learning. Finally, the aravot represent those lacking both knowledge and good deeds.

This symbolism offers meaningful insights. Firstly, it emphasizes that every member of Klal Yisrael, regardless of their level of knowledge or observance, has an essential role to play. Secondly, while the mitzvah

requires bringing all four species together, only three are bound up together. Although held together, the etrog is kept separate, indicating that even tzaddikim should interact with other Jewish people primarily when involved in a mitzvah.

A common law applies to all four species, particularly the lulav. A dry lulav is considered invalid for the mitzvah. The definition of "dry" varies, with opinions suggesting it crumbles under a fingernail or after twelve months. Why is a dry lulav unacceptable? The gemara links it to the Torah's description of the etrog as "hadar" (splendid), implying that, like the etrog, the lulav must be splendid. Rashi adds that a dry lulav fails to fulfill the requirement of "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him," while Ra'avad likens it to the dead, citing "The dead cannot praise G-d."

Notably, the word "lulav" shares the same gematria (numerical value) as the Hebrew

word for "life," "chayim" (68). Thus, the lulav symbolizes life itself.

Why, then, is a dry lulav only considered invalid when it has completely dried out? This seeming inconsistency reveals valuable lessons. As long as the lulav retains some moisture, it can be revitalized by placing it in water, even growing new roots. Therefore, it is not considered "dead" until it is utterly dry and beyond revival.

This offers two essential lessons. Firstly, we must remain spiritually "moist" and connected to Torah, often likened to life-giving water. Secondly, we should never give up on any member of the Jewish People, no matter how distant they may seem from their heritage. With the infusion of "Torah and mitzvot," they can flourish and, like a plant, develop new roots.

PARNESS HAYOM :: TISHREI

- 1 TISHREI | Jack Dym, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Mike Dym z"l
- 2 TISHREI | Lionel and Karen Dubrofsky, in honour of the Yahrzeit of Fayga bat Myriasha z"l
- 3 TISHREI | Alex Guttman in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Esther bat Tsvi Menachem HaCohen z"l
- 4 TISHREI | Gabi Cohen, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Tova bat Meir z"l
- 6 TISHREI | Joel King, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Arthur King z"l
- 7 TISHREI | Cindy Faust, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Harriet Miller z"l
- 8 TISHREI | Jeffrey Rein, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Olga Rein z"l
- 8 TISHREI | Jewel Shoham and Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her husband, Rabbi Sidney Shoham z"l
- 26 TISHREI | Rabbi Reuben Poupko, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Hinda Poupko z"l



JEWISH HEROES: THE RAMBAM

BY MICHAEL SLOMINSKY

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, the Rambam, was one of the greatest legal authorities in all generations, one of the prominent philosophers of the Middle Ages, a scholar, and a physician. The Rambam was deeply influential in every aspect of Judaism, making him one of the most important and revered figures in Jewish history. It is said of him, "From Moses to Moses, there arose none like Moses". The Rambam held a distinct rationalist approach, which is evident in his writings.

The Rambam was born in the city of Cordoba in Spain. After an extremist Muslim group took control of Cordoba and began to persecute Jews, the Rambam's family decided to flee the city. They wandered from place to place for about ten years, and when they couldn't find refuge in Spain, they eventually settled in the city of Fes in Morocco, where they lived for five years.

In 1165, the Rambam visited the Land of Israel and later moved to Alexandria, Egypt.

He eventually settled in Fostat, where he lived until his passing. In Egypt, the Rambam served as the religious leader of the Fostat community and was financially supported by his brother David, a gem merchant. This financial support allowed the Rambam to dedicate his time to Torah study and to write comprehensive works on the Mishnah.

However, the peaceful period in the Rambam's life did not last long. Within just two years, his father, wife, and two of his sons passed away. Additionally, a few years later, his brother David drowned while traveling to India. Without his brother's support, the Rambam had to seek other means of livelihood, and he turned to the practice of medicine to support his family.

In the 1185, the Rambam was appointed as the personal physician of the vizier of Egypt, and later he became the physician of the vizier Saladin himself. This appointment provided him with financial stability, allowing him to devote his free time to Torah study and his writings.

The Rambam's renown reached far and wide, and he received numerous questions on Jewish law and theology from Jewish communities all over the world. One community that maintained a continuous connection with him was the Yemenite Jewish community, which recognized the Rambam as their halakhic authority and leader.

The Rambam's halakhic work, the "Mishneh Torah," comprehensively covers all areas of Jewish law and remains a foundational source for Jewish legal discussions. His clear and concise language was a hallmark of his writing. His writings in the realm of philosophy, particularly his work "Guide for the Perplexed" (Moreh Nevuchim), had a profound influence on nearly every Jewish philosopher who followed him, as well as on non-Jewish thinkers in Arab and European cultures.

"It has been made clear... that the purpose of our existence and all that is in it is for a person to be learned and possess good character traits" (Rambam's introduction to the Mishneh Torah).

ISRAEL IN FOCUS: YAKIR

BY REUT DOKOW

The name of the yishuv Yakir is derived from Yirmiyahu 31:19, "הבן יקיר לי אפרים" - My dear son, Ephraim" as it is located within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. The tribal territory of Ephraim was situated to the south of the Kinneret River, and the yishuv of Yakir is included within its boundaries.

The yishuv is also named after the pilot Yakir Naveh, who tragically crashed into the Sea of Galilee in 1962, and the location of his burial remained unknown for many years until his body was discovered at the lakebed in November 2018, following a request from his parents.

Yakir is home to approximately 2,600 residents, comprising 450 families. It is a religious communal settlement with a diverse population.

This year, the settlement received a group of new Olim from France.

I served my national service in Yaqir last year and feel a strong connection to the community.

You're welcome to visit!



KTM FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

ASKING FOR RAIN, AND ASKING "WHY?"

BY YAAKOV JACKSON

Once the world was in need of rain, and so two Sages went to Abba Hilkiya so that he would pray for mercy and rain would fall. They went to the field and found him hoeing the ground. They greeted him, and then they saw some things that seemed strange to them: First, he did not return their greetings. Then, along the entire way back home, he did not wear his shoes, but when he reached water, he put on his shoes.

When he reached an area filled with thorns, he lifted up his clothes. When he reached his house, his wife entered first, then he entered, and only after were the two Sages permitted to enter. He sat and ate bread, but he did not say to the Sages: "Come and eat",

as was customary and polite. He divided bread to his children; to the elder child, he gave one piece, and to the younger one, he gave two.

Abba Hilkiya said to his wife: "I know that these sages have come due to the rain. Let us go up to the roof and pray for mercy." And so they did, and rain started pouring.

When he returned, he welcomed the Sages. After some words of gratitude, they asked him – "Please tell us Master: Why did you not return our greeting when we greeted you? And why did you not wear your shoes, but when you reached water, you put them on? Why, when you reached thorns, you lifted

up your clothes? And why when we arrived at your house, your wife entered first, then you entered, and only afterward we were allowed to enter? Why, when you ate bread, you did not say to us: Come and eat? And why did you give the older child one piece of bread and the younger child two?" (See Gemara Ta'anit 23a-b for more details to the story together with all of Abba Hilkiya's fascinating answers!)

One message I learned from this story is how important it is to ask questions, specifically "why" questions, with humility, and through our questions and answers, learn what is the most correct way for us to live our lives.

QUIZ

BY YAAKOV JACKSON

GRADE 1, 2:

1. WHAT ARE THE FOUR SPECIES?
2. HOW MANY WALLS ARE NEEDED FOR A SUKKAH TO BE KOSHER?

GRADE 3, 4:

1. WHO ARE THE USHPIZIN (SPIRITUAL GUESTS) WE INVITE TO THE SUKKAH?
2. WHY DO WE SIT IN THE SUKKAH (3 REASONS)?

GRADE 5, 6:

1. WHO DO EACH OF THE FOUR SPECIES SYMBOLIZE IN THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL?
2. WHY, IF I SLEEP IN THE LOWER BED OF A BUNK BED IN THE SUKKAH, DO I NOT FULFILL THE MITZVAH OF SLEEPING IN THE SUKKAH?

Answers:
 1) Eitrog, lulav (palm branch), hadas (myrtle), and aravah (willow).
 2) 2 complete walls and a third wall that is at least 3 tefachim (fists) wide.
 3) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.
 4) a. To remember the clouds of glory that protected us during the Exodus from Egypt. b. To commemorate the Sukkot that the Israelites built in the desert. c. To connect with the hardships of those who have limited means: by sitting in the Sukkah, which is the house of the poor, during Sukkot and by eating matzah, which is the bread of the poor, on Pesach.
 5) Eitrog - People who both study Torah (taste) and have good deeds (smell). Lulav - People who study Torah (has taste) but lack good deeds (no smell). Hadas - People who don't study Torah but perform good deeds (smells good, but no taste). Aravah - Those few who have neither Torah nor good deeds. It's important to remember that even they are part of the people of Israel, and we wouldn't be complete without them!
 6) Because in a bunk bed, I'm sleeping under the upper bed and not under the s'chach (thatch - roof covering), and the mitzvah is to sleep under the s'chach that is under the open sky.



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