



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

23 - 29 September, 2018
14 - 20 Tishrei, 5779

Torah:
Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12
(Due to the holiday, we
read as listed below)

Sukkot 1 (9/24/2018):
Torah 1:

Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44

Torah 2:

Numbers 29:12-16

Haftorah:

Zachariah 14:1-21

Sukkot 2 (9/25/2018):

Torah 1:

Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44

Torah 2:

Numbers 29:12-16

Haftorah:

Kings I 8:2-21

Sukkot 3 (9/26/2018):

Numbers 29:20-28; Num-

bers 29:20-254

Sukkot 4 (9/27/2018):

Numbers 29:20-28; Num-

bers 29:20-25

Sukkot 5 (9/28/2018):

Numbers 29:23-31; Num-

bers 29:23-28

Sukkot 6 -Shabbat-

(9/29/2018):

Torah 1:

Exodus 33:12 - 34:26

Torah 2:

Numbers 29:26-31

Haftorah:

Ezekiel 38:18 - 39:16

ALEPH INSTITUTE

Hyman & Martha Rogal
Center

5804 Beacon Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15217

412-421-0111

Fax: 412-521-5948

www.alephne.org

info@alephne.org

MI SUKKAH ES SU SUKKAH

The overall theme of the holiday of Sukkot is one of Jewish unity. This is expressed in several different aspects of the holiday and its laws and customs. The taking of the four species, for example, represents the binding and the inclusion of all "types" of Jews - from the most involved and learned to those who are not yet unaffiliated in any way. Everyone is included in the Mitzvah of the Lulav and Etrog.

Then there is the Mitzvah of the Sukkah itself. While there is a size limit with regard to the height of the Sukkah, the width allowance is unlimited. So much so, in fact, that the Talmud states, "the entire Jewish Nation may join together to eat in one Sukkah."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, was the leading authority on Jewish law in the city of Yekaterinoslav. Once, on the holiday of Sukkot, he was approached by a man with a Halachic question. The fellow explained that he lived in a home where the courtyard was shared with the other adjacent homes. They had all pitched in to build a Sukkah in this shared courtyard, and all intended to use it throughout the eight days of the holiday.

The issue was as follows: in order to allow carrying from their private homes into this public space on Shabbat, it was necessary to perform a "transaction" before Shabbat began in which

everyone involved brings a bit of food to the designated space, symbolizing their joint interest in sharing the space for personal use. These folks, however, had forgotten to perform this transaction before Shabbat, and were now faced with a double-bind: they couldn't bring their food out to the Sukkah because they had failed to "close the deal" on their shared property, but they also couldn't eat in their homes because it was Sukkot, the holiday during which we are instructed by God to make the Sukkah our temporary home. This is fulfilled by doing all of our regular in-home activities in the Sukkah instead, including, but not limited to, eating.

Without hesitation, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak replied, "the very fact that you got together to build a Sukkah in this shared property is the greatest symbol of shared interest there could possibly be. The Sukkah itself is a quintessential symbol of unity and joint property."

Such is the unifying power of the Mitzvah of the Sukkah. Not only is it symbolically unifying, but even to the extent of effecting practical Halachic ruling.

This holiday, when we enter the Sukkah, gather up the Four Species, bring them together and perform the Mitzvah by shaking them, "mixing" them together we ought to contemplate the unity which we are expressing. We ought to take it to heart, just as the Mitzvah itself is done by drawing the Lulav and Etrog hear the heart before and after shaking. We ought to take to heart the unity which would are and

should continue to pursue during Sukkot and long after the holiday is over.

SERVICE OVER SUFFERING

Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch, known as the Maggid, was known for his wisdom in all aspects of life. People would travel from near and far to seek his advice on a wide range of issues. Once, a man knocked on his door and complained that he was facing terrible financial difficulties and was suffering terribly as a result. He had hardly enough food, clothing and personal belongings. His house was rundown and barren. "How do I deal with such suffering?" He asked the Maggid.

The wise Maggid listened closely to every word, sat back and thought deeply for a moment. "I cannot help you." He suddenly replied. The visitor was taken aback. "However, I do recommend that you travel to the city of Anapoly and speak to a follower of mine, Reb Zushe." The man obediently left the Maggid's office and set out for Anapoly.

After a long journey, the man finally arrived. He began asking around for the famous Reb Zushe, to whom the Maggid had referred him for this difficult quandary... but none of the townspeople knew who he was talking about. "Reb Zushe?" They all asked incredulously, "you mean Zushe, the simple man who lives at the edge of town?" The man thought that surely couldn't be the one the Maggid had in mind. This Reb Zushe must be well

known, well respected.

After exhausting all his options he decided to finally go and give this “Zushe at the edge of town” a visit. Perhaps there was more to him than the townspeople realized.

As he approached the rundown home of Reb Zushe, his doubts only grew. “This is the house of this great man to whom the Maggid referred me?” He knocked on the door.

A gentle, pious looking man opened the door and greeted him with a warm smile. “Shalom Aleichem! Peace be unto you! How can I help you my dear brother?” Reb Zushe said warmly, motioning for him to enter. “Well,” he began hesitantly, “the Maggid of Mezritch sent me here to ask for your advice.”

Now it was Reb Zushe who was taken aback. “Oh? The Maggid sent you to get advice from me? Whatever for?”

The man explained his difficult predicament and the suffering which he was experiencing. Yet, even after he explained himself, Reb Zushe still seemed incredulous. “I really don’t understand. Why would the Maggid send you to me, of all people, to get advice on how to handle suffering? I have had absolutely no suffering in my life! I don’t know what to tell you! I’m very sorry...”

The man looked slowly around the house. No suffering? The house was in shambles, windows without glass, a sagging roof. And furniture? Nothing more than a plank of wood which served as a table, and some stumps which served as chairs. This was called no suffering...? Suddenly it hit him. Exactly! This was exactly what the Maggid had wanted him to hear.

True, Reb Zushe had a very difficult life financially, physically, but suffer? That, he did not.

There is a tremendously important difference between pain and suffering. Pain might be inevitable, but suffering is a choice. It may not always be easy, it may never be easy, but the emotional response to any given situation is a choice we can make.

On Sukkot, we do all of our regular activities in the Sukkah, that is unless it causes suffering. Therefore, if it’s raining, if it’s too cold, too hot, too wet or too buggy, in those cases it would be permissible to eat inside the house - on a technicality.

There are those, however, who always remain in the Sukkah regardless of weather conditions or what kind of insects may have joined them. The reason is because in their minds, who’s suffering? Yes, it is raining. Yes, it is hot. It is cold, or wet, or there is a bug on the table. Yes, they are experiencing discomfort. But suffering? That, they are not.

The sheer excitement or pleasure of fulfilling this beautiful Mitzvah, the pure happiness in doing God’s will outweighs the pain it discomfort they may be experiencing. This is not something which a person can develop overnight, but perhaps the next time you are sitting in the Sukkah and it starts to rain, perhaps that will be a good opportunity to practice and develop that skill of consciously choosing not to suffer.

By Rabbi Nissan Aizek

SUKKOT

Eat in Sukkah

The festival of Sukkot, commemorating G-d’s enveloping protection of the Children of Israel during their 40-year journey through the desert (1313-1273 BCE), is celebrated for seven days, beginning from the eve of Tishrei 15. During this time, we are commanded to “dwell” in a sukkah - a hut of temporary construction, with a roof covering of raw, unfinished vegetable matter (branches, reeds, bamboo, etc.) - signifying the temporality and fragility of human habitation and man-made shelter and our utter dependence upon G-d’s protection and providence.

The “Four Kinds”

“And you shall take for yourself on the first day,” instructs the Torah in Leviticus “the splendid fruit of a tree, fronds of dates, the branch of the thick-leaved tree and aravot of the river.” Torah SheBaal Peh (the oral tradition given to Moses at Sinai and handed through the generations, and later documented in the Mishnah and Talmud) identifies the four kinds as the etrog (citron), lulav (unopened palm branch), hadass (myrtle twig, of which three are taken) and aravah (willow, two twigs). The palm branch, three myrtle twigs and two willow twigs are bound together (with rings made from palm leaves).

Each day of Sukkot - except Shabbat - we take the lulav in hand, recite a blessing over it, take hold of the etrog, hold the “Four Kinds” together, and move them back and forth in all directions (right, left, forward, up, down and back). An additional blessing, shehecheyanu, is recited the first time that the Four Kinds are taken during the festival. We also hold the Four Kinds during the Hallel prayer (moving them as above in specified places in the text) and the Hoshaanot prayers (during which we march around the reading table in the synagogue) which are included in the daily service each day of Sukkot.

In Jewish History

Thursday, 18 Tishrei, 5779 - September 27, 2018

Passing of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1810)

Passing of the famed Chassidic rebbe, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Ukraine (1772-1810). A great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, he championed a unique path of divine service that entails simplicity, joy, and solitude. He left no successor, but his teachings remain influential more than 200 years after his passing. Machpelah Cave in Hebron.

Friday, 19 Tishrei, 5779 - September 28, 2018

Passing of Vilna Gaon (1797)

Passing of the famed Talmudist and Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (now Vilnius), Lithuania (1720-1797), known as the “Vilna Gaon.” Rabbi Eliyahu was the leading figure in the opposition to the Chassidic movement in its early years.