בס"ד

L'Chaim

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The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person
נוסד תוך ימי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)

IT HAPPENED ONCE

The hakafot (cirucits of dancing on Simchat Torah) were in full swing. Round and round went the circle of dancing worshippers in the little shul. I had come to watch, that's all. Somebody from the circle pulled me into the whirling mass of dancers. I turned my head to glance at the man who had "roped me in." He seemed elderly and I wondered where he got so much strength to dance and dance without end. I was astonished to see that tears were streaming down his cheeks. An inner happiness and ecstasy were written over his noble face.

"It's a long time since I had such inspiring hakafot," said my dancing partner. "It was exactly thirty years ago today, during the terrible days after the First World War. I lived in Riga then, the capital of the newly born independent Republic of Latvia.

"That night we were sheltering in a cellar. Things were not going well for the nationalists. They were losing ground and they suspected treachery. Anybody suspicious was shot, without even any investigation. Suddenly sentries saw a light in a top floor apartment. 'The spy nest has been discovered!' the sentries decided, and they rushed to the house to lay their hands on the spy.

"Whom did they rush to seize? Zalman. And who was he? I will tell you. He didn't know what it meant to be sad. Heaven knows, he had plenty of worries. But G-d had blessed him with a cheerful disposition, and seemingly nothing, absolutely nothing could break his spirit. Zalman was with us in the cellar that night. That night of all nights, when Jews rejoice and dance with the Torah we sat downcast, shivering with every explosion.

"Zalman couldn't stand it any longer. 'Brothers!' he exclaimed. 'It's Simchat Torah tonight! We must rejoice!' But his words fell flat. He looked hurt, then he suddenly remembered something. 'I see, my friends, that without a little shnapps there will be nothing doing. I have a pint of shnapps at home, which I've been saving for tonight. I'll be right back.'

"Before we could stop him Zalman climbed to the sixth floor where he lived. He picked up a candle and found the bottle. He was so happy that he danced about with the candle burning in one hand, and the bottle in the other, forgetting all about the war, the bombardment, and the regulations.

"Now, my young friend, you understand what the sentries saw in the darkness of the night. It was just as we were preparing to celebrate hakafot that the sentries burst in, crying, 'Where is the dirty spy? Turn the spy over to us, or we will have you all shot!'

"At this moment Zalman stepped forward, bottle in hand, and calmly said: 'Officers, it was I that you saw with the light upstairs, but I was not signaling to the enemy. I..."

" 'Never mind, come along!' the soldiers said briskly, and marched poor Zalman off under heavy guard.

"If we had been depressed before, now we were truly grief-stricken. He would be put to the wall and shot immediately. Time dragged slowly. Suddenly we heard steps, and presently in walked - who do you think? - Zalman! We couldn't believe our eyes, but the bottle in his hand looked real enough. There were tears in all eyes.

" 'Stop it! Stop!' cried Zalman. 'Let's just celebrate!' But we would not start until he told us what had happened.

" 'Didn't I tell you, we have a great and mighty G-d?' Zalman began. 'When I was brought to headquarters the duty officer hardly looked at me. "To be shot!" he called out. I looked at the officer for a moment, and I called out: "Styopka! What on earth are you saying!"

" 'The officer gazed at me for a moment, then burst out laughing. "What a joke! You, Zalman, a spy! Well, well, sit down and let's talk about old times. Do you remember when I used to come to your house to remove the candlesticks on Saturday mornings, and light a fire in the winter? I was a kid then, but you treated me as though I was a grown-up. I loved you, Zalman. Those were happy days in our little town, but these are grim days. You are lucky that I was on duty tonight. It was not even my turn, but I was substituting for a friend. You would have been a dead duck by now. But, what's the idea of the bottle? Is it Purim tonight?

" 'You ought to know better, Stepan Ivanovitsch,' says I to him. 'No, it's Simchat Torah.'

" 'Sure, I remember. You go round and round in a circle dancing. Well, go back to your dancing, and say a prayer for us, Zalman. You Jews are marvellous, risking your neck for your religion, dancing in the shadow of death...'

"That was Zalman's simple story. He got a pass to come back to us. And then we began hakafot. Oh, those hakafot! I'll never forget them. Every Simchat Torah, I remember them; for the last 30 years!"

From The Complete Story of Tishrei

In Loving Memory of
Mrs. Anna Lipschitz, OBM
Marking Her 31st Yahrtzeit
Chana bas HaRav Yoel Summer
The Linever Rav
Dedicated by
Hedy & Ben Lipschitz

to dedicate an issue
call (718) 778 6000

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

The Holiday of Sukkot

Exalted Guests--the Ushpizin
When the people of Israel leave their homes and enter the Sukka for the sake of G-d's Name, they achieve the merit there of welcoming the Divine Presence and all the seven faithful shepherds descend from the Garden of Eden, and come to the Sukka as their guests. *(Zohar)*

Waving the Four Kinds
One waves the Four Kinds [palm, citron, willow and myrtle] to and fro to Him who owns the four directions; up and down to Him who owns heaven and earth. That is to say: the four kinds are an allusion to G-d's having created all of existence, and that there is naught besides Him. *(Tractate Suka 37)*

Simchat Beit HaShoeiva-Rejoicing at the Water Drawing
Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania stated: "When we used to rejoice at the place of the Water-Drawing, our eyes saw no sleep. How was this? The first hour was occupied with the daily morning sacrifice; from there we proceeded to prayers; from the prayers to the additional sacrifice; then to the House of Study; then eating and drinking the festive meal; then the afternoon prayer; then the daily evening sacrifice; and after that the rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing all night!" *(Tractate Sukka 53)*

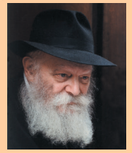
Genuine Desire on Simchat Torah
There is a unique dimension to Simchat Torah in that every Jew is given an aliya to the Torah. Generally, on a festival, five aliyas are called to the Torah; on Yom Kippur, six; and on Shabbat, seven. Simchat Torah is the one and only time in which every person in attendance is given an aliya. Although it involves time and one might think that it would be improper to delay the entire communal prayers for this reason, this practice is followed. Why? Because it is the genuine desire of each member of the community that every person present receive an aliya. *(The Rebbe, Simchat Torah, 5752-1992)*

Candle Lighting Time



NY Metro Area
14 Tishrei/Sep. 25/ Eve of Sukkot
Light candles at 6:30 pm
15 Tishrei/Sep. 26/ Sukkot
Light candles after 7:26 pm from pre-existing flame
Sunday, 16 Tishrei/Sep. 27
First days Sukkot end at 7:25 pm
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21 Tishrei/Oct. 2/ Eve of Shemini Atzeret
Light candles at 6:18 pm
22 Tishrei/Oct. 3/ Eve of Simchat Torah
Light candles after 7:15 pm from a pre-existing flame
Sunday, 23 Tishrei, Oct. 4
Sukkot holiday ends 7:13 pm

LIVING WITH THE REBBE



from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

Of all the holidays throughout the year, our joy is greatest on Sukkot, the "festival of our rejoicing."

The commandment to rejoice on Sukkot appears three times in the Torah. By contrast, there is no specific command to rejoice on Passover, and the command to rejoice on Shavuot appears only once.

Why is our joy greater on Sukkot? And why are we commanded to be happy three separate times?

The Midrash explains that the joy of a festival is directly related to the particular stage of the harvest when it occurs.

On Passover, which occurs in the spring, the grain in the fields has just begun to grow. Because one is not yet sure of the eventual yield, our joy is limited. Accordingly, there is no commandment to rejoice in the Torah. By Shavuot, the grain has ripened and is ready to be harvested. Our joy is not complete, however, for although it is gathered together, it must remain in the field and cannot yet be eaten. Thus, the commandment to rejoice appears only once.

On Sukkot, the grain is brought from the fields into our homes. Because the grain can now be utilized and fully enjoyed, our joy is greatest. The commandment to rejoice on Sukkot appears three times.

A deeper contemplation of this concept reveals that the events we celebrate on each holiday are also related to the particular time of year in which it falls.

On Passover, the Jews left Egypt. Yet they were still at the beginning, like grain that has just begun to germinate. On Shavuot, the Jews received the Torah, but they had not yet begun to observe it. This is like a harvest which has ripened but has not yet been brought indoors. On Sukkot, the Jewish people observed the Torah's commandments of their own volition. The "harvest," as it were, was finally being utilized.

These three periods are also reflected in the spiritual service of every Jew: The first stage, "spring," is symbolic of a Jew's pure faith in G-d, the foundation of Torah and mitzvot. But faith does not necessarily lead to practical observance, just like on Passover one is still unsure whether the wheat will flourish. This is the "spiritual Passover" of the Jew.

Reaping the grain is next, but it is not the culmination of the process. In the spiritual sense, this is equal to a Jew's resolve to keep the Torah before he has begun acting. The "harvest" is still in the field; hence a Jew's "spiritual Shavuot."

It is only when the grain is eaten, when the Jew's resolutions for good find expression in actual deed, that perfection is achieved. This is the "spiritual Sukkot" of the Jew. Thus the highest level of joy is felt on Sukkot, and it is truly " the time of our rejoicing."

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 29

The Sukkah: A Reset for Real Life

Every year, Sukkos invites us to do something that feels both ancient and surprisingly modern: step outside our usual routines and rethink what "home" really means.

For seven days, the Torah tells us to live in a sukkah. Not simply to visit it for a meal, but to make it our primary space—to eat there, relax there, learn there, and spend time there as we would at home. Our permanent home becomes temporary, while this simple, open structure becomes our center.

The sukkah offers a spiritual reset. We spend much of the year trying to create stability through walls, possessions, schedules, and carefully managed environments. The sukkah gently reminds us that security does not ultimately come from the structures we build. It comes from Hashem.

The sukkah is not a house, yet it is strong enough to shelter us. Its roof allows us to see the sky. Its walls create a space, but do not shut out the world. Sitting beneath the sechach, we are invited to loosen our grip on control and remember the Divine protection surrounding us every day.

The mitzvah is also radically inclusive. It does not ask us to become spiritual people only during prayer or Torah study. It embraces the whole person: body, conversation, food, rest, laughter, and relationships. In the sukkah, an ordinary meal takes on a particular holiness—not because the food is different, but because we are experiencing it through a special mitzvah.

This is one of the great messages of Chassidus: Judaism is not about escaping the physical world. It is about revealing the G-dliness within it. The goal is to bring holiness into our homes, workplaces, friendships, and daily decisions—to "know Him in all your ways."

The sukkah is called a "sukkah of peace," and our sages teach that all of Israel could sit together in one sukkah. That may sound idealistic in a world filled with division, but it points to a deeper reality. Beneath our differences, every Jew possesses a neshamah, a Divine soul. The sukkah creates a space where labels become less important and our essential unity becomes more visible.

For one week, we live with fewer barriers—between ourselves and the sky, between the spiritual and the physical, and between one Jew and another.

And then we leave the sukkah. But we do not leave its message behind. We carry it into the year: less anxiety, more trust; less separation, more connection; less distraction, more awareness of Hashem in everyday life.

May our sukkah of peace bring us to the ultimate revelation of G-dliness, with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, speedily in our days.

L'Chaim L'Chaim L'Chaim