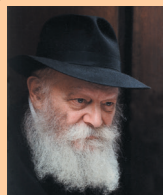


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

Sukkot is a time of unity. We sit together in the Sukka, pray together and recite a blessing on the Arba Minim, four species of plants that are brought together.

The mitzva of the Arba Minim is based on the verse, "You should take for yourselves a beautiful fruit of the tree (etrog), a date palm frond (lulav), a sprig that has a thick woody stem (hadas) and willows of the brook (aravot)."

Our Sages attribute great symbolism to this mitzva, specifically regarding the unity of the Jewish people. Torah knowledge is the flavor of Judaism and performing mitzvot is the fragrance. There are four kinds of Jews. First there is the lulav, a closed date palm frond, straight and tall. The dates that grow on the palm are flavorful but do not have a distinct scent.

This is the species that we mention when reciting the blessing on all four kinds – "al netilat lulav." It symbolizes our Torah scholars, whose main occupation is studying Torah, the flavor of Judaism, just as dates have flavor. They are tall beacons of light we look to for guidance and leadership.

The etrog, a citron, is pretty, fragrant and flavorful. The etrog stays on the tree year round, uniting the seasons. This symbolizes the very well-rounded Jew who studies Torah regularly and fulfills the commandments with joy and love.

Hadasim, myrtles, whose stem is woody and thick, has leaves that smell so good. Hadasim are symbolic of Jews who love doing mitzvot. They strengthen all the Jews around them with their mitzvot and kindness.

Aravot, willows of the brook, commonly have redish stems, grow bunched together. They have neither taste nor distinct smell. Aravot are symbolic of those of us whose involvement in Torah study and observance of mitzvot are minimal.

Which of these Four Kinds is most important?

It would seem to be the lulav as it is named in the blessing. And yet, the Biblical verse mentions it second, only after the etrog.

If you leave out any of the four and remain with only three, you can no longer do the mitzvah. The same is true for every Jew. Each one of us is necessary, with a unique part in the Jewish mission.

The mission is incomplete without every Jew's contribution. The value of every Jew is infinite. It is time to embrace every Jew. When we are united we complete each other. When we are united, G-d is overjoyed; our unity is irresistible. Therefore, our unity is what will bring Moshiach.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Dancing Is An Act Of War

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

In 1843, a small miracle happened in Russia. The minister of war gave permission for the Lubavitcher Rebbe to address a group of Jewish soldiers at a military installation. The small miracle was because these weren't just any soldiers; they were Cantonists, Jews who were drafted into the service as small children with the stated intent of assimilating them out of Judaism. That the Rebbe should address them would have the opposite effect, yet permission was granted.

When the Rebbe arrived, the soldiers greeted him enthusiastically, reverently and excitedly. They told him, "Rebbe, we've been preparing for your arrival. We polished our buttons to prepare for you. Now it's your turn; polish our souls, dulled as they are from the years of disconnection!"

The Rebbe spoke to them and concluded by saying, "Buttons are polished by sand and water; souls are polished by sincere, tearful words of Tehillim."

One of the soldiers spoke up, "But Rebbe, battles are won with joy, not tears."

"So speaks a soldier!" said the Rebbe, with obvious satisfaction. "Yes, you're right. A soldier enters the fray of battle to the tune of a joyous march, not with tears. It is by the power of his joy that he is victorious even in the most dangerous and challenging endeavors."

My friends, we are all soldiers. We are all on the front lines in the fight for Jewish life and continuity. And we ought to take a page out of this Cantonist's playbook, the same playbook used by the soldiers of the IDF today: energetic joy is a military strategy, not an indulgence or a luxury.

Israel's odds will tip heavily toward victory on the wings of the other-worldly joy about to burst forth from thousands of Simchat Torah celebrations.

An earthquake of Jewish energy is about to ripple out from the stomping

of millions of feet as they whirl and dance away the festival this week.

If you have any doubt about the power of our joy to encourage and embolden the soldiers half the world away in Gaza and Lebanon, just remember the encouragement and confidence you felt when you saw the smiling spirit of the soldiers in the war's early days.

At one point or another, we've all carried a child on our shoulders during the Simchat Torah dancing. But this year, we ought to prepare to carry far more than that. This year, as we march around the Bimah, we'll be carrying the spirits of those soldiers, the spirits of the hostages, the spirits of the injured and the spirits of all Israel's heroes, from the schoolchildren who endure the regular rush into bomb shelters to the politicians who endure the immense international pressure to concede.

Battles are won with joy, not tears.

This year especially, Simchat Torah dancing is an act of war.

The word "terrorist" implies a desire to terrorize and intimidate, to divide and conquer. And that is their aim. To fight back, first dance. Step by step, destroy their plans, one dance step at a time. An energized, euphoric and united Jewish Nation is a devastating blow to Israel's foes. The rejoicing amounts to aiding and abetting Israel; with each loving dance we offer aid and comfort to Israel.

It matters, my friends. Our dancing matters.

So please come out, wherever you are, and join the millions who'll be dancing this Simchat Torah.

We'll run around the Bimah, and the IDF will run circles around Israel's enemies.

Battles are won with joy, not tears.

And step by joyous step, we will win this battle, too.

"Go dance," says the Torah, "that's a direct order!"

Chag Sameach, good Yomtov! See you at the dance.

SLICE OF LIFE

From Darkness to Light



Sasha Troponov putting on Tefillin for the first time with the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar,

When Sasha Troponov was violently abducted from his home in Kibbutz Nir Oz on Simchat Torah last year, he couldn't have imagined that captivity would become his pathway to faith. Dragged wounded into Gaza's tunnels, the 29-year-old would discover spiritual strength in the most unlikely of places—the darkness of Hamas captivity.

"Until my captivity, I was very far from anything that smelled of Judaism or religion," Sasha admits, his voice gentle yet resolute. Growing up in Kibbutz Nir Oz in a family with Russian roots from Rostov, he had little connection to his religious heritage, despite his grandmother's relationship with Judaism through Rabbi Chaim Danzinger, a Chabad emissary.

Life changed irrevocably on that fateful Simchat Torah. "I was abducted and taken to Gaza, wounded in my leg and shoulder," he recounts. "Until that day, I was a young, energetic man. I always thought that control was in my hands, that I could plan what I would do and what would happen to me. Suddenly, I understood that control is not

in my hands at all, and that there is a higher power accompanying me."

The conditions were beyond imagination. "At first, they kept me in a small shed. Later, they moved me between tunnels and apartments. I ate one meal a day, and sometimes less than that." Yet within this confinement, Sasha found a surprising freedom of thought.

"In the beginning, when I was alone, wounded, unable to walk, the only thing I did was think," he explains. "I'm not afraid to think and ask penetrating questions. I had no other stimuli that could distract my mind. I didn't even interact with the terrorists guarding me because I didn't yet know Arabic."

In this forced isolation, something remarkable happened—Sasha began developing a profound sense of gratitude. "I played with the food, saving pieces for later. I tried to make decisions. There I learned to be grateful for what I still had."

Without embellishment, he states, "I went through hell. I survived in conditions that cannot be described. And yet I never stopped saying thank you. That was the formula that kept me there. I want you to adopt this in your lives—appreciate every little thing, even when it seems there's nothing to be happy about, because that's what gives you strength to continue."

This attitude of gratitude extended even to the circumstances most would find unbearable. "Because of my leg injury, they didn't shackle me," Sasha explains. "Because of it, I also learned Arabic, from a terrorist who was in the medical center where I was treated and who spoke English. The language helped me understand what was happening, to survive the long days."

During his 498 days in captivity, the terrorists fed him misinformation, telling him "no one was interested in us and that no one cared about us." Only after his release did Sasha learn the truth—about

the nationwide efforts to bring him home, about his mother's newfound religious observance, and tragically, about his father's death.

"She told me about the support of the Lazar family, about challah separations, and prayers at the graves of righteous people for my sake. I understood that she was there for me until the end."

Today, Sasha lives in a hotel room filled with Jewish books, including the Tanya, which he studies daily. "Since my release, I've been diving into Jewish thought, examining the commandments and searching for the spirit behind them," he explains. On his table lie the tefillin he received from Rabbi Berel Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia, who has been supporting his family throughout their ordeal.

"I put them on for the first time in my life, and the images stirred echoes around the world," Sasha notes. This year, he celebrated his first proper Passover Seder in Moscow with Rabbi Lazar's family.

His message now is simple yet profound: "I want people to thank the Creator of the world for what they have. Whoever reads my words—be positive about your life. When a person feels good in their heart, it's good for those around them; and when a person is sad, the sadness radiates outward, and that's bad for everyone."

As he continues his recovery, Sasha's thoughts turn to those still in captivity. "I came out of captivity, but I think about those who still remain there, and I pray for their return home soon."

From the depths of Gaza's tunnels to the light of newfound faith, Sasha's journey reminds us of the resilience of the human spirit and the unexpected ways in which transformation can occur, even in our darkest hours.

Adapted from Sichat Shavua Magazine 1997

Public Sukkas

As in previous years, if you're in Manhattan, visit one of the Lubavitch Youth Organization's public Sukkas during the intermediate days of the holiday. They will be open: Thursday, October 9, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm & Friday, October 10, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Sunday, October 12, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm and Monday, October 13, 10:00 am - 4:00. The Sukkas are: The United Nations Sukka, located in Ralph Bunch Park, near the Isaiah Wall across from the United Nations on First Avenue and 42nd Street; Sukka at Foley Square, near Worth Street; across the Federal Court House. The Wall Street Sukka, located on the cobblestones in Bowling Green Park, in lower Manhattan. The Garment Center Sukka in Herald Square across from Macy's. For more information call (718) 778-6000. To find out about public Sukkot in your area, call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center.

Two Weeks in One

This current issue of L'Chaim is for the entire Sukkot holiday. Issue #1894 is for 25 Tishrei/October 17 for the Torah portion of Bereshit.

A Call To Action

SIMCHAT BEIT HASHOEIVA

In the times of the Holy Temple, special festivities were held each night of Sukkot, in celebration of a special water-drawing ceremony.

Commemorating these festivities, Chabad-Lubavitch Centers throughout the world will be featuring evenings of dancing, singing and joyous gatherings. Join a celebration or organize one for yourself and friends. And, as the Rebbe suggests, make it a family affair by having the entire family participate.



Learn about Moshiach
Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Before Reb Mordechai of Neschiz assumed his position as rabbi, he was a merchant. His son, Reb Yitzchak, recalled that every time he would return from a buying trip, he would take a portion of his profits and put it aside in a special box to be used to buy an etrog.

One year he had amassed the sum of six silver rubles, and he made his way to the town of Brody to purchase the etrog. As he travelled down the road, he was surprised to hear the sound of weeping. He came upon a poor man sobbing over the loss of his horse, without which he had no means of support. Reb Mordechai told the man to stay put, and with his silver rubles, he rushed off to purchase a new horse for the man. The poor man couldn't believe his eyes when he saw Reb Mordechai approaching with a horse! He gratefully heaped blessings on his benefactor and went on his way.

As for Reb Mordechai, now left without any money, he also turned towards home. He realized that he would be without an etrog for the upcoming festival, but he thought to himself: "What's the difference? Buying an etrog is a mitzva commanded by G-d, and helping my poor brother is also a mitzva commanded by G-d." A smile crossed his face and he chuckled to himself: "Everyone else will make the blessing over an etrog; I'll make my blessing over a horse." And so he continued home in a very happy mood. In fact, someone brought him an etrog in good time to use for the Yom Tov, and that year he made a blessing not only over an etrog, but over a horse as well!

Preparations for the festival of Sukkot were under way, but for the poor, there were often obstacles. Finding wooden boards with which to erect the sukka was always hard, and so every year Reb Mordechai of Lechovitch amassed wooden boards that he lent out to needy Jews.

One year when the eve of Sukkot fell on Friday night, a tattered-looking man limped up to Reb Mordechai's door and asked if he could borrow a few boards to build his sukka. The tzadik replied that unfortunately there were none left. Without a word, the poor fellow turned and limped off to continue his search for the requisite boards.

Reb Mordechai watched sadly as the man disappeared into the alleyway, and then burst out in tears. He addressed G-d, crying, "Master of the Universe! See how Your children love the mitzva of dwelling in a sukka! Here You see a poor, wretched cobbler, lame in one leg, with torn clothing and no proper shoes--tramping through the mud, doing what!--looking for boards to build his sukka! Heavenly Father, look down from Your holy dwelling place and bless Your people, Israel--`Spread out over them Your Sukka, Your Tabernacle of Peace.'"

Reb Mordechai went outside, climbed his roof, and searched until he discovered a few loose boards. He then called his attendant and instructed him to bring the boards to the poor cobbler, and since time was short before the holy Shabbat, to help him to build the sukka as well.

The tzadik, Reb Pinchas of Koretz, didn't have a moment of peace. There was no dearth of suffering people--some needed a blessing for health, some for children, still others needed guidance in business affairs. Since Reb Pinchas couldn't turn away from his fellow Jews, they came to him day and night, knocking on his door, pouring out their hearts and souls.

Reb Pinchas did all he could for them. In fact, so completely did he devote himself to his brethren, that he felt his own divine service suffering. One day Reb Pinchas prayed that he become disliked by his fellow man. Then, he would be free of their demands, and would be able to devote himself to his own spiritual service. And so it was that from that day on he became a recluse, never emerging except to pray in the synagogue.

When the festival of Sukkot approached he tried to find someone to help him build the sukka, but no one was willing, since all his fellow Jews disliked him so much. He had to hire a non-Jew to do the work, and when he needed to borrow tools, even that wasn't easy because of the animosity his neighbors felt toward him.

After services on the first night of the holiday, Reb Pinchas wanted to fulfill the mitzva of inviting guests into his sukka, but no one would accept his invitation. When he arrived home, he entered the sukka and began chanting the traditional invitation to the first of the Ushpitzin (the Forefathers, who visit the sukka each night). When he looked up, he saw Abraham standing outside the door of the sukka.

Reb Pinchas saw that this year the Patriarch was unwilling to enter, and he cried to Abraham, "Why do you not enter my sukka? What is my sin?"

Our father Abraham replied, "I have the custom to enter only those places where guests are welcome."

Reb Pinchas understood from that response that he had been wrong in his path of service. He prayed that he be returned in favor to his fellow Jews, and that he be able to continue as before.

THOUGHTS

THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah portion

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew (Deut. 32:2)

Just as rain and dew can drench a person "to the bone," so should the holy words of Torah saturate a Jew's entire physical being and not just his mind.

(Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

He set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the Children of Israel (Deut. 32:8)

All world events contains an element that will eventually relate to Jews, even conflicts between non-Jewish countries that change borders and alter the map. For G-d turns the wheel of history according to His overall plan for the Jewish people. *(Der Torah Kvall)*

G-d established the borders of all the countries of the world so that the Jewish people, by living in those lands and observing Torah and mitzvot, could elevate the sparks of holiness they contain. The purpose of the Jews' exile among the nations is to illuminate the world through "the candle of mitzva, and the Torah, light." (Sichot Kodesh)

And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be (Deut. 32:20)

G-d assures us: Even though I will hide My face and subject the Jewish people to the laws of nature, it will only be a temporary situation. For even in their exile I am mindful of their "end," and will always protect their eternity.

(Shem MiShmuel)



6:16 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
11 Tishrei / October 3
 Torah Portion *Ha'azinu*
 Shabbat ends **7:13 PM**

Dedicated In memory of
Mrs. Anna Lipschitz OBM
 Chana bas HaRav Yoel Summer – The Linever Rebbe
 By Hedy & Ben Lipschitz