

J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Succos

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Candlelighting: 7:00 pm

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Succos

The holiday of Succos commemorates both the booths the Jews built during their forty-year trek through the desert after their Exodus from Egypt, and also the miraculous clouds of glory that protected them. The commentaries explain that although the Jews left Egypt in the spring, the holiday is celebrated in the autumn, after Yom Kippur, since that was when the clouds of glory returned to the nation after they were forgiven for the Golden Calf.

Succos is referred to as the period of our joy, more so than any of the other holidays. It is the joy of enjoying life in its sheer simplicity, unencumbered by the endless pursuit of materialism. As long as a person is chained to the shackles of the material world and its luxuries, he is incapable of truly enjoying life. During Succos, we move out of the security and beauty of our permanent homes and reside instead in temporary *succah*-huts, lacking even the most basic roof with which to protect ourselves. We eat our meals, visit, and some people even sleep, in the *succah*. There we can gain a new appreciation for life. Rabbeinu Bachya put it succinctly: Happiness is more in *being* than in *having*.

The Torah does not advocate a life of self-deprivation or asceticism. Quite the contrary, the Jew is often encouraged to fully enjoy the pleasures of the physical world, as part of his service to G-d. However, he must be careful not to become enslaved to the pleasures of the world. The Torah requires the Jew to leave his house for seven days, and he can then return. He need only leave long enough to ensure that he not become dependent upon the material comforts of the world for his enjoyment.

There is also a mitzvah to take four species of plants on Succos; the esrog, or citron, the lulav, or date palm branch, two aravos, or willow branches, and three hadassim, or myrtle branches. Three of the species are tied together and held with the esrog, and waved each day during Succos, except for Shabbos.

The *Sefer Hachinuch* explains that the nature of these species brings a sense of happiness and contentment to a person. Here, too, the theme is that it is not necessary to travel to exotic places, nor invest in expensive forms of entertainment, to find true joy. A few simple fruits and plants, representing the different elements in nature, can bring a person the greatest sense of joy and happiness, if he would only realize it.

The satisfaction and happiness we all pursue doesn't have to be on the other side of the world. It may be found in the *succah*, lulav and esrog, in one's own backyard.

Succos Schedule

See the separate Succos schedule for times

Kumzitz with music

Sunday, September 27th, at 9:30pm in R. Nisenbaum's *succah*.

New Series: The Foundation of a Nation

10 part series on Patriarchs and Matriarchs.
Mondays at 8:00pm starting **Oct 12**

Issue Sponsored

In memory of Herman D. Stein, Chaim Dov ben Yechezkel, on the occasion of his *yahrzeit*

Insights: Succos

You should take a beautiful fruit... (Lev 23:39) Rav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg was very stringent to get the most beautiful esrog he could find to fulfill the mitzvah. Nevertheless, he would share the mitzvah with anyone who wanted to use it too. Some years over a thousand people would recite the beracha on Rav Scheinberg's esrog. The esrog would often turn brown from so many people touching it, yet Rav Scheinberg would look at it lovingly and exclaim, "What a merit, for so many mitzvos done with one esrog!"

Did You Know?

Hoshana Rabba, the seventh day of Succos, is considered to be the final day of judgment in the High Holiday season. Many additional prayers are recited for our welfare, and especially for rain. After circling the synagogue for seven times, a bundle of five aravos (willow branches) are taken and beaten on the floor, representing the total humbling of oneself, to arouse G-d's compassion. It is customary for women and children to also beat the willow bundles. A festive meal should be served in honor of Hoshana Rabba. Many have the custom of serving kreplach (meat-filled dumplings) as a sign of atonement. (The white, doughy outside, representing purity, "covers" the red meat filling, representing desire and sin.)

Thought for the Week: Some men we relate to as persons; others we regard merely as phenomena (A Candle By Day)