


CHABAD

RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday nights* קדש

22-25 September 2010 - 14-17 Tishrei 5771
 Beginning of the Succot Festival


REAL ESTATE

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE INCLUDES LONG PERIODS OF WANDERING, without having an obvious fixed abode, a home. When we left Egypt at the birth of our people we wandered through the desert. Although at last we entered the Holy Land and settled there, some centuries later we were again in Exile. We returned to the Land of Israel, built the Second Temple - and then again began wandering.

You might expect a frequently itinerant people to scorn the comforts of home. Not at all. Collectively, we yearn to be restored in our Land, with the rebuilding of the Temple and the ingathering of all who are in Exile. As individuals and as families, we focus much attention, creative energy and financial investment on having a home.

The Sages in fact affirm that this is the right thing to do, telling us “anyone who does not have a home is not a person”¹. Anyone who has tragically undergone a period of real homelessness may well agree. Somehow, a home relates to the very essence of our feeling a whole and healthy individual.

Now, how might all this relate to the Succot festival which begins Wednesday evening (22 Sept.) and lasts over a week?



לזכרון נצח מרת טוביה בת פרוחה ע"ה
 In Loving Memory of Mrs Victoria Menashy ע"ה
 1 Tammuz 5770

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You've got it. Succot is the time when, traditionally, we leave our homes and eat, drink and generally make merry in a Succah, the main feature of which is that it has three walls and its roof is made of simple bamboo canes or branches, twigs and evergreen leaves². The Torah instructs us to do this and consequently for the week of Succot, our house, mansion, apartment, pent-house, caravan or igloo is not our home. The Succah is our home.

Ideally at some point at least during the festival we will actually sit in the Succah and eat something there. This is our moment of coming 'home' during Succot. This is the spiritual reality of our home and who we really are. Hopefully we will be able to have a convenient Succah available to us throughout the festival.

Consequently, since our real home is the Succah, even when we are in the street, or the office, or in some other building - even the one we might think of as 'home' the rest of the year - our inner self is actually focused on dwelling in the Succah.

What does that mean for us? The idea that all the activities we generally carry out in our homes are now specially sanctified. Whether eating, drinking, sleeping, studying, relaxing - all form part of the Mitzva of dwelling in the Succah, and all are holy.

Now, the festivals at this season, at the beginning of the Jewish year which lies ahead, are actually establishing certain basic structures. If this week we are able to ensure that our entire lives are sanctified by the Succah, we are setting the pattern for the future. The Torah tells us "in all your ways you should know Him"³, meaning that we should be connected to G-d in everything we do. The fact that this week the sacred Succah is where we really dwell, gives us the opportunity for holiness in every detail of our lives during the months to come⁴.

So, welcome to the Succah!

1. See Yevamot 63a and Tosafot.
2. A Rabbi should be consulted concerning the details of constructing a Succah.
3. Proverbs 3:6, Code of Law *Orach Chaim* 231.
4. See the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol.2 p.418.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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FESTIVAL OF SUCCOT

THE LULAV SET

Sammy came running through the door breathlessly. It was Sunday afternoon and he and his friends had decided to go to the Science Museum together. Now all he had to do was to ask permission from his parents.

He found his father in the garden. "Daddy," he said, "can I go with my friends to the Science Museum?"

His father looked at him with a smile. "Sure," he answered. "You can go if you like, but I have a little surprise for you, and you might want to come with me to get it!"

Sammy was intrigued. His father's surprises were usually worth having. Forgetting about his friends and the museum he said, "of course, I would love to come!" Then he asked inquisitively: "What is the surprise?"

"You will find out soon enough," said his father. "And," he added before Sammy had a chance to cross examine him further, "don't forget to call up your friends and tell them that you won't be able to go with them".

Soon they were on their way in the family car. Sammy was wondering what the surprise might be. A trip somewhere interesting? But then, where were Mummy and the other children? Surely they would also be coming! After quite a long drive, through the narrow roads of an unfamiliar part of the town, the car pulled up in front of a house. They went inside and Sammy looked in amazement around him.

Piled up on tables were all sorts of Lulavim and Etrogim, the palm branches and special citrus fruits used on the Succot festival.

In large vases were also Hadassim, long slender myrtle twigs, and Aravot, willows. Every year his father had a set of the Four Kinds, but Sammy had never seen the place where they were sold.

"Wow!" he exclaimed. The fragrant plants seemed very beautiful.

"Would you like a Lulav set?" asked his father.

"What, all of my own?" said Sammy.

"Yes!" his father said, "that is the surprise. This year both you and I will have a set: a Lulav palm branch, Etrog, myrtle and willow".

Sammy was quite taken aback. He had never had a set of his own before. "Wow!" He watched intently as his father carefully selected the different items, helped by advice from the Lulav seller, a young man with a black beard. Sammy chose his own Etrog. It was lovely.

The Lulav seller explained how to bind the Lulav together with the myrtle and willow. Sammy listened with interest. "That is just what our teacher taught us in class today," he said. "He told us that the Lulav and Etrog symbolize different kinds of Jewish people. Having them all together signifies the unity of the Jewish people, and shows us that we can't be complete without each other".

The Lulav seller and the nearby customers were all listening. Sammy's father laughed and said, "You're quite right. Now, what about a special box for the Etrog as well?"

Sammy was glad he had chosen to go with his father...

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