

First Days of Sukkot
Torah Readings in a Nutshell
Leviticus 22:26-23:44
Numbers 29:12-16

The reading begins with an injunction that a newborn calf, lamb, or kid must be left with its mother for seven days; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The reading then lists the annual Callings of Holiness — the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the 2nd day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the 50th day; a "remembrance of shofar blowing" on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival — during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the "Four Kinds" — beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the "8th day" of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

(continued next column)

The quality imparted by Sukkot is unity. Our interdependence and oneness as a people are expressed by the four kinds taken on Sukkot, and by the sukkah's embrace of every Jew — every type of Jew, and every individual Jew — within its walls.

And while other mitzvot each address a certain aspect of our persona, the mitzvah of sukkah provides a medium by which the totality of man is engaged in the fulfillment of G-d's will. All of the person enters into and lives in the sukkah.

-- The Rebbe

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Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Israeli Division:

Rabbi Yudi and Chana Eisenbach

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos / Erev Sukkot
Sep 29 / Tishrei 14

Candle Lighting 6:24 pm
Mincha 6:25 pm

Shabbos Day / Sukkos Day #1
Sep 30 / Tishrei 15

Shacharis 9:30 am*
Torah Reading..... 10:45 am
Birchas Kohanim 11:30 am
Kiddush 12:00 pm
Mincha 6:20 pm
Maariv 7:10 pm
(Light candles after) 7:21 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:47 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Sukkos Day #2 – Oct 1 / Tishrei 16

Shacharis 9:30 am*
Torah Reading..... 10:45 am
Rabbi's Drasha 11:20 am
Musaf 11:30 am
Kiddush 12:00 pm
Mincha 6:25 pm
Yom Tov Ends..... 7:19 pm



G-d declares the fifteenth day (and the subsequent 6 days) of the seventh month to be a holy convocation, no work shall be done during that time. The reading then describes the Sukkot offerings which were brought in the Holy Temple. ❖

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Bulletin

This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
"The Berman Law Office"
and
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Thank You to:
The Baal Korei, and
The Security Volunteers

Join us each weekday
morning Mon-Fri as we
delve into the mysteries
of Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am, followed
immediately by
Shacharis.

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Sep 30, 2023

Eastern Daylight Savings

Earliest Tallis 5:56 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:47 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:16 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 5:30 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 7:08 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Four Mysteries of King Solomon

By Yanky Tauber

*Three things are wondrous to me,
and four I do not know.*

(Proverbs 30:18)

Despite all the wisdom granted to [King] Solomon . . . he was mystified by the Four Kinds. As it is written: "Three things are wondrous to me"—these are the Passover offering, matzah and maror [eaten at the Passover seder]; "and four I do not know"—these are the Four Kinds [taken on Sukkot].

(Midrash Rabbah, Vayikra 30:14)

On Sukkot, the Torah commands us to take the "Four Kinds"—the etrog (citron), lulav (an unopened frond of a date palm), hadas (myrtle twig) and aravah (willow twig).

As is often the case with the Torah's commandments, the "Written Torah" (the Pentateuch or "Five Books of Moses") conveys this mitzvah in a few cryptic words, leaving it to the "Oral Torah" (the traditional interpretation of the Written Torah taught by Moses and handed down through the generations) to decipher their meaning. In the Written Torah, the verse regarding the Four Kinds reads:

And you shall take for yourselves . . . the splendid fruit of a tree, fronds of dates, the branch of the thick-leaved tree and aravot of the river.

(Leviticus 23:40)

King Solomon, the Midrash tells us, was mystified by this verse. "Who says that 'the splendid fruit of a tree' is the etrog?" he queried.

"All fruit trees produce splendid fruit! [As for] 'fronds of dates,' the Torah tells us to take fronds, in the plural . . . yet we take a lulav, the unopened heart of the palm. And who says that 'the branch of the thick-leaved tree' is the myrtle? . . . And concerning the 'aravot of the river'—all trees tend to grow near water."

How, indeed, do we know that "the splendid fruit of a tree, fronds of dates, the branch of the thick-leaved tree and aravot of the river" are the etrog, lulav, myrtle and willow? The Talmud, which summarizes forty generations of the oral tradition of Torah interpretation, identifies the Four Kinds through a series of homiletic exegeses of the Hebrew words employed by the verse. The clue to the identity of "the splendid fruit of a tree" lies in the word hadar ("splendid"), which can also be read as ha-dar—"that which dwells." The etrog is unique in that, while other fruits each have a particular season in which they grow, the etrog "dwells in its tree all year round," continuing to grow and develop under a variety of climatic conditions.

As for the lulav, the Torah indeed writes, "fronds of dates," but the word kapot ("fronds of") is spelled without the letter vav, meaning that it can also be read kapat, "the frond of," in the singular. In addition, the word kapot also means "bound," implying that we are to take a closed frond ("the heart of the palm"). By these means, the Oral Torah identifies the second of the Four Kinds as the lulav.

There are many "thick-leaved trees" in whose branches "the leaves completely cover the stem."

But the Hebrew word avot ("thick") also means "plaited" and "rope-like." Hence the "branch of the thick-leaved tree" (anaf eitz avot) is identified as the myrtle twig, whose overlapping leaves grow in knots of three, giving it the appearance of a plaited rope. There is another plant that meets this description—the hirduf (oleander, *Nerium oleander*)—but the Talmud rejects that possibility as inconsistent with the rule the "[the Torah's] ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its pathways are peace" (since the hirduf has thorn-like leaves and is a poisonous plant).

The aravot of the verse are identified as willow branches, because of the willow's tendency to grow near water, and the elongated shape of its leaves (like a river). Another identifying mark of the aravah is that willow bushes tend to grow in close-knit groups (aravah is related to the word achavah, "brotherhood").

So what was it about the identity of the Four Kinds that so mystified King Solomon? Surely "the wisest of men" was as proficient in the ways of Torah exegesis as the Talmudic sages whose analysis is summarized above. In any case, there are many cryptic passages in the Torah where laws are derived from double meanings and variant spellings of its words. Solomon's dramatic declaration regarding the etrog, lulav, myrtle and willow — "[Three are wondrous to me] and four I do not know"—must bode a deeper meaning, a meaning that relates to the inner significance of the Four Kinds taken on Sukkot.

(Continued next page)

Four Species of Man

The Four Kinds, says the Midrash, represent four types of people.

Man's mission in life consists of two basic challenges, learning and doing; or, as these relate to Jewish life, Torah and mitzvot. The Torah is the vehicle by which we gain knowledge of our Creator and insight into the essence of life; the mitzvot, the divine commandments, are the means by which we build a better and holier world, developing the physical creation into a "dwelling for G-d." These two endeavors define the four personalities represented in the Four Kinds.

The etrog, which has both a delicious taste and a delightful aroma, represents the perfect individual who both learns and achieves. The lulav, being the branch of the date palm, produces fruit that has a taste but no aroma; this is the prototype of the reclusive scholar who grows in wisdom but shuns the world of action. The fragrant but tasteless myrtle is the activist whose profusion of good deeds consumes all his time and energies. Finally, the tasteless, scentless willow represents the person who neither learns nor does, actualizing neither his intellectual potential nor his capacity to improve the world.

On Sukkot, concludes the Midrash, these "Four Kinds" are "all bound together in one bundle," each an integral part of the community of G-d.

The Tormented Fruit

In light of this, we can understand the four things that mystified the wisest of men.

If the "splendid fruit" in the Four Kinds represents the harmony of learning and accomplishment, why is this the fruit that "dwells in its tree all year round"? One would expect such perfection from a fruit maturing in tranquility, in a climate that is singularly attuned to its nature and needs—not from one whose development is agitated by ever-shifting conditions. And yet, time and again we indeed find that the greatest lives are those beset by travail and challenge; that the most balanced personalities are forged by the need to deal with changing circumstances and to constantly adapt to new climates and environments.

This, to King Solomon, was one of the great mysteries of life. How does vacillation fuel growth? Why is it that the individual who enjoys a tranquil existence is never as "fragrant" and "delectable" as the one who is battered by the vicissitudes of life?

Pressed Leaves

The lulav, too, perplexed the great mind of Solomon. Is not the very nature of intellectual discourse that it produces varied opinions and conclusions? In the words of the Talmud, "Torah scholars sit in numerous groups and study the Torah. One group deems a thing impure, and another deems it pure; one group forbids a deed, and another permits it; one group disqualifies something, and another renders it fit."

So when the verse speaks of "fronds of dates," we are inclined to understand these words in their literal, plural sense. For if the second of the Four Kinds connotes the Torah scholar—the human mind enfranchised to assimilate the divine wisdom—should it not consist of two palm branches, in keeping with the plural nature of the intellect? Should not their leaves be opened and spread, pointing to the various directions that the rational examination of a concept will take when embarked on by the mind of man?

And yet, the lulav commanded by the Torah is a single, closed frond, its leaves fused to a single rod pointing in a single direction. As the above-quoted Talmudic passage concludes: "Should a person then ask: How, then, might I study Torah? But all was received from a single Shepherd."

This was the second of the two mysteries pondered by King Solomon. How do the flock of opinions and perspectives of Torah relate to their "single Shepherd"? How can the divine wisdom be funneled through the multifarious world of human reason and remain the singular truth of a singular G-d?

(Continued next page)

The Plaited Twig

The myrtle in the Four Kinds represents the “deed” aspect of life—the manner in which we fulfill the purpose of creation with the physical actions of the mitzvot, thereby constructing a “dwelling for G-d in the physical world.” Thus, the Torah identifies the myrtle by alluding to its “plaited” appearance, given it by the way that its leaves grow in clumps of three: the number “three” represents the realm of action, which is the third of the soul’s three “garments” or vehicles of expression (thought, speech and deed).

Here lies what is perhaps the most profound mystery of all. How can the finite and mundane physical deed “house” the divine essence? Indeed, the plaited twig that comes to mind when thinking of the physical world is not the fragrant myrtle, but the barbed and poisonous hirduf!

Yet it is the material world where G-d elected to make His home. It is the physical deed to which He imparted the ability to serve as man’s highest form of communion with Him. Why? To the wisest of men, this was one of the four phenomena to which he could only say: “I do not know it.”

A Brotherhood of Trees

The fourth of Solomon’s mysteries concerns the willow, a plant with neither fragrance nor taste, devoid of learning as well as deeds.

Why is this species counted among the Four Kinds? The verse itself answers that question by referring to the fourth kind as “aravot of the river.” The willow might not exhibit any positive qualities, but its roots are embedded in the banks of its ancestral river and nourished by the waters of its heritage. It, too, is a child of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; in its veins, too, course the love and awe of G-d that they bequeathed to all their descendants.

Another hallmark of the willow is that “it grows in brotherhood.” This alludes to a unique feature of the human “willow.” Taken alone, he might exhibit not a single positive trait or achievement; but when gathered in a community, the aura of holiness that suffuses each individual soul suddenly comes to light.

Thus our sages tell us that the divine presence rests upon a gathering of ten individuals (the number that comprises a “community”) even if they are not engaged in the study of Torah or the performance of a mitzvah. This is also the significance of the minyan (the quorum of ten required to recite certain prayers): ten individuals gathered together represent a quantum leap in holiness. Ten ignorant boors make a minyan, while nine pious scholars do not.

This is what mystified King Solomon about the willow. How does ten times nothing add up to something? If each on his own possesses no visible expression of his innate holiness, how does that change when ten of them come together? All trees grow on water, mused the wisest of men; what sets the willows apart, earning them a place among the Four Kinds? Simply the fact that they grow close together?

Impossible Truths

If we think of these mysteries, they are as enigmatic and elusive as when King Solomon pondered them thirty centuries ago. But we usually don’t think of them at all, so deeply are they ingrained in our reality. Despite their logical incomprehensibility, these are obvious and ever-present truths in our lives.

Why do vacillation and hardship fuel growth? How can contradictory ideas embody a singular truth? Why does a simple physical deed elevate us to levels of holiness and G-dliness unequaled by the most transcendent spiritual experience? How are a number of ordinary human beings magically transformed when knit into a community, greatly surpassing the sum of their individual parts?

King Solomon couldn’t explain these mysteries; certainly, we cannot. But we recognize these as axiomatic to our lives, as four cornerstones to our existence that bear the stamp of a Creator within whose infinite being opposites merge and paradoxical truths harmoniously reside. ❖

Sukkos

Sukkos is a weeklong Jewish holiday that comes five days after Yom Kippur. Sukkos celebrates the gathering of the harvest and commemorates the miraculous protection G-d provided for the children of Israel when they left Egypt. We celebrate Sukkos by dwelling in a foliage-covered booth (known as a sukkah) and by taking the “Four Kinds” (arba minim), four special species of vegetation.

The first two days (sundown on Friday Sept 29 until nightfall on Sunday Oct 1 in 2023) of the holiday are yom tov, when work is forbidden, candles are lit in the evening, and festive meals are preceded by Kiddush and include challah dipped in honey. (one day in Israel)

The intermediate days (nightfall on Sunday Oct 1 until sundown on Friday Oct 6 in 2023) are quasi holidays, known as Chol Hamoed. We dwell in the sukkah and take the Four Kinds every day of Sukkos (except for Shabbat, when we do not take the Four Kinds).

The final two days (sundown on Friday Oct 6 until nightfall on Sunday Oct 8 in 2023) are a separate holiday (one day in Israel): Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah.

For seven days and nights, we eat all our meals in the sukkah and otherwise regard it as our home. Located under the open sky, the sukkah is made up of at least three walls and a roof of unprocessed natural vegetation—typically bamboo, pine boughs or palm branches.

The goal is to spend as much time as possible in the sukkah, at the very minimum eating all meals in the sukkah—particularly the festive meals on the first two nights of the holiday, when we must eat at least an olive-sized piece of bread or mezonot (grain-based food) in the sukkah. The Chabad practice is to not eat or drink anything outside the sukkah.

Another Sukkos observance is the taking of the Four Kinds: an etrog (citron), a lulav (palm frond), three hadassim (myrtle twigs) and two aravot (willow twigs).

On each day of the festival (except Shabbat), we take the Four Kinds, recite a blessing over them, bring them together and wave them in all six directions: right, left, forward, up, down and backward. The sages of the Midrash tell us that the Four Kinds represent the various personalities that comprise the community of Israel, whose intrinsic unity we emphasize on Sukkos.

Every day of Sukkos we say Hallel, a collection of psalms of praise (Psalms 113-118) as part of the morning prayer service. Every day aside for Shabbat, we recite Hallel while holding the Four Kinds, waving them in all directions at certain key points in the service, which are outlined in the siddur (prayerbook).

Afterward, we circle the bimah (the podium on which the Torah is read) holding the Four Kinds, reciting alphabetically arranged prayers for Divine assistance known as Hoshanot.

The seventh day of the holiday is known as Hoshanah Rabbah. This is the day when our fates for the coming year—which were signed on Rosh Hashanah and sealed on Yom Kippur—are finalized. On this day, we circle the bimah seven times. We also say a short prayer and strike the ground five times with bundles of five willows (also known as Hoshanot). For more on that, see next page of this Bulletin. ❖

*For more information on Sukkot, please go to:
https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4784/jewish/What-Is-Sukkot.htm*

Hoshana Rabbah

The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshana Rabbah, and is considered the final day of the divine “judgment” in which the fate of the new year is determined. It is the day when the verdict that was issued on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is finalized. This year it falls on Friday October 6.

The Midrash tells us that G-d told Abraham: “If atonement is not granted to your children on Rosh Hashanah, I will grant it on Yom Kippur; if they do not attain atonement on Yom Kippur, it will be given on Hoshana Rabbah.”

Isaiah says, “They seek Me day [after] day.” The Talmud explains that these two “days” refer to the day when the shofar is sounded (Rosh Hashanah) and the day when we take the willow (Hoshana Rabbah) — i.e., the day when the heavenly judgment begins, and the day when it concludes.

In addition, on Sukkot we are judged regarding how much rain will fall in the upcoming year. Thus, on Hoshana Rabbah, the final day of Sukkot, this judgment is finalized. Considering how much our wellbeing and economy depend on bountiful rainfall, it is clear how important this day is.

The Day of the Willow

The primary observance of Hoshana Rabbah is “the taking of the willow.” In addition to the Four Kinds taken every day of Sukkot, it is a tradition, dating back to the times of the prophets, to take an additional willow on the seventh day of Sukkot. This commemorates the willow ceremony in the Holy Temple, where large eighteen-foot willow branches were set around the altar every day of Sukkot. Every day of Sukkot the altar was circled once, to the sounds of supplications for divine assistance; on Hoshana Rabbah, the altar was circled seven times.

Today, during the course of the Hoshana Rabbah morning services, all the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark and are held by people standing around the bimah (Torah reading table). The congregation then makes seven circuits around the bimah (instead of the one circuit done the other days of Sukkot) while reciting the Hoshaanot prayers, with the Four Kinds in hand. At the conclusion of the Hoshaanot we take a bundle of five willows (available for a nominal fee at most synagogues), and with it we strike the ground five times, symbolizing the “tempering of the five measures of harshness.”

It is customary for all—men, women, and even small children—to perform this ritual. One should not use a willow bundle already used by another; a bundle should be purchased for every family member. After the bundle is used, many have the custom of throwing it onto the top of the Ark.

Festive Meal

A festive meal is eaten in the sukkah. We dip the bread in honey for the last time. Many have the custom to eat kreplach—dough filled with ground beef or chicken, folded into triangles—on this day.

Hoshana Rabbah is also the last occasion on which we recite the special blessing for eating in the sukkah, since the biblical commandment to dwell in the sukkah is only for seven days (though it is the practice of many communities—and such is the Chabad custom—that outside of the Land of Israel, we eat in the sukkah also on the eighth day, Shemini Atzeret).. ❖

*For more information on Hoshana Rabbah, please go to:
https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/757453/jewish/Hoshana-Rabbah.htm*

SUKKOT AT THE PATERSON SHUL

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Shmeini Atzeret – Minyan on Saturday, October 7th beginning at 9:00a.m. along with a Simchat Torah preview

We have Talaisim and Machzorim in Hebrew/English and Russian.

For more information, please email: JerrySchranz@Gmail.com or visit Facebook: The Paterson Shul

First Days of Sukkot Haftorahs in a Nutshell

Day One: (Zachariah 14:1-21)

The prophet Zachariah prophesies about the world transformation that will occur in the end of days, when “the L-rd shall become King over all the earth; on that day shall the L-rd be one, and His name one.”


But first he describes a great war that will center around Jerusalem immediately before the ultimate Redemption. G-d will gather the nations for war, and He will do battle with them, by visiting various diseases and ailments upon them. Zachariah then notes that those of the nations who will survive this cataclysmic war will be required to go to Jerusalem every year on the holiday of Sukkot to pay homage to G-d.


Day Two: (I Kings 8:2-21)

This day's haftorah describes the dedication of Solomon's Temple, which occurred during the holiday of Sukkot. (The celebration of the completion of the Holy Temple began a few days earlier, on the 8th of Tishrei.)


The construction of the Holy Temple was completed. King Solomon assembled the leaders and elders of the tribes to Jerusalem, and amidst great fanfare the Levites transported the Ark from its temporary location in the City of David and installed it in the Holy of Holies chamber in the Holy Temple. Immediately, G-d's presence appeared in the Temple, in the form of a smoky cloud.


King Solomon then blessed G-d. He recalled the history of the sanctuary, how his father, King David, had wanted to build it—but was told by G-d that it would be his son who would accomplish this feat. "And the L-rd has established His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the L-rd spoke, and have built a house for the name of the L-rd, the G-d of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein (is) the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt." ❖



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Good Shabbos and Chag Sa'may'ach to all!