

Sukkot | סוכות

“booths”

We are to be joyful during Sukkot. Sure, we are to be joyfull during all the feast days, but there is an extra measure of joy available at Sukkot. While we certainly rejoice on Pesach (Passover), it is not a full joy—spring is a time of firstfruits and hope, but we don't yet know what the fullness of the harvest will be.. We rejoice at Shavuot, but the harvest is still early, and so our rejoicing is tentative. At Sukkot, however, the harvest has fully come. There is no uncertainty, no anxiety. There is only rejoicing.

Additional
Resources:

BT:
2020

Rabbi
Sacks

119
Ministries

Community Questions:

1. What ways can you think of in which Sukkot brings joy?
2. Sukkot has a lot of potential problems—cold weather, mosquitos, rain—why might “Time of Our Joy” still be a good nickname for it?
3. How do you manage to be joyous given whatever is going on in your personal, national, and global situation?
4. In all the different parts of your life where you have "things", which parts do you think you have enough in? (Don't forget to include intangibles like health, family, friends, and career.)
5. If Sukkot is the “Time of Our Joy” because of having enough food to eat, then in what ways should we act so everybody gets to have a time of joy?
6. Recalling the Jewish folktale of Solomon and the Magic Ring (see pg. 2), why would the phrase “This too shall pass” intensify one’s happiness?
7. The word "*sukkot*" is related to the idea of "covering." Tradition links the *sukkah* not only to the Israelites' tents but also to the cloud that manifested God's presence in the wilderness. What can you remember about this cloud, and how can we apply the cloud to this time of year and this festival of Sukkot?
8. The four species held together speak of unity and a fullness of joy before God. How does a group experience increased unity? What practical steps can you take to increase unity in the family, at work, at school, or at Beth Tikkun?
9. Think of a "humble" *sukkah* compared to a complex house, and speak to John's comment that Yeshua "tabernacled" among us.



Solomon & the Magic Ring

CONTEXT: *This is a Jewish folktale. Although it draws on Biblical characters, the story is not in the Bible. There is an alternate version in which the magic ring makes happy people happier (with the same inscription).*

One day Solomon decided to humble Benaiah Ben Yehoyada, his most trusted minister.

He said to him, "Benaiah, there is a certain ring that I want you to bring to me. I wish to wear it for Sukkot which gives you six months to find it."

"If it exists anywhere on earth, your majesty," replied Benaiah, "I will find it and bring it to you, but what makes the ring so special?"

"It has magic powers," answered the king. "If a happy man looks at it, he becomes sad, and if a sad man looks at it, he becomes happy."

Solomon knew that no such ring existed in the world, but he wished to give his minister a little taste of humility. Spring passed and then summer, and still Benaiah had no idea where he could find the ring. On the night before Sukkot, he decided to take a walk in one of the poorest quarters of Jerusalem. He passed by a merchant who had begun to set out the day's wares on a shabby carpet.

"Have you by any chance heard of a magic ring that makes the happy wearer forget his joy and the broken-hearted wearer forget his sorrows?" asked Benaiah.

He watched the grandfather take a plain gold ring from his carpet and engrave something on it. When Benaiah read the words on the ring, his face broke out in a wide smile. That night the entire city welcomed in the holiday of Sukkot with great festivity.

"Well, my friend," said Solomon, "have you found what I sent you after?" All the ministers laughed and Solomon himself smiled. To everyone's surprise, Benaiah held up a small gold ring and declared, "Here it is, your majesty!"

As soon as Solomon read the inscription, the smile vanished from his face. The jeweler had written three Hebrew letters on the gold band: gimel, zayin, yud, which began the words "Gam zeh ya'avur" "This too shall pass."

At that moment Solomon realized that all his wisdom and fabulous wealth and tremendous power were but fleeting things, for one day he would be nothing but dust.