



Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz was a spiritual giant in his generation. At first, his greatness was mostly unknown to his contemporaries, but he had no regrets; indeed, it suited him just fine. He spent his days and nights in Torah-study, prayer and meditation. Rarely was he interrupted.

But then, the word began to spread, perhaps from fellow disciples of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, that Rabbi Pinchas was very, very special. People began to visit him on a regular basis, seeking his guidance, requesting his support, asking for his prayers and beseeching his blessing. The more he helped them, the more they came. The trickle to his door became a stream and the stream became a daily flood of personal stories and requests for help.

Rabbi Pinchas was overwhelmed. He felt he was no longer serving G-d properly, because he no longer had sufficient time to study, pray and meditate as he should. He didn't know what to do. He needed more privacy and less distraction, but how could he turn away dozens and even hundreds of people who genuinely felt that he could help them? How could he convince them to go elsewhere, to others more willing and qualified than he?

Then he had an idea. He would pray for heavenly help in the matter. Let G-d arrange it that people not be attracted to seek him out! Let G-d make him be despicable in the eyes of his fellows!

"A tzaddik decrees and Heaven agrees," they say. Rabbi Pinchas prayed and so it became. No longer did people visit him. Not only that, on those occasions when he went to town, he was met with averted heads and a chilly atmosphere.

Rabbi Pinchas didn't mind at all. Indeed, he was delighted. The old pattern was restored; rarely was he interrupted.

Then the "Days of Awe" of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur passed, and there remained only four brief busy days to prepare for the Sukkot festival. In previous years, there had always been some yeshiva students or local townspeople who were only too glad to help the pious rabbi construct his sukkah-hut. But this time, not a single soul arrived. No one liked him, and no one even thought to help him.

Not being handy in these matters, the rabbi didn't know what to do. Finally, having no choice, he was forced to hire a non-Jew to build his sukkah for him. But the hired man did not possess the tools that were needed, and Rabbi Pinchas could not get a single Jew in the neighborhood to lend him tools because they disliked him so much. In the end, his wife had to go to borrow them, and even that was difficult to accomplish due to the prevailing attitude towards her husband. With just a few hours remaining till the onset of the festival, they finally managed to complete a flimsy minimal structure.

As the sun slid between the forest branches and the Rebbeztin lit the festive candles, Rabbi Pinchas hurried off to shul. Despite his solitary ways, he always made a point to attend the congregational prayers on the holidays; besides he didn't want to miss the opportunity to acquire a guest for the festival meal, something so integral to the essence of the holiday.

In those days in Europe, people desiring an invitation to a meal would stand in the back of the shul upon the completion of the prayers. The householders would then invite them upon their way out, happy to so easily accomplish the mitzvah of hospitality. Rabbi Pinchas, unfortunately, did not find it so simple. Even those without a place to eat and desperate for an invitation to a sukkah in which to enjoy the festival meal, turned him down without a second thought. Eventually, everyone who needed a place and everyone who wanted a guest were satisfied, except for the tzaddik, Rabbi Pinchas.

He trudged home alone, saddened and a bit shaken up at the realization that he might never have another guest, not even for the special festive meal of the First Night of Sukkos. Alas, that too was part of the price of his freedom.... It was worth it, wasn't it?

Pausing just inside the entrance to his sukkah, Rabbi Pinchas began to chant the traditional invitation to the Ushpizin, the seven heavenly guests who visit every Jewish sukkah. Although not many are privileged to actually see these exalted visitors, Rabbi Pinchas was definitely one of the select few who had this experience on an annual basis.

This year, he raised his eyes and saw the Patriarch Abraham—the first of the Ushpizin and therefore the honored guest for the first night of the festival—standing outside the door of the sukkah, keeping his distance.

Rabbi Pinchas cried out to him in anguish: "Father Abraham! Why do you not enter my sukkah? What is my sin?"

Replied the patriarch: "I am the embodiment of Chesed, serving G-d through deeds of loving-kindness. Hospitality was my specialty. I will not join a table where there are no guests."

The crestfallen Rabbi Pinchas quickly re-ordered his priorities. He prayed that everything be restored to as it had been, and that he should find favor in the eyes of his fellows exactly as before. Again his prayer was answered. Within a short time, throngs of people were again finding their way to his door; seeking his guidance, asking his support, requesting his prayers, and beseeching his blessing. No longer could he devote all or even most of his time to his Torah-study, his prayer, and to his meditation. But thanks to his holy Sukkot guest, this was no longer seen as a problem.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Sukka

Although a sukkah is only a temporary dwelling, in certain respects we treat it as if it were our regular home—eating, drinking, and studying in it. This is how we should treat the world world at large. We should not regard the world as an end unto itself, but rather as a means of furthering our spiritual development and refinement; by properly utilizing the physical world, we bring G-dliness into our surroundings, transforming the temporary into something lasting and eternal. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

In sukkot shall you dwell seven days

The sukkah surrounds the entire person and one is enjoined to conduct all worldly affairs within it for seven days. The fact that all of a person's being is encompassed, including his very shoes, teaches us that not only through prayer and study do we worship G-d. The sukkah teaches that it is also through the physical world that we approach G-d and draw holiness into our surroundings, as it states, "in all your ways shall you know Him." The mitzva of sukkah strengthens our realization of this and gives us the power to carry out our G-dly mission throughout the year. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

Simchat Torah

One year, during the dancing on Simchat Torah, the Baal Shem Tov cried out: "Yisrael, you holy people. What is the cause of your great joy? It is our holy Torah! Do the other nations ever rejoice while holding their sacred books? Where do they go in the time of their rejoicing—into their inns and drinking houses! And we, the Jewish people, where do you find us in the season of our rejoicing? Inside the synagogues. And why are we dancing and singing? In honor of the holy Torah. When are we united, as one man with one heart? On Simchat Torah! Therefore, I say to you, Yisrael, my holy people! This day is a triple joy—the joy of the Torah, the joy of the Jewish people, and the joy of the Holy One Blessed Be He."

- NY Metro Area
- 14 Tishrei/Sep. 29/Sukkot**
Light candles at 6:23 pm
- 15 Tishrei/Sep. 30/Sukkot**
Light candles after 7:20 pm from pre-existing flame
- Sunday, Oct. 1, First Days Sukkot end at 7:13 pm**
- 21 Tishrei/Oct. 6/ Eve of Shemini Atzeret**
Light candles at 6:12 pm
- 22 Tishrei/Oct. 7/ Eve of Simchat Torah**
Light candles after 7:09 pm from a pre-existing flame
- Sunday, Oct. 8, Sukkot holiday ends 7:07 pm**

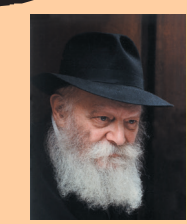


L'Chaim

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The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור ימי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

Two mitzvos are specific to the Yom Tov of Sukkos, the mitzvah of Sukka and the mitzvah of the "four kinds," lulav, esrog, haddasim and arravos. If so, why is the Yom Tov called Sukkos, and not after the four kinds? And what are we meant to learn from this?

There are several reasons that it's called Sukkos.

One reason is that the mitzvah of Sukka is connected to every moment of the holiday, from when the holiday is sanctified until it ends seven days later. On the other hand, the four kinds begins only in the morning of the first day.

What more, the Sukka has to be built before the holiday, especially for the mitzvah of Sukka and the building of the Sukka is considered a mitzvah. Whereas it's possible to put the four kinds together on Yom Tov.

Another reason is that once you do the mitzvah of the four kinds, there is no more obligation. But the mitzvah of Sukka is that you should live in it as you live in your home. This means that it continues all day long, until the holiday is over.

Another way that Sukka is greater than the four kinds, is that the four kinds are like most mitzvos, they are particular to one part of the body, in this case, the hands. On the other hand, Sukka is with the whole body, the mitzvah envelopes the whole body. And all the mundane things that are regularly done in the home should be done in the Sukka, and they become a mitzvah, so it makes everything you do a mitzvah.

You have to live in the Sukka as you live in your home. That means that your Sukka is your home for the duration of the holiday.

Our sages say, "One who has no home, is not a mentch," he is missing a vital part of being a person, a place to call home. When a person doesn't have a place to live, he doesn't feel like a mentch. This means that when a person isn't home, he is affected by the fact that he has a place to call home. On Sukkos, when we call the Sukka home, we are affected by the Sukka even when we are not in it, every moment of Sukkos we are affected by the Sukka.

Everything that we do in the month of Tishrei, the Holidays, the Ten Days of Teshuva, Shabbos Bereishis, and even the other days, are meant to affect the whole year.

We are expected to do everything for Hashem, as our sages say, "know Him in all your ways." And the mitzvah of Sukka gives us the strength for this. Because even if you sleep in the Sukka, you are doing a mitzvah, even when you are not in it, you are connected to the mitzvah, connected to Hashem. We have to take the holiness and the joy of the Sukka and bring it into the home throughout the year.

Our sages say, "a man's home is his wife," this tells us the power of the Jewish woman, that she has an effect on her husband and children, not only when they are home, but even when they are not home, as she is their stability.

May we all have a wonderful Sukkos, and may it affect our whole year and our homes that they should be filled with nachas and shalom bayis, hope and happiness, light and joy, good health and success. 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.

Joy and Happiness - Simcha

The holidays of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah which, happily, are approaching, are referred to as, "the time of our rejoicing."

As such, let's take a look at some of the words of our Sages and Chasidic teachings about the importance of joy and happiness in our lives.

King David in Psalms advises us, "Serve G-d with joy, come before Him with jubilation."

The power of joy is unlimited, for, as stated in the Talmud, "Joy breaks all boundaries."

In addition, G-d attaches a great deal of importance to joy, for "The Divine Presence rests only upon one who performs a mitzva in a joyous spirit." (Talmud)

In fact, it is said about the famous 16th century Kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, that he merited Divine inspiration and even to meet Elijah the Prophet, because he infused his mitzvot with so much joy.

Simcha, joy, is one of the most essential elements of the Chasidic way of life.

In fact, in the early stages of the Chasidic movement, before the name "Chasidim" was coined, Chasidim were often referred to in Yiddish as "di freilicha," meaning, "the happy ones."

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidut, would say that sometimes, when the Yetzer Hara (the Evil impulse) tries to persuade a person to commit a sin, it does not care whether or not the person will actually sin. What it is looking for is that after sinning, the person will become depressed and overcome with sadness. In other words, the depression that follows the sin can cause more spiritual damage than the actual sin itself.

Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin taught that depression is considered the threshold of all evil. He said that although the 365 negative commandments do not include a commandment not to be depressed, the damage that sadness and depression can cause is worse than the

damage that any sin can cause.

The Rebbe explained that if the Jewish people already begin now to rejoice in the Redemption, out of our absolute trust that G-d will speedily send us Moshiach, this joy in itself will (as it were), compel G-d to fulfill His children's wish and to redeem them from exile.

In Tanya, the basic work of Chabad Chasidic philosophy, Rabbi Shneur Zalman used the example of two wrestlers to describe the importance of joy:

"With a victory over a physical obstacle, such as in the case of two individuals who are wrestling with each other, each striving to throw the other -- if one is lazy and sluggish he will easily be defeated and thrown, even though he be stronger than the other, exactly so it is in the conquest of one's evil nature; it is impossible to conquer it with laziness and heaviness, which originates in sadness and in a heart that is dulled like a stone, but rather with alacrity, which derives from joy and from a heart that is free and cleansed from any trace of worry and sadness. This is a cardinal principle."

A Chasid once wrote to the third Chabad Rebbe, the "Tzemach Tzedek," that he found it difficult to be happy. The Tzemach Tzedek advised him:

"Thought, speech and action are within one's control. A person must guard his thoughts and think only thoughts that bring joy; he should be cautious not to speak about sad or depressing matters; and he should behave as if he were very joyous, even if he doesn't feel especially happy. In the end, he will ultimately be joyous."

What can you do to help a friend out of a slump if he isn't too happy? Tell him some good news, as our Sages advised, for good news gladdens the heart and good tidings expand the mind.

Happy holidays!
Part of this article excerpted an essay by Rabbi S. Majesky on joy published by Sichos in English.

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

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SLICE OF LIFE

The Torah Saved by the Soviet Policeman

By Rabbi Menchem Posner



Rabbi Aharon Chazan

The trip from Moscow to Tula was fraught with danger, but the prospect of arrest was nothing new to the duo, each of whom had suffered greatly at the hands of the Communist party and their lackeys for their steadfast fealty to Judaism.

Rabbi Aharon Chazan (1912-2008) and his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Sheiner, were stalwarts of the Chabad Jewish underground that spanned the Soviet Union. Living outside of Moscow, they were part of a small core group of chassidim who maintained a secret mikvah, an ad hoc synagogue, and even a matzah bakery in the Chazan home.

It was 1966 when they heard the sad news that the synagogue in Tula had been shuttered, the building slated to become a club. They could never know that more than 50 years in the future, Rabbi Zev and Irina Wagner would move to the city and revive Jewish life there. All they knew was that Torah scrolls

languished in a damp and dark cellar of a building soon to be overrun by the godless Soviet authorities.

They knew that the Torahs were technically considered state property and that tampering with them could result in the harshest punishments. But they also knew that Jewish tradition considers a Torah scroll almost like a human being, and that there was no way they could leave the Torahs to be destroyed or defaced.

When the pair arrived in Tula, they were pleased to discover that the local Jews had arranged for the government-appointed guard to look the other way just long enough for them to enter the deserted building.

Descending the dark stairwell, they were greeted by a most shocking scene: Torah scrolls, prayerbooks, and Talmuds lay on the floor, amid broken furniture, castaway cartons and long discarded religious articles.

But this was no time to mourn. They had a task ahead of them. As much as they wished they could take all the holy articles with them, they needed to be selective. Assembling all the Torahs together, they quickly inspected them to see which were in the best condition. They selected two scrolls, whose script still appeared fresh and strong, and loaded them into a large suitcase they had brought for this purpose.

Reentering the sunshine, the two lugged their precious cargo to the station, where they hoped to find a bus to Moscow.

To their dismay, they learned that the next bus would only depart in several hours, which would leave the two bearded men with a suspicious looking package vulnerable to inspection during their wait. To make matters worse, they noticed a police station directly across from the train station. It seemed inevitable that they would be stopped, questioned, and searched.

But years of dodging the Soviet authorities had taught the chassidim to think quickly.

“Come,” Rabbi Aharon told his son-in-law, “Let’s not wait for the police to come to us. Instead, we’ll go to them.”

“Excuse me sir,” they said to the officer on duty, as they entered the police station, “We are strangers here and have several hours until our bus arrives. Do you mind watching our suitcase for us while we take a few hours to enjoy the sights of this city? We will pay you well for your time.”

The policeman gladly took the package and the pair slipped away until right before the bus was to depart. Upon their return, the officer gladly returned their luggage, and the relieved rabbis carried it with them onto the waiting bus.

That same year, Rabbi Aharon and some of his children received permits to leave the Soviet Union. The trip over the border was by rail, and among the limited clothing and personal items they were able to take, the Chazan family packed two Torah scrolls, one of which was from Tula. The rollers were removed, and the two Torahs were combined into one large roll, which was hidden in an oversized pillow.

Thankfully, the border patrol suspected nothing, and upon their arrival in Israel, the Torahs were given to a trained scribe for inspection and repair. The Tula Torah was found to be in extraordinarily good condition, as beautiful and crisp as the day it was written.

Today, the scroll from Tula is used regularly in a synagogue in central Israel frequented by members of the Chazan family. And every Simchat Torah, even though the Tula Torah is heavier than many of the others housed in the ark, the congregants eagerly await their turn to dance with it—uniting with generations of Jews, past and present, who cherish the Torah more than life itself.

Adapted from a story in Sichat Hashavua with additional information from the Chazan Family.

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The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

A GLARING CONTRADICTION

By the Grace of G-d

4 Shvat, 5716 [January 17, 1956]

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

...In answer to your letter... in which you write of the current state of your affairs, adding that “all my life, no good has befallen me,” and conclude with a request for a blessing for yourself, together with you wife and children, may they live:

It seems that you are unaware of the contradiction in your letter.

For a man whom the Creator has provided his partner in life, and has blessed them with children, to say that, “all my life, good has eluded me,” is ingratitude in a most shocking manner...

Hundreds and thousands of people who pray every day to be blessed with children, and would give all that they have for a single son or daughter, have yet to merit it (may G-d bless them with the speedy fulfillment of their heart’s desires), while you, who received this blessing (seemingly without an

overabundance of praying for it) do not recognize what a treasure and joy this is, writing as you do in your letter...

I’m not implying that one is supposed to struggle for a living or not enjoy perfect health. My point is that perhaps the reason for your weak health and your difficulties in earning a living is your utter failure to appreciate G-d’s blessing to you in a far more basic matter than perfect health and abundant sustenance---the blessing of sons and daughters who follow the ways of G-d. When one does not recognize the explicit good bestowed from Above, particularly when one’s lack of recognition is so extreme that it results in statements such as you express in your letter, is it any wonder that blessings are not forthcoming from Above in other matters?

My hope is that these few lines will suffice to open your eyes to see your situation in its true light. And when you begin to serve G-d with a true and inner joy, surely G-d will increase His blessings also in regard to health and sustenance...

I trust that you have set times for Torah study, both for its exoteric teachings as well as the teachings of chassidut; in any case, do so from now on. It would also be proper to examine your tefillin, as well as the mezuzot in your home, and to set aside several coins for charity each weekday morning before prayer.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This week we are celebrating the holiday of Sukkot. It is special in many ways, teeming with mitzvot and customs with far-reaching spiritual implications.

We were commanded by G-d to celebrate Sukkot as a reminder of the sukkot--booths--in which we dwelled while in the Sinai desert. According to some opinions, the sukkah commemorates the actual booths and temporary dwellings the Jews lived in. However, other opinions consider these sukkot as a reminder of the Clouds of Glory with which G-d surrounded and protected us during the sojourn in the desert. Obviously, the sukkah itself is a major aspect of the holiday.

It is not surprising, then, that our upcoming holiday is known almost exclusively by the name Sukkot.

There are other mitzvot that we perform every day or most days of the festival, though, such as blessing the lulav and etrog, and saying the special “Hoshana” prayers. Why, one might ask, is the festival known specifically for the mitzva of dwelling in the sukkah?

The answer lies in the unique nature of the mitzva of sukkah. Every other mitzva a person performs involves a particular limb or part of the body: tefillin, for instance, are wrapped around the head and arm; Shabbat candles are lit using the hand; Prayers are said with the mouth.

The sukkah, however, is different. It surrounds and encompasses the entire person from head to toe. It envelops the person who sits within its temporary walls with the holiness of the mitzva.

May the Jewish people merit to witness what we read in the “Grace After Meals” on Sukkot, “May the Merciful One Restore for us the fallen Sukka of David” and may we celebrate all together this year in Jerusalem with Moshiach.

Shmuel Beilman

L’ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.

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Teachings...

Contemplate three things and you will not come into the hands of sin: Know what is above you (mimcha)...(Ethics 2:1) According to the Maggid of Mezritch, this teaching can be interpreted as follows: “Know that what is above – mimcha – is from you.” Know that everything which you receive from Above is a reciprocal reaction to what you do here in this world.

Public Sukkas

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: Monday, October 2 through Thursday, October 5, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, Friday, October 6, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. 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 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 1793 will be for 28 Tishrei/October 13 for the Torah portion of Bereshit.

