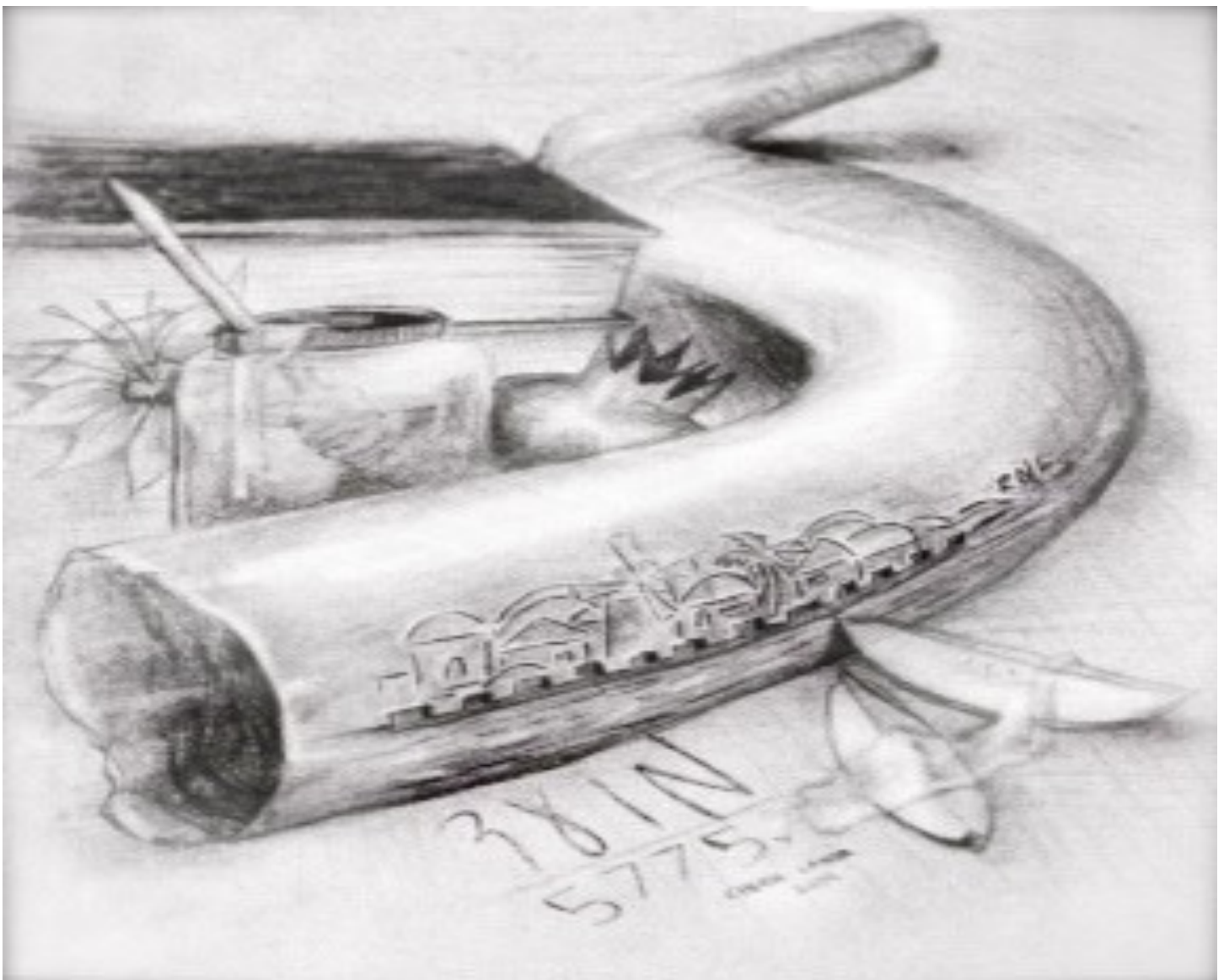


A TORAH PUBLICATION BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

# MO-ED

OF THE WEINBAUM YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

## Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, And Sukkot Edition 5775



# Table of Contents

Michali Mazor	page 3
Efraim Shachter	page 3
Baila Eisen	page 4
Shoshy Ciment	page 4
Leor Levenson	page 5
Fun Facts	page 7
Game	page 8

**Editors-in-chief: Leor Levenson**

**Ella Herman**

**Final Editor: Daniella Cohen**

**Art: Cherie Landa**

**Faculty Advisor: Mrs. Schochet**

# Faith in Hashem

Michali Mazor

This Rosh Hashanah could have very possibly been a time of tragedy and hardship for the Jewish people. A terrible plan was conceived by Hamas to kidnap and kill as many Israelis as possible. The futures of many Jewish lives hung in the balance, the lives of men, of women, of children. Our people.

This is not the first time the future of the Jewish people was endangered on Rosh Hashanah. In Sefer Bereshit, Hashem gives a test to Avraham, a test so difficult that it is beyond human comprehension. He tells Avraham to take Yitzchak, his only son, and sacrifice him. For those days leading up to the akeida, when this gezeira of Yitzchak's death is eminent, the entire future of the Jewish people is on the line. The promise Hashem has made to Avraham appears to have been severed. But that is not the case. Hashem saves Yitzchak. Hashem saves us.

“VehaElokim nisa et Avraham” – And Hashem tested Avraham. The root of the word nisa, tested, is miracle. In testing Avraham, Hashem did this incredible miracle for all the Jewish people, for all of Avraham's kids. He saved the entirety of our people.

Rosh Hashanah is the time when gezeirot are written in Hashem's book - whether we will live or die, whether we will be healthy or sick. Hashem decides what tests, what miracles, we deserve to merit. Everything that will occur this coming year will be decided on Rosh Hashanah.

Furthermore, Abarbanel says that the word nisa means a banner, one we hold high as an or legoyim, a light unto the nations. So much of what we do, how we act, affects not only us, but the nations around us. The other nations witness these miracles and tests.

To think that Hashem had already predetermined that the Gaza tunnels would be found is so awe-inspiring. Everything that has happened over the course of this summer proves how much Hashem is on our side.

Continued on page 5

# Preparing for Yom HaDin

Efraim Shachter

The month of Elul is a month of preparation, a month to prepare for Yom HaDin, the Day of Judgment. However, in order to meaningfully prepare for Yom HaDin, one must understand the concepts of a code of law and a judge who metes out justice based on the law. Jews are the premier example of people who live by a code of laws and approach legal scholars to help apply those laws to their lives. One would think, therefore, that the concept of Yom HaDin would be very easy for Jews to understand. However, Jews, like the rest of humanity, have not always been this way. In the parshiyot we read during the month of Elul, we see how Hashem used the Torah to form us into the people we have become.

When someone killed another by accident, the ancient custom declared that the dead man's family would avenge that death by killing the killer. The family members didn't ask a lot of questions about the circumstance of the death; they just wanted to take revenge and to maintain their security. There really wasn't any other way to keep themselves safe. In some parts of the world, this is true to this day.

In Parashat Shoftim, we read about the system of arei miklat. The Torah says that accidental killers should flee to those cities, far from the vengeful family. So long as the killer stays there, no revenge will be tolerated. The Torah could have suggested that the accused killer should get a fair trial and let court determine what will happen to him. That would make sense to us now, but such a law would have required too big a change to have an actual effect. What would have happened is that no accidental murderer would have survived long enough to get to his fair trial. The Torah itself tells us that it is "not up in the sky or across the sea, but close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it" Devarim (30:12-14). Throughout the Torah, we see Hashem slowly weaning us away from the way people had always been to turn us (and ultimately the world) into something better that we never could have imagined or reached on our own.

Continued on Page 5

# Endless Opportunities

Shoshy Ciment

To many, the concept of Sukkot is a vague one. Why must we dwell in a hut with such specific requirements? To understand the concept of Sukkot, we must look at the first time it appears in the Torah.

The first time we hear about a sukkah is after Yaakov survives a confrontation with his brother and enemy, Esav. The Torah says, “And on that day Esav returned on his way to Seir and Yaakov traveled to Sukkot and built for himself a house and for his cattle he made Sukkot therefore the name of the place is called Sukkot” (Bereshit 33:16-17).

At first glance, this verse is somewhat strange. Yaakov does the normal thing of building himself a house, but when he builds huts for his cattle, the place that he is in becomes known as “Sukkot.” This seems like an odd reason to name a place. The Or HaChaim explains that “perhaps because he did something new by showing his compassion for the cattle...that he did something that no one had done previously, that he prepared a sukkah - a shelter for animals; it was that novelty that caused that the place should be called so.” This explains why the place would merit to be named after this deed.

This also serves to give us insight into the true meaning of our sukkot that we practically live in for seven days. After the encounter between Yaakov and Esav, Esav goes back home and returns to his old ways. Yaakov, on the other hand, does something beyond what would normally be done, outside his home. He is not embittered by the experience with Esav. He is actually galvanized. He becomes better from it. The symbol of Yaakov’s improvement is his innovation in creating an arena for compassion in the universe. This symbol is non-other than the sukkah!

A sukkah is a place where everyone can express a sense of gratitude in a personal way. Each sukkah is decorated differently just like each person who represents his own world. Some people hang fruits and vegetables in their sukkah, some have pictures of rabbis, and some have Israeli flags. Many have artwork of children and shofars. Others have pictures of the four species, the lulav and etrog.

Continued on Page 6

# Opening Up

Baila Eisen

In a way, Sukkot seems like one of the most confining holidays. Though the food and company are good, we have to enjoy them sitting in that small, enclosed, and often rickety structure known as a sukkah, scooching in our chairs to let our guests and family members pass. Talk about claustrophobic.

Yet for all this talk about confinement, sukkahs turn out to be surprisingly open. Halachically, only three walls are required for a sukkah to be kosher. The fourth side can be completely exposed to the elements. In Masechet Avodah Zarah (2a-3b) we learn that at the end of days, Hashem will give idol worshippers one last chance to repent: He will give them the mitzvah of living in a sukkah, and if they keep it, they will be forgiven. Unfortunately, conventional wisdom dictates that the heat and discomfort of living outside will get to them, and they will give up, kick their sukkahs, and walk away. But how about the more rugged idol worshippers, those who can withstand the heat and less-than-ideal conditions? What makes this mitzvah so difficult for them?

The reason this is really such a tough mitzvah is because, at its core, it involves opening ourselves up, making ourselves vulnerable, and trusting completely in Hashem. Every Sukkot, we Jews must deliberately open ourselves to the elements, believing that G-d will keep us safe. This physical experience is symbolic of our spiritual experiences every day. Sukkot is one of the only holidays which includes a time-period, a *moed*, in which Jews can continue to go to work. Every day, when we face the outside world, we open ourselves up to a barrage of spiritual attacks. As long as we have trust in Hashem and keep His mitzvot, we are able to survive the spiritual chaos of our world unscathed, just as we can survive the physical exposure to the outside world that a sukkah provides.

Continued on page 6

# Humility Before Hashem

Leor Levenson

This month, by the time we get to Sukkot, we have already celebrated Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Why do we need another holiday so soon? According to the Yalkut Shimoni, the reason we observe the holiday of Sukkot so shortly after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is for insurance. In case Hashem has judged us unfavorably and has decided to penalize us through exile, we exile ourselves from our homes. This will hopefully sway Hashem against punishing us with a more serious exile later in the year.

This explanation is odd. Why does the Yalkut Shimoni specify exile as a punishment? Surely there are worse decrees like disease or famine. Also, how does sitting in the sukkah for a few days a year replace the sentence of exile?

In order to understand why we focus on exile specifically, we must examine what the message of exile is. Rav Friedlander explains that banishment forces an arrogant nation to become more humble. When people are forced from their land, they come to recognize that they have no real power. This scenario is clearly portrayed in a pasuk in Sefer Devarim. The Jews become haughty and complacent in their land, and have “ignored the Mighty One that fathered you, and have forgotten Hashem who formed you” (Devarim 32:18). Therefore Hashem decides to exile them. However, this answer raises another question: why would we be arrogant now, after the holiest days of the year when we know that Hashem is controlling everything?

Rabbi Naphtali Hoff offers an intriguing answer. One of the alternate names of Sukkot is Chag Ha’asif, or “The Harvest Festival.” Sukkot is celebrated when the first crops begin to ripen and the Jews begin the year’s harvest. Rabbi Hoff explains that this is the time, despite the proximity to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when man feels the most arrogant. When a man sees his beautiful harvest that he has worked an entire year to achieve, he may forget that Hashem is truly responsible for his wealth and he may be more prone to conceit.

This also explains why sitting in a sukkah atones for the decree of exile. If the whole point of exile is to remind us to be humble before Hashem, what better way is there to accomplish modesty than to live outdoors for seven days, completely susceptible to the

weather that Hashem controls! By sitting in a sukkah, we acknowledge another pasuk in Devarim: “You should remember Hashem you G-d, for He is the one who gives you the power to get wealth” (8:18). By sitting in a sukkah, we learn the important lesson of humility.

Mazor Continued:

However, if we look at the things we do not understand, we may assume that Hashem is hurting us. We may assume His actions are not in our best interest. We may not know how Hashem works, but we do have the ability to view every test Hashem gives us as a miracle, as a way for Hashem to save us from a potential spiritual downfall. We have to believe in divine providence. We have to believe that Hashem saves Yitzchak. We have to believe Hashem saved many lives over the course of this war. We have to believe that Hashem always does what is best for us, even though we may not necessarily understand it.

Shachter Continued:

Another example is in Parshat Ki Teitzei, which begins with the law of eishet yefat toar. This law applies when a Jewish soldier is in the middle of war and sees a beautiful woman whom he desires. He can take her, but he must wait 30 days and have her neglect her grooming so that she doesn’t look very attractive. After 30 days of getting to know her as a human being, if he still desires her, he must marry her, and she gets all the rights of married Jewish women (except the right to refuse the marriage). This is another case of Hashem weaning us away from barbarism. The common practice during war then - and still now- was to kill the men and pregnant women and then to rape (and often kill) the other women. If the Torah simply said that you could not touch or harm any noncombatant, including the women, it would have made the Torah unreachable (“in the sky or across the sea”), and might have led to all the women being killed, too. Therefore, the Torah did not abolish the practice, but restricted it to the point where it would simply wither away.

The reading of the Torah in shul was the beginning of Torah learning for the totality of the Jewish people. It is no less important today. In the parshiyot of the month of Elul we see Hashem preparing Am Yisrael to be His nation. Reading these parshiyot, and understanding their lessons is one big way for us to prepare for Yom HaDin. So pay attention! It's Cho-

### Ciment Continued:

A sukkah allows for artistic expression, but it also allows for inspiration and idealism to be harvested for the year to come. A sukkah allows for limitless possibilities. With this in mind, we should all be fortunate enough to have a chag sameach and a happy new year.

### Eisen Continued:

But the walls aren't the only part of the sukkah that can be open. If we lean back for a moment, we can just glimpse the night sky peeping through the *schach*. Our guests' laughter and conversation seem to bubble up through the gaps in the leaves straight to Heaven's gates. Indeed, by abandoning our houses for a few days, we are also abandoning our ordinary point of view. In return, we take on a new one—God's. We look in at our homes from the outside, just as He does, and try to see what He sees. If we can truly manage to open ourselves up to this experience, we may find ourselves wincing at more than the toys strewn all over the floor; indeed, we all have things we can work on, spiritually as well as physically. By moving out into the sukkah, we are able to catch a glimpse of our homes from an outsider's perspective. Hopefully, by the time we move back into our houses, we will have gained something from the openness of living outside, an insight into how to bring some of that Godliness back inside with us.

And that is the final and most important openness of Sukkot, the act of opening ourselves to personal growth. Sukkot is a holiday of strange and intricate demands, such as waving the *arbah minim* and living outside. Perhaps some would see this as limiting, but as Jews we understand that by giving us more mitzvot that we can't do during the rest of the year, Hashem is giving us a special opportunity. We see this as a bonus, not a burden. By following God's commandments in relation to Sukkot as well as everywhere else in life, we are free to achieve a high level of morality that we could never reach without His specific instructions. The more mitzvot we do—the more we seem to restrict ourselves—the freer we become. So by enclosing ourselves in a sukkah, we open ourselves to more opportunities to serve Hashem—and improve our own lives in the bargain.

# Holiday Fun Facts

Did you know...

- That the Rambam writes that if you do complete teshuva in the ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur with complete sincerity, it will be accepted immediately?
- That the huts that we sit in during Sukkot are symbolic of the clouds that protected us in the desert?
- That we blow the shofar 100 times because we are not sure of the correct sound it makes—we follow every possibility in order to fulfill the mitzvah?
- That Adam and Chava were created on Rosh Hashanah?

SUKKOT, ROSH HASHANAH, YOM KIPPUR, LULAV, SHO-  
FAR, TESHUVA

S	B	V	S	A	E	L	R	G	T	J	J	K	U	I
U	D	F	H	L	U	L	O	V	F	D	S	A	C	B
K	W	E	F	H	J	P	S	H	A	L	O	M	P	I
K	T	Y	L	O	I	J	H	M	N	R	A	R	W	Q
O	F	U	U	B	L	G	H	R	S	A	K	L	D	Q
T	E	U	L	P	H	O	A	P	U	F	D	S	E	T
W	E	R	A	T	S	C	S	L	K	O	M	Z	F	U
O	L	L	V	D	T	I	H	J	L	H	A	V	H	I
A	S	N	O	N	G	U	A	K	U	S	I	I	U	L
N	I	L	W	A	S	Q	N	R	T	E	L	O	Y	P
M	T	E	S	H	U	V	A	E	A	T	Y	O	Z	H
Q	W	D	S	R	A	Y	H	T	R	H	G	L	P	G
Y	O	M	K	I	P	P	U	R	G	J	X	P	O	D
R	T	Y	E	O	D	K	E	P	A	P	C	H	L	A
S	D	A	W	X	F	P	O	H	Y	L	P	S	K	W

**Chag Sameach!**