

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
SUKKOS 5783 - 2022



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*Sukkot*

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## *From the desk of the Editors*

We are so excited to begin this year's **Moadim** with the *chag* of *Sukkos*.

On *Sukkos*, we are obligated to do two significant *mitzvos*. The first is dwelling in the *sukkah* for the duration of seven days. The second is the ritual of shaking the four species. The underlying message in both these *mitzvos* is *Achdus*- unity.

Residing in the *sukkah* for seven days symbolizes unity as many families from different cultures and backgrounds unite together under one roof. In fact, the *Gemara* (*Succah* 27b) says, "re'uyim Kol Yisrael leishev besuccah achat." That translates into, "all of *Bnei Yisrael* are fit to sit in one *sukkah*." That teaches us that, unlike other *mitzvos*, where everyone has to have their own object to fulfill the *mitzvah*, with the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, one can let everyone use it to fulfill the *mitzvah* properly.

According to the *Midrash*, the four species represent four different types of Jews. The *esrog*, which is edible and has an aroma, is symbolic of a *tzaddik*, who studies Torah and performs *mitzvos*. The *lulav*, which has a taste but no aroma, represents a *gid* who devotes most of his time to *Torah* study. The *hassadim*, which has an aroma but no taste, signifies the Jew who is solely involved in *chessed* but is incapable of learning *Torah*. Lastly, the *aravos*, which has no taste and aroma, represents a Jew that lacks both *Torah* and *mitzvos*. The fact that we unite all four species and shake them emphasizes that Hashem wants all of us to be unified as a nation.

We are so lucky to be in a school like MHS, where *achdus* reigns supreme. Every student's presence and contribution is integral to the composition of this grand institution that we call our home away from home. This esteemed publication, the *Moadim*, is a microcosm of this concept. Students from different grades and different communities all contribute their unique talents and skills towards this publication.

We hope this publication filled with *divrei Torah* and beautiful artwork will enhance your *Simchas Yom Tov*.

Thank you to everyone who submitted!

*Chag Sameach,*  
**The Moadim Crew**

## *Message from the Menacheles*

The *yom tov* of *Sukkos* commemorates the miracle of the *ananei hakavod*, the Clouds of Glory. Hashem led His nation out of Egypt and through the wilderness, ensconced in the protection of His miraculous clouds. They shielded the fledgling nation through icy cold and scorching heat, killing snakes and scorpions in their wake. Traversing the barren wasteland, the Jews observed carcasses of dead snakes as wide as beams, littering the “great and awesome wilderness.” They then realized how carefully Hashem was protecting them.

On *Sukkos*, as we sit in the shelter of our *sukkos*, relishing the miracles of the past, we must contemplate and focus on the miracles of the present as well. Hashem’s proverbial Clouds of Glory continue to protect His nation, battered and ravaged by thousands of years of exile.

This Moadim publication features *divrei Torah* to enhance and enrich your *yom tov* experience. It also features inspiring little anecdotes that could be mistaken for a charming collection of brief, personal narratives of student and faculty experiences. In reality, they are accounts of *hashgachah pratis* as seen through the prism of our MHS family. Expressing gratitude for Divine Providence is by definition something personal. Often, two people encounter the same event, yet don’t experience it in quite the same way. Taking note of the invisible Hand of the Grand Orchestrator, Who places us where we need to be at precisely the right moment, requires both contemplation and perspicacity. As I read the brief accounts, I was inspired to reflect upon personal moments of *hashgachah* as Hashem’s Clouds of Glory propel me ever forward in time.

A special thank you to our superb editorial staff, Chana Tennenbaum, Ariella Kornbluth, Hodaya Zerbib, Ariella Gold, and Mikaella Inzlicht, who have compiled a spectacular edition replete with *divrei Torah*, artwork and articles, which are truly qualitative.

With great appreciation to Rebbetzin Peshi Neuburger, a brilliant editor who is devoted *לכל וכל* to our students, Mrs. Dena Szpilzinger, our talented IT director and graphics coordinator, Mrs. Sara Tendler, beloved Moadim faculty advisor, and Mrs. Avigayil Finkelstein, our distinguished alumna and proofreader.

*Chag Sameach,*  
**T. Yanofsky**

## The Inherent Kedusha of the Sukkah

The *Mishnah Berurah* states that since the *sukkah* embodies much *kedusha*, it is especially important to limit mundane talk and watch our speech carefully while inside of it. While in the *sukkah*, one should be extra cautious about *lashon hara* and *rechilus*.

This statement raises some questions. Why does the *Mishnah Berurah* only remark that we should be careful about speaking *divrei chol* specifically in the *sukkah*? Why doesn't it mention other times when one should limit speaking *divrei chol* such as while wearing *tefillin*?

The *Mishnah Berurah's* source, as cited in *Shaarei Tzion*, is found in the Shelah Hakadosh. The Shelah Hakadosh writes that his father took it upon himself to only speak *divrei Torah* while in his *sukkah*. The Shelah describes the extreme *kedusha* that the *sukkah* encapsulates. One of his proofs is that the wood used for building the *sukkah* cannot be used for any other purpose for the rest of Sukkos. The *kedusha* of the material aspect of the *sukkah* is an integral and inherent part of the *sukkah* and is present throughout Sukkos even while the *sukkah* is not in use; it is not merely a function of the *sukkah* being used for a *mitzvah*. The essence of the *Sukkah* is the *kedusha* inside of it. What is the reasoning behind the intrinsic *kedusha* of the *sukkah*? There is a difference between *tashmishei mitzvah* and *tashmishei kedusha*. *Sifrei Torah* and *tefillin*, for example, are *tashmishei kedusha* because even when not in use, they have inherent *kedusha*. On the other hand, *tashmishei mitzvah*, such as *shofar* and *tzitzis*, are used to perform *mitzvos*, but these items have no inherent *kedusha* themselves. They can therefore be disposed of in any way. In contrast, a *sukkah*, for the duration of Sukkos, has inherent *kedushah* even when it is not in use, and we must be careful to respect that.

The *sukkah* is not only *tashmishei mitzvah*, but this small structure that we build every year is also a spark and a microcosm of the Beis Hamikdash. The Pele Yo'etz writes that the sanctity of the *sukkah* is parallel to that of a *shul*, which is itself parallel to the Beis Hamikdash. It is therefore only appropriate for one to conduct oneself with utmost dignity and decorum. The *sukkah*, just like a *shul*, is a *mikdash m'eat*.

Rav Yerucham Olshin notes that the *halacha* is that the minimum height for a *sukkah* is ten *tefachim* because the *shechinah* will not descend within a structure shorter than ten *tefachim*. Hashem's *shechinah* attaches to the *Sukkah* just as it attaches itself to the *korban chagigah*. The *shechinah* rests on each and every *sukkah*, giving the physical structure an inherent *kedushah*.

On Sukkos we *daven* that Hashem should rebuild "*sukkas Dovid hanofeles*"—the fallen *sukkah* of Dovid: that is, the Beis Hamikdash. Every year, we are *zocheh* to build a *mikdash me'at*, a *sukkah*, which is a microcosm of the Beis Hamikdash. We *daven* to Hashem that because of our efforts, Hashem should allow us to see the rebuilding of the ultimate *mikdash*, the third Beis Hamikdash: שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו, אמן.

🕊️ Shirel Rosenblum  
Adapted from Rabbi Daniel Glatstein



**Reggie Klein, 12th Grade**



*Aliza Herzog, 10th Grade*

## Keeping the Closeness of Hashem

The time of Sukkos is a very interesting time of year. As we leave Yom Kippur behind, there is a palpable feeling in the air. Some of it may be due to a sense of having achieved something on Yom Kippur. We have worked during the Aseres Y'mei Teshuva and the forty days from the beginning of Elul until now. It is a time of real closeness to Hashem, when we are able to be honest to ourselves and the Borei Olam. And then it is over, and reality begins to set in again. How is it possible to simply leave that lofty state of Neilah and continue on into the regular year? How do we keep the loftiness and closeness with us? The answer is—Sukkos.

The Pachad Yitzchok points out that there are two cycles when it comes to the *yomim tovim*; first there are the Shalosh Regalim: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkos. Then, there are the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos. Sukkos comes at the end of both these cycles. In this way, Sukkos is the ultimate climax. Whatever we were meant to achieve in both these cycles—after coming out of Mitzrayim and receiving the Torah during Pesach and Shavuot, and after crowning *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* as our king during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—we bring it all together in the *sukkah*.

Sukkos is referred to as "*zman simchaseinu*"—the time of our joy. This makes sense if we see Sukkos in the context of the Shalosh Regalim, which appear to be the happiest days of the year; we sit and indulge during these *yomim tovim*. But Sukkos is also the capstone of the Yomim Nora'im. How does the idea of "*zman simchaseinu*" fit with the loftiness and seriousness of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

The Rambam, in his *peirush* on *Mishnayos* on *Maseches Rosh Hashanah*, explains that the Yomim Noraim are not sad days; rather, they are days where we run to be close to Hashem. When we are standing in the dark and our lives hang in the balance, we run straight to the Creator and Judge Himself. It is this sense of closeness and intimacy that we carry into the *sukkah*—as it says in Shir Hashirim (1:4): "*heviani hamelech chadarav...*" — "the king brought me into his chamber" — this is the *sukkah*—"*...nagila v'nismicha bach*" — it is time to rejoice. We take whatever we have achieved during the previous holidays and bring it into the *sukkah* to make it real for ourselves.

The days before Sukkos are busy, and there is a lot to do, but it is all part of the *simcha* of Sukkos. Neilah is the time when we ask Hashem for *rachamim*, and we ask for more time to do *mitzvos*. We ask Hashem to please keep the gates open, so Hashem responds—okay— and He says—Let's see what you do in the time between Yom Kippur and Sukkos; let's see if the *kabalos* are as real to you now as they were in the first ten days of the month—challenging us to bring them into the *sukkah* to solidify them and make them even more real.

☞ Malka Hager

## The Power of the Zeman between Yom Kippur and Sukkos

The Rema states that between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, one does not say Tachanun (*Shulchan Aruch*, Orech Chaim, 624). We might think that this is because these are happy times and we are preparing for *yom tov*. However, this alone would not exempt us from not saying Tachanun.

There is an interesting Beur HaGra which uncovers the power of this *zman* in between Yom Kippur and Sukkos. The Gra explains that these four days have so much *kedusha* that they have some of the *kedusha* of Yom Kippur. The Gra states that the days in between Yom Kippur and Sukkos are like *yom tov*. We learn this from the *pasuk* in Parshas Emor which says “*ul’kachtem la’chem ba’yom ha’rishon* (Vayikra 23:40)” —commanding us to start the *mitzvah* of *lulav* on the “first day.” The *medrash* comments that we don’t take the *lulav* on the first day (of Tishrei), but rather on the fifteenth day of Tishrei. Why does the *pasuk* refer to this day as “the first day”? The *medrash* says that the *pasuk* is referring to the first day of Sukkos, which is “*rishon l’chesbon avonos*”—the first day in the accounting of sins: that is, the first opportunity to do *aveiros*. This is somewhat puzzling. Although we are busy preparing for *yom tov* between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, one would think that people would still find time to do *aveiros* in the four days preceding Sukkos.

The Beur HaGra says that the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos are a *yom tov* like Yom Kippur. The same way Yom Kippur wipes away our sins, these days also have power and are *moichel* our *aveiros*. Even though we do not sit in *shul* and fast and repent for our sins, as we do on Yom Kippur, these days still have power “*k’mo Yom Hakipurim b’miktzas*”—like a smaller measure of Yom Kippur. For this reason, the first day of Sukkos is “*rishon l’chesbon avonos*.” We have this great opportunity to continue our clean slate and the purity of our *neshamos* from Yom Kippur; therefore, there is no need to say Tachanun in this time period between Yom Kippur and Sukkos.

🕊️ Shari Friedman

Adapted from Rabbi Daniel Glatstein



Ellie Trapedo, 11th Grade

## The Sukkah: Feeling Hashem's Presence

“בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים כל־האזרח בישראל ישבו בסכת” (ויקרא כ"ג:מ"ב).

Why does the *pasuk* use the language of “י-ש-ב” twice? It seems repetitive.

According to Rav Yonasan Eybeschutz, the first time the *pasuk* writes “בסכת תשבו”, it is a commandment that the whole Klal Yisroel has an obligation to sit in *sukkos* for seven days. The second “ישבו בסכת” refers to important members of Klal Yisroel; they should sit in *sukkos* for their whole life—meaning, that they should know throughout the whole year that they are living in a flimsy, portable house, and that this world is only temporary.

The *sukkah* must be constructed in one of a few particular shapes. Why must we follow guidelines for such a seemingly random shape? Rabbi Ari Shishler suggests the following *mashal*: A *sukkah* must have two features—sturdy walls and a flimsy roof that’s incomplete enough that it allows rain to infiltrate. So too, the Jewish people must have sturdy “walls” like a *sukkah* in the sense that we must not let negative influences from the outside world into our homes. Additionally, we are never limited by a ceiling; we always have more room for further growth and achievement in our Yiddishkeit.

Furthermore, if we dig a little deeper into the message of the *sukkah*, we realize that through the *sukkah*, Hashem is showing us that He doesn’t only care about us when we’re at the peak of our *avodas Hashem* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, after we have just experienced a month of continuous *teshuvah* and introspection. The Rabbanim teach us that the *kedushah* of a *sukkah* is compared to that of a *beis medrash*; the only difference is that we’re supposed to live our normal daily lives in the *sukkah*. We learn this from the word, “תשבו,” which the Gemarah explains to mean “כעין תדורו”—in the manner that you usually live (סוכה כ"ח ב). Hashem shows us with the most mundane thing, a *sukkah*, that He wants to be a part of our entire life and to have a relationship with us, even in the day-to-day, mundane things that occur. According to the Arizal, the minimum requirement for a *sukkah* is to have two walls plus a piece of a third, to replicate a hug from Hashem. A hug is made up of a body (side 1) + an arm (side 2) + a hand (partial side 3). As we sit in our *sukkah*, Hashem is embracing us in a divine hug. This is why Sukkos is called “*zeman simchasenu*”—because there’s no greater *simcha* than feeling Hashem in our life.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* (324) writes that on Shemini Atzeres, it is as if Hashem is saying “שקשה עלי פרידתכם, “that your parting is hard for Me, and that is why it’s called Shemini Atzeres.” Why, wonders the Lubavitcher Rebbe, does Hashem say, “your parting” instead of “our parting”? Isn’t Hashem leaving us too? However, this is where we see the beauty of Sukkos; Hashem never leaves us after Sukkos is over. He is with us the whole year, and we’re just the ones who are leaving the *sukkah*.

☺ Rikki Schreiber

Sarah Wassner, 10th Grade



## *The Arba'ah Minim: Channeling Happiness*

### *Towards our Avodas Hashem*

The *mitzvah* of the *Arba'ah Minim* is unique to Sukkos. In *Vayikra* (23:40) the *pasuk* says: "And you shall take for yourself on the first day the fruit of a goodly tree, branches of palm trees, the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and **you shall rejoice before Hashem** your G-d for seven days."

The *Sefer HaChinuch* explains why we have this *mitzvah* of *Arba'ah Minim*. He explains that man is influenced by the actions which he does every day. This is why Hashem gave us many *mitzvos*; this way we always have the opportunity to do *mitzvos*, and our *avodas Hashem* is always on our minds. Furthermore, if we are busy doing good all day long, we will receive *schar* for our good deeds. By continually performing *mitzvos*, we constantly focus our thoughts on the good, and we remember to live our lives in an honest and righteous fashion.

The reason for the *Arba'ah Minim* is very similar. Another name for Sukkos is "Chag Ha'Asif." It has this name because at this time of the year we harvest and gather the fruits. The harvest is a time of *simcha*. Hashem commanded that we have a *yom tov* at this time of happiness so that we could take our naturally joyful reaction to the *simcha* of the harvest and channel it towards our *avodas Hashem*. By simply being happy at this time of year, we are fulfilling an important *mitzvah* and receiving *schar*.

However, since feelings of joy are accomplished mostly through physical and material expressions, there is a danger that joy could cause a person to forget Hashem and act in a way that is not in accordance with Hashem's *mitzvos*. Therefore, Hashem commanded that we take in our hands objects that will remind us that the *simcha* should be for the sake of Hashem. Therefore, the *Sefer HaChinuch* writes, Hashem commanded that we take the four species because "it is known in the ways of nature that all four species gladden the hearts of those who see them."

The *Sefer HaChinuch* adds that there is another significance to the *Arba'ah Minim*. They resemble certain body parts. The *esrog* resembles the heart. We take a heart-shaped species to signify that we should serve Hashem with our intelligence. The *lulav* is like the spine, that which is a central element in man. We take the *lulav* to signify that one should direct his entire body towards *Avodas Hashem*. We take the *hadassim*, whose leaves resemble eyes, to remind us on this day of happiness not to let our eyes lead us astray. We take *aravos*, whose leaves resemble lips, to signify that one should guard one's tongue, especially during a time of *simcha*. In this way, the *Arba'ah Minim* remind us to keep our focus spiritual during this joyful time.

✿ Miriam Landau

## Don't Let Go

Pre-Sukkos is always a bustling and exciting time, in which we build the *sukkah*, prepare decorations, and buy the *arba'ah minim*. But if you think about it, we aren't left with remotely as much preparation time as for other holidays. We spend the whole month of Elul getting ourselves ready for the Day of Judgement, and we start cleansing our homes of *chametz* months before Pesach arrives. Why is there so little time allotted to prepare for Sukkos, which follows so soon after Yom Kippur? We barely have enough time to transition ourselves mentally into Sukkos mode, let alone prepare for the actual *chag*. Why is this day, which is dedicated to commemorating Hashem's clouds that protected us in the *Midbar*, right after Yom Kippur?

The proximity between Yom Kippur and Sukkos can be understood by examining Rachel's reaction to the birth of Yosef. It is interesting to note the name Rachel gave her first child. She named him Yosef. Why? Rachel states, "וַיִּשְׂאֵל רָחֵל אֶת-ה' לֵאמֹר, אֲנִי אֵין בְּנֵי אֶחָד" —asking Hashem to "add" for her another son (Bereishis 30:24). After countless years of crying, calling out, and praying, the first thing she does when she has her first child is to ask for another one. It seems a bit strange. One would think she'd first thank Hashem and enjoy what He just graciously gave her, and then maybe in a year or two ask for another child. One explanation is that through the many years of suffering she endured while pleading for a child, she developed an extremely close connection with Hashem. She had never felt so close to Hashem and she didn't want to lose that connection, so she kept davening to Him as if nothing ever happened. This feeling of closeness during hardship is something that many of us experience. However, Rachel didn't just want to feel the connection during hard times; rather, she wanted it to endure and stay alive within her. So she kept davening, never letting go of Hashem.

Coming out of Yom Kippur, we feel elevated, connected, and close to Hashem, but in a solemn way. We prayed and cried out to Him to forgive us for all that we did wrong that year, and through our tears and desperation, we strengthened our connection with Him. But we want to remain connected and not let it slowly slip away from our grasp. When Yom Kippur comes to a close and Sukkos arrives, we transform our connection, which was associated with the fear of the Judgement Day, into a closeness in which we feel the warmth of Hashem's abode. Now that the *din* is over, we want to take our closeness and just be with Hashem. We sit in the *sukkah* and just bask in His presence. We never want to let go.

🕊️ Yehudis Kundin

## *Shemini Atzeres: The Eternal Bond*

At the end of Sukkos, on Shemini Atzeres, we say a personal goodbye to the Divine closeness we merited throughout the days of *yom tov*. Over Sukkos, we celebrated with the rest of the 70 nations of the world, as symbolized by the 70 bulls we offered in the Beis HaMikdash throughout the festival. On the last day, Hashem says to us, "It is so hard for Me to part from you—I want to spend some time alone, just you and I." Therefore, we get an extra day, Shemini Atzeres, to say farewell.

Many *meforshim* are bothered by a question; how will it help to spend another day together? At the end of that day we will again face the difficulty of separation! How will the problem be solved? One of the most beautiful answers to this question is that on Shemini Atzeres, we have something special: Simchas Torah. As we rejoice with the Torah, we are given something tangible to embrace and to hold on to even after the festive season. Once we have attained a deep, warm, and joyous connection with the Torah on the final day of *yom tov*, we can carry that with us. By learning Torah, we maintain our communication with Hashem even after He "departs." Learning His holy Torah allows us to feel His intimacy at all times. As we dance and sing on this most beautiful of holidays, we are fortifying ourselves for the long winter ahead. The Torah will accompany us and we will never be lonely.

☞ Golda Bamberger



**Rashi Bell, 11th Grade**



Lieba 20.

Lieba Balashov, 9th Grade

## Bringing Back the Ananim

After B'nei Yisrael sinned through *Chet Ha'Egel*, one of the three ways that Hashem showed B'nei Yisrael that He forgave them and wanted to be with them again was by returning the *ananei hakavod*. Bringing back the *ananim* showed that Hashem wanted to protect B'nei Yisrael and wanted them to live with Him. When Yom Kippur is over, we wonder if Hashem fully forgives us and wants us to live with Him. The next thing that He commands us to do is to go into the *sukkah*, which represents the *ananim*. By doing this, it seems like Hashem is saying, "Look! I'm giving you the *ananim*! I forgive you, and I want to be with you!" Just as the return of the *ananei hakavod* after the *Chet Ha'Egel* was a sign of Hashem's forgiveness, so too our yearly transition to the *sukkah* after Yom Kippur represents Hashem's forgiveness of our sins. Once Sukkos rolls around, we've begged Hashem for *teshuva*. In response, Hashem tells us to go into the *sukkah*; He is giving the *ananim* back to us because he forgives us and wants to be with us.

🕊️ Ruki Schwartz



## The Derash of Sukkos Mamash

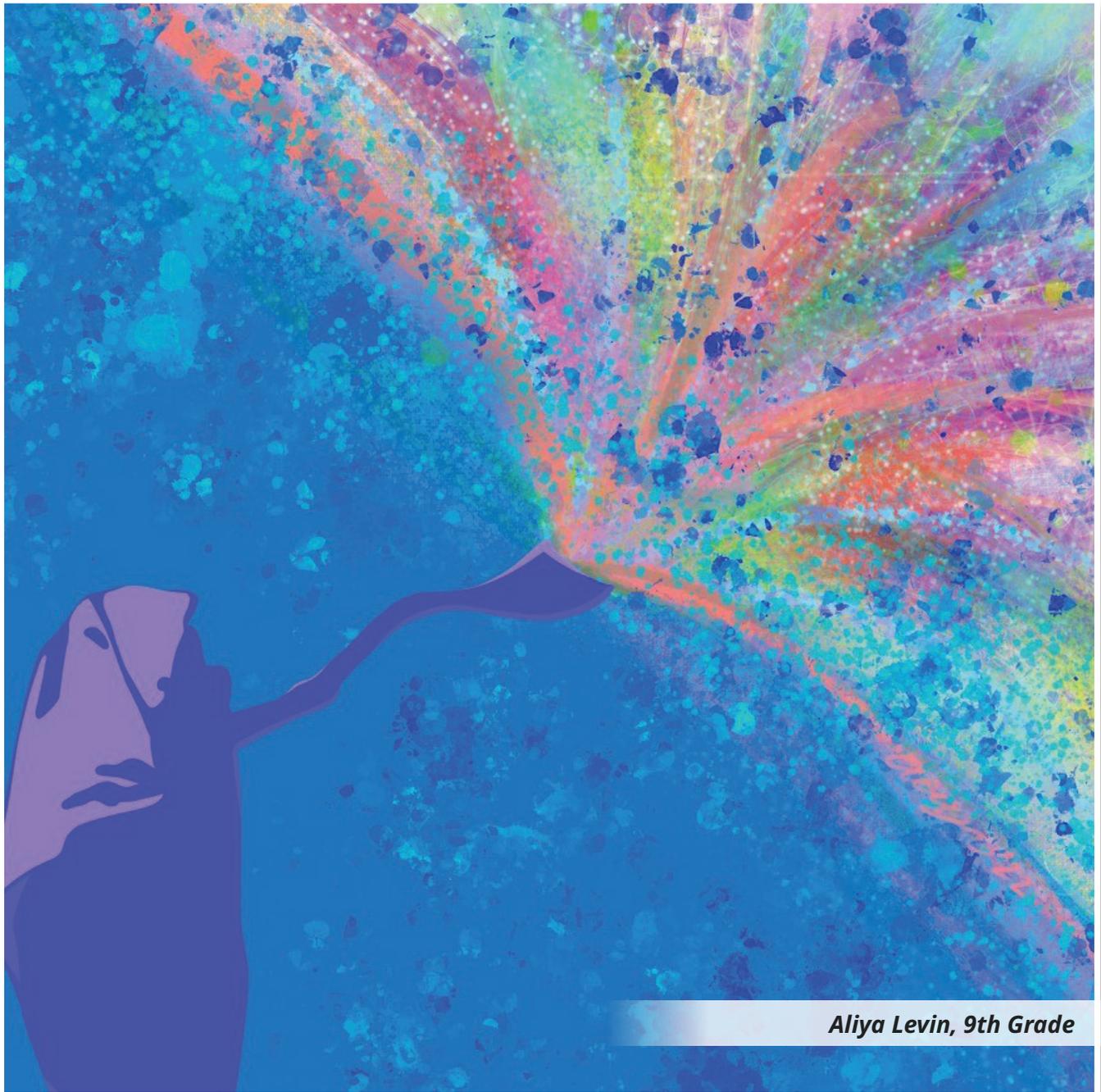
In נ"פ"ת, I wrote a *d'var* Torah discussing the meaning of the *pasuk*, "ki b'sukkos hoshavti es B'nei Yisrael" (Vayikra 23:43). I mentioned that Rabbi Akiva interprets "sukkos" as referring to "sukkos mamash"—physical tents. I then asked two questions; if *sukkos* refers to tents, then why not call them "ohalim," as in every other instance, and if B'nei Yisrael built their own tents, then why does the *pasuk* use the word "hoshavti"—I caused to dwell? Instead of giving an answer to these questions, I wrote that Rabbi Eliezer suggests another explanation for the meaning of "sukkos"—it actually refers to the *Ananei HaKavod*. I concluded by saying that in the future I would explore Rabbi Akiva's position further.

Truthfully, I didn't actually know what I was going to write. I didn't have a good answer for my questions. On the first night of Sukkos, however, I saw tremendous *hashgacha pratit* when Rabbi Feiner, the rav of the White Shul, spoke about this very topic before *ma'ariv*. He began his *drasha* by discussing the life of Rabbi Akiva. The illustrious *tanna* was the one who was *nichnas l'pardes v'yatza b'shalom*; he was one who reached *nun sha'arei binah*, which even Moshe Rabbeinu didn't achieve during his lifetime. In most instances in the Gemara when Rabbi Akiva is involved in a *machlokes* between *peshat* and *derash*, he takes the *derash* approach. However, when determining the meaning of "sukkos," he concludes that the *pasuk* refers to "sukkos mamash"—the most literal interpretation.

Rabbi Feiner pointed out something very interesting about the life of B'nei Yisrael in the *Midbar*. For forty years, we didn't need new clothing, food, or even the restroom. All our physical needs were completely taken care of, leaving us twenty-four hours a day to study Torah, allowing us to forge the most optimal relationship with the Ribono Shel Olam. But when we finally reached Eretz Yisrael, we needed to work the land, grow our own food, and make a *parnassah*, leaving us a lot less time to strengthen our connection with Hashem. Why would arriving in the Holy Land require us to remove ourselves from our holy *madreigah*?

Rabbi Feiner answered this question by explaining that although ideally we should try to get as close to Hashem as possible, the passive life of the *Midbar*, where all our physical needs are met, is not necessarily what Hashem wants from us. We were put into this world to live; we need to do our part. In the *Midbar*, we were given everything and gave nothing in return. The Borei Olam wants us to return something, and we do that by taking care of our physical necessities. Rabbi Akiva recognized the value of B'nei Yisrael contributing to their own physical maintenance, thus interpreting "sukkos" as physical tents. According to this interpretation, Sukkos is a *chag* when we show Hashem Yisbarach that we appreciate the miracle that He did for us and aren't forgetting to do our own *hishtadlus*.

It is said that Sukkos is the *yom tov* of Ya'akov Avinu. The first time the word "sukkos" appears in the Torah is when Ya'akov builds huts for his cattle: "ul'mikneihu asah sukkos" (Bereishis 33:17). Ya'akov also represents this idea of valuing *gashmius* when he returns for the seemingly insignificant *pachim ketanim*. Interestingly, the letters of אביר יעקב are the same as רבי עקיבא. Rabbi Feiner said in the name of the Arizal that Rabbi Akiva was a *gilgul* of Ya'akov Avinu, so it makes sense that Rabbi Akiva understood the importance of the material. When he explains "sukkos" as "sukkos mamash," it's not a more *pashut* explanation; on the contrary, as someone who understood *pardes*, Rabbi Akiva knew that once you finish *sod*, you come back to the *peshat* and interpret it a whole new way. Even though *sukkos mamash* seems like the simple understanding, it's really *peshat* the second time around—*peshat* as understood by someone who already understands *sod*. The interpretation of "sukkos mamash" is actually deeper than that which interprets the *sukkos* as *Ananei HaKavod*, because in addition to recognizing Hashem's protection, we recognize our own responsibility.



*Aliya Levin, 9th Grade*

Shira Nordlicht, 9th Grade



## Why are we so Happy on Sukkos?

The *yom tov* of Sukkos is known as *zman simchaseinu*. There is a *chiyuv* of *simcha* on each of the *regalim*, but a special *mitzvah* of *simcha* is present on Sukkos. Why is Sukkos associated with the *mitzvah* of *simcha*? Sukkos is the *yom tov* that follows *mechilas avonos* on Yom Kippur. The *midrash* in Shemos Rabah tells us that when the Bais Hamikdash was standing, no member of Klal Yisroel was ever distressed. They would enter the Bais Hamikdash full of sins, bring a *korban* to atone for those sins, and then emerge after atonement as a *tzadik*. This brought about a tremendous *simcha* which dispelled any distress that a *yid* would feel. The Shem M'shmuel, the Sochatchover Rebbe, points out that a *korban* was only *mechaper* for *shegagos* —sins without intent. However, Yom Kippur is *mechaper* for sins done *b'meizid* – with intent – as well. Therefore, the *simcha* after Yom Kippur is incomparably greater.

We know that Yom Kippur only brings about *kapparah* for the sins of those who do *teshuvah*. Similarly, Rashi points out in *Maseches Yuma* that *korbonos* of atonement only bring about *kapparah* for those who do *teshuvah*. However, we assume that anyone who brings a *korban* only does so because they regret their misdeeds and have repented. Therefore, Rashi says, all who bring a *korban* experience *kapparah*. It certainly follows, that *yidden* who fast and abstain from pleasure, and pour out their hearts to Hashem in *tefillah* on Yom Kippur, are doing so because they regret their bad deeds and repent. There is no question that Klal Yisroel will experience *kapparah* over Yom Kippur, and there is no greater *simcha* than completing Yom Kippur as a *tzadik*.

It would seem that the special joy of Sukkos is the joy of having received *kapparah* on Yom Kippur. However, in a *piyyut* in Shacharis on the second day of Sukkos, the *paytan* indicates that the four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos were added to create a separation between the *simcha* of Yom Kippur and the *simcha* of Sukkos. It would thus seem that the *simcha* of Sukkos is not related to the *simcha* of *kapparas avonos*; rather, the *simcha* of Yom Kippur and Sukkos stem from two separate sources.

The Shem M'shmuel explains that the *simcha* of *kapparas avonos* comes from two sources. The simplest source of *simcha* is the avoidance of punishment which results from *kapparas avonos*. The second source of *simcha* is deeper. The *neshama* in its native state is always happy. It is a *cheilek Eloka mima'al*, a portion of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's elevated court, where *simcha* always reigns: as the *passuk* says, "*oz v'chedva b'mkomo*"— strength and joy are in His place (I Divrei HaYamim 16:27). Therefore, man, who hosts the *neshama*, should always be *b'simcha* as well. However, the body, which is rooted in *gashmius* and the lower world, pulls man away from *simcha* and into a dour mood. One who can control the mind and heart and make the *neshama* paramount will have a greater propensity toward *simcha*. One whose body primarily controls the agenda, with the *neshama* as subordinate, or whose *neshama* is obscured by sins, will find themselves with less *simcha*. After *kapparas avonos*, when the *neshama* once again gets the upper hand, *simcha* is then freed from its constraints and is able to be fully appreciated. Whether *kapparas avonos* is on one's mind or not, the now-unfettered *neshama* inspires and imbues the person with *simcha*.

The first *simcha*— that of active appreciation for *kapparas avonos* and the avoidance of punishment—is the *simcha* we experience immediately following Yom Kippur. The second and more subtle *simcha*, which is deeper and innate to the *neshama*, is the *simcha* of Sukkos, the *simcha* of *zman simchaseinu*.

The Shem M'shmuel concludes that *motzei* Yom Kippur, which is always a weekday, when one is occupied by mundane pursuits and concerns, is not a time which allows one to appreciate the subtle and deeper *simcha* intrinsic to the *neshama*. On *motzei* Yom Kippur, we are only able to experience the more overt *simcha* of *kapparas avonos*. When *yom tov* arrives, and the focus turns inward to the *neshama*, the deep, intrinsic *simcha* of *zman simchaseinu* can then be appreciated.

## *Shade of Emunah*

*Chazal* offer two understandings of the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*. Rabbi Akiva maintains that our *sukkos* commemorate the actual temporary homes which Hashem provided for us in the *midbar*. Rabbi Eliezer insists, though, that they are symbolic reminders of the *ananei hakavod*, the 'clouds of glory,' which protected the Jewish People throughout their journeys. The *Zohar* explains that when we sit under the *sechach* of our *sukkos*, we bask in the *tzila d'meheimnusa*, the shade of the faith of our ancestors who merited that Divine protection. **We asked the MHS family to share instances when they or family members experienced their own personal 'ananei hakavod,' and felt sheltered in His shade.**

When my husband and I decided to really be *Shomer Shabbos*, I knew that performing music for mixed audiences was something I would no longer be able to do. It was a tough decision to make, but for the sake of my *yiddishkeit* I quit. Soon afterwards, a Jewish student of mine decided to start an open mic night for women only, mostly Jewish! She is a musically talented woman, and she wanted an outlet for her beautiful songs! One night, she invited me to perform at a ladies-only event, at a club in Manhattan. I did, and was seen by a woman who worked for Rabbi Wallerstein in Brooklyn. She asked me to come teach at Ohr Naava, and the rest is history! Hashem closed one door for me, and opened a much wider, more beautiful one.

☺ Mrs. Chava Schneider

I was nine years old that *Sukkos*, and was walking home from a neighbor's house. As any kid might be, I was careless about crossing the street at the crosswalk, and instead stood about fifteen feet away from it, waiting for the cars to stop. Finally, all was clear, and I stepped one foot into the street just as a car speeding down. I leaped back onto the sidewalk as the car, honking loudly, stopped short. I ran across to the other side, and continued walking home.

I realized when I was four or five houses from my house that the same car was inching along the street next to me, following me home. Panicked, I didn't think to knock on the door of a neighbor. Instead I ran to my house. Aware that I was being followed, I ran around to the back of the house, hoping the back door might be unlocked. It wasn't.

Seeing no other option, as the woman had parked her car in our driveway and fully intended to follow me inside, I ran into our *sukkah* but neglected to shut the door behind me. I simply huddled in the

corner, praying she wouldn't follow.

She did. Not more than a minute later, I heard loud banging on our back door, which stood about four feet from the *sukkah* door, which was wide open. The woman yelled threats, demanding that the door be opened, thinking I had managed to run inside.

But I hadn't. I regretted my decision to head home. Frightened, I sat there, waiting, as the too many minutes seemed to tick by. I was sure she was going to find me at any moment, but, astoundingly, she didn't even look inside the *sukkah*. She finally left, yelling that she would come back. Baruch Hashem, she hasn't.

With the passage of time, I can't be sure why she came. Perhaps it was to warn me to cross more carefully. But in that moment, I felt terribly threatened by her presence and the sense of Hashem's *hashgacha* has never left me.

☺ Shira Nordlicht

*Serach Soloveichik, 10th Grade*



**Adina Escott, 11th Grade**



*Shadina Escott*

I ordered an acai bowl from a cafe and called to make sure that it contained no milk, as we are careful to drink only *chalav yisroel*, and that establishment used *chalav stam*. They assured me that the acai bowl was dairy free and I was good to go. When it came, I noticed that it was more white than purple and wondered if in fact it really had a milk component. Once again, I called the store and this time they casually mentioned that the white I was seeing was the almond milk they used as the base. I am deathly allergic to almonds. Baruch Hashem I called again.

🕊️ Adina Bistrisky

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When my great uncle was 15 years old in Iran, the situation for Jews had worsened. Reluctantly, my great-grandparents decided to send him away to safety. They found out that Rav Tov was chartering a plane to bring young Jewish boys out of Iran. It was set to leave on *Shabbat*... that was the only option. He didn't want to go because it was *Shabbat*, but his parents pushed him because it was, to them, a clear instance of *pikuach nefesh*, and would, they hoped, save his life. He was still toying with the idea of giving up his seat, in order to honor *Shabbat*, when they received word that war had begun and the airport was bombed. There were no flights going in or out. Rav Tov informed them of the new day and time for escaping, and with Hashem's protection, he was able to both keep his last *Shabbat* in Iran, and make it safely to France.

🕊️ Chanala Elishis

In August 2020, going into tenth grade I was on the phone with my friend. She told me that she had recently begun to keep a *hashgachah pratis* notebook in which she would record a new story each day. I told her that it was so special of her, but insisted that I could never do that. She said, "Of course you can! Do it right now!" So I did. The next night, at about the same time, she called to remind me to "write another *hashgachah pratis* story that happened to you today." And then, remarkably, for the rest of the year she called me every single day. Now, in twelfth grade, each of us has continued to write in our special notebooks. And while it used to be so hard for me to think of a *hashgachah pratis* story every day, now it is so natural. Because now that I do it daily, I truly do always see Hashem's hand in the events of my life.

An example of an entry in my *hashgachah pratis* diary:

*My friend texted me to help her with the Chumash homework. I had already submitted it even though it wasn't due for two more days. When I checked google classroom for the homework, I realized that I had mistakenly submitted my Navi homework. Had my friend not asked me for help, I would never have noticed my error and would've gotten a zero.*

🕊️ Chana Sava

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When I was looking to move to Monsey, my real estate agent took me to see a house with a charming cherry tree in front, which was in full bloom in that spring month. I wanted that house. Days, weeks, and months passed, but the "red tape" and complicated logistics were becoming increasingly more knotty. I hoped, I prayed, and I waited, but eventually the sale fell through and I was left house-less and disappointed. Little did I know that Hashem had in mind for me a larger, more spacious house, on a quiet cul-de-sac. Almost every time I drive past that first house, I offer up a silent prayer to Hashem for directing me to the right address and for bestowing such *bracha* upon me before I even realized it.

🕊️ Mrs. Sara Tendler

Last year on *Erev Sukkot* I went to go pick up some food for the *chag*. When I got to the store, I saw that my food was ready, but there were others ahead of me so I patiently waited my turn. Five minutes. It may seem insignificant. But when I reached the corner which I usually cross on my way home I saw that someone there had just been hit by a car. Of course, I will never know the precise timing of the events that happened, but it did occur to me that I may have just witnessed a moment of *hashgachat Hashem* in my life.

☺ *Batsheva Benitzhak*

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One *Shabbos* I was in Israel with my cousins and we were planning to walk to the *Kosel* for *Shabbos* davening. As we got ready to leave, it began to rain and we wondered whether or not we ought to go. We decided that if the rain didn't stop in ten minutes we would change our plans, and stay back. Sure enough the downpour continued. We went up to the hotel lounge and sure enough the rain let up just a few minutes later. Still, we stuck with our decision not to go. After *Shabbos* we were horrified to hear that there had been a stabbing at the entrance to the Old City and that Arabs were continuing to throw rocks over the *Kosel*. People had been hurt and many fled in fear. I was terribly saddened by the suffering of fellow Jews, but at the same time, was enormously grateful to Hashem for sparing me and my family that *tza'ar*.

☺ *Leah Borenstein*

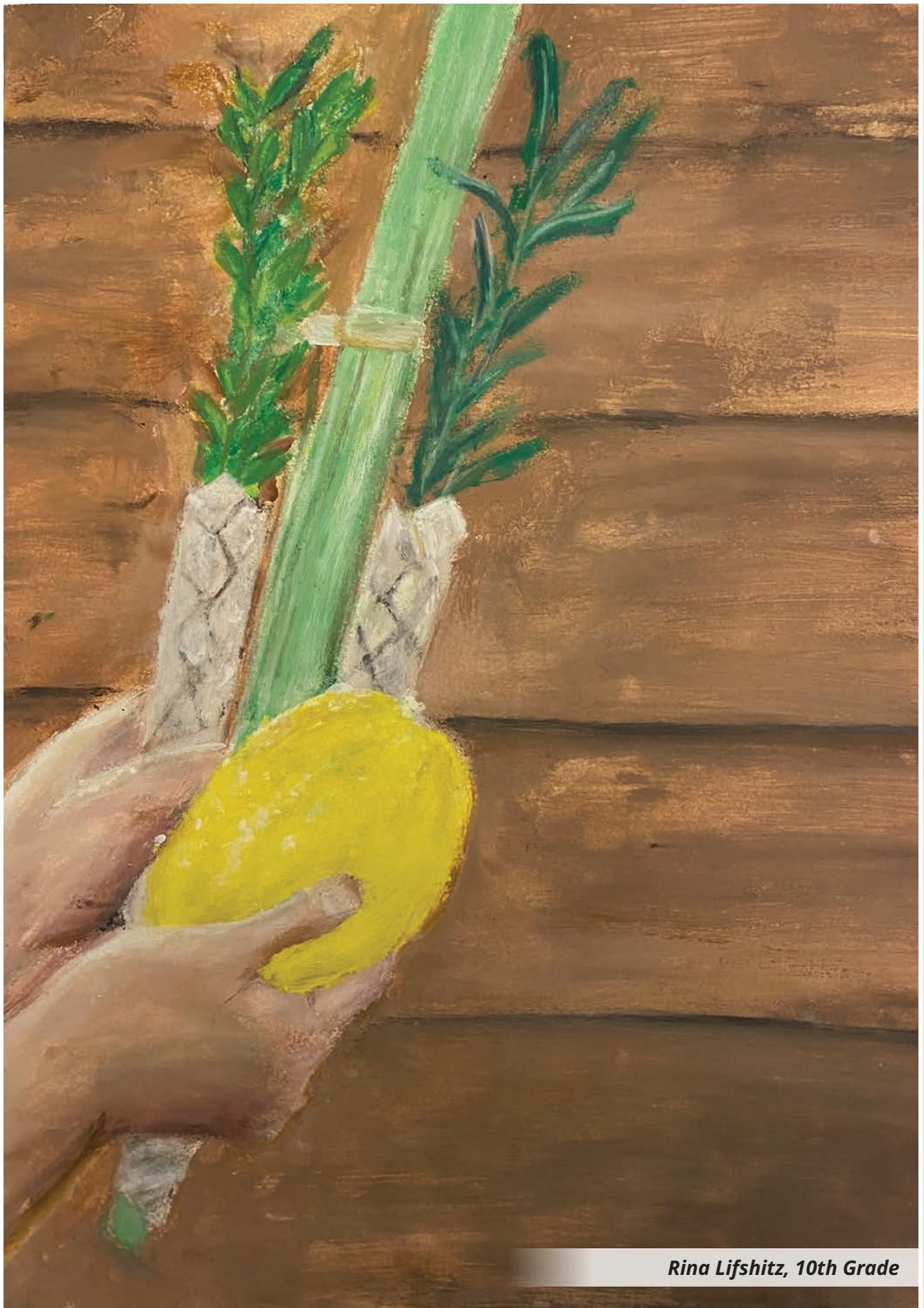
In my line of work, I source a number of fabric swatches for custom upholstery. I usually keep the swatch that gets used in my client's files. The rejected options get thrown or given away- I just don't have room to keep them all. But one striped taffeta was too pretty and unusual to discard. I kept it- alternating lines of lime, teal, emerald, olive- for more than 4 years, until last week, when I realized that it was the perfect thing to close a slit in a skirt. Having that swatch saved me a fabric shopping trip and let me wear the skirt the same week that I bought it, in time for a *simcha*.

☺ *Mrs. Zisi Naimark*

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A few years ago I purchased tickets for my family for *Chol Hamoed Sukkos* to visit an aquarium at a bit of a distance from our home. A half hour before we were supposed to leave we got a phone call from the aquarium saying that unfortunately they had overbooked and our tickets were rescheduled for one week later. But we didn't want to go one week later, as it wasn't *chol hamoed* anymore!! Not seeing a different option, with some grumbling we drove to a local park. About two hours later, as we were preparing to return home, the skies abruptly darkened and it began TO POUR! It was heavy, heavy, almost blinding rain. We rushed to the car and hurried home. A while later we heard on the radio that two highways we would have used to drive to the aquarium had flooded and were closed. People were stranded and could not drive further. We took a deep breath and thanked Hashem for sparing us from this situation! And then we prepared an extra fancy dinner to eat in our *Sukkah* (by the time dinner was ready the rain had stopped).

☺ *Reb. Fink*



*Rina Lifshitz, 10th Grade*

## A Sincere and Genuine Heart

“ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדור” — “And on the first day, you shall take a majestic fruit (*esrog*)” (Vayikra 23:40). When the Torah commands us to gather the four *minim* of Sukkos, it refers to the *esrog* as *hadar*, majestic. Why does the Torah only require the *esrog* to be “*hadar*,” and not the other *minim*?

The reason for this can be understood in context of a statement in Pirkei Avos 2:9. The *mishnah* raises the question: What is the right path that a man should choose? Various answers are given. Among them, R' Eliezer says one should have an עין טובה, a good eye; R' Yehoshua says one should have a חבר טוב, a good friend; R' Yosi says one should have a שכן טוב, a good neighbor, and R' Elazar says that one should have a לב טוב, a good heart. The *mishnah* concludes that while all these answers are correct, R' Elazar ben Arach's answer—a good heart—is the best, because all the other answers are included within it; if you have a good heart then you have all the other good qualities as well.

Everything follows the heart. If one's eyes and mouth are open wide, but the heart is full of *sheker*, then everything is fake. But if your eyes and mouth are open wide, and your heart is too, then everything else follows your heart.

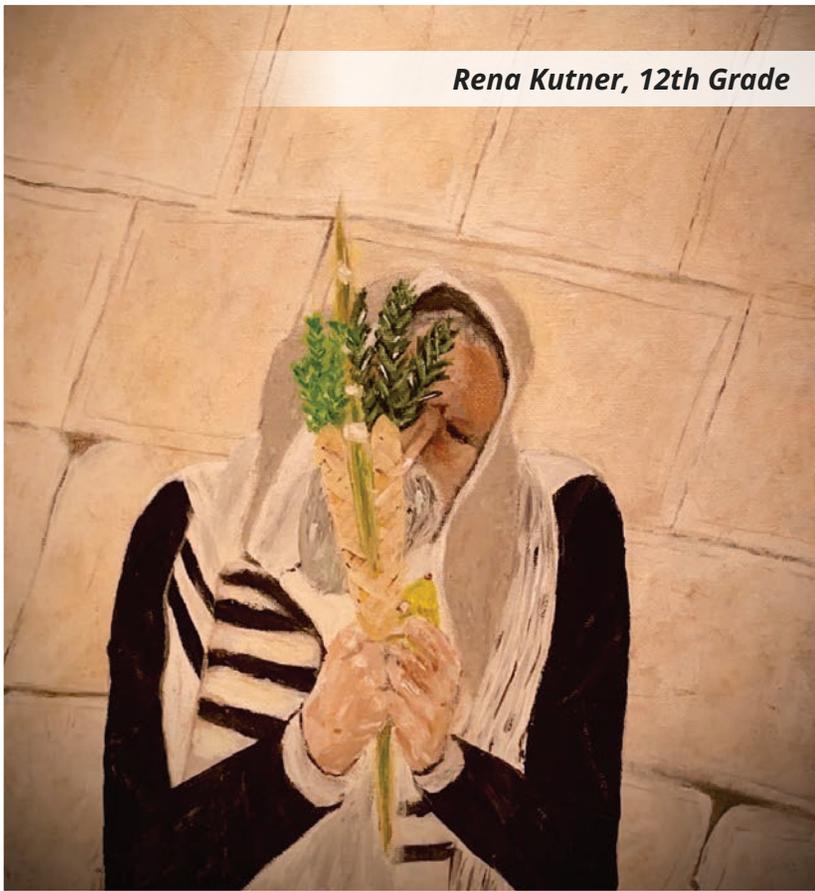
Each of the *arba'ah minim* represents a different part of the body. The *lulav* represents the spine; *aravos* are the lips; *hadassim* are the eyes; and the *esrog* is the heart. The *esrog*, which represents the heart, is the only one which must be *mehudar*. If your heart is *hadar*—sincere and genuine—then everything else will follow it. Similarly, if the *esrog*, the heart of the *minim*, is *hadar*, then all of the other *minim* will follow in kind and be *mehudar* as well; that is the beauty of the *esrog*.

☺ Faye Fuchs





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