

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
SUKKOS 5781 - 2020



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From the desk of the Editors

When one thinks of סוכות, the first thing that comes to mind usually is the מוצה of לולב. Well, maybe there is a reason for this; perhaps our נשמות know something about this מוצה that we don't yet realize. When we shake one לולב, one אתרוג, two ערבות, and three הדסים together, we are symbolizing something far greater than ourselves.

טעם, taste, represents דעת תורה, while ריח, smell, represents the accomplishment of מעשים טובים. Further, since the אתרוג has a taste, טעם, and a smell, ריח, it represents the people amongst כלל ישראל who have both a tremendously high caliber of דעת תורה and countless מעשים טובים. Since the לולב comes from a palm tree, it is associated with dates, thus representing yiddin who have a high level of דעת תורה, yet are lacking when it comes to מעשים טובים, since dates have a delicious taste but barely any smell. Also, because הדסים have an enjoyable smell yet no taste, הדסים represent yiddin who have multitudes of מעשים טובים but barely any דעת תורה. Finally, although the ערבות were created in Hashem's perfect ways, they have neither smell nor taste, therefore, they represent those amongst כלל ישראל who have little דעת תורה and meager amounts of מעשים טובים.

Accordingly, when one takes all four of ד' מינים and shakes them in unity to accomplish the beautiful מוצה of נטילת לולב, he is symbolizing אחדות בעם ישראל. Just as all of the ד' מינים are different from one another and in spite of that, they still come together to accomplish one stunning מוצה, us Jews strive to melt away our differences and come together באחדות to make up one powerful עם. This edition of Moadim is a concrete example of how different girls with varying הנפש come together, in spite of their differences, to make something magnificent. Moreover, this year, there will be a new segment in every Moadim publication entitled, "chavaya", loosely translated as "experiences". Girls have the opportunity to submit short stories about experiences that they had in relation to the upcoming יום טוב. This new segment highlights the individuality of each and every girl in MHS that helps make up our close MHS family. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to this edition of Moadim! It is our hope that this Moadim will enhance the שמחת יום טוב of all of the families in the MHS community, as this יום טוב is referred to as "זמן שמחתנו"!

With love,
The Moadim Crew

Message from the Menahel

Truly, we revel in our *yom tov* spirit and finery at this time of year. The slightly cooler weather heralds the spiritual crescendo of *tefillas neila* on *Yom Kippur* and the embrace of the *Sukkah*, with gleaming cutlery, ornamental decorations and a hint of the heavenly embrace of the עונני הכבוד. Beloved students, as you peruse these pages, perhaps sipping a tea or a latte comfortably ensconced in a chair in the *sukkah*, you will take note of Jenny Rapp's excellent article. She speaks of the high point of *Simchas Torah*, marked by song and dance with our beloved *Torah*, an expression of the deep attachment we feel to that most sacred gift. We celebrate this relationship on *Simchas Torah*.

The fulcrum of *Torah* scholarship is undoubtedly the investment of time, energy and patience into *Torah* learning. The *Kli Yakar* famously comments on the *pasuk* of ואהבת לרעך כמוך by relating the story of the aspiring גר who approached *Shamai* and asked him to teach all of the *Torah* while he stood on one foot. *Shamai* sharply refused. Lest you mistakenly think that *Shamai* was harsh, know that it was he who authored the directive of יהוי מקבל את כל האדם בסבר פנים יפות. It is posited that his retort was symbolic of his shutting down the misguided attitude for a quick fix or shortcut for the complex and arduous process of *Torah* study.

At MHS, our students are privileged to learn *Torah* from esteemed *rabbanim* and dedicated teachers. To their credit they studiously apply themselves, building their textual skills and *Torah* knowledge with grit, determination and focus.

When the same גר approached הלל, he responded with the classic לרעך כמוך, perceiving that the גר was seeking a leg to stand on, a foundation for *Torah* study.

Our students, too, are cognizant of the importance of רעות, friendship, love and respect for one another. At MHS, it is our desire to create an atmosphere where we revel in one another's successes and keenly feel each other's pain. *Rechilus* and defaming a fellow classmate should be anathema to an MHS student. This refined, interpersonal behavior will surely be the byproduct of their *Torah* study and interaction with incredible role models.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the *Moadim* Committee who were very recently appointed, on their first limited edition of *Moadim*. We are eagerly awaiting future installments of this delightful compendium.

Kudos to all of our talented artists (special mention to Reggie Klein - cover design and Cherri Citron - background design) and writers for their submissions, which will surely enhance our חג.

Thank you to Rebbetzin Neuburger, celebrated teacher and editor and Mrs. Tendler, for their oversight and involvement.

חג שמח.

Mrs. Tsvia Yanofsky



Chavi Golding, 12th Grade

Potato Kugel and Politics

By: Fayga Tziporah Pinczower

Sanhedrin HaGadol vs. The Supreme Court:

In the wake of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, conflict arises regarding the appropriate course of action. While some insist that the President refrain from appointing a justice until after the election, as Obama had, others argue that the Constitution clearly states that appointing a justice is within the President's jurisdiction, even immediately prior to an election. In times of conflict, it is compelling to reflect on how the Jewish courts would address the dispute. Despite the fact the Jewish court predates the American court by two thousand years, juxtaposing these courts may shed light on our current political dilemma.

Notwithstanding the differences regarding the makeup in the courts, there are striking similarities with regard to procedure. As one would assume, both the Sanhedrin HaGadol and (Lehavdil) Supreme Court are the most pre-eminent and powerful courts and are tasked with the weighty responsibility of interpreting invaluable texts. (Of course one cannot compare the importance of the Torah, which is God-given to any other document, including the Constitution which is merely the product of the human mind). Additionally, the semi-circle seating arrangement established in the Sanhedrin is implemented in the Supreme Court as well. Moreover, the fashion in which the Sanhedrin voted allowed the most junior member of the court to vote first so the other judges would not be swayed by a more senior judge. Interestingly, the Supreme Court imitates the same voting procedure. In both courts, verdicts are decided by a majority vote. As the Founding Fathers were deeply religious men, it is unsurprising that many characteristics of their country's court system were similar to the ancient Jewish court.

As similar as the Supreme Court and Sanhedrin may seem, there are many differences between the two. One significant difference is the moral quality of judges appointed to the Sanhedrin versus judges appointed to the Supreme Court of America. Unlike the American Supreme Court Justices – who do not need to

meet any specific criteria besides favor in the eyes of the President and Senate – the potential judges for the Sanhedrin need to meet numerous standards to even be considered, most crucially being a Talmud Chacham and having Yirat Shamayim. In order to ensure that the member was fit for the prestigious position, the judges would send agents to observe and identify these remarkable individuals. Additionally, the candidate would be required to receive Smichah (a mesora dating back to Moshe Rabeinu) from both Avos Beis Din and the Nasei of the Sanhedrin – no parallel exists in the Supreme Court of the United States. In contrast to the nine justices who serve on the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice, seventy Torah scholars served on the Sanhedrin collectively, (amongst them, three positions of distinction). Undoubtedly, there are many more differentiations to be made between Jewish and secular courts.

Perhaps the most significant differentiation is the Author of the interpreted documents which lay out the parameters for each court. While our wise Founding Fathers gave our current justices the tools to judge only legal cases, Hashem designed a justice system more powerful than the Supreme Court today. It not only held the role of clarifying legal dispute but also served as a center for Jews to refer to for Yiddishkeit. After all, the Sanhedrin HaGadol was responsible for enacting the celebration of Rosh Chodesh, clarifying disputes in Halacha, and even appointing kings. That is because the role of Halacha is intrinsically tied to our existence as Jews; without Halachic observance, we would not be here as a nation millennia after Sanhedrin was dismantled. By following the rulings of our judges, we have managed to survive and thrive.

While the passing of Justice Ginsburg is a solemn moment in U.S. history, its proximity to the Yom HaDin gives us pause for reflection. Despite a mortal judge's impact on justice in this world, it's important to have in mind that it is the True Judge, Hashem who controls every aspect of our lives, and even individuals in enormously powerful positions are mere messengers of His will.



Morah Blau a"h

Morah Blau, a"h, my elementary school principal, passed away this year on the first day of Pesach. תהא נפשה צרורה בצרור החיים.

How does one write about a woman larger than life? She may have been short in physical stature but I will always look up to her. There are so many life lessons that she imparted, so many ideas that influence my weltanschauung, which is quite remarkable considering that I left those hallowed walls of elementary school at such a tender age.

Morah Blau instilled in her students a love for words of *Tanach* and *Chazal*. Her appreciation of the *pesukim* as דבר אלקים and for the holy words of our Sages is something that has been a source of inspiration

for all of my classmates. In retrospect, I can see that so many of the school's trademark programs were aimed at instilling within us the words of *Tanach* and *Chazal* so that it was שגור בפינו. Our weekly פתגמים, our songs, our *Parsha* booklets, our *Pirkei Avos* programs, even our plays, were all modalities and forums to inculcate values as well as to create an abiding love for the *Torah Hakedoshah*. The *pesukim* of the story of *Mechiras Yosef*, *Megillas Rus*, *Megillas Esther*, and others will always roll off my tongue to the tune of the songs and script of our productions. And, remarkably, these goals were advanced in such an enjoyable way that, at the time, we were not even cognizant of the fact that, in effect, we were memorizing *pesukim*! It is only now, years later, that as I stand in my own classroom, harboring similar hopes and dreams for my own *talmidos*, that I truly appreciate the depth of her commitment to those crucial pedagogical values.

Perhaps the greatest gift that Morah Blau bestowed upon me was a feeling of solidarity and esprit de corps as a member of the *Bais Yaakov* movement. In today's climate, we often hear about "school spirit" and having pride in one's *alma mater*, but less so, about having pride in being a *Bais Yaakov* girl in general. She wanted us to have pride in being a "Bais Yaakov girl" and experience the joy of being a link in a chain from Sara Schenirer. We identified with the glorious movement which stemmed the tide of girls falling to the prevailing winds of secularism. All of the plays we put on in school were "Morah Blau productions" but none more so than the play, "שרה שנירר: אם של בית יעקב." That was her favorite and it became ours as well. She was the author of the song, "In a little town in Poland." She was the artist who drew the widely-circulated drawing of Sara Schenirer. As a proud *talmidah* of Reb. Vichna Kaplan, she was just one link away from Sara Schenirer. Morah Blau would speak of Sara Schenirer with such reverence and awe. When I was very young, and someone mentioned the name Sara Schenirer, the image of Morah Blau would inevitably pop into my head. As a teacher myself, I link myself to the genesis of the *Bais Yaakov* movement through Morah Blau. And it was definitely the impact of mechanchos such as Morah Blau that inspired me to become a link in the chain and choose a career in *Chinuch Habanos*. Morah Blau, I wish I could be like you someday.



☺ Sara Tandler



Rebbetzin Prager Keller, a"h

This Erev Rosh Hashana, the extended Prager-Keller families suffered a profound blow with the irreplaceable loss of their matriarch, Rebbetzin Shulamis Prager-Keller, mother of our esteemed *Halacha* instructor, Rabbi Mordechai Prager.

Rebbetzin Prager-Keller, a"h, emigrated from Czechoslovakia to America as a young child to escape religious persecution. The American education system offered little in the way of a Torah true *chinuch*. Young Shulamis attended public schools, Talmud Torah and was finally able to convince her father to allow her to attend a Bais Yaakov. Her own mother was a brilliant and shrewd woman who was steeped in *Yiras Shamayim*. Though the United States at this time was spiritually barren, Shulamis's home was infused with *Yiras Shamayim* and *Ahavas Torah* to safeguard the family from the cultural winds of modernity.

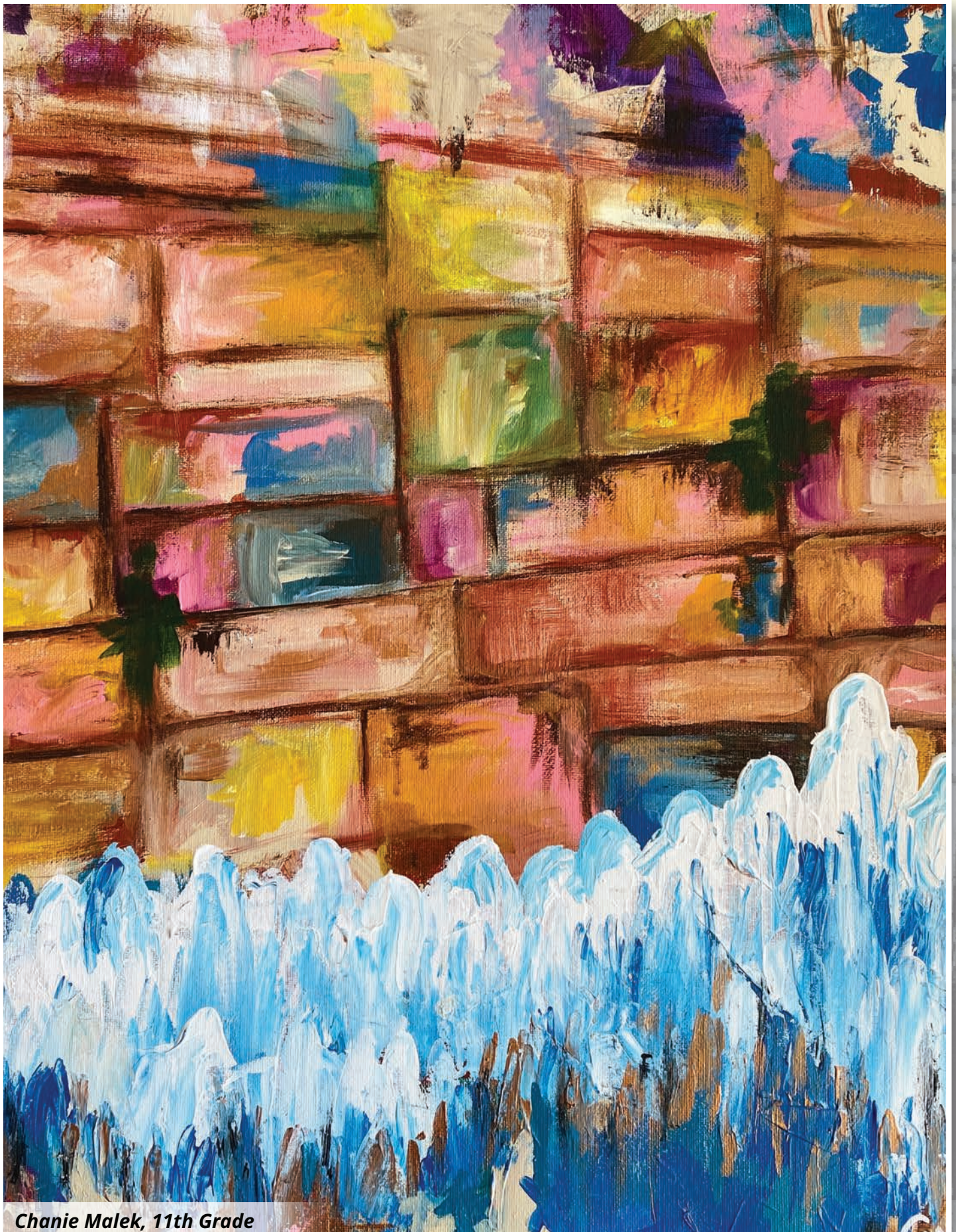
After attending Bais Yaakov for a number of years and having been exposed to the great *chinuch* role models and women educators, Rebbetzin Bender and Rebbetzin Wachtfogel, when the time came, Shulamis chose for herself a serious *Talmid Chacham* as her life partner. Rabbi Shlomo Prager, zt"l, was already a successful rebbe prior to their marriage. He learned in the Bais Medrash of Rav Gustman, a Torah Gaon and Rosh Yeshiva, in the afternoon. Rebbetzin Prager understood the great *chashivos* of being the wife of a *ben Torah* and *talmid chacham* and did whatever was in her power to facilitate her husband's uninterrupted ability to learn and teach.

Rebbetzin Shulamis herself was a born educator and began teaching in the local schools. Together with her husband, she prepared *Rambam*, *Hilchos Mada*, *Chumash V'Ramban*, and *Halacha*. Eventually, she became a beloved principal while always maintaining an influential presence in the classroom.

At a relatively young age, Rebbetzin Prager became an *almana* and was tasked with marrying off seven children alone. Thirteen years later she remarried the prominent Rosh HaYeshiva, Harav Chaim Dov Keller, and joined him in Chicago. There she assumed similar leadership in *chinuch*, in addition to the instruction to *kallahs*, which she considered a most sacred mission.

Rebbetzin Prager-Keller, a"h, led a life passionately dedicated to the values of Torah and *chinuch*, not just as ideal but in practice as well. We have all been the direct beneficiaries of this holy legacy as the *talmidos* of Rabbi Prager, her son, who serves as our teacher and Rav, imbuing us with the same devotion and commitment to Torah.

May he and his family be comforted by the continuation of her life's work as she becomes a *melitz yosher* for the entire family.



Chanie Malek, 11th Grade

The Chagim When did it all begin?

By: Jenny Rapp

When did the Joy Begin?

Considering the prominence שמחת התורה has on our calendar, one has to wonder its origin. Its popularity has far out-ranked שמיני עצרת (which is דאורייתא), yet nobody seems to know when it started.

The practice of reading the Torah every Shabbos was started by Moshe, back in the מדבר. However, there was no set order. People read whatever corresponded to the time or what they were told by the חכמים.



Around the time of the Geonim, an order was established. The Jewish community in Israel split the Torah into 150 parts, celebrating its completion once every three and a half years. The Babylonian Jewish community, on the other hand, split it into fifty four "פרשיות", finishing once a year. They specifically scheduled it so that Moshe's דברי מוסר Devarim were read right before the ימים נוראים. The *minhag* ירושלמי died out in the Middle ages leaving us with the Krias HaTorah we know today.

According to the Babylonian schedule, וזאת הברכה fell out on Yom Tov Sheni of שמיני עצרת, leading them to call the day שמחת תורה.

The rest of the yom tov that we have come to love fell into place over the next few centuries in Europe.

The *minhag* of beginning to read שמחת תורה on בראשית was started by European Jews in the 1100's to show their eagerness to start learning the Torah again. They also established many other *minhagim* including saying אתה הורית, giving everyone an עלייה, and changing the הפטורה to the beginning of Yehoshua, as that logically continues the story of דברים.

14th century Jews in Spain started *Kol Hanearim*, 15th century Jews added a הקפה at night, and in the 16th century, the ארי הקדוש instituted the seven הקפות around the בימה.

Through the contributions of many generations of Jews we can now celebrate שמחת תורה as we know it today.

The Joy of Unity

One of the central themes of *Chag HaSukkos* is *achdus*. According to *Chazal*, both of the *mitzvos* which we perform on *Sukkos*, taking the *arba minim*, as well as dwelling in the *sukkah*, represent unity. While each of the *minim* represents a different kind of Jew, we clasp and shake all four together. Why is this done? To emphasize the power and importance of a *Klal Yisroel* which is unified, for Hashem's love extends beyond every individual Jew, to encompass the totality of *B'nei Yisroel* as a single entity. We also join the *arba minim* together to underscore the need for all Jews to be united as one in the service of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

The *Chofetz Chaim* notes that although the *daled minim* signify the virtue of *achdus*, the *esrog* is not tied together with the other species, and is generally held in a different hand from them. It only joins with the other *minim* in order to facilitate the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*. Accordingly, while the taking of the four *minim* represents togetherness, it is the type of *achdus* prompted by those who possess a shared goal, and unite specifically for the purpose of accomplishing that goal. This stands in contrast to the *achdus* of the *sukkah*. All of *Klal Yisrael* can theoretically sit in one *sukkah* but there is certainly no *mitzvah* to do so. When many Jews choose to sit in the same *sukkah* together, they are joined together not by a communal obligation or objective, but rather by a mutual regard for one another. The *Arizal* and the *Shelah* advised taking the *daled minim* in the *sukkah* on each morning of *Sukkos* in order to bring the two notions of *achdus* together.

Perhaps another dimension of *Sukkos*, which is also referred to as *Z'man Simchaseinu*, is the added layer of joy we experience when *B'nei Yisrael* is unified. When there is harmony, there is happiness. However, when there is fragmentation within the family of *Klal Yisroel*, the *simchah* is diminished. The joy of *Sukkos* is dependent upon *achdus*. Accordingly, it was specifically on *Sukkos* of every seventh year that *B'nei Yisroel* united in a spectacular way through the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*. To be performed properly, this *mitzvah* necessitated the complete coalition of *Am Yisrael* through place and time, which ultimately resulted in an exquisite experiential *simchah*.

May all Jews aspire to have genuine affection for one another as they come together to rejoice in the service of the *Ribono Shel Olam*.

🕊️ Shirel Rosenblum

Idea adapted from Rabbi Moshe Don Kestenbaum

Hosting Guests... Even This Year!

If you are disappointed about the impact of social distancing on the celebration of סוכות this season, here's one thing to remember: guests will still visit your סוכה every night, as they do every year! One of the highlights of סוכות is the opportunity to invite the אושפיזין, the Biblical personalities whose spiritual presence graces our meals on each of the seven nights of the חג. I imagine that our first guest, אברהם אבינו, would be especially disheartened by the limitations the pandemic places on acts of hospitality and unity. His personal strength and arguably favorite מצוה was הנכנסת אורחים, inviting and honoring guests. אברהם's fervor for that מצוה was famously demonstrated when he stood outside in the heat of the day, soliciting strangers - even those who appeared to be idol worshippers - to find rest and refreshment in his home. אברהם provided five-star accommodations despite his own physical discomfort from his ברית מילה which had taken place only three days prior.

The image of הנכנסת אורחים is also used by חז"ל to illustrate how גלות looks and feels: "בנים שגלו מעל שולחן" ("children who were sent away from their Father's table"). Before גלות, we served our Father in His home, the בית המקדש, and were seated at His table. שנאת חנם, baseless hatred and mistreatment of one another, resulted in the Jewish people becoming אורחים, guests, in a foreign land. ה' completely flipped our position, but why? What can be learned from this inversion?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that the intention of גלות and the Jews' dispersal among the nations of the world should not be seen purely as punishment, but rather, as a positive form of preparation. In the discomfort of displacement, we find ourselves longing once more to be seated at the table of our Father, and this yearning challenges us to enact change. It is Hashem's will that we infuse קדושה everywhere in the world, cleansing and beautifying each place as one would prepare for a guest. In גלות we are given the opportunity to perform the ultimate act of הנכנסת אורחים in עולם הזה by making it fit for the return of the שכינה. By doing מצוות and learning תורה throughout this trying time, may we be זוכה to welcome the שכינה with the coming of משיח במהרה בימינו אמן!

Chaya Trapedo



Dassi Mayerfeld, 12th Grade

The Case of the Missing Hood

One of the famous debates between *Beis Shamai* and *Beis Hillel* in the *Gemara Sukkah* involves the case of a man who sat in the *sukkah* while his table and food were situated in the house. *Beis Hillel* believes that he fulfilled the *mitzvah* of eating in the *sukkah*, while *Beis Shamai* insists that he did not. This *machlokes* is rooted in a deeper difference of opinion. There are two ways in which a Jew can embrace his religious life. One Jew may choose an insular lifestyle; he shuts himself off from the rest of the world because he feels that only through such isolation can he dedicate himself to Hashem and be immersed in His Torah. Another Jew believes that it is his responsibility to reach out to the larger Jewish community, and to serve as an *Or Lagoyim*, a guiding light to the nations of the world. This second approach to Jewish living is harder, because with these lofty aspirations come significant challenges to maintaining one's own religiosity. One needs to figure out a way to be *mekadesh* the *chitzoniyot*, to turn the external things in life into holiness, without sacrificing his own sanctity.

Beis Shamai felt that when one sits in the *sukkah*, one must be completely immersed inside of it. All of one's thoughts and actions should be directed within the walls of the *sukkah*. Accordingly, *Beis Shamai* would favor living life like the first Jew, and being isolated from anything outside one's sphere of religious living. *Beis Hillel*, on the other hand, taught that as long as you are in the *sukkah*, your hands may be occupied outside of it. In other words, as long as one's religious foundation is solid and firm, one should find opportunities to elevate others, and it is okay, or even noble, for your 'hands' to be dealing with external issues or people. One *pasuk* that supports this idea of *Beis Hillel* is, "Ki beisi beis tefilah yikarei l'chol ha'amim". The *Beis Hamikdash* was open to people of all faiths and was a beacon of light to the world. The *gemara* points out that a gentile can even offer a sacrifice (albeit only a *Korban Olah*.) Opportunity is all around us and we should grab it before it is lost.

☞ Lizzie Boczko

As heard by Rav Shay Shachter

Blessings of Simcha

We all know the concept of being *b'simcha* on the *yontif* of *sukkos*. However, Rav Moshe Shternbach asks the following question: It says in *davening* that "es birchas moadecha l'chaim ul'shalom-" that there is a *bracha* of life and peace on *yontif*, yet there is no concept in the *torah* about "Birchas Moadim-" having this kind of given *bracha* on *yontif*?

In order to explain this concept of having a certain and given *bracha* on *yontif*, Rav Shternbach cites *rashi* on the well known *pasuk* in the *torah* regarding *yontif* of "V'hayisa ach sameach." There, *Rashi* concludes that this is not a command to be *b'simcha* on *yontif*, but rather it is a promise from Hashem. In fact, it is a *bracha* from Hashem that *klal yisrael* will certainly have *simcha* on *yontif*. Rav Shternbach adds that *chaim* and *shalom* are included in *simcha*, which explains this *tefillah* we say on *sukkos*: There is a *bracha* from Hashem given on *sukkos* for *chaim* and *simcha*.

This concept of the *bracha* of *simcha* Hashem gives to *klal yisrael* is important to keep in mind specifically this year. While *sukkos* may not be the same as years past, it is comforting to know that we are promised *simcha* on *sukkos*, and we will surely receive this promise. In addition, I think that we should also take the experiences from past *yomim tovim* and relate them to this year. For example, I will always remember the *sukkos* I spent in *eretz yisrael* and the *kedusha* I felt that year. Though I may not be in *yerushalayim* this year, I can take the *kedusha* and *simcha* of that year and link it to this year to enhance my *sukkos*. If we keep in mind Hashem's promise of *simcha* and the past *yomim tovim*, we will absolutely have a *sukkos* full of *simcha*, *chaim*, and *shalom*.

☞ Tova Schwartz



Ellie Trapedo, 9th Grade

A Lesson in Mindfulness

When the Jewish people were graced with a vibrant *Beis Hamikdash*, the great celebration of *Simchas Beis Hashoeivah* was a highlight of *Chag Hasukkos*. The *gemara* in *Sukkah* describes the intense expressions of joy and merriment which took place during that wonderful experience.

There is one description in the *gemara* which does not seem to make sense. When the great *tanna* Hillel arrived at the *Simchas Beis Hashoeivah*, he would declare, "*Im ani kan hakol kan*," which means "If I am here, all is here." Understood on a simple level, this statement is jarring. How could a rabbi of Hillel's stature, who was known for his genuine humility, make a proclamation which suggests just the opposite?!

Harav Yaakov Galinsky *zt"l*, the renowned *maggid* of B'nei B'rak, suggested a more favorable way of understanding these baffling words. Hillel did not mean to imply that when he is present it is if all is present. Rather, what he meant was, "When I am here, *all of me* is here!" Unlike so many people who, while physically present, are only partially focused on the experience at hand, Hillel proclaimed that he was entirely there, in body, mind, and spirit.

In our own lives, when we are distracted by so many things including our emails, texts, and phone calls, we are in danger of being robbed of many special moments which come our way. So many of our experiences could be richer if we were fully focused on them; davening, learning, family, and friends, to name a few. May we follow in the footsteps of Hillel and always try our best to be completely mindful and engaged in everything we do in life.

☺ Golda Bamberger



Cherri Citron, 11th Grade

Why do we read Koheles?

We read *Sefer Koheles* every *Sukkos*. One reason for this custom is that in addition to the Torah portion read by the king, *Koheles* was read at the *Hakhel* ceremony, which took place in the חצר of the *Beis HaMikdash* on *Sukkos* after every שמיטה year. The *Mishnah Berurah* explains that on *Sukkos*, which is the חג האסיף, our storehouses are filled with all the grain we have gathered, enough to last the winter. This is a tremendous source of happiness for us, yet at the same time it can cause us, חס ושלום, to feel self-satisfied with the abundance we possess, and ultimately to be בעלי גאווה. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to read *Koheles* at that pivotal moment in order to prevent any sense of haughtiness.

There is a second way to understand the relationship between *Z'man Simchaseinu* and *Koheles*. In regard to *Sukkos*, the *Torah* commands us ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבעת ימים (ויקרא נג:); we are obligated to rejoice in the presence of HaShem for seven days. *Koheles* teaches us how to achieve a level of real *simchah*. ולשמחה (קהלת ב ב) מה זה עשה (קהלת ב ב) *what good is there to simchah?* wonders Shlomo HaMelech. It is in this *sefer* that he communicates that the physical world is futile and fleeting. One can work tirelessly to achieve a vast amount of material pleasure, and yet never achieve success or joy. A life dedicated only to physical matters will be devoid of meaning and will not lead to *simchah*. Real *simchah*, as taught in the *Gemara*, is *Simchas HaTorah* and *Simchas HaMitzvah*. We read *Koheles* on the holiday most associated with happiness so that we may recognize what brings real joy, and understand how to feel and express *simchah* appropriately during the *Sukkos* festivities.

The *Gemara* (Shabbos 30b) writes that the *Chachamim* wished to conceal *Sefer Koheles* since it contains parts which contradict each other. Ultimately, they did not do so because תחילתו דברי תורה וסופו דברי תורה, the beginning and end are both דברי תורה. (Of course the middle of *Koheles* is sacred as well, but one must be learned enough to delve into it deeply in order to understand it.)

We go through a process of חשבון הנפש before *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*. Following this, we reach the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos*. It's hard to maintain the *Kabbalos*, resolutions, that we have taken upon ourselves for the year. It's easy to become accustomed to our old ways once again. We may find ourselves struggling: while we are required to be happy on *Sukkos*, we are brought down by the incorrect old ways to which we seem to be returning. Therefore, we *lein Koheles* to teach us something fascinating. HaShem always desires our *teshuvah* and searches for it; there is no greater joy for Him than the return of an individual who regrets a past wrongdoing. Although now we are thinking about the sins that we have committed, done *teshuvah* for, have perhaps committed again, it's not the middle that counts, but the end. If we do sincere *teshuvah* for all that we have done in the middle, and continually, throughout the year, correct our actions, then HaShem will look at the beginning and the end. It is this valuable and encouraging lesson that *Koheles* teaches us, which can help us experience undampened joy on *Chag Hasukkos*.

Adielle Rosenblum
Adapted from Rabbi Abish

Clouds of Glory

The *yom tov* of *Sukkos* is also referred to as *Z'man Simchaseinu*, The time of our happiness. While it is true that each of the *Shalosh Regalim* has a number of descriptive names, the connection between those names and the particular holiday is more readily apparent in the other two *chagim*. *Pesach* is known as *Z'man Cheiruseinu*, the time of our freedom, because it celebrates our freedom from *Mitzrayim*. *Shavuos* is called *Z'man Matan Toraseinu*, the time of the giving of our Torah, as it marks the day on which we received the Torah. But what joyous occasion does *Sukkos* commemorate? What connection is there between happiness and dwelling in a *sukkah*?

The Vilna Gaon addresses another related question. There is an opinion in the *Gemara Sukkah* that the *sukkah* we build represents the *Ananei HaKavod*. *Klal Yisroel* first received the protection of the *Ananei HaKavod* in the month of *Nisan*. Why then, the Gaon asks, do we commemorate this gift of protection in the month of *Tishrei*?

He explains that when *B'nei Yisroel* served the *egel hazahav*, the *Ananei HaKavod* were removed. On *Yom Kippur* we were forgiven, and immediately thereafter, on the 11th of *Tishrei*, Moshe began to collect donations for the *Mishkan*. *B'nei Yisrael* were forthcoming, and construction of the *Mishkan* began on the 15th of *Tishrei*. It was then that the clouds returned and our Divine protection was restored. For this reason, the Gaon writes, we celebrate *Sukkos* on the 15th of *Tishrei*.

From this, we can see that we are celebrating not just the gift of the *Ananei Hakavod*, but also what their return represents. We are remembering that Hashem forgave *Bnei Yisroel* and allowed His *Shechinah* to rest among them. It is *Z'man Simchasienu* because we recall Hashem's closeness and love, and the security He bestowed upon us.

The *posuk* offers a reason for the *mitzvah* of *sukkos*, "למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל", so that future generations will know that on *Sukkos* I settled *Bnei Yisroel*. Rav Tzadok beautifully points out that Hashem purposely mentioned future generations in this context to show that we are not merely commemorating the joy experienced by our forefathers upon the return of the *Ananei HaKavod* in the past. Rather, "למען ידעו דרתיכם", it is important for future generations to know that Hashem is constantly watching over us and

protecting us. It is not just a historic event that Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* and protected us with the *Ananei HaKavod*, but a phenomenon that continues to this day. Hashem is constantly guarding us and among us, and dwelling in the *sukkah* is a reminder of that. Therefore it is not only our ancestors who celebrated this, we ourselves have reason to be joyous! Let's all take this opportunity to serve Hashem with great happiness and rejoice in His constant connection and protection over us.



Shoshana Ovitsh, 11th Grade

What is a Sukkah? Understanding One Position in the Gemara

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many families, including my own, invested in open-air tents for outdoor entertaining. These tents are essentially the opposite of *sukkos*. They each have a roof but no walls. A *sukkah* must have three walls, and no real roof. So what? We certainly don't plan on using our tents as *sukkos*!

In fact, though, this distinction between tents and *sukkos* raises a question. The *pasuk* records that the reason we sit in *sukkos* is to commemorate "*ki b'sukkos hoshavti es B'nei Yisrael.*" Rabbi Akiva, in a well-known statement in the *Gemara Sukkos*, maintains that the word '*sukkos*' refers to the physical houses in which the Jewish people camped in the desert. Yet, in every other context in which the living quarters in the *midbar* are mentioned, the Torah uses the word *ohalim*, tents. Presumably, those tents had walls. Nevertheless, one can still imagine the difference between a tent and a *sukkah*. Luckily, Rabbi Eliezer offers another explanation for '*sukkos*.' He believes that they refer to the *Ananei HaKavod* which surrounded the Jews in the desert. But why would the clouds be called *sukkos*?

To uncover this mystery, let's look at the *shoresh* of the word *sukkah*. The letters *samech*, *chaf*, *chaf* appear often in *Tanach*, always with regard to protection. Interesting, but the *pesukim* that describe the *Ananei HaKavod* don't explicitly mention protection. Rather, they seem to simply have been clouds which led the way. Yet many *parshanim* maintain that the clouds protected *B'nei Yisrael*. Why?

Let's look further at the word *anan*. Where else does it appear? One very famous *pasuk* in *Shemos* describes that Hashem's glory was perceived through a cloud, "*vayeira kvod HaShem be'anan.*" Actually, the word *anan* frequently appears in the context of the Divine Presence. So maybe that is what the clouds symbolize. And if the *ananim* were in fact HaShem's mode of protecting us, it makes perfect sense that the word *sukkos* refers to them. When we sit in our *sukkos* on the *chag*, perhaps we are commemorating HaShem's protection in the *midbar*, rather than the physical tents in which our ancestors dwelled. This also explains the word *hoshavti*, I caused to dwell, which might seem out of place if you interpret *sukkos* as tents which *B'nei Yisrael* built for themselves. Of course, the opinion of Rabbi Akiva still stands. Perhaps I will write an article for *Moadim* next year exploring his position.

🕊️ Tova Berger



Ahuva Jacobson, 10th Grade

The "Esrog"nomical Fruit



At an astounding 8.8 lbs, the largest esrog grown in Neot Kedumim, Israel, made it into the Guinness Book of World Records.



Esrog trees have big leaves and purple buds that grow into beautiful white blossoms.



Instead of rotting, esrogim slowly dry out as they age.

IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD!

by Mindy Bober



The peel constitutes nearly 70% of the esrog leaving very little fruit to eat. Fortunately, society discovered alternate uses such as perfume, moth repellent, and medical benefits. It is also candied, pickled, and used as flavoring.

In Jewish history, during Mered Hagadol (69 CE) the esrog appeared on the coins that were used.



Averaging 10 ft tall with shallow roots, esrog trees have a shorter life expectancy than other trees and are more difficult to cultivate. Majority of the trees are grafted to withstand the harsh environment but this causes the esrogim to be non-kosher. Therefore many people only use the “Calabria Esrogim” which are known to be kosher.



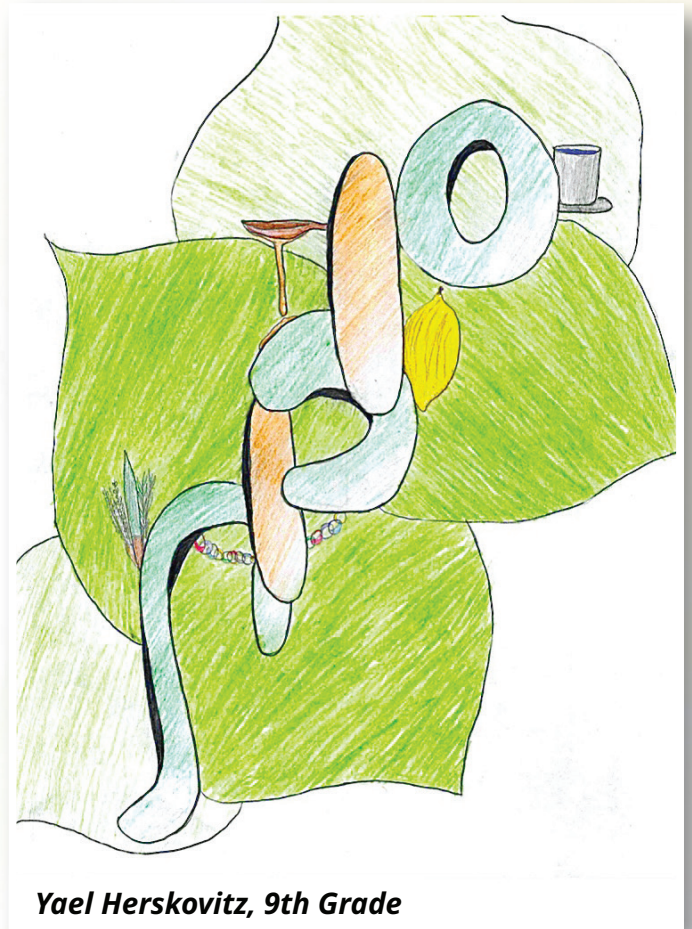
Abby Harris, 10th Grade

Happiness is a Mindset

It is abundantly clear why we celebrate the the *yom tov* of *Pesach*; it is a commemoration of the awe-some, monumental *nissim* which *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* performed on behalf of *Klal Yisroel* as He took them out of מצרים. Similarly, it is readily apparent why we celebrate the *yom tov* of *Shavuot*; it marks the day that *Klal Yisroel* received the greatest gift of all time from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* -- the *Torah Hakedoshah*-- and this, too, was accompanied by wondrous miracles. But what about *Sukkos*-- the last of the *Shalosh Regalim*? What was the spectacular, life-altering event that resulted in our celebration of *Sukkos* as one of the three major national holidays? The *pasuk* simply states, "בסוכות תישבו שבעת ימים למען, ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל" -- you should live in *sukkos* for seven days so that every generation will know that I caused *B'nei Yisroel* to dwell in *sukkos* [for forty years in the *midbar*.] How does that explain what we are celebrating? Moreover, why is it specifically the *yom tov* of *Sukkos* which is called *Z'man Simchaseinu*? What should we be so happy about?

The answer lies within the very question itself. Why are we looking for something so incomprehensibly large to celebrate? Is it not enough that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* kept us safe and provided for us for forty years in the desert? Unfortunately, it is common for people to convince themselves that "when ___ happens, then I'll be happy", but this "when- then" mindset will never produce a happy person. Each of us has a great measure of control over our happiness. We must find ways to be *b'simchah* during the "journey" just as we are *b'simchah* upon arriving at the "destination".

Perhaps this is the lesson which Hashem seeks to teach us through the *yom tov* of *Sukkos*: to be happy at all times with whatever we have. To be able to experience joy, not just when we get what we think we want, but also when we don't, and are still waiting for our *yeshuah*-- whatever it may be. Perhaps the *avodah* of this *yom tov* is to sit in the simple, no-frills *sukkah* and be happy. Be happy to be where you are and to have what you have. Take stock of your life. It is also especially fitting that *Sukkos* immediately follows the *Yamim Nora'im*, when we coronate *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and ask Him for everything we believe we need in the year to come. In fact, on *Sukkos*, we realize that ultimately He is the One in control and whatever He deems is best for us, is indeed best for us. By recognizing this, we can truly feel *simchah* on *Sukkos*. Hopefully, by working on our *simchas ha'chaim* during *Z'man Simchaseinu*, with Hashem's help we will merit a life of eternal *simchah* and *berachah*.



Yael Herskovitz, 9th Grade

🕊️ Emma Cohen

Adapted from an idea by Rav Tzvi Sytner

Finding the Happiness

The Torah commands us to be happy on Succos (דברים, טז: יג-טו). Indeed, Succos is described as a זמן שמחתינו in our *tefilos* and, as Rav Pam notes, in the *Gemara* as well. But how can we be happy this year? Unlike Purim when we don masks to celebrate Hashem rescuing us from danger, this year we wear masks in school and daven that Hashem will protect us from danger. Unlike other years when we spend this time of year thinking of what we could do to assuage the hurt feelings of those we may have offended and close the distance we have created between ourselves and others, this year we have to remember that we are required to remain physically distant from each other. How can Hashem command us to be happy?

There will be those who will scoff at this question. After all, as a people, we survived the Holocaust, the Inquisition, expulsion after expulsion, pogrom after pogrom. It may seem presumptuous to even think that the sacrifices needed to cope with covid should move the needle of our emotions.

However, "pain expands to fill the space." That is, if a person has a headache, the headache may seem very intense, but if that person finds out that he has cancer, ל"ג, the headache does not seem bad at all.

So, for us, covid is our reality and it is a painful one, facing us with the risk to life and health and requiring us to make changes that are inconvenient at best. And since to us as Jews, the loss of even a single life is painful, the loss of all those lost to covid, our relatives, our friends, our gedolim, is tragic. To us, these are painful times.

How then can we be commanded to be happy? In discussing *Succos*, Rav Pam notes that Yom Tov is a unique opportunity to seek closeness with Hashem and renew our desire to serve Hashem. In leaving our homes, representing our lives which may seem mundane, and living in the *succah*, which is our true spiritual home, we can focus on what is really important. We do not have to let fears of covid dominate our lives. Rather, we can be attached with love to Hashem. This attachment will yield joy and satisfaction.

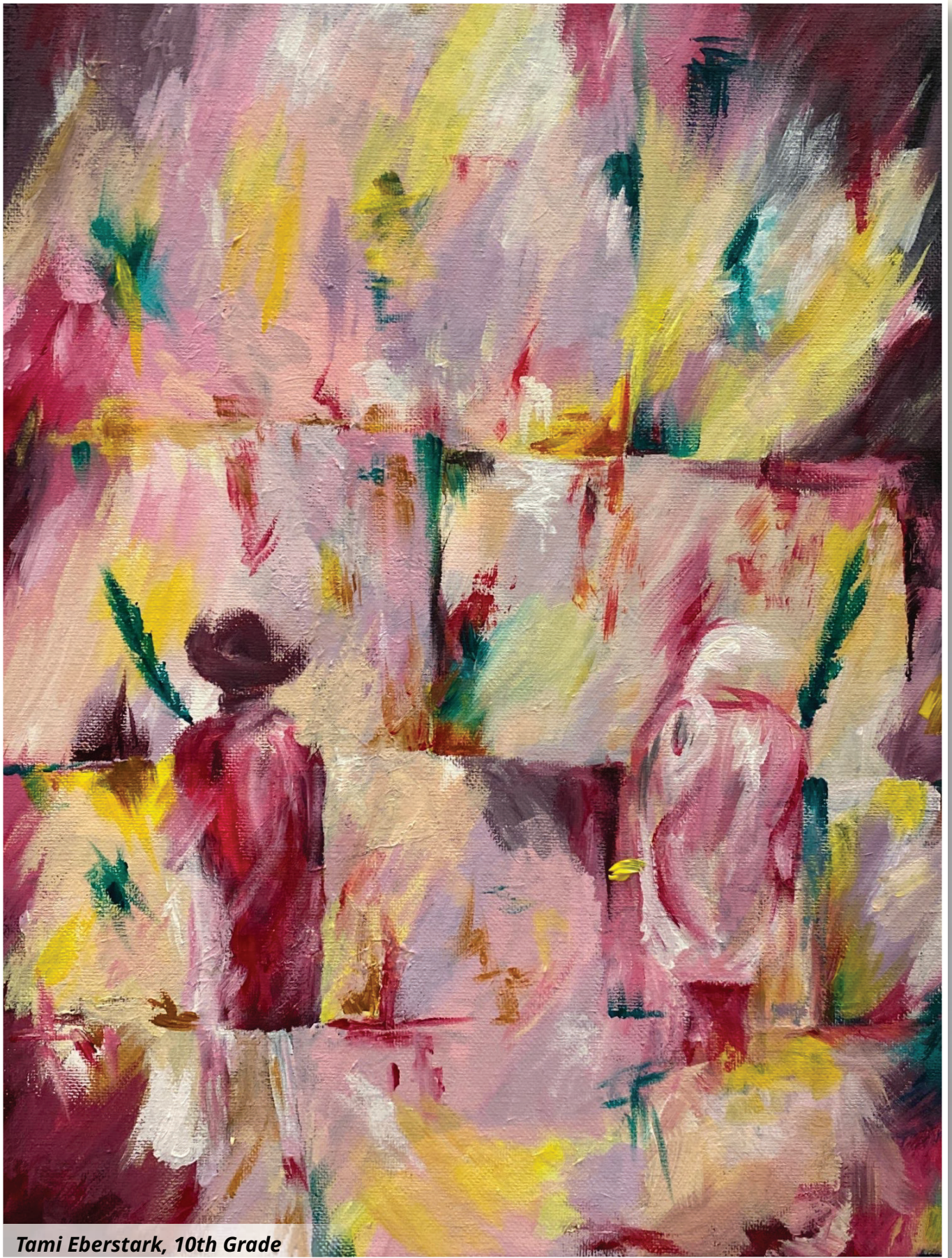
At this time of social distancing, it is critically important to experience the holiness of Succos and, in so doing, do everything we can to close the distance between ourselves and HaShem. This connection and attachment will make us truly joyous.

Vsamachta bichagecha!



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