

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center
6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



September 25, 2021

Chol HaMoed Sukkot

19 Tishrei, 5782

The Broken Etrog

It had been a difficult year. Poor weather, dangerous travel conditions and high tariffs had made it almost impossible for the Jews of Ukraine to import etrogim (citrons) for the holiday of Sukkot. The etrogim—waved together with the lulav bundle every Sukkot after the recitation of special blessings—were normally brought from faraway Italy or even the Holy Land, but that year there were almost none to be found.

In the city of Berdichev, home to tens of thousands of Jews, there was but one etrog. Of course, it was given to the town's rabbi, the famed Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, for safekeeping.

Everyone knew the plan. On the first day of the holiday the rabbi would rise early in the morning, immerse himself in the purifying waters of the mikvah, and then make the blessing while holding the etrog and lulav. Then the etrog would be passed from hand to hand, allowing every Jewish person to fulfill the biblical obligation to take the "Four Kinds."

Now, the rabbi had an assistant, a simple fellow who was tasked with overseeing the proceedings. "I know what will happen," said the assistant to himself. "First, the rabbi will make the blessing and wave the lulav and the etrog. Then the learned men will come for their turn to do the mitzvah. They will be followed by the respectable householders. Next will be the simple folk, who will all get their glorious moment. Then, when the sun is about to set and the day is about to fade away, I'll be the very last one to finally say the blessing over the lulav and etrog. Why must I always be the very last?"

"I know what I'll do," he thought. "Early in the morning, on the first day of Sukkot, when the rabbi is out immersing in the mikvah, I'll take the lulav and etrog and recite the blessing over them. No one will know but me."

And so, just after the sun rose, he sneaked into the rabbi's study, took the lulav and etrog in his trembling hands, and was about to chant the required blessings. But then—disaster struck.

Maybe it was because his palms were sweaty. Maybe it was because he was shaking nervously. But for whatever reason, the etrog slipped from his grasp onto the hard wooden floor below. To the attendant's horror, the etrog's pitom (wood-like protrusion) cracked right off its crown, rendering the fruit invalid.

Oh, he would have given all he had to be swallowed up by the earth. How would he face the crestfallen rabbi? How would he face the disappointed city? How would he face himself?

Every minute seemed like eternity as the attendant waited for his master to return. When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak entered his home, ready to do the mitzvah, the attendant had no choice. Gazing downward, in a trembling whisper, he told the rabbi what he had done.

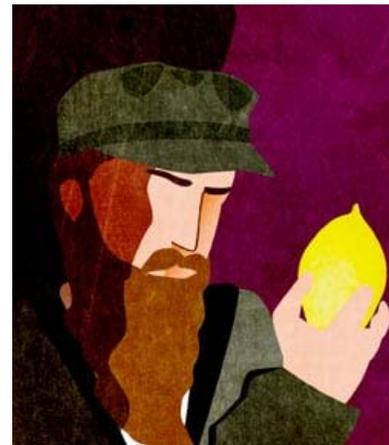
"Master of the World," cried the rabbi in a booming voice filled with love and wonder, "look how precious Your children are! Even this simple, unlearned son of Yours is so eager to fulfill Your commandment that he risked his job to fulfill Your will at the earliest opportunity!"

(by Menachem Posner from <https://www.chabad.org/>)

Why Booths?

The holiday of Sukkos starts on the 15th day of Tishrei. The holiday of Sukkos is characterized by the unique commandment of dwelling in Sukkos – temporary, hut-like dwellings, as the Torah says in Vayikra (23: 42-43) "In booths you are to dwell for seven days ... so that your generations will know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them from the land of Egypt"

(continued on the other side)



The Sages in the tractate of Succah (11b) disagree as to what the “booths” that the Israelites dwelt in refer to. Rabbi Eliezer says that these booths are a reference to the miraculous “Ananai HaKavod,” the “Clouds of Glory,” with which G-d surrounded the Israelites throughout their forty year sojourn in the desert after having left Egypt. These clouds protected the Israelites from the elements and the hot desert floor, kept the Jews’ clothing clean, and guided the nation of Israel through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains, however, that these “booths” refer to the actual booths or huts that the Israelites built while in the desert to serve as their dwellings.

The Aruch HaShulchan (Orech Chayim 625) raises the following question: Whereas Rabbi Eliezer’s booths were manifestations of a great miracle that G-d performed for the Jews in the desert, and certainly merits a commandment commemorating the infinite kindness and protection of G-d, Rabbi Akiva’s interpretation is most puzzling in light of the commandment to dwell in the Sukkah. What is the significance of the huts that the Jews lived in while in the desert?

The Aruch HaShulchan answers his own question. According to Rabbi Akiva, the Succah commemorates the greatness of the Jewish people. Their faith in G-d was so complete and so total that they traveled into the uninhabitable desert wasteland at G-d’s command. In this wasteland, the Jews did not even have permanent dwellings, but merely booths, trusting in G-d that He would care for their every need in the wilderness, which of course, He did.

Based on what we have seen, both Rabbi Eliezer’s and Rabbi Akiva’s interpretation of the Israelite’s “booths” in the desert relate our observance of the commandment of Sukkos to G-d’s miraculous protection of the Jews during their forty year sojourn through the desert on route to the land of Israel. This protection was not furnished only to the Jewish people while in the desert, but in His infinite kindness, G-d has extended that protection to our people throughout the ages. This special protection, symbolized by the Sukkah, has ensured the continued existence and survival of the Jewish people until this very day.

(by Rabbi Mendel Zlotnick from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

<p>As in previous years the shul will be hosting large Kiddushim by night and by day on Simchas Torah with challah available for washing. Please consider helping out by making a contribution to help sponsor the Kiddushim. Any amount is appreciated. Thank you and may this Yom Tov be a true time of Simcha for everyone!</p>	
--	---

	<p>The auction for all Simchas Torah Kibudim will take place before Mussaf on this Shabbat Chol HaMoed. Not only do we have an opportunity to fulfill the mitzva of tzedakah, but it is an important fund raiser for our Shul to help us get through the whole year. So we encourage everyone to participate actively in spirited bidding for the benefit of the Shul. Also, the custom in our shul is for as many individuals as possible to participate in buying Chassan Bereishit for the Rav. Sponsorships are available in multiples of \$36. In the past we have had more than 100 sponsorships in all, given by individuals in multiples of 1 to 10.</p>
---	--

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE	
<p>Friday – Chol HaMoed, 9/24 – 18 Tishrei Shacharit – 6:25 a.m. Shabbat Candles – 6:41 p.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv – 6:40 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday – Shemini Atzeret, 9/28 – 22 Tishrei Shacharit – 9:00 a.m. Sof Z’man Kriat Shema – 9:56 a.m. Yizkor – after 10:45 a.m. Minchah – 6:35 p.m. Candles – after 7:33 p.m. Ma’ariv followed by Hakafot— 7:35 p.m.</p>
<p>Shabbat – Chol HaMoed, 9/25 – 19 Tishrei Shacharit – 9:00 a.m. Sof Z’man Kriat Shema – 9:53 a.m. Simchat Torah Kibbudim Auction – before Musaf Minchah – 6:30 p.m. Ma’ariv— 7:41 p.m.</p>	<p>Wednesday – Simchat Torah, 9/29 – 23 Tishrei Shacharit – 9:00 a.m. Sof Z’man Kriat Shema – 9:56 a.m. Minchah – 6:35 p.m. Ma’ariv— 7:33 p.m.</p>
<p>Sunday – Chol HaMoed, 9/26— 20 Tishrei Shacharit – 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv – 6:36 p.m.</p>	<p>Thursday, 9/30 – 24 Tishrei Shacharit – 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv – 6:35 p.m.</p>
<p>Monday – Hoshanna Rabba, 9/27 – 21 Tishrei Shacharit – 6:10 a.m. Candles – 6:48 p.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv – 6:48 p.m. Hakafot – following Ma’ariv</p>	<p>Friday, 10/1 – 25 Tishrei Shacharit – 7:00 a.m. Shabbat Candles – 6:30 p.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv – 6:30 p.m.</p>