



One year the *etrog* (citron fruit used on the Sukot holiday as part of the "Four Species") dealers of the town decided to band together to raise the prices of *etrogim*. Now, an *etrog* had always been expensive, so much so, that it was customary for the wealthy leaders of the town to purchase one *etrog* to fulfill the *mitzva* (commandment) for the entire community. This year, however, the price was so exorbitant that even that one *etrog* was beyond their reach.

As Sukot approached, the people grew ever more worried. How would the community manage to celebrate Sukot without even one set of the Four Species to share amongst themselves? Finally the sextons of the town's shuls called a meeting at which they hoped to raise the money needed. Only the richest members of the town had been invited, as they had always supplied the *etrog* for their fellow Jews.

One wealthy businessman stood and addressed the gathering: "It's an outrage to spend so much money on an *etrog*. Who do those dealers think they are to hold us hostage like this! There are other *mitzvot* which urgently need doing in our community. Why what about marrying off poor brides? There is an orphaned girl in our very own town who is not getting any younger. Wouldn't that be a more fitting way to spend the community's money?"

The rabbi listened quietly until the rich man concluded his plea, and then he began to speak: "It is certainly true that the girl you speak of needs a match. And it is true, as well, that it is a great *mitzva* to endow a poor bride and to help an orphan. But, I can't help thinking why, in all these years, did our speaker never think of helping this girl? Why, only now, when the question of purchasing an *etrog* came up did he remember her? I will tell you the reason. My friends, what we are witnessing here is the work of the *yetzer hara* – the evil inclination. The evil inclination is wily and crafty. He will use any argument to discourage a Jew from doing the *mitzva* at hand, even if it means that he must convince us to do a different *mitzva* in its stead!

"This," the rabbi explained, "is typical of human nature. Often, when a person is about to fulfill a certain *mitzva*, in steps the evil inclination to cloud his mind with doubts. 'Why are you choosing to do this *mitzva* instead of that one? That one is surely more important.' Then the person becomes confused and his will to perform the *mitzva* is weakened. No, my friends, we must confront and expose the evil inclination for what it is and do battle with it. When we emerge successful, we will be able to perform the original *mitzva*, thus fulfilling the will of G-d."

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Before Reb Mordechai of Neschitz assumed his position as rabbi, he was a merchant. His son, Reb Yitzchak, recalled that every time he would return from a buying trip, he would take a portion of his profits and put it aside in a special box to be used to buy an *etrog*.

One year he had amassed the sum of six silver rubles, and he made his way to the town of Brody to purchase the *etrog*. As he travelled down the road, he was surprised to hear the sound of weeping. He came upon a poor man sobbing over the loss of his horse, without which he had no means of support. Reb Mordechai told the man to stay put, and with his silver rubles, he rushed off to purchase a new horse for the man. The poor man couldn't believe his eyes when he saw Reb Mordechai approaching with a horse! He gratefully heaped blessings on his benefactor and went on his way.

As for Reb Mordechai, now left without any money, he also turned towards home. He realized that he would be without an *etrog* for the upcoming festival, but he thought to himself: "What's the difference? Buying an *etrog* is a *mitzva* commanded by G-d, and helping my poor brother is also a *mitzva* commanded by G-d." A smile crossed his face and he chuckled to himself: "Everyone else will make the blessing

over an *etrog*; I'll make my blessing over a horse." And so he continued home in a very happy mood. In fact, someone brought him an *etrog* in good time to use for the Yom Tov, and that year he made a blessing not only over an *etrog*, but over a horse as well!

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Rabbi Fishel of Strikov would sit in the suka even in the pouring rain. Once he was asked: "Doesn't the Code of Jewish Law clearly state that, 'If it rains, one should go back into the house'?" And doesn't a commentary on the Code add that, 'Whoever is absolved from sitting in the suka and does not leave it, receives no reward for this and is nothing but a simpleton'?"

"I'd rather be a simpleton than leave the suka," said Rabbi Fishel.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew (Deut. 32:2)**

Just as rain and dew can drench a person "to the bone," so should the holy words of Torah saturate a Jew's entire physical being and not just his mind. (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

**He set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the Children of Israel (Deut. 32:8)**

All world events contains an element that will eventually relate to Jews, even conflicts between non-Jewish countries that change borders and alter the map. For G-d turns the wheel of history according to His overall plan for the Jewish people. (Der Torah Kvall)

G-d established the borders of all the countries of the world so that the Jewish people, by living in those lands and observing Torah and *mitzvot*, could elevate the sparks of holiness they contain. The purpose of the Jews' exile among the nations is to illuminate the world through "the candle of *mitzva*, and the Torah, light." (Sichot Kodesh)

**And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be (Deut. 32:20)**

G-d assures us: Even though I will hide My face and subject the Jewish people to the laws of nature, it will only be a temporary situation. For even in their exile I am mindful of their "end," and will always protect their eternity. (Shem MiShmuel)

## 6:43 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
**11 Tishrei/Sept 17**  
 Torah Portion Ha'azinu  
 Shabbat ends 7:40 PM

**18 Tishrei/Sept 24** light candles 6:31  
 Shabbat Chol Hamoad  
 Shabbat ends 7:28 PM



# L'Chaim

בס"ד  
 1690  
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 The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person  
 נוסד תוך ימי השלושים  
 Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
 ... I have called out to the L-rd and He answered me" (Psalms 120:1)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

Sukkot is a time of unity and camaraderie. We sit together in the Sukka, dance together, pray together and recite a blessing on the *Arba Minim*, the four species of plants that are brought together.

The *mitzva* (commandment) of the *Arba Minim* is based on the verse, "You should take for yourselves a beautiful fruit of the tree (*etrog*), a date palm frond (*lulav*), a sprig that has a thick woody stem (*hadass*) and willows of the brook (*aravot*)."

Our Sages attribute great symbolism to this *mitzva*, specifically regarding the unity of the Jewish people. Torah knowledge is the flavor of Judaism and performing *mitzvot* is the fragrance. As far as flavor and fragrance are concerned, there are four kinds of Jews.

First there is the *lulav*, a closed date palm frond, leaves united together, straight and tall. The dates that grow on the palm are flavorful but do not have a distinct scent. This is the species that we mention when reciting the blessing on all four kinds – "al *netilat lulav*." It symbolizes our Torah scholars, whose main occupation is studying Torah, the flavor of Judaism, just as dates have flavor. (While they observe *mitzvot*, they are recognized for Torah study.) They are tall beacons of light we look to for guidance and leadership.

The *etrog*, a citron, is pretty, fragrant and flavorful. The *etrog* stays on the tree year round, uniting the seasons. This symbolizes the very well-rounded Jew who studies Torah regularly and fulfills the commandments with joy and love.

*Hadasim*, myrtles, whose stem is woody and thick, has leaves that smell so good. Its leaves are clustered in united groups of three, with the top of the leaves of the bottom cluster covering the bottom of the leaves of the higher cluster. *Hadasim* are symbolic of Jews who love doing *mitzvot*. They strengthen all the Jews around them with their *mitzvot* and kindness. They learn Torah as well, but in general they are busy "doing."

*Aravot*, willows of the brook, commonly have reddish stems, with clusters of two leaves up its stems. They grow bunched together, united and in abundance. They have neither taste nor distinct smell. *Aravot* are symbolic of those of us whose involvement in Torah study and observance of *mitzvot* are minimal.

Which of these Four Kinds is most important? It would seem to be the *lulav* as it is named in the blessing. And yet, the Biblical verse mentions it second, only after the *etrog*. If you leave out any of the four and remain with only three, you can no longer do the *mitzva*. The Torah gives primacy to the *lulav* in the blessing and to the *etrog* in the verse to teach us that each of the four kinds are equal.

The same is true for every Jew. Each one of us is necessary, with a unique part in the Jewish mission. The mission is incomplete without every Jew's contribution. The value of every Jew is infinite. It is time to embrace every Jew. When we are united we complete each other. When we are united, G-d is overjoyed; our unity is irresistible. Therefore, our unity is what will bring Moshiah.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, [yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com](http://yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com). Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## Dance, Leap, Wave

The flame dances, leaps, flickers, gracefully waving its fiery body. It moves from side to side. It waxes and wanes, without a moment's rest, without an instant of inactivity. The flame is the prima ballerina in a ballet orchestrated specially for her. The Jewish soul is a flame. And when it wants to express itself, when it aches to rise above limitations, casting aside all restrictions, it too dances.

And this is why we Jews dance on the holiday of Simchat Torah: little children with their multicolored paper flags and miniature Torahs; adults with the handwritten scrolls of parchment; scholars and beginners, young and old.

We dance with the Torah, a contradiction of sorts. It contains a fixed number of words and letters encompassing immeasurable wisdom. It is unfathomable by our finite minds, yet the unlimited soul, the part of the Divine within every single one of us, the G-dly flame, is one with it.

One might suggest that the way to celebrate with and rejoice over completing the Torah at this time of year would be to open it up and study it.

But then, our celebrations would be limited. Our joy would be lacking. Many could not participate due to lack of basic Hebrew reading skills. Others, though proficient in Hebrew, lack- a knowledge of the foundations of Judaism. The child would be confined by his undeveloped cognitive skills. The scholar's prominence in this area would be conspicuous. There would

be no sense of the intrinsic equality of every single Jew.

And so, we dance. For some it is just a rhythmic sway. For others it is a kick-up-your-heels dance. For all, it is the expression of the part of us that transcends all limitations and definitions.

Dancing, specifically the kind of dancing that we do on Simchat Torah, is unique because it creates an atmosphere, an atmosphere of joy, excitement, carefree abandon from the worries of our day-to-day existence. It is difficult, no, nearly impossible, to see a mass of people swirling round and round without getting intoxicated with the exuberant mood.

The dancing on Simchat Torah is the culmination of days of joyous festivity during special celebrations on each night of Sukkot which are as ancient as the Holy Temple itself. The joy increases daily, from the first day of Sukkot until the end of Simchat Torah. And since our Sages tell us that "happiness breaks down barriers," the happiness at the celebrations can and should extend beyond all limits. For then, the happiness will serve as a source of happiness for the entire year to come. And seeing and appreciating such celebrations generates the potential to appreciate happiness in all things, throughout the entire year.

And so, on Simchat Torah we dance. As equals we dance. As equals we rejoice with the magnificent gift of the Torah. Some know more, some know less, but when we dance we are equal.

to dedicate an issue call (718) 778-6000

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

# SLICE OF LIFE

My Etrog Moment  
by Rabbi Nechemia Schusterman



During the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic every day was a long day. The kids were at home. Even in regular times, trying to squeeze some productivity in the busy holiday season with everyone at home can test the best of us and our patience.

I was getting ready to leave for my weekly Torah Class (on zoom) when I heard the bang. Unsure what it was, I heard one of my children – who shall remain nameless – mutter to herself, “uh oh!”

Not a good sign.

Then I heard another child say to this unnamed child, “Oh man, you broke it! Tatty is gonna kill you.”

Definitely not a good sign.

Then I heard my wife say to me gently, “You are not going to be happy.”

It was now sealed in my mind, something bad had happened.

And then I saw it. My child had knocked over my guitar and it had broken. Literally broke the entire head off, it was now being dragged by the still-connected strings.

Now, I am not a super sentimental person, but this was my first guitar I ever owned, given to

me by a friend and a gifted guitarist. This friend had inspired me to learn to play and this was my little escape when I needed the music of my soul to be louder than the noise of the world. Not a very expensive piece but valuable enough that the replacement would hurt a bit.

As my daughter – the culprit – came into the room, with her shoulders hunched, my blood pressure was peaking and the lava was starting to erupt out of my internal volcano. I was about to let loose a string of words not fitting for a rabbi at a tone not fitting for an one.

And then I realized, this is My Etrog Moment.

The story is told of Reb Yechiel Michel, the Maggid of Zlotchov, who had inherited a special pair of tefillin from his very holy father Rabbi Yitzchak of Drohovitch. These tefillin were more precious to him than anything, and he refused to sell them, despite their fantastic worth and his extreme poverty.

Wealthy men, who understood the spiritual value of the tefillin, had offered Reb Yechiel Michel huge sums of money, but he would never sell his father's tefillin even though his wife pressured him greatly.

One year, Sukkot drew near but there was no Etrog to be found in the city of Zlotchov. People waited for Etrogim to arrive from different places, but none came. Finally, a man arrived in town the day before Sukkot with a beautiful Etrog. He didn't want to part with it and would only do so for a huge sum of money for it.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel considered the matter and decided to sell the precious pair of tefillin as he had been offered the same amount of money that the Etrog cost.

As soon as he had the money, Reb Yechiel Michel purchased the beautiful Etrog, and the town of Zlotchov had an etrog to complete the “Four Species” and make a blessing on the holiday.

When Reb Yechiel Michel's wife found out that he had purchased the Etrog, she demanded to know from where he had gotten hold of so much money. He didn't answer her, so she continued to ask him.

Finally, Rabbi Yechiel Michel told his wife that he had sold his father's tefillin to purchase the etrog.

When his wife heard this, she became furious. She had begged him many times to sell the tefillin so that their own family could use the money and he wouldn't do it, but now he had sold it for an etrog!

In a fit of rage, the rebbetzin grabbed the Etrog off the table and took a bit out of it. Now the expensive etrog was worthless. Reb Yechiel Michel watched what happened in shock but he did not say a word. He maintained complete control and exclaimed: “If the Master of the World wanted my etrog to be invalid, I accept it with love!”

Later, Rabbi Yitzchak of Drohovitch, Reb Yechiel Michel's father, appeared to him in a dream. He told his son that in heaven the self-control that he maintained when his wife destroyed his Etrog had an even bigger impact than him selling his precious tefillin in order to fulfill the mitzva of blessing the Four Species.

An incredible lesson in patience and perspective. That was the story that fell into my head as I started to lose control over my broken guitar.

I told my daughter to come over to me. She walked over afraid and unsure of what reaction I was going to have. I simply took her head in my hands and gave her head a kiss.

She said, “I thought you were going to be angry with me?”

“Did you break it out of anger or on purpose?” I asked,

“No”

“In that case, mistakes happen, try to be more careful next time,” I concluded.

We all have our Etrog moments. I have many Etrog moments. I don't always rise to the occasion. This time I am thankful that I did. I am certain that she will long remember that kiss instead of whatever fury I might have unleashed on her.

As Covid continues to be a challenge for many, very possibly we will have more etrog moments.

Will we step up to the challenge and have the right reaction?

*Rabbi Nechemia Schusterman and his wife Raizel run the Chabad of Peabody Jewish Center. Rabbi Schusterman is a proud father of 7 who enjoys many hobbies, including exercise, skiing and writing. He is a certified mohel and loves to write on a wide variety of topics. Read more of his writings at RabbiSchusterman.com*



## Public Sukkas

As in previous years, if you're in Manhattan, visit one of the Lubavitch Youth Organization's public Sukkas during the intermediate days of the holiday. They will be open: Thursday, September 23 & Sunday, September 26, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, Friday, September 24 and Monday, September 27, 10:00 am - 4:00. The Sukkas are: **The United Nations Sukka**, located in Ralph Bunch Park, near the Isaiah Wall across from the United Nations on First Avenue and 42nd Street; **Sukka at Foley Square**, near Worth Street; across the Federal Court House. **The Wall Street Sukka** located on the cobblestones in Bowling Green Park, in lower Manhattan. **The Garment Center Sukka** in Herald Square across from Macy's. For more information call (718) 778-6000. To find out about public Sukkot in your area call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center.

## Two Weeks in One

This current issue of *L'Chaim* is for the entire Sukkot holiday. Issue 1691 is for 25 Tishrei/October 1 for the Torah portion of *Beresheet*.

## Today Is...

18 Tishrei

It is written that all through the year, when saying in the silent Amida (Sh'mona Esrei) prayer “and all the varieties of its produce for good”, one should have in mind wheat for matza and the etrog (elsewhere, wine for kiddush is also mentioned); then naturally all the produce will be for good.

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translated and excerpted

Between Yom Kippur and Succos, 5741 [1980]

These are the days when, having been blessed on Yom Kippur with a good and sweet year, we are preparing for the Festival of Succos – “the Season of Our Rejoicing.” At this time some reflection is in order:

True, we are living in exile, a time when G-dly revelation is not as prevalent. This diminished light of Torah has its effect in the world in its relations with the Jewish people and, in some Jews, in their relationship to Judaism.

(It should be stated that these two are interconnected. It is only when Jews, individually or collectively, proudly and openly adhere to their Jewishness that they earn the respect of the world around them.

Furthermore, by adhering to a Torah life-style, which means actually learning Torah and doing Mitzvos, we not only diminish but eventually completely eliminate the only cause of the Exile (as we clearly say in our prayer- “Because of our sins we were exiled from our land”) and the Exile is shortened and eventually ended by the true and complete Redemption through Moshiach.)

Nevertheless, the fact that we are still in Exile must not, and does not, dampen the joyful preparations for Succos, much less the actual joy of Yom Tov, particularly the Festival of Succos (including Chol HaMo'ed, Shemini Atzeres, and Simchas Torah) which has been singled out and designated as “The Season of Our Rejoicing.”

An additional factor, which is also one of our fundamental beliefs and basic principles of our Torah, is Bitochon (trust) in G-d. This means true and absolute trust in the Master of all the universe, whose Divine Providence extends to each and everyone individually, and specifically, and in detail.

This trust includes, first of all, that He surely

granted that everyone be favorably sealed in everything and in every detail, including and especially the fulfillment in our own very days of the hope, heartfelt yearning, and most fervent daily expectation of Moshiach “for whose coming I wait every day.”

The basis of this trust is the simple belief of every single Jew. For Jews are “believers the sons of believers,” this intrinsic belief having been inherited from our Father Abraham. This belief unites and unifies all Jews and, furthermore, it is perfectly equal in all Jews though they be unlike each other in many other aspects.

It is this trust that makes a spiritual uniting of the Jewish people a reality, unifying all Jews into one entity. For their common simple belief also pervades and encompasses everything in which they differ, including their understanding, and level of study and observance of the Torah.

This unity is also reflected in Yom Kippur, the unique and only day in the year, which of all the festivals ordained in the Torah, is celebrated for one day only, both in and outside of the Holy Land.

Yom Kippur is the day on which all Jews conclude on the same culminating “resume” and proclaim with profound inspiration and in a loud voice: Shema Yisroel-Hear, O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One; Blessed be the name of His glorious Kingdom forever and ever; Hashem He is G-d!”

This same unifying principle is reflected also in the Festival of Succos, in combining together the “Four Kinds” (Esrog, Lulav, Myrtle, and Willow), symbolizing all different types of Jews, into one Mitzvah, which is created by virtue of a Jew unifying them.

And also in the Succah itself, concerning which the Torah says: “It is possible for all Jews to sit in one Succah.”

May G-d grant that just as on Yom Kippur, after the many prayers and the culminating resume, one long shofar blast is sounded-a Tekiah Gedolah, according to custom, followed by the loud proclamation: Next year in Jerusalem!

So may every Jew in the midst of the entire Jewish people, may every Jewish man and woman, very soon indeed hear the sound of G-d's Great Shofar announcing our liberation, followed immediately by-“Bring us... to Jerusalem Your Holy House with everlasting joy.”

# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*The holiday of Sukot begins this Monday evening at sundown. Described as “the Festival of our Rejoicing,” it is unique in that we are specifically commanded to be happy. Regarding Simchat Torah as well, we are enjoined, “Rejoice and be happy on Simchat Torah.”*

*But does G-d really expect us to turn our emotions on and off like a faucet? How is it possible to be happy, just because the Torah tells us to?*

*We can answer this in the same way as we resolve the question of how the Torah commands us to love – both love of G-d and love of our fellow. The Torah commands us think those thoughts and do those things which will arouse the feelings of love.*

*There are two ways to arouse a feeling of joy: through the head, and through the feet. We can sit and meditate on things that make us happy, or we can get up and start to dance. But whatever our approach - cerebral or with outward manifestations of joy - the heart will follow.*

*In truth, every Jew has what to be joyful about. Just thinking about the enormous love G-d has for every Jew, or the great merit each of us has in possessing a Jewish soul, can make us appreciative and thankful.*

*When a Jew is happy, it expresses his trust and faith in G-d that whatever happens is for the best. Serving G-d with joy reveals the good that is hidden in everything.*

*The holiday of Sukot is a time to recharge our batteries, to “stock up” on an abundance of joy for the coming year. According to Chasidut, all of the spiritual goals we were trying to reach on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur by fasting and praying are attainable on Sukot and Simchat Torah - simply by being joyful and dancing!*

*So have a happy Sukot, and may G-d grant us the ultimate joy of Moshiach's arrival immediately.*

*Shmuel Butman*

## L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חי'ה י מושקא

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

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# MOSHIACH MATTERS

Simchat Torah has a special connection to Moshiach. In the hymn that we recite after dancing with the Torah on Simchat Torah day, we mention that Moshiach (“Tzemach”) will come on Simchat Torah. This does not mean Moshiach cannot come at another time; it merely underscores the conceptual

and spiritual relationship between Moshiach and Simchat Torah. One of the contributions of Moshiach with respect to Torah is that he will reveal heretofore hidden dimensions of Torah. In the Messianic Era, Moshiach will experience the unprecedented opening of all dimensions of his soul. Moshiach's personality is a Simchat Torah personality and Moshiach will radiate new light and depth to the teachings of the Torah. Moshiach, though, will not keep this Simchas Torah mindset for himself. He will share it with all of us. (Rabbi Yisroel Fried, *The Torah Celebrates With Us*)