

time we inadvertently lose or damage someone else's property.

I am writing this story nearly a year later. Looking back, I have to say that G-d amply repaid us for the cost of the missing etrog. In fact, we were able to set aside enough money to easily meet all of this year's holiday expenses, including the most beautiful lulav and etrog that we can find.

Live & Laugh

A patron at a restaurant was continually bothering the waiter about the air conditioning: first he would ask for the air conditioning to be turned up because it was too hot, then he would ask for it to be turned down because it was too cold, this went on for about a half an hour. To the surprise of the rest of the customers, the waiter was very patient, walking back and forth and very pleasant.

Simchas Torah Dinner

Thursday night 12 Oct.

Full Course Dinner Catered by

Stan & Pete.

Rousing, *Lebedig*, Spirited and Inspiring.

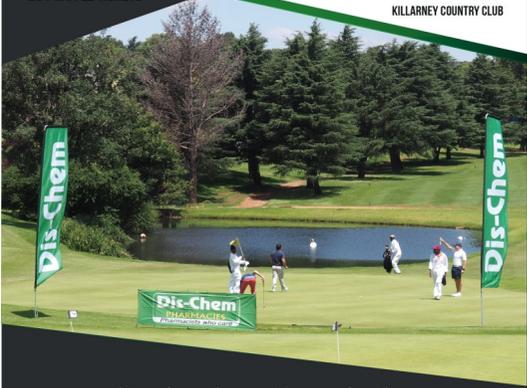
Booking at Shul office or
www.sydshul.co.za

DIS-CHEM REACH FOR A DREAM GOLF DAY

of the Sydenham Shul

- MAKE UP A FOUR BALL
- SPONSOR A HOLE
- DONATE PRIZES
- BUY RAFFLE TICKETS

WEDNESDAY
22 NOV
KILLARNEY COUNTRY CLUB



Join us for another great day away from the city noise and stresses

Please speak to Selwyn Kahlberg, Chairman of the Golf Day Committee, Ingrid Seef, or Rabbi Goldman.



So finally a customer asked; why don't you just throw out the pest?

Oh, I don't care, said the waiter with a grin, we don't even have an air conditioner.

Calendar

Thursday 5 Oct - 1st DAY SUKKOT

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl: 8:45 am
- ◆ Hallel: ±9:15 am
- ◆ Lulav & Esrog
- ◆ Mincha: 5:40 pm
- ◆ Candlelighting: not before 6: 41 pm from a pre-lit flame (Blessings for Yom Tov & Shehecheyanu)
- ◆ Yom Tov tonight
- ◆ Eat in Sukkah

Friday 6 Oct - 2nd DAY SUKKOT

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl: 8:45 am
- ◆ Hallel: ±9:15 am
- ◆ Lulav & Esrog
- ◆ Mincha: 5:40 pm
- ◆ Candles: not later than 5:52 from a pre-lit flame (Blessing for Shabbos only)

Simchas Torah Ladies Programme

Join Sydenham's Rebbetzins for Breakfast & Inspiration

Rebbetzin Rochel Goldman
Inside and Out
You are beautiful!

Rebbetzin Estee Stern
Simcha and Celebration
Why do we dance?

Friday 13 October 10:15am
Sydenham Shul Community Centre
Two Talks followed by Delicious Breakfast

SYDENHAM HIGHLANDS NORTH HEBREW CONGREGATION
SYDENHAM SHUL

Special thanks to our sponsors. You can still become one!
Contact the Shul Office 011 640 5021

7"ב

NOW IN OUR 75TH YEAR OF INSPIRATION

Published by the
Sydenham Highlands North
Hebrew Congregation
Johannesburg, South Africa

Good Yom Tov SYDENHAM!

5 & 6 Oct 2017 Succos 15 & 16 Tishrei 5778

Of Towers and Tabernacles

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Many years ago, when downtown Johannesburg was still home to Jewish shopkeepers and office dwellers, in my capacity as Director of Chabad House, I would always organize the Central City Sukkah. The little booth stood at the foot of the Carlton Centre, at the time Africa's biggest office and shopping complex, providing food, refreshments and, of course, the *Lulav* and *Etrog* for the many Jews in the district.

One year, I asked a photographer to take a shot of the Sukkah and the Carlton Centre skyscraper together. He had to use a rather sophisticated lens to get them both into one picture. Naturally, the Sukkah was dwarfed by the skyscraper. But I couldn't help thinking that, in the end, that humble little Sukkah would outlast even the mightiest of skyscrapers.

Indeed, since 9/11 and the collapse of the world's tallest towers, that feeling is even stronger.

There are two opinions in the Talmud as to what we commemorate when we build our Sukkah. One is that it recalls the Booths our ancestors built to shelter themselves from the burning desert sun after the Exodus from Egypt. The other, is that the Sukkah recalls not a *physical* shelter but the *spiritual* shelter provided by the Clouds of Glory, Hashem's protective cover that shielded them from many harmful effects.

Rashi, in his commentary on the Bible seems to favour the latter opinion of *spiritual* rather than *physical* shelter. This seems to be corroborated by the Halacha in the Laws of Sukkah that if

the *Schach*, the leafy covering is so thick that the rain cannot penetrate, then the Sukkah is actually invalid (*posul*).

It would seem that the purpose of the Sukkah is to remind us wherein lies our true security. It is in the protective cover of G-d, as symbolized by the Clouds of Glory, rather than in our own man-made shelters.

This is, in fact, the most important moral lesson we are meant to derive from this beautiful Festival. "Life is but a Sukkah," a temporary dwelling, here today, gone tomorrow - "a fleeting dream," as we said on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

So where do we look for strength, hope, salvation and our ultimate security? Not in the mighty man-made skyscrapers. We have seen all too horribly and vividly on our television screens how the mightiest towers on earth collapsed like a deck of cards! What took the most advanced society on our planet ten years to build, took a few madmen ten minutes to destroy!

And now life in South Africa is a mirror of the *meshugaas* that happens elsewhere. Today, an ordinary trip on an airplane requires taking off our shoes and being scanned for weapons; and even a little scissors or a vial of liquid is suspect. And this year we have seen unprecedented security measures around all our Jewish centres. Suddenly, nowhere is safe.

Yes, at the end of the day, "Life is but a Sukkah." When we realise our own vulnerability and our dependence on G-d for our life, our livelihood, our safety and security, then we begin to under-

stand that we are under His protective shield. And then, wherever we are we can feel safe in His embrace.

Every year, in my Sukkah at home we sing an old Yiddish song called “*Ab Sukelele ah Kleineh*” – or, *The Little Sukkah*. It is the story of a dilapidated, barely-standing Sukkah that is being threatened by gale force winds. The wife and daughter of the house are petrified that any moment their Sukkah will, G-d forbid, collapse. But the husband and father comforts them, reminding them that their little Sukkah is still standing for over 2000 years. The Sukkah becomes the symbol of the Jewish condition - frail and vulnerable but, inevitably, indestructible. Somehow, by the grace of G-d, we survive to live another day, come what may.

No winds can destroy the Jewish Sukkah. Our traveling tabernacle has given us shelter from the winds of change that swept through many continents over the centuries of Jewish journeys. When we remember that it is Hashem, the Guardian of Israel, who is our ultimate shelter and source of security, we find strength and serenity no matter what is howling outside.

May we all enter the Sukkah literally and figuratively and find the shelter and security we all seek in the warm embrace of the small but impregnable Sukkah.

Chag Sameach. Hope to see you in the Sukkah.

Holy Hut

By Rabbi Aron Moss

Question:

Why do we celebrate Sukkot immediately after the High Holidays?

Answer:

We have all made resolutions to become better people for the new year. But have we really changed? Whether we have promised

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.

Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810

E-mail: sydsdul@sydsdul.co.za

Website: www.sydsdul.co.za

www.facebook.com/sydenhamshul

to curb our temper, become more generous, go to Shul more often or quit a bad habit, it is much easier to say than to do. Often a sincere resolution is forgotten as quickly as it was made.

The reason for this is compartmentalization. Our personalities are divided. One part of us truly wants to improve and grow, while other parts of us are lazy and complacent. My mind tells me one thing but my heart feels otherwise. My soul has good intentions but my body comes in the way.

The solution: enter a Sukkah. When we enter a Sukkah, we enter with our entire being -- our body and our soul, our heart and our mind. It is one of the only mitzvas that we do with our whole person.

The Sukkah experience is one of wholesomeness. And only when we bring our whole self into a holy space, our resolve from Yom Kippur can be translated into reality.

Hugged by a Hut

By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

A *sukkah* is an embrace. You sit inside and G-d is hugging you. All of you, from head to toe.

Whatever you do inside your *sukkah*—sip a beer, chat with a friend, answer your e-mail, or just sleep soundly—all is transformed into a mitzvah, a secure and timeless connection with the Infinite.

And then, when you leave the *sukkah* to enter the world, you carry that hug with you.

All of life can become an embrace. A hug with the Infinite.

The Case of the Missing Esrog

By Chaya Shuchat

It was the second day of Sukkot and my husband came home and cheerfully informed me that his *lulav* and *etrog* were nowhere to be found. He had given his set to a yeshiva student who was making rounds to hospitals and nursing homes, to give patients the opportunity to fulfill this important mitzvah. The young

man, in turn, had passed in on to someone else who promised that he would personally return it. The chain broke down at that point but it was clear that someone had my husband's set of Four Species, and it was not him.

Unfortunately, I was unable to digest this news with the same equanimity that my husband displayed. A *lulav-and-etrog* set is not cheap--somewhere between \$100 and \$200 for a nicely grown, plump, unblemished citron and a firm, straight-backed *lulav* branch. This is on top of all the additional holiday expenses--new clothing and shoes for all the children, festive meals nearly every night.

Before I reacted, though, I recalled a story that I heard in childhood, of a poor rabbi who sold an heirloom set of *tefillin*, his only valuable possession, in order to afford a beautiful *etrog*. His wife was so incensed at what he had done that she grabbed the *etrog* and bit off its tip, rendering it unfit for a blessing.

My sympathies at that moment were completely with the *rebbetzin*, and I probably would have done worse things to the *etrog*, had it been in my possession. But our precious set of Four Species was currently in the hands of a well-meaning yeshiva student, who at the moment was trudging around Brooklyn to find Jews who had not managed to acquire their own set. This image calmed me down somewhat, at least enough to ask through clenched teeth: "And if you must lend out your *lulav* and *etrog*, why can't you at least buy a cheap set just for lending?"

"And why," my husband inquired patiently, "should a Jew in the street make a blessing over a *lulav* and *etrog* less beautiful than the one I choose for myself?"

I found it difficult to argue with his logic. People who spend over \$100 on a set of fruit and branches will fall for a mystical argument anytime.

I reminded myself of another childhood story, of a different rabbi (or maybe it was the same one?) who set out with the pre-

cious rubles he had hoarded all year, to purchase a truly outstanding set of Four Species. Along the way, he passed a poor coachman whose horse had just keeled over and died. The poor man was now left without any means of support. Without hesitation, the rabbi handed over the entire sum to the coachman to purchase a new horse. After all, he reasoned, blessing the Four Species is a mitzvah, and charity is a mitzvah, too. When everyone else in the synagogue blesses the Four Species, he will say his blessing over a horse.

Applying the rabbi's logic to my own situation, on the cosmic mitzvah scale there really is no difference if my husband makes a blessing over his set, or if that same set is used by hundreds of other Jews on the streets of Brooklyn. *Mitzvah* = mitzvah, right? Especially since the mitzvah is compounded many times over, by all the people using it.

I remembered one year when my husband's *etrog* had been returned to him covered with brown splotches, testimony to the dozens of hands that had gripped it. I had looked distastefully at the bruised *etrog*, thinking of the many hours he had spent browsing the *etrog* market, trying to find the most perfect, unblemished fruit. But my husband had seen it differently: "All the hand-marks make the *etrog* more beautiful."

Putting the missing-*etrog* saga into perspective, I couldn't be too angry. As the rabbi in the story had remarked to his *etrog*-chomping wife, family harmony is also a mitzvah, and if G-d had seen fit to deprive them of one mitzvah there was no reason not to have the other. The rabbi kept his peace, and so did I. My husband mentally relinquished all claim to his *lulav* and *etrog*, and gifted it with a full heart to the student who had borrowed it.

We made do with borrowed *etrogim* for the duration of the holiday, as my husband's set never was returned. I still wish he had found a more reliable agent, but mess-ups do happen. As we say in Yiddish, *zol es zain a kapparah*--"let it be an atonement," and let our forgiving attitude in this instance stand us in good stead the next

◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org, zahavi