



CANDLE LIGHTING 7:35 PM | 15 IYAR | MAY 2, 2026 | HAVDALA 8:39 PM

שבת פרשת אמור SHABBAT PARSHAT EMOR

Haftorah is Ezekiel 44:15-31.
Pirkei Avot Ch. 4.

ל"ג בעומר / 18 IYAR / TUESDAY, MAY 5

No Tachanun. Music, haircuts, marriages and buying items requiring shehechyanu are permissible.

FRIDAY EVENING

MINCHA 7:30 PM

SHKIA 7:53 PM

TZAIT HAKOCHAVIM 8:33 PM

SHABBAT

HASHKAMA 7:45 AM

SHACHARIT - MAIN 9:00 AM

POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR ≈ 9:20 AM

LAST KRIAT SHEMA 9:24 AM

FUNDAMENTALS SHIUR ≈ 11:30 AM

PRE-MINCHA SHIUR 6:45 PM

MINCHA 7:25 PM

SHKIA 7:54 PM

MAARIV 8:39 PM

MAY BIRTHDAY/ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

Kiddush is sponsored to celebrate our May birthdays and anniversaries!



Happy birthday to Naomi Avital, Sammy Avital, Audrey Bickel, David Bickel, Josh Bickel, Sharon Brooks, Benji Cooper, Tamar Cooper, Aaron Czinn, Judah Czinn, Belana Dworkis, Danielle Dworkis, Lior Gorelik, Aaron Jacobson, Aviya Jacobson, Jesse Schwed, Berko Shtaynberger, Arnie Spier, & Emily Wechsler.

Happy anniversary to Allison & Bryan Goldberg, Britty Cohen & Yuval Haddad, and Gail & Steven Plotnick.

SEUDAH SHLISHIT

Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Dina & Elliot Greene on the yahrzeit of Dina's father, Jacob Rubinowitz^{ה"ע} (Yaakov ben Herzl) and by Rebecca Berger and Jay Herman on the yahrzeit of Rebecca's mother, Florence Berger^{ה"ע}.

MITZVAH FAIR

Time to gear up for Mitzvah Day, tomorrow, Sunday, May 3, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Booths: Shatniz, Shchita & Kashering, Techeilet, Mikveh, Candle Making, Challah, Parchment Making, Sofrut with a Sofer, Leining, Hair Covering, Java Nut Food Booth, & Interactive Mitzvah House.

Register (suggested \$5/person or \$10/family max) or sponsor here: [MITZVAH FAIR](#). Sponsorship levels are: Yuharah (\$1,000), Mehadrin Min haMehadrin (\$360), Mehadrin (\$180), D'oraita (\$72), and D'rabanen (\$18).



SUNDAY
5/3

MONDAY
5/4

TUESDAY
5/5

WEDNESDAY
5/6

THURSDAY
5/7

FRIDAY
5/8

WEEKDAY MINYANIM AT AHAVAT ACHIM

SHACHARIT 8:00 AM 6:15 AM 6:25 AM 6:25 AM 6:15 AM 6:25 AM

2ND SHACHARIT MINYON - YISHTABACH AT 7:40 AM 7:25 AM 7:25 AM 7:25 AM 7:25 AM 7:25 AM

MINCHA/MAARIV 7:43 PM 7:44 PM 7:45 PM 7:46 PM 7:47 PM 7:30 PM

ZMANI

Earliest Talit 4:51 AM 4:49 AM 4:48 AM 4:46 AM 4:45 AM 4:44 AM

Gedolah 1:29 PM 1:29 PM 1:29 PM 1:29 PM 1:29 PM 1:29 PM

Shkia 7:55 PM 7:56 PM 7:57 PM 7:58 PM 7:59 PM

Tzait 8:35 PM 8:36 PM 8:37 PM 8:38 PM 8:39 PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 3** - Mitzvah Fair, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM.
May 17 - Boker Tov Sivan - Musical Hallel & Breakfast, sponsored by the Czinnis in honor of Judah's 5th Hebrew Birthday. RSVP here: [Hallel](#)
June 14 - Bowling!
June 23 - Annual Membership Meeting, 8:30 PM.

IN OUR FUTURE - KIDDUSH, SEUDAH SHLISHIT, & ETC.

- May 9** - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Amy & Stephen Agress for a siyum on Masechet Menachot and in zechut for the neshama of Sybil Scheiner, Shifra bat Yosef.
May 16 - Ruth ½-Perek-By-½-Perek Shiur at Seudah Shlishit. Sign up: [Round-Robin](#)
May 23 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Eli Zezon in memory of שלמה בין אליהו
June 6 - Birthday and Anniversary Kiddush
June 6 - Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Eli Zezon in memory of ברוך מפציר בן שמואל
June 20 - Kiddush is sponsored by Shelly & Steve Winchester celebrating Daniel's Auf Ruf and upcoming wedding to Yael Simons.

BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY KIDDUSH

To add a birthday or anniversary to our April list (next Kiddush on Shabbat, May 2), click here: [SIMCHA](#). Listings/sponsorships are \$36 per family per month. RSVP for the May birthday/anniversary Kiddush by Sunday night, April 26.

SHIURIM

- PESHAT OF THE PARSHA, Tuesdays at 1:00 PM, click here: [Parsha](#).
- TORAH FOR YOUR COMMUTE, via Whatsapp, with 3-minute daily Halacha insights. To join email Rabbi Shestack at rabbishestack@gmail.com. It is available on Spotify or on other applications with an RSS code. Click here: [PODCASTS](#).
- POST-HASHKAMA SHIUR, analyzing Mishlei (Proverbs)
- FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT, after Kiddush.
- SHABBAT SHIUR, **SANHEDRIN CH. 8**, 40 minutes prior to mincha.
- TZURBA M'RABANAN w/ Zack Doberman, Wednesdays at 8:30 PM. In-person at the shul and via Zoom.
- SEDER ON THE SIDUR, at Seudah Shlishit.

GITA COOPERWASSER ע"ה YOUTH EVENTS

- May 22** - First Day of Shavuot, Edison Playground, 3:45 PM.
May 23 - Shul Playground, followed by an Interactive youth program and dinner, 3:45 PM.

GITA COOPERWASSER ע"ה SHABBAT YOUTH INFO



- **SHABBAT YOUTH LEADERS:**
3RD - 5TH: ISABELLA, SOPHIA, ALICIA
K - 2ND: ARIELYS & ARIELLA
3 YRS - PRE-K: ZOE & ABBY
- Youth groups for 3rd through 5th Graders starts at 9:00 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on left on entering the social hall.
- Youth group for children 4 years old through 1st Grade starts at 9:00 AM (Drop Off) in the Youth Room on the right upon entering the social hall.
- Parent & Me, 9:00 AM in the Beit Midrash.
- Rabbi Meet & Greet, Friday night, kids can come over to the Rabbi after davening to receive a cup of grape juice and a ticket!
- Children earn tickets for coming to minyan (Friday night and/or Shabbat day), asking the rabbi questions or attending parent-child learning programs! Tickets can be redeemed for prizes.
- Children's corner at Seudah Shlishit, 1st to 5th graders will get 10 Torah questions in 10 minutes from Rabbi Shestack, with special snacks, tickets and more.

BOARD MEETINGS 8:15 PM

- May 26** - At shul w/Zoom option.

Friday Evening, May 1



Saturday Evening, May 2



Sunday Evening, May 3



Monday Evening, May 4



Tuesday Evening, May 5



Wednesday Evening, May 6



Thursday Evening, 7



18-25 Saddle River Road
 Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
 201.797.0502

<http://www.ahavatachim.org>

Mishlei/Proverbs

Post-Hashkama Shiur 26 – Building, Foundational Truth, and What Endures

חֲכָמוֹת נָשִׁים בְּנִתְהוּ בֵּיתָהּ וְאִלֵּת בְּיַדֶּיהָ תִּהְיֶה תִּהְרָסָנָה: יְהוֹלֵךְ בְּיִשְׁרָוּ יִרְאֵה וְהֵגֵל וְנִלְוֹז דְּרָכָיו בּוֹזֵהוּ: יִפְּרִי־אֹזֶיב חֶסֶד גְּאֻנָּה וּשְׁפָתַי חֲכָמִים תִּשְׁמֹרָם: יִבְּאִין אֲלֵפִים אָבוֹס בְּרַ וְרַב־תְּבוֹאוֹת בְּכֹחַ שׁוֹר: יִעַד אֲמוּנִים לֹא יִכְבֹּד וְנִפְיִם כְּזָבִים עַד שֶׁקֶר: יִבְקֹשׁ־לֵץ חֲכָמָה וְאִין וְדַעַת לִנְבֹנוּ נֶקֶל: יִלְךְ מִנְגִיד לְאִישׁ כְּסִיל וּבִל־יִדְעַת שְׁפָתַי־דַּעַת: יִחֲכַמֵּת עָרוֹם הַבִּין דְּרָכֹו וְאִנְלֵת כְּסִילִים מִרְמָה: יִאֲוִלִים יִלְיֵץ אִשָּׁם וּבִינוּ יִשְׁרִים רִצּוֹן: יִלֵּב יִדְעַת מֶרֶת נִפְשׁוֹ וּבִשְׁמַחְתּוֹ לֹא־יִתְעַרֵּב זָר: יִבֵּית רְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמַד וְאִהֵל יִשְׁרִים יִפְרִיחַ: יִבְיֵשׁ דְּרָךְ יִשָּׂר לִפְנֵי־אִישׁ וְאִחֲרֵיתָהּ דְּרַכ־יָמוֹת: —

1The wisdom among [wise] women [enables] each to build her house, but folly tears it [her house] down with her own hands. 2He who fears the Lord walks in his uprightness, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him. 3In a fool's mouth is a staff of haughtiness, but the lips of the wise guard them. 4Without oxen the manger is empty, but an abundance comes by the strength of an ox. 5A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness speaks lies. 6Scoffers seek wisdom in vain, but knowledge comes easily to one of understanding. 7Go far away from a foolish man or you will not learn from lips of knowledge. 8The wisdom of a clever man allows him to understand his course, but the folly of fools is deception. 9Reparations resolve differences between scoffers, but there is [inherent] good will among the upright. 10The heart alone knows its bitterness, and in its joy no stranger can share. 11The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the righteous shall flourish. 12The road ahead may seem right to a man, but in the end it is a road to death.¹

A. In Psychology 101, we learn of Maslow's five-level Hierarchy of Needs: physiological needs (the foundation), safety needs (stability), love and belonging (social needs), esteem needs (respect), and self-actualization (growth). While Maslow presents a modern psychological model of ascending needs, and Mishlei is more interested in aligning one's life with Hashem's will and wisdom, it nevertheless seems that Mishlei's metaphors sometimes correspond loosely to different rungs of the hierarchy that Maslow articulated much later.

B. The first four pasukim can be read as a self-contained unit: building (v. 1), living properly (vv. 2–3), and maintaining what was built (v. 4). While not necessarily in the same order, consider how these ideas relate to Maslow's hierarchy.

- V. 1 → The wisdom among [wise] women [enables] each to build her house, but folly tears it [her house] down with her own hands.
 - o The term חֲכָמוֹת, literally “wisdoms”, has caused variations in translations/understandings of the first half of the couplet, but the conclusion is that “houses”, presumably a metaphor for home and family, are built by wise women, but “lady folly” destroys her house.
- V. 2 → He who fears the Lord walks in his uprightness, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.
 - o The Vilna Gaon stresses the possessive sense of בִּישְׁרָוּ, highlighting that the verse speaks about a person walking in his own uprightness, as opposed to a universal uprightness.
 - o Some translations reverse the causal emphasis in the first clause, reading upright conduct as leading to fear of Hashem rather than the reverse.
- V. 3 → In a fool's mouth is a staff of haughtiness, but the lips of the wise guard them.
 - o There seems to be general agreement that the “staff” is causing harm, but views differ as to whether the harm is inflicted on others (via lashon hara, unsympathetic words, etc.) or whether on the fool (who perhaps is assaulted for his fighting words). There seems to be general agreement that the lips of the wise are guarding the wise themselves and not others, albeit perhaps by not allowing the wise to inflict harm on others with their words.

¹ Mishlei Chapter 14.

- V. 4 → Without oxen the manger is empty, but an abundance comes by the strength of an ox.

C. The next 5 pasukim address “truth”, whether in its simplest meaning (honesty vs. falsehood), or in its more analytical sense (differentiating reality vs. appearance). As we review these pasukim, consider whether a person who has reached the fourth or fifth stage of Maslow’s hierarchy, but is having issues achieving stability in that stage, might be knocked back hard to an earlier stage.

- V. 5 → A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness speaks lies. [Truth in testimony.]
 - o Metzudot and others read the verse in terms of cause and effect: one does not speak truth and thereby become a faithful witness; rather, one is a faithful witness, and therefore speaks truth.
- V. 6 → Scoffers seek wisdom in vain, but knowledge comes easily to one of understanding. [Truth in seeking wisdom.]
 - o The implication is that the scoffer’s quest is in vain because he tried to take a shortcut, trying to obtain wisdom without the humility and receptivity that make wisdom attainable, and the second part of the couplet shows the proper path.
- V. 7 → Go far away from a foolish man or you will not learn from lips of knowledge. [Truth in assessing other people.]
- V. 8 → The wisdom of a clever man allows him to understand his course, but the folly of fools is deception. [Truth in assessing oneself.]
- V. 9 → Reparations resolve differences between scoffers, but there is [inherent] good will among the upright. [Truth in assessing sin/guilt and its consequences.]

D. As this section of Chapter 14 concludes, consider where the person or persons being discussed fall on Maslow’s path to self-actualization.

- V. 10 → The heart alone knows its bitterness, and in its joy no stranger can share.
 - o Note that even though this translation (and most others) reflect *לִּבּוֹ* within “its” or a similar word, thereby not focusing on the reference to the soul, it is unlikely that this pasuk is referring to a person’s physical or emotional bitterness or joy, which with empathy or affection, respectively, can be felt by others, but instead is referring to what is happening to one’s soul, which cannot be shared.
 - o On the other hand, note that Yoma 83b quotes Rabbi Yannai as saying “If **an ill person says he needs to eat, and a doctor says he does not need to eat, one listens to the ill person. What is the reason** for this halakha? It is because the verse states: “**The heart knows the bitterness of its soul**”.
- V. 11 → The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the righteous will flourish.
 - o Ralbag notes that a house is a fortified structure, while a tent is more fragile. Nevertheless, if one’s growth is not intertwined with righteousness, what one builds will collapse.
- V. 12 → The road ahead may seem right to a man, but in the end it can be a road to death.
 - o A person may appear to reach a high stage of development and still bring the whole structure down from the top. Rashi reads this verse as describing a person who mistakes sins for something permissible or even righteous.
 - o The Midrash relates this to Nadav and Avihu, who brought an alien fire believing it to be righteous, but instead died for this sin.



AHAVAT ACHIM

קהלת אהבת אחים

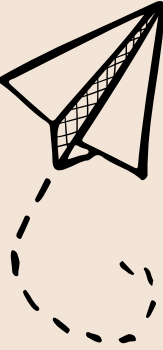
THE FAMILY SHUL

May

Simcha Kiddush

Honorees

Birthdays



Sammy Avital
Naomi Avital
Audrey Bickel
David Bickel
Josh Bickel
Sharon Brooks
Benji Cooper
Tamar Cooper
Aaron Czinn

Judah Czinn
Belana Dworkis
Danielle Dworkis
Lior Gorelik
Aviya Jacobson
Aaron Jacobson
Jesse Schwed
Berko Shtaynberger
Arnie Spier

Emily Wechsler

Anniversaries

Allison and Bryan Goldberg
Britty Cohen and Yuval Haddad
Gail and Steven Plotnick

FAIR LAWN

Mitzvah Fair

Sunday, May 3rd, 11AM-2PM

VENDOR & CRAFT FAIR
LIVE DEMOS

KIDS CORNER
INTERACTIVE HOUSE OF
MITZVOT



EXPERIENCE MITZVOT

- *Safrut*
- Hair Covering
- Kashrut
- Shechita
- Challah
- Mikveh
- Shatnaiz
- Parchment Making
- Techeilet
- The Mitzvah House
- And More!

Register Today

location provided upon registration
\$5pp recommend entry fee,
\$10/family



Tinyurl.com/AAMitzvahFair

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- \$72 - D'ORAITA
- \$180 - MEHADRIN*
- \$360 - MEHADRIN MIN HAMEHADRIN*
- \$1,000 - YUHARA*

*Sponsors for Mehadrin and up will have their names handscripted on the Mitzvah Fair Parchment of Kavod, to be displayed annually at each Mitzvah Fair. All others will have their names printed on a posterboard displayed at this year's fair.



BOKER TOV SIVAN

- MUSICAL HALLEL
- KIDS ACTIVITIES
- FREE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY MAY 17TH

9:15 AM SHACHARIT (Hallel at 9:40)

10:00 AM ARTS & CRAFTS for Kids

10:30 AM BREAKFAST

[RSVP AT TINYURL.COM/BOKERTOVSIVAN](https://tinyurl.com/bokertovsivan) BY 5/13

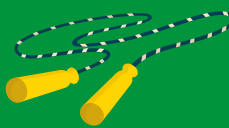


Save the Date!

Playdate in the Park: Shavuot Edition



Join us at Edison Park on
Friday, May 22nd at 3:45 P.M.



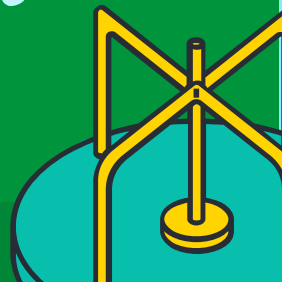
Fruit & snacks will be provided!
Bring your own water.

please do not bring snacks containing nuts



AHAVAT ACHIM
קהלת אהבת אחים

706.754.0000





Covenant & Conversation

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

EMOR • אמור

FROM THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ז"ל

With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel.

"I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah.

An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives." — Rabbi Sacks

This year's series of essays were originally written and recorded by Rabbi Sacks ז"ל in 5773 (2012–2013). These timeless messages are accompanied by a new [Family Edition](#) created to inspire intergenerational learning on the Parsha.

Faith as a Journey

In its account of the festivals of the Jewish year, this week's parsha contains the following statement:

For seven days you shall live in huts [*succot*]. All those native-born in Israel must live in huts, so that future generations may know that I had the Israelites live in huts when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

Vayikra 23:42-43

What precisely this means was the subject of disagreement between two great teachers of the Mishnaic era, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva. According to the Talmud Bavli (Succah 11a), Rabbi Eliezer holds that the reference is to the Clouds of Glory that accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse is to be understood literally (*succot mammash*). It means "huts" – no more, no less.

A similar difference of opinion exists between the great medieval Jewish commentators. Rashi and Ramban favour

the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation. Ramban cites as proof the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the end of days:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 4:5-6

Here the word *succah* clearly refers not to a natural but to a miraculous protection.

Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, however, favour the literal interpretation. Rashbam explains as follows: the festival of Succot, when the harvest was complete and the people were surrounded by the blessings of the land, was the time to remind them of how they came to be there. The Israelites would relive the wilderness years during which they had no permanent home. They would then feel a

sense of gratitude to God for bringing them to the land. Rashbam's prooftext is Moses' speech in Devarim 8:

And when you eat and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you. Take care not to forget the Lord your God...

Otherwise, when you have eaten and been satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, when your herds and flocks have grown abundant, and your silver and gold is abundant, and all that you have has grown abundant, your heart may become proud, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, the house of slaves... you might be tempted to say to yourself, 'My power, the strength of my own hand, have brought me this great wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to do great things, upholding the covenant that He swore to your ancestors, as He is doing on this day.

Devarim 8:10-18

According to Rashbam, Succot (like Pesach) is a reminder of the humble origins of the Jewish people, a powerful antidote to the risks of affluence. That is one of the overarching themes of Moses' speeches in the book of Devarim and a mark of his greatness as a leader. The real challenge to the Jewish people, he warned, was not the dangers they faced in the wilderness, but the opposite, the sense of wellbeing and security they would have once they settled the land. The irony – and it has happened many times in the history of nations – is that people remember God in times of distress but

forget Him in times of plenty. That is when cultures become decadent and begin to decline.

A question, however, remains. According to the view that the *succot* are to be understood literally as huts in the wilderness, what miracle does the festival of Succot represent? Pesach celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt with signs and wonders. Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the only time in history when an entire people experienced an unmediated revelation of God. On the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation, Succot fits this scheme. It recalls the miracles in the wilderness, the forty years during which they ate *mannah* from heaven, drank water from a rock, and were led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (In 1776, Thomas Jefferson chose this image as his design for the Great Seal of the United States). But on the view that the *succah* is not a symbol but a fact – a hut, a booth, nothing more – what miracle does it represent? There is nothing exceptional in living in a portable home if you are a nomadic group living in the Sinai desert. It is what Bedouin do to this day. Where then is the miracle?

A surprising and lovely answer is given by the Prophet Jeremiah:

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"I remember the devotion of your youth,
how – as a bride – you loved Me
and followed Me through the desert,
through a land not sown."

Jeremiah 2:2

Throughout Tanach, most of the references to the wilderness years focus on the graciousness of God and the ingratitude of the people: their quarrels and complaints, their constant inconstancy. Jeremiah does the opposite. To be sure, there were bad things about those years, but against them stands the simple fact that the Israelites had the faith and courage to embark on a journey through an unknown land, fraught with danger, and sustained only by their trust in God. They were like Sarah who accompanied Abraham on his journey, leaving “his land, birthplace and father’s house” behind. They were like Tziporah who went with Moses on his risk-laden mission to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. There is a faith that is like love; there is a love that calls for faith. That is what the Israelites showed in leaving a land where they had lived for 210 years and travelling out into the desert, “a land not sown”, not knowing what would befall them on the way, but trusting in God to bring them to their destination.

Perhaps it took Rabbi Akiva, the great lover of Israel, to see that what was truly remarkable about the wilderness years was not that the Israelites were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory but that they were an entire nation without a home or houses; they were like nomads without a place of refuge. Exposed to the elements, at risk from any surprise attack, they nonetheless continued on their journey in the faith that God would not desert them.

To a remarkable degree, Succot came to symbolise not just the forty years in the wilderness but also two thousand years of exile. Following the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were scattered

throughout the world. Almost nowhere did they have rights. Nowhere could they consider themselves at home. Wherever they were, they were there on sufferance, dependent on a ruler’s whim. At any moment without forewarning they could be expelled, as they were from England in 1290, from Vienna in 1421, Cologne, 1424, Bavaria 1442, Perugia, Vicenza, Parma and Milan in the 1480s, and most famously from Spain in 1492. These expulsions gave rise to the Christian myth of “the wandering Jew” – conveniently ignoring the fact that it was Christians who imposed this fate on them. Yet even they were often awestruck by the fact that – despite everything – Jews did not give up their faith when (in Judah Halevi’s phrase) “with a word lightly spoken” they could have converted to the dominant faith and put an end to their sufferings.

Succot is the festival of a people for whom, for twenty centuries, every house was a mere temporary dwelling, every stop no more than a pause in a long journey. I find it deeply moving that Jewish tradition called this time *zeman simchatenu*, “the season of our joy”. That, surely, is the greatness of the Jewish spirit that, with no protection other than their faith in God, Jews were able to celebrate in the midst of suffering and affirm life in the full knowledge of its risk and uncertainty. That is the faith of a remarkable nation.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once explained why the festival of Nissan has two names, Pesach and Chag haMatzot. The name Pesach represents the greatness of God who “passed over” the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The name *Chag haMatzot* represents the greatness of the Israelites who were

willing to follow God into the wilderness without provisions. In the Torah, God calls the festival *Chag haMatzot* in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, however, called it Pesach to sing the praise of God. That, it seems, is the argument between R. Eliezer and R. Akiva about Succot. According to R. Eliezer, it represents God's miracle, the Clouds of Glory. According to R. Akiva, however, it represents the miracle of Israel – their willingness to continue the long journey to freedom, vulnerable and at great risk, led only by the call of God.

Why then, according to Rabbi Akiva, is Succot celebrated at harvest time? The answer is in the very next verse of the prophecy of Jeremiah. After speaking of “the devotion of your youth, how – as a bride – you loved Me,” the Prophet adds:

Israel is holy to God,
The first fruit of His harvest.

Jeremiah 2:3

Just as, during Tishrei, the Israelites celebrated their harvest, so God celebrates His – a people who, whatever else their failings, have stayed loyal to Heaven's call for longer, and through a more arduous set of journeys, than any other people on earth.



Around the Shabbat Table

1. Why do we need faith to embark upon a journey without knowing the destination?
2. As a people, do you think we turn to God more when times are hard or when things are working out? Is this lamentable?
3. How can sitting in a flimsy succah make us feel safe?

● These questions come from this week's **Family Edition** to Rabbi Sacks' Covenant & Conversation. For an interactive, multi-generational study, check out the full edition at <https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/emor/faith-as-a-journey/>