



## Happiness on Succot



### Aims

- 1) To have a look at the importance of happiness in Judaism
- 2) To look at happiness in respect to Succot
- 3) To get to know your group
- 4) To eat a lot in many different Succot!

Dear Madrichim,

Welcome to the first Choveret of the year 5772!

Welcome to a new year at sviva! As the new Chinuch Worker, I am honoured and excited to be responsible for providing you with the weekly Choveret to help you plan meetings for your Chanichim, in order to educate our chanichim with our values of Torah, Avodah and Aliyah. I hope that you find it enjoyable, informative, and useful, and I welcome any comments that you have as to how it can be improved to help your Sviva even more.

The Choveret will always be about a topic which is important and relevant to us as Jews and as members of Bnei Akiva. The topic will often be connected to the weekly Parasha, the Jewish calendar, or current events taking place in Israel or the Jewish world including modern day history. My aim is that it will always be a small eight-page booklet (except for this week because of all the extra goodies you have been given!), so that it is short enough for you to absorb on a weekly basis, but long enough to give you a variety of ideas of how to incorporate Chinuch into your Shabbat afternoons activities.

The most important thing to remember about the Choveret is that it is just a starting point. How successful your Shabbat afternoons are this year will not depend on what I include in the Choveret, but on how much time, energy and passion you put into planning them. You have a wonderful opportunity to make a huge difference to the lives of young Jews on a weekly basis, and you should never underestimate how much you can achieve with your Chanichim in the coming year.

As it is the Succah crawl things may be a bit different to usual. It is important this week to make sure that everyone is having fun and will want to come back on a regular basis. As such it may mean you don't use the choveret this week exactly how you will be using it the rest of the year. That is ok as long as you make sure that everyone is happy... see inside for details!

Bevirkat Chaverim le'Torah ve'Avodah

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## The importance of happiness in Judaism



*'Here's a little song I wrote  
You might want to sing it note for note  
Don't worry be happy  
In every life we have some trouble  
When you worry you make it double  
Don't worry, be happy...'*

Above are lyrics from a chart number 1 in the 80's but what has that got to do with anything in Bnei Akiva?

Judaism places a lot of importance on 'being happy'. As the Mishna in Pirkei Avot (4:1) teaches:

"Who is rich? The one who is happy with his lot."

This Mishna is teaching us to always be grateful for what we have been given. If we are able to realize what we have been given, by Hashem, is what we need and that we don't always need to be looking for the next thing to buy, whether it be a new car or the next phone or the top of the range fashion item, then we will always be able to be satisfied and happy.

However if we are constantly looking at everyone around us and measuring ourselves to them, we will never be happy until we have the best.

Rebbe Nachman used to say that depression feeds the Yetzer Hara and one should only allow 5 minutes a day for depression, the rest of the time he should be happy. Rebbe Nachman's key phrase was:



מצוה גדולה להיות בשמחה תמיד

It is a huge mitzvah to always be happy

From this we can see how important being happy was for Rebbe Nachman.

The big question is if bad things happen to us how can we be happy? How does the ideal of Rebbe Nachman deal with a situation, which is deeply distressful or saddening?

There are many answers to this question but the answer which best explains the Jewish attitude towards life and towards tackling life in an appreciative way is found in Gemara Brachot 60b

One must receive the evil with gladness

The commentators explain that this is because a person who receives difficulties in this life is achieving atonement for his sins, so that they can enjoy the next life fully with no sins to bring them down. An interesting look at a common idiom in Judaism will shed some more light about the way Jewish thought looks at happiness. I'm sure we are all aware of the common phrase:

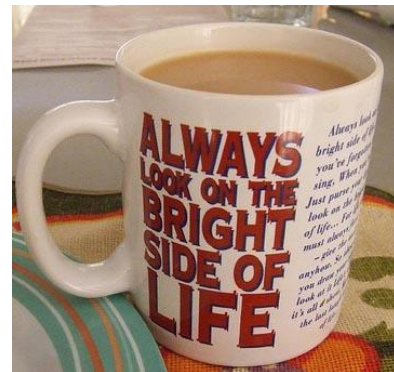
From the time Adar arrives you should increase in happiness משינכנס אדר מרבים שמחה

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However, at a closer glance this doesn't only tell us about how we should act in the month of Adar, but also all year round. The phrase tells us to **INCREASE** our simcha in Adar, not to 'start being happy in Adar'. A budding language specialist will note that this means that there should already be happiness in existence and it is merely increased in Adar rather than introduced. It is clear that all year round Judaism expects us to be happy people and to face life with a smile on our face as a man in the desert once sang:  
'Always look on the bright side of life'



However, it is also clear, as the saying above shows that there are certain times in the year when an extra sense of happiness is required.

## To look at happiness in respect to Succot

A quick glance at the leining for Succot will be more than enough for us notice that one of these times when an extra level of happiness is required is on Succot.



יָד וְשִׂמְחָתָּ, בְּחֻגְךָ: אֶתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ, וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ, וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֵלֶּמְנָה,  
 טו שְׂבַעַת יָמִים, תִּחַג לִיקוֹן אֱלֹקֶיךָ, בְּמָקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה: כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ.  
 אֲלֵהֶיךָ, בְּכָל תְּבוּאֹתֶיךָ וּבְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ, וְהֵייתָ, אִךְ שִׂמַּח.

**14** And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates.

**15** Seven days shall you keep a feast unto the Hashem your G-d in the place which Hashem shall choose; because the Hashem your G-d shall bless you in all your crop, and in all the work of your hands, and you shall be altogether joyful.

The first two words and the last three words of the passage above are often put together to form a beautiful song for Succot. However, they are much more than a song. The translation of those 5 words teaches us something very special about the festival of Succot.

"And you shall rejoice in your feast...  
 and you shall be altogether joyful"

ושמחת בחגך... והיית אך שמח

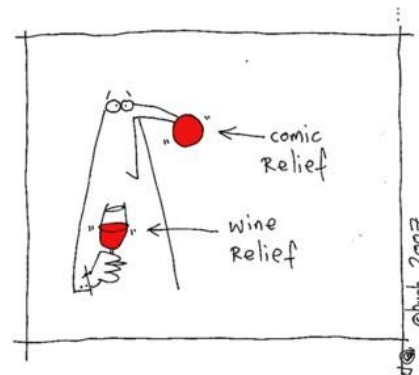
The festival of Succot seems to have an extra need for happiness over the other festivals. On Succot, not only do we need to take part in a festive meal, but we must also be 'altogether happy'. How can the Torah ask us to be 'altogether happy'? How is it possible for us to control our emotions? Surely if we are sad there is a reason and it is very difficult for us to just change and choose to be happy?

This is an interesting question and one, which the Gemara deals with. In Messechet Pesachim (109a) says:

'Rebbe Yehuda Ben Beteira says, When the Beit HaMikdash is standing there is no Simcha without meat as it says "and you shall make the shlamim sacrifice (which is meat) and eat it there and you shall be happy in front of G-d. Now that the Beit HaMikdash is not standing there is no simcha without wine as it says "and wine gladdens the hearts of man"

פֶּשֶׁתָּן מְנוּחָצִין תְּנִיא רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן יְהוּדָה בֶּן בֵּיתֵירָא  
 אוֹמֵר בּוֹזֵן שְׂבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קִיִּים אֵין שְׂמֵחָה  
 אֵלָא בְּבָשָׂר שְׁנֵאמֵר יְחֻבַּת שְׁלָמִים וְאֵבֵלַת  
 שֵׁם וְשִׂמְחָתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וְעַכְשִׁיו שְׂאֵין בֵּית  
 הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קִיִּים אֵין שְׂמֵחָה אֵלָא בֵּין שְׁנֵאמֵר  
 וְיַיִן יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ אָמַר רַבִּי יְצַחֲקִי קַסְתָּא

We can see here that the gemara is giving us practical ways to keep ourselves happy on Yom Tov. The gemara goes on to say that men should be happy in the way that makes them happy- through wine, and women the way that makes them happy- new clothes. Whether we agree with the customs laid out in the gemara is of little importance. What is noteworthy is that the gemara is giving us hints on how to be happy on Yom Tov. It is telling us to find things that always make us smile and make sure to do them on Yom Tov to ensure we are happy!



It is interesting to note that although it seems that when the Beit HaMikdash is standing, the simcha comes from the sacrifice, however the important thing isn't the sacrifice itself but rather the fact of being happy!

*So why do we need to be especially happy on Succot?*

## Dry Bones MODERN TIMES



Rashi uses the verse from the leining, quoted above, to prove from the Torah that we add on an extra day to succot, which we call Shmini Atzeret. But we still have the question, why should succot have this extra day of happiness added on to it but Pesach and Shavuot don't?

I think the answer relates to the two festivals that occur just before succot. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. On both of these days we stand in front of Hashem and pour out our hearts. They are days from which we need help to lift ourselves out from. This help comes in the form of Succot, a chag where we are commanded to be happy. We are commanded to tear ourselves away from the difficult days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and told to bring ourselves back to reality where we live our lives in joy

and happiness when we serve Hashem rather than through fear for our lives as we do on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. On Succot we are reminded Hashem is there for us and is looking after us as is evident from the need to sit in a temporary building for seven days.

This, I think, is why we get an extra day (according to Rashi) of Simcha on Succot. Because unlike on Pesach and Shavuot, on Succot we need an extra day. We need that extra boost of happiness to catapult us in to the rest of the year.

## Activities

Here are just a few additional suggestions specifically for the Sukkah Crawl:

- **Sukkot Trail:** Before Chag, give each Sukkah that you are visiting a poster to put up. Each poster contains a clue to a long quiz / treasure hunt, or perhaps directions to the next Sukkah with cryptic clues. You could link this to the idea of חג האסיף and gathering things in. This simple use of pre-made Kishut can make the difference between just visiting random families and having an exciting BA experience (otherwise known in Hadracha as the Disneyland Effect).
- **Get to know you:** As it's the first week, take the opportunity to play your favourite 'get to know you' games, especially in the first Sukkah or while walking.
- **Using Props:** Ask the chanichim about the posters on the walls of the Sukkah to trigger a discussion – e.g. pictures of Arba Minim, Pesukim to do with Sukkot, the Ushpizin (Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David).
- **Minim Basket:** This innovative variation of fruit basket should enable your Chanichim to learn the names of the Arba Minim.
- **Song Teaching:** The Sukkah Crawl is a great opportunity to teach some songs. There is an unfortunate lack of songs about Sukkot that are not for nursery age, but perhaps the activity could be to make up new songs about Sukkot.
- **Arba Minim:** If it's not Shabbat then you could even bring your Arba Minim with you! There's nothing better for the younger Chanichim than to see what we do over Yom Tov in real life!
- **Newspaper Game:** Split chanichim into two groups and give them one newspaper per team. Then ask fun questions about the newspaper to each team.
- **Divrei Torah:** A good opportunity to ask Chanichim to give Divrei Torah at their own Sukkah, especially when their parents are there to shlep nachus!
- **A Nice Idea:** Make cards or posters that say Chag Sameach and thank families for having tons of Chanichim bring mud and crumbs into their homes / sukkot! They will really appreciate it and it will help them to decorate their Sukkah!

## Festive Quiz!

Use the Sukkah Crawl as an opportunity to test your Chanichim's knowledge of the festivals. Take these questions or make up your own, and play in the style of your favourite quiz show!

1) How many days are there in Rosh Hashana here, and in Israel?

*Two days both in Israel and here.*

2) On what day do we say Kol Nidrei? At what time of day?

*The night of Yom Kippur.*

3) What are the shalosh regalim?

*Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.*

4) Which holidays have Chol HaMoed?

*Sukkot and Pesach*

5) What are the Arba Minim?

*Lulav, Etrog, Hadasim, Aravot*

6) On what days do we blow the shofar?

*Rosh Hashana, the end of Yom Kippur (also each morning during Ellul)*

7) How many walls must a Sukkah have?

*At least 2 and a half*

8) What phrase do we add to our Amidah starting from Shmini Atzeret?

*'Mashiv haruach umorid hagashem'*

9) In what year was the Yom Kippur war?

*1973*

10) In connection to what event in Jewish history do we celebrate Sukkot?

*40 years wandering in the desert.*

11) In Israel, how many days long is Sukkot? How many days are Yom Tov and how many are Chol Hamoed?

*7 days; 2 are Yom Tov and 5 are Chol Hamoed*

12) Name as many as you can of the Ushpizin (visitors to our Sukkah each night).

*Avraham, Yitzchak, Yakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and David*

13) What are 3 other names for Sukkot?

*Chag HaSukkot (Festival of Booths), Chag HaAsif (Festival of Gathering), and Zman Simchateinu (Time of Rejoicing)*

14) When do we not blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana?

*When it falls on Shabbat*

15) In a kosher lulav, there are 3 elements. One \_\_\_\_\_, two branches of \_\_\_\_\_, and three branches of \_\_\_\_\_

*One lulav, 2 branches of Aravot, and 3 of Hadasim*

16) Name as many as you can of the holidays during the month of Tishrei.

*Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret, Simchat Torah*

17) Until what day can you do Tashlich?

*Hoshana Rabah*

18) After Tishrei, what is the next Chag?

*Channukah*

19) Name as many as you can of the tribes who escaped from Egypt.

*Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Yissachar, Zevulun, Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher, Yosef, Benyamin*

20) What are other names for Rosh Hashana?

*Yom HaDin, Yom Teruah, Zichron Truah, Yom HaZikaron*



## Special HALACHOT for the SUKKAH CRAWL

- Remember to make before and after Brachot in each succah on all food being eaten.
- Try and make the Brachot in the correct order: Hamotzi, Mezonot, Hagafen, Ha'etz (7 fruits of Israel before others), Ha'adama, Shehakol.
- After making the Bracha on the food, if it is bread or mezonot, make the Bracha of "leishev basukkah." Then try to sit down and eat the food.
- After all the eating is done remember to say a Bracha Acharona, which is 'al hamichya' if at least a Kzayit of mezonot (or one of the seven fruits) is eaten. Remember to add "vesamcheinu beyom chag hasukkot hazeh".
- For all other foods say a "Borei Nefashot".
- Do not touch the decorations on the Sukkah because they are muktzeh (although taking the mickey out of them is permitted and some say obligatory!).
- There is no obligation to sit and to eat in the Sukkah if it is raining.



### Final Tips!

1. Work out your walking route exactly, and know whose houses you'll be going to and in what order well in advance. This enables you to place things strategically on the route as triggers to discussion when the Chanichim find them (a bit like a treasure / scavenger hunt) and then when they find them and you've chatted about them for a bit, you'll reach your next house.
2. Your hosts will probably have been nice enough to sort out some treats for you, like sweets, crisps and drinks. Think about Dugma and thank them when you arrive and when you leave.
3. Make sure that your chanichim are safe at all times and that they are never unaccompanied while walking in the streets!
4. Finally and most importantly: Enjoy it and make sure your Chanichim enjoy it too! Good luck!

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