

THE HOLIDAY EDITION

For grades 3-5



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CANDLE LIGHTING

It's time for Sukkot! There's lots of food and fun, and we eat all our meals in a little hut! But what's it about?

The High Holidays are over. We've spent a lot time thinking during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. We've recognized that Hashem created us to be good people - to be the "Best Me" - and we've thought about how we can get to that goal. We've promised ourselves that we will try really hard this coming year.

Now it's time to celebrate! Is there anything better than becoming a better person?

And we have help. Over the High Holidays, we have come to an understanding that Hashem (G-d) is always with us, and will help us in our project of reaching the 'Better Me'. We can feel secure and confident that this year is going to be great!

So, we build ourselves a Sukkah. A Sukkah that has walls on all sides of us. That symbolizes the G-dly protection that envelops us all over.

The Sukkah is not a sturdy or permanent structure. So, sitting in this temporary structure, we are reminded of a very important lesson: Hashem is *always* with us and brings us safety. No matter where we are, we are never alone. No matter where we are, Hashem is always watching us.

Just as Hashem gave us protection years ago in the desert (when the Jews left Egypt, they wandered in

THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

IT'S SUKKOT!

By: Malkie Herson

"Live from the Red Carpet at our **Annual Botany Fashion Show!"**

The crowd cheered and clapped, the atmosphere was exuberant. "This year, as in every year since this show began, the best and the freshest have come to showcase their special qualities!" continued the MC as the curtain opened allowing everyone to sneak a peek at this year's contestants. The usual participants, the **4 Plants** that we use on the Sukkot Holiday - the **Etrog**, the **Lulav**, the **Hadas** and **Arava** branches

each took a deep bow. Their leaves rustled as they waved to the audience. They all seemed genuinely happy to be here. "Let's welcome the **Etrog!**" bellowed the MC.

The **Etrog**, a shiny yellow fruit from the citrus family, walked down the runway.

She was shaped like an oval. She had a tiny flower blossom on the tip of her head, like a crown. And, at her base she had a thick stem.

"Ah!" the audience gasped in appreciation as the air was filled with the most delectable

fragrance. The **Etrog's** thick, yellow skin was bumpy with joy. Her bumps is actually what makes her different to her cousin, the lemon. She opened herself up and light colored juice dripped out of her.

The children sitting in the front row



the desert for 40 years, and they only survived because of Hashem's protection), Hashem will be the 'roof' over our heads.

Hashem won't only help us in our 'project' of reaching the 'Better Me'; Hashem will always be there as we go through life.

Wow, what a joy!

On Sukkot, we also have a special service using four different types of plants – the 'Lulav' (palm branch), 'Etrog' (Citron), the 'Hadas' (myrtle) and the 'Arava' (willow).

We gather these plants together, holding them in our hands, and make a blessing.

Each of these plants represents a different type of personality. So, when you gather them together, it's like having four different types of people, some very nice and smart and some very simple.

This teaches us the need for togetherness. No matter what our talents, we are one people.

After the High Holiday's lessons, and understanding about how Hashem created us all, and how we each have a 'Best Me' to become, we are ready for this special lesson of Sukkot.



got to taste the delicious juices. "Yum!" they said. "The **Etrog** tastes great!"

"I'm so pleased to be part of this," said the **Etrog** beaming with joy. "On behalf of citrons the world over, I want to say how proud we are that Hashem (G-d) created us with both a wonderful taste *and* an alluring smell," the **Etrog** bowed shyly. "I am like a person who studies Torah *and* fills the world with goodness by doing Mitzvot actions."

As the clapping subsided, the **Lulav**, a branch of the date palm tree, made her way down the red carpet. She kept her spine perfectly straight as she waved. Her leaves, two-fold and pointy, all came from her solid stem. "I, too, am happy to join you today. Unlike my **Etrog** friend, I don't have a scent at all, but if you want to taste nature's candy, get hold of the date fruits that grow on my tree!" said the **Lulav**, as her light-green, pointy leaves shivered with pride. "I am like the person who studies lots of Torah, but I have to learn how to better put my study into action."

Hadas, a branch from the myrtle bush, smiled as she walked down next. "I grow in a warmer climate, but I am so happy to be here in the crisp air of New Jersey's autumn." The audience smiled. Autumn was indeed beautiful! "Take notice of my leaves. They grow in groups of three! Like the **Etrog**, I have a wonderful scent, but..." Before she could finish her sentence, the crowd inhaled deeply making a loud appreciative sound. She continued, "...yes, yes, I smell sensational, but I don't *taste* very good. I am like a person who fills the world with goodness. I do lots and lots of Mitzvot. I have to put more time and attention into Torah studies, though, since Torah is a source of G-d's wisdom."

It was now the **Arava's** turn. She had willowy leaves, and grows in moist climates. Her quiet demeanor impressed everyone. "Although I neither taste nor smell special, I feel fortunate to be part of the **4 Plants**," said the **Arava** daintily. She takes a deep, flexible bow. "I represent the person who neither takes the time to study Torah, nor does many Mitzvot." The audience looked away, trying not to embarrass the **Arava**. "Don't you worry," said the **Arava**, "the beauty of Judaism is that we can *always* strive to be better, so the person I represent today can change to become an Etrog-Person tomorrow! That's the message of the High Holidays, remember?!"

The MC took the microphone and said, "Wow! **Arava**, that was beautiful! As you noted, the message of Judaism is that we can always strive to be better. On Sukkot, we celebrate G-d's love that surrounds us as we try to be our best." The MC paused. "As you know, another mitzvah of this holiday is to make a blessing over the group of **4 Plants**. As we do this, we are reminded that it is our obligation to be united. No matter how different we may seem, we are a family and we are each responsible for each other!" The audience nodded. "That is the connection between the two aspects of the Sukkot Holiday. The Sukkah reminds us of Hashem's love that surrounds us. The **4 Plants** remind us that Hashem loves us *all*!"



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THE DIALOGUE

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ◆ In the analogy above, the Plant's *taste* represents one's commitment to Torah study and its *smell* represents positive actions. Just like a smell permeates the air and affects everyone around, likewise our actions affect others, too. A taste, on the other hand, only benefits the one eating. Ideally, we want to be a person who studies Torah *and* does good deeds. What can we do to become that kind of person?
- ◆ In the Torah, Hashem tells us of His deep love for us. The Sukkot holiday teaches us that Hashem's love for us surrounds us like the walls of a Sukkah. How can we use this awareness as a propellant towards doing good things?
- ◆ Sukkot is also called "Holiday of Ingathering of Crops"; it is an agricultural holiday that celebrates the culmination of the planting cycle (the time we collect the plants to eat through winter). How might a farmer feel the Hand of Hashem in his work? How can we find the Hand of Hashem in our lives?