

15 Tishri 5770

3 October 2009

# KOILMEVASSER

KAHAL JOSEPH CONGREGATION • 10505 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, LOS ANGELES, CA 90025 • 310.474.0559 • WWW.KAHALJOSEPH.COM

## SUKKOT

### G-d's Carpenters

Rabbi Yosef Benarroch

This week, like many of you, I rolled up my sleeves and started building my *Sukkah*. As the holiday of *Sukkot* roles around I am always amused at how every man becomes an expert builder. In fact (at least in my circles) building the *Sukkah* becomes an exercise in bragging rights to see who can build the sturdiest and best designed *Sukkah*. All of a sudden every man becomes an expert in carpentry. But I must say my dad beats them all. Growing up in Winnipeg where in October winds can gust and temperatures drop he had no choice but to design the strongest most secure structure. For four days from *Yom Kippur* to *Sukkot* we all become G-d's carpenters. Today I would like to explore the message of *Sukkot* and more specifically the importance of building the *Sukkah*.

First of all it is not altogether clear why the holiday of *Sukkot* comes four short days after the holiday of *Yom Kippur*. Why not give us all a little



Fabric collage by artist Lynne Feldman of Rochester, NY

break and let us put a bit more preparation time into *Sukkot*? After all when it comes to *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* we begin preparing thirty days before the holidays. For *Pesah* the same is true and when it comes to *Shavuot* we count the forty nine days of *Sefirat Haomer*. Why then does *Sukkot* come four days after *Yom Kippur*?

Truthfully it all seems to be quite anticlimactic. On *Yom Kippur* we are all on spiritual highs. Wouldn't it make more sense to follow the spiritual high of *Yom Kippur* with something more spiritual? Instead we are busy cutting wood, banging in nails,

drilling holes, and becoming quasi carpenters. What is the meaning of following the holiest day of the year with something so mundane as banging in nails?

Dear friends, there is a great religious message in this. In Judaism spiritual experiences must have a physical way to be manifest. The spiritual experience in Judaism is not attained by withdrawing from the world, but by being engaged in the world. The spiritual needs the physical as much as the physical needs the spiritual. Like a flame needs a candle so too does the soul require a body.

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## *G-d's Carpenters* by Rabbi Benarroch

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The spiritual experience must find a way to manifest itself in actions.

One of the best examples I can give to this is from the Torah itself. Without a doubt one of the most spiritual experiences ever was revelation at Sinai. When G-d gave the Ten Commandments to the nation the spiritual energy was palpable.

Yet there is a very odd passage regarding that intense spiritual experience. Immediately after revelation we are told that Moses descended and communicated the law to the nation. Then we are told the following, "*Then Moses, Aron, Nadav and Avihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and they saw the G-d of Israel and beneath his feet was a kind of paved sapphire stone in the likeness of the heaven in clearness. And on the nobles of the children of Israel he did not lay his hand and they beheld G-d and they*

*ate and they drank"* (*Shemot* 24:9-11).

This is about as spiritual of an experience that there is to be had. It came replete with "seeing G-d", and "Sapphire stones in the likeness of heaven". What an odd ending to it all. Those who were present "ate and drank". What is the meaning of this behavior? In those precious spiritual moments all they could think about was the caterer?

Nahmanides explains that what they were doing was creating a human experience to go alongside a heavenly experience. He explains that the eating and drinking was not in the spirit of indulgence, but as a way to find an earthly way to celebrate such a magnificent moment. To rephrase Nahmanides I would say it is much like the meal (*Seudat Mizvah*) we have after a wedding, Bar/Bat

Mizvah, or Brit Milah ceremony. The meal is a physical way to manifest our joy over the spiritual experience.

In a similar vein the "*Meor Enayim*" (a great Hasidic work) explains that the eating and drinking was "Their way to enjoy the divine presence". He explains that every spiritual experience needs something physical to attach itself to; much like food needs a plate.

Perhaps we can gain a better understanding to the holiday of *Sukkot*. I would suggest that it comes four mere days after *Yom Kippur* because it is part of the *Yom Kippur* experience. On *Yom Kippur* we withdraw ourselves from the world. We do not eat or drink, we do not wash or anoint ourselves and marital relations are forbidden. On *Yom Kippur* we somehow take ourselves out of the world. But every Jew must

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**Hag Sameah**  
**Happy**  
**Sukkot**

## *G-d's Carpenters* by Rabbi Benarroch

understand that this is not the goal. *Yom Kippur* allows us to glimpse into the tremendous spiritual potential that exists in each and every one of us. But then we must find a way to transform that spiritual energy into something very tangible. The spiritual experience must always be manifest in the physical.

This is the meaning behind all the nails we are banging in and the holes we are drilling as we prepare for *Sukkot*. The great spiritual power we have attained during *Yom Kippur* is being transformed into the building of the *Sukkah* and then eventually into eating and sleeping in the *Sukkah*. In many ways *Sukkot* is the culmination of *Yom Kippur*.

This message not only applies to *Sukkot*, it is a general message in how the Torah wants us to live our lives. Maimonides explains that the greatest Rabbis in the time of the *Mishnah* all

had trades (see Mishneh Torah, Laws of Talmud Torah 1:12 and 3:9). They were both men of the spirit and men of the world. They understood that to be a Jew in the fullest sense of the word one had to live spiritually but also had to find a way to express that spirituality in the here and now.

Yes during these days we all become carpenters, not just regular carpenters but G-d's carpenters. On *Sukkot* we involve ourselves in things that are so worldly. We eat and sleep in the *Sukkah*, and we shake palm branches wrapped in myrtle and willow leaves with an *Etrog*. It's all so physical and yet so holy. Like the nobles of the children of Israel we too get a "glimpse of the divine" and then "we eat and drink."

Wishing you all  
Happy Sukkot

### A Note from KJ's Religious Committee

Dear Congregants:

Many of you love to show your love for our beautiful Torahs by embracing them and kissing them.

In light of public health concerns about spreading germs with the imminent flu season, and for general hygienic reasons, and the courtesy we want to extend to all members, we ask that you refrain from putting your mouth on our Torahs or on our books, refrain from embracing the Torahs as they pass you.

Also, please do not push others out of the way just in order to reach the Torah. This is very dangerous to our congregants and the one carrying the Torah. You can show your respect by touching your hand or tallit to the Torah and kissing it that way, or just by raising your hand from afar in the direction of the Torah.

Or, you can visit the Torahs in the Hechal after the Services. Please follow these rules during your visits to the Torahs in the Hechal after services as well. Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.



# Community News

**Kahal Joseph  
Congregation**  
**Norma & Sam Dabby**  
**Talmud Torah**  
**2009-2010**

**Sundays**  
9:30 am to 12:00 noon

**Tue/Thurs**  
4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

*Classes have started.  
Register now!*

For more information  
call 310.474.0559  
or e-mail  
molly@kahaljoseph.org

## Refuah Shlemah

*Please include these individuals  
in your prayers for healing:*

Yonatan ben Alizah • Mazal  
Tov bat Sulha Mitana • Matilda  
Louisa • Jack Wickett •  
Yaheskel ben Regina • Ayala  
bat Naomi • Khayah Noa bat  
Sara • Victor ben Pauline •  
Haim ben Mordechai • Moshe  
ben Naji • Pnina bat Esther •  
Yosi ben Esther • Victor ben  
Latif • Ramah Regina bat Farha  
• Chanan Velvel Simcha ben  
Bryna • Aziza bat Sara

## Congratulations

to  
proud parents  
Miriam & Yossi  
Shimoni

on the birth of  
a baby boy

## Sukkot Second Day Kiddush

is sponsored by  
Georgette Gelbard

in memory of  
her father

Yehezkel  
ben Sassoon, z”l

## Announcements

### *Spice Readers Club w/Saeed*

Wouldn't you like to chant  
from the Torah Reserve your  
haftara portion at 310.474.0559.  
Schedule time with Saeed and  
learn your haftara with authen-  
tic Baghdadi ta'amim, Iraqi  
melodies for Torah reading

### *KJ Community Ice Cream Party for Simhat Torah*

Build your own sundae  
on Saturday, October  
10th. Enjoy hakafot &  
dance with the Torah  
starting at 7pm!

### *Talmud Torah Sukkah Party*

All Talmud Torah stu-  
dents and parents are in-  
vited to KJ's sukkah!  
Learn about Sukkot sym-  
bols and rituals. Tuesday,  
October 6th at 4 pm.

## In Memoriam

It is customary to light a  
memorial candle in the eve-  
ning and donate tzedakah.  
Family members are en-  
couraged to attend services.

### **Shabbat / 15 Tishrei**

David Sulman Aslan  
Raina Murad Aslan

### **Monday / 17 Tishrei**

Salim ben Yoseph Meir  
Yehezkel ben Sassoon  
Salim ben Amin

### **Tuesday / 18 Tishrei**

Yaacov ben Ephraim  
Rosy bat Mazli  
Ya'akov Pesah ben Yitzhak

### **Wednesday / 19 Tishrei**

Gurjiyee bat Sarah  
Peninna bat Eliyahu Klein  
Regina bat Habiba

### **Friday / 21 Tishrei**

Yaacov ben Menashi Yaacov

### **Shabbat / 22 Tishrei**

Ezra Hayim ben Norman  
Ester bat Sarah  
Salman ben Haskel

*Poems by Yehuda Halevi, Transl. Franz Rosenzweig*

**With You**

I was with You, before the travails of earthly life—

May I now harbor your spirit and increase it.  
If I had strength to stand, would you disturb me?

and power to walk, would you prevent it?  
And my thoughts—remain Your thoughts.

What I begin—how could I do without You.  
You I seek at the time of grace—hear me;

Equip me with the shield of Your grace.  
Call me to service at Your gate,

and awaken me to the honor of Your name.

**Dream Vision**

My meadows are bathed in starlight.

Does now my Fall harvest return anew?  
A delightful meadow, a vineyard for me,

mine is the drum, mine is the mouth of the  
flute.

The ring returns on my arm,

a golden ring in my nose.  
And his palace and my abode

face each other threshold to threshold.  
Then I returned for their unification,

heart and senses all united.  
May it intoxicate the soul,

may the tongue announce the union joyously.

Another name for  
Sukkot is  
'Zman Simhatenu'  
which means 'The time  
of our happiness.'



**TORAH READINGS**

Please see *Sukkot Prayer Book* for readings.

*Prayer Schedule*

**Erev Sukkot & Shabbat**  
**Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**14 Tishri**

Shaharit..... 6:30 am  
Minhah & Arbit ..... 6:00 pm  
Candle Lighting..... 6:19 pm

**Sukkot**  
**Shabbat, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**15 Tishri**

Shaharit..... 8:30 am  
Minhah & Arbit ..... 6:00 pm  
Light Candles after 7:12 pm

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**16 Tishri**

Shaharit..... 8:30 am  
Minhah & Arbit ..... 6:00 pm  
Hol Hamoed. starts 6:55 pm

**Chol Hamoed**  
Shaharit..... 6:30 am

**Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**19 Tishri**

**Guest Speaker**  
***Orly Halpern***

***Middle East Journalist***

7:30 pm

*Presentation followed by Refreshments in the Sukkah*

**Hoshana Raba**  
**Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**21 Tishri**

Shaharit ..... 6:30 am  
Minhah & Arbit ..... 6:00 pm  
Candle Lighting 6:09 pm

**Shemini Atzeret & Erev Simhat Torah**  
**Shabbat, October 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**22 Tishri**

Shaharit ..... 8:30 am  
Minhah ..... 6:00 pm

**Shemini Atzeret & Erev Simhat Torah**  
**(cont.)**

Arbit ..... 7:30 pm

**Hakafot Tonight**  
**following prayers**

Light Candles .after 7:03 pm

**Simhat Torah**  
**Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**23 Tishri**

Shaharit ..... 8:30 am  
Minhah & Arbit ..... 6:00 pm  
Yom Tov Ends ..... 7:09 pm

## **Kahal Joseph Congregation presents**

### **Orly Halpern, Middle East Journalist & Speaker**

who will share her perceptions

### ***Straight from the Middle East***

**Wednesday, October 7th, 2009  
at 7:30 pm**



As a journalist, Orly Halpern has travelled across the Middle East (and occasionally beyond) to discover and share untold stories. During the first year of the Iraq War she lived and reported from Baghdad. She also covered the second Intifada by driving her sedan across the West Bank. And, during the Second Lebanon War she reported for US News and was an analyst on Fox News.

While the Middle East correspondent for *The Jerusalem Post*, she traveled across the Arab and Muslim world learning about the politics, the people, and their views on Jews and Israel. Today Ms. Halpern is a freelance journalist and reporter for Toronto's *Globe and Mail*. She has contributed to numerous newspapers and magazines, including *US News and World Report*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Jewish Daily Forward*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Haaretz*, and *McClatchy Newspapers*.

*Refreshments & live music in KJ's sukkah will follow Ms. Halpern's presentation.*

**Read more about Orly Halpern through her blog at**

**<http://orlyhalpern.wordpress.com/>**



For more information call our office at 310.474.0559. Kahal Joseph Congregation 10505 Santa Monica Blvd., L. A. 90025