The SCOOP

The Happenings of Congregation Beth Israel

October 2022

In case the last Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur, was a bit too solemn for your taste, well, chag sameach! It's time to celebrate Sukkot! This biblical harvest holiday — which begins this year at sundown on October 9 — is a fun and festive holiday. It's also one of the three *pilgrimage festivals,* along with Passover and Shavuot… in other words, super important!

Sukkot, Hebrew for "booths," is the plural form of sukkah, the temporary structures we build and dwell in for the entirety of the week-long holiday. Sukkot is the third of four very sacred holidays in the Hebrew month of Tishrei, and is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur.

So, dust off your hammer, gather some stray branches, order a pumpkin spice latte and enjoy these fruitful facts about this ancient holiday.

1. Sukkahs are built to resemble the small huts the Israelites used as shelter while wandering the desert for 40 years!

Think of it like this: Sukkahs are early versions of our modern camping tents. After God performed marvels and miracles in Egypt and freed the Israelites from bondage, the Israelites built sturdy but non-permanent structures that were "easily" transportable (though that's probably dependent on whom you asked!) and sheltered in them throughout their 40-year journey to the Land of Israel. In commemoration of this gigantic schlep, we build sukkahs and give thanks to God for our many blessings of freedom and abundance.

Just how does one build a sukkah? I'm so glad you asked:

2. There are numerous rules one must follow when building a sukkah.

The rules and regulations are described in detail in the Shulchan Aruch, a foremost compilation of Jewish laws by Joseph Karo in the mid 16th century, and are as follows: The sukkah structure must be sturdy and not blow away.

It's only required to have 2 ½ walls, provide over fifty percent shade and can be made of any material — except the roof, which must be made of a natural substance that was once alive but is no longer. Sounds simple, right? Wait, I'm not done: The sukkah cannot exceed 30 feet although it has a minimum volume of exactly 27" x 27" x 38" and one must be able to see the stars through the roof.

I know what you're thinking: Is this an SAT word problem? It's actually easier to construct a kosher sukkah than described and one can be quite creative and artistic in their design. Check out these *breathtaking sukkahs* exhibited by famous artists in New York City in 2010. The possibilities are endless!

3. Eating and sleeping in the sukkah

During Sukkot, the sukkah is treated and respected as one's home: a place to eat, sleep and dwell. This gets a little tricky, however, when weather, animals and other naturally occurring conditions disturb one's comfort. . But, like all great Jewish scenarios, what determines enough discomfort to exempt one from his obligation?

Well, here's one scenario: If one were to bring a pot of beans to eat in his sukkah and was worried that the quantity of rain drops would spoil his supper, one could eat (and sleep) in his house. Another way to measure? If one were standing in an indoor room, and so much water fell from the ceiling that one would relocate to a different room, the same holds true for the sukkah. Similar reasoning is taken into consideration with regards to critters, odors and bandits (oh my!) and other unsafe conditions.

4. It is a mitzvah to host both supernatural and physical guests in the sukkah!

Growing up, my sisters and I always looked forward to building our family sukkah on our porch every year. We had a different family come for dinner each night (yes, my parents are superheroes) which I just thought was awesome, but it is actually commanded. In Judaism, guests are synonymous with joy, and while gathering is encouraged year-round, guests are particularly special when celebrating festivals. This mitzvah of hosting is interpreted from Torah in Deuteronomy 16:14.

During a pandemic, fulfilling this mitzvah can be a little more difficult, but… fear not! There is a safe option: Ushpizin, which is Aramaic for "guests," refers to seven Jewish biblical figures who spiritually visit us in our sukkah, a different one for each day. According to the Zohar, Kabbalistic writings compiled in the 2nd century CE, each distinguished guest is commemorated for his specific attributes. They are known as the "seven shepherds of Israel": Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David. It is always a pleasure to host biblical guests — I have yet to hear one complaint!

5. The lulav (sacred arrangement of branches) and etrog (a citrus fruit) are needed to celebrate Sukkot, and each hold sacred symbolism.

The lulav, which is named after its long (and sharp — watch out!) palm branch, is composed of three different plants that, when united with an etrog, a fragrant citrus fruit, are known as the Four Species. Attached to the lulav are hadas (myrtle) leaves and aravah (willow) branches. The Four Species are described in the third book of the Torah, in Leviticus 23:40. The lulav and etrog are blessed and shaken in the sukkah in the morning hours of each of the seven days of Sukkot.

An extra layer of holiness is added to this mitzvah in that each of the Four Species represents a different part of the human body: Myrtle leaves resemble the eyes, willow denotes the lips and the palm branch signifies the spine. The etrog symbolizes the heart.

The most important part of the etrog is the pitom (stem). If the pitom is detached, it is considered not kosher. We must be very careful to handle the etrog; just as we must protect our own hearts… Either that, or they just wanted a fantastic excuse to sell those beautiful (and expensive) etrog boxes!

6. There's an art to shaking the lulav and etrog.

There is intricate choreography one must follow to properly shake the lulav and etrog; each step is filled with sacredness. We first recite the blessing, holding the lulav and etrog together, and the pitom of the etrog must be pointed down. Then, facing east, we then tilt the pitom upwards and shake them together three times in each of six directions, beginning with east, then south, west, north, up and down. Although there are numerous interpretations behind the symbolism of this choreography, the most noted is the representation that God's presence is continually all around us. Check out this beautiful video by Rabbi Sari Laufer for step-by-step instructions!

7. The last day(s) of Sukkot are celebrated very differently depending on where you live.

It is undisputed that Sukkot is a seven-day holiday that begins on the 15th of Tishrei and lasts until the evening of the 21st of Tishrei, as can be found in the Torah. It is what happens on the following day that is commemorated differently whether you live in Israel or elsewhere.

In Israel, the day after Sukkot is celebrated as a sacred holiday (yom tov) with restrictions similar to those observed on Shabbat. It is most often referred to as Simchat Torah, "Rejoicing in Torah," but religiously and biblically known as Shemini Atzeret, "Eighth Day of Assembly." Observant Israelis recite a prayer for rain and yizkor (a public prayer for remembering those no longer with us). Then, they jubilantly celebrate the completion of the Torah reading and immediately start reading the Torah from the beginning! Phew, that sounds like a very busy day!

In the Diaspora (Jews living outside of Israel), Shemini Atzeret is celebrated the day after Sukkot ends, and Simchat Torah gets its own separate day! Shemini Atzeret is observed in synagogue, complete with praying for rain (not for us, but for Israel) and the reciting of yizkor. Simchat Torah is celebrated the following day by dancing and singing with the Torah, as we end the very last verses from the final book of Deuteronomy and in the same breath, begin chanting the first verses in Genesis. Religious children rejoice in that both days are yom tov, which basically means no school!

Well, I better get to it! There's a very regulated sukkah to be built and spiritual guests to host… Wishing your family the most wonderful holiday and a bounty of blessings ahead! Chag sameach!

(Adapted from Kveller.com)

Sukkah Recipes: 7 Dishes to Eat (or Drink) During Sukkot

(Join us for our Sukkah Luncheon and find out which of these will be served)

CBI is excited to welcome its newest members to our community:

Barbara Kaufman
Shari & Irv Miljoner
Maritza Garcia
Ellen Zimel
Sandy Goodman

Please make them feel welcome and introduce yourself when you see them at our synagogue.

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The Rabbi Speaks

Dear congregants and friends,

Well, there it is: 5783 is upon us. Rosh Hashanah has come and gone and Yom Kippur is in the pipeline. A new year, new beginnings. There's a new buzz in the air at CBI, one that feels like freshness, like newness, like something grand is happening. For those that were in the synagogue this past Rosh Hashanah, you might know what I mean.

Perhaps I'm just talking from my own personal experience given the two-plus years that I have had to soldier on as the rabbi of your community in an empty sanctuary in front of a screen for such a long time. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that on these High Holidays I get to see your beautiful faces looking back at me instead of staring at an empty room.

But no, I'm pretty sure, nay, I'm positive, that something is afoot in our dear little shul, something that speaks of new energy as we welcome the new year. There have been new faces in our ranks, enthusiasm reins, and it feels like we are on to something special.

My only hope is that you are all feeling the same and that you are all ready to throw yourself into the opportunity of building a special community. A community of love, a community of friendship, fraternity, opportunity, spirituality, meaning, and of, well, Judaism. That's what Judaism has to offer people who are willing to stop and smell the literal and proverbial flowers that are on the Bima these High Holidays thanks to our High Holiday flower fund organized by our dear Muriel Levine. You won't smell the flowers until you stop and do it. Likewise, you won't feel the beauty of what our synagogue can offer you unless you stop and give some of your time and some of your soul.

We recently launched our Friday Night Kabbalat Shabbat service, and, so far, they've all been a smash hit. People have come out and enjoyed the singing and dancing, reveling in each other's company afterward over nosh and drinks, and I look forward to that continuing to be part of our monthly repertoire as we enter the Fall and Winter. Please continue coming out for that and please bring your family and friends as well.

Likewise, after the holidays, we will continue our weekly educational series to learn more about our history and heritage, our culture, and our way of life, and I look forward to the discussions and questions that it will bring. We might even bring back some of it in person, as we move forward post-covid. Please stay tuned for that.

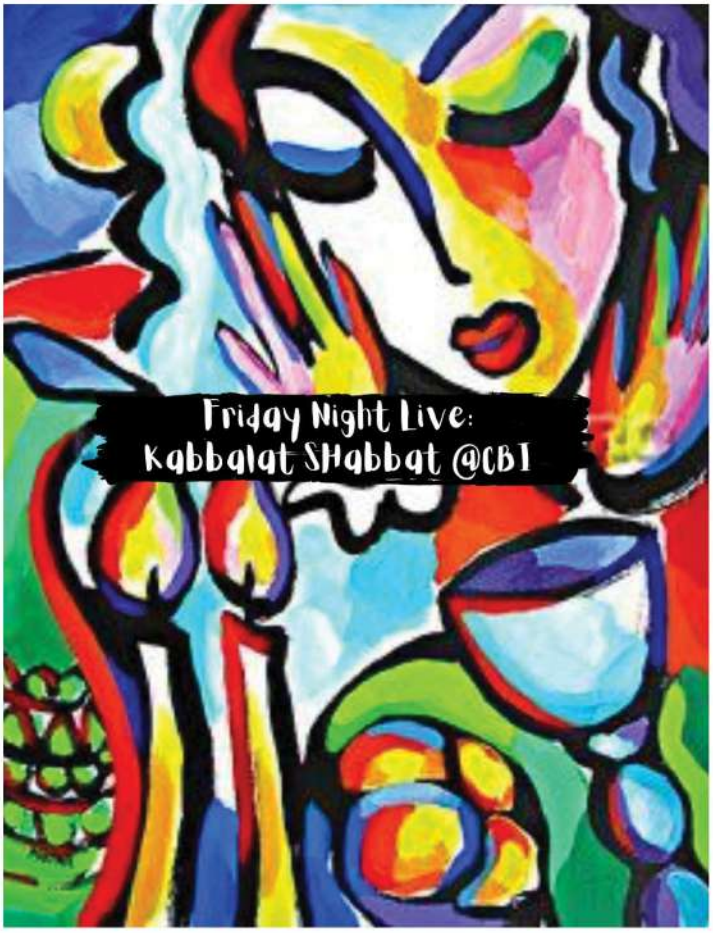
I also want to bring back our monthly column in the Scoop that is from one of you, our congregants, and starting next month, that's what we're going to do. Look out for that in next month's Scoop. If you'd like to be a contributor, please let me know.

A community is only as strong as the people in it and you, my dear friends, are those people. I look forward to spending time with you in the coming year in prayer and community, in friendship and song.

May you all be blessed with a beautiful and sweet new year, with only health, both physical and spiritual, to you and your families.

Warmly,
Rabbi Abe

Upcoming Events



Musical Kabbalat Shabbat @CBI

Join us these Friday nights

October 21

November 18

December 23

Oneg to follow services

Registration required by
the Wednesday prior
on our website homepage
www.cbicg.org

Bring a friend and family

We Salute Eli Soblick

Join us in honoring Eli
on his 98th birthday
with a special presentation recognizing
his military service by the
Jewish War Veterans
and the
Military Order of the Purple Heart

Saturday, October 29, 2022
10 AM
Luncheon to follow
Shabbat Service and Presentation
RSVP Required by October 24th
@www.cbicg.org

Lighten Up!

Laugh a Little!

Celebrate Your B-Mitzvah at CBI

Zoom B-Mitzvah preparations for all ages

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Personalized training & lessons
resulting in a unique spiritual and musical service

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- All Welcome
- Ages 13-100
- Egalitarian
- Non-Denominational
- Friendly Rabbi
- Beginners Welcome
- Affordable Rates

Rabbi Abe

October Yahrzeits

- Louis Glasser 10-02
- Saduie Faver 10-04
- Jerome Gottlieb 10-04
- Larry Atlas 10-10
- Adele Chisell 10-11
- Bluma Milioner 10-11
- Milton Jonas 10-12
- David Millioner 10-12
- Inessa Susnovski 10-19
- David Soblick 10-19
- Norman Abo 10-24
- Marc Robert Agulnick 10-27
- Henry Neider 10-30
- Max Zaum 10-30

Thank you to the congregants who have donated to our 2022 High Holiday Flower Fund:

SUELLEN AND BARRY AGULNICK - To wish the congregation peace at the New Year
LORRAINE ALBERT - I have been blessed with four great-grandsons, Mason, Justin, Lucas and Ryan, and one great-granddaughter, Dylan. They are the light of my life
MARIANNE BAKER - In memory of my dear departed
SUSAN BASS and THE BASS FAMILY- In loving memory of Mark Bass
ROBERTA BOUER - Wishing everyone a healthy year
DANA AND KEVIN BRANDES - In honor of all those who make CBI work
JOE AND YAEL COPPOLINO - To all our friends in CBI, we wish you and your families a very happy and healthy year
SUSAN AND BERNARD DREXLER - In memory of our dear friend, Susan Bennett, and in memory of Paul Skulsky and Robin Krauss
MARITZA GARCIA - Wishing everyone a blessed, healthy, and happy New Year
LOIS GLANZER - In memory of my husband, Alan Glanzer
AILEEN AND LEONARD GOLDBERG - In memory of Robin Krauss
RICHARD KRAUSS - In memory of: my wife, Robin Krauss; my mother, Iris Krauss; Robin's father, Hal Friedman; brother, Jeffrey Friedman, and cousin, Scott Moss
LAURA LEVY AND NAT LEVI - In memory of Laura's parents, Martha and Marvin S. Levy; husbands, Ian Cartier and Edward Bodnar; son, Richard Bodnar; and Nat's parents, Tillie and Julian Levi and our sister-in-law, Cora Lewis Levi. May they rest in peace.
MURIEL LEVINE - In loving memory of my husband, Milton Levine
MATILDA LOVINGER - In memory of my husband, David Lovinger
ALAN MANTIS - In memory of Adrienne N Mantis, beloved wife, mother, and inspirational grandmother, and in loving memory of parents, Frances and Max Mantis; In-Laws, Sarah and Irving Fricklas; Aunt Nettie Brust Cohen, Cousin Marvin Fricklas, Brother-In-Law, Richard Leon Fricklas, and Brother, Stanley Mantis
ELEANOR AND BERNARD NIERENBERG - In memory of Lillian and Henry Arak, Leatrice and Philip Arak, Bonnie Arak, Dora and Mandel Nierenberg, Milton Ratner, and Donald Nierenberg
ANGELA AND ABRAHAM SABBAS - In memory of our sister, Anna Ullmann
MARION KERNER SALOMON - In memory of my father, Nat Kerner, a real mensch and a real Jew
CLAIRE SCHOENFELD - In memory of my husband, Buddy Schoenfeld
LYNN SEVAN - In honor of my children, Keren and Dov Fisher, Danit Sibovits, and grandchildren, Eliana, Ephraim and Eitan, and in memory of Dubby and Morris Goldsmith
JUDI SLATSKY- In memory of my dear husband, Paul. "I will always love you for everything you stood for;" and in memory of my dear departed parents, Ann and Milton Marlin, and all my departed family members.
AMY ZAUM - In loving memory of parents, Blanche and Nat Zaum, and brother-in-law, Steve Sorin
ELYSE ZUCKERMAN - In memory of Ina and Norman Abo, and Alan Zuckerman, and wishing good health to Jodi Markowsky

Contributions

In Memoriam & Yahrzeits

Lorraine Albert (for my beloved grandson, Jeffrey Goldsmith. May he rest in peace forever. He will always be remembered by his nana)

Ellen & Stanley Rothman (In memory of Robin Krauss)

Muriel Levine (for the Yartzeit of my husband, Milton Levine, and in memory of Robin Krauss)

Jay Steinger (in memory of my father, Saul Steinger, at his yahrzeit)

Marsha Mandel (on the Yartzeit of Max Mandell)

Muriel Levine (for the Yartzeit of my father, Aaron Shillet, and the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund)

Alan Mantis (at the Yartzeit of my father-in-law, Irving Fricklas)

Marion & Alan Steinger (at the Yartzeit of my father, Saul Steinger)

General Donations

Muriel Levine (in appreciation to my mahjong group and other friends for my surprise 98th birthday celebration)

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