

THE HOLIDAY EDITION
For grades K-2



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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 & Dena Torgeman

Whoa! A scorpion. Its fangs scare me! Will it bite? Oh no! Over there - there's another one, and there's a long, scary-looking snake right behind it. Eeek! Is it poisonous?

Help! I can't see a thing with the grains of sand blowing in my face. Powerful gusts of wind, sending tiny pebbles flying into my eyes. This is so uncomfortable. My throat is parched. I am horribly, desperately, awfully thirsty. But there is no water



around...except if you count the beads of water dripping off my body as I sweat, sweat, sweat from the sweltering heat! Oh, at night, it's bitterly cold. I shiver as I try to sleep. Not that I can actually fall asleep; try sleeping on a rocky sandy surface and you'll see what I mean! Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I take short walks around the area. But if I am not extra careful, I can walk right into a prickly cactus bush. Last night, that's exactly what happened. It took me an hour to pull out all the sharp needles from my skin. And boy was that painful!



The desert seems to stretch for miles and go on forever in all directions! Everywhere I turn - it's just desert! I've never been here before, and I don't know where I'm going. I don't have any maps. No one I'm with seems to know the way, either. And we're going to be traveling this way for the next forty years!

This! Is! Not! Fun!



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.

BUT THAT IS NOT HOW THE STORY REALLY WENT. TRY THIS ONE ON...

It is 3,323 years ago. I am traveling from the land of Egypt towards Israel. It is a long journey and modern means of transportation have not yet been invented. So, I am traveling this long distance by foot. Trekking across desert land...

I am traveling with my immediate family and another two million people. The mood in our camp is quite joyful, even though the desert - as described before - is not the most inviting landscape in which to travel.

We are coming from Egypt and going to Israel. Ah! Israel. Our homeland. The land where our family first began. Finally we are going back home.

We are coming from a difficult life in Egypt. We have been living in Egypt for 210 years. 210 years of hostility. There, we were forced to be slaves to wicked King Pharaoh. We were forced to build buildings and roads for his country. Day in, day out, for all those years, with the threat of the taskmaster's whip over us. Then Hashem (G-d) performed incredible miracles for us. Now we're a free people! We are on our way back to Israel, our homeland.

To get to Israel, we have to travel through the desert. To make our journey easier, Hashem - who loves us and cares for us - protects us with astounding miracles. Surrounding the entire camp is a wondrous haze. I don't know how better to describe this wondrous haze. I can't quite put it into words. It feels kind of like clouds, but they're G-dly clouds. Above us, below us, and on all four sides. These clouds completely protect us from the harsh temperatures, the creepy creatures, the prickly brush, and even the strong winds that send grainy sand and pebbles a-flying!

It's scary to travel through the desert but, surrounded by this wondrous, protective haze, we continue safely on our journey. We are on our way to somewhere special, and we are totally cared for by Hashem's miracles!

AND NOW TO BRING IT TO OUR LIVES TODAY...

The story of the Jews traveling in the desert is *our* story! In retelling our family history, we remember how Hashem enveloped our ancestors with protection and love.

That is why, every year, we celebrate the Sukkot Holiday. We sit in a Sukkah hut, with walls on all sides of us. We remember how much Hashem surrounds us with love and protection. Then, today and forever.



THE DIALOGUE

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ◆ The Sukkot holiday shows us that Hashem's love surrounds us like the walls of a Sukkah. How does that knowledge make you feel? What can we do to help us remember how much Hashem loves us? What can we do to show how much we love Hashem?
- ◆ On Sukkot, another special mitzvah is to gather "4 Plants" and make the blessing over this group. (See sidebar.) This is a symbolic act that teaches us the importance of unity. Why is unity so important? What can we do to help ourselves feel united with all people?