

TorahFax: Succos
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Tonight (Friday night) begins the festive holiday of Sukkot, when we leave the comfort of our home and eat in the Sukkah. As mentioned yesterday, the Sukkah commemorates the miracle of the special clouds, which G-d provided to protect the Jewish people, after the Exodus, during their forty years of journey in the Sinai Desert. The holiday of Sukkot is called, "Season of our rejoicing."

Q. Why doesn't a Sukkah need a Mezuzah at the entrance?

A. Because the Sukkah is only a temporary dwelling, as it is used only for the week of the holiday.

Q. If the Sukkah celebrates the miracle of the clouds which protected the Jewish people forty years, why is Sukkot celebrated at this time of the year?

A. Had we celebrated sitting in the Sukkah in the spring or summer, when the weather is nice, it wouldn't be obvious that we are doing it for the mitzvah. However, when we leave the comfort of our home at this time of the year, when the weather gets cooler and we go into the Sukkah, it is obvious that we are doing it only for the sake of the mitzvah.

Q. What is the lesson of Sukkot?

A. This holiday teaches us that the physical pleasures and comforts of this world, our house, our furniture etc. are only temporary - like the Sukkah. Only our spiritual accomplishments, the mitzvot and good deeds we perform, are everlasting.

This lesson is especially important after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, when G-d gives us all that we need for the coming year. We must remember the purpose of our being and use our energy and belongings for what is truly important. Wealth and possessions are not an end in themselves, only a means to achieve spiritual heights.

A father was once sitting with his young son in a restaurant. The son noticed a person looking different than himself entering the restaurant. "Where is this man from?" he asked his father. "This person comes from China," his father answered. A little later the boy saw another man enter the restaurant. "Where is this man from?" he asked. "This man comes from Africa," was his father's answer.

As time passed, many more people entered the restaurant. The little boy asked his father, "Where are all these people from?" His father explained to him that each one comes from a different part of the world. One from Asia, another from Africa, another from Europe etc.

"Is the food in our town so good that people come from all over the world to eat here?" the little boy asked in amazement. The father laughed. "These people didn't come to our city for the food. They came here to be at the big fair where they buy and sell their wares. Once they're here, when they have to eat, they come to the restaurant!" explained the father.

The same is with the Sukkah. The Sukkah reminds us that, although we have to attend to our physical needs, we should remember that the purpose of it all is to accomplish our G-dly mission in this world and everything else is only secondary, like the restaurant in the city.