

An Additional Harvest of Sukkot Shorts for the 2nd Day of Sukkot
Rabbi Eliot Malomet Wednesday September 22, 2021 16 Tishri 5782

ויקרא כ"ג:מ'

וילקחם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר פפת תמרים וענף
עץ-עבת וערבי-נגל ושמחתם לפני ה' אלקיכם שבועת ימים:

Leviticus 23:40

On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. In addition to the Sukkah, the Four Species define the Holiday. Throughout the generations they have come to mean many things. They are plants that grow in different kinds of environments. The lulav, from a palm tree, in a desert environment; the willow, by rivers; the myrtle, by brooks in hilly regions; and the etrog, in an orchard sustained by luxurious rain. Water is the key element that connects them all, and the desire for life-giving and life-sustaining water, in the form of rain from Heaven, is what we are expressing with these symbols when we wave them and recite prayers holding onto them. Waving them at central moments in the Hallel, evokes God's omnipresence and functions as choreography of our gratitude for past sustenance mingled with our anxiety of possible depravation in the future. The species tell a story of Israel's journey from the wilderness (palm) to the Jordan (willow) to the hills of Judea, (myrtle) and to the period of settlement, (etrog). They also represent parts of the body: lulav-spine, myrtle-eyes, willow-lips, etrog-heart, and thus the following homily: a person should be straight as the lulav, have lovely eyes to see the good in everyone, as the myrtle leaf is good, have no evil speech, as the willow leaf represents a sealed pair of lips, and have a good "fragrant" heart, as the etrog is pleasant. And there are four types of Jews represented by the four species. Each of the species is defined by scent and taste. The palm tree gives a fruit that has taste but no scent; that is the Jew defined by Torah knowledge but lacking in Mitzvot. The myrtle has scent and not taste; that is the Jew defined by Mitzvot but lacking in Torah knowledge. The willow has neither taste nor scent; that is the Jew who is defined by neither Torah knowledge nor Mitzvot. The etrog has taste and scent; that is the Jew defined by both Torah

knowledge and the performance of Mitzvot. When you take them all together, you have the ultimate symbol of Jewish unity. And more.

From the Haftara I Kings 8:2-21

מלכים א ח':ב' ויגהלו אל-המקדש שלמה כל-איש ישראל
בגרח האתנים בנג הוא התחדש השביעי:

I Kings 8:2 *All the men of Israel gathered before King Solomon at the Feast, in the month of Ethanim—that is, the seventh month.* Diaspora communities have the great bonus of reading the cycle of haftarot from chapter 8 of the Book of Kings. These haftarot meld the theme of the construction and dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem to the great feast of Sukkot. The Temple is also referred to as a sukkah – shaded place, (see Psalm 27:5 and 76:3). When Solomon completed the Temple, he made the strategic decision to have a great convocation dedicating it on the holiday of Sukkot. This way, he combined the natural pattern of seasonal agricultural celebration with a national historical milestone. This act transformed the thematic associations of the holiday, arguably augmenting its significance as a purely agricultural holiday of thanksgiving associated with the wilderness trek, to one of national historical and epoch-making importance. From now on, the holiday of Sukkot would be forever associated with the Temple (and Solomon!) and more importantly, the holiday functions as the coda to Exodus from Egypt. It's not hard to see why, in a post-Temple world, the holiday would be re-imagined as the harbinger of the messianic era, a festival in which all nations would come to worship God at the restored Temple, at a time when *God reigned throughout the whole world, was One and His name, One*, as Zecharia stated (in yesterday's haftara.)

מלכים א ח':ט' אין בארון רק שני לוחות האבנים אשר הניח
ישם משה בחרב אשר כרת ה' עם-בני ישראל בצאתם מארץ
מצרים:

I Kings 8:9 *There was nothing inside the Ark but the two tablets of stone which Moses placed there at Horeb, when the LORD made [a covenant] with the Israelites after their departure from the land of Egypt.* By this time, the Exodus has

receded into Israel's past, well beyond the living memory of the oldest people alive during Solomon's reign. But the relic of the Ark exists, and aside from being intrinsically holy, functions as a visual link to the historical past. Seeing it would have filled those assembled with spiritual and historical awe. Indeed, this event would have been the last time that the ark would have been seen in public as it was destined to remain in the Temple Holy of Holies forever. An analogy would be seeing the Declaration of Independence at the National Archives Museum in Washington. It is under protective glass, and under permanent human and video surveillance. Seeing it with one's own eyes is an experience of historical awe.

מלכים א ח:יג ויהי בצאת הכהנים מן-הקדש והענו מלא את-בית ה':

I Kings 8:10 *When the priests came out of the sanctuary—for the cloud had filled the House of the LORD... If it wasn't already clear to those assembled that this moment was a culmination of Exodus and Sinai, then the cloud probably sealed it. We (who live in regions not terribly affected by wildfire) are so used to seeing industrial smoke that we have forgotten how terrifying the appearance of 'wild' smoke can be. Knowing of Sinai, the people understand that smoke represents a power that can inspire them and also consume them. The appearance of the cloud raised the emotional experience of the dedication to its peak.*

מלכים א ח:י"ט רק אמה לא תבנה הבית כי אם-בנה היצא מחלציה הוא-יבנה הבית לשמי:

I Kings 8:19 *However, you shall not build the House yourself; instead, your son, the issue of your loins, shall build the House for My name. The construction of the Temple has a great backstory. David was not permitted to build it. David's reign was defined by warfare. Solomon's by stability and peace. The Temple is a symbol of a new stage. And yet, Solomon is keenly aware of the privilege denied his father. His father's absence is both necessary and personally painful. Just like Joshua had to lead the Israelites into the Land of Israel, Solomon had to build the Temple. Moses was denied the former; David, the latter*

From the Hallel

תהילים קי"ח:כ"ח-כ"ט אלהי אתה ואנחנו אלהי ארוממך: הודו לה' כיי-טוב כי לעולם חסדו:

Psalms 118:28-29 *You are my God and I will praise You; You are my God and I will extol You.*

Praise the LORD for He is good, His steadfast love is eternal. These verses encapsulate the personal and the universal experience in worshipping God. Gratitude to God is expressed in the first person as if to emphasize the basic point of spiritual being: everyone in the end has his or her own personal relationship with God. But the second verse places the individual within the context of the worshipping congregation, a microcosm of all humanity. God's kindness extends to the universe, and to all time. לעולם. Contrast this verse with another similar sounding verse familiar to us from the daily prayers, located in the Song of the Sea. זה אלי ואנוהו אלהי אבי וארוממנה *This is my God, whom I glorify, the God of my father, who I extol.* (Exod. 15:2) There, like here, the individual claims the personal relationship with "my God" but the parallel line is *the God of my father and I will extol Him*, not, *my God and I will extol Him*. In the Song of the Sea the individual is located in a *generational* context; here the individual is located in the *universal* context. The individual is surrounded by a multitude of people and casts his eyes to eternity. Is Psalm 118 a comment on the Song of the Sea? A rebuttal? An extension?

From the Hoshanot

כהושעת מאמר והוצאתי אתכם. נקרב והוצאתי אתכם. כן *You saved them with the statement, "I will take you (from out of the sufferings of Egypt), which our sages interpreted "I went out with you" so save us!* This is impossible to translate! When God first announced that He was going to take Israel out of Egypt He said, והוצאתי אתכם a phrase which is connected to the three other redemption-phrases in Exodus 6:6-7, והצלתי, וגאלתי, – *I will save, I will redeem, I will take.* But if we subtly change the vocalization of והוצאתי with a 'piercing' נקרב, that is, by inserting a dot, 'piercing' the *vav*, and changing it from an 'o' to an 'u' (*vav holam* to *vav shuruk*) we get a new meaning. Not "I will take you out," but "I will be brought out - disclosed with you." In other words, encapsulated in this little line is all of Jewish theology: God took us out of Egypt not only to redeem us, but to be disclosed to the world by us. And here we are, claiming to God: *Because we have that role in the world, Please God, Save us! HAG SAMEAH! !* חג שמחה