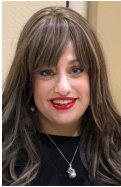


Shabbat Spice

SUKKOT EDITION



A Woman's Connection

By Elana Aminoff

As I sit here and write this, I have bread dough rising, I'm constructing a menu in my head and wondering when I will have time to decorate my Sukkah! I ask myself, what really is my connection, as a woman, to the *chag* of Sukkot? We know that generally women are not obligated in time bound *mitzvot*. This includes dwelling in the *sukkah* and the *mitzvot* surrounding the *arba minim* (4 species), which are the main *mitzvot* of Sukkot.

Sukkot comes after we, as a people, repented on Rosh Hashana, and received forgiveness from Hashem on Yom Kippur. Sukkot follows as a time of celebrating Hashem in the world. By living in temporary dwellings, we are acknowledging that Hashem provides for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs. Do we, as women, connect to this holiday in a different way than men? And what is our role?

One of the reasons that women are not obligated to fulfill time bound *mitzvot* is that we are the spiritual hubs of our families and homes. That is the power we have. We women are the keepers and makers of our homes.

What other *Mitzvah* encompasses the entire body? What other *mitzvah* is fulfilled just by walking into it? *Mikvah*. The woman's obligation to immerse herself after her menstrual cycle to become spiritually pure and be with her husband again. Jewish married life, and therefore the birth of future generations in accordance with *halachah*, is possible only where there is access to a *mikvah*. It is no exaggeration that the *mikvah* is the touchstone of Jewish life and the portal to a Jewish future. The mikvah offers the individual, the community, and Klal Yisrael the remarkable gift of purity and holiness.

G-d entrusted us with one of the most precious of all His commodities—the feeding and well-being of our families. The *sukkah* becomes our home for a time. Dwelling in it is a *mitzvah* that encompasses our entire self. One merely walks into a *sukkah* and fulfills a commandment. As women, it is our job to keep the home and therefore the *sukkah*. Making our *Sukkah* a home is one special connection women have to this *chag*.

The Midrash relates that after being banished from Gan Eden, Adam sat in a river that flowed from the garden. This was an integral part of his *teshuvah* (repentance) process, of his attempt at returning to his original state of perfection.

I'd like to suggest that a woman's connection to Sukkot goes deeper than merely making the Sukkah home-like and feeding and nourishing our family. It connects to the touchstone of Jewish life. To forging the Jewish future. In many ways, the mikvah separates the unholy from the holy, but it is even more than that. Simply put, immersion in a *mikvah* signals a change in status— more specifically, an elevation in status. Its unparalleled function lies in its power of transformation, its ability to bring metamorphosis. Let our sukkahs transform us this year! Let us walk into our sukkahs and feel a change in our status. Closer to Hashem, to our family and our future as a nation.

We, the Jewish women of our generation, must be leaders. In many ways, the reins are in our hands. As the saying goes, the buck stops here. We are all, each and every one of us a beacon of light, of hope and change. If one small candle can illuminate a dark room, imagine what millions of small lights can do to our world, for our future. Remember this as you sit in your sukkah this year. Relax in the sukkah, live in the sukkah, transform yourself from within its walls. Our actions speak volumes and we will pass this torch to the next generation still lit, brighter and stronger than ever, while sitting in our Sukkah and forging strength to the next generation.

Shana Tova and Chag Sameach!

CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE 6:22PM | 2ND NIGHT AFTER 7:29PM
CHAG ENDS SUNDAY NIGHT 7:27PM

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SUKKOT EDITION



The Secret to Staying Calm & Carrying On

By Rebecca Hakimi

A CEO once went into work to find that his business' computer system was malfunctioning. He called a team of technicians, and they found that the data was lost. 8 years worth of information, shipment records, records of businesses that owed him money and to which he owed—all gone! The business was a mess, but the owner had *emuna* and accepted the will of HaShem with joy. His employees were awestruck by the way he handled the situation. He never lost his cool, and was a great role model. After a few days, the technicians were able to solve the problem, and not a single piece of information was missing!

This story is from the book "Living Emuna" by Rabbi David Ashear. He teaches that we can all learn to have this level of *emuna*. A person who has strong *emuna* knows that HaShem is calling all the shots, there are no mistakes, and everything happens precisely the way HaShem wants.

During this upcoming holiday, we build Sukkot to remember when HaShem protected our ancestors for 40 years in the desert.

HaShem made clouds of glory to guide and protect the Jews, and sent *maana* from the sky as a food source. HaShem provided *maana* with the condition that each Jew did not collect more than 1 days worth of *maana*. Why? Because he wanted the Jews to practice having *emuna*, that the next day *maana* would fall again. They learned that they didn't need to take for two days, because it wasn't even a question that HaShem would provide again!

We all have a special opportunity to work on our own *emuna* this Sukkot. It's not enough to know all of the principles of *emuna*. One can have 100% faith in HaShem, and still become frantic during a challenge. To have strong *emuna* like the CEO in the story, one needs to constantly review and internalize the concepts of *emuna* through reading books on *emuna*, and practice remaining calm during stressful situations. Even though our food no longer falls from the sky, our food and our blessings and even our hardships are still coming from HaShem on a daily basis.

May HaShem bless us with the awareness to appreciate everything that comes our way!

Chag Sameach!

THANK YOU TO THE SHABBAT SPICE TEAM
RACHIE DILAMANI, VERONICA KORDMANY, ALEXIS
NAMDAR, ASHLEY NAMDAR, DANIELLA NAMDAR