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Sukkos 5785

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

RABBI BENJAMIN BLECH (Aish.com)

Here is a quick question I'd like you to think about: How many people do you know who you would consider successful?

Follow-up question: how many people do you know who you would consider happy?

Are the ones you would list in the first category the same as the ones you would think of including in the second?

We just spent a considerable amount of time during the period from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur speaking to G-d with our heartfelt prayers. We shared with Him our hopes and our dreams. We pleaded for lives filled with blessings. But what did we want most of all: success or happiness?

If you think they are identical you need to learn the startling lesson of Silicon Valley and its echo in the remarkable proximity of the holiday of Sukkot to the High Holy Days.

"I have witnessed so much success and yet so little happiness. In our valley of material riches and natural beauty, the two are regrettably too often in opposition."

Silicon Valley is one of the most sought-after locations for the greatest successful entrepreneurs in the world. Steven Jon Kaplan, investment advisor and CEO of True Contrarian Investments, recently wrote that it takes "close to a \$10 million net worth to be financially comfortable in the Bay Area – that's a reasonable but certainly not a lavish lifestyle." The area is home to those blessed enough to have fulfilled every standard used to evaluate success in contemporary terms.

But Silicon Valley has one pressing need that is not sufficiently met. In the words of a local prominent psychiatrist, Adam Strassberg:

There is a well-known shortage of psychiatrists nationally; however, more specifically, in the Silicon Valley Bay area, there is a tremendous shortage here locally. It is the nature of our supply and demand economic system – some of this imbalance is certainly due to supply, but I suspect most is due to a far greater local demand. I have practiced psychiatry in Silicon Valley for nearly 20 years, surfed the rise of the internet, floated with dot com bubbles and busts, witnessed fortunes and follies, all from the arms of my leather chair, in my tiny office, through a courtyard window, with two very ancient goldfish in tow. Everyday a parade of stressed-out 'middle class' multimillionaires marches through my office, on the hour, by the hour. I am indeed a 'Silicon Valley' psychiatrist. Over the decades – as both a psychiatrist practicing in Silicon Valley and a civilian living here locally – I have witnessed so much success and yet so little happiness. In our valley of material riches and natural beauty, the two are regrettably too often in opposition."

It is the tragedy of our times that so many people are blessed with success beyond measure, yet so filled with unhappiness and discontent. Ross Douhat writes of "an immediate crisis, one that is killing tens of thousands of Americans right now – more than the crack epidemic at its worst, more than the Vietnam War. The working shorthand for this crisis is 'deaths of despair,' a resonant phrase conjured by the economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton to describe the sudden rise in deaths from suicide, alcohol and drug abuse since the turn of the millennium. Now a new report from the Senate's Joint Economic Committee charts the scale of this increase – a

doubling from 22.7 deaths of despair per 100,000 American in 2000 to 45.8 per 100,000 in 2017, easily eclipsing all prior 20th-century highs."

What is the source of this crisis of "deaths of despair"? It is the result of a society that has so tragically confused success with happiness. There is a world of difference between the two of them.

Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get.

Success is having all the money in the world; happiness is having family and friends to spend it on.

Success is measurable; happiness is limitless.

Success is a fancy car; happiness is a joyous journey.

Success is working hard; happiness is loving the work.

Success is having everyone know your name; happiness is knowing everyone's name.

Success is being right; happiness is being true.

Success is money in the bank; happiness can't be deposited.

Success is private jets; happiness is flying high.

Success is never easy; happiness will never feel difficult.

Success is money; happiness is value.

Success is late hours; happiness is all day.

Success is second homes; happiness is always home.

Success is material things; happiness is in the materials.

Success is praise; happiness is never needing it.

Success is reaching the top; happiness has no ceiling.

Success is all the money in the world; happiness is needing none of it.

Success is doing what you love; happiness is loving what you do.

Success is envied; happiness is shared.

And most important of all: Success is measured in human terms; happiness is a divine gift for those who live their lives well by heavenly standards.

Sukkot is the holiday of rejoicing. In Hebrew it is called *zman simchateinu* – the season of our supreme joy. Its place on the calendar is not an accident.

True happiness can only follow from our spiritual growth on the High Holy Days. Happiness is G-d's gift to all who allow it to spring naturally from our pursuit of spiritual perfection, not the achievement of worldly success.

DRY LIPS IN PRAYER

RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR (Ohr.edu)

The four species, the etrog, lulav, hadas and arava correspond to parts of the human body. The lulav is the spine; the etrog the heart; the hadas the eyes and the arava the lips.

The four species also correspond to four kinds of Jew: The etrog has both smell and taste. It represents the Jew who has both Torah and good deeds. The lulav, the palm, has taste but no smell. It represents the Jew who has Torah but not good deeds. The hadas, the myrtle, has a beautiful smell, but its fruit is tasteless. It corresponds to the Jew who has good deeds but not Torah. And the arava, the willow, has neither taste nor smell. The arava represents the Jew who has neither Torah nor deeds.

Which is why it is puzzling that of all the four species, we make the most fuss over the arava. We have a special day on Succot where the arava is the "star" — Hoshana Rabba. None of the other three species have the honor of a specific day of Succot on which they are remembered. Why is the arava, which represents the least of the Jewish People, celebrated above all the other species?

The message of the arava is that G-d loves our prayers. The lips of a Jew are

his most precious possession. And even when our prayers seem dry and empty like the arava, when they come from a humble heart, G-d loves them, listens to them and accepts them.

Even from the dry lips of someone who is as lacking as an arava, G-d has nachat. Just as a parent loves the least of his children and takes pleasure when his child tries to please him, so too G-d loves the least of us and takes pleasure from our attempts to please Him, however dry and limited our attempts may be.

WHY SUKKOT SPEAKS TO US NOW MORE THAN EVER

SLOVIE JUNGREIS-WOLFF (Aish.com)

People are exhausted, fatigued. Children are in school and then they are not. Tensions within marriages and families are rising. Many feel isolated, lonely and sad. Worry about jobs and financial instability cause sleepless nights. What will be?

It is time for us to build our sukkah of peace. Beneath the stars we have been given the gift of serenity. The holiday of Sukkot comes just as we feel depleted and fills us with renewed energy. We must only stop and listen to the whispers in the night.

1. SHELTER UNDER THE WINGS OF FAITH

We dwell in our sukkah for seven days. We leave our homes and all that is within. The dining room table, the mirrors and lighting, the comfort of our couch and we sit in a temporary hut, a sukkah.

Why a sukkah?

When the Jewish people were taken out of Egypt, G-d provided them with ‘sukkah’ booths of shelter. His clouds of glory would be their protection in the harsh desert wilderness.

Why wouldn’t G-d give His nation a more permanent dwelling?

This generation that left Egypt was weak in faith. G-d wanted His people to know forever that strength and security come not from a beautiful home or a fancy car. It is all about our possessions, security systems, bank accounts, or jobs. It is all about faith.

“Come!” G-d beckons. “Leave all your fears behind. I will shelter you beneath My wings. You will find your faith, you will discover serenity. Our connection will endure forever. Greater than any ‘thing’ is the knowledge that you do not live life alone. Find your fortress of faith.”

Reflecting on our sukkah helps open our eyes to the definition of true trust in G-d. Sukkot asks us to think: What matters in life? What sustains me? Whatever is important is right here with me. Everything else is temporary. The shelter of the Divine is the only shelter that remains forever.

These past few months we have learned how little we know. We have seen how much is out of our control. A virus, a miniscule germ, has brought the world to its knees.

Our sukkah reminds us that there was a time our people, too, felt helpless. Just as G-d sustained us and nourished both our bodies and souls, so too, will we find our sustenance. G-d will never abandon His people. As difficult as life seems, remember this teaching well. We have gone through an incredible journey, exiled throughout the four corners of the world. Given up for dead. And yet, here we are! Sitting in the sukkah booths as our forefathers did in the desert. The legacy remains alive. We are a miracle.

Renew your strength and courage. Inspire yourself. Ignite the spark that lies within your soul.

2. PLUG INTO YOUR ROOTS

If we don’t know where we come from we don’t know where we are going. We are clueless to the power that lies within.

What are my hidden strengths? What is my potential?

Just as we have physical genes so too, we possess spiritual genes. Our fathers and mothers who walked before us paved the way. They travailed, overcame obstacles, were tried and tested, all so that we their children find the resilience to go through our own moments of difficulty.

The Zohar writes that when the Jewish people leave their homes and enter their sukkahs, they merit to welcome the Divine presence along with seven guests. Seven shepherds descend from the heavens above and come as our ‘ushpizin’ guests.

The seven exalted ushpizin are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.

It is customary when entering the sukkah to invite them to join us with a special prayer.

When we sit in our sukkah and feel overwhelmed with what is happening in our lives, let us plug into the power of our roots. Our spiritual guests went through incredible challenges. They suffered mightily. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stood strong holding onto their faith as the whole world stood

against them. Joseph was sold into slavery, thrown into prison and disgraced. Jacob thought he’d never see his son again. The grief was insurmountable. Moses and Aaron dealt with the pain of bondage, led the people through the desert for forty years but tragically never got to enter their beloved land of Israel. David was subject to rebellion, shame and his own son rebelled against him and threw him out of his royal palace. He never got to build the Temple in Jerusalem which had been his lifelong dream.

And yet.

These faithful shepherds sought only to bring kindness and truth into the world. They never lost their faithfulness, their compassion, their desire to make this world a better place.

G-d says: “You My children are shepherds, here to tend this world with love. It is therefore fitting for the faithful shepherds of old to dwell in the shelter of faith together with you, their faithful children.”

We are empowered knowing that we come from greatness, that we have the potential to overcome obstacles just as our forefathers did. Bring blessing into the world. Invite the ushpizin in.

3. STRENGTH COMES FROM UNITY

On the morning of the first day of Sukkot (when it is not Shabbat), we rise early and recite blessings on the four species. (Shehecheyanu blessing is only recited the first day, the remaining blessing recited the other days). The four species taken are: the beautiful fruit, the esrog; the palm frond, the lulav; the branch of a myrtle tree, the hadas; and the branches of the willow tree, the aravah. The four species together comprise one mitzvah. If one of the species is missing, the mitzvah is not fulfilled.

Each species represents another type of Jew. G-d says that we are to hold all four together as one. Each is necessary.

Whoever fulfills this mitzvah brings peace and harmony to himself and to the entire world.

These days, we need unity more than ever. Stop judging. Start loving. Call someone you know who is alone. Reach out to another Jew who is not like you. Give a good word, a smile.

G-d grants us peace when there is peace amongst us. Take the four species and seize the moment. Unity brings peace. Peace brings strength.

Find joy in your shelter of faith.

IT TAKES ALL KINDS

RABBI YANKI TAUBER (Chabad.org)

"It takes all kinds." That, essentially is the message of the mitzvah of the "Four Kinds" — the etrog (citron), lulav (palm frond), hadas (myrtle) and aravah (willow) — over which we recite a blessing on the festival of Sukkot. In the words of the Midrash:

The etrog has both a taste and an aroma; so, too, do the people of Israel include individuals who have both Torah learning and good deeds.... The date (the fruit of the lulav) has a taste but does not have an aroma; so, too, do the people of Israel include individuals who have Torah but do not have good deeds.... The hadas has an aroma but not a taste; so, too, do the people of Israel include individuals who have good deeds but do not have Torah.... The aravah has no taste and no aroma; so, too, do the people of Israel include individuals who do not have Torah and do not have good deeds.... Says G-d: "Let them all bond together in one bundle and atone for each other."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out that the Midrash is not just saying that "all are part of the Jewish people" or "all are precious in the eyes of G-d" or even that "all are necessary"; it says that they "all atone for each other." This implies that each of the Four Kinds possesses something that the other three do not, and thus "atones" and compensates for that quality's absence in the other three.

In other words, it's not just that it takes all kinds to make a people — it also takes all kinds to make a person. And Sukkot is the time when we bond with each other so that the other's qualities should rub off on ourselves.

The etrog says: "I am perfect. I balance learning and doing in flawless equilibrium. In my life, knowledge and action do not overwhelm or displace one the other, but rather fulfill and complement each other." This is something we all need to say, at least once in a while. We all need to know that we possess the potential for such harmonious perfection, and that we each have those moments in our lives when we attain it.

The lulav says: "I am utterly devoted to the pursuit of wisdom, awareness and self-knowledge. Doing is also important, but my first priority is to know G-d and (thereby) my truest self, even if this means withdrawing from involvement with the world." This is something we all need to say, at least

once in a while. We all need to know that there is the potential for such consummate knowledge in us, and that we each have those moments in our lives when we attain it.

The hadas says: "What our world needs is action. Knowledge of G-d and self-awareness are worthy goals, but I have a job to do. I need to build a better world — enlightenment may have to wait." This is something we all need to say, at least once in a while. We all need to know that our mission in life is to "make the physical world a home for G-d", and that there are times when the need for action takes precedence over everything else.

The aravah says: "I have nothing. I am nothing." This is something we all need to say, at least once in a while.

THE LUXURY OF AUSTERITY

RABBI YAAKOV MENKEN (Torah.com)

On the Mitzvah of dwelling in a Sukkah, the Torah says, "In order that your generations will know that I placed the Children of Israel in Sukkos when I brought them out of the Land of Egypt; I am Hashem Your G-d" [Vayikra 23:43].

What is the "knowledge" that we gain by living in a Sukkah? The Sages say: "Go out from your fixed dwelling, and sit in a temporary dwelling" [Sukkah 2a]. My wife's grandfather, Rav Tzvi Elimelech Hertzberg zt"l, explains that in so doing a person can merit to realize that all that we acquire in this world, what we imagine to be fixed and permanent, is in the end only temporary. With this, a person can subdue his own wants and desires for things of this world, since they are, in the end, of little consequence.

Thus, he says, by living in a Sukkah a person can merit to achieve true humility, where it might seem that he has "fallen," but Hashem is the support and helper of the fallen. In fact, hinting to this idea, the Rebbe of Koritz says that the Hebrew letters of "Sukkah" are themselves an acronym for "support and helper of all fallen."

The other major holidays, Pesach and Shavuot, recall particular events (the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, respectively) and come at the same time as those events. Sukkos alone is not tied to a particular event that happened on a particular day. So perhaps Rav Hertzberg teaches us why Sukkos is found on the calendar just a few days after Yom Kippur, a day when we reflect upon our failings, how low and lacking we are, and commit to doing better. Sukkos is a happy festival, but living in a Sukkah means being more exposed to the elements, and taking a step down from the comfort of our own dining room and warm house.

Especially as this is the time, in an agrarian society, where people would enjoy the harvest of their crops, Sukkos redirects us to spiritual uplift and enjoyment, rather than physical. This is a lesson we can carry with us throughout the year—so that while we enjoy the Sukkos holiday, we take away lessons that will bring us to the next Yom Kippur with fewer regrets over times we lost sight of what is truly important in life.

THE JOY OF ADMITTING WE DON'T KNOW

RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG (Aish.com)

Mark Twain once said: "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." Nobel prize winner Dr. Daniel Kahneman put it a little differently: "We're blind to our blindness. We have very little idea of how little we know. We're not designed to know how little we know."

Indeed, when asked what he would eliminate in the world if he had a magic wand, Kahneman answered with one word – overconfidence.

Overconfidence has been blamed for the sinking of the Titanic, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, the loss of Space Shuttles Challenger and Columbia, the subprime mortgage crisis of 2008, the great recession that followed it, and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, among other things. Overconfidence has brought personal financial disaster, imploded relationships and ruined lives.

One person who understood this was King Solomon, the wisest of all men. In Ecclesiastes, which we read on the Shabbat during Sukkot, he describes his efforts to explore and understand. "I said I will be wise, but it remained elusive to me." King Solomon confesses that he tried, analyzed, contemplated, but in the end of the day, he came up short, complete understanding was beyond his grasp.

What is he referring to? What did he try to apply wisdom to but was unsuccessful? Most say he is talking about the quintessential Torah statute, the red heifer, whose law is paradoxical. The impure person is purified from its ashes, but the pure person becomes impure. King Solomon tried to understand its mechanics, how and why it worked, but in the end, he

concedes, v'hi rechoka mimeni, and it is too distant.

Rav Yosef Shaul Natanson says the word v'hi – "and it" in the verse "and it is too distant" refers to the entire Torah. He understands King Solomon as telling us: After I saw that I could not comprehend the reason for the red heifer, I realize that the reason for everything in the Torah was entirely beyond me.

Someone once challenged the Chazon Ish, a great Torah sage who died in the 1950s, about the challenge of theodicy, how bad and painful things can exist in the world. He was driven to make sense and understand the suffering. The Chazon Ish showed him a Tosfos, a commentary on the Talmud, and asked him to explain it. The man tried but failed to interpret or understand the Tosfos. The Chazon Ish told him, "If you don't understand a few lines of Tosfos, how do you expect to understand the ways of G-d which is concealed from all mankind."

In Psalms, the verse says, "How great are your ways, G-d. A fool doesn't understand them..." Rabbi Meilech Biderman wonders why King David, the author of the Psalms, singles out the fool as not understanding them, when even the wise can't comprehend the ways of G-d? He explains, what makes someone wise is that they know what they don't know. The fool suffers from overconfidence, thinks he understands and knows everything. The fool thinks he or she has all the answers.

Our greatest scholars didn't hesitate to say "I don't know," causing us to think more, rather than less of them.

We live in a world that makes us feel if we say "I don't know" or "I don't have a strong opinion about that" we are uninformed, weak or unsophisticated. But we come from a tradition that says exactly the opposite. Humility, nuance and admitting we don't know are not signs of weakness, but strength. They don't display ignorance; they show we are informed enough to know that we can't possibly know absolutely.

The Talmud states, "Teach your tongue to say 'I do not know, lest you become entangled in a web of deceit'" (Brachos, 4a). Our greatest scholars didn't hesitate to say "I don't know," causing us to think more, rather than less of them, and to place greater confidence in the things they did purport to know. Rashi, without whom the Talmud would be a closed book, is famous for the several places in which he writes, "eini yodei'ah, I don't know" regarding the meaning, interpretation, or relevance of a particular verse or statement.

Perhaps this is why we read Ecclesiastes on Sukkot, "the time of our joy". Feeling entitled or capable of understanding everything only sets ourselves up for disappointment, brings about a failure of overconfidence, and leaves us feeling down, incomplete and unfulfilled. Of course, we should pursue understanding, try to gain wisdom, and obtain insight. But we must admit and concede that we can't have the answers to everything and there are things we just can't understand.

Listen to the advice of the wisest of all men: If you want to be happier in your marriage, at work, in your relationship with your children and with G-d, learn to say, I don't know.

MY HOMELESS EXPERIENCE

CHANA GRAJ (Chabad.org)

Two people greet me first thing every morning before I start my daily work. There is the homeless man who sleeps on the embankment of the canal outside my door, and the cleaner who is just finishing his night shift.

Without fail, each and every day the homeless man—wrapped in a soiled wool coat many sizes too big, a deep scar cutting through his left cheek—lifts his head from his latent position, and through his crooked teeth says cheerfully in his Brooklyn accent, "Good morning, sunshine!" Every morning it is the same three words, and then, as though I had never passed, he puts his head back down between his knees and returns to his dreams. I am told his name is Joe. I throw a half-smile in his general direction, and rush on towards my car.

The office building is deserted at 6:30 in the morning. The only sound as I walk slowly through the otherwise silent halls is the low hum of the cleaner's raspy voice as he sings his favorite Bob Marley tunes quietly to himself. I pass him as I make my way up the long hall, and he hastily stops his work, greets me by my name with his bent smile, and stands back against the wall and lets me pass, remaining in that position until I reach my office door. Each morning he takes the time to greet me by my first name, and yet, as I pass him today, I cannot seem to recall his name.

As I sit back in my chair behind my large oak desk, waiting for Windows to load, I wonder when I had become so conceited. Where had this feeling of superiority come from? What is it that makes me believe, even for even a

fleeting moment, that I am better than those two men? That they don't deserve my attention? That I don't even take the time to learn their full names? Who am I trying to fool? Why should I assume that I am greater than Joe the homeless guy who sleeps by my door, or the cleaner who picks up after me? They have their place in the world, as do I. I may not envy their work or their lifestyles, but I do know one thing: I am in no place to judge them or assume that I know the type of people they are.

Why are we so quick to try and establish barriers, to separate ourselves from our neighbors, our workers and our peers? Do we not realize that it is separation that destroys us? Has it not already been proven, time and time again, that it is such demarcations which are hurting our people by slowly sucking out blood, until we are all so estranged and divided that we stand completely alone?

I am to blame as much as anyone else, but it is the festival of Sukkot which comes as a pointed reminder of the error in our ways; such is the power of Sukkot. Amidst a world of intolerance, rivalry and distinctions, Sukkot comes as a reminder of the value of unanimity and the beauty of every man. On Sukkot we abandon our homes, our rigid lifestyle, the physical rudiments which serve to divide us from our neighbors, and we move into the sukkah, a temporary dwelling place where status and position counts for naught. All differences are put aside, all barriers broken, as man and man come together to acknowledge the one thing that unites us—our quintessential souls.

It is only once we regain our true perspective that we are able to achieve the highest level of unity—namely, when our individuality is celebrated within the framework of a tight-knit community. When distinctions are glorified rather than eliminated, when our differences are venerated rather than stamped out. For it is only with the recognition of our inimitability that we are able to create the perfect whole, and it is only with this understanding that true unity can be achieved.

That is the message of the “Four Kinds” of plants which we are instructed to take in hand each day of the festival of Sukkot. We take the harmonious perfection of the etrog, sweet in both taste and smell, and we hold it next to the tall, straight lulav, the symbol of pervasive wisdom and knowledge. We shake them together with the hadas, the embodiment of activity and life, and we bind them together with the aravah, the archetype of true humility. As these four plants are being shaken as one, we are finally able to reach the ideal state of perfection. Each fruit offers something the others lack, and it is precisely through this that they contribute to the union of Israel. It is only through the salutation of individuality that we are able to unite the Four Kinds and form a picture of perfection.

On Sukkot we do not discard that which is different, but rather we embrace it. On the festival of joy we bring the diverse community together, breaking through barriers of division to unite. We take the four dissimilar plants and we bind them together for a single purpose. As we take the Four Kinds into our hands and shake them together under the sukkah roof, we are effectively saying that through our differences we are one.

ACTIONS NOT WORDS

AVROHOM YAAKOV

Shulchan Aruch (OC 625:1) rules that the festival of Sukkos is to commemorate the Clouds of Glory that surrounded and protected (and according to some, transported) the Jews during their four-decade sojourn in the Sinai desert.

Unlike other festivals that are tied to actual events such as Pesach and Shavuot, Sukkos could be held at any time, so why set the timing for Sukkos after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur?

A suggested answer derives from the blessings that Yaakov and Esav received from their father, Yitzchak (Bereshis 27). Yitzchak promises Yaakov that he and his family will receive spiritual blessings in the World to Come, whereas Esav was blessed with physical munificence.

If that is the case, how do Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur fit in? These are days that we ask G-d to bless us with material objects such as food and money. Are we not therefore disproving the blessings of Yitzchak?

Therefore, immediately after Yom Kippur, we set up and live in a Sukkah, an uncomfortable rickety outdoor dwelling which is far from the height of materialism. This demonstrates that we do acknowledge that our real goal is not the physicality of this world, but the next world. We abandon the physical.

PEOPLE ARE FOREVER making promises about what they will do, but ultimately it is not the words that count, but the subsequent actions.

This may be a lesson from the Sukkah – to look at how we behave after Yom

Kippur as our true selves.

News, Views & Opinion

DEMONSTRATION OF IGNORANCE

JESSICA COSTESCU (Free Beacon.com 11-10-24)

A timeline of Israel's history sitting in the center of Harvard University's campus is riddled with factual inaccuracies, falsely accusing the Jewish state of starting the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict, for example. One expert called it a “demonstration of ignorance” and questioned the quality of the Ivy League school's education. Another said “pretty much everything” in the timeline is false.

The so-called art installation, “365 Days, 75 Years: A Reflection on the Ongoing Nakba,” was installed by an anti-Israel student group, the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee, and was on display Wednesday and Thursday. It included a timeline detailing key events in Palestinian history before the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attack that killed nearly 1,200 Israelis.

“Israel launches attacks on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, unleashing the June War that results in the Israeli occupation of what remained of historic Palestine,” the timeline read under the year 1973.

But that account is false. The 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict kicked off after Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack on Israeli forces.

“This display is a demonstration of ignorance, disinformation, malice, and anti-Semitism,” Elliott Abrams, a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, told the Washington Free Beacon. “It shames Harvard and makes you wonder what is being taught, and what is being learned, in its classrooms today.”

“The account of the 1973 war shows a complete lack of knowledge and a desire to avoid the historical facts about the coordinated Arab attacks on Yom Kippur 1973,” Abrams added. “In fact, even Al Jazeera would be a better source of information—it says, ‘Egypt and Syria decided to launch a two-front coordinated attack.’ This is pure disinformation.”

Israeli legal scholar and George Mason University Law School professor Eugene Kontorovich told the Free Beacon that “pretty much everything” in the timeline was false. He said it was akin to describing World War II by exclusively noting that Allied bombings killed millions of Germans and that Soviets raped women in Berlin. The difference, Kontorovich said, is that those details on their own are true, while “most of the things” in the anti-Israel group's timeline are not.

It's unclear whether Harvard, which did not respond to a request for comment, was involved in the installation, though it did include a poster promoting an April roundtable, “Fragmentation: Design and Counter-Design in Palestine.” The event was cosponsored by the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging and the Graduate School of Design.

The Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee's timeline also described the Oct. 7 terror attack as “the largest offensive by the [Al-Qassam Brigades] since its founding” and referred to the Israel Defense Forces as “IOF,” meaning “Israel Occupation Forces.” It erroneously dated the October events immediately following the attack as having occurred in 2024.

The committee was among several anti-Israel student groups to issue a joint statement marking the first anniversary since the Oct. 7 attack.

“There can be no normalcy here or anywhere as Gaza suffers massacre after massacre,” the Monday statement read. “Now is the time to escalate.”

“Resistance will ultimately break the shackles of the Zionist entity,” the statement continued. “Our role in the United States, at Harvard, in the imperial core, is to remain unflinching in our solidarity. After a year of genocide, military campaigns, and forced displacement, we only grow more committed to the struggle for a liberated Palestine.”

Meanwhile, early Tuesday morning, anti-Israel vandals smashed windows and poured red paint on a statue on Harvard's campus, leading to a police investigation. Unity of Fields, a self-described “militant front against the US-NATO-zionist axis of imperialism,” shared footage of the vandalism. The group previously vowed to bring violence to America.

“In the early hours of 10/8, autonomous actors at Harvard smashed windows of the main administrative building and vandalized the John Harvard statue in an act of solidarity with the Palestinian resistance,” the group wrote. “We are committed to bringing the war home and answering the call to open up a new front here in the belly of the beast.”

THE JEWISH MOMENT

MELANIE PHILLIPS (JNS.org 10-10-24)

Earlier this week, there was a sound that has become all too rare. It was a Western political leader expressing unequivocal moral clarity.

Asked about U.S. President Joe Biden's opposition to Israel striking Iran's nuclear facilities in defense against the Islamic regime's attacks, Canada's Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre said: "I think the idea of allowing a genocidal, theocratic, unstable dictatorship that is desperate to avoid being overthrown by its own people to develop nuclear weapons is about the most dangerous and irresponsible thing that the world could ever allow. If Israel were to stop that genocidal, theocratic, unstable government from acquiring nuclear weapons, it would be a gift by the Jewish state to humanity."

Poillievre's remarks were as startling as finding a diamond in a garbage heap. Most political and cultural leaders in the so-called civilized world either make equivocal, two-faced expressions of support for Israel or are part of the axis of demonization trying to bring down the Jewish state through lies and blood libels.

We now live in a world in which morality has been sickeningly turned on its head. The latest example is the nomination of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for the Nobel Peace Prize, whose winner will be announced this weekend. Other favorites are reportedly the International Court of Justice and the U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

What do all these candidates have in common? Absolute moral bankruptcy, expressed through their attempts to destroy Israel by weaponizing libelous falsehoods, murderous bigotry, and, in the case of UNRWA, active connivance with and even membership of Hamas.

There's copious evidence of UNWRA members in Gaza who doubled as Hamas terrorists, and of countless UNRWA facilities that housed Hamas's terrorist infrastructure.

The ICJ has presided over a travesty of law and justice by falsely accusing Israel of illegally occupying the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, giving serious consideration to a grotesque claim that Israel is committing genocide by defending itself against genocide, and relying for its information on viciously distorted claims by anti-Israel bodies.

The United Nations itself is a source of moral corruption. Guterres blamed Israel for bringing the Oct. 7 pogrom upon itself, and has consistently defamed Israel and soft-soaped Hamas during the months of war that have followed.

Far from being the avatar of global peace and justice in accordance with its foundational obligations, the United Nations has aligned itself with global forces of tyranny and terror while singling out Israel, the sole democracy in the Middle East, for systematic harassment, vilification and delegitimization. This week, the United Nations elected to its Human Rights Council—long the redoubt of human rights abusers—Qatar, patron of Hamas and perpetrator of enslavement, violence against women and the execution of gay people.

The moral depravity of these international bodies is integral to the epidemic antisemitism that has surged across the free world. This is a full-blown civilizational collapse that has engulfed political and cultural elites across the board and, most terrifyingly of all, fried the brains of millions of young people.

In this cultural meltdown, media outlets have played a key role. The media is essential to upholding freedom and democracy by keeping society's leaders honest. But the media itself is now the problem, having stopped being outsiders to the establishment—as journalists once thought of themselves—and becoming instead an outpost of the university-educated elite that has incubated the poisonous rot.

That's why staggering media malfeasance now goes hand in hand with the disintegration of political leadership.

The recent media appearances of vice-president Kamala Harris have revealed her to be beyond parody as an utterly hopeless, incompetent and inept presidential candidate.

In one live video briefing on the Florida hurricane, she was caught covering her mouth to tell an aide, who was surreptitiously feeding her questions to ask, that it was a "live broadcast"—without realizing her microphone was itself live.

Far worse occurred on the CBS show "Face the Nation." Asked by Bill Whitaker if the United States lacked influence over Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Harris gave one of her infamous "word salad" answers that was incoherent, incomprehensible and absurd.

But CBS then doctored the footage by removing the word salad and splicing in a different answer Harris had given in order to present the interview as coherent and focused.

This was straightforward journalistic corruption. It was part of the same intellectual environment in which media outlets systematically promulgated lies about former President Donald Trump's alleged collusion with Russia, while sanitizing and obscuring the fact that this was an illegal attempt by an alliance between the Democratic Party and elements in the justice and law-enforcement establishment to lever him out of office.

It's the same environment in which the BBC, The New York Times and most mainstream media outlets have been systematically recycling Hamas propaganda for the past year while inciting murderous hatred against Israel. It's the same environment in which the deranged hatred of Israel and the Jewish people in the general population has become mainstream and is overwhelming the culture.

This is obviously very frightening. However, it's important for Jews to view these tumultuous events not through corrupted Western eyes, which peer through a prism of demoralization and despair, but through Jewish eyes, which gaze through a prism of clarity and hope.

We Jews are not alone. There are good people who support us. They are people who still understand the distinction between right and wrong, truth and lies, victim and victimizer.

Although there are millions of them, they don't possess cultural and political power. They have been effectively disenfranchised by those who aim to destroy Western civilization, who despise Israel and the Jews, and who dominate the elite positions within Western society.

With the decent millions fighting back through the democratic avenues available to them, a titanic civilizational struggle is under way.

The Jews are the leaders of that resistance. Israel is leading it in geopolitical and military terms, fighting to defeat the forces of evil in Iran and the Islamic world.

More generally, the historic culture of the Jewish people reaffirms the core values of civilization against the forces upholding lies, hatred and the abuse of power.

Those forces are embedded within the left-wing establishment in every country. In the Diaspora, many Jews themselves are signed up to the ideologies that have unleashed them. Some of these Jews have been deeply dismayed since Oct. 7 to find their supposed fellow "progressives" have turned against them.

These Jews have a choice. They can recognize the unique value of the inherited, specific precepts of Judaism that have bound the Jewish people together over the centuries and enabled it to survive every culture that has tried to annihilate it. Or else they can stick with a Western culture which, unless it dramatically changes course, is going down.

This weekend is Yom Kippur. Rarely has its central theme of teshuvah—"return"—seemed more apposite.

In the Middle East, the enemies of the Jewish people are now on the back foot. In Israel, there's a quiet certainty that we are winning.

More than that, it's astounding that this tiny country is standing alone to defend civilization against barbarism—a service to humanity that it's delivering on behalf of the entire world.

No one is under any illusion. Many perils and maybe even more suffering lie ahead. What's certain, however, is that Israel and the Jewish people will survive and thrive.

As Poillievre so movingly declared: "One thing I know—even a thousand years from now, on Friday as the sun sets and Shabbat begins in Israel, the songs of Shabbat will continue to be heard, and the Jewish people will continue to exist."

We are living through a seismic chapter in Jewish destiny. The world may rage and shout and scream—because they know it, too. This is the Jewish moment.

UN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM: ALLEGEDLY GAVE \$1.3 BILLION TO HAMAS IN CASH

CON COUGHLIN (GateStoenInstitute.org 13-10-24)

Accusations that the United Nations funded Hamas's terrorist infrastructure by transferring \$1.3 billion to the organisation, some of which was used to finance the purchase of weapons used in last year's October 7 attacks, will only add to the view that the UN is no longer fit to fulfil the role for which it was originally intended.

A lawsuit filed in US Federal Court by victims of the October 7 Hamas attacks makes damning accusations against the UN Relief and Works

Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) that it was involved in orchestrating a large-scale money laundering operation from which the terrorist organisation benefitted.

The suit alleges that significant amounts of humanitarian aid intended for Gaza residents were diverted to Hamas.

Gavriel Mairone, the attorney who is representing the plaintiffs, argues that these shocking allegations demonstrate that, for more than a decade, UNRWA's aid distribution network was involved in widespread fraud and corruption. The lawsuit claims this scheme not only enriched Hamas but also funded terrorism, playing a pivotal role in the October 7 attacks.

Speaking at an event organised by the Jerusalem Press Club earlier this year, Mairone explained how specialized security trucks transported millions of dollars in cash into Gaza.

Some of the physical cash payments made to smugglers for weaponry date back to before 2018. After this date, Qatar began transferring \$10 million monthly in cash, and UNRWA added another \$20 million, making up two-thirds of the cash flow.

A key element in Mairone's case is that, while the Palestinian Authority pays its Gaza employees via wire transfers through banks, the payments to Hamas were made in cash, prompting questions about why the different payment systems were necessary.

"Now, the question is why is cash [dollars] being used in this one location and in all the other locations they use local currency?" Mairone asked.

The lawsuit brought by the victims of the October 7 attacks will further add to the pressure the UN is facing over its response to the attacks, and accusations of institutional anti-Israeli bias.

At the very least, the allegations against UNRWA highlight the urgent need for robust oversight and mechanisms to prevent the misuse of humanitarian funds, thereby safeguarding the integrity of aid operations and the well-being of vulnerable populations.

The UN's standing as an independent arbiter in global affairs has already reached an all-time low as a result of both its association with Hamas and the blatant anti-Israel policy it has adopted since last year's October 7 attacks, when Hamas terrorists murdered 1,200 people and took another 251 into captivity.

The first damning evidence of the UN's complicity in the worst terrorist atrocity committed in Israel's history emerged after Israel's military reported that 450 workers employed by UNRWA were "military operatives from Hamas and other armed groups" and has shared this intelligence with the United Nations.

"Over 450 UNRWA employees are military operatives in terror groups in Gaza – 450. This is no mere coincidence. This is systematic. There is no claiming, 'we did not know,'" IDF Spokesperson Daniel Hagari said.

The revelation that UN employees were involved in plotting the barbarous assault prompted many western governments, including the US and U.K., to freeze their donations, although some of these restrictions have subsequently been eased by some western leaders following pressure from hard-Left, pro-Palestinian activists.

The clamour for funding to be restored to UNRWA prompted the White House to confirm last month that it supports resuming funding for the UN agency if appropriate accountability measures are implemented.

This follows the introduction of new legislation by House progressives to restore funding to UNRWA. Congress passed legislation last year that bars US funding to the agency until March 2025.

White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby confirmed that the US still supports restoring funding in principle.

"In light of the fact that there is still an ongoing crisis in Gaza and the essential role that UNRWA does play in the distribution of life-saving assistance, we continue to support funding for UNRWA, with appropriate safeguards, with transparency measures built in and with accountability also baked into that," Kirby said.

More recently, the ability of proscribed terror groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah to infiltrate the UN's ranks was laid bare when it was discovered that a senior Hamas commander killed in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon last month had been working as a UN teacher.

Questions about the UN's credibility to act as an independent broker in the wake of the October 7 attacks have further been raised over the blatant anti-Israel bias displayed by the UN's extensive record of vilifying Israel unjustly, as well as the record of UN Secretary General António Guterres.

The dossier of "a UN crime against humanity" and its demonization of Israel is too long to list, but one can get a glimpse of it here, here, here, here, here

and here. The persistent criticism levelled at Israel by Guterres, a former socialist prime minister of Portugal, has prompted Israel to take the unprecedented step of banning the UN chief from visiting the country.

Announcing the ban, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz declared Guterres persona non grata and an "anti-Israel secretary-general who lends support to terrorists" for seeming to justify terrorism when he claimed that the unprovoked Gaza attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 "didn't happen in a vacuum."

The Israeli action is certainly deeply embarrassing for an organisation like the UN, which is no stranger to controversy.

In 2002, the UN was embroiled in the sex-for-food scandal. An 84-page report confirmed that the UN had known for 16 years that workers in more than 40 organisations in Africa were delivering food to children in exchange for sex.

A year later, in 2003, following the Iraq War, Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, was heavily criticised for his role in allowing Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to run a highly-profitable oil-smuggling operation to sustain his regime in power.

Following the UN's own devastating report into the Iraq corruption scandal, the UN said it would undertake wholesale reform to make sure it was immune from corrupt practices.

The mounting scandal over the body's involvement with Hamas, together with its institutional anti-Israel bias, indicates that no such reform has been undertaken and that the whole organisation is no longer fit for purpose.

Former US National Security Advisor John Bolton made headlines at the time of the Iraq scandal by claiming that, if the top ten floors of the organisation's New York headquarters were removed, no one would notice the difference.

A better idea, given the body's recent woeful record on its handling of the Middle East, would be to demolish the entire infrastructure of this corrupt and institutionally biased body.

WHO ARE THE U.S.-DESIGNATED TERRORISTS THAT ISRAEL HAS ELIMINATED OVER THE PAST YEAR?

CHAIM LAX (HonestReporting.org 10-10-24)

In its fight against Iranian regime-backed terror groups in both Gaza and Lebanon, Israel is not only defending its own territory, citizens, and national interests. It is also benefiting the United States and other Western nations that are threatened by the Islamic Republic and its proxies.

Since October 7, Israel has eliminated several top Hamas and Hezbollah leaders who have been designated as terrorists by the U.S. State Department, including some who have had American blood on their hands for over 40 years.

The following is a list of these U.S.-designated terrorists that Israel has eliminated since October 7, 2023:

MARWAN ISSA

Terror affiliation: Hamas

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 10, 2019

Date of death: March 11, 2024

Nicknamed "The Shadow Man," Marwan Issa was the deputy head of Hamas' military wing, the Qassam Brigades, and was considered to be the third highest-ranking Hamas official in Gaza.

One of the earliest members of the Qassam Brigades, Issa was one of the key figures who helped develop it into a paramilitary organization and he was also a central force behind many anti-Israel terror attacks since the late 1980s.

Issa is considered to be one of the central figures behind the planning of Hamas' October 7 attack.

ISMAIL HANIYEH

Terror affiliation: Hamas

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: January 31, 2018

Date of death: July 31, 2024

Ismail Haniyeh was the political head of Hamas, having previously served as its head in Gaza (until 2017).

As head of the terror organization, Haniyeh played a role in the violent ouster of Fatah and the Palestinian Authority from the Gaza Strip in 2007.

Following the October 7 attack, Haniyeh both publicly celebrated the rampage and justified it as an effective assault against the Jewish state.

ABU ANAS AL-GHANDOUR

Terror affiliation: Hamas

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: April 6, 2017

Date of death: November 14, 2023

Abu Anas Al-Ghandour, also known as Ahmed Ghandour, was a senior member of Hamas, serving as the Qassam Brigades chief in northern Gaza and also as a member of the terror organization's decision-making council. Al-Ghandour was responsible for several terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and military personnel in both Gaza and the West Bank, including the 2006 kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. According to the IDF, Al-Ghandour was a "leading figure in the planning and execution of the October 7th massacre."

MUHAMMED DEIF

Terror affiliation: Hamas

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 8, 2015

Date of death: July 13, 2024

Considered to be the number two Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, Muhammed Deif was head of the Qassam Brigades and is thought to be the mastermind behind the October 7 attack.

A prominent member of Hamas for decades, Deif spearheaded Hamas' use of rockets and tunnels and was also implicated in many terror bombings against Israeli civilians during the 1990s and 2000s.

In the 2014 war between Israel and Hamas, Deif was responsible for firing rockets at Israel during humanitarian ceasefires, endangering both Israeli and Palestinian civilians.

RAWHI MUSHTAHA

Terror affiliation: Hamas

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 8, 2015

Date of death: July 2024

Considered to be the "de facto prime minister of Gaza," Rawhi Mushtaha was the highest-ranking political leader of Hamas in Gaza while also being involved in the terror organization's violent activities.

An early leader of the Qassam Brigades, Mushtaha was sentenced to four life terms in Israeli prison for orchestrating terror attacks against the Jewish state, only to be released in 2011 during the Shalit deal.

Mushtaha was a close confidante of Yahya Sinwar, having served with him in Israeli prison and then co-founding Hamas' internal security service together. This security service was responsible for the torture and killing of Palestinians suspected of cooperating with Israel.

Rawhi Mushtaha was one of the few Hamas leaders to be intimately involved in planning the October 7 attack on southern Israel.

FU'AD SHUKR

Terror affiliation: Hezbollah

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 10, 2019

Date of death: July 30, 2024

Fu'ad Shukr was one of Hezbollah's most senior leaders, serving on its highest decision-making council and also directing its military operations.

One of the earliest members of the Lebanon-based terror group, Shukr helped coordinate attacks on foreigners in the 1980s, controlled the terror organization's operations in southern Lebanon in the 1990s and 2000s, and was part of Hezbollah's deployment to Syria in the 2010s to defend the Assad regime.

In his role as commander of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon during the 2000s, Shukr orchestrated a number of cross-border attacks against Israel, including the ambush and kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers in 2006 that precipitated the Second Lebanon War.

As a point man between Iran and Hezbollah, Shukr is largely credited with helping to expand Hezbollah's arsenal into one of the largest controlled by a non-state actor.

In 2017, the U.S. government offered a \$5 million reward for information on Shukr's whereabouts for his role in the 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks (which killed 241 American servicemembers) and French military barracks (which killed 58 French personnel).

IBRAHIM AQIL

Terror affiliation: Hezbollah

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 10, 2019

Date of death: September 20, 2024

Similar to Fu'ad Shukr (who he replaced after the latter's assassination), Ibrahim Aqil was an early member of Hezbollah who rose through the ranks to become a member of the terror group's highest military body.

Through his 40-year career as a terrorist, Aqil had led Hezbollah's foreign operations unit, was instrumental in providing Hezbollah's support to the Assad regime during the Syrian Civil War, and served as commander of the Radwan Forces (Hezbollah's elite troops).

In the past few years, Aqil had been involved in several attacks across the

Israel-Lebanon border, including the Megiddo Junction bombing in March 2023.

The United States offered a \$7 million reward for Ibrahim Aqil's whereabouts due to his involvement in anti-American terrorism in Lebanon in the 1980s, including the taking of American and German citizens as hostages, the 1983 U.S. embassy bombing in Beirut (which killed 63 people), and the U.S. Marines barracks bombing.

ALI KARAKI

Terror affiliation: Hezbollah

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: September 10, 2019

Date of death: September 27, 2024

A member of Hezbollah's highest military body, Ali Karaki (also known as Ali Karki) was commander of Hezbollah's southern sector and was responsible for all of the terror group's attacks that originated in southern Lebanon.

According to the Alma Research and Education Center, every anti-Israel attack since October 8 that originated in the south was either authorized by Karaki or directly coordinated with him.

After the assassination of Ibrahim Aqil, Karaki was chosen to be one of his successors.

Following a failed assassination attempt earlier that week, Ali Karaki was killed in the Israeli airstrike against Hezbollah's secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah.

HASHEM SAFIEDDINE

Terror affiliation: Hezbollah

Date added to the U.S. terrorism list: May 19, 2017

Date of death: Presumed killed October 3, 2024

A relative of Hassan Nasrallah, Hashem Safieddine was presumed to be Nasrallah's successor as secretary general of Hezbollah following the latter's assassination by Israel.

During Nasrallah's lifetime, Safieddine was considered to be the number two figure in Hezbollah's hierarchy, serving as head of the terror organization's executive council and as a member of its chief military body.

Safieddine also had close ties to Hezbollah's backers in Iran, which even extended into his family life – his son is married to the daughter of Qassem Soleimani, the former head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, who was assassinated by the United States in 2020.

IRAN MISSILE ATTACK: A NIGHT OF MIRACLES

HILLEL FULD (Aish.com 7-10-24)

I really don't think we all understand the absolute miracles that we witnessed last week here in Israel.

In fact, I am sure we don't.

Let's break this down.

Israel has three air defense systems, each one of them a technological wonder and that's not me saying it. That's Dr. Daniel Gold who basically invented the Iron Dome who told me that. The level and sophistication of the Iron Dome is simply unparalleled.

But the Iron Dome only knows how to detonate short range rockets or missiles within a 70 km range, give or take.

Then Israel has the David's Sling system. That knows how to deal with mid-range missiles up to approximately 300 km.

Then we have the Arrow system that detonates missiles that can fly outside of the earth's atmosphere. That has a range of about 2,400 km!

The night Iran rained down 180 ballistic missiles on Israel, all three defense systems were activated and implemented to perfection.

The chances of all of these incredibly complex systems working in unison as flawlessly as they did that night are minuscule.

If one thing went wrong, if one of those ballistic missiles hit an apartment building, a shopping center, or an army base, we would now be burying hundreds of Israelis.

And all of that is not even the biggest miracle.

A few days ago, I got a WhatsApp message from a good friend who is a senior executive at Microsoft and who wasn't exactly a G-d-fearing Jew. Until the night of the missile attack.

Here is what he wrote me:

"If you're looking for miracles man - last night I started believing. Missiles hit all around me but none of them hit my house or any house, for that matter."

He elaborated some more and shared info about the missiles that he watched land just meters away from very strategic places in Israel, to say

the least.

Each one of those defense systems is, in and of itself, pretty miraculous, but what is even more insane is the low casualty numbers from the rockets and missiles that were NOT intercepted.

Where did those missiles go? I'll tell you where. They landed in sand, in water, and in "empty spaces".

Have you been to Israel? It's a microscopic country. What empty spaces? Where are these empty spaces?

How have hundreds of Iranian ballistic missiles all either get detonated by miraculous systems or totally miss their mark and land in empty spaces causing zero casualties and minimal damage?

How?

Listen, I get it. This thought process begs the question, where was G-d during the horrible terrorist attack in Jaffa? Where was He on October 7th? Where was He during the Holocaust?

All valid questions that require a serious nuanced conversation.

But if you know anything about what had to happen the night Iran attacked Israel and throughout this war in general, for such a low number of casualties, you'll know that what we witnessed last night was the equivalent of G-d splitting the sea.

Guess what, when G-d split the sea, there were those who didn't believe it was a miracle and didn't jump in. And there are also those who feel the need to explain it naturally. Ok, that's fine.

You don't want to call yesterday an act of G-d? That's your choice, but like my Microsoft friend, if you look at these events objectively, you'd have a really hard time seeing those hundreds of deadly missiles land in empty spaces and not see the hand of G-d.

That missile attack was an incredible display of the collaboration between two of the powers that protect the Jewish people: The IDF and G-d.

That night will go down in history right alongside many of Israel's accomplishments in this war including the beepers and the unprecedented low ratio between combatant and civilian, as a military operation the likes of which the world has never seen. Ever!

That night will be analyzed by military strategists and experts for generations.

That night, we witnessed history.

That night we witnessed open miracles.

That night, we witnessed G-d watching over His children.

Kosher & Halacha Korner

The following article may be at variance to local Kashrus Agencies. When in doubt, contact your local reputable Agency. In Australia, direct any questions to info@kosher.org.au or visit www.kosher.org.au

EATING IN THE SUCCAH ON THE FIRST NIGHT

RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT (Torah.org)

You should dwell in a Succah (Emor 23:42)

Every adult male is Biblically obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread in a succah on the first night of Succos. The Talmud (1) derives this obligation from the similar obligation of eating a k'zayis of matzah on the first night of Pesach. Since these two obligations are closely related, their halachos are similar in many respects. Like all mitzvos, this mitzvah, too, can only be properly fulfilled if there is prior planning and clear knowledge of all the requirements. Let us review the pertinent halachos:

WHEN IS IT EATEN

In the late afternoon of Erev Succos, one should not fill himself with food or wine so that he will be able to eat the k'zayis of bread with a good appetite (2).

The k'zayis of bread [and the Kiddush that precedes it (3)] may not be eaten until it is definitely night (4), no earlier than 50 minutes after sundown (5). If one ate before that time, he must eat another k'zayis of bread in order to fulfill the mitzvah (6).

The k'zayis of bread may not be eaten after midnight (7). B'dieved, though, one who did not eat before midnight should do so after midnight and recite the proper blessing (8).

Preferably, one should sit down to eat the k'zayis of bread immediately after coming home from Ma'ariv. Unnecessary delays should be avoided (9).

HOW MUCH MUST BE EATEN

There are various views in the poskim about the exact measurement of a k'zayis. Since this is a Biblical obligation, it is proper to be stringent and eat at least 1.75 fl. oz. of bread, though one who eats 1 oz. of bread fulfills his obligation.

There is a view in the Rishonim (10) that holds that the minimum amount of bread one is obligated to eat in the succah on the first night is a k'beitzah, not merely a k'zayis. Although the basic halachah does not require the larger amount (11), still it is proper to satisfy that view as well (12). The amount to be eaten [to satisfy all views], therefore, is 3.5 oz. of bread (13). The bread which is eaten [whether it is a k'zayis or a k'beitzah (14)] must be eaten within a time-span of 3 to 4 minutes (15). No talking may take place until the full amount is chewed and swallowed (16). L'chatchilah, it is proper to chew and then swallow the bread in its entirety (17).

THE BASIC PROCEDURE

One is obligated to eat the minimum amount of bread even if he does not enjoy it and even if it causes him distress (18). Even a person who is classified as a choleh sh'ein bo sakanah is obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread (19).

Before eating the bread, one must have in mind that he is about to fulfill the Biblical mitzvah of eating bread on the first night of Succos (20). If one fails to have this intent and eats the piece of bread as he normally does every Shabbos or Yom Tov, it is questionable if he has fulfilled the mitzvah (21). In any case, he should eat another portion of bread with the proper intent (22).

One does not fulfill his obligation by eating cake, etc. (23) Only bread made out of one of the five species of grain is valid.

Women are exempt from this mitzvah, but if they do eat the required amount of bread in the succah, it is considered a mitzvah and they may recite the blessing (24).

There are some who maintain that the bread should be eaten without being dipped in honey (25), etc. Most poskim are not particular about this stringency (26).

ARE WE REQUIRED TO FULFILL THIS MITZVAH WHEN IT IS RAINING?

There are many discussions in the poskim concerning the obligation to eat in the succah on the first night of Succos if it is raining. The following points are raised:

If rain is falling, is one obligated to eat in the succah or not?

If it is raining, is one obligated to wait and see if the rain will stop so that he can eat in a rain-free succah?

If one does eat in the succah while it is raining, can a blessing be recited?

If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then the rain stopped, is he required to eat in the succah again?

If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then went to sleep, is he obligated to get out of bed to eat again once the rain has stopped?

Since there are different rulings on all of these issues, the following, then, is a summary of the majority opinion (27):

If it is raining steadily and there is a reliable weather forecast for rain all night, one should make Kiddush [with shehecheyanu] and eat a k'zayis [or a k'beitzah (28)] in the succah. No blessing over the succah is recited. The rest of the meal is eaten inside the house (29).

If there is no reliable weather forecast and there is a possibility that the rain will stop [e.g., it is drizzling or it is raining on and off], it is proper to wait an hour or two for the rain to subside (30). The poskim agree, however, that if the delay will disturb the dignity and pleasure of the Yom Tov, or if the family is hungry and/or tired, there is no obligation to wait.

If the rain stops while the meal is being eaten inside the house or even after the meal has finished, one is obligated to eat at least a beitzah (31) of bread in the succah. Even if the rain stops after midnight, a beitzah of bread must be eaten in the succah. If one has already gone to bed and then the rain stops, there is no obligation to get out of bed in order to eat in the succah (32).

FOOTNOTES

1 Succah 27a.

2 Mishnah Berurah 639:27.

3 Beir Halachah 639:3.

4 Rama O.C. 639:3.

5 This is the generally accepted time for "night". Under extenuating circumstances, there are those who permit eating the bread a few minutes earlier. Since this is a Biblical mitzvah, it is proper – weather permitting – to wait for 72 minutes after sundown, to satisfy the views of the Rishonim who hold that before that time it is not definitely night.

6 Mishnah Berurah 639:25. If, mistakenly, one ate the bread even earlier than sundown, not only must he eat another k'zayis but he must also repeat the blessing of leishev basukah.

7 Rama 639:3.

- 8 Mishnah Berurah 639:26. In that case, though, at least a k'beitzah of bread should be eaten.
- 9 Mateh Efrayim 625:42, 44.
- 10 Quoted by the Ritva and Ran in Succah 27b.
- 11 O.C. 639:3.
- 12 Mateh Efrayim 625:51; Mishnah Berurah 639:22.
- 13 The amount of a beitzah according to the Chazon Ish.
- 14 Mateh Efrayim 625:52 and Eleff le-Mateh 87.
- 15 Mishnah Berurah 639:22. Children under bar mitzvah may take up to 9 minutes for the amount to be eaten—Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 54 note 130).
- 16 Kaf ha-Chayim 639:50.
- 17 Mateh Efrayim 625:52. Mishnah Berurah, though, does not mention this.
- 18 Be'ur Halachah 639:3.
- 19 Bikurei Yaakov 639:6,24; Aruch ha-Shulchan 639:17.
- 20 Mateh Efrayim 625:51; Mishnah Berurah 625:1. In addition to this, one should bear in mind the reasons behind the mitzvah of succah. According to some poskim (Bikurei Yaakov 625:3 based on Bach), failure to have this intent invalidates the mitzvah. Mishnah Berurah, however, rules, that b'dieved one fulfills his obligation even if he does not have in mind the reasons for the mitzvah.
- 21 See Chidah (Simchas ha-Regel, quoted in Mo'adim U'zmanim 6:69) who questions if one has fulfilled his obligation in this case. See, however, Mishnah Berurah 60:10, quoting the Chayei Adam.
- 22 Mateh Efrayim 625:53.
- 23 Mishnah Berurah 639:21.
- 24 Sefaradic women, though should not recite the blessing on this mitzvah or on any mitzvah which they are not obligated to perform, such as lulav, shofar, etc.
- 25 See Yechaveh Da'as 4:37 for the various views.
- 26 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Nishmas Avraham O.C. pg. 320 and Harav O. Yosef (ibid. pg. 337). Tzitz Eliezer (15:32-14) maintains that one should be stringent. See also Mo'adim U'zmanim 1:86.
- 27 Based on rulings of Mateh Efrayim and Mishnah Berurah.
- 28 Mateh Efrayim 625:51, 62 and Elef le-Mateh 84. See, however, Ktzei ha-Mateh who holds that when raining all agree that a k'zayis is sufficient.
- 29 When reciting Hamotzi, one should have in mind that he will recite Birkas ha-Mazon inside the house.
- 30 Some poskim are more stringent and recommend waiting until midnight.
- 31 In this case, a k'zayis is not enough.
- 32 There is a minority opinion (Mo'adim U'zmanim 1:86, based on his understanding of the Gr"i; Harav M. Soloveitchik, quoted in Reshimos Shiurim (Succah, pg. 92) and in Mesorah Torah Journal, vol. 14, pg. 57) which maintains that even after going to sleep one is obligated to get out of bed in order to eat in the succah.

Candle lighting (Melb) Sukkos 16-10-24, 15 Tishrei 5784, 7:21p/8:20p/7:22p/8:22p