

מסכת סוכה דף נ"א

DAF YOMI⁴ KIDS

Inside the Daf

It was said to be the celebration of a lifetime: The שמחת בית השואבה, the Celebration of the Water-Drawing. Indeed, whoever did not behold it has never seen joy in his life.

This celebration was held on the second night of the סוכות holiday and every night thereafter (except on the Sabbath) until the end of סוכות.

The celebration would last all night and into the next morning when water would be drawn from the Shiloah spring for the גיסוף המים (water pouring) ceremony of סוכות.

The שמחת בית השואבה took place in the roomy עזרת נשים, or Women's Courtyard, of the בית המקדש (Holy Temple). Giant golden candelabra were set up in the Courtyard to provide light for the celebration. Four golden bowls sat atop each candelabra with a tall ladder leading up to each bowl.

פרחי כהונה, or young כהנים, would climb the ladders, fill the bowls with oil and set them alight. The candelabra would provide so much light for the celebration that there wasn't a courtyard in all Jerusalem that was not illuminated from the light.

The celebration would begin. Pious men and people who were known by their good deeds would dance in front of the crowds, juggle torches in their hands and sing praises to Hashem.

There was live music, too. The Levites would play harps, cymbals, trumpets and countless other musical instruments.

Did You Know...

The Rabbis teach that whoever has not seen Jerusalem in its splendor has never seen a delightful city in his life. Whoever has not seen the Second Temple when it stood never saw a magnificent structure in his life.

WORD OF THE DAY:

קָסַבַּר

"HE HOLDS"

The Synagogue at Alexandria

There are some pretty big synagogues out there but none of them compare to one that existed in Alexandria, Egypt.

The synagogue held 1.2 million people and had its own Sanhedrin-like court system complete with 71 chairs of gold.

Because of the synagogue's size, it was impossible to hear the prayers! As such, the congregation did not know when to say "אָמֵן" to the blessings of the צ"ש (prayer leader).

A signal system was developed. Someone would stand on a wooden platform in the middle of the synagogue with a flag in his hand. When the time came to say אָמֵן to the prayer leader's blessing, the person in the middle would raise his flag high for all to see. The congregation would see this signal and respond with an overwhelming "אָמֵן."

Another unique feature of this ancient synagogue was that every profession had its own section to sit in. The גמרא tells us that the goldsmiths sat in one place, the blacksmiths in another, so that when a newcomer came to town, he would be able to find his fellow tradesmen who would help him find work.

A Moment

The class was trying to think of ways to help new students.

"I know," suggested Arnold. "We could check to see what school supplies the new students need and we could see who has extra of those supplies and they can give them to the new students!"

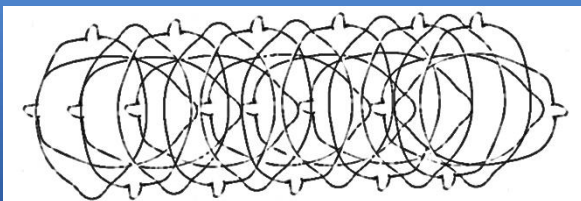
"You don't need to think so creatively to help others," Robert said.

"On the contrary," said Joey. "We see in the גמרא the degree to which people used to find clever ways to help each other. We are told that the synagogue of Alexandria had different tradesmen sit in different places so that newcomers could sit with their fellow tradesmen and find a job with them. What a creative way to help people!"

"I agree," said Arnold, "we should look for any opportunity to help people. We should think out of the box in our pursuit to help others!"

Games

Can you find every אָתרוג in the picture?



Review Questions – סוכה דף נ"א

1. Who lit the giant candelabra for the Celebration of Water-Drawing?

2. What was the flag used for in the synagogue at Alexandria?

3. What do the Rabbis say about the city of Jerusalem?