

Studies for Shabbat Chol HaMo'ed Sukkot 2018/5779 (The Shabbat of Sukkot)

(Predictions, not promises)

Morning Study Session

Sukkot is referred to as "*Z'man Simchateinu*" – "The Time of our Rejoicing". A constant theme in the Hasidic tradition (and therefore at Ohr HaTorah Synagogue), is the nature of rejoicing, the inner meaning of rejoicing beyond celebration and euphoria. Celebration and euphoria are good, but passing. The inner life teaching rests on the question (as recorded in the Talmud tractate Sukkot 11b) as whether we dwelt in the Sinai desert in actual huts (sukkot *mamash*), or the "clouds of the divine presence" (*ananei hakavod*, referred to in the mystical literature as the "shadow of faith"). The inner life traditions, of course, side with the "clouds of divine presence". Sukkot, therefore, is the holiday of being enveloped in the divine mist.

The rejoicing in that mist comes from an inner knowledge (da'at) (based on Leviticus 23:43). At the morning study session, we'll discuss the connection between knowledge and joy, as well as the idea of *tzila d'meheimatuna*, the "shadow of faith."

Torah Service Study

During our Torah service, we will study Exodus chapters 33 and 34, the traditional readings for the Sabbath of Sukkot. Avivah Zornberg, in her book *Reflections on Exodus: the Particulars of Rapture*. Zornberg offers a masterful treatment of the veil that Moses wore during the period after the Molten Calf catastrophe and before the giving of the second tablets, "Revelation by Veiling." You will notice that the idea of "revelation by veiling" lines up well with the idea of the "shadow of faith." Some kind of darkness seems to be required for truth to appear.

Lunch Then Learn

At the Lunch Then Learn, we will enjoy a closer reading of Zornberg than is possible during the Torah service. She develops several themes in addition to "Revelation by Veiling", each deserving our attention. Bring your Zornberg text if you have one. If not, this book is available as an e-book, for example, on Kindle.

As we wrote in an email this week, after the text study Lunch then Learn, I will stay after to answer any question on the spiritual/psychological dimensions of my teachings that morning. I will also gladly answer general questions, as well.