

CJL SHABBAT WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Source Sheet and readings

SOURCE SHEET FROM THE BLESSING OF THE RAINS AND WATER: LEARNING IN THE SUKKAH BY AJWS

Bereishit Rabbah 13:3

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said, three things are of equal importance, earth, humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyata said: ... to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist.

בראשית רבה י"ג:ג' אמר רבי שמעון בן יוחאי, שלשה דברים שקולין זה כזה, וא"ל הן: ארץ, ואדם, ומטר. אמר רבי לוי בר חייה ושלשתן משלש אותיות, ללמדך שאם אין ארץ אין מטר, ואם אין מטר אין ארץ, ואם אין שניהם אין אדם

Questions:

- 1) How do you understand Shimon Bar Yochai's statement?
- 2) What does this source teach about the relationship between people, land and the rain?
- 3) What is our responsibility towards the earth if it is of equal importance to humans?
What does that entail?

Taanit 8b:15 Rabbi Yochanan said "The day when rain falls is as great as the day on which the exiles are gathered in"

תענית ח' ב:ט"ו אמר רבי יוחנן גדול יום הגשמים כיום קבוץ גלויות

[Translation by Steinsaltz]

- 1) Why is rain compared to the ingathering of the exiles?
- 2) What does rain reflect about the Jewish people's behavior?
- 3) How do our actions affect the weather today?
How could our behavior help the environment?

Sukkot invites us out into the world. For a week, we eat, sleep, and live in a dirat arai, a temporary dwelling, whose roof reveals the stars, and through whose walls the winds of early autumn may pass. It's a holiday in which we get in touch with the beauty of this world, as well as come to understand the vulnerability of those who pass through the seasons without a firm roof above their heads. We become more cognizant of the blessings in our lives, and we acknowledge those members of our communities for whom the lack of a stable home is not just a temporary situation. Our recognition of their plight can make us more sensitive human beings, and hopefully compel us to community action on their behalf. When we build a sukkah we take the barren space outside and transform it into a dwelling, a place of relative comfort and security. At the same time, we take the activities of the home and bring them out into the world. The ritual of the sukkah captures the two-fold function of service: That we bring our entire selves to the task of working on behalf of the security of others, and in so doing, hope for personal transformation in the process.
Source: Tzaddik: Holidays: Sukkot

SOURCE SHEET - CLIMATE CHANGE AND JUDAISM, AJWS STAFF

When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow -- in order that Adonai your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment.

[JPS translation edited for gender-neutrality]

דברים כ"ד:י"ט-כ"ז
 בְּשֹׂדֶה לֹא תָשׁוּב לְקַחְתּוֹ לְגֵר לִיתּוֹם וְלֹא לְמִנָּה יְהִיָּה
 לְמַעַן יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֶיךָ: כִּי תַחַבֵּט
 לְזֵיתֶךָ לֹא תִפְאַר אַחֲרָיִךְ לְגֵר לִיתּוֹם וְלֹא לְמִנָּה יְהִיָּה

1. Who are the players in this text – seen and unseen?
2. What power dynamics are at play?
3. For those of us who do not live in agricultural settings, how can we apply these laws to our own gathering of resources?

Exposure to restorative environments helps restore attentional capacity

Berto, R. (2005). Exposure to restorative environments helps restore attentional capacity. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 25(3), 249-259.

Abstract

Three experiments were designed to test the hypothesis that exposure to restorative environments facilitates recovery from mental fatigue. Participants were first mentally fatigued by performing a sustained attention test; then they viewed photographs of restorative environments, nonrestorative environments, or geometrical patterns. Finally, they performed the sustained attention test again. Only participants exposed to the restorative environments improved their performance on the final attention test, and this improvement occurred whether they viewed the scenes in the standardized time condition or in the self-paced time condition. Results are in agreement with Kaplan's [(1995). The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15, 169-182] attention restoration theory, and support the idea that restorative environments help maintain and restore the capacity to direct attention.

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

WHETHER SITTING IN A SUKKAH OR TAKING A WALK OUTSIDE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What feelings and images of vulnerability – whether personal or from your community or from the news – are you carrying in your heart?
- How can you attend to the needs of others who don't have permanent roofs over their heads? Is there something that's holding you back?
- How far back do you have to go to get to a time in which members of your own family lacked the security and comfort of a home? Is there a family story that captures such a time?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FROM HAZON.ORG

- Meditate. Take the time to recite blessings before and after every meal during Sukkot and think about all of the hard work and resources that went in to bringing the food to your table. Consider reading Thanks a Thousand by A. J. Jacobs, which chronicles an incredible journey to thank every person involved in making a cup of coffee – most of whom we never think about.
- Celebrate the Harvest Season by Eating Local. Think about the food you normally eat during one week and calculate how far that food travels to get to your plate. During the week of Sukkot, try to cut those miles in half. Want to take it a step further? Commit to eating only foods produced within 250 miles for the entire week of Sukkot.
- Drink Organic Wine. Sukkot should be a time of rejoicing. Say “L’Chaim” over organic wine and/or other locally distilled or brewed beverages.
- Reuse and Recycle. Commit to using only reusable or recyclable plates and cutlery in your Sukkah. In addition, recycle your lulav and etrog! [Here](#) are some creative ideas on ways to reuse your lulav and etrog.
- Go Vegetarian! Celebrate the bounty of the harvest by eating a vegetarian diet during the week of Sukkot.

SOURCE: ASK BIG QUESTIONS: WHERE DO YOU FEEL AT HOME?

The Talmud recounts that the second-century Rabbis Akiva and Eliezer disagreed about how to understand the Biblical verse, “You shall dwell in booths (sukkot)... so that your descendants may know that the Lord made the people of Israel live in sukkot when he led them out of Egypt” (Leviticus 23:42-43). Rabbi Akiva interpreted the sukkah referred to in the verse as a literal sukkah: a hut like the ones we build today. Rabbi Eliezer believed the sukkot in the verse were the “clouds of God’s glory”—and thus the sukkot we build are metaphors or symbols, not a literal re-enactment of the past. We could say that for Rabbi Akiva, the sukkah—home—is a physical structure; for Rabbi Eliezer, it is a state of mind. Like the sukkah, home is an idea animated by paradoxes: it is both secure and vulnerable, real and metaphorical, at the same time. For some, home is a place of security. For others it is a place where we can make ourselves vulnerable—by inviting guests, by going to sleep. Home can be a physical location, and it can be a state of mind. We can be at home in a house, but we can also be at home in a language or an activity. Probably for many of us, it is all of these things.

Environmental Wellness Self-Assessment

Environmental Wellness: recognizing the interactions between yourself and your environment (natural and social), responsibly using available resources, and fostering a safer and healthier environment for others	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
1. I recognize the impact of my actions on my environment	1	2	3	4
2. I recognize the impact of my environment on my health	1	2	3	4
3. I am aware of and make use of campus health, wellness, and safety resources	1	2	3	4
4. I practice environmentally conscious behaviors (e.g., recycling)	1	2	3	4
5. I seek out ways to improve the social environment at Princeton	1	2	3	4
6. I contribute towards making my environment a safer and healthier place	1	2	3	4
7. I surround myself with people who support me in my journey of being healthy and well	1	2	3	4

Scores of 20-28: *Outstanding! Your answers demonstrate that you're already taking positive steps in this dimension of wellness. You're improving your own well-being and also setting a good example for those around you. Although you achieved a high overall score in this domain, you may want to check for low scores on individual items to see if there are specific areas you might want to address. You might also choose to focus on another area where your scores weren't so high.*

Scores of 15-19: *Your behaviors in this area are good, but there is room for improvement. Take a look at the items on which you scored lower. What changes might you make to improve your score? Even a small change in behavior can help you achieve better health and well-being.*

Scores of 14 and below: *Your answers indicate some potential health and well-being risks. Review those areas where you scored lower and review resources provided in today's Wellness Resources handout to help you develop and set achievable goals.*

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS (Princeton U_Matter):

- * Create environments that support well-being at every opportunity (e.g., when you're hosting a party-socially distanced, of course!).
- * Call out disrespectful or harassing behaviors and comments that create a negative social environment.
- * Use the health, wellness and safety resources available to you (e.g., University Health Services, Department of Public Safety).
- Practice environmentally conscious behaviors (e.g., recycling, energy conservation).

Definition of Environmental wellness (Princeton U_Matter): Environmental wellness involves considering the interactions between your environment, your community, and yourself. The environment includes not only the natural environment but also your social environment.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES These are just a few of the resources available to support your success and protect your health and safety at Princeton. They can also teach you how to contribute to others' lives and respect nature:

- [Office of Disability Services](#)
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [Outdoor Action](#)
- [Pace Center for Civic Engagement](#)
- [Sexual Harassment/Assault Advising, Resources and Education \(SHARE\)](#)
- [Sustainability at Princeton](#)
- [Center for Jewish Life](#)
- [UMatter Princeton](#)