



## Wandering and Wondering in the Time of Corona

Sukkot is a particularly joyous holiday. Following the introspective “Ten Days of Awe,” this holiday is a bit more light hearted and reflective of a period in our history. As we learn in the Torah, we spent 40 years wandering in the desert following our dramatic escape from Egyptian slavery. During this time, we lived in temporary dwellings (Sukkot). While some may argue that we wandered for 40 years because Moses refused to ask directions (!), I would argue that there was a different reason altogether; one that doesn’t necessarily fit the mold of the traditional explanation which is that 40 years was needed for a new generation to grow up in freedom in order to enter the Promised Land with a new outlook and self-respect.

I think we wandered in the desert for 40 years because we needed time to understand who we were as a people. Slavery shrinks our world and our ability to think about our lives. Our lives are dictated by others and little is within our control. Often, we talk about physical slavery, but for contemporary Jews I think it is more appropriate to talk about metaphoric slavery. Too often we are slaves to our fears, our vices, our poor life choices or simply our inability to imagine a different life other than the one we are living.

Maybe a bit of wandering would be good for us. Take the time to try new things. To explore new possibilities. To understand that “what is” is not what *has* to be.

Certainly, this is easier if we tie our wandering with wondering.

The ancient Israelites used their time in the desert to wonder what life would be like in the Promised Land. Early on their fears got the best of them. But with each passing year, they became more engaged with new possibilities and dreams. Perhaps a bit of wondering is good for all of us. I am not suggesting we live in a dream world, but I am suggesting we live in a world where the ability to wonder is a catalyst to change and an appreciation of the people and events and landscape that we too often take for granted.

So, take a moment or two. Wander around places both familiar and unfamiliar. Use that time to think and reflect and to see your world with open eyes. Take a moment to wonder. For within these moments of wondering are an appreciation of miracles both small and large; of a life that does not need to be static nor underappreciated.

For some this process will take 40 years or more. For others an insight may come in the flash of inspiration.

And if you feel a bit lost. Don’t forget, its ok to ask for directions. That’s what trusted cherished people in your life are for. And while there are no shortcuts, surely there is more than one way to make it to the Promised Land. Keep wandering. Keep wondering. You will get there.