



"YOU SHALL DWELL IN BOOTHS FOR SEVEN DAYS... AND IN A HEDER PEULT YOU WILL GROW FOR A LIFETIME

Gabriel Shnaider, Rosh Chinuch Hanoar Hatzioni B'Peru

Sukkot is a holiday celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Tishrei. Just days after the tension of Aseret Yemei Teshuva, we experience joy and union. The holiday of Sukkot has different rituals that characterize it: the sukkah, the Arbaat Haminim and the Ushpizin, among others. Sukkot is also known as Chag HaAsif (The Festival of Ingathering) and Z'man Simchatenu (The Day of Our Rejoicing); it is a holiday that promotes new morals.

The Sukka is probably the most characteristic symbol of this chag. In the Torah is written:

"בְּסֻכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים."

For a week, we leave the comfort of our homes and move into a tabernacle; this reminds us that when the Israelites left Egypt, they lived in booths for forty years. It is also a reminder of the cloud that accompanied the Israelites on their journey, demonstrating the divine protection during their Exodus from Egypt.

It was in these sukkot that our ancestors lived and consolidated as a people, where they lived during the great exodus and the journey through the desert and where they experienced the different episodes that occurred during that journey.

The dwelling place of our ancestors is relevant to their formation as a people. Therefore it is worthy of having a full week to remember it. Not only is it important to remember and analyze the events themselves, but also to understand, contemplate and value the place where they occurred, the environment where they developed and the context that accompanies them.

On the other hand, often when we do our tasks in the tnua, we become very focused on them: we spend a lot of time thinking about tochniyot, planning peulot, being with the chanichim, etc. Rarely do we stop to think about the location where all of this is happening. On this occasion, I would like to analyze and reflect together on the heder peilut, its importance and how we can use it as a unique educational tool. We will use three parameters to address this subject: practical, aesthetic and educational.

1. Practical Parameter:

For a sukkah to be fit for use, it must meet certain characteristics. First, it must have at least three walls that can be made of any material, even previously constructed ones. Likewise, the walls should be at least 96 cm high, but no higher than 9.6 m, and the dimensions must be larger than 70 cm x 70 cm.



The roof, known as the schach, must be made of natural materials (leaves, palm branches, etc.) and cannot be connected to the ground. In addition, it must be sturdy enough so that during the day there is more shade than sun and during the night the stars can be seen.

Similarly to the sukkah, our heder must comply with certain characteristics that transform it into an educational tool to conduct peulot uninterruptedly. For example, we must consider if there is enough room for all the chanichim to enter and that the games and interactions can be performed comfortably, as well as that there are enough chairs and benches so that everyone can sit. However, at the same time, the room must not be too large so as to not disperse and complicate the development of the peula, in order to obtain the practicality we seek.

It is important to consider the accessibility of the room, especially if we have chanichim with motor difficulties. The heder must provide the facilities required to include all our chanichim; it must be a space where everyone feels comfortable and there is respect, equality and inclusion.

In addition, the heder must be a place that enables good interactions and communication among the kvutza. It is important that the environment allows discussion in an efficient and constructive way. The dialogue is essential in our peula; therefore, we must take into account the factors that influence it.¹

2. Aesthetic Parameter:

One of the most beautiful and enjoyable traditions of the sukkah is its construction. The family usually works together, as all are participants in the same goal. Likewise, the children of the family make drawings and ornaments to decorate and beautify the sukkah. The fact that all members of the family take an active part in the building, organization and decoration generates a feeling of union and belonging, which leads to a warm atmosphere of pride and personal satisfaction.

The participation of children in the preparation of the sukkah brings them closer to it. This makes the children feel involved and assume responsibilities, and it generates their interest, curiosity and desire to continue participating. For example, last year in Hanoar Hatzioni Peru we built a sukkah in the ken, and the youngest chanichim decorated it. Then we invited the parents.

¹ We aspire to provide our chaverim with formative education, emphasizing human dignity, freedom of choice, pluralist legacy, teamwork and a dialogue between the educator and his student, as an essential and fundamental methodology – tools that will allow him to analyze, complexly and seriously, the reality in which he lives (Darkeu, 2018).

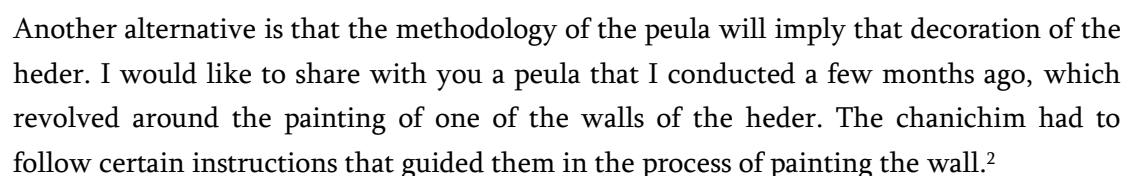
"Dialogue: the educational process, in all its interferences or frameworks, is transmitted through a dialogue between the educator and his student, and of them with the contents to be transmitted" (Edelstein, 2016).



“Building the heder peilut” encourages and highly supports the educational process of our chaverim in the tnua (as appears in the paragraph of the Educational parameter).

In many peulot, we ask the chanichim to draw and write; we use flipcharts, cardboards or other materials that can be later used to decorate the heder. This strategy has a dual function: the decoration of the heder and the evocation of memories of past peula.

In this way, every week, the chanichim receive a new peula and remember the past ones, thus, they manage to strengthen the annual educational process and facilitate the visualization of the tochnit’s linking thread.



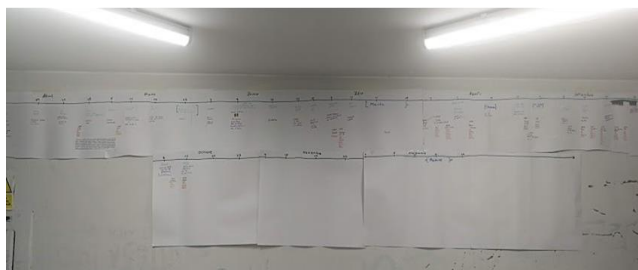
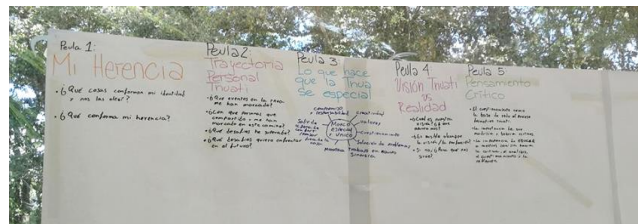
² The peula was about the identity of the kvutza and the impact of the tnu'a on the chanichim's lives. In light of this discussion, ideas were generated on how to assemble the wall. First, we asked the chanichim to prepare a symbol that represents the kvutza and a song that identifies them. Then, we collectively set the rules of coexistence that the kvutza must follow, the characteristics that the chanichim have in common and a brief description of the activities carried out within the heder. Finally, each chanich put his or her name and stamped his or her hands into a mold. Each color represented a subject in which the chanichim are involved. The blue represented the tnu'a. We asked them to paint their hands in a color according to the importance they gave to each one of the represented colors and then stamp it inside the mold. Thus, we formed one person who represents the entire kvutza, and we could see the importance of the tnu'a for this person.



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We can also think of elements that are built as the year progresses, where the evolution of the heder can be seen as the kvutza has new experiences and activities: for instance, a timeline where new peulot, the topics discussed in each peula and a summary of the methodology are added. In this way, we can contribute to the previously mentioned aspects.



Continuing with this idea, it would be a pleasant proposal to prepare a board where photos of the peulot or other activities carried out by the kvutza are added weekly. This proposal also has an emotional impact on the chanichim and allows a more personal identification with the kvutza and the heder.





In parallel with the "regular" decoration of the heder, we can decorate it, especially for a specific peula.

We can create environments that motivate the creativity and imagination of our chanichim to experience the peula fully, especially when the methodologies are based on a fictional or non-routine context.³



These are just a few examples of my experience. The different ways to approach the decoration of the heder are endless and remain open to the imagination and creativity of every madrich. The important aspect is to be encouraged to do it, try, discover new ideas and look for ways to implement them as much as possible.

3. Educational Parameter:

The sukkah is much more than a decorated booth where we eat for a week. The experience in the sukkah is full of learning and teaching; leaving the comfort of our homes transmits humility and allows us to value what we have. Throughout the year, we tend to be immersed in a fixed routine and attend different events that hinder the reflection of what we simply consider "obvious".

Similarly, the heder is not just the physical place where we develop our peulot. Its construction fosters the feeling of belonging of the chanichim and their interests, enthusiasm, responsibilities and desire to participate in the peula and other activities of the tnuva. It creates common bonds between all the members of the kvutza and its facilities. These behaviors benefit the educational process of the chaver.

It is often said that one of the main problems in the kenim is the lack of motivation, activism and commitment in some of the bogrim and the famous inertia with which we tirelessly fight. One way to see and understand the root of this situation is the lack of

³ In this peula, we pretended to be an Andean tribe that lives in a cave. To do this, we lined the walls and some of the doors with craft paper and drawings, imitating rocks. This, accompanied by the "costumes" and methodology of the peula itself, helped to create the expected ambiance. In more colloquial words, it made us enter the character in a more effective and credible way.



identity tnuatit among the chaverim. Therefore, the strengthening of this identity provides a solution.

Identification is the perception that each individual has of himself, comprised of his/her beliefs, abilities, skills, tastes, interests, thoughts and feelings, among other things; it is a mechanism that allows us to differentiate from each other, but at the same time, to associate with a group of people with certain similarities.

A strong and defined identification unites us with other people and guides us toward the same goal. In addition, it promotes synergy, mutual support and joint work. This is the goal we aspire to achieve with our chaverim: whole human beings who identify with their Judaism, the State of Israel and the tnuva. This will allow us to generate intrinsic motivation and desire to become leaders who activate for the tnuva, the communities and all of Am and Medinat Israel.

Achieving such identification is a complex process that requires dedication. It is difficult to identify with an abstract, intangible concept. That is why we look for ways to materialize and make the things we wish our chanichim to identify with a reality, which is one of the main objectives of the simliyyut.⁴

The heder is another element that can help us in this mission. As previously stated, the joint construction among all the members of the kvutza creates a tangible product of the group's work. If we manage to generate a feeling of belonging in the heder, it can easily transform the kvutza. Similarly to the heder, it can move to the ken (as physical space) and from there to the tnuva (as a movement).

We must understand the tnuva as an alternative home⁵, a place where there is comfort, safety and warmth. Therefore, we must think: what is it that generates this feeling when we are in our homes?

⁴ "The simliyyut (symbolism) is one of the elements that contribute to the chanich's identification with the Tnuati environment. The symbols are also a factor of great importance in the creation of codes shared by all of the movement's chaverim, granting abstract meanings to graphic figures, physical elements or behaviors. It is important to remember that, despite being loaded with feelings of identification, the element of simliyyut must not be distorted. Our path is very clear in this aspect: we must utilize the positive aspects of the simliyyut, avoiding a sense of fetishism" (Darkenu, 2018).

⁵ "Alternative House: Ken, a physical place. A pedagogical space. It represents its own space and time and gives both a physical place. It serves a space to create the union of the members of the institution" (Keller Freire) (Edelstein, 2016).



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The answer to this question is very personal. However, the treatment we receive from the other inhabitants of the house makes us feel comfortable in it, or in some cases, a certain discomfort.

The tnua works in the same way; we must create in the ken a comfortable, safe and warm environment. We will mainly achieve it with our Dugma Ishit by showing the chanichim that we feel welcomed and allow them to feel the same way. People naturally develop better in an environment where they feel safe and protected.

For example, many children and teenagers tend to decorate their rooms according to their tastes and interests; it is common to hang photos of them with their families and friends since it allows the youth to unwind and let go without any fear or prejudice.

It is possible to reach a similar context in our heder. It would be ideal for our chanichim to be able to free their identity and express themselves without oppression or distrust, to express their opinion freely in the sichot and act naturally during the peulot. This freedom, accompanied by acceptance and empathy, is essential for the proper development of the educational process in the tnua. We believe that personalized education is where every chanich is unique and special and should be encouraged to fulfill his/her potential according to his/her abilities, skills, tastes, interests and strengths. To do so, it is essential that our chanichim can unwind, feeling safe and confident. Our job is to create a conducive environment to achieve this.

Another important aspect is that new studies indicate that a physical place, the temporospatial location and the feelings are factors that directly influence the memory. Therefore, if we manage to achieve a special feeling toward the heder and make it a common denominator in the experiences and learning of the members of the tnua, we will obtain as a result a more significant impact on the memory of the chanichim.

It is needless to mention the dynamics of the kvutza in the heder as a means to promote equality, dialogue, teamwork, solidarity and interpersonal relationships. It would be ideal for every kvutza to have its own heder, decorated and accommodated to its needs. Although this is not possible, the same principles apply so that other spaces can fulfill the same function.

The reasons stated above credit the heder as a unique and invaluable educational resource. I encourage you to reflect and rethink the use we give to our facilities so that we can make the most of them in an optimal way.

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