

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted September 30, 2007, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED ON SUKKOT

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The Mishnah is usually a serene, philosophical document, describing the perfect Jewish world the sages envisioned. But sometimes the Mishnah gives us a glimpse of real life, and this anecdote rings true:

How did people use the lulav? If the first day of the holiday fell on Shabbat, they took their lulavs to the Temple Mount and the superintendents took them and put them in an orderly fashion on the roof of the balcony but the elders put theirs in an office and taught about them, saying, "Anyone who comes upon my lulav should consider it a gift." The next day, they came early and the superintendents threw the lulavs before the congregation and it turned into a fight. When the cour found that these lulavs caused a danger the ruled that every person should take their lulav home with them.
(M. Sukkah 4:4)

Gevult! This is certainly not a description of an ideal world; there is an all-to-believable essence of truth here. And that leads to some important questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the editors of the Mishnah include this story in their normally-sedate document? What was so important in this story that the sages felt we needed to remember it?
2. This mishnah is a "snapshot" of sorts, a picture of the Temple and its functioning on a very real level. Does this help you identify more with the Temple and its sacrifices, knowing that synagogue politics are often much the same?
3. Why do people take gifts and make something ugly out of them? What drives people to react poorly to things offered for free?

Chag sameiach!