

BATH HEBREWS CELEBRATE FEAST

Ancient Ceremony is to be Carried Out in This City

Feast of the Tabernacle, or Feast of Ingathering, as it is sometimes called, was celebrated by Bath Hebrews for seven days beginning at sundown Sunday. Morning and evening services were conducted in Music hall by Rabbis Charles Arik and Morris Cohen.

This is the third of the great festivals on which, in ancient days, all males were required to make pilgrimages to the Temple at Jerusalem. The celebration of this festival begins on the 15th day of the seventh month (Tishri).

It is agricultural in origin as is evidenced from the name "Feast of the Ingathering," from the ceremonies accompanying it and from the season and occasion of its celebration: "At the end of the year when thou gatherest in thy labors of the field" and "After that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing floor and from the wine press," says the Bible.

It is more particularly a thanksgiving for the harvest, a general thanksgiving for the bounty of nature in the year that has passed, the Hebrews recently celebrating their New Year.

In Music hall an altar was erected and following the example of that great patriarch of the Hebrew race, Abraham, the local Hebrews took a palm branch and sprig of myrtle and willow branch in one hand and a fruit called ethrog in the other hand and marched around the altar. This is repeated every day and on the seventh day seven times, giving thanks to God for all things in joy.

Features of the feast are: The Lulab, or festive palm branch waved during the chanting of the psalms; willow-branches used to adorn the altar, around which the Hebrews march. The seven times around on the seventh day is to commemorate the seven days encompassment of the walls of Jericho; Hallel, or lulab chant recited each day; the Musaf, or special prayers recited each day and the Dukan or priestly blessing given the first two and last two days.

There is also the Sukkah or booth. Rabbi Arik erected one at the rear of his residence on High street, especially for the festival. It is thatched so that the interior is protected from the sun, while it allows the stars to shine through at night. This represents the ancient portable tents similar to that which served the Israelites as a sanctuary during their wandering in the wilderness and in the early period of their life in Palestine.

What really constitutes the dwelling of the Lord, according to the express words of the Old Testament, are the inner curtains, which give the structure its characteristic form inside.