



the Jewish Festivals of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. The festival of Sukkot enjoins us to build temporary dwellings, open to the elements, in memory of the Children of Israel who traveled through the desert and wilderness for forty years, escaping slavery in Ancient Egypt. Their escape is not a historic event, rather one that each of us must experience personally. We are commanded to build temporary dwellings and physically experience our vulnerability to the elements and know what it might have felt like to not have a shelter. We are commanded to remember our own temporary nature... our frailty and dependence upon things beyond our control.

This year, we may be especially receptive (or especially resistant) to this particular To-

every ending is also a new beginning. Rather than fear endings and transitions, our tradition calls upon us to sanctify them and celebrate them.

The word "Torah" means teaching. We generally use it to mean the scroll of Torah that contains the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. But Torah is broader than any book that we can write. When we read the written Torah, we recite the blessing "notein hatorah" – we give thanks for the Torah that we are being given, in the present tense.

This brings us to the question: What is the Torah that we are being given in our own present day? What are we learning about how we are supposed to live? Do we fight the lessons that we receive? Do we wish for a past that is no