



## KOHELET

On Shabbat Chol HaMoed Sukkot we read the book of Kohelet. This 12-chapter book is sometimes lost amongst all the other mitzvot of the holiday. The Rabbis even debated about whether to include this sobering book, but it is actually fitting to read it during Sukkot - Z'MAN SIMCHATEINU - the time of our happiness. Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the days of Awe, are behind us. In Israel it is the time when the harvest is complete and we can celebrate and give thanks to God for all the bounty that He has provided us with, and the constant protection He gives us.

But unrestrained joy can be dangerous. We might get carried away and forget about God. So we read from the weighty book of Kohelet where Shlomo HaMelech, the wise, proclaims "HAVEIL HAVALIM - everything is futile" (1:2). Actually according to Avudraham, Kohelet it was read by Shlomo Hamelech to the whole nation at Hakhel (therefore the name Kohelet).

According to the Ramban the book has three main messages:

- 1) Man shouldn't run after the pleasures of this world since they are fleeting without lasting value;
- 2) Man's spiritual essence is eternal and he has a vital role in God's master plan; and
- 3) Human intelligence cannot possibly understand God's ways and calculations upon which His justice is based.

The bottom line is the last verses "The end of the matter, when all is said and done: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for that is the whole duty of man."

### CHAG SAMEI'ACH

In one sobering verse of Kohelet, when depicting the changes that come with old age, the verse uses a number of plants as metaphors. Prof. Felix in his book OLAM HaTZEMACH HaMIKRA'I explains how these plants show that the body weakens as it ages.

The plants mentioned are capers (ha'evyona, 12:5) and almonds (shaked). So here is a recipe with those ingredients. It can be served over rice or as a filling/stuffing for tacos or empanadas as it's a custom to eat stuffed foods on Hoshana Rabba.

## PICADILLO

oil

1 clove garlic, chopped

1 large onion, chopped

1 green pepper, chopped

4 sprigs parsley, chopped

1½ pounds ground beef

¼ cup seedless raisins

¼ cup whole blanched raw  
almonds

2 Tbsp sliced olives

1 Tbsp capers

2 tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

½ cup tomato paste

¼ cup dry wine

Sauté onion, garlic, pepper and parsley in oil until soft. Add ground beef and brown, stirring with a fork to prevent lumping. Stir in remaining ingredients. Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes. 🍷