



## **Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah : Rejoicing in the Holiday Season**

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During the coming weeks we will be celebrating the Holidays of Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. During the holiday of Sukkot we are commanded Leyshev BaSukkah, to live in our Sukkah for a period of one week. There are specific rules of building the Sukkah in regards to its dimensions and the amount of S'chach put on the roof. These rules are found in the Oral Torah, the Mishna. Building the Sukkah is the first Mitzvah we can perform after Yom Kippur. Many Jews, before they break their fast begin to build their Sukkah. During the week of Sukkot we learn in the Sukkah, we eat in the Sukkah and some of us sleep in the Sukkah. By spending as much time as possible in the Sukkah, we show our ongoing trust and dependence in God.

During Sukkot, we are commanded to take four species Arba Minim, the Etrog, Lulav, Hadasim and Aravot, each day except for Shabbat (this year the first day). As we take them we recite a blessing and wave them in every direction (North, South, East, and West, Up and Down), signifying that God is everywhere.

There are many explanations for the taking of the four species. Some suggest that each represent different body parts (Etrog, heart, Lulav, spine, Hadas (myrtle), lips, and Aravah (willow), eyes) and that we must use our entire bodies to serve God. Others suggest that each species represents a different type of Jew (Etrog, the Jew who learns and practices good deeds, Lulav, the Jew who learns but does not practice good deeds, Hadas, the Jew performs good deeds but does no learning, and the Aravah, the Jew who neither learns nor performs good deeds). No matter which explanation we may choose to accept, it is not until we take all of the species together, using our entire body, or the entire congregation of Jews, that we are able to fulfill the commandment properly. Each part is as important as the other.

The day after Sukkot is known as Shmini Atzeret. In Israel it is the same day as Simchat Torah (the holiday of Sukkot is one day longer in the Diaspora, the land outside of Israel)). On Shmini Atzeret we add a prayer for rain into our daily services (as part of the Shemona Esrai, the Amidah) to signify the changing of the seasons. We end the holiday with the celebration known as Simchat Torah. On Simchat Torah we conclude our annual cycle of Torah reading and begin it anew. During this day we are to literally rejoice in the Torah.

Our study of the Torah is done on a cycle. Once we complete the cycle we immediately begin again. This is to symbolize that learning never ends. A tree without water will surely die. The tree with the water continues to grow. It does not reach a point where it says that it is tall enough and no longer needs to grow. We, like the tree only stop growing when we cease to exist. The Torah, like water serves to feed us. Once we stop the study, we lose our water supply, our source of nourishment for growth.

Most Chumashim, Bibles do not begin on page one. They begin on page two. This is because we never begin to study Torah, we continue our studying. This follows the teaching found in the letters of the Torah. Unlike the Alef Bet, the Hebrew Alphabet, which begins with the letter Alef, the Torah begins, or rather continues with the letter Bet, showing that there is a continuation rather than a beginning.

The last letter in the Torah is Lamed (the last word is Yisrael). When we put the Lamed with the Bet of the first word of the Torah, Bereisheet, we get the word Lev, heart. We are to study Torah with all of our heart. This corresponds with the four species used on Sukkot (the Lulav, Hadas, Aravah and Etrog).

## A “How To” Mealtime *Sukkah* Guide for 5770

The beginning two days of *Sukkot*, then the two days after *Sukkot* (called *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simhat Torah*), both begin with *Shabbat* (in consecutive weeks). There are many rules about when and where to light candles, recite *Kiddush*, when to sit, where to eat, etc. Talk about complicated!

We hope the following summary helps you comfortably choreograph the various meals and candle lighting times. Customs vary among Jews and *shuls*, so ask your Rabbi if you have any questions.

### **Friday Evening October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Erev Sukkot**

- Jewish Law (*halakha*) instructs us not to light a new flame on a Yom Tov (holiday) or *Shabbat*, but we are allowed use an existing flame on the holiday. Why is this important? Well, you have to light candles on the 2<sup>nd</sup> night of the holiday, as well as light candles before *Shabbat* on Friday afternoon. What do you do? Read on...
- Set out a *Yahrzeit* candle (light one before sunset so you'll have a “utility flame” to use on Saturday night). Another option is to leave a burner on your stovetop lit for the two days (keep a huge, covered pot of water over a low flame). You can add water on Sunday, but not on *Shabbat*.
- Light candles by 6:46pm (light the “utility flame” first)
- Candlelighting in the *sukkah*, weather-permitting: *l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*
- [Note: some people “wash” (*netilat yadaim*) before going out to recite *Kiddush* so they don't have to go in and out of the *Sukkah*]
- *Shalom Aleichem*, *Eshey Chayil* and *Blessing of the Children*
- Blessing over wine: *Kiddush* (using the words and melody for the *Chagim*, include *Shabbat inserts*)
- Blessing for dwelling in the *sukkah*: *Layshev basukkah*
- Blessing for coming to this season: *Shehecheyanu*... sit and drink

- Wash hands, blessing over bread: *Netilat yadayim* and *motzi* – some people use honey instead of salt during the holiday. ( See **Note** above )
- Eat
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Shabbat* and *Sukkot*)

### **Saturday Lunch, October 3<sup>rd</sup> The First “Day” of Sukkot**

- Daytime *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov Kiddush* (Called *Kiddusha Rabba L'Yom Tov* in some *Siddurim*)
- Blessing for dwelling in the *sukkah*: *Leyshev B'Sukkah*
- Wash Hands: *Netilat Yadaim*
- Blessing for Bread: *HaMotzi*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Shabbat* and *Sukkot*)
- [**Note**: some people “wash” (*netilat yadayim*) before going out to recite *Kiddush* so they don't have to go in and out of the *Sukkah*]

### **Saturday Evening, October 3<sup>rd</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Sukkot**

- Light candles *after* 7:55pm **using an existing flame** – such as a *Yahrzeit* candle
- Candlelighting in the *sukkah*, weather-permitting: *l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*
- [**Note**: some people “wash” (*netilat yadayim*) before going out to recite *Kiddush* so they don't have to go in and out of the *Sukkah*]
- *Kiddush* (using the words and melody for the *Chagim*, including the section for Saturday night, *Havdalah*...no spices tonight!)
- Blessing for coming to this season: *Shehecheyanu*
- Blessing for dwelling in the *sukkah*: *Leyshev basukkah* (Note: yes, this is reversed from the previous night)... sit and drink
- Wash hands, blessing over bread: *Netilat yadayim* and *motzi* (see **Note** above)
- Eat
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Sukkot*)

### **Sunday Lunch, October 4<sup>th</sup> The Second “Day” of Sukkot**

- Daytime *Yom Tov Kiddush* (Called *Kiddusha Rabba* in some *Siddurim*)
- Blessing for dwelling in the *sukkah*: *Leyshev B'Sukkah*
- Wash Hands: *Netilat Yadaim*
- Blessing for Bread: *HaMotzi*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Sukkot*)
- [**Note**: some people “wash” (*netilat yadayim*) before going out to recite *Kiddush* so they don't have to go in and out of the *Sukkah*]

### **Friday Evening, October 9<sup>th</sup> – Erev Shemini Atzeret**

- Set out a *Yahrzeit* candle (light one before sunset so you'll have a “utility flame” to use on Saturday night). Another option is to leave a burner on your stovetop lit for the two days (keep a huge, covered pot of water over a low flame). You can add water on Sunday, but not on *Shabbat*.
- *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* (in Israel these are combined into one day) are an “add on” to *Sukkot*; they aren't really part of *Sukkot*. Because of this there are no blessings related to *Sukkot*; some people only make *Kiddush* in the *Sukkah* but don't eat there.
- Light candles by 6:35pm (light the “utility flame” first)
- Candlelighting in the *sukkah*, weather-permitting: *l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*

- *Kiddush* (using the words and melody for the *Chagim*, with *Shabbat* insertions) in the *Sukkah*
- Blessing for coming to this season: *Shehechyanu*
- Wash hands, blessing over bread: *Netilat yadayim* and *motzi*
- *Eat*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Shabbat* and *Shmeni Atzeret*)

### **Saturday Lunch October 10<sup>th</sup> – Shemini Atzeret Day**

- Daytime *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov Kiddush* (Called *Kiddusha Rabba* in some *Siddurim*)
- Wash Hands: *Netilat Yadaim*
- Blessing for Bread: *HaMotzi*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Shabbat Shemini Atzeret*)

### **Saturday Evening, October 10<sup>th</sup> – Erev Simhat Torah**

- Light candles after 7:43pm using an existing flame – such as a *Yahrzeit* candle
- Candlelighting: *l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov* and *Shehechyanu*
- *Kiddush* (using the words and melody for the *Chagim*) in the house
- Blessing for coming to this season: *Shehechyanu*
- Wash hands, blessing over bread: *Netilat yadayim* and *motzi*
- *Eat*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Simchat Torah*)

### **Sunday Lunch October 11<sup>th</sup> – Simchat Torah Day**

- Daytime *Yom Tov Kiddush* (Called *Kiddusha Rabba* in some *Siddurim*)
- Wash Hands: *Netilat Yadaim*
- Blessing for Bread: *HaMotzi*
- *Birkat HaMazon* (add *Shir HaMa'a* lot and paragraphs for *Simchat Torah*)
- *Havdala* after 7:42pm (no spices or flame, just *boreh pri ha'gafen* and long paragraph after)

The texts for these prayers are found in most *siddurim*. The texts for candlelighting and *Kiddush* can be found on pages 718 and page 742 in *Siddur Sim Shalom*.

## Special blessings for Sukkot

### Candle Lighting

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו  
במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב.

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us in His commandments and commanded us to kindle these festival day lights.*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו  
וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe Who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this day.*



### Blessing for taking the Arba Minim (four species)

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו  
במצותיו, וצונו על נטילת לולב.

**When taking the Arba Minim (four species) for the first time.**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו  
והגיענו לזמן הזה.

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us concerning the taking of the the Lulav.*

**When taking the Arba Minim (four species) for the first time.**

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe Who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this day.*

### Kiddush

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.  
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל עם  
ורוממנו מכל לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו. ותתן לנו יי אלהינו  
באהבה מועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון, את יום חג  
הסוכות הזה, זמן שמחתנו מקרא קדש, זכר ליציאת מצרים. כי  
בנו בחרת ואתנו קדשת מכל העמים, ומועדי קדשך בשמחה  
ובששון הנחלתנו. ברוך אתה יי מקדש ישראל והזמנים.  
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו  
לזמן הזה.

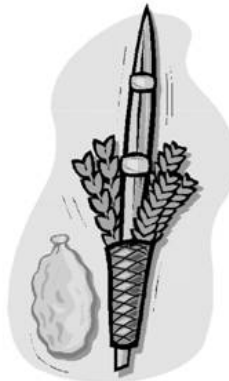
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו  
לישב בסוכה.

*Blessed are You, God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has chosen us from every people, exalted us above every tongue, and sanctified us with His commandments. And You gave us, Lord, our God, with love, appointed festivals, for gladness, festivals and times for joy, this day of the Festival of Sukkot, the season of our gladness, it is for us a holy convocation, a memorial of the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and You have sanctified us above all the peoples and Your holy Festivals in gladness and in joy have You granted us as a heritage. Blessed are You, God, Who sanctifies Israel and the festive seasons.*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe Who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this day.*

*Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has taught us the way of holiness through the Mitzvot and given us the Mitzvah to dwell in the Sukkah.*



## Sukkot Symbols

### The Sukkah

The word Sukkah means, "booth".

It is a temporary shelter that is to remind us of the shelters used by the Jews during the time of the traveling in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt.

#### Some rules for building a Sukkah -

A Sukkah must be under 20 Amot (30-40 feet) and taller than 10 Tefachim (30-40 inches).

A Sukkah must have at least three walls.

When building your Sukkah, it should be built for that year's Sukkot (it is a temporary structure).

A Sukkah should not be built under a tree.

One should see more shade than sunlight through the Shchach (the covering made by leaves, often palm fronds or bamboo sticks).

One should be able to see the stars through the Schach.

Fourteen meals are supposed to be eaten in the Sukkah.

Many have a custom to sleep in the Sukkah.



### The Lulav

The Lulav is the Palm branch that is part of the four species we shake on Sukkot.

*According to different sources each species represents a different type of Jew or a different body part.*

The Lulav comes from a palm tree which gives us dates that have a good taste but no smell. This represents the Jew who knows Torah but does not do Mitzvot.

The part of the body that it resembles is the spine.

### The Four Species

#### The Etrog

The Etrog is a citron. It is similar to a large lemon in size, shape and color. It has a bitter taste. At the end of the Etrog is the Pitom. If the Pitom falls off, the Etrog is no longer Kosher (it no longer is valid for the service of shaking the four species).

The Etrog has a strong taste and smell. It represents the Jew who studies Torah and does Mitzvot.

The part of the body that it resembles is the heart.



### The Hadas

The Hadas is the myrtle. The Hadas are small leaves on three branches. Many Hadas branches have berries on them that are picked off prior to being sold. If your Hadas has berries that outnumber the leaves, the berries can be picked off, except during Yom Tov (the first two days of Sukkot).

The Hadas has a pleasant smell but has no taste. It represents a Jew who does Mitzvot but does not know Torah.

The body part that a Hadas leaf resembles is an eye.



### The Aravah

The Aravah is the willow. The Aravah branches are long and thin leaves on two branches. The Aravah branches are found near a brook (as opposed to other willow branches, which may be ragged looking). The Aravah has neither a taste or a smell. It represents a Jew who does no Mitzvot and knows no Torah.

The part of the body that Aravah resemble: are lips.



### Putting it all together

Not until we put all four species together do we fulfill the Mitzvah. We hold them tightly together to signify that we need all types of Jews in order to have a community and that we need to use our entire body to serve God. If one of the pieces is missing, we have not fulfilled the Mitzvah, our community and our body are incomplete.

## **Ushpizin (Special guests invited into our Sukkah)**

Ushpizin is the Aramaic word for guests. There are seven guests invited into our Sukkah during Sukkot - one each night, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David. According to Jewish mysticism, each guest has a different purpose (for more visit [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com)), Abraham represents love and kindness; Isaac represents restraint and personal strength; Jacob represents beauty and truth; Moses represents eternity and dominance through Torah; Aaron represents empathy and receptivity to divine splendor; Joseph represents holiness and the spiritual foundation; David represents the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Many have a tradition each night to also invite Ushpizot (female guests) into their Sukkah. Seven Biblical women have been recorded as prophetesses, Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Hulda, Esther. Some traditions are to invite seven other Biblical women Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Dinah, Tamar, or Ruth. Others invite into their Sukkot women of historical significance such as Dona Gracia de Nasi, Emma Lazarus, and Hannah Szenesh.

*It is special when inviting each of the guests to explain the significance of their lives and why they are honored as guests in our Sukkah.*