

BS"D



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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SUCCOS - 5765

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Covenant & Conversation  
Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS  
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew  
Congregations of the British Commonwealth  
Emor [from 5763]

IN ITS ACCOUNT OF THE FESTIVALS OF  
THE JEWISH YEAR, [parshat Emor] contains

the following statement:

You shall dwell in thatched huts (sukkot) for seven days. Everyone included in Israel must live in such thatched huts. This is so that future generations will know that I caused the Israelites to live in sukkot when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your G-d. 1

What precisely this means was the subject of disagreement between two great teachers of the Mishnaic era, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva. According to the Talmud Bavli (Sukkah 11a) 2, Rabbi Eliezer holds that the reference is to the clouds of glory that accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse is to be understood literally (sukkot mammash). It means "huts" - no more, no less.

A similar difference of opinion exists between the great medieval Jewish commentators. Rashi and Ramban favour the "clouds of glory" interpretation. Ramban cites as proof the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the end of days:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter [sukkah] and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain. (Isaiah 4: 5-6) 3

Here the word sukka clearly refers not to a natural but to a miraculous protection.

Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, however, favour the literal interpretation. Rashbam explains as follows: the festival of Sukkot, when the harvest was complete and the people were surrounded by the blessings of the land, was the time to remind them of how they came to be there. The Israelites would relive the wilderness years during which they had no permanent home. They would then feel a sense of gratitude to G-d for bringing them to the land. Rashbam's proof-text is Moses' speech in Devarim 8:

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your G-d for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your G-d . . . Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your G-d,

who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery . . . You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your G-d, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, confirming his covenant which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today. (8: 10-18) 4

According to Rashbam, Sukkot (like Pesach) is a reminder of the humble origins of the Jewish people, a powerful antidote to the risks of affluence. That is one of the overarching themes of Moses' speeches in the book of Devarim and a mark of his greatness as a leader. The real challenge to the Jewish people, he warned, was not the dangers they faced in the wilderness, but the opposite, the sense of wellbeing and security they would have once they settled the land. The irony - and it has happened many times in the history of nations - is that people remember G-d in times of distress but forget him in times of plenty. That is when cultures become decadent and begin to decline.

A QUESTION, however, remains. According to the view that sukkot is to be understood literally, what miracle does the festival of Sukkot represent? Pesach celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt with signs and wonders. Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the only time in history when an entire people experienced an unmediated revelation of G-d. On the "clouds of glory" interpretation, Sukkot fits this scheme. It recalls the miracles in the wilderness, the forty years during which they ate manna from heaven, drank water from a rock, and were led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (In 1776, Thomas Jefferson chose this image as his design for the Great Seal of the United States). But on the view that the sukka is not a symbol but a fact - a hut, a booth, nothing more - what miracle does it represent? There is nothing exceptional in living in a portable home if you are a nomadic group living in the Sinai desert. It is what Bedouin do to this day. Where then is the miracle?

A surprising and lovely answer is given by the prophet Jeremiah:  
Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"I remember the devotion of your youth,  
how, as a bride, you loved me  
and followed me through the desert,  
through a land not sown. (2:2) 5

Throughout Tenakh, most of the references to the wilderness years focus on the graciousness of G-d and the ingratitude of the people: their quarrels and complaints, their constant inconstancy. Jeremiah does the opposite. To be sure, there were bad things about those years, but against them stands the simple fact that the Israelites had the faith and courage to embark on a journey through an unknown land, fraught with danger, and sustained only by their trust in G-d. They were like Sarah who accompanied Abraham on his journey, leaving "his land, birthplace and father's house" behind. They were like Tziporah who went with Moses on his risk-laden mission to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. There is a faith that is like love; there is a love that calls for faith. That is what the Israelites showed in leaving a land where they had lived for 210 years and travelling out into the desert, "a land not sown", not knowing what would befall them on the way, but trusting in G-d to bring them to their destination.

Perhaps it took Rabbi Akiva, the great lover of Israel, to see that what was truly remarkable about the wilderness years was not that the Israelites were surrounded by the clouds of glory but that they were an entire nation without a home or houses; they were like nomads without a place of refuge. Exposed to the elements, at risk from any surprise attack, they none the less continued on their journey in the faith that G-d would not desert them.

To a remarkable degree Sukkot came to symbolise not just the forty years in the wilderness but also two thousand years of exile. Following the destruction of the second Temple, Jews were scattered throughout the world. Almost nowhere did they have rights. Nowhere could they consider themselves at home. Wherever they were, they were there on

sufferance, dependent on a ruler's whim. At any moment without forewarning they could be expelled, as they were from England in 1290, from Vienna in 1421, Cologne, 1424, Bavaria 1442, Perugia, Vicenza, Parma and Milan in the 1480s, and most famously from Spain in 1492. These expulsions gave rise to the Christian myth of "the wandering Jew" - conveniently ignoring the fact that it was Christians who imposed this fate on them. Yet even they were often awestruck at the fact that despite everything Jews did not give up their faith when (in Judah Halevi's phrase) "with a word lightly spoken" they could have converted to the dominant faith and put an end to their sufferings.

Sukkot is the festival of a people for whom, for twenty centuries, every house was a mere temporary dwelling, every stop no more than a pause in a long journey. I find it deeply moving that Jewish tradition called this time zeman simchatenu, "the season of our joy". That, surely, is the greatness of the Jewish spirit that, with no protection other than their faith in G-d, Jews were able to celebrate in the midst of suffering and affirm life in the full knowledge of its risk and uncertainty. That is the faith of a remarkable nation.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once explained why the festival of Nissan has two names, Pesach and Chag haMatzot. The name Pesach represents the greatness of G-d who "passed over" the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The name Chag haMatzot represents the greatness of the Israelites who were willing to follow G-d into the wilderness without provisions. In the Torah, G-d calls the festival Chag haMatzot in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, however, called it Pesach to sing the praise of G-d. That, it seems, is the argument between R. Eliezer and R. Akiva about Sukkot. According to R. Eliezer, it represents G-d's miracle, the clouds of glory. According to R. Akiva, however, it represents the miracle of Israel - their willingness to continue the long journey to freedom, vulnerable and at great risk, led only by the call of G-d.

Why then, according to Rabbi Akiva, is Sukkot celebrated at harvest time? The answer is in the very next verse of the prophecy of Jeremiah. After speaking of "the devotion of your youth, how, as a bride, you loved me," the prophet adds:

Israel is holy to G-d,

The first fruit of His harvest. (Jeremiah 2: 3) 6

Just as, during Tishri, the Israelites celebrated their harvest, so G-d celebrates His - a people who, whatever else their failings, have stayed loyal to heaven's call for longer, and through a more arduous set of journeys, than any other people on earth.



[http://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2003/rsch\\_ysheini.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2003/rsch_ysheini.html)

Torahweb.org [from 18 months ago]

RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER

REGARDING THE SECOND DAY YOM TOV FOR VISITORS IN ERETZ YISROEL

In Eretz Yisroel the yomim tovim are observed for only one day as proscribed by the Torah. Outside of Eretz Yisroel the rabbis of the Talmud here instituted the second day yom tov, notwithstanding the fact that we already have a fixed calendar, and there is no longer any doubt regarding the correct identity of the day of yom tov [1].

For one from chutz laaretz who is only visiting Eretz Yisroel for yom tov it is well known that there is a difference of opinion among the poskim as to how many days of yom tov one must observe. The majority opinion always was that visitors observe two days [2]. Even if one always visits Eretz Yisroel for Pesach and Succos, but not for Shavuos, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach pointed out, based on the gemara, that one must observe two days of yom tov even for Pesach and Succos. The minority view of the Chochom Tzvi (18th century) was that even the visitors in Eretz Yisroel only observe one day. In recent years, this opinion of the Chochom Tzvi has gained more popularity among the poskim [3].

Then there are compromise opinions. Many observe what has come to be known as "a day and a half." They basically follow the Chochom Tzvi: davening tefillat chol on the second day, putting on tefillin with a bracha, but by way of compromise, they do not do any melacha on the second day to be choshesh for the other opinions. This is what Rav Soloveichik used to advise talmidim. He mentioned that his family tradition was that basically the Chochom Tzvi's opinion was more correct. (On some occasions he would even suggest that the idea of observing issur melacha on the second day might not merely be by way of compromise, but possibly based on pure halacha).[4]

Others have adopted an opposite style of compromise which some humorously refer to as "two and a half days." They follow what was always the majority opinion and observe two days of yom tov, abstaining from melacha on the second day and davening tefillat yom tov including the reciting of kiddush and observing the second seder; but at the same time being choshesh for the opposing view and putting on tefillin the second day without a bracha and listening to havdalah in shul at the end of the first day. (On the several rare occasions that I was visiting in Eretz Yisroel for yom tov this was indeed my personal practice and that of my family.) The rationale behind this practice is not to always be on the lookout for every possible chumra under the sun as some unlearned individuals have incorrectly understood; but rather to follow the classical majority view that visitors must observe two days and at the same time be tolerant enough to show respect for the minority view [5].

If one is in the practice of always following the views of Rav Soloveitchik, then of course this issue should be no exception and one should observe the "one and a half" days. But, in all honesty there are not many people who actually follow all of the Rav's opinions - considering that he had many many unconventional chumros! If one is a "chochom shehigia lehoraah", then he is entitled and indeed obligated to research each and every halachic issue and to follow his own personal view on any matter. But, if one is not higia lehoraah (as the overwhelming majority of people who learned in yeshiva would be classified) then one may not pick and chose arbitrarily from amongst the various opinions of the poskim. One must either always follow one posek (as the mishna in Avos tells us) or follow the consensus from among the group of poskim he looks up to as his rebeim (because of the fact that that group left an impression on him).

Before this past Pesach I was consulted regarding two interesting cases. In the first case, a family was visiting Eretz Yisroel for yom tov. The daughter, a student at Columbia, had previously studied in one of the seminaries in Eretz Yisroel after high school, and was taught there - in accordance with the classical traditional view - that one visiting Eretz Yisroel must observe two days of yom tov. Just a few months before Pesach the father had asked his local Orthodox musmach from down the block, to whom he asks all of his shailas as well, (who happens not to be a practicing pulpit rabbi) and was told that this family should only observe one day of yom tov. The question posed was, does it make sense that half of the family observe one day yom tov and the other half two days. My thoughts on the matter were as follows: the Talmud records that there were many disputes between Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai. Whoever was a follower of Beis Shammai had to abide by their opinions, and whoever was a follower of Beis Hillel had to abide by their opinions. But this is only provided they are together with their own group. If one from Beis Hillel was with a group of followers of Beis Shammai, he was not allowed to follow the views of Beis Hillel, as this would be a violation of lo tsgodedu, causing it to appear in a very noticeable fashion as if the Torah has been split into two Torahs! [6] Since the family was spending the yom tov together, and the majority of the members of the family had accepted the psak of their local rabbi, even the daughter should follow that opinion on this occasion, and only keep one day. On some other occasion, if the daughter should happen to visit

Eretz Yisroel again for a yom tov without the rest of the family, she ought to follow the psak of her rabbi.

The second case came two weeks later, when I was consulted by a rabbi who was going to Eretz Yisroel for yom tov with a group of baalei batim from his shul. They were all going to spend the yom tov together. The majority of his group was clearly going to observe only one day of yom tov, no matter what the rabbi would tell them. They knew that such an opinion is floating about, and were going to follow it this yom tov, as they had already done in the past. The question was whether it makes sense for some of the group to observe two days yom tov, when the majority of the group was not going to. Here again I thought that since the majority of the group planned to follow the one view, that it was not proper for the minority to follow the opposing view. In the event that the minority of the group should visit Eretz Yisroel on another occasion for a yom tov, they should ask again what to do. The reason for this psak was that the minority ought to follow the practice of the majority provided that the majority is following a valid halachik opinion.

Of course, it is self understood that in both cases, if the family (or the group of baalei batim) turns out to be staying in a hotel where the majority of the guests will be observing the second day of yom tov, then that majority ought to be followed.

[1] Gemara Beitzta (4b)

[2] See Yom Tov Sheni Khilchaso (Fried, 1998) pg. 48, and pg. 215 (quoting Rav Auerbach).

[3] Rav A.Y. Hakohen Kook used to follow this view (see Sifrei Rav Neirah)

[4] See Nefesh Horav, pg. 84-85

[5] For a discussion of the halachik significance of the concept of "eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim Chayim" see Be'ikvei Hatzohm, pg. 259

[6] See Yevamos (13b - 14a), and Beitzta (20a) quoting a Tosefta Chagiga

they remained with us throughout our stay in the desert. After the Cheit HaEigel, the Clouds of Glory left as a punishment for this grave sin. Only after Klal Yisrael started work on the construction the Mishkan which served as an atonement for this sin, did the clouds return. This occurred on the fifteenth of Tishrei, exactly the date of Sukkot, soon after Yom Kippur when Moshe descended with the second Luchot and informed the Jews of the commandment to build the Mishkan.

Bina La'Ittim (quoted in Tal'lei Orot) by R. Azaria Figo offers a novel explanation. Hashem's involvement in the world manifests itself in two ways: first, through the natural order, the fixed rules of creation; second, through, divine providence overriding the regular rules of nature. The goal of creation was that mankind, through their connecting to G-d by fulfilling His Will, would merit the second, transcendent level of Divine intervention in the world. This was to be realized through B'nei Yisrael who committed to fulfilling Hashem's mission for the world as embodied in His Torah. Malbim (B'raishis) explains the concept of the Avot being the "Divine Chariot" as meaning that they were the ones who caused this second, more intense level of Divine intervention to occur in the world, hence fulfilling the Goal of Creation.

The ancient Egyptians were steeped in the belief of the power and absolute supremacy of the "ma'arechet hakochavim," the order of the constellations, or the natural order. Hence, Pharaoh warns Moshe based on the statements of his astrologers that "evil" is "in the stars" for the Jewish people in the desert (Bo 10:10). Through His miraculous overriding of the laws of nature both in Mitzrayim and subsequently by protecting the Jewish people in the desert by sending supernatural Divine Clouds of Glory to shield K'lal Yisrael, Hashem indicated that He intervenes in Nature, shattering the myth of the supreme rule of "Natural Law" and underscoring His intense intervention in the world for the purpose of guiding the Destiny of His beloved people, descendants of the Patriarchs who originally merited this level of Divine intervention. It is for this reason that Sukkot, which commemorates this manifestation of Divine intervention, occurs in Tishrei, the month of the creation of the world, thus reminding us that the Creator of the natural order, overrides it at will for those who cleave to Him. (See also "Defying Human Nature and Divine Miracles" (TorahWeb.org, Parshas Vayeishev, 2001).)

In the Hallel which we joyfully recite throughout the entire holiday, we state: "Rom 'al kol goyim Hashem. Mi Kashem 'Elokeinu haMagbihi lashaves, haMashpili lir'os bashamayim uva'aretz. M'kimi mei'afar dal..." (Tehillim 113:4-6) "G-d is exalted above all of the Nations. Who is like our G-d who dwells on High, but who lowers Himself to see in the heavens and the earth? Who raises up the downtrodden from the dust..." Malbim interprets this series of p'sukim in a manner which highlights the above-mentioned theme. For the "Nations of the World," G-d is the Creator alone, exalted in His Majesty, not concerned with the actions of mankind. The Jewish people, by contrast, recognize "our G-d" as One who, despite His exaltedness, interestedly observes and intervenes in the affairs of mankind guiding them toward their Destiny. (Also see Lonely Man of Faith (Chapter II), by Rav J. B. Soloveitchik zt"l.)

May the holiday of Sukkot serve as an impetus for all of us to recommit ourselves to Hakadosh Baruch Hu's mission for us in the world and thereby merit His constant, miraculous protection.

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RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Yom Sheni, the twelfth day of the seventh month of the year [3]316 Monday, 12 Tishrei 5765 – September 27, 2004 Yesterday we discussed the famous debate between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer (Masekhet Sukka 11b) concerning the mitzva of sukka. The Torah (Vayikra 23:43)



From: TorahWeb.org [torahweb@torahweb.org]  
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RABBI YAAKOV HABER

CHAG HASUKKOS: THE TISHREI CONNECTION

Tur (O.C. 625) raises a famous question concerning the commandment to celebrate the festival of Sukkos in the Jewish month of Tishrei. If, as the Torah indicates (Emor 24:43), the mitzva of dwelling in a sukka reminds us of the fact that Hashem -- both miraculously through Clouds of Glory (the position of R. Eliezer, Sukka 11b) and through natural means via man-made actual huts in a previously uninhabited desert (R. Akiva, ibid.) -- protected us in the Midbar, the festival should take place in Nissan, the month of the Exodus when Bnei Yisrael first entered the Midbar and received this protection.

Ibn Ezra (ibid.) answers that the Bnei Yisrael only found it necessary to construct actual huts or sukkot from Tishrei onward to protect themselves from the cold. The 'Ananei HaKavod provided shelter from the sun during the summer months.

Tur himself suggests that Hashem delayed the celebration from the spring to the fall so that our dwelling in the sukkot should be noticeable as a mitzva performance in the not always pleasant fall weather and not be interpreted as a relaxing stay outdoors in the balmy spring weather unrelated to Divine service.

The Vilna Gaon offers an alternative explanation. Since the sukkot commemorate the 'Ananei Hakavod, we celebrate the date that

writes that this mitzva commemorates the “sukkot” in which Benei Yisrael dwelled during their travels in the wilderness. Rabbi Eliezer interprets “sukkot” here as referring to the ananei ha-kavod – the supernatural, protective clouds that surrounded Benei Yisrael, whereas Rabbi Akiva maintains the literal translation of the word “sukkot,” as “huts.” As we saw, most writers follow the novel interpretation of Rabbi Eliezer, rather than the simple translation. Why?

Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi, in his work on Rashi’s commentary, suggests that Rabbi Eliezer’s position becomes far more compelling in light of a careful reading of the verse’s phraseology. The Torah writes, “... in order that future generations may know that I had the Israelites live in ‘sukkot’ when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.” The verse does not say that Benei Yisrael “lived in sukkot,” but rather describes that the Almighty “had them live” (“hoshavti”) in sukkot. If “sukkot” refers to actual huts, then why does the Torah focus on G-d’s role in Benei Yisrael’s residence in the sukkot? This syntax, Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi argues, far better accommodates Rabbi Eliezer’s view, that we deal here with the ananei ha-kavod, which were clearly the work of G-d, rather than man.

The Levush (to O.C. 625) points to a different advantage of Rabbi Eliezer’s position. He argues that the Torah would not establish a festival to commemorate Benei Yisrael’s residence in physical huts during their sojourn in the wilderness. What is so miraculous about the construction of and residence in actual sukkot? If the Torah has us celebrate a holiday to commemorate “sukkot,” it stands to reason that it refers to “sukkot” of a miraculous nature. This argument prompted the Levush to accept Rabbi Eliezer’s position.

How would Rabbi Akiva respond to these challenges against his position?

Rabbi Eliezer David of Charna, in his “Keren Le-David,” addresses the first issue, the meaning of the word “hoshavti” according to Rabbi Akiva, and suggests the following explanation. In Rabbi Akiva’s view, the huts of the wilderness are not the primary focus of the mitzva of sukka. Rather, this mitzva relates to the autumn season, the period of the culmination of the “asif” – the gathering of the harvested produce. At this point in the agricultural cycle, when the farmer has filled his warehouse and stored plenty of grain for the winter, he is likely to feel a sense of self-sufficiency and independence. A successful yield might lead one to forget his dependence on the Almighty and take full credit for his production.

The Torah therefore bids us to leave the security of our homes and move into the crude accommodations of the sukka. There we will – hopefully – be reminded of our constant need for divine protection and complete dependence on G-d’s grace. It is to this end that the Torah has us remember our ancestors’ experiences in the wilderness. Before Benei Yisrael entered the “land flowing with milk and honey,” where they would cultivate the land and develop a thriving agrarian infrastructure, G-d “had them live in booths.” He first brought them into the wilderness where they could be no mistaking G-d’s role in their sustenance and very existence. This awareness had to be established before Benei Yisrael could settle the Land of Israel and reap the fruits of their own labors. Appropriately, as we leave our homes and move into the sukka, we must remember the message of the “booths” of the wilderness, the importance of first inculcating the awareness of our need for divine protection, before we derive benefit from our own efforts.

This, the “Keren Le-David” suggests, explains the verse’s phraseology according to Rabbi Akiva. We must remember that G-d forced our ancestors to experience life in “sukkot,” in temporary, flimsy structures, before allowing them to develop a permanent infrastructure in the land, where G-d’s role in sustaining the nation is less evident, but no less indispensable.

This also resolves the issue raised by the Levush. The Levush had asked why the Torah would establish a holiday to commemorate the

construction of huts in the desert. In light of the approach set forth by the “Keren Le-David,” the answer becomes abundantly clear. We commemorate these “huts” in order to draw the parallel to our current situation. Just as Benei Yisrael had to live in the insecure environment of sukkot before settling the land, so must we spend seven days in our sukkot so that we are reminded of our dependence on the Almighty even when we return to the comfort and security of our permanent homes.

(The crux of the Keren Le-David’s approach appears as well in the Malbim’s commentary to this verse in Sefer Vayikra. See also Ha’amek Davar, Vayikra 23:42.)

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RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Yom Revi’i, the fourteenth day of the seventh month of the year [3]316 Erev Sukkot - Wednesday, 14 Tishrei 5764 – September 29, 2004

We have devoted the last several editions of S.A.L.T. to the famous dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva (in Masekhet Sukka 11b) regarding the mitzva of sukka, whether it commemorates physical structures or spiritual “ananei ha-kavod” (clouds of glory). Several writers have claimed that in truth, both views are correct. Today we will present three such approaches to reconcile these two opinions.

The Netziv, in his commentary to Sefer Vayikra (23:43), suggests that Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva refer to two distinct themes of the festival of Sukkot. On the one hand, as we discussed two days ago, Sukkot serves as a reminder of our dependence on G-d’s mercy and sustenance. We therefore recall how Benei Yisrael traveled through the wilderness living in insecure huts, sustained purely by the Almighty’s grace. In this respect, we commemorate “sukkot mamash,” the actual huts used by Benei Yisrael in the desert, which are representative of the general, inhospitable environment in which they lived and miraculously survived for forty years. But Sukkot features another aspect, as well, to which Rabbi Eliezer refers. Earlier this week we cited the comment in the Midrash comparing the judgment of Yom Kippur to a war waged between us and those who wish to destroy us and take our place as G-d’s people. On Sukkot, the Midrash claims, we march with our lulavim just as triumphant armies would parade with tall branches to celebrate their victory. The Netziv writes that in the wilderness, too, Benei Yisrael traveled and encamped in military formation, as if they accompanied the Almighty as His army. On Sukkot, when we conduct our “victory parade” celebrating our spiritual triumph, we recall our proud march through the wilderness accompanying our King. We therefore commemorate the clouds of glory, which enveloped and characterized the “military camp” formed by Benei Yisrael as they traveled and encamped in the desert.

Later in his commentary (Bamidbar 10:34), the Netziv suggests a different approach to reconcile the seemingly conflicting views of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. When Benei Yisrael encamped, he writes, they were responsible for their own shelter and thus constructed manmade huts. When they traveled, however, they exposed themselves to the elements and thus depended upon G-d’s supernatural protection, which came in the form of the clouds of glory. In this vein he explains the verse describing Benei Yisrael’s embarkation from Sinai: “And the Lord’s cloud kept above them by day, as they moved on from camp.” The verse appears to emphasize that G-d’s cloud hovered above the nation only “as they moved on from camp.” The Netziv explained that the ananei ha-kavod appeared only when Benei Yisrael traveled, but now when they encamped.

The Chayei Adam, in his introductory remarks to the laws of Sukkot, reconciles the two views differently. Interestingly enough, he notes that the Torah employs two different spellings of the word “sukkot” in presenting this mitzva (in Vayikra 23:42-3): once with the letter “vav,” and once without the letter “vav.” The different spellings, he suggests, allude to two different types of sukkot – actual huts, and ananei ha-

kavod. For most of Benei Yisrael's sojourn in the wilderness, he claims, they were protected supernaturally by G-d's clouds of glory. When, however, they waged war against the armies of Sichon and Og and besieged these kingdoms' cities, they constructed and lived in actual huts. The reason, perhaps, is that this battle against Sichon and Og marked the initial stage of the conquest of Eretz Yisrael, which was conducted through purely natural means (with the important exception of the battle of Yericho, which involved an overt miracle). Therefore, during this battle, Benei Yisrael had to leave the miraculous setting of the ananei ha-kavod and begin protecting themselves through their own efforts and natural means.

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From: Aish.com [newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: September 28, 2004  
Subject: Sukkot - Dwelling in the Sukkah: Advanced  
[http://www.aish.com/sukkotsukkah/sukkotsukkahdefault/Dwelling\\_in\\_the\\_Sukkah\\_-\\_Advanced.asp](http://www.aish.com/sukkotsukkah/sukkotsukkahdefault/Dwelling_in_the_Sukkah_-_Advanced.asp)  
DWELLING IN THE SUKKAH  
BY RABBI ELOZOR BARCLAY AND RABBI YITZCHOK JAEGER  
Detailed guidelines for when to eat, sleep and bless in the sukkah.

1. Why are we commanded to sit in a Sukkah?

The Torah says "You shall dwell in booths for seven days, every citizen of Israel shall dwell in booths -- in order that your generations shall know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt (Leviticus 23:42-43).

When the Jewish people left Egypt and traveled into the wilderness they numbered about 3 million people. The wilderness was a place of great desolation inhabited by deadly snakes and serpents, and there was no protection from the burning heat of the sun. G-d therefore miraculously protected His chosen nation by surrounding them with seven clouds of glory -- four around the sides, one above them, one below them like a carpet and one to lead the way. We are commanded to sit in a Sukkah to remember this wonderful and miraculous act of kindness.

2. Why is this mitzvah performed in the month of Tishrei?

Although the Jewish people left Egypt in the month of Nissan and experienced the protection of G-d's clouds of glory immediately, nevertheless the mitzvah of Sukkah was postponed until Tishrei. Among the many reasons given are:

Nissan marks the beginning of spring when the weather becomes warmer, and people naturally leave their houses to sit outdoors. Tishrei marks the beginning of fall when the weather becomes colder and people naturally return to the shelter of their homes and no longer sit outdoors. It is G-d's wish that we sit in a Sukkah in Tishrei to demonstrate that we do so solely to fulfill his commandment and not for our own convenience.

The clouds of glory, which initially accompanied the Jewish people in the month of Nissan, were later removed when the golden calf was made. They returned permanently in the month of Tishrei when the construction of the tabernacle began, remaining with them for the entire forty years in the wilderness.

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, G-d sits in judgment and decrees the fate of all mankind. In case some people were sentenced to be exiled from their homes, we build a Sukkah and leave our houses.

3. How much time should one spend in the Sukkah?

The Sages say, "For the entire seven days, a person should consider the Sukkah to be his permanent home and his house to be a temporary place." Therefore, a person should eat, sleep and spend his time in the Sukkah in the same way that he does in the house during the year. He fulfills a Torah commandment every single moment that he spends in the Sukkah, both day and night.

4. Is it forbidden to leave the Sukkah unnecessarily?

A person should live in the Sukkah in the same manner that he lives at home during the year. Just as he naturally leaves his home to do certain activities and attend to various needs, so too may he leave the Sukkah when the occasion demands it. Nevertheless, it is praiseworthy to maximize the amount of time spent in the Sukkah since every moment brings eternal reward. If a person would be promised a vast sum of money for remaining in his house, would he not stay there as long as possible? Certainly he should stay in the Sukkah where the reward is immeasurable! In certain circumstances, a person should leave the Sukkah (e.g. rain, sickness).

5. When is one obligated to be in the Sukkah?

On three occasions:

a.. the first night of Sukkot    b.. when eating a meal    c.. when sleeping

6. Where should a woman kindle the Shabbat and Yom Tov lights?

She should kindle them in the Sukkah, since the main mitzvah is to enjoy the lights during the meal. However, if there is a concern that they may be extinguished by the wind, or they may be a fire risk, she should kindle them in the house. In this case, they should be placed near a window that faces the Sukkah, if this is possible.

7. Is one obligated to eat everything inside the Sukkah?

Strictly speaking, only meals must be eaten in the Sukkah, but not snacks or drinks. However, it is praiseworthy to eat and drink everything inside the Sukkah.

A meal is defined as eating a piece of bread larger than a kebeitza (about 58 cc). According to some opinions, a piece of bread the size of a kezayit (about 29 cc) when accompanied by other foods constitutes a meal.

If one eats an entire meal without bread, then strictly speaking, he is not required to eat in the Sukkah, but it is strongly recommended to do so.

Regarding other grain foods (e.g. cake, crackers), there are different opinions, but the prevalent custom is to be strict and to eat it only in the Sukkah, as is done with bread. (In this context, rice is not regarded as a grain food.)

8. May one eat or drink outside the Sukkah during a meal?

If a person is eating a meal in the Sukkah, everything he eats is considered to be part of the meal. Therefore, he is forbidden to have any food or drink outside the Sukkah. He must be particularly careful to remember this when going to and from the house during the meal.

9. How is the first night different from the rest of Sukkot?

By a comparison of verses, we deduce that the mitzvah of eating in the Sukkah on the first night of Sukkot is parallel to the mitzvah of eating matzah on the first night of Passover. One should preferably a piece of bread 100cc in size. Therefore, on the first night of Sukkot, one is obligated by the Torah to eat in the Sukkah. (As well, this applies rabbinically on the second night in the diaspora, though one need only eat 58cc.)

The bread must be eaten within two minutes if possible, or at least four minutes. Special care should be taken not to speak until the piece has been eaten.

During the rest of Sukkot, one is obligated to eat in the Sukkah only if he wants to have a meal.

10. Is one obligated to sleep in the Sukkah?

During the week of Sukkot, the Sukkah is to be considered as a person's home. Since the primary activities of the home are eating and sleeping, a man is obligated to sleep in the Sukkah. According to some opinions, sleeping in the Sukkah is even more important than eating there.

Some are lenient and sleep in the house because:

a.. In many countries, the weather is cold at this time of year, and sleeping in the Sukkah would cause much discomfort. (However, it is praiseworthy to organize a way to heat the Sukkah at night in order to be able to perform this important mitzvah.)

b.. Women do not usually sleep in the Sukkah, and if a married man would sleep in the Sukkah leaving his wife alone in the house, this may cause him distress.

Whoever is meticulous to sleep in the Sukkah and fulfill the mitzvah properly will merit seeing the Divine Presence.

11. What if a person is nevertheless afraid to sleep in the Sukkah?

According to most opinions, a Sukkah that is suitable only for eating but not for sleeping is invalid. Since a Sukkah is intended to be a person's home, it must be suitable for both eating and sleeping. Therefore, every effort should be made to build the Sukkah in a location that is safe enough for sleeping.

If a person lives in a dangerous area and sleeping in the Sukkah is an obvious danger, he should act sensibly and not rely upon miracles.

12. May one sleep in the Sukkah with his legs outside the Sukkah (or in an invalid section of the Sukkah)?

If his head and most of his body are inside the Sukkah, he fulfills the mitzvah, and he is obligated to sleep in the Sukkah in that manner.

13. May one sleep underneath a table in the Sukkah?

Ideally, one should eat and sleep in the Sukkah with nothing intervening between him and the s'chach. However, if necessary, it is permitted to sleep under a standard table (since it is less than 80cm high).

Similarly, one may sleep in the lower bed of a bunk bed, if the space between the beds is less than 80cm. This is true even if the upper bed is more than this distance from the ground, and even if someone is sleeping in the upper bed.

14. May one take a short nap outside the Sukkah?

No, this is forbidden. Although a person may eat a snack outside the Sukkah, he may not sleep even for a few moments outside the Sukkah. The reason is that sometimes even a short nap is satisfying and beneficial to a person and is equivalent to a proper sleep.

Although initially it may have been forbidden for one to doze outside the Sukkah, nevertheless he needn't be awakened by others since he is now exempt and it is a distress to be awakened and moved.

15. Is the blessing "laishev b'Sukah" always recited when eating in the Sukkah?

No. It is usually recited only when eating a piece of bread larger than 100cc.

If one is eating other grain foods as a meal, he should recite the blessing. In such a case, it is preferable to remain a while in the Sukkah and not leave immediately after eating, so that the blessing can also apply to the continued sitting in the Sukkah.

16. Is the blessing recited when sleeping or when just sitting in the Sukkah?

According to the widely accepted custom, the blessing is recited only when eating bread or grains. Although a person fulfills a Torah mitzvah every moment that he is inside the Sukkah, the blessing was ordained to be recited only when doing a significant action. Eating was chosen as the most significant activity, and all other activities such as sitting and sleeping are included in the blessing that is recited when eating.

Some have the custom to recite the blessing every time they enter the Sukkah (after a significant break) even if they do not intend to eat bread or grains. Ideally, a person should eat some grains in order to recite the blessing.

17. What if one does not intend to eat immediately?

Ideally, one should eat some grains immediately in order to recite the blessing for the Sukkah as soon as possible. If he does not wish to do so, he should postpone reciting the blessing for the Sukkah until he is ready to eat. The blessing will then apply retroactively to the entire time that he has been sitting in the Sukkah.

If a person forgot to say the blessing and began a meal, he should recite the blessing as soon as he remembers and eat some more. If one has already said Grace After Meals, he should say the Sukkah blessing if he still intends to remain a while in the Sukkah.

18. Does the blessing last all day?

If a person remains in the Sukkah all day or leaves for a short break, he does not repeat the blessing. This is true even if he eats another meal.

If he leaves for a significant break, he should repeat the blessing the next time he eats bread or mezonos. A significant break includes:

a.. to pray Shacharit    b.. to pray mincha and ma'ariv both    c.. to leave for two hours    d.. to leave due to heavy rain

19. What if one intended to leave for two hours but in fact returned sooner?

Since he took his mind off the Sukkah, he must make a new blessing when eating bread or mezonos. This is true even if he changed his mind and returned immediately.

20. If one goes to a different Sukkah, does he recite a new blessing?

The above rules are the same whether he returns to the original Sukkah or goes to another Sukkah. This is true even if the second Sukkah belongs to someone else, and even if he did not have the second Sukkah in mind when he made the original blessing. This is because the mitzvah is the same in whichever Sukkah one sits, and walking to another Sukkah is not considered to be an interruption. However, since some opinions disagree with this analysis, it is preferable to have the second Sukkah in mind when making the original blessing.

21. Do women recite the blessing?

According to the Ashkenazic custom, women recite the blessing in the same situations that men do.

22. Is a person obligated to eat in the Sukkah when it is raining?

If it is raining heavily, he is not obligated to eat there (except on the first night). Heavy rain is defined as the rain is coming through the s'chach into the Sukkah to the extent that if this would be happening in his house he would leave the room.

If it is raining lightly, he is obligated to eat there.

23. Is one permitted to remain in the Sukkah when it rains?

If it is raining to the degree that he is exempt from the mitzvah, then he should leave. A person who thinks that he is fulfilling a mitzvah by going beyond the line of duty in this situation is regarded as foolish and receives no reward. It is certainly forbidden to recite the blessing for the Sukkah.

24. Is one obligated to return to the Sukkah as soon as the rain stops?

If he did not yet sit down to eat in the house he must go to eat in the Sukkah, even if he left the Sukkah in the middle of a meal.

If he is in the middle of eating in the house, he may remain there until the end of the meal.

If he went to sleep at night in the house due to rain he may remain in the house until the morning.

In the last two cases, it is praiseworthy to return to the Sukkah immediately, although he is not obligated to do so.

25. When a person returns to the Sukkah after the rain stops, does he repeat the blessing for the Sukkah?

Since it is impossible to fulfill the mitzvah while it is raining, the previous blessing is no longer valid. Therefore, he should repeat the blessing when he next eats bread or grains.

26. What if it rains on the first night of Sukkot?

Opinions differ whether one is obligated to eat in the Sukkah despite the rain. On one hand, there is a parallel to the first night of Pesach when one is obligated to eat matzah in any event, but on the other hand there is usually no mitzvah to sit in the Sukkah when it rains. Therefore, one should wait an hour or two in the hope that the rain will stop in order to eat in the Sukkah and fulfill the mitzvah properly.

27. In which situations is one exempt from the mitzvah of Sukkah?

There are several types of situations in which a person is exempt:

a.. discomfort    b.. sickness    c.. preoccupation with other mitzvot    d.. travel

28. What constitutes discomfort?

This means that the conditions in the Sukkah are causing him discomfort and he will gain relief by leaving the Sukkah. If in the same circumstances he would leave the house, he is then permitted to leave the Sukkah.

A person is exempt in the following situations:

a.. The Sukkah is too hot or too cold. If one can easily dress more warmly or heat the Sukkah, he should do so.    b.. there is an unpleasant smell    c.. there are many insects in the Sukkah    d.. there is noise that is causing much disturbance    e.. leaves or twigs are falling into the food and he is very disturbed by this

If one is exempt due to discomfort, there is no mitzvah or reward in remaining there. It is praiseworthy to try and make the Sukkah comfortable in order to be able to remain there.

29. What if a person feels distressed due to bad news?

He is obligated to be in the Sukkah. This form of discomfort is not due to the Sukkah and will not be alleviated by moving into the house.

30. May one visit his parents if they have no Sukkah?

This is permitted even though he will not be able to eat or sleep in a Sukkah. If he can make arrangements to eat and sleep at a neighbor's Sukkah he should do so, unless this will upset his parents.

31. When is a traveler exempt?

If a person needs to travel (e.g. for business, to perform a mitzvah) during Sukkot he may do so, even though he will not be able to find a Sukkah on the way. Just as a person leaves his house in order to travel, so too may he leave the Sukkah in order to travel. Therefore, he may eat freely while traveling, unless he can easily find a Sukkah along the way. He must make an effort to find a Sukkah to sleep in, but if he is unsuccessful he may sleep indoors.

It is forbidden to eat or sleep outside a Sukkah if one is travelling only for pleasure. People who go on trips to places where there is no Sukkah and then claim exemption are transgressing.

32. Are any behaviors forbidden in the Sukkah?

A person should minimize mundane talk in the Sukkah, and try to speak only words of Torah and holy matters. Certainly, one must be extremely careful not to speak loshon hara or become angry while in the Sukkah.

Other forbidden activities in a Sukkah:

a.. bringing pots and pans inside    b.. leaving dirty plates inside    c.. washing dishes    d.. using the Sukkah as a storeroom (e.g. any item that one would not leave in his dining room should not be left in the Sukkah, e.g. bicycle, broom, garbage bin, etc.)

Strictly speaking it is permitted to bring pots inside, but the accepted custom is to avoid it. Therefore, one should transfer the food to plates or serving dishes outside the Sukkah.

33. What are the restrictions on personal use?

It is forbidden to remove any part of the walls or s'chach for personal use, since this degrades its sanctity. All normal use of the Sukkah is permitted, since one is expected to live in a Sukkah in the same way that one lives in a house. For example, one may hang items or lean on the walls and take shelter from the sun by standing in or near the Sukkah.

All the decorations whether hanging from the s'chach or on the walls have such sanctity. Therefore, they may not be removed from the Sukkah for personal use. For example, fruit which is hung from the s'chach may not be removed and eaten until after Sukkot. Pictures that are hung on the walls may not be removed and re-hung in the house until after Sukkot.

Decorations may be removed on chol hamoed and brought into the house to prevent them from being spoiled by the rain. They may be returned later to the Sukkah, but may not be used in the house until after Sukkot.

34. Does the Sukkah have any sanctity after Sukkot?

After Sukkot, the Sukkah loses its sanctity and one may use the walls and the s'chach for any other purpose. Nevertheless, one must not disgrace them by treading on them or throwing them in the street. It is certainly forbidden to throw them into the garbage. If one wishes to discard them without disgracing them, one may burn them.

35. When should furniture be moved from the Sukkah to the house?

On Hoshana Rabba in Israel (or Shemini Atzeret in the diaspora), one should move furniture back into the house in preparation for the evening. This may be done from mincha ketana (two-and-a-half halachic hours before sunset).

Any earlier is disrespectful to the Sukkah, which is supposed to be one's home for the entire duration of Sukkot. After mincha ketana it is permitted, since it is then clear that one is doing it in honor of the approaching festival.

36. Is there an obligation to sit in the Sukkah on Shemini Atzeret in the diaspora?

According to most opinions, the Yom Tov meals must be eaten in the Sukkah. The blessing for the Sukkah is certainly not recited. One may have snacks and drinks in the house, since even on Sukkot there is no obligation to have them in the Sukkah. Some have the custom to be lenient on Shemini Atzeret and eat some or all of the Yom Tov meal in the house. A person should not be lenient unless he has a strong family custom regarding this.

Regarding sleeping, the widespread custom is to be lenient and permit sleeping in the house.

Excerpted from "Guidelines - Succos" - 400 commonly asked questions about Succos (Targum/Feldheim). [http://www.aish.com/sukkotsukkah/sukkotsukkahdefault/Dwelling\\_in\\_the\\_Sukkah\\_-\\_Advanced.asp](http://www.aish.com/sukkotsukkah/sukkotsukkahdefault/Dwelling_in_the_Sukkah_-_Advanced.asp) Aish.com One Western Wall Plaza PO Box 14149 Jerusalem 91141 Israel Tel - 972-2-628-5666 © 2004 Aish.com

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From: Aish.com [newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: Sunday, September 26, 2004 11:52 AM Subject: Sukkot -

[http://www.aish.com/sukkotspecies/sukkotspeciesdefault/Laws\\_of\\_the\\_Four\\_Species.asp](http://www.aish.com/sukkotspecies/sukkotspeciesdefault/Laws_of_the_Four_Species.asp)

LAWS OF THE FOUR SPECIES

BY RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS

The special mitzvah of waving the 4 species - Esrog, Myrtle, Willow and Lulav.

The Torah says:

"You shall take... the beautiful fruit (Esrog), a palm frond (Lulav), myrtle twigs and willow branches of the stream -- and rejoice for seven days before the Lord your G-d." (Leviticus 23:40)

On Sukkot, we bind all the branches together -- two willows on the left, one palm branch in the center, and three myrtles on the right. We hold this bundle in our right hand, and then lift them together with the Esrog. We then shake them all together, three times in each direction: front, right, back, left, up and down. (Sefardim and Chassidim have a different custom for the order.) This mitzvah should be performed during the daytime, each of the seven days of Sukkot (except for Shabbat).

Before waving the four species, we say the following blessing:

"Baruch ata Adonoy, Elo-heinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu bi'mitzvo-sav, vi'tzivanu al ni-tilas lulav."

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who sanctified us with His mitzvot, and instructed us to raise up the Lulav.

To be valid for the mitzvah, the four species must meet certain requirements. Since the details are many and technical, it is not recommended to search through the forest on your own for these species! (Particularly the Esrog, which can easily be confused with a lemon.) A better idea is to purchase a complete set from a reliable distributor. Your local Jewish bookstore may have a "Four Species Set" with a rabbinical seal certifying their validity.

To be an informed consumer, here are some basic requirements to look for:

ESROG

- a.. Should preferably be turning yellow rather than green.
- b.. The peel cannot be punctured through in any spot, nor can it lack any of its inner skin.
- c.. The peel cannot be overly soft, cracked, dry or peeled.
- d.. Even a small black dot on the upper part invalidates it.
- e.. The shape should preferably be like a tower -- wider at the bottom and narrow at the top.
- f.. If this particular Esrog grew with a protruding stem (called a pitom), then that stem cannot be broken off. (However, if the Esrog grew in the first place without a pitom, it is still kosher.)

MYRTLE

- a.. You will need three myrtle branches.
- b.. A kosher myrtle has a pattern of three leaves coming out from the same point in the branch. This three-leaf pattern must be repeated over at least half the length of the branch.
- c.. Each branch should be at least 11 inches (29 cm.) long.
- d.. The branch cannot be dried out.

WILLOW

- a.. You will need two willow branches.
- b.. The stem should preferably be red.
- c.. The stem should be at least 11 inches (29 cm.) long.
- d.. The leaves should be oblong, not round in shape.
- e.. The leaves should have a smooth edge, not serrated.

LULAV

- a.. Look at the very top of the branch and make sure that the center-most leaf is not split, but rather is closed (at least half-way down).
- b.. The top cannot be cut off.
- c.. The branch cannot be dried out.
- d.. It should be at least 16 inches (39 cm.) long.
- e.. The straighter the branch, the better.

This article can also be read at: [http://www.aish.com/sukkotspecies/sukkotspeciesdefault/Laws\\_of\\_the\\_Four\\_Species.asp](http://www.aish.com/sukkotspecies/sukkotspeciesdefault/Laws_of_the_Four_Species.asp)

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From: RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM PARSHA COLUMN [parshat\_hashavua@ohrtrahstone.org.il] Sent: September 28, 2004 Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Sukkot by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin Shabbat Shalom: Sukkot By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - One of the most picturesque and creative festivals of the year is the Festival of Sukkot -- when the entire family is involved in building and decorating a special "nature home" which will be lived in for an entire week. But what are we actually celebrating and what is the true meaning of the symbol of the Sukkah? Is it the Sukkah of our desert wanderings, the temporary hut which the Israelites constructed in the desert when they wandered from place to place? If so, then the Sukkah becomes a reminder of all of the exiles of Israel throughout our 4,000 year history, and our thanksgiving to G-d is for the fact that we have survived despite the difficult climates -- the persecution and pogroms -- which threaten to overwhelm us. Or is the Sukkah meant to be reminiscent of the Divine "clouds of glory" which encompassed us in the desert with G-d's rays of splendor, the sanctuary which served as the forerunner of our Holy Temple in Jerusalem. In the Grace after Meals during the Sukkot festival we pray that, "the Merciful One restore for us the fallen tabernacle of David", which would certainly imply that the Sukkah symbolizes the Holy Temple. The Talmud (B.T. Sukkot 11) brings a difference of opinion between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer as to which of these options is the true significance of our celebration. I would like to attempt to analyze which I believe to be the true meaning and why.

The major Biblical description of the festivals is to be found in Chapter 23 of the Book of Leviticus. There are two textual curiosities which need to be examined. The three festivals which were always considered to be our national festivals, and which also Biblically appear as the "desert" festivals, are Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot; commemorating when we left Egypt, when we received the Torah at Sinai and when we lived in desert booths. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are more universal in nature and not at all related to the desert sojourn. It seems strange that in the Biblical exposition of the Hebrew calendar Pesach and Shavuot are explained, after which comes Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and only at the conclusion of the description comes Sukkot.

Now of course one can argue that this is the way the months fall out on the calendar year! However, that too is strange. After all, the Israelites left Egypt for the desert; presumably they built their booths immediately after the Festival of Pesach. Would it not have been more logical for the order to be Pesach, Sukkot, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur? Secondly, the Festival of Sukkot is broken up into two parts. Initially the Torah tells us: "and the Lord spoke to Moses saying, '... on the fifteenth



day of this seventh month shall be the Festival of Sukkot, seven days for G-d... these are the Festivals of the Lord which you shall call holy congregations....” (Leviticus 23:33-38). It would seem that these last words conclude the Biblical description of the festivals and the Hebrew calendar. But then, in the very next verse, the Torah comes back again to Sukkot, as if for the first time: “but on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather in the crop of the land, you shall celebrate G-d’s festival for a seven day period.... You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a citron tree, the branches of date palms, twigs of a plaited tree (myrtle) and willows of brooks; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your G-d for a seven day period..... You shall dwell in booths for a seven day period..... so that your generations will know that I caused the people of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them from the Land of Egypt. I am the Lord your G-d” (ibid. Leviticus 23:39-44). Why the repetition? And if the Bible now wishes to tell us about the four species which we are to wave in all directions in thanksgiving to G-d for his agricultural bounty, why was this verse not linked to the previous discussion of the Sukkot booths? And why repeat the booths again this second time?

I have heard it said in the name of the Vilna Gaon that this repetition of Sukkot with the commandment concerning the four species is introducing an entirely new aspect of the Sukkot festival: the celebration of our entering into the Land of Israel! Indeed, the great philosopher legalist Maimonides explains the great joy of the festival of Sukkot as expressing the transition of the Israelites from the arid desert to a place of trees and rivers, fruits and vegetables symbolized by the four species (Guide for the Perplexed, Part 3 Chapter 43). In fact this second Sukkot segment opens with the words “But on the fifteenth day of the seventh month when you gather the crop of the land (of Israel) you shall celebrate this festival to the Lord...”

Hence, there are two identities to the festival of Sukkot. On the one hand, it is a desert festival, alongside of Pesach and Shavuot, which celebrates our desert wanderings and survivals while living in flimsy booths. From that perspective, perhaps it ought to have found its place immediately after Pesach in terms of the calendar and certainly before the description of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in the Biblical text. However, this second identity of Sukkot, the four species which represent our conquest and inhabitation of our homeland and signal the beginning of redemption, belongs after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – the festivals of G-d’s kingship over the world and his Divine Temple which is to be “a house of prayer for all the nations”. This aspect of Sukkot turns the Sukkah into rays of Divine splendor and an expression of the Holy Temple.

So which Sukkot do we celebrate? Both at the very same time! But when we sit in the Sukkah, are we sitting in transitory booths representative of our wandering or rather in a Divine sanctuary protected by rays of G-d’s glory? I think it depends on whether we are celebrating the festival in the Diaspora or in the Land of Israel.  
Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach.



From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Monday, September 27, 2004 7:51 AM To: yhe-holiday@etzion.org.il  
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)  
**THE SOURCE AND REASON FOR HALLEL**  
**BY RAV MOSHE TARAGIN**

Hallel is recited on numerous occasions: on holidays and Rosh Chodesh, during the sacrifice of a korban pesach (Pesachim 64a), during the wine libations of

regular sacrifices (Arakchin 11a), and when Jerusalem or the Temple was expanded (Shavuot

14b). What is the source for Hallel, and can differences be drawn between its various forms?

The gemara in Arakhin derives the obligation of singing Hallel while offering holiday sacrifices from several different verses. It is unquestionable that this form of Hallel is de-oraita (of biblical authority). The Rambam, however, rules that saying Hallel on holidays outside the context of sacrifices is only a rabbinic obligation. Support for this position may be found in a gemara in Berakhot (14a), which explores the issue of interrupting the performance of different mitzvot by talking. The gemara wonders whether an interruption (hefsek) would invalidate the recitation Hallel and megilla - EACH OF WHICH IS ONLY A MITZVA DE-RABANAN. Furthermore, as the psalms that comprise the Hallel were authored by King David, it would be difficult to envision them as de-oraita. The Rambam asserts this position in Mishneh Torah (Hilkhot Chanuka 3:6), and in his Sefer ha-Mitzvot (shoresh 1) he contests the Behag’s ruling that Hallel is indeed de-oraita.

In truth, the issue he raises - that Hallel cannot be de-oraita since King David authored these texts – can be easily resolved. As the Ramban notes (in his hasagot to the Rambam’s Sefer ha-Mitzvot), it is quite possible that the concept of saying Hallel is a mitzva de-oraita, while the precise texts and timing of the mitzva were instituted by the sages. After all, the Rambam follows this strategy regarding the mitzva of prayer, which he believes to be de-oraita in origin (ironically, against the position of the Ramban), but concedes that the precise liturgy and timing were added only later by the sages. With regard to Hallel, however, the Rambam refuses to apply this reasoning and views the entire mitzva as purely rabbinic.

The Ramban defends the position of the Behag that Hallel is de-oraita. However, he lacks any direct verse obligating the recitation of Hallel. The only direct reference to such a practice is found in a verse in Yeshayahu which predicts the victory over Sancheiriv by declaring, “The song [after the victory] will be equivalent to the type sung on a night sanctified as a holiday [presumably a reference to yom tov].” In fact, the gemara in Arakhin employs this verse to distinguish between days on which Hallel is recited and days which do not require Hallel because they have no sanctity (such as Rosh Chodesh which features no prohibition of work and hence does require a complete Hallel) or no status as a “festival” (such as Shabbat). In fact, the Ra’avad (in his hasagot to the Rambam, Hilkhot Chanuka 3:6) cites this verse in suggesting that Hallel is not a standard de-rabanan, and should be classified instead under the category of “divrei sofrim” (mitzvot which have a reference in Tanakh). The Ramban, however, cites no verse in the Torah to serve as the basis for the Biblical obligation of reciting Hallel.

The Ramban therefore claims that Hallel might indeed be a “halakha le-moshe mi-Sinai” - a mitzva which has de-oraita status even though no specific verse refers to it. Subsequently, the Ramban generates an source for Hallel. Every festival obligates us in the mitzva of simcha (rejoicing), based on the verse, “Ve-samachta be-chagecha, You shall rejoice in your festival” (Devarim 16:14). Generally, this simcha is actualized through sacrificial offerings, meat and wine, and, according to the Rambam, any other personal enjoyment (see Hilkhot Yom Tov, ch. 6). According to the Ramban, an additional expression of simcha is the recitation of Hallel. After all, the gemara in Arakhin (11a) had already determined that Hallel is the epitome of an “avoda” (service) which causes joy. If so, it stands to reason that this expression of joy should be incorporated into every Yom Tov.

We should note that the gemara in Arakhin that the Ramban adopts as his source merely establishes Hallel as a form of AVODA which causes joy. Hence, when sacrifices are offered on a festival, Hallel is required (as stated above). The Ramban extrapolates from here that all forms of Hallel - even those recited outside the Temple and the context of sacrifices – constitute an expression of joy and are obligatory on festivals. This is not necessarily the implication of the gemara.

Another possible source appears in the gemara in Pesachim (117a), which suggests that Moshe and the Jewish people actually recited Hallel (in addition to the “Song of the Sea”) when they crossed the Red Sea. This would support the Ramban’s contention that Hallel traces back to Moshe Rabbeinu. An additional gemara which supports the Ramban’s position is found in Ta’anit (28b), claiming that Hallel on Rosh Chodesh (on which there is no prohibition of labor) is only of rabbinic origin. This would imply that other forms of Hallel - namely, its recitation on sacred days of festivals - may be viewed as de-oraita.

There is another form of Hallel that might have earlier roots, even according to the Rambam. The gemara in Pesachim (117a) claims that during the Exodus, the prophets instituted the practice of reciting Hallel any time a grave danger facing the Jewish People was relieved. Thus, during the performance of a miracle (perhaps only a national one), we have an obligation to recite Hallel. In fact, the Brisker Rov claimed that the annual Hallel recited Pesach night stems from this requirement. Since the mitzva of sippur yetziat Mitzrayim (recounting



the Exodus) requires us to envision ourselves as if we are currently departing Egypt, we actually relive a miracle and must therefore recite Hallel. The Brisker Rov assigns a different nature to the Hallel recitation of Pesach night. Whereas normally the mitzva entails READING (keri'a), in this instance it has the quality of song or poetry – "shira." Women would therefore be obligated in this specific Hallel, even though they might not be obligated in classic Hallel, as it is a time-bound mitzva. Since this special Hallel involves a direct and immediate response to the miracle, we would apply the principle of "af hein hayu be-oto hanes," they too were part of the same miracle (see Tosafot Sukka 38a s.v. mi). No blessing would be recited (see the Ran in his comments to Arvei Pesachim), and an interruption might be tolerated (as we actually allow during Hallel on Pesach night). Clearly, this form of Hallel would constitute a mitzva de-oraita. Whether the sages can legislate this type of Hallel beyond the immediate moment in which the miracle was performed is itself debatable, and would greatly impact the status of Hallel on Chanuka, which is neither a festival (as defined by the Torah) nor sanctified by a prohibition on labor, yet obligates one to recite Hallel because of the miracle that occurred.

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From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] Sent: September 28, 2004  
To: KBY Eparsha Subject: Succot

#### THE FUTURE CELEBRATION OF SUCCOT BY THE NATIONS HAMASHGIACH RAV AVRAHAM RIVLIN SHLITA

In the Haftarah for Shabbat Succot, Zechariah describes at length what will occur in the war of Gog and Magog. The war concludes with a mysterious plague that afflicts Israel's enemies, and destroys them and their animals.[1] In the remainder of the chapter, Zechariah describes what will happen after the war: "All who are left over from all the nations who had invaded Yerushalayim will come up every year to bow before the King Hashem, Master of Legions, and to celebrate the festival of Succot." (Zechariah 14:16)

The Gemara (Avoda Zara 3b) teaches that the war of Gog and Magog against Israel is essentially, "against Hashem and against His Messiah." (Tehillim 2:2) Therefore, it is understandable that, as a result, the non-Jews who survive will come to bow before the King, Hashem. Zechariah states in the previous pasuk, "Hashem will be king over the land; on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One. (Zechariah 14:9) Presumably, "all who are left", are the righteous gentiles who survived the plague that destroyed the wicked amongst them. Now they will be free to express what perhaps they felt even before the war – their recognition of G-d's rule of the world. But what connection do they have to Succot? Why did they choose to fulfill specifically this mitzvah? "To bow before the King Hashem" – is well understood; "to celebrate the festival of Succot" – requires explanation!

A wonderful and simple explanation is given by the Malbim and Metzudat David: "Because the downfall of Gog and Magog will be on the festival of Succot, they will go up to celebrate the festival to commemorate the miracle that was done for them on that day. (Malbim) "Because this plague will be on the festival of Succot, therefore they will come on it every year to be a remembrance." (Metzudat David)[2] Let us not forget that although the primary miracle of the war was for Am Yisrael, at the very same time a great miracle was done for the non-Jews who remained alive, when all their comrades were wiped out in the awful plague! The anniversary of the miracle is Succot, the time of the war of Gog and Magog, and therefore they go up to Yerushalayim on this holiday to thank G-d.

The second reason for their coming on Succot is that at this occasion they came to the true recognition of G-d's rule in the world. As a commemoration of this wonderful era of the revelation of His rule in the world, they come to note the holiday of "redemption" of Am Yisrael, in particular, and of the redemption of the entire mankind from the forces of darkness and atheism.

In addition, the nations are drawn to celebrate specifically Succot, because this holiday symbolizes more than any other festival the universality of G-d's rule in the world, and of the bond of Israel's concern and responsibility to the nations of the world. Before we examine the uniqueness of Succot in this regard, we need to clarify the Torah's perspective on the relationship between Israel and the nations, and to debunk a mistaken perception that seems to have been accepted by some learned people.

It is true that the Torah emphasizes very much the difference between Israel and the nations, both from a general, theoretical perspective, and from the practical perspective of mitzvot. It is true that G-d says to Avraham, "Go forth from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house" (Bereishit 12:1), and he is called "Avraham the Ivri" (14:13) – because the entire world was on one side, and

he is on the other. (Bereishit Rabbah 42:13) Furthermore, it says about Israel: "Behold! It is like a nation that will dwell in solitude and not be reckoned amongst the nations." (Bamidbar 23:9)[3] There are hundreds of similar verses and statements of Chazal. This view finds practical expression in the mitzvot, as there are many laws whose goal is to prevent closeness between Jews and non-Jews. All this is, indeed, true.

However, it is necessary to emphasize that G-d is the Creator of the entire world, and all of mankind, and He is G-d of all the nations. Immediately after the command, "Go for you...", which indicated detachment from the world, Avraham is informed, "all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you." This is the goal and the ideal! It is true that on our way to fulfill this goal we need to emphasize the difference between us and the nations. Yet, the difference and the detachment are only tactical, while the overall strategy speaks of partnership and unity. The goal of Creation is "to restore the world with the Kingdom of Shad-dai and all people will call in Your Name to turn to you all the wicked of the world. All the inhabitants of the world should recognize and know that to You will bow every knee and swear every tongue." [4] Thus we pray in the prayer of Rosh Hashana, "Thus, give Your fear, Hashem, our G-d, on all of your works, and your awe on all that you created." The prophets all spoke, each in his own style, of the idea expressed by Yeshaya: "Many peoples will go and say, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of Hashem.'" (Yeshaya 2:3)

This partnership finds practical expression nowadays in the mitzvot of Succot, when Am Yisrael offers special sacrifices for the nations of the world, for their peace and good: "To what do these seventy heifers correspond to? To the seventy nations." (Succah 55b) Rashi explains: "To atone for them, so that rain will fall on the entire world, since on Succot [the world] is judged about rain." The seven ushpizin wandered amongst the nations, and brought blessing wherever they were.[5] R. Yehoshua b. Levi taught: "If the nations would have known how good the Temple is for them, they would surround it with guards, as it was better for them than for Israel." (Bamidbar Rabbah 1:3) Many of the ideas of the holiday – trust in G-d, unity, harmony with nature, sufficing with little, and others – are appropriate for all of humanity.

Since this is the holiday in which we opened the door to the nations of the world, the nations use this door in order to join the ranks of those who believe in G-d. This faith they express through observing Succot.

[1] I heard a modern explanation for the description of the plague in a course on non-conventional warfare. The description, "Each one's flesh will melt away while he is standing on his feet; each one's eyes will melt away in their sockets; and each one's tongue will melt away in their mouths" (Zechariah 14:12), fits the description of a poison-gas attack. A film screened secretly after the Iraqis attacked the Kurdish strongholds with mustard gas in the 80's confirms this.

[2] It seems that the Malbim emphasizes their miracle more, while the Metzudot focuses on the general commemoration, but it is not clear.

[3] For a discussion of whether this pasuk describes a given circumstance of whether it is a guide of proper behavior for Bnei Yisrael, cf. Yonah – Nevuah V'tochacha, p. 196.

[4] From the prayer, Aleinu Leshabe'ach. We addressed the "contradiction" between the two passages of Aleinu, a contradiction relevant to the discussion here, in Iyunei Haftarah, p. 232

[5] Cf. Sefer Hatoda'a, pp. 199-200.

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