

Where is Sukkot? What are Sukkot?

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Rabbi Mitchell Berkowitz

B'nai Israel Congregation

1. Where is Succoth/Sukkot?

Genesis 33:17

But Jacob journeyed on to Succoth¹, and built a house for himself and made stalls for his cattle; that is why the place was called Succoth.

וַיֵּקֶבֶט נֹסֶע סֻכָּתָהּ וַיִּבֶן לּוֹ בַּיִת וּלְמִקְנֵהוּ
עָשָׂה סֻכַּת עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם סֻכּוֹת:

Malbim on Genesis 33:17

"And he built a house for himself and made stalls for his cattle" – Jacob built for himself a permanent (*kavua*) home in which he would dwell and serve God, but for his cattle he built only a temporary (*arai*) *sukkah*...

וַיִּבֶן לּוֹ בַּיִת וּלְמִקְנֵהוּ עָשָׂה סֻכּוֹת ,
לוֹ לְעַצְמוֹ בָּנָה בַּיִת קָבוע שִׁישֵׁב שָׁם
וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת ה', אֲבֵל לְמִקְנֵהוּ וּקְנִינֵו
עָשָׂה רַק סֻכּוֹת אֲרַעִי...

Numbers 33:5

The Israelites set out from Rameses and encamped at Succoth.²

וַיִּסְעוּ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעַמְסֵס וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת:

2 Samuel 11:11

Uriah answered David, "The Ark and Israel and Judah **are located at Succoth**, and my master Joab and Your Majesty's men are camped in the open; how can I go home and eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As you live, by your very life, I will not do this!" (NJPS)

And Uriyya said to David, "The ark, and Yisra'el, and Yehuda, **dwelt in booths**; and my lord Yo'av, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul lives, I will not do this thing." (Koren)

וַיֹּאמֶר אוּרִיָּה אֶל-דָּוִד
הֲאֵרוֹן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוּדָה
יֹשְׁבִים בְּסֻכּוֹת וְאֲדָנִי יוֹאָב
וְעַבְדֵי אֲדָנִי עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה
חַנּוּם וְאֲנִי אָבּוֹא אֶל-בֵּיתִי
לֶאֱכֹל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת וּלְשָׁכֵב עִם-
אִשְׁתִּי חַיָּה וְחַי נַפְשִׁיךָ אִם-
אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:

2. Sukkah as Booth

Leviticus 23:42-43

⁴²You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths. ⁴³in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I Adonai your God.

בְּסֻכּוֹת תִּשְׁבּוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל-הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
יֹשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת: לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דַרְתֵּיכֶם כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת
הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Talmud Bavli Sukkah 11b

It is taught in a *baraita*: "I made the Israelite people live in booths." According to Rabbi Eliezer, these were clouds of glory. Rabbi Akiva says: They established for themselves actual *sukkot*.

דַּתְנָא: "כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל", עֲנִי כְבוֹד הַיּוֹ, דְּבַרֵּי רַבִּי
אֱלִיעֶזֶר. רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: סֻכּוֹת
מִמֶּשׁ עָשׂוּ לָהֶם. הֵנִיחָא לְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר,
אֵלָא לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא מֵאִי אֵיכָא לְמִימַר ?

¹ This Succoth is in the Transjordan, on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, due east of Shechem, Mt. Ebal, and Mt. Gerizim.

² This Succoth is in Egypt, southeast of Rameses.

Isaiah 1:8

Fair Zion is left Like a booth in a vineyard, Like a hut in a cucumber field, Like a city beleaguered.	וְנוֹתְרָה בְּתִצִּיּוֹן כְּסֹכָה בְּכַרְם כְּמִלּוּיָהּ בְּמִקְשָׁה כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה:
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Rashi on Isaiah 1:8

“Fair Zion is left” – Devoid of its inhabitants, for they will be exiled from its midst, as a hut in a vineyard, made by a watchman, and when the produce of the vineyard is gathered, he leaves his hut and goes away, after they gather it.	וְנוֹתְרָה בְּתִצִּיּוֹן. רִיקְנִית מִיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ כִּי יִגְלוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ כְּאִשׁר תּוֹתֵר סוּכַת הַכֶּרֶם שֶׁעֲשָׂאָה נוֹצֵר וּבַעַת יִבְצֵר הַכֶּרֶם מְנִיחַ סוּכַתוֹ וְהוֹלֵךְ, בְּתֵר דִקְטוּפוֹהִי לְאַחַר שִׁבְצָרוֹ אוֹתָהּ:
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Isaiah 4:5-6

Adonai will create over the whole shrine and meeting place of Mount Zion cloud by day and smoke with a glow of flaming fire by night. Indeed, over all the glory shall hang a canopy, which shall serve as a pavilion for shade from heat by day and as a shelter for protection against drenching rain.	וַיִּבְרָא ה' עַל כָּל־מְכוּן הַר־צִיּוֹן וְעַל־מִקְרָאָהּ עָנָן יוֹמָם וְעֶשֶׂן וְנֹגֵה אֵשׁ לְהַבֶּה לְיֵלֶה כִּי עַל־כָּל־כְּבוֹד חֶפְזָה: וְסֹכָה תִהְיֶה לְצִל־יוֹמָם מִחֶרֶב וּלְמַחְסָה וּלְמִסְתוֹר מִזֶּרֶם וּמִמָּטָר:
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Amos 9:11

In that day, I will set up again the fallen booth of David: I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old,	בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים אֶת־סֹכֶת דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֹת וְגִדְרֹתֶיהָ אֶת־פְּרֻצֵיהֶן וְהִרְסֹתֶיהָ אָקִים וּבְנִיתֶיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:
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Rashi on Amos 9:11

“I will set up again the fallen booth of David” – Targum Yonatan translates this as “the kingdom of the house of David.”	אָקִים סוּכַת דָּוִד הַנוֹפֶלֶת: י"ת מַלְכוּתָא דְּבֵית דָּוִד:
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Psalms 27:4-6

One thing I ask of Adonai, only that do I seek: to live in the house of Adonai all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of Adonai, to frequent God's temple. God will shelter me in God's pavilion on an evil day, grant me the protection of God's tent, raise me high upon a rock. Now is my head high over my enemies round about; I sacrifice in God's tent with shouts of joy, singing and chanting a hymn to Adonai.	אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת־ה' אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית־ה' כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי לְחַזוֹת בְּנֹעַם־ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ: כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסֹכָה בְּיוֹם רָעָה יִסְתַּרְנִי בְּסֹתֵר אֱהָלוֹ בְּצוּר יְרוּמָמַי: וְעֵתָה יְרוּם רֹאשִׁי עַל אֵיבֵי סְבִיבוֹתַי וְאַזְבְּחָהּ בְּאֱהָלוֹ זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה אֲשִׁירָה וְאַזְמַרְהָ לָהּ:
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