

The Shabbat Package this week is sponsored by Dr. Shosh Kloot
in honour of the Bar Mitzvah of her grandson in Israel, Asaf Kloot.



SUKKOT PACKAGE 5781

On Sukkot, we move from our permanent abodes to dwell in temporary structures. In addition to the significance of the Mitzva as explained in Rabbi Kennard's Shiur below, dwelling in Sukkot is sometimes explained as a reminder of human frailty. We depart from the illusions of control and stability provided by our homes and expose ourselves to the elements, reliant on Hashem for protection.

This year we do not need such a reminder. Human limitation has been exposed on a global scale. So many of our plans have been forced to change, numerous countries are struggling to effectively contain the virus, we have not yet developed a vaccine or a cure, and we have no choice but to admit that mankind is not as powerful or advanced as we once believed.

Notwithstanding the context this year, and perhaps because of the context this year, I believe this message of the Sukkah is more relevant than ever. Entering our Sukkot reminds us that Covid-19 has not changed anything about the way our world is run. We were not fully in control before Covid-19 and we are not fully in control now. The real difference is in our perception of the world. Our eyes have been opened to our vulnerabilities, and the annual Mitzva of dwelling in the Sukkah reminds us that those vulnerabilities were always there.

Yet, the aim of dwelling in Sukkot is not only to highlight our weaknesses. On the contrary. It is an empowering statement of placing our faith in Hashem. We fully immerse and surround ourselves in a Mitzva, taking shelter with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Our time spent in the Sukkah should emulate the time we spend at home. This year, as many of us are spending more time at home than ever, it means we should spend more time in the Sukkah than ever. For those of us that are working from home, let's try this week to work from the Sukkah, if the weather, wifi strength and other conditions allow.

We have experienced unique celebrations of numerous Chagim this year, which will now include all three of the Shalosh Regalim. Just as previous Chagim have provided so many with pleasant surprises, new understandings, and experiences that were far more positive than previously feared, may this Sukkot be a true Zman Simchateinu. May we all truly rejoice in our Sukkot with Hashem and our many blessings from Him.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The weirdest of years, but although we have lots to be concerned about, we've still managed to structure Tefillot at Mizrachi within State government and DHHS guidelines. Rabbi Mirvis and Stephen Shnider represented the Jewish community in frequent meetings with the Government and DHHS representatives. Accordingly many shuls and their rabbis consulted Mizrachi for advice. Whilst we were still closed on Rosh Hashana, we were back on Yom Kippur. It took loads of effort. We experienced tremendous cooperation from our members and much appreciation. Several executive members have worked together with our professionals to schedule minyanim enabling all who requested to attend. We also provided opportunities to join selichot working with the Perth and Sydney Mizrachi communities.

Additionally, good things come in small packages. Through an initiative of Belinda Fisher, Rosh Hashana gift packages were put together and delivered by Mark & Karen Franks, Belinda & Daniel Parasol, Jennifer & Kovi Paneth, Belinda & David Fisher, Pat & Danny Levy, Suzanne & John Steiner, Judy & Sam Seigel, Julie & Mark Epstein, Bruce & Andrea Esterman, Tommy Junger, Deb Zimmermann, Selwyn & Allana Braver, Harry Gelber, Rachel Heinrichs, Jim Moustsos, Eva Lipp, Ken Shapiro, Stephen Barton, Danny Fantl, Sally-Ann Jaye, Robert Wyner and R' Mark Steiner to all Mizrachi members. Included were the Hamizrachi magazine and Yamim Noraim Companion booklet as well as food for thought whilst in lockdown.

Bnei under Shaliach Motti's energetic leadership have assembled and distributed Arba Minim, and at Mizrachi, Michael and Yedida Lewis, Sam Tatarka and Leon Tugendhaft have sponsored the placement of outdoor umbrellas to shield us from the rain or the sun as we will daven outdoors for the next month at least.

In Israel, the impact of Corona is severe, many thousands of new cases nightly and clearly resistance from some of the population to restrictions has exacerbated the spread. Lockdown now is severe and for many of us who have family in Israel, it's a concern. On the vastly brighter side, the Netanyahu/Trump peace arrangements with UAE, Bahrain have opened up wonderful initiatives with those countries as they have doors to other potential peace partners. Embassies are moving to Jerusalem as the spectre of the impact of "Palestinian" threats recede to irrelevance.

Last week saw the passing of a Gadol in South Africa, the late Rabbi Abraham Tanzer, who almost singlehandedly built Mizrachi and it's Yeshivah College in Johannesburg. Those of our members from South Africa will recall a wonderfully warm rabbinical leader, who visited Melbourne in 1982 as keynote speaker for our Mizrachi Yavneh appeal. May his memory be a blessing for our international Mizrachi community.

Finally I want to acknowledge World Mizrachi for the plethora of Divrei Torah provided over the lockdown period, in particular Rav Doron Perez, Rav Moshe and Rav Reuven Taragin.

Wishing you all a shabbat shalom and a chag sameach

FOR THE SHABBAT TABLE



Rabbi Mirvis

The special “HaRachaman” that we add to Birkat HaMazon for Sukkot is, הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את – The Compassionate One – May He establish for us the fallen Sukkah of David. The use of the Sukkah as an analogy for dynasty of David HaMelech originates in Amos (9:11), where Hashem declares, בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אֶקְיֵם אֶת־סֻכַּת דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֶטֶת – On that day, I will establish the fallen Sukkah of David.

Why is the Davidic dynasty compared to a Sukkah – a temporary structure? Wouldn't the term "בית" be more appropriate, like when we refer to "מלכות בית דוד"?

The Radak (Amos 9:11) explains that just like a Sukkah is a source of shelter, the role of a ruling power is to provide shelter, protection and a safe haven for all.

In this fashion, David HaMelech asks Hashem to conceal him “in His Sukkah on the day of evil” in Tehillim Perek 27 (LeDavid Hashem Ori), as the Sukkah represents a welcoming refuge from the outside world.

The Maharal differs, and explains that while a house may be strong and powerful, once it falls it is irreplaceable. Even if it is rebuilt identically with the finest detail, it will be known as a replica of the original, but will never assume the status or the symbolism of the original structure.

Our sukkot are vulnerable and are only built to withstand normal winds, but were they to fall down and be rebuilt, we would not call the rebuilt Sukkah a replica – it is the very same Sukkah. Each year we dismantle and rebuild our Sukkot, yet we do not view them as new structures – they are a direct continuation and representation of the first time we built them.

So too, the house of David HaMelech is known as a “Sukkah”. When we re-establish Jewish rule in our homeland, it is not a brand new project, or replica of the past. Our aspirations are for the very same Davidic line to reassume as a direct continuation of our unbroken connection to Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael.

“HaRachaman” – May the Merciful One indeed bless us to witness “את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה” – the speedy flourishing of the offspring of David HaMelech, as part of our ultimate redemption.

DERASHA NOTES



Based on Rabbi Mirvis' Derasha in Beit Yehuda, Sukkot 2016

The beauty of the Aravah

The Arba'at HaMinim are known for their beauty, but when considering the aesthetic value of the four kinds, there seems to be an odd one out.

The Lulav is majestic in its height and stature. The Etrog has beautiful appearance and taste. The Hadas has a pleasant aroma and intricate leaves.

And then there's the Aravah (willow). The Aravah is not particularly aesthetic to behold. It has no pleasant aroma. Where is the Hiddur (beauty) in taking a lowly and simple Aravah?

This question is strengthened when we consider the Mishna in Masseket Sukkah (4:5) which describes how on Hoshana Rabba, we would encircle the Mizbe'ach in the Beit HaMikdash.

On Hoshana Rabba, the Mizbe'ach was decorated with long Aravah branches. And the Mishna tells us that as people were leaving and took in the sight of the Mizbe'ach, they would declare, "יופי לך" "יופי לך מזבח, מזבח – Beauty unto you, Altar, Beauty unto you, Altar.

And even as we find ourselves between Batei Mikdash, the Aravah still receives great attention on Hoshana Rabba, as we take a bunch of willow in our hands.

How did the Aravah, seemingly the simplest and humblest of the Arba'at HaMinim reach such prominence and praise for its beauty?

In order to understand the beauty of the Aravah, we have to understand its role in the context of the Arba'at HaMinim.

The Gemara teaches us that in the first instance, the four kinds need to be in an Egged – bound together. (The Israeli bus company is called Egged because it is a cooperative owned by its members. It was also created as an Egged in 1933 by the merger of four smaller bus companies coming together).

In order to fulfil the Mitzva of Arba'at HaMinim, all four species must be present. Despite their individual qualities, none of them alone can be used to perform the Mitzva – they can only be used when they are together as part of a full set.

The real beauty of the Arba'at HaMinim is not in their individual aesthetic qualities, but the way they come together. The Lulav, Hadasim and Etrog are far more beautiful when joined by the Aravah, and the Aravah takes on new beauty and significance when placed with the other three. So it was on the Mizbe'ach as well. The Aravot in and of themselves are not particularly beautiful, but when placed alongside the Mizbe'ach, offsetting the Mizbe'ach with refreshing greenery, they contributed to an overall pleasing experience.

The Aravah itself, in its name and in its nature, represents this concept of interdependence and harmony.

Of all the 4 kinds, the willow is the most dependent on water for its growth. It cannot survive alone but must grow alongside rivers, streams or sources of water.

The name Aravah means mixture, indicating the Aravah's natural inclination to blend and mix with other elements. The Aravah alone does not have much beauty but must be in the context of other ingredients to shine.

In the Halachot of what qualifies as a Kosher Aravah, one of the requirements is that it is not allowed to be KeMasor – like a saw with jagged edges. This fits in with the symbolism of the Aravah, which represents unity and harmony, as opposed to a saw which represents division. As the Midrash in Vayikra Rabba points out, each of the four kinds represents a different kind of Jew. The Etrog, with both a pleasant taste and pleasing aroma, represents Jews who have both Torah and good deeds. The Lulav, with a pleasant taste but no aroma, represents Jews with Torah but no good deeds. The Hadas, with a pleasant aroma but no taste, represents Jews who have good deeds but no Torah. The Aravah, with no taste and no aroma, represents Jews with neither Torah nor good deeds. Ultimately, the Mitzva can only be performed when all four kinds are brought together.

The Sefat Emet explains that this is why the Aravah is granted such prominence on HoShana Rabba. It is specifically because it represents those who lack Torah and good deeds, in order to highlight the value of every single person.

This message is especially important in the context of a diverse community. On the one hand, it is essential to welcome and appreciate the value of every single person. At the same time, the Aravah teaches us that great beauty is not just about accepting or tolerating others. True beauty is found when those who one might find it harder to fit in are able to shine. Not only do they shine themselves, but they enable the overall group to achieve a level of beauty that could never have been achieved without their presence.

By internalizing the lesson of the Aravah, may we merit the fruition of our prayer during the Yamim Noraim:

“V'Yeasu Chulam Agudah Echat LaAsot Retzoncha BeLevav Shalem” – may we all become one “Agudah” – one group bound together to perform the will of Hashem.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON

SHIUR



Rabbi Kennard

There are not many mitzvot for which the purpose of the commandment is explicitly stated in the Torah. The mitzvah of sukkah is one. As we read in the Torah reading for the first two days of the festival:

You shall dwell in sukkot seven days. All who are native-born in Israel shall dwell in sukkot, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in sukkot, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Hashem your God. (Vayikra 23:42-43)

בְּסֻכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 יֵשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת.
 לְמַעַן יָדְעוּ דַרְתֵּיכֶם כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי ה' אֱ-
 לֹהֵיכֶם. (ויקרא כג: מב-מג)

We sit in sukkot so that we can remember the sukkot that Hashem provided for the Jews during their journey in the desert. But what were these original “sukkot”.

The **Gemara** (Succa 11b) brings two answers:

“... that I made the children of Israel to dwell in sukkot”. These were ענני כבוד - (the miraculous, heavenly) clouds of glory - these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Akiva says they made actual sukkot (i.e. huts)

כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל ענני כבוד היו
 דברי רבי אליעזר רבי עקיבא אומר סוכות ממש
 עשו להם

This issue is far from academic. Given that fulfilment of the mitzvah requires contemplation about the sukkot that housed the wandering Jews, we have to know which type of sukkot we are recalling; divine and magnificent clouds of glory, or simple, man-made huts?

Rashi (11th century France), in his commentary on our verse, follows the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer (according to the Talmud: in various Midrashic sources the positions of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva are reversed) and explain sukkot as “clouds of glory”.

The **Mizrachi** (16th century Constantinople) explains that Rashi is led by the word הוֹשַׁבְתִּי - “I made to dwell” - implying the Hashem Himself provided the sukkot. If these were actual huts, then the people would have built them for themselves, without Hashem’s help.

The **Ramban** (13th century Israel) endorses Rashi's view (that the sukkot are the clouds of glory), and states that it is "p'shat" - the simple meaning of the text - even though we might have assumed that "huts" would be the most obvious interpretation. On the contrary, since we are commanded to remember the wonders and miracles that Hashem performed for the Jews at the time of the Exodus and thereafter, it is logical to conclude that our verse commands the remembrance of clouds of glory as one of these miracles, and not the non-miraculous huts. Although the majority of classical sources follow this line of interpretation, and the Shulchan Aruch (Aruch Chaim 625) determines as halacha that it is the clouds of glory that we should remember when we sit in our sukkot, the "huts" position does have its defenders, in particular the two major "pashtanim", who claim that they are presenting the simplest explanation.

The **Ibn Ezra** (12th century Spain) states that the sukkot in question are the huts that the people made for themselves immediately after crossing the Yam Suf, and during their year-long stay at the foot of Har Sinai.

The **Rashbam** (12th century France) claims that the meaning of sukkot according to the "p'shat" is huts. He finds support from elsewhere in the Torah where the mitzvah of sukkot is specified:

<p>You shall keep the feast of sukkot seven days, after that you have gathered in from your threshing floor and from your winepress. (Devarim 16:13)</p>	<p>חג הסוכות תעשה לך שבועת ימים באספך מגרנד ומיקבך. (דברים טז: ג)</p>
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Sukkot comes at the time of the harvest, when we give thanks for the land and its produce, and we remember the time when we had neither, in the desert, but lived in huts. Thus the simple rudimentary huts are precisely the object of our remembrance in order to contrast that meagre existence with the bounty that we have now.

The **Emek Dvar** (19th century Lithuania) implies that although Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva take up seemingly contrary positions, they are both correct, albeit referring to two different situations. Each Jew lived in a hut, but when the entire nation was gathered together to hear words of Torah, or prayer, the people as an entity were enveloped in clouds of glory.

In another place in the Torah (Bemidbar 10:34) the Emek Dvar gives an alternative explanation. When the Jews were on the move through the desert they were surrounded and protected by clouds; when they stayed in one place they lived in huts.

According to either pair of explanations, our sukkot remember both the clouds and the huts. Following this idea of the unity between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer, we can suggest that not only do our sukkot remind us of both the natural huts and the miraculous clouds, but they represent the nexus between the two.

There is an obvious irony running through this debate; even according to the "clouds of glory" school, the sukkot that we construct to remember these heavenly creations are certainly nothing other than huts! It is remarkable, and critical to our understanding of our mission in life, that with a few bits of wood, some leaves and branches, our annual attempts at DIY with a hope and prayer, base materials become our version of miraculous, other-worldly clouds.

But this transformation is explained with one simple truth; it is not just screws and nails that make a sukkah and convert physical materials into clouds. It is only the halacha, the rules of maximum and minimum height; the “legal fiction” of imagining part of the roof as if it is an extension of the wall or that an airspace of less than three handbreadths is ignored; or the precise requirements of what constitutes s’chach that can make a sukkah.

By applying the halacha we make a miracle; we transform huts into clouds of glory. We sanctify every act performed in the sukkah - eating, sleeping, chatting - into mitzvot, acts of holiness. Thus we can suggest that Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva are not disagreeing. One says sukkot are huts because that is how they commence; the other see clouds of glory because that is what we, as live the halacha, transform our huts into.

During Elul, Hashem was “in the field”. On Rosh Hashana we entered into His courtroom. On Yom Kippur we were transported to his Bet Mikdash. But on sukkot, we invite Hashem into our house, by bringing heaven down to earth.



Dr Michal Kaufman, Rosh Midrasha

Sukkot – Our Season of Joy

On Sukkot, we leave the security and comfort of our homes and live in a sukkah (booth). Exposed to the wind, cold and the rain, we call this festival *zeman simchatenu*, our season of joy! Where does this sense of joy come from? How can leaving our comfortable homes and setting outside exposed to the elements be associated with joy? Perhaps a hint to this comes from evening prayer when we say:

”ופרוס עלינו סוכת שלומך ובצל כנפיך תסתירנו... ב רוך אתה ה שומר עמו ישראל לעד”.

And spread over us Your sukkah of peace and in the shade of your wings hide us.. You are the source of blessing, G-d, the One who safeguards Israel eternally.

The sukkah is the place where we feel the Divine protection. As we enter our Sukkah we remember how G-d protected us during our forty years of wondering in the desert. The Ari Hakadosh (Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi) notes:

הארי"י ז"ל (שער הכוונות דרושי חג הסוכות ד) כי צורת הסוכה מרמזת על חיבוק של אהבה שמחבק אותנו הקב"ה, [שהרי צורתה היא שתי דפנות שלמות, והדופן השלישית אפילו טפח" (סוכה ד ע"ב), דומה כאדם המחבק את חברו בידו - הזרוע והאמה שהם ארוכים -

ועוד טפח שזוהי כף היד], ואכן בשבתנו בסוכה יוכל כל לב יהודי לחוש קירבה מיוחדת ושייכות נפלאה אל הקב"ה.

The shape of the sukkah implies an embrace of love that God embraces us, [for its shape is "two whole sides, and the third side is shorter" (Sukkah 4: 2)] , is similar to a person embracing his friend - the arm and forearm that are long - and the shorter part which is the palm of the hand As we dwell in the sukkah, every Jewish heart is able to feel a special closeness and a wonderful connection to G-d.

Sukkot, on this reading, becomes a metaphor for the Jewish condition not only during the forty years in the desert but also the almost 2,000 years spent in exile and dispersion.

"What is truly remarkable is that it is called, by tradition, zeman simchatenu, "our time of joy." That to me is the wonder at the heart of the Jewish experience: that Jews throughout the ages were able to experience risk and uncertainty at every level of their existence and yet – while they sat betzila de-mehemnuta, "under the shadow of faith" (this is the Zohar's description of the sukkah: Zohar, Emor, 103a) – they were able to rejoice. That is spiritual courage of a high order. I have often argued that faith is not certainty: faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. That is what Sukkot represents if what we celebrate is sukkot mammash, not the clouds of glory but the vulnerability of actual huts, open to the wind, the rain and the cold".
(Rabbi Jonathan Sacks – A message for Sukkot (16 September 2013))