

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Sukkot
September 26 & 27, 2026 *** 15 & 16 Tishrei, 5787

Sukkot in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4126/jewish/Sukkot-2026.htm

The seven days of Sukkot—celebrated by dwelling in the sukkah, taking the Four Kinds, and rejoicing—are followed by Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah (October 2-4).

Sukkot—when we expose ourselves to the elements in greenery-covered huts—commemorates G-d sheltering our ancestors as they traveled from Egypt to the Promised Land. The Four Kinds express our unity and our belief in G-d's omnipresence. Coming after the solemn High Holidays, Sukkot is a time of joy and happiness

The first two days (or one day in Israel) are yom tov, when work is forbidden, candles are lit in the evening, and festive meals are preceded with Kiddush and contain challah dipped in honey. The remainder of the days are quasi holidays, known as chol hamoed. We dwell in the sukkah and take the Four Kinds every day (except for Shabbat, when we do not take the Four Kinds).

[Torah Readings in a Nutshell:Leviticus 22:26-23:44 Numbers 29:12-16](#)

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/742773/jewish/First-Days-of-Sukkot-Torah-Readings-in-a-Nutshell.htm

The reading begins with an injunction that a newborn calf, lamb, or kid must be left with its mother for seven days; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The reading then lists the annual Callings of Holiness — the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the 2nd day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the 50th day; a "remembrance of shofar blowing" on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival — during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the "Four Kinds" — beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the "8th day" of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret). G-d declares the fifteenth day (and the subsequent 6 days) of the seventh month to be a holy convocation, no work shall be done during that time. The reading then describes the Sukkot offerings which were brought in the Holy Temple.

[First Two Days of Sukkot Haftorahs in a Nutshell](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/742779/jewish/First-Days-of-Sukkot-Haftorahs-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

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[Day One: Zachariah 14:1-21.](#)

The prophet Zachariah prophesies about the world transformation that will occur in the end of days, when “the L-rd shall become King over all the earth; on that day shall the L-rd be one, and His name one.”

But first he describes a great war that will center around Jerusalem immediately before the ultimate Redemption. G-d will gather the nations for war, and He will do battle with them, by visiting various diseases and ailments upon them. Zachariah then notes that those of the nations who will survive this cataclysmic war will be required to go to Jerusalem every year on the holiday of Sukkot to pay homage to G-d.

[Day Two: I Kings 8:2-21.](#)

Today's haftorah describes the dedication of Solomon's Temple, which occurred during the holiday of Sukkot. (The celebration of the completion of the Holy Temple began a few days earlier, on the 8th of Tishrei.)

The construction of the Holy Temple was completed. King Solomon assembled the leaders and elders of the tribes to Jerusalem, and amidst great fanfare the Levites transported the Ark from its temporary location in the City of David and installed it in the Holy of Holies chamber in the Holy Temple. Immediately, G-d's presence appeared in the Temple, in the form of a smoky cloud.

King Solomon then blessed G-d. He recalled the history of the sanctuary, how his father, King David, had wanted to build it—but was told by G-d that it would be his son who would accomplish this feat. "And the L-rd has established His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the L-rd spoke, and have built a house for the name of the L-rd, the G-d of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein (is) the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

[FOOD FOR THOUGHT](#)

The Dual Nature of Succot by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l (2019)

<https://rabbisacks.org/archive/the-dual-nature-of-succot/>

Succot is different from any of the other festivals, in that it has a curious and very striking dual nature. Let's see how this works out.

If you look at the passage dealing with the festivals in parshat Re'eh in the book of Devarim, you will see that the word simcha, joy, is not mentioned at all in connection with Pesach. It's mentioned once in connection with Shavuot, but it's mentioned twice in connection with Succot: “**v'samachta b'chagecha**” (Devarim 16:14), at the beginning, and at the end, “**v'hayita ach same'ach**” (Devarim 16:15). It was this double reference to simcha that caused it to be called z'man simchateinu, the season of our joy. Why the double simcha?

Second, it has two very different key mitzvot. One is the arba'a minim, the Four Kinds: the palm branch, the citron, the myrtle, and the willow leaves, taken and waved on Succot. And the second, quite different, is the command to live in a succah, in a booth, a temporary dwelling, in memory of the 40 years in the wilderness.

Now, these are not only different from one another, but they are even seemingly opposed to one another. The four kinds, and the rituals associated with them, are about rain. So if it rains, our prayers have been answered. Whereas Succot only really works if it doesn't rain, because if it rains enough to spoil our food, then we are exempt from the command of dwelling in this Succah. So rain or not rain, there seems to be a tension between the two commands.

Then, again, look at the following: Number one, Succot is the

most universalistic of all the festivals. The prophet Zechariah says that there will come a time when the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up, year after year, to worship God and celebrate chag ha-Succot, the festival of Succot, and if any of them fail to do so, they won't have rain that year (Zechariah 14:16-17). This is the only festival which is spoken of as being celebrated by all humanity, by all the nations. And indeed, the 70 bulls offered during Succot were held by the Sages to represent the 70 nations.

So Succot is very universalistic, but [number two], it's also the most particularistic. Because when we sit in a succah and we remember Jewish history, the wandering in the wilderness, the entire experience of exile, we recall a history that is unlike that experienced by any other nation for any prolonged period. So it's very particular, but it's also very universal. How do we understand this duality?

The answer actually is quite simple, and it is that the festivals exist in two cycles.

There are the three festivals, the shalosh regalim, that are associated with moments in Jewish history: Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot – the Exodus, the Revelation, and the journey through the wilderness.

There is a second cycle which represents the festivals of the seventh month: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Succot. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are not only about Jews and Judaism, they are an anniversary of Creation. We say, “[uv’chen ten pachd’cha al kol ma’assecha](#)”, instil Your awe upon all Your works, and the fear of You on all that You have created (Amida prayer, Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur).

Look at the entire literature. It’s strikingly universalistic. So we

have now two cycles: Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot, which represent the particularity of Jewish history, what makes it different and unique, and we have Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Succot, the universality of the human condition and of the universe as a whole. And you will see immediately that there is only one festival – Succot - that belongs to both cycles. So it represents both the universality of the seventh month and the particularity of Jewish history. The Four Kinds, the arba'a minim, represent the universality of the festival; they symbolise nature, rain, the cycle of the seasons. And Succot, in the succah, represents the particularity of Jewish history. How we have so often travelled from place to place, journeying through our wilderness.

So there it is. Succot, more than any other festival, brings together what is unique and what is universal in Jewish history and Jewish identity. Humanity is formed out of our commonalities and our differences.

If we were completely different, we couldn't communicate, but if we were all the same, we'd have nothing to say. Succot brings together our uniquenesses of our people, and our participation in the universal fate of humankind.

[Come Together: The Arba Minim by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l \(2019\)](https://rabbisacks.org/archive/come-together-the-arba-minim/)

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The lulav and etrog, hadassim and aravot – the arba'a minim of Succot – testify to the fact that Succot is - above all a festival of rain - not just for Israel, but for the world. “Uve-chag nidonin al hamayim” (Rosh Hashanah 1:2). We hold that the rainfall of the year is determined on Succot. Or at any rate, on

Succot we are mindful of - and thankful for - the rain that makes the trees, the flowers, and the crops grow. And that is the primary fact about the arba'a minim, the Four Kinds. But of course, over time, various forms of symbolism have come to be attached to them. And one of them, perhaps the most famous, goes as follows.

The etrog, the citron, has taste and smell. The lulav, the date palm, has (or at least the dates have) taste, but no smell. The hadassim, the myrtle, have smell, but no taste. And the aravot, the willows, have neither smell nor taste. And the symbolism is that so it is with Jews. Taste represents learning. Smell represents good deeds. Some Jews have both. Some have one, but not the other: learning, but not deeds; deeds, but not learning. And some are like the poor willow that have neither.

And the Midrash says, “[amar Hakadosh Baruch Hu](#)”, the Holy One, blessed be He, says, “[yuksh'ru kulam agudah achat](#)”, may they all be bound together in a single bundle, a single binding together, “[v'hen m'chaprin eilu al ailu](#)”, and let them atone for one another (Vayikra Rabbah 30:12).

Now, this is remarkable, because what it implies is that not only does a Jew who has learning and good deeds atone for one who has neither, but the other way round as well. A Jew who has neither atones for one who has learning and good deeds. Now this is a very, very powerful statement of the agudah achat, this one binding together of these four kinds, that what counts is the “We” more than the “I”. Our greatness as a people is as a people, not as individuals. Our greatness exists when we ‘Come Together’.

And I mention that famous song by the Beatles – the first track, if I'm not mistaken, on an album of theirs called ‘Abbey Road’ – because it reminds me, interestingly enough, that the

Beatles themselves are the great secular example of this fundamental human truth. I mention Abbey Road because I used to live very close to there when I was Chief Rabbi for 22 years. In fact, the walk from our home to the St John's Wood Synagogue took us over a very famous zebra crossing, indeed, the zebra crossing of Abbey Road. And just a couple of weeks ago, there was a big celebration at the EMI Studios in Abbey Road for the 50th anniversary of the Beatles album called 'Abbey Road', which was the last they made (although not the last they released).

The fascinating thing about these four musicians is that as long as they stayed together, they produced music of absolute genius. Still, you cannot go a single day of any week along that Abbey Road and the zebra crossing without seeing hordes of people just wanting to be photographed like that famous photograph on the cover of Abbey Road.

And so long as they were together, they produced music of genius. But when they split apart, they never, ever recaptured it.

Just judging by their most famous and perhaps most successful individual efforts, you'd have to take 'My Sweet Lord', George Harrison; Paul McCartney, 'Maybe I'm Amazed'; John Lennon, 'Imagine'.

Now go and look up the dates of those three songs. George Harrison, 'My Sweet Lord': 1970. Paul McCartney, 'Maybe I'm Amazed': 1970. John Lennon, 'Imagine': 1971. The momentum of their creativity as a group carried on for a year thereafter, but then it simply dissipated and they were never the same again. Same individuals, the same four "I's", but they'd lost the "We". They'd lost the *agudah achat*, that one band.

Human beings come in many kinds, and when we bind and bond together, that is when we achieve greatness. And that is what the lulav and the etrog, the hadassim and the aravot, remind us of.

[The Environmental Festival by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l](https://rabbisacks.org/archive/succot-the-environmental-festival/)
[\(2019\)](https://rabbisacks.org/archive/succot-the-environmental-festival/)

<https://rabbisacks.org/archive/succot-the-environmental-festival/>

Succot is – can I put it this way – a Jewish anticipation of Extinction Rebellion. It is our environmental festival. It's a festival, first and foremost, of prayer for rain. In the Holy Land, where the Bible is set, rain was – and still is – the scarcest resource, and without it, there's drought and famine. So on Succot we take four kinds of things that need rain to grow: a palm branch, a citron, leaves from a willow, and a myrtle tree. And holding them, we thank God for rain and pray for it in Eretz Yisrael in the year to come, even if we happen to be living in the soggiest of climates like Britain. Succot is, if you like, a festival about the fragility of nature as a habitat hospitable to humankind.

The natural world is something science and religion both speak about in their very different ways. Science explains, religion celebrates. Science speaks, religion sings. Science is prose, religion is poetry. And we need them both. Science continues to inspire us in the way it reveals the intricacy of nature and the power of the human mind. But science can sometimes make us think that we're in control, which is why we need moments like Succot to restore our sense of humility. We're so small in a universe so vast, and our very existence

depends on an extraordinarily delicate balance between too much and too little, whose symbol is rain: too much and we have floods, too little and we have drought.

Only relatively recently in human history, only really since the second half of the 20th century, have we been aware of the damage we are doing to our natural environment. Damage that we're doing by carbon emissions, by pollution of other kinds. The damage we are doing to animal species that are going extinct at a rate unprecedented since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. The endangering of sea life by the pollution of plastic and various other detritus of civilization. And all in all, we are not obeying the biblical imperative. That imperative is set out in the second chapter of the Torah, when God plants the first human being in a garden and does so “*l'avdah ul'shamrah*”, to serve it, or to work it, and to protect it (Bereishit 2:15). That is one of the very first imperatives in the Torah. It is our task to protect the natural environment.

A lot of the laws of environmental concern derive from the prohibition of ba'al tashchit, the prohibition against cutting down fruit-bearing trees in the course of a siege (Devarim 20:19). But in truth, environmental concern is scattered throughout the Torah. Both in the idea that the land is entitled to its periods of rest, the shmittah and the yovel, and in the chukim, the statutes, which are, according to Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, laws designed to protect the integrity of nature: laws separating milk and meat, wool and linen, crossbreeding of animals, and so on. Nature has its own integrity, said Shimshon Raphael Hirsch in the 19th century, long before environmental concerns had entered the public square.

And that really is what Succot is about. It is the one festival when we expose ourselves to the elements of nature by sitting in a succah, and we use unprocessed natural objects like the arba minim. And in these two very different ways, we see: in the arba minim the reward of a nature well-tended, and in the succah, the vulnerability to the great forces that sometimes shake nature from time to time.

As well as knowledge, in other words, we need wisdom. And the better part of wisdom is knowing that we are guardians of a universe we can easily endanger and which we still don't fully understand. It's not crazy once a year to lift our eyes toward heaven the way we do when we're praying for rain, and remember how dependent we are on things beyond our control. The more scientific knowledge and power we have, the more humility we need.

[We Are All Sukkah-Dwellers by Eliezer Diamond z'l](https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/we-are-all-sukkah-dwellers-2/)
<https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/we-are-all-sukkah-dwellers-2/>

This commentary was written in 2020 by our dear colleague Rabbi Eliezer Diamond z"l. While Rabbi Diamond wrote in the immediate context of the COVID pandemic, his larger reflections on housing insecurity, human vulnerability, and our responsibility to care for one another speak to our concerns today as powerfully as they did when this piece was first published.

Since the accidental discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895 and the subsequent creation of X-ray machines, we have been able to view our bodies through two different lenses. The first is what we see in the mirror—a body of flesh, which takes various forms and distinguishes one individual

from another. The second is not visible to the naked eye; it is the skeletal structure that supports the flesh and organs that surround it. Though both are necessary constituent elements of our physical being, we are generally much more conscious of our outer being than our inner one. And yet, our bones are more durable than our flesh. Long after we die and our flesh has wasted away, our skeletal structure continues to exist.

The relationship between flesh and bone can serve as a useful paradigm for thinking about the symbolism of the sukkah; moreover, it can shape our experience of dwelling in it. All year long we dwell in houses. We experience them as durable shelters, places to retreat from the rest of the world and focus on our own lives, untethered to needs and demands of others—especially if we can avoid checking our smartphones. In this time of the COVID pandemic, our homes serve to protect us from the health threats that surround us.

The sukkot in which our ancestors dwelt, on the other hand, were—like the sukkot that we construct—frail structures that were vulnerable to collapse in the face of wind and exposed to rain from above. Moreover, the Israelites constructed their shelters in a forbidding wilderness, not knowing where they would encamp on the morrow.

It is easy to forget that so many of our fellow citizens live in modern-day sukkot—crumbling apartment buildings owned by indifferent landlords or sidewalk shelters made of cardboard boxes and ragged blankets. They contend not only with the frailty of their dwellings but also the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring. We may pass by these people, but they are peripheral to our own lives. We may even instinctively turn away to avoid the unpleasant and disturbing sight of fellow human beings living in conditions of want and misery.

How do we develop a sense of connection with the needy that leads us to action? We can start by utilizing X-ray vision to look under the surface of our own dwellings. We will realize that in fact our homes are fundamentally sukkot as well. They are built of much sturdier stuff than the sukkot of our ancestors, but their walls cannot guarantee us security, freedom from want and anxiety, or protection against illness and depression. And so, we all spend our lives dwelling in sukkot; the festival of Sukkot is simply God's way of reminding us of that fact.

How does one dwell in the world knowing that the walls of which we construct our lives may not hold in the face of adversity? The Talmud records the view of Rabbi Eliezer that the sukkot to which the Torah refers were not physical structures; rather, the people of Israel were housed together in a shelter consisting of the Cloud of Divine Glory (BT Sukkah 11b). This cloud sheltered the people from the elements and showed them the way through a hostile and unforgiving environment. Our ancestors could actually see a manifestation of the Divine presence and experience God intervening directly, and often miraculously, in their lives.

This is what we need: the shelter provided by Divine presence. But search the skies as we might, there are no clouds of glory to be found. Where, then, do we find God's protection? A rabbinic teaching that has been a fundamental part of my own spiritual journey is the dictum, הרבה שלוחים יש, "God has many agents to sustain those fear God" (see Rashi on Exod. 16:32, s.v. לדורותיכם). Who are these agents? We are. Each of us is divinely empowered to provide sustenance (physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual) to our fellow human beings. We all dwell together in the frail sukkah of human existence, searching for a haven in the face of life's stormy winds. We

can turn to each other and provide for each other shelter from the storm: better housing, adequate medical care, greater dignity, relief from mental anguish, spiritual guidance and inspiration, words and actions expressing love and connection, and so much more. And in doing this we also sustain ourselves, for where can we find meaning and joy in our lives but in fully embracing our sacred mission to love and support all our fellow human beings, each of whom, our Rabbis tell us, would be reason enough for the world to be created (see Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5)?

This year, dwelling in our sukkot in a time when our defenses seem particularly inadequate and in which we are all too aware of the frailty of human existence, let us visit each other's sukkot and say, I, like you, dwell in a sukkah. And I am here to help you find your way through the wilderness despite your fears, and mine, that the rain will pour in and the walls will collapse. Together, with the strength drawn from God's presence, we will prevail. *(Eliezer Diamond z"l was the Rabbi Judah Nadich Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS)*

Yahrtzeits

Rich Cohen remembers his father William Cohen on Sun. Sept. 27

Bob Woog remembers his father Cornelius M. Woog on Sun. Sept. 27

Blossom Primer remembers Irwin's sister Rose Rand on Wed. Sept.

30

Perry Fine remembers his father Melvin Fine on Fri. Oct. 2