



A Celebration of Sukkot and Simchat Torah



Opening

Community: “May we lie down in peace and be awakened again to a full and complete life. May we always dwell underneath the sukka of peace, and may our lives be ever enriched by good experiences and deep and lasting relationships.”

– Siddur: Hashkiveinu (adapted)



Candle Lighting – נרות

Reader: Each year the festival of Sukkot is greeted by a full moon, almost as if the heavens were shining a great light on this special day.

(Light candles) With light the world lives. With light let us bless life. To feel its warmth, to share its beauty, to make possible enlightenment, to create a world for all: a better world.

Community: Let us create the heavenly on earth. Let us empower ourselves with freedom in this world. We make ourselves whole as we gather together to light the light of this special day.

– Congregation Kol Shalom, Portland, Oregon

Sh'ma Yisra'el – שמע ישראל

Reader: “For everything there is a season, a right time for every intention under heaven; a time to plant, and a time to uproot...”

–Ecclesiastes 3. 1

The cycle of the festivals moves on, and in the fall we begin to look toward winter, and consider changing our lives.

–Rabbi Chaim Stern



שמע ישראל! הבה נקשיב להגיון לבינו ונביע תודה על כל מתנותינו היקרות.

Sh'ma Yisra'el! Hava nak-shiv l'heg-yon lib-be-nu v'nab-bia to-da
al kol mat-t'-no-tey-nu hay-y'-ka-rot.

Listen, Israel! Let us be attentive to the meditations of our hearts,
and let us be thankful for all our precious gifts.

הבה נזכור אהובינו שלא נמצאים איתנו עכשיו.

Hava nizkor a-hu-ve-nu she-lo nim-tsa-im it-ta-nu akh-shav.

Let us remember those who are not now with us.

הבה נזמן למחסה סוכתינו אלו שבחוץ.

Hava n'zam-men l'ma-kha-seh su-kat-te-nu e-lu sheb-ba-khuts.

Let us invite into the shelter of our sukka those who go without.

Song: Hinnay Ma Tov – הנה מה טוב

Hin-nay ma tov oo-ma-ma-eem
She-vet a-heem gam ya-had!



“How wonderful it is for sisters and brothers to dwell in unity!”

Reader: Jewish holidays and rituals are meant to give deeper dimension to our lives. During the High Holidays we revisited our connections to both our inner selves and to each other. During Sukkot, we unite our ancient history with our present and we experience our connection to the natural world.

Community: Our tradition has developed a custom of celebrating the harvest at this time of the year with great rejoicing: “ (Celebrate) next, the festival of harvest, the firstfruits of your efforts sowing in the field.” (Exodus 23. 16)

Reader: Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot were originally agricultural festivals. Sukkot marks the fall harvest when the ancient Israelites gave thanks for the bounties of the season. During the period of the gathering of crops, the harvesters would dwell in a makeshift hut called a sukka. There are at least ten references to Sukkot in the Bible, and it was considered one of the most important holiday periods of the year.

Reader: The Torah relates: “But on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered the produce of the land, you are to observe a festival for seven days; the first day is to be a complete rest and the eighth day is to be a complete rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit, palm fronds, thick branches and river–willows and celebrate (with them) for seven days...You are to live in sukkot for seven days; every citizen of Isra’el is to live in a sukka ... generation after generation.

– Leviticus 23. 39–43 (adapted)

The Lulav and Three Midrashim

Reader: The creation of the “lulav” satisfies a biblical injunction to gather together the various natural components on the festival of Sukkot and to celebrate with them.

The lulav is composed of the “four species” or “arba’at ha-minim” - ארבעת המינים, and they are:

1. **etrog** (or esrog) – אֶתְרוֹג – a citron, a large lemon-like fruit.
2. **lulav** – לוּלָב – a branch of the date-palm tree.
3. **hadass** – חֲדַס – a branch of the myrtle tree.
4. **aravah** – אַרְבֵּה – a branch of the willow tree.



The lulav, hadass, and aravah are gathered in one hand, the etrog in the other, and they are shaken in the four directions.

Throughout Jewish tradition, the rabbis offered many explanations of the meaning of the lulav. The three most popular are the following:

Reader: First Midrash: The four species represent the four different types of Jews in the world. The etrog is the most important of the species, since it possesses both taste and fragrance. It represents Jews who have both knowledge and good deeds. The dates of the palm tree have taste but no fragrance. They represent Jews with knowledge but who are lacking in good deeds. The myrtle has fragrance but no taste. It represents Jews who do good deeds, but lack knowledge. Having neither taste nor fragrance, the willow branch represents Jews who are without knowledge and good deeds.

The midrash concludes with the understanding that when bound together as a people, the Jews “who are the more virtuous will complement those who lack virtues.”

Reader: Second Midrash: In this midrash we learn that each of the species corresponds to a part of the human body, associating them by shape. The etrog represents the heart, hadass is like the eyes, the aravah is like the mouth, and the lulav is like the spine.

The midrash says that every part of ourselves should be devoted to the practice of doing good deeds.

Reader: Third Midrash: Finally, the third midrash says that each of the four species requires rain to thrive; and with our gathering of them all, we show gratitude for our past welfare, and demonstrate our hope for a coming year of goodness and prosperity.

– Sefer Abudraham, 159

A Psalm for Sukkot

Reader: Red crisp apples of autumn, shiny and stemmed,
Heaped to fill a basket ...

Community: Orange gourds swinging by crooked necks,
Graceful as swans,
Inedible and inscrutable ...

Reader: Yellow swirl of leaves,
Yellow fragrant etrog,
Yellow corn ...

Community: Green boughs above our head
Hiding and revealing
Blue and cool skies ...

Reader: Indigo twilight wraps around us;
Gathered in this fragile structure,
Purple wine and chewy bread

Community: Colored paper chains,
Rainbows of color
The promise of renewal ...

All: These are the gifts of this season.

– Debbie Pearlman, adapted

Simchat Torah

Reader: Simchat Torah is celebrated on the last day of Sukkot. Literally it means “Rejoicing in the Law.” On this day, Jews in synagogue finish the yearly cycle of reading the Torah with the last verses of Deuteronomy and begin again with the first verses of Genesis.

Community: The Torah purports to chart the course of our history as a people, and in this sense it is a symbol of our origins as a nation, not merely a religion. –CSJO



Reader: New beginnings are also endings; so too is every ending also a new beginning. Each of us must cope with beginnings and endings, joyful gains and painful losses, sometimes simultaneously. In the midst of life's new beginnings, let us acknowledge life's losses; but let us not overlook the wonderful beginnings that may also be hidden in life's endings.

– Rabbi Justin Kerber

My Help is in the Mountain (A traditional psalm for the Festivals)

Reader: My help is in the mountain
Where I take myself to heal
The earthly wounds
That people give to me



All: I find a rock with sun on it
And a stream where water runs gentle
And the trees which one by one give me company.

Reader: So I must stay for a long time
Until I have grown from the rock.

All: And the stream is running through me
And I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.

Reader: Then I know nothing touches me
Nor makes me run away.

All: My help is in the mountain
That I take away with me.

– Nancy Wood, an adaptation of Psalm 121

Song: Na-a-se Shalom

Na-a-se shalom ba-olam
Na-a-se shalom a-lay-noo
V-al kol ha-olam
V-ee-m roo shalom.



Reader: Let there be peace on earth, and let us say: Omeyn.

The Kiddush for Sukkot takes place in the sukkah if possible.

Kiddush for Sukkot - קדוש



Reader: “You are to keep the festival of Sukkot for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing-floor and winepress. Rejoice at your festival – you, your children and all who are among you.”
– Deuteronomy 16. 14–15

Reader: Sukkot is a holiday of hospitality, and the Zohar, the ancient book of Jewish mysticism, instituted the tradition of Ushpizin –The Guests, symbolically welcoming the important personalities of Jewish tradition; one set for each of the seven days:
1. Abraham and Sarah 2. Isaac and Rebekah 3. Jacob and Leah 4. Joseph and Rachel 5. Moses and Miriam 6. Aaron and Deborah 7. David and Ruth.

Community: By inviting these guests, and by naming other important guests as well into our sukkah, we are simultaneously reminded of where we came from, who we are now, and what we aspire to be.

– Paul Steinberg

Reader: We are grateful and joyful that we are here together as one community, and are able to celebrate this special time. She-he-che-ya-nu, v-ki-manu, v’hi-ghi-anu laz-man ha-zeh.



Wine – יין

Community: Let us bless our lives with joy, passion, and plenty. Let us create a healthy world. The fruit of the vine – with it let us drink L'Chayim – To Life! on this festival of Sukkot, season of our joy.

Challa – חלה

Reader: Bread from the land, fruits of the earth, have sustained us in the past, and will sustain us in the future.

Community: Let us seek and be satisfied with little. Let us hunger for life, and not the unessential, so that we all may be satisfied and sustained. Let us bless the sharing of this simple food. Let us bring forth food from the land for all of us to enjoy. –Kol Shalom, Portland, OR

חג סוכות שמח !



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