

Sukkot

HOW CAN WE PREPARE FOR THE WINTER WHILE REMEMBERING GOD'S PROVIDENCE?

Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot are the three Pilgrimage Festivals of the Jewish calendar. Each celebrates a uniquely agricultural and historic theme related to life of the Jewish People and our lives as individuals.

Sukkot is the Fall Harvest Holy Day.

BACKSTORY

סֻכּוֹת Sukkot, Tabernacles, is spoken of in the Torah:

³⁹ Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord to last seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰ On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall observe it as a festival of the Lord for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. ⁴² You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³ in 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 the Lord your God. (Leviticus 23)

Sukkot celebrates God's providence as we wandered through the desert after the Exodus and the in-gathering of the Fall harvest in preparation for winter. It falls on the 15th day of the Hebrew month Tishre, 5 days after Yom Kippur, always in September or October. It lasts for 7 days in Israel and among Reform Jews worldwide and for 8 days for Conservative and Orthodox Jews outside of Israel.

The Holy Day has several names. Each one refers to a different aspect of the holy day:

- **סֻכּוֹת** - Sukkot - Tabernacles (The booths of Ancient Israel and the booths we build today)
- **הַחֵג** - HeChag - The Festival (It was considered the most important holy day because of its timing between the harvest and winter)
- **חַג הָאֲסִיף** - Chag HaAsif - The Festival of Ingathering (Related to the harvest)
- **זְמַן שִׂמְחַתֵּינוּ** - Z'man Simchateinu - The Season of Our Joy (A joyous time because of the food surplus and because of God's providence)

Along with other readings from the Hebrew Bible, Ecclesiastes is highlighted because of the later life wisdom it offers as we enter the winter.

Questions:
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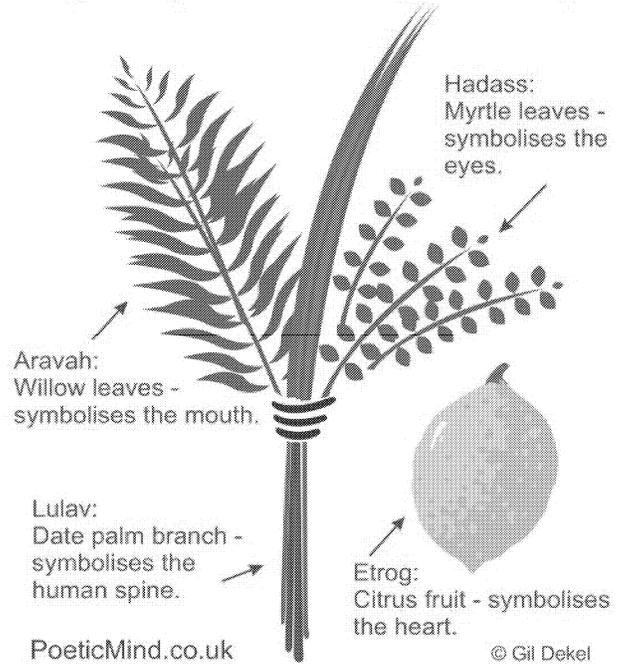
Sukkot is celebrated in synagogues with these special prayers:

- הלל - Hallel - Praise - Psalms 113-118
- יזכור - Yizkor
Memorial Prayers on 7th (or 8th) day
- יעלה ויבוא - Ya'aleh v'Yavo
Let Our Prayers Rise Up

The season is marked with these ritual items and activities:

- סוכה - Sukkah (Sukkot, plural) - Booth (Many people build a booth to live in and/or eat in during Sukkot)
- לולב - Lulav - Palm Branch
- הדס - Hadas - Myrtle Branch
- ערבה - Aravah - Willow Branch
- אתרוג - Etrog - Citron Fruit
- The Lulav, Hadas, Aravah and Etrog (often referred to collectively as 'Lulav and Etrog' or 'The Four Species') are ritually waved in 6 directions
- אושפיזין - Ushpizim - Historic Guests from generations past are invited to join us in spirit in our Sukkot

ארבעת המינים
Four Species of Sukkot - Arbaat HaMinim
(the four plants/fruit for Sukkot, Jewish holiday)



People greet each other with these words:

- גט יונטף - Gut Yontiff
A Good Holy Day (Yiddish)
- חג שמח - Chag Sameach - Happy Holy Day
- One person says: ...מעודים לשמחה...
Mo'adim l'simchah...
Happy Sacred Occasions...
- Another replies: חגים וזמנים לששון
Chagim u'zmanim l'sason
Joyous Festivals and Seasons

