

Radical Hospitality: a Multi-Faith Peace Service in the Sukkah



Hineih Mah Tov

Hi-neih mah tov u-ma na-im

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וְמַה נָּעִים

She-vet a-chim gam ya-chad!

שֶׁבֶת אֲחִים גַּם יַחַד

How Good It Is

How good and pleasant it is for brothers and sisters, for everyone, to dwell together as one (Psalms 133:1).

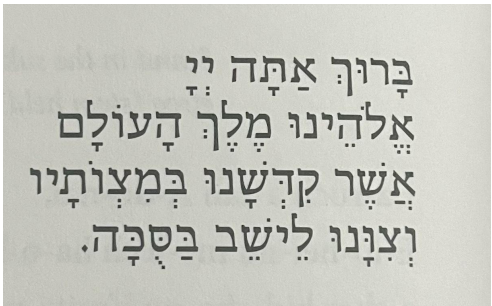
Introduction to Sukkot (Booths)

Sukkot is an autumn harvest Festival beginning on the fifteenth day of the month of Tishrei. The Torah instructs, “For seven days you shall dwell in tents, so that your descendants shall know that I made the children of Israel dwell in tents when I brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 23:42 - 44). Today, in Remembrance of our ancestors who wandered in the wilderness, we build *sukkot*, temporary and moveable structures, with roofs covered by branches so that the light of the stars and the full moon can shine through. To mark the harvest, the *sukkah* is usually decorated with seasonal fruits and vegetables. The book of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) is read on Sukkot, in part reflecting the fragility of the world in autumn.

This joyous celebration, following the more reflective period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, offers us a chance to reconnect with our friends, with our children, and with the earth. It is also customary to invite *ushpizin* (ancestral visitors) to join us in the *sukkah*. The quiet peacefulness of the *sukkah* can be a shelter from the many distractions of our technological age, with opportunities to eat organic, locally grown, sustainably farmed fruits and vegetables in praise of, and with respect for, the abundant world around us.

On Entering the Sukkah

Ba-ruch a tah A-do nai,
E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav,
V'tzi-va-nu lei-sheiv ba-su-kah.



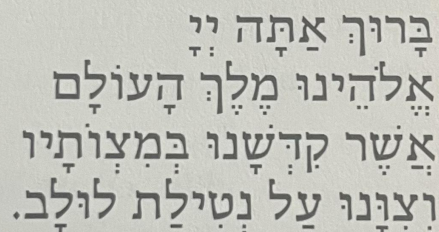
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

Blessed are You, our Eternal God,
Ruler of the universe,
who has sanctified us with Your commandments
and has commanded us to dwell in the sukkah.

Lulav and Etrog

Stand in the sukkah facing east, holding the lulav in the right hand and the etrog (stem held downward) in the left hand, so that they touch.

Ba-ruch a tah A-do nai,
E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav,
V'tzi-va-nu al n'ti-lat lu-lav.

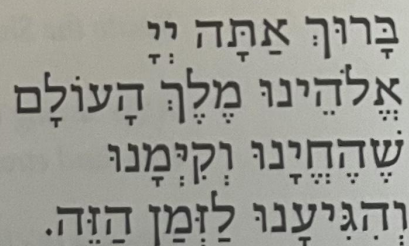


בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֻלָּב.

Blessed are You, our Eternal God, Ruler of the universe,
who has sanctified us with Your commandments and has
commanded us to take up the lulav.

On the First Day of Sukkot

Ba-ruch a tah A-do nai,
E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam,
she-he-che-ya-nu v'ki-y'ma-nu
v'hi-gi-ya-nu laz-man ha-zeh.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְמַן הַזֶּה.

Praised are You, God,
who created the world, who grants us life,
who sustains us,
and who brings us to this season.

Contemplation on Sitting in the Sukkah

If I just had a little hut
to sleep inside of for just one night, out of the wind,
out of worrying about the rain,
I would be so grateful
that I would offer the fruits of my harvest,
if I had a harvest, or if I had fruits...

But since I don't,
I would offer God what I could instead:
a prayer of thanks, or maybe a song, if there were one within me...
I would offer my heart to be opened anyhow,
even if I couldn't pray or sing.

And if I had a piece of fruit to eat from your sukkah,
I would remember better
how Abraham welcomed strangers into his tent,
and then I would eat half my hanging grapes
and save the rest for my friend,
who is still searching for a hut in which to be welcomed...
And then I would be able to tell her about
"Haporeis sukkat sh'lomecha al kol am Yisrael."

An Unending Love

We are loved by an unending love.
We are embraced by arms that find us
even when we are hidden from ourselves.
We are touched by fingers that soothe us
even when we are too proud for soothing.
We are counseled by voices that guide us
even when we are too embittered to hear.

We are loved by an unending love.
We are supported by hands that uplift us
even in the midst of a fall.
We are urged on by eyes that meet us
even when we are too weak for meeting.

We are loved by an unending love.
Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled...
ours are the arm, the fingers, the voices;
ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles;
We are loved by an unending love.

Peace (*Amidah*)

We invite peace into our hearts, our relationships, and our world, reflecting on our own capacity to bring and to receive peace in ever-greater measure.

What knots inside me need to be untied?

What tensions keep me from a sense of peace?

With whom am I in conflict at this moment?

Do I want to make peace?

How can I bring more tranquility and peace to my own life, and into the lives of my family and community?

Open my heart, Source of peace; slow down my breathing and quiet my spirit, so that I may bring Your peace into all my encounters.

May the One who makes peace on high let peace descend upon us, on all Israel, and on all the world, and let us say, Amen.

For Tikkun Olam

We pray now for the hungry, for the homeless, for the victims of war and catastrophe, for the sick and for the dying. And we pray for our fragile earth, for all her inhabitants, and for life itself.

We ask your blessing on all those engaged in *tikkun olam*, the healing and transforming of our planet. Open our hearts and stir us to struggle on behalf of your creations. May each of us, all of us, become Your limbs and hands, bringing healing and compassion, justice and peace to Your world.

Alternative Blessing for Rain

Neither flood nor drought is our need. So may the One who blessed all those who came before us, bless this world with balance and grant that which we cannot live without: precious water. May it gently replenish the lakes and reservoirs; may our crops thrive; may the city streets be cleansed anew; and may our faces and outstretched hands be sweetly wet, the earth deeply replenished, our souls refreshed by God's great gift of water from the sky.

On Leaving the Sukkah

Y'hi ra-tzon mil-fa-ne-cha A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu v'Ei-lo-hei a-vo-tei-nu
v'i-mo-tei-nu, k'Sheim she-ki-yam-ti
v'ya-shav-ti b'su-kah zo,
kein ez-keh I'sha-nah ha-ba-ah lei-sheiv
b'su-kah o-ro b'sha-lom.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵנוּ בְּשֵׁם שְׁקִימָתִי
וְיִשְׁבְּתִי בְּסֻכָּה זוֹ
כֵּן אֶזְכֶּה לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה לִישֹׁב בְּסֻכַּת
עוֹרוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.

May it be Your will, God and God of our ancestors,
as we have fulfilled the mitzvah and dwelled in this sukkah,
that we merit in the coming year to dwell with all humankind
in a radiant sukkah of global peace.