

SAMCHAINU GUIDE TO THE HALACHOS OF SUCCOS

A SELECTION OF LAWS & CUSTOMS WITH A FOCUS ON SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES

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The Shela Hakadosh writes that learning and properly observing the Halachos of a Chag infuse the Yom Tov with tremendous blessing. Please note that the laws and customs contained in this article follow the Ashkenazi custom.

CANDLE LIGHTING

Since the Yom Tov meal will take place in the sukkah, it is ideal to light candles in the sukkah. If there is no room in the sukkah or you are hesitant to light in the sukkah for safety reasons, you should try to light in a room of the house where the candles can be seen from the sukkah. If this is not possible, the candles should be lit in a place where people will be spending time while the candles are still burning (i.e. kitchen.)

The blessing of "*Shehechyanu*" is made on both nights of the "first days" of Sukkos, as well as the "second days" of Shemini Atzeres/ Simchas Torah, since the "second days" are really a new Yom Tov.

The following 2 blessings are said (see Machzor for full text):

1. *Lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov*
2. *Shehechyanu*

If a woman will be making Kiddush, she should omit the blessing of *shehechyanu*, since she already said it when she lit candles.

When the second night of Yom Tov is Motzei Shabbos, a woman should say "*Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'Chol*" before she lights candles or does any other action that is permitted on Yom Tov but forbidden on Shabbos.

LIVING IN THE SUKKAH

While doing the mitzvah of "living in the sukkah", it is best to have in mind that Hashem commanded us to live in the sukkah as a remembrance of going out of Egypt, and also as a remembrance of the Clouds of Glory which surrounded us in the desert, protecting us from the sun and the outside elements. At the minimum, have in mind that you are eating in the sukkah because it is a Torah commandment.

The Zohar calls the sukkah "the shadow of belief" and teaches us that anyone who sits in the sukkah, Hashem's presence, so to speak, spreads Its wings upon him/ her from on high.

The Chofetz Chaim writes in the name of the Shelah that since the sanctity of the Sukkah is so great, it is proper to try to speak words of Torah and holiness in the Sukkah . One should be especially careful not to engage in forbidden speech such as Lashon Hora (slander).

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After you finish eating, the dirty dishes should be removed from the Sukkah. Even though we would typically wait to clean up from Shalosh seudos (the third Shabbos meal) until after Shabbos (to avoid preparation for after Shabbos), on the Shabbos of Sukkos, you may clean up the dirty dishes immediately after the third meal. This act does not constitute preparation for after Shabbos, since it is necessary for the respect of the Sukkah.

A person should not engage in any activity that is disrespectful to the Sukkah (i.e. hanging laundry). The Aruch Hashulchan defines this principle as follows. We should treat the Sukkah as we would treat a nice living space in the home. Any activity that would not be done in such an area should not be done in the Sukkah. Any object that we would not leave in such an area should not be left in the Sukkah.

The Sukkah itself (walls and schach) are set aside to function as a Sukkah, and cannot be used for any other purpose until after Yom Tov. This applies even if the Sukkah falls down on Yom Tov.

SUKKAH DECORATIONS

Sukkah decorations cannot be used throughout Yom Tov for any purpose other than decorating the Sukkah. On Yom Tov itself, decorations should not be moved. If a decoration falls on the table, you may move it in an irregular manner.

Moving decorations on Chol Hamoed is permitted under certain circumstances. Decorations that have fallen down on Yom Tov may be hung back up on Chol Hamoed. Additionally, it is permitted on Chol Hamoed to switch decorations from one location in the sukkah to another in order to enhance the look of the סוכה. Decorations should not be removed from the sukkah, unless it is necessary to protect them from rain.

TAKING LULAV AND ESROG

The lulav is held in the right hand, with the hadassim branches facing the right of the lulav.

Before the blessings are recited, the esrog is lifted in the left hand, with the pittum side facing down. After reciting the blessing, the esrog should be turned over so that the pittum side is facing upward.

On the first day, two blessings are recited- "*Asher kedishanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu al netilas lulav*", and then "*Shehechianu*". For the remaining days of Sukkos, only the first blessing is recited. (Full text in a machzor)

To keep Aravos and Hadassim from drying out, some recommend that when the Lulav is not in use, remove the Lulav from the bundle holder and store it in a safe place. Then wrap the bundle still containing the Aravos and Hadassim in a moistened paper towel, and place it in a refrigerator until its next use.