



A STUDENT'S GUIDE

TO HIGH HOLY DAYS

SUKKOT EDITION

SUKKOT

Sukkot is a week long festival that celebrates the gathering of the harvest and the protection that G-d provided when the Jewish people left Egypt. We celebrate by dwelling in a Sukkah, a homemade dwelling outside and by taking the *Arba Minim* (Four Kinds) that are four different species that represent different parts of the body, more commonly known as the Lulav and Etrog. It is a great time to appreciate the shelter of our homes and our bodies.

WHAT IS SHEMINI ATZERET AND SIMCHAT TORAH?

Shemeni Atzeret and Simchat Torah make up the final part of Sukkot. For some, Shemeni Atzeret and Simchat Torah are two separate days, making Sukkot an 8 day long holiday. Other Jews combine these days, making the festival 7 days long.

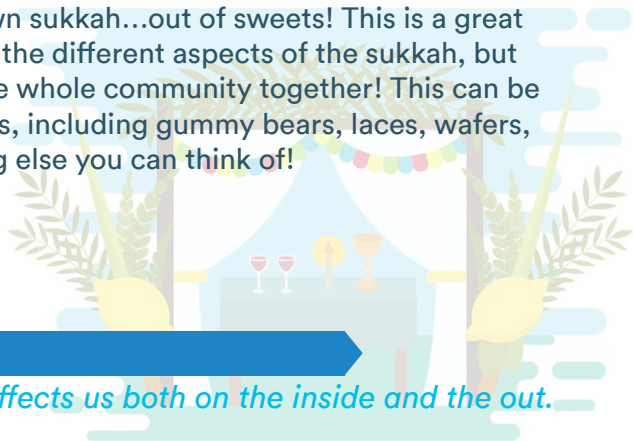
Shmeni Atzeret translates as the 'Eighth Day of Assembly', showing that this is the conclusion of Sukkot. This marks the beginning of the rain season in Israel and so around the world start praying for rain. Simchat Torah means 'Rejoicing in Torah', which celebrates the conclusion of the yearly cycle of reading the Torah, where we begin reading the Torah from the beginning again.



BUILD YOUR OWN SUKKAH!

For seven days and nights, we are encouraged to eat all our meals in the Sukkah and it is meant to be regarded as home for this period. You are encouraged to spend as much time in the Sukkah, with some people only eating in the sukkah, some sleep in the sukkah, and others tend to visit when they can.

Sometimes it can be hard to access a sukkah on campus, or maybe you would like an alternative way to celebrate the festival – why don't you build your own sukkah...out of sweets! This is a great way not only to learn about the different aspects of the sukkah, but also a great way to bring the whole community together! This can be built using a range of sweets, including gummy bears, laces, wafers, liquorice, icing and anything else you can think of!



INSIDE AND OUT

Sukkot is a festival that affects us both on the inside and the out.

On the outside, we are physically walking into the sukkah with our whole body therefore we are completely involved physically in the mitzvahs of Sukkot. By eating, sleeping and spending time in the Sukkah, this is the outside aspect as we are taking care of our physical welfare inside the sukkah.

In terms of the inside, the Lulav and Etrog represents part of the body, so that we can also celebrate Sukkot spiritually, and from the inside too. Each part of the four species represents a different aspect. The myrtle represents the eyes and how we see the world, the willow branches represents the lips and how we use our voice, and the palm spine represents the backbone, and how we are standing tall. The Etrog represents the heart and our emotive responses.



IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING

TIME OF HAPPINESS

Sukkot is often called “Z’man Simchateinu” – a time of happiness. Many of the customs and traditions of the holiday seem uniquely joyful in comparison to other festivals: the fun meals with family, the upbeat songs and the experiences of sitting outside in a sukkah.

Moving outdoors for a week to spend time in a temporary shelter helps us to focus on what is truly important. This allows us to focus on how we can improve our mental wellbeing to make ourselves happier in ourselves. We should aim to make Sukkot our “Z’man Simchateinu” in whichever way we feel is right.

APPRECIATING THE NATURAL WORLD

Sukkot allows us the perfect opportunity to spend time outdoors, which ultimately improves our wellbeing. Being outside can enhance our mental wellbeing and studies have found that spending more time outside has hidden benefits to our health, energy levels and mood.

Think creatively to find new ways to explore the outdoors and use Sukkot as an opportunity to explore how this festival may help you in ensuring a positive mental wellbeing.



HELPING THE HOMELESS

As the year **5782** begins it's the perfect time to get involved in a social action project.

Why do we raise awareness for homelessness during Sukkot?

- **Empathy** – “You shall live in booths... 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...” (Leviticus 23:42-43)

Sukkot presents a unique opportunity to reflect on the struggles of the Jewish people when they were left without a permanent home after the exodus from Egypt. The theme of displacement, which is fundamental to this high holiday, provides an incentive for Jewish people to help those who remain impoverished and homeless.

- **Hospitality** - “May it please you, Abraham, my exalted guest, that all the other exalted guests dwell here with me and with you Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David” (Prayer for Ushpizin)

It is considered a mitzvah to invite guests (or Ushpizin) into your Sukkah. This therefore offers the chance to invite people into your temporary home who would hugely benefit from the festive hospitality. The Sukkot motif of generosity further explains why raising awareness and funds for homeless people is of particular importance at this time of the year.

Homelessness charities nationwide have incredible volunteer opportunities throughout the year. For more information please look at:

- Centerpoint
- Whitechapel Mission
- Shelter England
- Crisis
- Salvation Army

Chag Sameach!

חג שמח!

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