



Tishrei in a Day 5780
Embracing Our Vulnerability
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This event is dedicated in memory of Ben Lax ז"ל, דב בן מרדכי ז"ל, by his loving family

This session is dedicated by:

Abraham Freilich in honour of Rabbi Sammy Bergman and his wonderful family and in appreciation for what the Kollel has done for the people of Toronto.

Judith Todd-Habot and Juda Habot. Keep up the great programming. Much appreciated!

Esther and Bob Libman in honour of Rabbi Torczyner for his amazing teaching and commitment to our Torah learning. Yasher koach.

Carla and Jules Sulzbach to express their appreciation for the amazing teaching of Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner.

Caren and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner in honour of Jeanette Adams, and the Sgan and Avreichim of our Beit Midrash

1. Talmud, Sukkah 2a (Davidson Edition Translation)

מתני' סוכה שהיא גבוהה למעלה מעשרים אמה פסולה ורבי יהודה מכשיר ושאינה גבוהה עשרה טפחים ושאיין לה (שלשה) דפנות ושחמתה מרובה מצלתה פסולה

MISHNA: A *sukka*, i.e., its roofing, which is the main and most crucial element of the mitzva, that is more than twenty cubits high is unfit. Rabbi Yehuda deems it fit. Similarly, a *sukka* that is not even ten handbreadths high, and one that does not have three walls, and one whose sunlight that passes through its roofing is greater than its shade are unfit.

2. Talmud, Sukkah 3a (Davidson Edition Translation)

אמר רב שמואל בר יצחק הלכה צריכה שתהא מחזקת ראשו ורובו ושולחנו

Rav Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: The *halakha* is that one's *sukka* must be large enough to hold his head, and most of his body, and his table.

3. Talmud, Sukkah 6b (Davidson Edition Translation)

תנו רבנן שתים כהלכתן ושלישית אפילו טפה ר"ש אומר שלש כהלכתן ורביעית אפילו טפה

The Sages taught in the *Tosefta*: In order to construct a fit *sukka*, two of the walls must be walls in the standard sense, sealing the entire length and height of the *sukka*, and the third wall may be even one handbreadth long. Rabbi Shimon says: Three of the walls must be walls in the standard sense, and the fourth wall may be even one handbreadth long.

4. Talmud, Sukkah 7b (Davidson Edition Translation)

ושחמתה מרובה מצלתה פסולה: ת"ר חמתה מחמת סיכוך ולא מחמת דפנות רבי יאשיה אומר אף מחמת דפנות

The mishna continues: And a *sukka* whose sunlight, i.e., the sunlight that passes through the roofing, is greater than its shade, is unfit. The Sages taught in a *baraita* that in the statement: Whose sunlight is greater than its shade, the reference is to sunlight that passes through due to sparse roofing, and not to the sunlight entering due to gaps in the walls. It is possible for a *sukka* to have more sunlight than shade due to sunlight passing through the sides and not the roofing, in which case the *sukka* is fit. Rabbi Yoshiya says: If the sunlight exceeds the shade the *sukka* is unfit, even if the sunlight is due to gaps in the walls.

5. Talmud, Sukkah 11a (Davidson Edition Translation)

זה הכלל כל שהוא מקבל טומאה ואין גידולו מן הארץ אין מסככין בו וכל דבר שאינו מקבל טומאה וגידולו מן הארץ מסככין בו :

This is the principle with regard to the roofing of a *sukka*: Anything that is susceptible to ritual impurity, e.g., vessels, or its growth is not from the ground, e.g., animal hides, one may not roof his *sukka* with it. And

anything that is not susceptible to ritual impurity and its growth is from the ground, one may roof his *sukka* with it.

6. Talmud, Sukkah 12a (Davidson Edition Translation)

כי אתא רבין אמר ר' יוחנן אמר קרא דברים טז, יג באספך מגרנך ומיקבך בפסולת גורן ויקב הכתוב מדבר

The Gemara cites a different source: When Ravin came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said that Rabbi Yohanan said that the verse states: “You shall prepare for you the festival of *Sukkot* for seven days as you gather from your threshing floor and from your winepress” (Deuteronomy 16:13), and the Sages interpreted that it is with regard to the waste of the threshing floor and of the winepress that the verse is speaking. One uses grain stalks and vines for roofing the *sukka*, materials that are not susceptible to ritual impurity and grow from the ground.

7. Talmud, Sukkah 2a (Davidson Edition Translation)

ורבא אמר מהכא ויקרא כג, מב בסוכות תשבו שבעת ימים אמרה תורה כל שבעת הימים צא מדירת קבע ושב בדירת עראי עד עשרים אמה אדם עושה דירתו דירת עראי למעלה מעשרים אמה אין אדם עושה דירתו דירת עראי אלא דירת קבע א"ל אביי אלא מעתה עשה מחיצות של ברזל וסיכך על גבן הכי נמי דלא הוי סוכה א"ל הכי קאמינא לך עד כ' אמה דאדם עושה דירתו דירת עראי כי עביד ליה דירת קבע נמי נפיק למעלה מכ' אמה דאדם עושה דירתו דירת קבע כי עביד ליה דירת עראי נמי לא נפיק

Rava said that the *halakha* is derived from here: “In *sukkot* shall you reside seven days” (Leviticus 23:42). The Torah said: For the entire seven days, emerge from the permanent residence in which you reside year round and reside in a temporary residence, the *sukka*. In constructing a *sukka* up to twenty cubits high, a person can render his residence a temporary residence, as up to that height one can construct a structure that is not sturdy; however, in constructing a *sukka* above twenty cubits high, one cannot render his residence a temporary residence; rather, he must construct a sturdy permanent residence, which is unfit for use as a *sukka*.

Abaye said to him: But if that is so, then if he constructed a *sukka* with steel partitions and placed roofing over them, so too, there, say that it would not be a fit *sukka*, as any *sukka* constructed as a permanent residence would be unfit. However, there is no opinion that deems a *sukka* of that sort unfit.

Rava said to him in response that this is what I am saying to you: In a case where one constructs a *sukka* up to twenty cubits high, a height that a person typically constructs a temporary residence, when he constructs a structure of that height that is sturdy like a permanent residence, he also fulfills his obligation. However, in a case where one constructs a *sukka* more than twenty cubits high, a height that a person typically constructs a permanent residence, even when he constructs it in a less sturdy fashion like a temporary residence, he does not fulfill his obligation.

8. Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir (11th Century France), Rashbam on Vayikra 23:43

חג הסוכות תעשה לך באוספך מגרנך ומיקבך באוספך את תבואת הארץ ובתיכם מלאים כל טוב דגן ותירוש ויצהר, למען תזכרו כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל במדבר ארבעים שנה בלא יישוב ובלא נחלה, ומתוך כך תתנו הודאה למי שנתן לכם נחלה ובתיכם מלאים כל טוב, ואל תאמרו בלבבכם כחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה.... ולכך יוצאים מבתיכם מלאים כל טוב בזמן אסיפה ויושבין בסוכות לזכרון שלא היה להם נחלה במדבר ולא בתים לשבת

The festival of Sukkot you shall make for yourself when you gather from your granary and winepress, and your houses are filled with an abundance of grain, wine and oil. So that you remember I housed the children of Israel in huts in the desert for forty years without settlement or an inheritance. From this you shall give thanks to He who gave you an inheritance and your houses filled with abundance, and you won't say in your hearts: my strength and the power of my hands made this wealth for me....Therefore, we leave houses filled with abundance during the time of the gathering, and sit in huts to remember that they had no inheritance in the desert and no houses to dwell in.

9. Rabbi Yitzchak Aramah (15th century Spain), Akeidat Yitchak Vayikra 67

והנה להיות זאת הכוונה המיוחדת בזה החג באו הסימנים והרשמים בו באופן שלא תוכל להתעלם. ראשונה בשם החג הזה גדרו חג הסוכות אשר בו יעזבו האנשים כל ענייני הכסף אשר לכסף לכסף ואשר לזהב לזהב סחורות ורוב תבואות וכל מדי דאקרי נכסים ויוצאין אל סוכה קטנה זו אשר אין בה רק ארחת יום ביומו ועל הרוב מטה ושלחן וכסא ומנורה שהוא התעוררות נפלא שלא יתעסק האדם להרבות מאלו

הקנייני' כי די בהכרחי לבד כל ימי היותו בפרוודור הזה שהיא דירת עראי כמ"ש התנא (אבות פ"ד) העולם הזה דומה לפרוודור בפני העולם הבא

Since this is the unique intention of this holiday, there are signs and symbolism to ensure one doesn't hide [from the ultimate goal]. Firstly, the name of the festival is Sukkot, for on it people leave their money, whether silver of gold, and storehouses of grain, and all types of property and go out into this small hut, which only has one's daily need, mostly a bed, a chair, a table, and a candelabra which is an incredible inspiration that a person shouldn't engage their efforts in acquiring a multitude of these valuables but rather only what is necessary as long as they are in this antechamber which is a temporary dwelling place as the Tanna states (Avot Chapter 12) "This world is akin an antechamber in front of the next world

10. Rabbi Yehuda Loew (16th century Prague), Maharal on Avodah Zarah 2a

אבל טעם שבחר במצוה זאת הוא דבר מופלג, וזה כי הם אומרים שהם ראויים אל התורה השכלית הבלתי טבעית ולכך אומרים המצוה שהיא מורה על שהאדם יוצא מטבעו היא מצות סוכה, שהאדם יוצא מבית שהוא בית טבעי ויוצא לשבת בסוכה ובודאי דירת ארעי הוא כי האדם כאשר יוצא מדירתו הטבעית, אז האדם אין דירתו בתחתונים כמו שהיה קודם. ומפני כך עושה האדם סוכה עליו, כפי אשר האדם הוא יושב בצל עליונים. ודבר זה הוא דירת עראי, כי אין לאדם שם דירת קבע. לפיכך אמר להם שאם הם ראויים לתורה, אז יש להם לקיים מצות סוכה לצאת מדירת [קבע] שהיא דירה טבעית ולישב בצל סוכה. ומפני כי כאשר הוציאם ממצרים, ההוצאה היה שלא בטבע ומנהג של עולם, אומר הכתוב (ויקרא כ"ג) כי בסוכת הושבת את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם ממצרים, כי לא היו ראויים לשבת בבית שהוא דירת טבעי, רק בסוכות שהוא יציאה מן דירת הטבע, כמו שהי' בזמן ההוא תחת רשות הקדוש ברוך הוא ובצלו, כך יעשה סוכת לא דירת בית שהוא דירה טבעית, והטבעי הוא גשמי והוא נבדל מן הש"י שהוא בלתי גשמי. ולר"א היו ענני כבוד ממש, והיו יושבים לגמרי תחת שמירתו, כי כאשר האדם יוצא מדירת טבעו יש לו הגנה ושמירה מן הש"י ואי אפשר בזולת זה.

But the reason he chose this mitzvah is an incredible thing, and that is because they say they are worthy of the supernatural intellectual Torah and therefore the mitzvah that teaches that man goes out of his nature is the mitzvah of sukkah, that man goes out of a house that is a natural house and goes out to sit in a sukkah. Certainly, it is a temporary dwelling place, for when a person leaves his natural dwelling place, then man does not have his dwelling place in the lower realm as he was before. And because of this man makes a sukkah over him, as if the man is sitting in the shadow of the upper realm. And this is a temporary dwelling place, because a person does not have a permanent dwelling place there. Thus, He told them that if they are worthy of the Torah, then they have to observe the mitzvah of sukkah to leave a [permanent] dwelling place which is a natural dwelling place and sit in the shade of a sukkah. And because when he brought them out of Egypt, the Exodus was not in the nature and custom of the world, the scripture says (Leviticus 23) that in the Sukkah I housed the children of Israel when they brought them out of Egypt, because they were not worthy to sit in a house that is a natural dwelling but in Sukkot, which means leaving the natural dwelling. Just as at that time they were under the authority of the Holy One Blessed Be He and his shade, so too he should make a sukkah, not a house which is a natural dwelling, and the natural is material and it is distinct from the Holy One who is immaterial. And according to R' Eliezer they were actual clouds of honor, and they would sit completely under his protection, because when a person leaves his natural dwelling, he has protection and security from the Holy One and it is impossible otherwise.

Review Questions

- 1) Which laws demonstrate that the Sukkah isn't meant to be a formidable dwelling place?
- 2) Why did Hashem instructs us to live in such a flimsy structure?
- 3) According to the Maharal, why must the Sukkah be a temporary dwelling place?