

## SUKKOS HALACHOS AND PRACTICES

### I. The Sukkah Structure

1. The minimum number of walls for a Sukkah are three i.e. two complete ones and a third wall that is wider than a handbreadth. The two complete walls are placed at right angles and the third must be situated within three handbreadths of one of the complete walls. A pole is then erected at the other end of the side of the incomplete wall and another pole is placed across the top of the pole and the incomplete wall.
2. Since the Halachos regarding a Sukkah with incomplete walls are complex, it is preferable to construct one with four complete sides including a door. Also, from the standpoint of Hidur Mitzvah the enhancement and aesthetics of a mitzvah the Sukkah should consist of four walls.
3. The walls of a Sukkah may be formed of any kind of materials. They must be strong enough to resist a wind normal during the Sukkah season.
4. The --- Sechack – the Sukkah cover- must shade the majority of the Sukkah area. Of course, it should not be so dense so as to obstruct the visibility of the stars.
5. Gaps of three handbreadths disqualify the sechach.
6. The Sukkah must not be set up beneath an overhand, trees, etc.
7. The sechach must consist of materials of vegative origin, for example: bamboo, wooden slats, branches, etc. according to major poskim bamboo shades specifically manufactured for Sukkah usage may be used. Some poskim prefer that the sechach is not placed in direct contact with the metal frame.

### II. The Mitzvah of the Sukkah

1. For the duration of the Sukkos Yom Tov, it is a mitzvah to reside or dwell in the Sukkah. Residing includes eating, sleeping, studying Torah, and socializing. In colder climates, sleeping in the Sukkah is not required.
2. All meals should be eaten in the Sukkah. Fruits or drinks may be consumed outside the Sukkah.
3. On the first night of Yom Tov, one is required to wait until nightfall before reciting Kiddush and is obligated to recite Hamotzi and eat a minimum of a kzait – size of an olive – of bread in the Sukkah.
4. Before every meal after reciting the Hamotzi, the bracha, ---Leshev Basukkah, is recited.
5. Following the Kiddush on the first night, the brachos, ---Leshev Basukkah, and ---Shecheyanu, in that order, is recited. On the second night there is a dispute amongst the Poskim whether the order should be reversed. The individual may choose either option.
6. One is required to eat the meals in the Sukkah on Shmini Atzeres, but the bracha, -----, Leshev Basukkah, is omitted.
7. Although women are not obligated to eat the meals in the Sukkah, if they choose to do so, they fulfill a mitzvah and should recite the bracha, Leshev Basukkah.
8. A sick person is exempt from the mitzvah of the Sukkah. One whose illness is not serious should make every effort to eat the meal or at least part thereof in the Sukkah on the first night.
9. Since it is a **special** requirement to eat in the Sukkah on the first night, if it rains, one should delay reciting the Kiddush for an hour or two. However, if the rain does not stop, then one should recite Kiddush and Hamotzi, eat a slice of bread, and afterwards return to the house for the remainder of the meal.
10. One is exempt from eating in the Sukkah if the weather conditions, such as extreme cold or rain prevail.

### III. The Mitzvah of the Arba Minim – The four Species

#### A. The Halachos of the Esrog

1. The Esrog is -----unfit if it is smaller than an egg dried up or punctured.
2. If the pitum – the protuberance at the end, which is not attached to the tree, is broken, then it may be unfit. Since there are certain exemptions, which may render it fit, a shailah should be asked. Those esrogim, which grow naturally without a pitum, are kosher.

#### B. The Halachos of the Lulav

1. The Shidra – the central shaft or spine of the lulav ends usually into a doubled leaf – the tyomes, --- --. If the tip is broken off the lulav is posul – unfit.
2. If the majority of the other leaves are broken off, dried up, or the majority of the lengths are split, the lulav is posul.
3. The minimum length of the shidra should be four handbreadths.

#### C. The Halachos of the Hadassim – Myrtle Branches

1. The minimum length of the Hadassim should be three handbreadths.
2. The tips must not be clipped off.

3. If the leaves have been dried to the point of discoloration, the Haddasim are posulim.
- D. The Halachos of the Arovos – Willow Branches
1. The minimum length must be three handbreadths.
  2. The tips must not be broken off.
  3. If most of the leaves have dried up or fallen off, they are posulim.
  4. The edges of the leaves must be either smooth or obtusely serrated but not acutely serrated.
- E. The Mitzvah of Netilas Lulav
1. The mitzvah must be observed during daylight that is between sunrise and sunset. However, if necessary, the mitzvah may be observed after a lot hashachar ---- daybreak.
  2. Although women may not be required to observe this mitzvah – since this is a time fixed mitzvah – yet if they do observe the mitzvah, they should recite the bracha as the man do.
  3. Children should be encouraged to observe the mitzvah at an earl age.
  4. The mitzvah is performed as follows: All four minim – species – are held prior to the recital of the bracha. Since the bracha must precede the actual performance of the mitzvah, the esrog is held upside down. The bracha is recited and the esrog is then turned to its rightful position.
  5. Some poskim are of the opinion that the esrog need not be turned upside down, but one may mentally stipulate that he does not wish to fulfill the mitzvah until the bracha is recited.
  6. After the bracha is recited, the Arba Minim – the four species – are waved in six directions. The movement begins from the heart three times in each direction in the following order: Forward, Right, Rear, Left, Upward, and Downwards.
  7. Though it is not mandatory, some perform the mitzvah in the Sukkah.
  8. The Tefillah preceding the performance of the mitzvah and the brachos may be found in Birnbaum Daily Siddur of .....

#### IV. Hoshana Rabbah Observance

1. Hoshana Rabbah is the last day – seventh day of Sukkos – when the mitzvah of the Arba Minim and in Israel the mitzvahs of Sukkah are observed.
2. During the morning services, seven processions around the Bima take place. This is then followed by a series of Tefillos entitled Hoshannos. The two primary themes of these tefillos are the Redemption of Israel and Economic Prosperity.
3. In many communities, the Tikkun Leil Hoshanna Rabbah is observed all night. Some read Sefer Devorim – Deuteronomy – and others Sefer Tehillim – the Psalms.
4. In honor of the day, festive clothes are worn and a festive meal is prepared.

#### V. Concluding Days of Sukkos

##### A. Shmini Atzeres

1. In communities other than in Israel, people still eat their meals in the Sukkah with one exception, that is, the bracha Leshev BaSukkah is omitted.
2. On this day, during the Musaf service, the additional phrase, Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hagoshe: is inserted. This practice is to be observed until after Musaf on the first day of Pesach.
3. Yizkor is recited on this day.

##### B. Simchas Torah

1. One does not eat in the Sukkah.
2. This day is dedicated to the celebration of the Torah.

#### VI. Isru Chag

1. The day after each of the three Yomim Tovim, namely Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkos is called Isru Chag.
2. Eulogies and fasting are avoided.
3. Tachnun is omitted
4. If it occurs on Shabbos Tzidkatcha Tzedk, is omitted.