

## TTL-Tani Talks Life-The Meaning of The Sukkah Elements

Shiur where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons

All shows besides TTD on podcast forums

For the reufah and yeshiva for anyone who wants or needs

Shout out to Jake W and Eli N

Sources from sefaria and aish unless noted otherwise

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Did you ever stop and think what is the point, the real point of sukkos? What are we supposed to learn and take from sukkos? What is the point of the hut, the esrog, the Lulav, the hadasim and the aravot? Is there something deeper going on?

The answer to this question, is for sure there is. We just have to dig and find out what it is.

[Aish.com](#) points out with author Slovie Jungreiss Wolf

We dwell in our [sukkah](#) for seven days. We leave our homes and all that is within. The dining room table, the mirrors and lighting, the comfort of our couch and we sit in a temporary hut, a sukkah.

Why a sukkah?

When the Jewish people were taken out of Egypt, God provided them with ‘sukkah’ booths of shelter. His clouds of glory would be their protection in the harsh desert wilderness.

Why wouldn’t God give His nation a more permanent dwelling?

This generation that left Egypt was weak in faith. God wanted His people to know forever that strength and security come not from a beautiful home or a fancy car. It is not about our possessions, security systems, bank accounts, or jobs. It is all about faith.

“Come!” God beckons. “Leave all your fears behind. I will shelter you beneath My wings. You will find your faith, you will discover serenity. Our connection will endure forever. Greater than any ‘thing’ is the knowledge that you do not live life alone. Find your fortress of faith.”

Reflecting on our sukkah helps open our eyes to the definition of true trust in God. Sukkot asks us to think: What matters in life? What sustains me? Whatever is important is right here with me. Everything else is temporary. The shelter of the Divine is the only shelter that remains forever.

Our sukkah reminds us that there was a time our people, too, felt helpless. Just as God sustained us and nourished both our bodies and souls, so too, will we find our sustenance. God will never abandon His people. As difficult as life seems, remember this teaching well. We have gone through an incredible journey, exiled throughout the four corners of the world. Given up for dead. And yet, here we are! Sitting in the sukkah booths as our forefathers did in the desert. The legacy remains alive. We are a miracle.

Renew your strength and courage. Inspire yourself. Ignite the spark that lies within your soul.

The four species together comprise one mitzvah. If one of the species is missing, the mitzvah is not fulfilled.

Each species represents another type of Jew. God says that we are to hold all four together as one. Each is necessary.

Whoever fulfills this mitzvah brings peace and harmony to himself and to the entire world.

From [aish.com](http://aish.com) with Rabbi Shraga Simmons

Often, the key to discovering this focus is found in the prayers. The Siddur (prayer book) refers to Sukkot as *Zman Simchateinu*, "the Time of Our Joy." Sukkot is designed as a one-week workshop on joy!

For seven days, we move out of our wall-to-wall carpeted, air-conditioned house, into a little hut called a Sukkah. But how is this supposed to make us happy?!

The lesson is that the physical objects with which we surround ourselves are not what make us happy. A person can live in a gorgeous home and be absolutely miserable. Or, he can live in a shabby hut and be ecstatically happy. The key to joy is success in our relationships. This includes our relationship with other people, with ourselves, and with God.

The Midrash says that the four species of the Lulav represent four different types of Jews:

- The Esrog has a good taste and a good fragrance. It represents a person with both wisdom (Torah learning) and good deeds.
- The Hadas (myrtle) has a good fragrance, but is inedible. It represents a person who has good deeds, but lacks wisdom.
- The Lulav (date palm) is edible, but has no smell. This represents the person with wisdom, but without good deeds.
- The Aravah (willow) has neither taste nor smell. It represents a person with neither good deeds nor Torah learning.

On Sukkot, we gather these four species, bind them, and wave them all together. The Lulav is only kosher if all four species are taken together. If one of the species is missing, the entire Lulav is invalid.

A similar principle is taught by the composition of the incense brought in the Holy Temple.

There were 11 ingredients, of which one, the *chelbanah* spice, smelled terrible. Yet, the incense was only valid if all the ingredients were included together. This teaches that we must look at all the Jewish people as a unit, working together.

There may be people we don't like, but we still have to deal with. We cannot simply say that certain people are not part of our world, or that they do not belong to us. On the contrary, humanity is one indivisible unit. This recognition is basic to happiness because when we realize that we are all interconnected, we can be more patient and tolerant of others.

Note that when the Lulav is held, the Esrog is held next to the willow. The one with the "most" should position himself to be near the one with the "least," in order to favorably influence him.

This idea finds expression also in the mitzvah of inviting guests into our Sukkah. This year, try inviting some friends over — perhaps even someone who you don't know very well. The results will astound you!

Another way to look at the Lulav is mentioned in "Sefer Bahir," a kabbalistic work almost 2,000 years old. It describes the four species as four parts of a human being:

- The Esrog represents the **heart**, the seat of our emotions.
- The Hadas (myrtle) has leaves shaped like an **eye**.
- The Lulav (date palm) represents the **spine**, from where our actions emanate.
- The Aravah (willow) represents the **lips**, our speech.

The four species must be taken together as a unit. So too, to achieve happiness, one must use all of his faculties in unison. You cannot say one thing and feel another. We must unify our feelings, our actions, our speech and our outlook. With all of these working together, we are well on the path to self-esteem, tranquility and joy.

The four species also represent the Name of God. Aravah (willow), Hadas (myrtle), Lulav (date palm) and Esrog represent the Yud and Heh and Vav and Heh of the four-letter Name of God. Again, the key here is unity. As we say everyday in the Shema prayer: "God is One." Whether things may appear to us as good or evil, we must realize that it all comes from God. One must deal with various pleasant or unpleasant circumstances — ultimately for one's maximal growth, but at the root everything comes from God.

Being aware of this keeps our focus and helps us to deal with the issues of life. When we relate to God's unity, we come closer to achieving joy in the world.

Sukkot is a one-week opportunity to build these relationships and incorporate them into our lives. May we all enjoy great success in this venture!

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg points out on [aish.com](http://aish.com)

We can focus on the details, the minutiae, the deficiencies and shortcomings, what is missing, and the gaps in our life, and we will be miserable. Or we can employ imagination and creativity and find happiness. Happiness is not the result of getting what we are missing, but it is achieved by focusing on what is there and seeing our lives as complete, even if it often takes imagination and creativity to do so.

Happiness doesn't come from things, it comes from experiences and it comes from relationships. Don't get me wrong, things are nice, they are good, and they are enjoyable, but we all know or have heard of plenty of people with lots of things who are still pursuing happiness who haven't yet found it. And there are people who lack many things, but are very happy.

In the sukkah, don't feel the heat of the sun; feel the warmth of your family. Don't focus on who is not at the table; focus on who is there. Don't focus on what spilled; focus on how much is left to enjoy.

Immersing ourselves in the sukkah is the secret to finally finding happiness. Go out of your home with fixed walls and a full roof and step into your temporary and incomplete hut that takes creativity and imagination to see as a dwelling, and you will experience true happiness and joy.

From Eliana Cline on [aish.com](http://aish.com)

The sparks of joy we get from home and possessions are through living and creating with them. The spark of joy from the couch is from sitting with the children reading stories, learning Torah, and discussing things with them.

The cluttered and scratched dining room table evokes joy by playing its pivotal role in the heart of the home where we Shabbas happens, meals, games, make birthday cards and have our Passover Seder and so much more.

Joy isn't about the space we live in but the space within in us.

So owning less is not necessarily going to create the joy we yearn for.

In a few days, we will gather in our sukkah with the wobbly folding table and artwork scribbles from kindergarten. And in that space where the rain will inevitably mar our careful decorations we will celebrate Sukkot – the festival of joy.

It is particularly in the sukkah when we leave our permanent homes and enter a holy space encased in God's eternal love that we experience true joy.

The deepest joy is found specifically when we move out of the safety of our things (however many or few), with no solid roof over our heads, open to the elements.

It is found in our vulnerability, in acknowledging that we are powerless but beloved, and part of the Divine plan which we do not fully grasp but trust is good.

It is found when we look way beyond the concrete through to the stars, realizing that security ultimately comes from connecting with God, basking in the sparks of joy that come through God's loving, sustaining embrace.

From

Rabbi Joel Padowitz on [aish.com](http://aish.com)

We all want happiness, but often make the mistake of confusing happiness with success. Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get. As the Sages taught, Who is rich? The one who is happy with his lot ([Avot 4:1](#)). Happiness is not something that happens to us. It's a decision we must make, and we can each be as happy as we decide to be.

Since our mandate on Sukkot is to be “completely joyous,” we are obliged to make that decision, which requires us to take a view on one of life's great paradoxes: On the one hand, whoever you are, by virtue of being alive, your cup truly does “runneth over.” But on the other hand, you could always have a bigger cup. Choose to take pleasure in what you do have, and — voilà! — you've stumbled onto the secret of happiness. Choose instead to focus on the pursuit of a bigger cup, and you are forever left wanting.

Not only is this the secret to happiness, but it's also the central message of the Sukkot holiday — named for the sukkah, the sparsely roofed temporary structure in which we dwell for the seven days of the holiday. This year, in a repeat of what we have done for more than 100 generations, Jews the world over will abandon their homes and creature comforts to seek happiness in flimsy huts furnished with little more than plastic chairs and foam mattresses. What better place could there be to remind ourselves that true happiness comes not from all the stuff we have, but from what we still have when stripped of all our stuff?

Story from Nesanel Safran on [aish.com](http://aish.com)

Mike sulked as he went through his closet for about the tenth time. How was he ever going to wear any of these junky clothes to visit someone so important?

He'd been feeling really excited and nervous ever since he got the invitation a couple of days ago from Jeremy, a new kid in his class, to come to his house for what he'd called a 'sukkah party.'

Though he had heard of the holiday of Sukkot, Mike really didn't know too much about it.

But *whatever* the reason for the invite, Mike was happy. After all, it wasn't every day a regular kid like him got invited to spend time together with someone like Jeremy, whose father was a very wealthy and famous executive who was even on the cover of Time magazine. Mike had wanted to make the 'right' kind of impression by buying and wearing the latest new designer shoes and clothing - but his mom had said no way.

"But Mom," he'd pleaded, "rich, important people like Jeremy and his family aren't like we are. They won't even look at me if I'm dressed in plain, old clothes."

"I'm sorry, Mike but clothing like that just isn't in our budget," she'd said. "Besides I'm sure Jeremy doesn't want to be your friend because of your clothing. It's who you are inside that's important."

Seeing that there was no more room for argument, Mike put on his best pants and shirt, shined his old shoes, combed his hair, and hoped for the best.

Riding over on his bike, Mike was surprised to see that while the houses were somewhat bigger than average, they in no way resembled the huge mansions he had imagined Jeremy's neighborhood would include. Leaning his bike carefully up against the stone staircase, Mike's hand was a little sweaty as he knocked on the door. He was nervous to face the butler he was sure was waiting on the other side of the door for his arrival, and was surprised when his knock was answered by Jeremy's mom.

"Hi there. You must be Mike. We've heard so much about you from Jeremy and we're happy to meet you."

"Hey Mike!" Jeremy appeared behind his mother's shoulder and the two of them smiled at each other as they welcomed Mike inside the house.

*Their house is so regular,* thought Mike. *They probably keep it that way so their sukkah house can be really fancy. They must spend all their money on that.*

"C'mon in, I can't wait for you to see our sukkah. It's out back." Jeremy led him through the house, which was actually a lot bigger on the inside than it seemed to be from the outside. They finally came to a glass door that led out to a huge yard. In one corner, Mike could see a wooden shack with leaves spread all across the top.

"Hey what's that, the servants' quarters?" he asked.

Jeremy laughed. "No. We don't have any servants. My mom has a cleaning lady a few times a week but she doesn't live here."

"So what is that, then?"

"That's our sukkah!"

Mike opened the door to the wooden hut and his jaw dropped in surprise. He felt like he had stepped into another world, but not the way he thought it would be. Inside was a long table, beautifully set with all kinds of candy, cake and *nosh*. There were all kinds of decorations and fruits and artwork hanging from the walls, and the branches that he now saw from the inside formed an open-air roof. Seated at the table were Jeremy's dad and two of his brothers, all reading from books with Hebrew letters. They all wore nice but simple clothing, and everyone looked very happy. Mike even felt a little overdressed.

Jeremy's dad stood up. "You must be Mike. Welcome to our sukkah. Would you like to make a blessing on the special *etrog* fruit and *lulav* branch? Then afterwards, you can sit down and eat some of these delicious treats. Sukkot is a time for being together and enjoying each other's company."

Mike couldn't get over how friendly and nice everyone was, and how comfortable he felt. Even though they were very wealthy, Jeremy and his family were regular people, just like his family. Under the leaves and the blue sky, he realized that deep down, people are all pretty much the same.

Another story from Nesanel Safran on [aish.com](http://aish.com)

They called themselves The Fabulous Foursome. When they first met each other as little kids, Nancy, Debra, Amy and Sue became inseparable. They all lived on the same block, went to the same school, and even the same classes.

Even though many times kids who are friends when they're little drift apart as they get older, the 'foursome' seemed to stick it out through thick and thin. But during the last couple of years, it had been getting harder to keep together.

First of all, Debra and Amy, who were real brains, had transferred to a special school out of town that was just for extra-smart kids. And Nancy had moved out of the neighborhood and started to go to a very exclusive private school that her parents felt was well worth the huge tuition.

But Sue, a cheerful, friendly girl, whose grades were not quite up to those of Debra or Amy, and whose parents couldn't afford to send her to Amy's school, was left holding down the fort at their old school.

The girls didn't want to just let the Fabulous Foursome fade away, so they decided that they would at least get together once a year. They chose the Fall, at Sukkot time, as the best time to do it since they all had off from school, and the holiday atmosphere was perfect for happy reunions.

The first year, the girls got together in Amy's family's beautifully decorated Sukkah. Although Sue felt a bit out of place as the other three animatedly went on about their exciting new schools, just the fun of seeing old and dear friends made everything alright. Then and there, before they went home, the girls promised to get together again next year - 'same time, same place'.

But now another year had passed and Sue's mother found her sitting alone in their modest Sukkah on their back porch. Instead of her usual bright smile, the girl wore a frown that hardly reflected the natural joy of the holiday.

"Sue," said her mom, "aren't you and your old friends from school supposed to be meeting each other right about now?"

Sue shrugged as if she had forgotten about the whole thing. But she certainly remembered very well, and she would have remembered even if Amy hadn't called her to remind and invite her the week before. At the time, Sue had given her a kind of vague answer, murmuring under her breath that the others would probably be bored getting together with 'plain old her.' She had considered going, but then decided that she didn't have anything to add to the foursome, not Debra's or Nancy's brains, nor Amy's popularity and glamour. She figured that the others would surely be much happier to go on without her, as a threesome, and were only inviting her out of pity because they felt they had to.

Sue's mother went back to her holiday baking, as Sue went back to her gloom. A few minutes later, she heard a knock on the front door. "*Some neighbor coming to wish her parents a happy holiday, no doubt,*" Sue thought to herself.

Then she heard what sounded like a lot of footsteps coming toward the Sukkah. She looked up and was amazed to see her friends, Amy, Debra, and Nancy all wearing big smiles and holding a big, beautifully decorated cake with the words 'FABULOUS 4 FOREVER' written in pink icing.

"How could the three of us sit alone in front of a cake like this?" quipped Amy.

Sue blushed. "But I thought you would never miss me. You guys are so special, in your special schools and everything, and I'm so ... plain."

By now Debra had started to cut the cake, not surprisingly made out of four layers. "Sue," Nancy explained, waving her finger in mock scolding, "you should know better than that. It's not where a person goes to school, what they have, or even what they know that makes a person special. Everyone is special, just because they are who they are. And you're a special and important part of us. You always have something nice to say about everyone, and just seeing your smile is enough to brighten a person's whole day. You're like the glue that keeps the four of us together, and sitting without you we felt like a table missing a leg. So what do you say, lets cut this out, and start cutting the cake, okay?"

Everyone laughed, and the foursome went on to spend beautiful Sukkots together for many years to come.

And a last story from Nesanel Safran from [aish.com](http://aish.com) to learn about how less can be more, especially when we think about how we go from our comfortable homes to small huts outside:

"Mom, I can't even fit all of my clothes into these measly closets!" Josh cried out glumly as his mother walked past his bedroom carrying a moving-carton.

"Well, maybe that means you have too many clothes," she grinned.

*Hah, hah, very funny!* the boy thought. There had been *plenty* of room for his stuff in the big house where they used to live.

"Why did we have to move into this dumb, tiny condo, anyway?" he blurted out to no one in particular, as his mother had already moved on. Not that it mattered, he already knew the answer - it had to do with his dad getting a different kind of a job - but that didn't mean he had to be happy about it.

After finally squeezing the last hanger onto the closet rod, Josh plopped down on his bed and looked around. True, he had all his furniture like in his old room, but now there wasn't space for

almost anything else. Feeling claustrophobic and just plain mad, Josh stepped outside to get some air. He leaned over the railing of their condo's small porch - nothing at all like the big back yard they used to have - and sighed.

"Hey, are you new here?"

Josh heard a voice call out, but couldn't figure out from where.

"Up here, man."

Josh craned his neck upward to see a smiling, freckled-faced boy about his age, looking down at him from the porch above.

"You just moved in, right?" the kid went on.

"Yeah."

"Well, I'm Steve - we're neighbors from now on."

"Uh, hi. I'm Josh."

"Hi Josh. You like playing street hockey?"

Josh nodded, his face brightening - he'd been part of an official street-hockey league where he used to live.

"Well, me and some other kids from here play every afternoon at parking lot 'C'. I'm going now from out front - wanna come?"

"Um ... sure. Just give me a minute." Josh ran back inside and started rummaging through the cartons that had his sports equipment. In his old house, he'd kept all this stuff neatly in an equipment locker in their big garage. Here they didn't even *have* a garage.

He fished out his pro-style helmet, knee, shoulder and elbow pads, laced on his official hockey shoes and slipped his mesh, league jersey over his head. Then he reached under his bed, grabbed his fiberglass, pro-curve stick. All this stuff had cost a lot, but it was worth it. You needed the best equipment if you wanted to really enjoy the game. He quickly told his mom where he was going and sprinted out the door.

Steve was there, waiting.

"Let's go," Steve said, giving Josh a strange look.

Josh noticed that Steve wasn't wearing - or even carrying - his uniform or pads or anything. *The guys in the league here must have a private locker room where they keep their stuff, in the gym the kid had said was at the end of the parking lot.*

Or so Josh thought. Because a minute later when they got there, he realized not only was there no locker room, there wasn't even a gym. Just a group of kids in their regular clothes, laughing and running around with old, beat-up hockey sticks in the parking lot. His face fell.

This wasn't a hockey league! It was just a dumb, little pick-up game - small and shabby - like everything in this dumb place, they'd moved to!

"Josh, you'll play on my team," Steve said, waving the kid into the action. Well, he was already here, he might as well play - just this once.

Before he had a chance to think, someone had shot the hockey ball (at least they had one of those!) his way. Soon he was running and mixing it up with the guys who, he had to admit, played pretty well. In fact, since they weren't as loaded down as he was, they were moving so fast he could hardly keep up.



As the game went on, more and more of Josh's fancy, official equipment came off, until he was running around looking like the rest of the guys, laughing with them - and having a blast! Could it be that having fancier stuff - or a bigger house - wasn't what made a person happy, after all? "Great game Josh!" Steve slapped him on the back. "Tomorrow, same *time* same *place*." "You bet!" Josh nodded, thinking to himself that though he was surely in a different, more simple *place* than he'd been used to, there was no reason from now on he couldn't have just as good a *time*.

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Let's look at some other sources.

### Leviticus 23: 40-44

Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the LORD [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of *hadar*<sup>c</sup>*Others "goodly"; exact meaning of Heb. hadar uncertain. Traditionally the product is understood as "citron."* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy<sup>f</sup>*Meaning of Heb. aboth uncertain.* trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.: You shall observe it as a festival of the LORD for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel 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, I the LORD your God.

So Moses declared to the Israelites the set times of the LORD.

### Hakatav Vehakabbalah LEviticus 23

**So that your generations will know that in Sukkos.** The clouds of glory began to appear above the people of Israel in Sukkos, as it says (Shemos 12:37): "The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Sukkos." In the Mechilta (12), Rabbi Akiva says: "Sukkos refers solely to the clouds of glory." It seems that this is why Scripture wrote בסכות with the מלא ( — full spelling); it teaches us about the place where the clouds of glory first appeared, for the name of the place is always spelled in the full form with the סכות — ו...

### Deutoronomy 31

#### Hakhel miztvah by sukkos

: And Moses instructed them as follows: Every seventh year,<sup>c</sup>*See note at 15.1.* the year set for remission, at the Feast of Booths (sukkos) : when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD

your God in the place that He will choose, you shall read this Teaching aloud in the presence of all Israel.

Gather the people—men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere the LORD your God and to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching.

Their children, too, who have not had the experience, shall hear and learn to revere the LORD your God as long as they live in the land that you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.

Sukkah 41a

**MISHNA:** How is the portion of the Torah that is read by the king recited at the assembly, when all the Jewish people would assemble? At the conclusion of the first day of the festival of *Sukkot*, on the eighth, after the conclusion of the Sabbatical Year, they make a wooden platform for the king in the Temple courtyard, and he sits on it, as it is stated: “At the end of every seven years, in the Festival of the Sabbatical Year” (Deuteronomy 31:10). The synagogue attendant takes a Torah scroll and gives it to the head of the synagogue that stands on the Temple Mount. And the head of the synagogue gives it to the deputy High Priest, and the deputy High Priest gives it to the High Priest, and the High priest gives it to the king. And the king stands, and receives the Torah scroll, and reads from it while sitting

King Agrippa arose, and received the Torah scroll, and read from it while standing, and the Sages praised him for this. And when Agrippa arrived at the verse in the portion read by the king that states: “You may not appoint a foreigner over you” (Deuteronomy 17:15), tears flowed from his eyes, because he was a descendant of the house of Herod and was not of Jewish origin. The entire nation said to him: Fear not, Agrippa. You are our brother, you are our brother. And the king reads from the beginning of Deuteronomy, from the verse that states: “And these are the words” (Deuteronomy 1:1), until the words: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4). And he then reads the sections beginning with: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4–9), “And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 11:13–21), “You shall tithe” (Deuteronomy 14:22–29), “When you have made an end of the tithing” (Deuteronomy 26:12–15), and the passage concerning the appointment of a king (Deuteronomy 17:14–20), and the blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28), until he finishes the entire portion.

The same blessings that the High Priest recites on Yom Kippur, the king recites at this ceremony, but he delivers a blessing concerning the Festivals in place of the blessing concerning forgiveness for iniquity.

[Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 625:1](#)

:On Succot we shall dwell for 7 days etc. Because on Succot I protected the children of Israel. These refer to the clouds of glory who protected them from all the intense heat and the sun of the desert. *And it is a Mitzvah to begin building the Succah immediately after Yom Kippur. For if a Mitzvah that comes to one's hands, one should not delay performing it.*

Deuteronomy 16

Three times a year—on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths—all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the LORD your God has bestowed upon you.

Sukkah 27b

**It is taught** in another *baraita* that **Rabbi Eliezer says: Just as a person does not fulfill his obligation on the first day of the Festival with the *lulav* of another, as it is written: “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a beautiful tree, branches of a date palm”** (Leviticus 23:40), and the Sages derive from the phrase: Shall take for yourselves, that it must be taken **from your own** and not from that of someone else, **so too, a person does not fulfill his obligation with the *sukka* of another...**

Mishne Torah, Shofar, Sukkah, and Lulav, 7

What is the requisite length of each of these species? The palm branch is not less than four handbreadths; and if it was [only] a minimal amount longer [than this], it is fit. And its measurement is only from its spine, not from the top of the leaves. The myrtle and the willow are not less than three handbreadths; and if they were [only] a minimal amount longer [than this], they are fit. And even if there are only three fresh leaves in each and every branch, they are fit. And that is so long as they be at the top of the branch...

How many should be taken of each species? One *lulav*, one *ethrog*, two twigs of willow, and three twigs of myrtle. If one wishes to increase the number of myrtle twigs so that the bunch should be larger, he may do so. And it is an adornment of the commandment. But [regarding] the other species, we do not add to their number or diminish from it. And if one did add or diminish from it, (it is disqualified).

#### Vayikra Rabbah 30:14

.Rabbi Mani opened, "All of my bones shall say, "Lord, who is like you" (Psalms 35:10). This verse was only stated for the sake of the lulav (the four species). The spine of the palm branch is similar to the spine of man. And the myrtle is similar to the eye. And the willow is similar to the mouth. And the etrog (citron), is similar to the heart. David said, 'In all of the limbs, there are no greater ones than these, as they are compared to the entire body.' This is [what is meant] by 'All of my bones shall say.'"

Vayikra Rabbah 30

Another explanation: "The fruit of a beautiful tree (*ets hadar*)" - this is [referring to] our father, Avraham, who the Holy One, blessed be He, graced (*hider*) with a good old age, as it is stated (Genesis 24:1), "And Avraham was old, had come along in days;" and it is written (Leviticus 19:32), "and you shall grace (*hadarta*) the old." "The branches (*kappot*) of a date palm" - this is [referring to] Yitschak, who was bound (*kafut* which is spelled with the same letters as *kappot*)

and tied up on top of the altar. "And a branch of a braided tree (a myrtle)" - this is [referring to] Yakov. Just like this myrtle bustles with leaves, so too was Yakov bustling with children. "And brook willows" - this is [referring to] Yosef. Just like this willow gets withered before these three [other] species, so too did Yosef die before his brothers. Another explanation: "The fruit of a beautiful tree (*ets hadar*)" - this is [referring to] Sarah, who the Holy One, blessed be He, graced (*hider*) with a good old age, as it is stated ([Genesis 18:11](#)), "And Avraham and Sarah were old." "The branches of a date palm" - this is [referring to] Rivka. Just like this date palm, it has food and it has thorns, so too Rivkah brought up a righteous one and an evildoer. "And a branch of a braided tree (a myrtle)" - this is [referring to] Leah. Just like this myrtle bustles with leaves, so too was Leah bustling with children. "And brook willows" - this is [referring to] Rachel. Just like this willow gets withered before these three [other] species, so too did Rachel die before her sister.

Another explanation: "The fruit of a beautiful tree (*ets hadar*)" - this is [referring to] the Great Sanhedrins (high courts) of Israel, who the Holy One, blessed be He, graced (*hider*) with a good old age, as it is stated (Leviticus 19:32), "And you shall get up in front of a venerable one." "The branches (*kappot*) of a date palm" - this is [referring to] the Torah scholars who force (*kofin*) themselves to learn one from the other. "And a branch of a braided tree (a myrtle)" - this is [referring to] the three rows of students who would sit in front of them (since three myrtle branches are customarily waved). "And brook willows" - this is [referring to] the two judges' scribes who would stand in front of them and write down the words of those who would render innocent and the words of those who would render guilty (since two willow branches are customarily waved).

Another explanation: "The fruit of a beautiful tree" - these are [referring to] Israel. Just like this citron (etrog), which has taste and has smell, so too Israel has among them people that have Torah and have good deeds. "The branches of a date palm" - these are [referring to] Israel. Just like this date, which has taste and has no smell, so too Israel has among them those that have Torah but do not have good deeds. "And a branch of a braided tree (a myrtle)" - these are [referring to] Israel. Just like this myrtle, which has smell and has no taste, so too Israel has among them those that have good deeds but do not have Torah. "And brook willows" - these are [referring to] Israel. Just like this willow, which has no smell and has no taste, so too Israel has among them people that have no Torah and have no good deeds. And what does the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? To destroy them is impossible, but rather the Holy One, blessed be He, said "bind them all together [into] one grouping and these will atone for those." And if you will have done that, I will be elevated at that time. This is [the meaning of] what is written ([Amos 9:6](#)), "He Who built the upper chambers in the heavens" (indicating his elevation). And when is He elevated? When they make one grouping, as it is stated (Ibid.), "and established His grouping on the earth." Hence Moshe warned Israel, "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day."

### Midrash Tanchuma, Emor 19:1

“And you shall take for yourselves.” This text is related (to Ps. 35:10), “All my bones shall say, ‘Lord, who is like you?’” David has stated this verse beautifully. You yourself know that the *lulav* is like a human spine, the myrtle is like the eyes, the willow is like the lips, and the *ethrog* is like the heart. David said, “I have no greater organs than these, [since] they correspond to the [whole body (in importance)].” Ergo (in Ps. 35:10), “All my bones [shall say, ‘Lord, who is like you?’]”

### Guide for the perplexed Part 3, 43

The two festivals, Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, imply also the teaching of certain truths and certain moral lessons. Passover teaches us to remember the miracles which God wrought in Egypt, and to perpetuate their memory; the Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the miracles wrought in the wilderness. The moral lessons derived from these feasts is this: man ought to remember his evil days in his days of prosperity. He will thereby be induced to thank God repeatedly, to lead a modest and humble life...

### Sifra, Emor, Chapter 16 2-5

"And you shall take for yourselves": each one of you. "for yourselves": and not what is borrowed or stolen — whence it was ruled: One does not fulfill his obligation on the first day of the festival with his neighbor's *lulav*. But if he wishes, he may give it as a gift to his neighbor, and his neighbor to his neighbor, even if there be a hundred. Once, R. Gamliel and the elders were coming in a boat and no one but R. Gamliel had a *lulav*, whereupon he gave it as a gift to R. Yehoshua, R. Yehoshua to R. Elazar b. Azaryah, and R. Elazar b. Azaryah to R...

### Sefer Hachinuch 324

And there is also another matter with these four things - that they are similar to precious limbs in a man (see Vayikra Rabbah 30:14; Midrash Tanchuma, Emor 19): As the citron is similar to the heart, which is the dwelling place of the intellect, to hint that he should serve His creator with his intellect; the *lulav* is similar to the backbone, which is the essence of a person, to hint that he should straighten himself completely for His service, blessed be He; the myrtle [leaves are] similar to the eyes, to hint that he should not stray after his eyes 'on the day of the rejoicing of his heart'...

### Shabbat 133

What is the source for the requirement of: “This is my God and I will glorify Him”? **As it was taught** in a *baraita* with regard to the verse: “**This is my God and I will glorify Him [anveihu]**, the Lord of my father and I will raise Him up.” The Sages interpreted *anveihu* homiletically as linguistically related to *noi*, beauty, and interpreted the verse: **Beautify yourself before Him in mitzvot**. Even if one fulfills the mitzva by performing it simply, it is nonetheless proper to perform the mitzva as beautifully as possible...

Sukkah 51

**MISHNA: One who did not see the Celebration of the Place of the Drawing of the Water never saw celebration in his days.** This was the sequence of events: **At the conclusion of the first Festival day the priests and the Levites descended from the Israelites' courtyard to the Women's Courtyard, where they would introduce a significant repair,** as the Gemara will explain. **There were golden candelabra atop poles there in the courtyard. And there were four basins made of gold at the top of each candelabrum. And there were four ladders for each and every pole and there were four children from the priesthood trainees, and in their hands were pitchers with a capacity of 120 log of oil that they would pour into each and every basin. From the worn trousers of the priests and their belts they would loosen and tear strips to use as wicks, and with them they would light the candelabra. And the light from the candelabra was so bright that there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated from the light of the Place of the Drawing of the Water.**

תְּסִידִים וְאֲנָשֵׁי מַעֲשֵׂה הָיוּ מְרַקְדִין בְּפִיָּהֶם The **pious and the men of action would dance before the people who attended the celebration,**

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with flaming torches that they would juggle in their hands, and they would say before them passages of song and praise to God. **And the Levites would play on lyres, harps, cymbals, and trumpets, and countless other musical instruments.** The musicians would stand on the fifteen stairs that descend from the Israelites' courtyard to the Women's Courtyard, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of the Ascents in Psalms, i.e., chapters 120–134, and upon which the Levites stand with musical instruments and recite their song.

And this was the ceremony of the Water Libation: **Two priests stood at the Upper Gate that descends from the Israelites' courtyard to the Women's Courtyard, with two trumpets in their hands.** When the rooster crowed at dawn, they sounded a *tekia*, and sounded a *terua*, and sounded a *tekia*. When they who would draw the water reached the tenth stair the trumpeters sounded a *tekia*, and sounded a *terua*, and sounded a *tekia*, to indicate that the time to draw water from the Siloam pool had arrived. When they reached the Women's Courtyard with the basins of water in their hands, the trumpeters sounded a *tekia*, and sounded a *terua*, and sounded a *tekia*. When they reached the ground of the Women's Courtyard, the trumpeters sounded a *tekia*, and sounded a *terua*, and sounded a *tekia*. They continued sounding the trumpets until they reached the gate through which one exits to the east, from the Women's Courtyard to the eastern slope of the Temple Mount. When they reached the gate through which one exits to the east, they turned from facing east to facing west, toward the Holy of Holies, and said: **Our ancestors who were in this place during the First Temple period who did not conduct themselves appropriately, stood "with their backs toward the Sanctuary of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east" (Ezekiel 8:16), and we, our eyes are to God. Rabbi Yehuda says that they would repeat and say: We are to God, and our eyes are to God.**

Sukkah 28b

**MISHNA: All seven days of *Sukkot*, a person renders his *sukka* his permanent residence and his house his temporary residence. If rain fell, from when is it permitted to vacate the *sukka*? It is permitted from the point that it is raining so hard that the congealed dish will spoil.**

Mishne Torah, Shofar, Sukkah, Lulav, 6

How is the commandment of dwelling in the sukkah? That one eat, drink and live in in the sukkah all of the seven days — both during the day and during the night — in the same way that he lives at home during the other days of the year. And all seven days of Sukkot, one renders his house temporary, and his sukkah permanent; as it is stated (Leviticus 23:42), "In huts shall you dwell seven days." How is that? [If he has] beautiful vessels and beautiful bedding, [they are brought] into the sukkah. And drinking vessels, such as jugs and cups, [are also brought] into the sukkah...

[Rashi on Leviticus 23:36:1](#)

— The word is derived from the root עצר “to hold back” and suggests: I keep you back with Me one day more. It is similar to the case of a king who invited his children to a banquet for a certain number of days. When the time arrived for them to take their departure he said, “Children, I beg of you, stay one day more with me; it is so hard for me to part with you!” (cf. Rashi on Numbers 29:36 and Sukkah 55b).