

Sukkot in the Age of Corona

Including Guidance for Those Not Attending Shul

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Friday, Erev Sukkot

- Those not attending shul should daven Mincha after 1:15pm and preferably before 5:23pm.
- One should light candles in the place of the meal. Since it is generally not safe to light candles in a sukkah, those eating in a sukkah should turn on the sukkah's electric lights in honor of Yom Tov with the *beracha* of *להדליק נר של שבת ושל יום טוב* (Men recite the *beracha* before turning on the lights and most women do so afterwards). Some women afterwards make *shehecheyanu* (Note: reciting *shehecheyanu* constitutes an acceptance of the holiday). Women who are making Kiddush themselves may not recite *shehecheyanu* at candle lighting; one who did so accidentally does not repeat it at Kiddush.
- One may light candles and daven Maariv after 5:40pm. One who is not eating in the sukkah may also recite Kiddush after this time (omitting the blessing *leishev basukkah*).
- Candles should be lit by 6:17pm.
- Remember to recite the Festival prayers and Kiddush with insertions for Shabbat.
- Those who are eating in the sukkah may not make Kiddush until 7:08pm. If one davened Maariv before this time, one should repeat the *Shema* before eating.
- It is a biblical obligation for men to eat an olive's bulk of bread in the sukkah on the first night of Sukkot (and rabbinically, on the second night as well). Preferably, one should eat more than an egg's volume. Men who will not be eating in the sukkah throughout Sukkot due to health concerns should nevertheless make every effort to make Kiddush and eat the requisite amount in a clean and empty sukkah on the first two nights.
- If it is raining at the onset of the first night of Sukkot, one should wait a while to see if the rain will stop before making Kiddush and eating. If the rain continues, one should recite Kiddush (without the blessing *leishev basukkah*) and *hamotzi* in the sukkah and eat the obligatory amount of bread (Note: one may wash before Kiddush on Sukkot even if that is not one's custom during the year). One may then continue the meal inside. If the rain lets up before one goes to sleep, one should return to the sukkah and eat the proper amount of bread again with the *beracha* of *leishev basukkah*.

Shabbat, 1st Day Sukkot

- Those who are davening alone are strongly encouraged to daven *ke-vatikin*, timing the *Amidah* to begin at sunrise (6:55am). Men should finish *Shacharit* by the latest time for the *Shema* (~9:45am).
- The 4 species are not used on Shabbat. Full Hallel is recited.
- There is no requirement to recite *Hoshanot* when davening privately (all the more so on Shabbat, when some authorities hold they are never recited).
- Begin the Shabbat morning meal before 12:44pm.
- *Shalosh Seudos* must be eaten after 1:13pm and preferably before 4:37pm. If not attending shul, daven Mincha before eating.

Saturday Night, 2nd Night Sukkot

- Shabbat ends at 7:14pm. No preparation for the second night of Sukkot may be done until this time. Maariv should be davened after this time with ותודיענו. Those who are not davening Maariv should recite ברוך המבדיל בין קודש לקודש.
- Candles of the second night of Yom Tov should be lit from an existing flame any time between 7:14pm and the beginning of the nighttime meal. Both men and women make the blessing before lighting the candles. If they cannot be lit in the sukkah, or one is not eating in the sukkah, the candles should preferably be lit in a dark area where their light will be used.
- Many women customarily recite *shehecheyanu* after lighting the candles. See above regarding a woman who is reciting Kiddush herself.
- The procedure of יקנה"ז is followed during Kiddush. One recites the blessing over wine and the blessing of Kiddush, followed by the blessing over the candle (if one is accessible), the special Havdalah blessing for when Yom Tov falls on Saturday night, *shehecheyanu*, and *leishev basukkah* (if one is in the sukkah). Some recite *leishev basukkah* before *shehecheyanu* (as is done in Kiddush on the first night).
- If it is raining, a similar procedure is followed as for the first night but one only needs to wait a few minutes for the rain to stop before proceeding with Kiddush in the rainy sukkah.

Sunday, 2nd Day Sukkot

- The *lulav* and *etrog* are taken with the blessings of *al netilat lulav* and *shehecheyanu*.
- On this day only, one should own the 4 species that one uses for the mitzvah. If one is using someone else's species, they should be given as gift (on condition that they be returned after use). During the rest of Sukkot, one may borrow.
- If one is not attending shul, there is a preference to take the 4 species in a sukkah immediately before reciting *Hallel*.
- One waves the 4 species during *Hallel* (at the verses אנא ה' הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו and ה' הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו) even without a *minyan* (although obviously there will be fewer wavings than in shul since ה' הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו is not recited responsively).
- Our *minhag* is to recite *Hoshanot* after Musaf. An individual may recite *hoshanot*; however, the marching only takes place in a shul where there is a *bimah* for Torah reading.
- Daven Mincha between 1:12 and 6:30pm.
- Yom Tov is over at 7:12pm. Daven Maariv after this time and recite Havdalah without a candle or spices. If it is difficult, one need not recite Havdalah in the sukkah.

Chol Hamoed

- The instructions above for taking the 4 species pertain to Chol Hamoed as well, except for *shehecheyanu* which is not recited.
- Full *Hallel* is recited every day.
- It is proper to dress more nicely on Chol Hamoed than on a weekday (although one need not wear a full Shabbat/Yom Tov outfit).
- It is proper to have a festive meal (including wine and preferably including meat, if one enjoys these foods) each day during Chol Hamoed.
- For those with access to a sukkah and no health issues, all meals should be eaten in the sukkah even if one does not wash and eat bread. Beverages (except those drunk in the context

of a meal), as well as snacks (including small portions of cake) may be consumed outside the sukkah.

Friday, Hoshana Rabba

- Davening *ke-vatikin* is highly recommended (sunrise is 7:01am). If one is short on time and/or *kavvanah*, one may recite the weekday *psukei dezimra*.
- It is proper to recite some of the special prayers for water even when davening alone.
- One waves and beats the *aravah* even when davening alone. This may be done any time during the day. In a pinch, one may separate the willows from the *lulav* and use them in the *Hoshana Rabba* ritual.
- It is customary to use 5 lush *aravah* twigs tied together. If obtaining such a bundle is difficult, one may use just 1 willow twig (as long as there is 1 leaf still attached).
- One should daven Mincha after 1:10pm and preferably before 5:12pm.
- Candles should be lit and Maariv davened after 5:30pm. If it is raining, or if one is otherwise exempt from eating in the sukkah, one may recite Kiddush and begin the meal after this time.
- See above under the 1st day for further instructions regarding candle lighting.
- Those who are eating in the sukkah wait to make Kiddush after repeating the *Shema* at 6:57pm.
- Absent a very strong alternate halachic tradition, men should eat all three Shabbat meals in the sukkah (weather permitting). One does not recite the blessing *leishev basukkah* on Shmini Atzeret.

Shabbat, Shmini Atzeret

- Those who are davening alone are strongly encouraged to daven *ke-vatikin*, timing the *Amidah* to begin at sunrise (7:03am). Men should finish *Shacharit* by the latest time for the *Shema* (~9:50am).
- Full Hallel is recited. The 4 species are not used on Shmini Atzeret.
- There is no requirement to recite *Kohelet* without a minyan; however, it may be recited or studied without a *beracha*.
- *Yizkor* may be recited without a minyan.
- Wash for the morning meal before 12:42pm.
- *Shalosh seudot* should be eaten after 1:13pm and preferably before 3:30pm. If you are not attending shul, daven Mincha before eating.

Saturday Night, Simchat Torah Evening

- Shabbat ends at 7:03pm. See above for instructions for davening and candle lighting on Saturday night.
- The *hakafot* are not performed outside shul. If one is upset at missing *hakafot*, one may dance a bit holding a *chumash*.
- The procedure of יקנה"ז is followed during Kiddush. One recites the blessing over wine and the blessing of Kiddush (same as for the previous night), followed by the blessing over the candle, the special Havdalah blessing for when Yom Tov falls on Saturday night, *shehecheyanu*.

Sunday, Simchat Torah

- See above regarding *hakafot*.
- Yom Tov ends at 7:01pm. Daven Maariv after this time and recite Havdalah without a candle or spices.