

SUKKOT:
**GOD’S DESIRE FOR A DWELLING
 IN THE LOWER WORLDS
 AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN MEETING
 HIS EXPECTATIONS**



God’s ultimate purpose in creating the universe was to bestow His goodness upon His creatures. Therefore He designed a world specifically for us, not only perfect in its physical laws but also filled with beauty, such as the magnificence of nature, crafted intentionally for our benefit.

The Midrash teaches that God desired to create a *dira batachtonim*—a “dwelling place” in the lower worlds, just as there is in the upper worlds. Therefore, when God created the world, the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) resided within it.

**GOD’S PURPOSE IN
 CREATION:
 BESTOWING
 GOODNESS AND
 BEAUTY**

SUKKOT FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

This idea is connected to Sukkot being uniquely referred to as "chag Hashem," meaning "the Holy Day of God." The Alshich (Rabbi Moshe Alshich, a renowned 16th-century Torah scholar and commentator) explains that this term reflects God's desire for the *Shechina* to dwell among us, as expressed in the Torah's command to build a Mishkan.

Sukkot, coming after Yom Kippur, marks the time when God returns to dwell within His people, symbolizing the profound Divine joy at this reunion.

A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD: THE DEEPER MEANING OF SUCCOS AS 'CHAG HASHEM'

SUKKOT FROM THE HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

After the introspection of Rosh Hashana and the atonement of Yom Kippur, the spiritual barriers (*kippot*) separating our "inner spark" (the divine essence within every soul) from God are removed. These barriers, which result from actions misaligned with Torah and mitzvot, form spiritual shells around the soul, obstructing its connection to its divine source.

The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that this spark is a "portion of God above," directly linking each soul to the Divine, driving spiritual growth and the desire to elevate the world.

This spark connects to different levels of the soul—*nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*, *chaya*, and *yechida*. The *yechida* represents the most profound alignment with God.

TRANSITION FROM THE HIGH HOLY DAYS TO SUKKOT

UNDERSTANDING THE INNER SPARK

In Kabbalistic terms, the *sukka* represents *ohr makif*—a surrounding light beyond direct comprehension but providing a transcendent form of divine connection. This energy hovers over those dwelling in the *sukka*, creating a holy space where the inner spark can be shielded and nurtured.

A VESSEL FOR THE
TRANSCENDENT
LIGHT OF OHR
MAKIF

The *schach* (the roof of the *sukka*) allows the light of the Divine to "hover" over those inside, much like the protective clouds that accompanied the Jewish People during their journey in the desert.

CHANNELING
DIVINE LIGHT AND
PROTECTION IN
THE SUKKA

The *sukka*, therefore, serves as a protective space for this restored inner divine spark, strengthening it and providing it with the spiritual energy and potential to remain pure and unaltered throughout the year. It will then be our responsibility to make proper use of this unique potential, received during our time in the sukkah, by staying aligned with God's will as expressed through His Torah and mitzvot.

THE SUKKAH: A
SHELTER FOR
NURTURING THE
DIVINE SPARK

THE SUKKA: A SYMBOL OF THE HOLY UNION BETWEEN GOD AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

I shall be holy in the midst of the Children of Israel; I am Hashem, Who betrothed you while taking you out from the land of Egypt to be for you a God; I am Hashem.

Vayikra 22:32-33

During the Exodus, the Jewish People resided in *sukkot* (booths), physical shelters as well as spiritual spaces evoking the Divine Cloud that surrounded and protected them during their 40 years in the desert.

Their commitment to follow Him and His Torah made them “betrothed” to God. Therefore, the *sukka* is also likened to a *chuppa* (wedding canopy), representing the sacred bond between God and the Jewish people.

A CANOPY ROOTED IN THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

SUKKOT: A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE FOR ALL HUMANITY

Sukkot, while deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, conveys a universal message for all humanity. This is embodied in the offering of seventy bullocks in the Temple, symbolizing the seventy nations of the world. These offerings represent prayers for the peace and well-being of all nations.

Sukkot highlights Israel's role in its relationship with God and as a conduit for divine blessings to reach the wider world.

This universal dimension is particularly evident in the prayers for rain recited during Shemini Atzeret, which extend beyond Israel's needs. These prayers seek nourishment and prosperity for all creation, recognizing the interconnected web of life sustained by God's care.

SEVENTY OFFERINGS FOR THE NATIONS

A BLESSING FOR ALL OF HUMANITY

SHEMINI ATZERET: THE YICHUD IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

If Sukkot symbolizes the *chuppa*, the wedding canopy that seals the marriage between God and the Jewish people, Shemini Atzeret represents the intimate moment of *yichud*. In the context of marriage, *yichud* refers to the time when, following the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom retreat to a private room to share their first moments of intimate connection as a married couple. It signifies an exclusive bond between them, away from any outside distractions, to deepen their relationship.

Similarly, Shemini Atzeret is when God invites us to an exclusive relationship with Him. This means that our existence, actions, and every aspect of our lives should align with Hashem's Will embodied in His Torah and mitzvot.

It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that no foreign influences interfere with this sacred relationship. It calls for a deep awareness that everything that transpires in our lives originates solely from His will and intervention. While our efforts—our *hishtadlut*—are crucial, required, and must be taken seriously, we must avoid the hybrid of believing that our achievements in various fields are solely the result of our own power.

Shemini Atzeret is a day dedicated to reinforcing this awareness, a consciousness that should remain with us throughout the entire year, guiding our actions and perspective.

SUKKOT AS A
CHUPPA

A SACRED SPACE
FOR
RECONNECTION
AND SPIRITUAL
PROTECTION

Composed by the Emor Project

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By Rav Pinchas Friedman
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