

SHELTER

A RESOURCE FOR SUKKOT

Reflection upon learning
with a partner

בְּרִזָּל בְּבְרִזָּל יִחַד
וְאִישׁ יִחַד פְּנִי-רֵיעוֹהוּ

משלי כז:ז

As iron sharpens iron,
so too one person sharpens
the wits of their friend

Proverbs 27:17

An invitation to learn

Rich images of a plentiful harvest and communal feast permeate our celebrations in the *sukkah*. Inspired by the symbolism of the *sukkah*, *lulav*, and *etrog*, Limmud has compiled these materials for you to explore with your family and friends this Sukkot.

The festival of Sukkot is named for the temporary booths that we build to serve as makeshift homes for the week. This year, as we mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, these texts reflect

upon the relationship between permanent and temporary, universal and particular, and the idea of Israel as a shelter.

We invite you to learn with a partner or group, in the spirit of participation, reflection, and transformation that characterises the model of Chavruta.

Chag Sukkot Sameach!

chavruta@limmud.org

SUKKAH: TEMPORARILY PERMANENT

Leviticus 23:41-43

⁴¹You 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. ⁴²You shall live in booths seven

days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³in 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.

Translation: NJPS

Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 28b

Our rabbis taught: “For all seven days, a person makes their *sukkah* permanent and their house temporary” (Mishnah Sukkah 2:9).

How so? If they have beautiful vessels, they take them up to the *sukkah*; if they have beautiful bedding, they take it up to the *sukkah*; they eat, drink, and relax in the *sukkah*. From where is this derived? As our rabbis taught: “[they] shall live [in booths]” (Leviticus 23:42) means they shall reside there.

וְחִגְתֶּם אֹתוֹ חַג לַה' שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּשָׁנָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁבִיעִי תַחֲגוּ אֹתוֹ: ⁴²בְּסֻכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל-הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
יֵשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת: ⁴³לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

ויקרא כג:מא-מג

תלמוד בבלי, סוכה כח ע"ב

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: “כָּל שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים אָדָם עוֹשֶׂה סוּכָתוֹ קֹבֵעַ וּבֵיתוֹ עֲרָאִי” (משנה
סוכה ב:ט). בְּיָצֵד? הֵיוּ לוֹ כְּלִים נְאִים מְעֻלָּן לְסוּכָה, מְצָעוֹת נְאוֹת מְעֻלָּן
לְסוּכָה, אוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתֶה וּמְטַיִל בְּסוּכָה. מִנָּא הֵינִי מִלִּי? דְּתָנוּ רַבָּנָן “תֵּשְׁבוּ”
(ויקרא כג, מב) כְּעֵין תְּדוּרוֹ.

Points to consider

Does the *sukkah* remind you of the exodus from Egypt?
What other symbolic meanings might the *sukkah* have today?

What is the difference between a shelter and a home?

Leviticus directly refers to “citizens in Israel”. Is the commandment to dwell in *sukkot* equally relevant to Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora? Why or why not?

LULAV – SPINE: STRENGTH AND VULNERABILITY

The Stars are Shining on My Head

So it is that the sukkah, with its broken lines, its open roof, its walls that don't quite surround us, calls the idea of the house to mind more forcefully than a house itself might do. And it exposes the idea of a house as an illusion. The idea of a house is that it gives us security, shelter, haven from the storm. But no house can really offer us this. No building of wood and stone can ever afford us protection from the disorder that is always lurking all around us. No shell we put between us and the world can ever really keep us secure from it. And we know this. We never really believed this illusion. That's why we never felt truly secure in it.

Alan Lew, *This is Real and You are Completely Unprepared*, p265

Points to consider

What are the different things in your life that make you feel safe? What different types of shelter do they provide?

Do you agree that the idea of a house is an illusion? Do you feel safer as a Jew in Israel or in the Diaspora?

ARAVA – LIPS: REQUESTING SHELTER

Traditional prayerbook, Hashkiveinu

Cause us, Eternal our God, to lie down in peace, and raise us up, our Sovereign, to life. Spread over us the shelter of Your peace, guide us with Your good counsel and save us speedily for the sake of Your name. Come to our defence, and shield us from enemies, plague, sword, hunger and sorrow. Remove the evil forces that stand before us and behind us. Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings. For You, God, are the One who protects us and saves us. You, Sovereign God, are gracious and merciful. Guard our coming and our going to life and to peace, from now until forever. Spread over us the shelter of Your peace. Blessed are You, Eternal, who spreads the shelter of peace over us, over all God's people Israel and over Jerusalem.

השְׁכִיבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְכָּנוּ לְחַיִּים וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמָךְ. וְתַקַּנְנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ. וְהִגֵּן בְּעַדְנוּ: וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב דָּבָר וְחָרֵב וְרָעַב וְיָגוֹן. וְהִסֵּר שֶׁטֶן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ. וּבָצַל כְּנֶפֶסְךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ. כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמְצִילָנוּ אַתָּה. כִּי אֵל מְלַךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה: וּשְׁמוֹר צֵאתָנוּ וּבּוֹאָנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמָךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

דוד, תפילת 'השכיבנו'

The Baron, the Rabbi, and the Cold

It is said that the famous Lodz rabbi, Rabbi Eliyahu Haim Meisel ז"ל once came on a cold winter night to a baron to ask for alms for the poor. When the rabbi arrived at the baron's house, he called him outside and spoke to him at length about various matters. When the cold began to bother the baron and his teeth began to chatter, the rabbi made his request. The baron answered: "Why did you call me outside? Could you not have told me this in my house?" Said the rabbi: "I did this intentionally, so that you too would feel the bitter cold and share the troubles and torments of the poor. See, when you sit in a warm room and I come to ask you for alms for the poor, you do not feel at all their urgency and stress. But when you are outside and the cold burns your flesh, then you will share their sorrow and open your hand wide."

Benjamin Ze'ev Rubín, *Tal Hermon*, p46

It's Expensive Outside



Protest against high cost of renting property in Tel Aviv, Summer 2011, Photograph: Yehonatan Shaul <https://bit.ly/2L8E157>

Protection of the Flag



Homeless person living in Tel Aviv, November 2005, Photograph: Ziv Koren <https://bit.ly/2NbhjuX>

Points to consider

What emotional response do the images and imagery of these sources evoke in you? Does spending time outdoors make you feel more charitable?

Does the State of Israel have a special responsibility to provide its citizens with shelter? Why or why not?

HADAS – EYES: SEEING THE OTHER

Deuteronomy 16:13-14

¹³After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. ¹⁴You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities.

Translation: NJPS

דברים טז:יג-יד

¹³חג הסוכות תעשה לך שבועת ימים באספך מגרנד ומיקבך: ¹⁴ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנד ובנד ועבדך ואמתך והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך:

Testimonial: Don't Shut the Door

There are many more like me in Israel... asylum seekers who wake up every day not knowing whether their relatives are still alive.... We understand that the government of Israel does not want us here, but we have nowhere else to go. Therefore, our last and only hope lies with the Israeli people and the Jewish nation. When you stand with us, it gives us inspiration. Only you can protect us now that we have lost hope in every other direction. Please don't shut the door in our faces. Don't let this disaster happen.

Monim Harun, The Jerusalem Post, 28 March 2018

Sukkah of Hope



Invitation from an Arab-Israeli couple, published in local newspapers in Nazareth Illit, October 2017.

Translation: Arabs and Jews celebrate together in a sukkah of brotherhood, hope and neighbourliness • Singing, talking and laughing together about the situation • Authentic Arab cuisine alongside kosher food, and a place for prayers.

Points to consider

Who should be welcome in our *sukkah* today? Who should be welcome to seek shelter in Israel?

Is Sukkot a force for universalism or for Jewish particularism?

ETROG – HEART: GOD'S DWELLING

2 Samuel 7:5-7

⁵...Shall you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶From the day that I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to this day I have not dwelt in a house, but have moved about in Tent and Tabernacle. ⁷As I moved about wherever the Israelites went, did I ever reproach any of the tribal leaders whom I appointed to care for My people Israel, saying: Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?

Translation: adapted from NJPS

שמואל ב ז:ה-ז

⁵...האֵתָה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַיִת לְשִׁבְתִּי: ⁶כִּי לֹא יִשְׁבְּתִי בְּבַיִת לְמִיּוֹם הָעֲלֹתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֵהְיָה מֵתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאֵהָל וּבְמִשְׁכָּן: ⁷בְּכֹל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲדַבַּרְתִּי אֶת־אֶחָד שְׁבֹטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לְרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בִנִיתֶם לִי בַיִת אֲרָזִים:

Yalkut Shimoni, 1 Kings 8, Remez 195

Rabbi Acha said: The Divine Presence has never moved from the Western Wall of the Temple...

Points to consider

Do you feel God's presence more strongly in your home or in nature? In Israel or elsewhere?

How might we invite God's presence into human dwellings? How might we provide shelter for God?

GOING HOME: PERMANENTLY TEMPORARY

Israel Is a Fortress, But Not Yet a Home

Home is a place whose walls — borders — are clear and accepted; whose existence is stable, solid, and relaxed; whose inhabitants know its intimate codes; whose relations with its neighbors have been settled. It projects a sense of the future.

And we Israelis, even after 70 years — no matter how many words dripping with patriotic honey will be uttered in the coming days — we are not yet there. We are not yet home. Israel was established so that the Jewish people, who have nearly never felt at-home-in-the-world, would finally have a home. And now, 70 years later, strong Israel may be a fortress, but it is not yet a home.

David Grossman, Speech delivered at the Alternative Memorial Day event in Tel Aviv, 17 April 2018. Translation: Haaretz.com

Do Iraqi Jews Really Want to Return?

The Iraq-born Israeli writer Eli Amir ignited a touch of drama yesterday when he questioned another Iraqi Jew's wish to return to his country of birth.... "Why do you want to go back? For what? For whom?" he demanded. "For Saddam Hussein? For General Aref? For General Kassem? We have no place in Iraq." The author, who has dedicated his writing career to chronicling the life and times of the Jews of Iraq and the difficulties of their immigration into Israel, said that he had been invited to go back to Iraq.... He refused the offer. Edwin Shuker defended his dream: it might someday become reality. "Who would have believed," he said, "so soon after the Holocaust, that Berlin might again become a thriving centre of Jewish life?"

Point of No Return, jewishrefugees.blogspot.com, 18 December 2017

Dorothy and the Scarecrow

No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country be it ever so beautiful. There is no place like home.

L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*

Points to consider

Does spending time in the *sukkah* make you excited to return home? Does it make you think about other places you might live?

Do you think of Israel as a home or a shelter? As permanent or temporary?

"There is no place like home." Where is your true home? What would it mean for you to go back there?



Limmud is an international community of Jewish learning founded in the UK in 1980.

Almost every week, there will be a Limmud activity or event somewhere in the world. These are organised by independent grassroots groups following shared values which include choice, diversity and volunteerism. Groups, volunteers, participants, presenters and supporters connect through the Limmud experience and by collaborations such as this Sukkot resource.

Limmud promises that wherever you find yourself, Limmud can take you one step further on your Jewish journey.

Find out for yourself and get involved at limmud.org

Limmud, 1a Hall Street, London N12 8DB
office@limmud.org

Registered charity no.1083414

This material was collected by volunteers from Limmud around the world: Yami (Miriam) Ben David and Beth Levy, led by Sofia Zway. Edited by Mikhael Reuven. Designed by Uri Berkowitz.

© Limmud 2018 Sukkot 2018 / 5779

Reflection upon concluding learning with a partner

טוֹבִים הַשְּׁנַיִם מִן־הָאֶחָד
אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלָהֶם
שָׂכָר טוֹב בְּעַמְלָם
קהלת ד:ט

Two are better than one,
because they have
a greater reward
for their toil

Ecclesiastes 4:9



To celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, UJIA is proud to support Limmud Publications with its 2018 resources.

We hope you've enjoyed learning with Limmud this Sukkot. Limmud is a charity which relies on your support to continue its activities, including the costs of this resource. We would hugely appreciate it if you can [give us a donation](#) to help with the costs of this and all our learning activities.