Darshan Yeshiva

Sukkot

Watch overview videos:

1. Sukkot in 60 Seconds (1:00)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpyitTzaDPs
2. Sukkot: Being in a State of Joy (6:06)
   http://www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/2030129/jewish/Being-In-a-State-of-Joy.htm

Basics:

Pronunciation: soo-KOHT (♫ http://bit.ly/1671OHa)
Meaning: Feast of Booths
Jewish Date: 15th of Tishrei
Secular Date: Generally falls around late-September to late-October
Length: 7 Days (Israel), 8 Days (Disaspora)

- Interim days of festival are called Chol HaMoed, which means the weekdays of the festival
- Final days of Sukkot are also seen as separate holidays – Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah

Themes:

1. Harvest
2. Respite
3. 6 Directions
4. Pilgrimage
5. Ancestors

History:

Read: http://bit.ly/162UFht

- One of three mandated pilgrimage festivals in the Torah (Lev. 23:42-43)
- Origins in ancient Israel agricultural cycles to celebrate the harvest, and the Exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:42-43)
- Booths of sukkot most likely were used as temporary shelters for people harvesting in the fields, and also the temporary structures that shielded the people in the wilderness during the Exodus
- Solomon's temple was consecrated on Sukkot

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- Ancient observances also included a water "libation" ritual to encourage good rains through the winter months.

Customs

- Greetings:
  - Chag Sameach
    - Lit: joyous festival
    - Idiomatic: Happy Holiday
    - This greeting, now used for many holidays, originally only was used for the three official "chag" festivals – Sukkot, Shavuot, and Pesach.
- Ushpizin
  - Aramaic word that means "guests"
  - Customary to "welcome" one of the Patriarchs (and Matriarchs) into your sukkah each night, which grew out of kabbalistic practices
  - See a wide range of approaches: http://bit.ly/17Ulz8R (RitualWell)
- Community Customs
  - Mizrachi: http://bit.ly/1gP1Ycb
  - Sephardic: http://nyti.ms/GMTaZ2
  - Kararite: http://bit.ly/1b4jI67

Halakhah & Liturgy

Read: http://bit.ly/18bz7hf

Sukkah

- Ideally one should "dwell" in their sukkah for the duration of the holiday, but eating and spending time in the sukkah suffices for most communities.
- **Temporary:** A sukkah cannot be a permanent structure. It needs to be a temporary installation.
- **Walls:** A "kosher" Sukkah needs at least two complete walls and a small part of a third wall. The walls can be of any material, as long as they are sturdy enough to withstand a normal wind. The walls should be at least 38 inches high (96 cm), but not higher than 30 feet (9.6 m). (aish.com)
- **Roof:** Roof should be added after all the walls are in place, and should be made from what is called S'chach, thatched roofing, and can be made from any natural material that is not currently attached to the earth. It should provide shelter from the sun, but allow the rain to pass through.
- **Sukkah Blessings:** Said while eating or reciting Kiddush in the sukkah:

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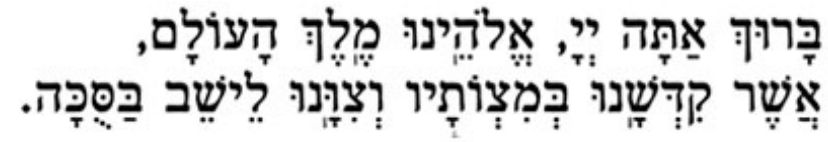

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu leisheiv basukkah.

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: You hallow us with Your mitzvot and command us to dwell in the sukkah.

Four Species

Read: http://bit.ly/162Qnqi

Lulav & Etrog

- Hadar trees (fruit of the goodly tree) is considered to be the Etrog, a citron fruit. Kosher etrogim must be unblemished and grown from a “pure bred” tree, which cannot be grafted with another tree. The pitam, if the fruit grew with one, must be present and at least part of the stem should be present.
- The lulav itself is the branches of palm and the myrtle (Hasidim) is the boughs of leafy trees and the Aravanot is the “willows of the brook.”
- When joined together the holder the palm should face you in the center, acting as the spine, and the myrtle goes on the right and willow on the left.
- Customary for individuals to have own lulav and etrog, but many synagogues just have a communal one.
- The waving of the Lulav and etrog are a positive commandment found in Lev 23:40. “On the first day [of Sukkot] you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Adonai your God seven days."

Shaking the Lulav:

- Wave the lulav and etrog on each of the seven days of Sukkot, in the morning during Shacharit or during Hallel.
- Waving – different communities have different customs for the exact practice of waving the lulav.
    - Stand facing east.
    - Hold the lulav (right hand) and etrog (left hand) in front of you, recite the blessing (below) and shake it 3 times, reaching out and drawing in, as the action of each shaking.
    - Repeat this to the south (right), west (behind over shoulder), north (left), raised above you, lowered below.
- See directions for waving Lulav during Hallel:
    - General: http://bit.ly/16RgcaW

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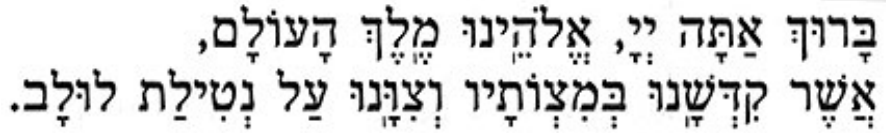
- Chabad: http://bit.ly/18jg7xc
- The Lulav and Etrog are not traditionally waved on Shabbat (carrying an object) because individuals usually carry their lulav and etrog to and from shul each day. Although many liberal synagogues do not follow this, and in some cases lulav & etrog are stored at the synagogue to avert this issue.

Blessings (urj.org):

- **Blessing for the Lulav:** The lulav is held up in the right hand, and the etrog is held pitom end (pointy side) down in the left hand. Facing east, recite the blessing. Then turn the etrog up and shake the entire bundle three times in each of six directions.



Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.

Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: whose mitzvot teaches us holiness and who instructs us to take up the lulav .

- **Shehecheyanu:** The first time you wave the lulav each year, recite the blessing marking a special occasion:
  בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

  Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehechehyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

  Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.

- **Hallel & Hoshanot**
  - The complete Hallel (Psalms 113-118) is recited each day of Sukkot .
    Text here (Conservative): http://bit.ly/1chrWot
  - Hoshanot are special prayers for abundance and prosperity in the year to come. Hoshanot are not recited on Shabbat.
    Text here (Conservative): http://bit.ly/1hON71K

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Sources and Bibliography

Books:

- The Jewish Holidays: A Guide & Commentary, Michael Strassfield
- Seasons of our Joy, Arthur Ocean Waskow
- The Jewish Book of Days, Jill Hammer
- Celebrating the Jewish Year: The Fall Holidays, Paul Steinberg
- The Rosh Chodesh Table: Foods at the New Moon, Judith Solomon
- Seasons for Celebration, Karen L. Fox and Phyllis Zimbler Miller
- Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Patkin Teutsch
- High Holy Day Prayer Book, Morris Silverman (1951)

Websites:

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- http://telshemesh.org/tishrei/the_second_night_of_sukkot.html
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- http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Sukkot/History/Biblical/Water_Drawing_Festival.shtml
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- http://www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/998913/jewish/The-Complete-Four-Kinds-Owners-Manual.htm
- http://www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/210033/jewish/Pictorial-Guide.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Species

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