



Imrey Noam

Sukkot

The Season of Our Joy

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City	Candles Sept. 25	Candles* Sept. 26	Yom Tov ends Sept. 27
New York	6:30	7:27	7:25
Los Angeles	6:27	7:21	7:19
Chicago	6:24	7:22	7:20

All times PM, local to each city.
*After this time, from an existing flame.

Yom Kippur Is Over. What Comes Next?

For Sukkot

Rabbi Reuven Kuklin



What do you think is the most dangerous stage of a space flight?

I am sure many would say: the launch, when the rocket lifts off and races into space. Yet one of the greatest dangers awaits the spacecraft on its return journey, as it comes home.

Entering the atmosphere at tremendous speed, the craft faces intense heat and immense forces. A mistake during descent can tear it apart. Reaching the heavens is not enough; one must return safely to earth.

Spiritual life is much the same. We gain deep insights, feel close to the Creator and see His guidance more clearly. Then we return to daily life, where everything seems different: success apparently depends on work, money, connections and favorable circumstances. Behind these visible causes, we do not always notice G-d's hand.

If the transition is too abrupt, an inner rift may develop: our thoughts remain in the heavens while our actions follow their old course. Ideas and deeds drift apart. In prayer we trust the Creator; in daily life we act as though everything depends on us alone.

After spiritual growth, we therefore need time to translate insight into life. How will faith in Providence change my approach to work? How will the Torah's holiness shape my decisions? How can I sanctify material things and preserve purity of soul amid earthly concerns?

My teacher, Rabbi Natan Rothman, used this principle to explain a Talmudic teaching: the pious of earlier generations would spend an hour before prayer and an hour afterward. Preparation is understandable: they withdrew from



distractions into solitude and focused their hearts. But why remain after praying?

To preserve what they had gained and consider how to live by it. In prayer, they had felt G-d's closeness and seen the world differently. Afterward, they reflected on bringing that vision into ordinary actions.

This helps explain the link between Yom Kippur and Sukkot. On Rosh Hashanah we proclaimed G-d our King. Through fasting and prayer on Yom Kippur, we became like angels. But if we plunge straight back into our busy routines, that spiritual height may become a mere memory.

In His mercy, the Creator gave us a time of transition: Sukkot. The Zohar calls the sukkah "the shade of faith." There we eat, talk and rest: bodily life itself becomes a mitzvah. In our temporary dwelling, we feel especially keenly that we are in the Creator's hands. We learn not to flee the material world, but to fill it with holiness.

Seven days in the shade of faith help unite lofty ideas with simple deeds. Then we can leave the sukkah and return to daily life changed, with the Creator in our hearts and faith expressed in our actions. Chag sameach!

Rabbi Reuven Kuklin, imrey.org. Berakhot 32b, explained by Rabbi Natan Rothman.

More Precious Than a Perfect Etrog

A story for Sukkot
Rabbi Reuven Kuklin

What remains when a lifelong dream is shattered?

A man from Brisk asked the rabbi to persuade his elderly mother to leave the small town of Rogova and live with him. He wanted to care for her, but earning a living left little time for frequent visits. For years, she had refused his pleas.

When she came to visit, they went together to the rabbi of Brisk. He explained how important it was to let her son fulfill the mitzvah of honoring his mother. She replied that he could ask anything of her except to leave her town. Then she explained why.

Her grandfather had been desperately poor. All his life, he had dreamed of owning an etrog, the citron used on Sukkot. In small Lithuanian towns, this was far from commonplace. For decades he saved coins in a little bag, sometimes even cutting back on food.

In his old age, he traveled with his wife to Vilna. The merchant counted their savings, but they could not afford even one etrog. The couple left, hearts heavy.

Then his wife suggested selling their house, renting a small home and using the proceeds to buy an etrog. They did exactly that. The merchant promised an exceptionally beautiful fruit and kept his word. Their joy knew no bounds.

Townpeople came to admire the etrog. While her husband studied Torah, his wife showed

their visitors the precious fruit. It passed from hand to hand and suddenly fell. Its pitam, the small tip, broke off. The etrog was no longer fit for the mitzvah.

She fainted. On recovering, she was afraid to tell her husband. She began indirectly, with parables. Alarmed, he wondered whether something terrible had happened to a grandchild. At last she told him the truth.

He stood up and said calmly, "When it is impossible, we are exempt!" Then he added: "The same Master of the Universe who commanded us to take an etrog commanded us not to become angry."

A lifelong dream had shattered, but he did not let pain turn into anger. His love for the mitzvah did not make him forget the will

of the One who gave it.

Every day, the elderly woman walked past the house her grandparents had sold for that etrog. Their memory gave her joy and strength. She could not part with that living reminder. After hearing her story, the rabbi no longer urged her to move.

The beautiful etrog did not survive. But faithfulness to the Creator, revealed in a moment of painful trial, continued to illuminate the hearts of later generations.



THE SUKKAH THAT SAVED A CHILD

Rabbi David of Lelov had a magnificent sukkah with carved wooden panels. One year, a plain sukkah stood in its place. Where had the beautiful one gone? Reb Zalman, a poor tailor, knew the answer.

That winter, his son had fallen gravely ill with pneumonia. The doctor said the house must be heated, but there was no money for firewood. The father went to Rabbi David, who had no

money either. So the rabbi took a saw, cut up his sukkah's panels and gave the wood to the tailor. The stove was lit, the house grew warm and the child's life was saved.

A beautiful mitzvah is precious to a Jewish heart. But that night, the greatest beauty lay in the warmth those panels gave a sick child. The magnificent sukkah was gone; the kindness it made possible remained.

From Rabbi Reuven Kuklin's articles at imrey.org. The sukkah story is based on Dirshu. English translation and adaptation.