

SUKKOT

Blessing over the lulav and etrog: One should say this blessing in the morning, before saying Hallel, but one is permitted to say it any time during the day (but not at night). The blessing talks about the lifting up of the lulav, but because the actual mitzvah-act is holding and waving all four species together, with all of them held as they grow (stem pointing down, tip pointing up), you actually first take the lulav* in your right hand, with the stem down and the tip up, and the etrog in your left hand, with the stem up and the tip down, and recite, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav** ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has commanded us to lift up the lulav").** On the first day of Sukkot, you then also say, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh** ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has given us life, and sustained us, and brought us to this day"). Having said the blessing(s), you turn the etrog over so that its tip is pointing up (stem down), and so it is touching the lulav, and wave them together in six directions: forward, to the right, backwards (over your right shoulder), left, up and down. Each time you wave the lulav and etrog in a particular direction, you gently thrust them outward and back three times. The lulav and etrog are lifted and waved in the same way on the other five days of Sukkot (not including Shabbat), ending on Hoshana Rabbah, the last day before Sh'mini Atzeret; but after the first day, we recite only the first blessing.

If the first day of Sukkot is on Shabbat (as it is this year), we do not use the lulav and etrog until the second day. In that case, on the second day, we recite the two blessings set out above.

* Each time the lulav is mentioned, what is really meant is three of the four species, tied together: two aravah (willow) branches on the left, a lulav (palm) branch in the middle, and three hadas (myrtle) branches on the right. The lulav should be held so that its spine (the greenest part) is facing towards you.

** This same verb, "ntl," is part of the blessing for washing hands, or, **n'tilat yadayim**. It means to put, place or lift up, and also, to wash for purification.

Blessing for sitting in the sukkah: You say this blessing when you are eating in the sukkah (i) during holiday meals, after kiddush, (ii) during every other meal, after hamotzi, and (iii) during every substantial snack, after the blessing for other foods, **borei minei m'zonot**. It goes, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu leisheiv basukkah**. ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has commanded us to sit in the sukkah.") On the first night of Sukkot, this blessing is followed by **shehecheyanu**. **N.B.** If it is raining, or if the sukkah is still wet after a rainfall, one should not eat in the sukkah. If it is raining on the first night, it is customary to wait awhile in the hope that the rain will stop, before giving up and eating indoors.

When and how do we say havdalah on the second night of a holiday whose first day falls on Shabbat?

Some of you may have confronted this question on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. Havdalah for Shabbat is part of kiddush for the second day, which, on Sukkot, should be said in a sukkah, if possible. First, as on Shabbat, we say over the wine, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, borei pri hagafen**. ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.") Then we say the rest of kiddush, which ends, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, m'kadesh Yisrael v'haz'manim**. ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who sanctifies Israel and the holidays.")

After this blessing, we don't say the blessing over the spices (**borei minei b'samim**) that we usually say as part of havdalah, because the loss of n'shamah y'teirah (the extra soul which, by legend, one receives over Shabbat) is less precipitous in the transition from Shabbat to a holiday than it is when Shabbat is followed immediately by a normal weekday. We do say the next havdalah blessing, **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, borei m'orei ha'eish**. ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who creates the lights of fire.") But unlike at the end of Shabbat, we don't light a havdalah candle. Just use whatever light there is in the sukkah or the house, such as the holiday candles that are already lit, or electric lights that are on. We don't even reflect the light in our fingernails. Just pause and look at the light.

Then we say the b'rachah for havdalah, which starts the same way it usually does: **Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu melekh haolam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or l'choshech, bein Yisrael la'amim, bein yom hash'vi'i l'sheishet y'mei hama'aseh.** ("Blessed are you Lord, our God, king of the universe, who distinguishes between holy and profane, between light and dark, between Israel and the other nations, between the seventh day and the six days of Creation.")

Then we note three more distinctions that God has made: (i) **bein k'dushat Shabbat lik'dushat yom tov hivdalta** ("you have distinguished between the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of the holiday"), (ii) **v'et yom hash'vi'i misheishet y'mei hama'aseh kidashta** ("you have sanctified the seventh day more than the six days of Creation"), and (iii) **hivdalta v'kidashta et amcha Yisrael bik'dushatecha** ("you have distinguished and sanctified your people Israel through your holiness"). The last two distinctions expand on earlier themes. We end up by saying, **hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh** ("who distinguishes between holy and holy"), meaning, between Shabbat and the holidays.

After this, we say the famous **shehecheyanu** of the second night. On the second night of Sukkot, however, unlike on Rosh Hashanah, we don't need to wear new clothes or eat exotic fruit. Finally, we say the blessing that ends, **v'tzivanu leisheiv basukkah.**

This flyer is part of the effort by the SSSM Parents' Association to provide information about religious rituals and customs to families in the SSSM community as a means of creating a link between school and home. We have provided you with a folder in which to keep this flyer and others that we will be distributing over the course of the year.