



Sukkot Shabbat
RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

MITSUMI COLLECTIVE X ONETABLE



Welcome to Sukkot. This is a holiday that celebrates and lives into the many tensions in our lives. The two traditional roots of Sukkot — the temporary homes the Israelites created during their time of wandering in the Wilderness of Sinai, and the shelters erected in ancient Israel during the fall harvest season — can be said to represent the space between these tensions: the bounty of the summer harvest coupled with the impermanence of the roofs over our heads, radical hospitality coupled with the anxiety of the impending rain that will set the stage for next year’s growing season.

During this year of tremendous challenge, as we prepare to bring in Shabbat — the proverbial “Temple in Time” — within the holiday of Sukkot, we honor all of the ways in which we have had to create impermanent shelters that have enabled us to weather the wilderness of the pandemic. We’ve sheltered in place, drawn circles of support during social isolation, cared for our friends and family members, worked in the frontlines of essential work and care, used the spaces in our homes for far more functions than they ever used to need to fill, and likewise used virtual tools for connection to create digital spaces to stand in for the physical spaces we’d otherwise occupy together.

So this year as we celebrate Shabbat during Sukkot, let us celebrate ourselves and each other — whether you have a physical Sukkah in your yard, patio, or balcony, or your Sukkah exists only in the metaphysical realm of your imagination, we celebrate the creation of sacred space and time and the opportunity to dwell within its midst.

Light

A candle throws its light into the darkness
In a nasty world, so shines the good deed
— Ben Harper

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר.
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ.

God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

— Genesis 1:3-4

During the holiday of Sukkot, which is all about carving out a symbolic space of welcome and peace, it's fitting that the lighting of our Shabbat candles is the catalyst for activating this sacred time and space. It's a tradition to gather in the light of the candles before reciting the blessing. For this Sukkot Shabbat we suggest you symbolically gather in all those close to you — especially those from whom you're currently physically distanced but yearn to pull back in — and hold them in your heart as you recite the blessing over the Shabbat and Holiday candles.

BLESS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וּצְוֵנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat v'shel yom tov.*

Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies our lives, and inspires us to kindle the light of Shabbat and this holy day.

Candle lighting is followed by *shehecheyanu*, the traditional blessing for doing something for the first time — either for the first time ever, or for the first time in a long time.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוּ הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam shehecheyanu v'kiyamanu
v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed is the Oneness that inspires the universe, sustains us, raises us up, and enables us to reach this season.

REFLECT

What is the relationship between communal obligation, physical proximity, and sacred space?



בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאִזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַּסֻּכּוֹת:

You will live in booths seven days; all Israelite citizens will live in booths.
— *Leviticus 23:42*

וחכמים אומרים אע"פ שאמרו אין אדם יוצא ידי חובתו ביום טוב הראשון בלולבו של חבירו אבל יוצא ידי חובתו בסוכתו של חבירו דכתיב כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בסוכות מלמד שנל ישראל ראויים לישב בסוכה אחת

The Sages say: Although it was taught that a person does not fulfill their obligation with the lulav of another, they fulfill their obligation with the sukkah of another, as it is written: "All Israelite citizens will live in booths" (Lev. 23:42). This teaches that it is fitting for all Israel to sit in one sukkah. The only way the entire Jewish people could do this is by residing in a communal sukkah that does not belong to any of them. Thus there is no obligation to reside specifically in one's own sukkah.
— *Babylonian Talmud Sukkot 27b*

After all these generations since Columbus, some of the wisest of Native elders still puzzle over the people who came to our shores. They look at the toll on the land and say, "The problem with these new people is that they don't have both feet on the shore. One is still on the boat. They don't seem to know whether they're staying or not." This same observation is heard from some contemporary scholars who see in the social pathologies and relentlessly materialist culture the fruit of homelessness, a rootless past. America has been called the home of second chances. For the sake of the people and the land, the urgent work of the Second Man may be to set aside the ways of the colonist and become indigenous to place. But can Americans, as a nation of immigrants, learn to live here as if we were staying? With both feet on the shore?

What happens when we truly become native to a place, when we finally make a home? Where are the stories that lead the way? If time does in fact eddy back on itself, maybe the journey of the First Man will provide footsteps to guide the journey of the Second.

— *Robin Wall Kimmerer from In the Footsteps of Nanabozho: Becoming Indigenous to Place*

What is the nature of your relationship to the place where you currently live?

How have you adapted to the varying unusual circumstances that have become commonplace during the time of pandemic in the context of place, living spaces, and community?



The following is the traditional blessing for sitting in the Sukkah. We encourage you to sit with this technology for grounding, gratitude, and appreciation whether your Sukkah exists physically in the space around you or metaphysically in your mind.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu leishev ba'sukkah.

Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies our lives, and inspires us to dwell in the sukkah.



Wine

מה טובו אהליך יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Ma tovu ohalecha Ya'akov mishkenotecha Yisrael.

How good are your dwelling places Jacob. The sacred spaces of the Israelites – those who wrestle with the divine

– Numbers 24:5

Bauen [lit. “to build”] originally means to dwell ... The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is bauen, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. This word bauen, however also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. Such building takes care — it tends the growth that ripens into its fruit of its own accord.

– Martin Heidegger, from Building Dwelling Thinking

Kiddush is the sanctification of Shabbat or holiday through consuming a special drink (traditionally wine or grape juice) elevated by the alchemy of fermentation into something that is both deeply connected to its source, the fruit of the vine, yet fashioned into something else: wine.

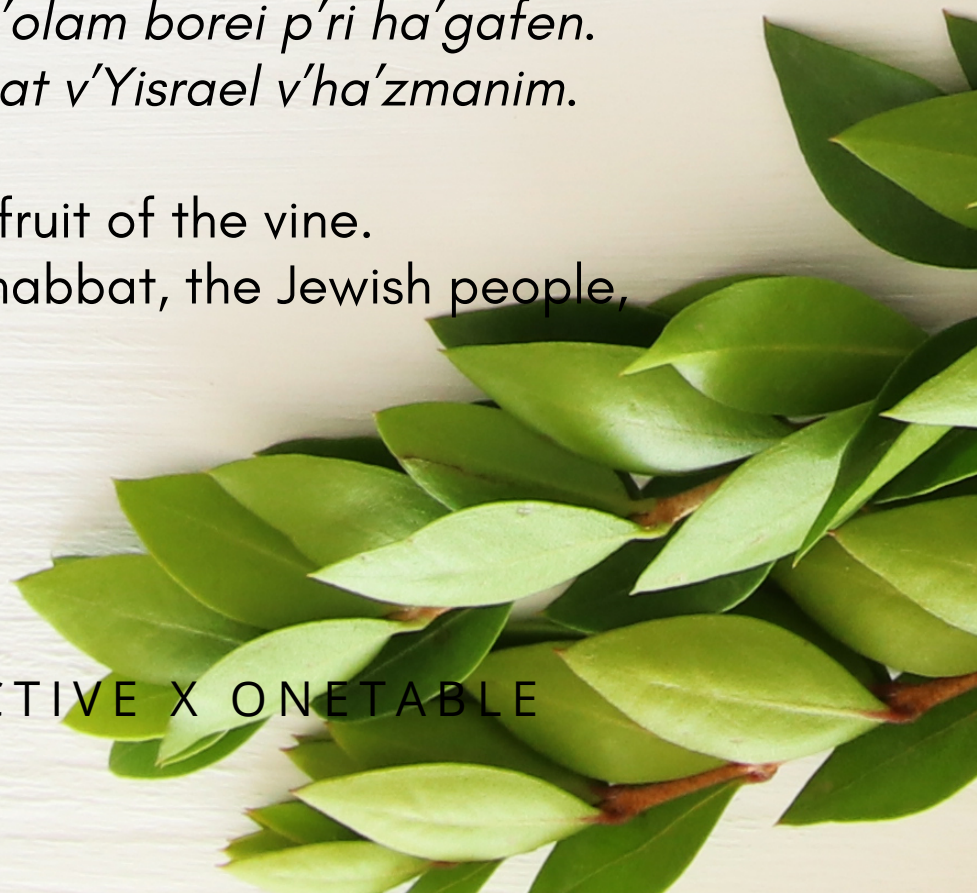
Wine is particularly known for its appellation, or its geographic origin, the place where it grew. For this Sukkot Shabbat, let us remember our own appellation – be it one place or many, be it our families' ancestral homelands, the place of our birth and upbringing, or any number of other places that have shaped and held us as we dwelled in them – and hold these places in our hearts as we recite Kiddush together.

BLESS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'gafen.
Baruch Atah Adonai mikadesh ha'Shabbat v'Yisrael v'ha'zmanim.*

Blessed is the Oneness that creates the fruit of the vine.
Blessed is the Oneness that sanctifies Shabbat, the Jewish people,
and the festive seasons.



Bread

Jewish tradition describes humankind as being made *b'tzelem Elohim* – in the image of the Divine. We understand ourselves as co-creators of the world, a relationship at the heart of one of our most ancient symbols and blessings: the braided challah loaf, descended from the showbread of the *Beit ha'Mikdash* (Temple) and its accompanying blessing, *ha'motzi*.

A common teaching for *ha'motzi* in the world of Jewish nature education speaks to the co-creative element of making bread and saying this blessing. Bread does not grow on trees and requires human labor and ingenuity to fashion flour and dough from seed; yet it requires Divine provenance to grow a fruitful and abundant harvest.

Likewise the Sukkah is a collaboration, a structure that protects while also opening itself to the elements – creating shelter while allowing in rain, shading out the sun while creating enough opening to see the stars.

BLESS

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Blessed is the Oneness that brings forth bread from the earth.

Gratitude

**As we sit together following a meal,
we express gratitude for the food that has nourished us.**



A beautiful Sukkot tradition brings the opportunity to call in cherished guests from our individual and collective past – the *ushpizin*. Who are the people in your life who have nourished and supported you but who cannot physically be present with you right now? Who are the guardian angels who have sheltered, guided, and protected you throughout your life?

Let us take this opportunity to call in these angels with a song and listening meditation based on the *Angels' Lullaby* (also known as Angel's Song or B'shem Hashem) that also closely parallels the traditional directions in which we shake the Lulav – the bundle of native plants representing the ingathering of the harvest – forward and back, right side and left side, up and down.

If you know a melody for the *Angels' Lullaby* please feel welcome to sing together; you can also simply read it together or click the link to play the song on YouTube. Then, meditate on who in your life have filled these roles of supporting angels, and imagine them surrounding you. What do you feel from their presence? What do they have to say to you? What words of nourishment do you receive?

Follow this meditation by reading or singing *B'rich Rachamana*, a Grace After Meals found in the Talmud. Also included are the traditional and adapted lyrics (and links to listen) to the Shaker hymn "Sanctuary," which make for a beautiful and fitting tune and accompanying words to this blessing of gratitude.

בְּשֵׁם הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִיְמִינִי מִיְכָאֵל וּמִשְׂמָאלֵי גַבְרִיאֵל
וּמִלְפָּנַי אֲוִרִיאֵל וּמֵאַחֲזָרַי רַפָּאֵל
וְעַל רֹאשִׁי וְעַל רֹאשֵׁי שְׂכִינַת אֵל

*B'shem Hashem Elohei Yisrael
Mi'mini Michael u'mismoli Gavriel
U'milfanai Uriel u'meachorai Rafael
V'al roshi v'al roshi Shechinat El*

In the name of the divine, the God of Israel
May Michael be at my right hand; Gabriel at my left
Before me, Uriel; Behind me, Raphael
And above my head and above my head
The Divine Feminine Presence of God.





BLESS

בְּרִידֵי רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִיָּה דְהַאי פִּיתָא.

Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.

We are blessed with compassion by the Oneness that sustains us with bread.

You are the source of life for all that is
And your blessing flows through me.

— Shefa Gold

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary
 Pure and holy tried and true
 And with thanksgiving I'll be a living
 Sanctuary for You

— Shaker Hymn

Love prepare me to be a revolutionary
 Bold and tender tried and true
 And with each other we'll build another
 World together for me and you

— Let My People Sing



Mitsui Collective works at the intersection of Jewish wellness, spirituality, nature connection, and community building. We seek to activate models for contemporary Jewish practice centering multi-racial & multi-generational community and embodying Jewish values, ethics, and spirituality all seven days of the week.

OneTable is proud to partner with Mitsui Collective to build resilient community around the Shabbat dinner table. To learn more about OneTable, head to onetable.org and [@onetablesabbat](https://www.instagram.com/onetablesabbat).