

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter XXXI: Emor (Lev. 21:1–24:23)

### Essay 12. The commandment to dwell in the Sukkah

**פסוק** "בסכת תשבו שבועת ימים" וכו'. והנה אמרו ז"ל שנים חסרים ואחד מלא, וצריך טעם למה דוקא האחרון הוא מלא והראשונים חסרים ולמה כתבה התורה כך כדי לרמוז דבנינו שלושה דפנות.

There are **verse[s]**: “**In booths** you shall dwell seven days; all citizens in Israel shall dwell in **booths**; in order that future generations may know that in **booths** I made the Israelite people dwell when I brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Lev. 23:42–43). **Thus [the rabbis] of blessed memory said**, in tractate Sukkah 6b, the first **two** occurrences of the word “booths” in these verses are written **deficiently** [בסכת] **and one** occurrence is written more **fully** [בסכות]. A first question is that **a sense is required why especially the last occurrence of the word is full and the first ones are deficient**.

**Also**, a second question is **why does the Torah write thus**, mentioning the word “in booths” three times? Two answer the second question first, it is **in order to hint**, as indicated in Sukkah 6b, **that there is no need that there be three walls** as a single construction, and indeed, one of the three required walls can be as small as a handbreadth in width? That is, we find in Sukkah 6b: “The Rabbis hold: The tradition [of the verses Lev. 23:42-43] is authoritative: **בסכת** [*ba'sukkot* without a *vav*], **בסכת** [*ba'sukkot* without a *vav*], **בסכות** [*ba'sukkot* with a *vav*]. There is [mention] here [of *sukkah*] four [times; i.e., the words without the *vav* each counting once, and the word with the *vav* counted twice]. Subtract one to [teach the mitzva of *sukkah*] itself, and three remain. [These three remaining *sukkot* teach that a *sukkah* requires three walls] two [of the three are walls] in the standard sense; the *halakha* [transmitted to Moses from Sinai] comes and reduces the [dimension of the] third and establishes it as a handbreadth. [That tradition teaches that one wall need not be any longer than one handbreadth.]”

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ונש לומר דאיתא בזוהר (ח"ג דף ק"ג ע"ב) אמאי בקדמיתא "תשבּו", "בספּת תשבּו", ולבּתר "ישבו בספּת", קדמאָה לאושפּיזין. תנּינא, לבּני עֶלְמָא עכ"ל. ומשום הכי הראשונים הם חסרים, שְהֶרָאוּ הוּא ציווי לאושפּיזין לבּדם וְהַשְׁנִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לבּדם ולפיכך הם חסרים. אָמְנָם השלישי שְהוּא "למען ידעו דרתיכּם כי בספּות הושבּתי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" שְהֶקִיפּם אֶז בְּעַנְי כְבוֹד וּבְאוֹרוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וְהָיוּ שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגַם הַמְלָאכִים, משום הכי פתב "בספּות" מלא.

Returning to the first question, it's worth saying that it is brought in the Zohar (parshat Emor, volume 3, page 103b): **“Why first in Lev. 23:42 does it have “you shall dwell,” i.e., “in booths you shall dwell,” and afterwards “they shall dwell in booths”?** The first [is a commandment for] the *Ushpizin*, the exalted guests that one invites into his Sukkah.<sup>1</sup> The second [is a commandment for] those who dwell in this world, i.e., people. Because of this, the first two occurrences of the word “booths” in Lev. 23:42–43 are written deficiently [ספּת], for the first is a commandment for the *Ushpizin* alone, and the second is a commandment for Israel alone, and therefore they are written deficiently. Indeed, the third occurrence of the word “booths,” which is “in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths,” who then surrounded them with the clouds of honor and the upper lights and there were present both the children of Israel and also the angels; because of this, as both parties were present, the word “in booths” is written more fully.

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<sup>1</sup> The Zohar quotes Rabbi Abba as saying that when one dwells in a sukkah during Sukkot, he is joined by *Ushpizin* [guests], namely, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David (representing the Sefirot, respectively, of *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchut*).