

Sukkot 5787

Nechemiah 8:13-18

And on the second day, all of the nation's heads of clans, the kohanim and leviyim gathered to Ezra the Sofer, and to gain insight into the words of the Torah. And they found recorded in the Torah which Gd commanded via Moshe that Israel should sit in succot on the holiday in the seventh month. And that they should announce and transmit a message through all of their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain and bring olive branches and branches of oil wood and myrtle branches and date branches and branches of the braided tree, and make succot as recorded. And the nation went out and brought, and they made succot for themselves, each on his roof and in their yards and in the yards of the house of Gd and in the plaza by the Water Gate and in the plaza by the Ephraim Gate. And the entire community who had returned from captivity made succot, and they dwelled in succot, for Israel had not done thus since the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, and there was very great joy. And he read from the book of the Torah of Gd each day, from the first day to the last day, and they made a seven-day celebration, and a festival on the eighth day as per the law.

Ezra 3:1-5

And the seventh month arrived, and Israel were in their cities. And the nation gathered, as one, to Jerusalem. And Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak and his brethren kohanim and Zerubavel ben She'altiel and his brethren arose, and they built an altar for the Gd of Israel, upon which to elevate burnt offerings as recorded in the Torah of Moshe, the man of Gd. And they prepared the altar on its foundations, for they were afraid of the nations of the lands, and they brought burnt offerings upon it in the morning and evening. And they performed the holiday of Succot as recorded, and each day's burnt offering on its day according to the number as per the law, each day its due. And then the daily burnt offering and for the months and for all of the festivals of Gd which had been consecrated, and for all who volunteered an offering to Gd.

Bavli Sanhedrin 38a

[He was named] She'altiel for Gd repealed His vow [that Yechanyah would have no child], Zerubavel for he was conceived in Babylon, and what is his name? Nechemiah, son of Chakaliah, is his name.

Shu"t Rashba haChadashot miKtav Yad 367

The simple text shows that they did not know the mitzvah of succah, and of refraining from the Amoni and Moavi. But it is not so; rather, it is known that a nation cannot entirely follow the

path of Torah, fulfilling all commands and avoiding all that the Torah prohibits, to the point that there will be no one who leaves the bounds of the Torah. Rather, some transgress knowingly out of compulsion from their desire, and some accidentally, not knowing or thinking - certainly, when they were exiled and they scattered here and there in their exile, and they encountered the trouble they encountered. And when they heard the Torah, they remembered what they remembered and repented, and one who had transgressed knowingly set his heart to regret it. This is why the Torah commanded to gather the entire nation – men, women, children, at the Sabbatical year... And so when Ezra read to them from the Torah scroll they saw what was commanded, and one who had not yet heard this contemplated it, and one who had known and transgressed knowingly, all of them were very agitated at this when they heard the words of the Torah... And it is known that from the days of Joshua, David and Solomon the Children of Israel did make succot, but not all of them did it as they did at this time, as I have said.

Malbim on Nechemiah 7:72

Some say this continues from the events of the first ascent in the days of Cyrus.. According to this, Ezra ascended twice... And Nechemiah also came then... And thus Ezra 3:4, “And they performed the holiday of Succot as is written,” would be correct, and not contradict what it says in Nechemiah 8:17.

Malbim on Nechemiah 8:14

Rama Orach Chaim 637 states that one may not place a succah in a public space. Since Jerusalem was not split among the tribes, it had no private space, just as one may not rent out a home in Jerusalem for the residents do not own them. Therefore, they could not make a succah there. And since in Ezra’s day they acquired Israel anew with chazakah and sanctified it, his court enacted that they may make succot in Jerusalem and other public areas, as stated in Tosefta Bava Kama 6 that a court-enacted condition permitted creating succot in public spaces. This means that Ezra’s court of that time enacted it, for otherwise they could not have created succot in Jerusalem...