



# THE HOUSE ON THE ROOF

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*Despite the strenuous protests of the owner, a man constructs a sukkah for his grandchildren on the roof of his apartment building.*

## SUKKOT

*Sukkot*, a fall harvest festival, is in some ways similar to celebrations of the earth's bounty found in other cultures. Also called the Festival of Booths, *Sukkot* reminds us of the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt, when they lived in temporary shelters. *Sukkot* refers to both the name of the holiday and to the booths, or huts, which are partially open to the sky, places to "dwell" during the holiday.

Consider the following questions about this story:

- Why did the old man do so much work to make his sukkah special, particularly when it would last only a short time?
- For whom do you think the old man constructed the sukkah?
- What do you think of the judge's decision?
- Why do you suppose the author chose to call the characters not by name, but to refer to them simply as "the old man," "the owner," and "the judge?"

## HACHNASAT ORCHIM - WELCOMING GUESTS

*Sukkot* lends itself beautifully to living the fundamental Jewish value of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming guests into one's home -- or one's sukkah! The gentleman in this story was intent on constructing a cheerful sukkah in which to welcome and entertain his grandchildren, in spite of the owner of the building. The man never responds as the woman complains, even when she chases him and his grandchildren with her broom! Could a lack of understanding about the man's customs have contributed to her behavior? How might the man have reacted differently? Welcoming friends is easy; the challenging and rewarding task is to help our children practice *hachnasat orchim* with everyone.