



Sukkot/16 Tishri 5778
October 6, 2017

Shabbat shalom!

Jewish communities across the globe are currently celebrating Sukkot, our harvest festival. During Sukkot, it is traditional to eat and sleep in sukkot, temporary dwellings, with roofs open to the sky.

It's fitting as we enter a Shabbat with so much rain forecasted that so many of the commandments of our Sukkot observance are drenched in water. From the blessings that we say to the commandment that ensures that the roof of every sukkah allow rain to pass through it, we are reminded of the centrality and force of water.

Rashi, a French commentator, writes that in the beginning of the world, no rain fell because there was no one to work the soil and no one could appreciate the benefit of the rains. Rainfall only exists in relationship, through labor and struggle, through our responsible work and care for the earth.

As our global family confronts the destructive force of devastating hurricanes, when the damage done in Puerto Rico is still unknown and folks across the Caribbean, in Florida, Texas and across the Southeast US do the slow work of rebuilding home and community, may we take the power of the rains seriously. As our western states smoulder after devastating wildfires, as people around the world (especially in the Global South) migrate in response to endless droughts, may we remember that rains do not fall equally on all of us. As we struggle to confront the impact of climate change, may we hold close Rashi's teaching that our actions on earth have impact on the rain.

According to the Zohar, a mystical text from the 13th century, humans bring rain to the earth through acts of justice. Rain is the divine response to righteous human action. As we pray for rain during Sukkot, may we hold in our hearts our yearning for justice, for abundance and equality. May the rains of justice fall gently on us, helping a new world to bloom.

With love this Shabbat,

Rabbi Arielle Rosenberg