

Karaite Discussion of Sukkoth in Exile

Compiled by: Bernie Besherse, CJ
Sunday, March 18, 2018

This is a lengthy email discussion of the various feasts that are prescribed in the Torah, with examples drawn throughout the Tanakh.

This article is instructive in scripture, scripture interpretation & understanding, as well as showing how Karaites view the Torah as the **supreme authority**, and the rest of the Tanakh as fundamental examples, and our job is to understand the scriptures, not force the scriptures to comply with our pre-conceived mind-set.

Hi Jack and Jodi,

you wrote: I don't think we can actually "keep" the feasts as YHVH commanded during diaspora as the heart and soul of all his feasts were coming before his temple where he dwelt - literally coming before him.

I write: So do believe that only when we come before him can we do the feasts? In the offering of sacrifices and offerings I can see that. But the other things not dependent upon an altar, tent or temple, how is it that we can't do them. (post divided)

Onstott response: It seems each of us is quite arbitrary upon what we see is dependent upon the altar, priesthood, and temple. For instance, all of us could to some extent keep the purity laws that dealt with entering the temple. We've met quite a few people who do in fact observe these commands to the best of their ability. We see this as a something that doesn't fit today as it solely dealt with coming before YHWH by entering into his dwelling place, the temple/tabernacle. On the other hand, we also know people who see that Passover and all the feasts can be observed at places other than Jerusalem. You give the example of Israel in the wilderness (later in this post) to justify use of tents during sukkot...the people that observe Passover likewise give the example of Israel's pre-Canaan era to justify keeping passover at a place other than Jerusalem. The way we see it is that all the feasts (chags) dealt solely with coming before YHWH and his dwelling place:

Ex 23:14, 17 - Three times thou shalt keep a feast **unto me** in the year.... Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord YHWH.

Deut 16:16 - Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YHWH thy God **in the place which he shall choose**; in the **feast of unleavened bread**, and in the **feast of weeks**, and in the **feast of tabernacles**: and they shall not appear before YHWH empty:

This is the same command given regarding Passover and sacrifices/burnt offerings:

Deut 12:13-14 - Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: **But in the place which YHWH shall choose** in one of thy tribes, there **thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings**, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

Deut 16:2 - Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto YHWH thy God, of the flock and the herd, **in the place which YHWH shall choose to place his name there.**

It seems that if we disallow Passover from being "kept" at places other than Jerusalem, then it is arbitrary for us to say that other feasts likewise commanded solely for Jerusalem can now be kept in any place *we* choose. Leviticus 23 also lists, sacrifices, meetings for the entire nation to observe, and a whole host of other requirements associated with having a temple/priesthood. Passover is not the only holy day that deals with having a temple/priesthood and altar. So again, it seems each of us is quite arbitrary in what we deem to be right during the diaspora.

Ivan writes - In all the references you give deal with the bring of offerings, there first fruits, free will offerings to the temple/tent of meeting. The three times a year is a direct reference to the bring of their first fruits. Barley, Wheat, and Fruit/produce harvests. This is because the offerings where to be given at the place with his name. The other requirements are not ties to the offerings. The males were responsible for their offerings being brought to the temple.

The Passover is commemorated in the galut (exile) and the reason it can't be kept as it was originally intended was the sacrifice is not able to be brought. The sacrifice would have been brought to Jerusalem because the altar was there. And After I Kings 8 & 9, we find that Melekh Shlomo asked for Jerusalem to be his place for YHVH's Name. Yet, we are not release from all its requirements since we still eat the Maror (Bitter Herbs), Matzot (Unleavened Breads), and retell the story to our children and family. These were requirements which can be done and are done in the galut. Because it tells us inb Exo. 12:14

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to YHVH throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for all time.

This shows us that the requirements do not all go away. It is a memorial something we are to remember. If there was an altar today, going to Jerusalem would be a requirement today also. That is the only place we are allowed to offer it. Also, it requires that all members of the family be present. Since this is also the start of the First day of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot) the whole family would have been there also for that.

Ivan wrote: We fast on Yom Hakippurim yet the Bull, and goats can not be brought. Does that mean fasting on the day is not to be done?

Onstott Response: We ****do**** think that we can fast and rest on atonement as this was not dependent upon coming to Jerusalem. Though we are able to rest and we are able to fast does this mean that this is atonement (kaphar)? The entire point of the day was the ceremony that covered Israel's sins. In diaspora, without the priests performing the atonement ceremony, can we really say that YHWH has covered our sins simply through our fasting and resting? It seems each one of us will (arbitrarily) have our own ideas about YHWH accepting our present efforts and whether or not he will cover our sins without an active priesthood performing the atonement ceremony.

Also relevant here is Unleaven. We see that observing the days of Unleaven Bread are not dependant upon Jerusalem, but are for the entire land.

Deut 16:4 - And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee **in all thy coast** (lit. border) seven days.

There is no provision within the law, that allows for sukkots to be built in any other place than Jerusalem.

Ivan writes - The fact that they built sukkot in the wilderness is proof that sukkot can be built anywhere. Sukkot is not tied to the sacrifices just like the days of unleavened bread is not tied to the sacrifices other than the priestly requirements for the days. The reason we memorialize it is that they did exactly that.

Lev. 23:42-43 You shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I [am] YHVH Eloheykha.

Where in the whole of Lev. 23 does it state that the practice of living in sukkot is dependant on doing a sacrifice. The point in Nehemiah of them living sukkot in Jerusalem was that discovered it while already there for sukkot on the second day. Why were they already in Jerusalem? The Altar was built and offerings were being made. In Nehemiah 8:14 it states they had not prior knowledge of this.

14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month:

So they discovered they must live in sukkot. They had forgotten to keep the requirements over the years.

You wrote: One of the questions we've asked ourselves in forming our opinion regarding sukkots is that if YHVH had told us to use specific types of ingredients in our matzahs for the Days of Unleaven, which could only be found in Israel, would we be observing the command to eat matzah's during the Days of Unleaven if we substituted our own ingredients? Our opinion is

that this may not be acceptable unto YHVH. We see this same principle applying for sukkot, when he specifies specific trees to be used. The case in point that we've considered for this position is when Aaron's sons offered strange fire before YHVH that was different than what he prescribed in his law. Though it could be argued that theirs was an act of idolatry the fact still remains that they substituted their own fire over what was prescribed in the law and YHVH issued judgment.

I write: The unleavened bread ingredients is mentioned in that no one can eat of the aviv grain (barley) until the wave sheaf offering is brought. Does that mean that only old barley may one eat. And specifically only barley which is grown in Yisrael. There are a variety of Barley which is ancient and specific to Yisrael. No, it speaks that grains which can be made to leavened. So wheat also can be used. After experimentation Karaites have determined several grains that do leaven on their own and so may make unleavened bread. (divided post)

Onstott response: Perhaps you missed our point? The point we brought up regarding matzah's was a ****hypothetical*** question based upon sukkot requirements but applied to the actual unleavened bread. Our point was that **IF** YHWH gave us specific ingredients. ..perhaps oil, flour, and "camelot" and "camelot" could only be found in Israel and could not be purchased in the U.S. or was too cost prohibative, could we actually fulfill the requirement for eating unleavened bread if we made it without the "camelot"? It would seem that in the absense of the right ingredients that we would simply live without bread during that week. For us, it seems the whole issue of whether we can eat of a new crop is a mute point as it is based upon an offering made at the temple...something none of us can participate in today.

Ivan wrote: The other point of the stange fire on the golden altar. This was who should offer incenses to Yehovah and when. He was very precise on when the incense was to be offered. This dealt with something qodesh (set apart) which a sukkah is never referred to as qodesh. Also, the ingredients for the incenses we readily available in the Mishkan before the goilden altar. Thus, ingredients was not the issue with Aharon's sons. (divided post)

Onstott response: Our interpretation is that ingredients were the issue with Aaron's sons, not the timing of when it was supposed to be offered. We largely base our conclusions upon the ISBE: "A breach of regulations may have involved the incense itself, in that it had not been compounded according to the prescribed recipe (Ex. 30:34-37). Such a breach would result in the prescribed punishment (30:38). Another suggestion is that the 'fire' of Lev 10:1 was a prohibited type of fire offering, but that is clearly not the meaning intended by the text" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol 4, p. 946, emphasis added). You may be right that **YHWH** is only "precise" regarding things that are qodesh. But then it seems ****our ideas**** of what we consider qodesh will be arbitrary opinions of man. For instance, **YHWH** considered all tithes qodesh (Lev 27:30). **IF** we today set aside a tithe for the poor is this tithe qodesh as it would have been with a priesthood?? It seems that there could be valid arguements both ways - in favor of tithes being qodesh without a priesthood and against tithes being qodesh without a priesthood. **IF** tithes are qodesh today, does **YHWH** deal with our tithes as stringently as he did compounding of fire made by Aaron's sons?? My point is that each of us has valid (perhaps albeit arbitrary) view points - and each point has its merits. The fact is they are still ****our**

opinions** we will not know YHWH's opinion until he once again sets his way straight before us.

Ivan Writes: It describes who was to offer incense on the golden altar in Exo. 30:7-9

And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. You shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

Here plainly Aharon was the only person allowed to burn incense on the golden altar. This had everything to do with when the incense was (a time other than prescribed) and by the wrong persons (Aharon's sons). Only the Chief Kohen was to offer up the incense in the holy of holies.

Ivan wrote: The ingredients for a Sukkot can be had today even in the US. The palm is a date palm (tamar) which grows all over the US in warmer regions. Willow branches can be gotten from any willow tree which are located every where. The branches of thick trees is any branches that may be interwoven. The branches of fruit trees is not specific to what type of fruit. So whatever fruit branches are available. Lets examine Nehemia 8:14-15

14 They found written in the Teaching that YHVH had commanded Moses that the Israelites must dwell in booths (sukkot) during the festival of the seventh month, **15** and that they must announce and proclaim throughout all their towns and Jerusalem as follows, “Go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees (aley zayit), pine <http://us.mg1.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?action=welcome&YY=1025975891&.rand=63c0dgivrp> epe - [ftn1](#) trees (aley etz shemen), myrtles (aley hadas), palms (aley tamarim) and [other] leafy trees (aley etz avot) to make booths (sukkot), as it is written (kakatuv).”

aley = branches

etz = tree

zayit = olive (a seed bearing fruit)

shemen = oil. it is from shaman which means to grow fat.

Hadas = myrtle

tamarim = dates

avot = thick

Kakatuv = as written (verb - katav)

So the key to this scripture is that this was done as it was written in the scroll of the torah as read by Ezra. This was not a one time thing. It also tells us what we should do with the sukkah.

16 So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate. **17** The whole community that returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths (sat in sukkot - yes'vu basukkot)—the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day—and there was very great rejoicing.

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Given this was the first time anyone heard this then went out and did it. Remember there was not book of Torah that each had they only had the copy from the temple.

Lev. 23:39-44

39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the LORD [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. **40** On the first day you shall take the product (periy) of *hadar*

<http://us.mg1.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?action=welcome&YY=1025975891&.rand=63c0dgivrp epe - ftn1> trees (etz hadar), branches of palm trees (kafot tamarim), boughs of leafy

<http://us.mg1.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?action=welcome&YY=1025975891&.rand=63c0dgivrp epe - ftn2> trees (anaf etz avot), and willows of the brook (ar'vey nachal), and you shall rejoice

before YHVH your Elohey seven days. **41** You shall observe it as a festival of YHVH for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. **42** You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens (home born) in Israel shall live (yesh'vu dwell) in booths, **43** in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live (dwell) in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I YHVH your Elohey. **44** So Moses declared to the Israelites the set times of YHVH.

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Every year they would gather in the crops. This was being spoken to all of the children of Israel (Beney Yisrael).

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periy = fruit (like the olive mentioned earlier)

hadar = glorious/magnificent/beautiful

tamarim = plural of tamar or dates

etz = tree

kafot = palms

anaf = branch

avot = thick

ar'vey = willows (plural of erev (ayin-reshe-bet)) pronounced **EH-rev**.

The only difference in the accounts is the willows. The account in Nehemia they felt they did exactly as written so they must have interpreted the list to be trees available to them in the land. They used the trees they had but kept close to the list they had in Torah. No where in the text will you see a prayer being given to ask for forgiveness in not doing it correctly.

Onstott response: You make a valid point and we may need to reconsider our thinking on this one.

You wrote: It seems that the same line of reasoning (i.e. that substitution in order to fulfill the law is ok/ or that **YHWH** knows the heart and intent) could be attached to keeping Passover (which many people we've met do believe). During Hezekiah's reign YHVH overlooked and forgave the people's uncleanness during Passover. Does this precedent now mean that we can keep Passover in any other manner than what is described in the Law? Or that we can now make substitutions for Jerusalem? Or for the "ingredients" YHVH has given? For us (unless someone can show us otherwise) the answer is "no."

I write: the comparisons to Hezekiah's Passover don't follow given no forgiveness was asked for. We saw then say that they kept it as written. Thus, no deviation was seen by them.

Onstott response: True, thanks for pointing this out. This still leaves the question of Jerusalem. When they kept Sukkot (as written) it was with the temple before YHWH at Jerusalem.

You wrote: I'm not sure I understand your position when you say:

"To stay in a hotel, motel, cabin or cottage is not fulfilling the Mitzvah (command) for Feast of Sukkot. Whether, you sleep in it, eat in it, meet in it, you are dwelling in it."

I write: To fulfill the commandment one must build and use the Sukkah. Thus, not doing so mean you are not fulfilling it.

You wrote: Are you saying that we should not eat, sleep, or meet inside a building during the days of Sukkot? This is what we've done the last few years. In years past, we've found that those who sleep in tents/sukkot usually "dwell" in the meeting room or inside a building during the day (where there is a/c and no bugs :-). Last year all of us ate inside and met inside. Many of the tents/sukkoters (like last year) slept inside during the day as they either got rained out the night before or were so uncomfortable that it precluded sleep, so I'm not sure if I'm correctly understanding your position here.

I write: Last year I also attempted everyday to sleep in my sukka. Got eaten up by bugs, and got rained on. But my point is I tried. Also, I noticed other people from Cabins taking naps too so what does that prove. Yes, if we met outside would everyone have had an electrical outlet to plug in those laptops. What you are trying to say is that we did not dwell 24/7 in the sukka (Sukkot plural). The men napped I don't remember Julie nor Brittany napping. They were in the tent. So we weren't exactly missing a lot of sleep.

Onstott response: We're not being critical regarding the way we all did Sukkot last year. Yes, we all enjoyed the electricity and the ability to use bible programs for studies...we don't get much out of a study if we just follow along, we (i'm sure like you) have to study/research right along with someone's study in order to learn. I don't think any of us accept being "spoon-fed."

We brought up the example of last year for clarification on your statement as it seemed inconsistent.

You wrote: One of the things that attracted us to Karaites has been the acceptance of differing beliefs as long as they find Scriptural basis. As a person who does stay in a "temporary" cottage I do take exception to the statement that sleeping in a tent has any greater validity for fulfilling YHWH's commands than a cottage. While you're entitled to your opinion, it seems that until YHWH restores us or restores his priests I don't think any of us can say that our position is better than any one else's. As I mentioned above, tenters/sukkoters in years past usually "dwell" indoors, eat indoors, and study indoors during the day. At what point are we splitting hairs over "dwelling" indoors during the diaspora? It seems we all need to respect each other's differences and realize there may be validity to their position, though in the end each of us does what we believe to be right in YHVH's sight.

I write: Yes, Karaites are tolerant (doesn't mean rollover and accept) others' interpretation. They scrutinize the text to see whether it is in line with Torah. I have to ask where do you find temporary dwelling in the Tanakh? Where is a fixed structure a temporary structure? This comes from the old WCG/SDA days in which they told us to stay in Hotel rooms was staying in a temporary dwelling. The Hebrew does not support that for a home structure. (divided post)

Onstott response: Agree we should all scrutinize the text to see whether it is in line with Torah. My point was that even when we don't agree with someone else's (Torah-based) interpretation, I don't think we can say our way is any better or more right than someone else's until **YHWH** establishes his way. Your right with the point of temporary dwelling that is a leftover from WCG. It seems, however, that we all are to some extent still operating under these preconceived ideas.....we all (arbitrarily) pick some place to meet (other than Jerusalem and the temple). No where does Scripture support this idea, but it is something we did in our former church days. The only place sanctioned by **YHWH** was before his temple at Jerusalem. The only other precedent that we see could be supported by Scripture is in Nehemiah where the people set up sukkots outside their houses (in Jerusalem).. ..picking a spot (outside) Jerusalem for sukkot it seems is just as arbitrary as whether we dwell in a tent, cabin, motel, hotel, house, etc.

Ivan writes - So, what if a Karaite who always being a Jewish from birth always built a sukkah for the chag hasukkot (Feast Of Booths) would he be laboring under a former perception. The places we have picked in the US have never been and will never be a replacement for Sukkot. It was convenient place for Karaites to gather and those who wanted to meet with them. It gave them a chance to live as a community. For that matter, when we built a sukkah in our backyard, we were fulfilling the mitzvah to keep sukkot in a sukkah in that we sat in it, ate in it, and read in it. If tomorrow I decided not to meet with anyone and just build a sukkah in my back yard and dwell in it I would be doing my part to keep these days.

Ivan wrote: The ohel moed (Tent Of Meeting) could be taken down and setup. It was portable. A tent back then was taken down and setup. it is portable. A sukkah is setup and taken down. it is portable. Now how is a cabin, house, hotel room able to be taken down and setup? I can

say that to keep a command that is not dependant on the temple or tent of meeting. Requires us to do even in the exile his commands. In the past I have also just sat in it to eat, I read in it. It has only been since meeting with those not staying in sukkah that we have been meeting in rooms. Why, because would you all gather in my sukkah for a study. I will change that this year. For we have decided to hold our meetings in it, eat in it, study in it, and sleep in it.

Onstott Response: I don't see the command for sukkots fulfilling something that is "portable." The entire composition of the sukkot and the requirement for the people to keep sukkot ****in Jerusalem**** made it quite un-portable (it may be temporary but not "portable").

The point I was questioning is that your statement, which indicated that you ***may*** see going into a building or dwelling in one at anytime during sukkot contrary to Torah. This seems to be adding stipulations to the Law that do not exist. Meeting in a sukkot works for a small group, but it is difficult for a large group to fit.

Ivan writes: I think you missed my point. There was no resort and no motel 6 on there journey's. They had tents and sukkot to live in. How is it a addition to the law to follow the command in Lev. 23. When in fact it states to do that. That is why each person built a sukkah. No need for the giant sukkah because each one had their own.

Ivan wrote: You object to me reminding people to stay in Sukkot. I will not apologize for mentioning a commandment which all the Karaites through the centuries have supported. Aaron Ben Elijah wrote: "if dwelling in a booth indicates the obligation to build it, we are indeed duty bound to do so" (Karaite Anthology, pg.178) If you were to ask any Qaraite/Karaite Hakham or teacher today they would say that building a sukkah in the Chag Sukkot is an obligation since we are commanded to dwell in it.

Shalom

Yochanan

Onstott response: In no way do we object to you reminding people to stay in sukkots. The point we took issue with was the statement that those who meet/ dwell/sleep, etc. in a home/building are not fulfilling YHWH's commands regarding sukkot as fully as those who do build them. As pointed out before, much of what each one of us see as valid or invalid without a priesthood or temple is quite arbitrary. We could just as easily argue that those building sukkots outside Jerusalem is rebelling against YHWH by doing it our own way (like the men going up to Ai) vs waiting upon YHWH for restoration. We consider any karaite writing or hakham's opinion as we would any other scholarly opinion. We are leary of following traditions, even those that have partial Scriptural basis, just because a group of people endorse it.

Shalom,
Jack & Jodi

Ivan writes: When one reads torah according to the plain meaning there can be room for different interpretations. You are welcomed to hold your interpretation. I am not

required to accept it either. You say that you could argue that those who build sukkot outside of Jerusalem are in rebellion. If you take that stance then you should not keep any of the holydays because the three times a year they were to come to Jerusalem. Therefore, you are inconsistent to claim no sukkah build but keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, and Feast of Weeks with their requirements away from Jerusalem. The people are required to act. They are "to listen" and "do" his commandments (mtzvot) even while in the exile. The limitation is the Altar, Temple, and Priesthood. When the Priesthood and Altar are restored then my responsibility will be to go to Jerusalem. When I am able to I will make Aliyah (Immigrate) to Yisrael. Until then I will keep what I can to the fullness of my heart and body.

Shalom

Yochanan

----- Original Message -----

From:

To: TorahTruthSeekers@ yahoo. com

Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 2:29:04 PM

Subject: Fw: [TorahTruthSeekers] Sukkot 2007 US Information

Hi Ivan and Martha,

Hope ya'll don't mind if we weigh in on this discussion :-). Ivan, thanks for sharing your views on sukkot. We have tremendous respect for your beliefs and see validity for them. For our family, there are additional Scriptural texts we also considered when forming our beliefs on Sukkot. We agree that we should keep the law wherever possible. Where our view differs probably relates to the diaspora. Though we observe the days of unleaven, take off the high days, and fast on atonement, I don't think we can actually "keep" the feasts as YHVH commanded during diaspora as the heart and soul of all his feasts were coming before his temple where he dwelt - literally coming before him.

One of the questions we've asked ourselves in forming our opinion regarding sukkots is that if YHVH had told us to use specific types of ingredients in our matzahs for the Days of Unleaven, which could only be found in Israel, would we be observing the command to eat matzah's during the Days of Unleaven if we substituted our own ingredients? Our opinion is that this may not be acceptable unto YHVH. We see this same principle applying for sukkot, when he specifies specific trees to be used. The case in point that we've considered for this position is when Aaron's sons offered strange fire before YHVH that was different than what he prescribed in his law. Though it could be argued that theirs was an act of idolatry the fact still remains that they substituted their own fire over what was prescribed in the law and YHVH issued judgment.

Over the years, we've seen plenty of evidence for many positions (beliefs) regarding the chags. For instance, you believe that the example of Nehemiah indicates that we can use whatever materials are on hand for sukkots, and you may be right. We also consider, however, that this

may have been a one time departure (like Hezekiah) where YHVH overlooked the substitution and he may consider it rebellious to continue in a way that departs from his law.

It seems that the same line of reasoning (i.e. that substitution in order to fulfill the law is ok/ or that YHWH knows the heart and intent) could be attached to keeping Passover (which many people we've met do believe). During Hezekiah's reign YHVH overlooked and forgave the people's uncleanness during Passover. Does this precedent now mean that we can keep Passover in any other manner than what is described in the Law? Or that we can now make substitutions for Jerusalem? Or for the "ingredients" YHVH has given? For us (unless someone can show us otherwise) the answer is "no."

Other factors that we've considered for sukkots is that Jerusalem (if memory serves correctly) is roughly the same latitude as New Orleans (please correct me if I'm wrong). This means that sukkoters would enjoy quite mild temperatures (he didn't send them to Arkansas :-). If Yahveh were with the nation, he would probably protect them from pesty bugs (pestilence is a curse for disobedience) and from getting rained out as well. So for us, we see sukkots forcing an issue that doesn't fit within the current diaspora, though we long for the day of restoration.

I'm not sure I understand your position when you say:

"To stay in a hotel, motel, cabin or cottage is not fulfilling the Mitzvah (command) for Feast of Sukkot. Whether, you sleep in it, eat in it, meet in it, you are dwelling in it."

Are you saying that we should not eat, sleep, or meet inside a building during the days of sukkot? This is what we've done the last few years. In years past, we've found that those who sleep in tents/sukkot usually "dwell" in the meeting room or inside a building during the day (where there is a/c and no bugs :-). Last year all of us ate inside and met inside. Many of the tents/sukkoters (like last year) slept inside during the day as they either got rained out the night before or were so uncomfortable that it precluded sleep, so I'm not sure if I'm correctly understanding your position here.

You also made the statement that: "In the exile, we don't claim the America is the place he places his name. We do our best to keep his commands here until we are able to go to the land." If YHVH understands your heart and that your fulfilling the law to the best of your ability by staying in a tent, don't you think he also will understand the heart and intent of those staying indoors at night?

One of the things that attracted us to Karaites has been the acceptance of differing beliefs as long as they find Scriptural basis. As a person who does stay in a "temporary" cottage I do take exception to the statement that sleeping in a tent has any greater validity for fulfilling YHWH's commands than a cottage. While you're entitled to your opinion, it seems that until YHWH restores us or restores his priests I don't think any of us can say that our position is better than any one else's. As I mentioned above, tents/sukkoters in years past usually "dwell" indoors, eat indoors, and study indoors during the day. At what point are we splitting hairs over "dwelling" indoors during the diaspora? It seems we all need to respect each other's differences

and realize there may be validity to their position, though in the end each of us does what we believe to be right in YHVH's sight.

Shalom,
Jack and Jodi

----- Original Message -----

From: Ivan

To: TorahTruthSeekers@yahoo.com ; txkaraites

Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 3:25 AM

Subject: Re: [TorahTruthSeekers] Sukkot 2007 US Information

Martha,

1st I am saying that as we are commanded in Devarim/Dueteronomy 30. We are to return to YHVH even in the exile. This would be to keep every commandment we can in exile. We keep the days of Unleavened Bread with Unleavened Bread, We keep the feast of Weeks by counting weeks, we keep Yom Teruah by blasting a shofar or making loud shouts of prayers and singing, We fast on **Yom Hakippurim** for atonement of sin, so why would we not build and use Sukkot on the Feast of Sukkot. This seems to be something I don't think people are considering.

2nd The same text in Devarim 30 states that while still in exile one will return to keep his commands. Therefore, building and living in a sukkot is a command we can do in the exile. We don't have to wait for being in the land. Nor do we have to wait for a temple. If one can not make it to the land does that mean no one has to keep any of the holy days? Why keep the rest and not keep sukkot with building a sukkah.

In the exile, we don't claim the America is the place he places his name. We do our best to keep his commands here until we are able to go to the land. For that matter, the building of sukkot with the materials at hand is exactly what I did last year. So for the boughs of trees I used 2x4s. Which is where they are derived from. I tried to sleep in it everynight that I could. But with all the bugs last year I usually only made it half way through the night. Better to keep it best you can and dwell in what can be made then to simply forgo this command because we are not in the land. Like I said should we give up all holydays because we can keep them in Jerusalem. YHVH forbid. Do you think that Nehemyah's account was wrong since they used a different set of trees and branches than the torah account. Or is it that they understood it to mean what ever materials which were at hand.

I believe we must keep all the commands we can. To stay in a hotel, motel, cabin or cottage is not fulfilling the Mitzvah (command) for Feast of Sukkot. Whether, you sleep in it, eat in it, meet in it, you are dwelling in it. Just was they did in the wilderness. In our desire for comfort are we losing site of what Sukkot is for. Giving thanks to YHVH and dwelling in home built shelters. The tent you also question. The children of Israel also lived in tents in the wilderness. So we have both. I use the tent as a backup if conditions worsen for the sukkah.

I hope this answers your questions.

Yochanan

----- Original Message -----

From: Martha N

To: TorahTruthSeekers@ yahoo groups. com; txkaraites <txkaraites@yahoo groups.com>

Sent: Monday, May 14, 2007 10:41:30 PM

Subject: Re: [TorahTruthSeekers] Sukkot 2007 US Information

Hello Ivan,

I have been busy and gone from home doing a bunch of things all day, and then got home late. Phil

read me your email though before we left this morning, and it has been on my mind all day.

I have some questions for you. Please help me to understand this.

1st. Are you saying below that if we do not stay in a tent, then we are keeping Sukkot wrong?

2nd. Doesn't anyone who keeps Sukkot today anywhere but Israel keeping Sukkot wrong? Isn't the command to keep Sukkot 7 days, where YHWH puts his name, and in the land that he gave the forefathers? and where all the 'men' must go to meet every year

(Deut. 16:16 Three times a year all your males shall appear before YHWH your Elohiym at the place that he will choose: at the festival of unleavened bread, at the festival of weeks, and at the festival of booths. They shall not appear before the YHWH empty-handed;).

And in the 7th year: men, women, children and the alien living in your towns.

(Deut. 31:10 Moses commanded them: "Every seventh year, in the scheduled year of remission, during the festival of booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before YHWH your Elohiym at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people--men, women, and children, as well as the aliens residing in your towns--so that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your Elohiym and to observe diligently all the words of this law,)

(Lev. 23:42 You shall live in booths for seven days; all that are citizens in Israel shall live in booths,)

From these verses above I understand this.

1.) We are to keep Sukkot in Israel.

2.) The men are to keep it every year, and the women, children and aliens in the towns are to come on the 7th year. This does not mean that the women, children, and alien can't go the other years, but does mean that they "must" go every 7th to hear the laws.

3.) The command in several places in the Torah, as you listed (Lev. 23:40 On the first day you shall take the fruit of majestic trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your Elohiym for seven

days.) There are trees listed here that most people do not have in their area, and some may only be found in Israel.?

4.) I think that since we are not in the land of Israel, and we can not go there to keep Sukkot, then we do the best we can. I don't see that anyone is breaking the command of keeping Sukkot if they sleep in a cabin, cottage, house, hotel/motel, RV, tent, or Sukkot made of 2 X 4's, with branches of trees in the area. I think we keep Sukkot (from what I see in the Torah, as a memorial to remember when YHWH had the children of Israel live in booths. (Lev. 23:43 so that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your Elohiym.)

I see that we do the best we can. Sukkot is suppose to be a time to study YHWH's commands and laws, and to also have fun to have some enjoyment over the good produce that YHWH has blessed us with for the year, to give thanks to him for his blessings of a good crop. (Lev. 23:39 Now, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep the festival of YHWH, lasting seven days; a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day.)

Since we are not in Israel, no one can keep the feast of Sukkot exactly right. We are suppose to be in Israel, we are to make the Sukkot out of the branches specified, and then live in the Sukkot for 7 days. (Lev. 23:42).

We can't do these things while not in Israel from what I see. None of the housing examples above qualify. Only a Sukkot made from the different types of trees above are what it is made of, and then to live in it, in Israel.

Please tell me where I am wrong in this, and thank you for your help in understanding.
Martha

***** **

Yochanan Ben Emek wrote:
Shalom to all,

We started out thinking about a campsite in Chattanooga, TN as our combined site for all Karaites. This has proven difficult this year. So we are going to have at least 2 sites this year. I am working to establish a East Coast US site in Chattanooga, TN. This will be primarily a camping site for tents and sukkot. As commanded in Tanakh...

Vayiqra/Leviticus 23:39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of YHVH [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. 40 On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before YHVH Eloheykha seven days. 41 You shall observe it as a festival of YHVH for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. 42 You shall live in booths (sukkot) seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths (sukkot), 43 in order that future generations may know that I

made the Israelite people live in booths (sukkot) when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I YHVH Eloheykha.

So our focus will be on keeping the command to live in sukkot. We will also have daily studies on Topics for Sukkot. The site in Branson will be primarily Those who wish to stay in cabins/rental properties. There will be some camping/RV hookups on site. Martha Neale and Jodi Onstott are organizing the site. Please contact them for information on the site. I am also trying to see if the Texas Karaites will be organizing a site. There is also a site being organized in Ontario, Canada. More information will be forth coming on the sites.

If you have a group of people meeting for Sukkot then let me know as we are trying to spread the work on getting the most people to keep sukkot in the US. If you want to part of a community and keep a biblical sukkot then please stay tuned. In the coming weeks I will be posting more information.

May YHVH make this effort successful,

Yochanan Ben Emek

Please send any comments about this article to:

BeytDinHillel@GMail.com

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20	Karaite discussion of Sukkoth in exile.pdf		
21	How do we celebrate Sukkoth		
22	Talmudic Logic – (a story, probably fiction)		
23	NT Contradictions.pdf	42	List Of Articles On Religious Topics

יהוה

The name of our Creator is made up of four, Hebrew vowels, Y H W H יהוה. Vowels are sounds, not just marks on paper. (source: **Flavius Josephus** - *Antiquities of the Jews*)

The letter ה (h) when used as a vowel, usually has the "ah," "ha," or the "huh" sound. The ה is the *definite* article, or *THE, SPECIFIC, to the EXCLUSION of ALL others*.

This is exemplified in showing the difference between the word "eretz," meaning land, and the words "ha_Eretz," meaning *THE Land of Israel, to the exclusion of all others*.

In Hebrew, the letters י (y) and ו (v)(w) are used interchangeably, and when located in the first, second, or third position in a word, indicate the tense of the word, either past, future, or continuing.

Being placed in the first and third positions, the י and ו indicate that the name is **both past and future**, or, - *Eternal*.

The ה associated with **both** the י and the ו means that the name is specifically, to the exclusion of all others, both *past* and *future*, or **THE Eternal**.

Furthermore, being *singular*, and *being found twice*, the ה would also allow the addition of the word, **ONE**, as a descriptor.

The Name, **YHWH**, could then be logically rendered as **The Eternal ONE**, because **He** has eternal existence, **to the exclusion of all others**.

It is pronounced in one, long breath, like the wind, with the accent on the middle syllable. .

eeeeeeaaaaaa UUUUUU' waaaah