

## A Discussion Guide for Sukkot and Immigration

### וּפְרַשׁ עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ

#### Spread over us your shelter of peace

**“You shall dwell in booths for seven days...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.” (Leviticus 23:42–43)**

During the evenings of Sukkot, we are commanded to share a meal in the Sukkah, and even to sleep overnight in the Sukkah where we can look up through the open canopy onto the stars of the autumn sky.

Why are we commanded to build a Sukkah with an open roof that provides little shelter from the elements? Because the Sukkah is not simply meant to symbolize peace; the Sukkah also reminds us that rather than stay enclosed and shut away from the world, we must look outward at the world beyond our own lives. As Jews, we must always remember that no shelter is truly complete until every shelter is complete.

What do we mean when we say no shelter is truly complete until every shelter is complete?

**“While you are eating and drinking on the festival, you must feed the stranger, orphan, and widow, along with the other unfortunate poor... [If you do not] you are not enjoying a mitzvah, you are only pleasing your stomach.” (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Festivals 6:18)**

Why does Maimonides remind us in the Mishneh Torah to feed the “stranger” during the festival of Sukkot? What does this text teach us about the obligation to the others in our midst? What is challenging about this obligation? Why do we seldom reach this ideal? During this Sukkot of 5780, how can we ensure we are fulfilling the mitzvah of protecting the vulnerable?

**“There shall be one law for you and for the resident ger (stranger), it shall be a law for all time throughout the ages. You and the ger (stranger) shall be alike before God” (Numbers 15:15-16)**

Who are the strangers who live in our midst: people who play a vital role in our communities but who we treat as the “other?”

What is our obligation to our neighbors and the “strangers” in our midst? How has the world changed in ways that make it harder to live up to this obligation? What can we, as Reform Jews, do to live out this sacred imperative?