Succos Questions

1. According to the Torah, what three basic requirements define a material as valid for use as a succa roof?
2. If the succa causes discomfort (e.g., it’s too cold) to the extent that under similar conditions you would leave your very own house, you are exempt from the mitzvah. Why?
3. What two things are forbidden to do outside of the succa all seven days of the festival?
4. What is the absolute minimum number of meals a person is required to eat in the succa during the seven day holiday?
5. Besides referring to the tree and its fruit, what does the word “esrog” mean literally?
6. What is the minimum length of a lulav?
7. What is the maximum percentage a person is required to add to the purchase price of his esrog in order to obtain an esrog of greater beauty?
8. On the Shabbos that occurs during Succos, we read the Book of Koheles, in which King Solomon refers to himself as “Koheles.” Why is King Solomon called Koheles?
9. What prohibition could a person transgress simply by sitting in the succa on the eighth day of Succos?
10. We hold a tallis over the heads of the people who read the end of the Torah and the beginning of the Torah. Why?

Answers

1. It must grow from the ground, no longer be connected to the ground, and not be receptive to tumah (ritual defilement).
2. Because the commandment of living in a succa is to dwell in the succa for seven days the same way you dwell in your house the rest of the year. (Mishna Berura 640:13)
3. Eat (an ‘established’ meal) or sleep. (O rach Chaim 639:2)
4. One. Eating a meal in the succa the first night of Succos is a requirement. The rest of the festival, a person can eat ‘snacks’ which are not required to be eaten in a succa. (Outside Israel, one must eat a meal the second night of Succos as well. However, there is no requirement to live outside Israel!) (O rach Chaim 639:3)
5. Beauty. (Ramban Vayikra 23:40)
6. Its spine must be at least 4 tefachim (halachic handbreadths).
7. 33.3% (O rach Chaim 656:1)
8. Because he gathered (kihale) vast wisdom, and because he, as king, gathered the nation on Succos after the Sabbatical year. (Rashi, Koheles 1:1)
9. Bal Tosif — “Do not add to the mitzvos.” The commandment to live in the succa applies for only seven days. To sit in the succa on the eighth day with intent to fulfill the mitzvah transgresses “bal tosif.” (O rach Chaim 666:1)
10. It represents the wedding canopy, symbolizing that through the Torah we wed ourselves to Hashem.