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VOLUME 40 | #4

DAF HASHAVUA

סוכות | SUCCOT

CANDLE LIGHTING:

A long-lasting candle and candles for Shabbat and 1st night Succot should be lit by:

London: 6.38pm

Jerusalem: 5.56pm

Candles for 2nd night Succot

should be lit from the long-lasting candle after:

London: 7.37pm

Yom Tov ends:

London: Sunday, 7.34pm

Jerusalem, Saturday, 7.07pm

(for other cities, please consult your local community)



TORAH READING SUMMARY

SUCCOT FIRST TWO DAYS

(VAYIKRA 22:26-23:44)

The Torah reading for the first two days of Succot is Vayikra ch. 23, which lists the main festivals of the Jewish year.

However, the actual reading begins a paragraph earlier, which concludes with, "Do not desecrate My name... I am God, Who made you holy, Who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, to be to you for a God". All our festivals relate back to the Exodus and our purpose as a nation.

The festivals section begins with Shabbat, which, in terms of its prohibitions, is stricter than most of the festivals (e.g. no cooking).

The festivals are then mentioned in two main parts: Pesach and Shavuot, linked by the counting of the Omer that begins on the second day of Pesach, followed by the festivals of Tishrei: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succot.

Separating these two sections is a single verse mentioning the farmer's obligation to leave the corners of the field and the dropped gleanings for the poor and stranger. Caring for the poor is as important as the festival rituals (see Rashi on v.22).

The end of ch.23 is the source for the three special mitzvot of Succot: the Four Species, dwelling in the Succah and *Simcha*, to be happy on Succot!

MAFTIR – FIRST TWO DAYS (BEMIDBAR 29:12-16)

The maftir for the first two days comes from *parashat Pinchas* and contains details of the special offerings that were brought on Succot.

HAFTARAH 1ST DAY (ZECHARIAH 14:1-21)

The haftarah for the first day of Succot is from the prophet Zechariah and speaks about the future war of Gog and Magog against Israel, leading to the final redemption and the Messianic era. It describes a massive attack on Jerusalem that will be miraculously defeated. Those among the nations who survive that war will ascend to Jerusalem to join the Succot celebrations, reflecting the universal nature of the festival.

HAFTARAH 2ND DAY (I KINGS 8:2-21)

This haftarah is about the celebration of the completion of the First Temple in Jerusalem under King Solomon. It took place during the festival of Succot and concludes with King Solomon's praise of God for fulfilling His promise to his father, King David, that Solomon would be the one to build the Temple.



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WHERE IS HOME?

BY: **RABBI MENDEL COHEN**

St John's Wood Synagogue

Every generation asks the question in its own way: where is home?

For some, it is a physical question. Families move countries, communities relocate, and people find themselves rebuilding their lives in unfamiliar places.

For others, it is a far deeper question. We may live in beautiful houses, yet still search for somewhere we truly feel secure, settled and at peace. Today, more than ever, many people are reconsidering where home is.

Succot invites us to ask a timeless question: what really makes a home?

"You shall dwell in succot for seven days... so that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in succot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Vayikra 23)

Rabbi Eliezer (Succah 11b) says we recall the *Ananei HaKavod*, the Clouds of Glory that surrounded, protected and embraced the Jewish people during their forty-year journey in the wilderness. The succah then

represents trust in God. *Halacha* (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 125:1) rules that consciously meditating on this idea is part of the mitzvah itself.

At first glance, the succah seems to symbolise insecurity. A home is where we feel completely secure. It is where we do not act as visitors, where we feel confident and settled. Outside our homes we naturally feel more vulnerable. We leave the comfort of our sturdy homes and move into a fragile structure.

Succot teaches us precisely the opposite – permanence is not determined by bricks and mortar but by where we place our trust.

The Chassidic masters describe two levels of *bitachon* (trust) in God. One level is to trust that God will bless our efforts within the natural order of the world. We work, plan responsibly, pay the mortgage, and trust that God will grant success. That itself is profound faith.

But there is a deeper level. It is where a person's confidence rests not in favourable circumstances but in God Himself. Whether life feels stable or uncertain, whether the surroundings are familiar or completely new, a person's sense of security remains unchanged because it comes from the One Who accompanies them everywhere.

This transforms the meaning of the succah. The Torah is not

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asking us to exchange a strong home for a weaker one. It is asking us to discover that our real security never came from walls, locks or deeds of ownership in the first place.

For forty years the Jewish people had no permanent address, yet they were never truly homeless. Surrounded by the *Ananei HaKavod*, they learnt that the safest place in the world is wherever God wants us to be.

This is why the *Mishnah* (Succah 2:9) tells us: *"for the seven days of Succot, a person should make the succah his permanent dwelling and his house temporary."* It is not a statement about architecture but about perspective. A Jewish home is not ultimately defined by its size, its postcode or even its permanence. It is defined by the faith that fills it. The walls of the succah may be temporary, but the lesson it teaches is eternal. Home is not merely the place where we live. Home is the place where we know, with complete confidence, that God is with us.

“ The walls of the succah may be temporary, but the lesson it teaches is eternal.



DOWN TO EARTH

BY: **SHEVI GRUNEWALD**

US Education

The contrast between Yom Kippur and Succot is like chalk and cheese when you think about the physical nature of the two festivals. On Yom Kippur – a mere few days ago – we reached the ultimate state of holiness. We stepped outside of our normal physical boundaries, put aside basic needs like eating or drinking, and all round tried to emulate angels to our best abilities. We spent much of the day in prayer, leaving shul post-fast feeling completely cleansed.

We then transitioned straight into Succot. Suddenly, the hammers and drills were out. We were up on ladders, building and binding. We physically packed up our lives, moved out of our comfortable homes and into temporary outdoor structures. To add to the physical aspects of this festival, we now rigorously shake the *Arba'a Minim*, the four species.

We go from being otherworldly and almost angel-like on Yom Kippur to being rugged, hands-on, and present in a deeply physical way on Succot.

Rabbinic sources (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30:14, *Midrash Tanchuma Emor* 19) note that the four species we shake on Succot correspond to four vital human organs. The *Erog* resembles the heart; the *Lulav* represents the spine; the *Hadassim* (myrtle leaves) look like eyes; and the *Aravot* (willow leaves) are shaped like lips.

The *Sefer Hachinuch*, written in

13th-century Spain, points out that our actions drive our attitude, and what we do physically shapes how we think.

These four organs give us a practical guide as to how to bring holiness into everyday life. The *Erog* (the heart) reminds us to purify our desires and focus them on doing good. The *Lulav* (the spine) reminds us to stand tall with moral courage and stick to our values. The *Hadassim* (the eyes) teach us to look for the good in others and see the world positively. The *Aravot* (the lips) remind us to use our speech for kindness and encouragement, steering clear of *lashon hara*, gossip or hurtful words.

Maybe the four species are mapping out a path for us. Holiness isn't meant to stay up in the Heavens, nor can we stay in the exact mindset of Yom Kippur all year long. Judaism isn't about escaping the physical world; it's about bringing holiness right into it.

We reach an angelic level on Yom Kippur as a beautiful and necessary reset. But for the rest of the year, we have to live as human beings. Succot commands us to come back down to the physical world, but to do so changed, elevated and holier. We do this by stepping our whole selves into the succah, and by picking up the four species.

Just as these four organs have

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to work together for our bodies to function, all different kinds of Jews need to come together so we can serve God as one.

When we hold the *Arba'a Minim* together and wave them in every direction, we are saying that every part of who we are is ready to be used for a higher purpose. We don't leave holiness behind when Yom Kippur ends. Instead, we pack it up, take it outside into the succah, and live it through our hearts, our spines, our eyes and our lips.





THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF SUCCOT

BY: **RABBI MATT MARKS**

Executive Head of Tribe

Rambam (1038-1204) opens *Hilchot Melachim* (Laws of Kings) with three mitzvot given to the nation of Israel on entering the land: appoint a king, wipe out the memory of *Amalek*, and build God a house (the Temple). This is the order that is required when we embark on the challenge of building our place: Shaul (Saul) was anointed before being sent to fight Amalek, and King David turned to building only once God had given him rest from his enemies (*// Samuel 7:1*).

Just as great philosophers, starting with Plato, saw the building blocks of society mapped out in the souls of individuals, so these national directives for the establishment of a functional state take a personal turn. *Tishrei* is when every individual resettles themselves. Retrace the Rambam's sequence onto these days: Rosh Hashanah crowns the King, Yom Kippur wages a universal war on doubt, and only then, on Succot, do we reach the

third mitzvah: creating a home to dwell with God.

There are two cycles of Jewish festivals. First, the universal cycle of *Tishrei*, which starts with the judgement of everyone in the world, and ends with the prayers on Hoshana Rabbah that request rain for all the world's inhabitants. Second is the cycle depicting the story of the Jewish people. Israel's own trilogy: our birth as a nation when we left Egypt on Pesach, our receiving of the Torah on Shavuot and our journey through the desert in the booths of Succot. Fascinatingly, the succah that we build at the culmination of the universal cycle commemorates a memory that is ours alone, but the *arba'at haminim* (the four species) are waved outward, a plea for rain to fall on every field, not just Jewish ones.

What does a place for God, the home we are trying to build, need to look like?

The Chassidic masters offer an image in the weeks before, explaining that on Rosh Hashanah the King leaves His palace and walks "in the field," available to anyone who steps out to greet Him. A field, though, is not a home.

Ask any British Jew what they picture when they think of Succot and it is not the refurbished Buckingham Palace! It is a rickety frame of poles and bamboo matting wedged between the bins

and the fence, praying it survives the first proper autumn storm. Very English, and close to the letter of the law: two walls and a bit of a third, a roof loose enough for starlight, thick enough only for "more shade than sun." The Talmud calls this *dirat arai*, no claim to permanence, just enough substance to survive the wind, enough gaps to let everything else in.

King Solomon's house, when it arose, was cedar and gold, its courts were such that only one man, once a year, reached the innermost room. The succah has none of that grandeur. It is open to the elements. To everyone.

That is Succot's answer to its own puzzle. Perhaps on a national level, glorifying the king means we need to build monuments that glorify and extol. But, when it comes to the individual, the King does not ask for gold or courts, only a shelter strong enough for the wind, light enough for the sky, walls thin enough to remember who we are.

“ The King does not ask for gold or courts, only a shelter strong enough for the wind, light enough for the sky, walls thin enough to remember who we are.





THE SUCCAH: A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

BY: **NETANYA GREIFF**

Jewish Chaplain, Cambridge & East Anglia

Although it can come crashing down from one strong gust of wind or sudden downpour, for the seven days of Succot a succah becomes our temporary home. It's where we eat and spend time with family and friends throughout the festival. Though simple and fragile, the succah reminds us that a home is not necessarily defined by sturdy walls and a strong roof, but by the warmth, connection and values found within it.

When a student arrives on campus for the first time, it is often their first experience of leaving home and living on their own. Although full of excitement and opportunity, university can also feel overwhelming. Thoughts such as, "How do I do my laundry?", "Who will I eat dinner with?", or "Where do I fit in?" can quickly occupy a student's mind. For Jewish students, the thoughts of "Can I

wear my Magen David necklace or should I wear my kippah?" are all too real these days. Surrounded by new faces and cultures, it can be difficult to know where to begin.

Something as simple as a WhatsApp message inviting them for a Shabbat meal or a coffee and chat can completely change that experience. Those small acts help transform an unfamiliar place into a new, temporary home. As Jewish Chaplains on campus, our role is to create that "home away from home," a welcoming space where students can eat, learn, ask questions, form friendships, and simply feel that they belong.

The Sages teach that the walls of the succah represent God's embrace, a reminder that, even in a temporary dwelling, we are surrounded by His love and care. Each year, we celebrate Succot to commemorate the faith that sustained *Bnei Yisrael*, the Jewish people, throughout their forty years in the wilderness. There is a debate in the Talmud about whether the succot in the desert were actual physical booths, or the *Ananei HaKavod*, the Clouds of Glory, that enveloped the Jewish people and protected them from danger. Whichever view one follows, the message is the same: God provided protection and a strong sense of care for *Bnei Yisrael*.

This idea deeply resonates with our lives on campus. Students arrive in a place that is exciting, but often



uncertain. They are navigating new academic and social pressures, learning new routines, and questioning who they are and who they hope to become at the end of their time at university.

Our aspiration as chaplains is to emulate both interpretations of the succah: to provide a physical home where students can gather, eat, hold meaningful discussions and form new friendships, while also cultivating an atmosphere of warmth, encouragement and support that surrounds them wherever they find themselves.

This Succot, and throughout the year, may we all merit to build succot and communities that offer more than just shelter. May our homes and communal spaces become places where each person feels welcomed, embraced and valued. And may everyone who enters our "succah," whether for a meal, a conversation, or simply a moment of belonging, leave feeling a little more "at home".



THE TRIBE WEEKLY

SUCCOT

25 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER | 15-21 TISHREI

A SUCCAH OF PEACE



BY: **TOMOR
BELOVSKI**

Tribe Operations
Manager

We often connect the idea of Succot with peace. In the daily *Maariv* prayer, we ask for “*succat shlomecha* – the tabernacle of Your peace”. And in the prayer for the Royal Family, recited on Shabbat morning, we ask our Heavenly Father to “spread the tabernacle of peace over all the dwellers on earth.”

Rav A.Y. Kook asks an interesting question: Why a succah?

The succah we build in our gardens is hardly substantial! Its walls are temporary, its roof is made from branches, and there can even be gaps between the walls and the ground or between the

walls themselves. If we are praying for peace, why don't we ask for a fortress of peace, something strong and permanent?

Rav Kook's answer is based on the *halachot* (laws) of a succah.

A succah doesn't have to be physically perfect to be considered valid. Its walls can have gaps, and, in certain circumstances, a succah can be kosher with only two full walls and part of a third. As long as it meets the requirements of *halachah*, it is still considered a proper succah.

And perhaps that teaches us something important about *shalom*.

Peace doesn't have to be perfect to be valuable.

Sometimes peace begins with something small: two family members who stop arguing, neighbours who agree to talk, or friends who put an argument behind them.

We might think, “That's not really peace, there's still so much unresolved”. Rav Kook teaches us that an imperfect peace is still peace. Just as *halachah* can recognise a partially complete wall as being a kosher wall, we can recognise a small step towards peace as something real and worthwhile.

The succah may look fragile, but it gives us shelter. In the same way, even a fragile peace can give people the space to listen, understand and eventually build something stronger.

This Succot, perhaps we can think about peace in our own lives. Is there a friendship we could repair? A disagreement we could let go of? Someone we could make the first move towards?

We don't have to create perfect peace overnight.

Sometimes, all we need to begin with is the first wall.

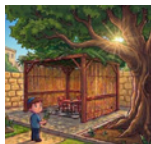
Succot puzzle

Which succot are kosher and which are *pasul* (not kosher)?

1.



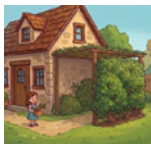
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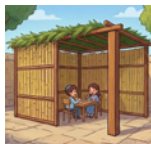
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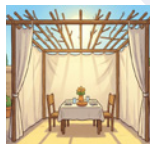
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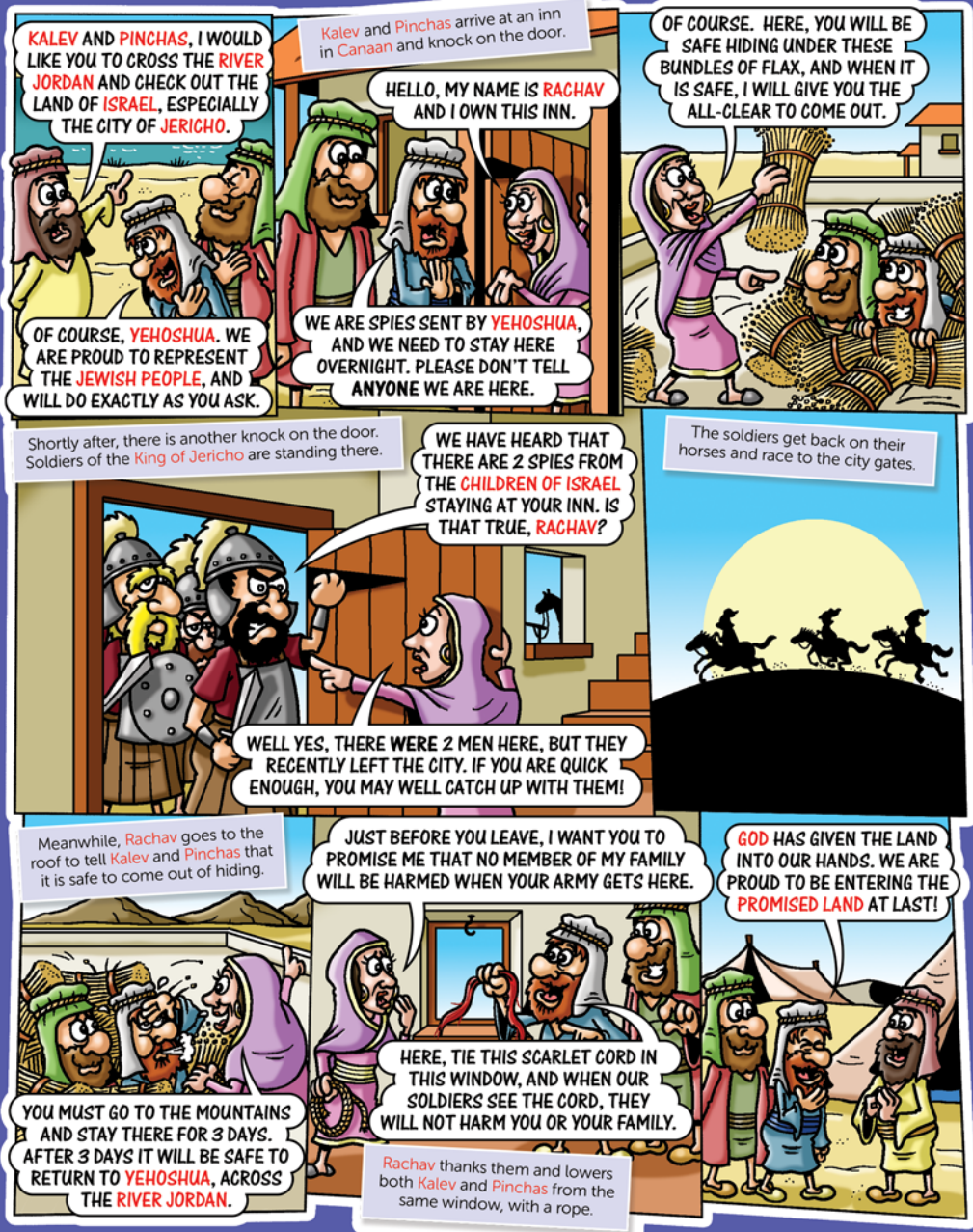
6.



Answers: 1. *Pasul* (too tall) 2. *Pasul* (under a tree) 3. Kosher 4. Kosher (the wall of growing trees does not invalidate the succah) 5. Kosher (the 2 walls and partial third is the minimum needed for a kosher succah) 6. *Pasul* (the gaps in the schach covering are too large)

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

Rachav's Rooftop Rescue



Writer: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

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