



Vezot Habracha - וזאת הברכה

**Coming up...**

- Sviva is restarting throughout the country beginning with the Succah crawl, for more information email Zechariah on svivot@bauk.org
- Don't miss Simchat Torah at the Northern Bayit with Bnei Akiva!! Including meals for Bogrim, pumping ruach and exciting Hakafot.
- Shabbat Hachshara for all Year 13's is on 28/29<sup>th</sup> October see poster below for more details



**Shabbat Hachshara for Shevet Avichai**



contact Ollie for details: ollie@bauk.org



**It's Not Really The End- Rafi Hambling**

The Parsha of Vezot Habracha concludes the reading of this year's L'orah cycle. It ends with the description of the passing of Moshe (Spoilers). The Torah goes on to tell us that there will never be another man like Moshe, nor will there ever be another generation like the generations of the Jews who were redeemed from Egypt, who accepted the Torah. In addition, we are taught the fundamental Jewish belief that there never will be another Torah nor will this one ever be modified or recast.

As such, there is a true sense of finality to this last chapter of the Torah. It not only details the end of an era together with the mortality of a life but it also serves to teach us another important lesson. And that lesson is that the past cannot be repeated and that every generation, just as every individual, is charged with the challenge of creating a new Moshe, so to speak, and a new sense of redemption, freedom and a new reacceptance of the Torah of Sinai.

This finality, the sealing of the books, is itself one of the greatest lessons of this Torah reading. Reconstructing the past may be Reconstructing the past may be the concern of historians, but in terms of life and achievement, it is only the present and future that can guarantee our survival and success.

There is always a great danger in the risk of forgetting our past, be it as an individual or as a nation. Without recalling the past, we invite ourselves to be blind to the unpredictability of human nature and behaviour, and we run the risks of terrible events repeating themselves.

Yet there is a great difference between recalling and remembering the past and attempting to live in the past. Living in the past freezes us and makes us a relic instead of a vibrantly creative society.

Inherent in the blessings that Moshe bestows upon the people of Israel is his look forward. He sees the land on Israel, which he will never enter, and views the Jewish people settled therein. He sees all of the challenges that Jewish life in the future will bring to the Jewish people while they are living both in Israel and scattered around the world.

However, he also sees the last days of the new redemption and the restoration of Israel to its Torah and homeland. In addition, his warning, repeated throughout his lifetime, that the Jews should never return to Egypt, takes on new meaning. The Jews should never live exclusively in the past but always to begin again and anew, as we do with the Torah reading itself, and build a bright, secure and holy future.

Rafi Hambling is in Shevet Na'aleh Nivcha Hanhallah 5777

**The Week that Was...**

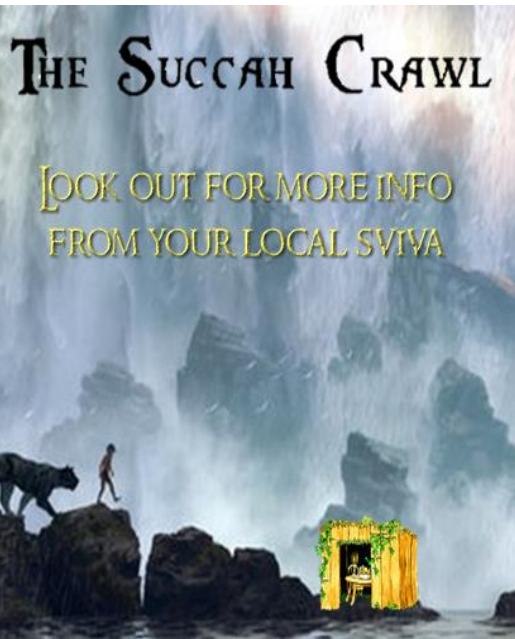
Bnei Akiva hosted members of the ZYC in the Succah for a lunch.

On Thursday we had our annual simchat bet hashoeva at Rav Ari and Chayas. Thank you to the Faustus for hosting such a great event.

**THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES**

	Ⓜ	Ⓢ
London	17:40	18:40
Manchester	17:43	18:46
Birmingham	17:41	18:49
Leeds	17:35	18:43
Liverpool	17:42	18:48
Bristol	17:45	18:53
Cambridge	17:34	18:42
Oxford	17:39	18:47
Jerusalem	17:24	18:36

To receive Shabbat Lashem by email every Friday, or for sponsorship details, send an email to shabbat@bauk.org





## Insight and Inspiration on the Parasha

Rav Ari Faust, Shevet Yechiam,  
Rabbinical Shaliach for Bnei Akiva and the Jewish Agency

### The Mitzvah of Building a Succah Part II

Last week we addressed the question whether or not it was a *mitzvah* to build a Succah. There is no question that sitting in the Succah during Succot is a *mitzvah*, a question is the actual building of it. While we saw sources indicating it is not a *mitzvah* and none of the codifiers count it as one of the six-hundred-and-thirteen *mitzvot*, an overwhelming number of sources implied that it was a *mitzvah* to build the Succah.

What is now left for us to understand is what is the essence of this *mitzvah*? Why is the building of a Succah different from all other preparatory acts, not considered *mitzvot* themselves but rather mere “*hechsher mitzvah*”; such as tying *tzitzit*, baking *matzah* or making a *shofar*?

Residing in the Succah is not just another *mitzvah*, there are several unique aspects to it making it an exceptional one:

Firstly, Succah is one of the few *mitzvot* that need specific intent and awareness of the meaning behind the act being performed. It is not enough to sit in the Succah, one must know that they are doing so, and must know the background behind this *mitzvah* (Vayikra 23:43), “*that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in Succot, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.*” In fact, it could be asked why it is necessary to commemorate the fact that we resided in booths in the desert; there are many miracles that occurred over the forty years, none of them are commemorated by holidays? It must be that the dwelling in the Succah is inherently connected to the redemption, and thus is necessary to celebrate each year.

Second, in the ancient poems customarily inserted into the Tefilla on Succot, the *mitzvah* of residing in the Succah is considered paramount to all other *mitzvot*:

**“The mitzvah of Succah should not be light in your eyes for it is equal to all other mitzvot of the faith...”**

Comparing Succah to all other *mitzvot* is a serious statement. Why is it paramount to the all *mitzvot*? Why is this one *mitzvah* compared to all the rest?

The Netivot Shalom suggests that the *mitzvah* of Succah represents absolute faith in Hashem, which is the cornerstone and foundation of all the Torah. It represents the message that just as Hashem protected and tended to our needs in the desert, He continues to do so at all times.

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This notion of Succah representing complete faith can be further understood: Nearly all other *mitzvot* are performed in specific manners, with specific limbs acting-out the performance of that *mitzvah*. In contrast, Succah is all-pervasive; just being in the Succah is a *mitzvah*, and no specific action is needed. When entering the Succah, the holiness envelopes and embraces ones entire being, such that they undergo a complete transformation from mundane to holy.

This represents our relationship with Hashem like no other *mitzvah*. While we usually connect to Hashem in particular manners – through specific *mitzvot* – Hashem’s presence is all-pervasive, completely embracing. We all exist within the ultimate and timeless reality that we call Hashem; this reality embraces us, and gives purpose and divine meaning to our existence. Such is our dwelling in the Succah, complete and all-pervasive and automatically gives divine meaning to all we do.

According to the Zohar, when we sit in the shade of the Succah we sit in צלל דמהימנותא – the shade of faith. We are completely and all-pervasively encompassed and embraced by Hashem.

Building a Succah is not just preparing ourselves to perform another particular *mitzvah*. It is setting the stage for a complete reality change – from mundane to holy. As such, it is like any other *mitzvah*, changing our perception of reality and setting ourselves up to appreciate the all-pervasive divine reality we are all part of – Hashem.

Each particular *mitzvah* we perform is comparable to making our world more and more like the Succah – an existence which is imbued with purpose and divine meaning. Indeed, the great prayer for the end of days says (said daily in Ma’ariv):

**“Spread Your Succah of wholeness upon us.”**

We pray to have the awareness that the whole world is part of Hashem, that everything is part of His holiness. Building the Succah, like all *mitzvot*, makes our reality closer to this one. As we reside in the Succah, we experience a microcosm of this ultimate endgoal; the Succah of wholeness, holiness and peace.

