



Sukkot: Existence and Meaning





Our Whole Physical Self, Even for a Moment

The sukkah is reimagined, mystically, as a dwelling of trust where *Shekhinah* spreads her wings to protect and comfort. A temporary shelter that holds real love and holiness speaks to the needs of children in foster care.

The Zohar, Section 3, Page 103b

Ye shall dwell in booths.... (Lev. 23:42) Observe that when one sits in this abode of the shadow of faith, the Shekhinah [divine presence] spreads her wings over [them] from above...

תא חזי בשעתא דבר נש יתיב במדורא דא
צלא דמהימנותא שבינתא

Questions for Discussion

- What does it feel like to sit inside a sukkah?
- Why is a sukkah called “shade of faith?”
- A sukkah is protection within impermanence, of holiness in the midst of transition.
 - How does this image resonate with you?
 - How do we find a sense of home in places that are not permanent?
 - What does this teach us about God, about presence vs power?
- Where in my life do I feel the “wings of the Shekhinah” — moments of unexpected protection or peace?
- How might that image speak to children who have experienced danger, loss, or instability?
 - What makes a space — or a family — feel like a shelter?
- How does the Shekhinah’s hovering presence mirror the care that children need through times of change?
- How can we help create a sukkah of the heart for someone who needs safety and care?
- What can this fragile, faith-filled shelter teach me about how to love and let go at the same time?

Passion and Futility

Kohelet 1:2

Utter vanity!—said Kohelet— Utter vanity! All is vanity

הבל הבלים אמר קהלת הבל הבלים הכל הבל

Questions for Discussion

- “All is utter vanity”
 - How do you understand the Psalmist’s claim?
 - How do you hear the tone?
 - How do the meaning and the tone shed light on each other?
- The Psalmist says that there is no evidence of meaning in the world—even as the soul longs for meaning.
 - Is it possible to have a deep longing for that which does not exist?
 - For that which may exist but that we cannot see?
 - Could our longing create/elicit the reality we seek? How?
- How might we understand the dissonance between “all is futility,” and the passion behind that sentiment?
 - Have you experienced that dissonance?
 - How might it shed light on the experience of kids in the foster system?

Kohelet Rabbah 1:2

Vanity of vanities...For who knows what is good for a human being in life when [life] is like a shadow. But which shadow? If it’s the shadow of a wall then there is something important in that, if it’s the shadow of the palm tree, there is something important in that.

הבל הבלים... כי מי יודע מה טוב לאדם
בחיים ויעשם כצל. באיזה צל, אם
כצלו של כתל יש בו ממש, אם כצלו
של דקל יש בו ממש

Questions for Discussion

- The rabbis read “shadow” as “shade” and claim that for some shade יש בו ממש—there is value in them.
 - How do you understand the metaphor of life being כצל—“like a shadow/shade?”
 - What’s the difference between the shade of a tree and the awning of a tall building? Physically? Spiritually and emotionally?



Ushpizin Posters

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Jae, 9

Jae always tries to bring a smile to others. He's a huge sci-fi fan—ask him about his favorite Jedi or Sith. His favorite books also include the "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" series. He admires the creativity of its protagonist. When he grows up, he'd love to use his imagination and creativity. His dream jobs include being an actor or a Lego designer.

ועת לִשְׂחוֹךְ
And a time to laugh
Kohelet 3:4

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Valencia, 18

Val is friendly, loves animals, and is passionate about the arts – acting, writing, music – and dreams of studying drama in college. They're currently writing a screenplay! Val is also passionate about activism, especially regarding minority issues and the LGBTQ community. Val is a confident speaker who's always trying to stand up for others.

לְכָל יָמָן וְעַת לְכַחֵפֵץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:
There is a time to every purpose under heaven.
Kohelet 4:11

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Viviana & Roman 13, 11

Roman is energetic and always up for a new adventure. He also enjoys video games, watching action-hero shows and going to school. Vivi has a warm heart-melting smile. She is energetic, but enjoys quiet time for painting, reading and cooking. They hope to find a family together.

וְעַת כְּנוּס אֲבָנִים
And a time to gather stones
Kohelet 3:5

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Isaiah, 15

Isaiah is a pleasure to be around—a great conversationalist, very family-oriented, values contact with his younger siblings and has reconnected with extended family members. He is bright and has a healthy perspective about how to work towards his future. Isaiah plays quarterback on the high school football team. His goal is to play in college and ultimately professionally.

וְעַת לִבְנוֹת
A time for building up
Kohelet 3:3

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Ryan, 11

Ryan is a talented kid who can draw just about anything. He's also a wiz at Minecraft. He loves to get up early and enjoy a quiet sunrise. He'd love to find a family to help him start his days on the right foot.

וְעַת לִבְנוֹת
A time for building up
Kohelet 3:3

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Kendall, 12

Kendall is very talkative, curious and looks forward to being part of an adoptive family. He loves to hear people's stories and play outside. Kendrick would make a great addition to any family.

וְעַת לְחַסֵּק וְעַת לְרַחֵם מִחֶבֶן
A time for embracing
Kohelet 3:5

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Ruth

Ruth has had challenging teen years, but that has not repressed her sparkle. She is prophetic and idealistic, yearning for adventure and meaning in a loving forever family that is ensconced in a purposeful and visionary community.

Found her forever family with a single mother, Naomi.
כִּי אֵלֹהִים מְצָאָהּ בְּעֵת צָרָתָהּ
For where you go, I will go; where you lie down, I will lie down;
your people are my people; and your God is my God.
Ruth 1:16

USHPIZIN

..... Welcoming Beccah, 16

Beccah is a creative, funny, anime-loving girl. She dreams of finding a loving forever family. She loves to try new foods and express her creative side through makeup and fashion. She also loves to read and wants to become an author someday. Her dream is to publish a book about her life experiences.

הַחֲכָמָה תְּחַיֶּה בְּעֵלֶיהָ
Wisdom preserves the life of the one who possesses it
Kohelet 7:12

USHPIZIN:

Welcoming foster families and kids

We invite *ushpizin*—guests in spirit—into our Sukkah, inspired by Abraham and Sarah's hospitality.

These are often biblical ancestors—many of whom wandered, searching for a place to belong. In that light, we start with our foremother Ruth, who was adopted by Naomi.

We also invite other honored guests: youth who are wandering and in search of belonging. These posters are to show that we welcome local foster kids and the families who care for them into our own care.

We have become a Second Nurture partner—welcoming and supporting local foster families with the love & capacities of our *kehilla*.

The illustrations of the children are created by the youth who have been adopted and are now adult adults.
To learn more ask a member of our staff or go to 2Nurture.org