

# What You Need to Live

**BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE**

The Talmud has some advice: “A disciple of the wise may not live in a city which lacks one of the following ten things: a court, a charity-treasury with two collectors and three distributors, a synagogue, a public bathhouse, sanitary services, a physician, an artisan, a barber, a butcher and a teacher of the young.” (Sanhedrin 17b)

If you ask your child or your friend “What can you not live without?” after they realize that “iPod,” “TV,” “Computer” and “cellphone” are actually inadequate answers, they might come close to the list the rabbis compiled two thousand years ago.

The tricky thing about technology is that we come to think of it not as artificial but natural. The elevator coming when we press the button seems as certain as the sun rising — and almost as surprising when it fails. But the holiday of Sukkot, when we dwell in artificial and temporary huts, reminds us what is real and what ultimately sustains us. Sitting in the sukkah, surrounded by food, learning, community and a view of the heavens is an important corrective to the gilded boxes in which we spend most of our lives. Justice, charity, community, medicine, education and reverence — these are the things human beings cannot live without, then and now.