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A TORAH TAVLIN Publication
34 MARINER WAY MONSEY NY 10952

Special Expanded Yomim Tovim Triple Issue!

חג הסוכות / שבת חול המועד / שמיני עצרת / שמחת תורה / פרשת בראשית

Chag HaSukkos / Shabbos Chol Hamoed / Shemini Atzeres / Simchas Torah / Bereishis

ט"ז - כ"ד תשרי תשע"ד - September 19 - 28, 2013

הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רבינוביץ שליט"א
ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים עיה"ק

רעינות ופירושים לעזר אהאם לעבודת הש"ת והתחזקות באמונת ובטחון מאת

חג הסוכות: כמעט שעברתי מהם עד שמצאתי את

חג הסוכות זוכים אנו למדרגה חשובה, כמו שאמרו חז"ל (סוכה ב. א): כל שבעת הימים צא מדירת קבע ושב בדירת עראי. וכוונתם בזה, שכשרוצים להתקרב להש"ת צריכים להכיר בכך שהעולם הגשמי הוא סתירה לרוחניות, ועל ידי הציאה מדירת הקבע מראה האדם שאינו משועבד לנוחיות העולם הזה שגופו הגשמי אוהב, אלא אדרבה, הוא נלחם עמו ויוצא לסוכה העראית, שהיא קטנה וצפופה, וחום וקור חודרים אליה בקלות. על ידי זה מתגלה שניתן לצאת מהבלי העולם הזה, ולזכות להתעלות עד שנגיש קרבת ואהבת ה' כאן בעולם הזה.

ומרן ה'הבן איש חי' וצ"ל, חיבר תפילה מיוחדת לכל יום מימי הסוכות, בה מבקשים אנו שנהיה ראויים להיות מרכבה למידה הקדושה, המרומת באופיזא דיום זה. וצריך האדם בכל יום לקבל על עצמו לתקן ולעבוד על אותה מידה; וכגון, ביום הראשון על מדת החסד, וביום השני על מידת גבורה המורה ליראת שמים, וכן בכל יום על מידה אחרת של הו' מידות, וכך זוכים לסיוע משמים להתנדב באלו המידות, ולהשפעה בוכות האושפיזא קדישא שבאל אלינו באותו יום. שאחיותו שבורש המידה של זה היום. ועלינו לנצל את שעת הכושר הזה, לבקש את קרבת ה', ולדאוג להספיק קניינים רוחניים. ועל כן אין להתמקד בחג הסוכות בשמחה גשמית בלבד, אלא מוטל עלינו להיות בשמחה רוחנית ובסיפוק הנפש, להשתוקק להרגיש את אהבת ה', להגיע למצב שהנפש תזעק מאליה להקב"ה: 'אין לי חפץ אלא בך'!

כאותו מעשה מופלא המובא במדרש (ילקוט פרי בראשית רמז טז), באחד שנשא אשה, ושהה עמה עשר שנים ולא ילדה, וביקש הבעל לגרשה. באו לפני רבן שמעון בר יוחאי, ואמר הבעל לאשה: כל חפץ שיש לי בתוך ביתי טלי אותו ולכי לבית אביך. אמר להם רבן שמעון בר יוחאי: כשם שנזדווגתם מתוך מאכל ומשתה, כך אי אתם פורשים זה מזה אלא מתוך מאכל ומשתה. מה עשתה האשה? ערכה סעודה גדולה ובה השקתה את בעלה הרבה יין עד שהשתכר, ורמוזה לשפחותיה ואמרה להן: טלו אותו ושאווהו לבית אבי, בחצי הלילה נגער הבעל משנתו ושאל: היכן אני נתון? אמרה לו אשתו: וכי לא כך אמרת לי, כל חפץ שיש לי בתוך ביתי טלי אותו ולכי לבית אביך – אין לי חפץ טוב ממך! וכיון ששמע זאת רבן שמעון בר יוחאי התפלל עליהם ונפקדו.

כך צריך כל אדם להרגיש, שאין לו שום רצונות מלבד הרצון להתקרב אל ה', וכשהוא שומע ומרגיש את אהבת ה', הוא מתקרב אליו באהבה, בבחינת: 'אחותי ולא ארפנו' (שיר השירים ג. ד), ואז לא ישתוקק לכל יתר הצרכים החומריים, ובזו

יבוא להם, ולא ירגיש בהם שום שמחה, רק שמחת הדבקות בה'. אמנם בכדי להשיג זה הרצון, מוטל על האדם בתחילה להתנור מתענוגיו החומריים אפילו בעל כרחו, כי אהבת ה' ואהבת תענוגי עולם הזה, הם תרתי דסתרי, וככל שהאדם נמצא יותר בתוך העולם הזה, נוחיותו ותענוגותיו – כך הוא מתרחק יותר מאהבת ה', וכמו שכתב בספר 'חובת הלבבות' (שער חשבון הנפש, פ"ג), שכשם שאי אפשר שיהיו מים ואש בכלי אחד, כי האחד דוחה את השני, כך אי אפשר לחיות עם תאוות העולם הזה ועם אהבת ה' גם יחד, כי האחת דוחה את השניה, אך אם יזכך עצמו וימנע עצמו מתענוגיו החומריים, אז יזכה לחזות בנועם השם ויזכה להתעורר לאהבת השם ולא עוד, אלא שאם יתפזר האדם באמת ובתמים בקרבת ה', אזי גם צרכיו החומריים ייהפכו אצלו לאמצעי לקיום המצוות ולהתדבקות יתירה בה' יתברך. כי אז תהיה גישתו לאלו הדברים באופן שונה לגמרי, כי כשהאדם בקטנות הדעת, ואינו משתוקק לקרבת אלוהים, אז כשמרגיש שגופו רעב ותובע את מזונו, יכין עצמו לאכילה רק מתוך כוונה לתועלת עצמו, להשקיש את רעבונו, ואז יחפש כבר את האוכל הטוב והטעים שגופו מתענג עליו, ואז הגם שיברך לפני האוכל ואחרי האוכל כנדרש, אין זה אלא כדי לצאת ידי חובתו שלא ימעל בחפצי שמים, וכמו שאמרו בגמרא (ברכות לה, א), שאסור לו לאדם שייחנה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה, וכל הנהגה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה מעל, אבל אין לו ענין של עבודת הש"ת בעצם עשיית הברכות.

אבל אם האדם משתוקק לקרבת אלוהים, אז בשעה שהוא תאב לאכול, יערוך חשבון לעצמו: הרי נגיש הוא כעת לאכילה, וסעודתו צריכה להיות בבחינת הקרבת קרבן, ושולחנו אשר לפני ה', הוא כמוזב המקרבים עליו אישים וניחוחים לצור עולמים, אז אז הופך את מעשה האכילה הגשמי למעשה של עבודת ה', בהכנה דרבה מקודם של 'נטילת ידים' בכל פרטיה ודקדוקיה, ואחריה הברכות מתוך התלהבות להש"ת, כדת כראוי וכנכון.

ובעצם האכילה, כוונתו ברורה, לצבור ולאגור עוד כח וחיל לעשות רצון קונו וחפץ צורו ברוך הוא, ע"י שיהא גופו חזק ובריא לעבודת ה'. ובזמן הסעודה ילמד דבר הלכה וכמו שאמרו במשנה (אבות ג. ג), בשולחן שאכלו עליו ואמרו דברי תורה: כאילו אכלו משולחנו של מקום ברוך הוא, שנאמר (יחזקאל מא, כב): זה השולחן אשר לפני ה', ואם כל ההתייחסות לאכילה היא כך, הרי ש'ברכת המזון' היא בוודאי בכוונה ובהתעוררות.

מעתה בואו חשבון, כמה השגות 'רוחניות' נעלות, השיג והרוויח אדם זה,

A SERIES IN HALACHA למעשה תלכת
LIVING A "TORAH" DAY

Forgotten and Little Known Halachos and Customs (50) Using Another's Mitzvah Item (cont.). Last week we discussed the issue of using of a *Lulav* and *Esrog* without the owner's permission. It is important that we add one crucial detail. If a seller brings any of the four *minim* to sell, no one is allowed to borrow them and put them back. The reason is simple. The seller brought them there for selling and not for doing favors ⁽¹⁾. **Borrowing Seforim.** The **Terumas Hadashan** ⁽²⁾ writes that from the *Gemara* ⁽³⁾ it seems that one cannot use the *sefer* of another person without permission, even for a short time. The reason is that *seforim* can easily tear and although by a *Talis* the owner would agree to the borrower's usage, for a *sefer* which gets damaged more easily, he would not automatically agree. This seems to be the prevalent rule in the days of the *gemara* and early *poskim*, and is brought as *Halacha* in the **RMA** ⁽⁴⁾. The **Pri Megadim** ⁽⁵⁾ also says that one should not use such a *sefer* for even a brief period of time because he might end up continuing to use it for a longer time, or a number of times, and tear it. Even the **Mishna Berura** in his time assumed the *halacha* was still the same and wondered why people use privately owned *siddurim* that are lying around the shuls. **Today.** There are a number of reasons why we may assume that in today's day and age, people are generally less particular and would not mind if others use their *siddur* or *sefer* briefly:

1) The wide availability of affordable printed material.

מאת מו"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א
ראש כולל עטרת חיים ברוך קליבלנד הייטס

2) The better quality of paper and binding used today, which makes them less likely to tear.

3) Today, one can easily repair a tear with binding and invisible (clear) tape and “after-wear-and-tear” binding. The **Aruch Hashulchan** ⁽⁶⁾ and **Likutei Maharich** ⁽⁷⁾ are indeed lenient to use such *seforim* on a temporary basis since nowadays, owners are less particular about these items. Between their more recent times and today, the above-mentioned reasons are even more compelling.

If Damage Occured. If indeed one borrowed a *sefer* and a loss was caused through damage and the like, there is room to debate if one is liable to pay. A regular שואל (borrower) is obligated to pay for any accidents that happen with an item, except for “מתה מרמת מלאכה” - in other words, normal wear and tear. In our case, there might be a logical excuse to exempt one from paying even in the case of an accident since the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* is not considered receiving the normal benefit of a borrower, due to the famous Talmudic dictum that *“Mitzvos were not given for us to benefit from.”* ⁽⁸⁾

On the other hand, since there was no explicit permission to use the *sefer*, the borrower might be more obligated than a usual borrower. Also, since many times the damage might be deemed a direct damage (אדם המזיק), in this case, one should inform the owner and together they should ask a *Rav* to decide if and what reimbursement should be made.

הוא היה אומר ...

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT”L (Kedushas Levi) would say:

“Rain on the night of *Sukkos* is considered a negative omen. However, I see it differently. Rain on *Sukkos* is a sign of protection and good blessings. When one wishes to protect himself from an *ayin hara* (evil eye), he spits on the ground three times, so the evil spirits should not attach themselves to him. Similarly, the rain is *Hashem's* manner of ‘spitting’ in order to keep the evil spirits away from His beloved nation. It is surely a good sign!”

Chacham Eliyahu Hamway ZT”L (Av Bet Din of Aleppo) would say:

“The **Zohar** teaches that *Hashem* often saves wicked people from harm because in the future, their descendants will be righteous. Based on this, we can understand why *Hashem* designated the *Arava* to be placed with the *Lulav*. The word 'זרע' has the same numerical value as the word 'ערבה' (277) which means seed or offspring. Thus, like the *Arava*, which is likened to the Jew with no *Torah* or good deeds, even such a person will merit to be joined together with the righteous of Israel - but only on the condition that his children follow along the proper path of *Torah* and *mitzvos*.”

R' Pinchos of Koritz (Imrei Pinchos) would say:

“The *Chosson Torah* stuffs his pockets with *Torah*, while the *Chosson Bereishis* stuffs his pockets with wealth. But during the festive dancing, often things fall out of one's pockets, and others have a chance to pick them up as well!”

(1) אגרות משה או"ח ביקו (2) פרק ק' בבא מציעא
כס' (4) או"ח י"ד (5) שם (6) או"ח י"ד (7) ברכת השחר
ר"ה חכ (8)

A Wise Tzaddik would say:

“The first three letters of the words 'שמח' - 'And you shall only be happy,' spell out the word 'שוא' (falsehood). Because a false *simcha* (happiness) is still better than a true sadness!”

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לע"נ רב ישראל יצחק
ב"ר מרדכי חנן חנו
ז"ל, יארעיש י"ג תשרי

מעצם העובדה שגופו הצ'שמ' היה רעב ותאב?!

וזהו צורת החיים של יהודי עובד ה', שזוכר את רבנו בכל רגע, ויודע ומכיר שכל פעולה צריכה להיות מכוונת לשם שמים, וכך הוא מקיים מצוות ומעשים

לקחי חיים ודברי תעצוררות
נסדרו עפ"י פרשיות,תשובע

בסוכות תשבו שבועת ימים כל האורה בישראל ישובו בסוכות. למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים וגו' (ויקרא כג-מב,מג) - בעניין חשיבות ההשקעה בתחילה

כתב האבן עזרא, "כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל – שהיו עושים וכו' במדבר סיני, שעמדו שם וכו', וכן מנהג כל המנות. והנה גם זה המועד זכר ליציאת מצרים, ואם ישאל השואל, למה בתשרי זאת המצוה, יש להשיב, כי ענן ה' היה על המחנה יומם, והשמש לא יכם, ומימות תשרי החלו לעשות סוכות בעבור הקור".

והנה, ישוב זה של האבן עזרא הוא רק לפי המ"ד ד'סוכות ממש עשו להם, ולא לפי המ"ד ד'ענני כבוד הוי', וכדאיתא בגמרא (סוכה י"א) שנחלקו בזה התנאים, "תניא כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל, ענני כבוד הוי', דברי רבי אליעזר, רבי עקיבא אומר, סוכות ממש עשו להם, וכן כתב **הרמב"ן**, "ועל דעת האומר 'סוכות ממש עשו להם', החלו לעשותן בתחילת החורף מפני הקור, כמנהג המחנות, ולכן ציווה בהן בזמן הזה וכו'", וא"כ, למ"ד ד'ענני כבוד הוי', עדיין 'שאל השואל, למה בתשרי זאת המצוה:

[ויש להוסיף, שיישוב זה אינו לפי דעת **ספר החינוך** (מצוה שכ"ה), שכתב 'מצות סוכה, שנצטווני לשבת בסוכה שבועת ימים וכו', משרשי המצוה וכו', למען נזכור הניסים הגדולים שעשה הא-ל ברוך הוא לאבותינו במדבר בצאתם ממצרים, שסיככם בענני כבוד שלא יזיק להם השמש ביום וקרח בלילה", וא"כ, לא היה להם כל צורך 'לעשות סוכות בעבור הקור].

והנה יעויין בדברי הרמב"ן שם נמצא שיישב גם בדרך אחרת, "והנה, ציווה בתחילת ימות החמה בזכרון יציאת מצרים בחדשו ובמועדו, וציווה בזכרון הנס הקיים הנעשה להם כל ימי עצימתם במדבר, בתחילת ימות הגשמים", כדי ש'תחילת ימות החמה' ו'תחילת ימות הגשמים' יהיו עם מחשבה אודות גדלות ה' וטובו, ובכך גם המשך ימות החמה וימות הגשמים יהיו עם מחשבה זו, כיון שהראשית גוררת אחריה את ההמשך.

וכמו שנאמר "טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו" (**מגילת קהלת ו' ח', הנקראת בתג הסוכות**), והכוונה "כשהוא טוב מראשית" (מדרש רבה קהלת ו' ט"ז), והיינו, שכפי ההשקעה בראשיתו של הדבר, כן תהיה הצלחתו וטובתו באחריתו, כיון שהראשית גוררת אחריה את ההמשך, ואם כן חשוב ביותר להשקיע כראוי בראשיתו.

וכן כתוב בהקדמת הספר **מ'שנת חכמים'** (ד"ה ובאשר אמרו), "אמר החכם, ההתחלה היא יותר מחצי הדבר, לפי שהוא עיקרו ושורשו של הדבר, ולכן 'כל התחלות קשות' לפי הטבע, כיון **שבהתחלת הדבר כלול כל הדבר**".

וכן כתב **הגר"א (אבני אליהו**, תפילת שלש רגלים, ד"ה ברוך [סידור הגר"א]) "כיון שכל התחלת דבר הוא יותר מהחצי של הדבר, והיא כוללת כל חלקיה, לכן היא שקולה כנגד כל הדבר. ולכן מצינו שמשה רבנו שהיה הראשון מישראל לקבל את התורה, היה שקול כנגד כל ישראל (ע' רש"י [שמות י"ח א.] ו**ילקוט שמעוני'** [רמז רמ"א, ד"ה תניא]), וכן מצינו שמצות מילה שהיא ראשונה למצוות שנעשים בגוף האדם (היינו שזו המצוה הראשונה שנעשה בגוף שנצטווה בה אברהם), היא שקולה כנגד כל המצוות (ע' נדרים ל"ב), ויצצית שהיא ראשונה למצוות המעשיות (היינו שנרמזה לאברהם בפסוק 'אם מחוט וגוי' [ע' חולין פ"ט,ט]. ראשונה), היא ג"כ שקולה כנגד כל המצוות (ע' נדרים כ"ה), ושבת שהיא ראשונה למצוות ל"ת ששמרו בני ישראל (שהרי שמרו אותה כבר במצרים [שמות רבה א' כ"ח]), היא שקולה כנגד כל המצוות (ע' ירושלמי ברכות א' ה'), ולכן בברכה ראשונה של תפילת שמונה עשרה נזכרים י"ח שבחים כנגד י"ח

טובים בכל אשר יפנה, וחי בדרכות בה' מבלי להיפרד ממנו.

אנו תפלה, שיעזרנו השי"ת, שנוכל כל השנה להיות חיים אמיתיים כאלו, וכמו שכתוב (דברים ד, ד): ואתם הדבקים בה' אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום.

מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט"א
מגיד משרים בק"ק בית שמש

בסוכות תשבו שבועת ימים כל האורה בישראל ישובו בסוכות. למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכות

הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים וגו' (ויקרא כג-מב,מג) - בעניין חשיבות ההשקעה בתחילה

הברכות, מפני שהיא שקולה כנגד כל התפלה".

ועל דעת זה כתב **התפארת שמואל'** (מאלכסנדר, חנוכה, אות ל"ה), "זבראשי חדשיכם תקריבו עולה לה', איתא בשם תלמידי **הבעל שם טוב הק'**, שיהיה האדם נוהר בעמדו ממיטתו, שתהיה המחשבה הראשונה והדיבור הראשון והמעשה הראשונה, להשי"ת, בתורה ומצוות, ועל ידי זה, יהיו נגדרים כל המחשבה ודיבור ומעשה של כל היום, אחריו, ואמרו (וע' בספר **שיח שרפי קודש'** פרשת בא, בשם היידיושי הר"ם), שזה הרמז בפסוק 'קדש לי כל בכור' (ש'בכור' היינו ד'ראשית', כמו שהבכור הוא ראשית הבנים), לקדש ראשית המחשבה ודיבור ומעשה, ואולי זהו הרמז, ז'בראשי חדשיכם', רצה לומר, בהתחלת היום, על דרך 'חדשים לבקרים', ת'קריבו עולה לה', המחשבה הראשונה יהיה לד', על דרך אמרם ו'ל' אין העולה בא אלא על ההורר הלב', וממילא יהיו נגדרים כל הפעולות והמחשבות אחר ה', וכמו שאמר דוד המלך ע"ה 'שבענו בבוקר (-) ראשית היום) חסדו, (ובכך)גרנגה ונשמחה בכל ימינו (-בכל היום, כיון שנגדר אחר ראשיתו).

וכמבואר בדברי **הרמ"א** (או"ח ריש ט' א', שכתב "יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו, שיהא הוא מעורר השחר וכו', (ובכך) ובשכבו על משכבו (בלילה שאחר כך) ידע לפני מי הוא שוכב, (ובכך) ומיד שיעור משנתו (בבוקר שאחר כך) יקום בוריותו לעבודת בוראו יתברך ויתעלה"), וכמו שאמר בקדשו אאמרו' וצללה'ה ז"ע (-היינו ה**ישמח ישראל' מאלכסנדר**) בזה"ל 'אז מען איז אויף שין, שלאפט מען שין' (-כשקמים יפה-כ'ראוי', ישנים יפה-כ'ראוי' [תרגום ללשון הקודש]), וכשישן בטוב, אז יקוץ ביותר טוב, וממילא 'שלאפט מען דיא אנגדע נאכט נאך שענער' (-ישנים בלילה שאחריו, עוד יותר יפה-כ'ראוי' [כנ"ל]), כי הכל נגדר אחר המחשבה הראשונה, ולזאת תיכף בהקיצו משנתו יידא ויפחר, ויהיה לנגד עיניו לקיים 'שוית' ה' לנגדי תמיד" (וכמו שמבואר ענין זה בדברי הרמ"א שם).

ויש להוסיף, שעניינו זה נרמז בכתוב 'מראשית ערסותיכם תתנו לה' תרומה וגו'" (במדבר ט"ז כ"א), והיינו, שאת תחילת היום שבה אנו קמים ממשותינו-ע'רסותינו' (ע' מאור ושמש' ו'אגרא דכלא' שמפרשים כך) עלינו לרומם אל ה', ע"י שנתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודתו.

ולפי יסוד זה-שחשוב ביותר להשקיע כראוי בראשיתו של דבר' יש לפרש כוונת הפסוק, "והוא כחתן יוצא מחופתו, שיש כגבור לרוץ אורח" (תהלים י"ט ו'), והיינו שעל החתן היוצא מחופתו להתחיל לרוץ במסלול חי הנישואין שלו עם התחזקות והתגברות בעבודת ה', וזאת משום שראשיתם משפיעה על המשך דרכם. (ע' **זוהב משבא' [מהגרמ"ש שפידיא זצ"ל]** על התורה, פרשת נח, זיחל נח איש האדמה).

ויש להוסיף, שכיון שחשוב ביותר להשקיע כראוי בראשיתו של דבר, לכן ד'ראשית השנה' היא עם חודש תשרי המלא בקיום המצוות, וכדאיתא בגמרא (ר"ה י"א), "ויקהלו אל המלך שלמה כל איש ישראל בידח האיתנים (-היינו, חודש תשרי) בחג (-הסוכות) וכו', מאי משמע דהאי איתן לישנא דתקיפי הוא, כדכתיב 'איתן מושבך', ואומר 'שמעו הדים את ריב ה', והאיתנים מוסדי ארץ' וכו', דתקיפי במצות", וכתב רש"י (ד"ה דתקיף), "דתקיף במצות-שופר, יום הכיפורים, וסוכה, לולב, וערבה, וניסוך המים", ובכך גם המשך השנה יהיה עם קיום המצוות, והתעלות רוחנית, כיון שהראשית גוררת אחריה את ההמשך.

“Anyway, we were singing the part of this *niggun* that says, ‘*Ain z’chiyah k’Torah, v’ain chachameha k’Yisrael.*’ (There is no merit like the *Torah*, there are no men of wisdom like those in Israel), when suddenly the camp commandant, a somewhat civil German by the name of Bruno Papeh, walked into the room. He looked at us singing and he seemed to become angry. ‘What is this? Why are you singing? Do you have it so good here that you can sing?” Everybody stopped quickly. We were frightened. Papeh was relatively civil - but he was still a German.

“‘Friedenson,’ Papeh called to me, ‘tell me, what are you singing?’ I stepped forward, obviously chosen to be the spokesperson of the group. I explained that today was our holiday and that we were praying in song, a song pertaining to the holiday. ‘You were praying or you were singing?’ asked Papeh. ‘Were you praying for the downfall of the Fuhrer? Is that what your song is about? Translate the words for me.’ I did as he asked and I explained the meaning of the words to him. When I came to the part that there are no men of wisdom like the scholars of Israel, he derisively exclaimed, ‘Are you Jews so wise? *Du glaubst in das?* Do you believe in this?’”

Mr. Friedenson paused for a moment to wipe his brow. The strain was tremendous, but the look on the faces of the men and children as they listened to his words was worth all the effort. With the strength of a lion, he gathered up all his reserves and continued. “I remember, there was a boy of seventeen or eighteen, just a Jewish boy, not even from our religious group. He jumped up and said in German, ‘Yes, Herr Commandant, I believe! *Ich glaubst!*’

Papeh then began asking each of us in turn if we also believed in this. He went from person to person, starting with me. You have to understand that we were not afraid to say the truth to him, because we knew he was good to us. Each and every person in the shop said, ‘Yes! We believe. Yes! We believe!’

“Papeh looked at us and excitedly gestured with both arms while exclaiming, ‘You Jews are amazing. I don’t know how the Fuhrer will ever be able to defeat you!’ and he walked away. It was an incredible moment of pride and faith.”

Mr. Friedenson finished the story and broke out into a huge smile. “How right he was and how fortunate we are today to be able to learn *Torah* in re-established centers of *Torah* and *Chassidus* throughout the world. We must never be afraid and we must always believe. Nu, what can I say ... ‘*Aiyen z’chiyah k’Torah v’ain chachameha k’Yisrael*’”

This was the cue and the small *shtiebel* in Monsey broke out in joyous singing and dancing.

אפצות פי בשירה ובזמרה ... והגיענו לשמחת התורה

ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם ... (במדבר כג-לה)

There are numerous words in the Hebrew language that are closely associated. The word "עצר" (gather) is related to "אצר" (collect), "אזר" (gird), "אסר" (bind), "עשר" (wealth), and "עזר" (assistance), all of which denote a form of “holding together” and “concentration.” Thus, we may interpret "שמיני עצרת" as a day which is not intended for the communication of new truths for us to accept and internalize, but rather, it has as its function to keep us before the Presence of the Almighty for yet a little while longer so that we may fix in our memories the perceptions we have already gained over the past few weeks; to have them remain with us forever and not lose these valued impressions amidst the vicissitudes of everyday life.

This, denotes **R’ Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT”L (Terumos Tzvi)**, would accord entirely with the purpose of the final day of the festival. For seven days we have saturated ourselves with all the truths that the fact of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Exodus from Egypt, has granted and guaranteed to the consciousness of a Jew. The seventh day is thus “*Atzeres*” - gathering up all the spiritual “treasures” we have collected during the festival of *Sukkos* that they may be preserved for us and that we may be truly enriched by them as we return to the every-day life which

begins again at the end of the seventh day. The function of *Shemini Atzeres* is accomplished if we allow all of our spiritual gains to pass in review before us and firmly resolve not to permit the work and turmoil of life to rob us of what we have attained.

Now, if the seventh day of *Sukkos* were designated as “*Atzeres*,” the task of preservation would apply only to the truths taught by the *Yom Tov of Sukkos* itself. However, *Shemini Atzeres* comes on the eighth day - one day after *Sukkos*. It, thus, functions as a holiday of its own, and so the idea of “holding together” before *Hashem* appears here as a concept independent of *Sukkos*; it is intended to conclude not only the festival series of the seventh month of *Tishrei*, but also that of the entire Jewish calendar cycle. The purpose of *Shemini Atzeres* then, would be to have us gather up all the perceptions and resolves brought to us by all the *moadim* (holidays) of the entire year, and have us resolve to “retain” and “hold fast” to our new spiritual gains, impressing them so deeply upon our hearts that they will remain our inalienable possessions throughout the year of everyday life to which we are about to return. And then, thus enriched, we will “remain with *Hashem*” no matter what the coming year may hold in store for us.

שהוכיחו האל, ואמר לו 'אתה גרמת לי' וכיוצא בדבר הזה, והוסיף כעס ורוגז" (וכן ביאר ב'ספדור').

ואילו ה'דבי יוסף בכור שוד' הוסיף, "ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו - מה שאמר לו הקב"ה בעדמה בא אליו, כי הרגש שהיה נשמר ממנו, ואמר לו, כך וכך אמר לי הקב"ה ונתפייסנו יחד, ופני לא היו לי עוד, כי הוא אמר לי 'למה חרה לך ולמה נפלו פניך' ופייסני, וחשב הבל שנתפייס ולא נשמר ממנו עוד".

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH... עזר כנגדו

What is the job and purpose of a woman? A woman's job is to emulate *Hashem*, just as it is a man's job - the *middah* of "והלכת בדרכיו". The difference between the two is how a woman carries out her job. That is what really defines her *tafkid* and her *mahus* - her very essence. Only when both man and woman work together as one entity with different jobs, can they achieve true perfection in a marriage. The *Gemara* tells us in the name of *Rav Elazar*: "כל אדם שאין לו אשה אינו אדם שנאמר זכר ונקבה בראם ... ויקרא "Any man who is not married to a woman is not (called) an ADAM." The *posuk* does not say "He called his name ADAM," but rather, "He called THEIR name ADAM." Why? Because an "ADAM" - a *mentch*, is the title given to a MAN AND A WOMAN working together as a team, to build a fine Jewish home.

Hashem deliberately made the human body in a way that helps us understand how to use it properly. He gave us two eyes and two ears - but only one mouth, so that we should listen and look TWICE as much as we speak. He put our heads higher than our hearts so that our intellect should rule our emotions and feelings. So too, *Hashem* made Chava from the rib of Adam, specifically an internal part of him, to teach us that the woman's influence would be an internal one, one that touches that inner core of the people she helps - mainly her husband and her children. This is why most of what women do is hidden. The great

מעשה אבות.... סימן לבנים

מים אבים הם גיא לעטר לכל יעצרו בנשיון שטר אמונים גנון כם שואלי מטר (תפילת גשם)

In the summer of 1492, Spain expelled its Jewish population as part of the infamous Spanish Inquisition. Tens of thousands of Spanish Jews subsequently fled to nearby Portugal where King John II granted them asylum in return for substantial monetary payments. Many of the refugees were wealthy and the ransom was produced. However, King John then came up with a new demand: a drought was taking its toll on his country and the people were suffering terribly. Crops were withering and the people, as well as the livestock, had nothing with which to sustain them. The king demanded that the Jewish rabbis organize a prayer vigil and make sure that the rains begin to fall or else!

This news was received by the Portugese community like a thunderclap! Only, there hadn't been the hint of thunder, or lightning, or rain for that matter, for many, many months. How would they be able to "guarantee" that the clouds would soon part and the precipitation would begin to fall?

It was decided that the *Gaon* and **Chacham Rabbeinu Yitzchok Abohav ZT"l** of **Castile**, together with thirty other of the most respected Jews of the land would attempt to negotiate with the king on behalf of their coreligionists. Chacham Yitzchok appeared before King John, but his excellency refused to budge on his demand: either the Jews bring the rain, or

וכך, או שלא יאמר כלל 'ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו', מאדור שלא פירש מה שאמר לו, אבל לגבי מה שפירש הרב 'בדברי ריב סתם', די במה שאמר 'ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו וגו', שפירשו, שעל ידי דברים שאמר לו קם והרגו, ומסתמא לא היו אלא דברי ריבות".

אבל האבן עזרא פירש, "ויאמר קין - הקרוב אלי, שאמר לו כל התוכחות שהוכיחו השם", והוסיף הדר"ק, "ופירש 'ויאמר קין וגו', שאמר לו התוכחות

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

זכר ונקבה בראם ויברך אתם ויקרא את שמם אדם (בראשית ה-ב)

influence that a wife has on her husband and the enormous impact that a mother has on her children is not something that is written up in the New York Times (or even in the *Yated Ne'eman*). The constant support and encouragement a woman gives her husband, the selfless devotion and love that a mother imparts to her children, is of inestimable worth, and a true emulation of *Hashem*. It is, however, an internal impact and not a subject that is necessarily revealed to the outside or one that she get "kudos" for.

It was well-known that Rebbetzin Bessie Scheinberg A"H, the wife of the great *Rosh Yeshivah*, **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg ZT"l**, was a key partner in her husband's life-work, supporting him and his students and opening her home to the many people who sought her husband's counsel. They even installed a telephone in their bedroom so callers could reach the *Rosh Yeshivah* at any hour of the night. On *Simchas Torah*, when hundreds of singing and dancing students escorted R' Scheinberg home from his *yeshiva* after davening, Rebbetzin Bessie would look down on the joyous proceedings from their fifth-floor apartment. When her husband came upstairs, he would say to her, "Did you see that? Did you see all those *talmidim* singing and dancing? That was all because of you. It's all yours, Basha!" Similarly, when she came into the *yeshiva*, he would immediately give up his seat for her, saying, "Basha, this seat belongs to you."

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כל עצמתי תאמרנה מי כמוכה ה' ... (תהלים לה-)

The *Medrash* interprets the *posuk*, "All my bones shall say, 'Hashem who is like You?'" (תהלים לה-), to refer to the four species of *Sukkos*; each of which resembles a part of the human body; all of which together praise the Almighty. The *Lulav*, whose central pillar is referred to as its "backbone" (שדרה) resembles the backbone of man. The leaves of the myrtle branch (*Hadas*) resemble the eyes of man. The leaves of the willow tree (*Arava*) resemble the lips of man. The *Esrog* - the citron - resembles the heart of man. The *Rebbe, R' Moshe of Rozvadov ZT"l* would search for a spotless *Esrog*. He would reason, "One must never be embarrassed from his *Esrog*. Since the *Esrog* is compared to the man's heart, one must ensure that his heart and soul are spotless and unblemished. If one's *Esrog* is clear and pure, so must be his heart and soul!"

A well-known *Esrog* merchant from Brooklyn was once waiting in line to hand-deliver an *Esrog* of supreme quality to the **Satmar Rebbe, R' Yoilish Teitelbaum ZT"l**. As he did for many years previously, the man had perused through hundreds of *Esrogim* until finally choosing a specimen of perfect pedigree, unblemished quality and spotless exterior. As he stood in the waiting area, minutes before entering the *Rebbe's* inner chamber, he took out the *Esrog* to admire it again and make one last inspection before presenting it to the *Rebbe*.

Suddenly, he recoiled in horror! Right there, in front of his face, was a "blet flek" - a tiny discolored spot! The valued *Esrog*, the "candidate" that outlasted hundreds of others and passed the final inspection - was imperfect and marked! Worst of all, how could he present this "defective" gift to his mentor, the holy Satmar Rebbe? Beads of perspiration trickled down his neck, soaking his shirt. His face turned white and his heart felt weak from anguish.

Entering the *Rebbe's* room, he immediately began apologizing in a combination of sobs and stuttered, incoherent sentences. As he passed the *Esrog* to the *Rebbe* with trembling hands, he blurted out, "This *Esrog* was perfect in every way. I looked at it myself. And now, as I'm giving it to the *Rebbe*, I see that it has a 'blet flek!'"

R' Yoilish, unflappable as always, smiled as he spoke. "Ahhh....one must learn from this. So long as the *Esrog* was yours it was perfectly clean. But the instant you gave

מעשה אבות.... סימן לבנים

In the years after he immigrated to British-mandated Palestine in 1936, **R' Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz ZT"l** (*Rosh Yeshivah of Ponovezh L'Tzirim*) developed a reputation as a *Torah* educator par excellence. R' Michel Yehudah would often say that he learned from **R' Isser Zalman Meltzer ZT"l** and the **Chazon Ish ZT"l**, that reaching heights in *Torah* is contingent on the love that a *Rebbe* has for his students. R' Michel always recalled the words of the Chazon Ish. "First and foremost, before one begins to teach, one must be an 'אורב את הבריות' (love all mankind). Only then, can one teach *Torah*."

The Chazon Ish said of R' Michel Yehudah, "When he wakes up in the middle of the night, he thinks about how to relate

it away to another person, you suddenly found a blemish. Only now, do you find it defective!"

הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והמנן (דברים לא-יב)

The *Mishnah* (סוכה כח) relates a story that when Shamai's daughter-in-law gave birth to a baby boy, Shamai removed a portion of the roof of the room in which the newborn slept, and placed *schach* on the opening so that the infant would be inside a *sukkah*. Many commentators wonder about this (*Otzar Meforshei HaTalmud* brings a list of authorities who grapple with this query) and question what the great Shamai sought to accomplish by doing this. What could the newborn child derive from the fact that he technically was "sleeping in a *sukkah*"? As we know, a minor is not obligated in *mitzvos*. Rather, his or her parents are obligated to train their child to lead a life of *Torah* and *mitzvos* after his or her *Bar/Bas Mitzvah*. Accordingly, we must determine, what precisly was Shamai seeking to impart to his infant grandson?

Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik ZT"l (**Reshimot Shiurim**) cites the ceremony of *Hakhel* as a precedent for Shamai. The *Torah* issues a command to the entire congregation of *Klal Yisroel* to gather in the *Bais Hamikdash* during the festival of *Sukkos* of the post-*Shemittah* year, for the *Hakhel* ceremony. Explicitly, the *posuk* mentions that every man, woman, and child is to attend this magnificent event. The **Ramban** understands the teachings of *Chazal* (חז"ל) that even infants should be brought to *Hakhel* in order to "gain merit for those (parents) who bring them." In the same vein, Rav Soloveitchik suggests that the newborn baby sleeping in his crib with *schach* on top of his head did not actually benefit from being in a *sukkah*. Shamai, however, did benefit by gaining meirt for constructing a *sukkah* for his infant grandchild.

This insight teaches us a vital lessons in the *Torah* outlook towards *Chinuch Habanim* (educating our children). *Chinuch* has the potential to benefit not only the child but also the one doing the educating, in most cases, the parents. In fact, *Chazal* (מכות י) express this point by recording the observation of the great *Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi*, who said: "I have learned much from my Rebbeim (teachers), and even more from my colleagues; but I learned (gained) the most from my students."

רעיות ופירזשים לעזר אַתּ האַעם לעבודת הש״ת וְהַתְחַזְקוּת בַּאֲמוּנַת וּבשְׁתוּחַן מַאֲת

טיב התבלין

הגה"צ רבי גמליאל חכהן רביצ'ניץ שליט"א ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים עיה"ק

שמיני עצרת ושמחת תורה: שישו ושמחו בשמחת התורה כי היא לנו עז ואורה (פרד הקפות) - סגולת ההקפות

שיהיה הייחוד ביהודא שלים, אנו עושים את כל הכבוד הראוי לתורה לשמוח בשמחתה ולכבדה בכל עניני הכיבוד, ואז גם התורה תכבד אותנו, ויתגלו לנו ריון ועמקי הסודות הטמונים בה. ומונשקים את התורה לבקש מחילה שלא הלכו בדרכיה בכל השנה, ובקבלה על העתיד לשפר את הדרכים לילך בדרך התורה. לכן, זכור וזכור לנצל כיאות את זמן ההקפות שהוא זמן נשגב, כשארון הקודש פתוח לרווחה וספרי תורה נמצאים בחוץ, ומרקדים בשמחה של מצוה ושישים ושמחים בתורת ה', וכך אנו מראים להש״ת שאנו שמחים בו ובתורתו. וכידוע שתכלית כל העבודות בימי הרחמים והסליחות והימים הנוראים שעברו עלינו היא להגיע לאתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא אלקים. כי זו היא עיקר ותכלית עבודת הימים הקדושים שעברו עלינו, ואם מגיעים להכרה זו, בוודאי שהשמחה פורצת כל הגבולות, ושוברת כל המחיצות של ברזל, המבדילות בינינו לבין אבינו שבשמים. ואז, בעת התעוררות האהבה הגדולה עלינו, בין קוב"ה ישראל ואורייתא, עלינו להתחנן ולשפוך שיח תפילתנו, שנוכה לשמור מצוותיה, ולא תמוש התורה הזאת מפינו ומפי' וזרענו עד עולם. וכיון שהיא רוגמת יחוד עליון ביהודא שלים, אנו מתפללים שימשיך הייחוד ולא יפסק, ויתחזק ויתעודר הייחוד, עד שיגיע לתכלית התיקון בשלימותו.

ומצינו בכתובים, ששמיני עצרת הוא זמן מסוגל ועת רצון מיוחד **(עיי' בווהד הק' חלק א דף סד ע"ב)**, ובטעם הדבר נראה, דהנה ידוע מכתבי **האר"י הק'** (שער הכוונות ענין סוכות דרוש ד קד, ב), שסוכה מרמזת על אור המקיף דאימא, שהיא מקפת לוי"א, ואנו דוגמת ז"א, ואנו נכנסים בסוכה שהיא אור המקיף, אא"מ אימא עילאה, ואחר עבוד ימי הסוכות, אנו יוצאים מבית האימא, ובמצב פרידה זה אנו דומים לבן שקיים את דברי התנא באבות **(ור, יב:)** הוי גולה למקום תורה, ונרד למקום רחוק מן הבית, לישב באהלה של תורה. והנה בבוא חג ומועד, חוזר הוא לבית אביו, ואחר עבוד אלו הימים חוזר לשיבה. וקשה מאד לאב ולאם להיפרד ממנו, והם מלוים אותו כברת דרך.

כך אנו בניו חביביו דמלכא קדישא, שבוה הסוכות ישבנו בצילא דמהימנותא, ובבוא העת להיפרד, כביכול האימא אינה יכולה להיפרד מנבנה, והיא מלווה אותו עוד כברת דרך שהוא כל המעט-לעת אחרי חג הסוכות, וכמובן שאז הרחמים על הבן הען במידה גדולה, כי הוא עומד להיפרד לפרק זמן ממושך, וכל מה שייבש הבן - תשתדל האימא למלא בקשתו. לכן יום שמיני עצרת ושמחת תורה הוא עת רצון גדול לבקש ולהתפלל לפני אבינו אב הרחמן. וזה שאמרו בווהד הק' בכמה מקומות (ראה ח"א סד, ב; ח"ג לב, א) על ההוא יומא דשמחת תורה, שהוא היום בו אפשר לבקש ישועות לכלל ולפרט, מתוך אותה קירבה נוראה לקב"ה. יעזור הש״ת שאכן נזכה לנצל זה הזמן כיאות, ולהמשיך בזה היום השפעות טובות וכל טוב למשך כל ימות השנה.

מאצ'רותיו של המגיד

מאַט הרב שלום פֿערל שליט"א

מגיד מישרים בק"ס בית שמש

ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו ויהיה בשרה ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו ויהרגהו (בראשית ד-ח) - **בביאור כוונת המילים 'ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו'** היו ניצים על פני השדה, ויקם קין על הבל אחיו, ויטביע אבן במצחו ויהרגהו'. אולם רש"י ביאר, "ויאמר קין-נכנס עמו בדברי ריב ומצה להתעולל עליו להרגו. ויש בזה מדרשי אגדה, אך זה ישובו של מקרא", ופירש **המורחי'** כוונת דבריו 'יש בזה וכו', 'ויש מדרשי אגדה, אך זהו ישובו של מקרא-אף על פי שכל המדרשות ההן כולן מפרשים אותו בדברי ריב, מכל מקום אין המקרא מתיישב על פי אותן המדרשות, שקצתן אמרו על חילוק העולם, 'אחד נטל את הקרקעות ואחד נטל את המטלטלין, דין אמר, ארעא דאת קאים ידידי הוא, ודין אמר, מה דאת לביש ידידי הוא', וקצתן אמרו, 'שניהם נטלו קרקעות, רק שהאחד אמר, שבית המקדש הוא בחלקי, והאחר אמר, הוא בחלקי' וכו', ואין המקרא מתיישב בשום אחד מהם, שאם כן היה לו לומר 'ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו, כך

to each and every *bochur* and how to help him.” This, he said, “is called a *mechanech!* This is a *Maggid Shiur.*”

As a young man R’ Michel Yehudah and his wife suffered the tragic loss of a baby daughter. A pot of boiling liquid accidentally fell on their infant daughter, taking her life. The Chazon Ish came repeatedly to console him and at the end of the *shiva* period, he sent all the people out of the room and spent the next four hours infusing R’ Michel Yehudah with *chizuk*. Even during the *shiva* the Chazon Ish told him he could deliver his *shiurim*, despite being a mourner, because he had the halachic standing of a person who was needed by the public. R’ Michel Yehudah thought he could never be consoled, but the only thing that helped him forget his grief was the *Shiurei Torah* that he delivered.

R’ Michel Yehudah related that soon after he arrived in *Bnei Brak*, the Chazon Ish asked him to change from his short European-style jacket to a long jacket. R’ Michel Yehudah told the Chazon Ish that he simply didn’t have enough money to buy a new jacket, but when he purchased his next jacket, he would make sure to purchase a long one. The Chazon Ish asked him, “If you stop eating butter with your bread, how long will it take you to save up for a new jacket?” R’ Michel Yehuda said he understood from the question how important it was to the Chazon Ish, that he wear a new jacket. R’ Michel Yehudah immediately went to a *Gemach* (free-loan society) and borrowed money to buy one.

Soon after his marriage, in 1941 (5701), the Chazon Ish gave R’ Michel Yehuda the seed of an ungrafted *Esrog* and told him to plant it in the yard of his home and he will have *Parnassa* from it. The Chazon Ish guaranteed that *Mehudar* (unblemished) *Esrogim* would grow on the tree. R’ Michel Yehudah initially protested that growing *Esrogim* requires a great deal of care and he had no experience. On top of that, Bnei Brak was not the ideal climate for growing *Esrogim*. R’ Michel Yehudah explained to the Chazon Ish that the time needed to care for the tree would surely take him away from his *Torah* learning, but the Chazon Ish reassured him that *Hashem* could send the *beracha* with one gust of wind! All he needed to do, said the Chazon Ish, was to plant and water it - and it would grow!

R’ Michel Yehudah followed his mentor’s advice and indeed, after planting and watering it, the tree began to sprout and take root. The Chazon Ish would frequently ask about the tree and would constantly remind R’ Michel Yehudah to water it. Compared with other *Esrog* trees, it needed little care. Yet, every year it grew an abundance of beautiful *Esrogim*.

His grandson related that during the second year of the tree’s life, it looked like it would fail. R’ Michel Yehudah reported this to the Chazon Ish who told him not to worry. “If the *Ribono shel Olam* desires it,” said the Chazon Ish, “He can make a wind come that will revive the tree.” There was an immediate improvement and, as is well known, the tree lived long after its planting, despite generally short life-spans for *Esrog* trees.

The first year after the fourth year (נטע רבע) of the tree’s production (a tree’s produce is forbidden until after the fourth year), the Chazon Ish arrived at R’ Michel Yehudah’s home to personally choose his *Esrog*, getting down on his hands and knees under the tree branches to select a choice *Esrog*. Every year after that, the Chazon Ish would buy his *Esrog* from R’ Michel Yehudah’s tree. He would come to choose an *Esrog*, as would the **Steipler Gaon ZT”L**, who always insisted on paying more than the quoted price, saying, “You’re giving me everything. I am giving you nothing.” And **R’ Chaim Kanievsky Shlit’a** is known to make his blessing only on an *Esrog* from R’ Michel Yehudah’s tree, regardless of whether another might be cleaner. These valued *Esrogim* became known as the famous “Lefkowitz-Chazon Ish Esrogim.” Over seventy years later, the tree stood tall in R’ Michel Yehudah’s yard and produced beautiful *Esrogim* from year to year.

In the summer of 5771 (2011), R’ Michel Yehudah passed away at the age of 98. Within a few months, news emerged from Bnei Brak that the historic tree was dying. Since the time of R’ Michel Yehudah’s passing, the tree’s branches gradually became dried out and the tree withered. The fruit has since fallen off and the branches have completely dried out.

Upon learning of the news, the **Toldos Aharon Rebbe Shlit’a**, who is careful each *Sukkos* to recite a *beracha* on an *Esrog* from R’ Michel Yehudah’s tree, sent his *chassidim* to confirm the report. They indeed found that the tree had withered. Since R’ Michel Yehudah allowed certain *Esrog* growers to take seedlings from his tree to grow entire orchards of *Esrogim* certified as kosher (*mehudar*) by the Chazon Ish, those who are stringent to only obtain “Lefkowitz Esrogim” can still find them today, from trees planted with seeds from the original “Lefkowitz Tree.”

כי יצפנני בסכה ביום רעה יסתירני בסתר אהלו בצור ירוממני וגו' (תהלים כז-ה)

In the winter of 1942, the Jews of Potek, Poland, were forced to flee their city from an impending Nazi Aktion, and ran to the forests around the Buczacz area to hide. This included the *Rav* of Potek, **R’ Shlomo Zalman Horowitz ZT”L**, who continued to serve as a leader and role model, while hidden away in caves, pits and tree hollows. Predictably, the overwhelming fear of discovery led to arguments among the Jews. It was here that R’ Shlomo Zalman stood revealed in all his strength and courage. He adjudicated the petty differences and guided his flock through serious malcontent. Although many hideouts were discovered by the enemy, the *Rav’s* hideout was never detected.

frosty night in the *sukkah*, and even invoked the Talmudic dictum of the sages: ‘*One who is suffering (discomforted) from the Sukkah, is relinquished of his obligation to (reside) in the Sukkah.*’

“But R’ Hillel was not ready to relinquish his *mitzvah* so quickly and insisted that no matter the temperature, he would sleep in the *sukkah*. His *rebbezin* again appealed to his sense of rational human behavior but this time, she claimed that it was unsafe for an elderly man to sleep by himself outdoors. If for no other reason, she urged, he must consider the lack of safety before spending the frigid night outdoors in the *sukkah*.”

The old man’s eyes sparkled now as he thought back to a period of time, almost one hundred years earlier. “I was a small child then and we lived near R’ Hillel’s house. He asked me if I would do him a favor and sleep in the *sukkah* with him that night, just so that he would not have to be by himself and thereby satisfy his *rebbezin*. I jumped at the opportunity to be in the confines of the great *Tzaddik* and did not hesitate for one minute, even though I can still remember how bitterly cold it was in the *sukkah* that night. The next morning, when R’ Hillel awoke, he was so happy that he did not have to forgo this special *mitzvah*. He said to me, ‘I cannot thank you enough for the kindness you did for me. Because of you, I was enabled to sleep in the *sukkah*, in spite of the tremendous cold. Since you have restored life to me by allowing me to perform this *mitzvah*, I bless you with a long and fulfilling life, and your children, too, should have long lives and not one of them should die in your lifetime.’”

As the Tzelemer Rav listened with rapt attention, the old man sighed once again, this time a sigh of desperation. “As you can see, the *Tzaddik’s* blessing came true and I am living well over one hundred years. The problem is that one of my sons is very ill. He is in a vegetative state and has been for quite some time. I can see that he is in pain and his suffering is great due to his terrible condition. But he won’t die and you know why? Because R’ Hillel said that none of my children will die in my lifetime!

“*Rebbe*, I cannot bear to watch my son suffer and yet, my life continues to go on and on, and as a result, he does indeed continue to suffer! Therefore, I implore you to daven on my behalf so that I may die and as a consequence, this will put my son out of his suffering!”

משל למת הדבר דומה

אהב כסף לא ישבע כסף ומי אהב בהמון לא תבואה גם זה הבל וגו' (קהלת ה-ט)

משל: A close *talmid* related that several years ago, when the famed Lucerne (Switzerland) *Rosh Yeshivah*, **R’ Yitzchok Dov Koppelman ZT”L**, was in America, a fundraiser was planned to raise money for the *yeshivah*. The scheduling of the event was such that from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., prominent donors would be able to meet with the *Rosh Yeshivah* in a more private setting. At 9 p.m., the *Rosh Yeshivah* would deliver a *shmuess* (discourse) for all of his *talmidim*.

During the planning stages, R’ Koppelman was sitting in a corner of the room learning *Chumash* and *Ohr HaChaim*, preparing for the *shmuess*, while a number of *askanim* were working out the details. They were perusing the lists of people and deciding who should enter first. For the first hour, they determined that they would only allow entry to those who donated very large sums - \$20,000 or more. During the second hour, they would allow entry to mid- level donors, and this way, if they would run out of time, at least the largest donors would have already had their audience.

Suddenly, from the corner of the room, the *Rosh Yeshivah* called out, “I could not help but overhear your conversation. I heard you say that he is worth \$20,000, so he is going in during the first hour; he is worth \$10,000, so he is going in during the second hour, and so on. Do you realize what you are saying? Basically, what you are

deciding is that these people are really worth nothing. They have no inherent value of their own - not their age, not their *Torah* knowledge, not their good deeds ... nothing means anything other than their \$20,000 or \$10,000? Is that what we have descended to, relegating a person to a number? Is there no other way to assess a person’s worth or importance other than the number of dollars affixed to his name?”

במשל: Wealth does not ensure happiness. It is an important means toward many other things: comfort, self-sufficiency, tranquility, peace of mind. But if its pursuit consumes us and occupies all our waking hours, we will find nothing but stress and anxiety. *Shlomo HaMelech* was the wisest of all men, and he understood that, “*the satiety of the rich man does not let him sleep.*” (קהלת ה-יא) One may have all the holdings, stock options, investments, assets, and earnings to make him seem blessed “on paper” - but is he truly blessed? Statistically, are the lives of the rich and famous more productive, content and happier than that of the modest laborer? If anything, it’s perhaps the opposite, as *Chazal* teach us: “*One who has one hundred, wishes to have two hundred.*” It is *Koheles*, the son of *Dovid HaMelech*, who wants us to understand that, “*One who loves money will not be satisfied with money,*” and, “*One who increases possessions increases worry.*” (שם ב-ח)

Around the time of the High Holidays, an amazing thing happened. R’ Shlomo Zalman had emerged from his hideout, a deep pit, to breathe some fresh air among the trees. Walking along through the dense foliage, he discovered a broad clearing in the midst of the forest. It was amazing to see that in such a dense forest, there was a completely open field without a single tree in it. R’ Shlomo Zalman decided that Heaven had caused it to be here in order for him to have a place to put up a *sukkah*. That was, no doubt, why he had discovered this spot - totally devoid of foliage that would impinge upon his ability to build a kosher *sukkah* - only now, just days before *Sukkos*.

The Jews in the forest had obtained some tarpaulins that the partisans had stolen from the Germans. R’ Shlomo Zalman took them and made walls for his *sukkah*. Then, he put a roof over it, according to the *halacha*, with tree branches and leaves. There were plenty of those.

A few Jews among them became angry when they saw the *sukkah*. They thought it might be spotted by German aircraft, and then they all would be in danger. The *Rav* maintained his position, though, that on the contrary, the merit of sitting in the *sukkah* would surely bring them Divine protection. Most of those hiding out in the forest were observant Jews, and they sided with R’ Shlomo Zalman, turning the scales in favor of the *Rav’s* position to have a *sukkah*.

It was the third day of *Chol Hamoed*, and R’ Shlomo Zalman was sitting with his son Shmuel in their *sukkah* in the midst of the forest. Suddenly, they heard a division of Nazi storm troopers marching in the area. All the Jews who were with them in the *sukkah*, quickly hurried out and escaped back to their hiding places. R’ Shlomo Zalman and his son, however, could not get away since their hideout was a little ways from the *sukkah*, and if they ran back to their pit now, they would easily be tracked and found by the searchers.

R’ Shlomo Zalman decided that it would be best to stay in the *sukkah* and leave the rest to *Hashem*. He told Shmuel that if *Hashem* wished them to be revealed to the enemy and killed, they have no choice but to accept this. He only wished for one thing: that if they were killed, it did not happen right there, in the *sukkah*. What a *Kiddush Hashem* it would be if he could tell his fellow Jews that the *mitzvah* of sitting in the *sukkah* had saved him and his son from death! The non-believers in the group would be convinced, too. They would all see that, “*One who keeps a mitzvah will come to no harm.*”

“Not for my sake, *Hashem*,” prayed R’ Shlomo Zalman. “Do it for Your sake, that Your Name may be sanctified before everyone.” He recited *Tehillim* in a whisper and mentioned the names of his ancestors back to the holy **Baal Shem Tov ZT”L**, which tradition says helps to draw down Divine protection.

Then, they saw the evil ones approaching. The thud of their boots came closer and closer. They walked back and forth in front of the *sukkah* three times, but they did not seem to see anything. It was as if they had been struck blind. Father and son peeked out through the cracks in the walls of the *sukkah*. They saw soldiers standing right next to them. They could make out every detail of their uniforms. But for some inexplicable reason, the S.S. could not see the *sukkah*.

Suddenly, one of the evil ones pointed off to the distance, indicating that he had spotted something suspicious, perhaps a hiding place. Immediately, they all set off and disappeared into the forest. R’ Shlomo Zalman took a deep breath, thanking *Hashem* for saving them, for rescuing them from death to life.

Later, when they met up with the other Jews again, they all wondered where father and son had hidden while the Germans were searching the area. When they heard that R’ Shlomo Zalman and Shmuel had been sitting in the *sukkah* the entire time, they were truly astonished. Even the biggest skeptics had to agree that nothing short of a miracle had occurred and the Hand of G-d had been at work. R’ Shlomo Zalman would quote the words of King David for many years to come: “*He will hide me in His sukkah on the evil day.*”

ובזכות צאתי מביתי החוצה ודרך מצותיך ארוצה ותוכנו לישב ימים רבים על האדמה וכו' (תפילה בשנכנסין לסיבה)

One year, a very old man came to the *Av Beis Din* of Tzelem, **R’ Levi Yitzchok Greenwald ZT”L**, with quite an unusual request. “Please, *Rebbe*,” said the old man, who was said to be over one hundred and five years old. “Please daven for me.... that I should die!”

A strange request indeed. The old man did not appear to be ill. He walked with a cane, but he was still moving about and seemed to be in good spirits. What could possibly cause him to make such a radical request of the Tzelelmer Rav?

The old man knew this was coming and let out a long and seasoned sigh before launching into his tale. “Many, many years ago, I grew up in the town of Kolomye. This little hamlet was home to the great *Tzaddik*, **R’ Hillel Lichtenstein ZT”L** of **Kolomye**. One year, the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* fell out late in the calendar year and the temperature outside had turned downright chilly. R’ Hillel and his righteous *rebbezin*, maintained the custom to eat and sleep in the *sukkah*, however, this particular year, it was so cold at night, that the *rebbezin* informed her husband that she would not be sleeping outdoors this year. She implored him, in the name of preserving his health, to desist as well from spending the

למען ידעו דורווייז'ם

ופרום עלינו סבת שלומך ותקננו בעצה טובה לפניך ... (תפילת מעריב)
Every evening during the *Maariv* prayer, we implore *Hashem* “to spread over us *Your sukkah of peace and grant us good counsel.*” The soundest advice *Hashem* can grant the Jewish nation is to prompt us to take note of our place on earth, our assigned role in life, and somehow, it seems, this is best conveyed to us from within the *sukkah*. How does the *sukkah* accomplish this?

R’ Eliyahu Dessler ZT”L (Michtav M’Eliyahu) tells us how. On *Sukkos* man is instructed: “צא מודירת קבע ושב” - *“Leave your permanent home and take shelter in your temporary dwelling.”* Living in a *sukkah* is an instruction in the transitory nature of life’s mundane experiences, a “ביטול היש” - *“negation of the material.”* For when a Jew in his *sukkah* ponders life in this nonpermanent structure, he realizes that nothing is of permanence in this world. The joys and comforts of the home are inaccessible. And even the modest creature comforts of the *sukkah* are only of short duration. Striving for material possessions, for fulfillment of passions, desires, and petty pleasures becomes revealed as a hollow pursuit. Designs to secure a place for oneself and for future generations are mere fantasy; after all, whatever gains are realized are of little duration and of no intrinsic value. Position? Power? Possessions? They all are of no substance. If man is to strive for anything of worth, it must be for spiritual attainment, because only in the realm of *ruchnius* (spirituality) do gains have any permanence. Only a spiritual existence can give a man authentic pleasure and lasting satisfaction. This is the lesson of the *sukkah*.

The *sukkah*, the temporary dwelling, offers a primary means for achieving *bitul hayesh*. Once one has fully absorbed the *sukkah’s* message of negation of the material, he can come to perceive with an unrivaled clarity that the world belongs to *Hashem*. His demands assume new dimensions of meaning, and pulsate with ever greater immediacy. The *sukkah* is described as “צילא דמהימנותא” - the protective shade of faith. Beneath its sheltering roof, the blinding attractions of falsehood disappear. In its shelter, a Jew becomes liberated from the shackles of conventional thought and dares to aspire for more, reaching for greater spiritual growth. He becomes the “*free man, committed to Torah*” (אבות ו-ג) governed by an inner peace, spreading light through all his actions.

פרי עץ הדר כפות תמרים וענף עץ עבות וערבי נחל ... (ויקרא כג-ט)
“*Fruit of the hadar tree,*’ symbolizes Israel: *Just as the Esrog has taste as well as fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess learning and good deeds.*

The palm tree has taste but no fragrance; so Israel has among them those who possess learning but not good deeds. ‘And boughs of a myrtle tree,’ likewise applies to Israel: Just as the myrtle has fragrance but no taste, so Israel has among them those who possess good deeds but not learning. ‘And willows of a brook,’ also applies to Israel: Just as the willow has no taste and no fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess neither learning nor good deeds. What does the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? To destroy them is impossible. ‘However,’ says the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘let them all be bound together in one bundle and they will atone one for another.’” (ויקרא רבה ל-ב)

The *Medrash* clearly illustrates that among the Jewish people there exists those who resemble a willow, with neither taste nor fragrance, neither *Torah* nor good deeds. And yet, we find in other places that even those who seem to be devoid of merit, “ריקנין שברהם” - *“your empty ones”* are as filled with *mitzvos* as a pomegranate is with seeds (חגיגה כז). If so, how can the *Medrash* here say that there are Jews who possess neither *Torah* nor good deeds? Everyone, even the emptiest Jew, it seems, is filled with good.

The answer, writes **Chacham Yehudah Tzadka ZT”L (Kol Yehudah)**, is that regarding those who have neither *Torah* nor good deeds, this is true only when they are alone, on their own, and not bundled together with the righteous *Tzaddikim*, for in that case they truly possess neither taste nor fragrance. However when they connect themselves to *Torah* scholars; when they learn *Torah* from them and participate in their lectures, they become new people. They obtain both taste and fragrance. Hence the *Torah* desires that we take them all together, so that they may come closer to *Torah* scholars and receive both taste and fragrance.

The *Gemara* (סוכה לז) says in the name of Raba: “*The Lulav in the right hand and the Esrog in the left. What is the reason? The former is comprised of three commandments and the latter only one.*” The *Gemara* is asking: since the *Esrog* refers to the *Torah* scholar, the most accomplished person, who has both fragrance and taste, wouldn’t it seem appropriate for the *Esrog* to be held in the right hand? The *gemara* answers that the *Lulav* comprises three *mitzvos* - *Lulav, Hadas* and *Arava* - whereas taking the *Esrog* is just one *mitzvah* by itself. Hence the *Lulav* takes precedence.

Chazal are teaching us an important lesson. In alluding to the *Torah* scholar, the person who possesses the greatest character traits, we can surmise that if he is only out for himself and he fails to assist and teach *Torah* to the simpletons among the people - those who resemble myrtles and willows - then despite the fact that his knowledge of *Torah* is great, the lesser *Lulav* is deemed even greater.

he would follow his Spanish counterparts, Ferdinand and Isabella, and banish the Jews of Portugal as well.

Chacham Yitzchok emerged from the palace and immediately went to a public square. There, he lifted his eyes to Heaven and called out in the Jewish tongue, “Master of the World! The wicked gentiles of the world serve false gods, they worship idols and deities that do not exist! They despise Your Jewish children and do their utmost to harm and persecute them. And yet, even they recognize that we are Your ‘Chosen Nation.’ It is our prayers that You listen and respond to! *Ribono shel Olam*, do this so that Your awesome and holy Name will not be desecrated by the nations!”

Then, in a powerful voice, Chacham Yitzchok screamed out a passage from the *Torah*, (בראשית כו-כ), “*To us the water, to us the water!*”) (“*To us the water, to us the water!*”)

Clouds began forming but no precipitation fell. Taking a cue from his predecessor, *Choni HaMaagel*, Chacham Yitzchok said, “Master of the World! I will not budge from this spot until You take mercy on Your children!” And then, just as it did thousands of years earlier for the great *Choni HaMaagel*, the skies opened up and rain began to gush forth in torrents!

However, as the *gemara* (תענית פג) relates, since the great *Shimon ben Shetach* took exception with Choni for “putting the Almighty on the spot” so to speak, similarly, there was a “קפידא” (annoyance) in Heaven aimed at Chacham Yitzchok Abohav. As he climbed off the platform he had been standing on, he fell and one of his eyes became dislodged! Until he passed away one year later, Chacham Yitzchok was blind in one eye!

In the end, though, the Portugese asylum was only temporary; after eight months, the Portuguese government decreed the enslavement of all Jews who had not yet left the country. In 1493, King John deported several hundred Jewish children to the newly discovered colony of São Tomé, where many of them perished.

אין אדיר כה’ ואין ברוך כבן עמרם. אין גדולה בתורה. ואין דורשיה בישראל (פיוט מן הדקדקות)

In a small *shtiebel* in Monsey, New York, the *Yom Tov* of *Simchas Torah* seems to be frozen in time. The total amount of men, teenagers, *bochurim* and young boys in the *shul* is no more than thirty to thirty-five, but one would not know this by the looks of it; it feels like much, much more due to the high-strung level of excitement, the loud and passionate singing, and the zealous, energetic, “*lebedik*” dancing that goes on for hours.

For many years, the *shul* also played host, every *Simchas Torah*, to a very distinguished guest. **Reb Yosef Friedenson Z”L**, the renowned historian, editor of *Dos Yiddishe Vort* and Holocaust survivor, would come to visit his daughter and son-in-law each year and they were sure to attend *hakafos* in the small *shtiebel*. Mr. Friedenson, not a young man, was content to watch, with unbridled joy, as the lively dancers circled the *bima* time after time, their *simcha* palpable, their singing reaching crescendo after crescendo. He, too, would get up to dance for his *hakafah*, and while he held the *Sefer Torah* tightly in his arms, his mind would take him back to another time and another place. This was when he would prepare himself for what can only be described as the “highlight” of the entire day. Midway between the fourth and fifth *hakafah*, the lively group would suddenly quiet down and await “the story.” Mr. Friedenson, old and frail, would stand up by the *bima* and in his inimitable manner, recount a fascinating and inspiring incident that occurred to him in the Starachowice concentration camp, many years earlier.

Although this custom has been ongoing in the *shtiebel* for close to ten years, this past *Simchas Torah* (5773) - Mr. Friedenson’s last - was undoubtedly one of the most memorable ones. Mr. Friedenson was not feeling well and his body appeared to be weaker than it ever was. He walked slowly, hunched over, an assistant by his side. Walking in, he greeted the *shul* members quietly and sat down heavily in a corner. When the time came for his annual speech - between the fourth and fifth *hakafah* - no one knew if he had the strength to do it this year. But Mr. Yosef Friedenson was not one to give in so easily. He understood that he had a responsibility to four generations; to the older men in the *shul*; to the women watching and listening from the ladies section; to the children who gaze at him in wide-eyed wonder; to the young fathers who will never forget the story that Mr. Friedenson is about to tell them.

Shakily and with great effort, he stands up and someone brings him a *shtender*. The moment he lays his hand on the wood, his posture straightens, his demeanor becomes distinguished, and his words become articulate. This is what he was created to do. He clears his throat and begins to speak in his elegant Polish accent.

“I will never forget that year. We were in the smithy shop preparing to work for the day, but for some reason, we had not been assigned any work to do. This was unusual, but we were not complaining. Somebody remembered that today was *Simchas Torah*, and we all began singing the appropriate songs. Then, someone started the *niggun*, ‘*Ain adir k’Hashem, v’ain baruch k’ben Amram.*’ (There is none as powerful as *Hashem*, there is none as blessed as [Moshe] the son of Amram). This is a traditional *niggun* that is usually sung when we dance with the *Torah* on *Simchas Torah*.