

(1) סוכה כז. (2) משנה ברורה תרל"ט:כו
(3) שם:כה (4) שם:כו (5) שם:כב (6) שם:ל

עדותיך אתבונן

למדנים מאת הרב אברהם דניאל אבסטמן שליט"א, בעמ'ס סדר אברהם

למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסבות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציא
אותם מארץ מצרים ... (ויקרא כג-מג) - עבודת מצות ישיבת סוכה
דו"ע מה שאמרו חז"ל שבים הושענא רבה הוא גמר הדין מימים נוראים.

הספר יסוד וטוהר העבודה (שער י"א, פרק ט"ו) הביא דברי **הארי"ל** ח"ל: "ואף ביום השענא רבה ירבה בתורה, כי בו ביום מוסרין השטרי חוב של הגויר דין ביד וממונים להעניש", עכ"ל. (וכתב (שם פרק ט"ו): "וידור האדם מאוד ומאוד ביום זה של שמיני עצרת, לפשפש במעשיו היטיב, כי עיקר מסירת הגויר דין של האדם הוא ביום זה, כמבואר במאמר הוה"ק הג"ל, שאע"פ שנמסרו הפתקין ביום השענא רבה, עדיין לא ניתנו רשות להשליחים לפעול דבר עד שמיני עצרת, שבוים הוה אם לא עשה תשובה גמורה ואמתית, נותנים רשות לשלוחים של מעלה שקבלו הפתקין מאתמול, שיעשו ועינישו כפי מה שכתוב בפתקין", עכ"ל. ודבר זה צ"ב, מדוע במשך עבודת הו"ט של סוכות עדיין דינא של צומד עלי, ואינו נמסר להשלוחים לפעול, ויכול לבטל דינו עד להושענא רבה, וצ"ב, ועוד, דהנה איתא בספרים הקדושים שעבודת חז"ל היתה כה"ה "תשובה מאהבה", במשך עשרת ימי תשובה אנו עושה תשובה מדידת הדין, ומדידת העונש, אבל בסוכות אנו עושין תשובה מאהבה, וצ"ב היכא מצינו עבודת תשובה מאהבה בהחג.

ונראה לבאר הענין בהקדם קצת עבודת מצות ישיבת סוכה, דהנה איתא בגמ' ע"ו (ג, ע"א): "אמרו לפניו רבש"ע, תנה לנו מראש ונעשנה, אמר להן הקדוש ברוך הוא שוטים שבעולם מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת, מי שלא טרח בערב שבת מהיכן יאכל בשבת? אלא אף על פי כן, מצוה קלה יש לי וסוכה שמה, לכו ועשו אותה וכו', ואמאי קרי ליה מצוה קלה? משום דלית ביה חסרון כים. מיד כאר"י נוטל והולך ועושה סוכה בראש גגו, והקב"ה מקדיד עליהם חמה בתקופת תמוז, וכל אחד ואחד מבעט בסוכתו ויוצא, שנאמר: ננתקה את מוסרותינו ונשליכה ממנו עבותינו. מקדיד, והא אמרת: אין הקדוש ברוך הוא בא בטרוניא עם ברייתו? משום דישאל נמי זימנ' דמשכיל ליהו תקופת תמוז עד תנא ויהי ליה צעידא. והאמר מרשך: מצטער פטור מן הסוכה? נדד פטור, בעוסי מן מבעטי. מדי, הקב"ה יושב ומשחק עליהן", ע"כ. וצריך לבאר דברי הגמ', האמאי נתן הקב"ה לעומת העולם דוקא מצות סוכה, כדי איכא דרבה מצות, מה מיוחד במצות סוכה יותר משאר כל המצות, וצ"ב?

התורות חיים ת' דמצות סוכה מיוחד משום שהיא שקולה כנגד כל המצות וע"כ נתן להם הקב"ה מצותה זה. דמצינו בדברי הפייט ביום ב' דסוכות דחזרת הש"ס

**ON THE PARSHA WITH A
S HOW TO SERVE HASHEM
JEW BY R' YEHOShUA GOLD**

הנחמדים מזהב

Hashem. In that case, they would not be *chayiv* in this *Mitzvah*! Adding another twist, he cites the **Maharam Alshich** that when in a bind, a *Murkav* Esrog may be kosher. Therefore, perhaps a *Ger*, with a pure Jewish *neshamah* but originating from a mundane body, is comparable to a *Murkav* and specifically should use such an *Esrog*! Now with Rav Zeira's announcement, they were no longer part of *Kahal Hashem*, so why were they commanded in taking *Daled Minim*, *Murkav* or not? As a result, he was heavily bombarded in a ferocious *Esrog* attack.

Ultimately, the *Medrash* adds, the *Lulav* is like a spin, the *Esrog* the heart, *Aravos* look like lips while the *Hadasim* are the eyes. “כל עצמותי ואמרנה”, with all of my body, I will praise *Hashem*. Regardless of status, we can all use ourselves to serve *Hashem*. This reason applies to all *Yidden*. “אשרנו מה טוב חלקנו”, together, serving *Hashem* as one.

Wishing all of *Klal Yisroel* a *Chag Kosher V'Sameach!*

וידע: "כל תהי מצות סכה בעיניך קלה כי כנגד כל מצות דת חקויה שקולה", עכ"ל.
ועוד שם וידע: "אשרי אנוש יעשה זאת וישב כשמו כל התורה הזאת", עכ"ל. ורוסיף
ושהגם שמצינו שיש עוד מצות שהם שקולה כנגד כל התורה כולה כגון שבת מילה
ושחיטת חטאת. סוכה הוא קל מכולם אמנם דא גופא יש לבאר מדוע מצות סוכה
שקולה כנגד כל התורה כולה?

ונראה לבאר דהנה מצניו הלכה וענין מיוחד במצות סוכה אשר לא מצניו בשאר כל המצות בכל התורה כולו, דאיכא פטור דמצטער, ודי לא מצניו במצות שמירת שבת וכדומה, שאם האדם מצטער מלקיימו ודי הוא פטור משמירת שבת, אאלא גבי מצות סוכה מצניו פטור וזה באמת, כל עיקר מדרשו של קיום מצות סוכה הוא גופא באופן שצניו לו, כשתב הטור דממש לא גופא, נקבע הו"ט בתחילת היות ההורף ולא בזמן הקיץ, ובתקופה זו דרבה פעמים קצת קור ואינו נו"ט לאדם ליישב ולדר בחוץ. ואם הוא ממש מצטער, יש לו הפטור דמצטער פטור מן האסרה

ונראה דאפשר ד"ל דהא גופא הוא מטרת קיום המצוה שאח"ל "תשובה כעין תדורו", להורות עד היכן האדם יכול לדחוף עצמו לקיים מצות הש"ת, באופן שאינו נוח לו. ומטעם זה יש לומר שמצוות סוכות מדורות הוא "תשובה מאברה". ונבאר זה על פי דברי הגמ' בקידושין (מט:) דאיתא שם דהמקדש אשה על מנת שאני צדיק, אפילו אם הוא רשע גמור – מקודשת, שמא תהיה תשובה בדעתו. וממובא בדברי הגמ', להלכות צדיק, זהו תלי רק בלבו של אדם, וידיע אמת יכול להיות בעל תשובה, ומה אותו הדרש של תשובה באותו רגע? והנה המחשבה השוררה לשעבר עצמו להיות עבה להש"ת ולעבור בכל לבו. וא"כ י"ל, דמי שחשב בסוכה באופן שאינו נוח לו, מה עולה בדעתו, שדיי ורצה לדחוף עצמו ולשעבר את עצמו לעשות רצונו של אבינו שבשמים, וזהו תשובה מאברה.

וא"כ לפי זה יש לומר, דזהו הטעם מדוע מצות סוכה שקול כנגד כל המצות, דמי שיכול לקיים מצות ישיבת סוכה באמת, דהיינו שהוא יכול לדרוךף עצמו ליישב בהסוכה אפילו במצב שאינו נוה לו, הרי הוא מורה שהוא משעבד עצמו לעשות רצונו של הש"ת, ומכון מומוזן לעשות אפילו דברים שאינם כרצונו, וע"כ שקולה כנגד כל התורה כולה.

ולפי זה מובן היטב מדוע עד הושענא רבה עדיין לא נגמרו גמרי דינו של אדם, ויש לו הזדמלות לשוב בתשובה שלימה ולבטל גור דינו, שרדי עדיין יש אפשר לעשות תשובה, והדינו תשובה מאהבה, ע"י קיום מצות סוכה, שהגם שאינו נוה לאדם לקיימו, רצו הקדוים ממנה שהוא רוצה לעבוד את ה' תשובה וז"ל תשובה וז"ל יכול לבטל הגזרות עצם קודם הושענא רבה עדיין לא נסמרו לחשלוש

GOLDEN NUGG:
FOCUS ON LESS
AND BE A BETT

There is a dispute in the *Gemara* whether a Jewish convert may marry a *Mamzeres*. Rav Zeira ruled publicly, in a city filled with converts, that the marriage is permitted. The townspeople responded by throwing *Esrogim* at him. The question is: why were specifically *Esrogim* thrown at him?

The *Medrash* (*Vayikra Rabah* 30) compares the *Daled Minim* to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, to the *Avos* and *Imahos*, and finally to *Klal Yisroel*. The *Esrog* has both taste and fragrance, representing *Torah* and *Maasim Tovim*. The *Lulav* has neither while the, *Hadas* and *Arava* each represent different combinations. These comparisons show that every *Yid* has a unique connection to serving *Hashem*. When we hold the four together, *Agud*, all of *Klal Yisroel* comes together and brings the *Shechinah* amongst us.

Explains the **Chasam Sofer ז"ל** that the dispute about a *Ger* marrying a *Mamzeres* is whether he is considered part of *Kahal Hashem*. Although fully Jewish, he is not *Meyuchas* to the *Avos* and perhaps is therefore not included in *Kahal*

תזרת הצבי על הפטרות

ידיה כל הנותר מכל הגנים וכו' ועלו מדי שנה בשנה להשתחות למלך ה' צבאות ולחג את חג הסוכות ... (הפמדה ליום ראשון דסוכות)

The *Torah* states: **וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאַלֵּיכֶם וְאֶל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָמֵי הָאֶזְרָח** - “for seven days all the inhabitants of the Land of Israel should dwell in sukkos ...” (Vayikra 23:42). From a purely speculative perspective, this seems to imply that *Chag HaSukkos* is mainly a Jewish festival intended to be celebrated in *Eretz Yisroel* alone. However, *Chag HaSukkos* also has a universal aspect to it, in that *Chazal* describe the seventy oxen that were sacrificed over the course of the *Yom Tov* which were meant to correspond to the seventy nations of the world (*Sukkah 55b*).

Furthermore, in the *Haftorah* of the first day of *Sukkos*, the vision of *Zechariah HaNavi* (זכריה) concerning the nations of the world is read in which the *Navi* predicts: “*And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations who came against Yerushalayim shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate Chag HaSukkos.*” Chazal relate that in the time of *Moshiach*, everyone – gentile and Jew alike – will be mandated to go up to *Yerushalayim* on *Chag HaSukkos* each year to observe the holiday and pay homage to *Hashem* and bow down to Him. And if they don’t go up, they will suffer dire consequences.

However, *Chazal* (*Avodah Zara 3a*) also relate the futuristic story where the surviving nations of the world will come to *Hashem* and say that had they been given the *Torah* and *mitzvos* like the Jewish people, they would surely have kept it as meticulously as *Klal Yisroel*. *Hashem* will then test them by giving them the relatively “easy” *mitzvah* of *sukkah* to fulfill. Immediately, each gentile will take materials and go and construct a *sukkah* on top of his roof. *Hashem* will then set upon them the heat (*makdir*) of the sun in the season of *Tammuz* (the summer), and each gentile sitting in his *sukkah* will be unable to stand the heat.

and will kick his *sukkah* and leave. This seems to be a one-off and the nations of the world will not attempt to celebrate *Chag HaSukkos* again. So, which is it? Will the nations go up every year to *Yerushalayim* to sit in their *sukkos* – like *Zechariah HaNavi* predicts, or will they do it one year and never again - like the *Gemara* seems to imply?

R' Yaakov Rosen *shlita* explains that the difference is in what indeed is expected of the gentiles. In the *Gemara's* scenario, the nations of the world were given the specific *mitzvah* of *sukkah* and told to fulfill it, however in Zechariah's prediction they were simply told to make the trip to *Yerushalayim* to "celebrate" the *Chag*.

But what constitutes celebrating?

R' David Altshuler ז"ל of Prague (Metzudas Dovid) explains that obviously, the gentiles who will be mandated to go up to *Yerushalayim* will not go empty-handed. Rather, Zechariah meant for the nations of the world to bring sacrifices on the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* and as such, that will be their purpose for going up to *Yerushalayim*. By having the gentiles bring sacrifices to *Hashem* on *Chag HaSukkos* together with the sacrifices brought by *Klal Yisroel*, there will presumably be millions upon millions of animals brought for *Hashem* – thereby elevating and glorifying the name of *Hashem* so much more. Thus, while the *Gemara* maintains that the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* has and always will be an exclusive *mitzvah* for *Klal Yisroel*, *Zechariah HaNavi's* prophecy reveals how the gentile nations will be mandated to be subservient to *Hashem* and “celebrate” *Chag HaSukkos* by bringing sacrifices and paying homage to the true King of the World, *Hashem*.

May we all merit to sit in our *sukkos* in *Yerushalayim* with the coming of *Moshiach* speedily and in our days.

בין הריחיים – תבלין מדף היומי – בכורות ב.

הגאון הרב יוסף שלום אלישיב brings in his *sefer* that he sent the following letter to **משה מרדכי שוליאנגר זצ"ל** (משמר הליי מס' בכורות ס' י') תשנ"ז in the year 1997. He writes as follows: Considering that the **לומדי דף היומי** are about to start **מסכת בכורות** and will be learning about the **פטר חמור**, there will certainly be a **התעוררות** to be **מקיים** this **מצוה** - and to show their **חיבוב המצוה** many will want to attend a **פדיון**. **פטר חמור**. Therefore, he is asking for a **פסק הלכה** regarding the following two questions:

1) Since פדיון חמור is not a מצוה חיובית i.e. a *mitzvah* one **must** seek out to fulfill, but rather if a פטר חמור is born to someone he must redeem it, may one be מבטל תורה to seek out an opportunity to be מקיים פדיון חמור?

2) Does the מילה of מלך הדרת מלך, warrant being פטור חמור to attend a ברית עם ענין? And if there is a ברית עם ענין, may one be מוטל ללכת אברהם כולל and מבטל תינוקות של בית רבן משתתף in the ceremony, or is פטור חמור no different than when one redeems his own son? Is פסולי המוקדשין or נטע רבעי or מעשר שני where these are done privately without any fanfare?

Rav Elyashiv answered: we find [מגילה ג'] that we are מוטב לך כלה והכנסת כלה מוטב לך ת"ת. The **שלטי גיבורים** adds, that he feels one is מוטב לך ת"ת to attend a מילה as well, because מילה is greater than מילה and one is מוטב לך ת"ת, than כל שכן for מילה which is greater. But, says אלישיב ר', we don't find that we are מוטב לך ת"ת to attend any other מצות. Also, although ברוב עם חשיבות עם, we don't find that we are מוטב לך תורה for that either. *Rav Elyashiv* added, if לומדי תורה are looking to be מקייםים of חשיבות עם, they have a easy opportunity through answering מילה שמיה רבה. He brings the מדרש in משלי [כ"ח] משלי in מדרש which says: When בני ישראל are in the מלכות השרת and tells the שמח ומתעלה בעולמו is הקב"ה at that time אמן יהא שמיה רבה בעולם, "Come and see how ישראל is being משבח me." At that time, מלבישין אותו חוד והדר. לך נאמר ברוב עם הדרת מלך. This was the final *psak* of *Harav Elyashiv*.

It was the second day of the Six-Day war. Bombs were falling everywhere. The sound of missiles hurtling through the air, the piercing wails of air raid sirens coupled with the tremendous, resounding “boom” as the bombs exploded on the streets of *Yerushalayim*, sowed fear and trepidation among the masses.

R’ Pinchos Menachem Alter ז”ל, the young *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Sfas Emes* (future **Gerrer Rebbe**), huddled together with his *Rebbeitzin* and young children in the air-raid shelter on the bottom floor of *Yeshivas Sfas Emes*. Suddenly, there was a lull in the bombing and the *Rosh Yeshivah* couldn’t believe what he was hearing. The sweet sounds of *kol Torah* began to waft down into the shelter from the nearby *beis medrash* of *Yeshivas Sfas Emes*.

Two *chavrusos* were learning. Who could be learning at a time like this, when all were cowering in bomb shelters in terror? It was two elderly *chassidim*, Reb Leibel Lichtenstein and Reb Meir Gershon Sharetzky. They had a daily *seder* in the early, pre-dawn hours of the morning and they weren’t about to let bombs falling in the area disrupt it.

The **Pnei Menachem** became very emotional upon seeing this love of *Torah* and devotion to learning, and although he virtually never spoke about himself, at that moment he shared with his children a story that he had experienced in his own life.

The story transpired just a few weeks after his *bar mitzvah*, following the outbreak of World War II. The young *bachur*, Pinchos Menachem, was in Warsaw as the Nazi blitzkrieg began strafing the beleaguered city with wave after wave of bombs. Within days, they had conquered Warsaw and had begun to terrorize the Jewish residents of the city, beating them, randomly shooting them, and snatching them off the streets to force them into dehumanizing slave labor.

Young Pinchos Menachem, however, had a *seder* with one of his cousins. It was a *kevius* (time set aside for learning) that he wasn’t ready to give up. Despite the desperate conditions outside, he surreptitiously made his way through the alleyways of Nazi-occupied Warsaw to the home of his *chavrusa*. To his misfortune, a Nazi noticed the young Jewish lad and grabbed him off the street, throwing him into a truck that was transporting Jews to slave labor.

As the truck filled up with other ill-fated Jews who had been caught, a *Gerrer chasid* who was passing by noticed, to his horror, that the *ben zekunim* (youngest son) of the *Rebbe* was on the truck! He hid in waiting and, as soon as the saw the guards had somewhat slacked off in their duty, he motioned to Pinchos Menachem to slip away and follow him. He thereby saved the *Rebbe’s* son from terrible torture or death.

The *Pnei Menachem* remembered this story and how the *koach haTorah* had protected him at that terrible time.

משל למה הדבר דומה

בסבת תשבו שבועת ימים כל האורח בישראל ישבו בסבת ... (כג-כב)
משל: A non-observant couple wished to reserve a room for the weekend at a strictly kosher hotel in Netanya, Israel. It was a special occasion and they found this particular hotel quite appealing due to its location near the sea. While finalizing the details, they inquired about early checkout, inadvertently revealing to the receptionist their intention to drive home on *Shabbos*. Because the establishment catered exclusively to a *shomrei Shabbos* clientele, the receptionist felt obligated to cancel their reservation on the spot.

Desperate to stay at that specific location, the couple asked to speak to the hotel manager. Unsure of how to navigate the delicate balance between maintaining the atmosphere of the hotel and turning away Jewish guests, the manager traveled to Jerusalem to consult the renowned *posek*, **R’ Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ז”ל**. He presented the dilemma, expecting a detailed ruling on communal standards and *halacha*.

Instead, Rav Elyashiv listened quietly and simply replied, “Why should it bother you if they eat kosher for a few days?”

When the manager returned and conveyed the *Rav’s* response, the couple was deeply moved. Having lost their families and support systems during the devastation of the war, they had felt alienated and had drifted entirely away from religious observance, assuming the observant world had

teshuvah is real and complete. We then walk around the *bimah* seven times, symbolizing the seven *sefarim* of the *Torah* (as stated in the *Gemara*, “ויהי בנסוע הארון,” is considered a *sefer* on its own; accordingly, *Sefer Bamidbar* is split into three separate *sefarim*, for a total of seven *sefarim*), and then we “whack” the *aravos*, which symbolize the sinner, on the floor, to indicate that we have purged every last bit of sin from us and have transformed ourselves into דורפּתקי - דאָרײַטאַ - true embodiments of *Torah*.

Finally, on *Simchas Torah*, we rejoice in the *Torah* that we have become, in the ecstasy of our union with the *Torah* - “ישראל אורייטא וקוב”ד ח ה רא”. This is what we are celebrating, and this is what should be our focus during these days - to learn with *ameilus*, with *hurvanya*, with a *geshmak*, so that the *Torah* seeps in our bones, “*mamish in di beiner arein!*”

A guten, freilichen, lichtigen Yom Tov!

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN זי”ל

מחשבת הלב

Simchas Torah in a circle symbolizing the shunning of the world outside of our circle. Hence, the next word in the posuk is “תורה ורחמיה” - He builds us with the *binah* of *רחמיה*. The results of living a real interior life is gaining the wisdom of *Torah* building us into His nation and connecting us with שמוחה שבשמים. May we be *zoche* to experience the true שמחה on this שמירת התורה day, by leading lives of *teshuvah*.

והג האסף בצאת השנה באספך את מעשיך ... (שמות כג-כז)

The **Tur** asks: Why is *Sukkos* celebrated in the month of *Tishrei*, if we are commemorating the עמי הכבוד which coincided with *yetzias Mitzrayim* during the month of Nissan?

The **Vilna Gaon** answers that after the חטא העגל, those clouds departed. After Moshe descended from *Har Sinai* on *Yom Kippur*, he instructed the *Yidden* that night, *לֹא תֵשֶׁר*, to erect the משכן. They gathered the material needed, and its construction began on י”ז תשרי. Then the clouds of glory returned. We therefore aptly remember the day they returned.

Based on this *Gra*, the **Meshech Chochma**, **R’ Meir Simcha ז”ל**, answers another question. In *Parshas Ki Sisa*, *Chag HaSukkos* is referred to as חג האסיף. However both in אמור and again in ראה it’s called חג הסוכות. To explain the name change he answers that originally *Sukkos* was just that, חג האסיף. Taking the four species and refraining from work. No *sukkah*. It was the last “leg” of the שלש רגלים. Later, after they sinned and Moshe evoked *Hashem’s* mercy, His clouds were restored, and we were commanded to remember those clouds through the *Sukkah*. It then also became part of the ימים נוראים, the days of *teshuvah* and repentance. Days we come closer to Him, not just out of fear but out of an abundance of love and *simcha*. The culmination of which is *Simchas Torah*, dedicating ourselves to lives of *Torah*. May we be *zoche* to tap into and connect to these *heilige* days!

ושמחת בחגך ... והיית אך שמח (דברים מז-מז)
שישו ושמחו בשמחת תורה ... (לשמחת תורה)

The *posuk* says “קחו עמכם דברים ושבו אל ה’”. The *Medrash* expounds that the verse is referring to *Torah*, i.e when we connect to *Torah*, we will merit to return to *Hashem* in *teshuvah*. However, the **Kotzker Rebbe ז”ל** observes that there are many people who learn *Torah*, yet we do not see them doing *teshuvah*. How do we reconcile this verse?

He answers with characteristic *sharfkeit*: When does the *posuk* say *Torah* brings to *teshuvah*? When one takes its words ‘עמכם’ - with him - the *Torah* must become part of him, otherwise, it will indeed have no effect on him.

The culmination of the *Yamim Noraim* is *Hoshanah Rabbah* and *Simchas Torah*. There is a custom to stay up and learn the night of *Hoshanah Rabbah*. Perhaps the reason is to show how the *Torah* is our very essence, to the point that we cannot separate from it by day nor by night. This is the ultimate demonstration, “Exhibit A,” if you will, that our

יבצאנו בארץ מדיבר ובתהו ילל ישמן יבכבננו

יבוננהו יצרנהו באישון עינו ... (דברים לב-)

Hashem “found” us to be a loyal nation, in the desert and surrounded us and enlightened us. **Rashi** says: “שם סבבם” והקיפם בעננים וסבבם בדגלים וסבבן בתחתית ההר”. What is this concept of surrounding *Klal Yisroel*, and sitting in the *Sukkah* as a remembrance of being surrounded?

The *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah 11a*) relates how *Onkelos*, a young nephew of Roman nobility, converted to Judaism. His uncle and family were furious, and sent soldiers to arrest him. He succeeded in persuading the soldiers to convert. How did he achieve the seemingly impossible? He engaged the soldiers in a philosophical discussion, and when challenged with his factual *Torah* wisdom, they yearned to convert. And so it went with each subsequent group of militia that came to arrest him. The final group his uncle dispatched, had strict orders not to speak with him, lest they too fail in their mission. But as they were escorting him out of his home he kissed the *mezuzah*. When asked, he explained that unlike a human king who, while inside his castle, has his servants standing guard outside; we are guarded by *Hashem* from the outside as we dwell inside. They, too, converted and the Romans gave up. Such is the love He has for us.

In other words, when something is encircled, it connotes that there is something inside. The entire world is outside trying to influence us on the inside, but we are surrounded and live inside a beautiful, pure world of ומצוות as the *Gemara* (*Menachos 43b*) says, “חביבך ישראל שסיבבך הקב”ה, במצות”. On *Sukkos*, we enter the *Sukkah* protecting ourselves with *mechitzos*, enveloped in His warm and loving embrace.

Rashi ends by saying that we were also “surrounded” by the mountain that *Hashem* hung above us until we accepted the *Torah*. In essence, *Hashem* was conveying to us that a life of *Torah* helps shield and ward off all outside influences. Perhaps to commemorate this we euphorically dance on

Yet, out of profound reverence for the *Brisker Rov's* formidable *Torah* scholarship, Mr. Englander refused to confront him directly or cause him embarrassing distress. Instead, he devised a subtle, respectful protest. Before serving the morning meal, the host carefully placed a volume of *Divrei Chaim* on the dining table, the *sefer* in which the *Sanzer Rav* provides *teshuvos* to some of the most difficult *halachic* questions, leaving it open to the exact page where the *Sanzer Rav* condemned the use of mirrors. In this way, he aimed to get his point across in a respectful fashion.

When the *Brisker Rov* sat down to eat, he immediately noticed the open *sefer* on the table and after reading the *teshuva* to which it was open, he caught the host's quiet message. Rather than taking offense or launching into a cold, complex Talmudic debate, the *Rov* smiled gently and spoke to his host in a language the *chasid* could deeply appreciate.

“I see what you have done and I appreciate the subtlety,” the *Rov* said warmly. “Since you are a *chasid*, let me explain myself to you in the spirit of *Chassidus*. This is a manner in which you can understand.”

The *Brisker Rov* then recounted a famous story about the *Divrei Chaim* himself. One year on *Sukkos*, a downpour struck the town of Sanz. According to *halacha*, heavy rain exempts a person from staying in the *Sukkah*. In fact, the *Gemara* notes that someone who insists on staying in the *Sukkah* when exempt is considered a “*Hedyot*” - a foolish layman. Yet, the *Divrei Chaim* refused to leave his beloved *Sukkah*, braving the pouring rain to remain surrounded by the holy walls. When his students asked how he could ignore the Rabbinic label, the *Sanzer Rav* answered, “I am perfectly willing to be called a *hedyot*, a fool, as long as I get to sit in the *Sukkah*.”

Looking up at his host, the *Brisker Rov* delivered his gentle punchline: “The *Divrei Chaim* was willing to be called a simpleton just to cherish the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah*. Likewise, I am willing to go against the *Divrei Chaim's* personal warning about mirrors, as long as I ensure my *tefillin* are positioned in the absolute exact location required by the *Aibishter*.”

For the *Brisker Rov*, precise *halachic* placement was his passion; for the *Divrei Chaim*, it was the warmth of the *mitzvah* itself. Two distinct spiritual paths met in complete mutual respect, proving that while their methods differed, their ultimate devotion was one and the same.

מרשות מרוםם על כל ברכה ושירה נורא על כל תחילה וזמרה ... עמוד עמוד עמוד חתן בראשית ברא ... (רשות לחתן בראשית)

It happened about a year ago, in a well-known synagogue in one of the big cities in Israel. You know how on *Simchas Torah*, there's this beautiful tradition? They call up the *Chosson Torah* and the *Chosson Bereshis*, two men honored with special *aliyos*, and it's not just a dry announcement. It's done with melody, with sweetness, almost like a cantorial performance. The person who does the announcing is usually someone with a musical soul, someone who knows how to sing it just right. The noise, the fanfare - for many, it is the highlight of the *aliyah* ceremony.

Now, in this particular synagogue, there was a man who had been doing this for thirty years. Thirty years! That's not just a job - it's a legacy. He was the voice of *Simchas Torah*. People looked forward to hearing him every year. He had the tunes down perfectly, the rhythm, the emotion. It was his moment, and he cherished it.

But then, just a few days before the final holiday, during *Chol Hamoed Sukkos*, the *gabbai* came up to the melodious announcer and told him some breaking news. “Listen,” he said, “the *shul* committee decided that this year, you will only announce the *Chosson Torah*. Someone else will do the *Chosson Bereshis*.”

The man was stunned. He didn't know what hit him.

“What did I do wrong?” he wondered. “Why would they take this from me?”

It wasn't just disappointment, it was legitimate heartbreak. He couldn't sleep that night. His mind kept spinning. During the day, he couldn't concentrate. It felt like something precious had been stolen from him.

And then came the day of *Simchas Torah*. He stood at his usual spot and announced the *Chosson Torah* with all the grace and beauty, pomp and ceremony, he was known for. But when it was time for the *Chosson Bereshis*, some new guy stepped up. It was his first time doing this, and let's just say ... he made that fact very clear! He stumbled through the tunes, missed the notes, got the rhythm all wrong. The veteran couldn't help himself - he started correcting him gently, whispering the right melodies, guiding him through.

And then, something unexpected happened. The new announcer reached the part where he had to call up the *Chosson Bereshis*. He sang out, “*Amod ... Amod ... Amod ...*” - the traditional lead-in. And then, instead of another name, he said, “*Amod Rav*” followed by the name of the veteran announcer himself! The announcement was about him!

The man froze. He looked around, confused. And then it hit him. His sons and sons-in-law had secretly arranged for him to receive the honor of *Chosson Bereshis*. They had purchased the *aliyah* for him, kept it under wraps, and planned it as a surprise. That's why someone else had to do the announcing - he couldn't very well call himself up!

All that sorrow, all that sleeplessness, all that pain - it had been for nothing. Not only was he not being pushed aside, he was being elevated. Honored. Loved. And the beauty of it? He hadn't seen it coming.

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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כי יצפנני בסכה ביום רעה יסתרני בסתר אהלו בצור ירוממני ... (תהלים כז-ה)

Sometimes the most powerful moments in life begin with the smallest, simplest decision. The following remarkable story is retold by **Rabbi Fischel Schachter *shlita***, and the lesson it imparts will last for generations.

A secular Israeli couple living in the southern part of the land of Israel, decided one year to build a *Sukkah*. Why? They really weren't sure themselves.

“Our kids know almost nothing about Judaism,” said the wife. “Let's build a *Sukkah*, just so they have something, some connection to their religion.”

Her husband was surprised. “But we're not religious. In fact, we are quite leftist. What will our friends say?”

His wife smiled and answered with a sharp retort. “Yeah, well ... sometimes when you go far enough to the left, you wind up on the right,” she argued. So they built it.

They headed outside and gathered branches from a palm tree that stood outside their home to use as *schach*, the covering for the *Sukkah*. It was a small act of just one *mitzvah*, but to the family, it meant a lot.

Then came the horror of October 7th. The sirens, the terror, the rockets. The morning air shattered under a relentless barrage of siren wails and thunderous explosions, giving way to an immediate, paralyzing dread as shouts in Arabic and the cold, metallic rhythm of automatic gunfire echoed through the streets outside. Inside the darkness of the heavy metal-doomed *mamad*, the reinforced safe rooms that were meant to protect, families huddled in breathless silence, parents desperately wrapping their arms around crying children while applying every ounce of strength to hold the heavy iron door handle shut against the unimaginable nightmare prowling outside, just inches away. Every step on the gravel, every shatter of glass, and every frantic whisper on the radio magnified an agonizing suspense, where seconds stretched into an infinity of pure survival instinct and desperate prayers amidst the unfolding terror of that black morning.

The family ran into their *mamad*, as terrorists stormed their community. Once inside, the father gripped the door handle as hard as he could, while terrorists on the other side of the door tried again and again to break it open. Eventually, the terrorists gave up, but not without leaving their mark. With murderous malice and intent, they lit the house on fire, as flames began to rapidly spread, consuming the house. The door handle, jammed from the struggle, wouldn't budge, leaving the family trapped inside the safe room, their only option being to escape through the open window.

“Are you crazy?” the wife cried. “There are terrorists outside! How can we go out the window?”

“We have no choice,” her husband said. “If we don't, we'll die here from the fire and smoke.”

So, one by one, the family climbed out of the window and into a world of carnage and fear. And then they began to run toward a palm tree. Its low branches offered a fragile shield, enabling them to camouflage as they crouched and hid. Craven Hamas fighters, looking for more innocents to kill, passed by again and again, yet they never noticed them.

At one point the father said, “Look over there. I think I see a better place to hide - a burnt-out shelter across the street. Let's leave this exposed tree and run for it.” But his wife stopped him. “*Hashem* has saved us here. They pass by but somehow they don't see us. Let's stay.” And they did. They stayed by that tree until, hours later, they were rescued.

When they finally emerged, they saw that their home had been burned to the ground. Everything was gone. Except one thing. The *sukkah*. It remained untouched. And then they turned back and looked again at the tree that had sheltered them. It was the very palm tree from which they had taken the *schach*.

Rabbi Schachter concludes the story with the following lesson. This is what happens when a Jew, no matter how distant, makes even a small decision to reconnect. One *mitzvah*. One step. One action to say, “I want to live a life of meaning. I want to give my children something to hold onto.” And in return, *Hashem* gives us shelter. Sometimes, quite literally.

בסוכות תשבו שבקעת ימים ... למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסוכת הושבתי את בני ישראל ... (ויקרא כג-ב)

In the world of European Jewry before the war, two great spiritual philosophies flourished side by side: the fervent, mystical devotion of *Chassidim*, and the razor-sharp, exacting devotion to Halachic law exemplified by the Lithuanian *yeshivah* tradition. Few stories capture the meeting of these worlds quite as gracefully as an incident involving the **Brisker Rov, R' Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik *zt"l***, and an ardent *chasid* of the **Divrei Chaim, R' Chaim Halberstam *zt"l*** of Sanz.

While staying at the famous Krenetz bathhouse, the *Brisker Rov* was hosted by a member of the renowned Englander family, a devout follower of the *Sanzer* dynasty. One morning, as the host observed his distinguished guest preparing for morning prayers, he noticed something that deeply unsettled him. The *Brisker Rov* was looking directly into a mirror to adjust his head *tefillin*.

To a *Sanzer Chassid*, this was practically unthinkable. The *Divrei Chaim* had written an explicit *halachic* ruling forbidding men from looking in mirrors, viewing it as an act of vanity and contrary to the spirit of *tefillah*. To the host, seeing a great leader act directly against his *Rebbe's* teachings felt like a slight against the *Divrei Chaim* himself.