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The Gemarrah in Avodah Zarah 2b states, that when the time of redemption will come, the Nations will ask Hashem to redeem them also. Hashem will tell them they didn't heed the Mitzvoths. They will say "You did not impose upon us a mountain as you did to the Yidden. After a long dialogue, Hashem agrees to give the nations one more chance. "I will give you a minor Mitzvah called Succah and if you will heed this I will redeem you." The nations made Succos on their rooftops. Hashem then had the Sun taken out of its shelter and the heat of the Sun was unbearable. The nations kicked away their Succos and left. Hashem laughed at them. From here we see that the Mitzvah of Succah is referred to as a minor Mitzvah, and this weighed to the favor of the Yidden to redeem them. Therefore, how appropriate are the words of Rashi: Heed the minor Mitzvah of Succah, and which one tramples with his heel, as he enters the Succah with his feet. By heeding this Mitzvah we will merit to be redeemed. (*Yehuda Z. Klitnick*)

Taking Guests in the Sukkah

The heilige Rabbi of Berditchev, would always invite poor, simple Jews and unlearned men as guests into his Sukkah. He explained why he was so thorough in doing this: The Talmud states that when the righteous Messiah comes, the Tzaddikim will sit in the Sukkah made of the Leviathan fish with their crowns on their heads, along with all the Patriarchs of the world and the righteous and pious of all generations. I, too, will want to enter the Sukkah of the Leviathan. If they try to chase me away and ask, "What is such a coarse and simple person doing sitting together with all the Tzaddikim?" I will answer that simple and coarse people also sat in my Sukkah—so they will have to let me in as well! (*Sukkos Shalom in the name of Sifsei Tzaddikim*)

A Remez That the Ushpizin Come into the Sukkah

"בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים" "You shall dwell in Succosh seven days; every citizen in Israel shall dwell in Succos" (Leviticus 23:42). It is known from righteous tzaddikim that the heilige seven Ushpizin (exalted guests) descend into the Succah. One can suggest an allusion from the Torah for this: the numerical value (Gematria) of the words "בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים" Basuccos teshvu shiv'at yamim – "You shall dwell in Succos seven days") equals 2062. This is the exact same numerical value as the names of the seven Ushpizin combined with the word "סוכה": "אברהם סוכה":

339, יצחק סוכה: 299, יעקוב סוכה: 279, משה סוכה: 436, אהרן סוכה: 347,
(*Zohar Chai, Komarna*) יוסף סוכה: 247, דויד סוכה: 115 = 2602.

The Sukkah Teaches Generations to Place Their Trust in Hashem

The heilige Alshich and the Mabib (in Beis Elokim) ask: The Talmud (Taanis 9a, Chullin 92b) states that Hashem, Blessed be He, gave three wonderful gifts to the Jewish people in the wilderness: the Manna, the Well of Miriam, and the Clouds of Glory. If so, why did the Torah command us to perform the mitzvah of Sukkah as a remembrance specifically for the Clouds of Glory, while there is no explicit mitzvah to commemorate the Manna and the Well? The heilige Bnei Yissaschar brings two answers from the heilige Chida: The Plain Meaning (citing the book Tzemach David): Just as the Well allowed them to taste any flavor of drink, and the Manna allowed them to taste any flavor of food, our Sages instituted the celebration of the holiday (Simchas Yom Tov) with meat and wine. Through eating and drinking on the holiday, we commemorate the Manna and the Well. A Deeper Reason (citing Rabbi Yeshua Zayin, one of the scholars of Egypt): The Jewish people received the Manna and the Well only after complaining and requesting food and water. In contrast, Hashem gave them the Clouds of Glory entirely on His own initiative out of His immense lovingkindness, without them ever asking for it. Therefore, no specific mitzvah was instituted for the Manna and the Well, but only for the Clouds of Glory. The Bnei Yissaschar concludes that this insight is hinted at in the verse: לָמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דִּרְתֵּיכֶם כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי ה' (ויקרא כג, מג) "So that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in Succos when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Hashem your Hashem" (Vayikra 23:43). "So that your generations may know" — לָמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דִּרְתֵּיכֶם — so future generations realize that בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "I made the children of Israel dwell in Succosh" without them asking for it, because אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם "I am Hashem your Hashem" — I know what is good for a person even when they do not realize it themselves. One must have bitachon that everything Hashem does is for the best, and this is the core lesson we learn from the Sukkah. (*Bnei Yissaschar Tishrei 10:13–16*)

INSPIRATIONAL SUCCOS STORIES***Saved using the Esrog with a Torah Pshetl***

In the introduction to the book "Amudei Esh Beis Yosef" by Hagaon Rav Yosef Leichtag, printed in Munkatch 1939 an interesting story is brought down regarding what occurred during the era of the heilige "Chozeh" of Lublin, Ztza"l.

It was a very difficult year due to war conditions, and the Esrog merchants could not import enough Esrogim into Poland as usual. There was a severe shortage, and the prices of Esrogim rose extremely high. Merchants demanded a hundred silver Rubles even for a simple Esrog.

The great Torah leaders of Poland held a gathering, an Asifah and decreed that each community was permitted to purchase only one Esrog using community funds. This decree took root in all communities, and throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*, each town bought only a single Esrog and handed it over to the Rabbi. An order was established: First the Rabbi would recite the blessing over the Esrog, then the community leaders, and then the entire congregation. During Hallel, only the Chazzan and the Rabbi would perform the ceremonial waving, *Na'anua'im*, and no one else, so that the Esrog would remain preserved.

However, the "Chozeh" of Lublin possessed his own personal Esrog, which a Chosid had sent him from Germany before the decree of the leaders of the generation was issued. As soon as the Rabbi of the city of Lublin, the Gaon Rabbi Ezriel Horowitz (known as the "Iron Head" or the "Eizener Kop", found out on the eve of Yom Kippur, he sent word to the Chozeh of Lublin that as the Chief Rabbi of the city, he forbade him from using his private Esrog due to the communal decree.

Naturally, the heilige Chozeh felt immense distress from this—so much so that he could not compose himself to eat the pre-Yom Kippur meal due to his grief over the Esrog. Present at that time was the great scholar Rabbi Yosef Lichtag of Zabaruz, known as "Rabbi Yossel

Charif" (the Sharp One), one of the prominent disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin. Rabbi Yossel spoke up and told the Rebbe not to worry, for he would settle the matter with the city's Chief Rabbi. Rabbi Yossel hurried to the "Iron Head" and told him that the Rabbi had overlooked an explicit Talmudic passage in Gemarra Chullin (17a). The Talmud relates that the Jews in the wilderness were not required to ritually slaughter, do Shechita, on their cattle; they performed "Nechirah" (stabbing/slitting). Only upon entering the Land of Israel were they obligated to perform proper kosher slaughter as commanded by the Torah. Rabbi Yirmeyah asked a query: What about people who still possessed meat from the wilderness that was not ritually slaughtered, and brought that meat into Israel? Were they permitted to eat it in Israel, or did the old meat become forbidden once they entered the Land?

The Rosh, Rabbeinu Asher, on the spot (chapter 23) asks: What practical difference does Rabbi Yirmeyah's query make to us, since it only applied upon entry into Israel and is no longer relevant in practice? Why does the Talmud mention it? The Rosh answers that it "can" be relevant in future generations: If a Rabbinical Court (Beis Din) ever enacts a decree prohibiting a certain food, those who already possessed that food before the Sages enacted their decree may still be permitted to consume what they already owned when it was still permitted.

Using these words of the Rosh, Rabbi Yossel Charif engaged in deep Talmudic debate with the "Iron Head" until the latter conceded that the Rebbe could not be forbidden from using his Esrog, which he had owned beforehand. As soon as Rabbi Yossel returned, the Chozeh rejoiced greatly and exclaimed, "Yosef, son of Leitza, you have illuminated our eyes!" They sat down to the pre-Yom Kippur meal with immense joy. From then on, Rabbi Yossel held great prestige with the Chozeh and would always sit among the foremost at his table.

The Belzer Rebbe refused to use the Esrog, as it wasn't intended for him!

Rabbi Meir Stein, recounted regarding the purchase of an Esrog for the Rebbe Shalom Eliezer Halberstam of Ratzfert son of the heilige Divrei chaim of Sanz. When the Esrog merchant arrived in Budapest with his few Esrogim, he decided that he would sell the most beautiful Esrog to the heilige Rabbi Shalom Eliezer of Ratzfert. When the heilige Rebbe of Ratzfert heard this, he traveled to Budapest in order to buy the Esrog. However, when he arrived there, the merchant requested no less

than twelve thousand good and solid florins Rhenish. The heilige Rebbe of Ratzfert turned to him and said: "I will give no more than ten thousand florins!" But the merchant was undeterred and held firm to his price. Seeing this, the Rebbe of Ratzfert immediately left the place.

Shortly thereafter, several Belzer Chassidim came in to the merchant and asked him how much he was requesting for the Esrog. He answered them: twelve thousand

florins. The Chassidim immediately paid the twelve thousand florins and purchased the Esrog for Rebbe Aharon of Belz.

When the Ratzferter Rebbe saw this, he immediately sent two messengers (one of whom was the Rabbi David Yehoshua Gross, to the Belzer Rav, and instructed them to tell the Rebbe that this falls under the Rabbinic halachic principle of 'עני המהפך בחררה ובא אחר ונטלו' "A poor man seeking a cake, and another came and took it"

(Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat, Chapter 237, Paragraph 1).

Lo and behold, as soon as the messengers of the Ratzferter Rebbe entered the Belzer Rav's room, and before they could even say anything, the Belzer Rav immediately took the Esrog and gave it to the messengers of the Rebbe of Ratzfert without saying a single word. And it was wondrous, as everyone clearly saw the Ruach Hakodesh of the Belzer Rav. It wasn't intended for him!

Helped the Great Reb. Asher of Stolin ztz"l with a Sukkah and Merited Longevity (26th of Tishrei)

The holy Reb Asher of Stolin ztz"l was born in 5520 (1760) to his holy father, the Holy Rabbi Aaron Hagadol of Karlin ztz"l. He was orphaned at the age of twelve when Reb Aaron suddenly passed away on the 19th of Nissan, 5532 (1772). Reb Asher was raised by the Holy Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin, who had been a disciple of Reb Aaron the Great and served as his successor until the 22nd of Tamuz, 5552 (1792), when Reb Shlomo was killed by a Gentile at fifty-two years old. Holy tzaddikim said of Reb Shlomo that he was Mashiach ben Yosef, who according to tradition is destined to fall at the hands of a Gentile. Reb Asher traveled to one hundred and ten tzaddikim in his lifetime and led the Hasidic movement until his passing on the 26th of Tishrei, 5587 (1826).

His household expenses were large, so the Great Stoliner traveled frequently to raise funds for his court. Once, he was on a distant journey and was forced to stay there for Succos. In that town, there was only a single Sukkah for the entire community. That year, severe cold set in early, and the roof of the Sukkah became covered with a thick slab of ice, making it impossible to open the roof and use the sechach (covering). When the Great Stoliner asked about the Succos situation in town, they broke the bad news that the town's only Sukkah could not be used. The Rebbe went to inspect the Sukkah, began to weep, and was utterly heartbroken. The townsfolk learned that the Rebbe wanted to celebrate Succos with them, but he was deeply pained, saying he could not endure Succos without a Sukkah.

There lived in that town a strong young man who approached the Rebbe and promised to ensure the Sukkah would be ready for the holiday. The young man climbed onto the roof and tried with all his strength to see what could be done, but seeing how thick the ice was, he realized he could not accomplish it alone. He called several friends who came to help chop the ice in the biting cold to make the task easier for him. His friends helped for a while, but the freezing cold became too unbearable, and they all left.

The young man desperately wanted to help the Rebbe

and decided to proceed with complete mesiras nefesh. He chopped away, sweating profusely in the freezing cold, until he finally succeeded in dislodging the ice from the roof. He opened the roof, revealing valid sechach over the Sukkah. The Great Stoliner rejoiced greatly and thanked him for his devotion.

However, a person is only human, and sweating in the freezing weather took a heavy toll on the young man. He developed a high fever and severe pneumonia, losing his strength until he was bedridden. People went to ask the Great Stoliner to pray for him. The Rebbe listened and inquired about his condition, but offered no blessing at that moment. Meanwhile, the festival of Succos arrived, and the Rebbe instructed that the young man be brought to the Sukkah, saying he wished to recite the blessing Leishev BaSukkah with him and eat the first required kazayit of the festival alongside him.

The young man was overjoyed upon receiving the Rebbe's invitation and requested to be carried there in his bed, as he had no strength to stand. The Great Stoliner waited, and when the young man arrived, the Rebbe greeted him with immense joy, thanking him warmly for his great effort and sacrifice in making the Sukkah possible. Understandably, the young man was spiritually uplifted, but he said to the Rebbe, "Everything is wonderful, Rebbe, but you see what this has brought upon me!" The Rebbe responded, "Do not fear, and do not worry; Hashem willing, you will be completely healthy."

Hearing these words, the young man was comforted. The Rebbe asked for him to be lifted out of bed and seated beside him. The Rebbe poured him a cup of wine, instructed him to recite Kiddush and Leishev BaSukkah, and thank Hashem, minute by minute, the young man felt his strength returning. The Rebbe placed the Lechem Mishneh before him and urged him to eat, and he began feeling much better.

After reciting Grace After Meals, the Rebbe bestowed a further blessing upon him. The young man returned home feeling greatly improved, and by the end of Succos, he

was completely healed. After the holiday, when the Rebbe prepared to return home, he bade farewell to the townsfolk. The young man came to see him off, entirely healthy and full of strength. In the merit of his self-sacrifice, the Rebbe blessed him with longevity, wealth, and joy from his children.

Rabbi Nachman Yosef Wilhelm ztz"l—father-in-law of the Holy Rabbi Yochanan of Rachmastrivka of Jerusalem

How the Heilige Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz ztz"l Became Famous Through an Esrog

The Heilige Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz ztz"l lived in deep concealment, hiding his scholarly brilliance. He served Hashem while living in extreme poverty, unnoticed by those around him. His wife survived on whatever charitable Jews brought her, and this went on for several years.

One year, a severe winter disrupted the growth of Esrogim. The few that grew were blemished with holes and unfit for ritual use. Merchants set out to search far and wide, but had no success. The Jews of Koritz were heartbroken at the thought of being unable to fulfill the mitzvah of the Esrog. When Reb Pinchas heard how distressed the community was, he could not contain himself and told them not to worry, for he would have an Esrog for the festival that year.

The townsfolk were astonished by his words, as no one considered him a prominent figure, and some even laughed at him. Yet Reb Pinchas maintained that he would have a beautiful Esrog that year. They continued to mock him: if the wealthiest community members could not afford or find one, how could a destitute man obtain an Esrog? Unfazed by their reactions, Reb Pinchas returned calmly to his Gemara, immersing himself in a complex Talmudic topic.

As the High Holy Days arrived, a wealthy man managed to acquire a kosher Esrog at an exorbitant price, relieving the community somewhat, as they could now at least fulfill the mitzvah through him. As Succos drew closer, people mockingly asked Reb Pinchas if he had obtained his Esrog yet. He replied that with Hashem's help, he would indeed have a beautiful Esrog that year. On the morning of Yomtov, Reb Pinchas still had no Esrog, yet he held firm to his conviction while others laughed.

The Shul finished the morning prayers, and Reb Pinchas was just concluding the silent Shemoneh Esrei, when a Gentile arrived at the synagogue searching for Reb Pinchas. He handed him a bound lulav alongside a splendid Esrog. Reb Pinchas went into the Sukkah, recited the blessing, and performed the ritual wavings (na'anu'im) with immense joy of the mitzvah. When he

ztz"l—related that while in Stolin in 5652 (1892), he met this very Jew, who had come to receive a blessing from the holy Rebbe, the Or Yisrael of Stolin ztz"l. By then, the man was well over one hundred years old, blessed with exceptional wealth and distinguished children—all in the merit of his self-sacrifice.

entered the main sanctuary with the Four Species, the Shul was stunned to see that Reb Pinchas indeed possessed an exceptionally magnificent Esrog.

Overcome with regret for having mocked him, the congregants approached Reb Pinchas after services to seek his forgiveness. He forgave everyone wholeheartedly and even allowed them to use his Esrog to perform the mitzvah. In a single moment, the community's perspective on Reb Pinchas was transformed; obtaining the Esrog was extraordinary enough, but his generosity in sharing it proved he was no ordinary man.

After the holiday, they asked Reb Pinchas how he had managed to secure the Esrog. He revealed that he had a close friend in Zaslav whom he knew from their time in Mezritch with the Holy Maggid. The friend regularly visited him for a blessing before business trips. Immediately after Pesach, when the friend was preparing to travel to a distant fair abroad, Reb Pinchas blessed him and added a request: while abroad, he should seek out a few beautiful Esrogim, set one aside for himself, and send one to Reb Pinchas for Succos. The friend agreed.

Although surprised by a request for a Succos Esrog right after Pesach, the friend trusted Reb Pinchas's words. He searched in that distant land and found several beautiful Esrogim. By the month of Elul, he headed home, intending to deliver the Esrog in person. However, several delays along the journey caused him to arrive home only on the eve of Succos.

Realizing he could not deliver the Esrog and lulav himself in time, he bound the species together with myrtle and willow branches, packed them securely, and sent a Gentile messenger to deliver them to Reb Pinchas. All of this Reb Pinchas had foreseen through his holy vision. Astounded by this revelation of open Ruach HaKodesh (Divine Spirit), the community accepted him as their Rebbe. Thus, Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz became renowned, was blessed with abundant sustenance, and attracted countless Chassidim seeking his blessings and salvation.

Where Did the Esrogim Come From Overnight?

One summer, Poland experienced bitterly cold weather, resulting in a total absence of Esrogim in Warsaw as Succos approached. As community leaders searched desperately for a solution, a clever Gentile merchant realized he could make a massive profit. He rented a storefront in Warsaw and announced he had Esrogim for sale.

The community rejoiced, but when the first buyers arrived, the merchant demanded an exorbitant price. When the buyers tried to negotiate, he refused to budge. Realizing they had no choice, they agreed to his terms—whereupon the merchant, seeing their desperation, raised the price even higher. Recognizing his greed, the buyers walked out. Others tried negotiating with him, agreeing to high prices, only for the merchant to continually raise his demands.

Realizing the merchant was exploiting them, the community leaders turned to the Holy Chiddushei HaRim of Gur ztz"l for guidance just a few days before Succos. The Rebbe pondered the matter and said he had a plan. He instructed that all Jewish Esrog merchants in Warsaw be summoned to him in secrecy.

The merchants arrived, and the Rebbe presented his plan, stressing that no one outside the room must know of it. The merchants left satisfied and set to work immediately. The next morning, the display windows of the Jewish Esrog shops were filled with dozens of magnificent Esrogim. Following the Rebbe's instructions, the shops remained locked, set to open only at 11:00 AM, though the displays were visible early in the morning. As the

Jews of Warsaw walked to morning prayers, they saw the beautiful display and rejoiced, assuming a fresh shipment had arrived at fair prices.

Word reached the Gentile merchant, who went to inspect the shop windows himself. Seeing the display of fine Esrogim, he panicked, realizing his greed had backfired: he had sold nothing, and now faced total financial ruin, as no one would buy from him while Jewish merchants had abundant stock.

The Gentile opened his shop, and a few Jewish merchants entered with cash, asking if he wished to sell his inventory. His pride broken, the merchant agreed to sell everything provided he recouped his initial investment. The Jewish merchants purchased his entire stock, and the Gentile fled Warsaw, relieved not to have lost his capital. Thus, Warsaw secured a sufficient supply of kosher Esrogim, and the Chiddushei HaRim acquired a beautiful Esrog as well.

After Succos, the merchants revealed the Rebbe's clever strategy: he had instructed them to hire craftsmen to carve Esrogim out of wood and paint them to look authentic. These wooden replicas were placed in the shop windows early in the morning, while keeping the doors locked so no one could inspect them closely or expose the ruse. Seeing the filled displays, the Gentile merchant assumed the market was flooded, broke his hold on the market, and sold his genuine inventory at cost. Through the wisdom of the Chiddushei HaRim, the community of Warsaw fulfilled the mitzvah of the Four Species in all its glory.

The Holy Sanzer Rebbe Receives a Fish Instead of an Esrog

One year, there was a severe shortage of beautiful Esrogim, and none of the specimens brought to the Holy Divrei Chaim of Sanz ztza"l met his approval. His devoted gabbaim selected two distinguished emissaries, gave them a large sum of money, and sent them to major cities to find an exceptionally fine Esrog for the Rebbe.

With Hashems help, they located a breathtaking Esrog. Though the seller demanded a fortune, they paid without negotiating, overjoyed to have secured such a specimen for the Sanzer Rebbe.

On their journey back, they stopped at the home of a wealthy rural Jewish merchant who traded in live fish. They showed him the magnificent Esrog they had bought. Looking at his fish tanks, the emissaries recalled that there were currently no fresh fish available in Sanz, meaning the Chassidim would have to serve salted herring for the holiday meals. They asked to purchase

several live fish to honor the Rebbe's festival table, but the man replied that his supply was low and he could not sell them any.

The emissaries pleaded and offered a large sum of money, but the merchant replied that he did not need money. However, he made an offer: he possessed one extraordinarily large live fish—enough to feed the entire court for the holiday—and he would trade it to them in exchange for the Esrog.

The emissaries calculated that since the first day of Succos coincided with Shabbos that year, fresh fish held immense spiritual importance for Oneg Shabbos. Furthermore, the biblical requirement for an Esrog on the Shabbos is deferred to the second day in post-Temple times. They agreed to the deal, loaded the giant fish into a large barrel of water on their wagon, and set off.

When they arrived in Sanz, the gabbaim and Hasidim

rushed out to see the Rebbe's Esrog. When the emissaries announced they had traded the Esrog for a massive fish, the gabbaim were furious at what they considered immense foolishness. Humiliated, the emissaries fled to a nearby village to spend the holiday, leaving the fish behind in Sanz.

The large fish was prepared for the festival meals, while the attendants decided not to inform the Rebbe of what had transpired. However, nothing was hidden from the holy tzaddik. To the astonishment of the gabbaim, when the fish was served at the Friday night meal, the Sanzer Rebbe remarked:

"My heartfelt thanks to the devoted emissaries who had the wisdom to realize that since the first day of the festival falls on the Shabbos, having fresh fish for the holiday meal is of paramount importance. This year, the Esrog requirement is Rabbinic, whereas serving fish

fulfills two distinct commandments: 'And you shall rejoice in your festival' and 'And you shall call the Shabbos a delight.' "

The Rebbe took a large portion of fish, instructed the gabbaim to set it aside, and ordered them to locate the two emissaries after the Shabbos to deliver the portion and request their forgiveness. On Saturday night, the gabbaim traveled to the village, presented the Rebbe's shirayim to the emissaries, and apologized. The emissaries returned to Sanz with great joy.

The joy was compounded later that night when the fish merchant himself arrived in Sanz, carrying the Esrog. He placed it directly into the holy tzaddik's hands, explaining that his true intention had been to honor the tzaddik with both the fish and the fine Esrog!

The Heilige Mahar'i of Belz Elevates a Soul Directly into Paradise

In Hungary, a wealthy tavern keeper owned a prosperous liquor establishment. Though successful, he was a wicked man who publicly desecrated the Shabbos. His tavern served fine spirits, making it a frequent stopping point for Hasidim traveling to their Rebbes. The tavern keeper routinely mocked Hasidim and their Rebbes.

Once, a group of Belzer Hasidim traveling to the middle Rebbe, the Holy Mahar'i (Rabbi Yehoshua) of Belz ztz"l, stopped at the tavern. As they spoke revered words about their Rebbe's greatness, the tavern keeper began mocking him. The Hasidim warned him to stop, lest he be punished from Above, but he scoffed, claiming he feared no Rebbe, and intensified his mockery.

Suddenly, the tavern keeper was struck with total physical paralysis. Word spread quickly throughout the town that he had been punished for mocking the holy Belzer Rebbe. Doctors were called, but none could help.

The tavern keeper had an observant brother who immediately took the paralyzed man to Belz. Upon their arrival, the Belzer Rebbe stated: "Regarding my personal honor, I forgive him completely; I do not wish for any Jew to suffer on my account. However, I do not know if Heaven has forgiven him."

The tavern keeper broke into tears, crying: "Rebbe, I wish to repent! I will never speak ill of righteous men again!" The Rebbe told them to return for Rosh Hashanah, when he would assist him.

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, both brothers presented themselves before the Rebbe. As the paralyzed man wept, the Rebbe said that if he sincerely committed to becoming an observant Jew and sought Hashem's forgiveness on Rosh Hashanah, Heaven would forgive him and restore his health. The man complied fully,

remaining in Belz through Yom Kippur. Immediately following the fast, he was completely healed.

After Yom Kippur, the Rebbe instructed him to return home. The man transformed, becoming observant, a generous philanthropist, and an active host of guests. He acquired a fine Esrog, built a large Sukkah, and hired a tutor who taught him Torah until he became a knowledgeable scholar.

He made it a custom to travel to Belz every Rosh Chodesh. During one visit, the Rebbe called him in after the festive meal, inquired about his spiritual progress, and expressed great pleasure. The Rebbe remarked: "You are a true Baal Teshuva, and where Baalei Teshuva stand, even the completely righteous cannot stand. You have reached a lofty spiritual level."

The tavern keeper responded: "If I have reached such a level, I ask the Rebbe for one blessing: to see Moshiach."

The Rebbe directed him to a forest near the Hungarian border, telling him that in a house at the edge of the forest lived Moshiach. The man traveled there and found a dimly lit house filled with smoke from a woman boiling potatoes. He knocked, and the woman asked what he wanted. The man replied that he wished to hire her husband to manage his accounting. She laughed: "My husband cannot read or write, let alone manage accounts!" But he pleaded to see him, so she told him to return after Maariv.

He returned after Maariv and saw a man deeply immersed in a holy book. He knocked and was let in. When the master of the house asked who had sent him, the man replied that the Belzer Rebbe had sent him. Instantly, the house and the man vanished into thin air. Returning to Belz, the Rebbe told him: "You have

merited a immense blessing to have seen Moshiach."

The man continued to elevate his spiritual devotions. One year, during a severe winter with heavy snowstorms, he traveled to Belz for Hanukkah. Upon arrival, the Rebbe instructed him to return home immediately. The man pleaded, distressed that he had made such a arduous journey only to be sent away without hearing the Rebbe's blessings. The Rebbe relented slightly: "You may stay for the first night, but you must leave immediately afterward!"

Upon returning home, the man suddenly fell critically ill, realizing only then why the Rebbe had urged him to

How an Esrog Should Be Received

One year, there was a severe shortage of unblemished Esrogim. A Chosid of the Heilige Rebbe Israel of Hussiatin ztz"l, a prominent merchant who traditionally provided the Rebbe with his finest Esrog, could find no completely clean specimen. He sent the finest one available, which bore a visible spot.

The Rebbe's attendant, Reb Kalman Shaul, realized this was the best specimen available and placed it into the Rebbe's Esrog box. On the first day of Succos, the merchant walked an hour from Meah Shearim to Kiryat Moshe to pray with the Rebbe. As he arrived, Reb Kalman Shaul greeted him joyfully, saying, "Come, I want to show you the Esrog you provided!"

Fearing something had gone wrong with the Esrog, the merchant inspected it closely, turning it over to look for

return home quickly. He wrote a ethical will instructing his family to distribute vast amounts of charity to the poor and to institutions in the Land of Israel for the elevation of his soul. He passed away shortly thereafter as an esteemed elder, honored by his entire town.

A few days after his passing, he appeared to his son in a dream and related: "When I ascended to Heaven, a proclamation went forth: 'Make way for the Baal Teshuva of Belz!' I was instructed to proceed directly into Gan Eden. There, I merited to see the Heilige Sar Shalom of Belz sitting adorned with a golden crown in supreme glory."

the spot—only to find it completely clean and flawless! The merchant was dumbfounded. The attendant explained: "After the Rebbe recited the blessing over the Esrog, I picked it up to bring it out for the congregation, and I noticed the spot had completely vanished."

A similar story is told regarding his father, the Holy Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Hussiatin ztz"l, who used to inspect Esrogim thoroughly before use. Eventually, he ceased inspecting them, explaining that since every Esrog he used became pure and beautiful after he recited the blessing, there was no need to search. Other great tzaddikim were known to simply reach into a box of Esrogim and draw one out, trusting that whichever landed in their hand was destined for them, and it always proved beautiful.

Haltiang the Rain

Once on Succos, a heavy rain began to fall. Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz was deeply pained that he could not dwell in the Sukkah. He wished to fast so the rain would stop, but fasting is forbidden on Yomtov (and some say it was Chol HaMoed, when fasting is likewise prohibited).

Reb Pinchas proclaimed: "Master of the Universe, I hold trust before You; therefore, I take upon myself to fast immediately after Yomtov so that the rain may cease!" The rain stopped immediately, and after Yomtov, he fulfilled his pledge and fasted.

Self-Sacrifice for a Sukkah

The Steipler Gaon (Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky ztz"l) was meticulously strict about sleeping in a Sukkah. Even when drafted into the Soviet army under brutally cold conditions, he insisted on sleeping in a Sukkah, sustained by the warmth of fulfilling the mitzvah.

One Succos, while assigned to guard a military hospital, he constructed a tiny Sukkah to sleep in while maintaining his guard duties. Military protocol dictated that if a guard spotted an advancing enemy, he was to fire a warning shot to alert the troops. Overcome with exhaustion, the Steipler drifted off to sleep, and his rifle accidentally discharged.

The garrison erupted into chaos as soldiers readied for an attack. When no enemy was found, the Steipler was

summoned to explain why he had fired.

The Steipler faced a dilemma: he could easily fabricate a story about seeing a movement in the dark, thereby avoiding punishment. However, telling the truth meant admitting he fell asleep on duty, an offense punishable by death.

The Gaon calculated: the Torah commands to "Keep far from falsehood", ruling out a lie. As for the truth, he reasoned that since he had been sleeping in a Sukkah, the principle applies that "One who observes a mitzvah will know no evil matter". Trusting that Hashem would protect him, he told the exact truth.

He was promptly arrested, imprisoned alongside hardened criminals, and sentenced to death by hanging.

Yet the Gaon maintained his complete trust in Hashem. As it happened, the Czar's birthday fell during that time, a day when the monarch customarily granted pardons to

select prisoners. Visiting the prison, the Czar took a personal liking to the Steipler and commuted his sentence, saving his life because he chose to tell the truth.

Purchasing a Lulav with Wisdom

The Steipler Gaon once entered a shop to purchase a lulav, but finding none to his satisfaction, he indicated to his attendant that they should leave. As they approached the door, the Steipler suddenly turned back, selected a lulav, paid for it, and left the shop.

His attendant asked: "Rebbe, you were leaving because you found no suitable lulav. Why did you turn back to

buy one?" The Gaon replied: "You must understand that there were many customers in the shop. If they saw me leave empty-handed, they would conclude that the store lacks quality lulavim, causing the merchant financial loss on my account. Therefore, I returned and purchased one, so people would say, 'This shop has good lulavim, for the Steipler bought his here!'"

Excessive Searching for an Esrog Is Bitul Torah

The Gaon Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld (the Chebiner Rav, author of *Dovrev Meisharim*) once entered a shop selling Esrogim. The store was filled with customers minutely inspecting numerous specimens.

The Chebiner Rav requested the shopkeeper to select an Esrog for him. The merchant brought one out; the Rav glanced at it, asked the price, paid, packed it up, and turned to leave. As he walked out, he overheard a customer remark to his friend: "The Rav bought his so quickly! Either he already has a finer one at home and

this is a secondary one, or the merchant set aside an exceptional one for him in advance."

Overhearing this, the Rav turned and said: "This is my only Esrog, and the merchant prepared nothing in advance. I simply believe one should not waste precious time searching endlessly for an Esrog. If it is kosher and beautiful, that is sufficient—anything beyond that is bitul Torah."

The Esrog is part of a person's Neshama

The Rebbe of Husyatin, Reb Yisrael Friedman, the son of Rav Mordechai Shraga, the son of the holy Ruzhiner Rebbe, Rav Yisrael, would always succeed in obtaining a beautiful, clean Esrog for Succos. One year, the crop of Esrogim wasn't good, and Esrogim weren't nice, and most had many spots on them. The Gabbai reluctantly told the Rebbe the sorry news, and that the Rebbe would have to use what's available. The best Esrog was found, as per the advice of the Rebbe, which was at least somewhat nice, even though many spots were found and visible on the Esrog. After verifying the Kashrus of the

Esrog, it was given to the Rebbe. Succos morning the Rebbe made his preparations, bound the Lulav and was excited to have an Esrog and recited the Bracha and shook the Lulav and Esrog. When the gabbai, Rav Kalman Shaul, examined the Esrog after the Rebbe recited the brocho, he looked, and turned the Esrog over and over, and noticed that all the spots were gone and it was a real beautiful Esrog. The chassidim understood that an Esrog is part of the Neshama, and a clean Neshama has a clean Esrog. That was the reason the Rebbe, always succeeded in having a beautiful Esrog.

The Gaon took the first Esrog

It is told of many Tzaddikim, who went to buy an Esrog, that the first Esrog that was offered to them, they took. It always happened to be a beautiful Esrog. When the Tchebiner Rav, was in Yerushalaim, he went to buy an Esrog. The store was full of shoppers, looking at Esrogim. The Rav entered and went straight to the dealer. The Rav asked for an Esrog, and was handed an Esrog. The Rav took one glance at the Esrog, and paid the price, thanked the dealer, and walked out of the store. Everyone was astonished that the Rav, made his decision so quick,

when they spend hours trying to find a nice Esrog. A real witty Yerushalmi approached the Rav, and stated out aloud; "This is probably a reserve Esrog for the Rav"! The Rav answered him: "This is my only Esrog, and besides, I didn't notify the dealer that I was coming, as I am confident in the merit of not wasting precious time from learning Torah, Hashem would always deliver to me a beautiful Esrog. This was a real inspirational Torah lesson, and all the patrons made their decisions rather quickly as not to waste precious time from learning.

Hagaon Rav Chaim Ozer uses his wisdom to entertain a guest

Hagaon Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Vilna the author of the *Achiezer*, was one of the greatest minds in Torah, as well as being very smart. One year just before Succos, Rav Chaim Ozer was ill, and bedridden. According to the Gemarra Sukka 26b and it is the Halacha, *מצטרע פטור*, *הסוכה* someone who is ill or is suffering, is exempt from the Succah. Therefore, Rav Chaim Ozer stayed indoors that Succos. In middle of Succos, a prominent Rav came to visit Rav Chaim Ozer in Vilna on a very important matter. Rav Chaim Ozer realized that the Rav had come on a long trip and was surely hungry. Rav Chaim Ozer had his Rebbitzin prepare a fine meal for the prominent guest, which was really appreciated.

The Rabbanim discussed their matter as the meal was being prepared, and the guest who knew that Rav Chaim Ozer wasn't feeling well, went himself into the Succah to

eat his meal. However, a few minutes later, Rav Chaim Ozer entered the Succah, bundled up in his a heavy coat and sat down next to the guest. He also brought along some food to eat. The guest questioned Rav Chaim Ozer: "You are not well and halachically exempt from eating in the Succah, why then did you bother to bundle up to come eat in the succah"? Rav Chaim Ozer gave a smile and answered with wisdom: "Of course you are absolutely right, and that I am exempt from eating in the Succah. However, I am not exempt from the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim, which includes making the guest feel comfortable. Now what kind of an honor would it be, if you would eat alone in the Succah? Therefore, due to this Mitzvah, I strained myself to do a Mitzvah with Shlaimos." Rav Chaim Ozer entertained his guest and in the same act, was able to eat in the Succah too.

The Succah in the forest

Reb Yisrael Mayer z"l was always looking to help other Yidden perform Mitzvos, as well as toiling himself to perform a Mitzvah with mesiras nefesh. In the concentration camps during World War 2, people literally starved, and the potato peels or a small piece of bread, were the source of light to those who received them. The people who worked in the kitchens lived a more comfortable life, as they were able to get food to eat, as well as smuggle out bits of food for other hungry Yidden. Reb Yisrael was among the fortunate few who worked in a kitchen. However, one summer day he asked the Nazi supervisor of the kitchen if he could go and work in the forest. The mere fact of asking a Nazi a favor meant a strong punishment. The Nazi, hearing this odd request from a Jew (**as they knew very well the paradise of working in the kitchen as opposed to working in the hot forest**), answered: "You can work in the forest. But you will regret the move!"

Reb Yisrael answered that he realized what he was doing and thanked the Nazi for allowing him to work in the

forest. The labor there was very hard. They had to cut down huge trees and chop them into firewood for the winter. The summer sun was beating down on the workers; however, Reb Yisrael worked diligently. He became close to the supervisor, and asked him if the workers could build a large shed in order to cool off a bit from the baking sun. The supervisor answered: "as long as you do your quota of work, you can build the shed."

In a few days a huge shed was built in the forest. No one realized the true intention and purpose of building the shed until Succos arrived. The shed was built according to the laws of Succah. This Succa was used by thousands of workers. They were able to eat their meals and sleep a bit in the Succah. Reb Yisrael Meyer sacrificed his paradise of working in the kitchen in order to perform the Mitzvah of Succah, as well as helping others perform the Mitzvah! This is the real "cheshebon" that a Yid must live by. The reward for this act is beyond our comprehension. His son R' Yanky Mayer A"H, a giant in chesed, went in his footsteps, and his neshama should have an Aliyah.

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