

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על דשא

AL E I DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

The Exemption of a Slave

The Mishnah at the beginning of the second perek of Sukkah (20b) relates an incident involving Tevi, Rabban Gamliel's slave. The Chachamim gathered in Rabban Gamliel's sukkah, while Tevi slept beneath the bed. Rabban Gamliel said to them: Did you see my slave Tevi? He is a talmid chacham, and he knows that a slave is exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah; that is why he sleeps under the bed.

From Rabban Gamliel's statement, the

To serve Hashem properly, we cannot simply copy others. We must reflect on why they act that way and then consider whether their conduct is appropriate for us.

Chachamim learned that one does not fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah while under a bed. However, his words seem to imply that there was a *chiddush* in a slave's exemption from sukkah, and that Tevi's awareness of this showed his knowledge of halachah.

Why is this a *chiddush*? Every slave knows that he is exempt from mitzvos from

which women are exempt, such as wearing tefillin and reciting Kerias Shema. Since it is well known that women are exempt from sukkah, every slave should have known that he is exempt as well.

We can offer the following *lomdisheh* answer: Although women and slaves are generally exempt from time-bound mitzvos, the Gemara (Sukkah 28a) still requires a specific source to exempt women from sukkah. This is learned from the extra letter *hei* in the word *האזרח*—*the native*, which limits the obligation and excludes women.

The Gemara gives two reasons why the general exemption of women from time-bound mitzvos is insufficient here. Abaye explains that we might have thought the pasuk *ותשבו*, which implies *תדורו*—*dwelling as one normally lives*, teaches that just as ordinary dwelling involves a man and his wife, the mitzvah of sukkah should include both men and women. Rava explains that we might have learned from the *gezeirah shaveh* of *ט' טו* from Pesach that just as women are obligated to eat matzah, so too they should be obligated in sukkah.

The Mishnah L'melech¹ writes that slaves are exempt from time-bound mitzvos just as women are. However, when women are exempt because of a specific *gezeiras hakasuv*, that exemption does not automatically apply to slaves.

This explains why women's exemption from sukkah did not make it obvious that slaves are exempt as well. Still, this approach

The Sukkah of Dovid

On Sukkos, when reciting *Birchas Hamazon*, we add the request: *הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד*—*May the Compassionate One erect for us the fallen sukkah of Dovid*.

The phrase *the fallen sukkah of Dovid* is based on the pasuk: *ביום ההוא אקים את סכת דוד ויהרסתי אקים ובניתיה כימי וגדרתי את פרציו ויהרסתי אקים ועולם*—*On that day I will raise up the fallen sukkah of Dovid, repair its breaches, restore its ruins, and rebuild it as in days of old* (Amos 9:11).

The Targum translates *סוכת דוד* as *מלכותא דביתא דדוד*. Accordingly, this *Harachaman* is a tefillah for the restoration of the monarchy of Dovid Hamelech's descendants.

Malchus Beis Dovid is central to the *geulah*. Describing the future redemption, the pasuk says: *אחר וישבו בני ישראל ובקשו את ד' אלקיהם ואת מלכם*—*Afterward Bnei Yisrael will return and seek Hashem their G-d and Dovid their king* (Hoshea 3:5).

Why is seeking Dovid mentioned together with seeking Hashem? We await Moshiach and the day when the entire nation will be united under a righteous king. We know that Hashem promised Melech Hamoshiach will descend from Dovid. But why should it matter to us whom Hashem chooses as the future king?

The Baal Shem Tov⁴ explains that every king is concerned with his own honor and the honor of his dynasty. What makes *malchus Beis Dovid* unique is that its concern is for the honor of the King of Kings, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

Rav Chaim Vital⁵ explains Dovid Hamelech's words: *לך אמר לבי בקשו פני, את פניך ד' אבקש*.

4 Degel Machanh Ephraim, Voe'schanan.

Bsh"t al haTorah, Lech Lecha 31.

5 Eitz Hadaas Tov.

1 Hilchos Melachim 10:7.

The Exemption of a Slave

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would require assuming that other slaves knew the Mishnah L'melech's principle, while only Tevi understood why it did not obligate slaves in sukkah.

The sefer *Berachah Mishuleshes*² raises this question and answers that although women are exempt, they commonly ate in the sukkah together with the men. Most slaves, seeing women eat there, assumed that women were obligated and that they themselves were as well. Tevi was a talmid chacham because he understood that women ate in the sukkah only to join the men, not because they were obligated; therefore, his own exemption remained clear.

There is a lesson here as well. Simple people often do not analyze what they see; they merely

imitate others without considering why those people act as they do, or whether they themselves should do the same. To serve Hashem properly, we cannot simply copy others. We must reflect on why they act that way and then consider whether their conduct is appropriate for us.

This is part of the avodah of Sukkos. The pasuk says: למען ידעו דורותיכם—*so that your generations will know*. The Bach³ maintains that one must have *kavanah* for the lesson of the sukkah in order to fulfill the mitzvah. This teaches that a person should not merely act, but should think about why he is acting.

There is also a deeper message in the halachah that slaves are exempt from sukkah. A person who does not think, strive, and overcome his

nature remains enslaved to his passions, with his actions guided by self-interest.

The deeper meaning of living in a sukkah is to abandon self-centered pursuits and enter a life centered on closeness to Hashem. This idea is expressed in Chazal's metaphor (Sukkah 28b) of *a servant who comes to pour wine for his master*.

One who is enslaved to self-centeredness cannot attain closeness to Hashem. To truly fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah, we must first rise above our natural enslavement to our interests and passions.

שבת חוה"מ סוכות תשפ"ו מאמר א

2 Sukkah 2:1.

3 Siman 625.

Yericho

The Hoshanos of Shabbos mention the virtues of Shabbos and praise those who prepare for it, honor it, and carefully observe its many halachos.

The Hoshanah of *Kihoshatah Adam* includes the following phrase: כהושעת פקדו יריחו שבע להקף, כן הושע נא—*As You saved those commanded at Yericho to encircle it seven times; they besieged it until its downfall on Shabbos, to strengthen them; so save us now*.

Why is Yericho's downfall on Shabbos counted as a praise of Shabbos? On the contrary, the battle involved acts that would normally desecrate Shabbos. Although halachah permits such acts for a required war, how does a victory achieved on Shabbos demonstrate Shabbos's greatness?

When we examine the pesukim in Sefer Yehoshua (6:3–15), we find that Yehoshua was commanded to bring about Yericho's downfall specifically on Shabbos. The Midrash⁶ indicates

that the timing was not coincidental; Hashem intended Yericho to be conquered on Shabbos.

The explanation is that Yericho was the key to conquering Eretz Yisrael, and its conquest therefore required the power of Shabbos. The kedushah of Shabbos gave Klal Yisrael the strength to take possession of the holy land. We can now understand why Yericho's conquest on Shabbos expresses the greatness of Shabbos.

שלום זכר שבת חוה"מ סוכות תשפ"ו

6 Bereishis Rabbah 47:10, Bamidbar Rabbah 23:6, Tanchuma, Masai 5.

Mechitzos Nikaros

The Gemara in Sukkah (4b) records Abaye and Rava's dispute about a sukkah built on a platform ten tefachim high, with no visible walls above its surface. Abaye rules that it is kosher because of *gud asik mechitztah*: since the platform's sides have the status of *mechitzos*, we view them as extending upward. Rava disagrees, holding that a sukkah requires *mechitzos hanikaros*—visible partitions—and therefore *gud asik mechitztah* alone cannot satisfy the requirement for sukkah walls. The halachah follows Rava.

This halachah contains a deep inner message. Chazal (Sukkah 2a) teach that the essence of the mitzvah of sukkah is *צא מדיירת קבע ושב*—*Leave your permanent dwelling and live in a temporary one*. The sukkah impresses upon us that Olam Hazeh and all it contains are temporary; true permanence exists only beneath the *schach*, which represents the shade of the Shechinah. Throughout the year we seek

the shelter of the Shechinah, but on Sukkos we create a space upon which the Shem Shamayim rests and live within it, so this truth can enter our minds and hearts. This is why Rava requires *mechitzos hanikaros*: the walls themselves must make the message of the sukkah visible and felt. The Gemara later discusses whether *gud asik mechitztah* applies to a sukkah built on the roof of a house. The Rishonim explain that Rava's objection does not apply there, because although the house's walls are not visible from the rooftop sukkah, they are visible below, separating the house's interior from the outside. The idea expressed by this halachah is that when a sukkah is built atop a home with *mechitzos hanikaros*, those walls can extend upward to enclose the sukkah. This too carries a deeper message. To shelter beneath the shade of the Shechinah, a person must separate himself from the temptations around him, beginning in his

own home. He must instill in his family a love for *ruchniyus* and make his home a protected space infused with warmth for kedushah and *avodas Hashem*.

The walls of a home are meant to be *mechitzos hanikaros*, protecting those inside from the winds and storms outside. Such *mechitzos* can extend upward, enclosing a person within the shelter of the sukkah.

A home may also allude to a person's private thoughts and feelings. A person must sanctify his inner world and make it a place of holiness. He cannot rely solely on his surroundings; even if he lives in a strong environment, learns in a yeshivah, and belongs to a good social circle, he must still build his own private inner space. The *mechitzos* around that inner self become *mechitzos hanikaros*, extending upward to protect him from outside influences.

י"ט א דסוכות תשפ"ו מאמר א

The Sukkah of Dovid

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Dovid said to Hashem: *To You it is know that when I said to Bnei Yisrael, Seek my presence—meaning that they should come see my royalty and honor me—I did so only because I seek Your presence; I seek to to inspire them to fear You and honor the King of Kings.*

This is the unique quality of *malchus Beis Dovid*: its purpose is to lead Klal Yisrael to serve Hashem. The power and glory of a mortal king help people grasp, in some measure, the power and glory of Hashem. When we seek Hashem, we seek the greatest perception of His majesty that we can attain. The majesty of *malchus Beis Dovid* is a means toward that ultimate perception. Therefore, seeking “*Dovid their king*” is mentioned together with *seeking Hashem their G-d*.

This is the meaning of Hashem’s promise to *raise up the fallen sukkah of Dovid and rebuild it*

as in days of old. It is this restoration that we daven for in the special *Harachaman* of Sukkos. We may add that the pasuk continues: וְהָרַסְתִּיו וְבָנִיתִיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם—*I will restore its ruins and rebuild it as in days of old*. Once Hashem has promised to restore *malchus Beis Dovid*, what is added by the end of the pasuk?

The word הָרַס alludes to the הרס within Hashem’s name as written with a *yud* and a *hei*. In *Parshas Beshalach* (17:15), the pasuk says: כִּי יָד עַל כָּס יִיָּה. Rashi explains that Hashem’s name is not complete until the evil of Amalek is eradicated.

Moshiach will wage the battles of Hashem and His people, ultimately eradicating evil from the world. At that time, Hashem’s name will be restored to its fullness.

This idea is reflected in the concluding declaration of Hoshanos: למען דעת כל עמי הארץ

כי ד' הוא האלקים אין עוד—*so that all the peoples of the earth will know that Hashem is G-d; there is no other.*

The emphasis is on the phrase *there is no other*. Many people acknowledge the Creator but see Him only as the greatest power, not the only power. They do not recognize that Hashem is intimately involved in every detail of life. We therefore declare that a time will come when everyone will know *that Hashem is G-d* and that *there is no other*.

Sukkos is an auspicious time to attain this *emunah*. We leave our homes and dwell beneath the דמהימנותא—*the shade of emunah*. Sitting in the holy sukkah, we can feel Hashem’s protection and grasp that there is truly *nothing besides Him*.

שבת חוה"מ סוכות תשפ"ו מאמר ב

The Lovely Shoes

The Gemara in Sukkah (49b) explains the pasuk, מַה יָּפֹהַ פְּעָמֶיךָ בְּנִעְלָיִם בֵּת נָדִיב—*How lovely are your steps in shoes, daughter of the noble* (Shir Hashirim 7:2), as referring to the beautiful steps of Yisrael when they are *oleh regel*.

The halachah is that one may not enter the Beis Hamikdash wearing shoes. Why,

then, does the pasuk emphasize *your steps in shoes*?

It must be that the pasuk refers specifically to the steps taken on the journey to the Beis Hamikdash, rather than to the arrival and entry to the Beis Hamikdash.

When a person reaches his destination, enters the Beis Hamikdash, and fulfills the mitzvah of *aliyah l'regel*, he certainly feels

a deep sense of accomplishment. Yet there is a unique beauty in the difficult journey itself. With each step, he draws closer to Yerushalayim; his anticipation grows, and his heart fills with longing to reach the Beis Hamikdash. This is the beauty of the steps taken while still wearing shoes.

ס"ג בחוקותי תשפ"ד מאמר א

A Goy in the Sukkah

וְהָיָה כָּל הַנּוֹתֵר מִכָּל הַגּוֹיִם הַבָּאִים עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם, וְעָלוּ מִדֵּי שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַמֶּלֶךְ ד' צְבָקוֹת וְלַחַג אֶת חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת.

All who remain from among the nations that came against Yerushalayim will ascend each year to bow before the King, Hashem, Master of Legions, and to celebrate the festival of Sukkos (Zechariah 14:16). This pasuk, read in the Haftarah on the first day of Sukkos, teaches that in the future the nations of the world will come to Yerushalayim to celebrate Sukkos.

Many *mefarashim* explain that the pasuk refers to nations that will survive in the days

of Moshiach and come to Yerushalayim on Sukkos to bring *korbanos*. Rashi, however, cites the Gemara in Avodah Zarah (3a), which says that Hashem will give the nations the mitzvah of sukkah.

The Gemara says that in the future, Hashem will reward those who kept the Torah. The nations will argue that they too deserve reward, claiming that they would have fulfilled the mitzvos had they been commanded. Hashem will then give them the opportunity to perform the easy mitzvah of sukkah. The people of the nations will immediately build themselves sukkos. Hashem will then cause

the sun to beat down with summer-like heat, and they will kick their sukkos and leave.

The Gemara appears to describe a one-time test that the nations will fail. Yet Rashi seems to understand that some worthy nations will indeed come every year to Yerushalayim and celebrate sukkos including fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah.

This raises an interesting *hilchesa l'Meshicha*: Do halachos such as *lavud* and *gud achis* apply to the sukkah of a goy? Does the *Shem Shamayim* rest on such a sukkah? And may a Yid derive benefit from it?

יו"ט א דסוכות תשפ"ו

The Time for Decoration

Sukkos	First Night	Second Night	Motzel Y"t
Brooklyn	6:29	7:29	7:27
Lakewood	6:30	7:29	7:28
Baltimore	6:40	7:39	7:37
Chicago	6:22	7:23	7:22
North Miami	6:55	7:48	7:47
Los Angeles	6:27	7:22	7:21

The Gemara (Sukkah 10a) cites a Baraisa: סינכה כהלכתה ועיטרה בקרמין ובסדינין המצוירין, ותלה בה אגוזין שקדים ... אסור להסתפק מהן עד מוצאי יום טוב האחרון של חג—*If one covered the sukkah with valid schach, decorated it with colorful curtains and patterned sheets, and hung nuts, almonds, and similar items in it, one may not use them until after the final day of the Chag.*

The Gemara in Beitzah (30b) explains that this prohibition applies because the *Shem Shamayim* rests on the sukkah, including the items used to beautify it.

The Penei Yehoshua explains why the Baraisa begins with the phrase, *If one covered it with schach in accordance with halachah*. He suggests that the *Shem Shamayim* rests on the decorations only when they are placed after the *schach*. If the decorations were put up first and the *schach* was added afterward, the decorations may not become *kadosh*.

The Penei Yehoshua⁷ presents this as a *chiddush* and remains uncertain about the practical halachah. Nevertheless, the idea

conveys an important lesson in *avodas Hashem*.

At times, people take on *chumros* and added acts of piety while neglecting the fundamentals of halachah. This is a mistake. Such piety can sometimes distract a person from shortcomings in basic obligations, especially in areas of *bein adam l'chaveiro*.

The lesson of the Penei Yehoshua's *chiddush* is that the sukkah must first be built according to halachah before it is decorated. So too, a person must first be careful in basic halachah, and only then add *chumros* and expressions of piety.

י"ט א דסוכות תשפ"א מאמר א

7 Sukkah 10b.

From the Desk of the Rosh Yeshivah

Strive to cultivate inner joy by fully accepting that Hashem directs your life. *Everything* that happens is decreed from Heaven.

Use every available means to overcome depression, whether through spiritual strengthening by studying works of *mussar* and developing *bitachon* and *simchah*, or through appropriate physical methods.

Make an effort to be sociable and pleasant with others, and establish fixed *sedarim* for Torah learning, which has the power to heal and gladden the human heart.

Your friend, who prays for your welfare in both *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus* and awaits good news from you,

Shaul

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