

A Taste of Torah Moving Out

By Rabbi Mordechai Mandel

The holiday of Sukkos is the culmination of the month of Elul, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; an intense period of introspection, teshuva and self-improvement. It is an opportune time to internalize the fundamental lesson of the sukkah.

The Sages (Sukkah 2a) express the Torah's commandment of sukkah in the following terms: "Leave the permanent dwelling and settle in a temporary dwelling". This relocation to a temporary dwelling place, a sukkah, comes to remind us that our whole life in this world is temporary. We are only here for a short while, to accomplish all we can. It is not necessary to become overly indulgent, or comfortable in the worldly pleasures around us, because in truth we are only visiting this "temporary" location. It is best to keep focused on the everlasting aspects of life such as Torah and mitzvos, experiences that will forever accompany us.

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, offers a deeper explanation for the aforementioned words of the Sages. "And you shall leave your permanent

dwelling place....", he says, refers to man's own mind. The average person is generally busy worrying about and tending to his own needs. That is his permanent dwelling place. "And live in a temporary dwelling..." refers to one's thoughts and concerns for others. From time to time, man is commanded to abandon his own concerns and think about the needs and worries of others.

But that is only temporary.

On Sukkos we are asked to leave our "permanent dwelling", the concerns and thoughts that revolve around ourselves, and move into a "temporary dwelling", the needs and concerns of others.

Only after we make this move, only after we focus our thoughts on others, can we truly fulfill the obligation regarding which the Torah commands, "And you shall be happy on this holiday". When one is only focused on himself, he can never be fully happy, since there is no end to what one wishes for himself. True happiness can only be attained when we concern ourselves with the needs of others, bringing joy into their lives.

May we merit to fulfill this mitzvah in its fullest sense.

Ask the Rabbi Falling in the Fall

From: D. Rubenstein

Dear Rabbi,

Why does Sukkos fall on the calendar after Yom Kippur, and not after Passover?

Sukkos deals with the fact that we sat in huts in the wilderness after we left Egypt, and the clouds that protected us. We were sitting in those huts and had those clouds right when we left Egypt,

Continued on back

Stories For The Soul

Just for the Mitzva

The Vilna Gaon was always meticulous in his performance of mitzvos. Every Succos, he would acquire the most beautiful and kosher esrog in order to perform the mitzvah of waving the lulav & esrog.

One year, due to extreme adverse conditions, there was a severe shortage of esrogim in Eastern Europe. A search committee was dispatched to literally scour Europe on a quest for an esrog. They went from town to town, each time coming up empty handed.

Finally, in one town they found success - or so they thought. A man had an exquisite esrog in his possession but refused to part with it. The committee begged and pleaded, and offered an enormous sum of money for the esrog. The man would not budge. They exclaimed, "This is for the holy and revered Vilna Gaon."

"With all the effort the great Rabbi is expending, surely his heavenly reward will be great when he performs this mitzvah," said the man.

"Of course," they replied.

"I will sell it to you on one condition. The Olam Haba (heavenly reward) that he earns in performing this mitzvah must go to me."

The delegation was absolutely stunned. How could they even dream of doing such a thing? Yet how could they not? Time was running out before the holiday and they had been everywhere. Despite their cajoling, despite their negotiating, despite their groveling, the man remained adamant. They had no choice but to

Continued on back

Kollel Happenings

The Kollel is on Sukkos break. Programs resume Sun., Oct. 10.

FATHERS-AND-SONS PROGRAM SUN., OCT. 10 AT EDOS

The next Fathers-and-Sons learning program will be held on October 10th at EDOS. Breakfast begins at 9 a.m. with learning following. For information, contact Rabbi Yehuda Amsel at 303-820-2855 or email rya@denverkollel.org



'ALLOW NATURAL DEATH?' AT OCT. 13 TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Dr. Lynn Taussig, Special Advisor to the Provost at the University of Denver, Retired President of National Jewish Hospital, and Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab for "Allow Natural Death? End of Life Decisions and Dementia" at the next Torah for Tycoons, Wed., Oct. 13. The program will be held at noon at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$20. To RSVP, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org



PARTNERS IN TORAH AT AISH TO RESUME WED., OCT. 13

The Kollel's Partners in Torah program for men at Aish Denver, which was on Sukkos break, will resume on Wed., Oct. 13. If you'd like to join - and learn the topic of your choice, at your own pace, with a knowledgeable mentor - please call the Kollel at 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues I Didn't Mean It

Taking something from another person as a practical joke or to cause annoyance is included in the prohibition of theft. This is true even if one intends to return the object shortly.

Furthermore, it is forbidden to take another person's property even if it will be for his benefit. For example, one knows that if he is caught stealing, he will be fined to pay the victim above and beyond the value of what he stole.

He figures this is a good way to help out an impoverished neighbor without his realizing that he is the beneficiary of charity. Despite the good intentions, such action is nonetheless forbidden as theft.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

so historically, Sukkos should come right after, or during, Pesach. Dear D. Rubenstein,

Passover is in the spring when the weather starts getting warmer; if we were to make huts in the spring, it might seem like we were just building vacation bungalows to escape from the heat. Therefore, the Torah commanded us to build our sukkah-booths in the fall when it starts getting cool, making it clear that the sukkah is a commandment and not a cabana.

The Vilna Gaon offers another explanation: The sukkah represents the clouds of glory with which G-d protected us in the desert. Hashem took away these clouds when we made the Golden Calf, and when He forgave us that year on Yom Kippur, the clouds came back. Thus, Sukkos celebrates the return of those clouds after the first Yom Kippur in the desert.

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Stories for the Soul

Continued from front
capitulate.

They returned to Vilna, barely in time for Succos, and marched straight to the home of the Vilna Gaon.

The Gaon was ecstatic to see the esrog, but they were trembling. They didn't know how to tell him what they had committed him to. Finally they blurted out, "Forgive us Rebbi, but in order to acquire this esrog, we were forced to agree on your behalf that you would give this man all of the Olam Haba that you earn doing this mitzvah."

The Vilna Gaon answered clearly and

immediately, "I would have consented to this agreement even if I had to give him my entire Olam Haba."

The Vilna Gaon was happy to serve Hashem and he was happy that Olam Haba was earned; but he didn't need to be the one to receive the Olam Haba. If it went to another Jew that was wonderful; as long as the mitzvah was done. The Gaon was truly a servant who serves the master not for the sake of reward, but out of love.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.