

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### BALCONY SUCCA

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week is the holiday of Succos. We all know that on Succos there is a mitzvah to live and sleep in a succah in order to remember the clouds of glory that protected the Jewish people during their travels in the desert. This leads us to the following story.

Akiva and his family lived in an apartment building in New York City. They didn't have a backyard and the only place they were able to place their succah was on their small balcony. The balcony had just enough space to build a small succah. There is a mitzvah to sleep in the succah, so after their meals were over Akiva would take out the dining room table and replace it with a mattress



### MUSCLE BUILDING

We know that everything that happens to us comes from HaShem. When everything in life runs smoothly we 'understand' why everything is smooth. However, when life becomes complicated we struggle to understand why HaShem changed His plan. How are we to make sense out of circumstances when they go totally out of control. This question sits on my mind as we all find ourselves in the middle of Covid and life has spun out of control. Although we have no Navi to direct us to the answer, nevertheless, there are clues to which we must pay attention.

Let us leave Covid for a moment and enter the life of a young couple that just had their third child. Sibling rivalry begins to lift its head and the parents struggle to keep the home peaceful. Nobody is at fault for this challenge; that is how children are programmed. As the parents work their way through this challenge, they discover that when they practice patience the situation becomes more manageable. For the next several years they begin exercising their patience muscles. By the time they have eight children they have become masters of patience and their home is beautifully peaceful. Sibling rivalry still occurs but it does not disrupt the home.

If we are asked why did the Hashgacha create the challenge of sibling rivalry in their home, we understand that it was to give them opportunities to exercise their patience and become masters of patience. Perhaps there were other reasons as well, but certainly this was one of them.

As we travel through our current situation, so many of us are experiencing challenging

## MITZVA MEME



on which he would sleep.

Things were perfect until Akiva's oldest son Eli became bar mitzvah. Eli wanted to follow his father's lead and do the mitzvah of sleeping in a succah. There was however a problem. There was only enough space in the succah for one mattress. Eli suggested, "Abba why don't you take out the mattress and we can sleep on the floor with blankets? That will be less comfortable but there will be room for both of us to sleep". His father replied, "I don't think it would be a proper fulfillment of the mitzvah for us to choose to sleep in an uncomfortable way. Perhaps it will be best for each of us to switch off using the mattress. One night I'll sleep in the succah and the next night you can sleep in the succah".

Eli replied, "If we do that then every other night you won't be able to sleep in the succah. Maybe it will be best for you to sleep in the succah by yourself". But Akiva felt that it might be best to switch off to give his son the opportunity to do the mitzvah.

So Akiva and his son had three options. Which would be best? Would it be best to sleep in an uncomfortable way without a mattress and both can sleep? Would it be best for them to switch off so each one could be comfortable? Or would it be best for only one to sleep in the succah?

What do you think?

circumstances. Many people spent Pesach alone half a year ago and were looking forward to joining their families for Succos. Now, with Baltimore's current outbreak many people will be locked out once again! Very few situations can cause more frustration. There are two reactions to this situation. The natural reaction is frustration. This could be expressed in anger, sadness, bitterness and other unfortunate expressions. However, there is an alternate reaction which is certainly not natural, but it can be accomplished with much thought. This reaction is exercising the 'emunah' muscle. We know that all the circumstances that created this frustration are an act of G.D. The actual virus, the government response as well as all the subsequent components were all orchestrated by Him. We know that every person has their personal hashgacha. This means that the current situation has been designed by Him just for me with much meticulous design. Consider if Succos would have been a month ago; there would be no problem. If it occurs now that it is because He wants me to deal with this struggle. Once I make peace with this understand-

ing, I will experience a calming effect. I will still have to deal with not being with my family but at least I am at peace, there is no frustration.

As I discover that the alternate approach is what brings me to inner peace I will exercise that emunah muscle more often. As these situations increase, I will need to continue exercising that muscle to bring myself to inner peace and before long my emunah will be very strong.

Just as the challenge of sibling rivalry served the purpose of developing the parents' patience, perhaps Covid serves the purpose of developing our emunah. As our emunah strengthens our inner peace increases. As our inner peace increases we become more open to experiencing joy.

Perhaps HaShem has brought Covid to Baltimore specifically at this point of the year so that as we leave the security of our homes and enter the Succah, we will be able to experience the joy that comes with it.

Have a very safe and very joyous Yom Tov

**Paysach Diskind**



Pictured: Clockwise from the top right, Cirrus cloud, Cloud iridescence, Fire rainbow, Huge cumulonimbus cloud over Denver in 2013

## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### DIVINE CLOUDS

This week we will begin the holiday of Succos. On Succos we commemorate and relive the experience of HaShem's protecting His people with the Ananei Hakavod, the clouds.

Lets learn a bit about clouds. There are a range of different types of clouds, the main types include stratus, cumulus and cirrus.

Fog is a form of a cloud. It is called a stratus, a type of cloud that appears very close to the ground.

Other planets in our Solar System have clouds, but they don't have to be made of only water vapor. Venus has thick clouds of sulfur-dioxide. Jupiter and Saturn have clouds of ammonia. Some exoplanets have clouds that are made of aluminum oxide, and titanium rain. Exoplanet Kepler-7b has a silicate-based cloud composition, it therefore rains molten liquid glass!

Clouds look like they weigh little more than a tuft of cotton, but the truth is they are much heavier than they look. Your average cumulus (fair weather) cloud can weigh more than a million pounds, and a vivacious thunderstorm can pack billions (if not trillions) of pounds of water in one tiny part of the sky. Yet, all of that weight seems effortlessly suspended in the air. It's both a little unsettling and, at the same time, awesome to think about.

While most clouds we see are made up of tiny liquid water droplets, there is one common type of cloud that's made of ice: cirrus. These clouds are collections of ice crystals that form in the upper levels of the atmosphere when water vapor deposits onto tiny particles like dust or smoke. Strong winds then shred these clouds apart, giving them their iconic wispy appearance.

Every once in a while, you might be able to look up at the clouds near

the sun and see an abrupt smattering of colors mixed together like the sun reflecting off of an oily sheen on a puddle. This is called "iridescence," and it's somewhat rare. Cloud iridescence occurs when sunlight diffracts through water droplets or ice crystals in very thin clouds.

The ice in clouds leads us to the next fascinating topic.

In recent weeks we learned about a moon rainbow. Have you heard of a "Fire rainbow?" Fire rainbows, or circumhorizontal arcs are a rare cloud phenomenon formed by hexagonal ice crystals in high-level cirrus clouds. The halo is so large that the arc appears parallel to the horizon. They are called fire rainbows because they appear like a flame.

Fire rainbows occur when the sun has risen higher than 58° in the sky. Aside from the position of the sun, the other factor to forming circumhorizontal arcs is cirrus clouds. Cirrus clouds are the thin, wispy clouds that occur at higher altitudes. Because the temperature is so low where these clouds exist, they are made of ice crystals. After the sun is higher than 58°, the light refracts through the plate-like crystals, which act like prisms and create the rainbow.

Here is a fascinating fun fact. The term "Cloud Nine", means to be in a state of bliss. What is the origin of the term Cloud Nine? In the first edition of the International Cloud Atlas, published in 1896, it defined ten types of clouds. The ninth cloud that was described in the Atlas was the cumulonimbus which rises to 6.2 miles, the highest a cloud can be. Cloud nine is a term that refers to the highest cloud!

Let's all try to be on cloud nine when we sit in the succah this year!

**BECAUSE MY ANGUISH OVER THEIR PLIGHT HAD BEEN RELIEVED, I WAS NOW ABLE TO GIVE BECAUSE IT IS A MITZVAH**

A maggid (itinerant rabbi) came to Premishlan and delivered a sermon in which he urged people to contribute money to him. The congregation responded with rather paltry sums. Later, the Chassidic master R' Meir of Premishlan spoke to the congregation, urging them to give charity, and they responded with handsome donations. The maggid was upset and said to R' Meir, "My sermon was at least as good as yours. Why did the people give you greater donations?" R' Meir said, "It's not the content of the sermon that is decisive. Rather, it is the attitude of the speaker. I despise money. My unspoken feelings made an impression on the audience, and they, too, began to despise money. They therefore had no trouble parting with it. You, however, value money greatly. That feeling was picked up by the audience. They, too, began to love money. They therefore could not give it away." We would do well to realize that our message is not necessarily conveyed by the words we use. The listener may be much more sensitive to our feelings than to our words. Whatever attitudes we may have will be conveyed, and the listener may act according to what we feel rather than to what we say.

R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa once came into a home of extreme poverty. He gave the family money for their needs. He later returned and gave them additional money. When his chassidim asked why he did so, he explained: "When I saw the hungry look on the children's faces, my heart ached for them. The money I gave them was to relieve my own distress. I would have done so even if there were no commandment to give charity. But in that case, I was simply doing something for my own comfort. I therefore returned and gave them additional money. Because my anguish over their plight had been relieved, I was now able to give because it is a mitzvah."

From Rebbes and Chassidim, By Rabbi Abraham J. Twersky



**THE ANSWER**

Regarding last week's question about the broken dishes, Rav Zilberstein wrote that once this was already done, the son did not have to pay for the broken dishes as the parents are presumed to be Mochel.

This week's issue was dedicated  
לזכות רפואה שלמה  
יוסף בן מלכה נטל

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