



Sukkos / סוכות

Taking Yom Tov With You

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Ben-Ami
Illustration: Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Chol Hamoed Sukkos in Yerushalayim was beautiful, as always. The weather was gorgeous, and everywhere you looked, in gardens, balconies, and even on the sidewalks, sukkos were filled with Yidden celebrating the Yom Tov. Walking down the streets of the Ir Hakodesh, one could hear people eating in their sukkos and singing songs.

Even the Jerusalem Prison had a large sukkah in the courtyard, where the frum prisoners ate and slept. The prison warden had canceled the prisoners' chores for the entire Yom Tov so that they could properly celebrate Sukkos. Today, Rav Volender had arranged a daytime Simchas Beis Hashoeiva for all of the prisoners. Delicious food and drinks covered the tables and the prisoners all sat in sukkah, eating and drinking.

"Vehayisa ach someiach!" the prisoners sang. It wasn't pleasant to be in prison, but it was hard not to be happy as they enjoyed eating and singing in the beautifully decorated sukkah.

As the song ended, Rav Volender stood up to speak.

"Rabbosai," he began. "Look around. Everyone is sitting and having a good time. But where are we? We're not in a beautiful ballroom or a fancy manor. We're sitting in a flimsy hut that Hashem commanded us to build and live in for seven days. And why are we here? One of the reasons is because Hashem



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wants us to remember that this world, even with all of its wonderful pleasures, is a temporary place.

“In a few days we will be leaving this sukkah and returning to normal life, just like after 120 years we will be leaving this world and going to Olam Haba. The only things that are important in this world are the Torah and Mitzvos that we accomplish - what we take with us at the end!

“It will be very easy, once everyone goes back to their daily chores and routine, to forget this week here in the sukkah. And therefore, it is super important that we ‘take the sukkah with us’. We must remember the songs, the good food that Hashem gave us, and the divrei Torah that we heard, and install them permanently in our minds.

“I asked the warden to give you this week off to make it easier for you to take advantage of enjoying the Mitzvah of sukkah to grow closer to Hashem. But when it’s all over, we need to make sure we don’t forget it. And the same goes for your stay here in prison.”

“Why would we want to remember our time in prison?” asked one of the inmates.

“Because, Kobi, many of you have gained a lot from your time here. First of all, I hope you have learned your lessons about not repeating the crimes that got you sent here. But in addition, you also got to attend many shiurim and learned a lot of Torah. Soon, b’ezeras Hashem, you will be released and head back out into the world. But you must make sure to take with you all of the important lessons that you learned here. Take the divrei torah that you heard with you! Don’t forget about all the seforim that you learned here! Don’t leave it behind! Take it with you!”

As Rav Volender was speaking, a prison guard appeared at the entrance to the sukkah.

“Tzadok!” he called, and Tzadok “Hatzadik” quickly stood up.

“I didn’t do it!” Tzadok said nervously.

“Tzadok, we have just received a message from the judge in your case where you were charged with trying to build the Beis Hamikdash in the middle of Rechov Shmuel Hanavi. The judge has said that if you promise not to do it again, he will drop all charges against you and release you.”

Tzadok’s face broke into a smile. “Of course, I promise not to build the Beis Hamikdash again on Rechov Shmuel Hanavi,” he said.

“Well then,” said the guard. “Come with me. You’ll change out of your prison uniform and be released immediately.”

Tzadok hurried after the guard and Rav Volender continued speaking.

A few minutes later, the prisoners saw Tzadok outside of the prison fence walking away with what looked like a huge stack of seforim that he had taken from the prison beis midrash.

“Halt!” called a guard, running after Tzadok. “What do you think you are doing? You are under arrest for stealing prison property!”

“Rav Volender told me to do this!” Tzadok protested, as the guard slapped handcuffs on Tzadok once again. “The Rav said I should take the seforim out of the prison!”

To be continued...

Have A Wonderful Yom Tov!

Takeaway:

When we’re in a place for a short time, we try to get the most out of it.

Let us take inspiration out of Sukkos for all year round.



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