

Sukkos / סוכות

Goodbye Mr. P.

By: Aharon Spetner

Illustrations by: M. Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Brrrrrrrrppp! Totty drove the last screw into the sukkah walls while Shimmy and Yitzy brought out the schach.

“Thank you boys!” said Totty with a smile as Shimmy and Yitzy climbed up to help unroll the schach mat. “It’s really a great help.”

Little Yaeli stood on the floor holding up a stick. “Here, Totty!” she called. “I made you a skak!”

“Thank you, Yaeli!” said Totty warmly, as Shimmy reached down to take the stick and put it on top of the rest of the schach.

Standing at the top of the ladder, Yitzy peered around. “Hey!” he exclaimed. Why is there a giant letter ‘P’ on the fence next door?”

Totty looked over at the neighbor’s front yard. “You’re right,” he said. “I never noticed that before.”

“They just put it up yesterday,” said Shimmy. “I guess Mr. Palladino wanted to put his initial on the fence.”

“That’s weird,” said Yitzy. “Do you think he kisses it when he passes by, the same way we kiss our mezuzos, lehavdil?”

Totty and Shimmy laughed. “I saw the men installing it,” Shimmy said. “Mr. Palladino told me it’s made of wrought iron and that it will last hundreds of years.”



“He has such an amazing house,” added Yitzy. “He just finished renovating and I heard that the whole house is electronic with built-in computers. All he has to do is say ‘house, make me a steak!’ and the refrigerator sends a piece of meat straight into the oven and it cooks it for him!”

“It’s kind of interesting,” said Shimmy. “Here we are talking about our neighbor’s fancy futuristic house and his giant ‘P’, while we’re building a flimsy little Sukkah.”

“I wouldn’t say flimsy,” Yitzy said to his older brother. “Totty’s really good at building. This Sukkah could last the whole year!”

“It probably could,” agreed Shimmy. “But we learned in Meseches Sukkah that the whole point of a Sukkah is that it is only temporary. The Gemara says that we leave our strong permanent house on Sukkos and move into a short-lived structure. And even though a strong Sukkah could still be kosher, it needs to be possible to build it in a way that won’t last a long time.”

“Fascinating!” said Yitzy. “But why is that?”

“Hmm,” said Shimmy. “I don’t remember the answer to that question. After all, the Sukkos in the Midbar probably lasted 40 years.”

Both boys turned to Totty for the answer, but just then Yaeli yelled “Look, a ‘yambillanz!’” just as everyone heard the sound of a blaring siren coming down their block. As the ambulance approached, all three of them looked to Shomayim and said “if it’s a Yid in the ambulance, please send him a Refuah Shleima!”, as Totty learned from Rav Avigdor Miller.

To their surprise, the ambulance slowed down as it passed them and stopped in front of Mr. Palladino’s house! Two paramedics jumped out, opened the back door of the ambulance, and rushed past the giant

‘P’ with a stretcher and oxygen tank and into the neighbor’s house.

After only a couple of minutes, one of the paramedics walked slowly out of the house. “Is everything okay?” Totty asked him hesitantly.

The paramedic looked up at Totty, who was still on the ladder adjusting the schach. “Unfortunately, no,” he said. “Your neighbor has passed away.”

The boys were shocked at this sudden news about their neighbor. As the commotion outside died down Totty and the boys went inside the Sukkah and began hanging decorations.

Shimmy turned to Totty. “I can’t believe what just happened,” he said. “Just a minute ago we were talking about Mr. Palladino’s giant ‘P’ and all of the fancy stuff in his house. And now he’s gone. What’s the point of buying all that stuff if he’s never going to enjoy it?”

“Yeah,” said Yitzy. “And now some other family will move into their house and their name probably won’t even start with a ‘P.’”

“Boys,” said Totty. “This is the answer to your question before about why a Sukkah is built in a way that it doesn’t need to last.

“Because the Mitzvah of Sukkah is to remind us that we are only in this world for a short time and our job here is to serve Hashem. Unlike Mr. Palladino, we don’t spend time investing in our Olam Hazeih, except what is needed to help us serve Hashem. So once a year we go out of our strong protective houses and live in a Sukkah, just like the Am Yisroel in the Midbar did. Living in the Midbar without grocery stores and comfortable furniture taught the Am Yisroel that life in this world is not permanent. And through the Mitzvah of Sukkah, we continue to learn this lesson every single year.”

Have A Wonderful Yom Tov!

Let’s Review:

- What did the children say when they heard the “yambillanz”?
- How did their goyishe neighbor teach them about the mitzvah of Sukkah?



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