

The Sweetness of Shabbos

מהיקות השבת

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Based on the lectures of the Rosh Yeshiva, Hagoon HaRav Menachem buroch Yaveh shlit"o talmid of Posek Hadar HaRav Shmuel Vosner ztz"l



MY STORY!

You'r 'right' but what's 'left'!

It was a rainy winter day, the grey clouds looming above showed no sign of clearing up in the near future. I quickened my pace shoving my hands deeper into my pockets, I hesitatingly turned around, throwing a backward glance towards where I had left my children standing. My heart lurched with pain I shook my head trying to clear my thoughts and pangs of guilt, a man's got to do what a man's got to do...

The phone in the Rav's study rang, its shrill piercing the silence that had been there a moment before. Glancing up from the sefer he was reading, Rav Shain picked up the receiver. "Hello?" it was his wife, the Rebbetzin, sounding alarmed and shaken. "Do you remember that new family – Freid that just moved into the neighborhood? I just met the wife, standing here outside in the pouring rain with her three sons, crying to me that her husband got upset and sent them out of the house! This isn't normal, we've got to do something!"

Rav Shain dialed Mr. Freid's number deciding that he will not let such behavior pass in his keillah. Within twenty minutes Mr. Freid entered his study a questioning look of surprise on his face. "Have a seat" said the Rav tersely. "We were very upset and disappointed to hear of what had just happened – to send away a wife and children like that onto the street and in such terrible weather?! What kind of thing is that? "Such behavior is totally unacceptable!"

Hearing his words Mr. Freid paled, "I-I It's not like what you think" he stammered uncomfortably,

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Wearing tefillin in the sukkah???

At the end of last week's Parsha Hashem commands about the mitzvah of tefillin, and right after it, in the beginning of this week's Parsha, we are told about Am Yisrael traveling in the desert, with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

The Tosefta says (Sotah 4), that in the merit of Avraham saying to his guests "recline under the tree", Hashem granted his descendants seven clouds in the desert; one to their right, one to their left, one in front of them, one behind them, one above their heads, and one for the Shechina that dwelled among them, and the Pillar of Cloud which went ahead and killed

the snakes and scorpions, burned the thorn bushes, straightening and smoothing out their path. Rabbi Eliezer's opinion in the Gemara (Sukkah 11) is that in memory of this is the mitzva of sukkah.



Huts in the desert...

Rabbi Akiva however, explains the passuk differently, he says "כי בסכות בני ישראל" means that Am Yisrael had actually built sukkos - huts in the desert, and they dwelled in them. Hashem says "I made B'nei Yisrael dwell in sukkos" – even though they themselves built them. Because actually all is Hashem's doings – "מאת ה' היתה זאת" and without Hashem's help a person cannot dwell anywhere, but "היא נפלאה בעינינו" "it is wondrous in our eyes" and it is far from our mind.

So, we are commanded "you shall dwell in the sukkos", as a reminder either of the actual sukkos in

the desert or of the clouds which surrounded Am Yisrael. Now let us understand, what is the connection this has with tefillin which last week's Parsha ended with?

Hashem's tefillin...

On Yom Tov we don't put on tefillin, but Hashem does put on tefillin on Yom Tov – he puts tefillin on us. On Yom Tov we study Hashem's miracles of K'rias Yam Suf and Yetzias Mitzrayim, and that is instead of tefillin shel Rosh. On chol hamoed we don't put on tefillin because the holiness of the Yom Tov flows on into the chol hamo'ed (see Beis Yosef 31).

Tefillin on Sukkos...

On Sukkos, the lulav and all four minim are like the tefillin shel yad. The sukkah above us is like the tefillin shel rosh, and it reminds us to study the miracle that Hashem protected us in the desert with the clouds of glory, and reminds us that Hashem watches and protects us every moment. The sukkah like the tefillin has to be "בין עיניך" – "in front of your eyes" and the sukkah cannot be above normal height that the eyes see.

Tefillin on Pesach...

On Pesach, eating the korban Pesach was like the tefillin, because when eating this delicious roasted mutton, we are reminded of the first time our forefather ate it in Egypt in ridiculing the Egyptian idol. By this it is as if we fulfill the mitzvah in tefillin that is - "ולזכרון בין עיניך" – in order that we remember Yetzias Mitzrayim. It states regarding the mitzvah of tefillin "למען תזכור" – Chazal explain that

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## MY STORY!

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"I'll explain why –" "No, I'm not interested in hearing" the Rav cut him off angrily. "There is no reason that can justify such rash actions!", and with those words he pointed towards the door. "Please let me explain!" said Mr. Freid pleadingly, "not another word" the Rav closed the door behind him shaking his head in annoyance.

A few weeks later found Mrs. Freid in beis din presenting a severe claim against her husband including a sharp letter from the neighborhood Rav that testified Mr. Freid's disgracefulness according to the Rebbetzin's testimony of what her eyes had seen.

Mr. Freid didn't give up trying to explain himself and clear the stain that had settled on his reputation. But it was too late and the next step led to a divorce. It didn't take a long time for the news to spread wings and Mr. Freid shamefully moved away from the neighborhood where he was humiliated and looked down at.

Years had passed and his sons were

still sitting at home unable to find a shidduch, After all that had happened.

...

One day Rabbi Shain walked into a shul where he was to give over a speech after ma'ariv. After concluding his speech, he walked down the aisles between the tables, stopping short in front of a familiar face – it was Mr. Freid, eight years had passed since they had last met.

Rabbi Shain called Mr. Freid aside. "I'd like to speak with you for a moment" he said, Mr. Freid followed him outside, curious about what he had to say. "I am here to apologize" said Rabbi Shain quietly, eyes downcast, "since that story happened eight years ago I am seeing bad luck following me around". Here he told Mr. Freid that his family was going through many different hardships; a few of his children got divorced, one of his sons became very sick and was recently hospitalized, he also lost an important position that he held in the beis din and more... "Only recently" continued the Rav "have I found out

that you have a different side to the story beyond what I saw and knew of.

...

Mr. Freid speaks: "life seemed simple for me; a young man with a wife and children, except for the fact that my wife was very quick to anger that would lead to action, and those outbursts from time to time erupted, shaking the calm waters of our life, until... Until at a certain point it went over board and she couldn't stay to live under the same roof as the children. I still acted towards her with great kindness and I rented an apartment for her not far away, but what I didn't know about – were the feelings of anger and revenge bubbling up in her...

"It happened on a rainy winter day, the grey clouds looming above showed no sign of clearing up in the near future. I bundled up my kids in warm coats preparing them for the low temperatures that were raging outside. My wife had insisted in seeing them today and I took them out to spend some time with her. As our usual custom, I left the kids

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## The sweetness of the Parshah

The following will explain why we don't wear tefillin on Sukkos. The Sukkah is a reminder for the ananei hakavod which we had in the midbar. So the sukkah is like tefillin. It reminds us of Hashem's chesed of yetzias Mitzrayim, and then surrounding us with the clouds that washed our clothing, protected us from snakes and thorns, just like the tefillin which reminds us when wearing it, of Hashem's great kindnesses.

When we wear tefillin or sit in the sukkah with these intentions, then the Goyim are afraid of us, because they see what a wise nation we are that we acknowledge Hashem's greatness, and this way will be fulfilled "וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה' נִקְרָא" – "עֲלֵיךָ וְרָאוּ כֹמְדָה" – "all the nations will see that the name of Hashem is called upon you, and they will fear you".

On Pesach, eating the korban Pesach is like wearing tefillin, because while eating it we announce our faith in Hashem – we remember the first time it was eaten - in Egypt, and this way we fulfill "לִזְכֹּרֹן בֵּין עַיִנֶיךָ" remembering yetzias Mitzrayim like by tefillin.



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it means that tefillin have to be made only from what is permitted to be eaten. So, on Pesach, the korban Pesach and the other mitzvos of eating, are like tefillin. And on Sukkos the first kezayis that we have to eat in the sukkah is like tefillin which are made only from what we are permitted to eat.

### Why did we eat matzos???

The matzah on Pesach is also to remind us that when we were under the slavery of the Egyptians all we ate was matzos – bread of affliction. The first Kezayis we eat at

the Seder reminds us that all those years in Egypt they ate only matzos because of the slavery, as we say "this is the bread of affliction our forefathers ate in Egypt" – because of the slavery.

The second Kezayis we eat, is to remind us that we left Mitzrayim in a hurry, because it wasn't befitting that we – free people stay in this house of bondage even for another moment. So, now because we had to hurry our bread had to be matzos, but this time it was not with humiliation and slavery rather because of our redemption.

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## The sweetness of the Haftarah

The Midrash says (Tehilim 106) that Hashem kept Pharaoh alive after all his subjects had drowned in the sea, in order that he will publicize Hashem's name in the world. His grandson nevertheless, held himself a god and intended to gain control over Shlomo Hamelech's marvelous thrown. As he was about to step up, a lion hit him and made him a cripple, and from then on he was called Pharaoh Necho – the crippled.

Shlomo Hamelech meant by the thrown having six steps – the honor of Hashem; on the first step he placed lions, because Shevet Yehuda were compared to a lion. He learned from the lion good middos; from the crouched lion he learned to humiliate himself in front of Hashem, from the lion attacking its prey he learned to kill the enemies as Yo'av and Shimi following his father's will. Opposite the lions he placed oxen, to remind of Shevet Yosef who are compared to an ox – excepting upon them the yoke of Malchus Beis David who come from Shevet Yehuda, and being submissive to Hashem's chosen kingdom.

On the second step he placed a wolf opposite a sheep – as a prayer to Hashem to have mercy on Am Yisrael who are surrounded by the nations as a sheep among seventy wolves.

On the third step he placed a leopard opposite a camel. On the fourth step he placed a vulture opposite a peacock, to remind us to have kedusha and shemiras einayim. The peacock is like a woman who's not wearing a modest dress, and the vulture rises up high and goes up away, in order not to see immorality.

On the fifth step he placed a cat opposite a rooster, because in the kingdom of Beis David "a wolf dwells with a lamb" and the cat and rooster who usually eat each other, now live in peace like in the days of Mashiach.

On the sixth step he placed a hawk opposing a dove, to teach the people they have to stay away from the hawk's bad middos and learn loyalty from the dove who's loyal to its spouse. The dove's job was to bring the sefer Torah to the king and bind it to his hand like tefillin, because the

dove is loyal as the Torah which is full of loyalty, like the passuk says "עֲרֵתֶיךָ נֶאֱמַנּוּ מֵאֵד".

On top of his thrown there was a golden menorah with seven branches, to symbolize the seven great shepherds of our nation, as to say that the kings of Beis David are going in the ways of the forefathers, a tradition from father to son.

Near Shlomo's two ears there were two fish, to remind not to except lashon hara, and like fish whose mood is undetectable, so also Shlomo's mood won't change when he hears lashon hara. The fish also whisper into his ears that he should hide his success as the fish who are hidden in the water.

The Sanhedrin also sat near him, and there people would come for justice. If one of the people lied, the lion hit him as he hit Pharaoh Necho.

Shlomo did not want any of this for his own honor, therefore Hashem sent Ashmedai who was jealous of him and expelled him from the kingdom. Shlomo was very humiliated having to go around on the streets as a pauper with merely his stick left from all his labor. When he received his kingdom back, he publicized Hashem's name, showing everyone that the kingdom is not his, everything is only in Hashem's hands, who raises the low and he humiliates the proud.



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It was done this way because Hashem heals with the same thing that was used for hitting; the same bread we had to eat when enslaved, was part of the happiness of our redemption.

**How will the nations fear us???**

Tefillin protect us from the nations of the world, as it says "וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ... וְרָאוּ מִמֶּנִּי" – "all the nations will see... and they will fear you", but that's only when a man studies – because of the tefillin he's wearing - all Hashem's kindness of his body. The tefillin shel yad reminds him of the kindness of his healthy heart and the tefillin shel rosh reminds him the kindness that the brain is functioning perfectly.

**The sweetness of Tu Bishvat**

On Tu Bishvat, the blooming of fruits starts and the sap (the sweetness) rises through the trees. When we eat, most of the sweetness goes to the brain, and the brain that controls all organs, spreads the sweetness throughout the whole body especially to the stomach where the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys are. How does all this happen?

Hashem has done a great kindness with us, by creating the chemical insulin in pancreas which balances the amount of sugar in our body, spreading it to all parts of the body. If the insulin does not fulfill its duty, all the sugar centralizes in one place of the body, which dangers a person's life. So also, on Tu Bishvat starts the blossoming of the sweet fruits which then spread the sweetness of the mitzvos of trumos and ma'asros throughout the entire year.

The same way that Hashem created sweetness in the fruits, so also did he create sweetness in the Torah, in the davening, in Shabbos and Yomtov, sweetness in good middos and in all of avodas Hashem. Our mission is to use our mind to do the job of the insulin – in ruchniyus; to spread this sweetness among all the parts of our body, and to use all our organs to serve Hashem and help a fellow Jew. This way we'll merit the fulfillment of the beracha brought

The black straps remind us of our healthy arteries and the blood, as the Gemara says that black is one of the colors of blood.

Tefillin is similar to the word tefillah – prayer, because the tefillin are meant to bring us to praise Hashem for all these great kindnesses; that our arteries are clean and not blocked with fats, and that they don't bust.

When we thank Hashem for all this, the nations of the world will fear Am Yisrael because they see what a wise nation we are, that we recognize and praise our creator for his greatness and kindness.

in this week's parsha; "כָּל הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר – שָׂמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁיב עֲלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' רֹפֵאֲךָ" – "all the illness that I have put upon Egypt, I will not put upon you, for I Hashem, am your healer".

In hard times, when a person feels that his wellspring of happiness has run dry, he should not lose hope but expect and hope for the yeshuas Hashem, and then he'll see that all those dry days that he's had will produce much happiness - as the dry fruits which are extra sweet, more than the regular fruits, because those hard days bring a person to the most important middah – anava (humility), from which all the good qualities come.

David Hamelech said "צַדִּיק בְּתִמְרֵי יִפְרֹחַ", meaning that a tzaddik observes the date palm and sees all of chasdei Hashem in the branches which are similar to a human spine, the ribs and the arms that come out from it supports the entire body, so that the body should be able to function properly. And because of this the righteous are happy and grateful. These kindnesses are "כְּאַרְזֵי בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה" – "as a cedar flourishes in Levanon". Levanon is the Beis Hamikdash, where the kohanim teach us to observe the cedar tree which symbols the kindness of the spine, the ribs and all the bones which come out of it and to thank Hashem for all these great kindnesses.

**MY STORY!**

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with her and walked back toward the apt. I hesitatingly turned around, throwing a backwards glance towards where I had left the children standing, my heart lurched with pain, I shook my head to clear my thoughts and pangs of guilt; soon the children will come back home and everything will be okay, or so I thought...

"I didn't know of the trap, laid by my wife, that I had just fallen into. From here things happened fast; my wife called up the Rebbetzin, and fabricated a sob story that guiltily pointed a finger in my direction. Upon hearing about the situation, Rav Shain – the neighborhood Rav, summoned me and began reproaching me about my bad behavior. Only then did I realize what had just happened, I tried explaining myself, but there was no one to speak to and I was disgraced and humiliated everywhere. Even the dayanim in beis din refused to hear my side of the story, claiming that if the Rav had testified such harsh things about me, then there is nothing to talk about".

• • •

I turned to Rav Shain, "it's hard for me to forgive" I said, my voice filled with hurt, "until today I am suffering the outcome, my sons can still not find shidduchim because of the bad reputation that I got". Rav Shain apologized again for the terrible misunderstanding, promising that he will do everything within his power to clear my name, and in shidduchim for my sons. With the time I strengthened my emunah that all comes from Hashem and no one can cause any harm, and I told Rabbi Shain that I forgive him for his misdeeds.

**It is my prayer that this story will inspire the readers to be dan lechaf zechus in every situation, to remember that there's more to every story than what our eyes can see.**

\*Names and details have been changed in order to protect the privacy of the writer.

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