



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

### Tish - Yom Tov Sukkos

The seventeenth of Tishrei is the *yohrzheit* of my great-grandfather, Rav Dovid Mordechai of Tolna-New York, zy”a

I remember the *seudah* that my grandfather Rav Yochanan zy”a used to make in honor of the *yohrzheit*. His *sukkah* was very small, and Gedolei Yisrael used to attend the *seudah*. The Rachmistrivker Rebbe, Rav Yochanan zy”a, would sit at the head of the table, next to the Admorim of Sochatchov and Malin zy”a. The sons of the Rachmistrivker Rebbe would also attend.

Even though there was barely room to move in the crowded *sukkah*, my grandfather personally served the honored guests.

Eventually, the *chasid* R' Mottel Roth z”l built a large *sukkah* for my grandfather, in the courtyard of the building. This enabled the guests who joined the *yohrzheit seudah* and the *simchas beis hashoevah* to sit and rejoice in comfort. Nonetheless, my grandfather always said that despite the cramped quarters, he experienced more pleasure in his little *sukkah* than he did in the new, spacious one.

My grandfather often told a story about Rav Menachem Nachum of Trisk zy”a the son-in-law of Rav Dovid of Tolna, whose father, the Trisker Magid zy”a was Rav Dovid’s brother.

At one point in his life, Rav Menachem Nachum moved to the town of Brisk, and built a Beis Medrash. When the building was completed, the Rav of Brisk, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zy”a (the *Beis Halevi*), who



[1]

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greatly admired and respected Rav Menachem Nachum, attended the *chanukas habayis*.

The new *Beis Medrash* was surprisingly small, and the *Beis Halevi* asked Rav Menachem Nachum about the humble dimensions of the building. Rav Menachem Nachum responded, אז ממאכט זיך קלענער ווערט דער מקום גרעסר (when you make yourself smaller, the place becomes bigger). The *Beis Halevi* greatly praised this response that demonstrated the humility of Rav Menachem Nachum.

This was the way of my grandfather zy”a. He always found ways to “minimize” himself, and leave room for others. This is why his small *sukkah* was able to contain so many Gedolei Yisrael.

This is truly the essence of *Mitzvas Sukkah*. The minimal dimensions of a kosher *sukkah* are seven by seven *tefachim*, and ten *tefachim* high, a space that can barely contain one person. These dimensions teach us that a person has to find ways to “make himself smaller”. The *Chacham Tzvi*, comments that if someone builds a *sukkah* of minimal dimensions, “It is clear that there is no greater *tzaar* than this, and certainly, *lechatchilah* he should not build a *sukkah* in this way.”

However, *chasidim* explained that even though it would usually be very uncomfortable for someone to squeeze himself into such a *sukkah*, the days of *Sukkos* are different. The *kedushah* of the *Sukkah* should cause someone to feel much “smaller” than usual, leaving more room in the *sukkah*. Someone who is aware of the *Shechina*’s presence in the *Sukkah* will feel that he actually takes up very little of the space in the *sukkah*, and will be able to sit there comfortably.

As we sit in the *Beis Medrash* of my grandfather zy”a, who humbled himself before each and every Jew, we should commit ourselves to the *avodah* needed to acquire the *middah* of *anavah*. The *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* is certainly an auspicious time to begin that *avodah*.



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A small *sukkah* provides us with a litmus test. If we can sit in such a *sukkah* without feeling that we are suffering, but rather rejoicing in having the opportunity to fulfill Hashem's *mitzvah*, we will have truly acquired *anavah*, the greatest of all *middos*.

As the Ramban writes in his famous letter to his son,

תעלה על לבך מדת הענוה, שהיא מדה טובה מכל מדות טובות, שנאמר (משלי כב ד): "עקב ענוה, יראת ה'". ובעבור הענוה, תעלה על לבך מדת היראה, כי תתן אל לבך תמיד: מאין באת, וילאן אתה הולך; ושאתה רמה ותולעה בסיף, ואף כי במוטף; ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחסבון, לפני מלך הכבוד, שנאמר (דה"ב ו יח): "הנה שמים ושמי השמים לא יכללוך", אף כי לבות בני אדם (ע"פ משלי טו יא). ונאמר (ירמיהו כג כד): "הלא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא, נאם ה'".

וכאשר תחשב את כל אלה, תירא מבוראך ותשמר מן החטא, ובמדות האלה תהיה שמם בתלקך. וכאשר תתנהג במדת הענוה להתבושש מכל אדם, ולהתפחד ממנו ומן החטא – אז תשרה עליך רוח השכינה, וזיו כבודה, וחי עולם הבא.

This quality is the finest of all admirable traits (see Avodah Zarah 20b), because (Mishlei 22:4), "Following humility comes the fear of G-d." Through humility you will also come to fear G-d. It will cause you to always think about (see Avos 3:1) where you came from and where you are going, and that while alive you are only like a maggot and a worm, and the same after death. It will also remind you before Whom you will be judged, the King of Glory, as it is stated (I Melachim 8:27; Mishlei 15:11), "Even the heaven and the heavens of heaven can't contain You" -- "How much less the hearts of people!" It is also written (Yirmeyahu 23:24), "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says G-d."

When you think about all these things, you will come to fear G-d who created you, and you will protect yourself from sinning and therefore be happy with whatever happens to you. Also, when you act humbly and modestly before everyone, and are afraid of G-d and of sin, the radiance of His glory and the spirit of the Shechina will rest upon you, and you will live the life of the World to Come.



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