

The Complex Mitzvah: Sukkah and gentiles

Timely Torah, September 26th 2021, Sukkos 5782

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The Challenge

1. TB Avodah Zarah 2a-b

דרש ר' חנינא בר פפא ואיתימא ר' שמלאי לעתיד לבא מביא הקדוש ברוך הוא ס"ת [ומניחו] בחיקו ואומר למי שעסק בה יבא ויטול שכרו

The Gemara cites homiletic interpretations of the verse that was discussed earlier: "All the nations are gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled; who among them can declare this, and announce to us former matters? Let them bring their witnesses, that they may be justified; and let them hear, and say: It is truth" (Isaiah 43:9). **Rabbi Hanina bar Pappa taught, and some say that it was Rabbi Simlai who taught: In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will bring a Torah scroll and place it in His lap and say: Anyone who engaged in its study should come and take his reward.**

מיד מתקבצין ובאין עובדי כוכבים בערבוביא שנאמר) **ישעיהו מג, ט** (כל הגוים נקבצו יחדו [וגו'] אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא אל תכנסו לפני בערבוביא אלא תכנס כל אומה ואומה

Immediately, the nations of the world will gather together and come intermingled with each other, as it is stated: "All the nations are gathered together and let the peoples be assembled." The Holy One, Blessed be He, will say to them: Do not enter before Me intermingled; rather, let each and every nation enter

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אמר להם הקב"ה במאי עסקתם אומרים לפניו רבש"ע הרבה שווקים תקנינו הרבה מרחצאות עשינו הרבה כסף וזהב הרבינו וכולם לא עשינו אלא בשביל ישראל כדי שיתעסקו בתורה

The Gemara returns to its narration of the future judgment. First, the members of the Roman Empire enter. **The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to them: With what did you occupy yourselves? They say before Him in response: Master of the Universe, we have established**

many marketplaces, we have built many bathhouses, and we have increased much silver and gold. And we did all of this only for the sake of the Jewish people, so that they would be free to engage in Torah study.

אמר להם הקב"ה שוטים שבעולם כל מה שעשיתם לצורך עצמכם עשיתם תקנתם שווקים להושיב בהן זונות מרחצאות לעדן בהן עצמכם כסף וזהב שלי הוא שנאמר) [חגי ב, ח](#) (לי הכסף ולי הזהב נאם ה' צבאות

The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to them: Fools of the world! Are you attempting to deceive Me? **Everything that you did, you did for your own needs. You established marketplaces to place prostitutes in them; you built bathhouses for your own enjoyment; and as for the silver and gold that you claim to have increased, it is Mine, as it is stated: "Mine is the silver, and Mine the gold, said the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:8).**

The Second Chance

2. TB Avodah Zarah 3a

אמרו לפניו רבש"ע תנה לנו מראש ונעשנה אמר להן הקב"ה שוטים שבעולם מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת מי שלא טרח בערב שבת מהיכן יאכל בשבת אלא אף על פי כן מצוה קלה יש לי וסוכה שמה לכו ועשו אותה

The gentiles say before Him: **Master of the Universe, give us the Torah afresh and we will perform its mitzvot.** The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to them in response: **Fools of the world!** Do you think you can request this? **One who takes pains on Shabbat eve will eat on Shabbat, but one who did not take pains on Shabbat eve, from where will he eat on Shabbat?** The opportunity for performing mitzvot has already passed, and it is now too late to ask to perform them. **But even so, I have an easy mitzva to fulfill, and its name is sukka; go and perform it.**

ומי מצית אמרת הכי והא אמר [רבי יהושע בן לוי](#) מאי דכתיב) [דברים ז, יא](#) (אשר אנכי מצוך היום היום לעשותם ולא למחר לעשותם היום לעשותם ולא היום ליטול שכר

The Gemara asks: **And how can you say so,** that it is possible to perform a mitzva after the end of this world? **But doesn't Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say: What is the meaning of that which is written:** "You shall therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, **which I command you this day, to do them" (Deuteronomy 7:11)?** This verse teaches that **today, in this world, is the time to do them, but tomorrow, in the World-to-Come, is not the time to do them.** Furthermore, **today is the time to do them, but today is not the time to receive one's reward, which is granted in the World-to-Come.**

אלא שאין הקב"ה בא בטרוניא עם בריותיו ואמאי קרי ליה מצוה קלה משום דלית ביה חסרון כיס
The Gemara explains: **But even so, God gave the nations an opportunity to perform a mitzva, as The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not deal tyrannically [beteruneya] with His creations, but wants them to feel that they have been judged fairly.** The Gemara asks: **And why does God call the mitzva of sukka an easy mitzva to fulfill? Because performing the mitzva involves no monetary loss.**

מיד כל אחד [ואחד] נוטל והולך ועושה סוכה בראש גגו והקדוש ברוך הוא מקדיר עליהם חמה בתקופת תמוז וכל אחד ואחד מבעט בסוכתו ויוצא שנאמר) [תהלים ב, ג](#) (ננתקה את מוסרותימו ונשליכה ממנו עבותימו מקדיר והא אמרת אין הקדוש ברוך הוא בא בטרוניא עם בריותיו משום דישראל נמי זימני **Immediately, each and every gentile will take materials and go and construct a *sukka* on top of his roof. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, will set upon them the heat [*makdir*] of the sun in the season of Tammuz, i.e., the summer, and each and every one who is sitting in his *sukka* will be unable to stand the heat, and he will kick his *sukka* and leave, as it is stated: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalms 2:3).** The Gemara asks: Why does God heat the sun over them? **But didn't you say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not deal tyrannically with His creations?** The Gemara answers: This is not considered dealing tyrannically with the gentiles, **because for the Jewish people as well, there are times**

דמשכא להו תקופת תמוז עד חגא והוי להו צערא והאמר [רבא](#) מצטער פטור מן הסוכה נהי דפטור בעוטי מי מבעטי

when the season of Tammuz extends until the festival of Sukkot, and in such years sitting in the *sukka* causes them suffering. The Gemara asks: **But doesn't Rava say that one who suffers in the *sukka* is exempt from performing the mitzva of *sukka*,** and under these circumstances even a Jew is permitted to leave the *sukka*? If so, why are the gentiles criticized for leaving? The Gemara answers: **Granted that one is exempt from performing the mitzva and is permitted to leave his *sukka*, but should one kick it?**

מיד הקב"ה יושב ומשחק עליהן שנאמר) [תהלים ב, ד](#) (יושב בשמים ישחק וגו' [א"ר יצחק](#) אין שחוק לפני הקב"ה אלא אותו היום בלבד

The Gemara resumes its narration: **Immediately, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits and makes sport of those gentiles, i.e., He laughs at them, as it is stated: "He that sits in heaven makes sport, the Lord has them in derision" (Psalms 2:4).** With regard to this verse, [Rabbi Yitzhak](#) says: **There is no making sport for the Holy One, Blessed be He, but on that day alone.**



Rav Chaim Friedlander, Mashgiach of Ponovezh Yeshiva

Different Sacrifices

3. Mishna Torah, Maaseh Hakorbanos 3:2

ואַחַד אֲנָשִׁים וְאֶחָד נָשִׁים אוֹ עֲבָדִים מְבִיאִין כָּל הַקֶּרְבָּנוֹת. אָכַל הָעֶפְרוֹ"ם אִין מְקַבְּלִין מִהֶן אֶלְא עוֹלוֹת בְּלֶבֶד שְׁנַאָמַר) [ויקרא כב כה](#) (ומִיָּד בֶּן נֶכֶר לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ אֶת לֶחֶם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם". אֶפְלוּ עוֹלֹת הָעוֹף מְקַבְּלִין מִן הַנְּכָרִי אִף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה. אָכַל אִין מְקַבְּלִין מִהֶן שְׁלָמִים וְלֹא מִנְחוֹת וְלֹא חֲטָאוֹת וְאֲשָׁמוֹת. וְכֵן עוֹלוֹת שְׂאִינָן בְּאוֹת בְּגִדֵי וְנִדְבָה אִין מְקַבְּלִין אוֹתָן מִן הַנְּכָרִי כְּגוֹן עוֹלֹת יוֹלָדוֹת וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶן מֵעוֹלוֹת שְׂאִינָן בְּאוֹת מְשׁוּם נֶדֶר וְלֹא מְשׁוּם נִדְבָה:

Kuzari II:45-

(מה) אָמַר הַפּוֹזְרִי: כָּבֵר הַרוֹת הַחֶבֶר וְדַמִּיתָ, וְהִיטַבְתָּ לְהַעִיר וּלְדַמּוֹת, אֲבָל הֲיָה צָרִיךְ שְׁנַרְאָה בְּכֶם מִהַפְרוּשִׁים וְהַעוֹבְדִים יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שֶׁהֵם בְּזוּלְתְּכֶם .

45. Al Khazari: Thy interesting comparison has completely riveted my attention. But I should expect to see more hermits and ascetics among you than among other people.

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(ב) אָמַר הַחֶבֶר: וְתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה לֹא הִעֲבִידָה אוֹתָנוּ בְּפָרִישוּת, אֲדָּה בְּדַרְךְ הַשְׁנוּה וְלִתְּת לְכֹל פֶּחַ מִפְּחוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְהַגּוּף חֵלְקוֹ בְּצִדְקָה מִבְּלִי רַבּוּי בְּכֶם אֶחָד, קִצּוֹר בְּכֶם אַחֵר, וּמִי שֶׁנִּטָּה עִם פֶּחַ הַתְּאֵנָה קִצּוֹר בְּכֶם הַמְחַשְׁבָּה, וּבִהְפֹךְ. וּמִי שֶׁנִּטָּה עִם הַנֶּצְחוֹן קִצּוֹר בְּזוּלְתוֹ. וְאִין רַב הַתְּעֵנִית עֲבוּדָה לְמִי שֶׁתְּאֻוֹתָיו חֲלוּשׁוֹת וְכַחוּתָיו חֲלוּשִׁים וְגוֹפוֹ רַזָּה, אֲבָל טוֹב שֶׁיַּעֲדוֹן גּוֹפוֹ, וְלֹא הַמְעַטֵּת הַמָּמוֹן עֲבוּדָה, כְּאֲשֶׁר יִזְדַּמֵּן מִן הַמֶּתֶר מִבְּלִי יִגִּיעָה וְלֹא יִטְרִידָהוּ קִנּוּתוֹ מִן הַחֲקִמָּה וְהַמְעַשִׂים הַטּוֹבִים, כֹּל שֶׁכֵּן לְמִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ טְפוּל וּבָנִים, וּמֵאֻנְיָיו לְהוֹצִיא לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, אֲדָּה הַרְבּוּי יוֹתֵר נְכוּן לוֹ.

50. The Rabbi: The divine law imposes no asceticism on us. It rather desires that we should keep the equipoise, and grant every mental and physical faculty its due, as much as it can bear, without overburdening one faculty at the expense of another. If a person gives way to licentiousness he blunts his mental faculty; he who is inclined to violence injures some other faculty. Prolonged fasting is no act of piety for a weak person who, having succeeded in checking his desires, is not greedy. For him feasting is a burden and self-denial. Neither is diminution of wealth an act of piety, if it is gained in a lawful way, and if its acquisition does not interfere with study and good works, especially for him who has a household and children.

4. TB Rosh Hashana 4a

וּמֵאֵן דְּעָבַד הָכִי לֹא מְעֵלְיֵיתָּא הִיא וְהִתְנִיָּא הָאוֹמֵר סֹלַע זִי לְצִדְקָה בְּשִׁבְלִי שִׁיחִיו בְּנֵי וּבְשִׁבְלִי שְׂאֲזַנְהָ בָּהּ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הִבָּא הָרִי זֶה צְדִיק גָּמוּר

The Gemara asks: **And one who acts in this manner, is he not acting in exemplary fashion? Isn't it taught** in a *baraita*: If one gives charity, saying: I give **this sela for charity in order that my children may live, or: I give it in order that through it I may merit life in the World-to-Come, he is still considered a full-fledged righteous person?** If so, what was wrong with the king bringing offerings so that the Jews would pray for his life and the life of his children?

לֹא קִשְׁיָא כָּאֵן בִּישְׂרָאֵל כָּאֵן בְּגוֹיִם

The Gemara answers: **This is not difficult. Here,** in the case of one who makes his charity conditional yet is considered to be righteous, it is referring **to a Jew**. This is because even if his condition is not fulfilled, he will not complain to God. However, **there,** where Cyrus was not given credit for his good deed because it was conditional, it is referring **to gentiles**. A gentile may come to regret his actions and complain to God if his condition is not fulfilled.

5. Vayikra 6:2

צֹו אֶת־אֶהְרֹן וְאֶת־בְּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תוֹרַת הַעֲלָה הִוא הַעֲלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלֵּילָה עַד־הַבֶּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תִּיָּקַד בּוֹ:

Command Aaron and his sons thus:

This is the ritual of the burnt offering: The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it.

6. Rashi, ad loc.

צו את אהרן. אין צו אלא לשון זריז מיד וקדושות; אמר רבי שמעון, ביותר צריך הכתוב לזרז במקום שיש בו תקרובת פיס (ספרא:)

COMMAND AARON — The expression “Command ...!” always implies urging on to carry out a command, implying too, that it comes into force at once, and is binding upon future generations (cf. Rashi on this passage in [Kiddushin 29a](#)). R. Simeon said: Especially must Scripture urge on the fulfilment of the commands in a case where monetary loss is involved (Sifra, Tzav, Chapter 1 1; [Kiddushin 29a](#)).