

GROWTH

7th Edition
By Mishaël Sionov
BS"D

At The

~~YOM TOV~~

~~SHABBAT TABLE~~

SUKKOT

First Dibs

The Gemara in Zevachim teaches the famous rule of תדיר ושאינו תדיר, קודם – that if one is presented with 2 mitzvot to perform, one that is commonly done throughout the year and one that is more rare and less common, the more common *mitzvah* takes precedence and should be dealt with first.

However, one may ask regarding the custom that some have, to shake the *lulav* early in the morning, before praying *shacharit*. After all, *tefillah* is a mitzvah done every day, as opposed to *lulav* which is only once a year. Thus, shouldn't the rule dictate that they must pray first and only then take the *lulav* and *etrog*?

Regarding the rule of choosing between common *mitzvot* and uncommon *mitzvot*, there is a fundamental discussion about whether the rule applies only when the two mitzvot at hand are both at the same level – either both Biblical in nature or both Rabbinically enacted – or even when one is Biblical and the other Rabbinic. The Noda B'Yehuda rules in accordance with the former, that we only apply the rule giving precedence to the common *mitzvah* in cases where both *mitzvot* are at equal standing; otherwise, not. Thus, given that *lulav* is a *mitzvah* from the Torah and *tefillah* is only a Rabbinic enactment, we don't run into the problem of תדיר ושאינו תדיר, קודם.

(Sefer Iyun HaMoadim)

The Outcast of the 4 *Minim*

R' Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro related a remarkable thought. Interestingly, people will buy an *etrog* with such reverence, paying top dollar for the nicest one. *Lulavim* are carried around with the nicest bags and top-notch protection. *Hadassim*, too, are carefully protected by their owners.

What did the *aravah* do wrong? Sellers just throw in *aravot* practically for free if you spend enough on the other three. When the *aravot* blacken a few days later, we can replace them for almost nothing, sometimes even for free. And then just another few days later, we take *aravot* and beat them against the ground. What did the *aravah* do wrong, that it doesn't get the same treatment as the other three?

R' Yechezkel Banett of Nitra offers an insight. After all, look at where the other 3 come from. *Eetrogim* come from orchards from Eretz Yisrael or Morocco or Italy. *Lulavim* come from Egypt. *Hadassim* are shipped from the Middle East. All these three originate from exotic places. Where do people obtain their *aravot* from? *Their own backyard*. And in general, a person tends to take for granted that which he has in his own backyard.

The Gemara in Sukkah tells us that towards the end of Sukkot, the Kohanim would circle the *Mizbe'ach* one final time, but without the *lulavim*, *eetrogim*, and *hadassim*. All that remained with them in that last *hakafah* were the *aravot*; at the end of the day, when the *chag* was about to take leave and they would have to return to normal routine, all they had left was the *aravah*, because the *aravot* are those in your life that are nearest and dearest – your parents. Don't take them for granted, because at the end of the day, that's who we have. They are the *aravot* in our lives; don't trade them for anything, don't be too busy for them, don't think they owe you with a sense of entitlement. They are our nearest and dearest – it's about what we owe *them*.

We must all be careful and exert caution to avoid falling into the trap of taking the *aravot* in our lives for granted...

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Rachamim Ben Shifra	Yitzchak Ben Naama	Noach Yisrael Ben Yaffah	Miriam Bat Bakol	Frida Bat Yaffa
Esther Bat Frida	Arkadiy Avraham Ben Mazal	Nosson Feitel Ben Yehudis	Yitzchak Elimelech Ben Chana Sarah		
Yitzchak Ben Sarah	R' Aharon Moshe Ben Fruma Rachel	Eitan Ben Rina	Menachem Mendel Chaim Ben Merel		

Take It All In

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In last week's paper, we delved into a possible interpretation behind the significance of the comparison between Torah and water; that beginners "float" on the surface and appreciate the Torah on a simpler level, whereas people with a true integrity that became more "dense" with much Torah knowledge they already acquired can "sink" down into deeper and more mystical levels of Torah. A close friend added an interesting take from a different angle. Things tend to absorb more when they are less dense. For example, if you throw a sponge into a pool of water, it can absorb a lot of water because it has low density. In a similar vein, people can only learn and absorb Torah from others when they are receptive and willing to listen. People who think they already know everything can't learn anything. One must be like a sponge and be willing to learn from others; only then can he absorb the Torah and internalize it.

**"We can ask
Hashem for a
million different
things, or we can
ask for eyes to
see His presence
in everything."
(R' Yitzchak Meir Morgenstern)**

An Unexpected Twist

R' Joey Haber shared a beautiful story from R' Spero. There was once a yeshiva in the 1950s that wanted to build and expand, and were thus in need of donations and financial support. There was a donor scheduled to visit the school, a wealthy individual named Sam Cohen. This donor had potential to give a very large sum of money to the yeshiva. The yeshiva prepared for this visit a few weeks in advance, making everything look clean, neat, and orderly. The students were notified to be on their absolute best behavior. Finally, when the big day arrived, Mr. Sam Cohen drove up in his convertible, without wearing a *kippah*. He walked up to the school, and one of the rebbeim in the school, named Rabbi Mendell, approached Sam Cohen and politely asked him, "Sir, where's your *kippah*?" The head of the school was shocked. This wasn't part of the plan. To make matters worse, the rabbi then asked Mr. Cohen, "Do you keep Shabbat?" The head rabbi couldn't believe what he was hearing. *What is he doing? We had this whole event set up! Just keep quiet, get the money, and let him be on his way!* Sam Cohen looked at the rabbi, perplexed: "What?" "Excuse me, I don't mean to hurt your feelings, but can I share with you a story about the Chafetz Chaim?" asked R' Mendell.

Mr. Cohen responded in the affirmative and R' Mendell related: "The Chafetz Chaim once had a big donor come to his yeshiva in Radin, and the donor wrote out a large check for him. But when he handed it to the Chafetz Chaim, he saw the rabbi crying hysterically. The man, thinking it wasn't enough money, wrote out an even bigger check, but the Chafetz Chaim kept crying. *It's still not enough?* the man asked, writing out another check for even more money. But the Chafetz Chaim cried even harder. Finally, the man asked, 'Rabbi, what's wrong? Is it not enough money? Should I give you more?' The Chafetz Chaim, sobbing, responded, 'No, the first check was more than enough.' The donor was perplexed. 'So why are you crying?' The Chafetz Chaim explained, 'I'm crying because you're obviously a kind, generous, wonderful person. But it seems that you're also not going to get the reward in the World to Come that you truly deserve.' 'What do you mean?' the donor asked, confused. 'You're kind and generous, but you don't keep Shabbat. So Hashem can't give you the reward that someone as kind as you should get.' The man got a little uncomfortable, and asked, 'So what is it that you want, Rabbi?' The Chafetz Chaim replied: 'I don't want anything; but since you're such a nice person, don't you think you should keep Shabbat?' 'Rabbi, you're right, I should,' replied the man, 'But right now I'm in the middle of a lot of critical business deals. Maybe in a few months I'll become *shomer Shabbat*.' The Chafetz said back: 'As far as I'm concerned, that's fine. But Shabbat is coming on Friday night, whether or not there are business deals happening. What's Hashem going to say...?' After a few moments, the man finally told the Chafetz Chaim, 'In your honor, I'm going to start keeping Shabbat.'"

R' Mendell concluded his story, and now directed his focus to Sam Cohen. "You're obviously a generous man, coming to support a yeshiva. But it's a shame that you're not observant, and likewise can't get the real reward that awaits such a great person like you..." At this point the whole school was watching this interaction, and the rosh yeshiva was likely thinking that this rabbi will be fired before the end of the night. To everyone's shock, Mr. Sam Cohen looked at R' Mendell and admitted, "I've never had someone be so clear with me in my life. Thank you for your candidness and honesty. I am going to try." For the rest of his life, Sam Cohen made R' Mendell his mentor. He ended up donating a significant amount to the yeshiva, way more than they even expected in the first place. And from then on, before every charity he participated in, he would call R' Mendell and ask, "Rabbi, can you give me advice? You're the only person who is honest with me."

Don't ever lose hope for anybody, or ever think you can't be involved in outreach. You never know the impact you can have...