



## Raining on Sukkot

We have learnt (2:9) that if it rains on *Sukkot*, one is exempt from the *mitzvah* of sitting in the *sukkah*. We shall try to understand the scope and nature of this exemption.

The *Rama* (OC 639:5) rules that this exemption does not apply on the first night of *Sukkot*; one must make *Kiddush* and eat at least a *kezayit*'s worth of bread in the *sukkah* even if it is raining. The *Mishnah Berura* (35) explains that the *Rama* understands that the exemption of *mitzta'er* (feeling discomfort) does not apply on the first night of *Sukkot*. The obligation to eat in a *Sukkot* is learnt from a *gezeira shava* from *Pesach*. Just as one must eat *matza* on the first night of *pesach*, so too one must eat in a *sukkah* on the first night of *Sukkot*. The *Rama* aligns with those that maintain that the *gezeira shava* extends to equate *Pesach* and *Sukkot* further. Since one eats *mitzvah* regardless of comfort, the same applies with the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* on the first night.

The *Mishnah Berura* continues that whether the *gezeira shava* is extended this far is the subject of debate with others maintaining that the exemption of *mitztaer* applies equally throughout all of *Sukkot*. Consequently, while one must eat in the *sukkah* if it rains, out of concern for the other opinions the *beracha* of "*leishev ba'sukkah*" would not be recited. Nevertheless he adds that one should wait some time for the rain to stop and he brings a number of opinions regarding how long one should wait.

With that background we can now appreciate a story involving Rav Soloveitchik *ztz"l* and his father (Rav Moshe *ztz"l*) (*Harerei Kedem* 114). It was raining on the first night of *sukkot* and having waited, they made *Kiddush*, ate a small amount inside the *sukkah* and completed the meal inside. Rav Moshe however stayed awake and when the rain stopped, he woke his children so that they could eat a *kezayit* in the *sukkah* in order to satisfy those opinion who

maintained that they earlier they were exempt; those that maintain that a *mitztaer* is exempt even on the first night.

The *Rav* objected that in any case he should be exempt - now he should be considered a *mitztaer* due to sleep! We see that the *Shulchan Aruch* (639:7) explains that if one was sleeping in the *sukkah* and it started to rain and he went inside, we do not bother him to return to the *sukkah* for the rest of the night. Indeed the *Mishnah Berura* (36) brings this exact logic to explain that *halacha*.

Rav Moshe Soloveitchik however explained the original debate, whether rain exempts one from the *sukkah* on the first night, in a different manner. Really, everyone agrees that the exemption of *mitztaer* does not apply on the first night. Those that maintain that rain exempts one from sitting in the *sukkah* is not because of the rule of *mitztaer*. Rain is very different and the exemption is because the *sukkah* itself. The rain means that the *sukkah* can no longer be defined as a dwelling, it can no longer be defined as a *sukkah*. In fact, the *Bi'ur Ha'Gra* cites the *Rashba* that explains, "when it rains it has no status of a *sukkah*."<sup>1</sup>

The *Rav* adds that even our *Mishnah* seems to suggest that the exemption of rain is different. The *meshal* (parable) that is brought that the advent of rain is "like a servant that comes to pour a drink for his master and [the master] empties the jug on [the servant's] face." We see from the *meshal* that the capacity for performing the task, for performing the *mitzvah*, has been taken away.

That being the case, his father understood that when it was raining, the means of fulfilling the *mitzvah* was taken away. Once the rain had stopped, since everyone agrees that there is no exemption of *mitztaer* everyone was obligated to wake up and eat a *kezayit* in the *sukkah*.

**Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier**

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the *Rambam* discusses the exemption of *mitztaer* (6:2) and the exemption of rain (6:10) in two different places. Also it is noteworthy our *Mishnah* does not write, "If it rains, when is one exempt?" it writes, "If it rains when is one allowed to clear out [and go inside]?" According to

this understanding it makes sense. Rain is not like the exemption of *mitztaer* that applies to the person. Instead the *sukkah* is no longer and the question is when is a person left without a *sukkah*.

### Revision Questions

סוכה ב' ד' ג' ח'

- Can one make a *sukkah* where trees are used to make the walls? (בי: ד')
- Which people are exempt, due to their circumstance, from sitting in a *sukkah*? (בי: ד')
- What can one eat outside a *sukkah*? (בי: ד')
- What three things did *R' Tzadok* do when he was given food less than a *ke'beitzah* and why? (בי: ה')
- List the two opinions regarding the number of meals that one must eat in a *sukkah*. (בי: ו')
- Explain the debate regarding a person whose body was inside the *sukkah* yet the table from which he was eating was outside the *sukkah*? (בי: ז')
- Which three people are exempt from eating in the *sukkah*? (בי: ח')
- Complete the following phrase: (בי: ט')  
 "\_\_\_\_\_ שבעת ימים אדם עושה \_\_\_\_\_"
- If it is raining, from what point is one allowed to move inside? (בי: ט')
- Can one use a stolen *lulav*? (גי: א')
- What extra requirement does *R' Yehuda* place on the *lulavim*? (גי: א')
- What are *tzinei har ha'barzel* and can they be used as *lulavim*? (גי: א')
- How large must the *lulav* be? (גי: א')
- Can one use a dried out *hadas*? (גי: ב')
- How many berries can the *hadas* have before it becomes invalid? (גי: ב')
- If the head of the *aravah* is severed, is it acceptable? (גי: ג')
- What is an *aravah* that is describe as *tzaftzafa* and is it acceptable? (גי: ג')
- Is an *aravah* acceptable if it lost some of its leaves? (גי: ג')
- How many of each of the four species must be taken? (include all opinions) (גי: ד')
- Is an *etrog* from an *ir hanidachat* acceptable? (גי: ה')
- Can an *etrog* of *orlah* be used? (גי: ה')
- Which of the following invalidates an *etrog*: (גי: ו')
  - A crack?
  - A hole (with nothing removed)?
  - The *oketz* being removed?
  - A small *chazazit*?
  - Being green in colour?
- What are the two opinions regarding the minimum size of an *etrog*? (גי: ז')
- What material may be used to bind a *lulav*? (גי: ח')

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### Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
15 <sup>th</sup> January כ' טבת	16 <sup>th</sup> January כ"א טבת	17 <sup>th</sup> January כ"ב טבת	18 <sup>th</sup> January כ"ג טבת	19 <sup>th</sup> January כ"ד טבת	20 <sup>th</sup> January כ"ה טבת	21 <sup>st</sup> January כ"ו טבת
Sukkah 2:4-5	Sukkah 2:6-7	Sukkah 2:8-9	Sukkah 3:1-2	Sukkah 3:3-4	Sukkah 3:5-6	Sukkah 3:7-8

