

SUKKOS

THE GREAT RE-ENACTMENT

What leaving our homes for seven days teaches us about chinuch

By Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein

**“The most powerful way to teach our children is not by telling them.
It’s by showing them.”**

THE OBLIGATION TO REMEMBER

Sukkos, the third and final Yom Tov of the Shalosh Regalim, offers us an incredible lesson in chinuch ha'banim.

By each of the Shalosh Regalim—Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkos—the Torah obligates us to pass down the significance of these Yomim Tovim to our descendants.

By Pesach, the pasuk says:

לְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנִי בְנִךְ וּבֶן-בְּנִךְ

“In order that you relate to your son and your grandson” the tremendous miracles that took place in Mitzrayim.

Regarding Ma'amad Har Sinai, which took place on Shavuot, the Torah tells us:

וְהוֹדַעְתֶּם לְבְנֵיכֶם וּלְבְנֵי בְנֵיכֶם

“You shall make known to your children and to your grandchildren”

יּוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֹרֵב

“the day that you stood before Hashem your God at Chorev.”

And on Sukkos, the Torah tells us that the reason we dwell in a sukkah for seven days is:

לְמַעַן יָדְעוּ דִּרְתִּיכֶם כִּי בְּסֻכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

“So that your generations will know that I made the Children of Israel dwell in sukkos when I brought them out of Mitzrayim.”

THE QUESTION

But the question is: If we are commanded to convey these momentous historical events to our children, why is it only on Sukkos that we are commanded to actually reenact the experience?

Why don't we reenact Ma'amad Har Sinai on Shavuot? Why don't we go to a mountain, blow shofar, and recreate the thunder and lightning?

And on Pesach, we tell the story of Yetziyas Mitzrayim and eat specific foods to commemorate our freedom, but we don't physically reenact leaving Mitzrayim.

Why specifically on Sukkos do we leave our homes, build a sukkah, and actually dwell in it for seven days?

THREE STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

Chazal explain that the Shalosh Regalim represent three stages in the development of Hashem's relationship with Klal Yisroel.

The courtship began on Pesach. That is when we celebrate the beginning of the relationship between Hashem and Klal Yisroel. Hashem revealed Himself to us with those exalted words:

אֲנִכִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

"I am Hashem your God, Who took you out of the land of Mitzrayim."

The second phase occurred on Shavuot, when, metaphorically, we entered the chuppah of our relationship with Hashem.

The Gemara in Masseches Shabbos describes "כפה עליהם הר כגיגית"—Hashem suspended the mountain over us. The mountain served, so to speak, as the *chuppah*.

And then comes Sukkos.

On Sukkos, we move into Hashem's home, so to speak. We leave our permanent homes and live together in the sukkah.

So Sukkos represents the stage of building a home and a family.

THE LESSON OF CHINUCH

And perhaps that is why Sukkos is singled out for this physical reenactment.

The Torah is teaching us a tremendous lesson in chinuch:

The most powerful way to teach our children is not by telling them. It's by showing them.

On Pesach and Shavuot, which represent the earlier stages of the relationship—the courtship and the chuppah—verbal messages may be enough.

But when it comes to Sukkos, which represents building a home and raising a family, you have to **physically** show the way.

It's not enough to **tell** your children about the importance of Torah.

It's not enough to **tell** them about the importance of mitzvos.

Go out and build a sukkah. Dwell in it. Show them what it means to live a life of Yiddishkeit.

Because our children don't usually listen to what we say. But they always watch how we live.

A STORY FROM REB MOSHE WEINBERGER

Speaking of the power of being a positive role model, I'd like to share an amazing story I heard from Reb Moshe Weinberger, the renowned Rav of Aish Kodesh in Woodmere.

His father, Reb Mordechai Weinberger, was a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. After the war, he settled in Queens.

Reb Moshe described him as a *poshete Yid*—a simple Yid. But he imbued his family with an extraordinary warmth and love for Torah and mitzvos.

Reb Moshe once related that when he was in high school, he had a very difficult rebbi. He wasn't doing well, and he hated going to yeshivah.

He noticed that many boys from religious homes in his neighborhood attended public school. They finished school much earlier, had much more free time, and he decided he wanted to join them.

So he approached his father and told him, "I want to leave yeshivah and go to public school."

His father listened carefully. He didn't lose his composure. He simply said:

"Moshe, this is your decision to make. But don't make a hasty decision. This is important. Take a few days, sleep on it, and make your decision after Shabbos."

Sunday morning, Moshe came back to his father.

"Totty, I made my decision. I'm staying in yeshivah."

"Moshe, I'm proud of you," his father told him.

Then Moshe asked:

"Totty, if I had told you I was going to public school, would you have let me go?"

His father leaned forward, looked him straight in the eye, and said:

"Over my dead body."

Moshe was confused.

“So then why did you tell me it was my decision if you never would have let me go?”

Reb Mordechai Weinberger, a survivor who had been separated from his own parents as a teenager and had never attended a parenting class, gave his son an extraordinary answer:

“Because I trusted you to make the right decision.”

THE MESSAGE OF SUKKOS

Why did he have that confidence in his son?

Because he had already spent years creating a home where Torah and mitzvos were not merely rules—they were a way of life.

**His son had seen it.
He had felt it.
He had lived it.**

And that is the message of Sukkos.

You want to teach your children what Yiddishkeit means? Build a home that demonstrates it.

**Don't just tell them about *emunah*—let them see your *emunah*.
Don't just tell them to love Torah—let them see your love for Torah.
Don't just tell them that mitzvos bring joy—let them see the joy on your
face when you do a mitzvah.**

Because the greatest chinuch doesn't happen when we tell our children what to do.

It happens when they watch us do it.