



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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סִבּוֹת

Sense of Direction

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Batsheva Ganzfried

on her Bas Mitzvah



Sense of Direction

Erev Shabbos Shuva - Rabbi Berkovits's Class

Rabbi Berkovits was teaching the boys the halachos of lulav and esrog but Elazar was daydreaming again, imagining all the fun he would have on Sukkos. Sleeping in the sukkah on the blow-up mattress and eating all the tasty food his mother cooked and going to the Minkatcher Rebbe for simchas beis hashoeivah. So much fun packed into one week! And then Simchas Torah with Avrum Yitzchok and the Weiss boys dancing up a storm!

Sukkos was by far Elazar's favorite Yomtiv — Purim was a runner up, but no question Sukkos was the best – how can you compare eight days of fun with only one day?!

There was only one thing that made Elazar nervous about Sukkos – he always got confused with the naanaim. Shaking the lulav left, right, up, down, backwards, forwards! It was so hard to remember the right order! Even though his father would always remind him about their minhag — somehow he always got it wrong. When everybody in shul was shaking the lulav to the left, he was shaking it to the right, and if they were shaking up, he was shaking down.

As Rabbi Berkovits explained to the class the best way to pick up the daled minim before making the bracha, Elazar was remembering what happened last year during hallel. He was trying to see which direction everyone else was up to and as he turned around he accidentally poked old Mr. Kupferstein in the head with the lulav. Mr. Kupferstein wasn't angry — he just smiled and said, "Be careful with that spear, young man!" — but it was very embarrassing anyway.

"Elazar," said Rabbi Berkovits. "What do you think is the reason?"

"Reason?!" said Elazar quickly remembering that he was in class. "Reason for what, Rabbi?"

"I was asking you if you know why we pick up the esrog upside down and only after we make the bracha do we turn it right-side up."

Elazar racked his brain for the right answer. It seemed like Rabbi always called on him just when he was daydreaming. Or maybe the problem is that he was always daydreaming but either way he was going to take a good

guess. “Is it because we don’t want the pitom to fall off before we make the bracha?”

“Well, Elazar” said Rebbi, “like always, that’s a great answer. And if I didn’t know the real answer I would have agreed with you. But the real reason is because the mitzvah of daled minim is just to “take” them — to pick them up. Once you’re holding them in your hand the right way, the mitzvah is finished.

“So if we would pick up the esrog the right way it would be too late to say the bracha — you’re not allowed to say a bracha on a mitzvah after a mitzvah is finished. So we pick up the esrog upside down, which is not the way to do the mitzvah, then we say the bracha and turn it over to do the mitzvah.”

Recess

“Rebbi,” said Elazar after walking up to Rabbi Berkovits’s desk. “I’m sorry for daydreaming in class today. I was just thinking about all the fun stuff we do on Sukkos and it happened by accident.”

“That’s— OK,” said Rabbi Berkovits. “I also did that when I was in third grade. And I still became a rebbi. Just keep trying and you’ll be just fine!”

“But can I ask you one question?” said Elazar. “If the mitzvah is finished as soon as we pick up the lulav and esrog, why do we have to do all of the extra



stuff? Up and down and front and back - all around. It's complicated – especially for us little kids.”

“Excellent question, Elazar! You're a hundred percent right. But even though the mitzvah is finished in a flash, the Am Yisroel is never finished. We love Hashem so much that we want to do extra. So instead of just putting the daled minim down we keep it in our hands and we get busy shaking the lulav in all directions.”

“Why in all directions?”

“There are many reasons. Rav Avigdor Miller one time said that we're reminding ourselves that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the King everywhere; He's in all the directions. Even if you take a trip to the North Pole, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is there with you. If you're in the South Pole, you'll find Him there too. If you go east to China, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is with you. If you go west to California, He's there too. Wherever you'll go you'll find Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Ma'alah – if you go up in a spaceship, or matah – all the way down in a submarine: wherever you go, He's there.

“And so even though it's true that we could put the lulav and esrog down right away and we'd still get the mitzvah, but the Am Yisroel doesn't like putting mitzvos down. We like holding on to mitzvos as long as possible to show how much we love Hashem!

“So instead of just being yotzei with picking up the lulav and esrog, we keep it in our hands and we shake it in all six directions to make a big show about Hashem being everywhere.

“And it's because of the extra we do that Hashem loves us and takes care of us extra,” continued Rabbi Berkovits as he opened up the gemara on his desk. “Look what it says here in Mesichta Sukkah about the naanaim: *Shiyarei mitzvah me'akvin es hapuranuyos* – *When we do the naanaim we're protecting the Am Yisroel from many many bad things that could happen during the year. Sickneses and car accidents and dangerous viruses. It's the extra that we do that shows Hashem how much we love Him. And He loves us back even more!*



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