

TWO HALVES OF A COMPLETE SIMCHA**1 שלש רגלים תחג לי בשנה**

When going through the פרשה this week, something very interesting may catch your eye. After talking about דיני ממונות and other דיני בין ימים טובים, אדם לחבירו, the פרשה switches all of a sudden to talking about the רבונו של עולם, the epitome of diving into a relationship solely with the ענין and the previous עניינים mentioned in the פרשה. However, as בני ישראל did עליה לרגל, they would learn תורה and clarify their ספיקות. This is why our פסוק immediately follows the פסוק of "ובכל אשר אמרתי אליכם תשמרו" "Guard all that I have told you".² We see from this אברבנאל the importance of the ימים טובים vis-a-vis תלמוד תורה. At a time of mass gathering of Jews, it is incumbent upon us to engage in תורה discussions to sharpen the mind, and gain a better understanding of דבריו של הקב"ה.

This also helps us see the significance of תורה vis-a-vis the ימים טובים. The last גמרא in מגילה³ teaches of the תקנה of הלכות פסח בפסח, engaging in the הלכות of the טוב יום on the טוב יום itself. It would seem from this גמרא that the focus of יו"ט is to be steeped in תלמוד תורה, specifically regarding ענייני דיומא, the topics of the day. However, an earlier גמרא⁴ says that on יו"ט, we come to shul late because we need to cook the יו"ט meal, and we leave shul early to eat it. In fact, if the חזן dragged out the תפילות, they used to rebuke him!⁵ How do we resolve this סתירה? This is the famous הלכה of חצי לה' וחצי לכם (herein referred to as חצי וחצי, for short), reserving half of the day for חצי וחצי, and half for yourself.⁶ רבי יהושע derived this הלכה from the seemingly contradictory פסוקים saying "עצרת תהיה לכם"⁷ and "עצרת לה' אלוקיך"^{8,9}.

1 שמות כג.ד

2 אברבנאל שם

3 מגילה לב.

4 שם כג.

5 עיין משנה ברורה תקכט.א

6 פסחים סח:

7 דברים טז.ח

8 במדבר כט.לה

9 Whereas רבי יהושע derives a חויב of splitting the day, רבי אליעזר interprets these פסוקים to say

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Parenthetically, this law applies by שבת as well, even according to רבי אליעזר. Based on this, the מגילה in ברייתא states that on שבת, since we aren't cooking the meal, we should be coming to shul earlier, and engaging in עבודה to a greater extent than יו"ט.

Now that we understand the basis of חצי וחצי, we can analyze some applications of this principle. The משנה¹⁰ brings down the שיטה of בית שמאי that a "סוכה ישנה", an old סוכה, is פסול for fulfilling the מצוה. To qualify this ruling, the משנה says that any סוכה built more than 30 days before סוכות without express intent to be used for the מצוה is considered "old", and פסול according to בית שמאי. Why is 30 days the barometer for the כשרות of a סוכה? When 30 days before the יו"ט comes around, we start to engage in the הלכות of the upcoming חג.¹¹ Therefore, since we start to be in the "mode סוכות" 30 days before סוכות, a סוכה built in that time period has a סתם חזקה לשמה, a standard סוכה is built for the sake of the מצוה. This brings us to another question. Earlier, we brought down the גמרא in מגילה that says we engage in the הלכות of the יו"ט on the day itself. How, then, can רש"י say we learn the הלכות from 30 days before? If we know the הלכות from studying them for a while beforehand, what's the necessity for studying them on the חג itself?

There are 2 approaches to answer this question. רי"ב סאלאוויצ'יק writes¹² based on the גמרא that explains how we got 2 crowns when we said נעשה ונשמע¹³, that נעשה represents doing, while נשמע represents learning. However, the הלוי בית says that you need to learn how to perform the מצוות. Therefore, נעשה is learning to *do*, while נשמע is learning to *learn*. Perhaps, we can draw a connection to our סוגיא from this מאמר of the הלוי בית. For 30 days before the יו"ט, we learn how to do what we need to do. We learn the הלכות and bring them in to the practical. On יו"ט, after we spent the past month learning the הלכות, we dedicate this day to engage in ענייני דיומא, purely for the sake of learning and the day itself.

In his ספר החינוך, שורשי המצוה¹⁴ says that we abstain from מלאכה on that you can choose a day for הקב"ה or a day for yourself. The שו"ע (או"ח תקכ"א) holds like רבי יהושע.

10 סוכה ט.

11 רש"י שם ד"ה "בית שמאי פוסלין"

12 בית הלוי עה"ת, משפטים א

13 שבת פח.

14 מצוה רצח, שלא לעשות מלאכה ביום ראשון של פסח

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because if we were allowed to do even light (aside from מלאכה), people would do מלאכה and neglect their kids, therefore not teaching them, which would be a failure in keeping the מסורה alive. Also, the mass gathering in the מדרש means the רבנים can lecture on דיומא. The ימים טובים are meant for us to take infrequent breaks from our everyday routine, and dedicate both body and soul in עבודת ה' יתברך. This is a time to get together with family, to eat and enjoy, and to pass down the מסורה. While the חינוך may be speaking specifically in regards to פסח, the idea of והגדת לבנך applies every day. Unfortunately, because of the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we don't get enough of a chance to do this. Therefore, the חצי וחצי דין is to bring families and friends together. While they're having a festive meal together, there's still an aspect of half our day being devoted to הקב"ה, devoted to the continuation of our everlasting מסורה. Overindulging in meat and wine isn't a sign of true שמחה, as true שמחה must involve עבודת היוצר in it.¹⁵ As we are sitting around our יום טוב tables, properly enjoying the meal, we should be זוכה to reach the level of true שמחה, both in our physical celebration, and our spiritual perpetuity.

15 עיין שו"ע או"ח תקטג. עם משנ"ב ס"ק כ