

Parashas
Beha'aloscha
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טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

י"ח ע"י
קהילת שבתי בבית ד'
בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
רבי גמליאל הכהן
רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הפרשה

טיב המערכת

למה נגרע? *Why should we be left out?*

In a magnificent hall, around set tables, the invited guests sat and satisfied their hearts, the waiters ran about and served loaded trays to every table, and behold, at one table, those seated were astonished to see that to them the waiter was serving lesser foods than the other tables. At the first opportunity when the waiter passed by them, they asked him: Why to the other tables are you serving more choice foods, while with us you suffice with a basic menu? And to them you serve an abundance of everything, and to us only a little? The waiter made himself appear innocent and asked them: What does it matter to you what is served at other tables? Say thank you and rejoice in what you receive! But the people do not agree to accept the 'rebuke' of the waiter—why should they suffice? We deserve everything exactly like everyone else!

The Torah tells us (9:6): 'ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם' ולא יכלו לעשות הפסח... ויקרבו לפני משה ולפני אהרן... ויאמר... למה 'And there were men who were impure through contact with a human soul and could not perform the Pesach... and they approached before Moshe and before Aharon... and they said... Why should we be left out, not to bring the offering of Hashem in its appointed time among Bnei Yisrael?' The continuation is known: HaKadosh Baruch Hu agreed with them and gave us an additional mitzvah: Pesach Sheni, and this mitzvah remained for generations. Rashi says: "And this section was fitting to be said through Moshe like the rest of the entire Torah, but these people were privileged that it should be said because of them, for merit is brought about through the meritorious." As Jews, we learn about the trait of contentment, and so the Tanna says in Avos (6:4): "Such is the way of Torah: bread with salt you shall eat, and water in measured amounts you shall drink, and upon the ground you shall sleep, and a life of hardship you shall live, and in Torah you shall toil." But the problem begins when one takes the trait of contentment to the wrong place. Ask a person about his spiritual state—usually he is quite satisfied; perhaps he will say there is room to improve, but in general, the situation is fine. But when one asks about physical matters—what is the state of livelihood, and how is the apartment, and the like—there the answers are completely different: one is never satisfied and always wants more. Why should we not reverse the matters? In physical matters let us be among those who suffice with little, and in spiritual matters let us seek more! So even if we are not yet at this level, at least let us feel some pain over the lack in spirituality, and raise our voices heavenward with a request for spirituality: "Why should we be left out?"
Tiv HaTorah – Beha'aloscha

זיכוי הרבים על ידי קיום המצוה
Benefitting the public through keeping the mitzvah
וידבר ה' אל משה במדבר סיני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים בחדש הראשון לאמר: ויעשו בני ישראל את הפסח במועדו: בארבעה עשר יום בחדש הזה בין הערבים תעשו אותו במועדו בכל חקתיו ובכל משפטיו תעשו אותו: (ט, א - ג)
Hashem spoke to Moshe, in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the second year from their exodus from the land of Egypt, in the first month, saying: The Children of Israel shall make the Pesach-offering in its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month in the afternoon shall you make it, in its appointed time, according to all its decrees and all its laws shall you make it. (9:1-3)

Rashi explains: In the first month – the parasha at the beginning of this sefer was not said until Iyar, to teach you that there is no sequence of earlier and later in the Torah. And why did the sefer not begin with this parasha? Because it is to the discredit of Israel, in that the entire forty years that Israel were in the Wilderness, they offered no Pesach-offering but this one alone.

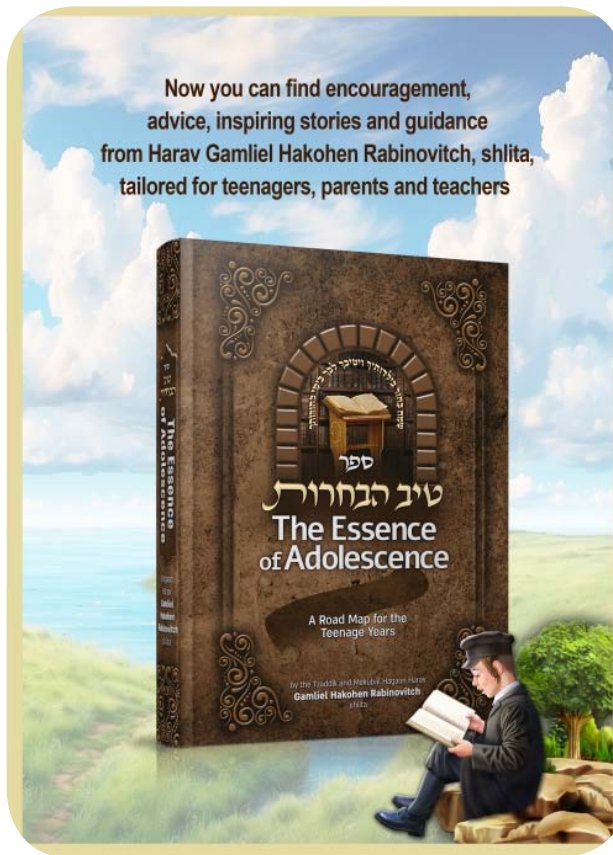
As an introduction to our words, it should be noted that these posukim speak about the generation of knowledge [Dor De'ah], regarding whose conduct and deeds we have no comprehension at all. And it is known what HaRav HaKadosh, the author of the Chiddushei HaRim zy"a, said—that from their sins Torah was made, whereas we have not merited to make Torah even from our mitzvos. Nevertheless, we are given permission to discuss their deeds even according to the smallness of our intellect, when our intention is to learn from them ways in the service of Hashem, for this is why they were written in our Torah. Behold, with a superficial view the words of Rashi appear puzzling, for even if it is a disgrace for Israel that they did not bring the Pesach all the years that they were in the wilderness, this is not apparent in the body of the command stated in the posukim before us. Also, in the other posukim in the parasha that speak about 'Pesach of the generations,' one does not seemingly find any hint to this occurrence and to its disgrace. And since the posukim do not touch upon the disgrace of Israel, why is there a need to delay them and conceal them? Furthermore, the posukim below speak in praise of Israel, that they held the mitzvah of Pesach in very high regard, and were meticulous to fulfill it properly in all its details and exactitudes. As the posuk states (9:5): "ויעשו את הפסח וגו' And they performed the Pesach... according to all that Hashem commanded Moshe, so did Bnei Yisrael." And afterward the posuk relates the great distress of those who were prevented from bringing the Pesach in its time, to the extent that their distress increased so greatly that they came before Moshe and Aharon to present their anguish, even though they saw no hope at all. It did not enter their minds that they would have any rectification after the proper time for bringing the Pesach, and nevertheless they could not bear to keep their anguish in the depths of their hearts and saw fit to pour out their pain before the leaders of the generation. And with all this standing before one who studies this parasha, how can one sense from it a disgrace of Israel?

Also, the very knowledge that they did not bring the Pesach of the generations throughout the forty years that they were in the wilderness does not indicate their disgrace, since they were not at all at fault in the matter, as is stated in the Gemara (Yevamos 72a), that this was because their sons were uncircumcised,

for they could not circumcise them while they were in the wilderness, since the healing northern wind was not present in the wilderness, and the circumcision involved danger. And in such a case, circumcision is prohibited, and as a result they were also forbidden from bringing and eating the Pesach—so what ‘disgrace’ applies here?

However, it can be said that דווקא מתוך גותן שבחן אתה מוצא גותן through their praise you find their disgrace. For since Bnei Yisrael saw that those who were impure through contact with a human soul merited the mitzvah of ‘Pesach Sheni’ only by virtue of their good will, they should have understood that even in situations where the obstacles to fulfilling a certain mitzvah are extremely strong, and one sees no solution at all for fulfilling it, HaKadosh Baruch Hu can fulfill that which is stated (Tehillim 145:19): ‘רצון יראיו יעשה’ - ‘He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him,’ and can provide ways how to fulfill it. If so, it would have been fitting that they too request from Moshe that he provide for them a way how to fulfill the Pesach.

Moreover, they should have learned a ‘kal vachomer’: if in a year when the essence of the mitzvah was fulfilled, HaKadosh Baruch Hu provided a way to fulfill it even for those who were prevented from being included with the כלל, all the more so would He provide a way in a time when it was not fulfilled at all. And if HaKadosh Baruch Hu provided a way for individuals to fulfill it, all the more so would He provide a way for the entire כלל to fulfill it. They also should have understood that if He had the ability to provide a way to fulfill it even in a situation where the impediment was due to the laws of the Torah, all the more so does He have the ability to provide a way to fulfill it



when only matters of nature prevent it, for the entire existence in the wilderness was by way of miracle.

And if nevertheless they did not turn to Moshe to request that Hashem provide them a way to fulfill the mitzvah of milah and Pesach, they demonstrated that they had not yet merited the proper measure of love, and therefore they did not have the strong desire to arouse satisfaction before Him in a manner of ‘kum v’asei’ - ‘arise and do.’ It was sufficient for them that its non-fulfillment was not considered a sin for them, and this is certainly considered a disgrace for them. And indeed, this is evident from the request of those impure through contact with a human soul, that this matter is stated as a continuation of that command.

And here the questioner will ask: how is such

a thing possible—that a year earlier the individuals were unable to bear their distress, and turned to Moshe and Aharon with the claim ‘Why should we be left out,’ and after a year it was already acceptable to all of Israel under the rule of ‘ones rachmana patrei’ – ‘the Torah exempts one in unavoidable circumstances’?

And it can be said according to what is accepted from Maran, the Baal Shem Tov zy”a, to explain the statement of Chazal (Shevuos 39a): ‘Israel are guarantors for one another,’ that they are mixed with one another. That is, if one of them stumbles in a sin, he arouses an inclination to that sin in all those connected to his root, and likewise one who exerts himself to fulfill a mitzvah arouses the desire to fulfill it in all those connected to his root. And according to this, it can well be said that in that year when Israel were commanded regarding the Pesach, those impure through contact with a human soul were also aroused to fulfill it, through the pure ones who were from their root, which is not the

case in the other years when they were not commanded regarding it at all.

And the lesson for generations from all the above is that the will of the Creator Baruch Hu, is not only in the fulfillment of the mitzvos because one is obligated in them, but rather in their fulfillment out of love of Hashem. And then he will also fulfill that which he is not obligated in, for his primary will and intention in fulfilling the mitzvos will be in order to arouse satisfaction before Him.

We must also exert ourselves in mitzvos to the extent of our ability, for in this way one draws forth a good will to all those connected to his root and merits them as well in the fulfillment of the mitzvos.

‘We will do and we will hear’

An elderly man of higher stature told Moreinu HaRav Gamliel the story as follows: “I got up one morning and my hearing aid fell to the floor. I wanted to pick it up, and by mistake I stepped on it and the device broke. Immediately I sat down to make a self-accounting: why did the hearing aid break? Then I remembered that at night I took my regular pills, and apparently, I confused the dosage and fell asleep immediately before I managed to recite Kriyas Shema on the bed. And measure for measure, HaKadosh Baruch Hu hinted to me about ‘Shema’ through the hearing aid. I repented for this, and I did not know how I would manage without the hearing aid. I remembered that two days earlier I had seen the old hearing aids, and I went to take them in the meantime until the new hearing aid would be repaired, but the batteries were dead. What does one do? I lifted my eyes to the heavens. As soon as I raised my eyes, I saw batteries in a crack of the cabinet. I checked, and they were for this device. Pesach and the cleaning had already passed, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu preserved the batteries for me in this crack for

‘נעשה ונשמע’

this time. But the most joyful part is that I was moved by HaKadosh Baruch Hu—how

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important my Kriyas Shema is in the eyes of Hashem, that He, Yisbarach, troubles Himself so much to break my hearing aid so that I should not miss Kriyas Shema anymore!!!” Rav Gamliel concluded the story and said: “I connect to the story, because I also have hearing aids, and I understand very well the distress when a hearing aid breaks or disappears. But the main message of the story is to learn how a Jew who serves Hashem must look at what happens to him. Instead of entering into a crisis, to enter into tremendous joy that Hashem loves me, and all service of Hashem that appears small in my eyes is great in the eyes of Hashem Yisbarach. And on the contrary, if Hashem awakens me immediately, it is a sign that He loves me. As it is written (Tehillim 16:8): ‘שיוויתי ה’ לנגדי תמיד’ - ‘I have set Hashem before me always’—when have I set Hashem, meaning when do I see Hashem? When it is before me always, that Hashem always shows me where I erred...”

Rashi explains (following the Sifrei): “And Aaron did so—to declare the praise of Aaron, that he did not deviate.”

The question is well known. What particular praise is there in saying that Aaron did not deviate from the command of Hashem? Especially when the Divine instruction was addressed to him explicitly—Speak to Aaron and say to him” (v. 2)—it would seem obvious that he would carry it out precisely as commanded, without the slightest alteration.

Yet the pasuk begins the parashah with the words, בְּהַעֲלֶתְךָ אֶת הַנְּדָוָה אֶל מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ וְגו' - When you light up the lamps, the lamps shall shine toward the front of the Menorah (v.2). The commentators ask: Aaron has not yet been commanded regarding the very obligation of lighting the Menorah. First there should have been a command to light the lamps; only afterward could the pasuk state that when he lights them, they should illuminate toward the front of the Menorah. The wording appears to assume a command that has not yet been stated—much like the question raised in the opening of Maseches Berachos (2a), “What does the tanna have in mind when he asks ‘From when?’”—here too one may ask: What is the intention of the pasuk when it states, when you light up?

A similar difficulty appears earlier, in the pesukim of Birchas Kohanim (6:23): כֹּה תְבַרְכוּ - So shall you bless the Bnei Yisrael; say to them... There too one may ask: The kohanim have not yet been commanded to bless Klal Yisrael at all. There should first be a command obligating them to bless, and only afterward instructions on how to do so. Again, the pasuk seems to be in the wrong place.

The same pattern appears later in this very parashah (8:6), קַח אֶת הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - Take the Levites from among Bnei Yisrael and only afterward does the pasuk clarify (v. 7), וְכֹה תַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְטַהָרֵם - And thus shall you do to them to purify them. This too requires explanation.

The answer given is that Aaron was already doing these things on his own initiative. We see this on the eighth day of the inauguration, when he assumed the kehunah (Vayikra 9:22), וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרָן אֶת יָדָיו אֶל הָעָם וַיְבָרֶכֶם - Aaron raised his hands toward the people and blessed them. Similarly, once the Mishkan had been erected for Divine service, and Aaron had been appointed kohen gadol, it followed naturally that he would light the Menorah as part of his sacred service.

Accordingly, the pasuk speaks here in a language of praise. Since you have already begun well, and since you are already blessing the people fittingly and properly—there remains only to instruct you in the precise manner of fulfilling the commandment, כֹּה

טיב המעשיות

In Praise of Aaron—He Did Not Deviate

וַיַּעַשׂ כִּן אֶהָרָן, אֶל מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ הָעֶלְיָה
נִרְתִּיתִי, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה (ת, ג).

And Aaron did so; facing the front of the Menorah he lit its lamps, just as Hashem had commanded Moses (8:3)

So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael. Likewise, since you are already lighting and elevating the lamps of the Menorah, this is indeed good and proper—only that when you raise those lamps, see to it that they shine toward the front of the Menorah.

Human nature being what it is, when a person acts on his own initiative and then receives praise and affirmation from the king—who strengthens his hand and confirms that he has aligned with the royal will—the heart can easily grow proud and think, “See the king agrees with me, and even adds instructions to refine my actions.”

Therefore, the pasuk declares the praise of Aaron and testifies about him that he did not deviate. He did not change from the way he had acted before the command of, When you light up the lamps. Just as previously he performed his service quietly, humbly, between himself and his Creator—without any acclaim or endorsement—so too afterward, once commanded, he continued in the same humility and lowliness of spirit as before. This is the meaning of, “to declare the praise of Aaron, that he did not deviate.”

When the saintly gaon Rav Baruch Te'omim-Frankel, author of Baruch Taam, was appointed to the rabbinate of the great city of Leipnik—a city filled with talmidei chachamim and sofrim—a grand reception was held in his honor in the main beis haknesses, as was customary, with the participation of the entire community. It was a magnificent occasion that left a deep impression upon the townspeople, who beheld the stature of their new rav; a towering scholar, God-fearing, renowned for Torah and piety.

The community committee provided the Rav and his family with a large, spacious home near his great yeshivah in the city center, befitting a leader of Klal Yisrael. They also appointed a special attendant to serve him and his household in all their needs.

One of the first days after the Rav moved into the house—while he was still unfamiliar with all the rooms and the placement of things—he asked the new attendant to bring him his lulke tsibach, or pipe. In those days it was customary to smoke using a special pipe filled

with fine tobacco leaves, which were ignited and drawn through the narrow mouthpiece. In earlier generations, in Yiddish, this pipe was called lulke tsibach.

The attendant immediately ran through the house, searching until he found the pipe. He brought it in with due respect, placed it gently before the Rav, and began preparing it for use: he opened the pouch of tobacco leaves, crumbled them into the wide bowl of the pipe, lit the small coal beneath the tobacco, and handed it to the Rav.

As he presented the pipe, releasing its fragrant smoke, the attendant smiled slightly and remarked that the term lulke tsibach was no longer considered so “acceptable” in modern times. In earlier generations, he explained, rabbanim and laymen used that name—but in the great city of Leipnik it was no longer appropriate. The younger people now used a more “advanced” term; in the language of the state it was called a pipa, or colloquially lulke reyvhern. It would be worthwhile, he suggested, for the Rav to become familiar with contemporary language.

When the Rav heard these words, his expression grew grave. He turned to the attendant and reproved him with burning conviction: Chas veshalom! I am not prepared to deviate from the tradition I received from my forefathers—not even so small a change as the name of a smoking pipe. Just as we called it lulke tsibach, and as our fathers before us called it, so shall it remain upon our lips. The language our parents used at home is appropriate for us as too!

As he spoke, the Rav grew deeply agitated. He rose from his seat and declared firmly: I am prepared, this very moment, to leave the entire rabbinate if holding it would require me to change even the slightest thing from what has been handed down to me. Better that I return to the old shtetl—the small town—so long as I need not alter even the smallest detail of what I saw, heard, and received from the house of my fathers and my teachers.

After the passing of the Baruch Taam to the World of Truth, his sons and sons-in-law once sat together with his disciples, speaking of the greatness of his genius and righteousness, each recounting stories of his extraordinary sanctity and Torah stature. Some described certain accounts as reflecting his highest and most wondrous qualities.

When this particular story—the matter of the lulke tsibach upon his appointment to Leipnik—was recounted, his illustrious son-in-law, the saintly author of Divrei Chaim of Sanz, suddenly became animated and said, “It seems to me that precisely this small incident, which appears to you as a simple story, reveals his greatest virtue and the fiery sanctity that burned within

him—the unwavering resolve to cling with strength and devotion to the path of ancestral tradition. His readiness to relinquish the entire rabbinate for this teaches true self-sacrifice: that we must be prepared to give up everything rather than alter even the tiniest jot of the customs of our holy forebears.”

Rav Shneur Kotler zt”l, rosh yeshivah of Beis Midrash Gevoah in the distinguished city of Lakewood, related an episode from the period following the establishment of the renowned yeshivah by his father, the saintly gaon Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l, author of Mishnas Rav Aharon. As is well known, this was at the very dawn of the rebuilding of the Torah world and the world of yeshivos in the United States, when American Jewry was still unaccustomed to seeing young men devoted exclusively to the study of the holy Torah.

When Rav Aharon founded his yeshivah, he did so in precisely the same form and framework as had been customary in the European yeshivos before the Holocaust, exactly as he had known and practiced during his tenure as head of the Slabodka Yeshivah in Kletsk, under the leadership of his illustrious father-in-law, the gaon Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer zt”l, author of Even Ha’ezel, disciple of the great founder of the Brisker method, Rav Chaim of Brisk zt”l. The local American Jewish community did not look kindly upon this. They rose up in opposition to him and to his approach. In the newspapers of that era, they protested sharply, claiming that his path would, indirectly but inevitably, lead to the destruction of Torah Judaism in America.

They argued that the elderly gaon of the “old generation” had succeeded in recruiting barely one hundred and twenty students for his yeshivah, precisely because he failed to understand or accommodate the needs of the “new generation,” who wished to combine Torah study with modern academic and vocational training in order to earn a livelihood. He should have established a yeshivah that incorporated a “university” component, they claimed—half the day devoted to sacred studies and half to secular studies—and in this way he would supposedly “save” American Jewry.

Yet, Rav Shneur concluded, only a few years passed before all those opponents stood astonished and bewildered at the mighty kingdom of Torah that Lakewood had built, to the glory of the Torah world and to the glory of Klal Yisrael. Then all came to recognize the righteousness of the path of the great Rav Aharon, the helmsman of Torah Jewry in the United States: not to

change anything whatsoever from the tradition handed down to us by our holy teachers of previous generations, from whose mouths we live and from whose waters we drink. The tens of thousands—generation after generation—of Torah scholars, God-fearing and wholesome Jews produced by the Lakewood Yeshivah testify clearly that the truest and most beautiful success for Klal Yisrael does not lie in novelties and constant change, but in that well-trodden and faithful path transmitted to us—the path of Torah, given to us generation after generation, back to Moshe Rabbeinu at Sinai.

In light of this introduction, how sweet and fitting are the lucid words of the saintly Rebbe, the author of Vayoel Moshe of Satmar zt”l, who applied Rashi’s words here to that gaon and tzaddik, Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l: “to declare the praise of Aaron”—that is, this Aaron—“that he did not deviate,” when he stood firm with unwavering strength, like a flinty rock, refusing to alter anything from the Torah tradition entrusted to us. Through this steadfastness, he merited to magnify the Torah and make it glorious.

The illustrious Rav Chaim Chezekiah Medini zt”l, known by the acronym Chacham, author of Sdei Chemed, was born in the holy city of Jerusalem, and later served as rav of the community of Krasov Bazar in the province of Crimea. Most members of the community were of Sephardic origin, though there were also many Ashkenazim. The Rav was beloved by all segments of the population, and already in his lifetime his name spread far and wide; countless halakhic inquiries were sent to him from Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora.

In his time, the *haskalah* movement began to spread, and from time to time its adherents altered sacred Jewish customs. Their crooked method was well known: they would begin by belittling and disparaging customs, claiming that these were “mere customs” and not matters of law, unworthy of self-sacrifice. In this way they weakened the people’s attachment to ancestral tradition and gradually led them astray, step by step, down winding paths of deviation.

One of the customs the *maskilim* sought to change concerned the location of the wedding canopy. As is known, customs differ in this matter: Sephardic communities traditionally conduct the *chuppah* indoors, whereas Ashkenazim hold it outdoors, under the open sky. [See Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha’ezel 55:1 and the commentaries there.]

Those *maskilim* who had emerged from Ashkenaz and Germany brazenly altered the accepted practice and began conducting weddings indoors, decorating halls lavishly and adding musical instruments and the like. Many

Jews followed in their wake, especially the youth, drawn by the allure of modernity.

At the time, the Sdei Chemed fought them like a lion, with all his holy strength. He stood proudly in the breach, refusing to permit weddings to be conducted indoors—or even in a *beis knesses*—and he elaborated extensively on this in his great work Sdei Chemed (Vol. 7, Chasan Ve’kallah), recording a wide-ranging correspondence with the leading *Gedolim* of his generation on this issue.

On one occasion, the Sdei Chemed was called upon to officiate at a wedding in his city. As the official *mara d’asra* this honor belonged to him for all weddings conducted there. The families involved were Ashkenazim, but since it was a bitterly cold winter day, with heavy rainstorms raging outside, they erected the *chuppah* indoors, reasoning that this would spare the guests from soaking rain, mud, and cold.

They assumed innocently that the Rav would not object, since most weddings in the city—being Sephardic—were held indoors anyway, and the rabbi himself was Sephardic. They therefore set up the canopy inside the hall and awaited the Rav’s arrival.

When the Rav entered and saw the *chuppah* standing indoors, his anger flared. He knew well that the families were Ashkenazim, whose custom was to conduct the *chuppah* outdoors, and he immediately ordered that the canopy be dismantled and re-erected outside, under the open sky—amid the driving rain.

The family was offended and pleaded that it was impossible to bring the guests out into such a storm. After all, they argued, this was the local custom for most residents, and even the rabbi himself usually officiated indoors. Why insist so forcefully on what was “only” a custom, when the marriage would be fully valid in any case?

But the Rav paid no heed to their entreaties. He declared unequivocally that if the *chuppah* were not held outdoors, in accordance with law and custom, there would be no wedding that evening. “I do not negotiate with the Rema zt”l!” he concluded.

By virtue of his Rabbinic authority, he had the power to halt the entire proceedings. Not only did the honor of officiating belong to him exclusively, but the marriage itself required his authorization and certification. The family had no choice. They dismantled the canopy and set it up once more beneath the open sky, as the Rav demanded.

The Rav then conducted the wedding properly and joyfully, with profound happiness over the fortification of the wall of faith and the *Kiddush Hashem* achieved through this act. The incident became widely known throughout the city.

All learned from it a powerful lesson: to be vigilant and careful not to alter even the slightest detail of Israel’s customs—to change nothing from the ways of our fathers and mothers.