



All Wrapped Up in Mitzvot

“Like an eagle protecting its nest, G-d spreads His wings over us...”
(The song of Ha’azinu).

In this crazy-busy world of ours – forget about so-called “time-saving” devices, we’re busier now than our previous generations ever were! – we struggle to find a “safe space” (sorry for using those overused buzz-words) to just be calm and peaceful. A place to let our minds roam free as we pause and think – just plain think – about the magnificent, multi-dimensional world around us, our place in it, and G-d.

I once asked Rav Shlomo Carlebach – a man who was perpetually on the move and surrounded by fans and friends – where he goes when he wants “private time.” Where is his “escape room” where he can be alone with his thoughts? He pondered for a moment and said, “My one and only refuge from this all-too-invasive and intrusive world is when I am completely wrapped up in my *tallit!*”

The *tallit* is one of four *mitzvot* that completely surround us from all sides so that, in a sense, we are “swallowed up” by the *mitzvah*. There is the *mikvah* too, of course, in which we immerse our whole body, and the *sukkah*, which also totally envelops us, and is the closest thing we can experience to the *Ananei Kavod*, the Clouds of Glory, the impenetrable, Heavenly wall that kept *Bnei Yisrael* safe in the desert.



In my *sukkah*, I am the Prince of my Castle (G-d, of course, remains the King!). Cozy (I prefer that to small) and constructed by our own hands, we can sit in the great outdoors, under the stars, and contemplate nature, escaping from the rush-rush-rush of ‘normal’ everyday existence. The decibel level has dropped, the spiritual level has risen, and somehow – despite its temporary structure – I feel safe there. I feel that G-d is squeezed right in here with me.

The fourth *mitzvah* in which we can be completely immersed is living in *Eretz Yisrael*. The moment we fulfill this glorious, foundational commandment and come to Israel, its *Kedusha* encircles us as if G-d is whispering, “You are home. You are safe in your *Sukkat Shalom!*”

Ironically, the *sukkah* was once a symbol of our national homelessness, as we moved from place to place through the desert on our epic journey to the Holy Land. We quickly assembled and disassembled our makeshift quarters, and headed to the next stop on the map, wandering and wondering when that long voyage would come to an end. Historically, it would continue for a long, long time throughout the Diaspora.

But now we are home, finally and forever. Wrapped in my *tallit*, sitting comfortably in my *sukkah* in the *re-Jew-venated* State of Israel, I can close my eyes as the *mitzvot* wash over me and I rhetorically ask, “Could it get any better than this?!”

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