

I'm sure you have heard the ancient Jewish joke about a husband and wife who decide to divorce after 65 years of marriage. The judge asks, "After all these years, why would you want to get divorced now?" And one of them responds, "Because, your Honor, enough is enough."

I think our sages wanted to teach us that very lesson, but as I see it, it is not the primary thing they want us to learn. So tonight I will explain how they taught us that enough is enough (aside from the truism that x always equals x), what I think our sages wanted us to take from that lesson, and then I will share what I believe to be the deeper level of understanding they wanted us to reach.

When was the last time you felt enough was enough? For me, I'm feeling it now. Why eight (or seven) days of Pesach? Why not just one or two? You don't have to eat matzah any more. That's only a mitzvah on the first night according to the Torah. The rabbis added the second day

of Yuntiff outside of the land of Israel (don't get me started on that one now), so OK, two nights we have to eat matzah. The rest of the holiday we can forgo matzah entirely. We just cannot eat *chametz*. So around this point, the middle of Pesach, I begin feeling like enough is enough. I just picked up my brother from the airport this afternoon, and one of our favorite things to do is eat out. This visit, no eating out at all because of Pesach. Enough is enough.

Sukkot. Sukkot is pretty nice here in Indiana. In Florida, it's not so nice. There are some bugs as big as your fist, and others so small they fit through screens—the ones called noseems, because you can't see them. One night in the sukkah, fine—it's been a year since we were last in one, so the first night is fun. By the end of the week, with the bugs having feasted on Jews more than the Jews feast on their meals, everyone agrees—enough is enough.

And finally, shiva. Many people shorten it. Those who observe the full shiva tend to find themselves more than ready to return to their routines when shiva ends. Shorten it to two or three days, and you might not reach that point. Observe all seven, and there will likely be at least a part of you that says when it comes to staying in the house all the time, enough is enough.

So there are three examples of our rabbinic sages pushing us to the point of saying enough is enough. Why? When it comes to Pesach, I believe it is to teach us that we owe our freedom to our ancestors doing much more than inconveniencing themselves for a night or two. In fact, it turned out to be forty years. And during that time, how frequently were they ready to give up and turn back to the familiarity of slavery? How often were they ready to say “enough is enough” in the desert? But for them, that was not an option. Rather than just remember what they went through, God tries to give us a little taste of it.

The same with Sukkot. Thank God, the rabbis said we don't have to stay in our sukkot in the rain, but our ancestors did. They did not have one week of swelling in a flimsy, temporary home, and they could not say enough is enough and go back inside. We get to experience a bit of that.

And shiva, I believe, is to show us that even at a time when we might feel that nothing will ever be the same again, there is another part of us that longs to return to our routines, even if we return as someone different from the persons we were the week before. The feeling of enough is enough at the end of shiva teaches us that we can and will heal over time.

As I said in my introduction, I think there is a deeper lesson our rabbis wanted us to take from this. We are told that beginnings are always difficult. There is truth to that.

But the opposite is also true. It is difficult to learn a new skill, for example. But which is easier to show up for—your second or third day at the gym, or your 2,000 or 3,000 day? Maybe you think the 3,000 day is easier because it has become a habit. *Af mir gezukt*—it should be said about me. For me, the challenge is keeping that commitment over many days, weeks, months, and years. Beginnings are difficult, but sustained discipline over long periods of time is no picnic either.

So yes, I admit it—I am tired of matzah and ready for chametz. But no chametz for me—not until Wednesday morning, because Tuesday night's chametz was baked during Pesach. Jews and Judaism have survived because we have mastered the discipline of sustained commitment over time, at least with regard to religion if not with regard to treadmills. Our rabbis were wise to teach us this important lesson, and your rabbi is wise enough to end

this sermon now. Because when it comes to sermons, like everything else in life, enough is enough.