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Original artwork & a Carlebach story to shake up your Shabbat Sukkot!

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"The Bakers"

Louis Teitelbaum '15 | BronfmanTorah | Sukkot & Shemini Atzeret 2015

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The story is my own retelling from my favorite Jewish storybook, *Lamed Vav: A Collection of the Favorite Stories of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*. It's called, "The Bakers."

The son of the *heilige* (holy) Apter Rov, Rabbi Avraham Joshua Heschel of Apt (Rabbi AJ Heschel's great-great-grandfather) received weekly money from his father in order to spend his time studying Torah. One day, the son asked his father how the Jews of Germany manage to live without such great *gedolim* (figureheads) as lived in Poland. The Rebbe just said, "you'll see."

The next week, the Rebbe's son received no money. He didn't the next week, either. Finally, he arranged a meeting with his father. The Apter Rov told him to get a job and see the world for himself. He advised a business plan to buy etrogs in Italy and sell them in Germany. The son was devastated that he would have to be away from his father for the *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe). At least he would be back for Sukkot, he thought.

The son followed his father's advice, and the business went very well. Just as he was about to set off for home from Germany, though, it began to rain. The rain continued, making travel impossible. He would have to spend the first part of Sukkot in Germany. He was miserable throughout services the first night, and was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he missed

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everyone going home. It seemed he would have no Sukkah to stay the night in.

Just then, a man walked into the shul. He was dressed in rags and covered in flour. The man began davening. He did everything wrong. He said the entire service out of order and mispronounced most of the words. The Rebbe's son could barely stop himself from laughing, but he knew this was his last chance, so he approached the baker as he was leaving.

"I'm sorry, but I have nowhere to stay for the Chag. Do you have a spare place in your Sukkah?"
"Of course. I don't have much, but you're welcome to share."

The baker's Sukkah was barely standing. It was perched on top of a decrepit house, and shook violently with each gust of wind. Through dinner, the son barely paid attention, except to help the man find his page in the siddur. *He couldn't help thinking of his father's Sukkah back home - So strong, so elegant, so holy. To think he had to spend Sukkos in such a place!*

When it came time for the *ushpizin* (Sukkot guests), the baker stood up and, fumbling with the words, managed to invite Avraham Avinu as a guest to the Sukkah. A minute later, they heard steps. A man walked in, dressed the same as the baker, covered in flour.

The baker exclaimed, "I'm so happy you could come!"
He turned to the Rebbe's son: "This is my dear friend Avraham, the baker!"
The son barely noticed. He was immersed in his dream of Sukkot in Apt with his holy father, and the chasidim dancing around...

The next night was the same. The son was miserable, and when the baker invited in Yitzchak, our holy father, more steps sounded at the door. Another baker walked in, this one taller than the first.

"This is my friend Yitzchak the baker!"

The son couldn't wait for the Yom Tov to be over. As soon as it was, he rode as fast as he could back to Apt so he could be home for the second part of the holiday. He was overjoyed when he got back, but as soon as he set eyes on the *heilige* Rebbe, he opened his eyes. He suddenly realized his mistake. Those wretched bakers had in reality been the holy forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, and he had just sat there sulking! He hadn't even bothered to listen to their conversation or talk to them at all!

His father smiled, "*You know, it is possible to sit, mamash, in a place of utmost holiness, and not even be there!*"

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