

## **A Mitzvah in Hand**

**Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by HaRav Chaim Weg**

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<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Rabbi-Weg-Parshas-Bo-5784-.mp3>

*You shall safeguard the matzos, for on this very day I will have taken your legions out of the land of Mitzrayim...*

Shmos 12:17

Rashi, quoting Chazal, interprets “*ushmartem es hamatzos*” homiletically as “*ushmartem es hamitzvos*.” Just as dough kneaded into matzah must be safeguarded to prevent it from rising, a mitzvah opportunity must be safeguarded and not allowed to pass. One may not even bypass a mitzvah for another mitzvah (*ein ma’avirin al hamitzvos*): The Biur Halacha says that one who inadvertently removes his tfillin from the bag before his tallis should don the tfillin first, despite the embarrassment involved if others are watching.

The Chayei Adam (1:68), who maintains that this rule is *mide’Oreisa*, says there are three exceptions:

- One may bypass a mitzvah in order to watch another mitzvah performed *berov am* (with a large group of people).
- One may temporarily bypass a mitzvah in order to fulfill it in its preferred manner (mitzvah *min hamuvchar*) a little later. For example, the Trumas Hadeshen allows waiting a few days until *motza’ei* Shabbos to recite kiddush *levanah*, because saying it dressed in one’s Shabbos finery is a mitzvah *min hamuvchar*.
- If one can either perform a lower-level mitzvah now or a higher-level mitzvah a day or two later, he should wait.

A man is incarcerated two days before Yom Kippur and is offered a 24-hour furlough on any day of his choosing. In prison, there are certain mitzvos to which he lacks access. Should he take the furlough immediately to do the mitzvos he is obligated to perform right now, or should he hold off and have a proper Yom Kippur in shul? The Chayei Adam, following his third exception, says to wait, but the Radbaz says that *ein ma’avirin al hamitzvos* directs that he should fulfill the current mitzvah rather than forgo it in favor of a greater one down the road. The Mishnah Brurah rules with the Radbaz.