



זכרון יחזקאל

# PIRCHEI Weekly

## Agudas Yisroel of America

Oct 25, 2014 - תשע"ד - א' מרחשון, תשע"ד - Vol: 2 Issue: 1



**פרשה: נח - הכפרה:** כה אמר ה' השמים כסאי (ישעיהו טו:א-כד)  
**ב' דר"ח מרחשון:** [מפסיר: במדבר כח:ט-טו] **דף יומי:** יבמות כ"א - **משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם** (מתחילין ותן טל ומטר בא"י בלילו')

### Torah Thoughts

*I am about to destroy them* (בְּרֹאשֵׁית וַיִּגַּע) ...וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתֵם...

מי שפָּרַע מדור המבול הוא עֲתִיד לִפְרַע מִמִּי (בְּבֹא מִצִּיָּא מו:). גְּמָרָא מֵי שְׂאִינוּ עוֹמֵד בְּדִיבּוּרָא — *The one who punished the Generation of the Flood will also punish a person who does not keep his word.* R' Yitzchok Zilberstein (son-in-law of R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv נִצְיִיל) asks, why is this so? What is the similarity between the דוֹר הַמַּבּוּל and a person who does not keep his promises?

explain that those who lived at the time of the דוֹר הַמַּבּוּל wanted to escape criminal punishment. They would steal insignificant items that were worth less than a penny — a sum so minimal that one cannot be prosecuted for its theft in court. Therefore, only דִּי, Who rewards for even the most minimal gain in personal growth, will punish those who cause even a minimal pain accordingly.

There are many important lessons to learn from the מַבּוּל, but the one eternal message that is listed in the תּוֹרָה as the direct cause of the entire destruction of the world is the seriousness of even a small act of חֶקֶס — a petty and insignificant robbery. If a small, seemingly insignificant act of petty robbery is the cause of such destruction, imagine the unlimited reward that awaits a person for returning a fellow Jew to his Jewish heritage.

This year, שְׁבַת פְּרֻשֶׁת נַח is being designated as an international day of rest, even for those Jews who are being exposed to the beauty of שְׁבַת for the first time. Even if our guests will come away with just

a seemingly minor gain, the reward we reap will be far greater than creating an entire universe. After all, every individual is an entire world unto himself and many of his decisions and actions will affect all his future generations until the coming of מִשִּׁיחַ.

In Rav Pam נִצְיִיל points out an interesting thought from the מִסֵּית וּמְדִיחַ, a wicked person who attempted to persuade his fellow Jew to turn away from his heritage and to worship idols. The מִסֵּית וּמְדִיחַ was unsuccessful in his attempt. We learn this from the fact that the intended target of his efforts is the witness in the case. He is tried in the בֵּית דִּין, and if he is found guilty of attempting to persuade his fellow Jew to turn away from his heritage, he will be punished with the highest level of punishment — סָקִילָה, *stoning*. We are also told something unusual that is not normally done in other cases of מִיתַת בֵּית דִּין, *death sentence imposed by a Jewish court of law*: we must not try to look for a redeeming factor after the verdict and death sentence have been issued.

Says Rav Pam, if this is the very harsh punishment for someone who was unsuccessful in his evil attempt to persuade his fellow Jew to turn away from דִּי, imagine how great will be the rewards in the next world for someone who tried to assist an unaffiliated Jew to find his Creator, even though he was totally unsuccessful.

Adapted from: עליט לשבא — Aleinu L'shabei'ach (with kind permission from ArtScroll)



### Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

**ד' חשוון**  
**5666 - 5743**  
**1906 - 1982**

was born in Malat, Poland, to ר' אֶרְיָה זָאב (לייב) נִצְיִיל, ר' מִשֶׁה אֶהֱרָר, ר' מִשֶׁה אֶהֱרָר, the town of, and רייכל Kushielsky. At מַצָּנָה age, he left home to learn in Vilkomir, Lithuania. After 1½ years, ר' לייב joined מיר קְשִׁיבַת מִיר (Vilna), but had to 'fix' his passport [לְשֵׁם אִמּוֹן, Gurwicz], and went to Baronovitz. For the next year he learned with ר' אֶלְחָנָן בּוֹנִים וְסָרְמֵן הִי"ד as a תַּלְמִיד/תַּלְמִידָה, R' Elya Lopian's daughter. In 1932, he was engaged to לִבְיָא, R' Elya Lopian's daughter. Due to the פְּטִירָה of R' Elya's wife, ר' לייב moved to UK, where he became a מְגִיד שְׂעוֹר in קְשִׁיבַת עֵץ חַיִּים and רב in the East End. In 1948, he became the legendary רֹאשׁ קְשִׁיבַת of Gateshead. He served as נְשִׂיאַת for many years. In 1978, he remarried to מְלַכָּה Isbee. His מְאֻזְרֵי שְׂעָרִים and אֶזְרָא דְּבֵי רַב, רֹאשֵׁי שְׂעָרִים, סְפָרִים, are classics.

### Gedolim Glimpses

The Brisker רב took an exceptional liking to ר' לייב, נִצְיִיל Gurwicz and would say, *"R' Leib can [really] learn!"* ר' מִיר, מִשְׁנֵיחַ of מִיר, ר' אֶלְיָהוּ told ר' לֵוִיִּץ, נִצְיִיל Levovitz ר' יִרְחָם, לִיבֵלְעַי, "Go to the בְּרִיסקָר רַב, ask for מְאֻלְאָטֵר [which is how ר' לייב was known in קְשִׁיבַת]. He is the עֵלְוִי you seek. You will find in this בְּחוֹר more בְּתוֹרָה and עֲנִיוּת, גְּדֻלוֹת בְּתוֹרָה than in any other!" This sufficed for ר' אֶלְיָהוּ, who later referred to his son-in-law as a living מְסִילַת שְׂעָרִים.



Dedication opportunities are available. If you would like to sponsor or receive this publication via email, please send an email to [pircheiweekly@agudathisrael.org](mailto:pircheiweekly@agudathisrael.org)

לְעִינֵי הַבַּיִת יִחְזָקָל עֵינָהּ בֶּן יִבְלַחֲטִיא לֵיבֵי נִי  
לְעִינֵי הַבַּיִת יִשְׁעִיהוּ דּוֹב עֵינָהּ בֶּן יִבְלַחֲטִיא יִצְחָק צְבִי נִי

# Living with the Torah

## Resilience and Resolve

... on that very day... (בְּרֵאשִׁית זֶה יוֹם)

... בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ...

On the very day נח entered the תִּבְנָה... The people of the generation wanted to stop him and threatened to kill him. די said, "I will show you all that he is going into the תִּבְנָה, and we will see whose word will be fulfilled!" (רָשִׁי י)

נח was taught the מִדָּה of being כְּנֶמֶר, bold like a leopard — to perform the will of די and disregard the scoffers and evil people of the world who vigorously try to stop us from doing the will of די.

\*

The following incident was told by Reb Shlomo Brevda זצ"ל, who heard it from Rebbetzin Greineman, the Steipler Rebbetzin's sister.

Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky זצ"ל was about to become engaged to the Chazon Ish's sister. But before the שְׂדוּךָ was finalized, he felt that it was important that he share with her an incident that had taken place while he was in Siberia.

The forced labor in Siberia was backbreaking. In addition to the bitter cold and blinding snow, the actual labor required sheer brute force. The Steipler Gaon had been inducted into the army against his will; yet, regardless of the terrible conditions and the impossible work, he knew in his heart that only one task mattered — serving the Master of the world.

One of the first obstacles the Steipler had to overcome was the army system itself. The army dictated that everyone must work seven days a week. To the Steipler this was absolutely unacceptable. He approached the officer in charge, a brutal, anti-Semitic, evil person, and asked that he be granted a furlough every שַׁבָּת. The official paused for a moment and answered that he would grant the request on one condition: the Steipler first had to prove himself to be a valiant warrior.

He quickly ordered his men to form two rows and arm themselves with truncheons. The Steipler watched the soldiers move into

formation and heard the words of the evil officer, "Kanievsky, here is the deal ... If you are able to make it through these lines and survive the blows from my officers, then you may rest on your Sabbath. However, if you don't ..." His voice trailed off, and he laughed. Clearly he was enjoying his little game.

The Steipler did not flinch. Instead, he whispered a quiet, heartfelt prayer to help him survive this difficult test. He knew that he could give up and the game would be over. But if he admitted defeat, then his attempt to be released from working on שַׁבָּת would have failed. The guards motioned to their commanding officer that they were ready; the officer and his comrades then stood back to watch the fun.

The Steipler approached the path and murmured one last plea. He held his hand over his head and ran between the rows of guards. With all their might they began to pummel him and beat him incessantly. The pain was unbearable, but the Steipler persisted and kept trudging forward. Blood trickled into his eyes but he continued on. Step by step the Steipler inched ahead until, finally, he reached the end of the treacherous path. He collapsed at the finish line. Nobody offered to help the Steipler get up from the ground, but it did not matter because he had survived. As he lay there, a smile formed on his lips. He had won. He was in incredible pain — but he had won! The שַׁבָּת was still holy and he would be able to observe it. The commanding officer grudgingly informed him that he would not have to work on Saturday.

The Steipler finished recounting his tale to his בְּלָה. He explained that this was his level of מַסִּירֵת נַפְשׁ.

"The blows were painful, but I was happy to have had the privilege to suffer for the sake of the שַׁבָּת." He then asked if she was prepared to join him in his continuous sacrifice for תּוֹרָה. She replied that she was, and they became הִתְוַךְ and בְּלָה.

Adapted from: Touched By a Story (ArtScroll)

## Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע ככלל ה' סעיף ד'

"During recess, the discussion among the seventh-grade boys turned to the topic of the different דְּרָשׁוֹת that the various boys had attended this year on שַׁבַּת הַקָּדוֹל. Yanky made an interesting observation about the new דְּרָשָׁה ס'רָב. "Yes, his שְׁעוֹר was really lomdish and very גַּעֲשֵׂמָאק," he told his חֲבֵרִים, "but it wasn't typical. He must have really prepared long and hard for this דְּרָשָׁה. He's not at all the lomdishe type and is only known to be good in דְּרָוֶשׁ!"

Why is Yanky's closing remark considered הֲרַע לְשׁוֹן הָרַע?

\*Stories adapted from Guard Your Tongue, A Daily Companion, A Lesson a Day and various real-life situations.  
 Answer: Yanky's comment, even though it may be true, can have the negative effect of lowering the esteem of the בר כבוד in the eyes of others. This, in turn, leads to a lessening of respect for דָּוָד. In fact, it is a lesson in "weakness," when this is not for a constructive purpose, is אָבִיב לְשׁוֹן.

## Questions of the week

- From where do we learn the concept that one should only say מְקַצֵּת שְׂבָחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם בְּאֵיזוֹ?
- What was another name for שְׂוָה, which alludes to several of her many outstanding qualities?

1. The root is שָׁוָה, which means to see or gaze. This alludes to both her beauty and her nobility, as does her name שְׂוָה.
2. The root is שָׁוָה, which means to see or gaze. This alludes to both her beauty and her nobility, as does her name שְׂוָה.

1. The second בְּרָכָה of מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ and since rain is referred to as גְּבוּרַת ה', we add מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ in the second בְּרָכָה.
2. One who remembers neglecting to say מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ before ending the בְּרָכָה of מִחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים should say מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ at the place that he is up to when he realizes the error.

\*Since we only discuss 1-3 halachot, it is important to consider these halachot in the context of the bigger picture. Use them as a starting point for further in-depth study.

## Halacha Corner

הלכות עניני דיומא  
 משיב הרוח  
 ומוריד הגשם

## Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,  
 The father of R' Leib Gurwitz זצ"ל ר' משה אהרן, זצ"ל Gurwitz Kushelevsky, was a descendant of a long line of מלמדים, teachers, and was the town's רב. His mother, מרת רייכלעיה, was a direct descendant of the Vilna Gaon, a reason that accounted for R' Leib adopting many of the מנהגי הגר"א.

R' Leib once told a young grandchild that, although he does not remember very much from his own childhood years, there was one episode, which must be his earliest childhood memory, that he will always cherish. He recalled that as a young child, his mother made him a special cake for his חנוכה (or סדור) סיום. The family lived in impoverished circumstances. However, the delight his mother showed by baking the small cake stayed etched in his memory forever.

In a similar vein, R' Leib's father recognized his young son's potential and was very anxious for him to learn in the Lithuanian ישיבות. Unfortunately, Malat was in Poland and the countries of Poland and Lithuania were on the brink of war. Travel between the two

countries was illegal and extremely dangerous.

On a cold winter morning, R' Leib boarded the horse and cart that would take him to the border. Once there, he would need to slip undetected into Poland. Before saying goodbye, ר' משה אהרן took off his only coat and handed it to his son. R' Leib protested. "How can I take your coat when I know that you will suffer in the cold?" His father responded, "I have already learned in ישיבה and am no longer in the early stages of growth in תורה like you are. Therefore, you are the one who deserves the coat..."

My תלמיד, a meaningful gesture can be as small as a tasty piece of cake or as large as giving away the only protection from the cold Russian winters. However, such gestures are far more powerful than any שמועס. R' Leib internalized his parents' אהבת התורה, which he tenderly transmitted to his children and תלמידים.

יְהִי זְכוֹר בְּרוּךְ

רבי Your, בגנידות

Story adapted from: Sunset (Hanoch Teller) and other sources



## Understanding Davening

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם

Who makes the wind blow and makes the rain descend

explains (ברכות לג.) that we mention גבורות גשמים, the Strength of Rainfall, in the ברכה of תחיית המתים because rainfall can be compared to revival of the dead. The similarity between the effect of rain and תחיית המתים is quite obvious. When a seed is placed into the ground, it first disintegrates. When it becomes saturated with rain, it begins to develop and sprout from the earth. An apple tree, capable of producing thousands of apples, can develop from the decaying seed of a rotten apple. Similarly, when a human body is placed into the ground, it first disintegrates, but at תחיית המתים it will come to life again: ומצמיח ישועה, He causes the ultimate salvation, ותחיית המתים, to sprout forth from the ground.

לעיני ר' משה צבי בן הר"י טוביה הלוי זצ"ל



## This Week in History

5623 / 1862 - Yahrtzeit of R' Abraham Joseph Rice, who was born in Gagsheim, near Wurzburg, Bavaria, in 1802. He first studied under R' Abraham Bing, the Chief Rabbi of Wurzburg, who had learned under R' Nossan Adler at Frankfurt, together with the רבנות סופר. R' Rice continued learning in the ישיבה of R' Wolf Hamburger, who bitterly fought the growth of Reform in Germany with uncompromising zeal. Indeed, it was his רבני influence that guided him in fighting the Reform in the US. He became a תלמיד מובהק of R' Hamburger, received סמיכה from him, and corresponded with him even when in the US.

In 1840 Rabbi Rice's רבנים prevailed upon him to go to America as the country's first rabbi with סמיכה. He arrived in New York late in 1840, finding total chaos. There were no qualified rabbis in the country at all, yet thousands of Jews were already living in the US, and every boat brought new arrivals. After a short stint in Newport, RI, he became the first Orthodox rabbi in Nidchei Israel, the first shul in Baltimore.

He received halachic questions from all over the country dealing with a variety of problems. As the first rabbi in the US, R' Rice was also asked to establish precedents in the writing of the names of various cities for כתובות and גטין. In spite of all his efforts, the rising tide of Reform could not be stemmed. Even within his own shul in Baltimore there were demands for changes. Rather than compromise his principles, he resigned from his position in 1849. He continued to live in Baltimore and engaged in business to support himself. In the meantime, he organized a private מנין, which was absolutely Orthodox in practice.

In 1862 he was invited to return to Nidchei Israel as its רב. He accepted after he was assured of strict adherence to Orthodoxy. His years of struggle had taken their toll and only a few months after accepting the appointment he passed away, at the age of sixty. The herculean efforts of R' Rice plowed the unbroken soil of America, in preparation for the future hundreds of thousands of תורה families that arrived on American shores. In this way we can all be considered spiritual heirs of R' Rice.

## Sage Sayings

R' Leib (Aryeh Ze'ev) Gurwitz זצ"ל was a רבי who taught every moment of his life. His home was across the street from the ישיבה, facing the ישיבה building. He would learn in the front room with his curtains wide open. Just before retiring late at night, he would close them. In the morning, he re-opened the curtains and learned before davening. He once explained, "אין וויל אזו מינינג" — I want my students to know how I spend my time!"

Source: Sunset (Hanoch Teller)



# LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד  
PIRCHAI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

RAV YAAKOV YOSEF HERMAN'S SMALL HOME WAS A LARGE 'FORTRESS' FOR YIDDISHKEIT. IT WAS AN OPEN HOUSE FOR ANYONE NEEDING A MEAL. EVEN THE GEDOLIM VISITING FROM ABROAD WOULD STAY IN HIS HOME OR COME FOR MEALS SINCE IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND A RELIABLE KOSHER MEAL IN NEW YORK.

IS THIS THE HOME OF RAV HERMAN, THE MACHNIS ORACH?

IT WAS SHABOS MORNING AND MANY GUESTS SURROUNDED THE TABLE SINGING AND SHARING DIVREI TORAH. RAV YAAKOV YOSEF WAS PERSONALLY SERVING CHOLENT TO EACH GUEST WHEN SUDDENLY ONE OF THE GUESTS, WHO WAS MENTALLY UNSTABLE, STOOD UP...

I DON'T LIKE THIS CHOLENT!

AND WITH THAT, THE GUEST TOSSED HIS BOWL OF CHOLENT ALL OVER RAV YAAKOV YOSEF'S BRAND-NEW KAPOTA!

SUDDENLY REALIZING WHAT HE HAD DONE, HE RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE.

OY...OY....WHAT DID I DO?

RAV YAAKOV YOSEF SPRANG UP AND CHASED AFTER HIM.

DON'T WORRY. IT'S OKAY; NOTHING HAPPENED. PLEASE COME BACK WITH ME...

NOW I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A NEW PORTION OF CHOLENT, AND THIS ONE YOU WILL LIKE.

HOW DO YOU DO IT? HOW DO YOU HAVE SUCH SAVLANUS?

IF YOU HAVE RACHMANUS (COMPASSION) YOU DON'T NEED SAVLANUS!

ר' יעקב יוסף WAS BORN IN SLUTSK, RUSSIA. HE WAS THE ELDEST CHILD OF ר' יצחק אייזק HERMAN AND HIS WIFE, מינה רבקה. IN 1888, THE FAMILY IMMIGRATED TO AMERICA. HIS FATHER WAS HIS PRIMARY רבי UNTIL HIS מצוה ב'ר. AT AGE 21 HE MARRIED AIDEL, DAUGHTER OF ר' SHMUEL YITZCHOK ANDRON. HE ASKED HIS WIFE IF THEY COULD HAVE AN OPEN HOME AND SHE AGREED. SOME OF HIS GUESTS INCLUDED ר' BORUCH BER, ר' RELUVEN (WHO STAYED IN HIS HOME FOR TWO YEARS), ר' ELIEZER YEHUDA FINKEL, ר' AVRAHAM KALMANOWITZ AND ר' ELIYAHU ELIEZER DESSLER. HE AND HIS WIFE MOVED TO ERETZ YISROEL IN 1939 WHERE HE CONTINUED TO INVITE DOZENS OF GUESTS TO HIS שבת TABLE. HE UPHOLD HIS YIDDISHKEIT EVEN IN THE FACE OF RIDICULE AND IS IMMORTALIZED BY HIS WORDS "I AM A SOLDIER OF THE BOSS, AND I OBEY HIS COMMANDS" IN THE CLASSIC BOOK ALL FOR THE BOSS (FELDHEIM) THAT HAS SINCE BEEN REPRINTED IN MANY LANGUAGES.



For any inquiries or comments please feel free to call 347-838-0869 • Illustrated by: Yishaya Suval 718-395-9794

י"ז תמוז 1880 - 1967 5640 - 5727