




**TorahThoughts**

# Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim



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# Living with the Torah

... ומצית עבדים פדיתנו ברכב זנתנו ... (From שמות).

... and freed us from the house of bondage. In famine You nourished us ...

Why was מצרים called בית עבדים, a house of bondage? Because it was impossible for a servant to escape the bleak situation. So too, during a famine, the people are lost and desperate. With a strong אמונה in ה' the situation can change, and what appeared impossible yesterday, happens!

\*

For Jews living in Leningrad during the height of the Cold War, life under Communism was nearly intolerable. Working long hours all week, a man could barely provide for a small family. But when a Jew would try to make a living, he was up against even greater odds.

observant Jews lived in constant terror that their forbidden observance would be discovered. That was a direct ticket to Siberia. All of the pressure forced hundreds of thousands of Jews to stop keeping שבת and abandon the תורה. But R' Yitzchak Isaac Krasik would not succumb — not from the hunger, political pressure and certainly not from fear. He lived by his own set of rules. But one time his ingenuity got him in trouble.

On the first שבת morning of his new job, he had shown up to work with a fake bandage on his head in order to get excused from work for the day. The next שבת he came in complaining of another ailment. For the first few שבועות, his manager authorized his sick leave. Then he noticed the pattern. Every שבת, R' Krasik came in with another excuse. Each time another mysterious ailment prevented him from doing any physical labor. Finally the plant manager called him in and informed him that he knew precisely what tricks he was up to. R' Krasik quickly shifted gears. He pleaded with his boss and the man promised, at least for now, not to report the "crime." After another few weeks, however, he fired R' Krasik from his job.

He was now faced with the daunting challenge of finding a job to help feed his family. But no one was willing to overlook

# Searching For Survival

the fact that he skipped work every שבת. Weeks turned into months and the Krasik family was desperate for food. With פסח approaching, the home was completely bare. Not a morsel of food could be found.

As the eve of the 14th of ניסן was upon them, they were required to check their home for any possible חמץ. The thought was ludicrous. חמץ in their barren home? How could he possibly check for חמץ at a time like this when his entire family was starving? A thought crossed R' Krasik's mind: Perhaps this year there was no obligation for him to check for חמץ. Perhaps the entire house was considered a חמץ בו חמץ — a place where no חמץ could have possibly entered.

His nephew, R' Meir Dobrovsky, came over and they discussed the idea of not checking for חמץ since there was obviously no food to be found. Nevertheless, the notion of skipping בדיקת חמץ entirely just did not seem right. We check for חמץ because that is what ה' wants from us and not necessarily because of what we might find. Although his hunger made it feel more like יום כפור than פסח, R' Yitzchak was determined to fulfill the requirement to search for חמץ.

As night fell and the stars appeared, he began his solemn search. Going through the motions, he walked from room to room searching for חמץ. Though weak from hunger, he kept at it. When he was almost finished, he stumbled across a large roll! He could hardly believe his eyes. Where had it come from. It couldn't possibly have been there beforehand. But there it was before his very eyes.

He sat down upon concluding his בדיקת חמץ and, together with his family, ate a very special חמץ סעודה. As they savored every morsel that entered their mouths, their joy knew no bounds. Together they had upheld a 3000-year-old tradition and now their efforts were being rewarded.

R' Yitzchak never forgot that lesson: A person must do what he is required to do, and help will come from the most unlikely of places.

Adapted from: One Shining Moment (with kind permission from ArtScroll)

## Chofetz ChaimMoment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל ז' סעיף ז'

\*Chaim asked Fischel to come to the dining room after school. When Fischel came into the dining room, he saw that Chaim was wiping away a tear. Chaim told Fischel that he had taken a side alley to get to ישיבה. He walked past a non-kosher restaurant and notice that Fischel's 'friend' was standing at the counter ordering a cheeseburger. He walked in to the restaurant and tried to stop the boy from eating the non-kosher food, but the boy was not interested.

**Can Fischel believe Chaim's story and spread it around?**

\*Stories adapted from Guard Your Tongue, A Daily Companion, A Lesson a Day and various real-life situations.

Answer: Fischel is allowed to be with him that the story happened, and must keep away from this 'friend' until he is completely convinced that he did full truth. Of course, Fischel can notify people about the episode if they can help, however, it is not to spread the story around to people who can do nothing.

## Questions of the week

1. Why did הקב"ה make a strong wind blow all night before He split the ים סוף? Would it not have been a greater miracle if the ים סוף just split in one instant?
2. What else is compared to ים סוף?

1. It takes to keep any miracle, even the most obvious one (לא פתאומי) as natural as possible (לא מלאכותי) in order to keep it from being dismissed as a miracle.
2. A person's חסידות - is compared to ים סוף - is the finding of a person's ישיבה. Can you think of any reason why?

## Focus on Middos



Dear Talmid,  
R' Moshe Halberstam ראש ישיבה וצ"ל was the Tshokava ישיבה and one of the most prominent members of the תשובה movement. He published a collection of letters called *דברי משה*. Just two days before his פטירה, he discussed with his grandson plans to publish his ספר on *תורה דעה*, examining the פתבים, making a number of corrections and engaging his grandson in פלפול on several halachic points.

R' Halberstam was also the רב and פוסק of the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital and as the spiritual authority for the Bikur Cholim Hospital, standing by the hospital during hard times. He would take part in various hospital events and provide staff physicians with an attentive ear. Numerous people would come to his home and to the nearby הוראה, including many doctors and others, with halachic questions related to medicine. Healthcare professionals were often astounded by his profound understanding of medical matters.

R' Moshe was also a חסד machine. He worked to promote various צדקה

and חסד organizations, including four decades at the head of the ר' מאיר בעל הנס Foundation, dedicating hours of his time to help the poor of ישראל. He also served as נשיא of the תורה, constantly guiding the directors of the organization in halachic matters.

R' Moshe was known for his tolerance towards all types of people and treated every Yid with great respect. People remember how he made that extra special efforts to gladden them by attending their שמחות, despite his full schedule. His רבי, R' Shmuel Vosner שליט"א, said at his לונה, that for over 50 years his תלמיד would call him every Friday afternoon to wish him a "גוט שבת" and then the two would converse on halachic matters.

My תלמיד, with such a special combination of אהבה עם דרך ארץ, is it any wonder that the תורה would honor ר' משה with an עילה, saying that he is destined for תורה גדולה!

יהי זכרו ברוך!  
רבי Your, בידודות

A letter from a Rebbe (based on interviews)

## Understanding Davening

ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו

The word ויאמינו is often translated *they had belief or faith*. Faith implies complete acceptance of something not supported by reason. Individuals who witness an event with their own eyes do not need to have faith to believe in the truth of that event. Similarly, כלל ישראל, having seen with their own eyes the Divine revelations at קריעת ים סוף, did not have to rely on faith to believe in ד'. They knew and experienced ד' as it triumphed over פרעה. Based on this understanding, the meaning of אמונה is *complete trust in and dependence on* ד'. Our trust is based on the entire nation personally witnessing the event of תורה, which was then transmitted precisely from father to son. It is as though we ourselves witnessed ים סוף. We reaffirm our trust in ד' every day.

לענין ר' משה צבי בן הרי טוביה הלוי זצ"ל



## This Week in History

### הקלות חג פסח

The הלכות מגלה תרצ"ה סימן א' writes that it is a beautiful idea that one should begin the תורה by learning פורים. He explains that this מנהג is hinted at in the words - ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה - the Jews had light and rejoicing; the word אורה, light, is a reference to the spiritual light of תורה. Based on this רמב"א, many have the custom to start their סעודת פורים with one of the הלכות of פסח. פסח is exactly 30 days before פסח and there is a הלכה למשה מסיני to start learning הלכות יו"ט thirty days before the טוב.

With this in mind, we have chosen the next international contest of the Pirchei Agudas Yisroel of America Newsletter: the learning of one הלכה in הלכות פסח every day until פסח.

The 3 סימנים that are practical for most of us and have 26 סעיפים are: סימן ק"ז: הלכות הכנת הסדר, סימן ק"ח: חזש ניסן ובו ג' סעיפים, הלכות סדר ליל סדר, סימן ק"י: ובו י"א סעיפים, ובו י"ב סעיפים.

If you are interested in joining this special program this year and of course will continue to review the weekly פרשה as per your grade level, please send a fax every week signed by a parent to 718 506 9633 - include your grade, name, school, city & state, and your contact number and fax number. Your name will be entered into a raffle to win a beautiful set of תפילות after פסח.

## Halacha Corner

עניני דיומא:  
הלכות חול המועד

- There is a requirement of כבוד and עונג (e.g. one should not wear weekday clothing).
- There is a requirement of שמחה on חול המועד to create a proper mood for service of ד'. חול המועד. Men should fulfill their requirement of שמחה with a רביעית wine and not grape juice.
- It is forbidden to garden or plant on חול המועד. Watering is only permitted if the plant is in danger of dying.
- Many forbid fishing or picking fruit for pleasure on חול המועד.
- Brushing one's hat is permissible on חול המועד.
- Polishing one's shoes is permitted according to some authorities.
- Forbidden cutting one's nails on חול המועד, while ספרדים hold that it is permissible.
- Most repairs on a car are forbidden on חול המועד and a רב must be consulted if the car is needed for חול המועד.
- It is forbidden to instruct a non-Jew to perform any activity that is forbidden for a Jew to do on חול המועד.

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





# LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד  
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

IT WAS A FEW WEEKS BEFORE PESACH AT THE KAMENETSKY HOME:

YOSSI, YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT OUR MINHAS IS NOT TO BE STRINGENT WITH GEBROKS\* ON PESACH.

ZEIDY, THEN WHY HAVE YOU BEEN MAKPID ABOUT GEBROKS FOR ALL OF THESE YEARS?

\*MATZOH BEING IN CONTACT WITH ANY LIQUID.

YOU ASK WELL. I ACTUALLY STOPPED EATING GEBROKS WHEN I WAS A BOCHUR IN SLABODKA. IN THOSE DAYS, WE DIDN'T GO HOME FOR PESACH AND WOULD EAT 'TAIG'.

\*LITERALLY MEANS 'DAYS.' THE YESHIVA WOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR THE BOCHURIM TO EAT ON DIFFERENT DAYS OF THE WEEK IN VARIOUS TOWNSPEOPLE'S HOMES.

I WAS VISITING SOMEONE DURING PESACH, AND WAS OFFERED SOMETHING TO EAT...

YAAKOV, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MATZAH BALL SOUP?

...I WASN'T SURE ABOUT THEIR KASHRUS STANDARDS, LET ALONE THEIR PESACH KASHRUS... BUT I DID NOT WANT TO EMBARRASS THE HOSTESS, WHO HAD WORKED HARD TO PREPARE THE FOOD...

...I QUICKLY FOUND A SAFE WAY OUT...

I'M SORRY... I AM NOT NOHEG TO EAT GEBROKS ON PESACH.

OH, OK. NO PROBLEM.

UPON LEAVING, I REALIZED SOMETHING...

I JUST TOLD SOMEONE THAT I DON'T EAT GEBROKS ON PESACH. I DIDN'T SAY BLI NEDER... IF I EAT GEBROKS FROM NOW ON, THAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BREAKING A NEDER!

RIGHT THEN AND THERE I WAS MEKABEL ON MYSELF NOT TO EAT GEBROKS ON PESACH.

THAT WAS A PERSONAL KABBALAH, AND THIS IS NOT MY FAMILY MINHAS, BUT NOW YOU UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ME EATING GEBROKS ON PESACH.

R' YAAKOV KAMENETSKY, זצ"ל, GREW UP IN DOLHINOV, POLAND. HE LEFT FOR MINSK AT THE AGE OF 11. IN 1905, R' YAAKOV AND R' AARON KOTLER WENT TO LEARN BY אגודת מוסלובדקא. HE ALSO LEARNED IN SLUTSK. DURING WWI, HE TOOK REFUGE IN R' YECHIEL MICHEL GORDON'S ישיבה IN LOMZA. IN 1919, HE MARRIED REBBETZIN ITA ETEL. IN 1937, THEY LEFT FOR THE USA. AT R' MENDELOVITZ'S REQUEST, HE BECAME מנהל תורה ודעת IN ראש ישיבה. IN 1945, A POSITION HE KEPT UNTIL HE RETIRED. ALONG WITH R' MOSHE FEINSTEIN, HE LED AMERICAN JEWRY IN ISSUES OF הלכה AND השקפה. HE WAS RENOWNED AS חכימה דיהודאי, THE WISE MAN OF THE JEWS. HE WAS A בקי IN MANY AREAS OF תורה BUT WAS KNOWN FOR HIS INSIGHTFUL דקדוק AND EXPERTISE IN הלכה (ESPECIALLY THE 5TH שו"ע). HIS חידושים ARE PRINTED IN אמת ליעקב ON תורה AND ש"ס, שולחן ערוך.



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

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