



PIRCHEI Weekly

Agudas Yisroel of America



כרשת תולדות - הכטרה: מחר חדש (שמואל א כ"ח-מב) - **דך יומי:** שקלים ט"ו
מצות עשה: מצות לא תעשה: 0 משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם - **מברכים ראש חודש כסלו** (מולד יום ראשון בשעה: חלקים 4 + 12:14)

Torah Thoughts



... ויבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף ... ויבז עשו את הבכרה.

... And עשו came from the field, and he was exhausted ... and עשו despised the birthright. (בראשית כ"ח-כ"ט, כ"ח-ל"ד)

R' עשו says that he was tired because he had just committed a murder. The מכרש states further that עשו had committed other serious sins on that day, including adultery and idolatry.

R' Aharon Kotler, זצ"ל, asks a basic question: if עשו committed such serious sins, all in one day, why does the תורה single out only the fact that he rejected the בכרה, birthright? If anything, rejecting the בכרה seems like a relatively small sin, when compared to the three cardinal sins (murder, adultery and idolatry). In regards to these three sins, we are taught that they are יחבר ועל יעבר, one must give up one's life rather than transgress them. Giving up the rights of the בכרה certainly is not that level of a sin. Why does the תורה focus on a seemingly insignificant sin?

R' Aharon explains this by first giving us a clearer understanding to the purpose of the בכרה:

We have a shallow definition of the בכרה if we think that the rights of בכרה simply gives its owner extra material rights, e.g. double the inheritance. While it is true that בכרה does, indeed, have material advantages, the primary purpose of the בכרה rights were spiritual

responsibilities. What כהנים and לויים were later in the history of כלל ישראלי, the firstborns were in יעקב and עשו's time. We are taught that כלל תורה to rest of כהנים and לויים were the main teachers of the תורה and ישראלי as we find כלל ישראלי for מסורה and ישראלי and the primary keepers of the מסורה. As the נביא teaches us in this week's הפטרה, "כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו" — For the lips of the כהן should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek תורה from his mouth" (מלאכי ב' - ז')

R' Aharon then continues: now that we have a better understanding of the true value and the responsibilities of the בכרה, we can better appreciate why the תורה singled out עשו's rejection of the בכרה. By telling us that עשו spurned the birthright, the תורה is informing us that this was the fundamental cause for all of his other sins.

The תורה is giving us an insight into looking at a person's wrongdoing. One can easily overlook resolving the root of the problem by focusing on the end result. This is wrong. Here, the תורה bears witness that עשו demonstrated his wrong values and shameless attitude towards spiritual matters. This was the real issue that was of concern. עשו had an improper attitude towards מצוות and spiritual matters. This was the area that needed to be changed, and by just trying to correct עשו's major sins, we would not have resolved עשו's problem.

Adapted from: משנת רבי אהרן (Volume III, P 191)



Yahrzeits of Gedolim

ב' כסלו
 5652 - 5723
 1891 - 1962

R' Aharon Kotler זצ"ל was born in Sislovitz, Russia. At 14, he went to the Slobodka, where he became known as the שטקלויצער עלוי. He married the daughter of R' Isser Zalman Meltzer, the ראש ישיבה in Slutsk. At 24, he became one of the ראשי ישיבה in 1921, due to the Bolshevik religious persecution, עץ חיים was forced to move to Kletsk. R' Isser Zalman emigrated to ישראלי and R' Aharon ran עץ חיים for almost 20 years. In 1939, the Soviet occupation forced R' Aharon to escape, first to Japan, then to the USA. R' Aharon assumed a leading role in the הצלה. In 1943, he opened בית מדרש גבה in Lakewood, NJ and with his dynamic drive he rebuilt תורה in America. R' Aharon also headed עמקאיי and תורה ומסורה in America.

Gedolim Glimpses

...One who does not know about his wealth is, for all practical purposes, poor. It is therefore vital that one learns and thinks about the greatness and קדושה within him ... This is the meaning of the אבות in משנה: "Do not be a כשע in your own eyes." The greatest cause of sin is one's lack of self-worth. Conversely, awareness of one's true value is the greatest motivation to elevate one's deeds!



If you would like to receive this publication via email, please send an email to pircheiweekly@agudathisrael.org

Please be careful to handle this sheet in the proper manner as required הלכה.

Please do not read this publication during קריאת התורה or קדיש.

This week's newsletter was dedicated in memory of

לעילוי נשמת אליעזר ב"ר משה ז"ל
 ולעייני מרים רייזל בת הרח"ג יוסף נחמ"י ז"ל
 לעייני ה"ב ישעיהו דוב ע"ה בן יבלחטי"א יצחק צבי נ"י

Living with the Torah

By Your Sword You Shall Live

ועל חרבך תחיה ואת אחיך תעבד ...

By your sword you shall live, but your brother you shall serve..
(Bereishis 27:40)

The *רמב"ם* explains that *בְּרַכָּה*'s *יָצַח* did not infer that his livelihood will be from the spoils of war, since in the previous *פסוק* he was blessed to have *פְּרוֹתָא* from *the fat of the earth and dew of the heavens*. This *בְּרַכָּה* was focused on *עֵשָׂו*'s lifestyle. *עֵשָׂו* was always fighting wars, therefore *יָצַח* saw it appropriate to bless *עֵשָׂו*, *ועל חרבך תחיה*. *By your sword you shall live*, that *עֵשָׂו* should not fall prey to the sword of his enemies.

*

World War II had finally come to an end, but tens of thousands of refugees languished in Europe. One day, news came to the *ועד הצלה* office that 24 *בְּחֹרִים* in Italy were in imminent danger of being deported back to Poland, which was a very dangerous place for Jews at the time.

The *ועד* called an emergency meeting. The group decided that the only "organization" capable of bringing these *בְּחֹרִים* to safety in those war-torn hectic years was the Mafia. A meeting was arranged between the *ראשי* who headed the *ועד הצלה* — *R' Aharon Kotler*, *R' Avrohom Yoffen* and *R' Avrohom Kalmanowitz*, together with the *ועד הצלה*'s director *R' Shlomo Shapiro* — and the Mafia head, "Joe Othello". They decided to bring \$20,000, which they anticipated would be necessary to convince Othello to help them out.

The *ראשי* were escorted into a heavily guarded building and brought into Othello's office. The "Mafioso" was already sitting there, dressed in a suit and smoking a big cigar.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

R' Aharon began explaining the problem in his fiery Yiddish. *R' Shlomo* started translating into English, but Othello stopped him.

"Keep quiet", he said, "let the Rabbi talk. I like to hear his voice."

R' Shlomo was taken aback, but he motioned to *Rav Aharon* to

continue. So *R' Aharon* began explaining the plight of the 24 young men, and the importance of getting them out of Europe as soon as possible.

When *R' Aharon* finally finished, Othello turned to *R' Shlomo*. "Now you can tell me what he wants. But make it short!"

R' Shlomo hastily summed up *R' Aharon*'s request in English.

Othello looked hard at his guards, then turned back to *R' Shlomo*.

"Do you want them to come by boat or plane?"

"וואס זאגט ער" — what did he say?" *R' Aharon* asked.

R' Shlomo repeated Othello's question. *R' Aharon* replied, "Tell him that they must get here as quickly as possible."

R' Shlomo translated *R' Aharon*'s words. Othello spoke quickly to his guards, and then in a confident but commandeering tone, he said to *R' Shlomo*, "Okay, today is Wednesday, Friday they'll be here."

R' Aharon turned to *R' Shlomo*. "Ask him what will this cost?"

R' Shlomo turned to Othello and asked, "How much will this cost?"

Othello thought for a moment. "Tell the 'Sage' he should give me a blessing instead."

Again *R' Aharon* asked, "וואס זאגט ער" — what did he say?"

R' Shlomo repeated Othello's unusual request. What was *R' Aharon* going to bless the head of the mafia? The *ראש* said in a serious tone, "וואס זאגסטו שטארבן אין בעט" — [when your time comes] you should die in bed!" *R' Shlomo* translated *R' Aharon*'s words with trepidation.

The atmosphere was ecstatic as the mobster jumped from his chair in joy! It was the ultimate blessing for a 'mobster' boss.

That Friday, 24 *בְּחֹרִים* arrived in New York. They described how they had been rounded up in the middle of the night and taken to the airport, where they were informed that they would be going to America!

As for Joe Othello's end, he spent time in jail and was often the victim of violence, but eventually died in his eighties of a heart attack... in his bed!

Adapted from: The Legacy of Maran *R' Aharon Kotler*
(with kind permission from ArtScroll publications)

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל א' סעיף ו'

"Mr. Jones sold a very competitive line of products. He encouraged his employees to make negative comments about the other local stores that sold the same wares. The more caustic the comment, the higher the employee rose in his esteem. Mr. Goldberg was eventually fired from his job because he refused to speak any *לשון הרע* about a Jewish competitor. Mr. Goldberg's loss of income caused him and his family much hardship.

Should Mr. Goldberg have acted any differently to save his *פְּנִיקָה*?

If person, unfortunately, finds himself in a difficult situation where he is working for an employer and in an environment where speaking harsh words is part of the way to do business, then one is required to leave the job, even if it means that he will jeopardize his future income.

Questions of the week

1. *דָּוֵן* that any request of a non-Jew in the *בְּיַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ* be accepted, even if he may be unworthy. From where did he learn this?
2. What similarity was there between the dish that *יעקב* served to *יצחק* and the *מן*?

Answers:

1. *יעקב* wanted to get the *בְּרִכּוֹת* only if worthy of them through *עֵשָׂו*, however, whose faith was lacking, was given an unconditional *בְּרִכָּה*. *ד"ה וְיָתֵן לָךְ*. (27:28)
2. The dish that *יעקב* served to *יצחק* had every flavor that *יצחק* wished to taste, like the *מן* which took on the taste desired by the eater. *ד"ה וְאָכַל מִמֶּנּוּ*. (27:33)

Halacha Corner

הלכות ענייני דיומא:

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם

- *משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם* is an additional praise of *די*, not a direct request for rain; therefore, if one accidentally says *מוריד הגשם* instead of *משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם*, it is an added praise and no correction is needed.
- *וְתָן טַל וּמָטָר* is a direct request for rain; therefore, if one said *טַל וְתָן* and missed *ומטר*, or said *בְּרַכָּה*, one must correct and say *טַל וּמָטָר*.

Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,
 One of the ישיבה נצי"ל recalls a typical day in New York with R' Aharon ישיבה נצי"ל. It was his turn that day to be the ישיבה נצי"ל's driver. R' Aharon left his apartment in Boro Park immediately after breakfast. The entire day was spent without any let-up — traveling, meetings, the ישיבה נצי"ל office, visiting people to solicit funds — a day full of strain and its usual share of toil.

During the day, R' Aharon ate a single apple — in the car, holding the core, the peel, and the pits in his hand until the next stop, so as not to litter the road.

The day continued beyond exhaustion. By the time R' Aharon finally returned home, it was already close to midnight. The moment he entered his home, he stopped. With pained look on his face, and the sound of anguish in his voice like a man who had been starving for a month, R' Aharon exclaimed, "Oh — I have not yet learned today!" This was despite the fact that he had held a ספר in his hands throughout

the entire day, glancing into the ספר every spare moment, and he had been "talking in learning" with his driver. Armed with the "best" excuses, R' Aharon still did not consider this to be a "day's learning". Every day, R' Aharon lived to present a complete "day's learning" to אביו וְעַבְדָּיו!

R' Aharon immediately seized a גמרא and sat down to learn with extreme zeal. When the Rebbetzin brought in a hot bowl of soup, he refused it. "Please give it to him!" he said pointing to the exhausted and hungry driver. Although R' Aharon had no obvious appetite to eat, he still clearly understood the natural needs of his driver.

My תלמיד, this one day with R' Aharon — who only thought in terms of לברו and בין אדם לברו (holding an apple core, peel and pits to avoid littering, collecting funds and showing concern for a hungry driver) — was still incomplete if it was not accompanied by a געשמאקע day's learning!

רבינו, Your בְּיָדֵינוּ

Adapted from The Jewish Observer

Sage Sayings

If there was anything that could match R' Aharon Kotler נצי"ל's תורה and יראת שמים, it was his special sensitivity to others. When approaching tollbooths, he always asked his driver to use a manned booth and avoid the machine. He would explain, "It is not being respectful [to a fellow being] — אפצולאון א מענטש פאר א מאשין — to ignore a man for a machine!"

Source: The Jewish Observer

Understanding Davening

... שים שלום טובה וברכה [חיים] חן וחסד ורחמים...
 Place peace, goodness, blessing, [life], charm, kindness and compassion...

The ישיבה נצי"ל explains that we begin the ברכות in ברכות שלום with the final ברכות שלום, that of שלום, peace. If one has שלום then it is appropriate to request with it all the other ברכות of טובה וברכה וכו'. The ישיבה נצי"ל elaborates that without first starting with שלום between each other, the other ברכות of goodness, blessing, etc., will not last. Peace is the כלי, vessel, to protect all, as תנ"ל teaches us, לא מצא די כלי מחזיק ברכה אלא השלום. — ברכה found no vessel that can hold ברכה except for peace. Similar to בצלאל, who was first taught the כלים of the משכן, but started with the outer building to protect them, so too, the ברכות שלום protects all other ברכות.

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



This Week in History

1st 5319 / 1518 - Yahrzeit of שלום שנקא ר' שלום שנקא of Lublin was born in Lublin, Poland in 1495. He was the רבי and father-in-law of the רמ"א. He established the Lublin Yeshiva in 1515. He was succeeded by another of his famous תלמידים, ר' שלמה Luria, the מהרש"ל.

2nd 5720 / 1959 - Yahrzeit of עקיבא ר' עקיבא of Pressburg, author of דעת סופר, a great-grandson of the חתם סופר (ר' משה סופר). He succeeded his father as ראש ישיבה and רב at the tender age of 24. Interestingly, three continuous generations - the חתם סופר, the כתב סופר, and the שקט סופר - each served as רב of Pressburg for 33 years. When his עקיבא סופר neared his 33rd year as רב, upon his uncle, the Erlauer רב's advice, he moved to ארץ ישראל in 1940, and was saved from the horrors of WWII.

3rd 5463 / 1702 - Miracle with the יחושע פני יחושע ר' Falk of Frankfurt was giving a שיעור in Lvov when an explosion in a gunpowder storage area set fire and wrecked his home and all the adjoining buildings. He was completely trapped under the fallen rubble in which 36 Jews were killed, including his wife, his young child, and his parents-in-law. As he lay trapped in the rubble he made a שבויעה that he would write a ספר and disseminate תורה if he survived.



IN 1938, 60 AUSTRIAN RABBOINIM AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE DEPORTED BY THE NAZIS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE SLOVAKIAN BORDER CONTROL REFUSED THE RABBOINIM ENTRY. THEY WERE LEFT STATELESS AND WERE IN MORTAL DANGER. **PART 2 OF 2**

NITRA, SLOVAKIA:

REBBI, WE RECEIVED A TELEGRAM!! NAZIS CAPTURED SIXTY RABBOINIM. THEY ARE IN GREAT DANGER! NO COUNTRY WILL ADMIT THEM!

I CANNOT SIT HERE AND LET MY BROTHERS SUFFER!



I DAVEN TO HASHEM THAT THIS WILD IDEA WILL WORK. I CALLED MY CONTACTS IN THE OXFORD LIBRARY.. THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN SAID HE WILL TRY GET ME AN AUDIENCE WITH THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. WHAT WILL HAPPEN FROM THERE?...HASHEM, I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT AND AM WILLING TO SACRIFICE MY LIFE TO SAVE YOUR CHILDREN!



FOREIGN OFFICE OF ENGLAND:

THIS IS RABBI MICHAEL BER WEISSMANDL, A WISE MAN WHO HAS A BURNING DESIRE TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE.

GENTLEMEN, I AM HERE TODAY TO PLEAD FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE FOR MY PEOPLE. I BEG YOU TO SAVE THEIR SPIRITUAL LEADERS. WITHOUT OUR LEADERS WE ARE ORPHANED. PLEASE GRANT ENTRY VISAS FOR SIXTY FAMILIES INTO ENGLAND. THERE IS A WAR BREWING AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE IN MORTAL DANGER! WE ALL KNOW, THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT THE NAZIS WILL DO WITH THEM!



ILLUSTRATED BY: YISHAYA SUVAL 718 395 9794

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

I THINK WE ARE GOING TO ENGLAND.

WE'VE ALL BEEN ISSUED VISAS TO ENGLAND! WE'RE SAVED!



NOT ONLY DID R' MICHAEL BER SAVE SIXTY FAMILIES FROM THE HORRORS OF WWII, BUT HIS "WORKING GROUP" BRIBED OFFICIALS AND THE DEPORTATION OF SLOVAKIAN JEWS WAS DELAYED FROM 1942 TO 1944. IN THE MEANTIME, HE NEGOTIATED AN AMAZING DEAL CALLED 'THE EUROPA PLAN' TO SAVE ALL EUROPEAN JEWRY. HE SAVED THOUSANDS OF JEWS, BUT REGRETFULLY HE NEVER COLLECTED THE REQUIRED MONIES TO SAVE EVEN MORE AND THE MASS MURDERS RESUMED. HE LOST HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN AND ESCAPED FROM THE TRAIN TAKING HIM TO AUSCHWITZ. HE IMMIGRATED TO THE USA, REBUILT HIS FAMILY AND FOUNDED THE NITRA COMMUNITY.