





# Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,

The lineage of ר' שלמה, the **הכהן זצ"ל**, the **אב בית דין** of Vilna (often referred to as the **ירושלים** of Lithuania), dates back to the family of **עלי הכהן**. Similar to his forefather, he served as a beloved leader for forty years. He became a legend in his own time for his classic works, **חשק שלמה**, **עצי ברושים** and **שו"ת בגן שלמה**, yet he was extremely modest and would try to avoid being openly active in community affairs. It is said that in ר' שלמה's later years when he went to shul together with other people and the men in shul would rise in his honor, he would tell those who accompanied him that these respectful people wanted to perform the beautiful **מצוה** of rising before the elderly.

ר' שלמה was known in the **תורה** world as a master of **הלכה**. Throughout the Diaspora, **רבנים** and laymen alike would send him their difficult **שאלות**. The **חפץ חיים** was a close friend of ר' שלמה. It is said that he chose the **חשק שלמה** to give his

on the **משנה ברורה** not only because he was a master of **הלכה**, but because of his astounding knowledge of **הלכות** that pertain to **כהנים** serving in the **בית המקדש**.

The **חפץ חיים** lived every moment preparing for **משיח** and he even opened a **כולל** so that **כהנים** should be well versed in **הלכות קרבנות**. The **חפץ חיים** is quoted as saying that the **חשק שלמה** learned the **הלכות** with such depth and clarity that when **משיח** will arrive he will be ready immediately and will have at his fingertips all the **הלכות** that a **כהן** needs to know to serve in the **בית המקדש**.

My **תלמיד**, both **גדולים**, the **חשק שלמה** and the **חפץ חיים**, were known for their modesty and for their longing for **משיח**. They lived every moment with a higher purpose. They taught by example that the ultimate world will be the world **בביאת המשיח**, and that today's honor is fleeting — it passes like a cloud!

יהי זכרו ברוך!  
בגידודות, Your רבי

*A letter from a Rebbi based on interviews*

# Sage Sayings

The **חשק שלמה**, ר' שלמה הכהן זצ"ל, was once reviewing a difficult **שאלה** and had on the table a rare **הלכה ספר**: **רבני ירוהם בן** (a well-known **תלמיד** of the **רא"ש** who lived from 1290-1350). When ר' שלמה returned from shul, he was informed that there had been a robbery in his home. He immediately ran to his study and checked the **ספרים**. When he saw that the **רבני** was still on the table, he said with a big sigh of relief, " **דאס** — **זענען שוואכע גנבים...**"

*Source: Heard around the שבת table*

# Understanding Davening

**ועל הנסים ועל הפרקו ...**

[We thank 'ד...] for the miracles and for the redemptions...

The word **פרקו** is found in the **נוסח** of **על** for both **אשכנז** and **ספרד**. What does it mean? The **תרגום** of the word **ישועה**, **salvation**, is **ישועה** ( **ישועה** ) ( **מ"ה:י"ז** ). If **ישועה** is the understanding here, we have two problems: 1) we repeat the thought with the words **ועל התשובות**, and 2) it is interesting that the word **פרקו** is Aramaic and all the other words of **על** are Hebrew. The **פרקו** suggests that it comes from the word **פרקו** are **הקדש**. The **פרקו** suggests that it comes from the word **פרקו**, **breaking free of the yoke**, and refers to **freedom** from the dominion of the **יגנים**. He uses the word **שליטן**, **ruler**, to demonstrate that **הקדש** can have an Aramaic-like ending.

לענין ר' משה בן הר' טוביה הלוי זצ"ל

# This Week in History

**25<sup>th</sup> קסלו / 5519 / 1758** — **יארצט** of R' Shlomo Zalman Kramer of Vilna זצ"ל, father of the **גרי"א**, the Gaon of Vilna זצ"ל. R' Shlomo Zalman was born c. 5455 / 1695 in Vilna, Lithuania, to R' Yissachar Ber. On his father's side he was a descendant of R' Eliyahu Chassid, the son of R' Moshe Kramer, **רב** of Vilna; on his mother's side, of the Be'er HaGolah, R' Moshe Ravkash. R' Shlomo Zalman, a **תלמיד חכם**, was renowned for his piety. He married Treina, the daughter of R' Meir, who was the son of R' Binyamin Wolf of Seltz (near Grodno), Byelorussia.

R' Shlomo Zalman dedicated his life to learning **תורה**. He was supported by the income from the estates of his maternal grandfather, the Be'er HaGolah, who appreciated his talents and goals, and allocated him this part of the inheritance.

On the first day of **פסח**, 5480 / 1720, the home of R' Shlomo Zalman was filled with **שמחה** as a baby boy was born. This boy, named **אליהו**, went on to become one of the foremost leaders of Jewry of all time who enlightens **ישראל** to this very day — the Gaon of Vilna.

R' Shlomo Zalman was a community leader in Vilna and was active in **כלל** work. In his humility he asked that no elaborate titles be written on his **מצבה**.

ONE MORNING IN SUMMER CAMP, REB LEIZER BELDZAHLER WAS ON HIS WAY TO THE BEIS MEDRASH FOR MORNING SEDER.

YINGELE, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

REBBI, I JUST MISSED THE RIDE TO MY DAY CAMP, AND TODAY IS THE GRAND TRIP!

WITHOUT HESITATION, HE TOOK THE BOY BY THE HAND AND HEADED TOWARD THE PARKING LOT.

OY! THAT IS A REAL PROBLEM, AND B'EZRAS HASHEM I WILL DRIVE YOU THERE. WHICH DAY CAMP IS IT?

REBBI! REBBI! THANK YOU! THE VIENER DAY CAMP...

A WHILE LATER, THE TWO ARRIVED AT THE VIENER CAMP.

EXCUSE ME, WHERE ARE THE BUSES LEAVING FOR THE GRAND TRIP?

OY! THE BUSES LEFT ABOUT 15 MINUTES AGO!

...REB LEIZER ASKED THE REBBI FOR THE DESTINATION OF THE GRAND TRIP. HE RETURNED TO HIS CAR WITH THE BOY, GOT ONTO THE HIGHWAY AND CONTINUED TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK.

OK, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN CATCH UP WITH THE BUSES... SO, TELL ME, DO YOU ENJOY CAMP?

OF COURSE! I LOVE CAMP!

WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING WITH YOUR REBBI?

THE ROSH YESHIVAH CHATTED WITH THE BOY AS IF HE HAD NOTHING ELSE ON HIS MIND. MEANWHILE, BACK AT CAMP, THE BACHURIM ALL WONDERED WHERE HE WAS.

IF THERE WAS ONE THING REB LEIZER COULDN'T ACCEPT, IT WAS A DREAM UNFULFILLED. HE DROVE OVER AN HOUR TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK.

WE'RE HERE! ENJOY YOUR TRIP!

REBBI! THANK YOU SO MUCH! OH! I SEE SOME OF MY FRIENDS WAVING TO ME OVER THERE! BYE!

IT WAS HIGHLY UNUSUAL FOR THE ROSH YESHIVAH TO BE LATE FOR MORNING SEDER, AND HE EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE PUZZLED BACHURIM IN THE BEIS MEDRASH.

BUT REBBI - IT WAS JUST A FEW HOURS OF FUN HE WAS MISSING...

MEIN KIND! TO A CHILD, A GRAND TRIP COMES AFTER WEEKS OF WAITING, AND IT'S THE CONVERSATION FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AFTERWARDS. YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND EACH CHILD AND PUT YOURSELF IN HIS SHOES!

REB LEIZER THEN NOTIFIED ONE THE REBBIEM. HE IMMEDIATELY DROVE BACK TO HIS CAMP AND WENT STRAIGHT TO THE BEIS MEDRASH.

R' ELIEZER BELDZAHLER זצ"ל WAS BORN TO R' ELIYAHU YEHOSHUA AND REBBETZIN HENNY (DAUGHTER OF R' ELIYAHU ELIEZER DESSLER זצ"ל). HE LEARNED IN HIS FATHER'S YESHIVA, OHR YISROEL; IN SHAAPEI YOSHER UNDER R' YOSEF ROSENBLUM, שליט"א; IN SOUTH FALLSBURG UNDER R' ELYA BER WACHTFOGEL, שליט"א; IN BRISK UNDER R' DOVID SOLOVEITCHIK, שליט"א, AND LATER IN LAKEWOOD UNDER R' SHNEUR KOTLER זצ"ל. HE MARRIED BAILA TWERSKI, DAUGHTER OF R' MICHEL AND REBBETZIN FAIGE TWERSKI, IN 1980. AFTER A FEW YEARS, HE BECAME RAVEN KOLLEL IN THE KOLLEL FOUNDED BY R' CHAIM MOSHE STRULOWITZ. IN 1995 HE BECAME RAVEN YESHIVA UNDER THE CHERNOBYLER REBBE OF BORO PARK. IN 1998, HE OPENED HIS OWN YESHIVA, OHR YISROEL, IN WILLIAMSBURG. HE WAS A TRULY BELOVED AND INNOVATIVE RAVEN YESHIVA, WHO WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS VIBRANT יראת שמים AND HOW HE CHANGED THE תנועה.

