

וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדוש... (שמות לה: ב)
 But the 7th day shall be holy for you...

שבת is more than a מצוה in the תורה; it is a foundation of our religion. Yet, it is one of the first מצוות that was given up during the waves of the European immigration to America. "שבת is important," the immigrants agreed, "but if you cannot make a living, its significance takes second place to survival." Consequently, שמירת שבת, Shabbos observance, was identified with the European *shtetl*. Much of Orthodoxy was discarded along with שבת. However, they were wrong then as they are wrong today. A Jew identifies with שבת as שבת identifies with the Jew. It sustains him physically and spiritually.

Life in Poland was difficult, hunger a constant companion. After much scraping and penny-pinching, the family saved enough for a single, one-way ticket to America. Miriam, as the youngest in the family, was chosen to go.

It was hard to send away a child in those days. Who knew if they would ever see each other again? Furthermore, would she remain faithful to her religion? With trembling hands and a breaking voice, Miriam's father said, "Miriam, מנן קינד (my child), remember that ד' is watching you every step of the way. Remember His laws and keep them well. Especially observe the שבת. Never forget that שבת protects ישראלי. ככלל ישראלי. It will be difficult for you in the new land. Never forget who you are. Keep the שבת — regardless of the sacrifices you must make."

They both wept as she boarded the ship. As the ship steamed away from the *shtetl* life in Poland, for many it was also the end to their religious observance. For this young girl, the trip was crammed with questions and uncertainty. Would her relatives extend themselves to her, or would she be all alone in a strange land? Would the new land fulfill its promise of hope, freedom and wealth? Would her relatives meet her, or was she now homeless?

Her family was there waiting for her, and they lovingly welcomed her to their home. It was not long before she found a job as a sewing-machine operator.

Life in America was quite different from her European home life. The young girl, however, never forgot her father's parting

words. She was prepared to dress the part of an American, but she would never give up שבת.

Each week she gave her employer a different excuse. Once, it was a stomachache; another time, a toothache. After a few weeks, the foreman, an assimilated Jew, grew wise. He called her over and said, "Miriam, you are a nice girl and I like your work, but this שבת business has got to stop. You are in America. שבת is a European holiday. In America, everybody works on שבת, or they do not eat. Either you come to work this שבת, or you can look for a new job."

Miriam's relatives applied pressure, but in the back of her mind her father's words kept echoing in her head. Should she listen to her father? After all, what did he know about America? On the other hand, how could she give up the beauty that her father had taught her? By שבת morning, she had decided. She was not going to turn her back on thousands of years of commitment and dedication. Jews had sacrificed their lives for the תורה. She was prepared to sacrifice her livelihood. It was a cool day. She walked all over the Lower East Side, and finally stopped at a park to watch the pigeons for the rest of the day. She was not going to desecrate the שבת. Her father said that שבת would protect her. She was sure that it would.

Three stars appeared in the sky. She made a ברוך המבדיל, and prepared to face the scorn of her relatives. She trudged home, dreading the nasty scene that was sure to greet her when her relatives learned that she had not been to work that day. As she neared home, a shout broke her reverie: "Miriam, is that you? ... Thank G-d, you are alive!"

Miriam looked up at her cousin Joe with a sad expression. "I am sorry. I kept שבת, and I lost my job ... They will think I am ungrateful. I could not let my father down. I will keep שבת!"

"Miriam, didn't you hear about the factory?" Joe asked.

"Hear what? I didn't go to the factory. I kept שבת," she said.

"Miriam, there was a terrible fire at the factory, and only forty people survived..." Suddenly, Joe's voice became quiet and he began to cry. "Miriam, don't you see? Because you kept שבת, you are alive. You survived because of שבת!" This infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire took place on ונקהל-פקודי שבת פראשת, כ"ה אדר, תרע"א, March 25, 1911.

Adapted from: *Peninim on the Torah* (with kind permission from Rabbi Scheinbaum)

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל ט' סעיף ב'

* It was Shlomie's first day in sleep-away camp. He arrived at his bunk and began making the acquaintance of all his new bunkmates. Eli, Chaim, Levi and Zalman had been in the camp for years, and when the discussion turned to the camp director, Eli said to the group, 'Can anyone wish for a better director? There is nothing I can find fault with in anything he does! He's just such a perfect guy. Nobody ever says anything bad about him. Don't you agree?'

Was there any problem with Eli's comment?

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

Answer: As explained in past issues, the ראשון of אדר has many different forms, and ארטל לאט קפא is one of them. Examples of ארטל לאט קפא include praising too much, in our story, Eli praised the director in a group environment and created an opportunity for anyone to minimize his praise. That is ארטל לאט קפא.

Questions of the Week

1. What do we learn from the fact that the תורה places אהליאב, from the less distinguished אָד, on the same level as בצלאל, from the more distinguished אָד, regarding building the משכן?
2. Why were the אָד recorded as having been built by בצלאל?

1. As the pater says in אהליאב, אָד, אָד - The nobleman is not recognized ahead of the pauper (אמאלטאן אָד אָד - אָד - אָד).
 2. Since אָד devoted himself more than the other volunteers to build the משכן, it was recorded as being built by אָד אָד אָד (אמאלטאן אָד אָד אָד - אָד).

- The מזל of אדר is דגים, fish. אדר is one of three months for which the מזלות are written in the plural form; the others are the מזלות of תאומים, twins, and מאזניים, scales.
- ספר התודעה explains: אדר can be doubled (as it is this year), so its מזל is doubled as well (although it could be written in singular form).

*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.

Focus on Middos



Dear Talmid,

As a child, the very young R' Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg זצ"ל did not know his father, who was called up in the Polish military draft (1910) a few short months before his birth. His father, R' Yaakov Yitzchok, chose to immigrate to America rather than submit to the religious compromises mandated by the Polish army. He left behind his expectant wife and older son, Avrohom Nosson, to seek a livelihood on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

At the turn of the century times were difficult. Each worker's quota required him to work on שבת. R' Yakov Yitzchok would not accept the thought of working on שבת under any circumstances. He had a bad cough on the first Saturday. He was sick on the 2nd Saturday. By the 3rd שבת, he was dismissed and left without a job. This schedule repeated itself until he had exhausted all available employment opportunities. With no work, he had no steady income. Dismissing any compromise and without rent money, he was forced to sleep on the side of East River Drive with all of his worldly

possessions: the clothes on his back, a blanket, a pillow, and an umbrella.

While his father was away, R' Chaim Pinchas was born. His mother had no income and was reduced to living with her parents. She would arise before dawn, milk the gentile neighbor's cows, and then distributed the milk to her Jewish clientele. The meager profit was primarily set aside for special תורה tutors for her sons. R' Chaim Pinchas absorbed what he was being taught by his parents' sacrifice and as child under five years of age he would arise by sunrise and beg his grandfather to take him along to shul every morning.

My תלמיד, R' Chaim Pinchas would often remark that just thinking about his parents' *devotion*, *מסירת נפש*, gave him the inner strength to succeed. You will be surprised at how much your parents have given of themselves for you. If you would think about it more, you could also grow to become a גדול בישוראל.

יהי זכרו ברוך!

Your רבי, בנידיות

A letter from a Rebbi based on interviews

Sage Sayings



... אמת מארץ תצמח — *Truth will sprout from the earth ...* (תהלים פה: יב). ר' שמואל רזובסקי זצ"ל. (תהלים פה: יב). ר' חיים פנחס שבנברג זצ"ל would explain why זוכה to always find the truth. He would explain to his תלמידים, וואס מער א מענטש האלט זיך נידעריק, אלץ גרינגער איז עס פאר — The more humble a person [lowly as earth], the easier it is for him to recognize the truth [which sprouts from the earth]."

Source: משל אבות

Understanding Davening



In preparation for *פְּרֻשֵׁת שְׁקָלִים* for *מוסף*...

אָשָׁל ... Every person is naturally attached to ד'. The more we bring ד' closer in our lives the more our lives are peaceful. We foolishly held back on giving צדקה that helps protect us. We therefore became completely unprotected from harm. Allow us again to give the *מחצית השקל* in the final *המקדש*, and protect us in the *זכות* of the reading of *פְּרֻשֵׁת כִּי תִשָּׂא*.

הַכֹּפֵר: *אתה גבור* ... We should learn and be aware of how giving *השקל* atones. May ד' remember the protection *אברהם* created for us by humbly saying, "I am like dust and ashes!" Similarly, *מחצית השקל* protected us from plague and its shame. Allow us again to give *מחצית השקל* in the final *המקדש* ... and resuscitate us with life-giving rain!



This Week in History

ר' יעקב בן ר' 5746 / 1986 — Yahrzeit of ר' יעקב בן ר' Kamenetsky זצ"ל of Yeshiva and Mesivta Torah Vodaath, and leader of 20th-century American Jewry. Born on אדר כ"א, 5651/1891, in the hamlet of Kalushkove (his family then moved to Dolhinov), he left for Minsk at the age of 11, where he befriended the young ר' ראובן ר' Grozovsky and the young ר' אהרן ר' and ר' יעקב, in 1905. Shortly after פסח he traveled to Slabodka to learn under the supervision of the Alter of Slabodka. ר' יעקב also learned in Slutsk. During World War I he took refuge in Lomza in the *ישיבה* of R' Yechiel Michel Gordon.

On כ"ב סיון, 1919, he married Rebbetzin Ita Ettel. On י"א מנחם אב, 1937, he left for America and was appointed רב in Toronto. In 1945, at the request of R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, he took the position of ראש *ישיבה* in Mesivta Torah Vodaath. He stayed there for the next 20 years, before moving to Monsey, officially "retired" but working tirelessly for U.S. and world Jewry. He was revered for his great kindness and compassion. His *חידושים* were printed in his *ספרים* *למען* and on תלמוד. As he requested, he was buried in Mt. Judah Cemetery on the Brooklyn/Queens border, since he pointed out that most of his family lived in America and would not always be able to travel to his קבר in ארץ ישראל. From his last request we learn yet another lesson about his consideration for others.



LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

IN THE LATE 1980S BOCHURIM IN THE CAMP AGUDAH MASMIDIM PROGRAM, LED BY RAV CHAIM YISROEL BELSKY, ZT"l, WERE TALKING ABOUT THEIR UPCOMING TRIP.

THE RAMBAM WRITES THAT SEEING THE BEAUTIFUL AND BRILLIANT WONDERS OF NATURE WILL INSPIRE LOVE AND FEAR OF HASHEM IN A PERSON...

I WOULD SUGGEST WE GO ON A HIKING TRAIL.

THE MASMIDIM TRIP WAS ARRANGED, BUT THERE WAS A TOUGH ISSUE THAT NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED...

REBBI, YISROEL IS WHEELCHAIR-BOUND, BUT HE'S PART OF THE MASMIDIM. HOW CAN WE TAKE HIM ALONG?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YISROEL; I'LL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM.

THE MASMIDIM BEGAN CLIMBING UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE, ENJOYING THE SCENERY ALONG THE WAY.

DO YOU HAVE A TRAIL WHERE IT'S POSSIBLE TO PUSH A WHEELCHAIR?

RABBI, I AM SORRY TO INFORM YOU THAT WE CAN'T HANDLE ANY WHEELCHAIR. SOMEONE MUST REMAIN BEHIND WITH ANY WHEELCHAIR-BOUND CHILD.

RAV BELSKY SUDDENLY NOTICED A FATHER LIFTING HIS YOUNG SON ONTO HIS SHOULDERS AND HEADING TO THE ATTRACTION...

ONE SECOND, WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I ALSO CARRY THIS BOY ON MY SHOULDERS?

WELL, ER... OK, BUT HE'S DEAD WEIGHT. HOW IN THE WORLD CAN YOU CARRY HIM?

RAV BELSKY REASSURED THE STAFF MEMBER, AND PERMISSION WAS GRANTED. RAV BELSKY ENCOURAGED HIS BELOVED CAMPER TO COME ON HIS SHOULDERS, AND TOGETHER THEY JOINED THE GROUP OF MASMIDIM.

YISROEL, ARE YOU COMFORTABLE?

REBBI, THANK YOU SO MUCH!

REBBI, THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN WAS SO AWESOME, I FELT THE MAJESTY OF HASHEM'S CREATION...

RAV BELSKY CARRIED THE BURDENS OF KLAL YISROEL, AND EVERY SINGLE REB YISROEL, ON HIS SHOULDERS - AND THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CAMPER WHO CHERISHES HIS MEMORIES OF THE SUMMER...

R' CHAIM YISROEL BELSKY ZT"l WAS BORN TO R' BEREL AND CHANA TZIREL BELSKY. HIS GRANDFATHER, R' BINYOMIN WILHELM Z"l, WAS A FOUNDER OF YESHIVA TORAH VODAAS. R' BELSKY RECEIVED סמיכה FROM YESHIVA TORAH VODAAS IN 1963, AND FROM R' MOSHE FEINSTEIN ZT"l IN 1965. HE ALSO STUDIED IN BETH MEDRASH ELYON FOR SEVERAL YEARS. HE WAS THE BELOVED ROV OF CAMP AGUDAH SINCE 1967, AND LED ITS MASMIDIM PROGRAM. HIS FIRST KASHRUS POSITION WAS WITH THE CHOF-K. IN 1987 HE JOINED THE ORTHODOX UNION AND BECAME ONE OF THE CHIEF EXPERTS IN THE AREA OF KASHRUS. HE BECAME THE ROSH HAYESHIVA OF YESHIVA TORAH VODAAS IN 2001. HE WAS A TORAH GENIUS WHO LEARNED FROM THE TORAH MANY OTHER DISCIPLINES AND WAS AN ACCEPTED EXPERT IN MANY AREAS. HIS EXTRAORDINARY KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY AREA OF TORAH AND HALACHA WAS ONLY MATCHED BY HIS LIFE INVOLVEMENT IN TZEDOKAH AND CHESED.



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