



זכרון ויחזקאל

PIRCHEI Weekly

Agudas Yisroel of America



March 29, 2014 - תשע"ד - כז אדר ב' - Vol: 1 Issue: 26

כרשת תזריע - מפטיר: החדש (שמות יב:א-כ) - **הפטרה:** 'הפטרה: כל העם הארץ' (ויחזקאל מה:טז-מו:יח) - **מברכים ראש חודש ניסן**
(מולד יום שני: חלקים 9 + 03:54) **דף יומי:** סוכה נ"ד - **מצות עשה:** 5 **מצות לא תעשה:** 2

Torah Thoughts

... ימול בשר ערלתו

...the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (Vayikra 12:3)

The מצוה of ברית מילה is unique in that it has been accepted throughout the generations with joy. Our people have responded to the call of ברית מילה with נפש. ברית מילה is a permanent imprint on the child, identifying him as a partner in the Covenant and a member of כלל ישראל. It is a sign that stays with the child throughout his entire life. ברית מילה is an event marked with pride and joy, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the event. It is one מצוה that nearly all Jews, even those who have otherwise become alienated from Jewish observance, have continued to embrace. Our people have been persecuted throughout the millennia, but we have always remained faithful to this unique מצוה.

There are many stories that relate the overwhelming נפש our People have demonstrated for ברית מילה. Rabbi Yisroel Spira, נצי"ל, the Bluzhover Rebbe, was sawing wood as a member of a slave labor contingent in the notorious Janowska Road camp. One morning, on הושענא רבה, the forest was filled with terrible, heartrending cries. It soon became known that a children's "aktion," a selection, was occurring. The Nazi beasts were grabbing little children away from their mothers, to be slaughtered like cattle in a nearby field. One can imagine the heartbroken mothers as their children were torn from them. These mothers knew that it would only be a short while before

they, too, would follow the same tragic path of their children.

As the procession of weeping, distraught mothers and children came closer to the Bluzhover's labor group, one mother broke ranks. Clutching her infant son in her arms, she cried out, "איידן! Have mercy, give me a knife!"

Assuming the woman sought to commit suicide, the Rebbe attempted to dissuade her. A Nazi officer, infamous for his sadistic behavior, approached the woman and handed her his penknife, hoping to enjoy the last moments of this hapless woman's life.

He did not know the Jewish spirit. Clutching the knife in her hand, the woman carefully placed her son on the ground and circumcised him. In a clear, loud, emotion-filled voice she recited the ברכת המילה, to the loud response of אמן by all those assembled. [The woman in this story was Leah, the mother of R' Dovid Hersh Mayer נצי"ל, and the baby was his older brother Menashe. Miraculously, the family survived the war and eventually emigrated to the United States.]

This is the way one Jewish mother inducted her son into the covenant of our People. תזיל tell us [ששון] in מנלת אסתר refers to מילה. We should learn from the נפש of our forebears to perform this most precious מצוה with special joy!

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



Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

ב' ניסן
5659 - 5728
1899 - 1968

R' Yaakov Yosef Twersky נצי"ל, the Skverer Rebbe, was born in Skvira, Ukraine. Due to the pogroms that followed the Bolshevik Revolution, his family was forced to move to Kiev in 1919. A few months later, on ט"ו כסלו, his father, ר' דוד, the Skverer Rebbe, was נפטר. The following autumn, the rest of the family left for Kishinev, Moldavia. In 1925, he married the granddaughter of ר' יששכר דוב of Belz and moved to Belz. Upon returning to Romania a few years later, he led the Skverer חסידים in Kolorash as their Rebbe. In the winter of 1945, he moved to Bucharest. He emigrated to the USA in 1948. After establishing his court, first in Boro Park and later in Williamsburg, he founded the unique community of New Square in 1956-7.

Gedolim Glimpses

On a train full of Jews en route to freedom in sweltering heat, small amounts of water were distributed to those on board. Due to his identity, ר' יעקב יוסף, was given a 2nd cup of water, which he drank. When he learned that some of the other passengers never received even a 1st cup of water, it broke his heart. To recall his 'mistake' of not asking, he stopped drinking plain water.



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לעיני ה' יחזקאל ע"ה בן יבלחטי"א לייב נ"י
לעיני ה' ישעיהו דוב ע"ה בן יבלחטי"א יצחק צבי נ"י

This week's Pirchei Weekly is sponsored l'ilui nishmas
Mrs. Edith Rieder.

A life steeped in chesed while raising a family of askanim and machshivei Torah.

Source: Heard around the שבת table

Living with the Torah

וביום השמיני ימול ... ערלתו

On the 8th day, the ... foreskin shall be circumcised. (Vayikra 12:3)

The מצוה of מילה, *circumcision*, leaves an indelible mark on a Jew, one that is with him throughout his entire life. It is a מצוה which connects generations, since the father is the person obligated to make sure that his son is circumcised. It is a מצוה for which many Jews, throughout the centuries, have died.

Many stories are told that demonstrate the Jew's commitment to this special מצוה. Even in our day and age, we still hear accounts of Jews who have performed this מצוה with great מקסירת נפש.

Rena Baruchov was waiting very anxiously. Where were they already?

Finally, there was a soft knock on the door. Rena's husband, Uri, entered with a little bundle in his arms. Behind him was a man they had only met recently. He was known simply as R' Avrohom.

"Mrs. B.," said R' Avrohom. "Everything went just fine."

"Yes," added Uri. "R' Avrohom performed the ברית and everything went as planned. ברוך השם, no 'surprise guests' showed up. Here, Rena," said Uri, as he undid the blanket around the infant whom he held. "Hold our little יוסף. Finally, our child has a Hebrew name."

Rena picked up the infant, kissed him on the cheek ... and then she fainted.

Under the rules of the Communists, circumcising an infant was considered an act of "religious coercion." The Communist regime, which was always "concerned" for the rights of its citizens, declared it a crime to perform a ברית until a boy turned eighteen, at which time he could decide for himself whether or not he wanted to be circumcised.

For the Sake of a Mitzvah

Of course, until a boy turned eighteen, the Communists would do an excellent job of brainwashing these young Jewish boys to despise their religion and even to deny belief in the existence of a Creator. By the time they turned eighteen years old, most Jewish boys did not have the faintest notion what מילה was all about.

Rena had been raised in a religious home and understood the importance of מילה. She knew that a Jewish boy without a ברית was a spiritually impaired נשמה. However, she knew that it would be impossible to have her child's ברית performed on the 8th day.

First, a qualified מוהל had to be found who was willing to undertake the great risk of performing this מצוה. Then, a plan had to be formulated through which the circumcision could be done in utmost secrecy. It would not be easy.

Rena did not know how long it would be until her son could enter the covenant of אברהם אבינו. She did, however, know one thing. The longer her son's ברית was delayed, the greater the danger that she would grow accustomed to his being uncircumcised. And what if it would be months or even years before the ברית could be performed? The need to fulfill the מצוה might, חס ושלום, become forgotten...

Rena decided to do something that would allow her no rest until her baby had his ברית. She promised herself that she would not kiss her little boy until he was circumcised.

And so, from the day he was born, Rena cuddled her baby, held him on her shoulder, rocked him to sleep—but never once kissed him. Now, as she held her little יוסף in her arms, all the love and emotion that had been welling up inside of her for so long burst forth as she kissed him for the very first time ...

And then she fainted.

Adapted from: Shabbos Stories (with kind permission from ArtScroll)

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל ג' סעיף ד'

"It was recess time on Thursday morning. A crowd of boys, including Shloimie, had gathered around Moishy who, as usual, had some story to tell them. "I'm not mentioning the name, but the שליח צבור this morning was so mixed up because we had so many days off from school due to the snow. When he got up to saying היום יום, he said, 'היום יום רביעי.' We all smiled, but as soon as he realized his mistake, his face went red."

Is Moishy allowed to tell the story without a name?

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

Answer: It is not permissible to tell the story even without mentioning a name. Often by listening to the story, it is easy to go back and find out the facts and determine who the 'nameless' person is. Where the intent was malicious, even if the tale was insignificant, it is referred to as a שמועץ רע.

Questions of the week

- For what purpose was the מצוה obligated to call out to passersby, "יטמא ויטמא"?
- Why is a מצוה singled out to live in solitary confinement? Why was it מזהר מזהר?

1. The מצוה must warn other people to stay away from him lest his separation between two people, it is better that he be punished by being isolated from people (שם לרש"י ט"ז — 13:46).

2. Since his affliction is a punishment for a transgression, which causes separation between two people, it is better that he be punished by being isolated from people (שם לרש"י ט"ז — 13:45).

Halacha Corner

הלכות עניי דיומא
הלכות ערב פסח -
בדיקת חמץ

- One may not speak between the ברכה and the start of the בדיקה. If one did speak, one must repeat the ברכה.
- During the בדיקה, one may only speak about something relating to the בדיקה itself. If one did speak during the בדיקה (about an unrelated topic), one does not make another ברכה.

*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.



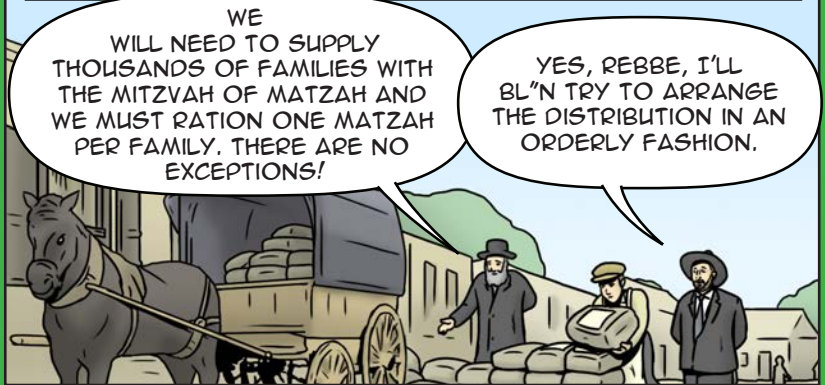
PART 1 OF 2

JUST BEFORE WORLD WAR II, FOOD WAS SCARCE IN MOST CITIES IN RUSSIA. PESACH WAS APPROACHING AND THE CITY OF CHERNOWITZ AND THE SURROUNDING AREA WERE WITHOUT FLOUR FOR MATZOS. THE SKULENER REBBE CALLED HIS CONTACTS TO TRY TO GET A SHIPMENT OF FLOUR BEFORE PESACH.



I UNDERSTAND THE COST, AND AM WILLING TO PAY. THE SHIPMENT MUST ARRIVE THIS WEEK!

A WAGON WITH BAGS OF FLOUR ARRIVED AT THE SKULENER REBBE'S HOME LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE PESACH. THE REBBE IMMEDIATELY SET UP A BAKERY AND WITH GREAT JOY HIS CHASSIDIM BAKED THE FLOUR INTO MATZOS.



WE WILL NEED TO SUPPLY THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES WITH THE MITZVAH OF MATZAH AND WE MUST RATION ONE MATZAH PER FAMILY. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!

YES, REBBE, I'LL BL"N TRY TO ARRANGE THE DISTRIBUTION IN AN ORDERLY FASHION.

AT THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, THE VIZHNITZER REBBE WAS PREPARING HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD FOR PESACH.



MY SON, PLEASE GO AND PICK UP THREE MATZOS FROM THE SKULENER REBBE.

BUT THEY SAID ONLY ONE MATZAH PER FAMILY--

I KNOW. STILL, ASK FOR THREE MATZOS. YOU MUST SAY IN MY NAME THAT YOU CANNOT SETTLE FOR LESS!

UH... THE VIZNITZER REBBE REQUESTED THREE MATZOS.

I AM SORRY, BUT WE NEED ENOUGH MATZOS FOR THE ENTIRE CITY. PLEASE TELL THE REBBE THAT THIS IS ALL WE CAN GIVE...

MY FATHER TOLD ME TO SAY IN HIS NAME THAT I MUST NOT TO RETURN WITHOUT THREE MATZOS...



ALTHOUGH THE SKULENER REBBE WAS CONCERNED THAT THIS MEANT THAT TWO FAMILIES WOULD LOSE THEIR MATZOS, HE DEFERRED TO THE KAVOD OF THE VIZHNITZER REBBE.



BUT REBBE... EVERY DAY PEOPLE ARE LINING UP TO COLLECT MATZOS ... WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH, EVEN NOW...

TO HONOR THE WISHES OF THE VIZHNITZER REBBE I AM WILLING TO GIVE AWAY THESE THREE MATZOS!

AS PESACH DREW NEAR THE LINES GREW LONGER. BY EREV PESACH ALL THE MATZAH HAD BEEN GIVEN OUT TO THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES. EREV PESACH IN THE MORNING:



REBBE, I TRAVELED ALL NIGHT; I HAVE NO MATZAH. PLEASE CAN I HAVE JUST ONE MATZAH...I'M WILLING TO PAY ANYTHING!

PLEASE DO NOT TELL MY GABBAIM WHY YOU CAME HERE TODAY!

TO BE CONTINUED...

R' ELIEZER ZUSIA PORTUGAL, THE FIRST SKULENER REBBE, WAS BORN IN SKULEN, RUSSIA. AT THE AGE OF 17 HE SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER AS THE ROV. HE LATER MOVED TO CHERNOWITZ, AND WAS CHOSEN AS ITS אב בית דין. AFTER THE WAR HE WAS KNOWN AS THE FATHER OF HUNDREDS OF ORPHANS AND ADOPTED MANY. HE SMUGGLED HIS "FAMILY" INTO ROMANIA WHERE HE AGAIN SAVED 1,000S OF ORPHANS. IN 1959, HE WAS IMPRISONED FOR TEACHING RELIGION. HE WAS EVENTUALLY FREED AND HE EMIGRATED TO AMERICA IN 1960. IN 1962 HE LAUNCHED THE TORAH NETWORK OF חסד לאברהם IN ארץ ישראל THAT HAS TO DATE ASSISTED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN. THE REBBE'S נפש for ALL TYPES OF JEWS WAS LEGENDARY. HE COMPOSED MANY BEAUTIFUL MELODIES AND WOULD SPEND HOURS ON HIS DAILY תפילות.

