

Living with the Torah

Shmittah Observance

ובשנה השביעית שבת שבתון ... שבת לה' ... שָׁדָד לא תזרע וְכַרְמְךָ לא תזמור (ויקרא כח: ד')

But the 7th year shall be a complete rest ... a שְׁבֵת for יה'; your field you shall not sow and your vineyard you shall not prune.

בְּרַכּוֹ ה' ... גִּבְרֵי כַח עֲשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ, לְשִׁמְעָה בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ (תהלים קג: כ)

Bless יה' O His angels; the strong warriors who do His bidding, to obey the voice of His word.

R' Yitzchak Nafcha said: This refers to those who observe שְׁמִיטָה ... This man sees his field lie fallow ... and he accepts all this in silence! Can there be a more powerful warrior than he? (לְקוּט שְׁמִיטָה י"ס (תהלים תתי"ס).

The שְׁבֵת refers to the year of שְׁמִיטָה as שְׁבֵת לה'. The observance of שְׁבֵת bears testimony to the fact that ד' created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th. Farmers have clearly seen how the faith they demonstrated during שְׁמִיטָה brought blessing to their crops. The נֶס of the locust plague is one of the most well-known stories connected to שְׁמִיטָה.

Before the שְׁמִיטָה year of 5719 (1959) began, the farmers of מוֹשֵׁב קוֹמְמִיּוֹת sowed their fields for animal fodder. During that שְׁמִיטָה, the skies of יִשְׂרָאֵל suddenly darkened as an enormous cloud of locusts approached from the south and attacked the fields below. All the settlements in the vicinity of מוֹשֵׁב קוֹמְמִיּוֹת suffered tremendous losses to their harvests; the farmers of קוֹמְמִיּוֹת rushed in panic to R' Mendelsohn and informed him of the danger hovering over their crop. R' Mendelsohn calmed them and said, "There is great merit for those who observe the מִצְוָה of שְׁמִיטָה." They waited anxiously as the frightening black cloud approached the fields of שְׁמִיטָה, and then — the cloud stopped and left the area. In that devastating locust plague, not one locust touched the fields of קוֹמְמִיּוֹת — an incredible miracle.

Below are excerpts taken from 2 news articles from world media (5768 / 2008):

Samaria Wines Win Big; Victor Credits שְׁמִיטָה Year

...at the annual Eshkol Hazahav wine competition this year a total of 251 wines were submitted to the rigorous competition, and were judged by dozens of experts in a blind taste test.

The religious Hararei Kedem winery in Yitzhar was particularly successful, taking two gold medals and one silver ...

Hararei Kedem is a unique winery ... Ben-Sheetrit observes the שְׁמִיטָה year, allowing his fields to lie fallow once every seven years.

Ben-Sheetrit was given an opportunity to address the audience after winning, and he used it to tell the hundreds of assembled winery owners, wine experts, journalists and tourists, that he attributes his success to his observance of the שְׁמִיטָה year ...

The grapes that created his winning wines were grown in the year before the שְׁמִיטָה year [5767], after he had decided to let the land lay fallow the next year [5768], despite agricultural experts' attempts to dissuade him, Ben-Sheetrit related. In that year ... the year before the שְׁמִיטָה year, his vineyard produced 3 times the usual quantity of grapes.

"It was truly a fulfillment of the words of the תּוֹרָה that the land will give enough for the 6th, 7th, and 8th years," he declared. The grapes were special in terms of quality as well as quantity, he added, as indicated by the prize-winning wines they produced ...

It's a שְׁמִיטָה miracle (5768 / 2008)

In what some potato farmers in the Negev are taking as a sign from Above, the recent frost that ravaged produce in fields across the land of Israel selectively passed over some crops as if guided, they say, by a Divine Hand. Potatoes planted in Israel's Negev before the beginning of the שְׁמִיטָה (sabbatical) year, in accordance with the biblical prohibition against plowing, sowing and many other field chores, were spared the damages caused by recent sharp drops in temperature.

In contrast, potatoes that were planted during this שְׁמִיטָה year ... were decimated ... Some farmers see the selective ravaging of produce as a sign from Above for their strict adherence ...

Stories excerpted from multiple news sources

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל י' סעיף ז'

*Eli had tried all possible ways to get Ari to stop relating לשון הרע about the new boy who was coming to camp this year. Eli realized that Ari would only lash out at him if he told him off; but Ari would continue to tell anyone he met his negative opinions about the new boy. Eli understood that he had to warn people about the לשון הרע that Ari was spreading, even though it might get back to the new boy that Ari is speaking negatively about him.

How should Eli go about warning others about Ari's לשון הרע?

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

Answer: Eli should do as much damage control as is necessary. In this specific case, it is better to tell people in groups of three or more, as this demonstrates Eli's willingness for Ari to hear what is being said about him. If Eli can try other solutions then obviously that would be better.

Sage Sayings

R' Binyomin Mendelsohn זצ"ל once asked about the fundraising efforts on behalf of קְרָן הַשְּׂבִיעִית. He wanted to know if the עוֹלָם had been מְשִׁתֵּת (participated) warmly. He was informed about the funds raised. He shook his head and replied, "סִימָנוּ נִשְׁט בְּלוּי דִּי גַעֲלֵט, סִימָנוּ דִּי מַעֲנִשְׁטן וּוְאָס זִיעֲנֵן זִיד מְשִׁתֵּת אִין דִּי מִצְוָה. — It's not only about the money; it is about the [number of] people who have participated in the מִצְוָה of מִיט. דַּעַר עָרַד פֿרייט זִיד מִיט. מִצְוָה — The earth rejoices with each one of them!"

Source: Dvar Hashmittah 5775

Halacha Corner

עניני דיומא: הלכות ספירת העומר

- Even for those who keep the 2nd מְנַהֵג, and do not take a haircut after לשון הרע, one is permitted to take a haircut during the 3 days before שְׁבִיעִית beginning from the morning of the 3rd of סִינן.
- On מְנַהֵג night, the מְנַהֵג is to wait until it is fully night to begin davening מְעָרִיב in order to have 49 complete days.

*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.

Dear Talmid,

The Brisker רב wrote about the רב of קוממיות, R' Binyomin Mendelsohn, נצ"ל, "ראת ד' היא אוצר", *fear of ד' is his treasure trove*." The following story gives us an appreciation of true שמנים.

During the famous episode of "Yossele" that gripped the entire ארץ, ישראלי, R' Binyomin was forced to defend himself in court. In short, the story was that a young boy, Yossele Shuchmacher, was being raised by his grandfather, a Breslover חסיד. One day, the חסיד became aware that his daughter and son-in-law were planning to return to communist Russia. He realized that his grandson would in time forget all of his Yiddishkeit, so he secretly sent Yossele to live with a *frum* family.

The episode of "religious kidnapping" cast the country into an uproar. Since Yossele had spent time in קוממיות, they tried to implicate R' Binyomin helped plan the kidnapping at a secret meeting on a מוצאי שבת בנ"י. That particular מוצאי שבת, R' Binyomin had helped a poor Holocaust survivor by going door to door with him throughout קוממיות soliciting funds. He desperately needed the survivor to be his witness. However, his terrible fear of courts made the survivor too afraid to testify.

R' Binyomin understood and assured the broken man, "All will be fine. Please do not worry; the fact that you cannot testify in court on my behalf should not prevent you from coming next year so I can take you collecting again."

In the end, the court used the צדקה receipts that R' Binyomin had signed that מוצאי שבת and sent them to a handwriting expert who requested that R' Binyomin write something, to compare the handwriting. He decided to write the 13 מאמין's. He explained, "Perhaps, when the handwriting expert checks this, he might think about what he is reading, and it will arouse אמונה in him..."

My תלמיד, R' Binyomin's נראת שמנים was not just for himself. While standing on trial for 'kidnapping,' he thought about helping an unlearned Jew find ד'. Are we missing opportunities to help others and make ד' world far more beautiful?

יהי זכרו ברוך!

בגידות,

Your רבי

A letter from a Rabbi (based on interviews)

The 2nd International ערב שבת Learning Program



Let us applaud the boys in 3rd grade being represented in the קדוש ד' of the International ערב שבת learning contest: Binyomin Schwartz, Kesser Torah in Sydney, Australia (and others in his class), Menachem Manis Bodenheimer, Yeshiva Beis Mikrah, in Monsey, NY, and David Zazulia, Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, in Brooklyn, NY.

The International Pirchei ערב שבת contest: During the weeks leading up to קבלת שבת פרשת קרח and until שבת פרשת קרח, learn at least 45 minutes before מנחה every שבת, in either your ישיבה or local מדרש בית. Each week that you learn for an hour or more will be considered another entry into the raffle.

The basic rules: There is no specific

למוד to learn and you can even review your שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום. However, if you can arrange for a group, and you have a קדושת שבת, especially about קדושת שבת, you will receive an extra chance in the raffle each week that there is a group with a שיעור. This contest is open for all ages up to 12th grade.

If you are interested in joining this program, please send in your fax signed by a parent by Monday 2:00 pm to 718 506 9633. Please include your name, grade, ישיבה, city and state. Please include your contact and fax number, and your name will be entered into another drawing for a beautiful set of מקראות גדולות!



AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA
אגודת ישראל באמריקה

NINETY-FOURTH

ANNUAL DINNER



CELEBRATING
75 YEARS OF
AGUDAH CAMPING
THAT SET THE
STANDARD FOR
ALL OTHERS
TO EMULATE

TRIBUTES

RABBI MOSHE SHERER MEMORIAL AWARD
Camp Agudah ACCEPTED BY Meir Frischman
MARKING HIS 40 YEARS AS CAMP DIRECTOR

ALSO PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE
Tress, Borchardt and Heschel Families

DECADES REPRESENTATIVES

- 1940s ► The Young Family in memory of Charlie Young ז"ל
- 1950s ► Charlie Grandovsky & Joseph Helmreich
- 1960s ► Yanky Adler in memory of Emil Adler ז"ל
- 1970s ► Chaim & Benny Wielgus
- 1980s ► Yaakov Bojman & Eli Neiman
- 1990s ► Yitzzy Bald, Yoily Edelstein & Shimmie Lax
- 2000s ► Shloime Leshkowitz,
Alty Pearl & Zevi Seidenfeld

SUNDAY
JUNE 5, 2016
כ"ח אייר תשע"ו
HILTON NEW YORK

Shrage Goldschmidt
DINNER CHAIRMAN

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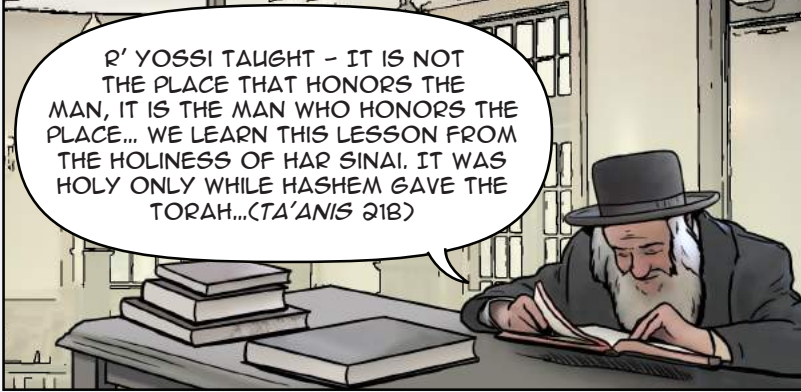
DINNER OFFICE:
212.797.8177 | FAX: 646.254.1640
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RAV SHMUEL WOSNER, KNOWN AS THE SHEVET HALEVI, WAS ONCE STUDYING IN THE BEIS MEDRASH OF YESHIVAH CHACHMEI LUBLIN, WHICH HE RECONSTRUCTED IN THE ZICHRON MEIR NEIGHBORHOOD IN BNEI BRAK AFTER THE HOLOCAUST.

R' YOSSI TAUGHT - IT IS NOT THE PLACE THAT HONORS THE MAN, IT IS THE MAN WHO HONORS THE PLACE... WE LEARN THIS LESSON FROM THE HOLINESS OF HAR SINAI. IT WAS HOLY ONLY WHILE HASHEM GAVE THE TORAH...(TA'ANIS 21B)



OUTSIDE, A COMMOTION WAS TAKING PLACE:

MY TATTY JUST BOUGHT ME A SEFER TORAH!

WOW! IT LOOKS JUST LIKE A REAL ONE!

IT HAS A KLAUF WITH THE TORAH WRITTEN ON IT!



FRIENDS GATHERED AROUND THE BOYS AS THEY MADE A PROCESSION UP AND DOWN THE STREET, IMITATING AN HACHNOSAS SEFER TORAH...

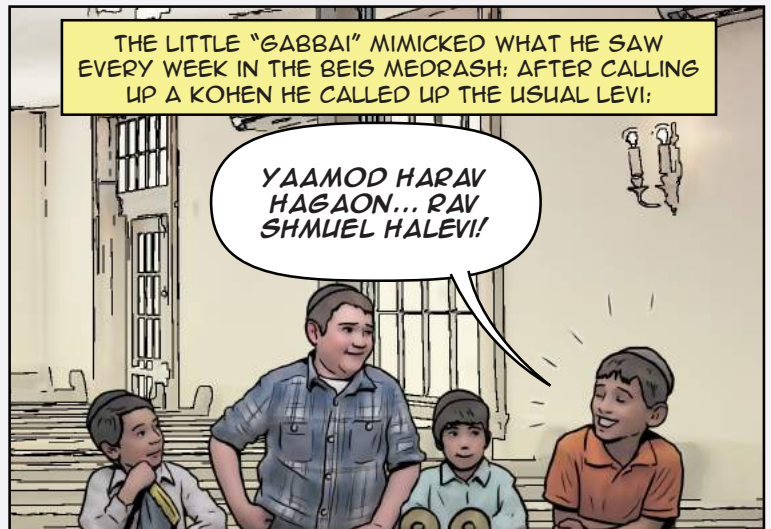
I HAVE AN IDEA! LET'S GO INTO THE BEIS MEDRASH AND LET'S PLAY LEINING KRIAS HATORAH!

GEVALDIG IDEA -- LET'S GO!



THE LITTLE "GABBAI" MIMICKED WHAT HE SAW EVERY WEEK IN THE BEIS MEDRASH: AFTER CALLING UP A KOHEN HE CALLED UP THE USUAL LEVI:

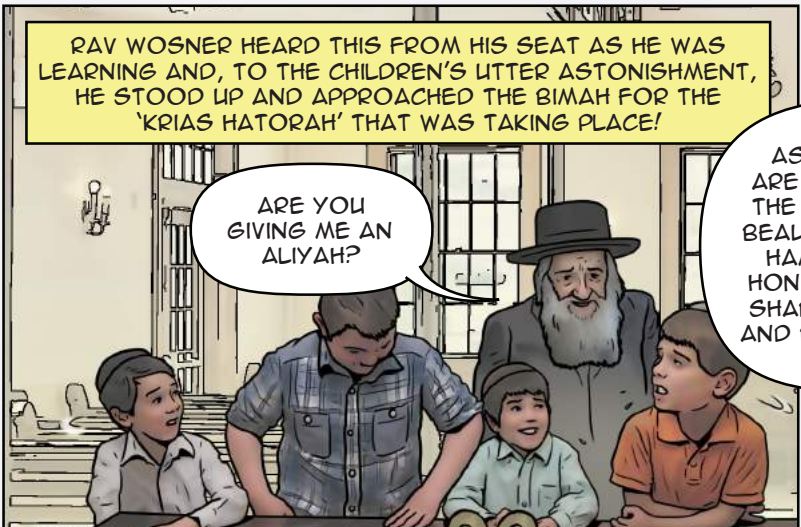
YAAMOD HARAV HAGAON... RAV SHMUEL HALEVI!



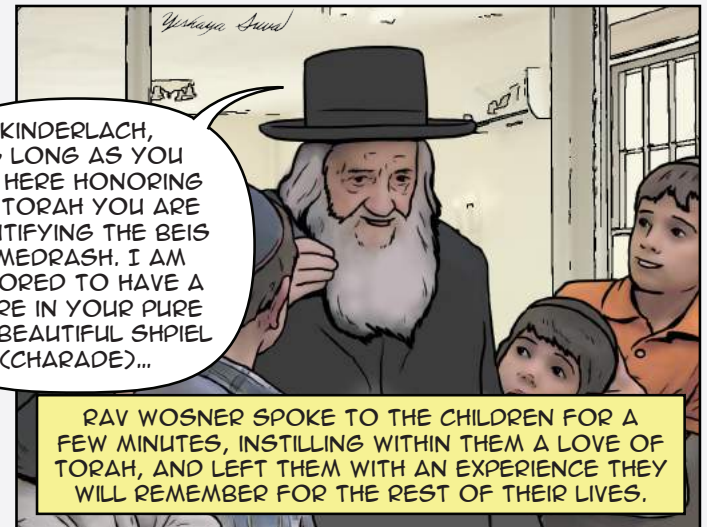
RAV WOSNER HEARD THIS FROM HIS SEAT AS HE WAS LEARNING AND, TO THE CHILDREN'S UTTER ASTONISHMENT, HE STOOD UP AND APPROACHED THE BIMAH FOR THE 'KRIAS HATORAH' THAT WAS TAKING PLACE!

ARE YOU GIVING ME AN ALIYAH?

KINDERLACH, AS LONG AS YOU ARE HERE HONORING THE TORAH YOU ARE BEAUTIFYING THE BEIS HAMEDRASH. I AM HONORED TO HAVE A SHARE IN YOUR PURE AND BEAUTIFUL SHPIEL (CHARADE)...



RAV WOSNER SPOKE TO THE CHILDREN FOR A FEW MINUTES, INSTILLING WITHIN THEM A LOVE OF TORAH, AND LEFT THEM WITH AN EXPERIENCE THEY WILL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.



RAV SHMUEL WAS BORN IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA, TO R' YOSEF TZVI AND ROCHEL (NEE SCHIFF) WOSNER. THE YOUNG SHMUEL WAS KNOWN AS AN UNUSUAL MASMID. HE JOINED THE LOCAL PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL AND SAW THE CHOFETZ CHAIM AT THE KNESSIA GEDOLA IN VIENNA. HE ALSO MET R' MEIR ARIK AND R' YOSEF ENGEL. HIS FAMOUS REBBEIM INCLUDE R' MEIR SHAPIRO (SPENDING 5 YEARS IN YESHIVAS CHACHMEI LUBLIN), ר' שמואל דוד אונגר, ר' יוסף אלימלך כהנא, ר' שמעון מוליחוב, ר' יוסף צבי דושינסקי. IN 1937 HE MARRIED RIVKA, THE DAUGHTER OF R' MORDECHAI GELBER, THE ROSH HAKAHAL OF PRESSBURG, AND IN 1938 IMMIGRATED TO ERETZ YISROEL. IN 1947, AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAZON ISH AND OTHERS, HE MOVED TO BNEI BRAK AND ESTABLISHED YESHIVAS CHACHMEI LUBLIN. HE WAS FROM THE LEADING POSKEI HADOR AT A YOUNG AGE. HE WROTE MANY ספרים, BUT HIS MAGNUS OPUS WAS THE 11-VOLUME שו"ת SHEVET HALEVI.

