



# PIRCHEI Weekly

Agudas Yisroel of America

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**פרשה: חקת הכפרה: ויפתח הגלעדי היה גבור חילו... (שופטים יא:א-לג)**

**דף יומי: יומא ס"ט אבות פרקה'**

**מצות תעשה: 3 שבועות לראש השנה 11**



## Torah Thoughts

### מצוה שצ"ז - מצות פרה אדמה

It is a מצוה to burn פרה אדמה so that the ashes will be available for the purification process of anyone who became impure due to contact with a dead person.

### משרשי המצוה

In his introduction to this מצוה, the חנוך explains why he dared to write even a mere glimpse of an explanation behind the other מצוה. The חנוך's heart was filled with ideas to explain the purpose behind all the previous מצוה, with the justification that these insightful reasons were important to help educate his son and his son's friends [Editor's note: understanding the reasons behind a מצוה is an effective tool in connecting to the מצוה]. However, when it came to a reason of this מצוה of פרה אדמה, his hand became too weak and the חנוך was afraid to even open his mouth. He writes, "How could I dare explain even the plain meaning, if חז"ל spoke at length that this מצוה is so deep that even שלמה המלך, [the wisest of all mankind], was unable to understand this מצוה. Also [I don't want to contradict] the מדרש מקדרש that when ד' taught רבינו משה this מצוה, ד' said, "To you I will reveal My reason for פרה אדמה, but not to others!"

"Don't be mistaken!" says the חנוך that the hidden mystery of the פרה אדמה lies in the ashes being able to purify a person. The true mystery lies in more than one area, but first and foremost is the unusual דין that it is מטמא the מטמא but it is also מטמא the טהור.

involved in burning the פרה אדמה to ashes. This law seems so mystical and defies logic.

### מצוה שצ"ח - מצות טמאה של מת

It is a מצוה to conduct ourselves in the way the תורה commands us regarding טמאה, impurity of a dead person. For example, any person or utensil in the same tent as a dead body is טמא, except a sealed earthenware utensil.

### משרשי המצוה

In (שלא יטמא כהן במת) מצוה לא תעשה רסי"ג the חנוך explains that a גוף, physical body, without a נשמה, soul, is considered אבי אבות, the highest (worst) level of impurity. A person is made up of a גוף and a נשמה. The גוף and נשמה are constantly pulling in completely opposite directions. The נשמה is the essence within a person that pushes him/her to strive higher and closer to ד', whereas the גוף, body, does the opposite, and pushes a person lower. When the נשמה leaves all that is left is the גוף, that constantly tries to weaken and lower the נשמה that makes it into אבי אבות הטמאה. The חנוך continues that צדיקים גמורים, pure righteous people, whose lives were pure and whose body helped the נשמה to become pure, merit to leave this world painlessly. [See an eye-opening בנשם... אותו היום: ד"ה אותו ק"ג: ד"ה אותו היום... בנשם.]

ספר החינוך במנין המצוות על פרשת השבוע - חקת Some מצוות and Ideas based on

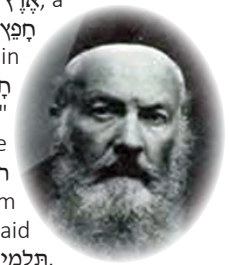


## Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

**תמוז י"ב**  
**5635 – 5701**  
**1874 – 1941**  
ר' אלקנה בנים וצ"ל Wasserman, born in Biržai, Lithuania, to ר' שניא רחל and נפתלי בינוש, learned in Telshe under R' Gordon וצ"ל and R' Shkop וצ"ל and also in Volozhin. In 1897, he studied under ר' Brisker. After his marriage to Atlas, in 1907, he moved to Radin. He became a תלמיד מבהק of the חפץ חיים and learned in his קדשים. In 1910, he served as ר"ם in Brisk, but returned during WWI. Later, he moved to Baranowicze, Poland, and founded his famous ישיבה. He was a dynamic leader and force in ישראלי together with his תלמידים, and 5000 other Yidden. Renowned for his analytical פשט and his צדקות, he authored שעורים, קובץ שעורים and other חידושים including the famous דמשיקא.

## Gedolim Glimpses

When he wanted to emigrate to ארץ ישראל, a committee of גדולים pleaded with the חפץ חיים to stay on. One asked, "רבי, in whose hands do you leave us?" The חפץ חיים replied, "I leave you with אלקנה!" As אלקנה was about to address a large gathering of רבנים, רביאל, רביאל, וצ"ל preceded him and recited aloud the ברכה which is said upon seeing an outstanding חכם. Stunned, אלקנה yelled, "Oi no! Absolutely not!" ר' אלקנה's modesty was equal to his גדלות in תורה!



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לעיני ר' ישראל בן אברהם ז"ל לעיני ה' ישעיהו דוב ע"ה בן יבלחטי"א יצחק צבי נ"י

To all the Menahalim, Rebbeim and Teachers for all their amazing work over the past year. Hatzocha and learn well this summer.



# Dead To the World

זאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל ... (במדבר יט: יד)  
*This is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent ...*

In its plain meaning, this verse discusses the laws of טומאה contracted through contact with a corpse. Our Sages also derive another meaning: "תורה can endure only in one who kills himself [כי ימות] over it" (ברכות ס"ג:).

The תפץ חיים explained this teaching with a parable:

There once lived a very successful textile dealer to whom many customers traveled from far and wide. The business occupied his every waking hour; he did not even take time off to pray with a מנין.

Years passed and he felt his strength weakening. He feared his end was drawing near; the time was approaching when he would have to stand judgment for the way in which he had spent his years on earth. He resolved to prepare for himself some "food for the road," regardless of the consequences. He decided to pray with a מנין each morning and remain in the בית מדרש afterwards for two hours to study תורה, despite the fact that customers and fellow businessmen awaited him.

On the first day, he arrived at his store 3 hours later than usual. His wife, greatly distressed, demanded, "Where were you? The store is packed with customers anxious to be on their way!"

The man replied simply, "My delay was unavoidable."

The next morning, when he was late again, his wife went to find him. How astounded she was to find him learning in the בית מדרש! "What has gotten into you!" she shouted. "Have you gone mad? The store is full of customers, and you are sitting and learning? Never mind the money we're losing today — you'll lose those customers forever!"

Calmly, with a sense of conviction, he responded, "My dear wife, what would you do if the מלאך המות would come to me and say, 'Come, let us go; the time has come for you to depart this world.'"

Would you interject, 'No, not now! Not when the store is full of customers!?' Well, from now on, consider me dead for the first three hours of the morning. Nothing should interrupt my prayers and תורה study."

This, said the תפץ חיים, is the meaning of the teaching of our Sages: תורה can endure only in one who considers himself as if he were dead during his periods of תורה study. One should not allow anything to interfere with his regular study schedule, nor should one allow oneself to be interrupted while studying.



A young couple once applied for visas to emigrate from Russia to the United States. The wife was granted a visa, but the husband was not. They decided it was wisest for the wife to take the opportunity while it was available and leave the country. Husband and wife parted tearfully, not knowing if or when they would see each other again.

The wife wrote letters regularly, but the Communists intercepted them and would not allow the letters to reach their destination. Then, the wife heard that a certain רב was being sent as an emissary by Agudath Israel of America to spend some time in Russia teaching תורה in secret to תשובה. She wrote her husband a letter and asked the רב to deliver it. He promised to try his best.

After arriving in Russia, the רב located the husband and rang his doorbell. When the husband came to the door, the רב handed him the letter and told him that it was from his wife. Tears welled up in his eyes and he thanked the רב profusely. Then, he took the still sealed letter and placed it in his pocket.

"Aren't you going to open it?" the רב asked.

"Yes, but not now," came the response. "I am in the middle of studying תורה with my תברותא [and this can wait]. When we conclude our study session, then I will open the letter."

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

## An Ahavas Chesed Moment

ספר אהבת חסד חלק א' פרק ו' ז'

\*As explained last week, if a mixed group of people came to borrow money and there is not enough money for everyone, then the priority of lending is based on their level of קדושה, holiness. Usually this means that a פוטר gets before a פוטר, a פוטר before a פוטר, etc. However, if one of the group is his father or רבי מבהק, the רבי from whom he acquired most of his learning and understanding in תורה, then that individual takes precedence.

\*This is intended only as a guide. Please review any real-life situations with a competent Rov.

The תלמיד חכם explains (based on עקיבא איגור) that the הלכה of the חכם taking precedence does not apply when it comes to a close family member. Therefore, a person who is only able to lend [or perform any חסד] to one person, must perform that act of kindness for a family member.

## "Questions of the Week"

1. Why are משה and הקב"ה's names not included in the שינה regarding the באר?
2. Who sent emissaries to ask permission to pass through סיוחון — one says משה (20:14) another says ישראל (21:21)?



1. It would be inappropriate to mention משה because he was punished on account of the ארץ. Since משה's name was omitted, ה'מקרא' is equal to his name as well [see (21:16)].  
2. משה and ישראל are equal to his name as well [see (21:21)].

- During the המצרים (the 3 weeks from באב - ט' תמוז - י"ז תמוז), the custom is to refrain from taking a haircut or a shave.
- An adult may not even give a haircut to a child.
- Trimming the mustache is permitted if it interferes with eating.
- Combing and brushing the hair is permitted.

Reviewed by R' Gedalyahu Eckstein

\*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 תלמיד,

R' Elchonon Wasserman זצ"ל and the Ponevezher Rav זצ"ל studied together in Radin. Once, they came to a difficulty. R' Elchonon had to research a particular ספר and recalled that it was mentioned in a notation in the משנה ברורה. Together they went to the תלמיד's house.

The תלמיד came to the door. R' Elchonon explained what they were learning and asked if he could borrow the ספר. The תלמיד replied that he did not own the ספר. He had borrowed it. Then the תלמיד glanced at the thirty or so ספרים on the shelf and let out a sigh.

R' Elchonon turned to his רבי and asked, "May I ask why the רבי gave a sigh?" The תלמיד did not answer. R' Elchonon did not want to go. He waited as both of them stood there in silence.

Finally, R' Elchonon asked again. "Can I ask why the רבי gave a sigh? Is it, perhaps, because the רבי looked at his few ספרים?"

The תלמיד shook his head. "No, that is not why." But he didn't offer the reason for his sigh.

R' Elchonon was not one to give up easily. Once again, he asked, "If that was not the reason, can I know what the reason was?"

Finally, the תלמיד began to speak. "When I looked at my ספרים I had a thought. From where did I obtain the money to buy these ספרים? I set aside a small amount of money from the ישיבה salary. Perhaps it was not worth the time raising the money which I had used to buy the ספרים. Perhaps it would have been better to utilize those moments for studying תורה. That is why I gave that sigh."

My תלמיד, R' Elchonon was puzzled by his רבי's sigh. He realized the importance of asking a question. Imagine how much his love and understanding for learning the תורה grew from his רבי's answer. We often assume we know the reason behind what we see without ever asking, but rarely is that the complete picture. Next time you see something that is bothering you, do not remain silent — ask! You may be surprised by the answer!

יהי זכרו ברוך!

בדידות, Your רבי

Story adapted from: *Visions of Greatness* (CIS)

## Understanding ערב שבת פרשת חקת

Heard from R' Lipa Geldwirth שליט"א  
... ביום הששי פרשת חקת נהגו יחידים  
להתענות...

... On the Friday [before] פרשת חקת there is a custom of [scrupulous] individuals to fast ...  
(מגן אברהם תק"פ)

The מגן אברהם explains that a צרה, calamity, happened on this day [in 5004]. 24 cartloads of ספרים were publicly burned in France. The חכמים of the time chose this day and this week's פרשה rather than the usual calendar date based on a פלאות הלוים, a divine revelation. The calamity was tied to this פרשה. The תרגום translates התורה זאת חקת התורה as דא גזרת אוריתא, which could mean, "This is the decree about the תורה!" In a letter to his רבי, the רמח"ל writes that the burning of the פרה אדומה was a כפירה to save כלל ישראל. Similarly, the calamity of the burning of the ספרים served as a כפירה to save כלל ישראל. So too, learning תורה saves כלל ישראל from calamities.



## Erev Shabbos

### Learning Contest

The latest Pirchei Newsletter contest is designed to make your ערב שבת fulfilling and memorable. During the weeks leading up to קבלת התורה and beyond, learn at least 45 minutes before מנחה every שבת, in your home, בית מדרש or local ישיבה. Learn for an hour or more and get an additional raffle entry. There is no particular למוד to learn — you can even review וקראת תרגום. If you arrange for a group to learn on the phone, and have a שיעור to learn about קדושת שבת or הלכות שבת, you will receive an extra raffle entry. The contest is open for all ages up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. To join the program, please send your weekly email to: shnayimmikrahcontest@gmail.com by Monday 2:00 pm. Please include your name, grade, ישיבה, city, state, and contact # and your name will be entered into a drawing for a beautiful set of מקראות גדולות חומשים!

## Sage Sayings

R' Naftoli Tropp, זצ"ל, once commented on the unusual and phenomenal memory of ר' אלקנה בנים וסרמן הי"ד. " ער נישט — פארגעסט גארנישט נאר — צוליב זיין גרויסע קאפ — but [rather] due to his great ער האט מורא צו פארגעסן אפילו — heavenly fear — און ווארט פון תורה of תורה!"

Source: שיעורים והקדוה חז"ל מסכת הרי"ת



# LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד  
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

R' ZUNDEL KROIZER'S DAILY ROUTINE STARTED AT MIDNIGHT.

OY! HASHEM'S GLORY IS STILL IN EXILE! I WILL CRY AND PLEAD WHILE RECITING TIKKUN CHATZOS.

R' ZUNDEL WOULD THEN LEARN 7 BLATT GEMARA BEFORE DAVENING SHACHARIS AT THE VASIKIN MINYAN.

ONE MORNING IN HIS LATER YEARS ON THE WAY TO THE ZICHRON MOSHE'S VASIKIN MINYAN...

OY! TATTE, TATTE!

R' ZUNDEL'S HOME WAS CLOSE BY.

TATTE, IF WE HURRY UP WE CAN STILL CATCH THE VASIKIN MINYAN.

R' ZUNDEL STARTED TO LEAVE, BUT WAS NOT IN A RUSH.

SHIMON, IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA, TODAY WE WILL DAVEN IN THE LATER MINYAN.

BUT TATTE, I HEARD FROM ZAI'DY THAT YOU HAVE NEVER MISSED A VASIKIN MINYAN SINCE THE AGE OF SEVEN?

MY SON, YOU MAY BE RIGHT! HOWEVER, I'VE ALSO NEVER SKIPPED ANY PART OF THE DAVENING, EVEN TO CATCH UP LATER. SAYING KARBANOS AND ALL OF PESUKEI DEZIMRA IN ITS PLACE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY CATCHING VASIKIN!

ר' זונדל פיינאנץ וואס איז געבוירן אין פראנקרײך און אריבער געצויגן צו אונגארן און דארט אריבער צו אונגארן און דארט אריבער צו אונגארן... WAS BORN IN PIRCHYCEWICZ AND MOVED TO BUDAPEST AND THEN TO BRATISLAVA. IN HIS YOUTH, HE LEARNED IN PIRCHYCEWICZ AND BRATISLAVA. DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS ENGAGEMENT, R' ISSER ZALMEN MELTZER ARRANGED A PARTNERSHIP FOR HIM SO THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO LEARN UNINTERRUPTED. HE MARRIED PORUSH AND WAS FROM THE FIRST TO LEARN IN BRATISLAVA UNDER R' CHAIM BRIM. HE LEARNED IN BRATISLAVA, BUT WAS OF THE OPINION OF THE AISH HASHEM. HE WAS A TALKER WITH R' FINKEL AND LATER WITH R' SOLOVEITCHIK. FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE, HE TURNED DOWN OFFERS TO SERVE IN ANY OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS A RABBI, SERVING INSTEAD AS A TALKER BOTH IN BRATISLAVA AND IN BUDAPEST. WHILE LIVING IN BUDAPEST, HE WAS A NEIGHBOR OF THE STEPLER AND WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF R' KANIEVSKY. HE WROTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN (5 VOLUMES) DURING THE YEAR HE SPENT IN LUGANO, SWITZERLAND, ESTABLISHING A PROLIFIC WRITER, HE ALSO WROTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN (5 VOLUMES), THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN, AND THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN. IN 1990, HE WAS APPOINTED AS A TALKER IN BRATISLAVA AND LATER IN BUDAPEST. KNOWN AS A TALKER, HE WAS ALSO A TALKER IN BRATISLAVA AND LATER IN BUDAPEST.



For any inquiries or comments please feel free to call 347-838-0869 • Illustrated by: Yeshaya Suval 347-486-6634

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