



# PIRCHEI Weekly

## Agudas Yisroel of America

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**פרשה שופטים הכטרה: אנכי הוא מנחמכם... (ישעיהו נאיב-נביב)**

**דף יומי: כתובות נ"ט אבות פקוד**

**מצות עשה: 14 מצות לא תעשה: 27**

**לדוד ה' אורי שבועות לראש השנה: 3 כתיבה וחתימה טובה!**



## Torah Thoughts



ובאת אֵל ... השפט אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בְּיָמֵי הֵהָם... (דברים יז ט)

*And you shall come to ... the judge that shall be in those days.*

Why does the תּוֹרָה mention going to "the judge that shall be in those (your own) days"? Is it possible for one to be judged by a judge from a previous era?

רש"י explains that the תּוֹרָה is telling us to accept the judges of our times even if they don't measure up to the judges of an earlier era. These are our judges, entrusted with the authority to rule on questions of הִלְכָה in our generation. We must respect them and abide by their rulings.

R' Pam, זצ"ל, explained, we sometimes hear, "Who are today's leaders? These you call גְּדוֹלִים I'll tell you what גְּדוֹלִים are. I'm from the old country. I saw real גְּדוֹלִים." This is the נֶצֶר הַרְעֵי speaking. These are his trademark expressions!

Can you imagine ר' Soloveitchik being challenged? Yet, when he became a מְגִיד שְׁעוֹר in the Volozhin Yeshivah, students complained to the הַתְּקַלָּה. Who was this ר' חיים? He only received his position because he married the granddaughter of the ראש ישיבה of Volozhin.

**The תּוֹרָה is speaking to each generation. Look at the judges in your times; they are given the סִיעָתָא דְשְׂמַיָא to handle the issues of the**

generation.

[Rav Frand's note: The end of the story about ר' חיים is very interesting and is too good to omit. The resolution of the students uprising against ר' חיים was to bring in three famous גְּדוֹלִים of the generation to observe ר' חיים and decide if he was worthy of giving a שְׁעוֹר in the Volozhin Yeshivah.

ר' חיים gave a שְׁעוֹר on a very complex topic. He presented a brilliant solution to a difficult passage of the תְּנַחְמוּ in his הַתְּקַלָּה. Suddenly, he recalled a particular phrase in the תְּנַחְמוּ commentary to the מְשֻׁנָּה that did not fit well with his proposed solution. His שְׁעוֹר didn't work.

ר' חיים slapped his lectern, and said, "The שְׁעוֹר I prepared is not true. The תְּנַחְמוּ's words in his מְשֻׁנָּה commentary contradict my hypothesis. It is wrong." ר' חיים then sat down.

The rabbis quickly rendered their decision. "He is worthy of giving a שְׁעוֹר in the Volozhin Yeshivah. Any person who cares so much about the אֱמֶת, truth, that he is willing to suffer the embarrassment of admitting his own mistake in public, even when no one else noticed it, is surely fitting for this position."].

*Adapted from: Rabbi Frand on the Parashah (with kind permission from ArtScroll)*



## Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

**ט' אלול**  
5637 - 5718  
1877 - 1958

Steif in Gaya, and ר' צבי was born in ר' יונתן זצ"ל, Czechoslovakia. At age 11, he went to learn in Pressburg under ר' שְׁבֵט סוֹפֵר (ר' שְׁמֻחָה בּוֹנִים סוֹפֵר זצ"ל) where he became close to ר' נחמן זצ"ל (אב"ד). In 1902, he married בלומא Fischel. After serving as רב and ראש ישיבה in Guta and then Ungvar, he joined the prestigious Budapest בֵּית דִּין from 1922-1944. He escaped to Switzerland on the Kastner Transport. In 1947, he immigrated to America. After serving briefly as מְגִיד שְׁעוֹר in Nitra, he became רב קהלת ווין. Universally accepted as a גְּדוֹל הַדוֹר, he headed the הַתְּאָחָדוּת הַרְבֵּנִים. Thousands of his תְּשׁוּבוֹת to שְׁאֵלוֹת from all over the world are recorded in שו"ת מהר"י שטייף. He also wrote אמונה וספקים, ש"ס, and the בְּנֵי נח.

## Gedolim Glimpses

די would converse with ר' יונתן Steif like a son speaks to his father. On one particularly hot and humid summer day, he was deeply immersed in his learning. בְּחוּרִים in camp watched his הַתְּמַדָּה with awe. A sudden breeze brought a short relief. ר' יונתן stood up and said, "מְשִׁיב דָּאֲנָק, מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ!" — Thank you so much, Master of the blowing wind! Their רַבֵּי's message of thanking די was forever etched in their collective memories!



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

# לרפואה שלמה לר' מאיר שליט"א בן פעסי ע"ה



# A Decision For Life

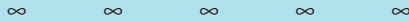


על פי התורה אשר יורוד ועל המשפט אשר יאמרו לך תעשה לא תסור מן הדבר ... גידודו לך זמין ושמאל (דברים יז:יא)

According to the *תורה* that they will teach you and according to the judgment that they will say to you, shall you do; you shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left.

By *תורה* law, an animal that is mortally wounded through birth defect, disease or injury, is deemed a *טריפה* and may not be eaten. [Today, the word *טריפה* is synonymous with all types of non-kosher food, but this is not the actual definition of the word. See *שמות כב:ל*.] There is a question whether a particular lung defect renders the animal a *טריפה*; *בית יוסף*; *ר' יוסף קרו* (R' Yosef Karo, author of *שולחן ערוך*) rules that it does not, while *רמ"א* (R' Moshe Isserles) disagrees.

Ashkenazic Jews generally follow the opinion of *רמ"א* when *בית יוסף* and *רמ"א* disagree. However, with regard to this disagreement, one Ashkenazic *גאון* ruled according to *בית יוסף*. He was R' Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, legendary author of *שענת ארנה* and one of the 18<sup>th</sup> century's greatest *תורה* geniuses. His *פסק* (ruling) in this matter caused quite a stir among Ashkenazic Jews. Nevertheless, the Jews of Volozhin, where the *שענת ארנה* served as *רב*, faithfully followed his opinion. Years later, when the *שענת ארנה*'s famed disciple, R' Chaim Volozhiner, became *רב* of Volozhin, he continued to follow his *רבי*'s ruling.



In the town of Volozhin, there lived a man who suffered from a lung disorder which was identical to that which was the subject of the disagreement between the *בית יוסף* and *רמ"א*. The man decided that his condition would benefit from the rarified air of Switzerland and he began making plans to move his family there.

One night before his intended departure, this man's father, who had died some years before, appeared to him in a dream.

"My son, I have come to warn you not to leave Volozhin. The illness from which you suffer is rendered life threatening by the *רמ"א* — and his ruling is followed by almost the entire European Jewry, including the Jewish community of Switzerland.

"It is only in the town of Volozhin that the *רמ"א*'s opinion is not followed, for it is there that the great *שענת ארנה* served as *רב*, and it is he who ruled that this illness is not terminal. The *שענת ארנה*'s opinion carries great weight in Heaven. Just as the animals in Volozhin with this defect are deemed kosher and not mortally ill, so too, are you deemed capable of living many more years.

"However, if you move elsewhere, where the *שענת ארנה*'s ruling is not accepted, you will die within the year."

The man canceled his plans to move. He was never cured of his lung disorder; however, he lived into his eighties.



R' Aaron Rokeach of Belz, *צ"י*, showed tremendous respect to the Tchebiner *רב*. He would say that the Tchebiner *רב* was "the *דעת תורה* of our generation". Whenever a difficult *שאלה* cropped up, the *Rebbe* would command that the *רב* be consulted, particularly if the question involved the medical field. People would come to receive the *Rebbe's* *ברכה* for a complicated operation, and the *Rebbe* would first send them to the Tchebiner *רב* to find out if such a risky operation was permissible according to the *הלכה*. This was the way the Belzer *Rebbe* taught his *תלמידים* the importance of *דעת תורה*.

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

## An Ahavas Chesed Moment

*ספר אהבת חסד - חלק ב' פרק ט'*

\*The *הפך חיים* offers another example of the 3<sup>rd</sup> argument of the *יצר הרע* to shirk away from lending money — *טענת פטור* — a person reasoning that they have an exempt status for lending monies: Remembering a previous bad experience of extending a loan and losing the money because of an unscrupulous borrower. The *הפך חיים* explains that this argument also has no feet. It is illogical that everyone can fall under the category of *לנה רשע ולא ישלם*, borrowing without intent to repay, without any previous past experience.

\*This is intended only as a synopsis. Review of the *ספר אהבת חסד* is far more extensive and appropriate. The *הפך חיים* elaborates further: in a case where the reason that you were not paid was due to a financial downturn and the poor person now offers to secure the loan with a *מאבטן*, collateral, then you would then you would still have a *חייב* to assist even the person who did not pay you back in the past.

## "Questions of the Week

1. Is there any part of *אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל* that we are forbidden to even plant a tree? If so, where?
2. Which part of *אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל* is considered to be higher than any other place in the world?



1. Yes. It is forbidden to build or to plant anything on the *הר הבית* — the Temple Mount (*הר הבית*) (16:11) — ...

2. The highest of all other places. Although *physical*, the *הר הבית* may not be the place of highest elevation in the world, this has a much deeper spiritual meaning (*הר הבית*) (17:8) — ...

- From *ראש חודש אבול* until *שמיני עצרת*, we recite "*לך ה' ... אורי וישעי ...*" followed by *יתום*.
- Some people have a *מנהג* to check their *תפילין* and *מזוזות* during the month of *אבול*. This recitation is *מערב* or *מנחה* and once by *שחרית*.

Reviewed by R' Gedalyahu Eckstein

\*Since we only discuss 1-3 *הנזות*, it is important to consider these *הנזות* in the context of the bigger picture. Use them as a starting point for further in-depth study.

## Focus on Middos

Dear תלמיד,

The daughter of R' Yonason Steif זצ"ל vividly recalls when her father left their home to go to the hospital to repair a hernia. He walked over to the ספרים on his bookshelves and kissed each one of them, one at a time. He used a footstool and began at the top shelf. He apologized to a specific ספר and told it, "I had to run to give a שיעור!"

He murmured apologies to other ספרים too.

"זני מיר מוחל", please forgive me, but I did not have enough time to study you as I should have!"

The words "Forgive me," were murmured over and over again. When he came to a ספר written by the חתם סופר, he pulled it out and looked at a piece of yellow paper with his writing and said: "Holy סופר, when we will meet, I would like to show you a פשוט in this שאלה!" He closed the ספר lovingly and gently returned it to its place.

This continued until his wife gently informed him that the car was waiting to take him

for the first of only two visits to the hospital.

Before he left for the last visit to the hospital, shortly before his פטירה, he again went over to his ספרים cabinet. He stood on a chair to reach to the top shelf, and in great pain, with tears flowing, he gently kissed each one of them goodbye. He was saying good-bye to the holy ספרים to which he was so attached and which had served him so well for so many years, one by one.

My תלמיד, when R' Yonason Steif זצ"ל went to the hospital, he was concerned that he may not return. He truly regarded a ספר not as a book of words, but as being alive and connected with the eternity of the living תורה. With the purity of a child, he saw every ספר as his true friend, each one needing a personal farewell. Is it any wonder why R' Reuven Grozovsky זצ"ל said, "He is the חפץ חיים of this generation!"

יהי זכרו ברוך!

בגידיות, רבי Your

Story adapted from: *The Life and Times of Rabbi Yonason Steif* (with kind permission from Feldheim)



## Understanding Davening

לדוד ה' אורי וישעי ... (תהלים כ"ז)  
אחת שאלתי מאת ה' אותה אבקש: שבתני בבית  
ה' כל ימי חיי ...

One thing I asked of ה', that I shall seek:  
Would that I dwell in the House of ה' all the  
days of my life ...

The מלבי"ם observes: A person's needs and desires are constantly changing. A person may need to be healed from an illness; another time, one may need money for food or to be saved from an enemy — every moment brings with it new needs and fresh requests. דוד המלך, however, tells us that he has had only one desire: שבתני בבית ה' — Would that I dwell in the House of ה' all the days of my life, because, in reality, this request includes all of his desires — to serve ה' and to understand His ways. When a person is close to ה', he does not worry about any problem.



## ערב שבת 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 ופחד 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' Yonoson Steif זצ"ל banged on the בימה to relay an urgent message. He rhetorically asked his עולם, "רבותי, which Name of ה' must strengthen in order to bring about the final Redemption? Every day we plead, 'קדוש ישראאל', גאֵלנו, די ... שמו, 'קדוש ישראאל', Our Redeemer די ..., His Name, 'The Holy One of Yisroel'! מען מוה פארשטארקן אוינדער הייליגקייט כדי דער אייבערשטערס נאמען זאל 'קדוש ישראאל' — הייסן 'קדוש ישראאל' holiness in order that His name will be recognized as 'קדוש ישראאל'!

Source: R' Avrohom Schorr שליט"א heard it from a מתפלל who was there!





DER ALTER OF SLABODKA ONCE DEVIATED FROM HIS USUAL CUSTOM OF DAVENING MINCHA IN YESHIVA.

MY SON, WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TIME THEY DAVEN MINCHA TODAY IN THE COMMUNITY SHUL?

YEYASHER KOACH! (THANK YOU!)

...OH! UH, I'LL CHECK AND COME BACK, REBBI.

IT WAS PUZZLING THAT HE CHANGED HIS USUAL PLACE OF DAVENING, BUT NOT AS PUZZLING AS HIS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY URGENT BEHAVIOR...

GABBAI! I AM A CHIYLV AND I MUST DAVEN AT THE AMUD...

IT'S URGENT...

DOES DER REBBI HAVE YAHRZEIT TODAY?..

DER ALTER WENT OVER TO THE AMUD WITHOUT EVEN GETTING A REPLY FROM THE GABBAI... AND HIS STUTTERING STARTLED THE MISPALELIM.

...YIS-YIS-GADAL V-V-YIS-KADASH... SH-SH-SH-MEI...

WHAT'S HAPPENING? IS THIS THE TEFILLAH OF DER ALTER OF SLABODKA?

AFTER DAVENING DER ALTER THANKED THE GABBAI AND LEFT AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.

WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? DER ALTER DOESN'T STAMMER OR STUMBLE WHEN HE DAVENS-

EH, M-MAY I DAVEN M-M-MAARIV? I-I JUST B-B-ECAME A CHIYLV...

I-I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT D-DAVENING IN P-PUBLIC..WHEN I-I HEARD DER ALTER D-DAVENING, AND EVEN HE STUTTERS... I-I CAN DAVEN TOO....

THE ALTER HAD BEEN MENACHEM AVEL THIS MAN EARLIER IN THE WEEK...

DER ALTER REALIZED THE MAN'S PREDICAMENT AND WILLINGLY EMBARRASSED HIMSELF TO PROVIDE THE AVEL THE ENCOURAGEMENT HE NEEDED.

בגיל FINKEL, THE ALTER OF SLABODKA זצ"ל WAS BORN IN RASEI, LITHUANIA, TO משה ר' AND מרים. HE WAS A AT AN EARLY AGE AND WAS A תלמיד OF THE ALTER OF KELM זצ"ל. HE MARRIED GITTEL WOLPERT. IN 1877, HE OPENED A חדר אורח AND WAS A תלמיד IN SLABODKA. HE ESTABLISHED THE TELZ ישיבה, APPOINTING GORDON ר' אליעזר AS ITS ראש ישיבה. IN 1884, HE FOUNDED THE SLABODKA ישיבה. IN 1897, THE ישיבה SPLIT IN A DISPUTE OVER THE EMPHASIS ON LEARNING AND HE FORMED ישיבת נפתל ישראל. HE ALSO FOUNDED SLUTSK ישיבה, APPOINTING זלמן ר' איסר AS ITS ראש ישיבה. HE OPENED A BRANCH OF HIS ישיבה IN ירושלים TOGETHER WITH ר' EPSTEIN IN THE '20'S, AND SENT WAVES OF HAND-PICKED TALENTS THERE. SOME OF HIS ILLUSTRIOUS תלמידים INCLUDED יצחק ר' HUTNER זצ"ל (BRUKLYN, NY), יעקב ר' KAMENETSKY זצ"ל (BROOKLYN, NY), בית מדרש גבוה זצ"ל KOTLER ר' אהרן (BALTIMORE, MD), LEIBOWITZ ר' דוד (BALTIMORE, MD), AND יעקב ר' RUDERMAN זצ"ל (BALTIMORE, MD). IN 1925, TWO YEARS BEFORE HIS פטירה, HE MOVED TO HIS ישיבה IN חברון. HIS שיעורים ARE COLLECTED IN אור הצפון.

