



# PIRCHEI Weekly

Agudas Yisroel of America

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**פרשה: ראה** **הפטרה: כה אמר ה' השמים כסאי...** (ישעיהו טו:א-כד)

**מתחילים לתקוע בשופר בימות החול ולאמר לדוד ה' אורי ביום ראשון בשחרית**

**דף יומי: כתובות נ"ב אבות פרק ה'**

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## Torah Thoughts



ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם ... ברכה וקללה (דברים יא: כו)

*See, I present before you ... a blessing and a curse.*

י' tells us to **רְאֵה** (ראה) *I am offering (literal translation: setting before) you (לפניכם), on this day, blessings and curses.* The **פְּסוּקֵי הַטּוֹרִים** notes that the word **רְאֵה** is the singular form of the verb, but the preposition **לפניכם** is plural. Why does the **פְּסוּקֵי** change from singular to plural?

Furthermore, why was it necessary to explain and introduce the **בְּרָכוֹת** from י' with the word **רְאֵה**, *see*? If you are actually giving someone a present, is it necessary to tell him, "Look, I am giving you a present"? Why is it necessary to point out the seemingly obvious?

The answer is that the **בְּרָכוֹת** from י' are rarely as obvious as we think. If we do not make a conscious effort to notice them, we may not even be aware of the blessings that we receive. In addition, without thought, it is impossible to appreciate the full extent of our blessings. We often misunderstand what is our greatest blessing. If we would stop to think about it, our life is full of all kinds of **בְּרָכוֹת**. In fact, life itself is the greatest **בְּרָכָה**. However, we take far too many of the 'normal' things in our life for granted and we do not realize just how blessed we really are. Therefore, י' reminds us to "see" the blessing that He has given us. We have to be aware of all the good that י' has given to us and we cannot take our blessings for granted. If we would

spend more time and think about our blessings from י', that will in turn create the **זְכוּת** to receive even more blessings.

The Kotzker Rebbe points out that the same **בְּרָכוֹת** can be given collectively to many people, but each individual will perceive the **בְּרָכוֹת** in his own way, depending on his own particular personality and outlook. **בְּרָכוֹת** can be universal, but the perception of them is always individual. Therefore, when י' tells us to "see", He uses the singular form, but the placement of the **בְּרָכוֹת** is expressed in the plural.

The **גְּמָרָא** (תענית ל:) teaches, "כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה – וְרוּחָהּ בְּשִׁמְחָתָהּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *Whoever mourns the destruction of ירושלים will eventually merit to see its joy.*" The reward for someone who mourns the "destruction of ירושלים," should be to merit to see it being rebuilt. Why is joy also part of the reward?

The reward of *seeing its joy* is based on the time spent thinking about the destruction of ירושלים. Even when ירושלים will be rebuilt, not everyone will "see" the profound depths of its joy; **that** will be a special **בְּרָכָה** limited to those that spent time and thought about our great loss. The **חֲכָמִים** are telling us that **if one thinks and internalizes the loss caused by the destruction of ירושלים, not only will he see the rebuilding of it, he will also merit to "seeing" its joy.**

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



## Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

**ג' אלול**  
5646 – 5708  
1886 – 1948

ר' שרגא פייבל זצ"ל was born in Vilag, Hungary, to Moshe and Sima Tcheba Mendlowitz. After his mother's tragic **פְּטִיחָה**, his family moved to Mezőlaborc, Slovakia, where he studied under the **שֵׁבֶט סוֹפֵר** and received **סְמִיכָה** at the age of 17. At age 22 he married Bluma Rochel Schaller. In 1913, he emigrated to the US and was a **מְלַמֵּד** in Scranton, PA, for 7 years. He joined **תּוֹרַת וְדַעַת** in 1920, and was appointed **מְנַהֵל**. He expanded it and opened the first **יְשִׁיבָה** high school in the US. He founded **בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ תּוֹרַת וְדַעַת**, **בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ עֲלִיוֹן**, **תּוֹרַת וּמִסְוֶרָה**, **בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ וְדַעַת** and assisted **יְשִׁיבָה** of Brooklyn, **תַּיִשׁ בְּרֻלִין**, Telshe (Cleveland), **בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ גְּבֵה**, and opened the first **יְשִׁיבָה** camp (Mesivta). He burned with **ד' אֲהַבְתָּ ד' אֲהַבְתָּ**, **אֲהַבְתָּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל** and **תּוֹרַת**.

## Gedolim Glimpses

Throughout his life, R' Shraga Feivel Mendelovich, זצ"ל, adamantly refused to use the title of Rabbi or **רֵאשׁ יְשִׁיבָה**. He was insistent that people referred to him as "Mr. Mendlowitz." However, this appellation only grew his stature in the eyes of all those who had the **זְכוּת** to meet him. The **גְּדוֹל הַדּוֹר**, R' Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל, described R' Shraga Feivel as the visionary savior of Jewry in America and said, "Were it not for him, there would be no **תּוֹרַת** and no **יְרֵאת שְׂמַיִם** at all in America!"



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

לעיני ר' אברהם יעקב הכהן פאם זצ"ל (נפטר כ"ח מנחם אב, ה' תשס"א)



# Life Saver

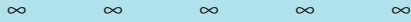


נתון תתן לו ולא ירע לבבך בתיקו לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברך ה' אלקיך ... (דברים טו: י)

"You shall surely give him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him, for because of this matter, Hashem, your G-d, will bless you ...

The **תורה** is teaching us a significant lesson: **צדקה** is our insurance policy. It protects us, as it prevents any evil from coming close to us.

The following story is just one of countless episodes that recount the remarkable consequence of giving **צדקה**. We must add that, as in all instances, there are many variables which play a role in a given situation. However, in the following episode we do see how giving **צדקה** with **מסירת נפש**, *utter devotion and self-sacrifice*, literally saved a life.



A very special **תלמיד חכם**, a kollel-fellow who devoted himself to the **תורה** study to the fullest extent, was learning at home. It was a very special home — but, alas, a very poor one. The couple had been blessed with fourteen children. Obviously, money — and even food — was at a premium at this house.

The well-mannered children played quietly while their father was learning. Even the younger ones were invited to join the game to keep them from disturbing their father.

Their favorite game was hide and seek. It did not take too long before the young children became experts at finding great new hiding places. The children were looking high and low for the youngest child, who had eluded everyone and was not found in any of the usual hiding places.

A poor woman, in desperate need of food, knocked on the door. Answering the woman's knock was the kollel fellow himself.

"I need a piece of chicken," cried the woman.

In truth, the kollel-fellow felt sorry for the poor woman, but he really did not have very much to offer her in the way of food.

"I am terribly sorry, my dear woman," he replied, "but I cannot help you. I have two chickens in the refrigerator which I have put away for the upcoming **יום טוב**, so that my family can enjoy the festival with a small piece of meat as prescribed by the **הלכה**. This is all we have for the entire family."

"Please, I am begging you, I have not had a piece of meat in such a long time. I crave a small piece of chicken," she implored.

A few moments passed and the young man decided that this woman's health was certainly as important as his **יום טוב**, celebrating the festival amid joy. If she was so obsessed with eating a piece of chicken that she would beg him so profusely, then she should get it.

"Ok, I am going to give you a piece of chicken," he said as he left her to go to the refrigerator for a piece of chicken.

Suddenly, there came forth a scream from the kitchen, as the young man opened the refrigerator door and beheld a shocking sight. His three-year-old son had somehow hidden himself inside the refrigerator and had been trapped there. His lips were already blue, his skin had turned pale, his breathing was shallow and labored — but, he was still alive! A miracle!

The **הצלה**, the emergency rescue team, was immediately summoned and they began to resuscitate the young child, as they hurriedly transported him to the hospital.

With the help of **ה'**, they succeeded in saving his life. All because of a piece of chicken. The gesture of giving **צדקה**, going out of his way to help a woman in need, saved the life of his child.

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

## An Ahavas Chesed Moment

**ספר אהבת חסד - חלק ב' פרק ט'**

\*The **הפך חיים** explains 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*. Unfortunately it is common for even well-to-do people to look at others who are blessed with even more wealth and assume that the richer person will undertake the cause. The **הפך חיים** calls this a **טענת הבל**, *a baseless reasoning* - it is only an assumption. The wealthier person may have his own personal reasons and possibly cannot undertake to lend at this time.

\*This is intended only as a synopsis. Review of the **ספר אהבת חסד** is far more extensive and appropriate. The **הפך חיים** quotes a **רדב"י** that one still has the responsibility to lend monies even if the poor person has close wealthy relatives in the city but the relatives have refused to assist. The **מצוה** of the **חייב** is to assist a poor person in their time of need. If the close relative doesn't help, then the responsibility is on you!

## "Questions of the Week"

1. Who are the four recipients of **ברכה**'s **הקב"ה** if someone gives to the **לוי**, **גר**, **יתום** and **אלמנה** their due?
2. What types of materials are permitted to be used as a covering for a **סוכה**?



1. Your son, your daughter, your servant and your maid/servant are the four who correspond to the **לוי, גר, יתום, אלמנה** (Levi, stranger, orphan, widow). (16:11-12)
2. We should use materials that grow from the ground and are not susceptible to becoming **אב"מ**, such as branches of a vine/tree or pieces of straw and the like (16:13).

- **הפסק** words are a **תפלת** instead on **אתה יצרת** we say **שבת ראש חודש** of **מוסף** In **שבת**. Many add **קרבו שבת וקרבו היום כאמור** to introduce **שבת**.
- **מקדש השבת וישאל וראשי הדינים** ends **אתה יצרת**. If one forgets, and ends **השבת**, then **מקדש השבת**, he is **יוצא**.

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,

A חבר of R' Shlomo Heiman once asked him how he could serve as ראש ישיבה for תורה ודעת when it did not have a formal מוסר program. R' Shlomo replied, "R' Shraga Feivel's שלש סעודות is the equivalent to the בחורים learning מוסר". The following is part of an essay, R' Yitzchok Chinn wrote about his beloved רבי:

"When a טוב יום approached, R' Shraga Feivel made certain that the boys from the poorest families were outfitted with new suits. He also made sure that the growing needs for the נשמה were met. רבי taught us how to sing נגון and how to shed a tear; how to dance and how to cry. He often remarked, 'If you cannot dance on שמחת תורה with what you have got, you cannot cry on יום כפור for what you are missing.'

"My first exposure to תורה ודעת was as part of a visit organized by a group of Pirchei leaders in Baltimore. The dancing and singing so captivated us that they gave us the impetus to leave home to learn in the 'big city'.

"The walls of the בית vibrated with the spirit of the season. רבי would direct the singing and dancing — not a wild release of energy, but a leap of the spirit. 'You can't jump from נגון to נגון,' he would tell us. 'You must wring the last drop of a נגון like you squeeze juice from a lemon.'

"I can still hear his voice ringing in my ears as he led us in the song, אם אני כאן הכל כאן — *If I am here, all is present* (see סוכה). פשט רש"י ב"חורים' (ניגון). 'רבי' referring to רבי' (אני) פשט 'תוספות ב"חורים' referring to שראל (presence)."

My תלמיד, when speaking to any תלמיד of R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz you will hear the same type of story. Watching their רבי's interactions were opportunities for eternal lessons of how they can grow and become greater! Remember, we are always teaching each other, each person is a רבי in one way or another!

הי זכרו ברוך!

רבי Your ב"חורים,

Story adapted: *The Heart of R' Shraga Feivel and the Soul of a נגון* — Chinn

## Sage Sayings

R' Shraga Feivel Mendelovich זצ"ל enjoyed the beauty of nature because he saw in it the glory of די and His majesty. A layman once commented on the position of R' Shraga Feivel's seat in Camp Mesivta. He observed that the רבי davens near the window and often looks out. R' Shraga Feivel explained "ער — מנינט אז איך קוק ארויס... דער אמת איז אז איך קוק אריין! He thinks I am looking out ... in truth, I am looking in." His eternal message was to open your eyes, and enjoy די's beautiful world!

Source: *Heard around the שבת table*



## Understanding Davening

לדוד ה' אורי וישעי ... (תהלים כ"ז)  
... ממי אירא, ה' מעוז ... ממי אפקד ... whom shall I fear? די is my ... strength, whom shall I dread?

The חובת הלכות tells of a צדיק who would sleep alone and unprotected in the wilderness. One man asked the צדיק, "Are you not fearful of the wild lions that roam around?" The צדיק replied, "I would be embarrassed in front of די, if I would be afraid of anything else besides Him!" The צדיק implied: imagine if a bee would fly past at the same time that a lion approached. Would the צדיק be concerned about the bee's sting? The צדיק's fear of די was constant at every moment. He had no place for any other fear. This is what נוד המלך meant — די is my light, my savior, my life's strength, whom shall I fear? I fear די, there is no place for any other fear!



## ערב שבת Learning Contest

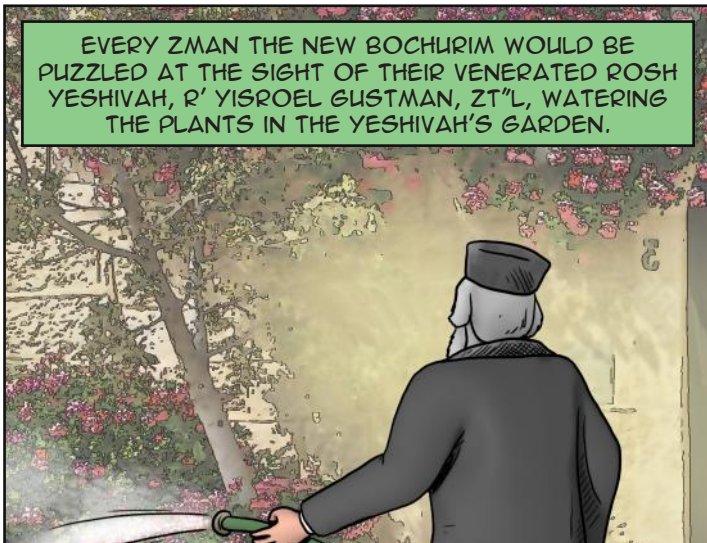
The latest Pirchei Newsletter contest is designed to make your ערב שבת fulfilling and memorable. During the weeks leading up to קבלת התורה and beyond, learn at least 45 minutes before מנחה every שבת, in your home, ערב שבת or local מדרש. Learn for an hour or more and get an additional raffle entry. There 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 שעור 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!



# LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

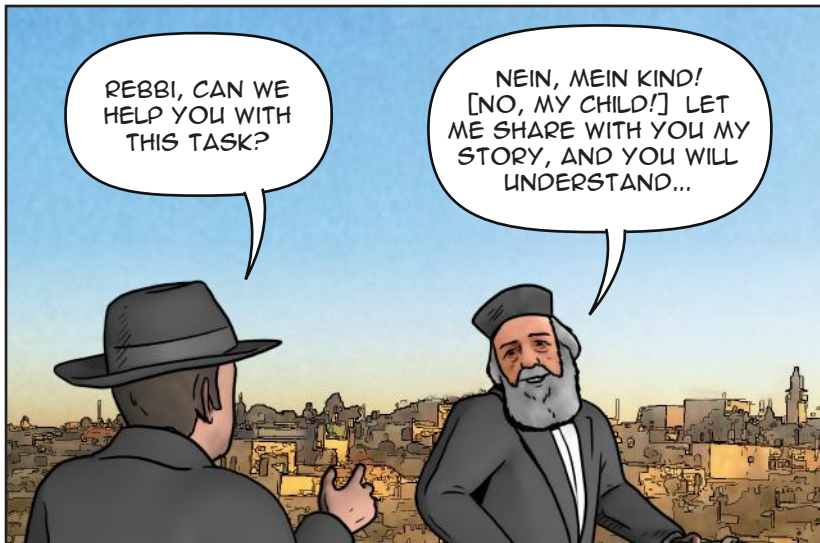
בס"ד  
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

EVERY ZMAN THE NEW BOCHURIM WOULD BE PUZZLED AT THE SIGHT OF THEIR VENERATED ROSH YESHIVAH, R' YISROEL GUSTMAN, ZT"l, WATERING THE PLANTS IN THE YESHIVAH'S GARDEN.



REBBI, CAN WE HELP YOU WITH THIS TASK?

NEIN, MEIN KIND! [NO, MY CHILD!] LET ME SHARE WITH YOU MY STORY, AND YOU WILL UNDERSTAND...

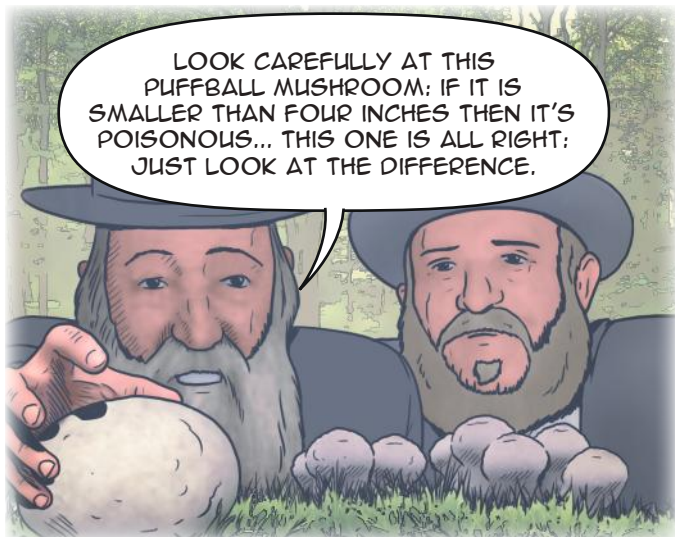


AS YOU KNOW, I WAS A TALMID MUVHAK OF REBBI, THE GREAT RAV CHAIM OZER GRODZENSKY, ZT"l. ONE DAY HE TOOK ME ON A WALK TO A SMALL FOREST OUTSIDE THE CITY...



R' CHAIM OZER BEGAN TO IDENTIFY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANTS, TELLING ME WHICH WERE SUITABLE FOR EATING, WHICH HAD CURATIVE PROPERTIES, AND WHICH WERE DANGEROUS.

LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS PUFFBALL MUSHROOM: IF IT IS SMALLER THAN FOUR INCHES THEN IT'S POISONOUS... THIS ONE IS ALL RIGHT: JUST LOOK AT THE DIFFERENCE.

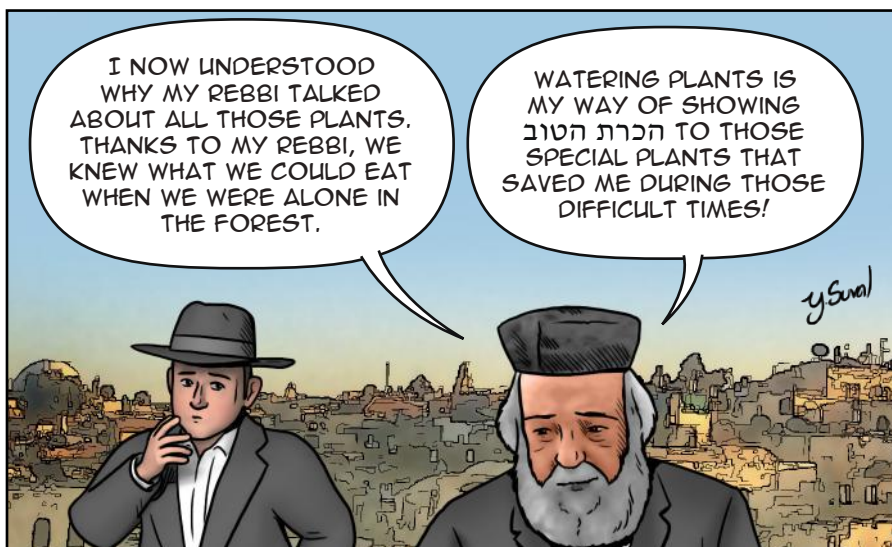


A FEW SHORT YEARS LATER, MY REBBI, REB CHAIM OZER, WAS GONE, THE TORAH WORLD WAS IN FLAMES, AND MY FAMILY WAS IN HIDING. DURING THOSE BITTER AND DIFFICULT YEARS, LIVING AS WE DID IN THE SUBHUMAN CONDITIONS OF THE FOREST, OUR SOLE SOURCE OF NOURISHMENT WAS PLANTS ...

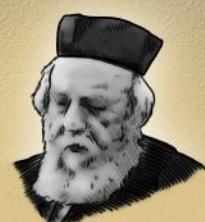


I NOW UNDERSTOOD WHY MY REBBI TALKED ABOUT ALL THOSE PLANTS. THANKS TO MY REBBI, WE KNEW WHAT WE COULD EAT WHEN WE WERE ALONE IN THE FOREST.

WATERING PLANTS IS MY WAY OF SHOWING THE HONOR TO THOSE SPECIAL PLANTS THAT SAVED ME DURING THOSE DIFFICULT TIMES!



תלמידו של ר' שמואל שחוק זצ"ל, ר' ישראל זאב גוסטמן זצ"ל, THE SON OF אברהם צבי AND אסתר, WAS BORN IN SKOLKA NEAR BIALYSTOCK. A TALMID OF R' SHIMON SHKOP זצ"ל IN GRODNO AT THE TENDER AGE OF 13, WAS PRIVILEGED TO LEARN FIRST WITH ר' שמואל שחוק זצ"ל (WHO LATER BECAME ישיבה ראש OF PONEVEZH), AND AS AN OLDER BACHUR WITH חיים ר' חיים עזר בית דין OF דין גוסטמן. MIRACULOUSLY, HE WAS SPARED, AND FLED FOR HIS LIFE. AFTER WWII, ר' גוסטמן IMMIGRATED TO THE US. IN 1950, HE OPENED HIS OWN ישיבה IN NEW YORK. IN 1961, ר' גוסטמן MOVED TO ISRAEL AND TRANSFERRED HIS ישיבה TO ירושלים. HE TURNED DOWN OFFERS TO SERVE AS רב FOR THE החרדית AND SERVE AS ראש ישיבה IN PONEVEZH AND MIR. HE DESIRED ONLY TO SIT AND LEARN. תורת ה' גוסטמן'S TEACHING WERE PUBLISHED AS שיעורים בקטגוריית שיעורים.



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

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