

EDITORIAL

BY: RABBI YOSEF BERKOWITZ

After a beautiful Yom Tov of Pesach, the y'mei haSefirah are here once again. It is a time of serious introspection, tinged with the sadness evoked by the realization that during these very days, no fewer than 24,000 of our greatest were taken from us in a matter of weeks.

Chazal were very specific in identifying the spiritual cause for that catastrophic earthly effect: Shelo nohagu kovod zeh lazeh, the talmidim of Rabi Akiva, students of a towering Tanna, failed to accord proper respect to each other.

Speaking of the Churban that is the basis for almost all of the fast days we mark on the Jewish calendar, the Rambam (Hilchos Ta'aniyos 5:1) writes that we fast in order to "awaken hearts... to be a remembrance for our improper deeds and the deeds of our ancestors that were like our deeds now, which brought upon them and us, these troubles. And by remembering these things, we will return to do better..."

It would seem the Rambam's words ought to apply with equal force to the deaths of tzaddikim, which Chazal equate with the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash itself. If we are still observing a mourning period during these days of Sefirah over the plague

that swept through the ranks of the talmidei Rabi Akiva, it must be that we still need to remember that unspeakable tragedy, because our actions and attitudes now haven't changed from what they were then.

It is important to note that Chazal do not fault Rabi Akiva's disciples for holding views that differed from those of their peers, for such is the way of Torah. Each Torah sage is entitled to

his own view, provided he arrives at it after approaching the topic with abundant yir'as Shomayim and middos tovos, and bases it on what he has received from his rebbeim in an honest examination of Torah sources.

To the contrary, the criticism of that generation may have been over their failure to respect the right of one's fellow talmid chochom to take a differing, even dissenting, albeit honestly held view.

He, too, was entitled to the kovod due a true talmid chochom, and he did not forfeit his entitlement to that respect when, based upon his understanding of Torah and the mesorah he was bequeathed by his teachers, he charted a path different from others of his peers.

The failure to grasp the transcendent truth of eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim

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Chazal do not fault Rabi Akiva's disciples for holding views that differed from those of their peers, for such is the way of Torah

AGREE OR DISAGREE I MUST PROTECT MY BROTHER

Pictures and reports of violent responses to a demonstration outside the Lishkat Hagiyyus this past Sunday have been seen across the media. The details regarding the young woman, Yuval bat Tamar Dadun, and her military detainment, are still unfolding.

In this context, we present the translation of an op-ed piece written by Yishai Cohen on Kikar Shabbos, on March 24, after some other painful events.

Imagine a picture of an ultra-Orthodox man pulling a dog's ears tightly. A picture published in the media. You do not have to be a prophet or a maven to determine that all the media in Israel would prominently pub-

lish the picture. We would hear politicians from all across the spectrum attacking, condemning and trying to prosecute without any delay.

But no, this is an ultra-Orthodox boy, a resident of Mea She'arim, a demonstration by extremists. A photograph that was documented and published in Kikar Shabbos during demonstrations and disorderly disturbances documents the cruel moments of a secular man pulling hard at the peyot of a boy who demonstrated in the place. The boy cries out in pain, but the man continues cruelly to pull on this symbol of his Jewishness.

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THE TINY JEWISH NATION

הנה כתוב (ואתחנן, שביעי) "לא מרובכם מכל העמים חשק הי' בכם, כי אתם המעט מכל העמים, כי מאהבת הי' אתכם, ומשמרו את השבועה אשר נשבע לאבותיכם, הוציא הי' אתכם ביד חזקה ויפדך מבית עבדים, מיד פרעה מלך מצרים". אמרו חז"ל (חולין פ"ט) "לא מרובכם, אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל, חושקני בכם, שאפילו בשעה שאני משפיע לכם גדולה, אתם ממעטים עצמכם לפניי, עד כאן לשונם.

כי אתם המעט מכל העמים

According to recently published figures by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Jewish population worldwide is still currently less than it was before the outbreak of WWII in 1939.

Their census totals the number of Jews worldwide at approximately 14,511,000, about two million less than the approximate 16,600,000 Jews alive at the onset of WWII. The current population resembles the

number of Jews in the world in 1922, when data suggests that there were a total of 14 million Jews in the world.

About 85% of the Jewish population today live in either Israel or the United States. The larger population is in Israel, with a total of about 6.45 million, with the other 5.7 million living in America. Other prominent Jewish populations include France, 456,000, Canada, 390,000, Britain, 290,000, Argentina, 181,000, Russia, 176,000, and Germany, 117,000.

Unfortunately, the numbers published by this study are not necessarily accurate, as it can almost be guaranteed that a large number of supposed Jews included in the numbers are not actually Jewish. There are many people who may have identified

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chayim is one of greatest gravity, and can result in a calamity of enormous proportions. And, today, thousands of years later, we grieve over that failure still, because, in the Rambam's words, the "deeds of our ancestors...were like our deeds now."

How much sadder it is when, in this last generation before Moshiach's advent, the assault on the very concept of objective facts has penetrated even into the Torah world

Recently in these pages, we cited the words of the Gemara at the end of Masseches Sota that foretells a time at the End of Days when "ha'emes tehi ne'ederes," the truth will disappear. But as one of the meforshim explains, the word ne'ederes can be understood in another way as well, as related to eder, a flock.

In this understanding, the Gemara is speaking of a time when Ha'emes, truth – which ought to evoke universal agreement -- tehi ne'ederes, will instead be variable and elastic, depending on what societal "flock" one travels with. Chazal foresaw an era in which, instead of adhering to immutable truths and demonstrable facts, some people will speak of "alternative facts," and others will say, "you have your truth and I have mine."

That era is now upon us. Nor is it exclusive to the right or left sides of the societal spectrum. The first formulation above is, after all, one that a spokesperson for the president of the United States has used to explain away his frequent indulgences in untruths. And the second one above is a phrase that is off-heard in that world of moral relativism and intellectual anarchy known as the contemporary college campus.

It would be unsettling enough were this to be the case only in society at large. Yet, how much sadder it is when, in this last generation before Moshiach's advent, the assault on the very concept of objective facts has penetrated even into the Torah world, where truth has always been a concept venerated above all else. Facts have become more malleable than Silly Putty and truth changes form based on what's acceptable to say and acknowledge among the members of the flock one moves and

pastures with.

Are thousands of Charedim being drafted into the Israeli army each year – or not? Are frum girls now receiving summonses to appear alone at the army draft office – or not? Does the army acknowledge paying dozens of charedim to circulate in frum neighborhoods and yeshivos to entice young bnei Torah to abandon learning and join the army – or not? Is there a division of the education ministry dedicated to integrating secular values into frum schools – or not?

There are a number of possible answers one might give when presented with questions like these, and all are reasonable. He might say, "I simply don't know," or "I will inquire and investigate," or "There is some truth to these claims," or "These statements are entirely true."

But there's one response that ought to be simply beyond the pale for a Torah Jew – really, for anyone who values truth – to give, and that is "I haven't investigated, but I don't need to. All the documentary evidence, all the eyewitness and first-person accounts, all the facts and figures provided by the government itself – they're all lies. Everything's fine and being taken care of, so why are you creating machlokes by asserting these things as fact?"

"Machlokes!" may be a convenient catch-all phrase to stifle the airing of facts and the expression of genuine concern over the spiritual fate of thousands of our brethren. In truth though, differences of opinions, and the adherence to the teachings of one's rebbeim in no way predicate machlokes. Machlokes exists only where people cannot be noheig kovod zeh lazeh.

Machlokes exists only where people cannot be noheig kovod zeh lazeh

When we grant another Yid the respect he deserves for following the lead of his rebbeim, who are gedolei Torah, even when they part ways with our rebbeim, who are also gedolei Torah, we impede machlokes.

When we accept the possibility that our fellow Jew knows facts that we may be unaware of and we open our hearts and minds to hear, we are being noheig kovod zeh lazeh.

And, when after consulting with our rebbeim, we still cannot agree with the conclusions of others who are following their rebbeim, yet, we nonetheless respect what they have to share on topics upon which we can agree, we will have learnt well the lessons of Sefiras ha'Omer and can earnestly anticipate a true kabolos haTorah.

Lehovin
להבין

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EYE ON THE NEWS

By : S. Liebeskind

In depth
investigative
reporting
on issues of
concern to
the Jewish
community

Neatly tucked away in volumes of regulations, disguised as bureaucratic norms, are the details that give governments the ability to wield their control over their citizens and shape their countries.

Most people never get to see, or bother to look at, the massive legislation passed each day and each year in governments across the world. Below are the new regulations for the Registration of Yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael with the Ministry of Defense.

By the signing the documents, the Rosh Yeshiva acknowledges that the recognition of the Yeshiva is for the purpose of getting deferments for students of the Yeshiva for whom "Torasam Um'nasam."

The Rosh Yeshiva declares that any talmid of his Yeshiva for whom a deferment will be requested does not work or involve himself in any work at all, for which one might get paid, even if he does not get paid for it. The only exception is if he receives a stipend from the Yeshiva.

The Rosh Yeshiva further declares that the dichuyim-deferments for the talmidim will only remain if all the following conditions are continuously met during the entire time of the deferment.

1. They will be makdish all their time to learning Torah and *Torasam um'nasom*.
2. They will learn in this Yeshiva and no other.

Yeshiva must agree to, reflection is warranted on the ramifications of this condition.

Is the Rosh Yeshiva obligating himself to reporting his talmidim to the authorities? Is this not mesira? Is the intention that every Rosh Yeshiva is to become the eyes and ears of the government, reporting if a bochur built a shtender and received compensation, or the Rosh Yeshiva himself becomes guilty?

Is this not the ultimate denigration of kovod HaTorah? Obligating Roshei Yeshiva, talmidei chachomim whose goal is to transmit Torah to the next generation and to uplift their talmidim, to instead become mosrim on their talmidim, seems quite shocking.

Is this not the ultimate denigration of kovod HaTorah?

The Rosh Yeshiva obligates himself, that if at any time during the period of the deferment, a talmid wants to switch to another Yeshiva, the Rosh Yeshiva will inform the appropriate authorities (draft office, army authorities, Vaad Hayeshivos...) within seven days. Likewise, he will inform the authorities within seven days of accepting a talmid into the Yeshiva.

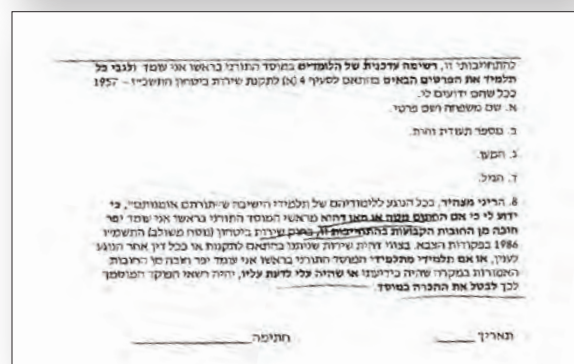
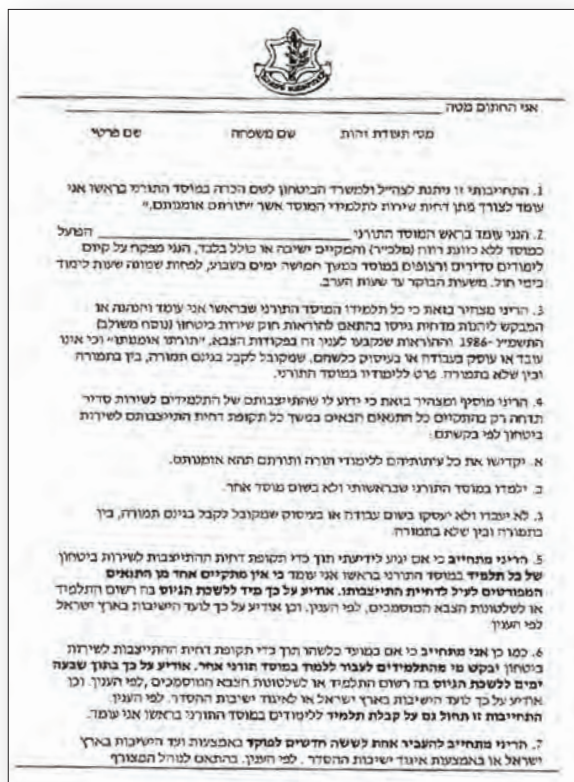
Imagine the scenario.

Yigal is having a hard time in Yeshiva. He is a good boy, but he is not keeping up with the shiur. He discussed it with the mashgiach, who suggested that perhaps he could help him get into another yeshiva that might be better suited to him. Can he afford to try the next yeshiva? What happens if it doesn't work out? Will the Rosh Yeshiva already have reported him no longer in this yeshiva, while the other Yeshiva did not yet officially accept him? Each Rosh Yeshiva will have committed himself to a seven day limit to report the status of Yigal.

If the first Rosh Yeshiva does not report that Yigal left until he feels confident that Yigal is actually staying in his new Yeshiva, he puts himself at risk. Didn't he obligate himself to report a talmid's departure from the yeshiva within seven days? If the Rosh Yeshiva does report his departure and the second yeshiva doesn't report his acceptance within seven days, Yigal is now officially not enrolled in Yeshiva and may now be drafted to the army. Fair and square. Legally correct.

More details follow, and then two more that are particularly noteworthy.

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3. They will not work or busy themselves with any work for which one could be paid, whether or not he gets paid for it.

The Rosh Yeshiva obligates himself, that if he will find out, at any point during the duration of the deferment, the young man fails to meet any of the conditions of the deferment, the Rosh Yeshiva will immediately report the infraction to the draft office or to the army authorities and the Vaad Hayeshivos accordingly.

Before continuing to list the conditions the Rosh

In other words, if a talmid of the Yeshiva violates any of the aforementioned criteria or other related regulations, the entire Yeshiva can lose their recognized status as a Yeshiva and consequently, all their talmidim can lose their status as bnei Yeshiva, and thus be obligated to serve in the army. Pretty shocking.

This seems simple enough: If Toraso um'naso then he is not working. Closer attention raises concern. Could it be a problem if he helped his father in his store during Bein Hazmanim? That's a paying job potentially, whether or not he got paid. Does that mean that if Toraso Um'naso, a yeshiva bochur cannot ever make a few dollars on the side, or he will lose his deferment? And the Rosh Yeshiva must sign that he stands by it.



GAZA BORDER PROTESTS CONTINUE

flash90



A planned six-week Palestinian protest on the Israeli/Gaza boarder began on March 30, and is expected to culminate on May 15.

Palestinians had arrived en masse at tented camps near the frontier as a protest called "The Great March of Return" - evoking a longtime call for refugees to regain ancestral homes in what is now Israel.

On Friday, groups of youths waved Palestinian flags and burnt hundreds of Israeli flags near the fenced off border

I MUST PROTECT MY BROTHER

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The criticism must be on us... If we do not issue a statement of condemnation and shock "Police, please arrest the perpetrator," why should Yair Lapid and Avi Gabai condemn the attack?

And you, my fellow journalists, who were horrified - justifiably - by the image of a demonstrator from the Jerusalem faction pulling a police horse's tail, were silent in the face of this picture. After all, we are talking about extremists, on the margins of society. Shame on us.

Before I conclude the subject, it is clear that we are all against violence, against disturbances that are contrary to Torah law, but there is no connection between the shock at this act that is reminiscent of other periods in history to the fact that we are against the demonstrations.

Irrespective of the details of the circumstances, Torah Jews and caring people may not stand idly by in the face of harsh treatment and violent attacks on other Jews, whether or not we may agree with their political views.

after Friday prayers. At one camp east of Gaza City, youths carried on their shoulders a coffin wrapped in an Israeli flag bearing the words "The End of Israel".

A Palestinian was killed and more than 200 others wounded during clashes with Israeli troops as thousands gathered in protest along the Gaza-Israel border on Friday, Gaza officials said.

An Israeli military spokesman said troops were being confronted by rioters and responded "with riot dispersal means while also firing in accordance with the rules of engagement".

Israel says it is doing what it must to defend its border, and to stop any of the protesters getting across the fence.

"Israel will continue to defend its borders and its citizens. Your country would do the same," an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said on Twitter.

THE TINY JEWISH NATION

Continued from page 1

as Jews, mainly because their father or grandparent was Jewish. Many who were included in collecting the data struggled regarding the parameters of what defined someone as a Jew, thus inflating the results of the study.

These numbers take on even greater significance, in the context of the world wide population. Currently, the total world population is about 7.6 billion. Jews represent no more than a speck, comprising about .19% of the total population.

ISRAEL NEUTRALIZES LONGEST, DEEPEST, VERY COMPLICATED GAZA TUNNEL

Israel recently discovered and destroyed a guerrilla tunnel from the Gaza Strip.

The passage ran "kilometres" from within Gaza into Israel and is the longest and deepest tunnel discovered. The tunnel was reportedly "very complicated" with many "branches." Israel's military accused Hamas as being behind the project. Hamas did not comment.

Palestinian gunmen used these tunnels to surprise and attack the Israelis during the 2014 Gaza war.

Israel has since been developing detection technologies with hope that it will end the Gaza tunnel threat by 2019.

In 2016, Israel created a military laboratory used to detect tunnels coming from Gaza into Israel.

The laboratory "uses innovative ground research, which includes scan-

ning of cavities and their dynamics, (and) strives to develop new discovery and mapping techniques", a military statement said.

Military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conricus told reporters about the most recent tunnel;

"We were able to detect it, and we destroyed it, using similar means to that which we have used in the past,"

"There was no use of explosives, but rather, we filled the tunnel, which rendered it useless for a very long period of time."

Conricus did not elaborate on the method of detection nor on how the tunnel was filled. These details are secret in Israel, which has received U.S. congressional funding for the project.



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RAV ADES SHLITA:

IF WE WOULD HAVE STOOD STRONG LAST YEAR WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS SITUATION TODAY

On Tuesday, 25 Nissan 5778, Rav Yoel Ades sent a letter to Rav Yaakov Toufik, shlita, Rav of Beitar, in response to his request for the opinion of the Gaon and Tzadik Rav Yehudah Ades, shlita, regarding the new regulations of the Israel Department of Education regarding the Mosdos Petur (Chadorim, Talmud Torahs, Bais Yaakovs and Seminaries which have chosen autonomy from government oversight and significantly less government funding. These institutions have existed for the past 70 years).

“... Already more than a year ago, the Rosh Yeshiva shlita, warned about the changes that the Machoz Chareidi insti-

tutions in order to be registered for the 5779 school year.

“ Last night, the Rosh Yeshiva shlita sat with a staff of Rabbonim, and went through, with great consideration, the new regulations. The amount of regulations which have been issued are truthfully inordinate, and nonetheless, there was tremendous effort to elicit, out of the hundreds of paragraphs, the major points which would result in the curriculum of the Talmud Torahs being determined by the Department of Education, and not by Lomdei Torah, in addition to serious interference in the enrollment of students. It is clear that this is a breaking of the Torah.



Harav Yehuda Ades, Rosh HaYeshiva of Kol Yaakov and Nasi of a school network

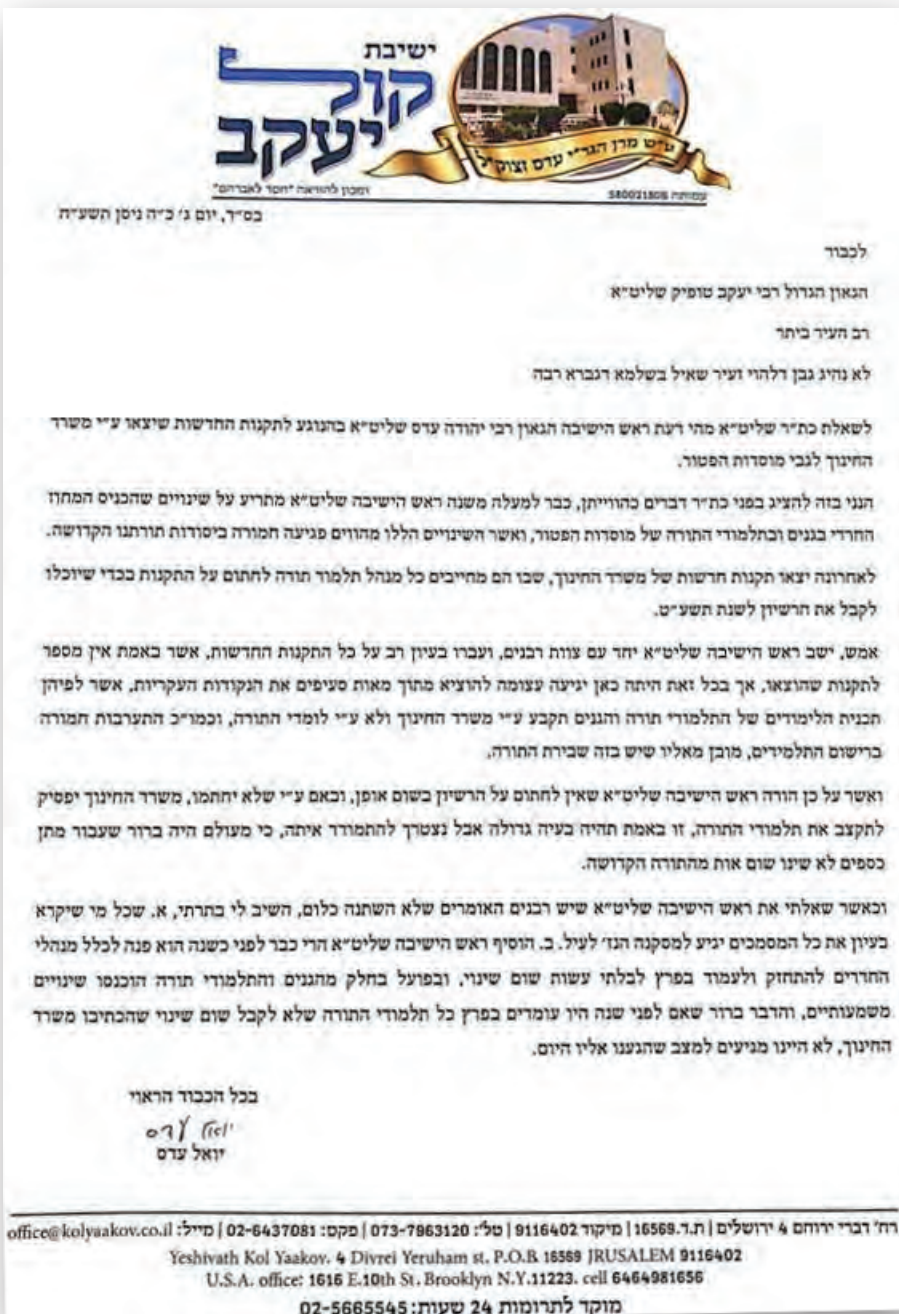
ways been clear that for money we will not change even one letter of the Holy Torah.

“When I asked the Rosh Yeshiva that there are Rabbonim who say that nothing has changed, he responded twofold:

That anyone who would carefully read all the documents would arrive at the same conclusion that he did.

The Rosh Yeshiva shlita added that already about a year ago he

turned to the totality of the principals of the Chadorim to strengthen themselves and to stand at the breach not to make any changes. In reality, changes were instituted in some of the kindergartens and Talmud Torahs. It is clear, that if a year ago we would have stood strong at the breach, and that no Talmud Torah would have accepted any changes designed by the Department of Education, we wouldn't be in the situation that we are today.”



tuted in the kindergartens and Talmud Torahs of the Mosdot Petur, and that these changes pose a serious threat to the foundations of our Holy Torah.

“ Recently, new regulations were issued by the Department of Education, which obligate the principals of each Talmud Torah to sign onto the regula-

Therefore, the Rosh Yeshiva shlita has instructed not to sign the regulations under any circumstances. If the result of this will be that the Department of Education will entirely stop the funding of the Talmud Torah, it will truly be a great problem, but nonetheless we will have to deal with it, because it has al-

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NEARLY \$120M PUT INTO DEAD SEA COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS SINKHOLES

The Prime Minister's Office said that it would be investing NIS 417 million shekels (\$118.5 million) over the next four years to help Dead Sea area communities deal with the increasing problem of sinkholes and their negative impact on tourism.

The Dead Sea shoreline is receding by three feet per year as a result of natural evaporation, diversion of water from the Jordan River to the north for agricultural purposes, and the pumping out of water at the southern end by the Dead Sea Works for the extraction of salts and minerals.

As the saltwater shoreline continues to recede, freshwater rushes in and dissolves what used to be underwater layers of salt. This causes the surface earth above these layers to collapse inwards resulting in sinkholes.

The NIS 417-million-shekel budget includes NIS 166 million (\$47 million)



flash90

WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUP THREATENS RELIGIOUS MEN'S RIGHTS



Rav Yitzchok Yosef

A new civil service course, aimed at bringing more Haredim into the workforce, will be forced to shut down unless it allows 10 women to join, according to a recent Israeli court ruling. The civil service courses were introduced as separate courses for men and women, with the men's courses having already begun in January and the women's courses set to start in October. The Israel's Women's Network (IWN) filed a petition with a Jerusalem Labor Court saying that these courses violate gender equality.

Harav Yitzchok Yosef, Chief Rabbi of

Israel, sent a letter to the Civil Service Commissioner, Udi Praver, saying "a course with gender segregation does not involve any violation of women's rights." The Rav wrote the letter after he was asked to help by the men who are currently in the course who will either have to drop out if the women join, or who will be left without a course if it is canceled. The Rishon Letzion (Sephardic Chief Rabbi) also stressed that it's not "chumras" or stringencies, rather it is simple halacha that the course must be separate.

for repairs to Route 90 between the Almog Junction and the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve.

It will also include improvements to public transport; NIS 108 million (\$30.7 million) funding for tourism development; NIS 41 million (\$11.6 million) funding for research; and NIS 25 million (\$7 million) to help local farmers acquire more agricultural land

to locate additional water sources, and to build affordable homes for first-time buyers through a Housing Ministry program.

More than 6,000 sinkholes can presently be found on the western side of the Dead Sea, with new ones developing daily.

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WORLD VIEWS ON SYRIAN CONFLICT

HEZBOLLAH'S NASRALLAH: U.S.-LED STRIKES ON SYRIA "A FAILURE"



Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah terrorist group, said that the U.S. attacks on Syria had failed to terrorize the army and didn't serve Israel's interests. He claimed that the U.S. military had kept its strikes limited because it knew a wider attack would spark retaliation from Damascus and its allies.

"The American (military) knows well

that going towards a wide confrontation and a big operation against the regime and the army and the allied forces in Syria could not end," Nasrallah said at a rally in Lebanon's Bekaa.

"Any such confrontation would inflame the entire region."

Iran-backed Shi'ite Hezbollah has been an ally of Damascus in the thus far seven-year civil war in Syria.

ARAB LEADERS MEET TO UNIFY RANKS

Saudi Arabia hosted an annual gathering of Arab leaders on Sunday, to push for a unified stance against Iran.

Saudi King Salman told leaders from the 22-member Arab League that Iran was to blame for instability in the Middle Eastern region.

The summit this year took place right after the United States, Britain and France struck dozens of sites they said were linked to the Syrian chemical weapons program. President Bashar al Assad and his close ally, Russia, have denied government forces ever used such weapons. Assad was not invited to the summit.

A final statement by the 22-member states refrained from supporting or opposing the strikes on Syria.

The league said it condemns the use of chemical weapons, but did not say more than that.

The Arab heads of state stressed unity and support for Palestinians. King Salman reiterated Saudi Arabia's disapproval of the United States decision to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and to recognize Jerusalem as the cap-

ital of Israel.

Despite its views on the United States' decision, Saudi Arabia has strengthened ties with Washington under the Trump administration.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir defended those ties, saying "there is no contradiction" with having very strong strategic ties with the United States while having opposing views on certain policies.

"The fact that we have very strong ties with the United States and the Trump administration in particular, is a positive factor, not a negative factor in trying to help guide them towards a positive engagement in the Middle East," al-Jubeir told reporters after the summit.

The strongest criticism of the Trump administration came from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"The decisions have made the United States a party to the conflict and not a neutral mediator," Abbas said at the summit.

SYRIA TO HEAD UN PANEL ON CHEMICAL DISARMAMENT?

Despite allegations that Syria carried out yet another deadly chemical-weapons attack, the country will chair the United Nations disarmament forum that created the treaty banning chemical weapons next month. The 65-nation Conference on Disarmament will take place in Geneva from May 28 through June 24.

Hillel Neuer, president of the Geneva-based nongovernmental organization United Nation's Watch, condemned European countries for not opposing the United Nations on this matter.

"If U.K., France, Germany & others stay silent as Syria assumes presidency of United Nation's Conference on Disarmament—the body which produced the treaty against chemical weapons—this will make a mockery of everything they said this week," Neuer tweeted.

The NGO announced it intends to hold protests outside the U.N. hall.

U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert spoke out against the United Nation's decision, calling it an "outrage."

"That would be an outrage if Syria were to take control of that," she said.

Furthermore, "We have seen these types of things happen at the United Nations before, where suspicious countries, countries that run against everything that an individual committee should stand for, will then head up that committee."

Under United Nation's rules, the Syrian ambassador to the forum, Hussam Edin Aala, will "represent the body in its relations with states, the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, and with other international organizations."

(Chelm had nothing on us)



GERMANY UPSET AT RUSSIA

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas criticized Russia for a series of activities beyond its borders, blaming the Kremlin for an isolated cyber-attack on his own government computer network, and said that Moscow must change its ways.

"We had an attack on the Foreign Ministry where we have to assume that it stemmed from Russia," he told the German broadcaster ZDF. "We can't just wish all that away ... And I think it's not only reasonable but necessary to point out that we do not view those as constructive contributions."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, a Social Democrat who has adopted a tough stance on Russia, stated

that Moscow had been an increasingly "difficult partner", but nevertheless Berlin was committed to maintaining dialogue, particularly on the topic of Syria.

"It is time, I think, to point out that we expect constructive contributions from the Russian side, including on the Syrian conflict.

And also that they don't always simply protect (Syrian President Bashar) al-Assad," he said.

"Whether we like it or not, the Syrian conflict cannot be resolved without Russia," he said on Sunday.



CHINESE GOVERNMENT WARY AS JAPAN UNVEILS FIRST MARINE UNIT SINCE WWII

Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera announced a new military unit at the Ministry of Defense.

The newly formed Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB) is Japan's first marine military unit since World War II. The new amphibious special unit is designed to repel invasions on Japan's remote islands.

Japan and China have a history of disputed territory regarding islands in the East China Sea.

Specifically, there is a rocky, uninhabited island chain known as the Diaoyu Islands in Beijing and the Senkaku in Tokyo over which there is tension between the two countries.

The Chinese government is wary of Japan's new development after a public exercise was conducted by 1,500 out of the 2,100 members of the new unit. Each was camouflaged with khaki stripes, and together, they imitated the recapturing of a Japanese island from an invading army. "In the event of an invasion of a remote island, its task will be promptly landing on the island and regaining and securing it," Onodera said at a press conference.

Split into two deployment regiments,

the unit is equipped with amphibious vehicles. Defense Minister Onodera stated that the unit is expected to continue training with United States military forces, and with a US-built military aircraft, the V-22 Ospreys, which can be used for long-range flights in addition to having the ability to take off and land like a helicopter.

Japan's naval forces also have ships well-suited for amphibious operations, including landing pads for its four helicopter destroyers, and the stealthy F-35B fighter jets, which can land vertically, as well as platforms that accommodate the V-22.

According to Grant Newsham, a senior research fellow at the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, Japan's marines are not yet an effective military force, despite its new unit and the hardware supporting it.

Newsham said in a blog post that in order for it to be effective, Japan must be able to integrate the marines with its air and naval forces. "Amphibious operations are complex, effectively three-dimensional as they involve operations afloat, ashore, and in the air," Newsham wrote on the Japan Forward website.



On March 31, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lu Kang called on Japan to "adopt a correct historical view" after Japan approved a series of education textbooks labelling the Senkaku Is-

lands as undisputed Japanese territory. "China resolutely defends its territorial sovereignty and any attempt to infringe upon China's sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands will be futile," Lu said.

KIM JONG UN CONTINUES DIALOGUE, MEETS HIGH-RANKING CHINESE DIPLOMAT

Just weeks after North Korean Supreme leader Kim Jong Un made an unannounced trip to Beijing and with



the upcoming potentially breakthrough meetings with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump, the supreme leader continued strengthening his ties with China this week, by meeting a high-ranking Chinese diplomat in Pyongyang.

Kim is scheduled to meet with Moon on April 27 in the demilitarized zone that divides the Koreas.

He is expected to meet with Trump in May or June.

During Kim's trip to China, he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, in an attempt to repair the traditionally warm ties North Korea had with China which have deteriorated over North Korea's development of ballistic missile and nuclear weapons technology.

China strongly enforced the United Nations economic sanctions against Korea.

Kim has said that he and Xi "reached important consensus" in Beijing. China's Xinhua News Agency reported that China is willing to work with North Korea to safeguard peace on the Korean Peninsula.

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CONGRESS DEMANDS STATE DEPARTMENT RELEASE 'GAME CHANGER' REPORT ON PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

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Dozens of members of Congress are pressuring the State Department to release a long classified report indicating the actual amount of Palestinian refugees. Insiders say that the report could alter the way the United States approaches the Middle East conflict in general, and specifically the way the US allocates millions of taxpayer dollars that fund the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), the chief Palestinian refugee aid organization. The report is said to have been marked classified in order to prevent the public from understanding that the number of Palestinian refugees is much smaller than the United Nations claims. The UNRWA provides funding to some 5.3 million Palestinians they claim are refugees. According to sources, the actual number indicated in the report could be closer to 20,000. Now that the report still remains classified, a large delegation of congressmen has begun to push for the State Department to uphold the law and make the report public.

The report was described as a potential clarifier in the debate over the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) and its mission, which has come under increased criticism in Congress for the agency's anti-Israel bias and continuous promotion of pro-terrorism doctrines. The United States decided recently to cut taxpayer funding to UNRWA as a result of the group's longstanding anti-Israel bias.

Lawmakers are outraged that the refugee report was classified by the previous president, and are demanding the Trump administration release the information as is required under U.S. law.



"The Obama State Department delivered the mandated report to Congress in classified form despite no apparent national security threat or known historical precedent for classifying such a report," the delegation of lawmakers' write. "We believe this classification was inappropriate and a deliberate attempt to conceal information from American taxpayers. The report should be declassified without further delay."

Rep. Doug Lamborn (R., Co.), one of the lawmakers leading the declassification effort, stated that, "It is critical that Congress investigate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which operates under the United Nations (UN) using a different definition of a refugee for Palestinians than all other UN refugees around the world."

"Americans have sent UNRWA billions of dollars over the years to help bring peace to the region, but instead the agency has perpetuated a victimhood mentality for Palestinians," Lamborn said. "Releasing this report to the American public is an important first step in recognizing reality in this difficult situation and bringing about much needed reform to UNRWA."

TRUMP PARDONS CHENEY AIDE SCOOTER LIBBY FOR PERJURY IN CIA PROBE

President Donald Trump pardoned I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby for lying to investigators probing the leak of a CIA officers identity. Libby was convicted of four felonies in 2007 for perjury in testimony to a federal grand jury, lying to F.B.I. investigators and obstruction of justice.

"I don't know Mr. Libby," Trump said in a statement, "but for years I have heard that he has been treated unfairly. Hopefully, this full pardon will help rectify a very sad portion of his life."

Libby, who was an aide to then-Vice President Dick Cheney, was the "victim of a special counsel run amok," White House aide Kellyanne Conway told reporters on Friday.

Some Democrats said the pardon was a signal to people involved in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election, to protect the president.



"This is the President's way of sending a message to those implicated in the Russia investigation: You have my back and I'll have yours," Representative Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, said in a statement.

President George W. Bush commuted Libby's 30-month prison sentence while leaving the conviction intact. Democrats decried the move, while many conservatives--including John Bolton, Trump's new national security adviser -- said Bush should have pardoned Libby.

The CIA agent Valerie Plame and her husband, former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson, later sued Cheney, Libby and Bush's political adviser, Karl Rove, and then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in a claim that they conspired to reveal Plame's identity as a CIA agent. The four men were accused of leaking Plame's identity to the media in retaliation for a New York Times opinion piece by Wilson that questioned the Bush administration's basis for going to war in Iraq.

The lawsuit was dismissed.

MORE THAN 200 MILLION EGGS RECALLED OVER SALMONELLA FEARS

Nearly 207 million eggs coming from a farm in North Carolina are being recalled from nine U.S. states including Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Jersey, Virginia, Colorado, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

The federal Food and Drug Administration issued the largest recall of eggs in the United States since 2010, after 22 people fell ill.

The eggs are thought to have been contaminated with salmonella braenderup, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people and others with weakened immune systems, the FDA stated.



911 COMPUTER GLITCH RESULTS IN DEATH

Kyle Plush, a Cincinnati teen, suffocated after he became trapped under the third-row seat of his Honda Odyssey in the parking lot of his school. The seat flipped over and pinned him down while he was trying to reach his tennis equipment.

Plush had called 911 twice from inside the car explaining where he was, but the police were not able to locate him. A deputy sent to the scene soon after the first call, reported that he couldn't find anyone trapped in a van, and questioned if the call had been a prank.

Plush called 911 again with a specific location, "I am trapped inside my gold Honda Odyssey van in the parking lot of the Seven Hills...Send officers immediately," Plush pleaded. "I'm almost dead."

During the call, Plush explained that the call was not a joke.

Amber Smith, who has been a 911 operator for four years answered Plush's second call. Police say that Smith failed to relay information to the



officers who were at the scene. She told supervisors her computer froze and she was unable to put information into the system.

Fraternal Order of Police President Daniel Hills told FOX 19 of Cincinnati that the computer-aided dispatch system may have gone down just before Kyle Plush called 911.

"This is not something that I think is terribly unusual. I mean electronic systems break down, they have to reboot, and they have to do different things," he said.

Hills explained that, in the event of a system failure to the 911 dispatching center, the emergency message would

have to be relayed by hand in order to get calls out.

"They do it how they did it in the old days, write it down on an index card and the card is handed to someone somehow sending the person dispatching on that channel," he said.

Smith will return to work on Wednesday while an internal investigation is under way.

A confidential police review obtained by FOX 19 stated that Smith told superiors she couldn't hear the 16-year-old during the 911 call.

"Only the investigation will reveal if it was the people or the hardware or a combination of both. We just don't know yet," Hills told FOX 19. Cincinnati Mayor, John Cranley and other elected officials are calling for a review of the city's emergency communications center.

"While it is unclear if there is wrongdoing by the city in this tragedy, we have a profound responsibility to find out," Cranley said in a statement on Thursday. "I applaud Police Chief Eliot Isaac for launching an investigation on the specific issues that happened Tuesday. However, separate from this incident, the problems of management, supervision and technology have been reported at the 911 center for years."

The Hamilton County coroner ruled Plush's death an accidental asphyxia due to chest compression – he died of suffocation.

POMPEO TO RECEIVE RESISTANCE ON SECRETARY OF STATE APPOINTMENT



mike pompeo

he does not want someone who is going to "exacerbate President Donald Trump's weaknesses rather than uphold our diplomatic legacy."

"You've seen President Trump try to underfund the State Department in USAID, not appoint key ambassadors, tweet out insults about foreign leaders, back the United States out of international agreements and organizations," Kaine said. "We need a Secretary of State who is going to stand up for strong diplomacy," he added, "and I don't believe that is Director Pompeo's inclination."

Several lawmakers expressed doubts about Pompeo after his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday. "There are fundamental areas of disagreement that we have, and I think that was true in the questioning," Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire said in an

interview with CNN after the hearing. "So he answered some of those questions but from my perspective, he just gave the wrong answers." Republican Rand Paul also told CNN the hearing "really solidified" his opposition to Pompeo.

It is possible that Pompeo won't have enough votes to win a favorable recommendation from the committee. There are no instances of a Secretary of State nominee receiving an unfavorable committee vote since 1925. But in an extraordinarily rare move, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell could still

bring up the nomination to the floor of the Senate despite the negative vote in the committee.

Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation" that he will vote against former CIA Director Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State. Kaine will not support Pompeo because of what he called the nominee's "anti-diplomacy disposition."

"We have a president who is anti-diplomacy," Kaine said. "And I worry that Mike Pompeo has shown the same tendency to oppose diplomacy."

Kaine referenced Pompeo's opposition to the Iran nuclear deal when he was a member of the House of Representatives and said Pompeo "spoke about the relative ease of wiping out Iran's nuclear capacity with a bombing run." In a written statement released after his appearance on CBS, Kaine called such a move "an unrealistic scenario" and wrote that Pompeo also "stands out in advocating US action to change the governments" of North Korea and Iran.

Kaine said he is voting against Pompeo for Secretary of State because

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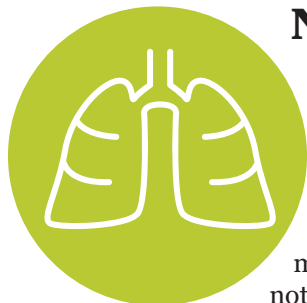
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HEALTH AND SCIENCE NEWS

BY: A.D. COHEN



New Hope For Lung Cancer Patients

A new hope for cancer treatment, immunotherapy, has recently gained popularity with the positive clinical trial results of a new drug, Keytruda.

Immunotherapy is a form of treatment which stimulates the body's natural immune system to fight against cancerous tumors rather than allowing the drug to try and fight the tumors itself. The body's immune system is an incredible masterpiece of creation, which serves as a protection to people's health. Being able to stimulate the immune system to fight cancerous tumors, is a dream of the medical community.

Immunotherapy also works to uncover tumor cells which can hide themselves from the body's immune system. These drugs are also able to genetically alter the immune system's proteins to specifically target tumor cells. This form of treatment works within each individual's unique immune system rather than through one broad mechanism, yielding better results.

Keytruda, a drug released by Merck and Co, is the first to find success in treating patients with non-small cell lung cancer, the most common form of lung cancer. While immunotherapy has had some success with other cancers, success in the treatment of lung cancer has earned it a lot of popularity, as lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer related deaths worldwide, because detection of lung cancer often happens after the cancer has progressed into an advanced stage, usually because patients attribute their symptoms to other, more minor, causes.

In the study, Keytruda was given along with a typical chemotherapy treatment.

Immunotherapy is becoming a more and more preferred option when treating certain cancer patients.

616 patients were given this combined treatment, and after one year, 69% of them were alive. Additionally, those in the group receiving only chemotherapy

were allowed to switch to it if their cancer worsened, and of that group, 49% of them were alive the following year. The 20% increase in survival is quite remarkable, experts say, particularly because the 49% survival rate of the second group also includes those who switched to Keytruda during the study. It is estimated that the combined drug treatment has doubled patient survival.

Aside from impacting survival rates, Keytruda also delayed the time until the cancer worsened, which occurred after about nine months, compared to five months in people not on Keytruda.

Immunotherapy is becoming a more and more preferred option when treating certain cancer patients. Studies have found that pre-treating lung can-

The body's immune system is an incredible masterpiece of creation, which serves as a protection to people's health. Being able to stimulate the immune system to fight cancerous tumors, is a dream of the medical community.

cer patients with immunotherapy drugs before surgery has helped melt away tumors, as well as limit or stop the spread. Dr. Roy Herbst, a lung cancer specialist at Yale Cancer Center, has said that the results are so remarkable that it is likely that every lung cancer patient will be given this option of treatment. "I have never seen progress move so fast," he told NBC news.

Although there is still a lot of research to be done, and the treatment is still too new for any definitive long term results, there is a lot of promise seen in this new form of treatment. Using immunotherapy as a form of personalized medicine may continue to help thousands suffering from this disease.



Hashem's Miraculous Army of Rats

There has been a new breakthrough in the detection of Tuberculosis, and the methodology may seem surprising.

According to the World Health Organization, Tuberculosis is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. While it is most prevalent in low income countries, such as India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and South Africa, the Center for Disease Control's data indicates that there are approximately 10,000 cases of TB in the US per year. Aside from the infected adult population, there are about 1 million children worldwide who have contracted TB, with a 25% mortality rate.

Unfortunately, due to the socio-economic standing of the majority of the infected population, many of the cases remain undetected until late stages of infection. The delayed detection in so many cases, minimizes the efficacy of treatment, and has therefore made the development of low cost and time efficient TB detection methods a matter of urgency.

A team from Sokoine University of Morogoro, Tanzania led by Dr. Georgies Mgone began an experiment using the premise that people who are infected with TB emit a specific smell. Using this knowledge, the team explored the option of designing a sniff test using rats.

The scientists collected sputum (saliva and mucus) samples from 982 children below the age of 5 and tested the samples for TB, all of whom had been tested for TB using standard microscopy in their local clinics. Of the children that were tested, 34 tested positive for TB. But, when the researchers used rats to see if they could detect the TB by smelling it, the rats detected an additional 57 cases, all of which were confirmed.

The training of rats to detect pediatric TB can be used easily to detect TB in areas where detection is often delayed, resulting in quicker and more successful treatment.

This is not the first case of rats being employed for their sense of smell. Following the Ottawa Treaty of 1997 which banned landmines, 29 countries declared themselves to be mine-free. However, fields of more than 50 nations were still embedded with millions of mines. It has been a tedious task to comb through vast expanses, specifically because metal detectors are often useless in detecting mines that were brilliantly made of non-metal materials to avoid detection.

People who are infected with TB emit a specific smell. Using this knowledge, the team explored the option of designing a sniff test using rats.

Although they are made of plastic, the non-detectable mines have not been able to evade the noses of rats. Because they sniff out actual explosives and not metal, they are able to quickly detect buried mines. Additionally, because of their light weight, it is unlikely that a rat will accidentally set off a mine by stepping on it. Attached to rope cables, rats have been able to scurry across fields, uncover hidden mines, avoid the tons of scrap metal, and deem seven countries mine-free, simply by using their sense of smell.



Cleaning a Fish Tank Can be Extremely Hazardous

Ten people were hospitalized this past week in Oxford-

shire, England after a man decided to power wash his aquarium.

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Zion or Zionism

Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l

Reprinted with permission from Selected writings of Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l published in honor of Rav Schwab's 30th anniversary as Rav of K'hal Adath Jeshurun 1988

The United Nations which today is but a caricature of what its brave name implies has resolved by majority vote to equate Zionism with Racism.

It is obvious that this is a blatant lie. It is equally obvious that this political slur is in itself intended as an expression of Racism, read: Antisemitism, of the ugliest and most heinous kind.

All over the world Jews have reacted by indignant protests and vigorous public declarations: "We are all

has never ceased to belong to us. Zion is the Sanctuary of the Torah, the holy city which surrounds it, the holy land of which it is its eternal capital, the Jewish Nation which owns it since ever and forever - the abode of the Shechina on earth, from which the word of G-d shall come forth and over which a new light will shine - the Zion of David and Shlomoh, the Zion of our Prophets and Sages and singers and mourners and lovers - all this is the very opposite of Zionism. No! A thousand times no! We love Zion and therefore we are non-Zionists.

We are Jews who hate Racism because we all have been the foremost victims of Racism. We hate Racism because all men were created in G-d's image, be they white, black or yellow.

However, we are G-d's firstborn son, we are indeed the "Chosen People," chosen by the Creator of all of G-d's children to carry the burden of His Torah, chosen to become the only non-sovereign nation, but rather a Kingdom of Priests and a holy people, chosen to serve Him and carry on His commandments, chosen to suffer if need be, for the glory of G-d and the redemption of all mankind, a light to the nations and a blessing for all the families of the earth.

For this our eternal historic mandate Eretz Yisroel was given us as an everlasting possession, but it was never promised as a "blank check." There are simply no guarantees from G-d which ensure continued and permanent existence for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel. On the contrary, it is a major teaching of the Torah that the Jewish people has to earn the right to dwell in the Land. And whenever Jews stop earning this right, Jews stop living in the land, heaven forbid. This we learn from countless passages of the T'nach as well as from the pages of our history.

Therefore, the U.N. Resolution could serve indeed as a powerful eye-opener to return to the only source of our strength, to finally wake up from our Golus sleep and find our real self, disregard Zionism and re-discover Zion, discard the United Nations where we had no business being in the first place, and go home to the Torah.

In this spirit we reprint - with the kind permission of the author - some excerpts from a thought-provoking article (in Tradition, Vol. 15, No. 3) by Rabbi Emanuel Feldman of Atlanta, Georgia, entitled: "Israel, Torah and I:"

"I live here in Jerusalem and I watch carefully the life about me. It is Jerusalem and it is holy and it has more portions of physical and spiritual beauty than any city on earth. It is Jerusalem and it is a dwelling place of the Jewish soul, and in many ways one can see that it is an earthly reflection of Yerushalayim shel maalah, that heavenly capital of G-d of which this place is but a mundane shadow. But I live here. I ride the buses, shop in the stores, drive on the streets, buy petrol, walk, listen, absorb. And because I live here I cannot theorize or idealize, or give fund-raising pep

talks. And about Israel and Jerusalem one must speak the truth even if it means chastising that which you deeply love.

"I live here and I must confess that, as much as I love the city and the Land and the people, occasionally I despair at what I see. For twenty-five years Israel's dominant leadership - political, social, educational, military - has followed a fundamental irreligious way. Israel's Declaration of Independence contains no direct mention of Israel's G-d, and in 1975 the New Year message of Israel's president also omits any reference to Him. This leadership has opted for the strange gods of secularism.

They wanted a new generation unfettered and unencumbered by the albatrosses of G-d, Torah, mitzvot, observances, which were after all - it is by now a discredited cliché - only designed for the Galuth Jew to keep him conscious of his Jewishness, but were no longer necessary in an independent Jewish State, and so they made the dominant school system a secular one. And now, twenty-five years later, having exposed an entire generation to the Bible as a book of literature and poetry and history but not as the Book of G-d, they now have a youth whose personal commitment to the State can no longer be taken for granted, and which occasionally actually questions Israel's own right to live in the Land.

"Illusions are punctured daily in Israel. They wanted a land kechol hagoyim, like all the Nations, but having become like all the "Goyim," they now find that the "Goyim" despise them as before. They wanted a State of their own in order to put an end to anti-Sem-

**About Israel and Jerusalem
one must speak the truth even if
it means chastising that which
you deeply love.**

Zionists," "Judaism is Zionism" and so on. This Jewish response is most unfortunate. A vicious lie is being answered with a simplistic untruth, which is as naive as it is self-defeating. Let us state at the outset that we have no sympathy with certain irresponsible anonymous advertisers in the N.Y. Times who claim to speak in the name of the Torah, but in reality speak in the name of nobody.

On the other hand, truth compels us to state unequivocally that most certainly Zionism is not at all identical with Judaism, that in fact it is diametrically opposed to it. Zionism is a political philosophy which considers the divine Nation of the Torah a nation like all others, albeit with certain religious traditions which you are free to accept or to reject as an individual, and which may or may not become part of the law of the Jewish land, subject to a majority vote of a democratic parliament. Zionism has transformed the holy land, the holy tongue, the holy nation into secular entities, according atheists and anti-religionist Jews at best equal status with firm believers.

Zionism has created a sovereign state which is governed like all other states by its own man-made laws and not by the G-d given laws of the Torah. All these are dry facts which cannot be disputed. The term "Zionism" is derived from the name Zion (ציון) which is one of the most sacred words in our authentic Jewish dictionary:

ציון משכן כבודך

Zion is the dwelling place of G-d's glory

Zion is the house of our life
- Zion is the citadel of G-d, promised us by the Creator, for which we long in our daily prayers and which

**They wanted a State of their
own in order to put an end
to anti-Semitism, but having
created the State, they find
that the endemic anti-Semitism
of the world is now directed
against the State of the Jews.**

itism, but having created the State, they find that the endemic anti-Semitism of the world is now directed against the State of the Jews. Little by little, the dreams and illusions of the secularist founders disappear like a mist.

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"They have raised a generation of socialists who are hard-eyed materialists: a young generation of "cultured" secular Jews who, according to a newly issued government report, know little even of the secular culture of the land - not the history, not the geography, not the literature.

They wanted to be like the Nations and much of its youth lives for the now and has little commitment to anything beyond its immediate needs - just like the youth of the Nations.

They sought desperately to be accepted into world

And let it also be said that in certain circles Torah flourishes in the Land. Yeshivoth of all types are powerful generators which are producing a force of Torah scholarship and piety which, no less than Israel's physical defense forces, sustains the Land and her people

society, wanted to be normal like any other country- but so fearful were they that their own traditions would make them less acceptable and that their own uniqueness would make them less normal that they threw the wheat with the chaff to the winds, and now they possess neither the tradition, nor the normalcy, nor the love, nor the respect of mankind.

Instead they have become the most lonely and most isolated and most forlorn among the nations, in ironic fulfillment of that very Bible which to them is not G-dly: "It is a people which dwelleth alone and is not reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:9).

"The leadership wanted total secularism without religion, wanted to demonstrate that you don't need G-d in order to be a Mensch. But having rejected Gottlichkeit, they have begun to lose Menschlichkeit as well.

"A quarter century of secularism has revealed a moral, political, economic, and social dead-end, calling to mind the very last sentence in the Book of Judges: 'In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes.'

"We in Israel today are in the most serious straits since the establishment of the State. The shock of Yom Kippur will not soon fade away, for then it was finally perceived that the strange gods to whom were ascribed so much power were not at all omnipotent and had almost been responsible for Israel's doom.

We are in serious straits, and the most serious of all is that our idols having failed us, we have no one to whom to cry out, nothing in which to believe.

"These are difficult times for non-believers. If I had been raised on secularism and did not believe in the divinity of the Bible and knew nothing of my historic right to this Land and the eternity of G-d's promises and of the destiny of the Jewish people, and then saw my enemies growing stronger every day and our friends ever weaker, I too would see little hope for the future and I too would be one of the tens of thousands of yordim today. Why sacrifice anything for a piece

of geography whose only claims upon me are some vague folk-legends?

"Let us be completely truthful: there are strong pockets of Jewish idealism left. Ironically, they are found primarily among the young people who were not raised on heavy doses of Zionism, but on heavy doses of Torah - in which love of Zion is an integral part.

"And let it also be said that in certain circles Torah flourishes in the Land. Yeshivoth of all types are powerful generators which are producing a force of Torah scholarship and piety which, no less than Israel's physical defense forces, sustains the Land and her people. All is far from black.

"But if these are very difficult times for non-believers because they have very little left, these are also difficult times for believers, for they know the soul of the Land, and it is a sensitive one. Eretz Yisrael is eretz hakedoshah, the Holy Land. It is also the Land of Holiness. It cannot be lived upon like any other land. This Land has its own special soul, its own life, and is so constituted that, like a delicate organism it cannot tolerate strange and foreign ways within its borders: the G-d-filled Land cannot suffer the efforts, conscious or casual, to empty it of G-d and to replace Him with nothingness. And in the fullness of time the Land spews out that which is offensive to it.

The same Torah which promises Israel's return to her ancestral Land also promises that this Land can-

not endure profaneness. Is it not possible that the same G-d who before our very eyes is fulfilling the first may also choose, once again, to fulfill the second? These are difficult times for believers as well.

'For a believer who daily recites the Shema Yisrael, certain passages in that testament of faith are very disturbing. I tremble when I become fully aware of the meaning of "hishomru lochem ... take heed lest you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them ... and you will perish quickly from the good Land which He gave you."

I tremble because this has already been fulfilled several times in Jewish history. And when my Jerusalem neighbor goes off to a discotheque on Friday night and plays raucous American music on his stereo on all of Shabbath, I despair, because he is ignoring himself, his essence, his innate Jewishness.

In his innocence and Jewish ignorance, this product of Israeli secularism barter sanctity for banality and is unaware that he lives in a Land that is holy. (I hope that G-d will be patient with us: with my neighbor for ignoring Him and with me for being intolerant of him who is willing to lay down his life for me.)

But my neighbor makes me think: have we earned the right to live in G-d's Land?

"Israel is in deep crisis, and not UJA drives, or Bonds, or American aid, or Senate resolutions can solve this crisis. Only Jews can solve it. By becoming Jewish Jews."

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HaRav Chaim Kanievski Shlita

Kabbolas Ponim for Bochrim Freed from Jail



Bochrim freed from jail on the dais together with Gedolei Yisroel



Klal Yisroel at the Kabbolas ponim for the bochrim upon their release from jail

Erev Pesach to Rosh Chodesh



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PULL OUT
SECTION!

Lehovin

להבין for Kids

TORAH RIDDLE:

When would we tell someone who is doing the מצוה of הבדלה to only make the ברכה of האש after the drinking of the wine at the end??

Answer will appear in next issue

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER

Q: When is it ok to marry two sisters?

A: If someone's wife was niftar he may marry her sister.

A word from the wise:

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHO YOU ARE AND WHO YOU WANT TO BE IS WHAT YOU DO."



It's hard to imagine that Pesach was over two weeks ago already! It seems like just a few days ago that we were helping my mother grind the charoses and the chrain...

Now that Pesach is over, all the Pesachdik china, pots, pans, and towels are being put away till next year. This year, my family got a head start on packing up our Pesach dishes and unpacking the chometz. We all pitched in and finished up in no time. In fact, we worked so quickly that only an hour and a half after Pesach was over, our kitchen was all set up! We couldn't believe it!

We'll unpack all those boxes & go shopping for chometz for them so they can get their kitchens set up easily."

Suddenly my father walked into the kitchen. "Boys, do you want to come?" he asked us. "I'm going to the bakery to pick up some bread."

"Perfect!" cried Yitzy. "We'll hang up signs

in the grocery for our Chometz Agency!"

And that's what we did. In no time at all, we had drawn up the signs and were ready to go. My father was really nice and agreed to stop off at another few groceries and bakeries along the way.

Continued on page K3

***"Perfect!" cried Yitzy.
"We'll hang up signs in the
grocery for our Chometz
Agency!"***

As we stood around trading memories of the amazing Pesach we'd had ("Remember that itching powder?" laughed my little brother Tzviki), my older brother Shia, who's twelve years old, suddenly piped up.

"Hey," said Shia, "I just had this amazing idea! You know how they have those Pesach Cleaning Agencies? Those bachurim that help people clean their fridges and ovens? So how about we make an Unpacking Your Chometz Agency? We'll get all our friends to join!"

"How would it work?" Yitzy wondered.

"Simple," answered Shia. "We'll work for all those people who still need help shlep-ping all their chometz and chometzdike dishes from their garages back to their kitchens.



Continued from page K2

"There," I said with a flourish as I hung the last sign, Yitzy and Shia at my side.

The sign did look pretty nice. It said:

"Time to Unpack Your Chometz!

...Need Some Help?

Just Call The Shia, Yitzy, & Pinny Chometz Agency!"

"My friend Dovi even had a set of twelve walky talkies we could use to communicate with each other when we were on jobs."

Our phone number was written on the bottom in bright red marker.

As soon as we got home, we made some phone calls till we had nine of our friends on call to do jobs with us. My friend Dovi even had a set of twelve walky talkies we could use to communicate with each other when we were on jobs.

Sure enough, soon we were getting lots of calls from neighbors who could use some help unpacking their chometz. We did a couple jobs that night, but most of the calls



were set up for the next day.

Bright and early the next morning, we all got to work. All twelve of us were out on jobs, busily shlepping, unpacking, and shopping for neighbors. Yitzy, Shia and I were at our next door neighbor's house, and my nine-year old sister Chayala was nice enough to come running to us whenever another call for a job came in. So it was Shia's job to assign jobs when they came in, which worked out pretty well with those walky talkies.

We were knee-deep in unpacking a carton of cereals when Shia's walky talky beeped. It was my friend Gershy. He sounded a little desperate.

"Shia, I'm coming over right now! It's urgent!"

Before we knew it, there was Gershy, hurtling down the street, tzitzis flying behind him as he sped towards us.

"Shia! Yitzy! Pinny! It's urgent! It's a crisis! It's a CHOMETZ EMERGENCY!!!"

Gershy's face was bright red and he could hardly get the words out, he was that out of breath. But slowly we started to get the picture.

Gershy had been working by the Fried's house. Actually, one of the Frieds, Heshy, was our friend. His sister, Malky, just got married last year, and had her first baby boy a few weeks ago. Turns out, that night was the pidyon haben! In case you don't know

***"Shia! Yitzy! Pinny!
It's urgent! It's a
crisis! It's a CHOMETZ
EMERGENCY!!!"***

what a pidyon haben is, it's special for first-born baby boys, and it only happens once in a while. You have it thirty days after the baby boy is born. It's a really special thing, because it can only happen once in every family!

Anyways, the pidyon haben was scheduled for that night, and all the Fried sisters had stayed up almost all night right after Pesach, baking cookies and cakes and making all kinds of desserts. You can imagine why they needed our help that morning finishing to set up their kitchen! Late at night, when the Frieds were finished baking, they had put all their stuff in a pantry in their garage



and gone to sleep.

Well, when Gershy popped into the garage the early next afternoon to shlep in the Fried's Pesach china, you'll never guess what kind of sight met his eyes! The pantry door was wide open, and all the food was strewn across the garage floor, smushed beyond recognition.

It even looked like someone - or some creature - had taken large bites out of some of

We watched wide-eyed in wonder as he called into the phone, "Troops! To the kitchen!"

that food!

"Yup," Gershy finished, "It was probably a cat or something. When I told the Frieds, they didn't know what to do! The pidyon haben starts in a few hours, and they don't have any desserts to serve! The bakeries will never be able to do such a big rush job for them right after Pesach..."

We whipped our heads around as Shia's walky talky suddenly crackled to life. We watched wide-eyed in wonder as he called into the phone, "Troops! To the kitchen!"

A few minutes later, all twelve of us were sitting around in our kitchen, trying to come up with a plan. Just then, my mother walked in.

When we told her what happened, she said, "Boys, I'm so glad you told me this. We'll get to work right away arranging all the neighbors to pitch in! I'm sure everyone will be able to make a cake or two to help out the Frieds!"

While my mother began making phone calls, all the boys split up and ran home to ask their mothers and sisters if they would be able to send a dessert to the Frieds, too. And most of them did!

At the end of the day, we were all tired but happy. It had been a long day, doing jobs for the Chometz Agency, but the day was over and the jobs were well done. And even though we were very tired, we weren't going to miss that pidyon haben that Mrs. Fried had invited us to!

What a pidyon haben that was! I think just about every neighbor showed up that night. After all, no one was going to miss that last-minute pidyon haben that they all pitched in for...

And Mr. Fried came over to our little group of twelve to give us a special mazel tov.

"Thanks a lot, boys," he said, giving us each a hand-shake. "You helped out in a big way!"

Who would have believed that one hungry cat, twelve hard-working boys, and some pretty super neighbors could turn out one of the nicest pidyon habens yet!"

Parsha Poem

By Yisroel Bitach

In this week's parshios,
A lesson is learned.
About our fellow Yidden,
We must be concerned.

Tazriah and Metzarah
One after the other.
Be careful how we speak,
For every Yid is a brother.

The punishment of Tzora'as,
The Torah explains.
Is that outside of the camp
The metzarah remains.

Loshon Horah it is,
Tzora'as it will bring.
Let's think before we speak,
Don't just say anything.

If we think we are better,
Than someone we know.
Ga'avah is the cause,
For Loshon Horah to flow.

Out of the machaneh,
The Torah sends him away.
With no more Tzoraas,
Return he may.

How does this happen?
Rav Hirsh asks the question.

And he leaves us,
With this suggestion.

Being outside the camp,
Gets the man to think.
I'm all alone here,
His heart starts to sink.

The ga'avah he had,
That terrible day.
When he said what he shouldn't,
Hashem sent him away.

But as soon as the change,
Took place in his mind.
The refuah did come,
Cause Hashem is so kind.

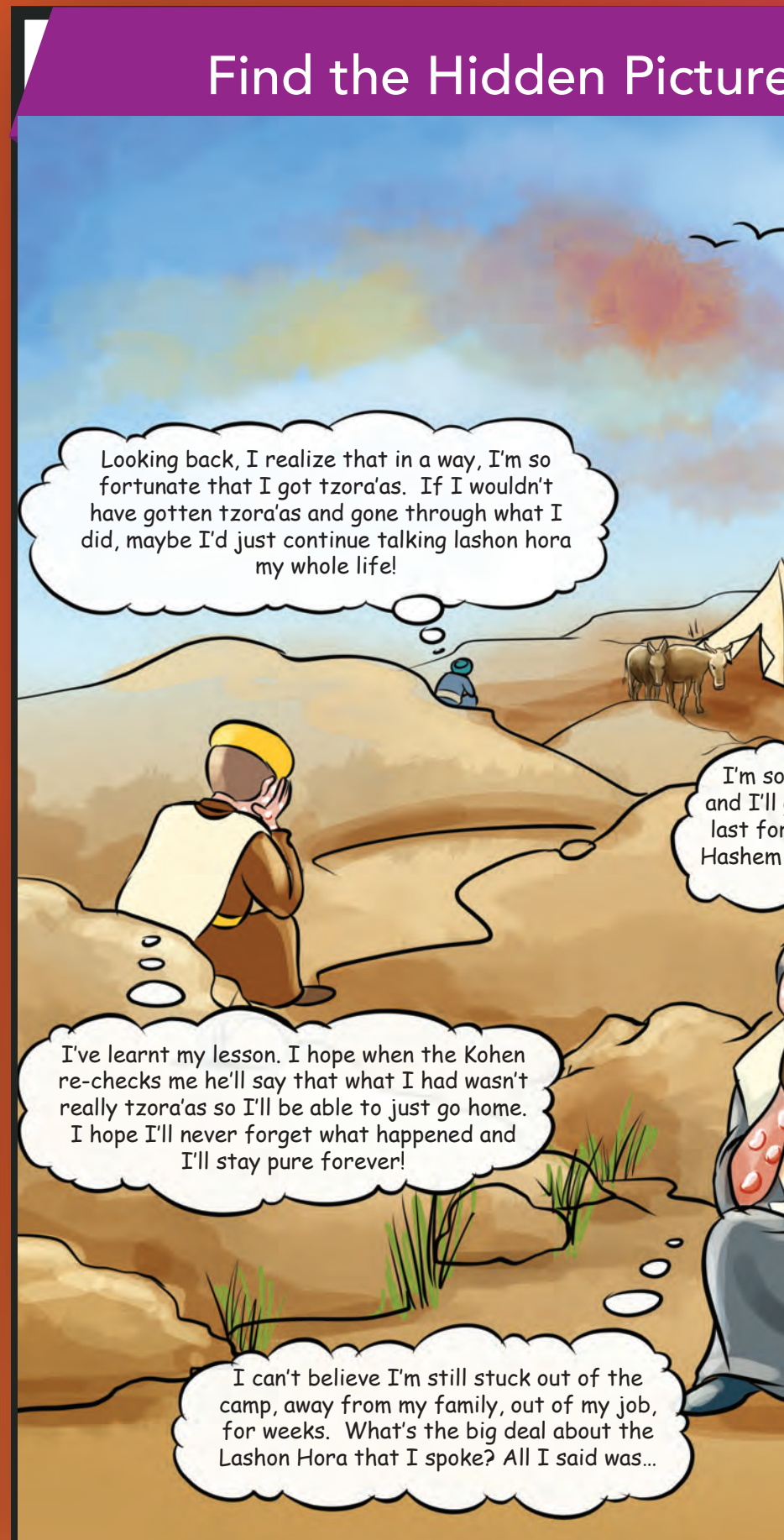
The lesson for all,
Remember we must.
Hashem gave us a mouth,
For a Yid he will trust.

It is so important,
That we watch what we say.
Think of the good,
That Hashem will repay.

If all of us try,
Just a little bit more.
It will bring Moshiach closer,
Of that we are sure.

FUN PAGE

Find the Hidden Picture



Word Search

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SUDOKU

Find these hidden items in the picture



THE TOUGH ROV

BY AHUVA COHEN

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"You CAN be married to a man ten years and still not be able to figure him out."

That's what Baila's always saying. Especially these days with these newfangled ideas about the young couple meeting before the chasuna. "Getting to know each other," they call it. "Ha," says my Balla. "Don't fool yourselves; the old ways are best." And without fail, she'll clinch the argument with those words: "You can live with a man ten years and he'll remain a puzzle."

Seems it's an old Yiddish saying that she

Rebbe, help me! I came to you because I heard that you have a kind heart and I know you'll help me!"

heard from her grandmother who heard it from her mother, who heard it from ... Anyway, you get the idea. Personally, I always thought it was nonsense. Not that I mean to question the wisdom of my wife, or of her grandmother, or of her grandmother's mother, or of any other woman. After all, don't Chazal say that women have bina yesaira? It's just that since becoming the shamosh of Rav Elya Cha'yim Meisel of Lodz eleven years ago, I lost my faith in this particular saying.

Why, I know the man inside out. I know when he has something on his mind and I can tell just by the expression on his face whether that something is a dowry for a needy man's daughter, a difficult sugya, or a case that the police have turned over to him to solve.

I've been with the Rov for eleven years, and he's no puzzle to me. Of course, I'm not married to him, but short of marriage you can't get much more constant association between two people than between a Rov and his shamosh.

All of which explains why I never put much stock in this particular saying. Never, until last Monday that is. And it all started with watered down milk.

Personally, I couldn't tell you in a hundred



years whether milk tastes watery or not. Half the time I don't even know what I'm eating. Set the food down before me and I'll eat it. But as I say, women are funny about these things. Call it a sixth sense, bina yesaira, or whatever you like. In any case, I wasn't the least bit surprised when Balla says to me one morning at breakfast.

"I'm sure this milk has been watered down."

"Hm," I murmured absentmindedly.

"I'm going to ask Mrs. Gutman if she noticed it," she continued, getting up to clear the table.

I left the house and promptly forgot about the whole matter. But no sooner had I entered the house that evening then she burst out, "Chatzkel, I was right! I saw Mrs. Gutman in the fish store and the store was full of women. Just as soon as I mentioned the milk they all said that they had noticed it too. Chatzkel!" she pointed her finger at me, "you must make an investigation!"

"Me?"

"Who else?" she countered.

There was nothing to say to this. Who else indeed? I was the Rov's shamosh and there wasn't a complaint, whether it pertained to employment, sanitation, ill-treatment at the hands of the

police, or city regulations against Jews, that wasn't brought to Rav Elya Cha'yim. Ever since he accepted the position of Rav of Lodz, the Jews of that city and of the cities around, came to depend on him in every crisis.

And this was certainly a crisis. If the milk was being tampered with, the health of an entire city might be at stake.

"All right," I nodded. "I'll speak to the Rov."

Rav Elya Cha'yim listened thoughtfully.

"Well, Chatzkel," he said when I had finished. "What do you think we should do?"

I was astounded. Me? Well, I'm only a plain man and I think plainly. So I said, "Why don't you just send for the milkmen and ask them?"

The Rov pretended to think that over for a

Well! You never saw such a change come over anyone as now came over those milkmen. They positively beamed

few minutes. I say pretended, because knowing the Rov as I do, I could see right away that he saw some flaw in my idea. But of course he wouldn't come right out and say so. Not Rav Elya Cha'yim - too afraid he might hurt my feelings.

And so, after a few minutes, he says, "I thought we might try doing things in a more roundabout

way. If we question the milkmen and they deny knowing anything about it, we'll have done worse than gain nothing; we'll have put them on their guard and made them so careful of be-



ing discovered, that our chances of catching them in the act will be nil."

The milkmen filed silently into the high-ceilinged meeting room of the Lodz beis din and stood uncertainly, waiting. They were a

Rav Elya Cha'yim shook his head, "There is nothing I can do for you," he said in a low voice.

tough lot, these milkmen, not accustomed to feeling ill at ease under any circumstances. But a beis din - that was something different, something to awe the most thick-skinned.

As they stood huddled together, facing the August rabonim who comprised the beis din, Rav Elya Cha'yim came forward.

"Sholom, Rabosei!" he greeted them warmly. "I'm glad you could come as there was something I especially wanted to ask you. The beis din is about to decide concerning a certain question of bosor b'cholov which has come to our attention. The matter concerns a large quantity of food which we will have to decree treif, because milk has accidentally gotten mixed into it. Unless - and this is why I sent for you - it can be proven that the milk contained a sufficient percentage of water, in which case, a heter in this particular case could be found. Needless to say, we would very much like to be able to matir this food."

Well!

You never saw such a change come over anyone as now came over those milkmen. They positively beamed.

"Rebbe!" cried one, his face wreathed in smiles, "set your mind at ease. The milk has the required percentage of water!"

"That's right, Rebbe!"

"That's so."

"It's a fact!" others chimed in.

All was quiet for a moment and then Rav Elya Cha'yim began to speak. As his words penetrated the silent beis din, the milkmen's grins disappeared off their faces as if they had been wiped off with a sponge. For Rav Elya Cha'yim was giving them mussar. He didn't raise his voice an octave during the

entire speech, but I and everyone else in that room knew that those milkmen were beaten. Never again would the people of Lodz have to worry about watery milk.

When the milkmen had slunk out of the room, pandemonium broke loose. Everyone rushed up to congratulate the Rov on the clever way in which he had netted the milkmen, but Rav Elya Cha'yim himself didn't seem very happy. I knew the reason, too. He had a soft heart, that man. He hated to scold wrongdoers, but that never prevented him from doing so with a vengeance when the occasion demanded it.

Now he brushed aside the congratulations and said simply, "It is time for the beis din to convene."

But no sooner had he and the assembled rabonim seated themselves in their places, then the door shot open and a man fell - yes, there was no other word for it - he fell into the room.

Oblivious to the half-opened mouths and startled expression of the assembled rabonim, the man picked himself up and gazed around idiotically. He must have been in his midforties, of medium height and weight, and with a face so undistinguished as to have rendered him completely unmemorable, were it not for the fact that he was the perfect prototype of a scatterbrain.

"Who is, which is, is this, which one ... " he stammered, and then he gasped out, "Rav Elya Cha'yim Meisel!"

Rav Elya Cha'yim calmly addressed the man. "I am Rav Elya Cha'yim Meisel. In what way can I help you?"

The man turned a distraught gaze on the Rov and his words came out in a torrent,

"Rebbe, help me! I came to you because I heard that you have a kind heart and I know you'll help me!"

"What is your problem?" the Rov questioned gently.

"Rebbe! I have a wife, an angel, a tzadeikes. We were married ten years and she bore me six children. Last year, on the evil advice of the neighbors, I divorced her, but now I want to take her back as my wife. But when I asked the Rov of my town to perform the kidushin he refused. 'You're a Kohein.' he told me, 'and you are not allowed to remarry your divorced wife.' But you can help me, Rebbe', can't you?"

Rav Elya Cha'yim shook his head, "There is nothing I can do for you," he said in a low voice. "If you are a Kohein, you may not marry a divorcee."

"Help me, Rebbe" the man wailed pitiful-

ly. "Have mercy on six small children. Now I love her truly, Rebbe."

Rav Elya Cha'yim stood up and his voice rang out firmly in the high ceilinged beis din. "There is nothing I can do for you. The Torah forbids a Kohein to marry a divorced woman. And now you must leave."

The man turned to go, muttered brokenly, "I was sure you could help me. They told me you have such a kind heart. They said ...

"As he reached the door, he turned suddenly and called out, "Rebbe, I have a good idea! I'll do t'shuva. If I do t'shuva you could

I found him finally, sitting all hunched up in a tiny back room. One quick glance at his face told me that he had been crying.

arrange for me to marry my former wife, couldn't you? I'll accept whatever punishment you give me, and I even have an idea for a real harsh one. If I refuse an Aliya to the Torah for a whole year, that would be a good punishment, wouldn't it?"

Not a muscle twitched in the Rov's face, but everyone else ... well, you could see they were making an effort not to burst out laughing. They smiled though, and one even gave a snort that sounded suspiciously like a giggle.

Shamefaced, the man turned and left the room.

The beis din quickly settled down to the business of the day. But where was the Rov? He wasn't in his place, nor was he anywhere in the room. Without him, nothing could start so I hurried out to find him.

I found him finally, sitting all hunched up in a tiny back room. One quick glance at his face told me that he had been crying.

"Why?" I demanded.

"That man ... " the words were barely audible.

"But the man was a boor, a buffoon," I protested. "Why did he divorce a good wife whom he loved, without a thought for her or their six children? He deserves hanging and instead he suggests being deprived of a few aliyahs as an adequate punishment. On such a man you are wasting tears?"

"Yes," the Rov answered simply. "It hurts me to that extent when I can't help a fellow Jew.

"What was that saying again? "You can live with a man ten years and he'll still be a puzzle to you," wasn't it?"

Tzedakah Tatzil Mimaves

Written by: Rusi Meyer

The Amora Shmuel was friends with a Babylonian astrologer named Avlet. One day, they were sitting at a fork in the road next to a lake.

Do you see that worker over there? I can see from my fortune-telling very soon, a snake will bite him and he will die!

Were he not a Jew, you would be correct. But Jews are above the rules of stargazing. He will not be harmed!

For a while, Shmuel & Avlet remained there, deep in conversation about different matters of wisdom.

Look! there is that man I showed you, who was supposed to die by snake bite! How can it be that he is still alive?!

Did a snake bite you today?

I don't have time for these jokes; I'm rushing home!

This is no joke! I saw in the stars that you were going to die from a poisonous snake bite. Show me your sack!

I don't believe this! What happened?!

Was there anything special that you did today?

Nothing!

Think hard! Perhaps you can think of something.

Well... I and my friends always share our lunch together. Every day, one of us gathers all of our lunches and divides it evenly between everyone. Today was my turn...

When I got to my friend's sack, I saw his face turn white with shame... He hadn't brought any food to contribute to today's lunch.

To save him from embarrassment, I pretended to put something from his bag into the pile of food.

The Jews are above the rules of astrology! As it says, "Tzedakah tatzil mimaves."

This mitzvah saved you!



HONDURAN LAWMAKERS VOTE TO MOVE EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM



“Israel congratulates the National Congress of Honduras for passing with an overwhelming majority a resolution in favor of opening an embassy in Jerusalem,” Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon tweeted.

“A notice has been sent to the secretary of state in the Foreign Ministry who handles [Honduran] ties to the Israeli people, according to which Honduras should consider moving its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv,” Jose Tomas Zambrano Molin, National Congress First Secretary said.

Honduras has been strongly supportive of U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and to move the American embassy there.

NIGERIAN MAN CAUGHT WITH \$400,000 COUNTERFEIT BILLS

A Nigerian man was arrested for alleged possession of \$400,000 counterfeit American dollar bills, Nigeria’s anti-corruption agency said Tuesday.

Wilson Uwujaren, a spokesman for the Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) said in a statement that Samson Otuedon confessed to operating an association that used fake dollar bills to scam unsus-

pecting clients. An investigation was launched into Otuedon’s activities in Nasarawa, Nigeria’s north central state, after receiving reports that the group was producing fake dollar bills.

Uwujaren stated that the anti-corruption agency had arrested several fake currency traders in northern Nigeria, which is a hub for foreign currency trading.

“Those conversant with currency trading in Nigeria know that most legal and illegal money change operators come from the north,”Uwujaren told CNN

A 2016 report from the United States Secret Service says that the threat of counterfeiting American dollar bills has increased in recent years as more countries adopt the US dollar as their

national currency.

United States officials have said the \$100 bill is the most frequently counterfeited denomination of U.S. currency outside the United States as a result of its broad circulation overseas

NOTHING TO SAY

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin could be the first person to be prosecuted under the highly controversial Polish Holocaust law. A far-right Polish nationalist group, called National Movement (RN) is trying to make that happen. Rivlin, who went to Poland for the “March of The Living” which takes place annually, did not say anything in his speech at Auschwitz that would be considered illegal under the new law.

Nevertheless, the Polish group (RN) is claiming that, in talking with the President of Poland, Andzrej Duda, President Rivlin allegedly said that although Poland had many righteous gentiles, Polish Jews didn’t only die in death camps but, as in other countries, their neighbors betrayed them. He also reportedly said that the Nazis knew there was fertile anti-Semitic ground in Poland, enabling them to do much more damage there.



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AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE

Divrei Torah
for everyone
to share

"THIS IS THE LAW OF THE TZARAAS..."

At the conclusion of Parshas Tazria, Rabbeinu Bachya explains the nature of tzara'as: "These afflictions demonstrate the absolute providence of Hashem. They were not natural phenomena, but a great miracle. This did not exist outside of Eretz Yisrael, only in Eretz Yisrael. When a Jewish person sinned, tzara'as would appear on his (or her) house or clothes or body to attest to the fact that he sinned... in order that he should repent and purify himself from his wrongdoing."

Clearly, tzara'as was not a contagious disease of leprosy. The Torah states:

"...on the day that live flesh appears in it, he shall become unclean" (13:14) Rashi comments that the introductory words "on the day" teach us that there are certain days when tzara'as can be inspected by the kohen and there are certain days when tzara'as would not be diagnosed. Specifically, a chosson during his sheva brachos and any person during the Shalosh Regalim, would not show their potential tzara'as to a Kohen.

If tzara'as is a contagious disease, occasions such as weddings and the Shalosh Regalim, when many people are gathered together, would be the most important times to make sure that there is no brewing epidemic, and to quarantine even possible cases of contagious diseases! That the Torah specifically states that during these times there is no diagnosis of tzara'as clearly shows that tzara'as was not a contagious disease. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that since a purpose of tzara'as was to motivate a person to do teshuva, and Hashem only punishes as a "last resort," it was not necessary to diagnose tzara'as at those times.

At his wedding, a chosson is so full of appreciation to Hashem for the great simcha which he is experiencing, and is so full of hope and prayer to Hashem for a beautiful life ahead, that hopefully the chosson, even if potentially he had tzara'as, will do teshuva and begin his new life correctly. He does not need tzara'as to motivate him.

Nor the Jew on the Shalosh Regalim. Joining the throngs of Jews converging upon Yerushalayim to celebrate Yom Tov together in the Bais Hamikdash, and experiencing the awesome closeness to Hashem there, certainly should motivate every Jew to mend his ways, stop sinning and avoid the divisiveness of lashon hora.

The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 169) explains: "Among the roots of the mitzvah is to implant in our souls that the providence of Hashem is individualized

for each and every person. His eyes see all their ways... Therefore we are warned to pay attention to this evil disease and to realize that sin causes it – Chazal al-

antine in the case that he had thoughts of repentance but has not yet completely repented... In this case, Hashem will cause symptoms that will require a second quarantine so that perhaps he will complete his repentance and become totally pure."

Tzara'as testifies to many of the Ikrei Emunah: the 13 foundational beliefs of every Jew. Among them, *Ikar #1: That Hashem, the Creator of the World, created and runs the world, and He Alone is responsible for everything that happens in the world.* Tzara'as is not a random event. If a person gets sick, it is the Hand of Hashem. If he wants to get healed, Hashem needs to heal him. *Ikar #10: That Hashem, the Creator of the World, know the actions and thoughts of people.* Tzara'as is an individualized event. Hashem discerns between the actions and motives of each individual to know if it warrants reward or punishment. *Ikar #11: That Hashem, rewards those who observe His mitzvos and punishes those who transgress His mitzvos.* The gift of tzara'as enabled a person to clearly see that he or she was travelling down the wrong path. Good is rewarded. Bad is punished. Tzara'as enabled people not just to believe, but to clearly see reward and punishment.

The Midrash tells the story of a peddler who was going around announcing "Who wants life?" R' Yanai went over to the man and expressed some interest. The peddler told R' Yanai that what he had was not for a great talmid chacham such as him. R' Yanai insisted, so the peddler pulled out a Tehillim and read him the verse: "Who is the man who desires life?... Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking falsehood." R' Yanai exclaimed that he had never been able to satisfactorily explain this posuk until now.

The Midrash is hard to understand. What did Rav Yanai learn from the peddler? Wasn't the peddler only stating the obvious?

The answer given by the Kochav MiYaakov is that Rav Yanai understood that the life referred to by Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim is Olam Haba. Through not speaking lashon hara, R' Yanai knew that a person would be guaranteed a good life in the World to Come. The peddler, though, simply taught that avoiding lashon hara brings life in Olam Haze. And R' Yanai appreciated the understanding that avoiding gossip truly leads to a pleasant life in this world as well. Many times people get themselves in trouble with their words and have to go to great lengths to fix

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A chosson during his sheva brachos and any person during the Shalosh Regalim, would not show their potential tzara'as to a Kohen. If tzara'as is a contagious disease, occasions such as weddings and the Shalosh Regalim, when many people are gathered together, would be the most important times to make sure that there is no brewing epidemic, and to quarantine even possible cases of contagious diseases!

ready said that lashon hara causes it in the majority of cases – and we should not take it as a random event. The afflicted person should go to the kohen, whose purpose is to atone for sinners. By associating with the one who atones, perhaps he will have thoughts of repentance. He may be quarantined for a few days so that he can contemplate his ways patiently and search his actions. Sometimes he will require a second quar-

the problem. Careless words detract from our quality of life. If one is careful about his speech, he will spare himself much hardship in both this world and the next.

Today, unfortunately, we no longer have tzara'as. With tzara'as, The Torah prescribes a whole process related to the effects of lashon hara and its remedy. Sadly, we don't have these Divine messages to help us correct ourselves today. Hashem is still running the world, and still cares about every individual's actions and deeds. Hashem still rewards and punishes and orchestrates every event, big or small. Our challenge is to recognize the various signs that Hashem sends us and act upon them.

**Careless words detract
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“This shall be the law of the person afflicted with tzaraas on the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the kohen” (14:2)

The metzora is required to consult with a kohen as part of his rehabilitation process. Only the kohen can render a decision about the status of his affliction and declare him healed. Kli Yakar explains that the kohen, as a descendant of Aharon who was renowned for his pursuit of peace, excelled in the area in which the metzora was lacking. In order for him to rectify his deficiencies in interpersonal relationships, the metzora was required to consult with a kohen who would be able to guide him on the path of self-improvement.

Another reason why the metzora's status is dependent on the pronouncement of the kohen is to teach him the power of speech. He had a callous attitude regarding the consequences of his slander and failed to realize that words can have a profound impact. To teach him that “life and death are in the power of the tongue,” his fate now depends on the speech of the kohen, whether he declares his affliction to be tamei or tahor. Perhaps before he did not recognize the power of speech, but now he will see its power firsthand.

“...the person to be cleansed shall take two live, clean birds, a cedar stick, a strip of crimson [wool], and hyssop” (14:4)

The Zohar says that tzara'as does not only afflict a person for bad speech such as gossip and slander, but also for refraining from saying good words when the opportunity arises. We are not supposed to remain silent in order to avoid lashon hara. A lot of positive things can be accomplished by the mouth: learning Torah, encouraging others, praising good people, expressing thanks to Hashem, bringing peace in the world, teaching others the ways of Hashem, etc... Speech is the characteristic that defines man and distinguishes him from the animal kingdom. As such, the power of speech can and should be used to accomplish tremendous things.

Based on this idea, the Sefas Emes explains why the metzora is purified by slaughtering one bird and sending another bird to fly away. On the one hand, one must slaughter the negative aspect of speech and completely avoid it. On the other hand, one must allow the positive forms of speech to fly freely, to share good words with other people and to learn Torah as much as possible.

Perhaps this explains the sequence of the following

pesukim in Tehillim (34:13-15): “Who is the man who desires life, who loves days and to see good [in them]? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deception. Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.” Immediately after warning us to be on guard against lashon hara, we are urged to not merely turn away from evil, but also to do good things with our power of speech. We are reminded that our words also have an incredible potential to increase peace and accomplish good things. One way to avoid lashon hara is to address people directly if we feel that they did something wrong instead of sharing the story with others. If we first speak to the other person directly, we may discover that it was an honest mistake or that there are other circumstances to take into consideration. Rather than jumping to conclusions and spreading rumors, we should keep our suspicions between ourselves and the person who we think did something wrong. *A person conducted a business deal through a third party, but later discovered that during the transaction his private card information was somehow shared with an unknown person. On the surface, this looked like fraud. But instead of telling people not to do business with the person because of his dishonesty, he instead approached the person directly. The person explained although the credit card company made it appear so, the unknown person had never actually had access to the information.*

The situation was resolved without any lashon hara being spread because the two parties spoke to one an-

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other directly.

“But if he is poor and cannot afford it, he shall take one lamb as a guilt offering for a waving to effect atonement for him, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a meal offering, and a log of oil” (14:21) The Chofetz Chaim uses the different sacrifices prescribed for a poor man and a rich man as a lesson regarding the expectations that Hashem has from people with different abilities.

Just as the rich metzora cannot fulfill his obligation with the poor metzora's sacrifice, people who are rich with abilities cannot look at their peers with lesser abilities and comfort themselves that they are better than the others. Although they may think that they are better, this is not necessarily so because they may not be living up to their capabilities. More is expected of a person with more talents. Every individual is held to their own standard and comparing oneself to others serves no purpose. The bottom line is that a person should strive to be all that he can be. That is what Hashem expects of him and nothing less.

“When you come to the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as a possession, and I place a lesion of tzara'ath upon a house in the land of your possession” (14:34)

Why did Hashem want to assure them that they would have tzara'as on their homes? Chazal (Horayos 10a) say that this was good news for them. Rashi on Chumash explains that the Emorim hid their wealth within the walls of their homes before the Jews conquered Eretz Yisrael. When the Jews took possession of those homes, Hashem put tzara'as on the houses so that the owners would have to knock down the walls and thereby discover the hidden treasures. Thus,

tzara'as was truly a good thing.

However, Rashi on the Gemara comments that the Torah presents this information as good news even though it was really bad. Rav Shimon Schwab, in his sefer Ma'ayan Beis HaShoeiva, asks: Why is this portrayed as good news and why would the Torah relate bad news?

One answer he gives is based on the Ramban's comments that tzara'as only occurs at a time when the Divine presence rests among the Jewish people and only in Eretz Yisrael. In times when Hashem hides His presence, we do not merit to have such clear communication from Hashem in the form of an obvious rebuke through tzaraas. Therefore, news of future tzara'as is really good news because it means that the Jewish people will have a close relationship with Hashem that is worthy of tzara'as.

His second answer is based on the Midrash which teaches that Hashem is merciful and does not immediately punish a person on his body when he deserves tzaraas. In His kindness, Hashem first afflicts the person's house with tzara'as in an effort to guide the person to change his ways. If he does not respond to this punishment, then Hashem afflicts his clothing and only then does Hashem put tzara'as on his body. Despite the fact that tzara'as on the house is a bad thing, the news that Hashem would first punish a person in this way is really good news and speaks volumes about Hashem's kindness. It teaches us that Hashem does not punish people in order to hurt them, but to guide them down the path of repentance.

“And the one to whom the house belongs comes and tells the kohen, saying: Something like a lesion has appeared to me in the house” (14:35)

Tzror HaMor notes that the person who approaches the kohen is described as “the one to whom the house belongs.” The reason why a person is afflicted with tzaraas is because he forgets that everything he owns is a gift from Hashem and does not really belong to him. He is stingy and does not share his possessions. He lies to others and pretends not to own the items that they want to borrow because he feels that he earned everything through his hard work and oth-

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ers should do the same if they want to live as he does. Now, he is forced to empty his house to prevent all his things from becoming impure. He asks his neighbors to help clear his things out and when they enter the house, they see that he really does own all those things that he claimed not to have. His cover is blown and, much to his great embarrassment, everyone knows why he is suffering a divine punishment.

If we remember that our possessions do not truly belong to us and act as if everything we have is merely “rented” from Hashem, we will use them in the way He has intended. We will find it easier to give tzedaka, to give loans, to share, and to use the great gifts we have been given, to live life to its true fullest and thus attain the good life in This World and the World to Come.



POST-PESACH REFLECTIONS OF A SEMINARY GIRL

Planning Rosh Hashana in seminary started sometime in August when the friends who were ahead of the game were already discussing their meals. For the rest of us, it started about a week after we landed, when we were just beginning to recognize our neighborhood. It was one of the first times that we used our Israeli phones and the first time that we called relatives whom we did not know so well. We were shy and hesitant, and we tried to stick with friends and go to family whom we knew. We had to buy ourselves seats in shul for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur at around the same time that we did our first loads of laundry. The independence was both frightening and empowering.

We cried because we were afraid not to, and despite the high we felt during that davening, we cried because we were homesick

For many of us, Rosh Hashana was the first time that we didn't spend Yom Tov with family. Our *seudos* were strange to us. The way our hosts served the *simanim* was wrong. They made kiddush in the wrong tune. The apples that they dipped in honey were not cut right. During those *seudos*, I remember thinking, "this just doesn't feel like Rosh Hashana."

Davening on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur was challenging. We went to unfamiliar shuls with unfamiliar people and unfamiliar tunes. The davening was powerful and majestic, and I remember how we cried. We cried because the words we were saying were

Yom Tov was beautiful. We felt it in the streets. We heard it in the singing which surrounded us in all nusachim. We saw it in the sukkas that were everywhere

more meaningful, because we were in a place where everything is more meaningful. We cried because we felt lucky and blessed, and we cried because we felt vulnerable and homeless. We cried because we had big dreams for the coming year. We cried because we were afraid to change, and we cried because we were afraid not to, and despite the high we felt during that davening, we cried because we were homesick.

After the fast ended, we calculated what time it was in America. It was disconcerting but strangely comforting that our families were still fasting and davening. As soon as we were able to call America, we called and tried to convey our intensity of emotion in a loud dorm with few words over a crackly phone. And we all said the same thing, maybe we had all thought of it on our own, or maybe we all imitated each other: "Yom Kippur was really nice, but it just didn't feel like Yom Kippur."

We formed a relationship with the land immediately, and by Sukkos time we began to love it. We had already taken buses the wrong way, gotten lost, and learned our way around. We had already figured out how Israeli money works. We had already gotten used to

Sabras, and we were no longer afraid of their prickly exterior. Sukkos preparations were everywhere, and we were awed by the greatness of what we belong to. The buses read *chag sameach*, lulavim and esrogim were being sold, inspected, and transported across the country. Sukkas went up on every *mirpesset*, in every *chatzer*, on landings between stairs, on roofs, and in narrow alleyways. The streets of Geula were packed with people buying food, clothing, and decorations. Yom Tov was not just a day on the calendar. It was alive, a royal guest, and the country knew how to welcome it.

We had a routine. We had friends. We were able to look back at the beginning and laugh

Sukkos this year was two three-day Yom Tovs, and we spent the days leading up to it finding, arranging, and confirming 12 meals. Yom Tov was beautiful. We felt it in the streets. We heard it in the singing which surrounded you in all nusachim. We saw it in the sukkas that were everywhere. But still, it was not home, and the homesickness that had been reduced to a dull ache during all the preparations resurfaced when we were eating our Yom tov *seudos* in somebody else's sukkah, with somebody else's family. That's why as I walked with my friends to a *simchas beis hashoeiva* in *Meah Shearim* on *Chol Hamoed* I said that same line again: "I'm so happy to be here, and Sukkos here is beautiful, but it just doesn't feel like Sukkos"

Before I went to seminary, people had

warned me about the cold. "It's a different type of cold" they said. "Your bones are cold, and you can't get warm." I didn't understand what they meant. But then, when the nights grew long, and the days got short and cold, I understood. I understood that the stone buildings retain the cold, and you could not escape it, because you feel as though it is inside of you. I also understood that those same stones retain history and Truth, and that I could not escape it, and I would have to look inside myself to see where I fit into that history and what the Truth means to me.

Then, came Chanukah. At that point, we were already settled. We had a routine. We had friends. We were able to look back at the beginning and laugh. Chanukah took on a new meaning that year. We felt the light, and we felt the *nissim*. The messages of Chanukah were not cliché; they were tangible, as tangible as the candles we lit. We felt a pride in who we are and what we were doing. Hazy areas had become black and white, and we had not realized it until we looked at the candles, and saw that the contrast between their light and the darkness around them did not make us uneasy. But still, despite all that, Chanukah is family time, and it was hard to miss our families' lighting and our families' latkas. We cried about missing Chanukah parties we had previously never wanted to go to, and we cringed as girls sang in the wrong tunes in front of the dancing candles. And although I had a beautiful Chanukah, on the first night, I took out my journal, and I wrote: "Lighting was weird tonight, it was really nice, but it just didn't feel like Chanukah."

The next couple of weeks passed quickly. The weather became nicer, and the work became more manageable. Then, the stores began to sell Purim costumes. We saw children in costumes almost every day starting from Rosh Chodesh, and we had to arrange our plans for the seuda and Purim outside of Yerushalayim. We joined the rest of the country in the joyous frenzied preparations which took place.

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Rebbetzin's Recipes

by Menucha Ostrow



Rebbetzin Esther Reisman's Erev Shabbos Oatmeal Cookies

Rebbetzin Reisman is the wife of Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, shlita Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath.

Ingredients:

3/4 cup margarine
 3/4 cup oil
 2 cups brown sugar
 1 cup sugar
 2 large eggs
 4 tablespoons water
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 6 cups quick-cooking oats
 1 package chocolate chips
 (mini chips work well in this recipe)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375
2. Beat oil, margarine and sugars very well. Add eggs, water and vanilla, beating until well-blended
3. Add flour mixture to other ingredients- mix until combined but do not over-mix
4. Stir in oats and chips
5. Drop cookies by rounded teaspoonfuls on parchment covered baking sheets
6. Bake one test cookie until edges are golden brown- I prefer to bake them for 13 minutes- if your cookies are larger or smaller- the baking time will differ. It also depends on how crispy you prefer them to be. It is always good to bake one cookie first so that you determine the exact baking time that you prefer. (Note that oatmeal cookies tend to harden as they cool.)



These are the cookies that I share with my BYA students on Friday mornings.

Rebbetzin Ezrachi's Ice Cream

Rebbetzin Ezrachi is the daughter of Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, zt"l, and the wife of Rav Yitzchok Ezrachi, shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of Mir Yerushalayim



Ingredients

6 eggs
 A little more than 1/2 c. sugar
 2 packets vanilla sugar
 1 container pareve whip
 1 tsp coffee
 1 tsp hot water

Directions

1. Separate the egg whites and the yolks
2. Whip the egg whites with 1/4 cup sugar
3. In another bowl start whipping the yolks.
4. While whipping the yolks add the other 1/4 cup of the sugar, the vanilla sugar and the whip.
5. Mix the two mixtures with a big spoon (not with a mixer) so it will be hard. (The Rebbetzin usually puts the white mixture into the yolk mixture)

6. Pour half of the new mixture (combination of the two) into the pan
7. In a cup mix the coffee (dissolved in hot water) into the other half of the mixture.
8. Put the coffee ice cream on top of the white one.
9. Freeze.

Rebbetzin Ezrachi said, "I usually make it in a round pan. You can double the quantity. (Cut it into triangles. When you cut it, it looks pretty. If you don't want coffee you can use chocolate and cover the top with melted chocolate".

Rebbitzen Feldman's Spelt Challah

Rebbitzen Feldman is the wife of Rav Aaron Feldman, shlita, Rosh Yeshiva Ner Yisroel

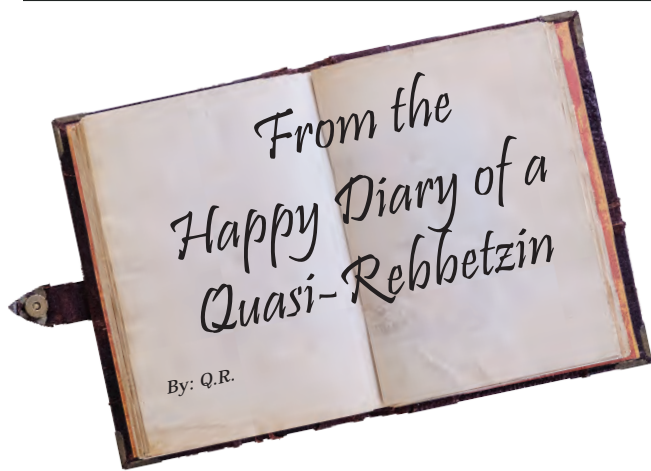
Ingredients

3 cups whole spelt flour
 1 cup white spelt flour
 1 egg
 2 heaping Tbsps dark brown sugar
 2 tsps salt
 2 tsps yeast
 2 Tblsp olive oil
 1 1/8 cups warm water

Directions

1. Knead together all ingredients well for 5 minutes.
2. Let sit for 10 minutes then knead again for 5 mins.
3. Let the dough rise for about 3/4 hr - 1 hr. It should double in bulk.
4. Braid or make rolls. (Lightly oil your hands to make braiding easier)
5. Bake for about 20 mins at 360° F or 180° C. Rolls take about 20 mins. Challah takes a little longer.





I've been thinking about kavod.

My husband came home from shul one Friday night and shared this story at the Shabbos table. (As an aside, I'm a big fan of sharing stories at the Shabbos table. Great Rabbis used to see a good fish early in the week and save it for Shabbos. I'm not much of a fish connoisseur (all the gefiltes look the same to me), but I want to follow in the footsteps of the greats, so I try to save a good story for Shabbos.)

He began shouting, his face turning red, "One of the pillars of the shul?!"

Back to the story. A Rabbi visiting from out of town told the following story (don't you love a story within a story? - as long as you can remember how to get back to the original point. In any case,) The visiting Rabbi was speaking in the shul and said that he was very happy to be given the opportunity to speak in various venues, but, he added, that he shies away entirely from speaking at funerals because of a terrible experience he once had.

He was a twenty something year old Yeshiva bochur when his father, a Rabbi of a big old shul called him. "Son," (Although I don't remember his name, I'm sure his father did,) "I need your help. We're in Eretz Yisroel now and there's been some bad news from home... The petirah of one of the chashuvim in shul... Goldstein... Do you think you could speak at the levayah?"

"Of course I agreed to help my father," said the visiting Rav. I diligently worked to prepare a proper hesped and then drove two hours from Yeshiva back to my home town, back to the big shul, in time for the

funeral. Moments later, I was called upon to speak. I began "We are gathered here today to pay final respects to Mr. Goldstein. Mr. Goldstein was one of the pillars of our community, one of the people who built the shul, one of the most important people here, who - at that moment, Mr. Goldstein jumped out of his seat in the front row - 'One of the pillars of the shul?!' he began shouting, his face turning red. 'One of the people who built the shul? One of the most important people? I am THE most important person in the shul. I am THE pillar of the community. I am THE person who built the shul.'

"And I," said the visiting Rabbi, "thought that I would faint at that moment. Evidently, it was Mrs. Goldstein, not Mr. Goldstein, who had passed on to the Olam HaEmes."

I assume Mr. Goldstein was distraught by his wife's passing and frazzled at the thought of being at his own levayah which provoked him to act as he did. But his story facilitated some great spirit and Shabbos table conversation. It also got me thinking of some other people I know who value kavod.

Mrs. Shirley Trachman (names have been changed. Details not, to the best of my memory) is a big fan of kavod. She is eighty years old (more or less. More in the feet, less in the smile) and treats every person with whom she comes into contact with incredible respect. Recently, she told us that she was going to be busy on Tuesday at the doctor. We asked what was bothering her. "Me?" she asked. "Boruch Hashem, I'm fine. But my plumber is a wonderful Jewish Russian man who doesn't speak much English. When he came to fix a leak last week, he really didn't look well. I told him that he must take care of himself and go to the doctor, but he was reluctant. I told him if he'd tell me what insurance he had, I'd make him an appointment and go with him. So Boruch Hashem we got an appointment for Tuesday." I was speechless. That is kavod. Kavod for another Jew.

Or Rabbi Yitzchok Weiss. He doesn't like to be called Rabbi, but in our eyes he certainly is. He is the gabbai of the shul, and has been since before my time. (I think you know that's more than a couple of years.) Well, there's a man in shul who, let's say, needs a lot of ruchniyus'dike chizuk, but comes to shul. Parshas Zachor the young man came to shul with his son. Late. Very late. Right after Parshas Zachor, to be exact. They had just put away the Sefer Torah and in they walked. And Rabbi Weiss, he should live and be well, walked right over to them. He turned to the ten year old son and warmly said "Perfect timing! Could we count on you to do Gelila of the Torah?" Wow. What kavod habriyos.

Or the Altshulers. Not particularly wealthy, but they constantly have meshulachim knocking on their door. I always wondered why. After a few times being on

the phone with Mrs. Altshuler when meshulachim were there, I understood completely. "Compote, Reb Chaim? Efsher some compote? Or maybe tea?" Next time I'm on the phone, "Please come in. Sit down. Maybe some mezonos? A drink?" These people were unbelievable. The respect they showered on every Jew who came to their door was memorable (certainly to me!). No wonder they were an important address on the meshulachim's list.

And make no mistake. There are lots of young people who know respect. I heard about an eighth grade class who wanted to do Purim shtik (okay. I heard of more than one class and not just the eighth grade who wanted to do Purim shtik). They decided that they would move their entire classroom to the roof for a day. These wonderful, respectful kids went to someone in the school and respectfully asked permission.

I guess who they asked and how they asked got the response they wanted (True story.) Up to the roof their classroom would go. They got permission from their parents and the next day they stayed late in school to shlep and move all their furniture: desks, chairs, garbage pail, and even lockers, up to the roof. After an hour's worth of schlepping, they went home, delighted with their efforts. Moments after arriving

"Did you hear? They changed the weather forecast. It's going to rain tonight! The school's furniture will get ruined! What should we do?"

home, the phones starting ringing. Kids in the class were calling each other. "Did you hear? They changed the weather forecast. It's going to rain tonight! The school's furniture will get ruined! What should we do?" And these great kids turned around and went back to school. They got tablecloths and covered all the furniture so that the school's property wouldn't in any way get ruined. Who says kids today have no respect?

I guess being the quasi-Rebbetzin that I am, I can't expect to get much kavod. But then again, after thinking about it, I think as long as I get some, I'd rather be on the giving end anyway.

POST-PESACH REFLECTIONS OF A SEMINARY GIRL

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On Purim, we woke up early and davened. We realized that more than half the year had passed and that we didn't want it to be over. That gave us a lot to be grateful for and a lot to ask for.

We joined the rest of the country in the joyous frenzied preparations which took place

We also had to redefine Purim for ourselves since a lot of Purim is spent with family. The concept of removing masks was very real to us that Purim. It was a strange day for us, for our families' Purim was already over, and it was the only time all year that we were ahead of them. During the day, we were not sure where to be, what to do, or what to wear. I heard my roommate on the phone with her mother "It's a weird day" she said. "It feels like something else, a *yom tefillah*, maybe, but it just doesn't feel like Purim."

Two weeks passed, and it was the day of my flight home for Pesach. I was excited, yet reluctant to leave the places and the people who had made up my home for the year. I went to the airport and boarded the plane. My flight passed quickly, and then I was home. Home. I

was in my house with my family. I was slathered with familiarity, and like a lotion, it was soothing, but it burned in sensitive places. I was with my parents and my siblings. I had my bed and my car. I felt safe and comfortable, and I switched off between embracing it and resisting it until I got dizzy.

In America, the streets didn't even know that it was Shabbos

On Shabbos, for the first time in months, I ate at home. Kiddush was right, the soup was made with real chicken, the food was what I was used

to, and most importantly, it was my family sitting around the table.

On Shabbos morning, I went to shul. When I went outside, my neighbors were noisily pulling a car into their driveway. The streets were strangely quiet. Cars drove by as if it was a regular day, some of them even dared play loud music. I passed by a man on his phone, and I instinctively looked away. I didn't hear strains of davening coming from the windows of the buildings I passed. I didn't see girls in matching dresses. I didn't see people walking in the street. In America, the streets didn't even know that it was Shabbos.

That night, I spoke to my friend. "How was Shabbos?" she asked me. "There's no place like home," I said, and then, I heard myself say that refrain that I had been saying all year "but Shabbos just didn't feel like Shabbos."

I (the Rosh Yeshiva) hereby declare that I understand that by affixing my signature I acknowledge that if I, or anyone of the Yeshiva administration... violates any of the obligations accepted herewith... regarding the deferment or any related laws, or if any student of the Yeshiva violates any of the aforementioned laws that I should have, or could have known about, the authorized officer can be m'vatel the Yeshiva's recognized status.

תחייבות ראש פוסד תורני
בדוק טל:
רק המלצת "ועד הישיבות" יצרה את ההכרה בישיבה.
ולא היתה ענישה קולקטיבית על הפרה של תלמיד
בדוק החדש:
חומצת ראש הישיבה והתחייבותו לשירות לשר הביטחון, יוצרת את ההכרה בישיבה (המלצת "ועד הישיבות" אינה הכרחית יותר).
על כל הפרה של תלמיד תיפסל הישיבה קולקטיבית.
תקנות חוק טל
הקנתה רחיצת שירות להלמידי ישיבות שחרומם אומצת,
הטסיה-2005
אבות המידה להכרה בישיבה או בטלל
13. השיר יכלול ישיבה ברשימת הישיבות אם התקיימו בה כל אלה:
(1) ועד הישיבות בארץ ישראל המליץ למגיד להכיר בישיבה;
(2) מספר התלמידים בישיבה לא יפחת מן המספר המזערי;
(3) בישיבה מתקיימים לימודים בתיקף שלא יפחת מ-45 שעות בשבוע; היתה הישיבה בוללמתקיימים בה לימודים בחיך שלא יפחת מ-40 שעות בשבוע.
בישול המרה בישיבה:
14. (א) השיר יראוי להכיר ישיבה כרשימת הישיבות אם נמצא כי-
(1) ראש הישיבה מסר אישור כותב לפי סעיף 4(2) להק או לא קיים את התחייבותו לפי אותו סעיף, והשיר הודיע לו בכך, כי התקיימו תנאי הישיבה האמורים;
(2) פחת מספר התלמידים בישיבה מן המספר המזערי והישיבה אינה עומדת במספר המזערי של התלמידים גם בתום תקופה של חששים ימים מימם שהשיר הודיע לראש הישיבה, בכחב, כי פחת המספר הכוער; הישיבה חסר ברשימת הישיבות מימם שנת הלימודים סכה פחת מספר התלמידים מהמספר המזערי;
(3) אינה עומדת עד באמות המידה האחרות והקבועות בדקת 13.
(ב) לא חוסר ישיבה כרשימה, הישיבות בהתאם להקנת משנה (א) אלא לאחר שניתנה לראש הישיבה חודשנות לטעון נגד ההסרה.
כ"א בחמונו התססית (28 ביולי 2005)
טאל מיוז 19
טר הביטחון

In other words, if a talmid of the Yeshiva violates any of the aforementioned criteria or other related

Can the Yeshiva learn Kesubos and laws of mamzerim? Can they learn Megilla and the chiyuv to destroy Amalek? Perhaps Bishul Akum in Chulin isn't so pleasant because it separates the Jews and the non-Jews.

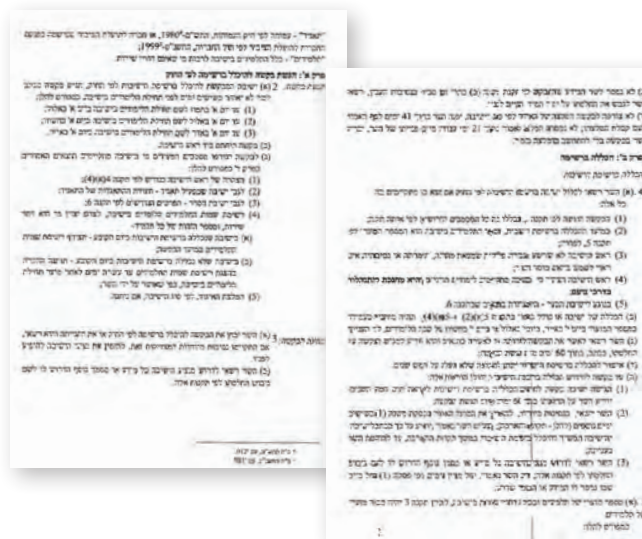
regulations, the entire Yeshiva can lose their recognized status as a Yeshiva and consequently, all their talmidim can lose their status as bnei Yeshiva, and thus be obligated to serve in the army. Pretty shocking.

Notice the wording. The Rosh Yeshiva declares that he accepts that the entire Yeshiva and all its talmidim will be at the mercy of the ministry of defense if any talmid acts in discord to any of the regulations, whether or not the Yeshiva knows about it. Because after all, the Yeshiva could have possibly known about it.

Small details? Or words that can potentially shake the foundations of the Yeshivos and threaten the R shei Yeshiva. Frightening.

A line-by-line study and report of each and all of the voluminous regulations is beyond the scope of this article.

Let us conclude with the closing line of one of the documents, right above the signature line for the Rosh Yeshiva.



I hereby declare that in the Yeshiva, Torah studies take place in accordance with the law and is conducted b'darchei noam.

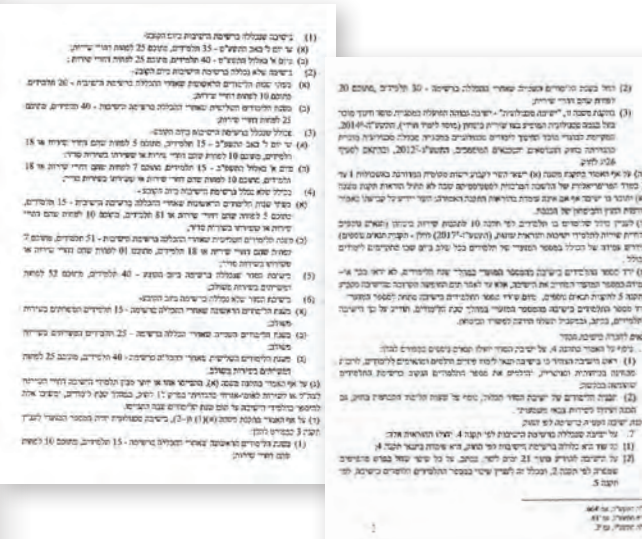
Sounds beautiful. Darchei Noam. The Torah's ways are pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.

Warning bells sound. Who determines what are ways of pleasantness? The Torah or the Ministries?

Can the Yeshiva learn Kesubos and laws of mamzerim? Can they learn Megilla and the chiyuv to destroy Amalek? Perhaps Bishul Akum in Chulin isn't so pleasant because it separates the Jews and the non-Jews.

לשימוש פנימי
חומצת גיבול
מדינת ישראל
הביטחון
מקשה להמליץ ברשימת הישיבות המוסרות לפי פרק 11 לחוק שירות כבד
(נוסח משולב) - התסס"ו - 1986 - ישיבה הרדית
שם הישיבה:
פרטי ראש הישיבה:
שם משפחה | שם פרטי | מסר דה
כתובת הישיבה:
רחוב | מס' בית | ישוב | הגר
פרטי התקשורת:
סלולר קוד | סלולר נייד | כת.גר.זיל
מספר התלמידים בישיבה:
דוחי שירות | יצוא צבא | פסורים משידור

התקנות החדשות
רשימות קובץ התקנות
7 בתשרי התשס"ח
7868
26 בספטמבר 2017
תקנת שירות ביטחון (אמות מידה לגיוש רשימה של ישיבות), התשס"ח-2017
באוקף מסכסכו לפי כעס"מ 22, 22א, 22ב ו-26 לחוק שירות ביטחון (נסח משולב), התסס"ו-1986)
1. התקנת אלה -
הקבוצה
"אצט"א" - ועד הישיבות בארץ ישראל לענין ישיבות לפי פרק 11 לחוק, איגוד הישיבות הנהגות הציוניות לענין ישיבות גבוהות ציוניות או איגוד ישיבות ההסדר לענין ישיבות התסדר;
"מקשה" - בקשה לפי תקנה 2;
"דוחי ישיבות" - מיועג לשיחות ביטחון שקיבל צו דחיות שירות לפי סעיף 22א או פרק 11 לחוק או שנוסד בהתאם להחיות שירות לפי המעסיים האמורים הוא צו כעם צערה שנים לפחות;
"חוק דחיות שירות" - חוק דחיות שירות תלמידי ישיבות שחרותם אישנים, התסס"ב-2002;
"היום המובע" - י"ב באב התשס"ב (31 ביולי 2012);
"ישיבה" - ישיבת הסדר, ישיבה גבוהה ציונית או ישיבה לפי פרק 11 לחוק;
"מליל" - ישיבה הנהגות כפיקר לאנכרים נשואים או כעלי מטמנות;
"המשרד" - משרד הביטחון;
"רשימת הישיבות כיום העוקב" - רשימת הישיבות לפי סעיף 8 לחוק דחיות שירות העוסדת בחקמה לפי הראות סעיף 18(ב) לחוק שירות ביטחון (תיקון מס' 19), התסס"ו-2014;
"שנת לימודים" - תוספת לימודים בישיבה המתוחלה בכל שנה כיום א באולל אסתיימת כיום ל באב של השנה העברית העוקבת;
"השיר" - שר הביטחון.



There's more. There are distinctions between different types of Jews and men and women throughout Kodshim. Is that b'darchei noam? Certainly Hiddush and the Women of the Wall don't think so. They probably think its discrimination. And discrimination is not pleasant.

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Closer attention raises concern. Could it be a problem if he helped his father in his store during Bein Hazmanim?
Our investigative reporters have clearly unearthed a scourge of untold proportion neatly tucked away in the fine print of pages of bureaucracy.
Where does that leave us?



Continued from page 11

When Chris Matthews and his entire family started to feel nauseous and experience eye problems, he originally thought that they had all come down with a case of the flu. However, after

It turned out that by scrubbing a piece of coral, Matthews had released a toxin called Palytoxin, the second deadliest non-protein toxin known

his dogs began to show symptoms, he realized that something else must be wrong.

When the symptoms progressed to resemble a bad case of pneumonia, Matthews realized that the coral from

his fish tank may have been the culprit. He promptly called the police, and was rewarded with a massive emergency response.

It turned out that by scrubbing a piece of coral, Matthews had released a toxin called Palytoxin, the second deadliest non-protein toxin known, that is produced by several marine creatures such as coral and anemones.

Dozens of emergency personnel, including emergency officers, a hazardous area response team, and ambulances surrounded the Matthew home. A fire and rescue crew followed detailed instructions from the Public Health of England to safely remove the toxic coral from the house. The six members of the family as well as four firefighters were rushed to the hospital to be treated for the inhalation of toxic fumes. The family was told that one more night spent in the house would have been extremely dangerous. While the poison is generally most dangerous when ingested, even inhaling the toxin can have serious effects.

Matthews warns other pet owners to use his experience as a lesson to be careful with their pets and to make sure that buying exotic aquatic creatures does not come at a risk to one's life.



Hands Down: Blood is Red

Look up from this paper and ask the person closest to you, "What color is the blood inside of our bodies?" Ask a few more people, members of your family, friends. The most probable answer that you will receive is that the blood in your body is blue, as every child knows. The simple proof would be to look at your own wrist.

This is a common childhood misconception that seems to remain with people long after it should have been debunked. There seems to be no doubt in people's minds that the blood inside of their bodies is blue. People have believed this myth for years, never bothering to inquire.

A recent article published by Dr. MaryAnn de Pietro in Medical News Today sought to clear up this common misconception. She confirmed that the blood inside of a person's body is red, regardless of whether it is oxygen rich or not. The blood that flows from the heart through the arteries to supply the body with oxygen is a brilliant bright red color, as the rich oxygen reacts with the iron in blood to give it its red color. Blood that flows through the veins toward the heart, which has been depleted of its oxygen, is still red, contrary to popular belief. However, because of its reduction in oxygen, the blood is a sig-

nificantly darker shade of red, almost purple.

The explanation as to why the veins appear blue is a lesson in the way that we perceive light and colors, and the way light travels through the skin. Light travels in waves of various length, with the longer waves taking longer to travel. Colors are the absorption and reflection of the various wavelengths within the light. This explains the order of the rainbow, as red has the longest wavelength, followed by orange, progress-

Because of its reduction in oxygen, the blood is a significantly darker shade of red, almost purple.

ing as everyone can sing and finishing with purple. Because of the way our incredibly complex skin absorbs light, the blood we can see through the skin appears to be blue, although it actually is still red.

Now, be proud of your newly acquired knowledge and share it with those around you. And while you're sharing this, you can also tell them that the gum they swallowed five years ago is long *long* gone.



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CHINUCH

Lighting The Fire
That Shines Forever

by: Rabbi Moshe Brody



Is it time for Kosher textbooks and curriculum for our Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs?

Recently, general studies in Yeshivos has been making the news. In England, an unparalleled crisis in the educational system, the likes of which no one has seen in more than a century, is slowly unfolding. At the core of the crisis is the introduction of certain problematic government mandated curriculum that chareidi Jewry feels compelled to leave out. Alternative lifestyles, and tolerance and acceptance of other anti-Torah agendas, many which the Torah Hakedosha terms "Toeva", are being pushed through government educational organs. Some think the motivation is the hope of stamping out Islamic extremism, and despite the acceptance of pluralism in English society which in the past allowed for the flourishing of traditional Jewry, now, as their failure to contain these Islamists using traditional policing has become glaringly obvious, the government has turned its attention to schooling methods as effective tools at combatting radical Islam.

Others understand the recent crisis simply as yet another forum in the Humanist Mission to eradicate tradition, morality, and religion. The Humanists have been promoting their agenda for decades throughout the Western world, and the liberalism and perceived godlessness becoming more rampant throughout the world is a testimony to their success.

Regardless of the motivation and sponsorship, all

While recent legislative developments may have diminished the potential danger we face, we cannot be complacent and think that we are out of the woods on this issue.

school-age children are now expected to study these new, so-called "British values", to our detriment.

Here in New York State, we also face a potential crisis regarding general education in our mosdos hachinuch of a different but similar nature. Pushed by anti-yeshiva activists who wish to alter the nature of chasidishe mosdos by claiming that they don't provide their children with an adequate general studies education, these individuals have lobbied members of the State education department to look into our Ye-

Is this not an opportune time to examine options other than using these free textbooks, to cover the States curricular demands while at the same time teaching the curriculum in a Torah sensitive way?

shiva education. And let's pay attention here, these new regulations have the potential to not only affect the above mentioned mosdos hachinuch but virtually all mosdos hachinuch in NYS. These regulations, if successfully lobbied and pushed through, may end the decades-old autonomy that all mosdos hachinuch enjoyed. And while some erroneously shrug their shoulders and tell themselves that all is peaceful on their front, think again. If onerous government regulations and inspections are implemented, they won't stop at chasidishe schools, they will target (and potentially impact) all mosdos hachinuch equally. And while recent legislative developments may have diminished the potential danger we face, we cannot be complacent and think that we are out of the woods on this issue.

What can be done about this? Besides for the necessary hishtadlus and shatdlunus that is required by the Torah in such times and which wonderful Jews have undertaken, as Torah Jews, we have always looked internally when faced with trials and tribulations. Time and time again, the Torah reminds us to reflect on our conduct and to try to uncover what may be causing Hashem to challenge us. In the parsha of vihoya im shimo'a, this Divine contract is clearly laid out. We are bidden never to forget that Hashem is watching our actions and that our actions have consequences for the good and unfortunately for the negative. If faced with such extensive threats to our education, it behooves us to do a cheshbon hanefesh on our current yeshiva curriculum. Every yirei Shamayim should ask themselves "What can we do to fix our ways when it comes to general studies in yeshivos?"

While the list is quite extensive, and we could easily choose from a number of problems, let us examine something quite open and applicable to virtually ev-

ery yeshiva and Bais Yaakov of which I am aware of: non-kosher textbooks and curricula in our yeshivos.

For decades, virtually all our mosdos hachinuch in NYS have provided a general studies education to

Isn't this an opportune time to plead that our science books proudly make a Kiddush Hashem by proclaiming that Hashem is the Creator and Continuous Master of the world?

their students. And while the type of education varies from mosad to mosad, one similarity runs through virtually every single one of them: the use of free secular textbooks from the state. No matter whether the Yeshiva is found on the right or left side of the Orthodox spectrum, all Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs that the author is familiar with, accept, and to one degree or another, distribute these textbooks to their students. In Yeshivos that pride themselves as being authentic repositories of the mesorah without any taint of foreign influence, textbooks produced by companies with names such as MacMillan, Prentice Hall, Barron's, and others can be found in cubbies and lockers of all their classrooms.

Different schools and teachers utilize the books differently, but they are certainly used. Since these books follow the state curriculum very closely, many teachers opt to use these books as their primary teaching vehicles. Students are told to use these books when practicing for tests (especially for state tests) and these books are used as teaching aids when pictures are needed for demonstrative purposes. Moreover, as these books cover the entire state-mandated curriculum in a logical and coherent fashion, many teachers opt to use and require their students to read sections of the book either as their primary source of information or for review of materials already taught. Thus, not only do these yeshivos use the textbooks, they essentially shape the way the material is taught and remembered by their young and vulnerable student body.

Yes, despite the inherent spiritual dangers to our precocious talmidim and talmidos nestled in these books, Yeshivos of all spectra have consistently bought and used these books in their classrooms. Moreover, despite the vociferous protests of many Gedolim throughout the years to remove these problematic books and curriculum and replace them with Torah sensitive and Torah positive textbooks and curriculums, Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs continuously purchase these books. Why? How can it be that Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs who are committed to the chinuch of our children, would allow these books in our classrooms? One answer is that they are free. Under the State's generous NYSTL (New York State Textbook Law) program (and other supplementary aid programs), Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs are allowed to purchase free, pre-approved, books and educational materials for their schools. Facing already severe and mounting financial pressures, Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs of all stripes and colors have in the past felt compelled under the circumstances to purchase these books and have them brought into their classrooms despite the spiritual menace they pose. To list the halachic and hashkafic issues found in many of the topics taught and promulgated by these textbooks are beyond the scope of this article. However, suffice it to say that the list is quite extensive and deeply problematic for the Torah true Jew.

Continued on Page 27

In view of the recent worldwide crises regarding threats to authentic Torah chinuch, is this then not something that ought to be explored by our community? Is this not an opportune time to examine options other than using these free textbooks, to cover the States curricular demands while at the same time teaching the curriculum in a Torah sensitive way?

Isn't this an opportune time to petition our mosdos hachinuch that they only use kosher textbooks even if it is costlier and may not be NYSTL approved? Isn't

this an opportune time to plead that our science books proudly make a Kiddush Hashem by proclaiming that Hashem is the Creator and Continuous Master of the world?

Isn't it about time that our social studies textbooks proudly proclaim our values and our views on history while teaching the curriculum? Isn't it an opportune time for new authors who are familiar with the topics at hand to write new textbooks and Torah based curriculum?

And finally, isn't this an opportune time to insist that our mosdos Hatorah hire only Torah-true gener-

al studies teachers who can teach the general studies materials in a kosher and Torah positive light?

How can it be otherwise?.

Rabbi Moshe Brody is a Chaver Bais din on Bais Din Bitzedek Tishpoit and is also the director of the Limudai Yisroel Institute for General studies, a not for profit dedicated to a more Torah based general studies in Yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs. He can be reached at info@limudaiyisroel.org

Are you a general studies teacher or principal who has developed an academically enhanced curriculum that maintains our halachic and hashkafic standards?

Have you put in effort so that your students learn general studies with the proper Torah worldview?

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בחרנו את הטובים ביותר



AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE

Divrei Torah
for everyone
to share

"DIVREI TORAH ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM"

“For on this day He shall effect atonement for you to cleanse you. Before Hashem, you shall be cleansed from all your sins” (16:30)

In the final Mishna of Maseches Yoma, R' Akiva says: “You, the Jewish people, are praiseworthy! Before whom are you purified? Who purifies you? Your Father in heaven!” This idea is supported by two pesukim. One is a posuk from Yechezkel in which Hashem says “I will sprinkle waters of purification on you and you will become pure.” The second posuk, from Yirmiyah, says “Hashem is the hope (mikveh) of Yisrael.” Playing on the word “mikveh,” Chazal say that just as a mikveh purifies those who are impure, Hashem purifies the Jewish people.

R' Ovadiah Yosef comments on the significance of the comparison between Hashem and a mikveh. A person must be completely immersed in a mikveh to become purified. Even if one finger or hair is outside of the water, the person remains in the status quo. Similarly, for a person to take advantage of the spiritual purification that Hashem offers us, he must be fully committed to every part of the Torah. One cannot choose to ignore certain aspects of the Torah's commandments. It requires complete and total commitment to all 613 mitzvos.

Why are two pesukim necessary to support R' Akiva's statement? There are two stages to spiritual purification. As Chazal teach, Hashem asks us to open up a small opening like the eye of a needle and then he will expand it to the size of a large entryway.

This means that if we take the first small step toward Hashem, He will ease the way for us to complete the task.

Similarly, for a person to take advantage of the spiritual purification that Hashem offers us, he must be fully committed to every part of the Torah. One cannot choose to ignore certain aspects of the Torah's commandments. It requires complete and total commitment to all 613 mitzvos.

The two pesukim mentioned in the Mishna hint to this idea. If we begin small like the waters of purification from the parah adumah,

which entailed sprinkling drops of water on a person, then Hashem will expand our opportunities to do teshuva, like the mikveh which contains 40 se'ah, a much greater amount of water.

“Speak to the entire congregation of the Children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy” (19:2)

The Chofetz Chaim opens the introduction to his sefer as follows: “Blessed is Hashem, G-d of Yisrael, who separated us from all the nations, gave us his Torah and brought us to the Holy Land so that we can merit to fulfill all of his mitzvos. His entire intent is for our benefit, so that through this we can become holy, as it is written: ‘In order that you remember and fulfill all my commandments and be holy to your G-d.’”

The Chofetz Chaim states clearly that the way to achieve holiness is by fulfilling the mitzvos. Eretz Yisrael is special to us because that is where we can fulfill all of the mitzvos, whereby we can access greater holiness. We mention this is the blessing that we recite before performing a mitzvah, thanking Hashem “who sanctified us through His commandments.” Observing the laws of the Torah is the path to holiness.

Rashi notes that the commandment to “be holy” was addressed to “the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael,” indicating that it was delivered before a full assembly of the people. This would have included men, women and children.

It is worth emphasizing that women were included in this commandment.

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The Torah holds the women in the same esteem that it holds men, considering all people to be capable of holiness regardless of gender. Rav Moshe Feinstein penned a responsa in 1976 on the subject of the women's liberation movement (Orach Chaim 4:49) in which he wrote: "One must know that [the different level of mitzvah obligation between men and women]

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is not because women are at a lower level of holiness than men. As far as holiness is concerned, they are equal to men with regard to the obligation in mitzvos in general, which stems from the holiness in Yisrael. Women were also commanded regarding all the verses with directives to be holy, whether the introductory conditions before the giving of the Torah... or the command "you shall be holy" in Parshas Kedoshim... and all places that you find the topic of the holiness of Yisrael. That is why women also recite blessings with 'who sanctified us through His commandments' even for mitzvos in which the Torah did not obligate them." (The interested reader is directed to read the rest of the responsa for the conclusion.)

It is also important to note that this obligation was directed to children as well. Even when they are not yet old enough to be obligated in mitzvos, it is important for children to understand what will be expected of them as adults and to give them a goal to which they can aspire.

"When you slaughter a peace offering to Hashem, you shall slaughter it willingly" (19:5)

Why does the Torah command the person who brings a korban to do so willingly? Chizkuni explains the Torah's command as follows: "Put your feeling in it and do not begrudge what you are offering to Hashem. There are people who are not motivated to bring sacrifices from the heart,

but only do so because they see their friends doing it and would be embarrassed if they did not also do so."

When we do a mitzvah, we should do it because we appreciate it and want to do it, not just because everyone else is doing it. If one does mitzvos because of peer pressure, he does not reach the level that he is meant to attain through the mitzvah. While peer pressure can be useful, the goal is to use it as motivation to do the right thing of our own accord.

And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to Hashem" (19:24)

The Gemara on Berachos 35a cites this posuk as the basis for the Rabbinic obligation to recite blessings before and after eating food.

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This posuk uses the plural form of "hilulim" to indicate that there are two praises to be said when eating, both before and after.

It is interesting to note that the Gemara there assumes that if there was only a source for one bracha on food in the Torah, the one required bracha would be after eating, not before. This is because the one bracha m'di'Oraysa, Birchas HaMazon, is recited after eating. It is important for us to realize that the bracha after eating may be even more important than the bracha before. That is indeed the primary bracha, though we commonly think that the opposite is true. In fact, when Chazal tell us how Avraham Avinu taught people to recognize Hashem, they teach that Avraham instructed his guests to thank Hashem after they ate. We must be sure to give the beracha after eating its due.

On Berachos 35b, Chazal cite the posuk in Mishlei (28:24) which says: "He who robs his father or his mother and says, 'This is not a sin,'

We must wake up from sleepwalking through life and become productive individuals before we become advanced in years and it becomes difficult to change our ways.

"Mipnei" also sometimes means "because of." The posuk would then read: is the companion of a destroyer." This posuk is a reference to those who eat without a bracha. Such a person steals from Hashem (his "father"), who is not acknowledged, and from the Jewish people (his "mother"), because the produce of the entire nation will suffer when Hashem is not thanked. Such a person is a "companion of a destroyer," a reference to Yaravam ben Nevat, who destroyed the Jewish people's relationship with their Father in heaven.

Why is a person who neglects to recite a bracha considered to have led others astray? Rashi says that when one is lax about reciting brachos, others take note and learn from him to do the same. The awareness that our behavior, through both action and inaction, impacts others should give us the motivation to pay attention to how we act at all times.

"And in the fifth year, you may eat its fruit; to increase its produce for you. I am Hashem, your G-d" (19:25)

Rashi comments on the Torah's promise that observance of the mitzvah of orlah will result in an increase in the land's productivity. The Torah attempts to counter the arguments of the yetzer hara, who whispers in our ear that we will be wasting four years of fruits by keeping this mitzvah.

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To help us fight against this argument, the Torah promises that we will be rewarded in the long run for keeping this mitzvos at the beginning of the tree's existence.

This is not the only place in the Torah where Hashem takes the temptation of the yetzer hara into consideration. Hashem provides ammunition for us to use against yetzer hara so that we never feel as if we are losing out by observing a mitzvah. Also, this should remind us that Hashem has given us the power to control our temptations. A person should never feel that he cannot control himself, because Hashem, who gave us a yetzer hara, also gave us the ability and wherewithal to overcome it.

ספירת העומר תשע"ח

SEFIRAS HA'OMER CALENDAR

חסד שבחסד	היום יום אחד בעומר:	Sat. eve. March 31
גבורה שבחסד	היום שני ימים בעומר:	Sun. eve. April 1
תפארת שבחסד	היום שלשה ימים בעומר:	Mon. eve. April 2
נצח שבחסד	היום ארבעה ימים בעומר:	Tue. eve. April 3
הוד שבחסד	היום חמשה ימים בעומר:	Wed. eve. April 4
יסוד שבחסד	היום ששה ימים בעומר:	Thur. eve. April 5
מלכות שבחסד	היום שבעה ימים שהם שבוע אחד בעומר:	Fri. eve. April 6
חסד שבגבורה	היום שמונה ימים	Sat. eve. April 7
	שהם שבוע אחד ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שבגבורה	היום תשעה ימים	Sun. eve. April 8
	שהם שבוע אחד ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שבגבורה	היום עשרה ימים	Mon. eve. April 9
	שהם שבוע אחד ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שבגבורה	היום אחד עשר יום	Tue. eve. April 10
	שהם שבוע אחד וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
הוד שבגבורה	היום שנים עשר יום	Wed. eve. April 11
	שהם שבוע אחד וחמשה ימים בעומר:	
יסוד שבגבורה	היום שלשה עשר יום	Thur. eve. April 12
	שהם שבוע אחד וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שבגבורה	היום ארבעה עשר יום שהם שני שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. April 13
חסד שבתפארת	היום חמשה עשר יום	Sat. eve. April 14
	שהם שני שבועות ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שבתפארת	היום ששה עשר יום	Sun. eve. April 15
	שהם שני שבועות ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שבתפארת	היום שבעה עשר יום	Mon. eve. April 16
	שהם שני שבועות ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שבתפארת	היום שמונה עשר יום	Tue. eve. April 17
	שהם שני שבועות וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
הוד שבתפארת	היום תשעה עשר יום	Wed. eve. April 18
	שהם שני שבועות וחמשה ימים בעומר:	
יסוד שבתפארת	היום עשרים יום	Thur. eve. April 19
	שהם שני שבועות וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שבתפארת	היום אחד ועשרים יום שהם שלשה שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. April 20
חסד שבנצח	היום שנים ועשרים יום	Sat. eve. April 21
	שהם שלשה שבועות ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שבנצח	היום שלשה ועשרים יום	Sun. eve. April 22
	שהם שלשה שבועות ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שבנצח	היום ארבעה ועשרים יום	Mon. eve. April 23
	שהם שלשה שבועות ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שבנצח	היום חמשה ועשרים יום	Tue. eve. April 24
	שהם שלשה שבועות וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
הוד שבנצח	היום ששה ועשרים יום	Wed. eve. April 25
	שהם שלשה שבועות וחמשה ימים בעומר:	

יסוד שבנצח	היום שבעה ועשרים יום	Thur. eve. April 26
	שהם שלשה שבועות וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שבנצח	היום שמונה ועשרים יום שהם ארבעה שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. April 27
חסד שבהוד	היום תשעה ועשרים יום	Sat. eve. April 28
	שהם ארבעה שבועות ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שבהוד	היום שלשים יום	Sun. eve. April 29
	שהם ארבעה שבועות ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שבהוד	היום אחד ושלשים יום	Mon. eve. April 30
	שהם ארבעה שבועות ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שבהוד	היום שנים ושלשים יום	Tue. eve. May 1
	שהם ארבעה שבועות וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
	ל"ג בעומר	
הוד שבהוד	היום שלשה ושלשים יום	Wed. eve. May 2
	שהם ארבעה שבועות וחמשה ימים בעומר:	
יסוד שבהוד	היום ארבעה ושלשים יום	Thur. eve. May 3
	שהם ארבעה שבועות וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שבהוד	היום חמשה ושלשים יום שהם חמשה שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. May 4
חסד שביסוד	היום ששה ושלשים יום	Sat. eve. May 5
	שהם חמשה שבועות ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שביסוד	היום שבעה ושלשים יום	Sun. eve. May 6
	שהם חמשה שבועות ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שביסוד	היום שמונה ושלשים יום	Mon. eve. May 7
	שהם חמשה שבועות ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שביסוד	היום תשעה ושלשים יום	Tue. eve. May 8
	שהם חמשה שבועות וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
הוד שביסוד	היום ארבעים יום	Wed. eve. May 9
	שהם חמשה שבועות וחמשה ימים בעומר:	
יסוד שביסוד	היום אחד וארבעים יום	Thur. eve. May 10
	שהם חמשה שבועות וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שביסוד	היום שנים וארבעים יום שהם ששה שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. May 11
חסד שבמלכות	היום שלשה וארבעים יום	Sat. eve. May 12
	שהם ששה שבועות ויום אחד בעומר:	
גבורה שבמלכות	היום ארבעה וארבעים יום	Sun. eve. May 13
	שהם ששה שבועות ושני ימים בעומר:	
תפארת שבמלכות	היום חמשה וארבעים יום	Mon. eve. May 14
	שהם ששה שבועות ושלשה ימים בעומר:	
נצח שבמלכות	היום ששה וארבעים יום	Tue. eve. May 15
	שהם ששה שבועות וארבעה ימים בעומר:	
הוד שבמלכות	היום שבעה וארבעים יום	Wed. eve. May 16
	שהם ששה שבועות וחמשה ימים בעומר:	
יסוד שבמלכות	היום שמונה וארבעים יום	Thur. eve. May 17
	שהם ששה שבועות וששה ימים בעומר:	
מלכות שבמלכות	היום תשעה וארבעים יום שהם שבעה שבועות בעומר:	Fri. eve. May 18

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