



PIRCHEI Weekly

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פרשה: משפטים **מפטיר:** במדבר כח-ט טו **הפטרה:** ... השמים כסאי... (ישעיהו סו:א-כד)

דף יומי: בבא קמא ק' משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם **ותן טל ומטר לברכה** ברכי נפשי (שבת מנחה)

מצות תעשה: 23 **מצות לא תעשה:** 30

ב' דראש חודש אדר חצי הלל **אתה יצרת**

משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה

Torah Thoughts

ואם אמר לאמר העבד אהבתי את אדני ... ונרצע אדניו את אדניו במרצע ...
If the servant will say, 'I love my master' ... and the master shall pierce his ear lobe (וי-הי: ר' סיני).

quotes a well-known *מכילתא* to explain why ד' said that the ear should be pierced: אמר רבן יוחנן בן זכאי און זאת ששמעה על הר ... סיני "לא תגנב" והלך ונגנב תרצע *said: This ear that heard at סיני 'You shall not steal,' and he went and stole, let it be pierced;* — ואם מוכר עצמו און ששמעה על הר סיני "כי לי בני ישראל עבדים" והלך וקנה — *and if he sold himself, the ear that heard at סיני 'For the Children of Israel are slaves unto Me,' and he went and acquired a master for himself, let it be pierced."*

There are only two possible reasons for a Jew to become an *עבד עברי*, a *Jewish manservant*: if a person was extremely poor and needed money, he would sell himself to get some cash, or if the person stole an item and was penniless and could not return the original stolen object, *בית דין* would sell him as a slave to raise the money to pay back the person from whom he stole.

In the case of the poor person who sold himself, we pierce the ear to remind him about what he heard at סיני. The ear heard כי *Because the children of ישראל are servants to Me.* ד' לי בני ישראל עבדים wants כי בני ישראל to be His servants and not servants of others. We pierce the ear of the poor man who stole an item and was unable to repay, to remind him of what he heard on סיני. The ear heard לא *You shall not steal,* and this man stole.

The question is, why is the piercing done *after* the *עבד עברי* has finished his term of service? Why are we piercing his ear to remind him about why he was originally sold?

Both cases involve a poor man. One man sold himself to get money; the other simply could not resist the temptation and, in a very desperate moment, stole in order to obtain what he needed. We can understand such a person's pain and what he must have been going through.

As an *עבד עברי*, a person has a lower spiritual status than any Jew. Everything around him during the period he is an *עבד* reminds him that he must change his ways and do *תשובה*. When such individuals leave after their term of service has ended, ד' does not want them to suffer anymore and have an everlasting memory of the event. However, if after six years of service, an individual shows no regret about his unfortunate situation and he is happy with his circumstances, if he can say, "I love my master, I love my maidservant wife and her children", then he clearly is showing that he does not have regret for his misdeed. He does not understand the lesson and has obviously missed the message of the last six years. In this case, we have to pierce his ear to remind him of what he heard with his ear at סיני, *You shall not steal* or *For the children of ישראל are servants to Me*, and that being a servant is a lower spiritual level.

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

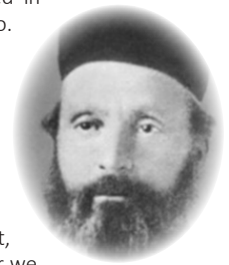


Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

7 אדר א' R' Eliezer (also known as Laizer) זצ"ל was born in Chernian, 5601 - 5670 Lithuania, to אברהם שמואל ר' Gordon, a תלמיד of R' Chaim 1841 - 1910 of Volozhin זצ"ל. He learned at R' Yisrael Salanter זצ"ל's ישיבה in Kovno with R' Yitzchak Blazer זצ"ל, R' Simcha Ziv זצ"ל, and R' Naftali Amsterdam זצ"ל. He first served as a רב in Kovno for 3 months, before becoming the רב of Kelm, where he opened a ישיבה. Then he went to Slabodka for 6 months, and then to Telshe, to become the רב and ראש ישיבה. In 1897, he hired R' Leib Chasman as משגיח to help combat the influence of the השפלה. After a fire destroyed the Telshe ישיבה, R' Laizer went to London on a fund-raising mission and was נפטר there. He was buried in the Edmonton Federation Cemetery in London.

Gedolim Glimpses

As a youngster, ר' אליעזר גורדון זצ"ל learned in the ישיבה of זצ"ל in Kovno. Recognizing that ר' גורדון had the inborn traits of a ראש ישיבה, ר' זצ"ל trained him for this position and appointed גורדון as a מגיד שיעור in the ישיבה. Interestingly, twice גורדון was offered the position as רב of a prestigious city while he was learning and being supported by his father-in-law, but his father-in-law refused to let גורדון accept, explaining to his family, "Who knows whether we are sustaining גורדון with our money, or he is supporting us with his תורה?"



לעיני בני ישראל בן אברהם ז"ל

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אחינו כל בית ישראל, הגתוגים בערה ובשביה, העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה, המקום ירחם עליהם ויזיאתם מערה לרחה, ומאפלה לאורה, ומשעבוד לגאולה, השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב, ונאמר אמון:

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An Orphan's Pain

... אֶלְמֵנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תַעֲנוּן (שְׁמוֹת כ"ב: כ"א)

You shall not persecute any widow or orphan.

One tear. Who can imagine the power and influence of a tear shed by a poor widow, grieving over her loss, which is magnified every time she senses the feelings of helplessness and loneliness that have now become her partners? The same feelings are felt by a young יָתוֹם who has no parents with which to share both pleasant and sad daily stories. די tenderly watches over these and other lonely individuals. He becomes their partner and grants them and their caregivers a special level of דְּשִׁמְיָהּ.

It was a very difficult time for the *Rebbetzin*. Her husband, R' Yosef Dov *HaLevi* Soloveitchik (R' Berel), revered ראש ישיבה of Yeshivas Brisk in ירושלים, was seriously ill. The *Rebbetzin* did everything she could to make sure R' Berel was as comfortable as possible. Every few minutes, she came to her husband's bedside to see if he needed anything.

One day, R' Berel told his wife, "R' Yosef Loibler is not here."

Thinking that she had not heard correctly, the *Rebbetzin* asked her husband to repeat what he had said. "R' Yosef Loibler is not here," he repeated. The *Rebbetzin* did not understand.

The next day, R' Berel Soloveitchik, one of the great גְּאוּנִים of the generation, passed away. During the week of שְׁבֻעָה, the *Rebbetzin* repeated her husband's strange words to his illustrious brother, R' Dovid (himself a revered ראש ישיבה). R' Dovid nodded his head knowingly. He explained:

He and R' Berel were great-grandsons of R' Yosef Dov *HaLevi* Soloveitchik (R' Yoshe Ber), author of בית הלוי, R' Berel's namesake.

As a youngster, Yoshe Ber came home from ישיבה one day and declared, "I cannot learn תורה by this רבני any longer!" He explained that the רבני had tested the boys on their studies in class that morning and had offered a prize for the one who offered the

most correct answers. Two boys had been tied for first place. One boy's father was a wealthy member of the town's Jewish community; the other boy was an orphan – he had no father. The רבני awarded the prize to the rich man's son.

Yoshe Ber became emotional as he asked his father, "How can I study תורה from a person who is not sensitive to the feelings of an orphan?"

While Yoshe Ber's father knew that the רבני had in fact erred, he nevertheless felt that this did not disqualify the רבני as a תורה teacher and it was in his son's best interest to continue studying under that רבני, at least for the time being. That same day, Yoshe Ber's father went and bought a prize, which he brought to the house of the רבני. The next day, the רבני told the class that on the previous day, he had had with him but one prize, and had given it randomly to the other boy. Now, he proudly presented a prize to the orphaned boy as well. Yoshe Ber was somewhat calmed by this and he continued to study under the רבני.

Sometime later, young Yoshe Ber fell seriously ill and lapsed into a coma. While everyone prayed for the boy's recovery, they feared the worst. Miraculously, the boy opened his eyes one morning and improved little by little until he completely recovered.

When he had fully recovered from his illness, he told his father that while he had been unconscious, he had seen the מלאך coming to take his soul. As the angel approached, its path was blocked by R' Yosef Loibler, the deceased father of the orphan boy. "Stop!" R' Yosef Loibler had declared. "Let this boy live! It was he who spoke up for my little boy when his feelings had been so terribly hurt." The מלאך backed off and Yoshe Ber awoke shortly thereafter.

And so, as his great-grandson R' Berel Soloveitchik felt his end drawing near, he had remarked to his wife, that he was not like his great-grandfather; there was no R' Yosef Loibler to ask that he be granted a new lease on life in this world.

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

Focus on Middos

Dear תלמיד,

In 5633/1873 the Russian authorities insisted that all מלמדים, Hebrew teachers, complete an advanced course of secular studies by a certain date. As the deadline neared, some leading reform Jews, known as משכילים, vocally demanded that the decree be officially enforced, and that every הדר whose מלמדים hadn't met the requirements be closed. Since not a single מלמד had enrolled in such a course, it was feared that all of the תדרים in Russia would be shut down.

Although R' Eliezer (Lazer) Gordon גדולי was still a young man at that time, the ישראלי of Lithuania, R' Yitzchok Elchonon Spector זצ"ל, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin זצ"ל and R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik זצ"ל, chose him to represent them before the government. They sent him as

their representative to go to St. Petersburg to try to annul the decree. Like יוסף הצדיק, he found favor in the eyes of the authorities and the משכילים were shocked and bitterly resentful.

Due to his success in this endeavor, the משכילים held their grudge and tried to harass him when he became רב of Kovno after his father-in-law's passing. The משכילים knew that R' Gordon no longer had someone to support him and needed an income. They tried to make him resign by successfully influencing the town council not to pay him for his first three years as רב since his father-in-law, who had been very wealthy, had never taken a salary.

R' Spector, however, was eager to have R' Gordon serve as Kovno's רב. He had his

secretary, R' Yaakov Lipshitz, collect enough money to cover R' Gordon's salary for three years. However, three months later R' Gordon accepted a position as רב of Kelm, because it offered him a greater opportunity to strengthen תורה. Before leaving Kovno, R' Gordon returned all of the money he had received from R' Spector.

My תלמיד, just look at the contrast. Those who are far from תורה live to promote מחלוקת, division, while those who are close to די and His תורה will travel far to be מרבה שלום and will pay money they do not owe, to prevent even a slight possibility of ill feelings!

יהי זכרו ברוך!

בְּיַדְיֹת,

Your רבני

Story adapted: *Yated Ne'eman* (with kind permission)

- The מנל of אדר is דגים, fish. אדר is one of three months for which the מנלות are written in the plural form; the others are the מנלות of תאומים, twins, and מאזניים, scales.
- ספר התודעה explains: חדש אדר can be doubled (as it will be this year), so its מנל is doubled as well (although it can be written in singular form).

מִזְלֵ דְגִים
רֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר

Reviewed by R' Gedalyahu Eckstein

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

