

# עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

**פרשת מצורע**  
ז' ניסן תשס"ה  
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Candle Lighting:	7:17
First קריאת שמע:	8:59
Second קריאת שמע:	9:35
Latest שחרית:	10:42
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דוב בר רב יוסף ע"ה

## THAT'S HOW IT GOES!

Yaakov Chesed Polansky, 12th Grade

We all know how it goes. Purim ends, and it's "stay away from mommy time" - the cleaning for Pesach has begun. It's the time of year when the house gets turned upside down and inside out; made all sparkly clean in time for *sefer* night. The *Seforim HaKedoshim* tell us that the search and burning of *chometz* is not only for the outside, physical *chometz*, but is also on the *chometz* in each and every one of our souls. It's the time to get rid of all the *shmutz* inside of us and prepare for the redemption from the spiritual bondage our souls were trapped in for so many years. If this is the deeper meaning to our destruction of *chometz* before Pesach, we must ponder; why is bread called *chometz*? What bad trait do we find in bread that relates to the *yetzer hara*?

If you examine a piece of bread, you will notice that it's not really what it appears to be. The bread puffs itself up to be this huge fluffy slice while it is really stretching its thin substance. The *matzah* however is true to itself: it gets rid of all the haughtiness and shows the world what it really is. And what it really is, is bread that signifies our change from affliction to redemption when we finally called out to Hashem, and it is what it is without showing off to be more, like the haughty piece of bread.

So if we spend all this time getting rid of *chometz*, over a month - what is the point of *sefiras haomer* which will turn into full swing at the conclusion of Pesach? Each day of the *omer* we are supposed to fix another *midah*, until we finally reach Shavuot when we will have hopefully perfected all our traits. If we did the internal cleaning before Pesach, then what is left for perfecting during *sefiras haomer*?

I would like to present two possible answers. Firstly, *mishnayos Pesachim* teaches us that if you find *chometz* on Pesach, you must cover it and burn it on Chol Hamoed. Furthermore, if you find *chometz* on the *last days* of Pesach, you must burn it even after Pesach. What is the essential purpose

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## WITH A CLIPPED TONGUE

Bencion Klinger, Mesivta Alumnus

This week's *parsha* discusses the atonement process for someone who was afflicted with *tzoraas*. As we know, once the Kohen pronounces a person *tomeih*, he must leave the camp and live in isolation for a period of seven days. It is after that waiting period that he can begin the process brought down in this week's *sedra*. Interestingly enough, the *mishna* in *Maseches Keilim* states that going outside the camp only applies to a *metzora* who lives in a *walled city*. This point certainly needs some clarification.

Firstly, why does a *metzora* have to leave the camp in the first place? The *gemara* in *ט"ז. מסכת ערכין* explains that a person who speaks *lashon hora* causes the person he speaks about to be distanced from his own friends. Therefore it is only befitting as punishment and part of the cleansing process for the *metzora* to be separated from people as well.

If this is so, why is this limited to a walled city? The *Be'er Yosef* brings an interesting answer based on the *gemara* earlier on *טו*, which talks about our tongue. The *gemara* states how Hashem says to the tongue, "of all the body parts, you are the only one that is horizontal and you are inside the body itself, and therefore need protection which is provided by barriers of your body - a resemblance to protective walls. The teeth and lips; all this is needed to guard you from speaking *lashon hora*." This is surely the meaning of the *pasuk* in Tehilim, *מה יתן לך ומה יוסיף לך לשון רמיה וק"ב*, "what more can I give; what more can I add to you, sly tongue?" This explains to us that if a person

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# FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Yaakov Sonnenblick

Reb Chaim Shmulevitz *zt'l*  
The Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva

3 Tishrei 5663 / 1902 - 3 Teves 6739 / January 2, 1979

- Chaim Leib was born in Kovno, Lithuania, on Motzei Rosh Hashanah 5663 (1902) to Reb Refael Alter Shmulevitz and his wife, Ettel, the daughter of Reb Yoseif Yoizel Horowitz, The Alter of Novaradok.

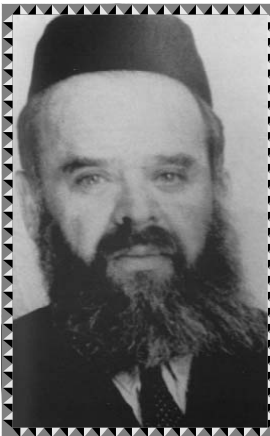
- The great *gadol* Reb Itzele Peterburger (Rav Yitzchok Blazer, one of Rav Yisroel Salanter's greatest Talmidim) served as *sandek* by his Bris, during which he gave the young Chaim a *bracha* that he should grow up to be one of the great leaders in Torah and Mussar.

- Rav Chaim as a young child had an unusually sharp mind. In addition, his memory was so powerful that it was rumored he didn't know the meaning of forgetfulness.

- Unfortunately, Rav Chaim was forced to leave Yeshiva in 5680 (1920), at the age of 16 due to the sudden death of both his parents.

- This great burden of providing for his brother and his two sisters was put on his shoulders and was taken quite seriously; during the day he was busy with commerce and most of his nights he spent toiling in Torah.

- Reb Chaim was known not only as a diligent *masmid*, but also as someone who had learned through the yeshiva's entire library of *sefarim*. Everyone would turn to him when a new *sefer*



entered the yeshiva's walls to hear his opinion and insights.

- qualify equally, but for the task of imbuing students with a true *ahavas Torah*, I did not find anyone who equals the "*iluy* of Stuchin".

- Reb Chaim continued his studies in Mir where the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel chose Reb Chaim as a suitable match for his outstanding daughter.

- With the outbreak of WWII he remained with the Mirrer Yeshivah in its exile to Shanghai. Despite the trying conditions and constant fear and pressure that accompanied the yeshiva, Reb Chaim's dazzling Talmudic Shiurim and Torah Study exceeded that of tranquil times.

- During the years in Shanghai, Reb Chaim was like a father to all the students, many of whom had been orphaned as a result of the war. He himself would bring food and medicine to the ill. He cared for them spiritually and emotionally; teaching them, learning with them, and raising their spirits in every possible way.

- A short while after arriving in Shanghai, Reb Chaim received American visas for himself and his family. He refused them, saying that he would leave only when all the students had received their visas. This ultimately meant staying in Shanghai for over five years.

- Many years after the yeshiva was settled in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Chaim would say about their exile that under these most trying circumstances, forced to flee from one place to another, the yeshivah prospered as never before.

- After the war, he lived for a short period of six months in America, and then moved to Yerushalayim to serve as the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, which he did faithfully until his passing some 32 years later.

- Besides for his audiences, Rav Chaim's Shiurim also dazzled the elite of the Yeshivah world in Eretz Yisroel.

- At the weekly Shabbos table, while his family was eating and conversing, Reb Chaim would sit at the head of the table in his own world, totally engrossed in Torah thoughts.

- To Reb Chaim, every moment was precious. At a young age, he had mastered control of his sleeping requirements and very often spent entire nights engrossed in learning, only to continue his regular schedule the following day.

- Reb Chaim once told his wife, "I'm going to daven, and then I must vote early, before I return home." "You're in such a rush," she commented,

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entered the yeshiva's walls to hear his opinion and insights.

- When Harav Shimon Shkop *zt'l*, Rosh Yeshivah of the Yeshiva in Grodno, found out about the dire situation, he was bewildered that a student of Rav Chaim's ability was in the workforce instead of yeshivah. He immediately made arrangements for the orphans, and invited Rav Chaim to join his Yeshiva in Grodno. [The Grodno Yeshiva is today located in Queens, NY, under the title 'Shaar HaTorah']

- After three short years, young Rav Chaim was appointed to a lecturing post in the Yeshiva. When Rav Shimon was asked if he couldn't find anyone as suitable as Rav Chaim for the position, he replied "Indeed there are many others who would

BENCION KLINGER (continued from page 1)

speaks *loshon hora*, they are letting their tongue breach the walls of their mouth by allowing it to run loose. It is therefore *midah kineged midah* that a person who gets *tzaraas* from speaking *loshon hora* has to leave the security and comfort and protection of their own walls to go forth and cleanse himself.

The majority of today's world doesn't live in walled cities that surround and protect us. Even today the spiritual and invisible borders that shelter us barely seem to exist. We must therefore remember to guard one of the greatest merits we have – our lips and teeth which are our *own* internal wall to protect us from evil. Rabbi Paysach Krohn says that one reason why we have two eyes and one mouth is so we should look at something twice and think of the consequences before speaking even once. May we truly utilize this message, and one day very soon be back under the protection of the walls of Yerushalayim, speedily in our day, *bimheirah biyameinu amen*.

**Mazal Tov to OFR TZADOK of the 10th Grade upon his recent *Siyum* on *Masechtas Brachos*!**

YAAKOV CHESED POLANSKY (continued from page 1)

of this? We just did a "spring cleaning" on our souls. Any human being is likely to find himself in the position of not being totally flawless, as we see by the "sins" of our forefathers. The *halacha* is showing us that there is always time for change, and we must never miss the opportunity to make ourselves better. If we don't totally achieve this today, we mustn't give up hope – there's always tomorrow to continue growing. As long as Hashem blesses us with life we have the ability to change for the better, but we mustn't wait and wait to change while life simply passes us by.

A second possibility can be the following. My rebbe, Rabbi Baruch Rabinowitz explains that life is like a ladder. When going up a ladder, what do you do? You climb one rung at a time. Patience is a virtue. If you try to jump the rungs to skip a few to the top, you're not simply going to fall down one rung. . . you've just let go and will now fall all the way down. When it comes to Pesach, the only job we have is to burn the *chometz* inside of us. We must get rid of all of the outside influences and focus completely on ourselves. As hard as this sounds, we must burn all the *chometz* that is influencing us in other ways, which will make way for what is holy and true.

After Pesach, once we have accomplished

the mission of ridding ourselves of the bad influences, we will find ourselves in the middle of *sefiras haomer* with Yom Tov long gone. Since we have abolished the evil influences, we will be able to take the remaining good traits and grow with them – step by step. . . day by day. Each day of the *omer* we will focus on another *midah* within ourselves, without rushing things, and if true effort is put we can truly advance since we did a *bedika* on our bad traits by Pesach and are left with only the good traits. When someone rushes things, when he jumps the rungs on the ladder, he's just going to fall. When the time for *sefiras haomer* comes, let us work and toil to be the Jew that we are intended to be.

As Pesach is quickly approaching, let us begin with this message of self improvement, so by the time we come to *sefiras haomer* we will be able use it for its true worth. By getting the most out of the opportunities presented in the greatness of the holiday, we will afterwards be able to fully grow and benefit more from what *sefira* has to offer. Grab the opportunity, and don't let this special *zman* pass you by! Take advantage of life and change now, and we will soon see the results of our great struggles and effort. Good Shabbos!

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

"that you're forgetting how early it is. You'll finish davening, and the polls still won't be open!" She happened to be right.

- In his later years, Reb Chaim gave his famous Mussar Shiurim published today in the *sefer Sichos Mussar*, learnt by thousands weekly to this very day.
- When quoting a source during a shiur or shmuess Reb Chaim would open the Gemara, leaf through the pages and read. Those standing behind him would often notice that the sefer was not even turned to the appropriate page. He knew the text entirely by heart, but in his humility he made it appear as if he were reading.
- A few days after Succos, 5739 (1978), Reb Chaim was rushed to the hospital, and for the next two months, his life hung by a thread. Even during the weeks of semi-consciousness his lips moved, and from time to time he could be heard mumbling *divrei Torah*. Torah Jewry the world over stormed the gates of Heaven pleading for his recovery.
- Rav Chaim was niftar on a Monday night, the third of Teves, 5739 (1979). More than 100,000 people attended his funeral. His name said it all: Chaim Leib - the living lion. He reigned in the Torah world as a lion in his domain, until his very last day.
- A righteous man is considered living even after his death because the living world is still feeling the influence of his words and deeds. He is giving, so he is considered among the living. Such was the greatness of Reb Chaim Shmulevitz *zt'l*.



Reb Chaim *zt'l* at the Kosel

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

One of the *halachos* unique to a *metzora* is that unlike any other person who is *tamei*, a *metzora* must live by himself outside the camp, and must remain isolated, even from other *metzorim*.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks a question on this *halacha*. What is the reason that the *metzora* must live by himself? Obviously *tzaraas* is not a contagious disease. In order to preserve *simchas Yom Tov*, a *Kohen* may not declare a person *tamei* on Yom Tov, and until after Yom Tov the person remains *tahor*. If *tzaraas* were a contagious disease, then *simchas Yom Tov* would not help to prevent the disease from spreading. Why then does the *metzora* have to remain isolated, even from others that share his affliction?

Rav Yaakov answers this question based on central concept regarding the affliction of *tzaraas*. The Torah forbids a person to remove the *tzaraas* affliction. It would seem that a person who has *tzaraas* can easily prevent himself from being declared *tamei* by simply scratching off the skin on which the affliction appears. As such, what is the point of someone becoming afflicted with *tzaraas*? It is like putting a criminal in a jail cell, and not locking the door. The answer is that Hashem will not force a person to do *teshuvah*. Hashem will give someone *tzaraas* as a message that he has to improve, but it is up to the person to choose whether or not to respond to the message. The person can choose to go to the *Kohen*, and start the *teshuvah* process, or he can choose to scratch off the skin and ignore it. We see that the purpose of *tzaraas* is not so much to punish a person, but rather to push him in the direction of *teshuvah*.

We find a similar idea regarding a person who has *tzaraas* on his entire body. Such a person does not become *tamei*, as we presume that one who has been afflicted so virulently will do *teshuvah* of his own accord.

This idea can also be used to answer our original question. Living amongst other people is not a conducive atmosphere for doing *teshuvah*. On the other hand, living by oneself will give a person time to contemplate his sins, and repent for them. Therefore, in order to facilitate the *teshuvah* process, it is beneficial for a *metzora* to remove himself from the environment in which he sinned initially.

We can learn a very important lesson from this idea. It must be our choice to do *teshuvah* and draw closer to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Hashem may send us opportunities, but it is up to us to capitalize on them. May we be *zoche* to see the messages that Hashem is sending us, and return to Hashem with *teshuvah shelaimah*, so that we may be *zocheh* to the coming of *Moshiach*, *bi'mihayra bi'yameinu, amen*.



Rav Yaakov speaking in Eretz Yisroel on behalf of Chinuch Atzmai. On the left is Rav Yechezkel Abramsky and the Sadigerer Rebbe.

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once overheard a person in shul reciting the tefillos so rapidly that the words were unintelligible. He approached the man and mumbled some meaningless sounds. The person was puzzled and asked Reb Levi Yitzchak to repeat what he said. Again, Reb Levi Yitzchak mumbled some nonsensical syllables.

"I'm sorry," the man said, "but I have no idea what you're trying to tell me."

Reb Levi Yitzchak replied, "But that is exactly how you are reciting your davening! You run the words together so rapidly that they are unintelligible. You should speak clearly to Hashem just as you wish me to speak clearly to you."

The man responded, "But Rebbe, when a child cries out to his Father, He is able to discern the needs of the child and will help him any way He can!"

Reb Levi Yitzchak was exited by this answer, and replied to the man, "Your entire existence would be worthwhile for this *limud zechus* alone. What a wonderful defense for all those who unfortunately don't daven properly!"

Reb Sholom Schwadron zt"l adds that this is so when an infant lies in his crib and cries out to his Father. However, when an adult is still unable to produce coherent speech and mutters unintelligibly, that's a terrible tragedy.

Rabbi Baruch Rabinowitz adds a *limud zechus*, that maybe due to our suffering in *galus* we don't know how to daven like adults; but are we really crying?

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