

## Echoes of the Ages

Rav Moshe Feinstein was legendary for never refusing requests for help. A woman once came to his door, asking to speak to the Godol. When told that he was busy, the woman adamantly replied that she needed Rav Moshe to translate a letter she had received from her sister in Russia. The man at the door was stunned; "the Rosh Yeshiva cannot be bothered with such things!". "What do you mean?", retorted the woman, "he has been translating my letters for twenty years!".

**Extracted from the book *Reb Moshe* by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman.**

At the funeral of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's wife, Rav Auerbach testified that "it is customary to ask forgiveness from the deceased. However I have *nothing* to ask your forgiveness for. During our marriage, neither of us did *anything* that would require the other's forgiveness. We both led our lives according to the Shulchan Oruch". What a man and what a marriage!

**Adapted from Hanoch Teller.**

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*Editorial Team:*

*Technical Editor:*  
*Contributors:*

*Reviewed By:*

*Under the direction of:*

Yisroel Greenberg  
Shane Lefkowitz  
Yedidya Livingstone

Eli Coten  
Moishy Wieder  
Rabbi P Gerber

Mr K Davis

Rabbi D Meyer

As a young bochur of only 16, Rav Moshe Schwab (future Mashgiach of Gateshead yeshiva) arrived in Kamenitz to attend its renowned yeshiva. Dining at a private home where a group of yeshiva boys ate their meals an accident occurred. Tea was being served and Moshe accidentally spilled his glass of the boiling Russian beverage over the trousers of the boy next to him. The victim calmly rubbed his hands on his knee and asked the lady of the house, "please, would you pour my friend another glass of tea?". Moshe was deeply impressed with this superhuman expression of self-control. In no small part, this was due to the influence of the Kaminetzer Rosh yeshiva, Rav Baruch Ber Lebowitz. A Godol known for his humility and total submissiveness toward his Rebbe, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk, he surely spurred his Talmidim to dizzying heights of self-discipline.

**Extracted from a Jewish Observer article.**



## Gratitude Above All Others

The Gemara says in the name of ר' שמעון בר יוחי "from the day the world was created there was not a person who gave thanks to the *הקב"ה*, until *לאה* came and gave thanks, as the *פסוק* says, "הפעם אודה". Rav Shimon Schwab asks how can this be? Is it that *אברהם* never gave thanks to the *הקב"ה* for the *חסד* bestowed upon them?! The Gemara must therefore be that *לאה* gave a 'new type of thanks' to the *הקב"ה* which had never been seen before.

Rav Schwab answers with two approaches which give an inspiring lesson. First, we can answer that this 'thanks' which *לאה* gave was an 'original' because she doesn't even mention the thing for which she is giving thanks! She just says in a vague manner, *הפעם אודה* - "I will give thanks to *ה'*". She is saying the very fact that she has received something from the *הקב"ה*, the *מלך מלכי המלכים* is itself worthy of thanks irrelevant of what the actual gift is. This is the *חידוש* of her *הודאה* - that previously no one had given thanks with such utter unawareness of the gift they are thanking for.

We can also answer as follows. If we look at the births of *ראובן*, which precede the birth of *יהודה* we can see a fundamental difference in the reasons behind their naming. *לאה* names the first 3 sons after a prayer for future success. For example, she names *ראובן* because "אתה יאהבני אישי" - my husband will love me". Similarly with *לוי*, she says "הפעם ילוח אישי אלי" - again another hope that she will find favour in the eyes of *יעקב*. However, despite these *תפלות*, we see that *לאה* wasn't answered and still remained the 'secondary' wife to *רחל*.

This is the thanking which *לאה* gives now. She says *הפעם אודה* - "I will give thanks to *ה'*" - in whichever situation I will thank the *הקב"ה*, whether my requests are listened to or not. This is the type of *הודאה* which had never been given before, a *הודאה* on things which had not even been granted. This is what we must take from *לאה*, being satisfied and grateful for all that the *הקב"ה* has granted us.

**By Moishy Wieder**

## How Many Days in Seven Years?

יעקב ברחל שבע שנים ויהיו בעיניו כימים אחדים באהבתו אתה - בראשית ט:כ

Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him a few days because of his love for her - *Bereshis 29:20*

Immediately, this פסוק seems to scream out a question: surely if someone desires something greatly, a few days seem like forever. How then can the Torah state the exact opposite, that to יעקב אבינו seven years felt like just a few days?

The Dubno Maggid sheds some light on this problem. The love that יעקב had for רחל was not the kind associated with this saying. He explains that there are two types of desire that motivate a person. The first is called חפץ. This is where the person wants something right here and now, the sooner the better. The second is חשק, where the individual plans out for the future, taking everything into account. It is therefore understandable also that חפץ will benefit most in the short-term and חשק in the long-term.

This is why to יעקב אבינו seven years seemed like a few days: his love for רחל was fuelled by both aspects, חפץ as well as חשק, and we can now understand the פסוק.

An alternative פת is given by the ספורנו. He explains that the reason why seven years seemed like a few days to יעקב אבינו is because he saw this long period of time as a small price to pay for the spiritual qualities and potential in building כלל that ישראל possessed.

A slightly more complicated פת is given by the Maharil Diskin. He quotes the מרדכי דף ב, who states that a couple should not spend too much time together before the marriage as they may discover faults in each other which חס ושלום could affect their love for one another. Rather they should spend less time together before the marriage and then afterwards get to know each other as best as possible, since they would no longer see any faults in such a negative way.

However, in the case of יעקב אבינו, he spent seven years in לבנו's house with רחל before reaching their original wedding date and they did not find any fault in each other. The two of them were pure and free of any shortcomings and thus the seven years seemed to יעקב like "a few days", i.e. the time had the same effect on their relationship like a few days would have on an average couple.

By Shane Lefkowitz

### Riddle of the Week

When two foods are separate, one is כשר and the other one is טרף, but when you mix them the כשר one becomes טרף and the טרף one becomes כשר. What are the two foods?

Answer to last week's riddle: In שבת on נשמת we say אלפי אלפים

## ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשותיו וישם אותה מצבא ויצוק שמו

### על ראשה - בראשית כח: יח

We see here יעקב אבינו took the stone which had been at his head and set it up as a מצבא.

The ספר תכלת מרדכי asks why does the פסוק emphasise that the same stone that he was lying on was used as a מצבא. Surely any stone could have been used for this purpose?

The Gemora in מסכת עבודה זרה דף: ח מה says that every mountain and hilltop in ארץ ישראל was used for עבודה זרה. The מדרש tells us that these stones came from הר המוריה which is in ארץ ישראל. If so how could they be used for a מצבא since once they have been used for עבודה זרה they are פסול for a מצבא.

The answer is that we know that Hashem never makes a miracle with something that is טמא. Since a miracle occurred with these stones יעקב's head as רש"י says that all

twelve stones turned into one we can be certain that these stones were not used for ע"ז. Therefore they were allowed to be used for a מצבא.

The מדרש ספר תפלת says with this introduction we can understand the פסוק in the אשר את האבן אשר שם מראשותיו. He took the stones that he had placed at his head and a miracle had occurred with them and he was sure that they had not been used for עבודה זרה and built a מצבא with them.

By Rabbi P Gerber

### Quote of the Week

"There is no hell in the next world; Hashem will take the sun out of its sheath - the righteous will be healed by it and the wicked judged" - *Gemara Nedorim*

### Halocho Insights: Mezuzah

There is a halachic obligation to have a mezuzah on every doorway in a property that you own (with the exception of bathrooms, storage cupboards etc). However, there is a requirement to send your mezuzahs to a qualified *sofer* twice every 7 years to check for the effects of warping, dampness, heat, paint or any of the other factors that can invalidate a mezuzah. Mezuzahs outside are exposed to harsher conditions and so should be checked more often. But what if there is no available *sofer*, or it is not practical to send off all your mezuzahs?

Assuming the mezuzah was originally bought from a reputable, qualified *sofer*, it is enough for anyone who can read Hebrew and is familiar with the layout of a mezuzah (i.e. the paragraphs) to read it over and check that none of the letters are obviously deformed. Queries about specific letters should be referred to an appropriate authority. If possible, it is still better to send your mezuzahs to a *sofer* to be checked.