

PARSHAS YISRO

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת יתרו - שבת מברכים ר"ח אדר א'
February 1, 2024 / כ"ב שבט תשפ"ד



What's happening in Belz

Yahrzeit of Maran Reb Yehoshua of Belz zt"l - Friday, כ"ג שבט

Maran Rebbe Yehoshua Rokeach zt"l was the youngest son of the first Belzer Rebbe, the Sar Shalom of Belz zt"l. Though it was common in that era to anoint a close disciple to take over the Rabbinic leadership after a Rebbe's passing, it was a new concept of hereditary rabbinical positioning to have a son assume the mantle after his father.

Several days after Rebbe Shalom's passing, he appeared before his eldest son, Reb Eluzer zt"l, while he was praying in the Grand Belz Shul and confirmed that it was his wish that he should be succeeded by none other than his youngest son!

Although the Sar Shalom would travel to other Rebbes to learn from their Chassidic paths, his son Rebbe Yehoshua would say, "My father was my only Mentor, and he taught me everything and revealed all that will happen to me until I pass on. He never told me to travel to other Rebbes; therefore, I don't."

Maran Rebbe Yehoshua, known as the Mittlerer Rav, was from the leading Rabbanim who combated the "Maskilim" - the enlightenment movement at the time. Together with Hagaon Rebbe Shimon Sofer zt"l, the Krakow Rav, they established the "Machzikei Hadas" organization to fight the maskilim and established "Kol Machzikei Hadas" -

a religious newspaper to combat the rebellious papers.

The head of the Maskilim met in Lemberg with leading Rabbanim, with Rebbe Yehoshua presiding. The Maskilim proposed a treaty saying that the Maskilim and Chassidim should agree on a 'middle way approach to Yiddishkeit' since there's no 'side route' to Yiddishkeit; either to be removed entirely from Torah or completely adhere to the ways of Chassidus.

Rebbe Yehoshua told the head of the Maskilim to come to the window and describe what he saw outside. He answered, "I see people walking on the sidewalks and horses in the middle of the road." Rebbe Yehoshua replied with a smile: "Yes, yes! You said well. Only horses go the middle way!"

He Saw Eliyahu Hanavi at the Seder.

As a young child, during a Pesach Seder, Maran Rebbe Yehoshua once cried bitterly, and no one could calm him down. His father, Maran the Sar Shalom zt"l, took his son on his lap and asked why he was crying. Rebbe Yehoshua said because he napped during the saying of "שפור המתך" and no one woke him to see Eliyahu Hanavi. Rebbe Shalom calmed his young son by repeating שפור המתך, and the child stopped crying.

I Also Want Such a Son

A Yid came with his blind son to Maran Rebbe Yehoshua zt"l and asked that the Rebbe heal

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Yahrzeit of Maran Reb Yehoshua of Belz zt"l – continued

his child. Rebbe Yehoshua told him, "Who am I, to be able to heal? I can give you a bracha that Hashem should help and heal your son."

The Yid replied with a story: "I was a brilliant young boy, and my father took me to the first Belzer Rav zt"l to test my knowledge. The Rav was amazed by my brilliance and called Rebbetzin Malka a"h to share how well I knew with her. The Rebbetzin cried that she also wanted such a son! The Rav told her, "Don't worry, you will still have a son that will light up the world. A year later, you, their youngest child, were born; therefore, I am sure you can help my son!"

Reb Yehoshua placed his handkerchief on the child's eyes, and he started seeing again.

Making the Doctor Believe

During his final year, Maran Rebbe Yehoshua underwent surgery in Vienna. Before the surgery, he asked the doctor, a non-religious Jew, if he believed in Hashem. The doctor replied, yes. Rebbe Yehoshua continued asking, "Do you believe in Moshiach?" The doctor responded, "No since it says that Moshiach will be a poor man riding on a donkey, how will a poor person scare all the nations?"

Rebbe Yehoshua lifted his long eyebrows and fixed his holy eyes on the doctor. The doctor became so frightened that the surgical knife dropped from his hand. Rebbe Yehoshua explained to him, "If I, a simple person, can startle you so, then Moshiach will surely cause a scare across the world."

The doctor became a baal teshuvah and escorted the Rebbe by train back to Belz after the surgery.

Midway, Rebbe Yehoshua recited Shema and was niftar. (The doctor merited to be the tenth person in the minyan as the Rebbe's neshama departed this world.)

שבת מברכים - Rosh Chodesh Adar - Friday and Shabbos - February 9 & 10

מזל אדר דגים

There are two months of Adar this year.

The Kedushas Levi zt"l says the reason for two Adar's is that the מזל of Chodesh Adar is fish. No evil eye – עין הרע – befalls fish since they're underwater and can't be seen, and Ayin Hara can only reign on something visible.

Yosef was blessed "וידגו לרוב" – his children will multiply like fish, and Ayin Hara won't reign on them. Therefore, the two months of Adar אשר שני refer to Yosef's two children – Menasha and Efraim.

The Ropshitzer Rav zt"l explains why the month of Adar is compared to fish, as it hints at an overflow of רחמים & חסדים.

- Fish are always in water, and water symbolizes חסדים.
- A fish's eyes are always open "עיני פקיקחא" – Hashem always keeps His 'eyes' open for the Yidden's good.
- The nature of fish is to swallow one another – no other creation has this merciless nature. So, too, Hashem will punish, without mercy, those who harm the Yidden.
- The word דגים equals 57. Just like the two names of Hashem that evoke רחמים. The name "א-ל" equals 31, and the name "הוי-ה" equals 26= together 57.

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Everyone loves a good story, especially a Chassidishe story...

כבד את אביך ואת אמך (יתרו כ:יב)

Honor your father and your mother.

The Yehudi HaKodosh of Pershischa zt"l was delivering a Shiur to his students when he suddenly came upon a difficult question on the Sugya (subject) they were learning. He became very engrossed in his thoughts, grappling with the question and trying to figure out an answer. One of his students, an orphan from his father, was quite hungry, so he figured it could take the Yehudi Hakadosh a while, so he decided to run home to grab a bite between the shiur.

He ran to his mother's home, which was nearby, and quickly ate something to satiate his hunger. When he was done, his mother asked him a favor to climb up to the attic to bring her something. But the bachor (lit. bachelor) excused himself, saying he must return to the Yeshiva before his Rebbe continued the Shiur.

On the way back to Yeshiva, the bachor regretted his actions, thinking, "The whole purpose of learning Torah is to act upon its mitzvahs – commandments. By leaving his mother's request unfulfilled, he just lost an opportunity to honor his mother – one of the Ten Commandments! He spun on his heels and ran back to help his mother, only to return to Yeshiva.

As soon as the bachor entered the room, his teacher awoke from his trance with a huge smile on his face. He asked the bachor, "What mitzvah did you perform? Because I see that the holy Amora Abaya – one of the main Talmud-era

personalities – escorted you back!"

The bachor related that he performed the mitzvah of *אם כיבוד* by helping his mother. The Yehudi Hakodosh explained to his talmidim that Abaya was orphaned from both parents at a very young age. Whenever someone performs the mitzvah of honoring one's father and mother, Abaya descends to this world and escorts the person while performing the mitzvah since he never merited performing the mitzvah.

"Abaya also escorted this bochor and came into the Yeshiva and answered the difficult question on the Sugya that was hard for me to figure out," concluded the Yehudi Hakadosh.

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו (יתרו כ:ה)

Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.

A Yerushalmi merchant used to walk every Shabbos to daven Mussaf at the Kosel Hamarovi. He used to pass the Arabic market, and the Arab vendors who dealt with him during the week would call out the prices to him as he passed.

With time, the Yerushalmi merchant's wheel of fortune turned for the worse. His parnassah dwindled from day to day. The merchant went to Rebbe Shlom'ke Zevilar zt"l and bemoaned his fate, asking for a bracha.

Rebbe Shlom'ke saw with Ruach Hakodosh (divine prophecy) that the Arabs share their prices during Shabbos, and he told the Yerushalmi merchant not to pass the Arab market on Shabbos, there are other routes to the Kosel – and that he will resume being successful. And so it happened.

לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה (יתרו כ:ד)

You shall not make yourself a carved image nor any likeness.

The Bilgorai Rav zt"l related that when he and his

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**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY,
ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY**
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brother Maran Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l arrived in Chalev, Syria, during their escape from Europe, many dignitaries from Eretz Yisroel were there to greet them. Included were Harav Herzog zt"l, the Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel, his son Dr. Yakov Herzog, Mr. Yonah Cohen, and Mr. Rachamim Nechmod, a community representative from Chalev.

Mr. Nechmod wanted to capture a picture of this 'historic moment.' Maran Reb Aharon first refused to allow taking a picture, but after Mr. Nechmod begged to take a photograph, Maran acquiesced. Before taking the photo, Maran related, "My father, Maran Rebbe Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l, never let himself be photographed. When he was once in Marinbad, a photographer wanted to take a picture of my father. His gabbaim didn't allow it. But when my father saw the commotion, he said, 'A thing that thousands of Yidden do, I will also join in doing,' and he allowed himself to be photographed."

לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה (יתרו כ:ד)
You shall not make yourself a carved image nor any likeness.

When Maran Reb Aharon of Belz zt"l needed a photo for his passport, his Chassidim made special arrangements that he wouldn't need one. When Maran saw his passport missing a picture, he asked what happened.

The Chassidim replied that they made special arrangements so Maran wouldn't need to be photographed. Maran told them, "I also know the 'יערות דבש'" – alluding to the teachings of the Sefer Yaros Devash by HaGoan Reb Yonasan Eibeshitz zt"l, which talks about the unholiness of taking

people's pictures. "But even though I don't want to be different than everyone else," concluded Maran.



THIS WEEK'S VORT

פרשת יתרו

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וישב משה את דברי העם אל ה' (יתרו יט:ח)
Moshe related the words of the people to Hashem.

How a person conducts himself in this world is how he will be dealt with – from the World above. This is alluded to in the pasuk "וישב משה את דברי העם" אל השם. Moshe Rabenu wanted to arrange it so that – as the Yidden said, "נעשה ונשמע" – first we will do and then we will hear" – so too, Hashem should reciprocate with the exact words when Yidden pray to Him.

אנכי ד' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים (יתרו כ:ב)
I am Hashem, your G-d, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt.

Why doesn't the pasuk say "אנכי ד' אלקיך אשר בראתי" – "I am the G-d that created heaven and earth"? If this is how HaShem would have opened the Ten Commandments, people might have wondered: "How can I connect to such a big G-d?". However, when the Jewish People heard that Hashem came down to Mitzrayim and took them out of the impurities of Egypt, thereby creating the conditions to grow in their personal development, to such a G-d is it possible for a person to connect.

לא תגנוב (יתרו כ:ג)
You shall not steal.

Rashi says that "לא תגנוב" refers to someone that



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THIS WEEK'S VORT - פרשת יתרו

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steals people. And "לא תגנבו" in פרשת קדושים refers to stealing money.

The לא תגנבו in this pasuk doesn't just mean that a person shouldn't steal from another person. It also means that a person isn't allowed to steal his own soul - one shouldn't steal or fool his own self.

וכל העם רואים את הקולות ואת הלפידים (יתרו כ:טו)
All the people saw the thunder and the flames.

After receiving the Torah, the Yidden saw "את הקולות ואת הלפידים" - the sounds and the flames, whereas before קבלת התורה, it says "ויהי קולות וברקים" - there were sounds and lightning - there weren't any flames, just lightning. This is because, before Kabbalas HaTorah, the Yidden were on a level of "ברק" - lightning, which lights up momentarily. It all changed after hearing the עשרת הדברות - the ten commandments; Yidden rose to the level of "לפידים" - torches that burn continuously and don't become extinguished - a more exalted level.



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BATTLING THE WAR WITH KINDNESS

Since Israel was brutally attacked on Simchas Torah "Saad V'Marpe סעד ומרפא", A Belz Institution in Israel's affiliate organization, has been at the forefront, ensuring our soldiers have whatever they need to fight and defend us!

Donate Now - www.worldofbelz.org/help-our-soldiers



PARSHAS BESHALACH

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

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