





## Living with the Torah

### An Unforgettable Flight

Adapted from: *Touched by a Story* (with kind permission from ArtScroll)

The altar shall be holy of holies. (שמות כט:ל) ... והנה המזבח קדש קדשים...

R' Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל notes that the **outer** **מזבח** is described as holy of holies, while the **inner** **מזבח** (40:10), which is the holier of the two, and was in the inner chambers, is described merely as holy. Why?

R' Moshe explains that this teaches us two ethical lessons. (a) A תלמיד חכם who 'lives' in the **בית המדרש** must be careful to be even more holy when he is **outside** among ordinary people. He must be so strongly influenced by his תורה study that his behavior, worthy of emulation, will impress others. (b) One who is considered holy in the company of fellow scholars is considered to be holy of holies by **outsiders**, in the sense that his behavior is scrutinized carefully and critically.

The late hour worried R' Chaim Kahan, a bearded Orthodox Jew, but he had no choice. If he wanted to get home for שבת he would be forced to take the flight that arrived in Denver from San Francisco a mere two hours before שבת. His friend, R' Yehudah Lefkowitz, would pick him up at the airport and they hoped there would be no delays.

The flight departed on time and R' Chaim's worry about being delayed for שבת dissipated. All seemed to be going fine as the weather appeared to be pleasant and the pilot announced that the planned arrival would be a few moments earlier than scheduled.

Suddenly everything changed. With about a half hour left to the flight the captain announced: "Ladies and gentleman, this is your captain speaking. Please listen carefully. I regret to inform you that the hydraulic system has failed. That means that we have no way to stop the plane. We need you to follow our instructions for your own safety. Remove all sharp objects from your pockets and lean forward. Place your head between your legs and brace for a crash landing. Oh, and one more thing – please pray."

At first no one moved or spoke. Then suddenly everyone began to cry softly. R' Chaim could not believe this was happening. He followed the instructions and began to reflect on his own life. He thought about his life's accomplishments. Had he really done all he could? He was young, but he had learned what one should do during one's last moments on this world. And so, softly, tearfully, quietly, he began reciting וידוי. Afterwards, he tried to remain calm and began saying those chapters of תהילים he knew by heart. The words came forth from his heart as he prepared to meet his Creator.

An hour after the first announcement had been issued, the plane began its final descent. But it did not descend the way a plane normally does. Instead it descended like a helicopter. And it touched the ground gently with just a slight bump.

Disbelievingly, the passengers sat up straight again and looked out the windows to convince themselves that they were indeed alive. Afterwards, when they saw the many emergency vehicles rushing toward the plane, they realized that indeed a miracle had taken place. In a brilliant move, the pilot had exhausted the fuel supply and the plane had been able to float to the ground safely. Cries of relief filled the cabin and cheers erupted from the thankful passengers.

R' Chaim glanced at his watch and realized that it was now less than an hour until Shabbos. He unfastened his seatbelt, opened the overhead bin, removed his attaché case and rushed toward the exit door. But just as he reached the door he was stopped by the steward and stewardess. "Rabbi, do you have a minute?"

R' Chaim looked up at them and wondered what they could possibly want from him after the harrowing flight they had been through. "We want you to know something. During the entire last hour of the flight when we thought we were going to die, the passengers looked to us for strength. And, Rabbi, we all looked to you!"

R' Chaim recounted this story a few months later when he spoke at a dinner. He felt that the entire ordeal had happened because הקב"ה wants us to realize that the world is watching us and looking at how we behave. We must not let them down.



### Ad Yada Moment: מליצת ישרים — Riddles of the Smart!

Found in an early version of Midrash SmartScroll

Who was the first person in [un]recorded history to have a servant named Friday?

אסתר. When she was taken to the king's palace, אסתר was given seven maidservants, and she did not want them to realize she did not work on שבת. Therefore, she made arrangements for a different maid serve her on each day of the week and she named the maids

Sunday, Monday... Friday (in Persian). אסתר named the maids



## Focus on Lubos

בס"ד

(Based on the **הגות** of R' Akiva Eiger, פאה 28:)

Dear Rebbe מציאת מצרים שושן פורים,

I was intrigued by the question you quoted last year, in the name of R' Shmuel Rosovsky זצ"ל ראש ישיבה, Ponevezh, בני ברק. A רשבי"א had challenged the ראש ישיבה during a שיעור from a בחור. R' Shmuel thought for a moment and then asked the תלמיד, "If I was blind, how then could he have built the תבנה?"

R' Shmuel rhetorically answered the בחור, "My תלמיד, if you make an assumption of the fact [that I was blind, or that that is what the רשבי"א said], then you can ask such a question!"

However, I was still bothered. I was surprised that I was blind. so I followed the example of R' Michael Be'er Weissmandl זצ"ל, and travelled to the British Library. I found an old print of the מדרש (that was taken out by the censors) that answers this question.

This מדרש quotes the פסוק "וַיֵּרָא הֵם" and asks, why is it that הָם was the one who saw, but, in fact, it was כַּנְעַן that was cursed, as the פסוק says clearly "אֲרֹר כְּנָעַן"? The מדרש then offers an amazing explanation that is a lesson for all generations.

The תורה writes about רְאוּבֵן and הַמֶּלֶךְ that they were sinners. In reality, each of them had only committed a minor sin, but because of their greatness, the תורה referred to their actions as sinful. The מדרש continues: we know that הָם had the 'spirit' of a great man. He really never did anything wrong; however, because he failed to discipline his son כְּנָעַן, the תורה wrote that הָם had committed a sin.

My רבי, you taught us that there is a rule: מְדָה טוֹבָה מְרֻבָּה. The מדרש explains: we should realize that a son's negative act is attributed to his father. How much more so a son's positive act, which is as a direct result of his father's command, should be considered his father's act. So, in fact, I understand that הָם NEVER actually built the תיבה since he was blind — it was really built by his CHILDREN.

א פרייליכן פורים!

בשמחה רבה,

Your special תלמיד



## Scholarly Shmoozings

Sauce: Names withheld to protect the guilty

One festive פורים, during the סעודה, the wise Rebbe observed a תסיד eating a salami sandwich. Smiling at the opportunity to teach about honesty, the Rebbe asked the תסיד, "סאיזו אמת וואס זיי זאגן?" — Is it true what they say? — ס — באלוני איז נאכאלץ באלוני. — Baloney is still baloney. — It does not make any difference how thin you slice it!"



## \*Halacha Corner:

הלכות סעודת פורים ועוד



- When פורים is on Friday, most opinions hold that it is best to recite ברכת המזון before נרות שבת to avoid any issue of whether one may day הנסים and רצה in the same ברכת המזון.
- We inquire [learn] about the laws of פסח 30 days beforehand. This starts on פורים.

\*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.

## Questions of the Weekend:

1. The אסתר ruled over 127 provinces.
2. The גר"א points out that the פסוק uses the word הגלה three times, alluding to the three times that מרדכי was exiled from ישראל and he returned. This showed his tremendous חסידיות for ישראל: ארץ ישראל.

## Answers

1. How many times was מרדכי exiled from ישראל? ג'.
2. What is the connection between מלך and the powerful kingdom of אשור?
3. How many of the 26 "mistakes" can you find in this week's issue?