

Rav Eliyahu Chaim Meisel & The Best Book That Wasn't A Bestseller

Special thanks to Revach L'Neshama for the story

Rav Eliyahu Chaim Meisel, z'tl was the Rav of Lodz and one of the *gedolei hador* in the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to his greatness in Torah, he was a known *ba'al chessed*. He spent much effort easing the plight of those who were less fortunate. It was common at those times that poor Jewish children were taken and conscripted into the Russian army, but this never happened under his jurisdiction.

Once, Rav Meisel met with Rav Chaim Ozer, z'tl, and Rav Meisel praised the *sefer* *Achiezer* which R' Chaim Ozer had recently published. R' Chaim Ozer asked R' Meisel, "When will we see a *sefer* from you?" Rav Meisel responded by emptying his pockets of little folded pieces of paper. They were promissory notes from loans he had signed to enable him to aid widows and orphans. He said, "This is my *sefer*. I am so busy with problems of this nature that I don't have the time to complete a *sefer*." Rav Chaim Ozer responded, "My *sefer* pales in comparison to your *sefer*." ♦

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בס"ד
Menucha
*The Shabbos Table Companion
for the Whole Family*

תשע"ה
vol. II, issue 14

שמות

Halacha Challenge

"And these are the names..." [Shemos 1:1]

Reading the Bar Mitzvah's Mishebeirach list

by Shlomo Epshteyn

reviewed by Rav Chaim Malinowitz



"How am I going to remember all the names for the special Mishebeirach tomorrow?" wondered Daniel on erev Shabbos - the day before his Bar Mitzva. After a few moments, he had an idea and said out loud: "I know! I'll just write a list of the names now and read from the list at the time of the Mishebeirach tomorrow." His older brother Yosef overheard him and said: "You better ask if that's permitted to do, because I heard that, in general, it's not allowed to read from a list on Shabbos."

Question: Can he read the names from this list for the *Mishebeirach*?

Answer: Daniel should give the list to the Gabbai to read the names for the *Mishebeirach*.



Dedication

This week's issue is dedicated
by the Bisk family, *l'ilui nishmas* Yisrael ben Moshe

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A Mishna in *masechet Shabbos* says: "[On Shabbos], a person may count his guests and delicacies from memory, but not from a written note."¹ This Mishna is teaching us that there is a Rabbinic *g'zeira* not to read from a list on Shabbos.²

There are two opinions in the Gemora for why this *g'zeira* was enacted. One opinion is that the sages did not want people to read from lists on Shabbos, because a list is structured similarly to *Shetarei Hedyotos* (e.g., financial documents and the like),³ and thus, a person may wrongly conclude that just like it is permitted to read from a list, it is also permitted to read from *Shetarei Hedyotos*.⁴ Rishonim have different explanations for the *g'zeira* not to read from *Shetarei Hedyotos* on Shabbos. The Rosh explains that reading from *Shetarei Hedyotos* is prohibited under the general prohibition of *Mimtzo Cheftzecho** (preparing on Shabbos for a melacha that a person is planning to do after Shabbos).⁵

Chazal teach us, however, that under the prohibition of *Mimtzo Cheftzecho*, only *Cheftzecho* - i.e., your needs, are prohibited, where as *Cheftzei Shamayim* - i.e., *mitzva* needs, are permitted.⁶ Based on this, if a list would be read for a *mitzva* purpose, the reasoning of "reading a list may bring a person to read from *Shetarei Hedyotos*" would not apply, since for a *mitzva* purpose, one may read even true *Shetarei Hedyotos* (i.e., based on the Rosh's explanation of *the g'zeira*. See, however, note A).⁷

The other opinion in the Gemora holds that the *g'zeira* not to read from lists on Shabbos was enacted due to the concern that a person may come to erase items from the list and would thus be performing the *melacha* of *Mochek*. However, the case of our source (i.e., in the Mishna quoted above) is where there is a concern that a person may be tempted to erase from the list. Thus, in a case where there is no concern that a person will be tempted to erase from the list, the reason of "maybe one will come to erase" would not apply. One example of such a case brought by the poskim is where a person who is reading from the list is not the owner of the list and has no permission to erase anything from the list.⁷

Let's now apply this to our case of reading from a list of names for the *Mishebeirach*. There is no concern that the Gabbai will come to erase from the list, because it's not his list and he has no permission to erase anything from there. Is reading from this list considered to be a *mitzva*? Rav Nissim Karelitz *shlita* teaches that if one will say the names from memory, he might forget to mention someone and that person may be offended. Since by reading from the list one is making sure that nobody will get offended, reading from this list is considered to be for a *mitzva* purpose.⁸ Hence, since there is no concern of "maybe he will erase", and reading from the list is considered to be for a *mitzva* purpose, the Gabbai can read from this list for Daniel's special *Mishebeirach*. ♦

* **Note A:** Some Rishonim hold that reading from *Shetarei Hedyotos* is prohibited due to a concern that one may come to erase from a document.

1. שבת פרק כג משנה ב. 2. עיין בשש"כ"ה פרק כט סעיף נא (סעיף מט במהדורה ישנה). 3. עיין בשו"ע א"ח סימן שז סעיף יג. 4. שבת קמט. 5. רא"ש פרק כג אות א. 6. שבת קיג. 7. עיין במ"ב סימן שז ס"ק מז. 8. עיין במהדורת דרשו של מ"ב סימן שז אות מה.

Aldabra Giant Tortoise

by Alex Isaacson



The Aldabra Giant Tortoise, from the islands of the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles, is one of the largest tortoises in the world. It's brown or tan color with a high, domed shape. It has stocky, heavily scaled legs to support its heavy body. Its neck is very long, even for its great size, which helps the animal to exploit tree branches over 3ft above the ground as a food source.

A peculiar kind of habitat has developed due to the grazing pressures of the tortoises: "tortoise turf", a comingling of 20+ species of grasses and herbs. Many of these distinct plants are naturally dwarfed and grow their seeds not from the tops of the plants, but closer to the ground to avoid the tortoises' close-cropping jaws. As the largest animal in its environment, the Aldabra tortoise performs a role similar to that of the elephant. Their vigorous search for food fells trees and creates pathways used by other animals. Hashem created these creatures to be pioneers in foraging.

Interestingly enough, Hashem made the Aldabra tortoise with two main varieties of shell. Specimens living in habitats with food available primarily on the ground have more dome-shaped shells with the front extending downward over the neck. Those living in an environment with food available higher above the ground have more flattened top shells with the front raised to allow the neck to extend upward freely. ♦



Riddles

Riddle

Answer to the last issue's riddle

Where in parsha's Shemos is there a hint to the mitzva of Sh'nayim Mikra v'Echod Targum?

(Riddle: Yossi made Aliya to Eretz Yisroel. Now, he gets to answer Amen to a certain supplication very often - an opportunity that in Chutz La'aretz he only had on a rare occasion. Once, Yossi proudly told about this to his friend Moishy. "Which supplication are you talking about?" asked Moishy. "Oh, it's the one that I never hear," replied Yossi. Which supplication is Yossi referring to?)

ANSWER: The supplication that Kohanim say after they bless the tzibur. According to Halacha, they should complete that supplication at the same time as the Chazan completes the final bracha, so that the tzibur can answer Amen to the Chazan and to the Kohanim—even though they don't hear the Kohanim say that supplication.