

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

**Rabbi Yisroel Alter**, the Beis Yisroel

*Special thanks to Yaakov G. for the help with the content*

Yahrzeit date: 2nd of Adar. The Beis Yisroel is the third son of Rabbi Avraham Mordechai, the Imrei Emes. In 1940, the Imrei Emes escaped Europe and reached Eretz Yisroel, along with his sons, Rabbi Yisroel, Rabbi Simcha Bunim, and Rabbi Pinchas Menachem. After his father's petira, the Beis Yisroel assumed the mantle of leadership as the 4th Rebbe of Ger. For the next 29 years he rebuilt Ger and was a major force in the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisrael. The Beis Yisroel guided the work of Agudas Yisrael in the Knesset, concluding alliances with various other political parties to further the causes of the Torah community in Eretz Yisroel. Under the leadership of the Rebbe, Ichud Mosdos Gur was established as the responsible body for funding all the educational institutions within the orbit of Ger in Israel. He would go around at night by himself to the various yeshivos and check on the talmidim.

Rav Yisroel, a true *pikoiach* who had a brilliant way of looking at things, left a great impression on people from all walks of life who came in contact with him. His idea was to elevate every person - to somehow become one level higher than his present state. There are countless stories from individuals who met the Rebbe, relating how he had a tremendous spiritual impact on them and how this strong impression will never leave them. What makes this even more impressive is that many of these encounters with the Rebbe were for a very short period of time.

After his passing, Ger chassidim was led by his brother, Rabbi Simcha Bunim, until his petira in 1992. After that, his other brother, Rabbi Pinchas Menachem led Ger for four years. Since then, Ger has been led by Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh, the son of Rabbi Simcha Bunim. The Beis Yisroel will always be remembered as the Rebbe who rebuilt Ger after World War II.



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◆ Please, don't read me during tefilla, kadish, etc. ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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פקודי

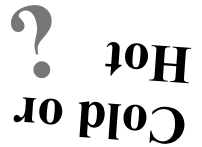
5776

Challenges

**Halacha Challenge**

TOPIC:

Taking a Cold Shower



Mendy and his family live in Teveria. On *erev* Shabbos, Mendy waited patiently for all of his younger brothers and sisters to take baths and showers. When his turn finally came, he went in the shower room, and opened the hot water faucet so that he won't need to wait for hot water when he goes in the shower. A few minutes later, when Mendy put his hand under the stream to feel if the water was hot, he was saddened to discover that the water was cold!

Mendy looked at the clock and said to himself: "There is plenty of time for the water to heat up...But maybe a cold shower is also good...It's Adar! Why not do some things a bit backwards?"

**Question:** Should Mendy wait for the water to heat up?



DEDICATIONS

- put your dedication in the next issue



*Special thanks to kehillas Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham*

◆ requires geniza ◆

**Help:** To help us solve the challenge, we need to recall one important source that we saw in one of the previous articles in this series of challenges on the topic of “bathing in honor of Shabbos”: A verse from the Book of Eicha is what the Gemora and *poskim* refer to when explaining the *mitzva* of taking a bath on *erev* Shabbos. In describing the afflictions during the Churban, Yermiyahu HaNovi (the author of the Book of Eicha) says: וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי נְשִׂיתִי טוֹבָה - *My soul despaired of having peace; I have forgotten goodness.* [Eicha 3:17] Chazal explain that this verse is talking about some aspects of Kavod Shabbos:

*What is “My soul despaired of having peace” referring to? Rabbi Avahu said: This is [referring to] lighting the Shabbos candle. [And what is] “I have forgotten goodness” [referring to]? Rabbi Yirmiya said: This is referring the bath house (on erev Shabbos). [Gemora Shabbos 25b]*

Hence the “peace” in the first part of the verse is referring to the peace at home that’s achieved through the Shabbos candles, while the “goodness” in the second part of the verse is referring to bathing on *erev* Shabbos. | *Take a close look at this source and try to solve the challenge.*

**An answer based on the *Beur Halacha’s* ruling:** Yes—Mendy should wait till the water heats up.

**Explanation:** The *Rama* rules that to fulfill the *mitzva* of bathing in honor of Shabbos one should wash his whole body using hot water [OC 260:1]. Why specifically “hot water”? Let’s recall that Rabbi Yirmiya said (see above): “This (i.e., the word טובה) is referring the bath house (on *erev* Shabbos)” The *Sha’ar Hatziun* explains that a bathhouse by definition is a place where people wash using hot water (contrary to bathing in a river, for example) [Shaar Hatziyun 260:4]. Based on this, the *Beur Halacha* [OC, 260 בחמין ד”ה] concludes that one cannot fulfill the *mitzva* of bathing in honor of Shabbos by washing with cold water. (Also, as we recall from the last article (see the footnote), Rabbi Yehuda Bar Iloy’s custom was specifically to wash his face, hands and feet with hot water.)

**Footnote** The Gemora [Shabbos 25b] asked: “What [exactly] is this *mitzva* [of bathing on *erev* Shabbos]”? The Gemora answered by citing the following story:

*...Such was the custom of Rabbi Yehuda Bar Iloy: On erev Shabbos, they would bring for him a bowl filled with hot water, and he would wash his face, his hands and his feet. [Then,] he would wrap himself with a cloth (lit. sheets) that had tzitzis strings on it and would sit [like this, anticipating the arrival of Shabbos]. And [at that moment] he would resemble a malach of Hashem [Shabbos 25b]*

**Riddle**



Warning: this riddle is not for the weak-hearted. Sefer Vayikra begins with the parsha of Korban Olah. In Mishnayos (Tamid 3:4) we learn how and when the heart of an animal is taken out from Korban Olah.

Now, where does the Torah (Chumash) explicitly states that the heart of certain people came out?!

**Answer to the last riddle:**

**RIDDLE:** In the *Megilah* [4:14] we read that Mordechai admonished Esther and told her if she will be quiet and not beseech Achashveirosh to have mercy on the Jews, then Hashem will provide *hatzalah* from another source. Now, to express “if you will be quiet,” Mordechai used a double verb with the root שחר to express his statement: הִחָרַשׁ תְּחַרְשִׁי. Interestingly, there is a *parsha* in Chumash relating to women, which does exactly the same thing—uses a double verb with the root חרש. Where in Chumash is it?

**ANSWER:** In the parsha of *hataras nedorim*, the verse says regarding a man who will be silent and not remove his wife’s *neder* [Bamidbar 30:15]: וְאִם-הִחָרַשׁ יְהָרִישׁ לָהּ



**Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers**



**Zeidy –** You taught us that the reason why the Torah says: “Adam” in the beginning of Vayikra is to teach us that just like Adam would not bring a stolen animal for a *korban*, so too, we should not bring a stolen animal for a *korban*. Why would a person who is coming to serve Hashem in the Beis HaMikdash would be tempted to bring a stolen animal?



Good observation, kids! Perhaps the Torah is teaching us here an important *yisod* in *Avodas Hashem*! A person who wants to serve Hashem in one *mitzva* might be tempted to “steal” from another *mitzva*. For example, before *tefilla*, a person might be involved in the morning with one *mitzva* and say to himself: “I’ll just say *Pesukei Dezimra* quickly.” So here, he is stealing time from the *mitzva* of praising Hashem and giving it to another *mitzva*.