

EXPANDED SHAVUOS EDITION



Under the Eyes of the KGB
RAV YITZCHOK ZILBER'S
DEDICATION TO TORAH NO
MATTER WHAT

New!
ESCAPE THE
ROOM

**Did China
Lie?**



**Make a
Shavuos
Bouquet!**
CREATIVE
CRAFTING

WEEKLY
CHILDREN'S
MAGAZINE

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**New
CONTEST!**

**Bar Mitzvahs
Under Lockdown**
CIRCLE READERS SHARE
THEIR EXPERIENCE

**Mastermind
Meyer Contest
Winners!**



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Boy oh Boy!



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Under the Eyes of
the KGB



It takes 10 pounds
of milk to make one
pound of cheese.



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Hi there!

There's a beautiful song that many people sing on Shavuot. It describes how, as Bnei Yisroel are learning Torah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu looks down at them and says, "Chazu banai chavivai — look at my beloved children! They forget about their own troubles and busy themselves with my joy, the Torah."

I feel like that will be truer this Shavuot than it has been in a long time. Many people have suffered over these last few months. And this year, Shavuot night will not be spent in shuls, in the company of many people, with bright lights, refreshments, and an energized atmosphere.

It's probably a lot harder to learn all night when you're at home by yourself, but that is what countless people will be doing on this very special night. And no doubt, that will bring about much nachas and delight in Shamayim.

Have a wonderful Yom Tov!

Devorah



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From our Mailbox

Hi, Circle staff!

I love your magazine! I love all the columns, especially What a Story! I have a question for the author, S. Pruzansky. I'm curious where she gets the stories from. One of the stories actually happened to my aunt (the one with the paycheck), so I was wondering if it was just a similar story, or if it's actually about my aunt.

Some of my other favorites are Social Scene, Mastermind Meyer, Gizmo, and Only Mimi. I'm really enjoying *Out of Mind* too.

Thank you for all your amazing work! Keep it up!

Chani Volk, Miami

Hi, Chani!

I'm so happy to hear you're reading and loving *The Circle*!

The stories for the What a Story! column are real-life accounts that happened to people who have given me permission to share them. I happen to know your aunt, and this story DID happen to her! You have a great memory!

Say hello to your family from me, and keep reading! (But not when you're already supposed to be asleep ;).)

S. Pruzansky

Dear Circle magazine,

A while ago you had a Bundt cake recipe, and I changed it to gluten free by switching the flour to Bob's Red Mill 1-to-1 Baking Flour and Rice Dream.

A few weeks ago, you had a pasta recipe, and I used gluten-free pasta. I also used Follow Your Heart mozzarella-style cheese.

Just recently, you had a recipe for edible cookie dough, and I also changed it to gluten free by using Bob's Red Mill 1-to-1 Baking Flour and not using salt. Then I stored it in the fridge for eight hours to thicken the texture.

Thank you for such a great magazine.

Miriam Englander

Wow, Miriam, we admire your resourcefulness and the way you don't let food restrictions get in the way. Thanks for the tips!

Hi!

My name is Leiby Roth. I'm 6, and I live in Detroit (technically Oak Park, MI). This past Shabbos, my mother wanted to wash for challah, but her rings were stuck on her finger. She pulled and twisted and wet them, but they wouldn't come off! Uh oh... would we have to wait for our seudah for hours? Then I remembered that someone read to me from *The Circle* to use Windex on stuck rings. My mother sprayed Windex on her rings, and they slid off! Thank you for saving our seudah - I was hungry!

Love, Leiby Roth

Joke Corner

Why did the robber try to steal from the bakery?

Chana Schechter, 11

He was told that their cheesecakes are rich.



Submission Form

THE LEMONADE STAND

Issue #: _____

Answer: _____

Name _____ Age _____

email thelemonadestand@circmag.com

AROUND THE SHABBOS TABLE

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Issue: _____ Answer: 1 2 3 4

Submissions must be received by **Tuesday** to be entered in the previous week's raffle.

email hilchosshabbos@circmag.com

JOKES AND RIDDLES

Where did you hear / read it?

Name _____ Age _____

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FEATURE



Under the Eyes of the KGB

Rav Yitzchok Zilber's
Dedication to Torah No Matter What



February 1972.

Rav Yitzchok Zilber and his son Benzion came to see the Mirrer Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz. Their unusual clothing and thick accents showed that they had recently arrived from Russia. In those days, with Russia's Communist government at the height of its power, the sight of Russian Yidden in Eretz Yisrael was very unusual.

And yet, to Rav Chaim's amazement, despite the 50-plus-year war of the Communists against Torah, Rav Yitzchok Zilber was not only *shomer Torah u'mitzvos*, he was also well versed in Halachah!

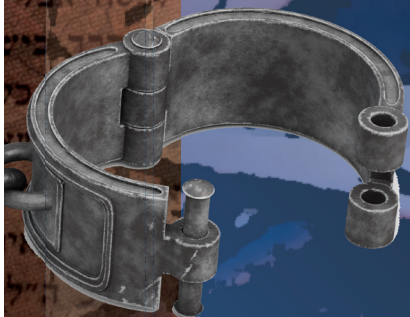
Rav Chaim turned to the young Benzion and asked, "How much did you learn in Russia?"

The Rosh Yeshivah was well aware that Benzion had never attended yeshivah and that any learning he had done had been in hiding. How much could he be expected to know?

He was astounded to hear the answer.

Rav Yitzchok stated, "Whatever he learned, he learned from cover to cover."

Benzion then told Rav Chaim what he had learned: *Bava Kama*, *Bava Metzia*, and *Bava Basra* (some of the biggest and hardest *masechtos* in *Shas!*), part of *Chullin*, and part of *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah*.



Rav Chaim burst into tears. If this was how much they had learned in secret, what would be expected of people who could learn openly?

Interestingly, Ben Zion thought the Rosh Yeshivah was crying out of regret that Ben Zion had learned so little!

Who was this Rav Yitzchok Zilber, who grew up in Communist Russia and was not only a *talmid chacham* but also brought up a son who was a *talmid chacham*?

Childhood

Rav Yitzchok Zilber was born in Communist Russia. In the Soviet system, it was mandatory to attend school, where students were taught not to believe in Hashem. Despite this law, Rav Yitzchok never spent a day in school. His father taught him *Tanach*, *Mishnayos*, *Gemara*, and *halachah* and hired private tutors to teach him math, reading, and science. He always went to shul, and by the age of six, he knew davening by heart. This set the stage for a lifetime of *mesirus nefesh* for Torah.



Mathematician

As a young adult, Rav Yitzchok realized that he would have to have a job, which would make it very difficult to keep Shabbos. In Russia, Shabbos was a regular day, and it was considered a crime to miss a day of work. He realized that if he would become a math professor, he would have an easier time keeping Shabbos, so he went to university to study math.

But the university also had classes on Shabbos.

How would he avoid chillul Shabbos? For this he had a whole bag of tricks.

He would come to school on Shabbos with his hands bandaged and ask someone to write for him. He couldn't do this every week, but he got away with it once month. He also befriended the weaker students and did their work with them. This way, on Shabbos, he could have them write for him. Keep in mind that there are around 50 Shabbosos every year, besides *Yamim Tovim*. He couldn't use the same trick too often, so he had to have many different ones. And in all his time as a student in university, he was never *mechalleh Shabbos*!

Eventually he became a professor and taught math in a university. Of course, he had to come in on Shabbos. Now he needed a new batch of tricks to avoid *chillul Shabbos*. He would come in late, and "because he was late," he would ask one of the students to take attendance. Rather than write on the board, he would call the students up to write the examples on the board. And if he had to give a test on Shabbos, he would write the marks on Friday, before the students even took the test!

One Shabbos, during a test, there was a surprise inspection. The government was watching him give a test. After the test was over, he showed them the marks, which had been written the day before. They were amazed at how accurately he had marked them!



In the Labor Camp

When Rav Yitzchok came to the slave labor camp, he had one thing on his mind: How would he be able to keep Shabbos?

To his surprise, the first week he was there, he didn't have a problem, since he was in the hospital! How did that happen?

Rav Yitzchok was put to work chopping up enormous trees. To do this, he had to climb up a flimsy ramp to get to the top of a pile of wood. The Russian he was working with would jump up and down on the ramp to scare Rav Yitzchok. On Thursday, Rav Yitzchok fell off and was very badly injured. That is how he came to spend his first three Shabbosos in the hospital.

But soon enough, he was released. What would he do now?

When Shabbos came around, Rav Yitzchok went down to the lake, where he hid in a boat. At 4:45, when the workday was over, the guards called everyone back. Rav Yitzchok was so far that he didn't hear them, so he stayed where he was. When the guards realized that someone was missing, they made everyone stand outside in the rain for hours while they looked for him. When Rav Yitzchok finally returned, the people were furious! He realized that he would have to find another solution.

Water Carrier

Rav Yitzchok went over to a man named Kolka, who was in charge of giving out the jobs. "You see I'm not so good with logs," he said. "I need another job."

"Which job do you want?" asked Kolka.

Rav Yitzchok knew that the only way to keep Shabbos was to try to finish his week's worth of work before Shabbos. The problem was that every job was assigned with a partner, and his partner wouldn't agree to this. The only job that didn't have a partner was being a water carrier.

Rav Yitzchok asked to be a water carrier.

Kolka wouldn't agree to his request without a bribe. Rav Yitzchok promised to pay 25 rubles, and the job was his. Carrying water for 3,000 people was backbreaking labor. It would have been too hard even for five people! And when the water spilled on his hands, it would freeze, leaving his hands frozen and cut up. But Rav Yitzchok was happy. Now he could keep Shabbos!



Torah!

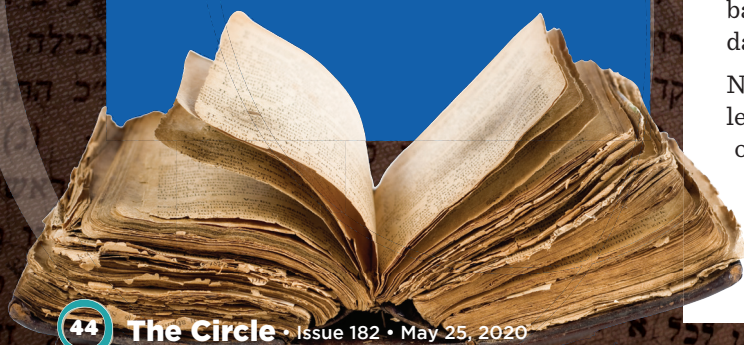
But what about learning Torah? A Yid must learn Torah no matter what the circumstances are. Rav Yitzchok spent 14 hours a day going back and forth to and from the lake to bring water to the camp. When would he find time to learn?

He had an idea.

A trip to and from the lake took one hour. If he would run both ways, he could do it in 45 minutes, leaving him 15 minutes to learn.

So that is what he did. He would spend his day running to and from the lake. After each trip, he would sit down to learn for 15 minutes. Then, he would run to the lake again. Do the math! Fourteen hours a day, at an hour a trip, means 14 trips. Now that he was running, he had 15 minutes of each trip to learn! Fifteen minutes times 14 trips equals three and a half hours! Working 14 hours a day at backbreaking labor, he was able to learn three and a half hours a day. (How many days go by when we don't learn that much?)

Now Rav Yitzchok had found the time to learn. But where could he learn and not get caught? He found a small room with a curtain on one side. He hid behind this curtain and learned there. The only problem was that the curtain blocked out any light. Since Rav Yitzchok had no choice, he trained himself to read in the dark, an ability he had for the rest of his life.





Persecution

Years passed, and Rav Yitzchok was released from prison. One day, he decided it was time to move to Eretz Yisrael. He knew he would never get permission to move to Eretz Yisrael, so he requested permission to move to Poland. This was considered a terrible thing to do; the Communists felt that it was a crime to want to leave Russia.

He was denied permission.

Six months later, he asked again. Once again, the answer was no. But now, the government started persecuting the Zilbers. The newspapers printed stories about the terrible Zilbers: They did dreadful things to their children! Their daughter had to travel on four buses to get to school! The children couldn't eat unless they made a blessing first! Their parents wouldn't let them eat nonkosher food! It didn't take very long before both Rav Yitzchok and his wife were fired from their jobs.

Soon, the government started threatening to take the children away and raise them as *goyim*. Rav Yitzchok realized that it was time to escape. It wasn't easy, but the family eventually escaped across Russia to a place called Tashkent, where it was somewhat easier to live as a Yid.

Eretz Yisrael

Finally, in 1972, the Zilbers got permission to move to Eretz Yisrael.

Even seated on the plane, they didn't believe they would be able to leave until the plane actually took off.

Once in Eretz Yisrael, Rav Yitzchok didn't stop teaching Torah to Russian immigrants and helping people for the rest of his life.

There is so much more to tell. How he brought up *frum* children in Russia. How he kept the Yamim Tovim in the labor camp. The *bris milahs* that he arranged for countless Yidden. His life in Eretz Yisrael. But let us at least learn from this tzaddik to keep learning Torah and doing all the mitzvos properly, in all circumstances. ◦

Source: *To Remain a Jew* (Feldheim)

Photos courtesy of Toldos Yeshurun, toldot.ru.