

# Congregation Beth Abraham's Be'er Mayim Chayim

Brought to You by Noam Cohen

*POOOORIM 5,766*

## Jewish Personality Of The Week

HARAV DOVID TZVEE PLOTZKER  
The "PLOTZ"  
(CIRCA 1967—?)

Harav Dovid Tzvee Plotzker, referred to in modern halachik circles as **the PLOTZ**, (whose 2nd wine tasting was held on March 5) was one of the "sheeshim hareeshonim" of Congregation Beth Abraham. He was also one of the pillars of Torah of the last generation produced by Yeshivas Ner Yisrael, along with Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky, and Rav Aharon Feldman, shlita. The latter 3 gedolim generally defer to Rav Plotzker on the more difficult sha'alos of the day, such as whether a chicken with a non-Jewish mother can be koshered properly, and if one who eats such a chicken will make a proper shidduch. His dedication to the shul has also been very unique. While the new building was under construction, Tzvee picked up his entire family and moved from Wilbur Rd. in Bergenfield way across town, almost as far as Route 4. Only Seymour Berkowitz from Dumont has a longer walk, but as Tzvee likes to say, "The *sichar halichah* really gets my blood going." Although he wears out 3 pairs of Shabbos shoes each month, and last winter, he lost 2 toes to frostbite, he feels it's a small price to pay for the pleasure of living so far from the *shul*. His melodious laying of *Megillas Rooos* on *Shavuos* is very moving, and people from all over come to hear him.

He's also been an invaluable companion to Ron Koesterich during davening. It's not easy to keep Ron busy and out of trouble during a 2 hour Shabbos davening, but Tzvee keeps at it, week after week.

Last but not least, Tzvee publishes the Be'er Mayim Chaim each week, which educates others regarding important events in Jewish history such as how many of our ancestors were killed or maimed on each day of the week, and such important issues as which hand one should use to pick one's nose—with the right hand, which is used to kiss the *mezoozah*, or with the left, which is used to don our *tefillin*? In any event, the Be'er Mayim Chaim has single-handedly turned many of our mispalalim into talmidei chachamim and yirei shomayim.

## Jewish Ethical Dilemmas

### ETHICS OF BEING UGLY

Several weeks ago, we raised the important issue of whether it is ethical to be overweight. This week's question is, *Is it ethical to be ugly, especially in a world already so full of ugly people?*

*Rashee* in *Bereishis* 12:11 explains that *Avruhum* hid *Suruh* in a box as they entered *Mitzrayim*, because the *Mitzree'im* were dark and ugly and they were not used to seeing good looking people. Should we not strive to be different than those in *Mitzrayim*, and try to be better looking?

Obviously, ugliness is something one has little control over, unless he or she splurges for expensive plastic surgery. *Tanach* is full of stories of women who got expensive facelifts and such, sometimes to such an extreme that not only did they rid themselves of wrinkles, but their skin became so tight that each time they sat down, their mouths were forced open. However, for many of us, expensive appearance-altering surgery is not a viable option. What, then, should one do?

This issue has far-reaching implications. If two ugly people marry and have children, those children will definitely be ugly too. And, although it is an *aino miskavain* and it is probably *lo nicha lei*, it is also a *p'sik raisha*. Such an act would be contrary to our nation's *tafkid* of *teekoon olam*. And when people comment regarding a *kallah's* beauty, in keeping with the well known gemorah, "*Kaytzad Merakdim Lifney Hakallah, Kallah Na'eh Vachasoodah*", they will be forced to lie, causing the *kallah* to be over on the *lav* of "*lifnei eever*."

Perhaps rather than asking if it's ethical to be ugly, we should be asking if one is ugly, is it ethical for one to come out of one's house? For while being ugly is largely beyond one's control, staying in one's house is certainly achievable, and why cause others unnecessary discomfort? Besides, the more ugly people who stay home, the more seats there are available in shul.

## This Coming Week In Jewish History

### Shabos [12 Adar]:

- Mayor of New York introduces new alternate side of the street parking rule, setting off riots in Boro Park. 25 buildings and stores along 13th Ave. are set ablaze. 14 Jews (including 2 shnurers) are killed. (1968)

### Sunday [13 Adar]:

- Plate of kugel put on a table in a shtiebel before the end of davening results in pandemonium. 28 Jews killed, 3 still missing. (1963)

### Monday [14 Adar]:

- (1974) Property tax assessment in Bergenfield occurs with little fanfare, since no one yet knows where Bergenfield is. Nonetheless, Vera & Nechama sell their first Bergenfield home, a two bedroom, 1/2 bath (no kitchen) for \$1.2 million.

### Tuesday [15 Adar]:

- (1987) CBA moves into spacious new 75 seat capacity building on New Bridge Road. Avi Stokar and Jeff Teller comment on how much space there is, and neither think there should ever be a need for a makom kavuah.

### Wednesday [16 Adar]:

- Shloomiel Yachamovich becomes the 1st Brooklyn Jew to pay cash to avoid sales tax. Upon leaving the store, he discovers he's been ticketed for quadruple parking in front of a hydrant. Horrified at this obvious travesty of justice, he takes his own life, but not before going on a rampage, killing 37 other Jews, (incl. 9 Russian men playing chess on Ocean Parkway.) (1957)

### Thursday [17 Adar]:

- Yeshiva University begins requiring students to participate in the cafeteria dining club. When students find out that a piece of chicken and 2 potatoes costs \$37.95, they riot on Amsterdam Avenue. 42 Jews and 3 innocent Puerto Ricans are killed. (1991)

### Friday [18 Adar]:

- Someone does Hagbah on Herb Schneider's Torah and opens it to 5 columns. Herb is so upset, the next day he gives a patient a cleaning and ends up removing 3/4 of his teeth, his lower gums and his appendix. (1997)

## Tefilah Tips

### PROPER KAVANAH DURING SHMONEH ESRAY

*Which parts of Shemoneh Esray require kavanah?*

Lichatcheelah, all of them.

Bidieved, some of them.

Bishas Hadechak, none of them.

To summarize, either all of them, some of them, or none of them.

This is the list, in descending order of halachik preference, of things one should think about in the event he finds he cannot concentrate properly during shemoneh esray:

1. What you did in the office during the previous week.
2. What you need to do in the office during the coming week.
3. What are those smells coming through the vents from hashkamah?
4. Whether you would, indeed, rather be a Lithuanian Jewish woman.
5. Whether you should have a dermatologist take a look at that thing growing on your lower thigh.

Of course, if you are davening near a dermatologist such as Michael Wiederkehr, the halachah requires that you show it to him (discreetly) and then continue davening with proper kavanah. However, keep in mind that after such a display, *HE* might have difficulty continuing to daven with proper kavanah.

## Vort Of The Week

Rashee tells us that Moshe Rabbainu had a difficult time understanding the mitzvah of Machatzis Hashekel. Hashem decided to show Moshe a machatzis hashekel made from fire, from under his keesay hakavod. How can we understand this episode? The answer is very simple. We know that one of the principles of this mitzvah is achdoot, since each Jew needed another in order to make his shekel whole. We also know that part of achdut is sholom bayit between a man and his wife. Thus, the Torah is telling us that when our wives clean for Pesach, and they get upset at us for dropping crumbs in between the cushions, they should look to the Torah, which tells us that even Hashem, from time to time, finds some loose change in his couch.