

What Does Ezras Torah Mean To Us?

Horav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin, zl, was an outstanding tzaddik and undisputed halachic authority. Indeed, he was a man of singular greatness. His ability to "conceal" his greatness was a true measure of his gadlus, distinction. As the head of the famous Ezras Torah charitable organization, he carried on his shoulders the plight of literally tens of thousands of families throughout the world. Their daily well-being was his daily concern. Yet, he never revealed the identity of these families. His weekly salary was a paltry fifty dollars. Indeed, at one meeting, the resolution was passed that his "salary" should be increased. Rav Henkin immediately arose from his chair and exclaimed, "Must I leave Ezras Torah?" Rav Henkin carried a small notebook with him, in which he kept a log of those minutes during the day that he did not fully dedicate to Ezras Torah. He was not involved with personal business during this time. He had no personal business. He lived for the klal, general community. When someone would visit to discuss a halachah, however, or if he would receive a call from anywhere in the world requesting his opinion concerning a halachic issue, he would immediately look at the time and note in his record how many minutes he had borrowed from Ezras Torah. He would then know how many minutes he would have to "make up" for Ezras Torah. Yashrus!