

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

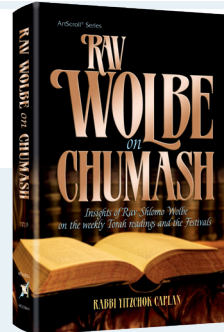
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L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

THE RUACH HAKODESH IN EACH OF US

Rav Wolbe on Chumash from Rav Shlomo Wolbe, written by Rabbi Yitzchok Caplan



עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמַר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקוֹתַי וְתוֹרָתִי.
Because Avraham obeyed My voice, and observed My safeguards,
My commandments, My decrees, and My Torahs (26:5).

The Torah tells us that Avraham Avinu kept the entire Torah. The *Midrash (Bereishis Rabah 95:3)* explains, “From where did Avraham know all the commandments of the Torah? He learned them from himself.”

What does it mean that he learned the entire Torah “from himself”?

The *Ramban* on the above *pasuk* writes that *Chazal* tell us that Avraham learned the entire Torah through *ruach hakodesh*. If so, it seems that “from himself” means through *ruach hakodesh*, because deep down, one’s true self is nothing less than *ruach hakodesh* itself.

Ruach hakodesh is not prophecy. Prophecy is when Hashem speaks to a person. *Ruach hakodesh* is the things that a person perceives on his own, after he sanctifies his spirit to the point that it is truly holy. Although this is a lofty level, the underpinnings of *ruach hakodesh* are alive in each and every one of us.

We have a problem relating to such concepts, because we don’t really know who we are. We associate ourselves — “the true me” — with the

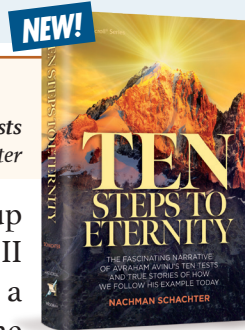


Rav Shlomo Wolbe

**WE MUST
MAKE A
SERIOUS
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yetzer hara. When the *yetzer hara* convinces someone to do something prohibited, the person hears that message as “I want to do that.” But when it comes to getting up early to *daven* or to doing any other such *mitzvah*, he feels that he must drag himself out of bed with metal chains. The mindset is, “I am a Jew who believes in Hashem and, therefore, I am obligated to perform the *mitzvos*,” but the *mitzvos* are not “me.” One who has reached the level where he feels the opposite — that *mitzvos* are his true self, and any desire for evil is coming from outside forces — is well on his way to attaining *ruach hakodesh*, for he has sanctified his spirit and succeeded in revealing his true self.

We have a long way to go until we reach the level of *ruach hakodesh*, but we must still make a serious effort to discover who we really are. If we would feel that *mitzvos* and spirituality are at least as much me as all the things the *yetzer hara* tries to get me to do, then we will have reached quite a lofty level in our *avodas Hashem*. 📖



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UNITY

A GUIDING LIGHT

Ten Steps to Eternity – The fascinating narrative of Avraham Avinu’s ten tests and true stories of how we follow his example today by Nachman Schachter

The Jewish nation is charged with being a guiding light for the world during good times as well as in difficult times.

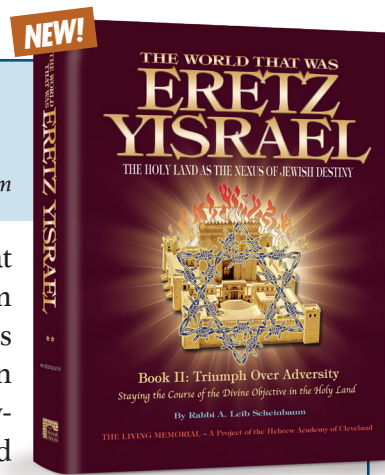
Alex Szendro was born in Sarbo-

gard, Hungary, in 1905. He grew up as a secular Jew. When World War II broke out, he was fortunate to have a very close friend who worked in the

ARTSCROLL PUBLISHED MONTHLY

THE RIDBAZ, RAV YAAKOV DAVID WILLOWSKY

The World That Was – Eretz Yisrael, Book II by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum



Rav Yaakov David Willowsky, who hailed from Russia, arrived in Tzfas in 1905. He established Yeshivas Toras Eretz Yisrael. The name itself bespeaks his passion and love for the Holy Land. He was born in Kobrov, Russia in 1845. His father, Rav Zev, was an extraordinary individual whose reputation as a tzaddik, righteous person, was well-known. The young Yaakov David was a child prodigy, blessed with a quick mind and a brilliant memory which were augmented by his exceptional hasmadah, diligence, in Torah study. These qualities melded together to produce an unusually erudite scholar who, even at a young age, was conversant in all areas of Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi. Indeed, he had written glosses on both.

At the young age of 23, he was appointed Rav of Izbballim, followed by a stint as Rav of Bobrisk, Vilna. Rav Yaakov David was then asked to accept the rabbanus in the large city of Slutzk. It was here that he earned the title, Rav David Slutzker. He founded a yeshivah in Slutzk which attracted students from all over. All came to learn and be inspired by his brilliant mind and encyclopedic grasp of Torah. As the personification of integrity, he had difficulty remaining quiet when he felt that a wrong had been committed against someone. He spoke up, diplomacy notwithstanding. As a result, his restless soul found little peace in the various communities that he served. Hardship was his companion. Nonetheless, it did not deter Rav Yaakov David from growing in Torah. He even took upon himself to author a commentary on Talmud Yerushalmi, which was an area in which many scholars were not “well-versed.” In 1903, he left Slutzk to assume the position of Nasi, President, of the Agudas HaRabbanim of America, in Chicago. He left the Yeshivah in the able hands of its Mashgiach, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer. While in Chicago, Rav Yaakov David also established a yeshivah. Unfortunately, his stay in Chicago

was cut short. Realizing that Chicago was a far cry from Slutzk, he quickly ended his rabbanus there. His written description of religious, Jewish life in Chicago is a sad commentary on the many challenges experienced by the Orthodox Jew, often with unsuccessful results. While he did foreshadow that one day America would be a magnificent abode for Torah, this was not likely to occur during his tenure. Rav Yaakov David traveled extensively, speaking to large, gratified crowds of listeners. He left a powerful impact on their spiritual, moral and ethical perspectives on life.

Rather than return to Russia, the Ridbaz – as he became known for his commentary (an acronym of his name Rav Yaakov David ben Zev) – set his sights on the city of Tzfas, a city famous for its esoteric studies. His reputation for brilliance in Torah preceded him. He established his yeshivah, Toras Eretz Yisrael, in 1905. It was not long before several hundred students sat at his feet, imbibing Torah. Sadly, his incredibly successful tenure in Yeshivas Toras Eretz Yisrael was short-lived. The drive, passion and power that had infused the Tzfas community for eight years was extinguished on Rosh Hashanah 1913. Without the Ridbaz, the Yeshivah’s forward trajectory began to dissipate, and with the added pressures of World War I, it ceased to exist. During the course of its existence, the Yeshivah served as an outstanding example of what a successful Torah institution should be. Eight years is not such a long time. Nevertheless, it was long enough to imbue Tzfas with a spiritual character reminiscent of the days of old, when some of our people’s most eminent and illustrious Torah and mystical giants made Tzfas their home. Rid-

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The Ridbaz



Shailos U'Teshuvos of the Ridbaz

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER / כסלו

| SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 26 ב | 27 ג | 28 ד | 29 ה | 30 ו | 1 ז | 2 ח |
| Nedarim 32 | Nedarim 33 | Nedarim 34 | Nedarim 35 | Nedarim 36 | Nedarim 37 | Nedarim 38 |

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER / כסלו

| SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 26 ב | 27 ג | 28 ד | 29 ה | 30 ו | 1 ז | 2 ח |
| Shabbos 2:7-3:1 | Shabbos 3:2-3 | Shabbos 3:4-5 | Shabbos 3:6-4:1 | Shabbos 4:2-5:1 | Shabbos 5:2-3 | Shabbos 5:4-6:1 |

A GUIDING LIGHT continued from page 1

government office of birth records. This non-Jew did Alex an incredible favor: He destroyed Alex's birth records, and therefore there was no record of his status as a Jew. In fact, as a result, as far as the Hungarian authorities were concerned, Alex Szendro did not exist.

Even though he had no papers identifying him as a citizen, he managed to rent a small room. Alex was careful to stay under the radar of the authorities so as not to be noticed. He was somehow able to remain undetected by police until 1944, when he was almost forty years old. As the war was nearing its end, Alex was picked up by the police and sent to a work camp.

Alex felt very fortunate when he learned that his work responsibilities included helping in the kitchen. That meant that he had easier access to food than others. From Alex's vantage point, he discerned the unspoken basic camp survival system. When one needed anything, he should acquire it by any means at his disposal. If that entailed lying or stealing, that was fine. Survival of the fittest was the rule.

Alex noticed that all the inmates of the camp acted this way, except for one small group of people. This

group was dramatically different from the others. When one of them needed food, the group made sure that he received it. If someone needed medical care, the others made sure he got it. Members of the group looked out for one another. After weeks of admiring them from afar, Alex identified this group as Orthodox Jews. Seeing how wonderfully they looked after each other,

MEMBERS OF THE GROUP LOOKED OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

as well as the beautiful camaraderie they shared, he desired such a relationship for himself and his future family. He approached the group and expressed his genuine feelings about the life he wished to lead. They put him in touch with Rabbi Benedikt, their rabbi. The rabbi became Alex's mentor and taught him all about Orthodox Jewish life. Soon after the war ended, Alex, who was the only surviving member of the Szendro family, moved to Budapest, close to the home of Rabbi Benedikt. He married and started a family. He did his best to acquire *sefarim* written

in Hungarian, and went to classes given on Jewish topics, so that he and his family could become productive and active Orthodox Jews.

Alex established a photography business, and became successful and financially comfortable. In Budapest, though, there were very few opportunities for his children to receive a Jewish education or for his family to practice their religion properly. Alex realized that it was time for his family to leave Hungary. Only one barrier stood before him: a rule to discourage immigration. An emigrant from Hungary was permitted to take with him only \$50 per person. Any remaining funds had to be left behind. Even so, Alex made the decision to leave.

In March of 1957, Alex, now Shimshon, his wife Magda, and his children Yosef and Miriam, landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Halifax was a hub for immigrants, the Ellis Island of Canada. Within a few days, they joined the Orthodox community of Toronto, Ontario — proud and thankful to Hashem that they were going to be living a wonderful new Orthodox Jewish life in a religiously hospitable community.

- Heard from Yosef Szendro, Providence, Rhode Island 📍

THE RIDBAZ, RAV YAAKOV DAVID WILLOWSKY continued from page 2

baz is among them.

As a result of the Ridbaz's commitment to the spiritual renewal of the holy city of Tzfas, the community began to grow both spiritually and physically. Rabbis and students flocked there from all over, and it soon became a viable Torah center. The Ridbaz's influence extended beyond the hallowed halls of the Yeshivah.

During the Shemittah year of 1910, he assumed the responsibility of ensuring that the laws of Shemittah were adhered to, as well as other mitzvos exclusive to Eretz Yisrael. He showed the farmers what to do and aided them economically, in such a manner that they were able to execute all of the Halachic requirements of Shemittah. 📍

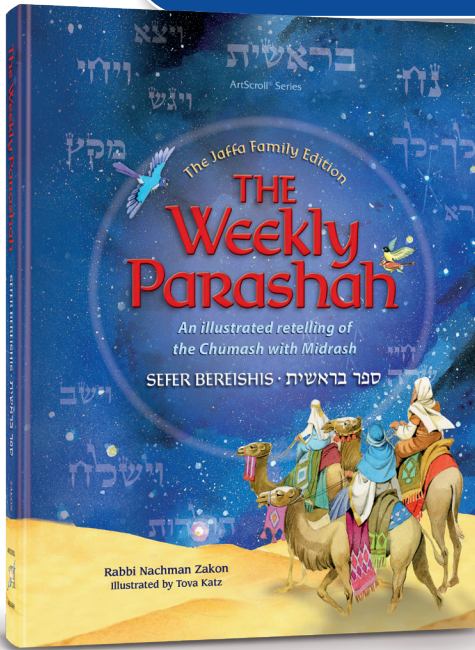
This week's Yerushalmi Yomi schedule:

| NOV-DEC / כסלו | SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 26 ב | 27 א | 28 ט | 29 ה | 30 י | 1 י | 2 ה |
| | Berachos 13 | Berachos 14 | Berachos 15 | Berachos 16 | Berachos 17 | Berachos 18 | Berachos 19 |



Parashah for Children

פרשת תולדות



Happy Birth Day!

Right before they were born, the twins had a big fight. Each one wanted to come out first and be the firstborn. Finally, the evil baby overpowered his brother, and he was born first. His younger brother held onto the older one's heel, trying to stop him from being born first, but it was too late.

Ever see babies? They usually have very little hair, they have no teeth, and they're cute. But

Rivkah's firstborn was different. His skin color was reddish. He had hair all over — even on his face and hands — and he was born with teeth! Not cute at all.



They called him Eisav.

The younger twin was born with a bris! Hashem Himself named the baby Yaakov, and told Yitzchak the baby's name.

Why Yaakov? Because he came out holding his brother's heel, which is called "eikev" in Hebrew.

Yitzchak became a father for the first time at age 60! Mazel tov!



Why was the older baby called Eisav?

Because he was hairy, like a grownup.

The word Eisav has the letters of the Hebrew word "asui," which means "completely made." He was a baby who looked like he had been born already finished — like a grownup who already has hair.

WIN A \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Toldos:

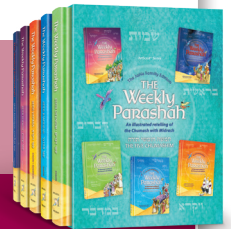
Why did Yitzchak Avinu turn blind? (Give 1 of 3 answers.)

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. **HINT:** The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

The winner of the Lech Lecha question is: MORDECHAI SMITH, Brooklyn, NY

The question was: Why was Og the giant given his name?

The answer is: Og arrived when Avram was baking "oo-gos," another word for matzah, so he was nicknamed Og.



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