

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת וארא
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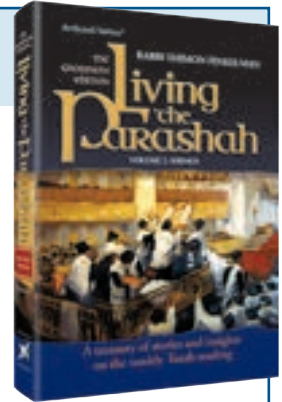
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Living the Parashah by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה, אָמַר אֶל אַהֲרֹן: קַח אֶת מַטְּךָ וּנְטֵה אֶת יָדְךָ עַל מֵימֵי מִצְרַיִם...
Hashem said to Moshe, "Say to Aharon: 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt ...'" (Shemos 7:19).

"Say to Aharon" — Because the river protected Moshe when he was cast into it, therefore it was not stricken through his hand, neither with the plague of blood, nor with the plague of frogs; rather, it was stricken through the hand of Aharon (Rashi from Shemos Rabbah 9:10).

Later in this *parashah*, Rashi informs us that when the time for the plague of lice came, the soil could not be stricken through Moshe, for he had benefited from it as well. As inanimate objects, the Nile and the soil of Egypt did not willingly assist Moshe and would not have been "offended" had he brought plagues upon them. Nevertheless, explains Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, when a person damages something that he benefited from, this has a detrimental effect on his personality and will corrupt his own *midah* of *hakaras hatov*, gratitude.



Rav Elazar Menachem Shach

Torah personalities have always excelled in their *hakaras hatov* towards those from whom they benefited. This was certainly the case with Rabbi Sholom Eisen, one of Jerusalem's foremost *poskim*.

During his final illness, R' Sholom was attended to by yeshivah *bachurim*, who cared for him with true devotion. Despite the pain and other difficulties R' Sholom strained himself to travel great distances in order to attend the weddings of these *bachurim* and would deliver an address in honor of the occasion.

When his illness worsened, R' Sholom's doctors advised that he be brought to America for treatments. The treatments were not successful and R' Sholom returned to Jerusalem in grave condition.

Taanis Esther arrived and with it came the tragic

news that the *posek* of the generation, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, had passed away. His funeral was held in New York on *Taanis Esther* and was to take place in Jerusalem on Shushan Purim, the day on which Jerusalemites perform the mitzvos of the yom tov. A quarter of a million Jews paused in their celebration of Purim to accord final honor to R' Moshe.

R' Sholom wanted very badly to participate, but his family insisted that he physically was not up to it. Bedridden and pitifully weak, he accepted their position and remained at home.

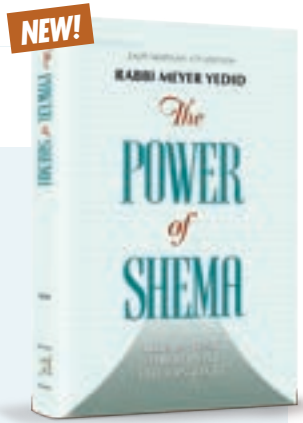
Later, he called his son to his bedside and said, "I would like you to gather a minyan, go the grave of R' Moshe, and ask forgiveness for my not having participated in the funeral."

"But why, *Tatte*?" asked his son. "Weren't you exempt because of weakness?"

R' Sholom replied, "As far as the obligation to attend the funeral of a *gadol hador*, I believe that I was exempt. But when I was hospitalized in New York, R' Moshe, *zt"l*, visited me. Out of *hakaras hatov*, I should have attended his funeral — and I do not think that my illness freed me from that obligation."

Only after his son carried out his wish and, in the presence of a minyan, asked forgiveness at R' Moshe's grave, was R' Sholom Eisen at peace.

Once, Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach contacted Rabbi Chizkiyah Katzberg, a *mashgiach* *continued on page 3*



One of the definitions of the word *shema* is “to gather.” How does that fit into *Shema Yisrael*? What *kavanah* am I supposed to have when I say *Shema Yisrael* with regards to gathering? What exactly am I gathering?

Before we answer that, let’s consider another question, an oddity that many of us may have never noticed, even though it pops up in *pesukim* throughout the Torah. Let’s take, for example, a *pasuk* from *Parashat Kedoshim* (*Vayikra* 19:9):

וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פְּאֵת שְׂדֵךְ לְקַצֵּר

This *pasuk* is talking about the mitzvah of *pe’ah*, the obligation to leave an end of the field unharvested for the poor to eat. The first words, וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם, *When you reap the harvest of your land*, are in the plural. The קֶם of קִצְרְכֶם and the קֶם of אֲרָצְכֶם both signify the plural form. But, surprisingly, the next words — in the very same *pasuk* — are in the singular: לֹא תִכְלֶה פְּאֵת שְׂדֵךְ, *You shall not complete your reaping to the end of your field*. Here, both the word תִכְלֶה and the word שְׂדֵךְ indicate the singular.

What’s going on here? And there are many other examples of the Torah switching back and forth between singular and plural when addressing the Jewish people. Which way should it be?

The *Tzeror HaMor* (*Vayikra* 19:19) from R’ Avraham Saba offers a beau-

tiful explanation. He says that even when there are millions of Jews, they are considered one person, one *neshamah*. There is a *neshamah* called *Am Yisrael*, and every single Jew is a part of that one big *neshamah*.

The Gemara (*Shevuot* 39a) teaches: *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh*. Simply, that means that all Jews are responsible for one another, but the word *Areivim* is related to the root *Areiv*, to mix. Accordingly, the *Tomer Devorah* teaches that *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh* means that all Jews are intermingled. Inside of every Jew is a sliver of every other Jew. We are all *areivim*, responsible for one another, because we are all *me’uravim*, mixed together. We are one! “Love your neighbor as yourself” (*Vayikra* 19:18), because he is literally a part of yourself.

We are all fully invested in the success of every Jew, similar to the partners of a corporation. If one salesperson closes a huge deal, then not only does he make money, but every partner makes money. If he causes a loss, then not only does he lose money, but all the partners lose money. So, *Am Yisrael* is like one company; when someone does something great and lifts up his *neshamah*, then all of us benefit spiritually from that. And if, Heaven forbid, it’s the other way around, all of us go down because of that.

And that’s why, the *Tzeror HaMor* says, the Torah always talks to us in

two ways: It talks to us as individuals, because we have to be responsible for ourselves. But it also talks to us as one entity, because we have to know that we are not only responsible for ourselves, but we are also responsible for every other person in our nation, represented by every other part of our *neshamah*.

What does Shema have to do with gathering? What is the *kavanah* we are supposed to have? The answer is, when someone says *Shema Yisrael*, he turns to the rest of the Jewish nation and says, *Let’s do this together. Let’s commit together. A piece of every one of you is in me and a piece of me is in every one of you. I feel for you as I feel for myself and I am responsible for you as I am responsible for myself*.

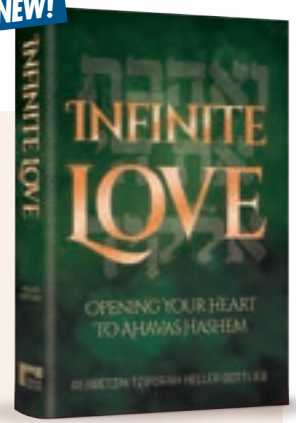
You cannot turn to Hashem as a lone individual and expect to be successful. When a Jew says the Shema, it’s not enough that he is thinking about himself. You can’t just say, *Shema, Hashem, me and You*. You have to think about the rest of the Jewish nation, and you have to feel a togetherness with them, and you have to feel responsible for all of them. *Shema Yisrael* means “Together, Yisrael!” We, the *Bnei Yisrael*, declare together and commit together that we serve the One and Only G-d. 🇲



Rabbi Meyer Yedid

YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK:

| | SHABBOS JAN 25 כ"ה טבת | SUNDAY JAN 26 כ"ו טבת | MONDAY JAN 27 כ"ז טבת | TUESDAY JAN 28 כ"ח טבת | WEDNESDAY JAN 29 כ"ט טבת | THURSDAY JAN 30 א שבט | FRIDAY JAN 31 ב שבט |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| BAVLI | Sanhedrin 39 | Sanhedrin 40 | Sanhedrin 41 | Sanhedrin 42 | Sanhedrin 43 | Sanhedrin 44 | Sanhedrin 45 |
| YERUSHALMI | Shabbos 60 | Shabbos 61 | Shabbos 62 | Shabbos 63 | Shabbos 64 | Shabbos 65 | Shabbos 66 |
| MISHNAH | Makos 1:4-5 | Makos 1:6-7 | Makos 1:8-9 | Makos 1:10-2:1 | Makos 2:2-3 | Makos 2:4-5 | Makos 2:6-7 |
| KITZUR | 46:17-29 | 46:30-40 | 46:41-47:7 | 47:8-21 | 47:22-48:5 | 48:6-End | 49:1-6 |



Are you your soul? Are you your body? Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the Ramchal, says you are both.

Your body continually changes and ultimately dies. Does that mean you are your soul?

What is your soul?

It's far easier to talk about what it is not. It's not physical, and for that reason, it's not drawn to physical experience. "Wait a minute," you may find yourself saying. "If the soul is me and it's not drawn to physical experience, who stood in line for pizza? Who diets endlessly to look better?"

You have a point. You are not *only* your soul. Your soul and your body are in partnership. They are like "two companions who never part." They are like dough. You start with separate ingredients, but when you mix them, they morph into a dough and become inseparably one.

For body and soul, the partnership isn't always a smooth one.

Your body is a constant actor in the play called Personal Reality. It is your constant companion. Hashem gave you your body to let you actualize yourself. It allows the most enduring part of you, your soul, to ar-

ticulate your values concretely and express itself in this very physical place called earth. The soul realizes all this and identifies with the body enough to feel obligated to care for it, provide for it, and respect the partnership Hashem forged. Your soul was created with a strong intuitive sense of what the body needs and wants, and it's programmed to be sensitive to its partner.

There is a bridge between body and soul. Your capacity to see more than coarse and transient reality is found there. Your love of nature, literature, art, music, are all part of both your body and your soul. The heart, the seat of emotion, uses physical imagery and experience to make the bridge real. When looking at this "bridge," the question becomes whether these experiences use your senses to walk the bridge toward your higher self, your soul, or whether they take on a life of their own, perhaps enriching the body, but not touching the *neshamah*.

Your soul isn't your body. It is the part of you that experiences Hashem both intuitively and intellectually. When your soul is exposed to

inspiration, it can "forget" the body momentarily, just as the body can "forget" the soul.

The soul won't let you forget it forever, and the body can't let you forget it forever. The soul, by its nature, longs for a world of enduring light and ideals that have their roots in a higher plane. The body has its own needs and wants. There are people whose lives reflect their ability to see their core identity as their souls and, at the same moment, recognize that in this world, the soul needs to be in partnership with the body. Others make the mistake of thinking that the two can exist independently. They can't. The body and soul "think" differently. The body is concerned with Now. It wants to take and make Now as rewarding as possible. The soul is concerned with being rather than having, and Now is not as important as longing for a bit of light or meaning. 📖

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE continued from page 1

in a Bnei Brak yeshivah and said, "In your yeshivah there is a bachur named Aron Taplin. I would like you to arrange for him to study every day with a *kollel* member, who will help Aron to advance in his studies. I will pay the young man for this. Please come to me each month on Rosh Chodesh to receive the young man's payment."

Rabbi Katzberg wondered why Rav Shach had singled out this *bachur* for this special arrangement and eventually found out why.

When Rav Shach was a *bachur* during the First World War, he endured tremendous deprivation. He was all alone, and learned in a beis midrash in Slutzk day and night, living on virtually nothing but bread and water

and sleeping on a bench in the beis midrash. He had one shirt, which he washed once a week in honor of Shabbos.

One day, a Jewish woman approached him and said, "I could not help but notice that your shirt is ripped. Shouldn't you change your shirt?"

"I have no other shirt," he replied.

The woman soon returned with two shirts for him to keep.

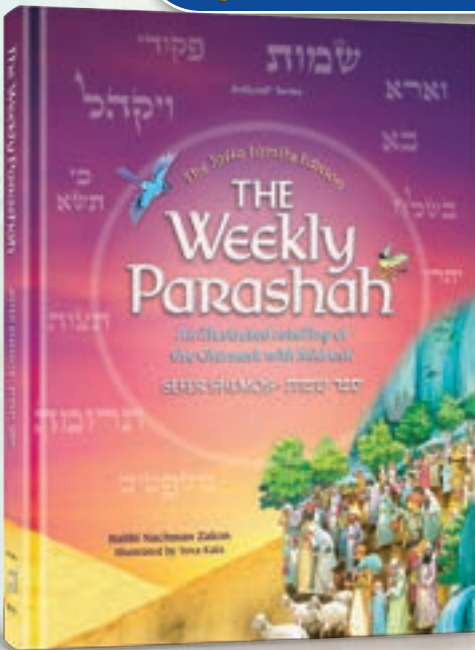
After the Second World War, Rav Shach tried to find out what happened to this woman and her family and learned that her entire family was killed, except for one grandson, Aron Taplin.

Rav Shach's helping Aron Taplin to advance in his learning was his way of expressing *hakaras hatov* for what his grandmother did for him. 📖



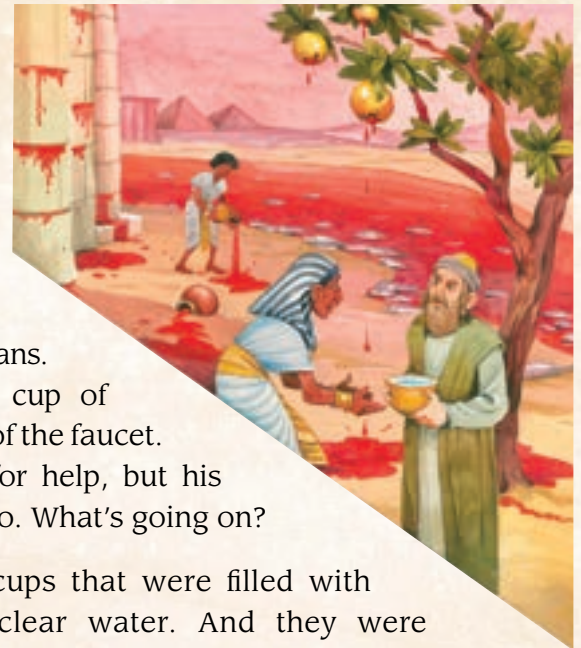
Parashah for Children

פרשת וארא



Bloody River

The Torah begins to tell us about Dam — Blood, the first of the miracles of the Ten Makkos — the ten strange, terrifying, and awesome plagues that Hashem brought on the Egyptians.



Imagine going to get a cup of water, and blood comes out of the faucet. You run to your neighbor for help, but his water has turned to blood too. What's going on?

Both of you run to a nearby river. What do you see? As far as the eye can see, for miles and miles, the water in the river has changed from bluish-green to deep, blood red.

You get closer and see dead fish floating on the river. There is a terrible smell in the air everywhere. All around you thousands of people are trying to drink the river's water and spitting it out. It's blood!

You would totally panic!

That is what was happening all over Egypt. The Egyptians frantically asked each other: "Where can we get water?"

And then they saw their slaves. Imagine: Those

Jews had cups that were filled with beautiful, clear water. And they were drinking it!

Thirsty, frightened, and angry, the Egyptians grabbed the cups from them.

And that beautiful water turned to blood.

Nothing worked. Even if a Jew and an Egyptian drank from the same cup at the same time, the Jew got water, the Egyptian got blood.

Makkas Dam lasted seven days. No one can last that long without water. So how did the Egyptians survive? There was only one way to get water. They had to *buy* it from the Jews. Only water bought from the Jews did not turn to blood.

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Va'eira:

Which two of the ten makkos did not last seven days?

*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*.*

Winner for Vayeishev is: MOSHE A. COHEN, Baltimore, MD

*Question for Vayeishev was: Name two kings who descended from Yehuda and Peretz.
Answer for Vayeishev is: King David and King Shlomo*



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