

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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RABBI YITZCHOK HISIGER, EDITOR
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L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS ROCHEL LEAH

PARASHAH

GOOD NEWS

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash by Rav Yaakov Bender

וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח הוּא לֵה' אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל בֵּיתִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּצְרִים בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת בְּתִינוּ הִצִּיל וְיָקֹד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ.

And it shall be that when your children will say to you, "What is this service to you?"
...and the people bowed and prostrated themselves (12:26-27).

Rashi explains that they bowed *al besuras hageulah*, the tidings of the impending redemption, the *besuras ha'aretz*, tidings that they would receive the Land, and *besuras habanim*, the tidings of the sons that they would have.

But we know from the *Haggadah Shel Pesach* that the question quoted in the *pasuk* is that of the *ben rasha*, the wicked son. "What is this service to you?" he asks, removing himself from the equation — so what were the parents so grateful for?

They were filled with thanks because these future parents realized something.

This conversation happened before *Mattan Torah*. The people knew that there was a gift awaiting them, an inheritance and a legacy that would change everything. Even someone who appeared to be a *rasha* or acted in a way that might be considered wicked would have a ladder that could lift him up and cleanse him.

The Torah would be theirs, and its holy words, the sanctified air of the *yeshivah* and

hallowed air around *talmidei chachamim* would have the potential to purify and uplift.

We have all seen children and teenagers struggle and fall. We have seen adults struggle and fall.

There is always a way back if you believe in the essential purity of the *neshamah* and its

"I WANT YOU AS A TALMID. I AM AMAZED BY YOU."

ability to become cleansed.

Every morning, we announce that the *neshamah* within us is "*tehorah hi*," pure, without blemish. Whatever we may have done, it remains pure. It is crucial to convey that to our children. Their mistakes will make them smarter and their challenges will make them stronger.

Rabbi Avraham Ravitz was a *rosh yeshivah* prior to being selected by Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach to serve as a Degel HaTorah Knesset representative. In his *yeshivah*,

there was a boy who had been *mechallel Shabbos*, and word of the *bachur's* misdeeds reached Reb Avraham.

He called the *bachur* in and bluntly shared what he had heard. The boy did not deny it. He admitted his sins and accepted the inevitable punishment. He would have to leave *yeshivah*. He understood.

But he made one request. "Please do not tell my parents the reason you are sending me home," he asked the *rosh yeshivah*, "because the pain they will have at hearing about *chillul Shabbos* will be unbearable for them. I will simply tell them that I want to change *yeshivos* because I need *chizuk*, a new start. Is that okay?"

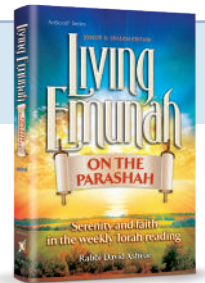
Reb Avraham agreed and assured the *bachur* that it would remain a secret between them, and the *bachur* rose to go pack his bags and leave. As he turned to step out of the office, Rabbi Ravitz called him back and asked him to be seated.

"Can you come learn here?" asked Rabbi Ravitz.

The boy looked at him, uncomprehending. *continued on page 3*



ARTSCROLL PUBLICATIONS



The *Ramban* writes (*Shemos* 13:16) that the purpose of Hashem performing open miracles is for us to learn that He is also behind the hidden ones. We must praise and thank Him for those as well.

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Lugassi explained this concept with a parable.

Chaim's* salary is paid every other Friday. One Friday morning, he finds himself with no money and no food for *Shabbos*. He prays to Hashem to please send him something. Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. It is a man he has never seen before, asking Chaim to do him a favor in exchange for money. He agrees to do it, takes the money, and quickly goes to buy food for *Shabbos*. That night, he and his family sing the praises of Hashem for sending them the money just in time.

The following Friday, Chaim gets his paycheck as usual and has plenty of money to buy food for *Shabbos*. The family will probably not be as overjoyed with their food that night because it came in the natural way.

The *Ramban* is teaching us that the point of the open miracle the previous week was for the person to realize that it is always Hashem sending him his money. He should give praise to Hashem the same way when He gives it to him through his job.

If someone, Heaven forbid, was in a horrendous car accident and emerged without a scratch, it is an open miracle! The person will probably make a *seudas ha-da'ah*, a feast of thanksgiving, to thank Hashem. However, it is supposed to be a lesson for the other thousand times the person gets in his car and arrives safely, with no accidents. Those are also from Hashem.

If a person had an illness that was diagnosed as terminal and was miraculously cured, the purpose of that miracle was not only to heal, but also to teach him that Hashem is the One Who bestows health on a daily basis.

The Torah portions describing all the great miracles Hashem did for our ancestors are not there just for us to say, "Wow, look what Hashem did for them!" When we read about Hashem providing *mann* for millions of people in the Wilderness, it is for us to learn that He is the One providing for us as well. He gave our ances-

tors Clouds of Glory, and He gives us apartments and houses.

Sometimes people hear *hash-gachah pratis* stories and say, "Come on! That wasn't Hashem. It's just 'normal life.'" The *Ramban* is teaching us that they are missing the point. There is no such thing as "normal life." Everything is Hashem; He is just hidden. We are not supposed to recognize Hashem's involvement in only the big things, like the million-dollar sale or the healing of an "incurable" disease. He is involved in our regular, everyday life, taking care of every need.

Rabbi Kleinbart* was recently asked if he could be a substitute teacher in a Brooklyn *yeshivah*. He responded that it would be impossible, as he had laryngitis.

"Please, we're desperate," the school secretary begged. "We have a large class coming in. They need somebody for four hours. If you don't take over, it will be chaos. Even if you just chaperone, it's okay. Maybe you could teach something in a low voice."


Rabbi Kleinbart agreed, thinking he would try to manage by sipping tea all day.

Before the start of class, Rabbi Kleinbart went to the cafeteria to prepare a cup of tea. To his dismay, they were out of teabags. With no other choice, he went to class and tried to teach.

About thirty minutes into the class, a boy walked in. He went up to the rabbi and apologized for his tardiness, explaining that he had a *bris milah* to attend.

"I'm sorry," he continued, slightly embarrassed. "Usually when we come from a *bris milah*, we bring *rebbe* a plate of food, but by the time I remembered, everything was taken away. I felt bad to come empty-handed, so I took a few packets of tea, the only thing that was left on the table."

The rabbi thanked him profusely. "That's exactly what I needed!" he exclaimed.

Hashem provided the rabbi with his needs. This was an open miracle. But as for hidden miracles, that is where we need to work on appreciating Hashem. As the *Ramban* said, the open miracles are there to teach us about the hidden ones. 

THE OPEN MIRACLES ARE THERE TO TEACH US ABOUT THE HIDDEN ONES.

וּמָלְאוּ בְּתִידָּ וּבְתִידָּ וּבְתִידָּ כָּל מִצְרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא רָאוּ אֲבֹתָיִךְ וְאַבּוֹת אֲבֹתָיִךְ
מִיּוֹם הַיּוֹתָם עַל הָאֲדָמָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּפֶּן וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פְּרָעָה.

And he [Moshe] turned and left Pharaoh's presence (10:6).

The theme of *Sefer Shemos* is learning proper *middos* from the Torah. The *Midrash* on this *pasuk* is an excellent example of this. The *Midrash* states that Moshe turned away because he saw Pharaoh's ministers taking counsel with each other.

In Czarist Russia, it was not uncommon for Jews to be arrested on suspicion of treason. Anti-Semitism was rampant, and anyone who wanted to make trouble for a Jew would accuse him of plotting against the Czar.

One such case involved R' David, rabbi of Bechov, who was arrested despite his protests of innocence. After several days in prison, he was brought before a board of inquiry. Several of the members of the panel began to discuss something that they did not wish R' David to overhear, so they

spoke in French. R' David turned and walked away.

The presiding officer reprimanded R' David for his disrespect in walking away from the panel. R' David said, "Your honor, I did not mean any dis-

to keep secret. That is why I walked away."

The panel was taken by surprise by this show of honesty and decided that a person of such integrity was speaking the truth when he protested his innocence. They promptly released him.

R' David later explained to his friends that it would not have occurred to him to walk away from the panel, until he remembered the *Midrash* that Moshe turned away when he saw Pharaoh's ministers taking counsel. "Obviously," he said, "it is not proper to eavesdrop and overhear when others wish to discuss something in secret."

A lesson in decency derived from the Torah spared R' David's life. 📖

"OBVIOUSLY, IT IS NOT PROPER TO EAVESDROP AND OVERHEAR WHEN OTHERS WISH TO DISCUSS SOMETHING IN SECRET."



Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski

respect. It was evident that you were speaking to each other in French rather than in Russian because you did not want me to listen to your discussion. However, I am fluent in French, and it would have been dishonest of me to overhear something that you wanted

GOOD NEWS continued from page 1

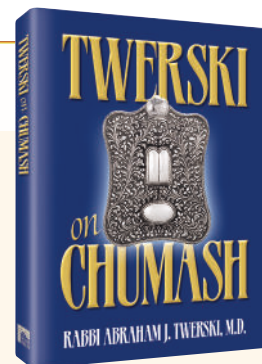
"I want you as a *talmid*. I am amazed by you. At a time when you had just been severely punished, you worried about your parents and their feelings. That is the sensitivity of a *talmid chacham* and I want you in my *yeshivah*. Can you join us?"

The *bachur* smiled in gratitude and hurried back to

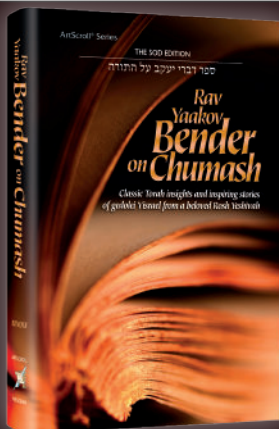
the *beis medrash*, ready to start anew, aware of his own greatness and that the *rosh yeshivah* had seen it too.

If you believe in the power of Torah, if you believe in the power of a *neshamah*, and if you are able to show every child that you consider them "good news," worth giving thanks for, then they will justify that faith.

It is a *besurah tovah*. 📖



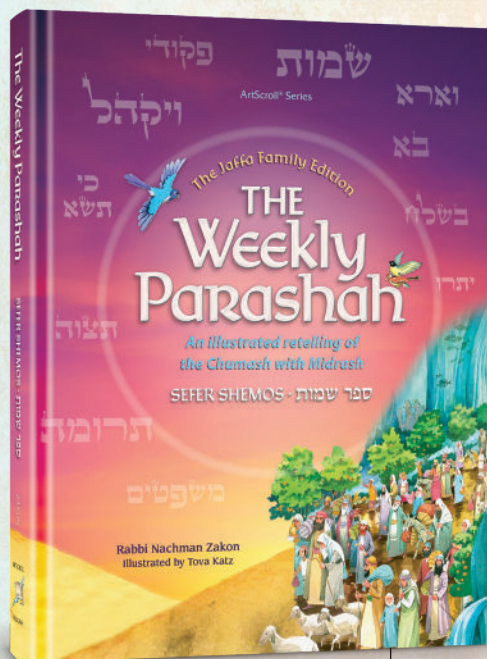
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Parashah for Children

פרשת בא



Locusts!

Moshe stretched out his stick over Egypt. A powerful eastern wind began to blow. It was blowing locusts into Egypt.

There were billions of them! They covered the earth and the sky. Even though it was midday, it was dark in Egypt, because the locusts blocked out the sun. It was terrifying. The locusts were very hungry. They ate any plants and crops that were growing.

Not only were the locusts in the field, they also filled the Egyptians' homes. There were locusts on the walls, locusts on the tables, locusts everywhere. When the Egyptians opened their closets they found insects munching on their clothes.

FASCINATING FACTS

Nowadays, when locusts swarm, there can be at least 80 million and sometimes as many as 160 million locusts in a square mile! And the plague of locusts in Egypt was much worse!

Along with the locusts, Hashem sent poisonous snakes to bite and kill the Egyptians.

The Egyptians had forced the Jews to plant fields of wheat and barley, so the locusts came and ate their crops.

During *Makkas Choshech* it wasn't dark for the Jews — even at night.

Darkness

Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart. He did not let the Jews go.

It was time for the ninth *makkah* — *Makkas Choshech*.

It was a beautiful, sunny day in Egypt when Moshe stretched his hand toward heaven. Suddenly there was darkness. It was as if someone had turned off the sun. No moon or stars — just blackness everywhere. It was as if everyone in Egypt had become blind.

The darkness was even darker than the blackness you "see" when you close your eyes in a dark room right before going to sleep. People could not even see the person next to them.

Everyone was moving very slowly. The Egyptians walked with hands outstretched, trying not to bump into trees, or stumble and fall, or fall down stairs. They tried lighting candles and fires to be able to see, but nothing happened. The candles and fires went out.

For three days, the Egyptians didn't see the sun and couldn't see anything.

