

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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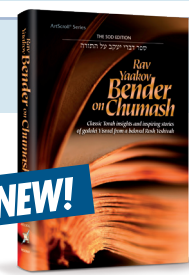
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS ROCHEL LEAH.

PARASHAH

GAUGE FOR SUCCESS

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash by Rav Yaakov Bender



הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר ה' להם הוציאו את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים על צבאתם: הם המדברים אל פרעה מלך מצרים להוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים הוא משה ואהרן.
This was the Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said: "Take the Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim according to their legions." They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, king of Mitzrayim, to take the Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Mitzrayim; this was the Moshe and Aharon (6:26-27).

In introducing us to Moshe and Aharon, the *pasuk* tells us: "This was the Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said: 'Take the Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim.'" In the very next *pasuk*, we are told: "They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh...this was the Moshe and Aharon."

Rashi, clearly bothered regarding the switch in order — in the first *pasuk*, Aharon's name is written first, and in the next *pasuk*, Moshe is named first — says that this is to teach us that "*shekulim heim*," they were equal in stature and greatness, and therefore the order is interchangeable.

The question is how we are to understand this if one of the 13 fundamentals of our faith is that Moshe Rabbeinu stands tall, unique in his levels of *nevuah*. There was none like him before and none since. How can Rashi say that they are equal?

Rav Moshe Feinstein asks this question and quotes a *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (Iob) that tells us a story about Yosef, the son of Rabbi Yehoshua, who

was unconscious. When he returned to good health, he told his father about what he had seen, the glimpse he had gotten of the Next World.

"*Olam hafuch ra'isi*, I saw an inverted world," he said, and explained, "*Elyonim lematah vetachtonim lema'alah*, the ones

world that cherishes results — high marks, the best *yeshivos* or seminaries, or financial success.

And this is false. It's not only an incorrect gauge for success, it might even be the opposite.

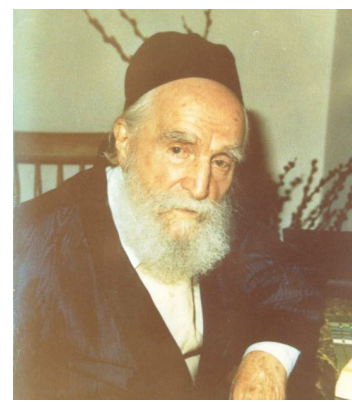
True success comes from

IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE HOW SOCIETY VIEWS YOU, BECAUSE TALENTS OR GIFTS DON'T DEFINE A PERSON.

considered important in this world are below, considered less significant, while those considered insignificant in this world are above, very important in that world."

"*Olam barur ra'isah*, You have seen a clear world," Rabbi Yehoshua told his son.

I feel that like this *Gemara* needs to be taught to every *bachur*, repeated every few weeks. It is so easy for them to grow despondent, because they are being raised in a



Rav Moshe Feinstein

hard work, from toil and persistence. *Sheleimus* comes from fulfilling your mission in the best way that you can.

This, says Rav Moshe, is the answer to the question. Moshe had his gifts and a *shelichus* that corresponded to them, and Aharon had his gifts and *shelichus*. Their greatness was equal in the sense that both of them in-

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ARTSCROLL MESORAH IS

SULIKA HACHUEL – THE SANCTITY OF A JEWISH WOMAN

Great Jewish Journeys by Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



Amid the graves of all the righteous sages buried in Fez is the grave of Sulika Hachuel (1817-1834), a 17-year-old girl who was killed by the Muslim authorities. Her story is as follows: Around the year 1830, a Jewish family by the name of Hachuel lived in the Moroccan city of Tangiers. Sulika, the daughter of Chaim and Simcha, was beautiful and modest. She became well known among the Jews of Tangiers for her *chessed*, kind heart, and goodwill. Chaim was a merchant by trade, but was also very knowledgeable in Torah, even leading Talmudic study groups in his home.

One day, a boy from one of the wealthiest neighboring Muslim families saw Sulika and desired to marry her. The young man's father threatened Sulika's family that if they would not allow Sulika to convert to Islam and marry his son, they would suffer bitterly. Overcome with fear, the family instructed Sulika to hide in the home of a close friend. A short while later, soldiers came to the Hachuel home to arrest Sulika. When they did find the girl there, they arrested her mother instead and kept her imprisoned until Sulika would be found. Upon hearing what happened to her mother, Sulika immediately surrendered to the authorities, who brought her before a Muslim judge. The rich neighbor accused her of having converted to Islam and then returning to Judaism, a crime punishable by death under Islamic Law. The court ordered Sulika to return to Islam or face execution. But Sulika remained defiant. "As a Jewess I was born and as a Jewess I wish to die," she proudly proclaimed, prepared to die *al kiddush Hashem* — for the sanctification of Hashem's Name.

The judge was furious and threatened Sulika with torture. They placed her in a pitch dark dungeon with an iron collar around her neck and chains on both her hands and feet. They then decided to send her to the Sultan to decide her fate.

The *chachamim* of Fez were inspired by Sulika's dedication, but they were ordered by the Sultan's judge to extract a confession from the girl that she had previously converted to Islam. The *chachamim* went to Sulika and explained that the Jews of Morocco could be endangered if the authorities don't get what they want. Sulika responded with firm resolve that she would maintain her untainted commitment to Judaism until

the very end; the *chachamim* rejoiced in their hearts.


At the final stage of the trial, one of the sons of the Sultan saw Sulika and, similarly taken by her beauty, made her a lavish offer. If she agreed to convert to Islam and marry him, the prince promised, her life would not only be saved, but she would live in wealth and honor. Without hesitation, Sulika rebuffed the offer and announced that she could not betray Hashem. Despite his embarrassment by her initial rejection, the prince tried to convince her once more, but Sulika stood firm in her decision. Her tragic fate was sealed, and the prince or-

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Sulika's tombstone. French inscription reads: "Here rests Mademoiselle Sulika Hachuel born in Tangier in 1817. Refusing to convert to the Islamic religion, Arabs murdered her in 1834 in Fez, torn away from her family. The entire world mourns this saintly child."

dered her immediate execution. Just before she was murdered the executioner offered her one last chance to convert. Sulika remained firm. "Do not make me linger," she said. "Behead me at once, for dying as I do, innocent of any crime, the G-d of Avraham will avenge my death!"

The body of Sulika was laid to rest in the city of Fez and she became a shining example of inspiration and sanctity for the Jews of Morocco. Whenever Moroccan Jews confronted a crisis or situation of danger, they went to her grave to plead with Hashem and found remarkable salvation there. To this day, thousands of Jews pray tearfully at the *kever* of Sulika, who has become known as the "Rachel Imeinu of Morocco." 

GAUGE FOR SUCCESS

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vested all of their efforts in their respective missions.

And that's what defines greatness.

It doesn't make a difference how society views you, because talents or gifts don't define a person, and the adulation of this world has no bearing on the way a person is viewed in the World of Truth.

I will always remember the *bachur* who came in to my office and burst out, "I see the truth! I see the way our *rebbe* scans the room for the brightest boys when he asks a good question, challenging them to answer... He never even notices us, the mediocre ones, because we can't deliver... I see it...and I feel it."

This *bachur* told me about a boy in the class who didn't seem very

engaged, preferring casual joking to listening, yet when the *bechinah* came, that boy got a hundred, while he, who had listened and reviewed and studied, barely got a seventy.

The frustration and hurt were real, and he wasn't alone. Many *bachurim* feel that way, but they just don't articulate it like he did. Many young women feel that way. They are surrounded by girls who don't try as hard, who seem to understand everything and ace every test without studying, girls who get higher marks and are seen as greater successes.

It's a lie, but they are too young to realize this.

Chassidim tell how a certain *chassid* toiled week after week to purchase and prepare *Shabbos* foods. The strain of finding money

with which to honor the *Shabbos* took its toll, and he went to the *Baal Shem Tov* for a *berachah*.

"Please, *rebbe*, making *Shabbos* is so hard. All week I'm scrambling to put together some money. Give me a *berachah* that I should be able to make *Shabbos* without *agmas nefesh*."

"Who said that in Heaven they desire your '*Shabbos*'?" the *Baal Shem Tov* replied. "Maybe what they really want is your *agmas nefesh*!"

This idea is echoed by the Steipler Gaon in his *sefer Chayei Olam*. He says that often, in *Shamayim*, they want the toil, not the easy result.

That's what brings joy in Heaven. Hard work. Toil. Effort.

And that is true success. 📖

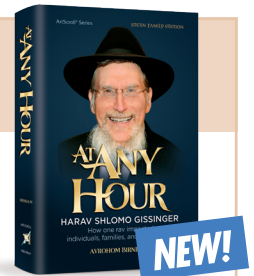
HUMILITY

THE FICTITIOUS SIGNAL

At Any Hour – The biography of Rav Shlomo Gissinger zt"l, by Avrohom Birnbaum

It was an accepted practice at Khal Zichron Yaakov that the *rav*, Rav Shlomo Gissinger, would signal that he had finished saying *Shema* before the *chazzan* would continue with the *tefillah*. What wasn't known by anyone, however, was that when the *rav* gave the signal, he had not finished *Shema*. Only his son, Binyomin, knew that the *rav*, not wanting to hold up the con-

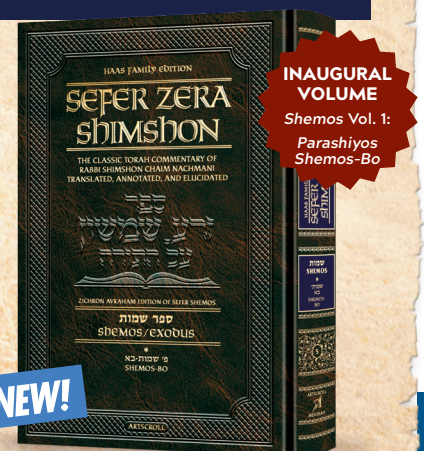
gregation, would signal that he was finished regardless of where he was personally holding. Then, while the congregation forged ahead, the *rav* would discreetly end off *Shema* at his own pace. This was just one of the ways in which the *rav* concealed his greatness. 📖

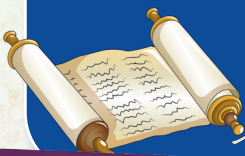


Learn the incredible story of how this sefer and its segulah were discovered from the man behind the movement!



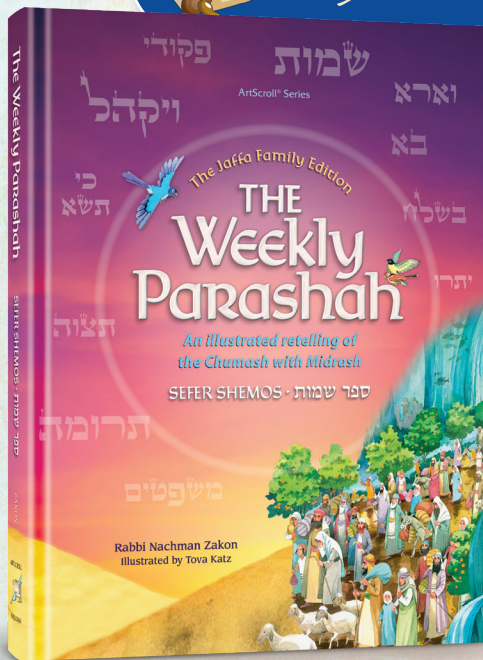
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Inside ArtScroll
interview with
Rabbi Binyomin Paskesz
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Parashah for Children

פרשת וארא



Magic in Mitzrayim

Once again Moshe and Aharon stood in Pharaoh's throne room and spoke to the little man on the big throne. Moshe said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go."

Pharaoh answered, just as Hashem said he would, "Do something miraculous to prove that Hashem sent you."

Aharon threw the walking stick to the floor. Miraculously, it turned into a snake, hissing and sliding back and forth on the floor. Its head lifted up as it looked for someone to bite into with its poisonous fangs. What a frightening sight!

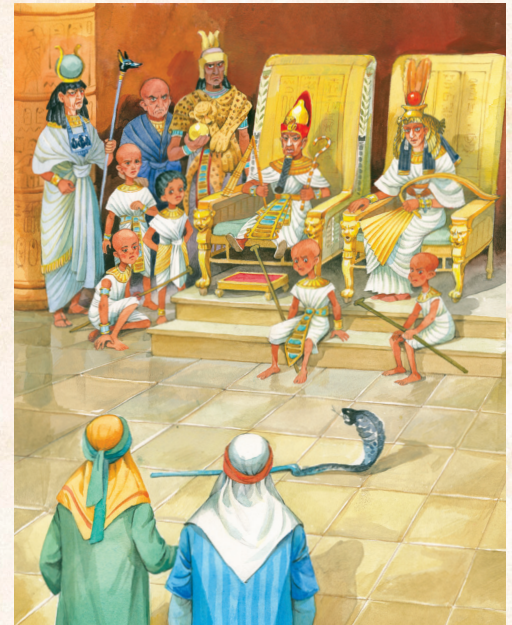
You would think that Pharaoh and his guards would have been terrified. But they weren't scared at all. They just laughed.

"This is a sign?!" said Pharaoh. "In Egypt anyone can do this magic." Egypt, at that time, was a center of sorcery. Many Egyptians could do magic — even children!

Pharaoh brought some schoolchildren into the throne room and said to them, "Turn your sticks into snakes." And they did!

Pharaoh then called his queen. The queen also let her stick fall and it became a snake.

Then Pharaoh's chief wizards, Yochani and Mamrei, did the same with their sticks. They also made fun of Moshe.



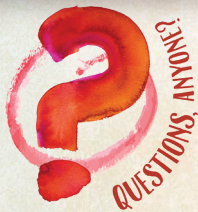
Not Funny!

All the Egyptians were laughing. But not for long!

By now the floor was covered with snakes. Aharon's snake lowered its head to the ground. Its body became stiff and suddenly it changed back into a stick. Then ... the stick began to move as if it were alive! One by one, Aharon's stick swallowed all the snakes.

The Egyptians stopped laughing. This was something they couldn't do! Pharaoh was scared. "What if Aharon tells the stick to swallow me and my throne?" he wondered.

And yet Pharaoh didn't give in. Pharaoh was stubborn and hardened his heart to say: "No, they are not leaving!"



Why did Hashem punish the Egyptians with frogs?

Egyptians would torture the Jews by making them catch roaches, worms, snails, and other disgusting bugs.



Since more frogs came out every time the Egyptians hit the large frog, why did they keep on hitting it?

The Steipler Gaon explains that this shows us how people react when they get angry. They don't think clearly and do things only because they are upset. Sometimes a person is upset so he breaks a toy or something else he really likes.

Other times, small arguments become big fights because a person was angry. If one of the people had thought about it, he would have kept quiet and the argument would simply have ended. Instead, it got worse and worse until it became a terrible fight.