

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת ואתחנן
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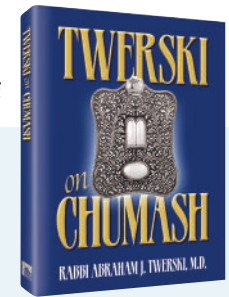
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

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

PARASHAH

PRAYING TO PRAY

Twerski on Chumash by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski



וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֶל ה' בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר. ה' אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה הַחַלּוֹת לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת עַבְדְּךָ אֶת גְּדֻלָּךְ
וְאֶת יְדֵי הַחֲזָקָה... אֶעֱבְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה...

I prayed to Hashem at that time, saying, 'My L-rd, G-d, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness. Let me now cross the Jordan and see the good Land'" (3:23-25).

The word *leimor* actually means “to say.” When it follows a phrase, it generally means that this statement should be conveyed to others. The above verse would thus read, “I prayed to Hashem at that time to say ‘My G-d, etc.’” What could be meant by “to say” in this context? To say to whom?



Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski

The *Divrei Chaim* explains this verse as follows: “I prayed to Hashem. What did I pray? That at the time when I will have to plead for myself, I should be able to say, ‘My G-d, etc.’” In other words, Moshe Rabbeinu *davened* to Hashem to give him the ability to *daven* properly.

In some *siddurim*, there is a “prayer before praying,” a beautiful preparatory *tefillah* composed by Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, which should put a person into the proper frame of mind for *davening*. The *Gemara* says that the pious men of yore would spend an entire hour before *davening*, preparing themselves to pray properly.

We pray for all our needs. Inasmuch as proper prayer is certainly one of our needs, should we not ask for Divine help with this need?

A *chassid* complained to Rav Mendel of Kotzk because he was beset with many serious problems. “Have you prayed to Hashem for help?” the *rebbe* asked.

The *chassid* responded, “I don’t know how to pray well.”

Rav Mendel said, “Then that is an even more serious problem than all those you mentioned, and you did not even mention that.”

We *daven* every day. But let us be honest with ourselves. If we had to present an important petition to a high government official, how careful would we be to ensure that it is worded correctly and delivered properly?

Do we give this much attention to our prayer? According to the *Divrei Chaim*, Moshe *davened* for the ability to *daven* well. If Moshe felt that he needed Divine assistance to *daven*, what can we say for ourselves? 📖

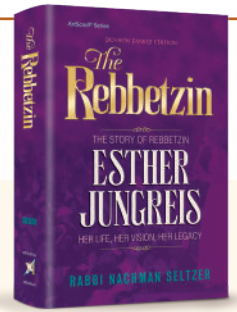
HOW CAREFUL WOULD WE BE TO ENSURE THAT IT IS WORDED CORRECTLY AND DELIVERED PROPERLY?

ARTSCROLL PUBLISHED MONTHLY

THE KEY TO KIRUV

The Rebbetzin – The Story of Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis Upon Her 5th Yahrzeit, 19 Av

by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer



Rabbi David Aron is the rosh yeshiva of Orayta and the founder of Israel Light, a kiruv organization. He recalls:

I met Rebbetzin Ezther Jungreis over thirty years ago. At the time, I was an aspiring young rabbi teaching part time for Aish HaTorah in the Old City of Yerushalayim. Having heard that the Rebbetzin was visiting Israel at the time, I asked Rav Noach Weinberg zt”l, if I could arrange a meeting between a number of rabbis I knew who were looking to get into the world of kiruv. Rebbetzin Jungreis, who as everyone knew was an unparalleled success in the field of outreach, would be able to give our group helpful tips and guidance on how best to reach Jews today.

Rav Noach thought it was a great idea and our group met with the Rebbetzin at the Plaza Hotel. There were about ten of us sitting around that table: ten young rabbis (all *baalei teshuvah*) who were eagerly hoping to become educators and outreach professionals.

When everyone had arrived, I asked the Rebbetzin if she could share with us some key principles and techniques for reaching Jews today.

She pointed at one of the guys sitting there and asked, “How did you get involved in Judaism?”

“I happened to attend a class given by a rabbi and it made a lot of sense, so I saw the truth and I embraced it.”

The Rebbetzin didn’t accept his answer at face value and began to poke holes in his story, somewhat akin to a lawyer questioning a wit-

interrogation.

Time and again, we heard the same story. Every one of us told of how we had seen and heard the truth and felt connected to it. But as she began challenging us in her sweet way, we all admitted that it had taken us a long time to get to where we were today and that the journey and process had been

“EVERYONE HAS A QUESTION, EVERYONE IS SEEKING. JUST GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRUST YOU AND OPEN UP.”

ness on the stand.

“You mean, you just walked in and it made sense?”

“No, I walked in, heard the class — and returned five months later.”

“What happened after those five months? You just moved into *yeshiva*?”

“No,” he admitted. “I actually went down south to Eilat for three additional months and eventually I returned to Yerushalayim and *yeshiva*.”

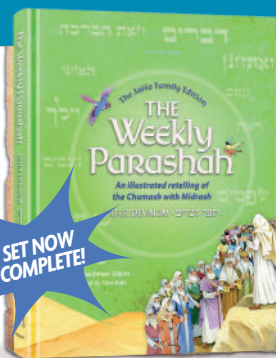
The Rebbetzin accepted his answer. Then she turned to the rest of us and began subjecting everyone around the table to their own

filled with intellectual and emotional struggles and confusion galore.

The Rebbetzin did this for about an hour, and we all began feeling disturbed by the fact that she was sitting and playing lawyer games with us, without even answering the question we had asked her in the first place!

After an hour, in which she managed to manipulate every one of us into admitting that we had been confused kids whose journey back to Judaism had been time-consuming and difficult, she said, “Well, I hope *continued on page 3*

New in time for Sefer Devarim!



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The Weekly Parashah features age-appropriate text and graphics, gorgeous illustrations, and fascinating sidebars on every page.

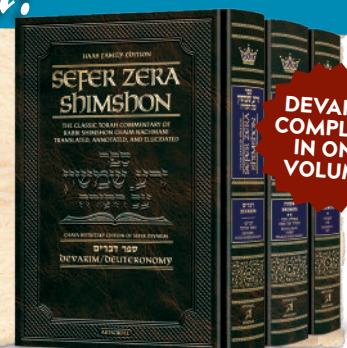


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continued from page 2 that I helped you,” making it clear that she considered the meeting to have reached its natural conclusion.

We looked at one another, devastated by her approach and not comprehending what she was talking about or why she felt her interrogation had answered the question we had come to discuss with her.

It was at that point that I spoke up.

“Rebbetzin,” I said, “forgive me, but I must have miscommunicated the purpose of our visit. We came to hear your insights, techniques and guidance on how to reach Jewish people in this day and age...”

The Rebbetzin looked directly at me and replied, as if puzzled, “But I thought that I just shared with you the most important concept you need to know.”

None of us knew what she was talking about and she must have understood that from the blank looks on our faces.

“Listen,” she said at last. “I wanted all of you to understand something important. While it is true that each and every one of you embraced Judaism, it is equally true that each and every one of you has a difficult time now admitting that you went through a period when you were confused and had questions, and that the journey was slow and challenging.

“I want you to understand, to internalize the fact, that just as it was that way for you, it’s the same for everyone else who returns from the outside world. Everyone has questions and everyone is confused, and nobody likes admitting that fact when they finally succeed in working everything through and achieving true clarity.

“So this is what I want you to un-

derstand. In order to reach people and help them become religious, you need to be genuine, sincere, and there for them — truly and honestly there for them. When they feel they can trust you, and that you care about them, then maybe they will open up to you with the real questions that are sitting on their hearts, and then maybe you’ll be able to begin a real dialogue with them — the kind of dialogue that leads to change.”

That was it. That was what she wanted to tell us. And I remember that we all walked out of that meeting feeling kind of challenged and also wondering how valuable her insight would end up being for us in the future.

The following week, I flew out

STOP SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT TRICK, SHE WAS TELLING US, AND INSTEAD START BEING A GENUINE PERSON WHO CARES.

of Ben Gurion to Toronto, Canada, where I was about to begin my first official rabbinical position. On the plane, I met a group of very wealthy women who didn’t seem to be searching for anything or to have any deep questions at all. They appeared to be blithely going through their lives, happily doing as they pleased.

As the plane took off, I suddenly heard the Rebbetzin’s voice in my head saying, “Everyone has a question, everyone is seeking. Just give them the opportunity to trust you and open up.”

So I began a conversation with one of the women sitting a few seats from me, who turned out to be the leader of that group. And while we talked, I found myself judging her to be a superficial person and

questioning the Rebbetzin’s premise that everyone is searching and everyone wants to know the truth.

But as the time passed, our conversation grew deeper and suddenly she said to me, “You know, I’m curious about something. You’re about to become a rabbi — you actually seem very young to be a rabbi — but maybe you can explain to me why so many of our youth are being drawn into the cults.”

I turned back to her and gave her the following answer: “I believe that the answer to your question has to do with the fact that deep in their hearts everybody is seeking, deep in their hearts everybody has questions and that deep in their hearts everybody is searching for meaning in their lives.”

The woman looked at me and said to me with the most genuine sincerity imaginable, “I’m looking, too, rabbi. I’m seeking, too.”

And then we had this incredible conversation and I realized that the Rebbetzin was right. In retrospect, her guidance that day at the Plaza had a profound effect on me throughout my years as an educator and as someone who has been involved in outreach.

And I also learned another important lesson at that meeting with the Rebbetzin — that there are no real techniques. Stop searching for the perfect trick, she was telling us, and instead start being a genuine person who cares. This will allow you to create the kind of environment where people feel they can be open, explore, share, and genuinely ask their questions without feeling judged or that you have something to sell them.

At the end of the day, the Rebbetzin taught me that it’s not about technique. It’s about being true and trustworthy. 📖

Parashah for Children

פרשת ואתחנן

We're at Har Sinai!

1n our parashah, Moshe says that when Hashem told him to go up to Har Sinai, He said, "Stand here with Me." Of course, Hashem does not have a body, so He doesn't sit or stand. Hashem was telling Moshe to stand, and it would be as if He were standing there next to him.

When we read the Torah in shul, it is like we are receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. We make sure to have three people standing at the bimah when the Torah is read. The person who gets called up to the Torah for an aliyah stands next to the baal korei, who reads the Torah out loud. The gabbai — the one who calls people up to the Torah — stands next to them.

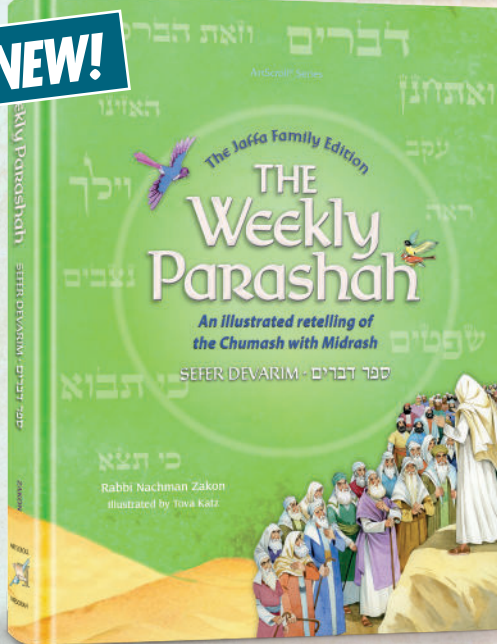
Since the gabbai chooses whom to call to the Torah, he reminds us of Hashem, Who gave the Torah to whomever He chose.

Because the baal korei reads the Torah aloud, he is compared to Moshe Rabbeinu, who taught the Torah to the Jews. Just as Hashem told Moshe to stand, the baal korei must stand when he reads the Torah.

The person who gets the aliyah is like the Jewish nation that received the Torah.

Another reason we have three people stand at the bimah is that there were three Avos: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. That is why if the baal korei gets an aliyah, someone else stands next to him so there will be three people there.

NEW!



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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Va'eschanon:

Why do we say the pasuk of "Baruch Sheim kevod malchuso..." quietly?

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday, July 28, to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name 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 Parashas Pinchas question is: RUCHAMA CHARNI, Brooklyn, NY

The question was: Which was the largest shevet of the Bnei Yisrael? The answer is: Yehudah, with a population of 76,500.

