

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT
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Mesorah
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Foundation

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

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PARASHAH

IN A GENTLE MANNER

Aleinu L'shabei'ach by Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein

וידבר אלֹקִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה'.

G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am Hashem" (6:2).

The term "*vayedabeir*" connotes harsh speech, as indicated by the verse, *The man, the lord of the land, spoke (dibeir) harshly to us* (Bereishis 42:30). The term "*vayomer*" represents gentle speech, as indicated by the verse, *So shall you say (somar) to the House of Yaakov* (19:3), on which Rashi comments, "Say to the women, with gentle language."

In the verse, "*G-d spoke (vayedaber) to Moshe and said (vayomer) to him, 'I am Hashem,'*" we find both types of speech. "*G-d spoke*" represents harsh speech, while "*and said*" represents gentle speech. Which one was it? Did Hashem speak harshly or gently?

The answer is: Both. Hashem was reprimanding Moshe, as Rashi says, "He spoke to Moshe with words of rebuke for speaking harshly and saying, 'Why have you harmed this people?'" But the Torah is teaching us that even when rebuke is necessary, it should be given in a gentle manner.

This concept is also expressed in the verse, *Then Yaakov became angered and he took up his grievance with Lavan; Yaakov spoke up and said to Lavan* (Bereishis 31:36). Although the Torah states clearly that Yaakov "took up his grievance with Lavan," the Torah uses the term "*vayomer*" — Yaakov spoke gently. The Chofetz Chaim

points out that even though Yaakov was angered, he did not speak harshly, in anger,

but rather addressed Lavan in a gentle tone.

Shlomo Hamelech tells us: *Do not rebuke a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you* (Mishlei 9:8). We learn from this verse that when rebuking a person, we should not tell him, "You're a scoffer." Rather, we should tell him, "You're a wise man!" — and it is therefore unbecoming for you to act in a certain way. The chances of success in influencing a person to change his ways are much greater if we speak to him in this way than if we pour harsh criticism upon him.

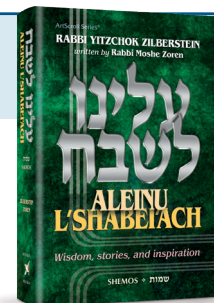
This is the task of our generation. Many people who are distant from Torah are interested in hearing about our lifestyle, but we have to speak to them gently. This requires special skill, and it is our duty to learn this skill.

The gentle speech that we need to use when speaking to our not yet-religious brethren is particularly important when we are trying to persuade them to observe *mitzvos* and bask in the light of Torah. When people see the fine *middos* that characterize Torah-observant people, they will be spurred to draw closer to us. 📖



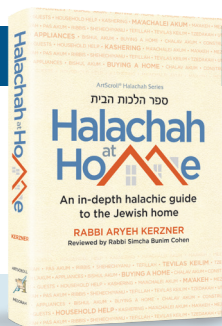
Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein

**THIS REQUIRES
SPECIAL SKILL,
AND IT IS
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LEAVING A ZEICHER L'CHURBAN

*Halachah at Home by Rabbi Aryeh Kerzner,
reviewed by Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen*



The Halachah

There is an obligation to leave a square *amah* of space unfinished near the entrance of a Jewish home during construction. Even though the common practice is to be lenient about this halachah, it is best to observe it, since it is difficult to justify leniency.

The Background

Chazal decreed that as a sign of mourning over the *churban haBayis*, one should leave a space of a square *amah* unfinished when building a home, and it should specifically be by the entrance of the home (*Bava Basra* 60b; *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 560; see *Pri Megadim* 560:1, *Shaarei Teshuvah* ibid., and *Mishnah Berurah* 560:3), where it will be seen when one enters the home.

The *Levush* (ibid.) writes that some people paint the *amah* by *amah* black rather than leaving it unfinished, but he strongly objects to this practice. He writes that this black paint doesn't diminish the quality of the home, but, to the contrary, enhances it, and this certainly lacks the required display of mourning.

However, the *Maharsham* (560:1) writes that perhaps we may be lenient regarding the practice of painting the area black if the words "*zeicher l'Churban*" are written in that spot as well, demonstrating the person's feeling of mourning over the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

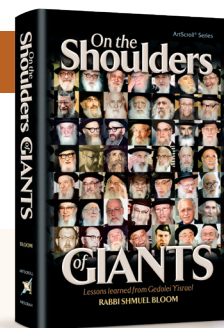
The *Mishnah Berurah* (560:2) notes that the common practice has become for people not to leave a square-*amah* area at all, and he is troubled by this apparent violation of the *halachah*.

The *Aruch HaShulchan* (560:4) suggests that the reason people are lenient is simply because the decree applied only to a house being built from limestone, which isn't used as much in contemporary construction. 📖



YOU MEANT IT?

*On the Shoulders of Giants
by Rabbi Shmuel Bloom*



Indelibly etched into my mind is a story that my *rebbe*, Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, often told.

Rav Ruderman was called upon to dissuade a middle-aged man, one of the *she'air-is hapleitah* (survivors of the war), from marrying a non-Jewish woman he had met. The man went to Rav Ruderman's office and the *rosh yeshivah* spent over an hour using every argument in his arsenal to try to con-



Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman

vince him what a mistake it would be for him to marry out of the faith. But it was to no avail. The man had made up his mind and was adamant.

As the man was ready to leave, he opened his wallet and took out a \$100 bill to "pay" Rav Ruderman for his time. Rav Ruderman refused the money and told him that he receives a salary as *rosh yeshivah* of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael and doesn't accept other remuneration.

"You mean you really meant all the things you told me?" was the response. "Then let's sit down and discuss the issue again!"

They discussed the situation for another hour and the man ultimately relented.

Sincerity is one of the factors that breed success, and when sincerity is projected, it is effective in influencing others. 📖

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

JANUARY / טבת-שבט

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 כח	2 כט	3 א	4 ב	5 ג	6 ד	7 ה
Megillah 20	Megillah 21	Megillah 22	Megillah 23	Megillah 24	Megillah 25	Megillah 26

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

JANUARY / טבת-שבט

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 כח	2 כט	3 א	4 ב	5 ג	6 ד	7 ה
Berachos 3:2-3	Berachos 3:4-5	Berachos 3:6-4:1	Berachos 4:2-3	Berachos 4:4-5	Berachos 4:6-7	Berachos 5:1-2

FOR THE SAKE OF THE FEW

The Call of the Torah by Rabbi Elie Munk

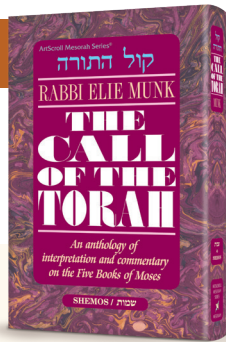
והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ.
*I shall bring you to the land
[of Eretz Yisrael] (6:8).*

OF THE 600,000 PEOPLE WHO LEFT EGYPT, ONLY TWO ENTERED ERETZ YISRAEL.

Interestingly enough, except for Yehoshua and Calev, the generation that left Egypt never entered the Promised Land. Thus, of the 600,000 people who left Egypt, only two entered Eretz Yisrael (*Sanhedrin* IIIa).

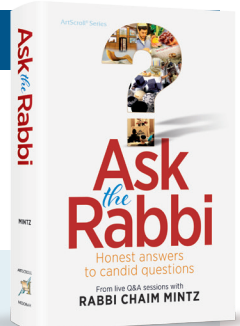
The *Meshech Chochmah* remarks that it was worth performing all the miracles and wonders in Egypt and the desert so that two righteous people could reach the promised goal.

From this we learn that believers should not despair when it seems that only a few select people are following the righteous path. For the sake of those few, the light will shine forth, as it did then for the two righteous people who entered the Holy Land. 📖



FEELING UPSET WHEN WE ARE IN PAIN

*Ask the Rabbi from Q and A sessions
with Rabbi Chaim Mintz*



Q. *If we believe that all bad events come from a righteous G-d and are for our good, is feeling bad and upset a lack of faith in Hashem?*

A. There is nothing wrong with feeling pain and sadness when difficulties enter our lives, and on the contrary, these feelings are part of what brings atonement. In fact, if we did not feel any pain, there would be no point in Hashem afflicting us with pain to awaken us to change our ways. However, at the same time, one should have an overwhelming feeling of serenity, trusting Hashem that this is all for our ultimate good.

Having such conflicting emotions simultaneously may sound impossible, but it can be done. A vivid example of this is when someone is sick and has to take a bit-



Rabbi Chaim Mintz

ONE SHOULD HAVE AN OVERWHELMING FEELING OF SERENITY.

ter medicine that will save his life. The person will barely notice the unpleasant taste, realizing that this is saving his life. The Talmud (*Berachos* 59b) discusses this very situation. A child who hears the news that his millionaire father died is, on the one hand, sad that his father died, but, on the other hand, is happy about the wealth he has inherited. Because of these mixed emotions, he recites two blessings, one for the good news and one for the bad.

In addition, any sadness or pain can only be temporary. When a parent dies, *halachah* dictates that the children mourn for a year. After that time period is over, they must leave their mourning behind. It is as if G-d is telling them, "Get back to life! You're not more merciful than I am, and I took this person's soul for a good reason." Of course they will miss the parent who is gone, but they have to work to switch their thoughts from sadness to happiness, secure with the knowledge that the deceased is now enjoying his reward in Heaven.

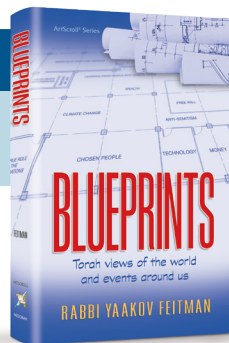
In short: One should feel pain, which is part of what brings atonement. At the same time, one should trust in Hashem that this is all for our ultimate good. 📖

FOR REAL

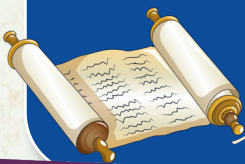
Blueprints by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky was once commenting on the radical diminution of the generations.

"When I was a child," he recalled, "one of the other boys offered to trade his friend a quarter of his *Olam Haba* (World to Come) for a few toys. When the *rebbe* heard this, he chastised the boy severely. But one thing was clear. To this child, *Olam Haba* was real and was considered a commodity that could be traded. Today, which child feels such a connection to the World to Come?" 📖

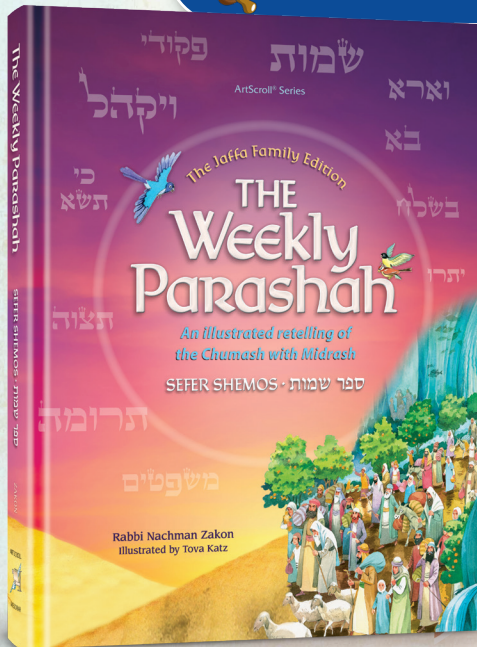


Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky



Parashah for Children

פרשת וארא



Shechin — Boils and Blisters

Three Miracles



Hashem told Moshe how to bring the next makkah. When Moshe and Aharon did what Hashem told them to do, three miracles happened.

Moshe reached into an oven with both hands and filled them with two handfuls of ashes. Aharon did the same. They stood before Pharaoh, their hands full of ashes. Pharaoh watched as Aharon took his ashes and put them on the ashes Moshe was holding in his hands. Though Moshe's hands had been full, all of Aharon's ashes fit in his hands. None of it spilled to the ground. That was the first miracle.

Take a handful of sand at the beach and throw it up in the air. It doesn't get very far. Moshe threw the ashes up into the air. It kept going up and up, higher and higher in the sky until it reached heaven. That was a second miracle.

Then came the third miracle. The ashes came down, and though it had been such a small amount — only a few handfuls — it miraculously spread out

and fell all over Egypt.

The ashes caused terrible boils and blisters to break out all over the bodies of the Egyptians and their animals. Makkas Shechin had hit Egypt.

Boils and Blisters



Besides the terrible pain of being covered with boils and blisters, the Egyptians couldn't take a bath for a whole week! Because of the blisters, they would scream in pain whenever their skin would touch the bath water.

This was their punishment for screaming at their Jewish slaves to bring water from the river, cut wood, and make a fire to heat up the water. All that work, so their Egyptian masters could take a hot bath.

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ARTSCROLL
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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Va'eira:

How long did the plague of dam, blood, last?

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 Parashas Vayigash question is: ELIYAHU EISENBACH

The question was: Who were Yosef's five weakest brothers who he took to meet Pharaoh?
The answer is: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yissaschar, and Binyamin.

