

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת וישלח
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RABBI YITZCHOK
HISIGER, EDITOR

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MRS. AVIVA KOHN

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

ILLUMINATING THE WAY

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash

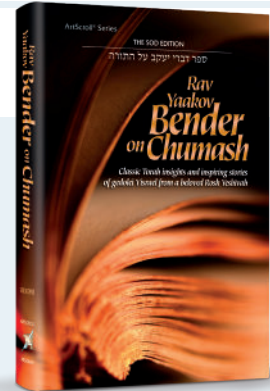
Not long after Menachem Begin was elected prime minister of Israel, he visited America and met with members of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah at the home of Rav Moshe Feinstein. It was a historic meeting, since it was the first time the country had a leader with a genuine feel for Torah and *mitzvos*, and the *gedolim* understood the opportunity.

At one point, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky addressed Begin. "Reb Menachem," he said, "you know that when Yaakov Avinu heard his brother Eisav was coming, even before anyone declared war, he prepared to confront his brother with a three-pronged approach. Given the situation, different tools are needed to win a war: sometimes it is the force of *tefillah*, other times the power of diplomacy and tact, and, in some cases, there is no choice other than war. Yaakov was ready."

Rav Yaakov was letting the prime minister know that even in an arena of diplomacy and sweet-talking, direct combat always needs to be an option when dealing with enemies. It is a reality taught to us by Yaakov Avinu in the *parashah* that is the guidebook to relations with the *umos ha'olam*. The *chachamim*, we are taught, would learn *Parashas Vayishlach* before going to Rome to meet with the government leaders.

It was a productive meeting, the message Begin heard that day leading him to successfully negotiate the Camp David accords, which would prove helpful over the course of time.

My friend, Reb Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, refers to Rabbi Moshe Sherer as his *rebbei*. In a *derashah*, he once explained the term. "Some *rebbeim* give *shiur* on *sugyos* in *Shas*, some in *sugyos* in *halachah* or *aggadah*. Rabbi Sherer gave *shiur* each and every day on the *sugya* of 'Yisrael Bein Ha'amim,' our role and the proper mode of conduct between the nations of the world."



Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky

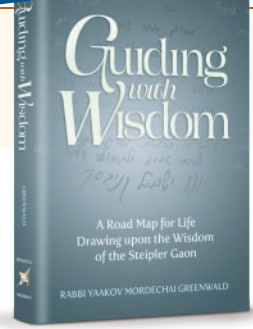
**IT IS THE
ENDURING SOURCE
OF WISDOM, AND
THE SOLUTION TO
EVERY PROBLEM
LIES WITHIN IT
UNTIL TODAY.**

That is what Rav Yaakov was saying.

Along with the practical encouragement Rav Yaakov was giving Begin, I feel like there was another message he wished to convey: Torah is not just true and real. It is the enduring source of wisdom, and the solution to every problem lies within it until today. Know, Rav Yaakov was telling the visitor, that just as Yaakov Avinu's plans ring true centuries later, so too every word in the Torah. This is reality. We have a Torah that will always illuminate the way. 📖

ARTSCROLLMETSORAH
PUBBLICAT

NEW!



A SENSE OF GROWTH

Guiding With Wisdom - A Road Map for Life Drawing Upon the Wisdom of the Steipler Gaon
by Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Greenwald

No matter what a person's goal may be, it is very hard to keep striving if he feels that success is beyond him. This is as true in Torah and *avodah* as in any other area. The difference is that in spiritual matters, success is very difficult to measure. In fact, one may very well be using the wrong yardstick. Nevertheless, once he has come to the (mistaken) conclusion that he is a failure, his natural reaction is to lose all hope.

This may come about in a number of ways: A person may have enjoyed a long period of growth, which was then followed by what appeared to be a decline. Or he may have struggled with a sense of failure all along. He may believe he has abundant ability, which has simply never found proper expression. Or he may feel that he has no talent at all. Regardless of the exact scenario, the result is the same: Today he sits numbly, staring out the window, wondering whether there is any point in going on.



The Steipler Gaon

What we need to examine, then, is how to evaluate our efforts and our progress correctly to ensure that unjustified despair does not steal from us our future.

The Challenge:

What should a *yeshivah bachur* or any other person do when he feels he has entered a period of stagnation? What if he feels he has never made any progress at all, but has remained on the same low level at which he began? What if he feels he is a total failure all around? How can he regain his enthusiasm when every day seems just as fruitless as the one before?

The Response:

The first thing this person must realize is that in all likelihood, the source of his problem does not lie in his learning, his *davening*, or any other aspect of his *avodah*. Oftentimes, it is simply a matter of wounded pride. It may be, for example, that he feels that his classmates, *rabbeim*, or fellow community members do not think

highly enough of him. Or he may be jealous of the "stars" of the *ye-shivah* or community.

It is this deeper issue that causes him to view his own achievements in a negative light.

Every Achievement Is a Success

The Steipler writes in *Chayei Olam* (Ch. 12) that all this is simply a stratagem of the *Yetzer Hara* to persuade him to give up learning and striving. The truth, he says, is that every achievement is a success, no matter how small. Every

daf a *talmid* completes and every *Tosafos* he masters is a precious acquisition and a sign of growth and progress.

The mere fact that he is able to understand more today than yesterday is a cause for celebration.

IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS, SUCCESS IS VERY DIFFICULT TO MEASURE.

What is more, says the

Steipler, if he will just keep going, he will gradually acquire more and more Torah until at last he becomes a living illustration of the verse (*Mishlei* 13:11): *Wealth through vanity diminishes, but he who gathers through toil increases.*

There have been many *talmidei chachamim*, testifies the Steipler, who were not considered gifted in their youth, yet through toil and diligence became recognized scholars. Hence while standing out among one's peers is not a valid measure of success, making small but steady acquisitions is.

This principle is just as applicable to other types of *avodah* as it is to Torah study. If a person gradually improves his *mitzvah* observance, perfects his character or increases his concentration in *davening*, that, too, is real success.

Do Not Compare!

Often, part of the trouble is that the *talmid* is in the habit of comparing his own progress with that of his companions. Let us suppose for the *continued on page 3*

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

DECEMBER / כסלו

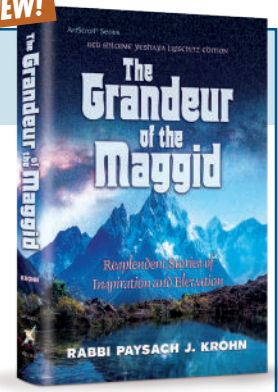
SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 טו	11 יז	12 יח	13 יט	14 כ	15 כא	16 כב
Nedarim 46	Nedarim 47	Nedarim 48	Nedarim 49	Nedarim 43	Nedarim 44	Nedarim 45

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

DECEMBER / כסלו

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 טו	11 יז	12 יח	13 יט	14 כ	15 כא	16 כב
Shabbos 6:2-3	Shabbos 6:4-5	Shabbos 6:6-7	Shabbos 6:8-9	Shabbos 6:10-7:1	Shabbos 7:2-3	Shabbos 7:4-8:1

NEW!



Rabbi Alexander (Sender) Gross was a *musmach* of Rav Shlomo Heiman (1892-1945), *rosh yeshivah* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and a very close *talmid* of Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz (1886-1948). In 1947, he founded the Hebrew Academy of Miami, the first Jewish day school south of Baltimore. The Academy, which started with six students, today has more than 600. Since its inception, thousands of children have gone through its portals, where Rabbi Gross, during his thirty-two years as principal, gained his reputation as a master and caring *mechanech*.

The early years were difficult, as few parents in South Florida saw the need for an Orthodox education for their children. Additionally, many could not afford to pay the school's tuition, even though Rabbi Gross offered liberal scholarships.

In 1959, the board of directors gave Rabbi Gross an ultimatum: The child of any parent not paying tuition must be removed from the Academy. The school was strapped financially. One particular family that felt school fees were too high told their nine-year-old son that he would soon be leaving the school permanently.

The child was crestfallen. He loved the Academy, especially the Jewish studies. He sat down and wrote Rabbi Gross a letter. He said, "I want to remain in your school. If you let me stay, maybe one day I will be a great rabbi, but if I have to leave, who knows what will become of me?"

Rabbi Gross was so touched by the letter that he read

it to the board of directors at their next meeting. They decided to let the child continue at the Academy. He stayed until his eighth-grade graduation and was the class valedictorian. He continued his studies in the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland and became a prodigious *talmid chacham*.

The nine-year-old boy who wrote the letter was Zev (Billy) Leff. Rav Mordechai Gifter (1915-2001), the *rosh yeshivah* of Telz, once told Rabbi Gross, "If the Hebrew Academy was created just so that it could produce this one *talmid*, Rabbi Zev Leff, *dayeinu* — it would have been worthwhile."

Rabbi Leff, a world-renowned speaker and spiritual leader, has authored numerous *sefarim* and led the Young Israel of Greater Miami for nine years. He is today the *rav* of Moshav Mattisyahu in Israel.

The son of Rabbi Alexander Gross, Rav Shragi, related that after his father passed away in 1980, his children were going through the precious papers their father kept in his wallet. Among them was the folded letter of the nine-year-old boy from Miami, written twenty-one years earlier! Undoubtedly, it helped kindle Rabbi Gross's burning passion, both in

Miami and on a national level in his work with Torah Umesorah (founded by his rebbi, Rav Shraga Feivel), to assure that every Jewish child, wherever he was and whatever the cost, would be taught the Ribbono shel Olam's Torah. 📖



Rav Zev Leff

"IF I HAVE TO LEAVE, WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME?"

A SENSE OF GROWTH *continued from page 2*

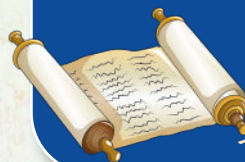
moment that his assessment of his relative standing is accurate. Even so, it is only a reflection of the present moment and tells us nothing about what tomorrow will bring. Thus the Steipler writes: *The fact that he sometimes sees his fellow surpassing him in ability, comprehension and the like is no proof regarding the future. I have seen many talmidim who were considered unsuccessful in their youth, yet in the course of time grew to acquire solid*

knowledge in most of the Talmud...

There are two points to bear in mind here: The first is that through steady perseverance, he may indeed outshine his more gifted colleagues one day. But a more important point is that growth is not a competitive sport to begin with. We did not come into this world to be "better" than anyone else, but to make the most of the gifts we were granted. Hence there is no point in comparing oneself with anyone else at all. 📖

This week's Yerushalmi Yomi schedule:

DECEMBER / כסלו	SHABBOS		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
	10	י	11	יא	12	יב	13	יג	14	יד	15	טו	16	טז
	Berachos 27		Berachos 28		Berachos 29		Berachos 30		Berachos 31		Berachos 32		Berachos 33	



Parashah for Children

פרשת וישלח

Kever Rachel, Then

Yaakov, surrounded by his family, buried his dear wife Rachel. He built a monument over her kever (grave) to mark the place on the side of the road where he buried her.

Even though it would have been more respectful for Rachel to be buried in the nearby city of Beis Lechem, Yaakov buried her on the side of the road. Why?

Yaakov saw far into the future. He knew that one day the Beis HaMikdash would be burned, and the Jews would be taken to Bavel. The Jewish captives would be led on this very road, and pass the spot where Rachel died.

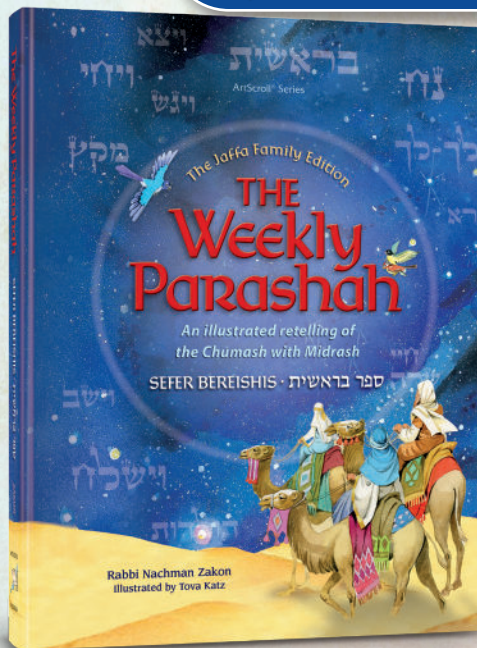
Yaakov decided to bury her there on the road, so when the Jews would pass by the grave of Mama Rachel, they would pray there and cry bitter tears over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

Yaakov made the right choice! After the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, Rachel heard her children's cries. She came before Hashem and pleaded for mercy and for the return of the Jews to Eretz Yisrael. Hashem promised her that He would return the Jews to Eretz Yisrael.

Kever Rachel, Today

Today, Kever Rachel is a very popular holy site where Jews come to pray. They come all through the year. It's only about a five-minute drive from Yerushalayim's city limits.

Rachel's yahrtzeit, the anniversary of the day she passed away, is the eleventh of Cheshvan. On that day tens of thousands come to pray there, men, women, and children. Rachel is surrounded by her "children" on that day.



How old was Rachel when she passed away?
She was only 36.

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Vayishlach:

In which city did Hashem give Yaakov Avinu his new name, Yisrael?

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 Chayei Sarah question is: YAAKOV KIMCHE, Boca Raton, FL



*The question was: What's the oldest cemetery in the world?
The answer is: The Me'aras HaMachpeilah in Chevron. It's over 3,700 years old!*

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