

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת חקת-בלק
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RABBI YITZCHOK

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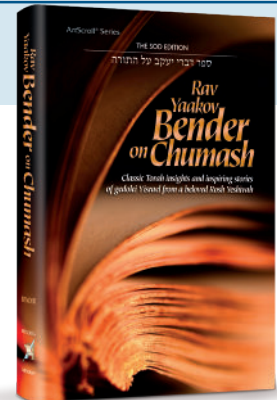
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

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

PARASHAH

THE GOLDEN PATH

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash



זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה אשר אין בה מום אשר לא עלה עליה על.
This is the decree of the Torah, which Hashem has commanded, saying: Speak to the Bnei Yisrael, and they shall take to you a completely red cow, which is without blemish, and upon which a yoke has not come (19:2).

Parah adumah is the quintessential *chok*, a *mitzvah* whose reason is beyond our grasp, and not just because of the way the impure person becomes pure. Part of the riddle is that those who are involved in bringing about *taharah* — such as the one who burns the *parah*, the one who collects the ashes, and many others involved in the process — actually become *tameil*.

It is hard to comprehend, and therefore, it is part of the *chok* as well. The *Seforno* (*Bamidbar* 19:2) reveals a profound lesson that lies in this *halachah*.

The *tamei* individual needs to be cleansed, and extreme measures are required to achieve that. It is necessary, but there is a price that comes with engaging in those extreme measures. The ones involved with the *parah adumah*, great as their *zechus* is, are made impure by that association.

The ritual of the *parah adumah* is extremely holy. It is created to purify the impure, but, as the *Rambam* cautions, a person has to go on the middle road. People who are pure should not go to extreme measures, and if they do, they can become impure.

As *mechanchim* and parents, we tend to celebrate excellence, but we have to celebrate normalcy the very same way. A long *tefillah*, an in-

tense learning seder, and extraordinary selflessness are

all signs of a growing person, but parents have to always be watching to make sure that the *shvil hazahav*, the golden path in the middle, is being followed.

There was a *bachur* in one of the *yeshivos* of Yerushalayim who took to wearing *tefillin* during first seder, feeling that it elevated him. His *rebbe* took him to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach to discuss the matter. Rav Shlomo Zalman, who rarely raised his voice and always spoke in gentle tones, looked at the *bachur* and spoke in a very strong voice. “*Zei normal, be normal!*” he exclaimed.

Rav Shlomo Avigdor Altusky once said in a *shmuess* in our *beis medrash* that as a *bachur*, he was extremely scrupulous about how he said the words of *Krias Shema*, repeating them again and again to ensure that he met the particulars of *halachah*.

It was taking a long time and turning into an emotional burden.

He went to speak to the Steipler, who was unequivocal in his decision. “It is *assur* for you to repeat words,” he said, plain and simple.

“He saved my life,” Rav Shlomo Avigdor told a *beis medrash* filled with *bachurim*,

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Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro



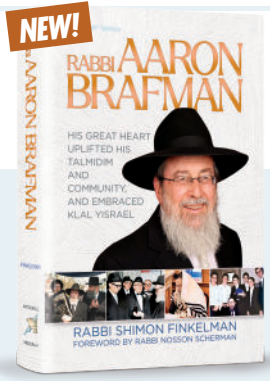
Rav Shlomo Avigdor Altusky



Rav Michael Bender

BRINGING OUT THEIR BEST

Rabbi Aaron Brafman by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman



A *talmid*, Shaul Friedman, related: “The year the *yeshivah* learned *Masechta Gittin*, signs went up about the annual grand *siyum* on the *masechta* we had learned. There was a poster for *talmidim* to sign their name if they were planning to complete the *masechta* in time for the *siyum*. I had learned well that year, but had not come close to finishing; I was not going to sign my name.

“Then Rabbi Brafman met me in the hallway. ‘I didn’t notice your name on the poster,’ he said.

“I told him the truth, that I was not making a *siyum*. His response shocked me.

“What do you mean? You *shteiged* so much this year! Your *hasmadah* influenced other *bachurim* to learn better. You deserve to have your name up there.’

“And he went and added my name to the list.

“Apparently, Rabbi Brafman felt that what I had accomplished that year was on a par with the *siyum* that others would be making. And at the *siyum*, he included me among the *bachurim* who were called up by name to participate in the program. I never forgot the *chizuk* this gave me.”

•••••

A *talmid*, Yehoshua Krasnow, related:

“One *Rosh Chodesh* when I was in eleventh grade, I was the *chazzan* for

Hallel in *yeshivah*. I sang *niggunim* for both *Hodu* and *Pischu Li* and received a number of compliments. The most effusive in his praises was *rebbe zt”l*, who motioned to me as soon as I was done that I had done a great job. He complimented me again after *davening*. However, the best was yet to come.

“In the middle of learning *Gemara*, Rabbi Brafman peeked inside the doorway of my classroom and called me outside. He said that he needed to know the name of the *niggun* I had used for *Hodu*, as he had enjoyed it immensely.

“At the time, I wondered: What was the urgency that he felt it necessary to call me out of class in the middle of *Gemara*? Looking back, I feel that this was his way of giving me *chizuk* and making me feel good about what I had done. By calling me out of *shiur*, he made sure that I would never forget the compliment he had given me. In reality, another person would have felt embarrassed to make such a big deal about a *niggun*. But *rebbe*, being the humble person that he was, would not worry about such things when a *talmid* was concerned. He never thought about himself.”



Rabbi Aaron Brafman

THE GOLDEN PATH

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“allowing me to focus on my regular *sefer hayom* again.”

When extremes are met, there is a good chance that priorities are being reshuffled.

I noticed a *bachur* in our *beis medrash* who was *davening* longer and longer, and I realized that he was probably repeating the words to a point of unhealthiness. I called him over and said I would convene a *beis din* and write him a *shtar* that we would take on ourselves the *aveirah* of mispronouncing words, but he could no longer repeat them.

His features flooded with relief, and he nodded. He understood. He said that the *beis din* wasn’t necessary after all.

How does one know? Who decides what is extreme and what is normal?

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro gives us a clue. Not long after his arrival in Eretz Yisrael, he wrote a letter describing his schedule, the hours he merited to spend at the home of his cousin, the Brisker Rav. If there was a home in which *halachah* was sacred, it was that one, and Rav Moshe Shmuel’s term for the household is telling — *beiso ha’alitz shel Maran HaGriz*, the joyous household of the Brisker Rav!

Despite the intense focus on *halachah*, it was a happy place to be, and

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THIS WEEK’S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

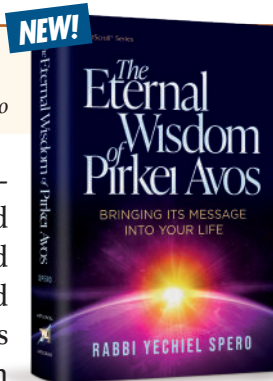
JULY / תמוז

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 א	2 ב	3 ג	4 ד	5 ה	6 ו	7 ז
Gittin 46	Gittin 47	Gittin 48	Gittin 49	Gittin 50	Gittin 51	Gittin 52

THIS WEEK’S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

JULY / תמוז

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 א	2 ב	3 ג	4 ד	5 ה	6 ו	7 ז
Succah 2:4-5	Succah 2:6-7	Succah 2:8-9	Succah 3:1-2	Succah 3:3-4	Succah 3:5-6	Succah 3:7-8



The Al-mighty detests those who are haughty. He has no interest in sharing His universe with them (*Sotah* 5a). Conversely, humility plays a critical role in our receiving of the Torah (*Bamidbar* 12:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:9).

Make no mistake. *Anivus* does not dictate that we deny our ability and potential. It is crucial to possess a strong self-awareness and a healthy self-esteem. Without them, we will never be able to grow and maximize our potential.

As a young man, Rav Elyakim Schlesinger of London, a disciple of the Brisker Rav, served the *Chazon Ish*. One time, he built up the courage to ask the *Chazon Ish* if he was fully aware that he was the *gadol hador*. The *Chazon Ish* thought for a moment and then replied that he was cognizant of his role and responsibility as the *gadol hador*.



Rav Elyakim Schlesinger

When young Elyakim asked how the *Chazon Ish* balanced that awareness with the *middah* of *anivus*, the *Chazon Ish* explained that humility does not entail a denial of one's abilities. Rather, one must appreciate the talents Hashem has given him and realize what he has. *Anivus* helps one ascribe those gifts to the Al-mighty.

The *Chazon Ish* concluded, "I am certain that if someone else would have been given the gifts I was given, he, too, would have become the *gadol hador*."

Despite acknowledging their capabilities, our *gedolim* work on the *middah* of *anivus*, to the point where they detest honor and anything associated with it.

Rav Akiva Eiger wrote a letter depicting his abhorrence and distaste for the honor associated with the rabbinate. He would have much preferred to serve as the *shammash* of a *shul* or serve in the capacity of a night watchman, where he could have learned undisturbed for long periods of time. The rabbinate stole precious time from his day and forced him to receive unwanted accolades and honor.

Rav Akiva Eiger writes, "*Rov tefillasi be'yamim hakedoshim le'hotzieini mi'masger asir hazeh* — The majority of my prayer on the holy days is to release me from my imprisonment (of honor)."

Rav Akiva Eiger, the *gadol hador*, spent the holiest days of the year begging to be freed from the shackles of *kavod*!

The *Yalkut Shimoni* (*Yeshayah* 499) teaches that when *Mashiach* comes, he will stand on the roof of the *Beis HaMikdash* and call out, "*Anavim higia zman geulaschem* — Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived."

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, the *mashgiach* of Beth Me-drash Govoha, asks: Why does *Mashiach* hail the pious *Yidden* as humble ones? Why not refer to them as *tzaddikim*, *yerei'im* (those who fear Hashem), or *chachamim*?

The answer, avers Rav Nosson, is that *Mashiach* will come in the merit of *anivus*. 📖

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that is usually an indication that the behavior within it is what the Torah considers normal.

My brother, Rav Michoel Bender, was such a person. He was so elevated, refined, and pure to the point of *kedushah*, but always within the realm of normalcy. An old

yeshivah roommate of his recently told us how my brother would return to the room late at night, well after midnight. Even though Michoel was particular about *nekivus* and hand-washing, when the other *bachurim* were sleeping, his hand-washing took an instant, and then he went quietly to bed.

His priorities were in order and

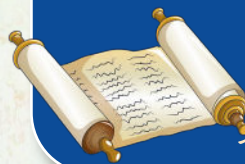
everything — Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, and *middos* — fit together in harmony.

It is when one wanders away from that perfect, precise path, whether to the right or the left, that troubles start, and that is why the one engaged with the impure, necessary as it might be, must himself be made pure once again. 📖

This week's Yerushalmi Yomi schedule:

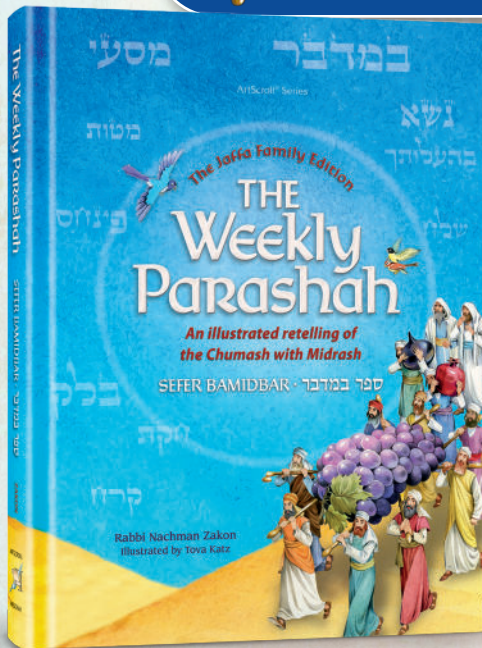
	SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1 א	2 ב	3 ג	4 ד	5 ה	6 ו	7 ז
	Demai 63	Demai 64	Demai 65	Demai 66	Demai 67	Demai 68	Demai 69

JULY / תמוז



Parashah for Children

פרשת חקת-בלק



The Moving Mountain

Hashem moved an entire mountain! The mountain on the Emorite side moved over to the mountain of Moav. The jagged rock formations pressed deeply into the caves of the mountain on the other side. It was like putting together two pieces of a puzzle. But these weren't puzzle pieces, they were mountains!

The Emorite soldiers hiding inside the caves were crushed!

The danger to the Jews was over. And with its job finished, the mountain moved back to where it was before.

When the Jews passed through the valley ... nothing happened to them. No ambush, no rocks, no arrows. The Emorites had been defeated. But the Jews didn't know that. They didn't know that

Hashem had been watching over them and had saved them from an ambush. They had no idea of the great miracle that Hashem had done for them.

So how did they find out?

Through Be'er Miriam. Hashem made Be'er Miriam's water shoot up into the caves. It washed out all the blood and bodies of the crushed Emorite soldiers. A river flowed through the Jewish encampment, so all the Jews could see what Hashem had done to the Emorites.

When the Jews saw it they realized what had happened, and they

sang shirah (a song of praise) to Hashem. They thanked Him for the miracle that had saved

them from the ambush, and also for the

miracle of Be'er Miriam, which had given them water for 40 years in the desert.



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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Chukas-Balak:

How did the water of Be'er Miriam get to each shevet?

*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 Behaaloscha question is: AVRAHAM ZICHERMAN, Toms River, NJ



The question was: How were Eldad and Meidad related to Moshe?

The answer is: He was their half-brother. Eldad, Meidad and Moshe had the same mother – Yocheved. Eldad and Meidad were older than Moshe.

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