

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת דברים
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EDITOR

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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

REAL LEADERS

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה — *These are the words that Moshe spoke (1:1).*

Moshe Rabbeinu begins his farewell speech, a *shmuess* that would mix reflection on the past and guidance for the future. It was a masterpiece of oratory, as Chazal teach us, the various places listed off in the *pesukim* all references to the experiences in the *midbar*; “*Lavan*,” “*Chatzeros*,” and “*Di Zahav*” corresponding to the struggles along the way.

What, asks the Midrash Tanchuma, are the opening words of the *parashah*, *Eileh hadvearin*, *These are the words*, telling us? What message lies in the introduction? Throughout the Torah, we find Moshe Rabbeinu speaking and we do not find this sort of preface.

The Midrash takes us back to the very beginning, when Moshe Rabbeinu first encounters the Ribbono shel Olam. Hashem asks Moshe to go lead Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, but Moshe demurs, feeling incapable of being a national spokesman.

For seven days, Hakadosh Baruch Hu and Moshe discuss this, Moshe still certain that he is unworthy. After all, he says, *lo ish devarim anochi*, *I am not a man of words* (*Shemos* 4:10).

Finally, Moshe Rabbeinu relents and approaches Pharaoh, despite not being a man of words and thinking himself unqualified.

This is what the *pasuk* here is teaching us, says the Midrash. The man who insisted that he could not, that he would not succeed, who had a speech impediment and was certain he would not be heard — he was not just the most effective leader we ever had, but his every word would live on for eternity. He would speak and we would listen, again and again.

Eileh hadevarim! All the lessons and teachings over

a forty-year journey came forth from the humble man who claimed, “*Lo ish devarim anochi*.”

After the *petirah* of Rav Beinish Finkel, there were a number of suitable candidates to succeed him as rosh yeshivah. His oldest son-in-law, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, was one of the biggest *masmidim* in yeshivah, respected as a *gaon*, but some of the yeshivah old-timers thought that the American *avreich* could not stand at the helm of what was essentially a Yerushalmi yeshivah.

It was not just the fact that English was his first language. He was already then suffering from what would later be diagnosed as Parkinson's, dealing with weakness and physical limitations that would only worsen.

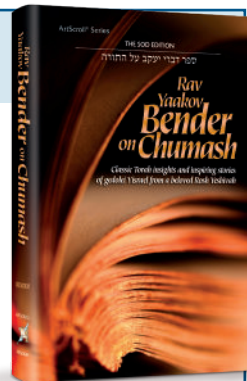
How could he lead the yeshivah if walking down the street was hard?

It did not take long for those who worked closely with him to become his greatest admirers. On the first Simchas Torah after Rav Beinish's passing, Rav Refoel Shmulevitz — who some

talmidim had considered a suitable choice — spent a good part of *hakafos* dancing alone in front of Rav Nosson Tzvi, as if the new rosh yeshivah were himself a *Sefer Torah*. It was a resounding message to the *talmidim* about how Rav Refoel viewed the new *rosh yeshivah*.

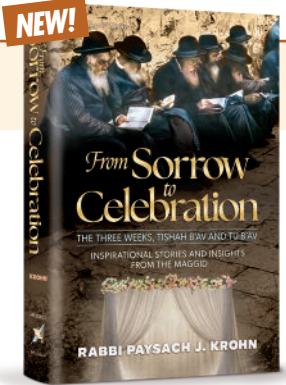
Years later, Rav Nosson Tzvi came into a yeshivah Channukah *mesibah*, which is one of the high points of the year in Mir, an evening of *simchas haTorah*, *achdus* between friends, and shared celebration between

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Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

**HE RAISED THE
MICROPHONE
AND ROARED
OUT, LO B'CHAYIL
V'LO B'KOACH KI
IM B'RUCHI...**



Many of us have had the special opportunity to daven at the Kosel HaMaaravi. To most of us, the tall, imposing wall is majestic in its beauty, the plaza with its usual multitude of multifaceted people is inviting, the ambiance on most days — especially on Shabbosos, Yamim Tovim, and fast days — is sacred and inspiring.

It certainly wasn't always this way; in fact, for years, when it was controlled by Arabs, the place was in shambles. However, even today we must never forget that we are not at the ideal stage — far from it. The Beis HaMikdash that was beyond the Kosel is still not with us. The degree of holiness that was once there is still lacking. In this incident featuring Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932), we realize he had his priorities in order. We should never forget them.



This classic story was told to me by Rabbi Yosef Scheinberger (1919-2007), the secretary of the Beis Din Tzedek in Jerusalem.

Until World War I, Palestine (Eretz Yisrael) was part of Turkey's Ottoman Empire. After the war, the League of Nations put Great Britain in charge of the Holy Land, and in 1920, the British appointed Sir Herbert Samuel, an assimilated Jew, to be High Commissioner of Palestine. One of his first official functions was to pay his respects to the country's prominent rabbis. His itinerary included a visit to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the Chief Rav of Jerusalem, who lived in the

Old City.

Rav Yosef Chaim lived in a very simple basement apartment that was not only without luxuries but did not even have electricity. Rabbi Moshe Blau, the administrator of Agudas Yisrael, who was handling the arrangements for the meeting, felt that Rav Yosef Chaim's apartment was too simple to play host to the distinguished High Commissioner. He therefore asked Rav Yosef Chaim if he would be willing to meet Sir Herbert, the High Commissioner, in a more suitable home.



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld

**IF HE
CAN LIVE
LIKE
THAT,
THEN I
CAN LIVE
LIKE THIS**

Rav Yosef Chaim refused, saying that it would be deceptive to let it appear as though he lived somewhere else. Rabbi Blau countered with another suggestion. Perhaps a new table and chairs could be purchased for Rav Yosef Chaim's home to replace his rickety furniture? Rav Yosef Chaim refused again, insisting that this, too, would be deceitful. Seeing that Rav Yosef Chaim could not be persuaded to make any changes at all, Rabbi Blau made the appointment for a Wednesday, at midday, at the Rav's residence in the Old City.

On the appointed day, a squad of police officers escorted the High Commissioner's entourage, accompanied by Dr. Moshe Wallach, founder of the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem. Dozens of people followed them.

The group wound their way through the maze of the Old City alleys to the Batei Machseh neighborhood. When they arrived, Rav Yosef Chaim, wearing his Yom Tov clothes as a sign of respect, came forward to greet the High Commissioner, the representative of the King of England. Sir Herbert Samuel then descended the steps to Rav Yosef Chaim's apartment. As he walked into the little abode and glanced around, he asked Rav Yosef Chaim, half-jokingly, "You couldn't find a lower apartment?"

Rav Yosef Chaim turned to the sophisticated gentleman and said, "Please come to the window. I would like to show you something."

The two men walked to the window from which the Kosel HaMaaravi was clearly visible in the distance. The Arabs purposely kept it in disgraceful condition.

Rav Yosef Chaim pointed to Heaven and said, "If He [Hashem]," then pointed to the Kosel as he continued, "can live like *that*, then I can live like *this*." 📖

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

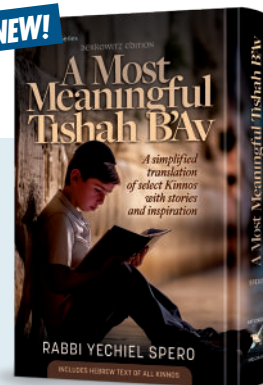
AUGUST / אב

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 Bava Basra 46	11 Bava Basra 47	12 Bava Basra 48	13 Bava Basra 49	14 Bava Basra 50	15 Bava Basra 51	16 Bava Basra 52

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

AUGUST / אב

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 Bava Kamma 2:1-2	11 Bava Kamma 2:3-4	12 Bava Kamma 2:5-6	13 Bava Kamma 3:1-2	14 Bava Kamma 3:3-4	15 Bava Kamma 3:5-6	16 Bava Kamma 3:7-8



The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of sinas chinam, hating a fellow Jew for no reason. The rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash starts with loving every Jew. When we help each other and try to understand one another, we bring ourselves closer to that special day, creating a place where Hashem wants to be. Just like doing chesed, speaking nicely to others, avoiding lashon hara, and forgiving others when they wrong us, judging others favorably is one of the many actions that show our ahavas Yisrael. By always giving the benefit of the doubt, we create a loving and united world, one that is ready and waiting for the newly rebuilt Beis HaMikdash.

After World War II, famine struck Eretz Yisrael, and food, especially bread, was hard to come by. Rav Moshe Auerbach, the principal of a boys' school in Eretz Yisrael, was always concerned about his *talmidim's* needs. He noticed that many of them looked thin and lacked energy. Therefore, he raised funds to give each child an extra piece of bread during recess. This small act of kindness brought much-needed relief to the hungry children.

Every day, the children eagerly lined up for their extra bread. Most of them enjoyed every bite, grateful for the extra bit of food. However, one boy did something strange. Instead of eating his bread, he threw it over the school fence. In those times of hunger, wasting bread was like wasting diamonds.

The other children noticed and tried to convince him to stop, but he didn't listen. They informed Rav Auerbach, who felt he had to step in. He called in the boy and asked why he was throwing the bread away. The boy refused to explain.

Rav Auerbach said to the boy, "If you throw bread over the fence again, you will be suspended."

The next day, the boy received his bread and, as usual, threw it over the fence. True to his word, Rav Auerbach decided to suspend him. Bread was too precious to waste.

That evening, Rav Auerbach visited the boy's home to explain the situation to his father. As he spoke, the father began to cry. Rav Auerbach felt terrible, thinking he had upset the man.

Finally, the father explained, "We are

going through hard times and have very little food. When you first began to give out the extra bread, my younger son cried from hunger, knowing that my older son was getting an extra piece. So, my older son worked out a plan with his little brother.

"Every day, he throws his bread over the fence, and his younger brother picks it up later. The bread isn't being wasted. It's going to his hungry sibling." The older brother must have been embarrassed to tell the principal how desperately poor his family was. So that's why he hadn't explained his actions to him.

Now, hearing this, Rav Auerbach could not hold back his own tears. He had misunderstood the boy's actions completely. He apologized to the boy and his family and welcomed him back to school with great respect.

This story can serve as a reminder to us to judge others favorably, even when we are almost 100 percent sure that they did something wrong. 📖

REAL LEADERS continued from page 1

rebbeim and *talmidim*. Rav Nosson Tzvi was clearly in pain, every step difficult as he made his way to the head table, his face wreathed in determination just to make it to his seat.

The singing *talmidim* watched him, their beloved rosh yeshivah, and every one of them was wondering the same thing. How was it possible? How did this man, who faced such obstacles, manage to learn and teach, saying brilliant *shiurim* and *chaburos*, maintaining personal *chavrusa* sessions with any *bachur* that asked? How did the weak, sickly *tzaddik* raise millions of dollars each year, traveling and speaking and meeting donors?

Rav Yitzchok Ezrachi speaks at the annual *mesibah*, and that year, he seemed to detect the unasked ques-

tion hanging over the room. He raised the microphone and roared out a *pasuk* from the *haftarah* of Shabbos Chanukah *lo b'chayil v'lo b'koach ki im b'ruchi, amer Hashem: Not with strength, nor with might — but with My spirit, said Hashem, Master of Legions* (Zechariah 4:6).

That was his answer. That was his explanation.

Physical might has no connection with success. Strength has no bearing on the final result. *Ruach?* Spirit? That is everything. A weak man emerged as one of the great builders of Torah in modern history — and from whom did Rav Nosson Tzvi learn?

From our greatest leader, who went from "*lo ish devarim ano-chi*," to a *Sefer* in the Torah that begins with "*eileh hadevarim*," these are the words that Moshe taught, and still teaches. 📖

**This week's
Yerushalmi Yomi
schedule:**

**AUGUST /
אב**

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 Challah 9	11 Challah 10	12 Challah 11	13 Challah 12	14 Challah 13	15 Challah 14	16 Challah 15



Parashah for Children

פרשת דברים

Patience!

Before Moshe died, he told the Jews that after he had appointed the judges, he spoke to them. Here are some of the things he told the judges:

- ▶ How lucky you are to be appointed as judges over the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, a people Hashem loves.
- ▶ Be patient in judgment. No matter how many times you have judged this kind of case before, when it comes up again with new people, take the time to think about it again.
- ▶ Judge every kind of case carefully.

The judge decides based only on what the law says.

- ▶ No matter how rich, strong, or politically powerful someone is — don't be afraid of him. Judge the case according to the law, even if it means the rich or powerful person will lose the case. Judgment belongs to Hashem. If you are a judge, you are Hashem's agent to do the right thing. The only One you have to be afraid of is Hashem, and not people!

Moshe also said, "If a case is hard and you don't know the answer, then you should bring the case to me, and I will hear it."

Moshe told those who would be in charge of appointing judges in the future: "When you have to appoint a judge, be careful to appoint only the right person. Don't make someone a judge because he is handsome, strong, or related to you."

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Devarim:

Which Shevet did not send a spy to Eretz 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 Balak question is: YITZI KOLODNY, South Bend, IN

The question was: If Hashem didn't want Bilaam to go to Moav, why did he tell him to go?
The answer is: A person is led on the path he wants to go so Hashem didn't stop him.



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