

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת ויחי
מ"א טבת תשפ"ה

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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

GATHERING FOR MASHIACH

Touched by the Parashah by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

In *Parashas Vayechi*, the final *parashah* of *Sefer Bereishis*, Yaakov gathered his family together and blessed his sons before his death. The *pasuk* says, "*Hei'asfu ve'agidah lachem eis asher yikra eschem be'Acharis HaYamim* — Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days" (49:1). As Rashi explains, Yaakov wanted to reveal to his children when Mashiach would come. Therefore, according to the Shelah, he told his children to assemble, since it is impossible for the Redemption to come if there is hatred among Jews; they all must be in one group, one assembly.

The Chiddushei HaRim notes a repetitious command, as first Yaakov told his children to assemble, *hei'asfu*, and then in the next *pasuk*, he said to gather, *hi'kavtzu*. The Chiddushei HaRim explains that at first Yaakov wanted to reveal when the End of Days would come. So he called out, "*Hei'asfu*."

Then, according to Rashi, "*nistalkah mimenu Shechinah* — but the *Shechinah* departed from him." Therefore, he was no longer able to reveal when Mashiach would come, so he began to say other things. However, although he was prevented from revealing *when* it would come, Yaakov was able to reveal a suggestion *how* to bring about the *Geulah*. Hence, he called out once more, "*Hi'kavtzu*," for when Jews are unified, that will speed up the Final Redemption.

Rashi explains the *pasuk*, "*Va'yehi vishurun Mel-ech, be'hisaseif roshei am yachad shivtei Yisrael* — He became King over Yeshurun when the numbers of the nation gathered, the tribes of Yisrael in unity" (*Devarim* 33:5). When will we merit Hashem as our King? Only when we are gathered into one unit, and there is peace among us — not when there is strife.

Rav Chaim Shaul Kaufman, in his *sefer Mishchas*

Shemen, cites the *sifrei Kabbalah* that explain the words we say in *Minchah* of Shabbos, "*Atah Echad ve'shimcha Echad, u'mi ke'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aretz* — You are One and Your Name is One; and who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation on earth." According to their explanation, we are saying to Hashem: You, Al-mighty, are One, and Your Name is One, but that is revealed only when Your nation is united, when they are a *goy echad*.

The Shevus Yaakov, Rav Yaakov Reischer, was delivering his legendary Shabbos HaGadol *derashah*. This year, he spoke about the minimum *shiur* of *achilas matzah*. People came from all over to hear the *talmid chacham's* intricately woven tapestry of Torah. Even the greatest Torah scholars of the region were in awe of the brilliance and depth of the Shevus Yaakov's speech. After two hours, he concluded his talk. By the time the *rav* reached the door of the *beis midrash*, nearly everyone had said something to him — a comment, a question, an added point, a compliment — about his riveting speech.

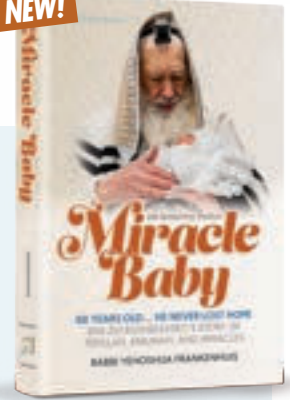
But there was one individual who had yet to be heard. A haggard-looking pauper approached the *rav*, as he, too, had a *kasha* on the *shiur*. "Rebbi, it makes no difference what the *shiur* of *achilas matzah* is, if I don't have any food or matzah for my family for Pesach!"

The Shevus Yaakov was taken aback. He looked at the downtrodden pauper who stood before him; the man was crying. Immediately, he retreated to the podium where he had delivered the *derashah*. As he stepped onto the stage in front of the *aron kodesh*, the crowd hushed. They were thrilled

continued on page 2



Rav Chaim Kaufman



Rav Zvi has become an example of *emunah*, hope, inspiration, and encouragement to thousands all over the world. Although perhaps what garnered the most attention was when, at the age of 88, his *ben bechor* was born, the greatest *chizuk* and source of inspiration are his sixty-five years of waiting, of davening, of disappointments, of not seeing the answer to his *tefillos* yet not letting it interfere with his *avodas Hashem*.

There are many who struggle with infertility, with *shidduchim* for themselves or their children, with illness or earning a *parnasah*. They beg Hashem for a *yeshuah* and sometimes feel great disappointment when their *tefillos* are not answered. They do not understand what has happened to their prayers, or why they deserve their plight.

Let us go to the very beginning of the Torah, which will shed light on this subject.

The Torah begins by describing the creation of the world in great detail. Why is this the most important thing with which to begin the Torah? The Torah is not written chronologically. Why then does it begin with creation rather than discussing mankind, the *Avos*, or *Mattan Torah*?

We are all familiar with the story of the cruel executions of the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*, recited on Yom Kippur and Tishah B'Av. Following baseless accusations, these ten *tzaddikim* were taken to be killed by the Roman emperor in the cruelest ways imaginable. Upon seeing the horrid

ic events, the *malachim* cried out to Hashem, “Zu Torah v’zu secharah? Is this Torah and is this its reward?” But Hashem’s response was, “*Shtok — Quiet! If I hear this question being asked again, I will destroy the world and return it to tohu vavohu.*”

Why did Klal Yisrael experience such terrible *hester*? Why did the greatest *tzaddikim* deserve such a fate? Why



Rav Zvi Kushlevsky

HE BEGAN CUTTING THE GARMENT. “STOP!” THE KING SHOUTED!

did Hashem shut down the seemingly reasonable question of the *malachim* and threaten to destroy the world?

A parable provides insight:

Meshulam, a trusted tailor for the king, created magnificent garments for the royal family. For the king’s jubilee, he was commissioned to craft a spectacular robe using the finest material. After weeks of meticulous work, Meshulam delivered a masterpiece, exceeding the king’s expectations and the king paid him handsomely.

However, a jealous bishop slandered Meshulam, claiming he stole and sold some of the royal material. The king, initially dismissive, decided to investigate. When the material’s measurements were compared with the completed cloak, there was a discrepancy. Meshulam was arrested for

treason and sentenced to death.

On the day of his execution, Meshulam requested his final wish: to have the cloak and a pair of scissors.

Granted his request, he began cutting the garment. “Stop!” the king shouted.

Meshulam calmly explained, “Every inch of material you gave me is in this robe. The only way to show you is by undoing the seams and stitches, returning the fabric to its original state. Then, all will be clear.”

With this we can explain the episode of the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*. Hashem’s message to the *malachim* was: “You were not there during *maasei Bereishis*, when I created the world. If you continue to ask this question, I will need to explain it to you, and the only way for you to understand is if I undo every last seam and every last stitch of the world — return it to *tohu vavohu*. Then, in its original state, there will be no questions.”

This, explains the Vilna Gaon, was Hashem’s response to the *malachim*. “Indeed, from your perspective, from your vantage point, you pose a great question. Why is all this pain, suffering, and carnage inflicted upon the greatest *tzaddikim*? I do not have an answer that you can understand. You weren’t there when I created the world. You did not see the masterplan of thousands of years. You do not understand every pleat of fabric, every seam and stitch.”

GATHERING FOR MASHIACH continued from page 1

that the *rav* was going to continue his *shiur*, and waited with bated breath; then the *rav* continued his *derashah*. “My entire *derashah* is *upgreft* [proven wrong].

“The new *shiur* for *achilas matzah* is to ensure that every single family has enough food and matzah to eat for Pesach!” *Achdus*, which goes along with looking out for other *Yidden*, is what will bring about the Redemption. 📖

There are moments in a person's life that live on, single encounters or conversations that replay, again and again, for years. One such moment can shape an entire life.

My mother, Rebbetzin Basya Bender, was a *chiddush*, a novelty — an immigrant to this country and a young *almanah*. The lone survivor in her family, she rose above pain to not only raise us on her own, but to inspire and guide hundreds of *bnos Yisrael* as a beloved and effective teacher.

She was a woman of resilience and faith, but if I had to identify the moment when her strength and spirit shone most brightly, it was early on a Shabbos morning.

It was not just any Shabbos morning: It was that week, in the autumn of 1965, when we were sitting *shivah* for my father *zatzal*, who had been *niftar* so suddenly and unexpectedly.

Every one of us was lost without him. That Leil Shabbos, she worked to keep our mood upbeat during the *seudah*, to show us that we would be able to carry on as a family, that Shabbos was still Shabbos.

It could not have been easy.

That night, we all slept. It had been an exhausting week, emotionally and physically, and we must have slept very deeply. When we started to come down on Shabbos morning, we rubbed our eyes in disbelief.

The house was in complete and total disarray, furniture toppled over, *sefarim* thrown all over the floor, and the cabinets empty. The house had been ransacked, thieves obviously coming in during the night and robbing whatever valuables they could find.

It was too much. The house was a mess. We had been in financial distress before this, and there was certainly no money to replace whatever had been taken.

But especially painful was the fact that they had taken away that which was most precious to us — the small reminders of our father that had remained. It shook us up. Whatever sense of calm we might have had was shattered. It was just too much. It seemed so unfair, the blow that would make all the challenges with which we had been confronted that week unbearable.

Then we heard our mother's footsteps and we froze. How would she handle it?

She came down the stairs and saw what happened.

A Heart for Another by Rabbi Yaakov Bender

She — a woman in a strange country, her parents gone, having suddenly lost her husband a few days earlier and faced with the burden of feeding and clothing us on her own when money was tight — looked around at the damage, and then she looked at our faces.

"*Kinderlach*," she said, "we don't cry over things that can be replaced."

One line, but one line that gave us such clarity. There are times to cry, when tears are appropriate. And there are times when tears have no purpose or place. Items, even with sentimental value, are replaceable, and we would not allow the loss of mere objects to pull us down.

And here is the enduring lesson of my mother and her lesson on that Shabbos morning.

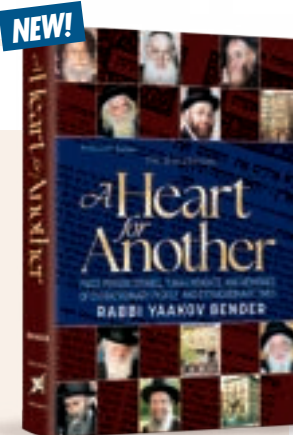
If ever in my life I felt like an *umlal*, a despondent person, it was that week, during those terrifying, confusing days in which the foundation of our lives had been pulled out from underneath us. That blow — the invasion and robbery — had the potential to be so devastating, that extra challenge that would have made the whole situation unendurable.

But she didn't let that happen, and in doing so, she sent us another message. The rule in Chazal is that "*mid-dah tovah merubah mimiddas puraniyos* — Hashem's measure of good is greater than His measure of punishment" (*Sotah* 11a). From this we can extrapolate that if a harsh word to an *umlal* can be devastating, then a kind word to an *umlal* has the potential to build, reassure, and restore.

At that moment, our mother gave us the gift of a perspective and attitude that can carry a person through so many difficulties — we don't cry over that which can be replaced. And instead of sinking deeper into pain, it gave us a way forward.

Our loss was significant, but we still had each other, and everyone was healthy. We would find strength in one another. We would continue in our father's way and make her proud.

If we did not become *umlalim*, it was because of her. She gave us our lives. 📖

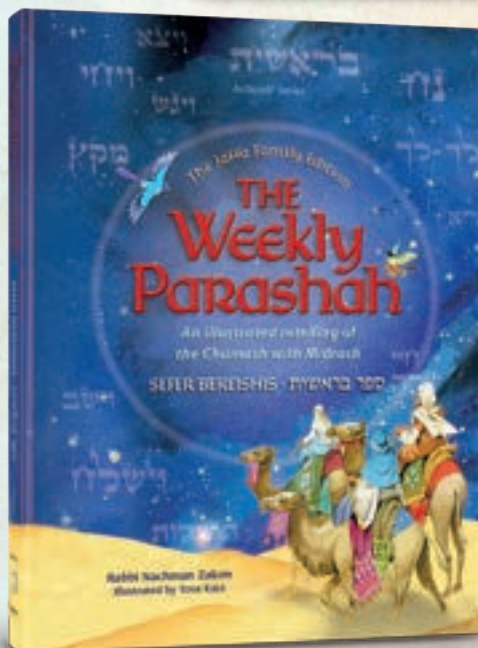


	SHABBOS JAN 11 י"א טבת	SUNDAY JAN 12 י"ב טבת	MONDAY JAN 13 י"ג טבת	TUESDAY JAN 14 י"ד טבת	WEDNESDAY JAN 15 ט"ו טבת	THURSDAY JAN 16 ט"ז טבת	FRIDAY JAN 17 י"ז טבת
BAVLI	Sanhedrin 25	Sanhedrin 26	Sanhedrin 27	Sanhedrin 28	Sanhedrin 29	Sanhedrin 30	Sanhedrin 31
YERUSHALMI	Shabbos 46	Shabbos 47	Shabbos 48	Shabbos 49	Shabbos 50	Shabbos 51	Shabbos 52
MISHNAH	Sanhedrin 8:1-2	Sanhedrin 8:3-4	Sanhedrin 8:5-6	Sanhedrin 8:7-9:1	Sanhedrin 9:2-3	Sanhedrin 9:4-5	Sanhedrin 9:6-10:1
KITZUR	39:2-40:4	40:5-13	40:14-End	41:1-7	41:8-42:5	42:6-19	42:20-43:3



Parashah for Children

פרשת ויחי



Yaakov called together all his sons. He wanted to let them know when Mashiach will finally come.

When all twelve sons arrived, Yaakov tried to tell them when Mashiach would come. Suddenly Yaakov felt Hashem's Presence leave him, and he could not remember when it would happen. Hashem made him forget because He didn't want the Jews to know how long it would take before the exile would end.

Shema Yisrael!



Yaakov wondered why Hashem's Presence left him, just when his children arrived. He had a terrifying thought. Maybe it happened because one of his sons was not a tzaddik?

"Does anyone doubt that Hashem Who is in Heaven is the true G-d?" he asked them.

The brothers answered with the same six words we say today, morning, evening, and before we go to sleep.

"Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad — Listen, (our father) Yisrael (Yaakov's other name), Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only."

Later, when the Torah was given, Hashem made it a mitzvah for us to say these words.

Hearing his sons say these words, Yaakov answered:

"Baruch Shem k'vod malchuso l'olam va'ed — Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever."

Yaakov then blessed his sons. In these blessings, he let them know what would happen to their shevet in the future.

When he finished blessing his sons, Yaakov told them to bring his body back to Eretz Yisrael and to bury him in Me'aras HaMachpeilah.

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Vayechi:

Which 6 people were so holy that the Angel of Death had no power over them?

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*.



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