

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE
Mesorah
Heritage
Foundation

פרשת יתרו
ל"ז שבט תשפ"ה
5785
FEBRUARY 15, 2025
ISSUE #227
RABBI YEHUDA MUNK
EDITOR
DESIGN & LAYOUT:
MRS. AVIVA KOHN

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

UNITY: THE PREREQUISITE OF TORAH

Twerski on Chumash by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, MD

וַיִּחַנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹגַד הָהָר — *And they encamped in the Wilderness and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain (Shemos 19:2)*

The narration that precedes the giving of the Torah is more than just historical. It indicates the prerequisites of Torah.

Rashi points out that the Hebrew word for encamped is *vayichan*, he camped, rather than *vayachanu*, they camped. Furthermore, the Ten Commandments were also spoken in the singular, *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, your G-d in the singular, rather than the plural *elokeichem*. The singular form of the verb is utilized because there was such complete unity among the Israelites that they were like one person, hence the entire nation could be addressed in the singular.

The Torah was given to each individual, and every person is required to fulfill the 613 mitzvos. It is obvious that technically this is impossible. There are some mitzvos whose performance is restricted to *Kohanim*, which a *Yisrael* cannot perform. A person whose firstborn child is a girl cannot fulfill the mitzvah of *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn son). Mitzvos that apply to judges do not apply to lay people. How can any single person fulfill all 613 mitzvos?

Torah scholars have provided the answer. When a person puts *tefillin* on his arm and head, it is not just the arm and head that have the mitzvah, but the whole person. Similarly, when people are united, they are as one, and a mitzvah performed by one person is shared by those with whom one is united. How tragic that we have allowed ourselves to be divisive. Fragmentation not only weakens our na-

tion, but deprives a person of acquiring the merit of those mitzvos which he is unable to perform.

We should realize that eliminating the divisiveness that reigns among us is not merely altruistic. It is of inestimable personal benefit.

In fact, unity among His children is so dear to Hashem, that the Talmud states that when Jews are united, Hashem forgives even their gravest sins (*Kallah* 8).

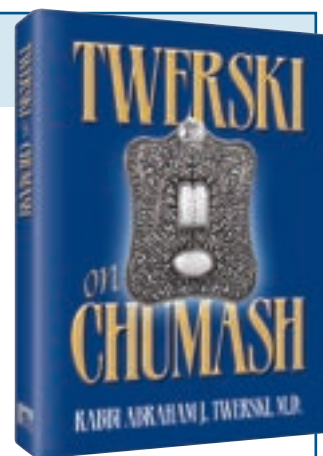
The Sages teach, "You have no person without his hour and no thing without its place" (*Pirkei Avos* 4:3). One of the *chassidic* masters asked, "If every person has a specific time and place, why is there so much dissension among us?" He answered,

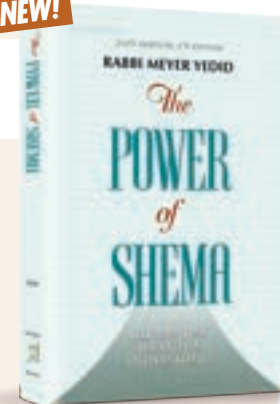
"Because many people are envious of others, and wish to occupy their time and place." If we were free of envy, we might achieve the coveted unity.

We may conceptualize unity of a nation as a symphony orchestra, where each musician has a designated assignment. If the percussionist or the flute player would balk at his assignment because the violinist plays a better part, the performance would suffer. No one musician is of greater importance than another. This is equally true of the Jewish nation. We all have specific assignments: *Kohanim*, *Levites*, *Israelites*, men, women, Torah scholars, lay people, yet we are one harmonious unit. 📖



Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski M.D.





We want to succeed at everything we do in our lives. If we thought that we couldn't succeed at something, then we probably wouldn't do it.

If so, how does a person guarantee that he will be successful? Is there some formula we can use to know that we are on our way to success?

And not only success, but pleasure too?

Let me pause to make myself perfectly clear: To the American mind, "success and pleasure" describes easy street, a life of leisure with nothing to do. That's *not* what I'm talking about. I am not saying that life will be easy. Life wasn't *meant* to be easy. But even if it is not easy, you can still live a successful and enjoyable life.

So, again, is there a way to make sure that, when I get involved with something, I am going to succeed and I am going to enjoy it?

I'm going to give you a rule. The rule is:

If you do it lishmah, then you will succeed and you will love it.

When I say *lishmah*, I mean doing it for the right reason. Whatever you involve yourself with in life, if you do it for the right reason, then you will succeed. *And you will love it.*

Let me state the rule the other way around: Whatever you're involved with, if you do it for the pleasure, then (A) you will probably not succeed, and (B) you will probably not enjoy it.

I'll give you an example.

Let's talk about going to school. When you go to class *lishmah*, it's a different class. It's a different school experience. But you might ask: *What does that mean?* How would I go to school *lishmah*?

Lishmah in school means that I'm going to school because I realize I need to learn. I need wisdom to suc-



IF YOU ARE SUFFERING, WHY WOULD YOU MAKE YOUR KIDS SUFFER?

ceed in life. I realize that, in order to become successful, I have to know many things in many areas. So I am going to school to get that.

Imagine a seventh- or eighth-grader, or a high school student, whether a boy or a girl, going to school *lishmah*. Do you have any idea what going to school *lishmah* would be like as opposed to *shelo lishmah*? When you go to school *lishmah*, you become a great student, you succeed. No matter what level you're on, you succeed and you love it. You love going to school.

If you do it *shelo lishmah* — you're going to school because your parents told you to go, or because you have

no choice — then your rate of success will plummet and you won't enjoy it either. You won't like it because you're not *lishmah*.

I once told a group of students that they would enjoy their school experience much more if they were lishmah.

And they said, "But we don't see the value in school. How can we be lishmah?"

So, before I continued, I asked for their forgiveness in advance. And then I said, "I'm going to argue with you. I can prove to you that you see the value in school."

I then asked them, "Do you plan to get married and have children one day?"

"Yes."

"When you have children, will you send them to school?"

"Yes."

"That's not nice," I said. "If you are suffering by going to school, why would you make your kids suffer?" I asked them, "Would you send them to, like, a camp type of school, or a real school with real work?"

"No, no; the best school."

"Would you want your children to do well in school?"

"Of course."

"But you said you see no value in school. It's not true. Of course, you see value in school!"

A great man told me something years ago that he said changed his life. In many ways, it

continued on page 3

YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK:	SHABBOS FEB 15 י"ז שבט	SUNDAY FEB 16 י"ח שבט	MONDAY FEB 17 י"ט שבט	TUESDAY FEB 18 כ' שבט	WEDNESDAY FEB 19 כ"א שבט	THURSDAY FEB 20 כ"ב שבט	FRIDAY FEB 21 כ"ג שבט
	BAVLI	Sanhedrin 60	Sanhedrin 61	Sanhedrin 62	Sanhedrin 63	Sanhedrin 64	Sanhedrin 66
	YERUSHALMI	Shabbos 81	Shabbos 82	Shabbos 83	Shabbos 84	Shabbos 85	Shabbos 87
	MISHNAH	Shevuos 2:5-3:1	Shevuos 3:2-3	Shevuos 3:4-5	Shevuos 3:6-7	Shevuos 3:8-9	Shevuos 3:10-11
	KITZUR	59:2-8	59:9-19	59:20-60:5	60:6-13	60:14-61:5	61:6-62:3
							62:4-14



One is obligated by the Torah to give charity, but what is not well known is that the Torah also tells us *how* one should give charity.

Rabbeinu Yonah (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 3:35) explains that to achieve generosity, it is not enough to just try to give more money; rather, one must work on developing a generous heart.

Giving charity both generously and with happy feelings is not just an advisable idea; it is part of the Torah obligation!

But how does one achieve this, as it is very hard to part with hard-earned money?

The answer, as Beis HaLevi teaches, is through *bitachon*. One who has *bitachon* knows that his money is all a gift from Hashem. It is not a result of his hard work, but rather of Hashem's kindness, and is therefore truly His. Such a person does not find it difficult to part from his money; he gives generously and happily, trusting Hashem to keep His word, and repay him for his deed.



The Beis HaLevi

And there is another important aspect to giving charity.

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 10a) states that on Rosh Hashanah, Hashem *determines the amount a person is going to earn, as well as the amount he is going to lose*. If one merits, the money he is destined to lose will go for charitable causes; if he does not merit, the money will end up in the hands of unworthy people.

Thus, the amount of money one is destined to lose is already decreed in the beginning of the year. However, it is up to the person to decide how he will part from the money.

The Gemara proves this from a story. R' Yochanan ben Zakkai once dreamt that his nephews were going to lose 700 *dinar* — a very large sum of money — during the coming year. R' Yochanan implored them to donate significant sums to charity. They heeded his advice, and they donated a total of 683 *dinar*.

On Erev Yom Kippur, government officials came to collect 17 *dinar* in tax money from R' Yochanan's nephews. They

were very frightened, afraid that the government would then be demanding more.

R' Yochanan assured them that they had nothing to fear. He informed them of his dream, and explained that by donating 683 *dinar* to charity, they reduced the decree to just 17 *dinar*, and so this was all they were going to have to pay.

The Chofetz Chaim asks: Why is it necessary to have two different decrees — how much one will gain and how much one will lose? Why doesn't Hashem simply decree how much one will earn in total? Instead of decreeing, for example, that a person will earn \$200,000 and lose \$20,000, why doesn't Hashem simply decree that he will earn \$180,000?

The Chofetz Chaim explains that as a result of one's sins, one is deserving of punishment. Hashem therefore issues two separate decrees for our benefit, so we can earn atonement without enduring severe calamity. Through these two separate decrees, one can "redeem" his punishment through financial losses. If he simply made less money, the decrease would not count as a "redemption" because he would not feel the pain of actually losing it. By first decreeing that the person should earn a certain amount and arranging that he lose some of it, the loss can serve as his punishment for his sins, in lieu of something more severe.

The Chofetz Chaim adds that, as stated in the Gemara, not only does the *loss* of money serve as a protection from more severe punishment, giving to charity has the same effect. Thus, charity offers a double benefit; it has the effect of reducing the amount of money one is destined to lose and, secondly, it is a precious mitzvah, for which we will be richly rewarded.

Internalizing this concept makes the mitzvah of giving charity not only a great mitzvah, but a positive experience as well. 📖

LIFE SUCCESS: A ROADMAP continued from page 2

changed my life too. He said that, at a young age, someone told him that when you have to make a decision in life, especially an important one, make believe you're making this decision for your children. Don't decide for yourself. When you decide

for your children, you will realize, all of a sudden, how much clarity you really have. When it comes to yourself — because you're lazy, because you have certain things that block or bias you — you don't see straight.

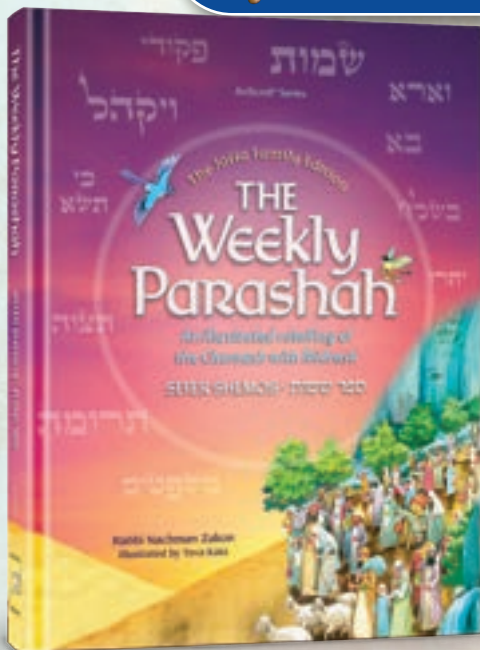
Think about your children.

That's how you should make decisions. The option which is truly *lishmah* will then be clear and no longer clouded by your personal limitations and biases, and your chances to succeed and enjoy the journey will be so much greater. 📖



Parashah for Children

פרשת יתרו



Mattan Torah — The Giving of the Torah

The most important day in world history is the day the Torah was given!

If the Jews hadn't accepted the Torah, the world would have disappeared. That makes it the greatest thing that ever happened.

The reason the world exists, the reason it was created, and the reason it still exists, is for people to keep the Torah. Nothing in the world is as great and valuable as our Torah.

The Torah is important for another reason too. Without it we wouldn't know how to use the world the way Hashem wants us to. We wouldn't know how we're supposed to act, how to behave to others, how to make Hashem — and ourselves — happy.

This parashah describes the preparations the Jews made to receive the Torah, and what happened on the day the Torah was given.

The story begins on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the day the Jews arrived at Har Sinai. This was the mountain where Hashem had spoken to Moshe from the burning bush, telling him it was time to take the Jews out of Egypt.



Why was the Torah given in a desert?

1. The desert is a place that belongs to no one. Anyone can go there without tickets, without paying to get in. The Torah was given in the desert to show that no matter who you are, the Torah is available for you to learn.
2. The desert is a place with sand dunes stretching for miles in all directions. No trees, no cities, no people. It seems endless. The reward for learning and keeping Torah is also endless. Our imagination is not big enough to understand how much reward there is for learning even a small amount of Torah.

**WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
GIFT CARD!**

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Yisro:

Can you give an example of how we are meant to remember Shabbos?

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*.

Winner for Vayechi: AHARON MORDECHAI BERMAN, Lakewood, NJ

Question for Vayechi was: Which 6 people were so holy that the Angel of Death had no power over them?
Answer for Vayechi is: Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam.



© ARTSCROLL MESORAH PUBLICATIONS • 1-800-MESORAH • WWW.MESORAHHERITAGE.ORG

To download *At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table*, visit www.mesorahheritage.org/shabbosnewsletter

Monthly and weekly dedication opportunities available. To sponsor, contact newsletter@artscroll.com