

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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

## PURIM

## THE MIRACLE YOU DON'T SEE

Around the Year with Reb Meilech by Yisroel Besser

We speak of the great miracles, the *makkos*, the splitting of the Yam Suf, Mattan Torah. Our people live with those images before their eyes.

But Purim has none of that, not a single instance in which nature changed, no clear revelation of Hashem's dominion.

In the first *perek*, Vashti is killed. It's a big story, but not unusual.

*Reb Meilech pauses to reflect, "The Chiddushei HaRim would say that if someone mentioned it in shul the next day, no doubt one of the older members would have said, 'Nu, Reb Yid, we don't talk politics in this beis medrash.'"*

In the next *perek*, Esther becomes the queen, and again, it's noteworthy, but not miraculous in any way.

Bigsan and Seresh are planning to kill the king, and Mordechai steps in to save his life, an unusual story to be sure — but a story just the same.

Haman rises to prominence, and one night, he comes to visit the king, who cannot sleep.

Suddenly, mighty Haman is leading the beleaguered Mordechai on a horse, their roles subtly changing.

But it started at the moment when Vashti was killed. That was the first event that set the others in motion, and it happened without fanfare, the miracle concealed under layers of *teva*, nature.

It was as big a miracle as Krias Yam Suf, the Chasam Sofer writes, but so well hidden. That is why we rejoice in this month, he explains, because it reminds us that the Ribbono Shel Olam's love for us endures, and His desire to do good with us is perpet-

ual, regardless of the layers that block us from seeing it clearly.

That's Chodesh Adar.

You can read *Megillas Esther* at any time of year, the Vilna Gaon writes, and you will feel *emunah* when you are exposed to the precision and perfection of His plan for us.

*Reb Meilech is speaking in everyday language now, pulling out terms that have the people around him nodding in recognition. "Yesterday's phone call and today's message and the person you will punkt meet next week, suddenly everything comes together at one moment and you realize that He is in charge."*

That brings *simchah*. Little children start a puzzle and they become disheartened when they can't complete it right away... but a wise parent says, "*Sheifele*, stick with it, it will come together and you will be happy you persevered..."

Chodesh Adar gifts us with new eyes, a vision that perceives that even in the layers of obscurity, He is showering us with His love. The Gemara tells us that a *ganav*, a thief, who steals in the stealth of night so that no man will see him, pays a fine equivalent to double that which he stole, while a *gazlan*, who fears no one and steals brazenly, pays only the value of what he stole (*Bava Kamma* 79b).

The Gemara explains the reason: A *gazlan* has equated the honor of the Master to the honor of the servant, fearing none of them, while the *ganav* fears man, but not the Creator.

Now, we know that a positive force is always stronger than its negative parallel, *middah* continued on page 3



Rav Meilech Biderman

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While learning in Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, I witnessed firsthand how the rosh yeshivah, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, who was stricken with Parkinson's disease, would struggle to deliver his shiur as his entire body shook uncontrollably. However, although he may have been weak and in pain, he was tamid be'simchah, always happy. You heard the joy in his voice, and you felt it in his presence. The Torah he learned and taught gave him so much happiness and koach, enabling him to push above and beyond the norm.

"Ki heim chayeinu ve'orech ya-meinu." When Torah is your life, it empowers your days, giving you strength and vitality.

The Ponevezher Rav, Rav Yosef Kahaneman, known as a prince of Torah, was focused on achieving his mission of building Yeshivas Ponevezh in Bnei Brak. Indeed, he merited to build one of the greatest edifices of Torah in the world. In order to accomplish his dream of rebuilding Torah after the war, he frequently traveled to America to raise funds, yet he never appeared burnt out.

On one such trip abroad, he returned to the home of his host, tired and worn out. His host brought him a hot cup of coffee. "Here, this will give you some strength."

Rav Kahaneman gratefully took the coffee, but replied, "If you really want to give me strength, please give me the number of a wealthy person who can help support my yeshivah;

that would be the best thing you could do for me right now."

The host couldn't get over it. "How do you keep going? Where did you get this fiery passion? Where did you develop this love of Torah?"

"It all started when I was a little boy of eleven years old," Rav Kahaneman shared:

*It was Purim morning. My mother was in the kitchen baking a cake, and*



The Ponevezher Rav

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*she exclaimed, "I am so excited to bake a cake for the rav of our town. What a zechus to give honor to a tzaddik!" My mother's excitement affected my father, who said, "I, too, have something for the rav. A peddler recently came through the town selling Gemaros, and I bought a Maseches Bava Basra from him. I know that the rav doesn't have a full set of Shas in his home, and he is missing a Bava Basra. Now he will have it; how happy he will be."*

*My older brother and I went to the rav of the town to deliver the mishloach manos and the gift. My brother held my mother's cake and I held the Bava Basra. I handed the rav the Bava Basra and his eyes lit up. He kissed it and called out in joy, "How lucky I am, what a trea-*

*sure, a whole masechta Bava Basra!" Then he danced around the table holding the Gemara, as if it were Simchas Torah and he was dancing with the Sefer Torah.*

As the Ponevezher Rav told his host the story, he danced around the table, to demonstrate how the rav had danced. Then he continued.

The rav asked his wife, "Do you also want to give me mishloach manos?"

"Yes, of course," she answered.

"Great! Yesterday we decided that we would begin our Purim seudah at 5:00 p.m. But if you would be kind enough to push it off until 6:00 p.m., then I can learn from my new Gemara from 5:00 to 6:00, for an uninterrupted hour. That would be the greatest mishloach manos gift in the world."

The wife agreed and the rav danced around the table again.

"I was only eleven years old when this took place. But at that moment, I was so inspired that I made up my mind to dedicate my life to Torah and put everything I have into it. That is where I derive the inner strength, determination, and drive to build Torah in Eretz Yisrael."

Sometimes, a seemingly insignificant action can lead to big results. The rav's simchah and dancing inspired Rav Kahaneman to dedicate his life to building Torah, and

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	SHABBOS MARCH 15 טו אדר	SUNDAY MARCH 16 טז אדר	MONDAY MARCH 17 יז אדר	TUESDAY MARCH 18 יח אדר	WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 יט אדר	THURSDAY MARCH 20 כ אדר	FRIDAY MARCH 21 כא אדר
BAVLI	Sanhedrin 88	Sanhedrin 89	Sanhedrin 90	Sanhedrin 91	Sanhedrin 92	Sanhedrin 93	Sanhedrin 94
YERUSHALMI	Shabbos 109	Shabbos 110	Shabbos 111	Shabbos 112	Shabbos 113	Eruvin 1	Eruvin 2
MISHNAH	Eduyos 1:6-7	Eduyos 1:8-9	Eduyos 1:10-11	Eduyos 1:12-13	Eduyos 1:14-2:1	Eduyos 2:2-3	Eduyos 2:4-5
KITZUR	142:6-End	72:11-19	72:20-73:4	73:5-End	74:1-75:3	75:4-9	75:10-76:4

## THE BEST MISHLOACH MANOS

What if on Yamim Tovim 2 Adapted by Rabbi Moshe Sherrow from the works of Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein

**Q:** One Purim, around one hundred years ago, many *Yidden* who were residents of the city of Saana in Yemen brought *mishloach manos* to Rabbi Shlomo Alkara, their beloved rav. One poor Jew also wanted to bring *mishloach manos* to the rav, but he had nothing in his home to offer. The only food he found was a rotten radish. He wrapped it in a pretty napkin, put it on a plate, and waited on line to give it to the rav.

When he presented his offering to the rav, the rav's face lit up and he blessed the man warmly. When the next man in line gave the rav his *mishloach manos*, the rav blessed him and in return gave him as *mishloach manos* the package he had received from the poor man. When the man unwrapped the napkin to examine its contents, he discovered the rotten radish.

The rav spoke immediately. "Do you think that the man wanted to insult me? *Chalilah v'Chas*. This was the offering of a poor man who had nothing else to give. Such an offering is exceptionally precious. On this the *pasuk* states, *v'nefesh ki sakriv korban minchah la'Hashem*, When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem; he brings his *nefesh* (soul) with the offering. And now, if you are zealous for my honor, fill this man's house with bounty so he will have the means to give an honorable *mishloach manos*."

Everyone sent the poor man *mishloach manos* as per the rav's instruction, until he was inundated with food. In this way, the townsmen fulfilled the mitzvah of *mishloach manos* as well as the mitzvah of *matanos l'evyonim*.

Could the poor man have fulfilled the mitzvah by proffering a rotten radish, had there been another food accompanying it, or, since a rotten radish is inedible, was it eligible to use for the mitzvah?



**A:** The *Chasam Sofer* explains that there are two reasons given for the mitzvah of *mishloach manos*. The *Terumas HaDeshen* maintains that it is in order to ensure that people will have the wherewithal with which to make a *seudas Purim*. Even if the recipient has

more than enough food for his Purim feast, one has nevertheless fulfilled the mitzvah. In that way, even those who do not have enough will not be embarrassed to accept for themselves, since all Jews send each other gifts of food without discrimination. The *Manos HaLevi* taught that the rationale behind the mitzvah of *mishloach manos* is to create peace and love between Jews. This is to contradict Haman's accusation that the Jews are dispersed and separated by *machlokes* (strife). Thus, we have a mitzvah to effect the exact opposite.

It would seem that a rotten radish could not be used for the *seudas Purim*, nor would it engender peace and friendship, so according to both reasons, it could not satisfy the requirement of *mishloach manos*. It must be that the radish was not completely rotten, and although a more discriminating diner might not have eaten it, **most** people would.

The poor man recognized the rav's great stature, including the fact that the rav sufficed with simple fare, as the *mishnah* teaches us in *Pirkei Avos*, *kach hi darkah shel Torah; pas b'melach tocheil...* This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt .... The rav would certainly have been satisfied to accept such a radish; hence, the man would have fulfilled the mitzvah of *mishloach manos* had he given another food item with it. 📖

THE MIRACLE YOU DON'T SEE continued from page 1

*tovah merubah m'middas puranus*. If a person is punished for fear of being seen by man, but not by Hashem, imagine the opposite — one who sees Hashem even in the actions of man, capable of perceiving the reality that He is in charge even when it appears that humans are in charge! He will certainly receive a double reward!

With this, Rav Chuna Halperin explained the words of the Shabbos *zemiros*: וְאִשְׁרֵי כָּל-חֹכֶה לְתַשְׁלוּמֵי כָּל מֵאֵת בֵּל סוּכָה שׁוֹכֵן בְּעֶרְפֶּל — Praiseworthy is everyone

who awaits a double reward, from the One Who sees all but Who dwells in a dense cloud.

One who can see the existence of the Ribbono Shel Olam in the dense cloud, who sees past the veil and recognizes the true reality, gets a reward of double, the converse of the punishment of one who sees only man and not the Creator.

Purim gives us this ability, the *koach* to see past the screens and barriers and perceive the truth. 📖

A DANCE FOR THE AGES continued from page 2

thus Yeshivas Ponevezh was born. He became a partner in Rav Kahaneman's work of building Torah in Eretz Yisrael.

When our homes are infused with true *simchah*, the *simchah* of the Torah, it can influence not only our children, but all of Klal Yisrael. 📖





## My Favorite Mishloach Manos



Dr. Sergei Andropov was a famous Jewish doctor living in St. Petersburg, one of the biggest cities in Russia. He had a wife, Natasha, and a 4-year-old son, Ilya, whom he loved very much, and they were a happy family. But living in Russia was very frightening — the Russians hated the Jews, and sometimes the Russian police would just come and take Jewish men to jail for no reason at all. One night, there was a loud banging on the Andropovs' door. Usually that meant one thing — the police were coming to take someone away. Although Dr. Andropov had done nothing wrong, two men led him away while his wife and son were left standing at the door. He didn't even have a chance to say good-bye or to turn and give them one last loving look. Natasha and Ilya were terribly sad. They had no idea when he would be coming back, and they were so scared — how were they going to live? Who was going to earn money for food?

Their friends were frightened too. If they were seen talking to Natasha and Ilya, or helping them, the Russian police might arrest them as well. So all of their friends stopped talking to them and pretended they never knew them. Natasha and Ilya Andropov were all alone.

One and a half years after Dr. Andropov had been taken away, just before Purim, Ilya walked into the kitchen and asked his mother if they would be able to give *mishloach manos* this year. Although the question surprised Natasha, she was happy that her son was interested in the mitzvah. "Of course we can." She knew what the next question would be: "But to whom are we going to send them? We don't have friends anymore." Even a boy as young as Ilya understood that since the day his father had been taken away, none of his friends were allowed to play with him.

A twinkle sparked through the tears that had formed in Natasha's eyes. "Ilya, we do have a friend to whom we can send *mishloach manos*. We can send *mishloach manos* to Hashem. He's our Friend." It sounded so simple, as if a child had spoken, but the thought was so true. Ilya too seemed excited by the idea of giving *mishloach manos* to

Hashem. He ran to the kitchen and searched through the cupboards for some food. But the only food left in the house was one stale cookie. Ilya remembered that one has to

prepare two separate types of food for the mitzvah. Where would they get another one? Natasha looked at her son. "Remember how your father always used to say that we should serve Hashem only out of joy and happiness. Well, we are going to make an exception to that rule. The second item we are going to use is a cup of tears. We are going to sit down and think about your father. If we start crying, we will gather our tears in a cup and that will be our second item. I'm sure Hashem will be pleased with our gift."

Ilya and his mother sat on the floor, thinking about their father and husband and about how sad their lives had become. The tears started to flow. Together Ilya and his mother cried. And before long, they had filled the cup. Ilya's mother took the cup and placed it next to the cookie, and slowly, carefully, she started to wrap her *mishloach manos*. Suddenly a loud knocking at the door surprised the two of them; sudden knocks on the door usually meant danger, perhaps the police. Afraid of whom she might see, Natasha slowly opened the door.

And there before her eyes stood her husband! Her heart stopped, tears ran down her cheeks, and she could not move from her place.

"Look," Ilya shouted, "look at how Hashem has sent us back *mishloach manos*."

Ilya looked up at his mother, who was crying. But now her tears were tears of joy. Then he looked at his father. He hugged him and held onto him so tight. He didn't want to let go. Finally he looked up to Hashem and thanked Him for the best *mishloach manos* ever. 📖

