

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT
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Foundation

פרשת עקב
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RABBI YEHUDA MUNK
EDITOR
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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

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

Rabbi Frand on the Parashah

המאכלך מן במדבר... ולמען נסתך

The One Who feeds you manna in the desert... in order to test you. (8:16)

Everyone knows that life is a test. We struggle to make a living, to raise our children, to build up our communities. Nothing comes easy, and our test is to deal with the hardships and frustrations in the best way possible.

But what if our livelihood were served up to us on a silver platter? How wonderful that would be! No more worries about how to pay for the children's tuition or the new roof. What if everything we needed came to us like manna from heaven? Would we consider this a test? Hardly. We would consider it a blessing. The Torah, however, seems to say otherwise.

No sooner had the Jewish people come forth from Egypt that they complained (*Shemos* 16:3), "If only we had died by the hand of God in the land of Egypt when we were sitting beside the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread; now you have brought us out into the desert to let the entire congregation starve to death."



The Maggid of Mezritch

"Behold, I will rain down bread from the heavens on you," Hashem replied (*ibid.* 16:4). "The people shall go out to collect their daily portion every day, in order to test whether or not they will follow My Torah."

The commentators wonder what kind of test this is. What could be better than having everything you need delivered to your doorstep every day? This is a test? This is a blessing!

Rashi explains that Hashem was referring to the laws that govern the manna. One could not store away any manna for the next day. One had to collect

a double portion on Friday. And so forth. This was the test. Would the Jewish people observe the laws of the manna scrupulously?

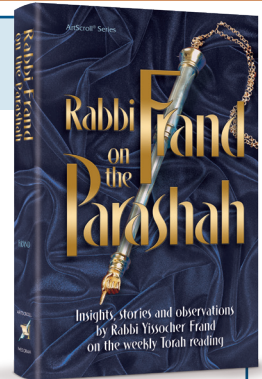
This test is also mentioned in *Parashas Eikev*, "The One Who feeds you manna in the desert... in order to test you." Sforno explains that the test is to see if the Jews would still follow the Torah when they do not have to worry about their livelihood.

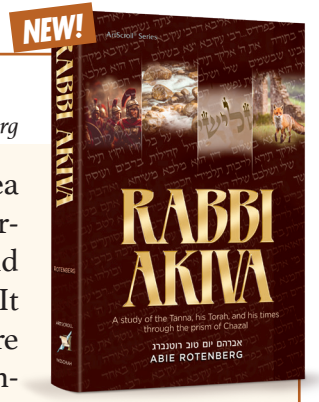
Yes, there is a great test in "bread raining down from heaven." Affluence without effort is a dangerous thing. It comes with a great amount of leisure time and freedom of action. What do we do with that leisure time and that freedom of action? Do we use our leisure time and freedom of action to taste the forbidden? This is the great test of the manna.

We are all aware of the test of poverty. We are all aware of the trials and tribulations of being poor. However, says Sforno, affluence also comes with great temptations. It puts a tremendous responsibility on a person. This is the test of the manna, and it is the test for many Jews in these affluent times.

The *Chovos Halevavos* writes in *Shaar Hachichon* that one of the reasons people, unlike birds and animals, must make a great effort to earn their livelihood is to control the *yetzter hara*. If we had too much time on our hands, we would be unable to resist the temptations he puts be-

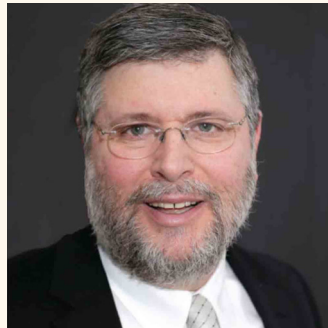
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In one of the most famous parables in Gemara (*Berachos* 61b), Rabbi Akiva articulated for all time the indispensable relationship between Klal Yisrael and the study of its Torah.

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: Once, the evil regime decreed that the Jewish people should not study the Torah. Papus ben Yehuda came and found Rabbi Akiva convening public assemblies and engaging in Torah study. [Papus] said to him, “Akiva, are you not afraid of the regime?” [Rabbi Akiva] replied, “I will offer you a parable. To what can this be compared? To a fox walking alongside a river, who saw fish gathering from place to place. [The fox] said to them, ‘What are you running from?’ They said to him, ‘From the nets people are bringing to [catch] us.’ He said to them, ‘Is it your wish to come up to dry land, and we shall dwell together as did my ancestors with your ancestors?’ They said to him, ‘Are you the one they describe as the cleverest of animals? You are not clever but a fool! If in the place that gives us life we are afraid, the place that will lead to our deaths (should we not be afraid) all the more so?’ So too with us. Now, as we sit and engage in [the study of] Torah, of which it is written (*Devarim* 30:20), ‘For it is your life and the length of your days,’ we are endangered, if we were to disengage from Torah, all the more so!”



Abie Rotenberg

The fish rightly mocked the fox’s recommendation. How would it benefit them to go to a place where they could not breathe and would surely perish? But we are left wondering why the alleged wisest of animals presented so spurious an argument in the first place?

An observation by Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian (*Lev Eliyahu*, first edition, page 40) may provide an approach. The Mishnah in *Keilim* (17:13) teaches us: The Torah states that utensils and garments are susceptible to *tumah*. But because the word *begeg*,

garment (of cloth), which the Torah uses to refer to materials that grow on *land*, such as flax, cotton, or wool, is juxtaposed to the word *ohr*, leather, we derive that only a utensil or garment made from the hide or skin of a land animal can contract *tumah*, but an item made from the skin of a fish will not. Rabbi Akiva, however, notes that there is an exception: A leather utensil made from the skin of the creature known as the sea dog, which flees to the land to escape danger, is susceptible to *tumah*.

Rabbi Lopian questions the reasoning. Is it not true, he asks, that

even the sea dog can survive on land only briefly? It may flee there to escape danger, but if it wishes to survive, it must return to its true, natural habitat! Should it not then be classified as a water creature?

His answer is an enlightening *musar* thought. The fact that the sea dog turns to the land for deliverance — even a temporary one — is enough for us to determine that it is not a true denizen of the sea. The lesson is that the Jewish people are no different. Torah is the air we breathe. If, during hard times, we abandon it, even if we intend to do so for a short while or to some limited degree, we are detaching ourselves from our source of life and are doomed.

Perhaps, then, the fox said to the fish, “Come to me on the land where I will provide you with a temporary haven from the fishermen’s nets. I’ll place you in a pond or an aquarium where you can survive in the interim. I will return you to the water once the danger has passed.”

The fox’s assurances did not fool the fish. They realized that his true intentions were to devour them immediately. The lesson Rabbi Akiva wished to impart is that any suggestion that we deviate even slightly or temporarily from Torah, our true-life source, must be seen for what it is: national suicide. 🇮🇱

IT MAY FLEE THERE TO ESCAPE DANGER, BUT IF IT WISHES TO SURVIVE, IT MUST RETURN TO ITS NATURAL HABITAT!

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

AUGUST / אב

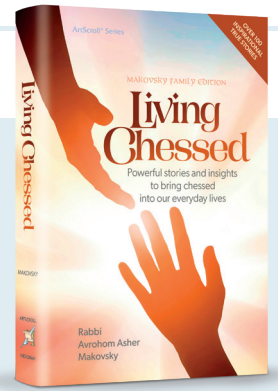
| SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 24 יג | 25 כה | 26 כז | 27 כח | 28 כט | 29 חה | 30 סו |
| Bava Basra 60 | Bava Basra 61 | Bava Basra 62 | Bava Basra 63 | Bava Basra 64 | Bava Basra 65 | Bava Basra 66 |

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

AUGUST / אב

| SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 24 יג | 25 כה | 26 כז | 27 כח | 28 כט | 29 חה | 30 סו |
| Bava Kamma 5:3-4 | Bava Kamma 5:5-6 | Bava Kamma 5:7-6:1 | Bava Kamma 6:2-3 | Bava Kamma 6:4-5 | Bava Kamma 6:6-7:1 | Bava Kamma 7:2-3 |

Living Chessed by Rabbi Avrohom Asher Makovsky



An idealistic man wants to use his money to help Klal Yisrael, and opens a gemach. He offers loans of up to \$5,000 to help people who have been hit by an unexpected expense or perhaps need some help climbing out of debt.

There is only one drawback to his gemach; many people who come to seek his help walk away feeling hurt and insulted. The man seems to look down upon them. He asks intrusive questions and belittles them by implying that if they were just a little smarter or a little more energetic, they wouldn't be in the position of needing a loan.

What is the balance between the good this man does and the harm he causes? Are his loans still considered a chessed if he wounds the recipient's feelings as he dispenses the money? The Chazon Ish helps us weigh this question.



The Chazon Ish

Someone once asked the Chazon Ish the kind of all-encompassing question that only a *gadol* of his caliber could answer: "What should be the ultimate goal that I aspire to achieve in my lifetime?" The Chazon Ish's answer was simple: "A person's ultimate goal should be that he lives out his 70 years in this world without hurting the feelings of another Jew."

He explains that the mitzvah of *v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha* is comprised of two parts. The first is to do for others that which you would wish them to do for you. This is called chessed. But there is another component, and that is to refrain from doing to another Jew anything you do not want done to you. This too is chessed.

But the surprising fact is that this second part is the most important part. The Chazon Ish refers to the oft-quoted Gemara (*Shabbos* 31a) that recounts the conversation between Hillel and a man who came to him wishing to become Jewish. The man said he would convert on the condition that Hillel could teach him

the entire Torah on one foot. Hillel fulfilled the man's condition by telling him, "Do not do to anyone that which you would not want done to you."

The Chazon Ish addresses the *Maharsha's* question on this exchange. Why did Hillel only tell the man one part of the mitzvah? Why didn't he tell him about the positive requirement to help other people? The Chazon

Ish answers that the Gemara is teaching us that the primary aspect of the mitzvah is to refrain from hurting others. This is more important than doing acts of kindness.

The greatest chessed is to control ourselves and avoid saying something that will make another person feel devalued, humiliated, uncomfortable or worried. Chessed is noticing someone's new purchase without mentioning that you know where he could have gotten a better deal. Chessed is allowing someone to

share their opinion with you on some matter without disparaging or mocking them. Chessed is refraining from a critique of the overcooked dinner. This restraint is Hashem's top priority in our *ahavas Yisrael*, so much so that, as Hillel states, it is the foundation of the entire Torah.

On the other side of the equation is our man with the *gemach*. He may consider himself a great *baal chessed*, but he is in fact missing the most important part of the mitzvah. In fact, according to the Chazon Ish's interpretation of the Gemara, he's missing the entire foundation of the Torah the way Hillel described it.

As the Chazon Ish tells us, hurting others while we help them completely misses the mark. True chessed is a desire to uplift our fellow Jew; when that is the motivation driving our deeds, we can be sure that our chessed will be complete. 📖

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

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fore us. As it is, we are either too busy or too tired most of the time. And even then it is a struggle to resist temptation.

The Maggid of Mezritch once said that when people face troubles, sickness or mortal danger, Heaven forbid, they all become religious. They all come to *shul*. They pray fervently. They say *Tehillim* with

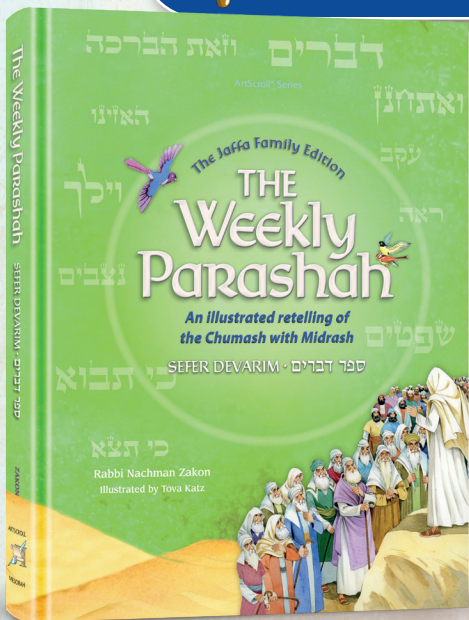
tears streaming down their cheeks. They give charity generously. But when things are going well, when they are going wonderfully, do they give much thought to the Almighty? This is the test of the manna. 📖

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| <p><i>This week's Yerushalmi Yomi schedule:</i></p> | <p>AUGUST / אב</p> | SHABBOS | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| | | 24 יג | 25 כד | 26 כה | 27 כז | 28 כח | 29 כט | 30 ל |
| | | Challah 23 | Challah 24 | Challah 25 | Challah 26 | Challah 27 | Challah 28 | Challah 29 |



Parashah for Children

פרשת עקב



No Way!

Moshe told the Jews the great reward they will get for keeping the Torah. When we do what Hashem commands, we will live long, have many children, and we will get the land that Hashem swore to give Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

But what about the times when things don't go well? Does it mean Hashem won't keep His promise? Or maybe He stopped loving us and forgot about us?

NO WAY!!!

Does a father who punishes his child for doing something dangerous stop loving him? Of course not! The father wants to stop his child from doing something dangerous before he or she gets hurt.

Yitzy's father tells him how important it is to wear a helmet when he rides his bike. He's told him that many times, but Yitzy keeps forgetting and goes biking down the sidewalk — without a helmet. So his father has to try something a bit stronger, to make sure Yitzy understands. That's why he punishes his son by taking away the bike for two days.

Even when we are doing bad things, Hashem still loves us. He never forgets us. He is punishing us so we learn to change our behavior for the better. If we do that, we will live a much happier and better life.

Being afraid of Hashem's punishment is actually one of the 613 mitzvos. That fear helps us do what's right when we might want to do something wrong. Drivers know that speeding is dangerous, but still, sometimes they want to drive too fast. They don't, though, because they don't want to get a ticket.

In the same way, being afraid of Hashem's punishment can help us keep the mitzvos.

Of course, the best way to keep the mitzvos is to do them because we love Hashem. Then we are like a child who obeys a parent out of love, and not because he is afraid of being punished!



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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Eikev:

What are the first words of Torah a father should teach his child who has just started to speak?

*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*.*

