

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

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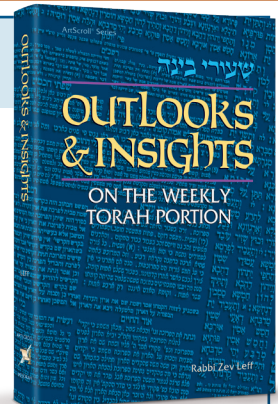
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PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

REISHIS - FIRST AND FOREMOST

Outlooks & Insights by Rabbi Zev Leff



וְלִקְחֶתָּ מִרְאשֵׁית כָּל פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תָּבִיא מֵאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְשָׂמֶתָ בַּסָּנָא וְהֵלַכְתָּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם —

You shall take of the first of every fruit of the ground that you bring in from your Land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that Hashem, your G-d, will choose, to make His Name rest there (Devarim 26:2)

The Torah commands us to take the first fruits and bring them to the *Kohen* as a thanksgiving offering to Hashem. Elsewhere we are enjoined to dedicate all our firsts to Hashem – the first shearings of the wool, the first of the dough, the firstborn of man and animal, etc. Why did the Torah not command us to offer the best of our produce and not the first?

The importance of the first lies in the fact that it is the root and foundation of all that follows. The foundation of a building must be totally free of imperfections. A hairline crack in the foundation endangers the entire building, whereas that same crack in a wall on the fourth floor would not be significant. Similarly, with respect to everything having to do with *kedushah*, the beginning must be holy and pure if holiness and purity is to emanate from it. Any imperfection in the root will manifest itself a hundredfold in what grows out of it. Therefore, we dedicate all firsts to Hashem to firmly establish the foundation and root of all that follows.

The *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 85b) relates that when R' Chiya reintroduced Torah in a generation in which it had been forgotten, he began by planting flax. From the flax he made nets to capture deer. Upon the skins of those deer he wrote the Five Books of the Torah. He would then travel from town to town teaching Torah to five boys in each town. With each he learned one book of Chumash. To six older boys he taught one order of Mishnah each. Each then taught the others what he had learned, and in this way, Torah was once again established.

Why was it necessary for R' Chiya to plant the flax

and make the nets. Couldn't he have bought these? The answer is that every new beginning is the construction of a foundation. Only if every step is taken with holy and pure intentions will the result be holy and pure.

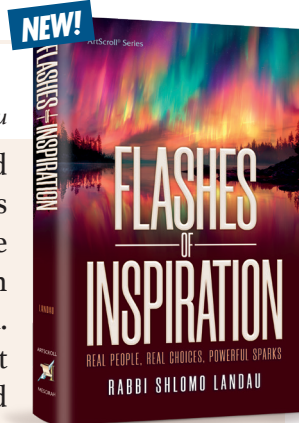
During the Ten Days of Repentance from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, it is customary to be extra stringent in one's observance of *mitzvos*. Thus even one who is not usually strict about eating kosher bread baked by a non-Jewish baker (*pas palter*) should nevertheless be strict during that period. At first glance this practice seems difficult to understand, for it applies even to a person who intends to eat *pas palter* the rest of the year. Are we trying to fool Hashem into thinking we are more pious than we actually are in order to secure a favorable judgment?

The significance of this conduct lies in the fact that Rosh Hashanah is not just the beginning of the year, but *reishis hashanah* — the foundation and root of the year. Each of these ten days must be treated as firsts, dedicated to Hashem in purity and holiness. Hence the extra stringencies, the more intense davening and learning, are not merely for show. They are designed to lay the foundation for the entire year. Even if the building of the coming year is not constructed of such quality materials, the foundation will give it strength.

Thus did the wisest of men say, *tov acharis hadavar meirishiso* (Koheles 7:8), which is usually translated as "The end of the matter is greater than the beginning," but can also be understood, "A good end emanates from the beginning." 📖



Rav Zev Leff



Reb Aharon is a devoted and dedicated kollel *yungerman* who toils in Torah day and night. When he decided to elevate his life and learn full-time, he knew that it would come with many financial challenges and even sacrifices, yet he was fully prepared to give up monetary pleasures for a life steeped in *Torah v'avodah*.

To supplement his modest kollel check, Reb Aharon tries to find other sources of income that do not affect his rigorous kollel learning schedule. Towards that end, he periodically agrees to recite Kaddish daily for someone who was *niftar* and has no one to say kaddish on their behalf. In return, the family pays Reb Aharon a modest sum of money, which he uses to support his *mishpachah*.

This past Tzom Gedalya, Aharon davened *maariv* in a local shul. The *baal tefillah* was clearly quite hungry and sped through the davening at top speed. Reb Aharon, to whom *tefillah* is very precious, was still in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei when the *baal tefillah* concluded davening and even afterward as Kaddish Yasom was recited.

Reb Aharon concluded his own Shemoneh Esrai well after davening was over and suddenly realized that he had missed the opportunity to recite Kaddish on behalf of a *niftar*. Being that it was after a *taanis*, there were no later minyanim in his town.

Reb Aharon began to panic. He had committed to the family of the *niftar* that he would recite Kaddish, and now, he had missed his chance. As he made his way home, he wracked his brain to figure out how he could somehow still recite Kaddish.

Suddenly, he thought of a brilliant idea. There was a very early morning *selichos* minyan in his neighborhood that recited *selichos* well before daybreak. Perhaps, he could join them and daven for the *amud*. This would allow him to recite a Kaddish immediately after Ashrei while it was still dark and still the previous day.

Reb Aharon was thrilled on the one hand with his idea, but also a bit nervous that he could potentially sleep in and miss his chance to say kaddish. To ensure that he would make it to the early *selichos*, Reb Aharon stayed up the entire night and even arrived early to *selichos*.

He approached the *rav* and shared his dilemma. The *rav* was only too happy to accommodate and Reb Aharon heaved a big sigh of relief upon concluding kaddish. He was grateful that he had not let down the family that had hired him, and more importantly, the *ne-shamah* of the *niftar*.

A number of months passed and Reb Aharon all but forgot about that sleepless night.

One day, an affluent fellow in his neighborhood approached him. The fellow shared that he needed help with a business project that he was spearheading and asked Reb Aharon if he was interested in being a part of the project. He assured Reb Aharon that all of the work could be done outside of seder hours and offered Reb Aharon \$100,000 for his services.

Reb Aharon could not believe his ears. The salary for this project would go a very long way to support his *mishpachah* and give them much-needed financial stability. He agreed to join the project, and true to what the fellow had told him, all of the work that he performed was outside of his daily learning schedule.

On the day that Reb Aharon concluded all of his work for the project, he went to pick up a check from the affluent fellow. Before the fellow handed him the \$100,000 check he said to him, "Reb Aharon, I want you to know something. You may be wondering why I approached you out of so many other people that I know. Here is why.

"I was in attendance at the early *selichos* minyan the morning after Tzom Gedalya and I overheard your conversation with the *rav*. I realized that you had been up all night to ensure that you kept your commitment to say Kaddish. I also knew full well that no one would ever know the difference if you skipped one *tefillah*, yet your dedication was unwavering.

"I told myself that if I ever needed someone with integrity and commitment, you would be my first call.

"It is a *zechus* and an honor to have had you as a part of this project. Understand that you really earned the \$100,000 early that morning of *selichos*. 📖



YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK:	SHABBOS SEPTEMBER 13 ב אלו	SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 14 בא אלו	MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15 בב אלו	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16 בג אלו	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17 בד אלו	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18 בה אלו	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19 בו אלו
	BAVLI	Horayos 12	Horayos 13	Horayos 14	Zevachim 2	Zevachim 3	Zevachim 4
	YERUSHALMI	Shekalim 21	Shekalim 22	Shekalim 23	Shekalim 24	Shekalim 25	Shekalim 26
	MISHNAH	Menachos 4:1-2	Menachos 4:3-4	Menachos 4:5-5:1	Menachos 5:2-3	Menachos 5:4-5	Menachos 5:6-7
	KITZUR	129:8-13	129:14-19	129:20-End	130:1-End	131:1-4	131:5-9
							131:10-16

הָעוֹיֵנוּ — *We made the path crooked.* We set others off course. Maybe without meaning to. Maybe with a joke, a gesture, or even a silence that spoke too loud.

וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ — *We made it worse.* We pulled others down. Not only did we stumble, but we made it harder for others to stand.

הָעוֹיֵנוּ. וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ. Two words. Two confessions.

But they don't focus on our actions. It's more about how we have influenced others.

It's the power of השפעה, *influence*. השפעה comes from the word שיפוע, *an incline, a ramp*. What's placed at the top of a hill eventually rolls down. Meaning: what's inside me will affect you. What drips from my heart will land in yours. What rolls off my tongue will echo in someone else's ears — and maybe shape the way they live.

We may not wear the title "leader," but we lead every day. A younger sibling watches you. A friend listens to how you talk. A classmate sees how you daven, how you dress, how you laugh, how you react. And it shapes them.

The only question is: Are we the reason someone bent a little lower... or stood a little taller? And that brings us to a story.

The United States Marines are known as one of the most elite military forces in the world. The soldiers go through the toughest training and the most demanding exercises. One commander of a top combat unit decided he wanted to raise his team's performance to the next level. And he planned to use their most dominant trait: their competitive spirit.

He gathered the best soldiers in his unit and announced a challenge: "You will be split into two teams and you'll compete against each other in a complex, high-level combat course. This course will push you to the limit, and we'll see which team performs best."

Both teams immediately entered intense preparation mode. They trained harder than ever, drilled every maneuver, and became even sharper and faster.

The night before the competition, each team leader gave his group a motivational talk. Team A's commander stood before his men and said, "The course you're about to face is extremely difficult. You've trained hard, but this challenge is harder than anything you've done. Some parts will test you physically. Others will try to destroy you mentally. You might get hurt. You might not even finish. I just hope you can make it to the end."

The soldiers looked at each other, worried. Were they really ready? Meanwhile, Team B's commander took a completely different tone. "This won't be easy," he admitted, "but you've been preparing for this for years. Your training, your mental toughness, and your teamwork are all unmatched. I believe in every single one of you. I know you have what

it takes. Work together, push through, and you'll finish strong."

The soldiers of Team B felt the energy. They were pumped. Ready.

The next morning, the two teams lined up at the start. The whistle blew. The race began.

They climbed cliffs. They crawled through mud. They hauled heavy loads up hills. The trail turned dangerously slippery, and it took everything to keep moving.

In time, Team A started slipping. Some fell; their energy was gone. The doubts planted in their minds had taken root. Every obstacle looked like a mountain.

At the same time, Team B encouraged each other. They lifted each other up — literally.

No one moved forward until the last one climbed up. They believed they could finish, and that drove them.

Finally, after many hours, Team B crossed the finish line, exhausted but victorious. Team A didn't even finish.

After giving them time to rest, the division commander called both teams together. "I want to tell you something," he began. "You all trained the same way. You've all completed the same missions in the past. So why did only one team succeed today? Let me remind you: A year ago, you did this same exact course. The only difference? You did it at night, in total darkness. And you all passed. Every single one of you.

"That's right. You already did this 'impossible' course. So what happened? It was the power of words. Yesterday, I told the two team leaders to give very different speeches. One to encourage. One to challenge. One built confidence. One planted doubt. The rest you saw yourselves.

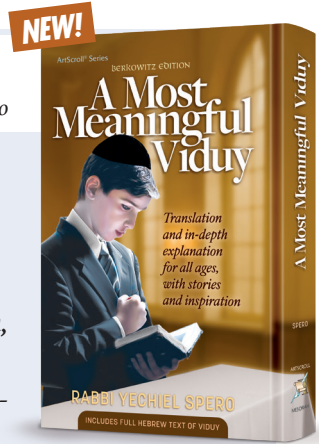
"Team A, don't be discouraged. You are capable of far more. In fact, you were all handpicked to go on to officer training. You will be leaders one day.

"You now understand: Words matter. What you say can pull someone down, or lift them up. That was the true lesson of this mission."

As I say Viduy...

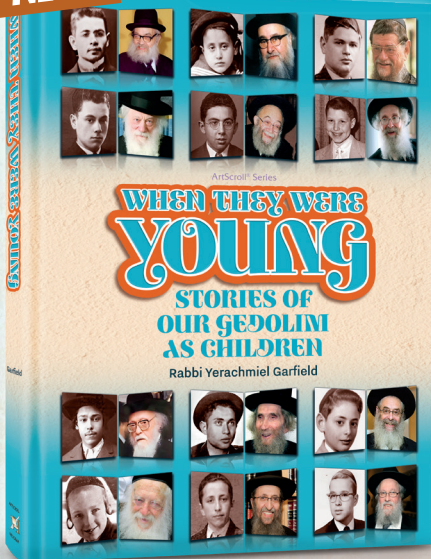
...I will keep in mind that I have the power to change others. I will try to strengthen and uplift, not weaken or belittle.

Because someone out there might finish or quit the race — only because of me. 📖



NEW!

When They Were Young



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was the first child born in the Shaarei Chesed neighborhood of Yerushalayim. His father, R' Chaim Yehudah Leib, was a well-known *talmid chacham* and founder of Yeshivas Shaar HaShamayim in Yerushalayim. His mother was Rebbetzin Tzivia. Shlomo Zalman learned at the famous Yeshivas Etz Chaim in Yerushalayim. His main rebbeim were R' Isser Zalman Meltzer, R' Yechezkel Sarna, and R' Tzvi Pesach Frank. He married Chaya Rivkah Ruchamkin.

In 1938, R' Shlomo Zalman began teaching at Yeshivas Kol Torah in Yerushalayim. His reputation as a rebbi grew, and his *shiurim* attracted many students. He became one of the foremost halachic authorities in the world. His warmth and caring for every Jew served as an example until his *petirah* in 1995.

RABBI SHLOMO ZALMAN AUERBACH

הרב שלמה זלמן אויערבאך זצ"ל

Position: Rosh yeshivah of Yeshivas Kol Torah

Place: Yerushalayim

Publications: *Meorei Eish*, *Maadanei Eretz*, *Minchas Shlomo*

Birth: 1910 **Petirah:** 1995

Known for: Being beloved by all of Klal Yisrael; his halachic *psakim* on issues that we face nowadays



As a young boy, Shlomo Zalman learned in one of the *chadarim* of Yerushalayim. Many *gedolei Yisrael* took their first steps to greatness on the simple wooden benches found in those rooms.

A STORY FROM HIS YOUTH

There was a very strong student who “skipped” into Shlomo Zalman’s class in the *cheder*, where he was younger than everyone else. Unfortunately, his new classmates did not like the fact that he’d joined their class. Most of them did not treat him nicely.

Soon, it was time for the boy to celebrate his bar mitzvah. In those days, the class would chip in and buy the bar mitzvah boy a set of *sefarim*. However, the classmates decided not to give this boy a gift. Not only that, but they decided not to show up to his bar mitzvah at all!

It’s hard to imagine how hurtful such a plan would be to a young boy. Since this newcomer had left his previous class, his former classmates would not attend. And now, due to the boys’ plan, his current class would not be there either. How would he explain to his family why no friends were coming to his bar mitzvah?

One boy, however, refused to participate in the classmates’ plan. When the special day arrived, Shlomo Zalman Auerbach attended the bar mitzvah. And he brought a beautiful *sefer* as a gift, a gift he had bought on his own. This one act of kindness was enough to protect this new boy from feeling embarrassed and rejected. Shlomo Zalman prevented this most joyous day from turning into a sad one.

Reb Shlomo Zalman and the boy remained friends throughout their lives, and they learned together as well.

Reb Shlomo Zalman’s actions as a teenager mirrored his life as an adult. He treated every Yid with genuine love and respect.

WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Ki Savo:

Can bikkurim be brought more than once a year? Is the viduy bikkurim that is said with it recited more than once a year?

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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