

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT  
OF THE  
Mesorah  
Heritage  
Foundation

פרשת ואתחנן  
י"ג אב תשפ"ד  
5784  
AUGUST 17, 2024  
ISSUE #202

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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

SHABBOS  
NACHAMU

## THE GREATEST SOURCE OF COMFORT

Around the Year with Reb Meilech by Yisroel Besser

Shabbos Nachamu is a Shabbos that brings comfort. Each and every year, as the period of *bein hametzarim* and Tishah B'Av comes to an end, the voice of Hakadosh Baruch Hu rings out once again. "*Nachamu, nachamu ami,*" He calls out, His voice bringing comfort and hope, now as then.

But how do we actually take comfort, if the reality that caused us to mourn has not changed? We cried because the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, and now, after Tishah B'Av, it has not yet been rebuilt. What is the source of this burst of *simchah* and comfort?

The *pasuk* addresses this, says the Sfas Emes. "From where will you take comfort, My people? From the fact that this comes from Me, *Elokeichem, your God.*

The awareness that it is He and only He Who plans, decides, and acts, that all sorrow and anguish are also a result of His precise, perfect, compassionate design — this brings comfort.

The word "*nachamu*" is doubled, because there is one measure of

comfort one takes in the awareness that even difficult situations come from Him, but there is a second portion of *nechamah* that comes from the assurance that whatever He does is for our ultimate good.

Yes, we still see *churban*, but a deeper look allows us to reflect upon where it all comes from, and to take heart in this: It is from our loving Creator, Who seeks only to benefit us.

This knowledge itself brings comfort and joy.

Reb Shmuel Munkes was one of the close chassidim of the Baal HaTanya, a spirited man of great depth.

He came into the *beis medrash* one morning and announced that a fire had consumed his house, destroying all his possessions. Somehow, he had scraped together a few coins and gone to buy a bottle of *mash-*

*keh*, whiskey, which he put on the table.

He invited the assembled chassidim to join him in drinking *l'chaim*, and they looked at him oddly. He had just lost all his possessions, yet he was clearly in high spirits.

He poured a *l'chaim* for each of the chassidim and then started to dance, singing a *niggun* to the words, "*shelo asani goy.*"

Reb Shmuel's friends wondered if the tragedy had affected him — perhaps he had lost his grip on reality and he didn't realize what had happened to him?

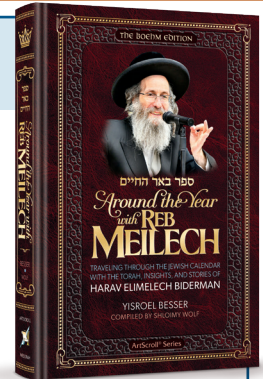
Reb Shmuel saw the expressions on their faces and he explained his joy. "Imagine I was not a Yid," he said. "Just imagine this would have happened to me. I would have lost everything, every possession and every object, and if my god was

material, then it too would have been consumed. But thankfully," Reb Shmuel's face brightened, "I am a Yid, my God is alive and well, and no fire can affect Him. He remains as powerful and good today as yesterday, and therefore I dance, *shelo asani goy!*"

This is the *nechamah* we receive on this Shabbos. Yes, the Beis HaMikdash still lies in ruins, but *Elokeichem*, the King and Creator Who made us His and gave Himself to us, is as present and primary as ever.

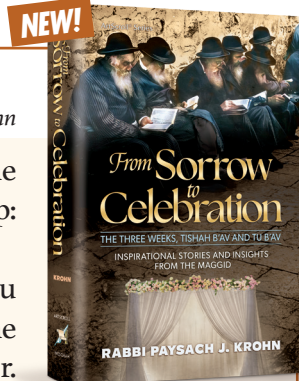
The moment of greatest connection between the Ribbono Shel Olam and us came at Har Sinai, when He presented Himself to us with the word *Anochi* (*Shemos 20:2*): *Anochi Hashem Elokecha, I am Hashem, your God.* Later in the Torah, Hashem speaks of times of great concealment using that very

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Rav Meilech Biderman

From Sorrow to Celebration by Rabbi Paysach Krohn



In the spring of 1994, R' Shlomo Malik, a Satmar chassid, was a young married man working for Micro Innovations, a computer store in Manhattan. Recognizing his diligence and potential growth, his employers enrolled him in a laptop training course given by Toshiba.

An essential feature of the course was to learn how to take apart and put together a laptop. Its intricate components include memory modules, clips, chips, track pack screws, cooling fan, battery, audio port cable, LCD screen, and keyboard, each comprising scores of parts, many of them tiny.

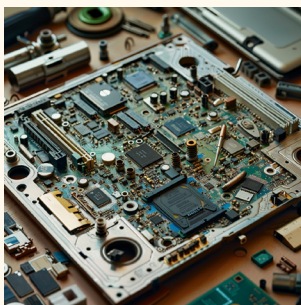
The instructor, Mr. Morgan Watkins, told the class that their final exam would be to totally disassemble a laptop in the morning, and then reassemble it in the afternoon, after lunch, and have it function perfectly. Each student would be given a large tray with partitions in which he could place the parts in an orderly manner.

On the morning of the test, each of the thirty students worked meticulously, taking apart the laptop and placing every component carefully into particular sections of the tray so that they could easily find it to reassemble the computer. With a Phillips screwdriver and tiny tweezers, Shlomo unscrewed, unbolted, and detached every part of the laptop until the only thing left was the frame.

As the lunch break was ap-

proaching, Shlomo analyzed all the parts that he had in his tray, visualizing the order he would use to reassemble the laptop.

After lunch, the trainees returned, and everyone immediately began the reassembling process. Shlomo worked meticulously and diligently and after two hours had the laptop put together. But then he looked at his tray and there was still a screw there! He could not believe it! He was sure he had reconstructed the laptop perfectly. He also knew, though, that if a screw was missing and the laptop was turned on, it could cause a short circuit. He had no choice but to take apart the laptop



and reassemble it again, making sure that this screw was put in the right place.

After methodically taking it apart and putting it back together, that same screw remained in the tray. Shlomo

decided that this time he would start the laptop; if the screw were missing, the laptop wouldn't start. But to his amazement, it started perfectly. He went through various tasks, and they all worked. No one was allowed to leave the room until the instructor collected all the laptops. Soon Mr. Watkins inquired, "Everybody done?"

Some students raised their hands. "Are your laptops working?" he asked those with raised hands. They all nodded in the affirmative.

"Anybody have any extra screws?" he asked.

Only one hand went up: Shlomo's.

"Could you please come up here?" Mr. Watkins asked.

Shlomo told me he felt so foolish. He could feel the stares and smirks behind him. There were people of many nationalities in the class, and he, the obviously Chassidic Jew, was now going to be humiliated in front of everyone. Mr. Watkins took Shlomo's laptop and made sure that it worked perfectly.

"No one else found an extra screw?" he asked again.

There were chuckles and embarrassed coughing, but no student said anything. "Well, at least we have one honest person in the room," Mr. Watkins said. "You see, while you were out for lunch, I put an extra screw in each of your trays. It was a test to see what you would do with it."

Shlomo could not contain his smile and his pride that he had just made a *Kiddush Hashem*. Mr. Watkins praised him for his competence and integrity, and then collected everyone else's laptops and excuses.

*The Maharsha (Bechoros 8b) writes that the twenty-one days of The Three Weeks correspond to the twenty-one days from the start of Rosh Hashanah (when Heavenly judgment begins) until Hoshana Rabbah (when the final judgment is ratified) and should be days of introspection and teshuvah. May our summer and beyond reflect a joyful time of atonement and absolution...*

THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

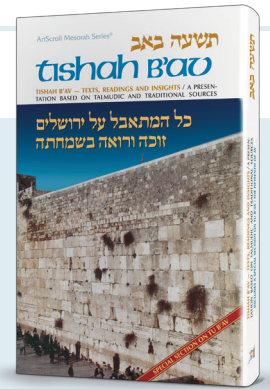
AUGUST / אב

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
17 א	18 ט	19 י	20 יא	21 יב	22 יג	23 יד
Bava Basra 53	Bava Basra 54	Bava Basra 55	Bava Basra 56	Bava Basra 57	Bava Basra 58	Bava Basra 59

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

AUGUST / אב

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
17 א	18 ט	19 י	20 יא	21 יב	22 יג	23 יד
Bava Kamma 3:9-10	Bava Kamma 3:11-4:1	Bava Kamma 4:2-3	Bava Kamma 4:4-5	Bava Kamma 4:6-7	Bava Kamma 4:8-9	Bava Kamma 5:1-2



אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל: לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמישה עשר באב וכיום הכיפורים, שבהם בנות ירושלים יוצאות בבלי לבן...

**Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: Israel had no days as festive as the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur, when the maidens of Jerusalem would go out dressed in white garments...(Taanis 26b)**

In the times of the Beis Hamikdash, a ritual was held on Tu B'av and Yom Kippur, where *shidduchim* were arranged in a festive ceremony. Tu B'Av is still commemorated as a day of increased joy, and engagements and weddings are often celebrated specifically on this day. In fact, a connection between marriage and Tu B'Av can be detected as far back as Creation.

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 22a) says, "Forty days before the formation of an embryo, a Heavenly voice proclaims: The daughter of this one is meant to marry this one." Being that the world was created on the 25th day of Elul, forty days before Creation was the 15th day of Av! Accordingly, if there is any day befitting the marriage of a "daughter of this one to this one," it would be the day of Tu B'Av (see *Bnei Yissas'char* Chapter *Besulah B'Machol* 2).



Furthermore, just as one mourns the death of a relative for six days, and then "gets up" on the seventh day to begin the rebuilding process, similarly, Jews as a whole "sit *shivah*" for the destruction of their beloved Beis Hamikdash on the Ninth of Av, and then commence the rebuilding process on the morning of the seventh day, the Fifteenth of Av (*Pri Tzaddik*). After the Ninth of Av, we strive once again to place the *Shechinah* within our camp. But how does one restore the *Shechinah*? The Gemara (*Sotah* 17a) teaches that if a man and wife merit living together righteously, the *Shechinah* rests between them. Perhaps this is why the matchmaking ceremony mentioned in the Mishnah was reserved for this period.

Another method of returning the *Shechinah* to our midst is by reversing that which caused the separation to begin with. The Gemara (*Yoma* 9b) states that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and the *Shechinah* departed as the

outcome of baseless hate between people. Unity is therefore the tool needed to reverse the hostility and undo the cause that led to the destruction. The Torah says, *v'dovak b'ishto v'hayu l'vasar echad*, (*Bereishis* 2:24), proclaiming the bond of man and wife as the ultimate form of *achdus*. This may be another reason why the union through marriage was sought during this post-Tishah B'Av period of rebuilding.

Companionship promotes the presence of the *Shechinah* because hate among people draws a separation between man and Hashem. Because every human being is born *b'tzelem Elokim*, with the image of Hashem, if one separates himself from his fellow Jew, then he, in effect, is separating himself from Hashem. This concept is hinted to in our *tefillos*:

After the weekday reading of the Torah, a number of short prayers are recited by the *chazzan*, each prayer asking for Hashem's assistance in various aspects of life. Every passage begins with the same words, "*Yehi ratzon milifnei Avinu Shebashamayim, May it be the Will before our Father Who is in Heaven.*"

Every passage that is, except for the last one, said by the entire congregation in unison, requesting mercy for all suffering Jews, which starts with the words: "*Acheinu kol Beis Yisrael..., Our brothers, the entire family of Yisrael...*"

Here, we do not preface our request by asking Hashem to *change* His Will in our favor. For when Jews speak as one, and refer to each other as *brothers*, we erase the division between Hashem and ourselves. We no longer must beg Hashem to change His Will to our will, for when we act as brothers, Hashem's Will and our will is one and the same. 📖

Therefore, the Navi tells us, in the name of Hashem, *Anochi, Anochi Hu minachemchem, I, only I, am He Who comforts you* (*Yeshayah* 51:12), using the same word twice. It is the awareness that it is the very same *Anochi*, at times of great revelation and at times of great concealment, that is the greatest source of comfort! 📖

## THE GREATEST SOURCE OF COMFORT

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same word, *v'Anochi astir hastir panai bayom hahu, And I will surely have concealed my face on that day* (*Devarim* 31:18), teaching us that the light and darkness are connected, two perspectives of the very same reality.

**This week's  
Yerushalmi Yomi  
schedule:**

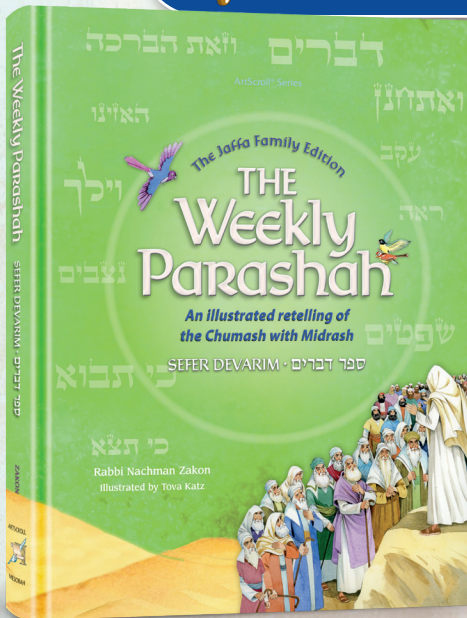
**AUGUST /  
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SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
17 י"ג Challah 16	18 י"ד Challah 17	19 טו Challah 18	20 טז Challah 19	21 י"ז Challah 20	22 י"ח Challah 21	23 י"ט Challah 22



# Parashah for Children

## פרשת ואתחנן



### The First Pasuk and Its Last Word

**B**efore we say the pasuk of Shema Yisrael, we cover our eyes with our right hand, so we can think about the words we are saying and not look around. We say the words out loud because it helps us concentrate better.

When we say the first pasuk of Shema, we accept that Hashem is our King. We should have in mind that we know that Hashem always existed and always will exist, that He is the master of everything, that He is the only God, and that He can do anything.

Every letter is also a number. The word אֶחָד has three letters. א is 1, ח is 8, and ד is 4.

When we say the word אֶחָד, at each letter we should think about something connected to that number:

- א (1) — that Hashem is one;
- ח (8) — that He is King of the world and the heavens. In the Torah, this letter is written as חָ. The “roof” that comes up in the middle of the letter hints that Hashem is THE King up in Heaven and down here on Earth. There is one earth and seven heavens, which equal 8;
- ד (4) — that He is King in all four directions: east, west, north, and south.



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## THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Vaeschanan:

**Which is a word that was in the second luchos, but not in the first luchos?**

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to [shabbosquestion@artscroll.com](mailto: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*.

**The winner of the Pinchas question is: SHMUEL KHAIMOV, New York, NY**

The question was: The shevatim told Moshe they would build areas for their cattle and cities for their children, but Moshe switched the order. Why? The answer is: The order of what the shevatim said showed that their business became before their children. Moshe was telling them that children come first!

