

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE
Mesorah
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Foundation

פרשת חיי שרה
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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

PARASHAH BLESSED WITH ALL

Rav Druck on Chumash – Bereishis by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Druck

וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וְה' בֵּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל
— *Now Avraham was old,
well on in years, and Hashem had blessed Avraham with everything (Bereishis 24:1).*

From here we derive," says the Midrash, "that Avraham observed the mitzvah of succah."

The Vilna Gaon explains this enigmatic Midrash in a similarly cryptic fashion. The word, בְּכָל, *with everything*, he says, is an acronym for three clauses in the following verses about the mitzvah of succah (Vayikra 23:42-43):

בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֹשֵׁבוּ בַסֻּכּוֹת,
לְמַעַן יָדְעוּ דִרְתִּיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי
אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם You shall dwell in booths for
a seven-day period; every native in Yisrael shall
dwell in booths. So that your generations will
know that I caused the Children of Yisrael to
dwell in booths when I took them from the land
of Egypt; I am Hashem, your G-d.

What connection is there between Avraham being blessed with everything and his keeping the mitzvah of succah?

Let us preface our answer by explaining the source of the joy of Succos. We are commanded to be exceedingly joyous on this festival, which is known as Zman Simchaseinu, the season of our joy. If so, why is it that specifically on this festival we are required to exile ourselves from our homes and dwell in the succah? Isn't exile the opposite of happiness?

We can explain this with an analogy. A family is going on vacation, and they pack up many pieces of luggage and cram the suitcases into their vehicle. Although they feel squashed, no one complains, because they know that this is a temporary arrangement, and they will soon arrive at their vacation spot. They therefore accept the cramped conditions quietly, as they look forward to the spacious quar-

ters they will enjoy at their destination. That's because when a person feels that his situation is temporary, he is able to overcome all difficulties and obstacles.

The reason people find happiness elusive is that they experience difficulties in various areas of life: children, health, livelihood, etc. If, however, they would realize that these are all temporary, and they are on their way to the place of rest, they would not take all their hardships to heart, but would revert to their natural joie de vivre.

When a person internalizes the reality that this world is fleeting, he feels joy, and his tzaros seem insignificant.

This is the message of the well-known story that happened with the Chofetz Chaim, who once welcomed a wealthy visitor from abroad to his home. When the visitor surveyed the impoverished dwelling, with its sparse, shaky furniture, and the clothing hung on nails due to lack of a proper closet, he wondered why the house was not furnished.

"And where is your furniture?" the Chofetz Chaim asked him.

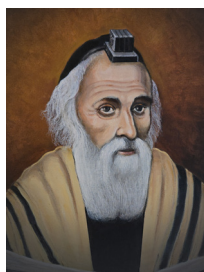
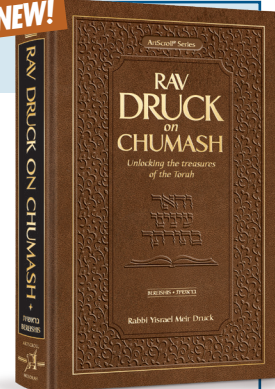
"At home," the visitor replied. "Right now I am traveling."

"I, too, am traveling," the Chofetz Chaim responded.

A person who recognizes that this world is but a corridor to the World to Come will feel no lack or constraint, and will see no reason to com-

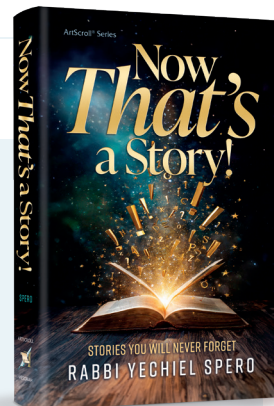
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NEW!



Vilna Gaon

**ALTHOUGH THEY
FEEL SQUASHED,
NO ONE COMPLAINS**



A young child who is running in one direction can suddenly stop and run in a completely opposite direction. A young man can do the same in regard to his direction in life.

However, as we grow older, we become more and more set in our ways, making it increasingly difficult to change our direction. And so, we pretty much stay the same.

But it doesn't have to be that way. If we deem it important enough to change and we exhibit the proper willpower, we can change direction, no matter our age, as illustrated by the following story.

Yaakov Vardi was born in Romania. After surviving the Holocaust, he immigrated to Eretz Yisrael, where he settled on a kibbutz run by HaShomer HaTza'ir, an antireligious Zionist youth movement.

Bright and eager to learn, he threw himself into his medical studies, becoming a physician and eventually serving as chief of the department of neurology in Shaarei Tzedek Medical Center. He also owned an agricultural farm and dabbled in music and poetry.

Nothing about Yaakov Vardi's lifestyle had any connection to religion.

But one day, when he was already middle-aged, Professor Vardi began pursuing Torah and Yiddishkeit, until he became a complete *baal teshuvah*. And he hasn't veered from that lifestyle for decades.

The metamorphosis was unexpected, seemingly coming out of nowhere. No one could figure out

when it had started, or where it had come from.

Finally, someone asked Vardi what triggered his inspiration. "What made you suddenly become a *baal teshuvah*? Is there a story behind it? Was there an interaction with a patient?"

The answer is perhaps as shocking as the transformation itself:

I was on my way to Tel Aviv and stopped at a red light. Usually, it takes about a minute for the light to turn from red to green. I could have daydreamed or stared into space but instead I took note of the bumper sticker on the car in front of me.

That bumper sticker would change my life.

It was three lines long (based on a well-known Hebrew aphorism).

The first line read, "*Hado'eg l'shanah yizra chitah* — One who is worried about the upcoming year will plant wheat." Indeed, wheat provides nourishment and bread. But it has to be planted every single year.

The next line read, "*Hado'eg l'shanim yita matta* — One who is worried about the upcoming years will plant a grove (of trees)." Trees produce fruits that come back year after year and is far more productive than planting wheat.

But it was the third line that made all the difference.

"*Hado'eg l'dorot yechanech et banav* — One who is worried about the upcoming generations will educate his children." If you are worried about future generations, you must teach your chil-

dren the proper way to live.

It hit me like a sledgehammer.

On the kibbutz where I had grown up, I had planted wheat, harvesting and enjoying the fruits of my labor. As the owner of an agricultural farm, encompassing one hundred dunams of plantations, I had planted trees, benefiting from the yearly produce.

But what about my children? What had I done for them? How had I educated them?

What was I teaching them? To make more money? To take another trip and go on another vacation? What would become of my future generations?

It was at that moment that I decided it was time to make some drastic changes, to find out what it really means to be a Jew.

And that's how my family and I became *baalei teshuvah*.

Often, when we reach middle age, we settle in, thinking that we are not going to change anymore; whoever we are is who we are going to be for the rest of our life.

What a shame. There is so much more to learn, so many more ways we can grow.

Look around. Search for inspiration. Who knows? The next time you are stopped at a red light, that moment may just change your life forever. 📖

	SHABBOS NOV 23 בב חשוון	SUNDAY NOV 24 בב חשוון	MONDAY NOV 25 בב חשוון	TUESDAY NOV 26 בב חשוון	WEDNESDAY NOV 27 בב חשוון	THURSDAY NOV 28 בב חשוון	FRIDAY NOV 29 בב חשוון
BAVLI	Bava Basra 151	Bava Basra 152	Bava Basra 153	Bava Basra 154	Bava Basra 155	Bava Basra 156	Bava Basra 157
YERUSHALMI	Bikkurim 23	Bikkurim 24	Bikkurim 25	Bikkurim 26	Shabbos 1	Shabbos 2	Shabbos 3
MISHNAH	Bava Basra 4:7-8	Bava Basra 4:9-5:1	Bava Basra 5:2-3	Bava Basra 5:4-5	Bava Basra 5:6-7	Bava Basra 5:8-9	Bava Basra 5:10-11
KITZUR	16:1-End	17:1-7	17:8-18:2	18:3-9	18:10-14	18:15-End	19:1-7

Why *do* we tend to focus on the things we are missing rather than the many things we have?

A major part of it is entitlement. We feel as though we're supposed to have everything. We *should* have parents who love us, house us, feed us, and give us everything we can imagine. We're *supposed* to have good health. We're *supposed* to get married at exactly the age we decided is right.

If this is a person's attitude, then as soon as something goes even slightly wrong, it becomes intolerable.

I was once talking to someone who had a series of things go wrong in his life, and he kept saying, "Why me?"

"Let me ask you something," I responded. "For the first thirty-five years of your life, when all you received was *berachah*, did you ever ask, 'Why me?'"

"Why did you wake up now and start asking, 'Why me?'"

The reason is that he felt that everything was coming to him. And a person who thinks that way can't be happy with anything he has, because it was owed to him. On the contrary — when he doesn't get something he wants, he feels that it's unfair.

The road to simchah is paved with the recognition that we're not entitled to anything. Hashem didn't have to give us anything — from the smallest to the biggest things we have.

There is a story about a person who goes out into the street and he sees a line of dozens of people waiting. He asks someone what everyone is waiting for, and the person answers, "There's a guy up front who is writing out checks of \$100 million to each person who comes to shake his hand."

Naturally, he takes his spot at the back of the line. He can see from afar that indeed, each person who shakes the guy's hand walks away with a certified check for \$100 million. In his mind, he's already spending the money. He's calling a realtor, a travel agent... By the time he

reaches the front of the line, he has spent \$95 million of it. Finally, it comes his turn, and not only does he shake the guy's hand, he bends down to kiss it.

The guy asks for his name, writes out a check, and hands it to him. He walks away, opens the check, and he can't believe his eyes — it's written out for \$10 million.

First he's so distraught he doesn't know what to do with himself. Then he gets angry. How could the guy give him "only" \$10 million?

He waits to see what the next guy gets, and sure enough, it's \$100 million.

He comes home, and his wife takes one glance at his face and is stricken with fear. She's never seen him so mad before! He's been

fired dozens of times and he has never been this angry.

"What happened?" she asks.

"You want to see what happened, here," and he throws the check on the floor.

His wife picks it up, opens it, and sees that it's a \$10 million check.

"Are you crazy?" she asks him. "You're upset about \$10 million? You never even dreamt that in the course of your entire life you would earn this much!"

"You don't understand," he retorts. "This was supposed to be \$100 million!"

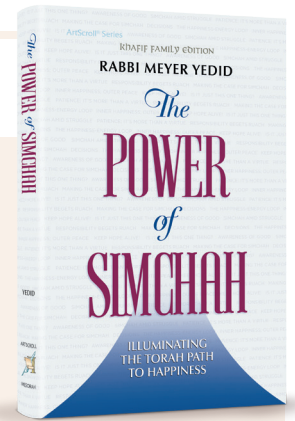
This sounds like a silly *mashal*, but in truth, don't we do this all the time?

We're sitting on the value of billions of dollars. How much is each of our senses worth? How much is each child worth? But somehow, when we're missing a few hundred thousand dollars, we're miserable.

Hashem owes us nothing. We didn't make anything in our body ourselves. It's all a gift, and each organ and each limb is priceless. 📖



Rabbi Meyer Yedid



BLESSED WITH ALL continued from page 1

plain, since he knows that this is all temporary.

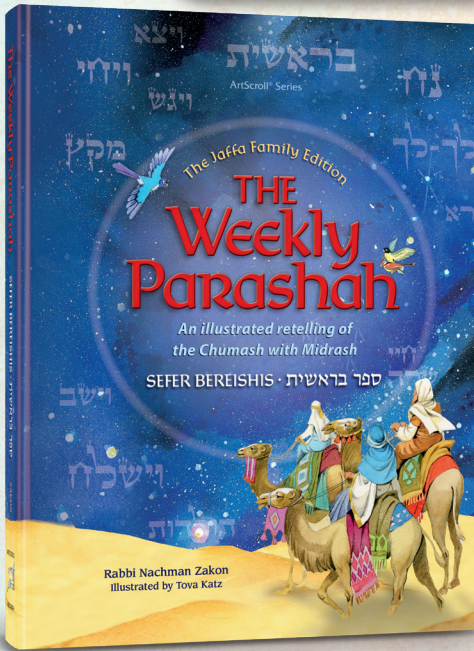
That is why, specifically on Succos, when we are commanded to be extra joyous, we are also commanded to sit in the succah. Sitting in this temporary dwelling is the pathway to true joy, for when we sit there we internalize the idea that all of Olam Hazeh is fleeting and we are not in our permanent location. Then we feel no lack, and we become filled with happiness.

We can now understand why the Midrash links the Torah's statement that Hashem blessed Avraham with everything with the mitzvah of succah. When the Torah wished to describe the great blessing that Avraham Avinu enjoyed, it hinted to the mitzvah of succah, which helps us internalize and maintain the feeling that our world is temporary. That leads to true joy, and that is the great berachah of *bakol*, with everything. 📖



Parashah for Children

פרשת חיי שרה



The Cave

Avraham Avinu knew exactly where he wanted to bury Sarah. It was in the cave he had discovered when the angels came to visit him after he had a bris. This was the amazing cave where Adam and Chavah were buried.

But there was a problem. Avraham didn't own the property. It belonged to a man named Ephron, who was from the Hittite nation. Even a bigger problem: The Hittites ruled Chevron at that time, and the law was that land for burial could be bought only by another Hittite. It was illegal to sell land to a foreigner. Avraham had to get permission from the Hittites to buy a grave, and then he had to persuade Ephron to sell the cave to him.

Me'aras HaMachpeilah

- ▶ It's the oldest Jewish cemetery in the world — over 3700 years old!
- ▶ The first man and woman to be created, Adam and Chavah, are buried there as well.
- ▶ Eisav's head is buried there.
- ▶ For 700 years the Arabs did not allow Jews to enter Me'aras HaMachpeilah. In 1967 the Jews conquered Chevron — including Me'aras HaMachpeilah — in the Six Day War with the Arabs. We are fortunate that our generation can go and pray inside.
- ▶ The big building where people pray is actually built over the cave where the Founding Fathers and Mothers are buried. The entrance to the cave has been sealed for many centuries and is below ground.
- ▶ It's one of our holiest places.
- ▶ All souls pass through this cave on the way to heaven.

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

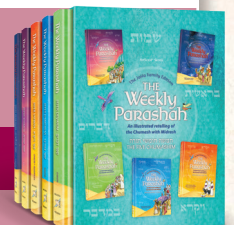
Question for Chayei Sarah:

What are two reasons Chevron is also known as Kiryas Arba?

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*.

The winner of the question for Parashas Noach is: REUBEN SCHWARTZ, Elmwood Park, NJ

The question was: How old was the world when Avram was born?
The answer is: The world was 1,948 years old when Avram was born.



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