

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE  
Mesorah  
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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

## THE KEY QUALITY

Rav Nosson Tzvi Speaks from Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l

וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר בְּלִעְדֵי אֱלֹקִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה.

“Yosef answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘That is beyond me; it is G-d Who will respond with Pharaoh’s welfare’” (Bereishis 41:16).

On the word בְּלִעְדֵי, Rashi comments: “The wisdom is not mine; rather, it is G-d Who will respond — He will place the response in my mouth for Pharaoh’s welfare.”

Pharaoh’s actions seem astounding. The king of Egypt takes a young man — a former slave who has just been released from prison, and who comes from the land of the Hebrews, who were despised by the Egyptians of that era — and, seemingly on a whim, declares him viceroy, with powers second to no one but Pharaoh himself! What exceptional qualities did Pharaoh discern in Yosef that spurred him to spontaneously appoint him as ruler of his country?

The *rosh yeshivah*, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, explained that it was precisely one word that allowed Yosef to earn Pharaoh’s unqualified trust: “*Biladai*.”

When Yosef HaTzaddik stood before Pharaoh, he knew that he had not been redeemed from prison and taken to the king’s palace without a reason. Clearly, someone had praised him effusively to Pharaoh, as Pharaoh himself attests (v. 15): “*Va’ani shama-ti alecha leimor sishma chalom lifsor oso, Now I heard it said of you that you comprehend a dream to interpret it.*”

Yet, instead of highlighting his rare power, Yosef categorically denies his talent and answers, “*Biladai* — it is not my strength or power, but the wisdom and help of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.” He does not demand honor or even request minor credit for his



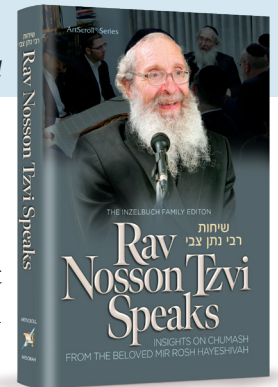
Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

remarkable ability to interpret dreams, professing that it is all *siyata diShmaya*.

A person like this — who does not request anything for himself and demonstrates an utter lack of self-interest — is someone who can surely be trusted.

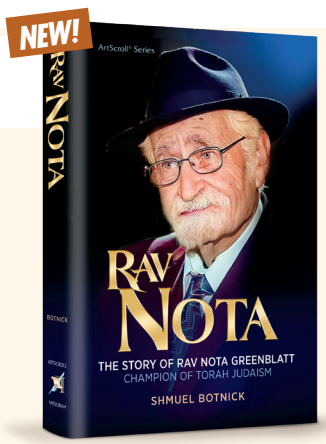
Yosef HaTzaddik again demonstrates this quality in the next *parashah*, when he sends wagons to bring Yaakov to Mitzrayim, as the *pesukim* say, “*Vayitein lahem Yosef aggalos al pi Pharaoh, And Yosef gave them wagons by Pharaoh’s word*” (ibid. 45:21) and “*Vayisu vnei Yisrael es Yaakov avihem...ba’aggalos asher shalach Pharaoh laseis oso, The sons of Yisrael transported Yaakov their father...in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to transport him*” (ibid. 46:5).

Yosef HaTzaddik was the *mishneh lamelech*, yet he never acted without obtaining Pharaoh’s express permission. Since Egyptian law prohibited sending wagons out of the country without the royal stamp of approval, Yosef made sure to ask Pharaoh and never once infringed upon his word, as the Torah attests on numerous occasions. This is the model of a person who acts with *nekius* (integrity), taking nothing for himself — and this is a person who is deemed trustworthy. When Pharaoh discerned this exceptional quality in Yosef HaTzaddik, he immediately determined that this is a person whom he could trust to serve as his viceroy. 📖



# THE BERACHAH

Rav Nota – The Story of Rav Nota Greenblatt by Shmuel Botnick



Rav Nota Greenblatt carried his experiences in Yerushalayim throughout his lifetime, in one instance quite literally. For decades to come, Rav Nota would tell of his encounter with his brothers' *rebbe*, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook. Rav Nota described how he had been a weak child and, at the age of nine, his health began to seriously decline. His concerned father brought him to Rav Kook to receive his *berachah* for a full recovery. Rav Kook pulled young Nota under his *tallis* and gave him a heartfelt *berachah*, reciting the *pesukim* of *Bircas Kohanim*. He then *davened* for Nota's *refuah sheleimah* and concluded with the blessing that he "live a long life and become a *talmid chacham*." Rav Nota was mesmerized by this story. He relived those minutes that he stood beneath the *tallis*, watching a *tzaddik daven* on his behalf.



The effects of Rav Kook's *berachah* were evident for nearly ninety years, as Rav Nota traveled from city to city, often surviving on only matzah and sardines, going to sleep after eleven o'clock and, not infrequently, rising in the predawn hours to catch his next flight.



When he was ninety-two years old, he was staying in the home of Rabbi Yosef Grossman in Houston, Texas, when Rabbi Grossman noticed that he looked somewhat uncomfortable.

"Is everything okay?" Rabbi Grossman asked.

"I have a headache," Rav Nota admitted.

"Can I get you an Advil?" Rabbi Grossman offered.

"Advil?" Rav Nota responded. "In all my life I took only six pills! I have a *berachah* from Rav Kook — who needs pills?"

Indeed, until his final illness, Rav Nota very rarely visited a doctor.

But Rav Kook had given two *berachos*: one, that he live a long life; the other, that he become a *talmid chacham*. Rav Nota would quip that "at least the first half came true." Undoubtedly, Rav Kook himself would have dif-

fered with him on this.

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One of the Israeli members of the Greenblatt family had a four-year-old son who was diagnosed with a rare condition. To receive the best treatment, they had to travel to New York to consult a specialist in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. It wasn't easy. With their critically ill son, they had to relocate to the United States, a foreign country, whose culture was unfamiliar and whose language they barely knew. Rav Nota flew to New York from Memphis to be there with them and do what he could to make their stay easier.



While he was there, Rav Nota learned that his mother, who had lived her last few years in an assisted living facility in Eretz Yisrael, had passed away. As the youngest child in the family, who was always exceptionally close to his parents, it was assumed that Rav Nota would board the next plane to Eretz Yisrael. But Rav Nota wasn't budging.

"She has passed away already," he explained. "If she's no longer alive, there's no question of *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life). Here, on the other hand, there is *pikuach nefesh*. They need me here. I'm not going." Only after Rav Nota's son promised that he would take over his role in the hospital, and fully take his Israeli cousins under his wing, did Rav Nota board a plane and head to his mother's *levayah*.

Years later, he would demonstrate a similar concern, this time, for worried children rather than worried parents. Rav Nota's nephew, Rav Efraim Greenblatt, had to undergo complex heart surgery. A doctor in St. Louis was recommended as an ideal surgeon to conduct the operation and so Rav Efraim traveled to St. Louis. Many of his children traveled to St. Louis to be with him. As the time of the operation neared, the children huddled together in the waiting room, whispering *Tehillim* and apprehensively glancing at their watches. *continued on page 3*

## THIS WEEK'S DAF YOMI SCHEDULE:

### DECEMBER / סבט

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
16 Bava Kamma 44	17 Bava Kamma 45	18 Bava Kamma 46	19 Bava Kamma 47	20 Bava Kamma 48	21 Bava Kamma 49	22 Bava Kamma 50

## THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:

### DECEMBER / סבט

SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
16 Yevamos 14:5-6	17 Yevamos 14:7-8	18 Yevamos 14:9-15:1	19 Yevamos 15:2-3	20 Yevamos 15:4-5	21 Yevamos 15:6-7	22 Yevamos 15:8-9

In *Maseches Kiddushin* (36a), there is a dispute between Rav Meir and Rav Yehudah. Both agree that *Klal Yisrael* are called Hashem's children; the question is whether they can forfeit that title. Rav Yehudah takes the position that it is only when the Jewish people conduct themselves as Hashem's children that they are referenced as such. Rav Meir ardently disagrees. Always, says Rav Meir, no matter how far they may have drifted, regardless of what sins they may have committed, the Jewish people are called Hashem's children.

The reason we cannot divert our attention from Rav Meir is because he was the one who revealed that we are always considered Hashem's children. Since this principle is the "precious cornerstone" of our existence, he who brought it to light must be always on our minds.

This idea is as relevant as ever. We are living in trying times. It is only natural that we should strive to feel Hashem's love as we valiantly attempt to navigate personal and national challenges.

But the reality is that even when we don't see it, Hashem's love — both boundless and eternal — blazes just as brightly as it always did.

This lesson is so vital, it serves as the preamble to one of the most momentous occurrences in our history. In *Parashas Shemos*, we learn of Moshe Rabbeinu's encountering the prophetic revelation at the burning bush. A dialogue between him and Hashem ensues, wherein Hashem appoints him to be His emissary to free the Jewish people from Mitzrayim. Moshe presents a question. "And when they say to me, 'What is His name?' what should I tell them?" Hashem responds, "Ehkeh Asher Ehkeh." This is a newly introduced appellation for Hashem that is undoubtedly replete with endless depth and meaning. However, literally, the words mean "I will be what I will be."

Rav Shimon Schwab, in the introduction to *Haggadah Shel Pesach Beis HaSho'eivah*, presents the following explanation for this cryptic dialogue. Moshe was concerned that when he informed the Jewish people that he was a messenger from Hashem, they would

respond with consternation.

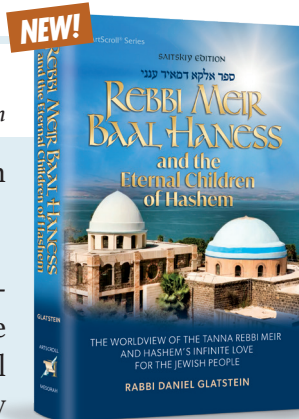
"Hashem?" they might exclaim. "Where was He all along? Why was He silent throughout our suffering?"

Although they would concede that Hashem's love for the Patriarchs was openly expressed, their distress would be that in their experience as slaves to Egypt, they never enjoyed that love.

Moshe's query to Hashem was, "What should I tell them? How do I respond to such a pained question?"

Hashem told him, "Ehkeh Asher Ehkeh — I will be what I will be." Hashem was saying: Tell the Jewish people, "My feelings of affection for you have never changed. It always has, and always will be, a relationship founded in the deepest, most infinite love."

Today, even as the challenges grow, we must cling to this message. "I will be what I will be," says Hashem. We may not always see it, but the love is always there. 📖



### THE BERACHAH continued from page 2

Then the door swung open. A tall man with a straw hat and tan jacket entered.

"Uncle Nota!" they exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

Rav Nota simply nodded, took a seat beside them, and joined them in saying *Tehillim*, stopping every now and then to offer a few words of encouragement. He stayed for one hour and then rose to leave. It had been a five-hour drive from Memphis to St. Louis, and now he had a five-hour drive home. Ten hours of travel for a one-hour visit.

**"HE LOOKS LIKE A JEW IN PAIN."**

Rav Nota's son, Reb Yaakov, once drove to a correctional center in southern Illinois to procure a document needed for a *get* from a Jewish prisoner who was found guilty of murder. A teenage boy from Memphis accompanied him. When they returned, the boy found a picture of the inmate online and brought it to Rav Nota's house.

"This is the man we went to visit in Illinois," he told Rav Nota. "He actually looks like a murderer, no?"

Rav Nota glanced at the picture. "He looks like a Jew in pain," he responded. 📖

*This week's  
Yerushalmi Yomi  
schedule:*

DECEMBER /  
טבת

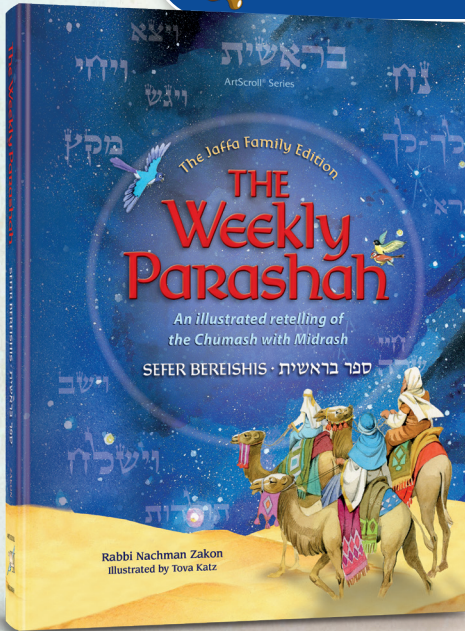
SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
16 Sheviis 70	17 Sheviis 71	18 Sheviis 72	19 Sheviis 73	20 Sheviis 74	21 Sheviis 75	22 Sheviis 76





# Parashah for Children

## פרשת מקץ



### Yosef Gets Out of Prison!

**P**haraoh was very excited about this prisoner who could predict the future from dreams, and get it right. He immediately ordered his guards to bring Yosef to him.

It was Rosh Hashanah when guards took Yosef out of prison. Yosef got a haircut. Instead of a prisoner's uniform, they dressed Yosef in clothes fit to meet a king.

### Yosef Meets the Ruler of the Egyptian Empire

**Y**osef was taken to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to him, "I had a dream but no one can tell me what it means. I heard that you can explain the meaning of dreams."

Yosef answered, "The wisdom to explain dreams is not mine. Hashem will tell me what to say."

This was good enough for Pharaoh. He told Yosef his dreams and Yosef began to explain their meaning.

### The Dreams Mean ...

**Y**osef told Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's two dreams are really one dream. Hashem is telling Pharaoh what He will do to Egypt. The seven fat cows and seven good ears of grain stand for seven years when there will plenty of food in Egypt. The seven skinny cows and seven bad ears of grain are seven years of terrible hunger that will come after the years of plenty."

Then Yosef explained why in the dream the skinny cows ate the fat cows and still stayed skinny.

"The hunger will be so bad that all the good times of the years of plenty will be forgotten. The dream was repeated twice to show that Hashem is going to do this right away."



## THE WEEKLY QUESTION

*Question for Mikeitz:*

**How could the brothers not recognize Yosef when they met him?  
He was their brother and they grew up together!**

*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 Tehillim raffle for Parashas Vayeitzei is: SHLOMO GLAZER, Houston, TX**