

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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"ד סְבִט תְּשִׁפְפָּת"
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L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

BECOMING A DESCENDANT OF YOSEF

Krias Shema al HaMittah by Yisroel Besser

NEW!

הַמְלָאָךְ הַמֶּלֶל אֹתִי מִכֶּל רֹעֵי יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַנְּשָׁרִים, וַיְקָרָא בָּהֶם שְׁמֵי, וַיִּשְׁמַע אָבָתֵּי אָבָרָהָם וַיַּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר לְבָב בְּקָרְבַּתְּהָרָה — *May the angel who redeems me from all evil bless the lads, and may my name be declared upon them — and the names of my forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak — and may they increase abundantly like fish within the land.*

The Gemara (*Berachos* 55a) teaches that one who is frightened of *ayin hara* should say, “I come from the family of Yosef, on whom the *ayin hara* has no dominion,” as the *pasuk* says, *בֶן פָּרָת יוֹסֵף בֶן פָּרָת* — *A charming son is Yosef, a charming son to the eye* (*Bereishis* 49:22). “Do not read the words as ‘alei’ *ayin*, but as ‘olei’ *ayin*, those who rise above the sphere of influence of the evil eye.”

R’ Yose ben R’ Chanina derives the same fact, that the children of Yosef are spared the effects of *ayin hara*, from a different *pasuk*: *וַיֹּצְאָג לְרֹב בְּקָרְבַּתְּהָרָה* — *And may they increase abundantly like fish within the land* (*ibid.* 48:16). Just as fish in the sea are covered by water, affording the *ayin hara* no dominion over them, so too are the offspring of Yosef protected from the effects of *ayin hara*.

Thus, as we ward off the *mazikim*, the forces of harm that circulate in the night, this *pasuk* is an effective means of protecting us.

The *meforshim* wonder how Chazal can advise a person to state unequivocally that he is descended from Yosef HaTzaddik, when other than Kohanim and Leviim, most of us do not know with certainty which *shevet* we come from.

Some of them suggest that since Yosef sustained all his brothers in Mitzrayim, providing them with food, every individual Jew, regardless of *shevet*, owes their existence to him and is thus considered to be his child.

Perhaps, in the context of *Krias Shema al HaM-*

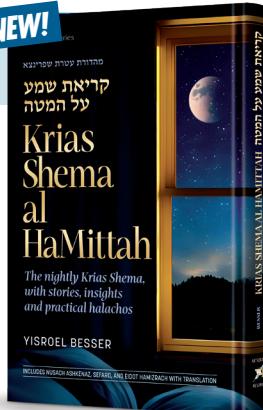
ittah, we can understand the words differently. Yosef HaTzaddik embodied the *middah* of *vatranus*: His brothers had banded together to sell him into slavery, and when they were at his mercy, they were justifiably worried that he would exact revenge from them.

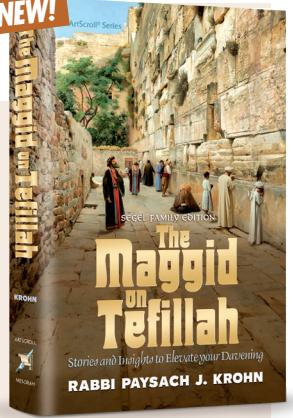
He assured them that there is no reason for them to be concerned. With tears in his eyes, he consoled

them, saying, *וְאַתֶּם חִשְׁבַּתֶּם עַל רַעֲיהָ אֱלֹהִים חִשְׁבָּה לְטַבָּה* — *Although you intended me harm, God intended it for good* (*ibid.* 50:20). With his response to them, he was telling every single Yid, at every time, how to respond after being wronged by another.

The Ribono shel Olam runs the world. No man has the power to harm another were it not for His will. When other people cause us to suffer, it is easy to be upset and want revenge, but the *pasuk* is telling us that Hashem is the One Who is the ultimate cause, and He is doing it for our benefit — *Elokim chashavah l’tovah*.

When a Yid recites the *tefillah* of *Ribono shel Olam* at the start of *Krias Shema al HaMittah*, he is emulating Yosef HaTzaddik, agreeing to forgive and forget slight or hurt. By doing this, a Yid can become “*zaro shel Yosef*”. While he may not be the actual biological offspring of Yosef, he may be considered a spiritual offspring of Yosef HaTzaddik, by grasping the *middah* which Yosef illuminated for us all. (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik, Parashas Ki Savo*) 





אלו דברים

Rav Chaim Kreiswirth, the chief rabbi of Belgium, who many said had a photographic memory, told me this incident about himself. In his lifetime, whenever I repeated it,

I did not mention his name, as I did not want to bring upon him an ayin hara.

Decades ago, R' Chaim became gravely ill. He was taken to a hospital, where he underwent a dangerous procedure. The family waited anxiously for the surgeon's diagnosis, and when it came, they were devastated.

The doctor informed the family that although the medical team had done everything possible, they did not feel optimistic about the Rav's future health. They simply could not see him recovering from his illness.

The Rav remained in the hospital for some time, but eventually he was able to return home. Ever so slowly, he began to regain some strength, and when he was up to it, he went to Eretz Yisrael to visit the Steipler Gaon, R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky (1899–1985), in Bnei Brak. R' Kreiswirth explained the nature of his illness to the Steipler, mentioning his doctor's gloomy forecast. He pleaded with the Steipler to give him advice on how to merit *rachamei Shamayim* (mercy from Heaven).

Although the Steipler was very hard of hearing, he understood everything R' Kreiswirth said. After a few moments of thought, the Gaon spoke. "There is a bit of advice that I can give you. Become involved with the mitzvah of *hachnasas kallah* (providing for a bride)." The Steipler went on to explain. "A question is asked about a passage from the Talmud (*Shabbos* 127a). The passage lists numerous mitzvos for which a person receives reward both in this world and in the World to Come: *kibbud av va'eim* (honoring a father and mother), *hachnasas orchim*

(hospitality to guests), *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick), *hachnasas kallah* (providing for a bride), and *levayas hameis* (escorting the dead).

"Why," asked the Steipler, "is the precept of providing for a bride placed between that of visiting the sick and escorting the dead? It seems to be out of sequence."

The Steipler answered his own question. "It is placed there because if someone wishes that there be an interruption between his status of being sick and visited by others, and being buried, he should involve himself with the mitzvah of *hachnasas kallah*." And then the Gaon added, "Especially with helping provide for an orphaned bride."

R' Kreiswirth told me that he was taken aback, for he had recited this passage thousands of times in his daily morning Shacharis recitation of *Eihu Devarim*, but he had never understood it that way. He followed the Steipler's advice and raised considerable amounts of money for poverty-stricken brides. Eventually he recovered completely from his illness. R' Kreiswirth lived for almost twenty years after the doctor's dismal diagnosis.

and he relished repeating this episode so that others could learn from it as well.

May Hashem, in His compassion, bring cure and healing to all those who suffer from illness or ailment. 

	SHABBOS JANUARY 3 ד' בטבת	SUNDAY JANUARY 4 טו בטבת	MONDAY JANUARY 5 טז בטבת	TUESDAY JANUARY 6 טז בטבת	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 7 ח' בטבת	THURSDAY JANUARY 8 יט בטבת	FRIDAY JANUARY 9 כ' בטבת
BAVLI	Zevachim 111	Zevachim 112	Zevachim 113	Zevachim 114	Zevachim 115	Zevachim 116	Zevachim 117
YERUSHALMI	Succah 15	Succah 16	Succah 17	Succah 18	Succah 19	Succah 20	Succah 21
MISHNAH	Erchin 1:1-2	Erchin 1:3-4	Erchin 2:1-2	Erchin 2:3-4	Erchin 2:5-6	Erchin 3:1-2	Erchin 3:3-4
KITZUR	41:1-7	41:8-42:5	42:6-19	42:20-43:3	43:4-44:4	44:5-13	44:14-45:2

Like his father R' Refoel Kook, R' Simcha had a reverence for Torah greatness in all its manifestations — a pattern that held true throughout his life when he became a trusted confidante of *gedolim* from across the spectrum.

Once, during his early years in Chevron, he was told that the Brisker Rav himself wanted to speak to him. It turned out that the Rav — who was the leader of the postwar Torah world — wanted him to serve on a sensitive mission. In 1949, a controversy erupted over women being drafted into the IDF. The Brisker Rav took the lead to prevent the draft's implementation among the religious community. The Rav wanted R' Simcha to act as a go-between, to gain the support of another leading rav in opposition to the draft.

"When I came to the Brisker Rav," R' Simcha would recall, "he was sitting and learning at a low table, and I was so awed by his holiness that I began to shake and rattled his table."

Another towering figure with whom he became close was the Gerrer Rebbe, R' Yisroel Alter, known as the Beis Yisroel. The Rebbe — whose *beis midrash* was down the road from the Chevron Yeshivah, which was located in the Geulah neighborhood until 1976 — proved an inspirational figure for

many *bachurim* from the yeshivah world.

Several of the encounters that he had with the Rebbe serve as indirect testimony to the esteem with which R' Simcha was regarded during his time in yeshivah.

Late one Yom Kippur night, the Chevron *bachur* was very disturbed; somehow, he wasn't able to concentrate and daven properly. Gripped by a sense of crisis, he decided to go to the Gerrer Rebbe.

It was close to midnight when he reached the Rebbe's *beis midrash* on Rechov Ralbach. At that hour



R' Simcha Kook leaving the Churva Shul

I HAVEN'T HAD A YOM KIPPUR LIKE THAT AGAIN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE!

there was no one around. The Rebbe himself was in his room, and the *bachur* from Chevron approached the *gabbai*, R' Chanina Schiff, and asked to be admitted.

"What do you mean?" the *gabbai* responded, incredulous at the request. "It's Yom Kippur night — the Rebbe doesn't see anyone!"

The *bachur* refused to back down. "I have one request for you — please don't refuse."

"What is it?" R' Chanina asked.

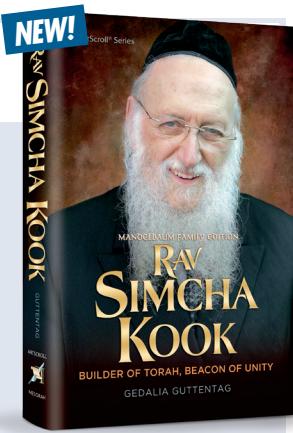
"Tell the Rebbe that Simcha Kook is outside."

Something about the young *bachur*'s earnestness must have persuaded the *gabbai*, who circumvented the usual policy and went in to deliver the request. A short while later he emerged and said, "The Rebbe says that you should come in."

Almost crying, Simcha Kook went in to the Beis Yisroel and shared his distress at the Yom Kippur davening that just wasn't fulfilling.

"Simcha'le," the Rebbe replied in his famously terse style, "Im ein ani li, mi li.' Only you can help yourself! Go!"

That instruction to dig deeper within himself was all that the *bachur* needed. As R' Simcha would conclude when telling this story, "I haven't had a Yom Kippur like that again in my entire life." ☩

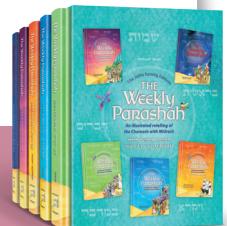


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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

What gift did Yaakov give Yosef for agreeing to bury him in Eretz Yisrael?

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*.

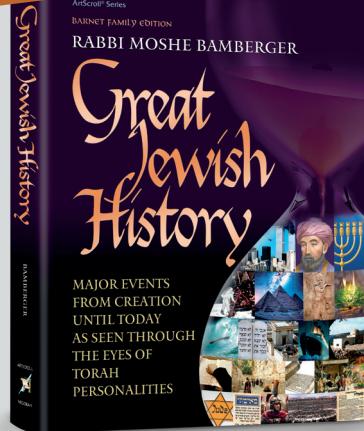


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1439

GUTENBERG INVENTS PRINTING PRESS; JEWS IMMEDIATELY USE IT TO DISSEMINATE TORAH

One of the major inventions of all time was undoubtedly the modern printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, in 1439. It enabled the proliferation of books and information to the masses and changed the course of world history. No longer would books need to be written by hand, which was time-consuming and expensive, and affordable only by the privileged few.

With the advent of the

printing press, books could be disseminated to the general public both in quantity and relatively inexpensively. Those books printed in the first years after the invention of the printing press, until the year 1500, are known as *incunabula*, meaning cradle books, as they were the infancy of publishing. Not surprisingly, the "People of the Book" seized the opportunity to print books for the study of Torah. Jewish publishers began printing *sefarim* around twenty years after the Gutenberg press was invented. The sheer number of Jewish books printed since has been astounding, and until today thousands of Torah works are produced each year.

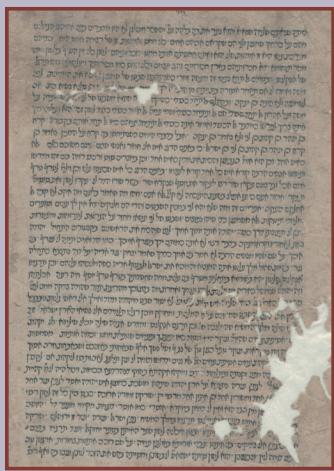


Artistic rendering of Johannes Gutenberg examining his printed page

TORAH VIEWS AND NEWS

The Right of the Firstborn

The Ramban (1194-1270), in his introduction to his commentary, writes of **Rashi** (1040-1105), "To him, indeed, belongs the right of the firstborn." The Ramban is clearly referring to the preeminent status that Rashi's commentary earned in the world of Torah. But Rashi was accorded another "first" in history, nearly four centuries after his passing. The earliest books did not have their printing dates indicated; the first to be dated was Rashi's commentary to Chumash. It was printed by Avraham ben Garton in southern Italy (at the tip of Italy's "boot"), in the town of Reggio di Calabria, on February 18, 1475. It was 116 pages with 37 lines each, and consisted of just Rashi's commentary, without the actual Chumash. This copy also contributed what is famously now known as "Rashi script." Contrary to common opinion that those distinctive fonts were invented by Rashi himself, they actually emanated from the Reggio di Calabria edition of Rashi, whose typeface was based on an Italian-influenced Sephardic semi-cursive hand.



Reggio di Calabria edition of Rashi's commentary

Still Need a Rabbi

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) cautions those who think that since nowadays we have so many printed *sefarim* available to us, and everyone has a *Shas* and a *Shulchan Aruch*, it is no longer necessary to attend yeshivos. This could not be further from the truth, he says, for it is not enough to have Torah in *sefarim* — one needs to know how to accurately understand what is written in the *sefarim*! This is what a yeshivah is designed to accomplish — to have a rabbi, a mesorah. This is what Torah *Shebe'al Peh* (the Oral Law) is all about...