

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת משפטים
כ"ז שבט תשפ"ו

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EDITOR

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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

JUSTICE WITH A HEART

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash 2

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניכם.

And these are the laws that you shall set before them. (Shemos 21:1)

This *parashah* is filled with *halachos* and *dinim*, each one showing the perfect precision and accuracy of the Divine plan for how we should live life.

Why, then, do we start with the *halachos* of an *eved*, a thief forced to sell himself into slavery; why not begin with a case where the brilliance of Hashem's judgment is shown, a complex, intricate question of *bein adam lachaveiro*?

The Alter from Kelm said that it is specifically here, that the full splendor of Hashem's judgment is shown, because it is not just about being fair, but about being fair as well as good. His *rachmanus* takes every *cheshbon* into account.

The case of the *eved* is an example of a system founded on compassion.

I have been to prisons in the American prison system, even some of those considered to be "better." The air is heavy with fear, and the guards are trained to be nasty. Even as a visitor, one feels their malevolence. Not only does the system not rehabilitate prisoners, if anything, it does the opposite. The recidivism rate in America is one of the highest in the world, with nearly half the prisoners ending up back behind bars within a year of release.

Contrast that with the Hashem's *mishpat*, the way a thief is allowed to pay up his debt according to the Torah. He is welcomed into a home, treated with dignity and respect, exposed to the values of a proper home, and invested with the sense that he too can have a home like this.

We had a beloved talmid in the yeshivah named Baruch Kolodny. His parents had been exceptional people who passed away young, leaving several yessomim. Life was not easy for these children, yet with

courage and fortitude they persevered, each becoming a tremendous source of nachas to their parents in the Olam HaEmes.

After leaving our yeshivah, Baruch went to learn in Yerushalayim, where he became close with the Boyaner Rebbe. He later became a chassan, and when I traveled to Eretz Yisrael for his chasunah, he shared an amazing story.

Baruch received a phone call in yeshivah weeks before the wedding. He answered a public payphone,

wondering who could be calling, and was stunned to hear the Rebbe's voice.

"Baruch, pack a suitcase, gather your clothing, bring your *tefillin*, and come to my home," the Rebbe said.

A true *chassid*, Baruch asked no questions and went directly to the Rebbe's home in the Mekor Baruch neighborhood. There, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin welcomed him warmly. The Rebbe's study had been cleared, and a bed and closet were brought in.

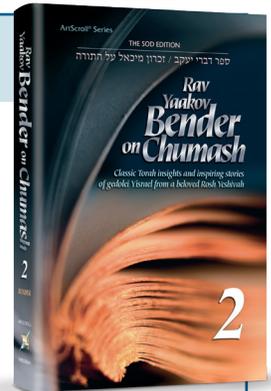
"I want you to stay here until the wedding," the Rebbe said. "You are about to build a home, yet you were deprived of seeing how a home runs and how parents relate to one another. To build a home, one must observe a home."

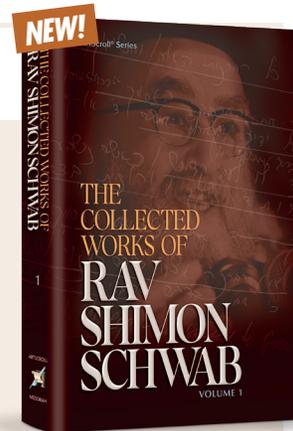
The Rebbe could have sent Baruch elsewhere, but instead welcomed him into his own home, determined to give him the experience of a peaceful, tranquil home upon which he could build his own.

That is our *mishpat*, and it reveals to us the essence of every single halachah and *din*. *V'eilah hamishpatim.* 📖



The Boyaner Rebbe





When I was a young man of twenty, I had the privilege to spend one Shabbos with the Chafetz Chaim. I heard him speak, and those words were, in their way, addressed to us today. I came on a Friday and left on Sunday. The Chafetz Chaim talked to me privately on my arrival in Radin. And I heard him several times on Shabbos.

That weekend I witnessed something that revealed the Chafetz Chaim's greatness. Before *Motza'ei Shabbos*, after a frugal *seudah shelishis* and before *bentching*, he spoke in a dark, crowded room about the duty to be *mekarev rechokim*: "Go into the shuls and talk to the people about mitzvos, doing *teshuvah* — keeping Shabbos and kashrus, tefillin and *taharas hamishpachah*... I will also go, *bli neder, bli neder*" — which he did; he went to Grodna to speak to the people there.

The Chafetz Chaim continued, talking about how the generations have gone down: "What love for Torah former generations had! People vied with one another to be close to anyone who was involved in Torah study. Every one of us is obligated to work at bringing people back to the ways of the *Ribono shel Olam!*"

Then he said, "It's time to *bentch*" — and he started to *bentch*, like a simple Jew, saying one word at a time... I did not see anything special in his manner. Suddenly when he reached *נְאֻם רַחֵם* (the blessing that begins "Have mercy..."), something seemed to have happened to him. He cried out: *עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲמָךְ* (...on Your nation, Israel) *oy! oy!* — *עַל צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ* (...on Tzion, home of Your glory) *oy! oy!* He continued in this manner until he reached the *HaRachamans* and stopped. At this point he said, "I see what will be ten years from now. [This was 1930.] You don't see; but I do. A great conflagration will burn!" In the middle of *bentching* he suddenly had a vision of future events. "Twelve million is child's play!"

I turned to the person next to me and asked him what he meant with his comments. He replied, "He

always talks about it. Twelve million is the sum total of those killed in the World War."

I never forgot this scene, and for ten years I repeated it, and waited fearfully, for its realization — until ten years later, in 1940, when it started to come true.

This was the Chafetz Chaim.

That same Friday morning, the Chafetz Chaim told me, "There is a dispute in the Gemara (*Yoma 13a*) whether Kohanim are *sheluchim* of Hashem or the *sheluchim* of Klal Yisrael..."

I threw in the Talmudical term, *שְׁלוּחֵי דִּידָן אוֹ שְׁלוּחֵי דְרַחֲמָנָא*.

"Ah! You have learned that already! How beautiful!"

Then he asked: "Are you a Kohen?"

"No," I replied.

"I am a Kohen, maybe you have heard?"

"Yes, I have heard," I whispered.

"Perhaps you are a Levi?"

"No."

"What a pity! Mashiach is coming and the Beis Ha-Mikdash will be rebuilt. If you are not a Kohen you can't go in to do the *avodah*."

"You know why? Because 3,000 years ago, at the incident of the Golden Calf, *dein zeida is nischt geloffen*, your *zeida* didn't run when Moshe Rabbeinu called out '*Mi LaShem Eilai*' — Whoever is with G-d should come to me! Now take heart. When you hear the Call, '*Mi LaShem Eilai*,' come running" (see *Maayan Beis HaSho'eivah, Shemos 32:26*)!

This is the message of the Chafetz Chaim. We are living in a time when any thinking person can hear a great shofar blasting from all sides, calling out: "*Mi LaShem Eilai!*" and it is incumbent on us to come running.

Let us all be in the forefront of those responding to this call. 📣

| YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK: | SHABBOS FEBRUARY 14 | SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15 | MONDAY FEBRUARY 16 | TUESDAY FEBRUARY 17 | WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18 | THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19 | FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20 | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | כז שבט | כח שבט | כט שבט | ל שבט | א אדר | ב אדר | ג אדר | |
| | BAVLI | Menachos 34 | Menachos 35 | Menachos 36 | Menachos 37 | Menachos 38 | Menachos 39 | Menachos 40 |
| | YERUSHALMI | Beitzah 24 | Beitzah 25 | Beitzah 26 | Beitzah 27 | Beitzah 28 | Beitzah 29 | Beitzah 30 |
| | MISHNAH | Temurah 7:6 Kerisus 1:1 | Kerisus 1:2-3 | Kerisus 1:4-5 | Kerisus 1:6-7 | Kerisus 2:1-2 | Kerisus 2:3-4 | Kerisus 2:5-6 |
| | KITZUR | 65:9-15 | 65:16-22 | 65:23-End | 66:1-6 | 66:7-10 | 66:11-67:5 | 67:6-End |
| | ORAYSA | Yevamos Chazara 29a-30a | Yevamos 30b Chazara 30a | Yevamos 31a Chazara 30b | Yevamos 31b Chazara 31a | Yevamos 32a Chazara 31b | Yevamos 32b Chazara 32a | Yevamos Chazara 30b-31a |

The Maggid on Tefillah by Rabbi Paysach Krohn

רְפוּאָה וּבִקּוּר חוֹלִים

In every weekday *Shemoneh Esrei*, we pray for healing and livelihood. Interestingly, only in these two requests do we mention Hashem's Name right at the start of the blessing, רְפָאנוּ ה' וְנַרְפָא, *Heal us, Hashem, then we will be healed*; and בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ ה', *Bless us, Hashem [with prosperity]*. Why is Hashem's Name used specifically in these two blessings?

R' Nachum Auerbach of Yerushalayim suggests that people tend to think that their healing and prosperity are the result of their own efforts. For example, they think they were cured because they chose the right doctor or hospital, or it was their intelligent decision that resulted in a profitable investment or business deal. *Chazal* want the praying person to know that it is only Hashem Who grants good health and financial success. That is why they introduced both blessings with His Name.

In the following story, we see a thoughtful and considerate course of action taken by a *gadol hador*, who followed the orders of both Hashem and a doctor.

R' Yaakov Bender, rosh yeshivah of Yeshiva Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, New York, told me an illuminating story regarding *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick). When his father, R' Dovid Bender (1912–1965), was a young man, he enjoyed a close relationship with his rebbi, R' Shlomo Heiman (1892–1945), rosh yeshivah of Torah Vodaath. For four years they learned together in the *beis midrash* of Torah Vodaath, as *chavrusos* (study partners). Later, when R'

Heiman's final illness prevented him from coming to the yeshivah, R' Bender would go to his home in Williamsburg, and they would study there.

When R' Heiman was hospitalized at the end of his life, R' Bend-



R' Shlomo Heiman

“THE RABBI IS NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE VISITORS. HE IS TOO WEAK. YOU MUST KEEP EVERYONE OUT — NO EXCEPTIONS.”

er was constantly at his bedside. One day the doctors told him, “The Rabbi is not allowed to have visitors. He is too weak. You must keep everyone out — no exceptions.”

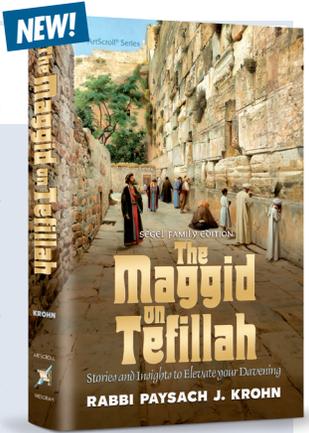
Later that day, R' Moshe Feinstein (1895–1986) came to visit R' Heiman. R' Bender was conflicted. On one hand, how could he not allow R' Moshe to enter, especially since R' Shlomo would certainly be happy to see the great Torah scholar? On the other hand, the doctors said that no one should be allowed in, as the strain could be harmful to the patient.

R' Bender explained the severity of the Rosh Yeshivah's condition and the doctor's orders that no visitors should be allowed in. He apologized profusely.

R' Moshe smiled and said, “In that case, then the mitzvah of *bikur cholim* today is *not* to visit. However, the mitzvah is comprised of two parts: the first is

to visit the patient, and the second is to daven for him.” R' Moshe stood outside the hospital room, recited a *perek* (chapter) of *Tehillim*, and left.

No pressure, no complaints, just compliance — with the *Shulchan Aruch* and with the doctors. 📖



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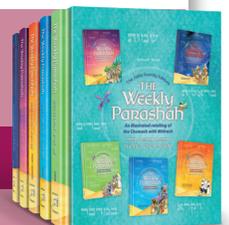
THE WEEKLY QUESTION

What are the three things that cannot be done with milk and meat together?

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*.

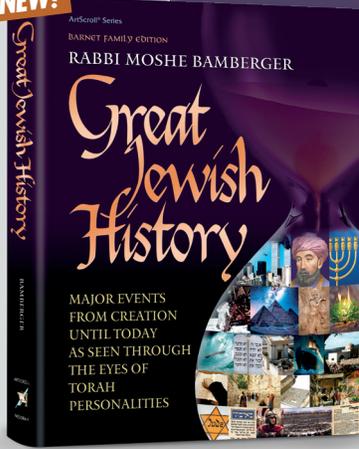
The winner of the question for Parashas Va'eira is: YITZCAK KOFFSKY, Woodmere, NY

Question for Va'eira was: Which types of crops were not destroyed by the plague of Barad, and why were they spared?
Va'eira Answer: The fields of wheat and spelt that were not yet ripe were spared so that they would be destroyed in the next Makkah and eaten by the locusts.



Great Jewish History

NEW!



4720 960 TORAH MIGRATES FROM BAVEL TO EUROPE THROUGH THE FOUR CAPTIVES

A fascinating tale appears in *Sefer HaKabbalah*. During the times of the Geonim, in the year 960, the great Babylonian Torah institutions of Sura and Pumbedisa were on the decline; the establishment of new Torah centers was necessary. It was then that four leading Babylonian Rabbis traveled by ship to fundraise for the Torah centers of Bavel. Pirates in the

Mediterranean Sea captured the ship; when they discovered the ship's esteemed Rabbinic passengers, the pirates understood their value and offered them up for ransom, each in a different region of the world. Rabbi Shemaria was ransomed by the Jews of Alexandria and became the Chief Rabbi of Egypt. Rabbi Chushiel was ransomed by Kairouan, Tunisia, and headed that community; his sons were Rabbeinu Chananel (died c. 1055) and Rabbi Nissim Gaon, both teachers of the Rif, whose student, the Ri Mi-Gash, later became the teacher of the Rambam (1135-1204). Rabbi Moshe and his young son Rabbi Chanoch were redeemed in Cordova, Spain. R' Chanoch would become the teacher of Rabbi Shmuel HaNaggid. The fourth Rabbi's name and fate are not known. This episode explains how the center of Torah study moved by the year 1000 from Babylonia to Europe and North Africa, ushering in the golden period of the Rishonim, whose commentaries and texts are studied and analyzed by *talmidei chachamim* in every yeshivah.



TORAH VIEWS AND NEWS



Providence Ensuring the Torah's Continuity

The story of the Four Captives demonstrates God's guiding hand in history to ensure the continuity of Torah among the Jewish people. **Rabbi Avrohom Pam** (1913-2001) cites this as one example of "a golden thread that weaves its way through the blood-stained history of Am Yisrael": Hashem's assurance that the Torah will always survive among His people, as the verse states (*Devarim* 31:21): "For [the Torah] shall not be forgotten from the mouth of its offspring." Another such example is Hashem granting Yosef, as viceroy of Egypt, the power to resettle his family in Goshen, away from the decadent Egyptian metropolis.

Aware of this, Yaakov Avinu sent Yehudah ahead to establish a yeshivah in Goshen. Thus, by the time the family arrived, a Torah center was prepared for them. Rabbi Pam cites a twentieth century example: Before the outbreak of World War II, which brought about the destruction of nearly one thousand years of Eastern European Jewish life, Hashem had already planted the seeds for the re-birth of Torah on the North American continent. He sent dynamic, idealistic Jews like R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz to these shores to establish new centers of Torah. Then, after the great Holocaust, when the *she'eiris hapeitah* (survivors) arrived, they found yeshivos and Torah institutions upon which to build further. As the Satmar Rebbe, R' Yoel Teitelbaum, put it, "Had it not been for R' Shraga Feivel, we would not have been able to accomplish what we did, to establish Chassidic *kehillos* and Torah institutions in the ways of our forefathers."



A young
Rabbi Shraga Feivel
Mendlowitz