

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

A PROJECT
OF THE
Mesorah
Heritage
Foundation

פרשת ואתחנן
"א אב תשפ"ו

5786

JULY 25, 2026

ISSUE #297

RABBI YEHUDA MUNK
EDITOR

DESIGN & LAYOUT:
MRS. CHANIE LANDAU

PROJECT DEDICATED BY THE JAFFA FAMILY

PIRKEI AVOS

A BEIS HAMIKDASH IN THE BEIS MEDRASH

Pirkei Avos: Generation to Generation by Rabbi Nosson Muller

רבי חלפתא בן דוסא איש כפר חנניא אומר: עשרה שיושבין ועוסקין בתורה, שכינה שרויה ביניהם... ומניין אפילו אחד, שנאמר: בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי, אבוא אליך וברכתך. — *Rabbi Chalafta ben Dosa of Kfar Chanania says: If ten people sit together and toil in Torah study, the Divine Presence rests among them, as it is said... How do we know this even of one? For it is said: "In every place where I will mention my Name, I will come to you and bless you."* (פרקי אבות ג:ז)

In *Shemos* (20:21) Rashi tells us in the name of the *Pesikta* that from this verse we learn that the Name of Hashem may only be uttered in its entirety when articulated in a place where the Divine presence rests: the Beis HaMikdash. If so, how can our *Tanna* learn from this very verse that even when one person is sitting and learning, Hashem will come to bless him? Be'er Moshe points out an amazing thought. From here we see the greatness of one who sits and learns Torah, as he is indeed no less than the *Makom HaMikdash* itself! There is no greater place for Hashem's Dwelling than in the heart and mind of a man who is learning *Toras Hashem*!

Indeed, *Chazal* (*Berachos* 8) tell us that from the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hashem only rests His Countenance within the four *amos* of *halachah*. Additionally, the *Gemara* (*Horayos* 13) expounds on the verse, "*Yekarah hi mipninim*" (*Mishlei* 3:15), that even more precious than the *Kohen Gadol's* service in the inner chambers of the Beis HaMikdash is one who is sitting and learning Torah. Accordingly, our *Tanna's* analogy is right on the mark!

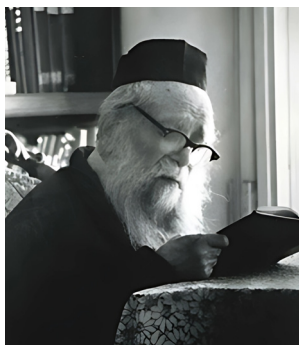
The *Gemara* (*Niddah* 30) says that before a baby is born, a heavenly angel teaches him the entire Torah and a candle rests above the child's head from whose light he can see from one end of the world to the other. The *Gemara* goes on to say that right be-

fore the baby is born, the angel taps the child on his upper lip and all the Torah he was taught is forgotten (only to be retrieved when learning throughout his lifetime). The *Gemara* does not expound on what happens to the burning candle. What happens to it?

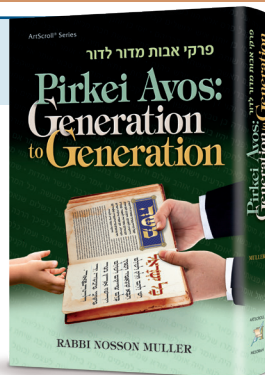
Divrei Yoel explains that it is all part of the same simple yet fascinating phenomenon! The minute the power of Torah is diminished by the tap of the angel, the burning light is extinguished as well! What enabled the child to see across the world was only the power of Torah he possessed. The moment that leaves him, so does the light that came along with it.

People constantly seek different paths to merit blessing in their lifetime. What they don't realize is that the greatest source of blessing lies in their bookshelves at home! Instead of traveling thousands of miles across the world and hunting for innovative *segulos*, just learn Torah and Hashem Himself promises that He will come and bless you; as Torah is the most powerful source of blessing that we have!

When the *Mashgiach* of *Chevron*, R' Meir Chodosh, would be asked by his students who were engaged to be married to whom they should go for a *berachah* before their wedding, he would reply, "Don't go anywhere. Stay in *yeshivah* and learn, as there in the *beis medrash*, by your *Gemara*, you will merit the greatest *berachos*!" 📖



R' Meir Chodosh



The Gemara offers a number of reasons for the significance of the day. One of them is that on the 15th of Av, the days begin to get shorter, the nights longer. The longer nights create the opportunity to learn more Torah, and from that day on, "one who adds to his Torah learning will add years to his life."

The availability of those extra minutes for Torah learning turns this day into a Yom Tov. One of the other reasons that the Gemara brings for the special status of this day is that the job of those charged with the task of cutting wood for the *maarachah*, the arrangement of firewood for the *Mizbei'ach*, ended.

Since the sun grows weaker in intensity after this date, the wood would no longer be perfectly dry, and it was not fit for use on the *maarachah*. This is an interesting feature of the day, but how does this make it a Yom Tov?

Rabbeinu Gershom (*Bava Basra* 121b) explains that those involved in cutting the wood had less time to learn Torah, but on that day, the task was complete. They rejoiced, he writes, because they were able to toil in learning.

"What were they doing until that day?" Reb Meilech asks. He closes his eyes and shakes his head from side to side. "Groisse, heilige avidois, they were preparing wood for the *Mizbei'ach*, the most important space in the world, a job that was *docheh* learning Torah. And yet, they rejoiced on this day, when they were free to simply sit by the Gemara and learn..."

The Gemara is teaching us not just how valuable is Torah learning, but how precious an extra moment of learning Torah is!

"Years to your life, you hear? Years to your life! Two *Mishnayos* in *Pirkei Avos* before you go to sleep... years to your life." Reb Meilech nods slowly and repeats it again, "years to your life."

Rav Zundel Kroizer was once sitting with a Yid who was seeking to make a *kabbalah*, a significant commitment to elevate his life. Rav Zundel suggested that the man accept upon himself to learn one more minute of Torah each day.

The visitor, who had been expecting something more dramatic, was clearly disappointed by the recommendation. How would learning sixty seconds more than he had been learning bring the change he was hoping for?

Rav Zundel showed him the words of the Rashbam (*Bava Basra* 121b), who points out that the change in nighttime hours was barely felt from one day to the next. The whole difference between the night of the 15th of Av and the night of the 14th, says the Rashbam, was a moment, but that moment was cause of celebration!

From the 15th of Av, there remain forty-five days until Rosh Hashanah, and so this commitment enables us to prepare to greet the King.

There were those who had the custom of wishing others a *kesivah v'chasimah tova* from this day, feeling that it was appropriate to start blessing one another for the year ahead.

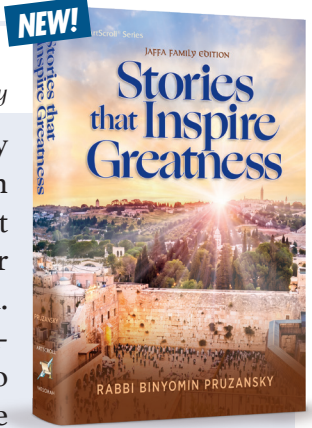
The pasuk states: *V'atah Yisrael mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of You?* (*Devarim* 10:12). The word *mah* equals 45, says the Bas Ayin, a reference to these days. It is this that Hashem asks of us — that we increase our love for and fear of Him so that when the great day comes, we will be ready.

Throughout the year, we encounter the King, but now, He will be creating the world anew. With focus, heart, and toil, we will be ready. 📖



R' Meilech Biderman

	SHABBOS JULY 25 ז' אב	SUNDAY JULY 26 י' אב	MONDAY JULY 27 י"א אב	TUESDAY JULY 28 י"ב אב	WEDNESDAY JULY 29 י"ג אב	THURSDAY JULY 30 י"ד אב	FRIDAY JULY 31 ט"ו אב
BAVLI	Chullin 86	Chullin 87	Chullin 88	Chullin 89	Chulin 90	Chulin 91	Chulin 92
YERUSHALMI	Moed Katan 9	Moed Katan 10	Moed Katan 11	Moed Katan 12	Moed Katan 13	Moed Katan 14	Moed Katan 15
MISHNAH	Keilim 19:8-9	Keilim 19:10-20:1	Keilim 20:2-3	Keilim 20:4-5	Keilim 20:6-7	Keilim 21:1-2	Keilim 21:3-22:1
KITZUR	127:11-End	192:1-7	192:8-193:5	193:6-End	194:1-11	194:12-195:7	195:8-196:1
ORAYSA	Yevamos Chazara 86b-87b	Yevamos 88a Chazara 87b	Yevamos 88b Chazara 88a	Yevamos 89a Chazara 88b	Yevamos 89b Chazara 89a	Yevamos 90a Chazara 89b	Yevamos Chazara 88a-88b



Chaim Yankel is a *chassidishe Yid* who lives in New York. A few years ago, a very close relative of his became dangerously ill. The situation was so critical that the doctor sent for an ambulance to take the patient immediately to the emergency room. Chaim Yankel followed closely behind in his own car, his mind racing with concern. After what felt like an eternity in the waiting room, the doctor emerged with a grim expression. "I must tell you," he said somberly, "the diagnosis is very serious. It does not look promising."

Chaim Yankel was shattered. Heartbroken and in a state of shock, he walked out to the parking lot, got into his car, and simply started driving. Tears streamed down his cheeks as he drove for a long time, completely lost in his thoughts. When he finally looked up, he realized he was in a totally unfamiliar neighborhood, miles away from where he had started.

Exhausted, he pulled into a random parking lot and saw a small coffee shop. Deciding to go in to ask for directions, he pushed open the door. Behind the counter stood a man who did not appear to be Jewish. As Chaim Yankel approached, the man looked at him with a strange intensity and said, in perfect Yiddish: "Chaim Yankel, *G-t hut nisht fargessen fun dir!* — Chaim Yankel, G-d has not forgotten you!"

Chaim Yankel was frozen. "Do you know who I am?" he asked, bewildered.

"No," the man replied.

"Then how do you know my name?"

"I don't," said the man.

"Have we met before?"

"No."

"Then why in the world did you say those words to me?"

The man behind the counter leaned forward.

"Let me explain," he began. "My grandmother lived in a *shtetl* in Europe many years ago. In that *shtetl*, there was a poor water carrier named Chaim Yankel. As he got older, the heavy buckets became too much for him to bear. As he struggled through the town, exhausted and perspiring, he would constantly repeat one phrase to himself: 'Chaim Yankel, *G-t hut nisht fargessen fun dir!*'"

"That phrase was his only source of strength. My grandmother heard it so often that she adopted it herself. Whenever there was any trouble in her home, she would recite those words. My own mother continued that tradition, and I grew up hearing that phrase constantly. It always cheers me up. When you walked in just now, I saw you were Jewish and looked completely beaten down. My mother's phrase just popped into my head and came out of my mouth. I don't even know why."

Chaim Yankel was overwhelmed. This was clear *hashgachah pratis*. Hashem knew he needed *chizuk* and guided him to that exact shop, at that exact second, to hear a specific message from the descendant of a woman who knew a water carrier generations ago. It was the perfect message at the precise time he needed to hear it.

There are times when we, too, feel lost. In those moments, if we listen closely, we can hear Hashem calling to us. The shidduch hasn't come yet? I haven't forgotten you. The job hasn't come through? I haven't forgotten you. Someone you know is facing a medical challenge? I haven't forgotten you. When we internalize that Hashem is always with us, we find the inner strength to keep moving forward. 📖

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
GIFT CARD!

Give an example of a word that was in the second Luchos but not in the first.

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 Chukas is: CHAIM SOCLOF, Far Rockaway, NY

Question for Chukas was: Which three mountains weren't flattened by the cloud in the midbar
Chukas Answer: Har Sinai, Hor HaHor, Har Nevo



PART 20: THE DEBATE BEHIND THE MACHZOR

“What should we publish next?” always has a way of turning into lively debate in ArtScroll. In last week’s issue, we described how, after the Five Megillos and Sefer Bereishis, we turned to translating the Siddur. But the question of what should come first — the Siddur or the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Machzorim — was anything but simple.

The Siddur seemed obvious. It is used every day of the year, while the Machzorim are opened for only three days a year. Ultimately, that reasoning led us to publish the Siddur first.

But looking back, the debate was more nuanced.

The Siddur is constant, but the Machzor is intense. Many people do not have the time necessary to properly study the weekday and Shabbos davening in depth. But when the *Yamim Noraim* arrive, everyone feels the weight of the *tefillos*. Everyone wants to understand what he is saying and enter those days with clarity, feeling, and connection.

And the Machzor needed that clarity. The *Yamim Noraim tefillos* are among the most difficult in our liturgy. The authors of the *piyutim* were not only towering Torah scholars but also holy poets, weaving into their words allusions to Tanach, Gemara, Midrash, and halachah. A single phrase may contain a pasuk in Yeshayah, a *sugya* in Shas, or a Midrash unfamiliar to most people. Even those who can usually follow Hebrew davening find themselves lost.

Another debate remains: Who gained more? The serious *davener* who understood the Siddur but had long struggled with the unfamiliar *tefillos* of the *Yamim Noraim*? Or the Jew who visited his local synagogue only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, yet, for the first time, felt comfortable, able to follow and truly pray?

The answer may be both. For some, the Machzor deepened a lifelong *avodah*. For others, it made shul feel less foreign and more inviting, often triggering the start of something much more — there are

enough stories of people whose journey to Torah life began with that newfound *Yamim Noraim* connection to fill a book of its own.

Ultimately, translating the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Machzorim became Rabbi Scherman’s next great undertaking after the Siddur. It required not only explaining the words, but preserving the power and beauty of the original language. Rabbi Zlotowitz’s comments and Rabbi Sheah Brander’s design were, as usual, essential.

Like the Siddur, producing the *Machzorim* was a team effort. The great R’ Hersh Goldwurm wrote the concise Halachah section at the end of each volume. R’ Avie Gold wrote the invaluable instructions that help people follow the *tefillos*: when to stand or sit, when the congregation follows or precedes the *chazzan*, and where many congregations skip certain passages, and he made important suggestions as he reviewed the text. Mrs. Faigie Weinbaum was a brilliant proof-reader and grammarian. When she was reading page 632, she could remember that a word had been translated or explained differently on page 176.

When R’ Gold was tapped to be the author of the Pesach, Shavuot, and Succos *Machzorim*, it led to a dispute between ArtScroll and R’ Avie. Rabbis Zlotowitz and Scherman wanted to list him as the author by writing on the title page simply, “By Rabbi Avie Gold.” But he refused, saying that he could not be called the author because much of the material was simply taken from the Siddur and *Machzor*. Dissension! Unheard of in ArtScroll! Finally, a solution was found. The title page says, “Composed by Rabbi Avie Gold,” making it clearer that he arranged and crafted the volume, without insinuating original authorship. If all disputes were as honest and as easily resolved as this one, Klal Yisrael and the world would look a lot healthier!

We had published the Siddur first, believing that 362 days must outweigh 3; the *machzor* taught us that there are days so towering that they cannot be measured by numbers alone, but by the awe they awaken.

UP NEXT: Rav Yaakov's Question — Really? Yes, Really



R' Avie Gold