

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

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PARASHAH

THE MEASURE OF A JEWISH HEART

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash

Near the end of *Sefer Devarim*, we have two passages that focus on war. One is read near the end of *Parashas Shoftim*: **בִּי תַצּוּר אֶל עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם**, *When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to capture it* (20:19). This is followed by another topic, after which we read in *Parashas Ki Seitzei*: **בִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה**, *If you will go out to war...*

In between these two passages of war, there is another topic: that of *eglah arufah*, the halachah of a lone traveler who is killed along the way.

Why is this juxtaposed between those two passages? I saw in the *sefer Ruach Eliyahu*, which features the *shmuessen* of Rav Elya Svei, that there is a powerful message here. War can make a person callous, insensitive to death. Bodies pile up.

Eglah arufah teaches us the value of a single person, the tragedy of a single death, the respect due to a single body. It is meant to reinforce the sensitivity and awareness that war has the potential to erase.

This is a well-known idea of the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh, on the *pasuk* following the command to destroy an *ihr hanidachas*, a city desecrated by *avodah zarah*: **וְלֹא יִדְבַק בְּיָדְךָ מְאוּמָה מִן הַתֹּרֵם... וְנָתַן**, *No part of the banned property may adhere to your hand... and He will give you mercy and be merciful to you* (Devarim 13:18).

The mitzvah is to destroy the city, to kill its inhabitants and show no mercy, actions that can make a person callous and insensitive — and so Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives a promise that those who do so will be blessed with an added measure of mercy and compassion.

V'richamcha.

In Europe, it was common practice to charge the *shochtim*, those who spent their days involved with blood and dead animals, with the mitzvah of

hachnassas orchim, a means of investing them with extra sources of *chesed*, allowing them to expand themselves so that the coarseness of their day job would not affect them.

In the Philadelphia Yeshiva, Rav Mendel Kaplan would direct the *bachur* who served as *vekker*, charged with waking up the others for Shacharis, with being the one who brought breakfast to those who were not feeling well. Rav Mendel, a man of exceptional wisdom and insight, perceived that the act of waking someone else up could sometimes involve callous behavior — shouting, prodding — and to counter that, he wanted them to engage in extra *chesed*.

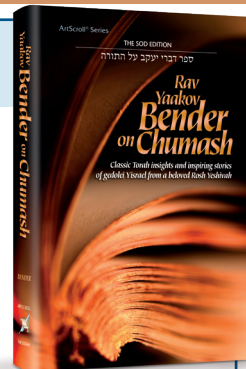
This trait, compassion, is so essential to everything we want to convey to our children.

When people suggest shidduchim, we ask about *yichus*, intelligence, and *middos*. But the Baruch Taam taught what the true deal-breaker is.

Rav Elya Baruch Finkel related that after the Baruch Taam made a shidduch for his son, the new *mechutanim* came to visit. Just before they arrived, he learned that the town's water-carrier had fallen ill. If someone replaced him, the water-carrier might lose his livelihood permanently. The rav became absorbed in finding a solution and was distracted when his guests arrived.

The new *mechutan* took offense and exclaimed, "It is only a lowly water-carrier. Why are you so concerned?"

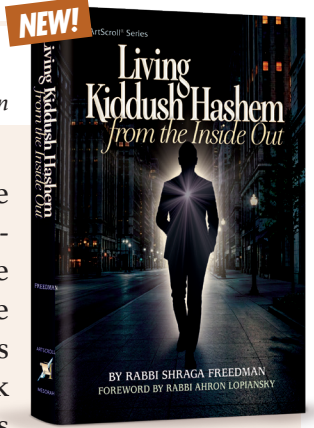
Those words alarmed the Baruch Taam, and he broke the *shidduch*. To him, valuing every single person was the essence of a Jew and that is the message of *eglah arufah*: a Jew must never lose sight of the infinite value of a single person. 📖



THIS WEEK'S ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDER POLLAK Z"l ON HIS 6TH YAHRZEIT —
HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, IDF VETERAN, AND LOVING HUSBAND: A PIONEERING VISIONARY AND "A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS"

MESORAH HERITAGE FOUNDATION

A GENEROUS AND PRICELESS GIFT

Living Kiddush Hashem from the Inside Out by Rabbi Shraga Freedman

Shmuel Mashiach, a Chicago businessman, was waiting in line at Ben Gurion Airport together with hundreds of teens returning from NCSY's Anne Samson Jerusalem Journey (TJJ). Behind him, a boy named Eyal was telling his counselor that although he had kept his first Shabbos in Eretz Yisrael, he had no idea how to continue once back home, since his parents didn't keep Shabbos or kosher.

On the spot, Shmuel raised his voice so the group could hear: "Anyone who keeps four *Shabbosos* in a row, starting this week, will get one thousand dollars from me." A commotion broke out as the teens turned toward him. He explained the conditions: They had to begin right away, spend Shabbos with a shomer Shabbos family, and go to shul at least once. "Shabbos is a gift," he told them. "Unwrap it, and it will change your life."

The counselors took his number, and the line moved on. A few minutes later, Mrs. Mashiach placed her carry-on bag onto the conveyor belt. The alarm sounded. Security began searching the bag and pulled out a beautiful silver challah knife from Hazorfim, a gift they had purchased for their son. Because the knife was in the carry-one luggage, the guard explained firmly that it had to be confiscated. "This is Ben Gurion policy. Nothing can be done."

Shmuel tried to protest. "This isn't a weapon; it's for Shabbos. It cost hundreds of dollars. Can't I just bring it back to check-in?" But the answer was final: It was going into the trash, along with all the other confiscated items.

Just then, a voice rang out from the back: "*Rega, rega, rega!*" A supervisor approached and motioned to them quietly, "*Bo iti* — Follow me." Expecting trouble, they braced themselves. Instead, he lowered his voice and said, "I saw what you did with those kids. You touched my heart. I used to keep Shabbos faithfully for many years, until life and old wounds pulled me away. But what I heard from you awakened something in

me."

Then, breaking protocol, he told them, "I'm going to do something that's never done. I'll have your wife escorted back to the United desk, check this bag as luggage, and then bring her back through security." And true to his word, he arranged everything until the knife was safely stowed under the plane.

Before parting, he turned to Shmuel with emotion in his voice. "I want you to extend the same challenge to me without the money. I want to try to keep four *Shabbosos* in a row." They exchanged numbers, and soon afterward, he began sending updates: "First Shabbos kept." "Second week, still going strong."

THEN, BREAKING PROTOCOL, HE TOLD THEM, "I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING THAT'S NEVER DONE."

And it didn't stop there. Since that airport encounter, many of the teens from the group have been calling as well, saying they're taking him up on the challenge and some have gone beyond the four weeks, continuing to keep Shabbos on their own.

Who knows how far the impact of this kiddush Hashem will spread as the story continues to unfold.

Shabbos is a shining example of the true sweetness of Yiddishkeit. Once these students experience it, they may begin to develop a deeper appreciation for the more refined joys of *ruchniyus*. At times, a tangible incentive can help someone take the first step, but the ultimate hope is that they come to value the beauty of Shabbos, and of *ruchniyus* itself, for its own sake. 📖

	SHABBOS AUGUST 22 ט אלול	SUNDAY AUGUST 23 י אלול	MONDAY AUGUST 24 יא אלול	TUESDAY AUGUST 25 יב אלול	WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26 יג אלול	THURSDAY AUGUST 27 יד אלול	FRIDAY AUGUST 28 טו אלול
BAVLI	Chullin 114	Chullin 115	Chullin 116	Chullin 117	Chulin 118	Chulin 119	Chulin 120
YERUSHALMI	Yevamos 14	Yevamos 15	Yevamos 16	Yevamos 17	Yevamos 18	Yevamos 19	Yevamos 20
MISHNAH	Keilim 26:3-4	Keilim 26:5-6	Keilim 26:7-8	Keilim 26:9-27:1	Keilim 27:2-3	Keilim 27:4-5	Keilim 27:6-7
KITZUR	215:1-216:End	217:1-219:1	219:2-7	219:8-220:4	220:5-221:2	221:3-End	Klalim
ORAYSA	Yevamos Chazara 96b-97b	Yevamos 98a Chazara 97b	Yevamos 98b Chazara 98a	Yevamos 99a Chazara 98b	Yevamos 99b Chazara 99a	Yevamos 100a Chazara 99b	Yevamos Chazara 98a-98b

WHEN THE CAROUSEL COMES AROUND

Steps to the Throne with Joy by Rabbi Nosson Muller

A halachic distinction, derived from verses in the Torah, is found between sea animals and land animals regarding impurity. An animal's carcass conveys *tumah* to those who touch them, while dead fish do not.

However, the Mishnah (*Keilim* 17:13) teaches that waterdogs, although they primarily reside in the sea, are likened to animals and do transmit impurity.

Why?

Because they consistently run toward dry land.

Rav Tzadok of Lublin explains that every creation is naturally pulled toward the source from where it initially came. A waterdog's constant desire for dry land is proof that its essence is rooted there. Although it inhabits the sea and shares many similarities with fish, it is still categorized as an animal that lives on the land.

Therefore, a waterdog shares the laws of its counterparts who live on the ground. Like them, when no longer living it does transmit impurity.

A Jew's connection throughout the year fluctuates up and down and in and out. Sometimes the signal is clear and strong, and sometimes, it is so faint, it can barely be heard. There are days he feels so close and days where he seems so far away.

With repentance, a Jew returns to his original home, and with prayer, he reconnects to his Source. And when Rosh Hashanah arrives, a Jew seeking his Creator no longer possesses *tumah*.

He is home, and there, under the protective embrace of Hashem, only purity is found.

A child on a carousel mirrors a Jew's journey through

the year. The little one sits on the horse, tightly clutching the rope on the horse's neck, as it bounces up and down. Background music rises as the horse jumps and falls as it descends.

As the plastic colt makes its circuit, the child hunches low on its back, entirely focused on staying astride. At one point, however, he looks up and relaxes a bit.

He reaches the place where he knows his parents are standing. His smile is wide and his little arms wave frantically with joy and with pride. The boy sees his parents and feels safe. In that moment, he is no longer alone in his journey.

He is back at his source, he is secure.

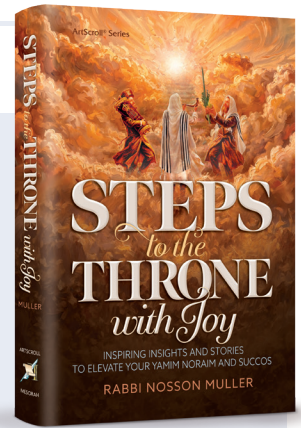
A Jew's journey through the year is comparable to a ride on a carousel. He goes up and he goes down. The background music alternates from sad tunes to rousing melodies, and he holds on to his horse for dear life. It is not always easy, but he valiantly battles, and manages to stay upright.

During Elul, as Rosh Hashanah approaches, he starts completing the circle. He sees his Father waiting there, looking on with joy and with pride.

He feels safe again and he begins to wave.

"Father in Heaven, I am still holding on. I am still sitting upright on the bumpy road on which You have placed me, still loyal to Your Torah and committed to living the life You commanded me to live.

Keep watching over me, as I journey through the year ahead and proudly restart my renewed circle of faith!" 🙏



R' Nosson Muller

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

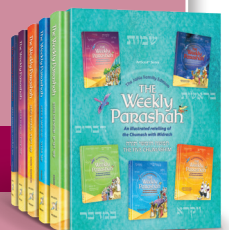
WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
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Does someone who owns a kosher pet bird need to do shiluach haken?

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 Va'eschanan is: BRACHA MUNK, Lakewood, NJ

Question for Va'eschanan was: Give an example of a word that was in the second Luchos but not in the first.
Va'eschanan Answer: The word *tov*, which means good.



PART 24: THE ARTSCROLL SERIES — WHO IS IT FOR?

About ten years ago, a Canadian doctoral student was doing research for his doctoral thesis, which was on the subject of ArtScroll. He concluded that ArtScroll has been created primarily for *baalei teshuvah*, essentially as a literary kiruv organization. His facts were carefully gathered. His conclusion, however, was wrong.

When we began, focusing specifically on the unobservant Jewish population was not our intention. Our vision was broad: to make the Torah's wisdom accessible to every Jew whose ability to learn was limited by the language barrier, background, time or opportunity.

That audience included Jews across the spectrum, from the totally uninitiated Jew, all the way to the accomplished *talmid chacham* looking for efficient access to sources and explanations. ArtScroll was not created for one segment of Klal Yisrael. It was created for every Jew.

Although that scholar was mistaken about our original purpose, he had recognized something enormously significant about its impact. The modern *baal teshuvah* movement could not have achieved anything approaching its extraordinary success without ArtScroll.

Think of it: those who were around before 1976 — before ArtScroll entered the scene — probably knew no more than one or two *baalei teshuvah*. Today, chances are that you know many Jews who have found their way to Torah, and that many — if not all — relied on ArtScroll for their journey.

When the *baal teshuvah* movement started, kiruv organizations, *rabbanim*, teachers, hosts, families, and communities inspired countless Jews to rediscover their heritage. They awakened curiosity, ignited Jewish souls, and opened doors to Torah life. But once those doors were opened and they were on their own, people needed the tools with which to en-



Actual siddur used by the woman from Baltimore

ter and stay the course.

The treasures were there, but for many they remained hidden behind a language barrier. The desire to learn might have been intense, but desire alone could not translate Hebrew, explain an unfamiliar phrase, provide background, or guide a newcomer through a page of Gemara.

ArtScroll changed that reality.

As one woman from Baltimore wrote: “When I first began my journey toward an observant Jewish life, the ArtScroll Siddur became my rebbi. I carefully studied the translation, as well as every instruction on its pages. It guided me step by step and gave me the confidence to daven with meaning and with a genuine connection to Hashem.”

“That siddur helped ignite a lifelong journey of faith and accompanied me as I married, raised a family, and built a beautiful Jewish home of my own. Today, my children are true *bnei Torah*, dedicating their lives to Yiddishkeit — a legacy that began, in so many ways, with the ArtScroll Siddur, and continues to this day with the help of ArtScroll’s many other “rebbeim,” which continue to guide us through every area of life.”

Sometimes, the stories are more amusing. There is a community out West — one of those “ArtScroll communities” that rely on ArtScroll for nearly everything. Someone once noticed that no one there recited a *berachah acharonah* after drinking the Havdalah wine. When asked why, they explained that the ArtScroll Siddur does not include a *berachah acharonah* after Havdalah — and they faithfully follow “Minhag ArtScroll”! (Instructions to recite the *berachah acharonah* after Havdalah has since been added.)

The *pasuk* tells us that the Torah is “not in the Heavens” or reserved for an elite few. It is “very close to you.” By making Torah accessible to Jews everywhere, ArtScroll played a major role in transforming those words into a living reality.

UP NEXT: The Stone Chumash: A Revolution Carved in Stone