

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT  
OF THE  
Mesorah  
Heritage  
Foundation

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY  
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

פרשת שופטים  
ו' אלול תשפ"א

5781

AUGUST 14, 2021

ISSUE #54

RABBI YITZCHOK  
HISIGER, EDITOR

DESIGN & LAYOUT:  
MRS. AVIVA KOHN

PARASHAH

## RIGHTEOUS IDEALS

Rav Asher Weiss on the Parashah

שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֵּן לָךְ בְּכֹל שְׁעָרֶיךָ...

**"Judges and enforcers shall you appoint in all your gates [of the cities] which Hashem your G-d gives you for your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment... Righteousness, righteousness you shall pursue, so that you will live and take possession of the land that Hashem your G-d gives you" (Devorim 16:18, 20).**

Rashi comments: *So that you will live and take possession of the Land:* The merit of appointing righteous judges is worthy to keep the *Bnei Yisrael* alive and to settle them upon their land.

The *Ketzos Hachoshen* notes that *Rashi* here stresses the great merit of appointing righteous judges, but does not actually mention the need for the *Bnei Yisrael* to abide by their righteous judgments. Would it not have been more appropriate for *Rashi* to say that the merit of practicing justice throughout the nation allows us to live and to take possession of the Land? What merit is there for the entire nation in the very appointment of righteous judges?

The *Ketzos* explains by drawing a comparison between two similar incidents in *Tanach*. In *Parshas Vayeira*, we learn of *Sedom's* shocking cruelty towards their guests. In *Sefer Shoftim*, we find a story no less heinous of a woman who was horribly murdered by the people of *Givah*. The entire region of *Sedom* was uprooted, with no remnant or survivors left except for *Lot*, who was spared in *Avraham's* merit. In contrast, the people of *Givah* did not suffer such destruction. How were they more deserving of Hashem's mercy than was *Sedom*?

The guilt of *Sedom* lay not only in their wickedness, but in their failure to establish a court of law to punish such wickedness. The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 109b) states that the names

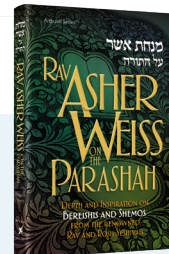
of their judges were *Liar*, *Deceiver*, *Forger* and *Corrupter of Justice*. Their legal system supported evil, until it actually became an ideal and a way of life. Therefore, there was no hope of reforming them and they had to be destroyed.

The people of *Givah*, although they were evil, had a righteous legal system designed to punish evil and enforce justice. As long as a nation maintains ideals of justice, there is still hope to reform them. However much they may stray from the ideals they espouse, there is still hope that they might eventually return to those ideals.

Therefore, there was no need to destroy the people of *Givah*. They suffered grievous losses in battle and were thus duly punished, but they were not entirely destroyed as was *Sedom*.

We can thus understand why *Rashi* says that the very appointment of righteous judges is merit enough for the *Bnei Yisrael* to live and take possession of the land. Our righteous judges exemplify the ideals of justice for which we strive. As long as they lead our people, their merit serves to protect us, since they will guide us back to the straight path, even if we happen to stray.

The same principle applies to each individual in his private life. His conscience is his judge. Even when he falls prey to temptation and sins in what he knows to be



Rav Asher Weiss

## HIS CONSCIENCE IS HIS JUDGE.

continued on page 3

## WHY AM I HERE?

*Reb Getzel – The dramatic life of Reb Getzel Berger, builder of an empire of chesed  
by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer*

There are many stories told about Reb Getzel Berger. He's still a legend in London and people still talk about him, even now, four decades after he passed away.

One of Reb Getzel's neighbors once saw him pacing back and forth in his garden one day. He was tossing a handful of pebbles on the ground and he was lost in thought.

"Reb Getzel!" the man called out. "You look as if something is bothering you. What's on your mind?"

"One of the local banks called me this morning with an offer," Reb Getzel said. "They told me about a very expensive foreclosed property that has come on the market, and they're offering it to me first."

"Are you going to purchase it?"

"I want to, but the majority of my funds are tied up in numerous projects and I don't have the money available to make the purchase."

"So what will you do?" the neighbor asked.

"The manager of my bank called me up a few hours after I got the call about the deal. 'Mr. Berger,' he said, 'we've reviewed our accounts for the past year, and we find that we are left with a surplus of cash. We have therefore decided to offer you a mortgage with very good terms for any property you would like to invest in at the moment.'"

"This was an unbelievable turn of events. I had just been offered a property I wanted to buy but didn't have

the cash for it, and a few short hours later, my manager called me and offered me the very cash I needed! I immediately accepted the offer and I gave word to the first bank that I would be purchasing the property.

"Then, a few hours after I closed the deal this morning, a businessman I know, a Jew, called me up. 'Mr. Berger,' he said, 'I heard that you purchased a certain property this morning.'

"That's correct," I replied, confirming the news.

"Listen, I want that property, and I'm prepared to offer you a very good price for it."

The businessman named the price. If Reb Getzel sold the property to

him, it meant he would be able to triple his money in one day.

Now it was late afternoon of the same day, and he said to his neighbor, "You're wondering why I'm so lost in thought. The answer is simple. Think about everything that happened today.

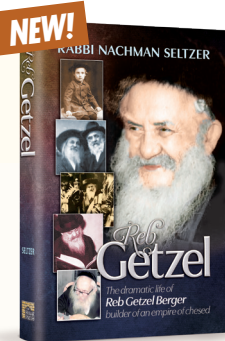
In one day I received a phenomenal offer from one bank, funds from my own bank to make it happen, and the ability to triple my money on the deal a few hours later. Hashem is throwing money at me! I'm standing here trying to figure out what He wants from me. What is my role in this world? Why am I here?

"That's why you see me here so deep in thought."

**"HASHEM IS  
THROWING  
MONEY AT ME! I'M  
STANDING HERE  
TRYING TO FIGURE  
OUT WHAT HE  
WANTS FROM ME."**



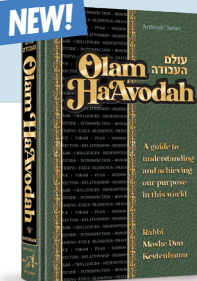
*Reb Getzel Berger*



## Newest Releases:







The *mitzvah* to love Hashem requires us to love every single Jew as well, for every Jew is a child of Hashem, and a father wants his children to love one another. The absence of love for another

Jew automatically reflects a deficiency in our love for Hashem. This idea is, perhaps, alluded to in the *pasuk* (Vayikra 19:18): “Ve’ahavta lerie’acha kamocha... You shall love your fellow as yourself — I am Hashem,” which can be interpreted to mean that because I am Hashem, the Father of all of the Jewish people, you, My children, must love one another.

Our sages (*Yoma* 9b) teach that during the period of the second *Beis HaMikdash*, the Jewish people were involved in Torah and *mitzvos*, but the *Beis HaMikdash* was nevertheless destroyed because of baseless hatred. This teaches us that baseless hatred is equivalent to the three cardinal sins of idol worship, immorality, and murder (which caused the destruction of the first *Beis HaMikdash*).

Rav Shmuel Baron relates a powerful parable that brings home this idea:

*There were once two brothers who grew up in the slums. The older brother worked very hard to put himself through college, and he became a*

*lawyer and ultimately landed the job of mayor of a prominent city. The younger brother did not fare as well and was living in poverty. One day, in desperation, the younger brother decided to travel to visit his successful brother and beg him for financial assistance. Perhaps, he thought, his brother could give him a good job or help him in some other way. Although they had not been in touch for many years, he was optimistic that his brother would do his best to help him.*

## AT THE ROOT OF OUR CHESSED SHOULD BE OUR LOVE FOR HASHEM.

*Once in the mayor’s office, he anxiously approached the secretary and asked to speak to the mayor. “Please tell the mayor his brother is here to see him,” he added.*

*Skeptical that this poorly dressed person could be the mayor’s brother, the secretary called the mayor and said, “Some person is here and claims he is your brother.”*

*“Send him away,” the mayor responded curtly. “I have no brother.”*


*Dejected, the poor brother left the office.*

*Many years later, the mayor, who had lost touch with his father as well, decided to go pay his elderly father a*

*visit. How proud my father must be of me, he thought, and how excited he will be to see me! Dressed in his finest clothing, he excitedly knocked on the door, hoping his father would be home. Sure enough, his father answered the door, but gave him a blank stare.*

*“You don’t recognize me?” the mayor exclaimed. “Dad, it’s me, your son!”*

*His father continued to look at him, emotionless, and finally said, “If my son is not your brother, then I am not your father!”*

It follows that the obligation of *chesed* is not limited to performing external actions of kindness; rather, we must develop genuine love and concern for our fellow Jews. Our love for others should be rooted in the fact that they are Hashem’s children, our brothers and sisters, and we are obligated to concern ourselves with their well-being. While we do not need to think of this idea every time we help someone else — for once the love is there, helping others becomes a natural instinct — at the root of our *chesed* should be our love for Hashem. Accordingly, when performing an act of kindness for someone else will contradict the will of Hashem, there is no room for that act of kindness. 


## RIGHTEOUS IDEALS continued from page 1

forbidden, if he still has good ideals, his conscience will berate him and he will eventually return in *teshuvah*.

In contrast, the truly wicked person develops a warped ideology to justify his sins. There is no hope for him to return as long as he is led by the crooked judge of a warped conscience. The *Mesillas Yesharim* therefore warns us, in his opening words, that our

foremost obligation is to clarify what our purpose in the world is:

The foundation of piety and the root of perfect service is to clarify and recognize what one’s obligation in the world is, and to what ends he must focus his aspirations in all his toils every day of his life.

When a person recognizes the correct ideals toward which he must strive, then even if he veers from those ideals, he will eventually return. 

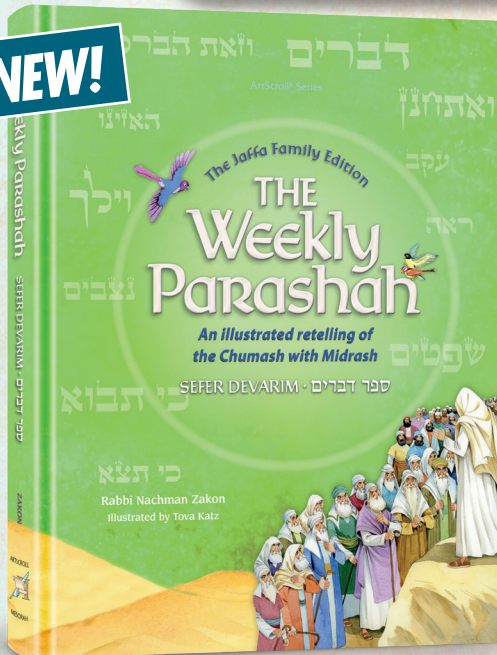




# Parashah for Children

## פרשת שופטים

**NEW!**



## Fruit Trees and War



We learn it from our *parashah*, where the Torah tells us not to cut down fruit trees. It's one of the things we must avoid even during a war.

What do fruit trees have to do with war?

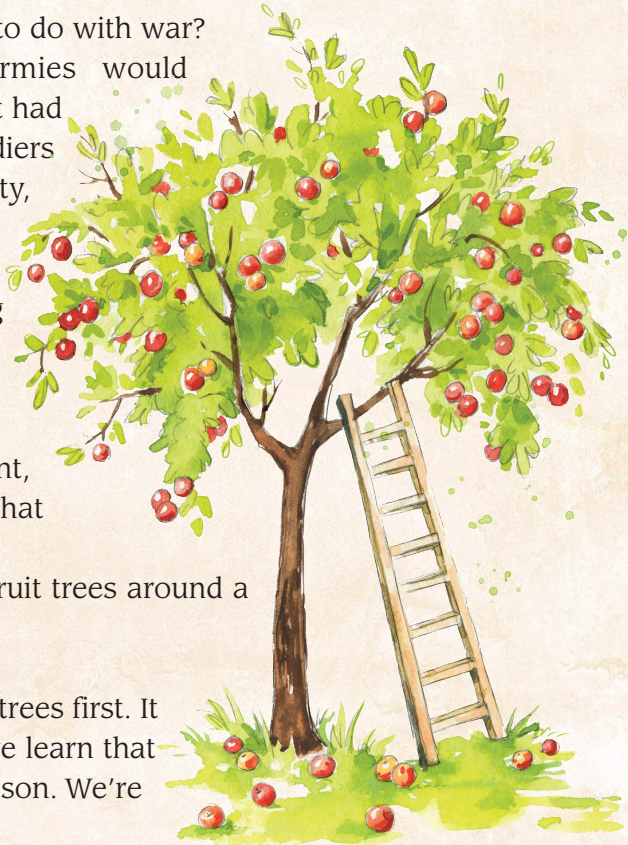
In the olden days, armies would surround an enemy city that had a wall around it. The soldiers couldn't get into the city, because the entrance was blocked by strong, heavy gates. To get in, the attacking soldiers had to build equipment out of wood to get over the wall and invade the city. Or they would pound the gates with big tree trunks.

To get the wood to build all this equipment, soldiers would cut down trees. Even fruit trees! What a waste. The fruit trees give food!

Sometimes the soldiers would burn down the fruit trees around a city just to damage the food supply.

Again, what a waste!

The Jewish army isn't allowed to cut down fruit trees first. It has to use trees that do not bear fruit. From this we learn that Jews shouldn't destroy or waste anything for no reason. We're not allowed to do "*bal tashchis*."



**WIN A \$36  
ARTSCROLL  
GIFT CARD!**

## THE WEEKLY QUESTION

*Question for Parashas Shoftim:*

**What are the names of the women prophets mentioned in Tanach?**

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 Parashas Va'eschanan question is: CHAVA BRACHA LEVINSON, Philadelphia, PA**

The question was: Why do we say the pasuk of "Baruch Sheim kevod malchuso..." quietly?

The answer is: 1) When Moshe taught Shema Yisrael to the Bnei Yisrael, he did not say this pasuk. 2) When Yaakov's sons said Shema Yisrael out loud, he said Baruch Sheim quietly. 3) Moshe heard the malachim saying the pasuk, but it was not taught to him to teach the Bnei Yisrael; when he did teach it, he told them to say it quietly.

