

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

THE POWER OF SEEING

Rav Yaakov Bender on Chumash 2

וְיָהּקָם מֶלֶךְ תַּחַת עַל מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְדַע אֶת יוֹסֵף.

A new king arose over Mitzrayim, who did not know Yosef (Shemos 1:1).

This *parashah*, which opens with the story of *gillus Mitzrayim*, contrasts two leaders.

Chazal explain the term “new king” used for Pharaoh as a reference to the fact that he made himself, *asah atzmo*, as if he did not know Yosef.

Then we are introduced to Moshe Rabbeinu’s leadership when he grows up and *goes out to his brothers and sees their suffering* (Shemos 2:II).

Rashi explains the word “*Vayar*” as “*nasan einav velibo lihiyos meitzar aleihem*” — he invested his eyes and heart into truly feeling their pain.”

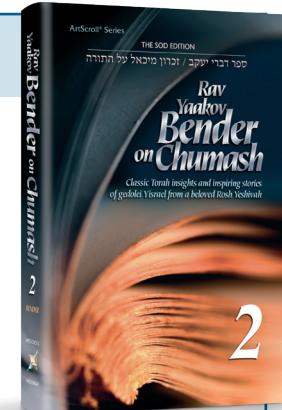
Pharaoh pretended not to see, so as not to be obligated. Moshe made sure to *really* see, so that he could really help — and ever since, this has been the mark of our great leaders, people who did not just see, but who made it a point to understand and grasp the depth of the situation facing another.

It is well known that before the Ponevezher Rav built the great yeshivah, he first established Batei Avos, an orphanage, to meet the needs of the stream of young survivors arriving in Eretz Yisrael without parents.

He was a *lamdan* and a *gaon*, trained to teach Torah, but the Ponevezher Rav invested his eyes and heart in seeing — and when a person truly looks, the next step is obvious. He saw not what he wanted to do, but what he needed to do.

Less well known is how the Ponevezher Rav was *zocheh* to become a *talmid* of the Chofetz Chaim. A prize *talmid* in Telshe, he once stopped in tiny Radin to receive a *berachah* from the *gadol hador*. In the Chofetz Chaim’s home, he heard heart-rending cries. Alarmed, he was told that the Chofetz Chaim was davening for a woman in grave danger during childbirth.

Astounded that the *rabban shel Yisrael* could feel another’s pain so personally, he resolved not to leave Radin. The Ponevezher Rav would become one of the Chofetz Chaim’s foremost *talmidim*, and when he later built the orphanage, he was echoing his *rebbi*’s cry — living as one who is *nasan einav velibo* to the suffering of another.

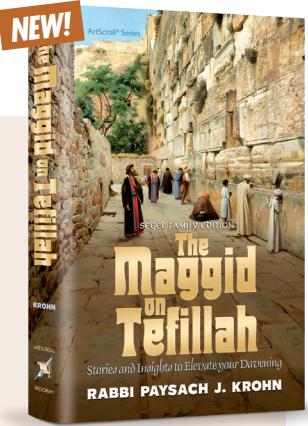


On Shabbos, R’ Aryeh Levine would often visit his *rebbi*, R’ Isser Zalman Meltzer, in Yerushalayim, and during one such visit they reminisced about R’ Aryeh’s years learning under him in Slutzk, including where he ate his meals. When R’ Aryeh listed the families who hosted him on each day of the week, R’ Isser Zalman noticed the number did not equal the days of the week but said nothing. Later that night, Rebbetzin Meltzer urgently came to R’ Aryeh, explaining that her husband was deeply distressed and repeating, “How can it be that I taught him Torah, yet didn’t see that he was hungry? I failed him as a *rebbi*,” feeling personally responsible for not having truly seen his *talmid*’s needs.

R’ Aryeh returned to reassure his *rebbi* that all had been well, and although R’ Isser Zalman eventually calmed down, the pain of realizing he had not fully perceived his student continued to trouble him deeply.

In any frum community the phone book lists hundreds of *gemachim*, each born because someone truly saw a need, felt the *tzaar*, and then took the extra step to help.

This is what Moshe taught us, and this is what Yidden who learn and live the Torah aspire to do. 



A rosh yeshivah visiting Yeshiva Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, told the following moving story about R' Yeshaya Bardaky (1790–1862), a *talmid* of R' Chaim Volozhiner.

R' Yeshaya and his two children were among many people on a boat trying to escape from a despotic official in their province. If they could only manage to cross the river, their freedom was assured.

Like every night, the small, fragile boat was crammed with panicky people fleeing their harsh circumstances, carrying what little luggage and valuables they could.

Soon all the rafts were full, and people could save their lives only by swimming to the shore. Desperate to save his two children, R' Yeshaya held on to them with one arm and began swimming. The children were frightened and crying. R' Yeshaya held on to them desperately, using every ounce of strength he had to swim forward.

Soon he felt he could carry them no longer. He would have to let go of one of them, otherwise they would all drown. "My children," he cried, "I cannot carry both of you. Please forgive me, I have to let go of one of you so that the other will be saved. How can a father make such a decision? I beg you, forgive me." He turned to one child, the one he had chosen to release, and said, "I will carry you for as long as I can, but then you will have to try and swim alongside me."

"I understand," said the crying child.

He carried both children for as long as he could, and then, as he was loosening his grip and the child felt himself slipping, he screamed and pleaded, "Tatte! Don't let go."

The shattering, painful cry pierced R' Yeshaya's soul, and he grabbed the child tighter and continued swimming with strength he did not know he had; somehow he carried both of his beloved children

to shore. Totally spent, he collapsed on the beach next to his children.

"Thank you, thank you, Tatte, for saving me," the child cried, as his father became aware of his surroundings again. "I can never thank you enough."

"No, my child," the fatigued R' Yeshaya replied, "it is you who saved yourself. I had no strength left. My arm could no longer hold both of you, but your piercing cry penetrated my soul and gave me miraculous energy. And that's how I was able to save you. So, it was *you*, by crying out that one more time, that saved you."

**"NO, MY CHILD,"
THE FATIGUED R'
YESHAYA REPLIED,
"IT IS YOU WHO
SAVED YOURSELF."**

The rosh yeshivah paused to let the boys absorb the story. Then he added, "In Elul we recite the *LDovid Hashem* prayer twice a day. It ends with the *pasuk*, קַוָּה אֶל הָרֶיךָ וַיַּאמַּר אֶל הָרֶיךָ — Place confidence in Hashem, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage; and place confidence in Hashem (Tehillim 27:14). R' Chama bar Chanina comments that this verse teaches us one of the techniques of prayer: If one prays but is not answered, let him reinforce himself and pray again (*Berachos* 32b).

"That is one of the messages of Elul — never give up! Just as one must persevere in prayer, so too in learning. This is why Dovid HaMelech repeats the expression וַיַּקְוֹה אֶל הָרֶיךָ — And place confidence in Hashem. When Hashem, our Father, hears our repeated pleas and sees our repeated efforts, He gains new strength, *kaveyachol* (so to speak), to help us succeed. Until then maybe we didn't deserve it, but when He sees that we don't give up and we keep trying harder to succeed in learning, *yiras Shamayim*, and *tefillah*, He saves us and carries us into a new year of *hatzlachah*."

	SHABBOS JANUARY 10 כָּבֵד טבָת	SUNDAY JANUARY 11 כָּבֵד טבָת	MONDAY JANUARY 12 כָּבֵד טבָת	TUESDAY JANUARY 13 כָּבֵד טבָת	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 14 כָּבֵד טבָת	THURSDAY JANUARY 15 כָּבֵד טבָת	FRIDAY JANUARY 16 כָּבֵד טבָת
BAVLI	Zevachim 118	Zevachim 119	Zevachim 120	Menachos 2	Menachos 3	Menachos 4	Menachos 5
YERUSHALMI	Succah 22	Succah 23	Succah 24	Succah 25	Succah 26	Succah 27	Succah 28
MISHNAH	Arachin 3:5-4:1	Arachin 4:2-3	Arachin 4:4-5:1	Arachin 5:2-3	Arachin 5:4-5	Arachin 5:6-6:1	Arachin 6:2-3
KITZUR	45:3-8	45:9-16	45:17-46:3	46:4-16	46:17-29	46:30-40	46:41-47:7

Nechemiah Fishman speaks about how his mother, a *giyores* from Honduras, was raising Nechemiah in difficult circumstances, when she heard about Rechovot's chief rabbi.

She turned up one day at his office and tearfully explained her situation: While she wanted to send her little son to a Talmud Torah, her nominally religious husband wanted nothing to do with such extremism.

R' Simcha took the woman's plight to heart, advising her on how to navigate the choppy domestic waters. Then he took Nechemiah under his wing, practically becoming a surrogate father to the three-year-old boy.

Today a cheerful *bachur* in Toras Refael, a yeshivah headed by R' Simcha's son, he looks back at those years when the great rav of Rechovot took him under his wing, and says, "I thought that he was my grandfather."

To R' Simcha's way of thinking, *chazal's* dictum that *talmidim* are like sons was literal.

There was one *bachur* from Rechovot who struggled in yeshivah and was eventually expelled. When R' Simcha heard what had happened, he dropped everything and postponed an important meeting with the director general of the Religious Affairs ministry in order to drive to the boy's yeshivah in Zichron Yaakov, a journey of two hours each way.

Naturally, R' Simcha was treated like a celebrity when he arrived for an unscheduled visit at the yeshivah. The rabbanim had no idea why he was there, but he was asked to give a *shiur* and meet the *bachurim*.

Hours into his visit, he came to the point. "I have a

Rav Simcha Kook By Gedalia Guttentag

son in the yeshivah who's struggling," he told them.

"Which son?" they asked in confusion, knowing that no one in the student body was a member of the Rav's family.

When R' Simcha explained that it was a member of his community whom he regarded as one of his children, the message got through and the boy was readmitted.

R' Simcha displayed that same blend of wisdom and heart with an elderly Holocaust survivor. The man, who lived in Gedera, a town a few miles from Rechovot, would consistently badger religious people about their own faith, based on his own bitter experience.

An acquaintance from Rechovot decided to see if the chief rabbi could work his wonders to temper the man's bitterness. He persuaded the older man to travel with him to see R' Kook.

To the acquaintance's surprise, the Holocaust survivor emerged from R' Simcha's study after half an hour with a smile on his face. "I have no more questions," he said.

On the way back to Gedera, the man explained. "The rabbi didn't even say a word to me. He just sat and hugged me and cried with me about all the torment and loss I went through in the Holocaust.

"I felt that he was in real pain and that finally there was someone who shared my great sorrow, and I had no more questions." ☩



R' Simcha Kook with R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel

"WHICH SON?" THEY ASKED IN CONFUSION.

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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

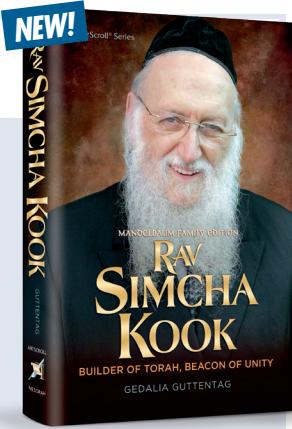
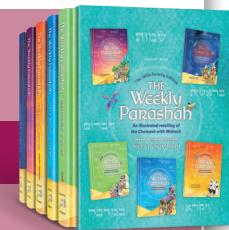
What other significant event occurred, years later,
on the date Yocheved placed Moshe in the river?

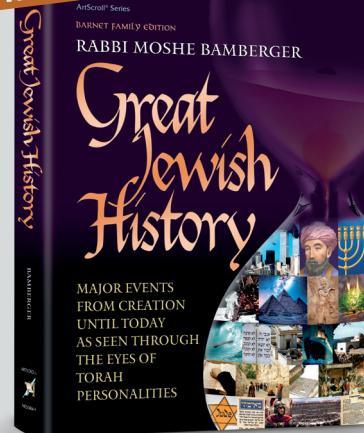
Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

The winner of the question for Parashas Vayeishev is: YOSEF SHALOM HUPPERT, Toms River, NJ

Question for Vayeishev was: Name the four groups, or people, that Yosef was sold to

Vayeishev Answer: The word פָּסָר, from the kesones passim coat that Yaakov gave Yosef, stands for all the groups Yosef was sold to: פָּסָר — Potiphar, פָּסָר — socharim (slave traders), פָּסָר — Yishmaelim, פָּסָר — Medanim.



NEW!

Great Jewish History

2332 JEWS ENSLAVED BY PHARAOH - 1429 IN EGYPT

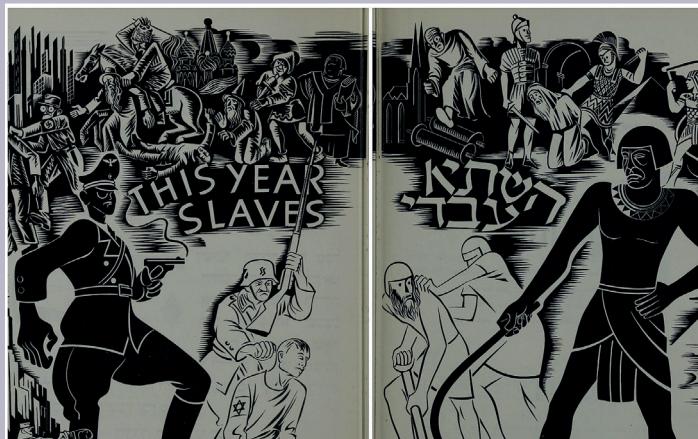
As Hashem had foretold Avraham at the *Bris Bein HaBesarim*, his descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land (*Bereishis* 15:13). Although God did not reveal who would enslave them, the role was filled by Pharaoh in Egypt. Fearing that the rapidly growing Jewish population would soon outnumber their host country and rebel, Pharaoh came up with a solution: afflict them in slavery, thereby sapping their strength and slowing their high birth rate. Despite the fact that Yosef, as viceroy, saved the Egyptian economy and made its treasury swell, Pharaoh

pretended he did not know who Yosef was, and enacted his plan against the Jews. Yet the more the Egyptians tormented the Jews, the more the Jewish population exploded. Pharaoh then ordered Shifrah and Puah, the Jewish midwives, to kill the Jewish male babies at birth. Heroically, they thwarted Pharaoh's plan and allowed the infant boys to survive. Pharaoh's decree of enslavement would prove beneficial to the Jewish people in the long term; they were molded and hardened by the experience. The verse likened it to a smelting furnace used to purify iron (see *Devarim* 4:20); in the backbreaking labor of Egypt, they honed their faith in God and learned how to serve a Master properly — Him.



Artist's rendition of Jewish slaves in Egypt

TORAH VIEWS AND NEWS



A children's Haggadah from 1945 draws parallels between the Passover narrative and the Holocaust.

Vicious Propaganda

The Torah writes that the early phase of our becoming enslaved to Pharaoh began with "Vayare'u osanu haMitzrim — and the Egyptians made us evil." Notice that it does not say, "Vayareu lanu haMitzrim — and the Egyptians did evil to us." **Rabbi Mordechai Gifter** (1915-2001) derives from this that Pharaoh did not merely persecute us, he demonized us, persuading the masses that we are subhuman and repulsive, and therefore enslavement and even infanticide were justified. This same strategy was utilized in Nazi Germany in the 1930s when Hitler's propaganda machine spread lies to the populace of the "filthy, vile Jew," leading to the Final Solution.

Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar (1887-1979), based on the words in the Haggadah that the Jewish people in Egypt were *metzuyanim*, distinctive, speculates that the Egyptians likely forced the Jews to wear a distinctive emblem on their clothing, much as the Nazis decreed that they must wear a yellow star to distinguish and humiliate them.

