

Parashas
Vayigash

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י"ז ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

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טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב המערכת

It is good to thank Hashem

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One of the people of Yerushalayim once went abroad to raise funds for his son's wedding. He would visit shuls, seeking the assistance of his fellow Jews, and would wholeheartedly bless anyone who gave even a small or a generous contribution. Everyone was showered with blessings from his lips. In one shul, there was a wealthy man who was also a great philanthropist. However, in the shul, he would give only a few small coins. When this man approached him, as usual, he gave a small coin, and the fundraiser blessed him warmly with radiant expressions and heartfelt blessings. The wealthy man was very surprised and, after davening, approached the fundraiser and asked why he had blessed him with such special blessings. The fundraiser, not knowing who he was speaking to, innocently replied that it was his custom to bless every giver, even for a small coin, because he genuinely appreciated every donation. The wealthy man told him that he was accustomed to people frowning at him when they received only a few small coins from him. But since the fundraiser did not behave this way, he wanted to give him a generous contribution. And indeed, he fulfilled his words...

When Pharaoh asked Yaakov (47:8), - כמה ימי שני הייך, "How many are the years of your life?" Yaakov replied, ימי שני מגורי שלשים ומאת שנה, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and hard have been the years of my life." The Midrash comments: "At the moment Yaakov said, 'Few and hard have been the years of my life,' HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to him: 'I saved you from Eisav and from Lavan, I returned Dina to you, and also Yosef, and yet you complain that your life has been few and hard? By your life! The number of words from 'And he said' to 'the years of their sojourning' corresponds to the years that will be deducted from your life, so that you will not live as long as your father Yitzchak.' There are 33 words, and thus 33 years were deducted from Yaakov's life, as Yitzchak lived to the age of 180, while Yaakov lived only to the age of 147."

We cannot speak critically of Yaakov Avinu, who was the "choicest of the avos." However, we can learn for ourselves from the words of Chazal, which were written for our benefit. The Torah teaches us how important it is to thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu for what He gives us, and not to complain about what we lack. As it is written in holy seforim, one who complains that life is not good, as if, says to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, "This is not good?" To such a person, Hashem may respond, "Let Me show you what truly not good is." But one who thanks Hashem for what they have and declares that life is good, Hashem responds, "This is good? Let Me show you what true goodness is!"

- Tiv HaTorah- Vayigash

טיב הפרשה

To bless for the bad just as one blesses for the good

אָנכי אֵרד עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶנְכִי אֶעֱלֶךְ גַּם עִלָּה מוֹד:
I will go down with you to Egypt, and I shall surely bring you up (46:4)

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This passage sheds light on the statement of Chazal (Berachos 54a): "A person is obligated to bless for the bad just as they bless for the good." We are accustomed to always thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu for taking us out of Egypt, as the Torah commands us (Devorim 16:3): 'למנון' 'So that you may remember the day you left Egypt.' This gratitude is rationally justified—after all, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, compared to donkeys, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu came and redeemed us from backbreaking labor and all the humiliation that was our lot.

However, when the verse "I will go down with you to Egypt" (Bereishis 46:4) is before us, and we see that it was HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself who revealed to Yaakov that the descent to Egypt was by His decree, a question may arise in the thoughts of those of little faith. For if it were possible for the Nation of Israel to descend to Egypt of its own free will, and Pharaoh had initially been given the authority to enslave them without Hashem's decree, then the concept of gratitude for our redemption is understandable. Even if Hashem had not caused our enslavement, He would have found it appropriate to redeem us. But if, from the outset, Pharaoh had no authority to enslave us without HaKadosh Baruch Hu's decree, and it was Yisbarach who orchestrated Yaakov's descent to Egypt and the subsequent enslavement of his descendants by the Egyptians, the matter of gratitude becomes

unclear. For one might argue: “Do not enslave us, and there will be no need to redeem us!”

However, in practice, the Torah obligates us to give thanks for this, and every day we are commanded to remember the Exodus twice. It must be that not only was the redemption beneficial for us, but also the enslavement that preceded it. Even during the enslavement itself, HaKadosh Baruch Hu was already benefiting us. Indeed, with human eyes, we saw only humiliation under the hand of Egypt. They treated us as if we were ownerless, beat us until we were utterly exhausted, threw our children into the river, and slaughtered them to bathe in their blood, *Rachmana litzlan*. Nevertheless, we are commanded to believe that Hashem intended it all for good. He alone knew the hidden goodness embedded in those sufferings, and we must thank Him for them.

From this, we must also learn a lesson about the Creator’s governance. We must understand that nothing evil comes from Him. Even when we endure various hardships, we must recognize that they are for our benefit and thank the Creator for them with the same joy as we thank Him for the good. Indeed, since suffering by its nature evokes pain, it is proper for us to pray for our salvation. But as long as we are not yet redeemed, we are obligated to give thanks even for the suffering. Without a doubt, HaKadosh Baruch Hu brought us this hardship to benefit us, even though we cannot understand why or how it is for our good.

And so said Dovid HaMelech (Tehilim 101:1): ‘חסד ומשפט אשירה לך ה’ אדמרה’ - “I will sing of kindness and justice; to You, Hashem, I will sing praises.” On this, Chazal expounded (Berachos 60b): “If it is kindness, I will sing; if it is justice, I will sing.” This means that whether a person merits to see the kindness of the Creator in the

world, or whether they perceive only His might, that is, His judgment, they must thank the Creator and even sing to Him. For these too are ultimately considered acts of kindness.

This is also the intent of the *pasuk* before us: ‘I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again’. This statement was not directed solely to Yaakov but to all those included within him. HaKadosh Baruch Hu knew what the future held for *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt and said to them: At the time when your suffering increases, know that I am with you and that I see all your afflictions. Do not wonder why I allow you to remain in your distress—it is only because I see the hidden good within it. Therefore, you must thank Me for it, and you must also believe that these sufferings are faithful. Once they have completed their purpose, they will depart from you. So, be assured that “I will also surely bring you up again.”

And Chazal said (Pesachim 50a): והיה ה’ למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה’ אחד ‘Hashem will be King over the entire earth; on that day Hashem will be One, and His name will be One’ (Zechariah 14:9). Is He not One now? Rav Acha bar Chanina said: The World to Come is not like this world. In this world, one blesses over good tidings, ‘Blessed is He who is good and does good,’ and over bad tidings, ‘Blessed is the True Judge.’ But in the World to Come, it will all be ‘He who is good and does good.’”

This is because, in this world, a person sees only the existing reality. With their physical eyes, they perceive only the difficulties and visible suffering. The hidden goodness within them is not seen, and therefore, one may experience anguish. The only way to cope is through faith—believing that these are truly acts of kindness. Since the good is not apparent to the senses, one cannot bless for it explicitly. Instead, one blesses based on the faith that everything is for the

best, and the expression of this is the blessing of ‘ברוך דיין האמת’ - “Blessed is the True Judge.” This blessing reveals one’s belief that there is no injustice in their situation and that it must be for their benefit.

However, in the World to Come—there, all is good. There, one can already see with their eyes the hidden goodness in their measure of suffering. In that upper world, a person will realize that their suffering, beyond sweetening the judgments at the time, was also inherently good.

Nevertheless, the task incumbent upon us is to live with faith during our lifetime that “everything the Merciful One does is for the good.” The joy that arises from such faith is a semblance of the joy of the World to Come. For in the World to Come, this will be one’s joy: realizing the immense good hidden in their measure of sorrow. Those who believe can already merit, even in this world, a semblance of that joy.

It is well known what has been recounted about several *tzaddikim* who, before their passing, declared that they would not allow the world to continue as it was. They promised that as soon as they ascended to the World Above, they would persistently demand the salvation of Israel and the coming of their Messiah. Yet, a long time has passed since their passing, and the awaited transformation in the world has not yet come. When these *tzaddikim* revealed themselves to their disciples or to other *tzaddikim* of that generation, they were asked, “Where is your promise to act for the complete redemption?”

They replied, saying that while it was indeed correct to make such statements in this world, there, in the World of Truth, they see that everything is truly for the good, in the most literal sense, and there is no evil in the world at all!

‘בת פלוני לפלוני’

‘Daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so’

An amazing story happened to my brother on his way back from Hungary after a journey of praying at the graves of tzaddikim. My brother arrived at the airport and realized he had three hours until his flight. My brother is not the type to waste time and is highly mission driven. This means that if he went to Hungary for a Tefillah journey, he felt he needed to remain focused on the mission of Tefillah.

However, davening with devotion in an airport is challenging. So, he stopped a taxi and asked the driver to take him to the nearest Jewish cemetery to the airport. He arrived at the Jewish cemetery, but he did not know if there were any tzaddikim buried there or where they might be located. My brother chose a grave at random, one that drew his heart, and began to daven there. His main Tefillah was for a shidduch for his daughter. He poured out his heart, finished his Tefillah, returned to the airport, and then flew back home.

Upon arriving in Israel, he received a suggestion of a shidduch for his daughter. From that suggestion, the sides celebrated with the breaking of a plate, Mazel Tov!

Now the extent of hashgacha pratis became clear: The groom turned out to be the grandson of the very person on whose grave my brother had davened. He pulled out his camera and showed them a photo of himself davening at their grandfather’s grave. The emotion reached its peak when it became evident that the grandfather had acted from the heavens to secure a good shidduch for his grandson.

Another interesting point highlights how HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranges matches so precisely: my brother was adamantly opposed to a chosson from the Kohen lineage (for various reasons). It was only after the engagement that he realized HaKadosh Baruch Hu had orchestrated everything perfectly. This time, he hadn’t inquired in advance whether the family was Kohanim or not! My brother said, “When a shidduch is destined to happen, no tactic will help. HaKadosh Baruch Hu had long ago declared, ‘The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so.’ Against the decree of the One who arranges shidduchim, there’s no way around Him Yisbarach!”

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The Joy of Yisrael in Their Sons and Daughters

יֵשׁ לָנוּ אָב זָקֵן וְיֵלֵד זָקֵנִים... וְאָבִיו אֶהְבּוֹ: לֹא יוּכַל הַנֶּעֱר לַעֲזֹב אֶת אָבִיו וְעֹזֵב אֶת אָבִיו וְיָמָת... וְעַתָּה כִּבְּאֵי אֵל עֲבָדְךָ אָבִי וְהַנֶּעֱר אֵינָנו וְנִפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ... כִּי אִיךָ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל אָבִי וְהַנֶּעֱר אֵינָנו אֶתִּי פֶן אֶרְאֶה בְּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא אֶת אָבִי:

We have an aged father and a young boy form his old age, and his father loves him. The boy cannot leave his father, for if he leaves his father, he will die. Now, if I come to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us, and his soul is bound up with the boy’s soul. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with (me)? (44:20-34)

A Doting Father to a Beloved Son

The fundamental principle is that “*the [good] deeds of the fathers are an omen for their descendants.*” As the Ramban establishes at the beginning of *Parashas Lech Lecha* (*Bereishis* 12:6):

“I will teach you a principle by which you can understand all the upcoming narratives about Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. It is a significant matter that Chazal mentioned briefly, saying, ‘Whatever occurred to the forefathers is a sign for the sons.’ Therefore, the pesukim expand upon recounting the journeys... Even if one may think these details are superfluous, they are all meant to teach us about the future.”

We, too, can derive lessons for life from the simple understanding of the *pesukim* in this week’s *parashah*. Although we have often emphasized that we cannot fully comprehend the deeds of the *Avos*, the Torah’s purpose is to teach us, and no *pasuk* deviates from its straightforward meaning. Here, we learn about the profound bond between a father and his child, as the Torah testifies: *And his father loves him*—a deep and powerful love to the extent that *his soul is bound with his soul*, meaning the father’s very life depended on him.

The tzaddikim have taught: *How can I go back to my Father (in Heaven) if the boy is not with me?* We are obligated to bring children and *talmidim* closer so that the boy will be *with me*, bound and connected to us with a loving and inseparable bond.

We must draw our precious children and *talmidim* closer with visible and tangible love so they feel with all their hearts that their parents and teachers deeply love them, genuinely desire their well-being, and are wholeheartedly committed to uplifting them to connect with our Father in Heaven.

As the penetrating teaching of the great defender and lover of Yisrael, Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, explains the *pasuk* (*Shir Hashirim* 1:7) *Tell me that my soul love* to mean: Express and declare to me, *My soul loves (you)*! Similarly, reveal and demonstrate your love for your beloved children with extraordinary affection and a heartfelt connection.

When children feel “*the joy of Yisrael in their sons and daughters,*” this genuine and sincere joy and love will instill immense inner strength within them. It will give them extraordinary energy to build their souls confidently, face challenges and struggles against the evil inclination, and walk the path of goodness and righteousness.

Sincere Faith in the Coming of Mashiach

One of the prominent *talmidei chachamim* of the previous generation, a precious and esteemed Jew, was Rav Dovsha Shovaks *zt”l*, who served for many years as the head of the *Sfas Emes* Yeshivah. He built his household with remarkable faithfulness and dedication and was privileged to raise blessed and upright generations, a seed blessed by Hashem.

As a master of *chinuch*, he deeply understood the hearts of his sons and daughters and always strove to convey love and affection with closeness of heart. Joy was a constant presence in his home, and the good children felt the pleasant warmth of the household’s atmosphere and the *simchah shel mitzvah* their devoted parents displayed in their love for their children.

In his time, the *phonograph* was introduced, accompanied by kosher and refined music records performed by the finest singers in *avodas Hashem*. Many homes began to resonate with the sounds of pleasant and uplifting songs of phonographs (later replaced by cassette players, tapes, and so on).

This was a revolutionary novelty at the time, allowing even simple households to enjoy good music with orchestral accompaniment. Rav Dovsha's children, accustomed to a home filled with joy and holy vitality, wished to have a phonograph like many of their friends. They asked their righteous father to buy the device and some of the latest albums of the finest chassidic singers. However, Rav Dovsha was not entirely comfortable with the idea. He worried that this might also introduce a hint of frivolity, *chas veshalom*. After all, there is a vast difference between joy and frivolity (*holelus*), as distant as east from west. He also feared there might be halachic concerns regarding the prohibition of *zemer* (song), derived from the *pasuk* (*Hoshea* 9:1), *Do not rejoice, Yisrael, with exultation like the nations*, which the prominent *poskim* have already elaborated upon.

Rav Dovsha deliberated, hesitating and fearing, as is the way of the God-fearing and pure-hearted who follow the teaching (*Orlah* 3:9), *"New things (chadash) are prohibited by Torah law everywhere."* Who knows where such a novelty could lead? Yet, on the other hand, he sincerely wished to bring joy to his home so that his children would not feel different from their peers in the *cheder*.

Rav Dovsha told his children: *"Let us wait a little and see after two weeks."*

Two weeks later, the children repeated their request. At that point, their father surprised them with an astonishing response: *"Believe me, my dear children, my hope and faith were firm and unwavering that within two weeks, Mashiach would surely come, and we would no longer need all these devices, as the joy of Yisrael will be complete with the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. And from a halachic perspective also, the prohibition would be void, as it was only instituted because of the Churban. That is why I told you to wait two weeks."*

"But I never imagined it possible that after two weeks, we would still be standing under the same prohibition amid this difficult exile, with Mashiach not yet here."

This teaches us the character of Yerushalayim's pious and upright people. Although their homes were filled with the joy of their sons and daughters, they never abandoned their hope for redemption and participation in the *Shechinah's* sorrow throughout their lives.

Rav Zundel: A Master Educator

The noble path of our teacher, the righteous Rav Zundel Kroizer *zt"l*, author of *Or HaChamah*, was to draw the children of *Klal Yisrael* close to the love and diligence learning of Torah through affection and warmth. As an esteemed educator in numerous institutions and holy yeshivos, he merited to raise many *talmidim*, influencing them with kindness, closeness, and a radiant countenance, treating each *talmid* as though he were his child.

With the Divine wisdom embedded within him, he understood the soul of each *talmid* and always found a wise and uplifting way to inspire him. He helped *talmidim* recognize their talents and appreciate their strengths. Through his perpetual joy and beautiful humility, he succeeded in encouraging and uplifting every student. Even the weakest child would feel, in his presence, like one of the best and brightest.

Rav Kroizer made it his mission and purpose to elevate and honor his *talmidim*, instilling a sense of pride and dignity so they would feel (as in *Divrei Hayamim* II 17:6): *And his heart was raised in the ways of Hashem.*

In the report cards he wrote for his *talmidim*, whom he treated as his own children, he would always find ways to include words of praise and honor, often supported by verses from the Torah or teachings of *Chazal*. For example, if a student named *Moshe Aharon* succeeded in an exam, he would write something similar to, *...as Moshe and Aharon counted, according to the word of Hashem (Bamidbar* 4:37).

Faithful to his approach, Rav Kroizer rejoiced greatly at a clever insight or an impressive novelty he heard, even from a young student. He would exclaim with delight: *"This is a strong sevara (logical argument), reminiscent of the Nesivos!"* or *"This innovation is fitting for Rav Akiva Eiger!"* From then on, he would affectionately call such *talmidim* by nicknames like *"Our Nesivos"* or *"What does our Rabbi Akiva Eiger say?"* with a kind smile lighting up his holy face.

Often, when he heard wondrous thoughts or interpretations from his *talmidim*, he

valued and cherished them so much that he would include their insights in his own writings, mentioning their names to fulfill the teaching (*Megillah* 15a): *"Whoever says something in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world."* For this reason, his holy *sefarim* are replete with brilliant questions and insights he heard from his *talmidim*, attributed to the children who conveyed these teachings to him, as it is said (*Taanis* 7a): *"And from my talmidim [I learned] more than from all of them."*

Once, a young man who had fallen into the harsh snares of the evil inclination, *Rachmanalitzlan*, came to Rav Zundel Kroizer *zt"l*, seeking encouragement. Rav Zundel infused him with renewed life, speaking to him with his pure and refined language. He spent considerable time offering kind words and heartfelt encouragement, expressing warmth and closeness until he succeeded in "convincing" the young man and instilling in his heart how dear and close he was to the Almighty. He likened the situation to a father with only one beloved son, and no matter how that son behaves, he never wavers in his love for him.

Rav Zundel was not content with just offering words of support. He went further and took a cherished pen from his collection of writings and lovingly presented it as a gift to the young man. While handing it over, he explained: *"You should be aware that this pen is very precious to me. It is the quill I used for many hours to painstakingly compose my Or HaChamah. Now, as a sign of my love and esteem for you, seeing how you bravely fight life's battles and refuse to despair, chas veshalom, I am giving you this precious pen. Use it to record every time you overcome the evil inclination and stand firm in your trials."*

The young man left Rav Zundel's home as if transformed into a new person. He began recognizing his inner worth and genuinely believed he was cherished and favored before the Almighty and His righteous servants.

This newfound perspective gave him the strength to rise like a lion and cast off heavy burdens of sin, sadness, and regret. He embarked on a new path with that pen, recording each triumph over his inclination. He rose quickly to great heights in Torah and avodah, bringing immense nachas ruach to his Creator.