

Parashas
Beshalach

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י"ז ע"י
קהילת שבתי בבית ד'
בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
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רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב המערכת

ויצעקו בני ישראל

The Children of Israel Cried Out

It is told about the Imrei Emes' of Gur, that he had a precious crystal bottle in which he kept the wine for Shabbos. One Shabbos, there was a great crowding, and the table was pushed; the precious bottle fell and shattered into pieces.

When the 'Imrei Emes' saw this, he let out a heavy sigh, and it seemed as though he was distressed over the loss of the precious bottle. One of the Chassidim who was present felt sorrow upon seeing his Rebbe's distress. Therefore, he immediately declared that he would take it upon himself to buy the Rebbe a new bottle, far more beautiful than the previous one, to adorn the Rebbe's table—just so the Rebbe would not be saddened. The "Imrei Emes" responded and said: "Do you think I am distressed over the loss of the bottle? My sigh was only because it is a sign from Heaven to awaken me, and I fear—what will happen if, *chas v'shalom*, I do not awaken properly?!"

Bnei Yisrael left Egypt after so many miracles: 'וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם' 'And the Children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, Egypt was marching after them; and they were very afraid, and they cried out to Hashem.' (14:10) At first glance, this seems puzzling. Why did *Bnei Yisrael* cry out? After all the miracles they had witnessed in Egypt and during their exodus, they should have been calm, knowing that surely they would soon see yet another miracle—how Hashem would "deal with" the rebellious Egyptians. So why did they cry out? The answer is: When they saw the Egyptians pursuing them, they feared that there might be an accusation against them and that they needed to repent for their deeds. If they did not repent, they would not be worthy of another miracle. This is the meaning of "they cried out"—they awakened themselves to repent and to pray for their distress.

The Rambam states: 'It is a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and sound the trumpets over any calamity that befalls the community... This is part of the ways of repentance, for when a calamity occurs and they cry out and sound the trumpets, everyone will know that their misdeeds caused this misfortune... And this will lead them to remove the calamity from upon them.'

Similarly, Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said that a person was meant to earn a livelihood without hardship, "but I worsened my deeds and thereby diminished my livelihood." (Kiddushin 82b)

We must understand that repentance is always effective, especially during the holy **Shovavim** weeks, about which the righteous have said that repentance in these days is even greater than repentance in the days of Elul—because now, it is repentance out of love!

טיב הפרשה

יראת הרוממות מתוך התבוננות בחסדי השם יתברך

Awe of His Greatness Through Contemplation of Hashem's Kindness

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וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּם: וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה' וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בֵּה' וּבִמֹּשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ: (יד, ל לא)

And Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great hand that Hashem had performed in Egypt, and the people revered Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, his servant. (14:30-31)

At first glance, the Torah seems to repeat itself regarding the recognition of the Bnei Yisrael in the downfall of Egypt. Initially, it states: "And Israel saw Egypt dead upon the seashore," and afterward, it reiterates the matter in a different wording: "And Israel saw the great hand that Hashem had performed in Egypt." It is necessary to understand what the Torah intends to add with this repetition.

Additionally, we must understand the significance of the Torah's addition: "And the people feared Hashem." After all, the very fact that this event led them to fear is self-evident—for who would not be overcome with awe upon witnessing firsthand how the G-d of vengeance had appeared, demonstrating that there is justice and a Judge? If, despite this, the Torah saw fit to explicitly state this idea, it must be that it seeks to impart a moral lesson for us in our service of Hashem. Therefore, we must contemplate: what is the precise message that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wishes to convey to us through this?

To clarify these matters, we must examine the essence of the service that the Creator Baruch Hu desires. Let us bring the words of the Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuva* 10:1), which illuminate for us the proper intention required in performing deeds. Here are his words: 'A person should not say, 'I will fulfill the mitzvos of the

Torah and engage in its wisdom so that I may receive all the blessings written in it, or so that I may merit life in the World to Come. Likewise, I will refrain from the transgressions that the Torah warned against so that I may be saved from the curses written in the Torah, or so that I will not be cut off from life in the World to Come.’ It is not fitting to serve Hashem in this manner, for one who serves in this way is serving out of fear. This is not the level of prophets, nor the level of the Chachamim. Only the unlearned, women, and children serve in this manner, for they are trained to serve out of fear until their knowledge increases, and then they will serve out of love.’

In these words, the Rambam seeks to encourage young people and accustom them to serving their Creator in a fitting manner. He delves into the mindset of youth, revealing what compels them to follow the path of righteousness, identifying the factors that their immature intellects grasp, which lead them to agree to serve their Creator. He also acknowledges that it is impossible to train them in mitzvot in any other way. However, he seeks to awaken the slightly older youth to direct their minds toward the true and desired intention in serving Hashem.

When a small child is informed that this world has a Master Who demands that all its inhabitants serve Him, and that He promises reward to those who obey Him while severely punishing those who do not, the child immediately reasons as follows: “I do not yet know this Master personally, but one thing I do know—there is no way to outsmart or deceive Him. His eyes roam everywhere, seeing every detail of a person’s actions. Therefore, there is no escape but to adhere to His words. From now on, I will not transgress any of His warnings. On the other hand, I will do everything in my power to please Him by fulfilling His commandments, for He rewards those who keep them...”

The child seems to be correct! And were it not for the words of the Rambam, he might continue with this perspective and perform many deeds based on it, all the way into old age.

But then, the Rambam comes and

stops him! The Rambam sharpens his understanding and reveals to him that Hashem is not pleased with this approach! It is true that if one commits sins, he will be punished, and if he performs mitzvos, he will be rewarded—but this is not the reason one should serve Hashem!

This reasoning is suitable only for those who, due to their immaturity, are unable to recognize the **Master of the world**. But this does not apply to you, who have grown and possess intellect! Therefore, you must seek out and come to know Hashem—contemplate His infinite goodness, recognize His immense power, and appreciate the greatness of His mercy! Then, your reverence for Him will deepen, and in addition to *fear of sin*, you will also attain *awe of His greatness*! Moreover, you will also merit *love of Hashem*!

Then your approach to serving Hashem will be entirely different. You will understand that it is a privilege for a person to serve Hashem, and logic itself dictates this. This is as elaborated further in the Rambam’s words (*Halacha 2*), where he states: ‘One who serves out of love engages in Torah and mitzvos and follows the paths of wisdom—not for any worldly gain, nor out of fear of punishment, nor in order to inherit goodness. Rather, he does what is true because it is true, and ultimately, goodness will come as a result. This level is a very great level, and not every wise person attains it. It is the level of Avraham Avinu, whom Hashem called ‘His beloved,’ because he served only out of love. And this is the level that Hashem commanded us through Moshe, as it is written (Devarim 6:4): ‘ואהבת את ה’ אלהיך’ - ‘And you shall love Hashem, your G-d.’ When a person truly loves Hashem, he will immediately fulfill all the mitzvot out of love.’

Now, let us come to understand the *posukim*. At first, the Torah presents the matter plainly: **“And Israel saw Egypt dead upon the seashore.”** These words evoke *fear of punishment*, for previously, the Israelites had witnessed how the Egyptians acted wickedly and subjected them to severe and bitter suffering. Now, they see that there is judgment and a Judge—the Egyptians

are paying for their cruelty with their lives. And as we have said, this level of fear does not need to be explicitly mentioned in the Torah, for it is self-evident.

However, the *Bnei Yisrael* understood that Hashem did not demand from them only the fear of punishment. HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not perform such wondrous signs merely for this purpose! Rather, Hashem desired that through these miracles, they would awaken to love Him and to the awe of His greatness! Therefore, the *Bnei Yisrael* began to contemplate the greatness of the miracles they had experienced, and how He had elevated their honor in the eyes of all the nations by parting the sea for them, with the waters standing as walls on either side. They also recognized that His vengeance against the nations was tempered with compassion, for, in contrast to their wickedness, they deserved much harsher punishment than what they received.

And then **“Israel saw”**—the eyes of understanding within Israel perceived **“the great hand”**, referring to the great kindnesses accompanied by the attribute of justice that was enacted against Egypt. [As is known, the word *“great”* signifies the attribute of kindness.] And they recognized that all of this was **“what Hashem did”**, referring to the merciful attribute of the name *Hashem*.

The Torah tells us that from this, *Bnei Yisrael* merited **“and the people feared Hashem”**, meaning the *awe of His greatness*. Here, we indeed see a new development: even those who were simple, referred to as *the people*, also merited this awe of greatness. In other words, the awe of Hashem’s greatness is not only the domain of the wise and understanding, but even the simple among the people—if they reflect deeply—will recognize and understand the greatness of Hashem and His abundant mercy and kindness. And they too will come to experience this exalted fear, so that both the small and the great will be united and together will sing praises to Hashem, as it is written in the *posuk*: **“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang”**...

במומו פוסל

With His Own Flaw He Criticizes

I went with the children to the park near the bus stop. A neighbor arrived with her children, waiting at the stop for a bus. She told me that every week, she has to travel to the lost and found department to retrieve her son's lost belongings—each time, it's something different: one time a bag, another time a coat. The main thing is, he always forgets something on the bus, and so, every week, she takes the whole family on a trip to the lost and found...

She boarded the bus, and my son, who had overheard my conversation with the neighbor, told me that he has a friend just like that—absentminded and constantly forgetting his belongings on the bus or at the station. He went on to say that just today, his friend forgot his bag at the stop, and he had to chase after him to return it after he had already boarded the bus. (Of course, the entire conversation took place without mentioning names, to avoid any issue of lashon hara.) Then, with a chuckle, my dear son added: "He's so absentminded that he has already forgotten twice that he had a dentist appointment and just didn't show up!"

The moment he said that, I suddenly remembered—my own dear son had forgotten to go to his haircut appointment last week! And today, he had another appointment scheduled... I quickly asked him, alarmed: "Aren't you supposed to have a haircut today?!"

He jumped up and realized that the appointment was in exactly fifteen minutes. If he waited for the bus, he would likely miss it... I called my husband, who happened to be in town, and the devoted father immediately drove him straight to the barber.

And so, through a remarkable twist of Divine providence, the neighbor's story led my son to speak about his absentminded friend with a tone of sympathy—ultimately saving him from the embarrassment of missing his appointment twice in a row!

ש.ג.

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כמוצא שלל רב

Like One Who Finds Great Spoils

Moreinu HaRav shlita relates: I was invited to a bris milah to serve as the sandek. As is my sacred custom, I am incapable of arriving late and always make an effort to come early. The appointed time for the bris arrived—the mohel was present, but the infant had not yet arrived...

I felt it was a shame to waste such precious minutes. As I was contemplating this, the Rosh Kollel of the kollel halacha—located on the same floor—approached me and asked if I could give a short talk to the avreichim.

A few minutes after the talk, the newborn arrived, and we proceeded with the mitzvah of the bris milah...

Purify Us!

Every year, our holy kehillah observes a Shabbos called "Shabbos Taharenu." following the noble custom of many sacred Jewish communities who gather during the Shovavim period for purification. On that Shabbos (this year on Parashas Mishpatim) and in the days following, we are privileged to purify and sanctify ourselves - each person examining the innermost recesses of his heart and soul. This sacred endeavor takes place under the elevated and awe-inspiring guidance of our revered leader and teacher, the Gaon and Tzaddik, shlita.

The *pesukim* state (*Divrei Hayamim* II, 29:16-19), לטהר ה' לטהר, ויבאו הכהנים לפניו בית ה' לטהר, ויציאו את כל הטמאה אשר מצאו בהיכל ה'... ויאמרו טהרנו את כל בית ה'... ואת כל הכלים... "The kohanim went into the inner part of the house of Hashem to purify it, and they brought out all the impurity they found in the hall of Hashem... They said: 'We have purified the entire house of Hashem and all the vessels... We have prepared and sanctified them, and they are before the altar of Hashem.'"

Likewise, with the proclamation of a *milchemes mitzvah*, we strive to save our homes, our souls, and the souls of our descendants from the grave threat looming over Jewish homes in this generation—the dangerous plague of technological devices, the ultimate source (*avi avos*) of impurity, driven by the fiery forces of the *Sitra Achra* (impure Other Side). These devices burn with the boiling excrement of impurity, *Rachmana litzlan*, seeking to destroy and extinguish the pure Jewish soul.

As we stand in awe, deeply moved by the sanctity and purity that inspired us to strengthen ourselves together as one unified people, we resolve to seize this opportune moment. A small collection of selected tales has been gathered, related to the theme of this time, to prepare and fashion vessels that can sustain the flow of holiness within us. These vessels must be firmly built upon a foundation of faith in *Chazal* and unwavering adherence to the directives and guidance of our Torah leaders, *shlit"u*, in all their decrees and in upholding the protective walls they have erected to safeguard the sanctity of the Jewish home. This effort is essential to ensure that the Jewish home does not, *chas veshalom*, slowly transform from within into a foreign dwelling in Jewish disguise.

May it be the will of our Father in Heaven that, through this awakening of repentance for the purity of Yisrael during these exalted days of the **Shovavim** period, we elicit an awakening above (*isarusa d'le'eila*) from the awakening below (*isarusa d'lesata*). May this lead to our purification and sanctification in His supreme holiness, bringing abundant blessing into our homes. May our homes be filled with the triple blessing of children, life, and abundant sustenance. Amen.

The Severity of Owning Forbidden Devices

The meticulous purity of speech of the holy Rav Sharia Deblitzki, *zt"l*, is renowned. In his vast genius, he had precise mastery over all the laws of *shmiras halashon*, and was an expert in countless areas of halacha and rare *minhagim*. Everything was clear in every detail—nothing was hidden from him. His extraordinary diligence in observing these *halachos* matched his meticulous care in guarding his speech.

At the entrance to his home hung a large sign that proclaimed:

"In this house, no words about any Jew are spoken at all—not even positive ones!" This was to prevent the natural tendency of speech that positive speech can lead, inadvertently, to harmful talk.

When he reached the age of ninety (!), he testified that from his bar mitzvah until that day, he did not recall ever having spoken *lashon hara*, *chas veshalom*, nor could he remember ever hearing or accepting it!

As a great halachic authority in all areas of Torah, many diverse questions were brought to his table, including matters not explicitly clarified in the *Shulchan Aruch*. In his characteristic manner, he ruled decisively on every issue, guided by Divine wisdom. Among these questions, he was frequently consulted regarding the laws of *shmiras halashon*, as they are intricate and nuanced, akin to mountains hanging by a thread, and not everyone is sufficiently knowledgeable in them.

He was once asked whether it is permissible to speak *lashon hara* about a person who, *chas veshalom*, possesses the impure device of the internet, which could more accurately be termed the *untervelt*, the underworld.

The Rav pondered the question for a few moments and ultimately ruled that, since we cannot fully know the specific reasons why someone might possess such destructive devices, perhaps it is for his livelihood or he relies on some leniency

provided by a Rav, we must exhaust all possible justifications in his favor before deciding that the status of a *rasha* applies to him, *chas veshalom*. Therefore, speaking disparagingly against him would fall under the strict Torah prohibition of *lashon hara*.

However, in his sharpness, the Rav immediately added a stringent circumstance to his ruling. In certain situations, we might treat such a person stringently, suspecting that he does not have a legitimate justification or leniency. For example, if determining whether to include him in a *minyan*, one should err on the side of caution.

Since there is a strong possibility that the designation of *rasha* does apply to him due to his brazen disregard for this abominable transgression and because he stubbornly refuses to disconnect himself from the depravity, he may not be counted in a *minyan*!

This question might yield other practical halachic ramifications regarding various laws and issues. Nevertheless, this discussion is not intended as a definitive halachic ruling, as we have repeatedly stated that this forum does not aim to provide binding halacha decisions. Instead, the purpose is to extract a moral lesson from each story or case and learn and appreciate the gravity of the issues involved.

The takeaway is the severe and terrifying consequence of associating oneself with these destructive tools, to the extent that it could render one ineligible to be counted in a *minyan*! Such thoughts make one's hair stand on end! (Kelaliyos, Kovetz 130201-008)

INSPIRED TO ABANDON AN IMPURE DEVICE

A Jewish man sadly fell prey to his evil inclination, breached the boundaries established by *Chazal*, and bought a sinful and detestable device, Heaven forefend, to the heartbreak of his family and his tormented soul.

The evil inclination, the “old and foolish king,” gave him the excuse that he needed the abominable device that could plunge him into the depths of spiritual ruin because, as a car owner, he required *Waze* for navigation on his journeys. Since kosher GPS devices were less advanced, he willingly descended into the abyss, purchasing the *treifa* device, *Rachmana litzlan*.

His plunge from using the seemingly innocent *Waze* application to grave transgressions involving prohibited and forbidden sights was swift. Crossing the line involved no more than a light touch on the screen, as he had opted for an advanced “touchscreen” device. With the mere swipe of a finger, he found himself surfing through filth and depravity, immersed to his neck in delusional imaginings of a “boiling and putrid cesspool,” *Rachmana litzlan*.

This unfortunate sinner was part of a WhatsApp group formed by a few like-minded empty friends who united in their depth of depravity. As is common among such people, they justified each others' moral failures and declines.

One day, this man received an invitation on his device from one of the group to join him in a night of drinking and debauchery, *chas veshalom*. Already deeply immersed in moral decay and surrounded by wicked friends, his spiritual senses dulled, and he accepted the invitation. Together, they indulged in copious amounts of alcohol, behaving like despicable drunkards.

When their revelry ended, the two men began the journey back home. On Tel Aviv's *Ayalon Freeway*, an Arab traffic officer stopped them for a routine inspection. It is common for the police to set up surprise checks to catch reckless drivers who endanger public safety. In addition to examining the vehicle and the driver's documentation, the officer measured the alcohol level in the driver's blood. This test is taken very seriously, as driving under the influence of alcohol is a severe offense that endangers passengers and other vehicles. Drivers who fail the test face immediate license suspension, vehicle confiscation, and a court summons, often accompanied by severe penalties and fines.

When these two disreputable individuals saw the Arab officer signaling them to pull over, their hearts sank with dread. They knew that if the officer conducted his tests, their excessive drinking would be exposed, and they would face harsh consequences!

At that moment, the driver recalled the well-known and accepted *segulah* (spiritual remedy) from the holy teachings of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, *zt"l*, the leading Rav of *Eretz Yisrael*, that when encountering law enforcement authorities and seeking to escape their grasp, one should recite the *passuk* from *Megillas Esther* (5:4), יְבוֹא הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְיִקְרָא וְיִפְתָּח הַדֶּלֶת וְיִשְׁמַע הַיְיִים הַשְּׁמַע הַרְוִיחָהּ. This is a tried-and-true *segulah* to escape the clutches of harsh authorities. (See what is written on the *passuk* in the *sefer Tiv HaMoadim – Purim*.) Immediately, the man cried out from the depths of his heart, reciting the words of the *segulah*, and his heart filled with prayer and supplication to his Creator to save him from the severe penalties looming over his head.

The vehicle slowly pulled over to the side of the road and stopped near the stern-faced officer. He lowered the window, and the officer thrust his head inside and immediately smelled the alcohol heavily permeating the two Jews. Without hesitation, he firmly pronounced his verdict: “You've been drinking, haven't you?!”

He pulled out a breathalyzer and moved it toward the man. As he brought it closer,

the device immediately emitted incriminating beeping sounds.

Realizing his dire situation, the man appealed to the officer's better nature, pleading that he overlook the crime just this once, as police sometimes grant leniency on a first offense. To his amazement, the harsh Arab officer agreed to his request, stating derisively, “Listen carefully. I'm letting you go this time! Drive very carefully to the nearest gas station, wash your face thoroughly, and get home safely! Woe to you if I catch you like this again!”

The man thanked the officer and handed his *Waze* to his companion in the back seat, asking him to check the location of the nearest gas station. The intoxicated friend left the vehicle with the device to check where to go. Seeing the officer standing nearby, he loudly expressed his gratitude: “Thank you very much! Thank you so much!” But as the officer whiffed the foul odor from his breath, he threateningly shouted: “Leave immediately, or I will impose all the fines and penalties on you right now!”

Seeing that things were escalating, the driver called his friend to return so they could drive off at once. Without delay, they sped away before the officer could change his mind.

As they sped off, the friend suddenly remembered that in his confusion and fear at the officer's warning, he had placed the forbidden device—the very object that had led them to such a lowly state—on the roof of the car, intending to use it to find their way.

As they hastily sped away, they saw the device fly off the roof and shatter into countless pieces on the road.

At that moment, the man realized the magnitude of the miracle God had so kindly performed for him—a Divine gift he did not deserve. Overwhelmed by repentance and deep remorse, he cried out from the depths of his heart: “*Ribbono Shel Olam*! I hereby consign this costly device as a sacrifice to You in fulfillment of the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 7:26), *You shall not bring an abomination into your house, lest you become cherem like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is cherem!* I pledge to return to You in complete repentance!”

Indeed, the spiritual storm within him produced great fruits. He committed to using only kosher devices, abandoned all repugnant vanities, joined several honey-sweet Torah study groups, and began to observe even the smallest mitzvos carefully. His family rejoiced as he ascended spiritually in Torah learning, *yiras Shamayim*, and closeness to God.

Later, he recounted the incident to his lawyer, a traffic law expert who was well-acquainted with the strictness of traffic police. The lawyer remarked that such an occurrence could not have happened naturally and surmised that Eliyahu Hanavi must have appeared to save them from plunging into the abyss and raise them from the bottomless pit to the greatest heights.