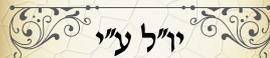


Parashas
Yisro

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ז' שבט תשפ"ה

5785



קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

רבי גמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב המערכת

לא טוב הדבר

The thing is not good

It is stated in the Gemara (Shabbos 31b): 'Rebbe Yannai proclaimed: 'Woe to one who has no dwelling but makes a gate for the dwelling.'" In other words, woe to one who has no house but builds a gate for a house. We seek to understand: What is the house, and what is the gate that Rabbi Yannai refers to? To clarify, let us look a few lines earlier in the Gemara: 'Rabba bar Rav Huna said: Any person who has Torah but lacks fear of Heaven is comparable to a treasurer to whom the keys to the inner chambers were given, but the keys to the outer chambers were not given—how will he enter?' Rashi explains there: 'Fear of Heaven is like the outer doors, through which one enters the inner chambers. Likewise, if a person fears Heaven, he becomes meticulous in observing and fulfilling [the Torah]; but if not, he is not concerned with his Torah.' For the ultimate purpose of Torah study is to lead to its fulfillment and to attachment to Hashem.

In our parasha—the parasha of the giving of the Torah—we read about Yisro, who gives advice to Moshe Rabeinu. Many wonder about the meaning of Yisro's "interference" in Moshe Rabeinu's leadership, and even more so about Moshe Rabeinu accepting his words. According to our approach, we can interpret it as follows: Yisro saw that Moshe Rabeinu was occupied from morning until evening solely with Torah and legal matters. Therefore, he told him (18:17), 'לא טוב הדבר אשר אתה עשה' - "*The thing that you are doing is not good,*" because you must leave time to engage in fear of Heaven and in cleaving to the Creator. Yisro continues and tells him that if he persists in this way, 'ובל תבל גם אתה גם העם הזה אשר עמך' - "*You will surely wear yourself out, both you and this people who are with you,*" for, as we have seen, if there is no fear of Heaven, the entire Torah that one learns cannot be upheld. And even if you think that you are great and strong enough to always remain attached to Hashem Yisbarach, it is not sufficient, because 'לא תוכל עשה לבדך' - "*You cannot do it alone,*" as the people need to see and learn from you how to conduct themselves.

It is no coincidence that these words appear in such an important parasha, for fear of Heaven is the gateway to Torah study. Therefore, every person must set aside time to reflect on the fear of Hashem and engage in *seforim* that deal with the subject of awe. The **Nefesh HaChaim** wrote: "*It is fitting for every person to contemplate repentance in his heart before engaging in Torah study. By doing so, he will study Torah with a sense of attachment to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. And if, in the midst of his learning, he feels that his fear of Hashem has weakened, he is permitted to pause his studies and reawaken his awe of Hashem. This is not considered a neglect of Torah, for through his fear, his learning will endure.*"

Tiv HaTorah - Yisro

טיב הפרשה

מידה כנגד מידה גם בעתות ההסתר

Measure for measure, even in times of concealment.

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עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־גָדוֹל ה' מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי בִדְבָר (אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם: יח:יא)

Now I know that Hashem is greater than all the gods, for with that which they schemed against them. (18:11)

Rashi explains: For with that which they schemed against them – As Targum translates, they imagined that they would destroy Israel through water, and they themselves were destroyed by water.

If we assume that Yisro's amazement was solely due to the great miracles and wonders that HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed, the holy Torah informs us otherwise. In the *posuk* before us, Yisro expresses what led him to this point—to attach himself to the nation of Hashem: "**Now I know that Hashem is greater than all the gods.**" Why? Not because the miracles were beyond the laws of nature, but rather "for in the very matter that they plotted against them, they were punished."

In other words, it was through this very miracle that Yisro recognized the principle of 'measure for measure'—that the Egyptians were destroyed precisely in the manner they had schemed to destroy Israel. This realization is what stirred him to join the nation of Hashem, for it was the awareness that Hashem's ways are just and upright that awakened his desire to be counted among His people.

These words were not written in the Torah without purpose. The Torah seeks to teach

us that even in times of great concealment, when divine justice may seem hidden, a person has no excuse for weakness in his service of Hashem. We will now explain this idea in greater depth.

It is well known that the latter days are not like the former days. In earlier times, from the days of Moshe and the prophets who followed him, Israel merited knowing that Hashem was in their midst, for they were accustomed to miracles, which demonstrated that everything is in the hands of Heaven. Even later, when we were exiled from our land, we were still privileged to have great tzaddikim who illuminated the world with their heavenly powers. These were the holy Tannaim, who, aside from their righteousness and Torah, also proved themselves through supernatural deeds. Their wondrous acts are interwoven throughout the Talmud and Midrashim. Following them, the Geonim and Rishonim continued to shine their exalted light upon the world. Even in more recent times, the Baal Shem Tov, his students, and the disciples of his students illuminated the world, and through their deeds, it became known to all that Hashem is the true God. Their actions also awakened people to love and fear Hashem.

However, in our times, few are the true tzaddikim. Hashem has willed to test us with the trial of concealment. Thus, our generation is a 'poor generation' that does not merit witnessing miraculous changes in nature. As a result, one might say that we have lost the concept of 'recognition of the living G-d,' and all that remains for us is this '*emunah*' (faith) alone.

Lest a person say, "It is no longer possible to stand strong!", tell him: You are mistaken! True, we no longer have signs and wonders, but they were never the primary source of strength. The essence of recognizing the living G-d comes from the reality of 'measure for measure,' just as Yisro taught us. From this, a person can awaken himself and develop a desire to subdue his inclinations. Through this, he sees that all his actions leave

an impression—that for every sin, he will receive punishment, and for every mitzvah, he will receive good reward. Naturally, this leads him to yearn to improve his deeds.

The recognition of this divine governance of 'measure for measure' is indeed present in our times as well, as I heard from my revered teacher, the holy Rebbe Binyamin Rabinovitz. This principle is very much felt at all times, and even when we are amidst a sea of concealments, we can still sense this guidance that accompanies a person always. It is understood that a person does not immediately recognize this, for if that were the case, there would be no reality of free will.

However, anyone who desires to perceive this will succeed in doing so, if he pays attention to it. And thus, it will be within the person's ability to strengthen himself through it in the ways of Hashem.

Likewise, it will be within a person's ability to examine, through this principle, the reasons behind everything that happens to him. If he sees that the attribute of judgment is harsh upon him, he can understand, through it, the cause of this trouble, after reflecting on which sin his punishment is directed. Once he corrects the wrong, he will merit redemption and relief.

I will share a story related to measure for measure, which was frequently recounted by my father. This took place in Radin, the home of the Chafetz Chaim, during the time when the draft crisis was looming over many of our brothers and sisters in Israel, who were under the rule of the Tsar in Russia. One day, the authorities appeared in the town, holding lists that named young men who were to leave their homes and their town, to wander far from their homes and enlist in the army. It was a true calamity, for these young men and boys would not return home for many decades, after serving in the impure army, and most of them would forget their Jewishness altogether...

Among those named on the lists of the authorities was the son of

a wealthy man. When the officers came to his house to demand that he present his son, the wealthy man pointed to a poor orphan who was near his home and claimed, "*This is my son.*" Immediately, the officers seized the orphan, who was likely exempt from military service. Despite his cries, tears, and pleas, insisting that the rich man had lied, the orphan was taken against his will to the wicked army. The soul of the wealthy man's son was saved, but at the expense of the suffering of the orphan and his widowed mother.

The Chafetz Chaim, who firmly believed that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not overlook injustice, knew that this action would not go unpunished. He understood that Hashem's hand would strike the man eventually. Wanting to observe the Divine Providence, he kept a close eye on the man to see how events would unfold. Indeed, twenty years later, this wealthy man's son fell ill with a dangerous and contagious disease. After a period of suffering, he passed away from his illness. To his sorrow, no one was willing to take care of his son's burial. Even the members of the Chevra Kadisha refused to get involved, fearing that they might contract the deadly disease. Left with no choice, the father himself had to bury his son, with no one to stand by his side.

This story was told by the Chafetz Chaim himself after he saw it as a strengthening example of Divine Providence, and as a means to awaken fear of Heaven [*Yiras Shamayim*]. For it proves that HaKadosh Baruch Hu repays a person according to his deeds, and even if one sees that the sinner is still at ease, it should be known that in time, his punishment will reach him, unless he repents and corrects his actions.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu grants delayed punishment to provide the person with an opportunity to reflect on the wickedness of his deeds and awaken to repentance. However, bitter and sorrowful is the fate of a person who does not regret his actions...

עין רואה

An eye that sees

I had the privilege of serving as a photographer for prominent rabbis who deliver lectures and speeches at various conferences and events. A major event is approaching—one led by the esteemed Mashpia, Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, in honor of the *yahrzeit* of the **Bnei Yissaschar**. I need two additional cameras of a specific type to properly film and produce this important event at a high level. These cameras are of an older model that is no longer available on the market. After extensive searching, I managed to find someone who lives far away and might be able to get them for me at a price of over a thousand shekels. I was disheartened and prayed to Hashem to help me obtain all the necessary equipment with ease.

“Before they call, I will answer”—I arrived at an event at the home of one of the **Gedolei Yisrael** to serve as the photographer. As I was setting up my equipment, I could hardly believe my eyes. Right in front of me was an open cabinet door, and on one of the shelves sat **two cameras**—the exact ones I had been searching for! I was utterly stunned by the sight that had just unfolded before me. I turned to the esteemed Rav, apologized for my boldness, and asked whose cameras they were and whether I could borrow them in honor of the event?!

The Rav, who heard how much I had been searching for these cameras, was moved and said that these cameras were no longer in use by him, and that I could use them gladly and wholeheartedly.

The Rav further emphasized the *hashgacha*, saying: *“This cabinet is never open, and today, of all days, I happened to need something from it and left the door open. Everything was orchestrated by Hashem’s personal supervision—especially for you!!!”*

ב.פ.

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שיר השירים קודש קדשי

Shir HaShirim is most holy

Every Friday night, during the *drasha* between *Kabbalas Shabbos* and *Maariv*, a public reciting of Shir HaShirim for children takes place in the women’s section. This ensures that instead of the children running around outside and making noise, they engage in something meaningful—for themselves and for all of Klal Yisrael. To prevent noise from disturbing the *drasha*, the windows of the women’s section are closed. These windows are actually opaque sliding doors set on a track. However, this Shabbos, something unusual happened—the *gabbai* did not notice that someone had turned off the lights in the women’s section before Shabbos, leaving the area completely dark, making it impossible for the young *tzaddikim* to recite *Shir HaShirim*. But Hashem had other plans. That very Shabbos, the scheduled speaker forgot that it was his turn to give the *drasha*, and as a result, no one had prepared a *drasha* for the congregation. Since there was no sermon, there was no need to close the windows of the women’s section, allowing an abundance of light to shine in from the main synagogue. With great focus and heartfelt melody, the children recited Shir HaShirim!!!

This was the first time ever that the lights had gone out, and the first time ever that a speaker had failed to prepare... We clearly saw how beloved Shir HaShirim is before the Omnipresent Yisbarach!!!

כ.ה.

The Importance of Honoring One’s Parents

כִּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּ יְמֵיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: (כי:ב)

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be lengthened upon the land Hashem your God gives you. (20:12)

Rashi explains: “That your days may be lengthened — if you honor, your days will be prolonged; if not, they will be shortened. The words of the Torah are written briefly; from an affirmative statement, one can infer the negative, and from the negative, one can infer the affirmative.”

Thus, the Torah teaches us that the quality and duration of life hinge on the great mitzvah of honoring one’s father and mother. Long days are understood as days that pass in goodness and pleasantness, whereas shortened days are filled with hardships, suffering, and distress, *chas veshalom*.

This is evident from Rashi’s explanation (Shabbos 105b) regarding the Babylonians, of whom it was said: Their days were lengthened, but their years were not. Rashi explains: “Their days were lengthened—their days were filled with goodness, which is considered length of days, as the Gemara (Yoma 71a) says on the pasuk, For length of days and years of life they will add to you (Mishlei 3:2): ‘Are there years of life and years that are not of life? Rav Elazar said, These are the years of a person that are transformed from suffering to goodness.’”

Thus, length of days refers to one whose days are filled with goodness and pleasantness and one’s years with blessing, peace, and joy.

Therefore, if a person experiences suffering, distress, or harsh judgments, he should reflect on his deeds and consider whether these challenges stem from failing to honor his father or mother. If he discovers he has been negligent in this mitzvah, he should hasten to seek their forgiveness. By correcting his ways, the Creator will help him attain good and pleasant days in quality and quantity.

The immense value of this mitzvah is beyond measure, as elaborated by Chazal and the Midrashim. The Tanna D’vei Eliyahu (Rabbah, Chapter 26) states, “As long as a person honors his father and mother, no sin—neither desecration of Shabbos nor any other sin—will come upon him, and if he has sinned, he will be forgiven, etc.” This mitzvah is considered equal to all the Ten Commandments and is among the few the Torah explicitly also ties to blessings in this world.

The Torah’s Promise Fulfilled

In Yerushalayim, the holy city, there lived a very elderly man, Rav Blatt, zt”l. He passed away at a very advanced age, over 110 years old, and in good health.

When I visited the family for the mitzvah of *nichum aveilim*, the conversation turned to the extraordinary length of his days and years. His son remarked that after hearing many discussions about what *zechus* his father might have had to achieve such an exceptionally long life, he considered that it may have been due to the mitzvah of honoring his father and mother, which he fulfilled with exceptional dedication and meticulous care!

He recounted that his father owned a large business enterprise, employing dozens of workers who labored diligently to produce the required monthly output to fill the factory’s wholesale orders.

Rav Blatt had elderly parents whom he deeply respected and loved, and he sought to bring joy to their old age and add meaning to their lives. After much thought, he devised a highly original idea: he set up a beautifully designed and well-equipped office on the administrative floor of the large factory, specifically for managing checks.

As was common in those times, most financial transactions from wholesale clients and storeowners were conducted via checks. The office was elegant, comfortable, and fully equipped. Rav Blatt asked his venerable parents to “accept” this important position, upon which the factory’s financial cycle hinged.

They happily agreed and took up their responsibilities in the pleasant office,

managing all matters related to checks—collection and deposit—with exceptional diligence. Being naturally meticulous and organized, they handled every check with care, ultimately feeling like the “owners” of the entire factory since the management of all checks rested on their shoulders.

This remarkable idea, conceived by the son specifically for his parents to enrich their lives and fill their remaining years with goodness and blessings, proved exceptionally successful. Throughout those years, the parents were filled with satisfaction and vitality, fulfilling their roles joyfully and enthusiastically. They received special respect from all the factory employees as the parents of the factory owner. At every company event, they were seated in positions of honor and treated as royalty. Thus, Rav Blatt ensured they were upheld with dignity and reverence.

This aligned perfectly with the explicit promise in the Ten Commandments regarding the reward for honoring one’s parents: *That your days may be long, and that it may go well with you, etc.*

From Death to Long Life

I heard a wonderful story about a young Yerushalmi man, from my dear father, the righteous Rav Zvi Zev, *zt”l*, author of *Ma’adanei Hashulchan*. About a month after his wedding, he was struck by severe abdominal pain. Rushing to the doctor for thorough examinations, he was shocked and dismayed by the diagnosis. It was revealed with certainty that he was suffering from a severe and life-threatening illness. According to the doctor’s prognosis, he was unlikely to survive more than a few months, as his internal organs were severely damaged and deteriorating, as clearly shown in the medical imaging. Tragically, the doctors could offer almost no hope of a cure.

His young and devoted wife, deeply concerned for her newlywed husband’s life, inquired extensively with the doctors about possible treatments to save him. The doctors recommended a specific treatment that might address the illness, but due to its advanced stage and rapid progression, they gave the treatment only a very slim chance of success.

The young bride did not despair and urged her husband to enter the hospital and begin the recommended treatment immediately. However, her husband, a talmid chacham and a God-fearing man, insisted on first traveling to Bnei Brak to seek the counsel and blessing of the renowned Chazon Ish, *zt”l*.

In those days, the journey to Bnei Brak took several hours. Traveling from Yerushalayim to Tel Aviv and then on to Bnei Brak was a lengthy and exhausting trip, especially for someone in his frail and critical condition. Yet, the patient was adamant about undertaking this journey, declaring that it was a clear directive from the Gemara in Bava Basra (116a):

“Rav Pinchas ben Chama taught: ‘If one has a sick person in his household, let him go to a chacham and request mercy on his behalf, as it states (Mishlei 16:14), The wrath of a king is like messengers of death, but a wise man will appease it.’”

After the difficult and grueling journey, he arrived at the holy residence of the leader of Yisrael, the Chazon Ish *zt”l*. Bursting into tears, he recounted the severity of his illness and begged for a blessing, explaining that the doctors had given him only a short time to live.

When the Chazon Ish heard the doctors’ prognosis, he smiled and said:

“Why would we need a blessing to overturn the doctors’ verdict when an explicit passuk in the Torah can change everything? It states (Shemos 20:12): Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be lengthened. Take this blessing that the holy Torah offers you, and you will merit long life and good years.”

Hearing these sacred words filled the young man with renewed vitality. He immediately changed his plans; instead of heading to the hospital for the grueling and prolonged treatment, he eagerly traveled to his parents’ home in Yerushalayim. Upon arrival, he greeted them warmly and wholeheartedly, rolled up his sleeves, and began assisting them in every way he could.

He constantly asked his father and mother: “How else can I help? In what other ways can I honor and serve you?”

Seeing his son’s great desire to fulfill the mitzvah of honoring them, his devoted father remarked that he had long been seeking a good *chavrusa* for learning in the evenings after he closed his small shop in Yerushalayim during the early evening hours.

The young son was, of course, overjoyed as though he had discovered a great treasure. He began visiting his parents’ home every evening, studying with his father as *chavrusa* in good spirits, not before serving him a hot cup of tea with some light refreshments. Even after the learning session, he continued to assist his mother and father in every way possible, striving with boundless love to honor them.

He did not enter the hospital but instead continued his new daily role at his parents’ home. After a very short period, when he returned to the doctor for a thorough check-up to evaluate his severe illness, the doctor was stunned to find that the disease had reversed course. Instead of worsening and spreading as expected, the body was fighting back and eliminating the illness at its root!

A few more months passed, during which the man returned for bi-weekly check-ups, and his medical condition completely transformed. The disease vanished as though it had never existed.

All the doctors noted this as a medical miracle, preserving in their archives the initial scans

and reports showing the disease’s devastating progression, alongside the sudden and complete reversal that led to his full recovery.

The son concluded that his father ultimately lived to an advanced age, close to 90 years, fulfilling the Torah’s blessing: *Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be lengthened.*

From this remarkable story, we learn the immense value of the mitzvah of honoring one’s parents and how essential it is to believe with complete and pure faith in the observance of the Torah and mitzvos. The blessings of the Torah and the words of Chazal are true, for they are our life and the lengthening of our days.

He Remained to Fulfill His Father’s Wish

Rav Meir Abuchatzzeira, *zt”l*, the eldest son of the saintly Baba Sali, *zt”l*, was one of the great *chachamim* and *tzaddikim* of Morocco. Like his father and holy ancestors, he excelled in Torah and *avodas Hashem* and was renowned as a God-fearing and learned sage.

After his *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael alongside his father, Rav Meir was deeply shaken by the spiritual decline he observed, especially among the secular population who rebelled against Hashem and His Torah. He was particularly disturbed by the lack of modesty and widespread immodesty in the streets. Having been accustomed to the great modesty of the women in Morocco, who would flee to hide themselves respectfully at the sight of a Jewish *talmid chacham*, the stark contrast in Israel pained him greatly.

Initially, Baba Meir considered returning to Morocco to resume the pure and modest life he had known. However, after consulting with his father, the Baba Sali, his father dissuaded him, assuring him that the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael would shield him and enable him to ascend spiritually through Torah and fear of Heaven more effectively than in the Diaspora.

The Baba Sali further explained that the spiritual strength of Moroccan Jewry might not continue as in past generations, as many of its *chachamim* and devout individuals were making *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael or emigrating elsewhere. Meanwhile, the God-fearing community in Yisrael was growing stronger, and Rav Meir could establish a *yeshivah* and grow in his Torah study with peace of mind.

Indeed, over the years, Baba Sali’s foresight was proven correct, as Moroccan Jewry experienced a weakening of its religious vitality.

Rav Meir told his *talmidim* that it was very difficult for him to accept his father’s advice because of the challenging sights in the streets, even though he never looked at or glanced at them in any way. Nevertheless, he felt bound by the mitzvah of honoring his father and submitting to his will.

Rav Meir established a *beis midrash* in Ashdod, where he was mostly confined to his holy home and study. He rarely ventured outside, safeguarding his sanctity and purity while fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring his father, as it says: *Honor your father.*