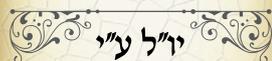


Parashas  
Pekudei

◆ 676 ◆

כ"ט אדר תשפ"ה

5785



קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

רבי נמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

# טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

טיב המערכת

חיזוק לזמני קטנות

Strengthening During Times of Spiritual  
Lowness

עבודת משכן אוהל מועד

## The work of the Mishkan, the Tent of Meeting

In our parasha, the work of the Tabernacle, which has accompanied us for five parshiyos, comes to an end, leading up to the emotional moments of the Mishkan's erection and the Shechina dwelling within it. These are undoubtedly moving moments in the history of the Jewish people. But how is this relevant to me today? Aside from Torah study, what can I do with this information? Is this information relevant to our times as well?

The Mishnah states (berachos 28b): 'Rabban Gamliel says: Every day a person prays the Shemoneh Esrei. Rabbi Yehoshua says: An abbreviated version of the Shemoneh Esrei. Rabbi Akiva says: If his prayer flows fluently from his mouth, he prays the full Shemoneh Esrei; if not, he prays the abbreviated version.' The Gemara then asks: "Why eighteen?" and answers: "Corresponding to the eighteen commands in the Torah regarding the Mishkan." We must understand the connection between the Mishkan's commandments and the Shemoneh Esrei Tefillah. The holy seforim explain that just as there is a Mishkan and a Bais HaMikdash, so too within the soul of a person—each individual must create within his heart a Mishkan for the Shechina. As the well-known words of the Chareidim state: "In my heart, I shall build a Mishkan." The path to meriting to become a "Mishkan" for the Shechina is through the service of prayer. By standing in awe and submission before the King of the world, and by speaking words of praise and supplication, a person attains spiritual elevation and purification, becoming a "Mishkan" worthy of the Shechina dwelling within him.

In our times, everyone can be a "Betzalel." Each person is worthy and obligated to build a Mishkan for the Shechina, and there is no need to carry acacia wood from Egypt to do so. Rather, one must transform oneself into a "Mishkan," and through heartfelt prayer, every Jew can achieve this. No special connections are required, nor does one need to be of noble lineage or prestigious descent—every Jew can attain this.

As testified by the holy Rebbe Shalom of Belz, when a person prays with focus and understands the meaning of the words, they can attain tremendous spiritual elevation—even to the extent of meriting a revelation of Eliyahu HaNavi! For the service of prayer purifies a person so much that he becomes worthy of the most exalted spiritual experiences. So, the next time we stand in prayer, let us remember that we are building a Mishkan, and our role is to make it worthy of housing the Shechina.

- Tiv HaTorah - Pekudei

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עֲשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' כִּן עָשׂוּ  
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: לטמט

Moshe saw all the work and behold! They had done it as Hashem had commanded, so had they done, and Moshe blessed them.

(39:43)

Rashi explains: And Moshe blessed them – he said to them, "May the Shechina rest in the work of your hands. May the pleasantness of my Lord, our G-d, be upon us and the work of our hands, etc.

Behold, the words "es kol ha'melacha" (all the work) seem at first glance to be redundant, as the previous posuk already states that it refers to "kol ha'avodah" (all the labor). If so, the posuk could have been shortened to say: "Vayar Moshe vehinei asu osah" (And Moses saw, and behold, they had done it), and it would be understood that this refers to the work. It must be, therefore, that the Torah intended to teach us something through these three additional words.

One may suggest that the posuk is revealing why those who performed the work were worthy of receiving a blessing, and the nature of this blessing. It is well known that the yetzer hara does not allow one who begins a mitzvah to complete it easily; rather, it places great obstacles in his way. A person must exert great effort to overcome all the impediments that the yetzer hara (evil inclination) sets before them. At times, a person may choose to settle for partial completion, reasoning, "I have done what I was able to do, and the rest will have to wait until the yetzer decides to ease its resistance."

However, this is not the will of the Hashem Yisbarach. HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires that a person fight against his yetzer and not rest until he successfully completes his task. Chazal (Sotah 13b) have already spoken of the severity of one who begins a mitzvah but does not complete it.

Now, the work of the Mishkan was intellectual and highly intricate craftsmanship, which could have been a cause for sluggishness and discouragement. Those engaged in the work had to battle their yetzer using the attribute of zeal (zerizus). The Torah testifies in the previous posuk (Shemos 39:42) that they indeed completed their mission properly: "As Hashem commanded Mohe, so did the Children of Israel do all the labor." The verse specifically emphasizes "so" (ken), meaning that they performed it without any laziness whatsoever, ensuring that "all"—every single detail of the work—was done to completion. Since this was the case, they were worthy of a blessing. That is, this blessing was not merely for their involvement in the work of the Mishkan, but rather for their perseverance in overcoming the obstacles. This is why the posuk emphasizes: "And Moshe saw all the labor, and behold, they had done it as Hashem had commanded, so they had done it." Meaning, they exerted themselves and toiled to complete everything, not allowing themselves any rest. Therefore, they were deserving of the blessing: "And Moshe blessed them."

As Rashi explains, the blessing was "May the Shechina dwell in the work of your hands." This was a blessing fitting for their efforts—because they had pushed themselves and had not been deterred by obstacles, they would now continue to merit divine assistance (si'ata d'shmaya). From now on, they would be able to bless the completed work in all their endeavors, and this success would be dependent on the Shechina dwelling in the work of their hands.

The Torah did not mention this blessing without purpose; rather, it sought to teach that this principle applies for all generations: One who overcomes all obstacles and fulfills a mitzvah completely will have the gates of blessing and divine assistance (si'ata d'shmaya) opened for him from Heaven. From that point onward, he will succeed in every mitzvah—even those that are naturally difficult to bring to completion. This does not

mean he will not face challenges, but even if difficulties arise, he will not be shaken by them, knowing that in the end, he will prevail.

We see a similar idea in the life of our forefather Yaakov. From the moment he reached the age of mitzvos, he had to contend with a great trial that could have discouraged him from his spiritual pursuits. If not for the fact that he was an ish tam—a man of wholehearted devotion who carried out his duty with sincerity—he might have submitted before the wicked Eisav.

For the posuk (Bereishis 25:27) states that Eisav was "a skilled hunter," whereas Yaakov was "a pure man, dwelling in tents." This implies that Yaakov had no part in the affairs of the material world; he was secluded in the tent of Torah. Meanwhile, Eisav spent his days indulging in worldly pleasures. He roamed the fields for enjoyment, engaging in the thrill of hunting animals. Not only did he take pleasure in the chase and in eating meat, but he also proved himself to be cruel, preying upon people as well. The garments of distinction that he entrusted to his mother had been stolen from Nimrod, whom he had murdered in the field.

And behold, what a wonder! Despite the vast gap between the two brothers, it was Eisav whom Yitzchak loved. This caused Yaakov great distress—for he was the one who imposed upon himself the yoke of mitzvos, and yet, despite all his toil, his father did not appreciate him. On the contrary, he saw how his father drew close specifically to his brother, who followed the desires of his heart.

This reality presented Yaakov with a tremendous test. He began to wonder whether HaKadosh Baruch Hu truly desired his service. After all, the righteous Yitzchak, who possessed ruach hakodesh (divine inspiration), did not show him favor. Perhaps he should follow Eisav's ways and adopt his behavior? Otherwise, why would the tzaddik of the generation show such warmth toward Eisav?

Indeed, we see this idea in the holy sefer Ohr HaChaim, in its commentary

on the posuk "And Yaakov cooked a stew" (Bereishis 25:29). It explains that the reason Yaakov deviated from his usual conduct and engaged in cooking—a task he had never undertaken before—was due to the doubts that arose within him upon seeing how Yitzchak shone his favor upon Eisav. He thought that perhaps this was the true path for a person to follow, and so he sought to prepare a dish for his father as well.

But this was not a test of merely a day or two—it was an ongoing trial that lasted fifty consecutive years! From the time the boys grew up and reached the age of thirteen until the day Rivka instructed Yaakov to deceive and take the blessings for himself, by which time he was sixty-three. For fifty years, Yaakov struggled daily, hour by hour, with this immense challenge. On one hand, his clear intellect told him that his path was the correct one in Hashem's eyes, but on the other hand, from his father's actions, he understood that he might be mistaken.

However, after enduring this difficult yovel (fifty-year period), the truth was revealed—it had all been a test! When the moment arrived for the truth to emerge, Yitzchak himself sensed it. When Yaakov entered, he smelled the fragrance of Gan Eden, but when Eisav entered, he felt the fires of Gehinnom opening beneath him. This was all orchestrated from Heaven so that the one who had overcome his inclinations for so many years would be the one to receive the blessings. As stated earlier, one who does not succumb to obstacles but overcomes them is the one truly worthy of blessing.

Indeed, after Yaakov received Yitzchak's blessings, both he and Yitzchak knew that from that moment onward, no trial would be able to sway him. They no longer feared his stay in Lavan's house. Only at that point did Yitzchak send Yaakov to Lavan's home—an environment filled with impurity. Lavan sought, through his deceit, to completely destroy Yaakov. However, through his wisdom and cunning, Yaakov overcame every challenge that Lavan set before him.

שקל הקודש The holy shekel

"Bring me the memory card from the camera—I'll transfer the pictures to my card and return it to you tomorrow! What? Are you afraid the card will get lost?"

"I'm not afraid you'll lose the card, but I'm worried because there are a lot of pictures on it that I don't have backed up!!!"

My friend was convinced, and I transferred the pictures—photos he had taken of me dressed as the Purim Rav in full costume, as is customary in our community...

The next day, my friend asked me where the card was. I reached into my pockets, felt everything inside—but the card was nowhere to be found. I told him I would check later, in case I had left it at home. The following day, my friend called again to ask about the card. I told him I still had not found it but would search more thoroughly later that day. I felt extremely uncomfortable and deeply ashamed, knowing how important the card was to him—especially since he had warned me about it.

The next day, he called again, and at that point, I did not even know what to say. I almost hesitated to answer the call, but I gathered my courage and picked up, apologizing once again. To my surprise, my friend responded with a smile, saying that the card had already been returned to him. How did this happen?

A woman shopping at the supermarket was about to pay for her groceries. As she took money out of her purse, a one-shekel coin slipped from her hand and rolled under the checkout counter. She quickly bent down to pick it up and noticed that the coin had stopped next to a memory card. She picked up the memory card and saw that there was no name or phone number on it. She decided to take it home and check its contents.

Most of the photos didn't show any familiar faces—until she saw one particular picture. Immediately, she recognized someone: the mother-in-law (shvigger) of the card's owner!

And how did she know the mother-in-law? Many years ago, they had been neighbors, living side by side. Without hesitation, she contacted her and returned the valuable card to its rightful owner.

How the card fell, I have no idea. But expressing gratitude? That, I surely know how to do! And what could be more fitting than acknowledging the hashgacha pratis at play and publicly giving thanks for the great kindness that the Creator has shown me!

The Holy "Beis Yisrael" of Gur zt"l

Here is a small collection of teachings of and stories about the Beis Yisrael of Gur zy"a. May his merit protect us and all of Klal Yisrael, Amen.

In the holy sefer Beis Yisrael on this week's parashah, the Rebbe wrote: **וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת צִיץ נֶזֶר הַקֹּדֶשׁ זָהָב טְהוֹר וַיִּכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַה'** - And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and they inscribed upon it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet: Holy to Hashem (39:30). My father zy"a, focused on the plural form and they inscribed (וַיִּכְתְּבוּ). This hints that every individual must engrave the words Holy to Hashem, as the pasuk says (Mishlei 3:3), **כָּתְבָם עַל לִוַי לִבְךָ** - Write them upon the tablet of your heart. Initially, this is achieved through the influence of Moshe Rabbeinu, for the pasuk says earlier in the singular, **וַעֲשִׂיתָ צִיץ זָהָב טְהוֹר וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַה'** (וַעֲשִׂיתָ) a plate of pure gold and you shall engrave upon it like the engraving of a signet: Holy to Hashem (Shemos 28:36). Afterward, each individual can and must write it themselves on his own heart.

It is said in the name of the Chiddushei HaRim: "The Gemara states (Taanis 29b): 'One who has a dispute with a gentile should resolve it during Adar, as their mazal is strong then.' The reference to a gentile hints at the sitra achra (impure forces) and Amalek. In Adar, a person can prevail over them. Thus, Chazal said (Gittin 9a), 'A document contested by others can be validated by its signatures.' The 'contestants' represent accusations against a person, and the 'signatures' (בְּחוֹתְמָיו) refer to (Shemos 39:30) **וַיִּכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה** - They inscribed upon it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet (פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם), holy to Hashem."

The holy Beis Yisrael of Gur zt"l, was once visited by a young bar mitzvah boy accompanied by his father to receive the Rebbe's blessing, as was customary.

The father handed the Rebbe a kvittel. As the Rebbe gazed deeply into it, his countenance changed. He began to bless the boy with fiery intensity, repeating multiple times: "Good friends! Good friends!" His holy eyes pierced the boy's heart and soul with a powerful gaze so awesome that the boy struggled to remain standing, overwhelmed by awe and fear.

The two left the Rebbe's chamber deeply shaken and confused, unable to understand what had happened. The boy, an upright and exemplary talmid devoted to Torah and avodah, had never thought of having bad friends. He wept profusely, profoundly moved and shaken by the Rebbe's words engraved deeply into his soul.

Years passed. The boy grew into a strong, successful young man sociable and surrounded by many friends. One day, however, one of his friends, who had tragically strayed from the path, attempted to lead him astray as well, enticing him toward destructive behavior. The test was excruciatingly difficult. Yet, in that critical moment, the young man suddenly recalled the Rebbe's blessing from years earlier with perfect clarity: "Good friends! Good friends!" Those words now burned within him like a fiery flame. He vividly remembered how strange those words had seemed then, how much he had cried afterward, and now everything became clear. He understood how far the Rebbe's holy eyes had seen into the future.

He jumped from his seat as if struck by lightning and screamed with a torn and boiling heart at the bad friend: "Get away impure one! This is a life-threatening danger! There's a terrorist here wearing an explosive belt! Hashem yerachem!"

The young man later said that the Rebbe had given him the greatest bar mitzvah gift possible—the blessing that ultimately saved his life and guided him throughout his days.

The Beis Yisrael once overheard people praising a certain Jew, saying he was kind-hearted with excellent middos. The Rebbe interjected, "To truly verify whether someone has good character traits, you must ask his spouse. Only she knows the truth about his character." He explained, "Within the home, in private, a person's true nature is revealed—how he controls himself in moments of challenge. Outside the home, putting on a façade of being cheerful, kind-hearted, and possessing good traits is much easier. A person's true essence is only evident in how he behaves with his spouse at home."

The Rebbe connected this idea to a minhag mentioned in holy sefarim, where women scatter ten pieces of chametz throughout the house before bedikas chametz (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 432:2).

He explained, "A wife, who knows her husband's character well from public life within the home, points out where his chametz is, telling him, 'Here, in this corner, you tend to get angry; there, you are too harsh; and here, you give in to desires.'" (See Avodas Yisrael on Shabbos Hagadol and the Haggadah commentary Divrei Binah)

Similarly, people say of the appointment of dayananim in the Torah where Moshe was instructed (Shemos 18:21), וְאַתָּה תִּחְזָה מִכָּל הָעָם, - וְאַתָּה תִּחְזָה מִכָּל הָעָם - And you shall seek out from among all the people men of valor, God-fearing, men of truth, hating bribery, that when they were actually appointed, the pasuk states (Devarim 1:15), אֲנֹשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְיָדוּעִים, - אֲנֹשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְיָדוּעִים - wise men, and known ones, but omits God-fearing. The Rebbe explained, "This is because whether a person has true fear of Hashem can only be known by Hashem Himself—and a person's wife."

The renowned talmid chacham Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman zt"l, the Ponovezher Rav, famously established a bastion of Torah in the Holy Land after World War II. Having survived as the sole remnant of his large family, his illustrious community, and the renowned yeshivah in Ponovezh in Lithuania, he was ignited with a holy fire to rebuild. He dedicated himself to establishing a memorial to the martyrs of the Holocaust through the magnificent and expansive Ponovezh Yeshivah and its many institutions. These institutions today stand proudly on the Yeshivah Hill in Bnei Brak, bringing glory to Torah.

To build and sustain these numerous institutions, which required monthly sums, he tirelessly traveled the globe, knocking on the doors of philanthropists and Torah supporters in Jewish communities worldwide.

Before embarking on one of his first trips abroad, he visited several great Torah leaders to request their blessings and prayers for success. Being particularly close to the Rebbe of Gur, the Beis Yisrael zt"l, he sought his guidance and parting blessing.

The Rebbe received him with great honor as befitting his stature, and after hearing of his plans to travel to raise funds, the Rebbe offered the following advice:

"Many meshulachim and fundraisers believe they must flatter the wealthy and resort to ingratiating behavior or falsehoods to secure a few extra dollars. But this is not the correct path.

"Chazal taught us (Shabbos 32a): Merit

(zechus) is brought about through the meritorious (zakai). Heaven seeks worthy people with the merit to induce the wealthy to support Torah. Therefore, your primary focus should be on being worthy—a true zakai. If you are upright and deserving, you will naturally bring zechus to Klal Yisrael through their generous contributions."

In the autumn of Tishrei 5734, during the tumultuous Yom Kippur War, the surprise outbreak of hostilities in the middle of the sacred day sent many men straight from shul—wrapped in their kittel and tallis—to the battlefield.

One Gerer chassid from Yerushalayim was among those summoned to the front lines. As Hoshanah Rabbah approached, he requested leave from his unit commander to travel to Yerushalayim for a day. His wish was to daven with his Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael, and attend the Rebbe's tish. The commander granted his request, giving him a one-day leave.

Arriving home late at night, the chassid's family, who had been deeply worried for his safety, joyfully welcomed him. When his righteous wife heard that he had come just for the prayers with the Rebbe, she insisted he also seek the Rebbe's blessing before returning to the battlefield.

He prayed at the great shul the following day with his holy Rebbe. Afterward, however, when he attempted to gain entry to the Rebbe's private room to request a blessing, he could not do so—the door was locked, and the loyal aides would not let him in.

Left with no choice, he returned home without the sought-after blessing. After completing the Hoshanah Rabbah seudah, he prepared to head back to the front lines. When his wife learned he had not received the Rebbe's blessing, she protested firmly: "You cannot possibly return to such a dangerous war without the Rebbe's blessing!" "But the Rebbe's door is closed!" the husband argued.

"Then we'll wait a little longer," she replied, "perhaps it will open later today, and you can still secure the blessing."

The man, worried about getting reprimanded for a late return, hesitated. His wise wife took away his tallis and tefillin and declared, "You are not leaving for the war without the Rebbe's blessing!"

Exhausted from the grueling battles, the man lay down to rest. His wife did not disturb him, and he slept soundly for several hours. When he awoke in the late afternoon, he hurried to the Rebbe's house, which, to his relief, was now open. The Rebbe was receiving people for advice and blessings.

As soon as the chassid entered the Rebbe's holy presence, the Rebbe gave him a piercing

look that penetrated his heart and soul. The Rebbe took his kvitel and when the man requested a blessing before returning to the battlefield, the Rebbe smiled warmly and quoted the Gemara (Sanhedrin 100a), תְּחִמּוֹת בֵּיתָהּ - נְשִׁים בְּנִתָּהּ בִּיתָהּ - The wisdom of women builds their home (Mishlei 14:1)—and the wife of Ben Peles saved him!" Then the Rebbe added, "Go in peace and return in peace!"

The chassid was puzzled by this cryptic statement but had long learned not to question the Rebbe's words.

When he returned to the front lines a few hours later, he discovered that, during the exact time he had been in the Rebbe's presence receiving his blessing, a shell had struck the tent where his platoon members were stationed. Tragically, all his comrades were killed. He had been spared from death and granted life, thanks to his righteous wife's insistence that he not leave without the Rebbe's blessing.

May the Rebbe's zechus protect us all—Amen.

אִם יֵשׁ מְקוֹם הַנָּה עוֹד 2

Top of Form

The holy Beis Yisrael of Gur was known for his daily walks through the alleys of Yerushalayim. This was his sacred custom in the early hours of the morning. One such morning, the loud, jarring sound of the muezzin from the nearby Arab neighborhoods of East Yerushalayim interrupted his deep contemplations. Turning to his attendant, who accompanied him on his walk, he asked sternly: "What is he shouting about over there?"

The attendant joked, "They're trying (in their idolatrous imagination) to remind Hashem of that incident—the sin of the golden calf."

The Rebbe appreciated the response and added, "It seems they don't know the insight of Rav Henoch HaKohen of Alexander zt"l. He taught that from that very incident we learn how profound God's forgiveness of Israel's sins is. For it is written (Shemos 32:34), וּבַיּוֹם פִּקְדֵי עֲקוּבֹתֵי עַלְמָם חֲטֵאתָם - On the day I make an account, I will bring their sin to account against them. This teaches that Hashem forgave them for that sin at that time, only exacting minor consequences over future generations. If Hashem could forgive such a grave sin, how much more so will He forgive their lesser transgressions! Just as He forgave them for that sin, He continues to forgive them always."

The Rebbe concluded, "Thus, when someone attempts to bring up Klal Yisrael's sins before Hashem, He is immediately reminded of the immense forgiveness and atonement He granted at the time of the golden calf, and this brings forth revealed mercy and kindness upon Klal Yisrael."