

Parashas
Tetzaveh

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ח' אדר תשפ"ה
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י"ז ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
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טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

חיזוק להבאים בשערי העבודה

Encouragement to those who enter the gates of Avodah

טיב המערכת

הקרב אליך את אהרן אחיך

Bring Aharon your brother close to yourself

It is told of a certain man whom everyone knew as a “man of kindness,” and his custom was that every Friday he would walk through the streets and markets, looking for people carrying heavy baskets. Whenever he found someone like that, he would gladly help them carry their heavy loads to their homes. One day, he noticed a woman carrying heavy baskets. Although he was careful to guard his eyes and did not look at the woman, still, being a man of kindness, he immediately approached her to help. As he took several heavy baskets into his hands, he heard her voice—and suddenly realized that the voice was familiar to him. It was his wife’s voice! Immediately, he put down the baskets, saying, “My wife will manage on her own,” and ran off to look for more mitzvot and acts of kindness.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Moshe Rabeinu, אהרן את אליך את אהרן, 'ואתה הקרב אליך את אהרן, - “And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother and his sons with him from among the Children of Israel.” There is no doubt that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has great and lofty reasons for choosing specifically Aharon HaKohen. However, the holy Torah is eternal, and there is always something for us to learn from it. From these *pasukim*, we can learn that Hashem is teaching Moshe Rabeinu—and us—an important principle: Are you in an important position? Do you hold a significant role? Are you engaged in acts of kindness? **Do not forget your close ones!** Bring them near, help them, even if in that setting you receive fewer thanks, or perhaps none at all—because in their eyes, it is simply expected that you assist your family. **But that is true kindness!**

Chazal say (Sanhedrin 76b): “One who loves his neighbors, brings his relatives closer, marries his sister’s daughter, and lends a coin to a poor person in his time of need—regarding them, the *pasuk* says: ‘אז תקרא וה’ יענה’ - ‘Then you shall call, and Hashem will answer.’” (Yeshaya 58:9) This means that aside from the obligation to bring one’s relatives closer, there is also a special *segulah*—that one who behaves this way is promised by the Torah: “Then you shall call, and Hashem will answer,” that Hashem will respond to his prayers. Could there be a greater *segulah* than this?!

And it has already been ruled in *halacha* (Tur Yoreh Deah 251:3) that “The poor of one’s household come first.” This is what we saw among all the great leaders of Israel—they would first do *chesed* with their own household. And even when they engaged in kindness, they were careful that it would not come at the expense of their family. Because true *chesed* begins at home, then extends to the close circle, and only afterward to the wider community. Tiv HaTorah - Tetzaveh Top of Form

בְּאֵלֶּה מוֹעֵד מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל הַעֲדוּת יַעֲרֹךְ אֹתוֹ אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו מִעֶרֶב עַד בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי ה' חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדוֹרֹתֶם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כז:כא
In Ohel Moed, outside the Paroches that is near the Testimony, Aharon shall arrange it, with his sons from evening until morning, before Hashem, an eternal decree for their generations, from the Children of Israel.
27:21

It can be said that the *pasuk* hints at those who desire to attain the level of the *Aron*—that is, those who wish to bask in the radiance of Torah. They are not content with just desire but engage in *hishtadlus* (efforts), toiling in their study within the “Ohel Mo’ed”, which represents the “tent of Torah.” However, even after much toil, they still do not merit seeing the light and still perceive themselves as “outside the curtain that is upon the Testimony.” They stand before barriers that separate them from the Torah, which is called “Testimony.” At this point, they require *chizuk*—strengthening—so that they may persist in their efforts until they are granted divine assistance and their wishes are fulfilled. This strengthening corresponds to “Aharon and his sons shall arrange it.” Regarding this arrangement, it is said (Bamidbar 8:3): וַיַּעַשׂ ‘וַיַּעַשׂ - ‘And Aharon did so,’ and Rashi explains: “This teaches that he did not change anything.” He would always kindle the lamps with the same love as in the beginning. Similarly, those who toil in Torah are encouraged to continue their efforts with the same yearning they had at the start. Even when their hands weaken and their state turns into “erev” (evening/darkness), they should persist until they are granted from Heaven the level of “boker” (morning/light), meriting to experience the sweetness of Torah.

And what are the words of encouragement that can uplift a weary and discouraged soul? **By informing it of “chukas olam”—the eternal decree**—that this is the very order and structure of the world in all matters: “First darkness, then light.” A person cannot merit the “light of Torah” unless he first endures the stage of “night.” Moreover, he should also know that even if this stage of “night” seems prolonged, it has a set limit. In the end, he will surely attain “light” and delight in the radiance of Torah.

This strengthening is intended for Israel “throughout their

generations”—until the end of time. For, as mentioned, this is the very order of the world, and there is no change in the act of Creation.

And how will this awareness be established? To this, it says: **“from the Children of Israel”**—meaning that those who have already merited the level of **“Yisrael,”** which signifies greatness, should illuminate the path for those who are still at the level of **“Yaakov,”** which signifies smallness.

That is, those who are still in the stage of **“Yaakov”** should receive inspiration and encouragement from those who have already attained the level of **“Yisrael”**—for even they underwent the same process. They, too, did not attain **“greatness”** until they first passed through the stages of **“smallness.”**

This is what the wisest of men, **Shlomo HaMelech**, said (Koheles 2:9): אִף־הַכֹּמֵתִי: **“Even my wisdom stood by me.”** Chazal explain (Yalkut Shimoni, remez 968): **Rabbi Chanina bar Papa said: “The Torah that I studied with difficulty is what endured for me.”** In other words, the Torah that he learned at a time when studying was extremely difficult for him—**that very struggle is what ultimately brought him to merit enjoying its light.**

Even in the later generations, there were several righteous individuals who etched into eternal memory how they merited the light of Torah **only after they had already tasted the taste of death** in their service of Hashem.

Among these righteous individuals was the holy Gaon of Komarno, who wrote that in the beginning of his learning, he experienced the taste of death **a thousand times.** Similarly, it is well known that **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov** testified about the immense toil he endured in his youth. He also emphasized the necessity of **strengthening young scholars who struggle**, saying that if he had been told back in his youth that a day would come when he would merit feeling the sweetness and delight of Torah and divine service, his efforts would have been far easier. However, he did not even receive this encouragement.

This is what the verse (Micah 7:8) says: **‘כִּי אֲשֶׁב בְּחוֹשֶׁךְ הָ אֹרֶךְ לִי’** – **‘For when I sit in darkness, Hashem is my light.’** When a person finds himself in a state of **“darkness,”** it is a sign that he is on the path toward **“light.”** For, as mentioned, this is the way of the world—**darkness precedes light.** As long as a person has not yet struggled through the thick bonds of **“darkness,”** it is a sign that he has not even truly begun the necessary work. He remains distant from the light, and there is no guarantee that he will ever merit reaching it...

Based on this, we can also explain the words of **the Rambam (Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:13)** regarding Torah study at night: *“Even though there is a mitzvah to study both by day and by night, a person acquires most of his wisdom specifically at night. Therefore, one who desires to merit the crown of Torah should be meticulous with all his nights, not wasting even one of them on sleep, eating, drinking, idle talk, or anything similar, but rather dedicating them to the study of Torah and words of wisdom.”*

Chazal said (Eruvin 65a): ‘There is no song of Torah except at night,’ as it says (Eichah 2:19), ‘קוּמִי רוּנִי בַלַּיְלָה,’ - ‘Arise, sing out at night.’ Furthermore, anyone who engages in Torah study at night will have a thread of kindness drawn over him during the day, as it says (Psalms 42:9), ‘יוֹמָם יִצְוֶה הַשֵּׁם חֶסֶדּוֹ וּבַלַּיְלָה שִׁירָה עִמִּי,’ - ‘By day, Hashem will command His kindness, and at night, His song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.’ (Sanhedrin 92a): ‘Any house where Torah is not heard at night will be consumed by fire,’ as it says (Job 20:26), ‘כָּל חוֹשֶׁךְ טְמוֹן לְצַפּוֹנָיו תֹּאכְלֶהוּ אֵשׁ לֹא,’ - ‘All darkness is laid up in store for his treasures; a fire not blown shall consume him.’ And (Sanhedrin 99a), כִּי, ‘דַּבַּר הָ בּוֹהַ - ‘For he has despised the word of Hashem’ (Bamidbar 15:31)—this refers to one who has completely disregarded words of Torah.’”

We see from his words that **the Rambam places great emphasis on Torah study at night.** On a simple level, his intent is that one must literally study Torah at night. However, his words can also be understood as an

allusion—that he is referring to any time in a person’s life that is considered a **“night”** for him. That is, when he feels a **heaviness in all his limbs** and does not sense the delight of Torah. On this, **the Rambam said that one must not waste even a single “night”**—meaning, specifically at a time when one is in **darkness**, he should ensure to **exert himself in Torah study without weakening.** For in doing so, **he draws himself closer to the light.**

This is the very idea I heard nearly **sixty years ago** from my teacher and rabbi, the holy Gaon **Rabbi Neta Freund**, who explained in the name of *tzaddikim* the meaning of Rashi’s commentary on the *pasuk* (27:20): **‘Crushed for illumination, not crushed for offerings.’** He explained that if a person undergoes the experience of being **“crushed”**, feeling broken and despondent because he sees no success or blessing in his efforts, he should strengthen himself and understand that **from this very darkness he will merit the “light”**—that is, the light of Torah. **“Not crushed for offerings”** means that this crushing should not lead to despair or cessation from the work. One should not think that because he feels inadequate or unable to receive the light of Torah, he should stop trying.

Similarly, Chazal said (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 8:10): *“What is the meaning of ‘the thousand for you, Shlomo’? Rabbi Chiya, son of Rabbi Abba of Yifto, said: ‘One who learns Torah with difficulty receives a thousand (reward), while one who learns without difficulty receives two hundred for his reward.’ From whom do we learn this? From the tribe of Yissachar and the tribe of Naphtali. The tribe of Naphtali, because they learned Torah with difficulty, received a reward of a thousand, as it says (Divrei Hayamim I 12:35), וּמִנְפַתְלֵי שְׂרָיִם, - ‘And from Naphtali, commanders of a thousand.’ However, the tribe of Yissachar, because they learned Torah without difficulty, received a reward of two hundred, as it says (Divrei Hayamim I 12:33), רֵאשִׁיָּהֶם מֵאַחַת וְכָל, - ‘Their chiefs were two hundred, and all their brothers were at their command.’”*

כי אשמרה שבת For I shall guard the Shabbos

My granddaughter was hospitalized in the U.S. My husband and I traveled there to be close and assist our son and granddaughter during her hospitalization. We rented a kosher place near the hospital so we could be of help.

On Shabbos morning, I went to visit and assist. When I arrived and saw all the electronic barriers at the hospital entrance, I didn't know what to do or how I would manage to enter without, *chalilah*, transgressing. I prayed to Hashem to help me and walked toward the entrance. Since Shabbos is a day off for non-Jews, there was almost no pedestrian movement at the hospital entrance. I stood at a distance, waiting for someone to arrive so that when they opened the automatic glass doors, I could immediately slip in behind them.

A few minutes passed, and a security guard entered. I quickly followed behind him and was relieved when the first door opened. But suddenly, he turned around and walked back out, leaving me stuck between the first entrance and the second set of electric doors. I prayed to Hashem, and just then, the guard returned and entered again. I breathed a sigh of relief and continued to the security checkpoint.

I asked the guard if I was required to go through the metal detector or if I could skip it. He asked me if I was Jewish and if today was my Shabbos. I answered yes, of course. The guard told me to wait a moment—he brought in a replacement for himself, then personally escorted me to the elevators, called the elevator to the 13th floor for me, and continued to accompany me past all the electric doors until he brought me to the ward where my granddaughter was hospitalized.

I thanked him from the bottom of my heart, amazed at how well he understood what is permitted and forbidden for us on Shabbos. He explained that he had previously worked in a Jewish neighborhood as a *Shabbos goy* and therefore immediately understood my needs!

What a relief, what a kindness from Hashem, who arranged for me this messenger! The hospital was completely empty of visitors, and if I had needed to wait for a non-Jew to call the elevator for my floor, I would have had to wait a long time—especially since the stairwell doors were also locked electronically, requiring a button press to open!

(Needless to say, we consulted a halachic authority in advance regarding every question of what was permitted and forbidden.)

Moshe's Messirus Nefesh for Klal Yisrael

The Baal HaTurim comments: "Moshe's name is not mentioned in this *parashah*, unlike every other *parashah* from the time of Moshe's birth. The reason is that Moshe said (*Shemos* 32:32), *וְאִם אֵין מְחַנֵּי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ - Erase me, please, from the book that You have written*, and the curse of a *chacham*, even when conditional, takes effect (*Makkos* 11a). This was fulfilled here." This idea is also mentioned in the *Zohar Hakadosh* (3:246a).

The holy *sefer* *Divrei Torah* by the saintly *Minchas Elazar* of Munkatch, *zt"l* (8th edition, 35), explains why this specific Torah portion was chosen: "Because *Parashas Tetzaveh* always coincides with the seventh of Adar, the day of Moshe's passing. In a leap year the *parashah* falls on the seventh of Adar Rishon—which is considered the primary seventh Adar."

He adds that we find a similar phenomenon with other great *tzaddikim*. In the *parashahs* corresponding to their passing, their writings contain few or no original insights, serving as a subtle allusion to their deaths. For example, the holy *sefer* *Noam Elimelech* does not include discourses on *Parashas Vayakhel*, the *parashah* in which he passed away. Instead, the discourses are placed later, at the end of *Parashas Pekudei*, as noted in *Ohel Elimelech* (*siman* 289).

This pattern is also evident in the passing of other great *tzaddikim*, such as *Rav Tzvi Elimelech* of Dinov, author of *Bnei Yissaschar*, and *Rav Tzvi Hirsch* of Zidichov, author of *Ateres Tzvi*. Who can understand such holy and profound mysteries?

The deeper reasoning for this phenomenon of Moshe is explained in the holy *sefarim*. In Moshe's statement (*Shemos* 32:32), *וְעַתָּה וְאִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מְחַנֵּי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ - And now, if You will forgive their sin, (good); but if not, erase me, please, from the book that You have written*, Moshe demonstrated unparalleled *messirus nefesh* for the sake of Israel's welfare and salvation. He offered himself entirely as their atonement, even at the cost of being erased from the Torah and losing his eternal remembrance. This self-sacrifice signified complete devotion, as being cut off from the Torah would have been as if Moshe had never existed.

Similarly, Moshe's passing on the seventh of Adar represents absolute *messirus nefesh* for the benefit of *Klal Yisrael*. It is known that Moshe prayed 515 prayers (the *gematriya* of *ואתחנן*, *Devarim* 3:23) to enter Eretz Yisrael. But this was denied him, and in his premature death, he gave up his life for Yisrael, ensuring that Divine wrath would be directed at inanimate objects (the *Beis Hamikdash*) rather than the living people of Yisrael, for had he built the *Beis Hamikdash*, it would have been so holy that it could never have been destroyed. So it is with the death of other *tzaddikim* who are *mosser nefesh* for the Jewish people that their death atones for everyone (*Moed Katan* 28a).

This error led the wicked Haman to rejoice when his lot fell in the month of Adar, believing it auspicious because Moshe passed away in that month (*Megillah* 13b). However, he did not realize that Moshe was also born in Adar, and that even Moshe's passing in this month reflected his *messirus nefesh* for Yisrael's salvation. This act served as

a merit for Israel, turning the month from sorrow into joy.

Saving Jews with *Messirus Nefesh*

During the days of Rav Shmuel Shmelke of Nikolsburg, a severe decree was issued against the Jewish people. As he held the prominent position of Rav in the region, he was compelled to travel to the royal capital to petition the king for the decree's annulment.

It was late winter, during the snow thawing, when rivers and lakes overflowed, making travel perilous. The roads were filled with mud, and long journeys were particularly unsafe. Nevertheless, the urgency of the situation required action. Rav Shmelke declared that the decree involved *pikuach nefesh* (danger to lives), obligating him to act with *messirus nefesh*.

During his journey, he had to cross a large river near the capital. It was swollen with chunks of ice and snow cascaded into it from nearby mountains. No boat dared attempt the crossing; all vessels remained anchored onshore, waiting for the thaw to subside. Despite the dangers, Rav Shmelke pressed forward, trusting in Divine providence, to fulfill his mission of saving the Jewish people. His journey serves as a timeless example of *messirus nefesh*.

Rav Shmuel Shmelke could not afford to wait at all; he was in a great rush to reach the royal palace to advocate for the annulment of the dreadful decree looming over the holy nation.

His devoted talmid who accompanied him on the journey, the saintly Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, zt"l, seeing his master's deep anguish, proposed a solution. He suggested that they hire a small boat, which Rav Moshe Leib would personally navigate.

Lacking any other means to cross the river, Rav Shmuel Shmelke accepted Rav Moshe Leib's advice. They rented a small fishing boat, boarded it with composure and tranquility, placing their trust in the Creator, the Master of all deeds, and set out across the turbulent river.

Many local non-Jews gathered and shouted warnings, exclaiming that this was a life-threatening endeavor! They declared that it was impossible to cross the river in its current state, swollen and

overflowing with massive blocks of ice, especially in a small, frail fishing boat like theirs. However, Rav Shmuel Shmelke paid no heed to their cries. He embarked on the perilous journey together with his devoted talmid.

As they entered the raging river, their dire situation was quickly apparent. There was no way to advance; the entire path was blocked by enormous chunks of ice. The constant avalanches of ice crashing into the river intensified the waves, endangering their lives further. Their danger was so great it evoked the ruling from Bava Metzia (24a): "Whatever is swept away in the sea or a river's current belongs to the finder, for the owners despair of recovering it."

Seeing their plight, Rav Shmuel Shmelke stood in the middle of the tiny boat, now in the heart of the surging river. With fiery passion and deep attachment to God, he began reciting the Shiras Hayam, with Rav Moshe Leib fervently responding to each *pasuk* in a thunderous voice.

Suddenly, the boat found an open pathway in the middle of the river. They began progressing, navigating between the giant ice blocks. Miraculously, wherever the boat advanced, the ice blocks moved aside, as if clearing the way for them. It was as though the ice acknowledged the holiness of their mission, allowing the small vessel to forge a clear path.

The many non-Jews gathered along the riverbank were astounded and deeply moved. The miraculous event caused a great commotion. Wherever the boat traveled, people flocked to the shore to see the awe-inspiring sight with their own eyes.

The news spread quickly, reaching the gates of the palace. The emperor's servants reported the wondrous event unfolding on the great river—two Jews miraculously sailing their small boat through as crowds watched in astonishment from the banks.

The wise emperor, intrigued by the news, expressed his desire to witness it firsthand. He went to the river with his esteemed entourage, positioned himself on the shore, and observed the scene with a telescope. He immediately recognized the two figures as esteemed Jewish leaders navigating the treacherous river with no sailor or guide, reciting prayers as they

went. He saw the ice blocks moving aside and the waves calming as if bowing in reverence to them. With their fervent singing, the men advanced steadily over the river's surface.

The emperor decided to wait until the small boat reached the shore to meet these remarkable individuals, angelic in their miraculous accomplishment.

The boat approached the riverbank safely, its bow aligning perfectly with the spot where the emperor stood. As the boat dropped anchor and came to a halt, the two great tzaddikim disembarked with joy and dignity.

As soon as the emperor saw Rav Shmuel Shmelke stepping off the boat, he recognized him instantly. The emperor was familiar with him as the senior Rav of the entire region and a leader of the Jewish diaspora, having met him several times. The emperor hurried toward him, greeted him warmly, and anxiously inquired why he had risked such a dangerous journey across the raging river when no living soul dared to traverse it.

Rav Shmuel Shmelke explained that he was compelled to act immediately and undertake the perilous journey due to the terrible decree issued against the Jews. The urgency and gravity of the situation necessitated an act of *messirus nefesh* for the salvation of Yisrael. He expressed profound gratitude to Hashem for the great miracles performed on their behalf during the journey, which had brought them directly to the emperor's feet!

The great king was profoundly moved and impressed by the extraordinary miracles he had witnessed and began apologizing. He admitted that his ministers and advisors had misled him with false and deceitful reports about the Jews and now realized, from what he had seen, that the Jewish people were deeply connected to Hashem. They were willing to sacrifice themselves for Him, and in return, He performed great and wondrous miracles for them. The king thus immediately annulled the decree entirely, bringing great salvation to Israel.

Rav Shmuel Shmelke said that it is explained in the writings of the Arizal that in times of severe decrees when harsh accusations loom and no means of annulment seems possible, one must demonstrate *messirus nefesh* for the sanctification of Hashem's name. Through such *messirus nefesh*, the decrees are nullified, and the Borei Yisbarach, saves us from the nations' hands.