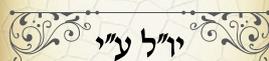


Parashas
Vayakhel

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כ"ב אדר תשפ"ה

5785



קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

רבי גמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

בענין חובת הצניעות

The Obligation to be Modest

טיב המערכת

למטה יהודה... למטה דן

Of the tribe of Yehuda... of the tribe of Dan

One of the greatest lies of the yetzer hara is that it convinces you that you are worthless, or that the work you do is worthless because you are so small and simple. But if you were great and good like Moshe Rabeinu or like Avraham Avinu or at least like Mordechai HaTzaddik... But as you are now? Come on, what have you really done? Prayed with kavanah? That's called kavanah? Recited Birchot Hamazon with focus from the siddur? And what were you thinking about in the meantime... In short, whatever you do is not good enough or important enough. And of course, this is a great lie!

Moshe Rabeinu says to the people of Israel: "See, Hashem has called by name Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda... he and Ahaliav, son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan." And Rashi explains: "And Ahaliav - from the tribe of Dan, one of the lowest of the tribes, from the sons of the maidservants, yet Hashem equated him with Bezalel for the work of the Mishkan. And Bezalel was from the greatest of the tribes, to fulfill what is stated: 'The noble is not distinguished before the poor.'" Specifically in the most important work of the Mishkan, Hashem shows us that everyone is equal before Him. It does not matter which tribe you are from or your lineage—whether from the greatest of the tribes or from the lowest of them, all are equal before Him.

And so, one of the maggidim explained the argument between Mordechai HaYehudi and Haman HaRasha. Haman—Amalek, who represents the yetzer hara—claimed that "a little" is nothing and has no value. But in contrast, Mordechai HaTzaddik argued that everything is important before the Creator, even a little. In the end, when Haman arrived and found Mordechai sitting and studying the laws of the mitzvah of the Omer offering, he asked: "This Omer—what is it made of? Gold or silver?"

They answered him: "Neither gold nor silver, and not even wheat, but barley."

He asked: "What is its price? Ten kikar of silver or twenty?"

They answered: "It is worth only ten ma'ot."

Then Haman said to Mordechai and the Jews with him: "Rise, for your ten ma'ot have already defeated my ten thousand kikar of silver."

So, the next time you hear a voice telling you that you are worthless and that your small deeds, chas v'shalom, are not desired before the Creator, remember who it is that is saying this—and that in the end, even Haman admitted that a Jew's little offering triumphs over ten thousand kikar of silver!

וְכָל אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת יָב בְּיָדֶיהָ טָווּ: (לה:כה)

Every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands. (35:25)

It is told in the Gemara (Yoma 66b): "A wise woman asked Rebbe Eliezer: Since the sin of the Golden Calf was the same for all, why was their punishment not the same?" He answered her: "A woman's wisdom is only in the spindle," as it is written: "And every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands."

From Rebbe Eliezer's response to this woman, one might understand that she did not ask properly, and therefore he deemed it appropriate to dismiss her, essentially telling her that she would be more successful in dealing with matters of spinning than in engaging in Torah discussions.

However, in truth, we see later in the Gemara that she did, in fact, ask properly. Immediately afterward, the Gemara records that the *Amoraim* Rav and Levi saw fit to explain why the deaths of some were different from the deaths of others. If so, it is appropriate to ask: Why, indeed, did Rebbe Eliezer see fit to dismiss her?

The answer to this is that the woman did not conduct herself appropriately. Although she asked a valid question, there was a deficiency in the attribute of modesty. She personally appeared before the greatest sage of the generation to present her difficulties, presumably in the presence of his students. The very act of a woman appearing before men is already considered a breach of modesty, especially when she comes to display her intellectual success and remarkable talents—demonstrating how well she can pose difficult questions. This naturally arouses admiration, and such things can lead to significant spiritual pitfalls.

For this reason, Rebbe Eliezer deemed it appropriate to reject her and rebuke her, saying that "a woman's wisdom is only in the spindle." That is, she should uphold the *posuk* (Tehillim 45:14), 'כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה' - 'All the glory of the king's daughter is inward,' and concern herself solely with matters that belong within the home, such as working with the spindle and similar domestic tasks—not going out publicly to showcase her intellectual abilities for all to see. And it was precisely because she asked correctly that she was more deserving of his rebuke.

Since she herself acted immodestly, she was not worthy of receiving an answer to her question. However, in truth, her question was indeed a valid one, and once she had received

her rebuke and left, the *Amoraim* in the *Beis Midrash* saw fit to address and resolve her inquiry.

Rebbe Eliezer's response should serve as a rebuke for many women of our generation. For throughout history, all those who fear Hashem have always known that the proper place for women is not in the public streets. Women should remain within their homes, and even if they wish to engage in a trade to help support the household, it should be in matters similar to the work of the spindle—tasks that can be done within the confines of the home.

However, in the last generation, the boundaries of the world have been breached. Jewish women have begun to leave their homes and work outside, and many of them interact daily with strangers in their workplaces. Many spiritual stumbling blocks arise from this, *Rachmana litzlan*. They must understand that Chazal do not approve of such conduct, and in the future, they will be held accountable for it.

And there will be those who say that this reality is, in our days, a necessity. For we clearly feel the truth of what Chazal testified (*Sotah* 49b) about the days of *Ikvesa d'Meshicha* (the footsteps of the Moshiach), and one of the things they listed was: "The cost of living will soar."

Most heads of households are unable to support their families unless the homemaker also assists them. And so, they will justify it by saying, "Necessity cannot be condemned."

However, they are mistaken, for we do not find any allowance to transgress a commandment of the Torah merely for the sake of financial ease. We must remember that livelihood is in the hands of our Creator and were it not for His will that we engage in *hishtadlus* (effort), we would not be entitled to it at all. Therefore, even when He does desire *hishtadlus*, it is certainly not in ways that lead to sin. And if a person has no option for permissible *hishtadlus*, then he is exempt—and

Enhance your Shabbos table
with the Torah lessons and stories of
Harav Gamliel Hakohen Rabinovitch, shlita



even prohibited—from engaging in it. Regarding such a case, Chazal stated (*Devarim Rabbah – Parashas Re'eh* 5): 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu said: Listen to Me, for no one listens to Me and loses out.'

I will not remain silent and will recount the self-sacrifice of my mother in the matter of modesty, for this serves as a living example of our discussion. Surely, righteous women will be inspired to follow in her footsteps.

My mother, *a"h*, was known to be highly skilled in sewing. In her time, the concept of buying ready-made dresses, as is common today, was almost nonexistent. Instead, people would purchase fabric and bring it to a seamstress, who, with her craftsmanship, would turn it into a beautiful and elegant dress.

One day, a woman knocked on my mother's door, holding fabric in her hands, and asked my mother to make her a dress from it. At first, my mother was pleased with the opportunity, as poverty and lack were constant guests in our home. My father devoted himself entirely to the study of Torah, and his income was minimal, with only occasional side earnings that served as a true aid. However, when my mother began measuring for the dress, the

woman requested that the sleeves be slightly shorter, in a manner that would not violate halachic standards, but it would no longer maintain the standard of modesty. At first, my mother tried to persuade her, gently suggesting that the sleeves be longer, but when the woman insisted on her decision, my mother firmly declared that she would not sew such a garment under any circumstances!

The woman looked at my mother as if she were crazy, saying: "There is no halachic issue with this, and why won't you make it for me, especially when poverty is so evident in your home?" But my mother stood her ground and refused to take on the job in any way.

The woman left as she had come, and on her way home, she met one of her acquaintances, and they began talking. During their

conversation, the woman mocked my mother, saying that she had just come from my mother's house, where she had refused to make the dress for her, despite the poverty in her home, simply because the sleeves didn't meet her standards of *hidur* (enhancement of modesty) according to her opinion. The words actually made a good impression, and that acquaintance, who was also considered wealthy, was impressed by my mother's *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice). From that time on, she would send women to my mother's house with fabric to be sewn. This incident serves as reinforcement for those whom the *yetzer hara* tempts, suggesting that they will benefit if they deviate from the ways of the Torah. The truth, however, is the opposite: it is adherence to the word of Hashem that brings success to a person. Had my mother listened to the woman's request, she would have only earned that one dress. But because she listened to the word of Hashem, she was rewarded with many dresses. 'For there is no one who listens to Me and loses out...'

May HaKadosh Baruch Hu grant us the merit to earn our livelihood through permissible and honest means.

טיב ההשגרה

ביצה שנולדה בשבת

An egg laid on Shabbos

It was Shabbos Sheva Brachos, the joy and the *seudah* was at its peak. In the kitchen, preparations were underway to beautifully plate the traditional chopped egg and onion salad, as is the custom among chassidim and people of good deeds. Suddenly, from the adjacent hall, the host of another Sheva Brachos celebration entered. It turned out that they had forgotten their egg salad in Yerushalayim and had nothing to serve their guests—people for whom this dish was very important, as it carries deep mystical significance in the secrets of Shabbos foods. Without hesitation, we divided ours in half—half for us, half for them—and there was an abundance for all.

I thought to myself: Had they arrived just one minute later, all the salad would have already been distributed onto the tables, and likely, there would not have been enough to gather respectable portions for their celebration. Hashem sent him at precisely the right moment, just before serving, granting us the merit of performing an act of kindness this Shabbos. And in doing so, He likely also ensured peace in their home—so no one would be upset at the person who had forgotten the salad in Yerushalayim.

צ.ה.

בואכם לשלום מלאכי השלום

May your coming be for peace, angels of peace

A Satmar chassid arrived in Eretz Yisrael and stayed at the Central Hotel. Half an hour before Shabbos, as he was preparing for Shabbos, he suddenly realized that he did not have his white Shabbos socks—and all the stores were already closed. Going to shul without his Shabbos socks would be embarrassing, as this attire is very noticeable to everyone.

He asked the locals where he might find a pair of white socks?! Through *hashgacha pratit*, he was directed to the Rabinovitz family home at 2 Rav Hagiz Street.

He knocked on the door, and I offered him several types of socks—with patterns, without patterns, whatever he preferred. He was overjoyed to have them and immediately pulled out a hundred-dollar bill to pay.

Of course, we refused any payment, explaining to him that mitzvos are not sold for money!

After he left, I said at home: **“I am certain that one of the reasons I started wearing white socks myself was so that I could help this Jew! Who knows how much marital peace was saved? Perhaps each spouse would have blamed the other for forgetting this essential item in the suitcase? And so, they entered Shabbat organized and joyful!”**

- Moreinu HaRav shlita

טיב המעשיות

Living Wisdom

ואתה תדבר אל כל חכמי לב אשר מלאתי רוח חכמה בהם:

And you shall speak to all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom (28:3).

In our holy Torah, we find two types of wisdom: the wisdom of the mind and the wisdom of the heart. Most straightforward is the wisdom of the mind, the intellect residing in the brain, as it states, (*Koheles* 2:14), הַחֵכֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ - *The wise man's eyes are in his head*. However, when it comes to constructing the *Mishkan*, a dwelling for the *Shechinah*, the Torah emphasizes the need for *wisdom of the heart*.

What is the difference between the wisdom of the mind and the wisdom of the heart? After all, both involve understanding. Why distinguish between the intellect that comprehends and the heart that understands?

The wisdom of the mind is abstract knowledge, an understanding that resides in intellect alone, much like philosophical reasoning—it is knowledge without application. It is akin to a profound idea written in a *sefer*: while the wisdom is vast and deep, the *sefer* remains a mere piece of paper. Similarly, in modern terms, a “computer” can store enormous repositories of knowledge and entire treasures of Torah. Yet it is merely a “tool,” incapable of utilizing this knowledge to transform itself. As has been humorously noted: The Hebrew word for computer (מחשב) can be split into the two words מח-שב—representing a mind (מח) that sits (שב) idle, letting the computer do all the work.

On the other hand, “wisdom of the heart” is living wisdom—active, applied wisdom that manifests in one’s actions and life.

This wisdom is implemented in practice and is not left as abstract knowledge like philosophy. It breathes life into one’s actions. Since life stems from the heart, when a person acts and functions based on the wisdom they comprehend, this becomes “wisdom of the heart.”

At one point, the renowned *maggid*, Rav Shalom Shwadron *zt”l*, delivered a discourse (*derashah*) every Shabbos night at the Zichron Moshe *shul* in Yerushalayim. Large crowds gathered to hear his inspiring words, sweeter than honey and the finest oil. Occasionally, Rav Velvel of Brisk, the Brisker Rav, *zt”l*, would pass by the *shul* during his routine evening stroll, which he took to refresh his frail lungs. Upon hearing the *derashah* from outside, he would pause by the window to listen briefly.

One Shabbos evening, Rav Velvel arrived near the end of the sermon. After listening for a few moments, he encountered Rav Shalom outside the *shul* and humorously asked him: “Reb Shalom, did you hear what was said in the *derashah*?” He meant to say: Did your heart hear and understand what your mouth said.

The essence of *chachmas chaim* (life wisdom) is wisdom of the heart. Thus, when Hashem commands the construction of the *Mishkan*, the dwelling of *Klal Yisrael*, He calls upon those whose hearts are filled with wisdom. Clearly, technical expertise in weaving, embroidery, and craftsmanship alone will not suffice; one must bring his entire heart into the work. Regarding Shlomoh Hamelech, it states (*Melachim* 1 5:9): וַיִּתֵּן אֱלֹקִים חָכְמָה לְשִׁלְמֹה וַתְּבוֹנֶה הָרֶבֶה מֵאֵד וְרָחֵב לֵב - כְּחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּם: *God gave Shlomoh wisdom and very great understanding and breadth of heart like the sand on the seashore.*

Wisdom alone is not enough; it requires immense understanding and, most importantly, breadth of heart, particularly when it comes to building the *Beis Hashem*.

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The holy Rav Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz, *zt”l*, known as *Chakima D’Yehudai* (the Wise One of the Jewish People), once spoke about his eventual resting place after 120 years. He said that if he were offered two choices—one to sit in *Gan Eden* with a fool, and the other to sit in *Gehinnom* with a wise person—he would prefer to sit with the wise person in *Gehinnom* rather than with the fool in *Gan Eden*.

He explained his reasoning: sitting with the wise person would transform *Gehinnom* into *Gan Eden* while sitting with the fool would turn *Gan Eden* into *Gehinnom*. The wisdom of the sage radiates joy and enlightenment, creating a *Gan Eden* wherever he is. Conversely, foolishness itself is *Gehinnom*.

Reflecting on this idea in a *mussar* context, I considered the four sons mentioned in the Pesach Haggadah: “The Torah speaks of four sons: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does

not know how to ask.” Why is the wicked son placed next to the wise one, while the “one who does not know how to ask” is left to the end?

The wicked son, despite his wickedness, asks questions, probes, and acts. His inquiries, though misguided, indicate an engagement with the world. He is therefore placed next to the wise son so that the wise one can influence him positively, turning him from wickedness to righteousness.

However, the fourth son, “the one who does not know how to ask,” neither questions nor seeks anything. His indifference makes it much harder to inspire change in him. Similarly, the third son, the simple one, accepts his path naively, without understanding the need to search for truth or strive for righteousness, content to say, “Peace will be upon me.” These traits make it more difficult to guide them toward repentance.

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Rav Aharon Mordechai Rotner, *shlit”a*, a *maggid shiur* at our Yeshivas Shaar Hashamayim, shared a story he heard years ago from the holy Rav Aharon of Belz, *zy”a*, about his grandfather, the holy Rav Yehoshua of Belz, *zy”a*.

One year, a simple *baal agalah* (wagon driver) traveled to Belz for Shavuot, hired by a group of Belzer chassidim from his town. Spending the entire festival immersed among the pure-hearted chassidim and their holy Rebbe, the wagon driver was deeply moved by their prayers, Torah study, and the sanctity of their gatherings. His heart was filled with holy inspiration, and he resolved to elevate himself in Torah and *avodas Hashem*.

The wagon driver decided to abandon his trade and become a full-time learner in the Belz court.

However, there was a significant challenge: this wagon driver was uneducated and completely ignorant of Torah and halachah. He had never opened a Gemara or Mishnah and had no idea what *Chazal* ever taught. Yet, he did not despair. His heart opened wide, filled with a burning desire for holy wisdom. He sat among the learned men and begged each of them to teach him a little. Thus, he began to educate himself, learning first how to read properly, then studying *Chumash* and Mishnah, and eventually delving into Gemara and its commentaries.

Through years of extraordinary diligence, perseverance, and intense yearning, this former wagon driver became a great *talmid chacham*.

This story teaches us that it is never too late to acquire the wisdom of Torah!

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One day, a respected Jew from the United States came to me and shared his distress. His son, already an older bachelor, was stuck and couldn’t find his match.

This man was wise and honest enough to admit that he was partly to blame. When his son reached marriageable age, the father rejected every suggestion of a match. Over time, the son noticed this pattern and began emulating it, dismissing every proposal with minor excuses and reasons. Now, even though the father was eager to accept a match, the son had the habit of refusing every suggestion that came his way.

I asked if there was currently a proposal on the table. He replied that there was a very good one, but his son had already met the young woman and did not wish to pursue it. I asked him to bring his son to me.

When the young man arrived, I engaged him in a long conversation about the foundations of life and the principles of building a home, eventually steering the discussion toward the current proposal. Gently, I asked if he would be willing to share the reason for his refusal.

The young man said, “Rav, I can be honest with you. I met her, and our meeting was pleasant, but I realized she isn’t clever or insightful enough. I feel she isn’t a suitable match for me.”

I replied, “My dear young man, let us consider this rationally. What role are we expecting this young woman to fulfill? Must she lead all of America or Russia? The homes being purchased today are about 120 square meters. Is she not wise enough to manage a household of 120 square meters?”

The young man agreed to marry the woman, and they were wed with great joy. They live in peace, harmony, and happiness, blessed with several children. With the *binah yeseirah* (extra measure of understanding) that Hashem has endowed women with, she runs her home with excellence and grace, bringing honor and pride to her family.

I had a sharp-witted grandmother who used to say humorously, “A woman’s wisdom is sufficient if she understands that when it rains, she should go under the roof. More than that only causes trouble...”

Why examine all the grades and certificates from first grade onward? Will her high marks in history or mathematics help her more with preparing Shabbos meals? Will one need to solve a complex Rambam with her?

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My father, the author of *Ma’adanei HaShulchan, zt”l*, beautifully illustrated this concept with a parable:

Strolling through the forest, a donkey once stumbled upon the skin of a lion, complete

with its grand and majestic mane. The donkey was enchanted by the lion’s skin and decided to don the royal attire, imagining how he would appear as a king.

The donkey slipped into the lion’s skin and resembled a tall and fearsome lion.

All the animals moved aside in awe and respect for the “king of beasts.” Paths were cleared before him; everyone trembled at the sight of the mighty “lion.” Even the real lion of the forest hesitated upon encountering him, perceiving him as a towering, majestic competitor. The donkey, of course, was thrilled, reveling in the honor and reverence.

But one day, the fox, the cleverest of the animals, came upon the scene. Taking a sharp and discerning look at the creature before him, the fox grew suspicious. His instincts told him something was amiss—this wasn’t exactly a lion. However, he couldn’t be certain. Discussing it with some of his forest friends, they unanimously agreed that the figure was genuine and warned the fox against meddling, lest he pay with his life.

Still, the fox couldn’t shake his doubts. Though the creature looked like a lion, it seemed to lack the inner might and bravery of a true king of beasts.

The fox pondered deeply and devised a plan to reveal the truth. Gathering a handful of sharp stones, he stealthily approached the so-called lion from behind and hurled the rocks forcefully. The sharp pain startled the donkey, and instead of a lion’s roar, a loud bray burst forth from his mouth.

The truth was exposed! At once, the animals turned on him in fury—it was nothing but a donkey in disguise!

The moral is piercing: as long as a person remains silent and avoids excessive speech, his true nature is not easily discerned and he is respected accordingly. As the wisest of all men, Shlomoh Hamelech, wrote in the *sefer Mishlei* (17:28), **גַּם אִיל מְחַרֵּשׁ הֶכֶם, יְחַשֵּׁב אֶתֶם שִׁפְתָיו נְבוֹן** - *Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.* But the moment he opens his mouth...

Like the donkey-lion, speaking carelessly can risk one’s entire standing. As long as the donkey remained silent, everyone regarded him a great and mighty king, wise and powerful. But the moment he opened his mouth and brayed, his deception was revealed!

Thus, one must speak wisely, remain silent when silence is required, and carefully weigh one’s words. Avoid speaking excessively, like a fool or a simpleton.

As the *Iggeres Haramban* advises: “*Reflect on your words before you let them leave your mouth, and do so throughout your life, in all matters, to avoid sinning. By doing this, your words, actions, and thoughts will be upright, and your prayers will be pure, clear, focused, and accepted before the Blessed One.*”

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