

Parashas
Tazria-Metzora

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ה' אייר תשפ"ה

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

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רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

חביבה גמילות חסדים יותר מן

העבודה

Acts of kindness are dearer than avodah

טיב המערכת

To do the will of my Creator

לעשות רצון בוראי

About eighty years ago, in the American city of Williamsburg, there lived a poor widow with an only son. Due to her extreme poverty, she was unable to send her son to a *cheder* and instead enrolled him in the local public school. Each evening, she would sit with him to teach him the Hebrew letters and how to pray from a *siddur*.

When the boy turned twelve, he heard of a *cheder* attended solely by Jewish children who studied Torah, and he decided that he, too, wished to learn there. However, his mother had no money to pay for transportation to the far side of the city, nor did he even own a coat to shield him from the bitter cold. Still, the orphaned boy insisted on going to learn Torah. Having no alternative, his mother permitted him to walk there on foot.

He trudged for over two hours through the biting cold, without a coat upon him. When he finally arrived at the Talmud Torah building, soaked through, he immediately went to the principal's office and asked to be admitted to the *cheder* to study Torah. The principal was astonished — never before had a child come alone — and, wishing to assess him, asked, "What do you know? On what could we test you?"

The boy replied, "I know nothing, except a little from the *siddur*."

"If so," said the principal, "you are not suited for our school."

The boy pleaded to be admitted into the class of the youngest children, so that he could begin his studies like everyone else. But the principal responded that there was no room even in that class.

The boy then said, "Would you at least write me a letter stating that I wished to learn, but there was no space for me?"

The principal was puzzled and asked why he needed such a letter.

The boy answered: "I am an orphan, and when I come to the World of Truth, my father will surely ask me why I did not go to learn Torah. If I tell him that I wanted to but the principal would not accept me, my father might not believe me. Therefore, I request that the honorable principal write it for me in his own hand."

Naturally, upon hearing this, the principal accepted the boy into the *cheder* — and that boy grew up to become a great leader among the Jewish people.

When a person becomes a *metzora* (one afflicted with biblical leprosy), he suffers great humiliation. Yet the Torah further commands him (13:45): 'טמא טמא יקרא' - 'He shall call out: "Impure! Impure!"' — compelling him to heap additional shame upon himself. Despite the hardship this entails, he must surrender his own will to the will of Hashem Yisbarach.

And so it is with every commandment of the Torah: even when it is difficult or uncomfortable for us, we are called to nullify our own desires and fulfill the will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. For it was through this very power of faith that we received the Torah — when we nullified our own reasoning and declared with absolute trust (Shemos 24:7): 'נעשה ונשמע' - "We will do and we will hear!"

Tiv HaTorah - Tazria

וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּרְאֵה וַיִּבְחַן וְהָיָה נִרְפָּא נָגַע הַצִּרְעָת מִן הַצִּרְעָה: (יד:ג)

The Kohen shall go out to the outside of the camp, the Kohen shall look and behold! – the tzara'as affliction had been healed from the metzora. (14:3)

Rashi explains: Outside of three camps where he was sent if confirmed.

Behold, the Kohen stands in the House of Hashem, serving his Creator with his exalted service — a service that arouses pleasure in the heavens, a service that finds favor for Israel before their Maker, a service through which the Shechinah is drawn down into the lower worlds. And yet, he is commanded to leave his lofty service and make a long journey to that remote place where the Metzora resides, in order to purify him and assist him in returning to his family's embrace and the closeness of his friends and acquaintances.

Were the Torah not to explicitly command this, the "common sense" of householders would never agree to such a course. They would say: "It is true that even when the Kohen is involved in the purification of the Metzora, he is fulfilling a mitzvah; however, the sanctity of the Temple service is incomparably greater. For, as we have said, through the Temple service, perfection is brought to the world; it brings favor from Hashem Yisbarach upon His world; it draws down the Shechinah; and when the Shechinah dwells among us, blessing abounds. If so, why interrupt the Kohen from a service that brings such great benefit to the entire collective, merely to assist a single individual? Would it not be better to appoint Talmidei Chachamim — Yisraelim who are experts in identifying the signs of tzara'as — to deal with such matters, allowing the Kohen to continue his lofty service uninterrupted?"

Yet, as we see, this is *not* the way of the Torah! HaKadosh Baruch Hu prefers that the Kohen leave his sacred post and his exalted standing, and that *he himself* go to the downtrodden Metzora, doing everything in his power to hasten his salvation. From this we learn: bringing joy to broken hearts is more precious before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the sacred service of the Mikdash!

When there is a person, alone in some distant, forsaken place, broken by his situation — even if he is himself at fault, even if his sins are what brought him to his sorry state — nevertheless, the reward for one who sets aside his own concerns to lighten that person's suffering is beyond measure. Whether by practically working to rescue him from his dire straits, or by speaking to his heart, strengthening him, and offering him comfort — it is an act beloved beyond measure.

Even now that we understand the greatness of relieving the pain of the broken-hearted, and even knowing that it brings no loss to the Kohen's own standing, we must still ask: why did the Torah specifically choose the Kohen for this task? Why not allow other Talmidei Chachamim, experts in the laws of tzara'as, to perform this mitzvah as well?

We may suggest that our Creator desires that *specifically* His servants, those closest to Him, engage in this great mitzvah — for it is a great honor to Hashem when those who serve Him are the very ones who concern themselves with the suffering of others.

From now on, this mitzvah will no longer seem minor — even to those who devote every moment to serving their Creator through Torah study and Avodah. They, too, will not withhold from setting aside time to perform acts of kindness, to bring joy to broken hearts, by whatever means they can. And through this, they will merit to bring even greater delight to Hashem through their Torah and their Avodah — for our Creator takes pride when those who serve Him are men of refined character, who care deeply for the wellbeing of others.

And beyond the fact that this mitzvah is a crown of honor for the servants of Hashem and for Torah scholars, it also serves to elevate them higher in levels of Torah. It is well known, the teaching of Rabbi Akiva in the Yerushalmi (Nedarim 6:1) on the verse (Vayikra 19:18), 'ואהבת לרעך כמוך' - *"And you shall love your fellow as yourself,"* that *"this is a great principle of the Torah."*

I once heard a beautiful explanation: *"This"* — the mitzvah of *"Love your fellow as yourself"* — is the *"principle"* by which one becomes *"great in*

Torah." Meaning: if you examine the lives of those who truly merited the title *"great in Torah,"* whose paths in Torah were clear and illuminated before them, you will find one thing in common: all of them were exceedingly meticulous and zealous in this mitzvah. *"Love your fellow as yourself"* was their constant guide. They always suffered with the suffering of others; they were always occupied in their thoughts with how they might bring goodness to another. It was this mitzvah that prepared their hearts for the Torah. And it was in its merit that they rose and cleaved to the Torah.

Who is greater than the holy author of the *Bnei Yissaschar* — anyone who delves into his writings is left astounded by his genius. It is told of this righteous man that he had the ability to write with both hands simultaneously, each hand writing on a different subject, and in his fifty-eight years he authored a vast number of works. And yet, his primary aspiration was always to benefit his fellow Jews and to rescue them from their distresses. So devoted was he to this mission that even in moments of personal pressure and critical importance, he was ready and willing to do all within his power to heal broken hearts.

It is related that when he lay on his deathbed, sensing that his final hours were approaching, he beseeched Hashem Yisbarach to grant him three additional days so that he might prepare properly for his transition from this world to the next. Heaven granted his request. Naturally, those days were consecrated for deep introspection and repentance for even the slightest imperfections, the kind for which HaKadosh Baruch Hu is exacting with His righteous ones.

His students and close followers, knowing what occupied their master during those days, dared not enter his room and disturb him. They merely stood outside, observing their Rebbe communing in solitude with his Creator. Suddenly, an unfamiliar Jew arrived at the house of the tzaddik. Without asking many questions, he entered the Rebbe's room, sat down near his bedside, and began to pour out his heart. He said: *"I am a merchant. Some time ago, an opportunity for a lucrative deal came my way — to purchase a large quantity of wool at*

a low price, intending to resell it at the regular market rate. However, to my great dismay, after the transaction was completed, the market price of wool plummeted, and I lost my entire fortune."

The students were more astonished by the merchant's behavior — barging in at such a critical time to speak of monetary losses — than by anything else. Yet even more wondrous was their Rebbe's reaction: he turned his full attention toward the merchant, listening intently to his distress, as if he had forgotten entirely the critical hour in which he found himself.

The holy tzaddik inquired into all the details of the transaction and the extent of the merchant's losses. Finally, he spoke words of comfort and encouragement, telling him to hope for better times, explaining that, by all reasonable estimation, the price of wool would soon rise again. Then he would be able to sell his merchandise at a fair profit. The merchant, comforted and relieved, left to go on his way, while the tzaddik sank once again into his sacred contemplations.

The students could scarcely believe what they had witnessed with their own eyes. They were convinced that this incident must have been heavenly in nature, beyond human comprehension. Some speculated that the merchant was in fact a hidden tzaddik, who had known through *Ruach HaKodesh* that their Rebbe was nearing his end and had come to speak with him in allegories and parables about deep, hidden matters. Others tried to explain that the encounter was meant as a preparation for the Rebbe's transition to the world of truth.

But the Rebbe's son and successor, the holy Rabbi David of Dinov, saw it differently.

According to him, the visitor was a simple merchant, nothing more. And despite his father's immersion in sacred preparation for his departure from this world, he nevertheless made himself available to help a distressed Jew find solace and peace of mind — because this had been the burning desire of his heart all his life: always to be ready, at any moment, to sacrifice himself to bring good to another Jew.

'Grandmother Stories (Bubba maasos)'

'סיפורי סבתא'

As a teacher in a Talmud Torah, I am always seeking ways to uplift and encourage my students, helping each child reach new achievements according to his unique abilities. There was one boy in particular — mischievous yet sweet, with clear and outstanding talents — who, in practice, spent most of his time acting out and disrupting the lessons.

That week, I decided to create a special project just for him. I approached him with an offer: "If you learn well this week and don't disrupt the class, I will give you a special 'nachas note' (petek nachat) to take home to your parents — something that will fill them with joy."

The clever boy thought for a moment and said, "This week it's not worth it, because we're traveling to Savta Roizman in Netivot anyway!" I smiled and answered, "On the contrary — Savta Roizman will be thrilled to receive such a note!"

Persuaded, the boy agreed. That week, he studied with such dedication that even I could hardly believe what I was seeing.

I looked forward to Friday when I could write him the note he had earned. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu had other plans. On Friday, I received heartbreaking news: my own beloved grandmother had passed away. I traveled to the funeral and even delivered a hesped, mourning her deep loss. Yet throughout all the sorrow, one thought would not leave my mind: little Yedidya, waiting eagerly for his nachas note. If he didn't receive it, his trust in me would be broken — a wound that would be hard to repair. My grandmother's passing was, for him, simply an adult's story; a child, in his world, just needed his promised note. After the burial, I returned home and prayed to Hashem to guide me as to what I should do.

Suddenly it struck me: "How many Roizmans could there be in Netivot?" After all, Roizman is an Ashkenazi name, and at that time, Netivot was mostly populated by Sephardic families. I called directory assistance and asked for the Roizman family in Netivot. They gave me a number. I called, and an elderly woman answered.

"Hello," I said. "Have I reached Yedidya's grandmother?" She confirmed and asked what it was about. I explained that I was Yedidya's teacher and wanted to share with her how wonderfully he had behaved that week, how he had studied with diligence and not disrupted the class even once. She became emotional and exclaimed, "Wait, wait! I need to find a pen and paper to write all this down — otherwise, how will I remember to tell Yedidya what the Rebbe said about him?" I waited patiently while she fetched her writing materials, and then I dictated to her a long list of praises and blessings for her special grandson. We ended the call with warm wishes for a Shabbat Shalom.

On Sunday, the father told me: "You have no idea what you did! The whole way to Netivot, Yedidya cried, saying, 'The Rebbe promised me a note, and he didn't come!' We arrived at Savta's house, and Savta greeted him with great excitement, and in front of the entire family, she read aloud the special note the Rebbe had dictated to her. She even went out to buy special treats to celebrate the occasion — and the joy lasted throughout all of Shabbos. Savta couldn't stop praising her beloved grandson!"

From that week forward, Yedidya blossomed. He became the most diligent and serious student in the class, and he has continued to flourish ever since in his Torah learning.

ק.מ.

Honoring Eliyahu's Goblet

The holy Rebbe of Ruzhin zt"l, told the following story:

There was once a wealthy and God-fearing man devoted to mitzvos. One of his favorite mitzvos was preparing Eliyahu's Cup for the Seder night. Every year, he lovingly polished a magnificent golden goblet and enhanced its brilliance so it sparkled as a fitting tribute to Eliyahu Hanavi. The man also spared no expense in purchasing the finest aged wine for the cup, ensuring it was worthy of the esteemed guest. However, the man's fortunes declined until he was forced to sell his possessions to support his family. Yet, he steadfastly held onto the goblet, cherishing it above all else as a symbol of his devotion to the mitzvah.

The blessed days of Nissan approached, and the goblet was once again displayed prominently in his home, bringing joy to the family despite their dire circumstances.

One year, as Pesach approached, his family found themselves destitute. They lacked even the basics for the *chag*—matzah, wine, and other essentials. The man reluctantly resolved to sell the cherished goblet to provide for his family. His wife, however, objected firmly. She insisted that the goblet belonged to Eliyahu Hanavi and could not be sold under any circumstances.

When her husband asked how they could celebrate Pesach without selling it, she replied with unwavering faith: "We must trust in Hashem, who provides sustenance from the horns of wild oxen to the eggs of lice. Surely, He will send us salvation." Seeing his wife's resolute faith, the man abandoned his plan to sell the goblet and placed his trust in Hashem.

On Erev Pesach, the man left for *shul* early, preferring not to witness the family's lack of everything. He immersed himself in the *mikveh* and spiritually prepared for the holiday through *tefillah* and Torah study. When he returned home after *Maariv*, he was astonished. The table was laden with matzos, wine, and all the traditional Pesach foods. In the kitchen, he found meat, fish, and an array of festive dishes.

Overwhelmed, he asked his wife where all these provisions had come from. She explained:

"After you left, a distinguished elderly guest arrived with a radiant and majestic appearance. He requested to be a guest in our home for the Seder. I explained that we had nothing, but he reassured me not to worry and brought in a cart filled with all the *chag's* necessities. Before leaving for shul, he asked us to begin the Seder without him if he delayed and to wait for him when the time came to set out Eliyahu's Cup."

The man rejoiced and thanked Hashem for His abundant kindness. During the Seder, at the moment of שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ (Pour out Your wrath...), the couple saw the same radiant guest re-enter their home. To their astonishment, it was none other than Eliyahu Hanavi who entered joyfully and drank from his exquisite goblet.

Before departing, he declared: "Because of your devotion and refusal to sell my magnificent goblet, Heaven sent me to bring blessings to your home. From now on, you will never lack with Hashem's help."

Indeed, the man soon regained his wealth and honored the mitzvah of Eliyahu's Cup with even greater splendor.

When the Ruzhiner Rebbe concluded this story, he would add: "The husband, who initially considered selling the goblet, merited to see Eliyahu the Prophet once. But the wife, whose devotion and faith were unwavering, merited to see Eliyahu Hanavi twice!"

The Rebbe's Weather Forecast

One Chanukah, a prominent timber merchant in Poland, approached the holy Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov, pouring out his predicament. The merchant had six fine daughters ready for marriage but lacked the necessary funds for their dowries and wedding expenses.

A promising opportunity arrived: he could purchase a vast forest of high-quality trees at a significant discount, as the owner urgently needed cash. However, there was a catch. Heavy snows covered the forest, making tree felling impossible until late winter around Adar. Additionally, timber shipments relied on frozen rivers to transport the logs on rafts, a method only feasible during the colder months when snow and ice on the rivers helped keep the rafts afloat.

It was precisely regarding this matter that the merchant in question approached the Rebbe with his query:

"Would the Rebbe please tell me, in the coming month of Nissan, will the snow still cover the rivers, or will the sun shine strongly enough to melt it? This question determines the entire business deal—whether I should proceed with it or abandon it, as otherwise, I risk losing all my money!"

When the Rebbe heard the man's question, he wanted to dismiss him outright: "Am I a prophet to know the state of the snow on the rivers four months from now? Such a question belongs to the meteorologists, where the forecaster sits and 'dreams up' weather predictions for the coming days... And even they cannot say during Chanukah what the snow on the rivers will be like in Nissan. What does this have to do with me?"

But the simple man would not relent. "The Rebbe knows everything!" he insisted firmly. "There is no one else in the world to whom I can turn with such a question—only to the holy Rebbe himself!"

The Rebbe tried several times to explain that such a question was inappropriate and that it was improper to trouble him with it. But to no avail—the man persisted, pleading with all his heart. "The fate of all six of my unmarried daughters depends on this deal! I must know whether to proceed or withdraw!" Seeing that the man would not give up, the Rebbe called for his *gabbai* and asked him to escort the nuisance out of the room.

"Why are you troubling the Rebbe?" the *gabbai* asked the man angrily. But the man, in his great simplicity, did not understand why they were upset with him. He repeated his question, saying he was only asking about the "weather forecast" for the coming month of Nissan. When the loyal *gabbai* heard the question, he paused, uncertain whether he should remove the man.

Noticing the *gabbai's* hesitation, the Rebbe smiled and asked, "Do you, too, think I am a forecaster? How could I possibly predict the state of the snow on the rivers in Nissan?"

However, the clever *gabbai*, who knew the Rebbe well, remarked, "If someone comes to the Rebbe with such a question, perhaps it is indeed a 'Rebbe-like question.' After all, no ordinary person would ask such a thing!"

The *gabbai*, feeling compassion for the man, tried to advocate on his behalf, explaining to the Rebbe that surely the questioner did not mean to inquire based on meteorological knowledge. "Rather," he said, "he asks in pure faith, believing in the tzaddikim and seeking only your guidance."

The *gabbai* elaborated further: "We are currently in the holy days of Chanukah, when the wondrous hidden light shines forth—a light through which one can see from one end of the world to the other. As believers and the children of believers, we trust in the power of the tzaddikim, especially during these days of miracles!" Upon hearing this, the holy Rebbe stood up, went to a corner, and offered a brief prayer to the Creator with reverence and awe. He then turned to the man with a radiant expression and gave him a heartfelt blessing:

"Go home and proceed with the deal in the best possible way! May Hashem assist you so you do not incur any loss, and may you marry off your daughters with ease and honor!"

The man rejoiced greatly at the clear answer and the accompanying blessing. Indeed, the deal went through successfully. After Pesach, the man thanked the Rebbe for his wise counsel and faithful guidance. From that lucrative deal, the man became wealthy, and from then on, his success blossomed, making him one of the great magnates of Poland.

This story teaches the immense power of faith in tzaddikim, who possess insights beyond the need for forecasters or

predictors through the Torah within them. Their holiness enables them to sense and perceive blessings, especially during the days of Nissan and Iyar—days that are inherently blessed with success, divine assistance, and goodness in both spiritual and material matters.

Enjoying Sufferings

My mother, Michla Ita *a"h*, daughter of Rav Yechiel Meir *zt"l* (whose *yahrzeit* falls on 11 Nisan), endured many hardships. Yet, she knew how to bear those sufferings with love and acceptance.

Approximately a year before her passing, she fell and broke her leg, *lo aleinu*. As soon as I heard of her fall, I rushed to her side and quickly realized that she had suffered a severe injury. Yet when I asked her how she felt and where she was in pain, she replied: "Do you think Hashem strikes without purpose? *Chas veshalom!* This must certainly be something I deserve.

"I actually enjoy it because it means I will arrive in the World to Come purified and cleansed from sin. As is taught (Berachos 5a), 'Suffering atones for a person's sins.'"

She expressed these words not in a state of calm or comfort but while enduring severe and bitter pain, writhing from the intensity of it! She even refused to take painkillers, insisting: "If Hashem wishes to give me suffering, I do not wish to escape it! If I avoid it now, I will surely have to repay this debt another time."

Her simple faith was the anthem of her life. Her entire existence was one continuous expression of solid and unwavering faith, which she instilled deeply in her children. One could elaborate at length on this, but this is not the place.

She merited that she was accompanied by a song of faith even in her passing. This began about two years before her death when she spent the Seder night at my home. We arranged a *minyan* for the evening prayers, and after the *davening*, everyone sang the song of *emunah*, *Adon Olam*, as is customary in many Jewish communities.

When my mother heard this melody, she derived immense joy from it. After the *tefillah*, she approached me and said, "I wish to be accompanied from this world with this song!" The following day, after the *Yom Tov* prayers, she repeated her request, stating that her heartfelt wish was to be escorted from this world with the melody of *Adon Olam*.

Indeed, her wish was fulfilled. At her *levayah*, *Adon Olam* was sung, as per her request, and it inspired great spiritual arousal among those who attended, in her merit. May her soul be bound in the bond of eternal life.