

Parashas
Vayigash
• 714 •
ז' טבת תשפ"ז
5786

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

י"ל ע"י
קהילת שבתי בבית ד'
בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
רבי גמליאל הכהן
רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הפרשה

ואנדיל אהכס מן העמים

טיב המערכת

למחיה שלחני אלוקים

It was to sustain life that Hashem sent me

It was the custom of Duber – the strongman of the town, that in everything that he would do he would mention the Name of Heaven. No matter what happened in the town, he would always say that everything is from Heaven. Even when from time to time he would steal from others, he would announce that everything is from Heaven. And even when he would bring down the force of his arm upon the townspeople who did not find favor in his eyes, even then everyone knew that regarding everything that he did he claimed that everything was from Heaven. And when someone would ask him how it could be that in Heaven they agree to his evil deeds, he had a decisive answer: If I succeeded in doing what I did, it is a sign that this is what they desired in Heaven. If HaKadosh Baruch Hu would not want this, He would not allow me to do such a thing.

Yosef HaTzaddik says to his brothers (45:5), 'ועתה אל תעצבו' - "And now do not be distressed and let it not anger your eyes that you sold me here, for to sustain life Hashem sent me before you." He says that he has nothing in his heart against them, because he believes with complete faith that everything that happened was from Heaven. And this was after the brothers had already been aroused and had returned in complete repentance for selling him, and he speaks to their hearts in order to encourage them and strengthen them in hashgacha pratis. And did the brothers not know what hashgacha pratis is? Certainly and without any doubt they did! So for what purpose did Yosef speak to their hearts?

This is the way of the yetzer hara, that it encourages a person to believe in Hashem and in His hashgacha when it is convenient for him. A person can transgress all the most severe transgressions, Rachmana litzlan, and in his mouth there are words of faith about hashgacha pratis, and he will even find support for his claims from seforim of Mussar and Chassidus. And certainly all this distances him from repentance. But we do believe in hashgacha pratis?! Correct, but not in order to evade responsibility. Therefore, the correct path is: to take responsibility for our deeds. If a person erred, sinned, acted improperly, the very first thing he must do is to repent for his sin. But then comes the "righteous" yetzer hara, and torments him over his deeds in order to cast him into sadness, which is the root of evil. That is the time to believe in hashgacha pratis. And this is also what Yosef HaTzaddik did. After the holy brothers regretted with all their heart their deeds, he encouraged them with words of faith so that they should not fall into the net of the "righteous" yetzer hara: "Do not be distressed!"

- Tiv HaTorah - Vayigash

And I will separate you from the nations

וְהָיָה כִּי יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה וַאֲמַר מַה מְעַשְׂיָכֶם וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֲנַשִּׁי מִקְּהֵל הַיּוֹד מְנַעַרְיָנוּ וְעַד עַתָּה גַם אֲנַחְנוּ גַם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּעִבּוֹר תִּשְׁבּוּ בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן כִּי תוֹעֵבַת מִצְרַיִם כָּל רֹעֵה צֹאן: (מו, לג לד)

And it will be when Pharaoh summons you and says, "What is your occupation?" Then you shall say, "Your servants have been cattlemen from our youth until now, both we and our forefathers", so that you may settle in the land of Goshen, every shepherd is an abomination to Egypt. (46:33-34)

It is fitting to expand upon the simple explanation in these *posukim* in order to sharpen the "message for generations" that is hidden within them.

When Yosef instructed to bring his father and all his descendants down to Egypt, he was careful that the reward of his action should not come at the loss of something greater. He knew that this descent would bring great benefit to Israel, because when they would be close to him, he would be able to sustain them with all the good of Egypt, and through this their hearts would be free to cleave to Hashem without disturbance. However, he also knew that this descent was like "a tail and a thorn in it," because the stay of Israel in Egypt could bring them to form connections with the defiled Egyptians, and these would reveal to them that there is "olem hazeh," and that one can indulge in lowly physical pleasures. Even if the elders would warn the young not to speak with the Egyptians for good or for bad, the ways of the Egyptians would leave an impression upon Israel, because inevitably Israel would notice them, and through this they would come to know concepts that are not honorable for the House of Israel. And even if, because of those concepts, the Egyptians would at first become a mockery and object of ridicule in their eyes, there is concern that with the passing of time they would become accustomed to their way, and they would no longer be so despised in their eyes, and after yet another period of time it might even arise in their minds that perhaps the Egyptians are correct, and they too will try the path chosen by the nation that resembles a donkey, and who knows how far the matter could develop.

Therefore, Yosef understood that immediately upon their descent the Children of Israel must establish a town of their own in a place separated from the masses of Egyptians, so that they would not need at all to become acquainted with them, and only through this would they be able to continue to exist in their holiness.

However, he understood that for this it was necessary to do something that even Pharaoh would agree to. More precisely, he needed to "compel" Pharaoh to agree to it. And in order to understand why, we must recall the statement of the Amora Rav (Shabbos 11a): that "if all the seas were ink, and the marshes pens, and the heavens parchment, and all people scribes, they would not suffice to write the emptiness of government." This statement teaches us that in order to govern a country even for only one day (as Rashi explains there), one requires people of very deep thought.

And Egypt was not blessed with people of such a type. The very concept of “people of thought” was almost nonexistent in Egypt, [and therefore they were steeped in lowly and material matters, because they did not cause the mind to rule over the heart at all], and certainly there were not among them “people of deep thought.” It is therefore not surprising that Pharaoh himself transgressed one of the laws of Egypt, that “a slave does not rule,” and he appointed Yosef as ruler. He saw that Yosef was one of a kind, and it was impossible to maintain this law when the kingdom of Egypt desperately needed a “person of thought” like him. And indeed we see that through the breadth of his understanding he saved Egypt from the disgrace of famine, and he even enriched the royal treasury which gathered to itself all the wealth of the world.

This is what the Torah states (above 45:16): והקול נשמע בית פרעה לאמר באו אחי' ווסף וייטב בעיני פרעה - “And the voice was heard in Pharaoh’s house saying, Yosef’s brothers have come, and it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh.” When Pharaoh was informed that Yosef’s brothers had come, he understood that they were a “treasure of gold” for Egypt. He assumed that Yosef’s brothers were similar to him, and that they too were “people of thought” like him, and the land could derive much benefit from them. Therefore, their coming was pleasing in his eyes. Since this was the case, Yosef understood that Pharaoh would not easily agree that they should separate themselves in some remote corner of his land, and he would seek to integrate them among the ministers of the kingdom, in a manner that would inevitably force them to intermingle with those who are among the lowest of the human species.

Since this was so, Yosef sought to present his brothers before Pharaoh as simple men, and beforehand he requested of them that they should not hesitate to say before Pharaoh things that would cause their

value to diminish in his eyes. And although this concerned a “king,” in whose eyes everyone wishes to find favor, nevertheless Israel is holy and must forgo this, because finding favor in the eyes of Pharaoh is a cause to lose favor in the eyes of Hashem. Therefore, when he will request to know “What is your occupation,” understand that he wishes to hear from you that he did not err, and that you are counted among the talented, and that each one of you is a “expert” in his field. But you should not conceal the truth that you are nothing but “shepherds of livestock,” even though this is a profession that does not require much thought, and generally it degrades its practitioners.

And indeed, we see later in the parashah (below 47:3) that this is what took place. Pharaoh asked them, **‘מה מעשיכם’** - “What is your occupation?” and they did not refrain from telling him the full truth, so that they would not find favor in his eyes.

However, this was not sufficient to persuade Pharaoh that these were people unfitting for matters of royalty, for Pharaoh also knew Yosef’s history. He knew that Yosef too had belonged to the lowly, and was even worse than a shepherd, for a shepherd is at least free to himself, whereas Yosef had been a slave, utterly the lowest of the low, completely nullified to another, and nevertheless it was ultimately clarified that he was worthy of kingship. If so, Pharaoh would think that Yosef’s brothers were also like him, and for some reason they were not utilizing their abilities, and therefore it was necessary to encourage them that at least from now on they should begin a new chapter in their lives and integrate among the honored ministers of the kingdom. Therefore, they added and emphasized, “We, we and also our fathers,” meaning that for several generations already we have been accustomed to this work. Thus, Pharaoh would understand that this is a family firmly established in its simplicity,

and Yosef is an “exception.” Only then would Pharaoh agree to give them a remote corner, and he would even be compelled to do so, because he would not desire that shepherds roam about the center of his land, “for it is an abomination to Egypt.”

And the true reason that the forefathers chose this profession was because it was a profession that does not overly burden its practitioners, and thus the main part of their time would remain free for the service of Hashem. But this they did not say to Pharaoh, because they preferred that he think they were lowly and unfit for a more dignified occupation, and in this way, he would leave them alone. For the tribes also chose to suffice with this lowly profession in order to devote the main part of their time to Hashem. And in particular they recoiled from the authority with which Pharaoh sought to honor them, knowing that it is accompanied by the danger of “burning the soul.”

This matter must be a sign also for generations, and especially in the final generation, in which there are many temptations from the authorities encouraging those who fear Hashem to integrate into all sorts of courses that “teach a profession,” including fields that are not fitting for members of the Jewish nation. And we must know that even if we would merit livelihood through these studies, as a result we would need to intermingle with the people of the street, and this would be a great danger to our souls. Therefore, we are forbidden to listen to the temptations of the authorities, even though they condemn us when we do not obey them. And concerning matters like this Chazal have already said (Eduyos 5:6): “It is better that a person remain a fool all his days, and not be a wicked person for even one hour before the Omnipresent.” Our forefathers chose to appear as fools before Pharaoh, and so too we should prefer to appear as fools before the authorities of our days.

‘לא לוקים פתונים’

טיב ההשגרה

‘Solutions belong to Hashem’

I live in an area where there is no regular transportation, and therefore I very often travel with rides, and almost every time I have wondrous stories of hashgacha. [Of course, one should not take any instruction from here to take rides.]

Once, I stood at an intersection for an hour and a half trying to stop a ride in the direction of Meron. A moment before I despaired, a car stopped that was traveling exactly toward Meron.

The driver was a bit naive, but along the way a conversation developed about putting on tefillin. He explained to me that he had been in a shiur, and the Rav said that one must check the tefillin, and if the tefillin were not checked at least once in seven years, then the tefillin are invalid.

He finished his words with a chilling sentence: “Since that speech, I stopped putting on tefillin for several years.” I was shocked, and I put a Rav who rules halachah on the line, who said that he should certainly put on the tefillin even if he did not check them. I explained to him that apparently he did not properly understand the Rav in the lecture that he heard.

He immediately accepted upon himself to put on tefillin, and I also connected him with a Heaven-fearing avrech [young, married man] in his area who would help him bring the tefillin to be checked by a Heaven-fearing sofer.

Now I understood why the ride had been delayed for so long. Everything had been worthwhile in order to merit a Jew with the mitzvah of tefillin...

After some time, I once again found myself stuck waiting for a ride for a long hour. I became impatient and frustrated. But this time I remembered the story with the tefillin, and I immediately calmed down, for I already knew that there is a reason for the delay, and certainly HaKadosh Baruch Hu has His reasons...

At last, the long-awaited ride arrived. I did not see any special story, but I understood that one does not need to understand everything, and to Hashem belong the solutions!

ש.ש.

The Quality of Deeds

Woe unto us from the Day of Judgment, woe unto us from the Day of Rebuke!

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו, אֲנִי יוֹסֵף! הֲעוֹד אַבְי חִי, וְלֹא יָבִיאוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲבוֹת אוֹתוֹ? (בְּיַבְהֲלוֹ מִפָּנָיו) (מה, ג)

And Yosef said to his brothers: I am Yosef! Is my father still alive? And his brothers could not answer him, for they were startled before him (45:3).

In the Midrash Rabbah (93:10) on this pasuk it states:

“Abba Kohen Bardela said, Woe unto us from the Day of Judgment, woe unto us from the Day of Rebuke. Bilaam, the sage of the idol-worshippers, could not withstand the rebuke of his donkey, as it says (Bamidbar 22:30), הַהֶסְכֵּן הַסִּבְנִיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת, לֵךְ כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יוֹסֵף לָךְ כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא - ‘Have I ever been accustomed to do thus to you?’ And he said, ‘No.’ Yosef, the youngest of the tribes, and they could not withstand his rebuke, as it says, And his brothers could not answer him, for they were startled before him. So, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu will come and rebuke each and every one according to what he is, as it says (Tehillim 50:21), אוֹכִיחֶךָ וְאֶעֱרָךְ לְעֵינֶיךָ - I will rebuke you and present it before your eyes, how much more so!”

On the holy night of Shabbos Kodesh, Parashas Vayigash, in the year 5648, in the small town of Gur, the holy Sfas Emes had just concluded arranging his tish in the great beis midrash, and he turned toward his sanctified home. Those who were close to him and those who understood perceived in the flame of his holy fire that his spirit was stirred within him, and his heart burned with a holy fire, a fire from Heaven.

After entering his room and sitting down, he opened and said with fervor and trembling holiness, in the name of his grandfather, the Chiddushei Harim zt"l: "Surely you know the Midrash in our parashah that states, "Woe unto us from the Day of Judgment, woe unto us from the Day of Rebuke!" And it derives this through a kal vachomer from Yosef, the youngest of the tribes.

"See, the tribes themselves took that kal vachomer for themselves, and indeed this is so—all the farshtelekhts [concealments] were only so that they would take this kal vachomer to heart!" "And in truth, all the farshtelekhts [concealments] are so that we should learn from them—[and should reach this understanding]."

"The Rebbe, Reb Shmelke z"l, said (Divrei Shmuel, Likkutim) explained the pasuk (Tehillim 119:161), שָׁרִים רָדְפוּנִי חֲנָם וּמִדְבָרְךָ פָּחַד, לִבִּי - Princes pursued me without cause, but my heart feared Your word, as follows – When princes pursued me without cause, it is only so that he may fear Him, Baruch Hu: 'But my heart feared Your word.'"

"All the farshtelekhts [concealments] come only to bring one to this kal vachomer. And if we would strengthen ourselves now in this kal vachomer of, 'Woe unto us from the Day of Judgment,' etc., the exile would cease to be." Thus far his holy words (from the sefer Likkutei Harim, our parashah).

Maran HaGaon Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, was accustomed to say, in the name of the Charedim, that if one wishes to determine the measure of a person's yiras Shamayim, this may be examined through his prayers. A person who possesses yiras Shamayim—his prayers are also with awe and fear of God.

And he explained the matter: In Torah study, when one sees that a person is a lamdan (erudite scholar) or a shakdan (diligent scholar), this is not sufficient proof of his yiras Shamayim. For it may be that the learning itself interests him and gives him pleasure, rich with understanding and novel insights, which readily ignite within him the "desire for Torah." But tefillah, which is the same prayer three times each day—its essence is "the service of the heart." In this, the matter depends upon how much yiras Shamayim the person possesses. Since the essence of prayer is standing before the King with awe and love, without yiras Shamayim a person cannot approach tefillah properly.

Therefore, he would advise those who sought his counsel, when investigating matters of shidduchim, to examine carefully how the person in question prays, for in this one may discern well his measure of yiras Shamayim. And this is good advice in the process of the matter of shidduchim.

To what may the matter be compared? To the search we conduct for a kosher and beautiful esrog. How much toil, checking, and repeated seeking goes into finding an esrog that is most beautiful, pure, clean, refined, and excellently grown—a true pri etz hadar (see Vayikra 23:40). And why all this commotion? After all, bed'avad the esrog may still be kosher, and one could fulfill the obligation with it; sometimes it is even lechatchilah, merely lacking adornment. Why not suffice with that? The reason is simple: Yisrael are holy and beautify the mitzvos, and they do not relinquish the finest beauty.

So too is the search for a worthy groom. He too must be sought like the most adorned of esrogim, examining with great care that he is indeed faithful and fitting. And one may best ascertain this by examining well the measure of his yiras Shamayim in his tefillah.

And so I witnessed with one of the gedolim of Yerushalayim. When he sought grooms for his daughters, his practice was to go personally to observe their manner of tefillah. And from that single observation, he would understand the essence of the young man in question. Give to the wise, and he will become wiser.

The holy Rav Dovid of Lelov zt"l, was once delayed in arriving to shul. The congregation waited a long time and wondered why the Rebbe was late, so unlike his way.

His loyal attendants, seeing that the Rebbe was not arriving, went out to search and investigate the matter. How astonished they were to find the holy Rebbe, on his way to the great beis midrash, standing beside a certain courtyard

and gazing inside for a long time. The disciples approached him and asked what the Rebbe saw in such an ordinary courtyard. The Rebbe answered that here he was learning yiras Shamayim. The attendants, who knew the character of the householder living in that courtyard, were greatly surprised. He was a very simple Jew, not known as a man of stature or great yiras Shamayim. What, then, could one learn from this man?

The Rebbe explained: As he passed by the courtyard, he suddenly heard loud shouting coming from the householder. He approached to see what was happening, and saw that the man was working in the field, while his aged father—over ninety, frail and weak—sat nearby on a chair, watching his son work.

At some point the son became tired from the heavy labor—running back and forth across the field to sow, hoe, pull weeds, and perform all the tasks of the field. He asked his elderly father to come and relieve him for a bit. But the aged father said he had not the strength to

rise and take on such labor. So it went several times: the son pleading, the father refusing.

After several refusals, the son became angry. He ran toward his father in great fury with the hoe in his hand and shouted: "If not for my yiras Shamayim, I would already strike you forcefully with this hoe!"

In the face of these words, the tzaddik concluded, I remained here to draw a bit of yiras Shamayim from this simple Jew—who, though shouting unjustly at his elderly father and burdening him terribly with the work, nevertheless possessed a touch of yiras Shamayim, and out of fear of Hashem and His majesty refrained from striking his father.

It would have been a wasted opportunity, Rav Dovid explained, not to take this lesson of simple yiras Shamayim from that simple Jew of Lelov.

Maran, the holy gaon, the Chafetz Chaim zt"l, once passed on a journey by a field filled with beautiful, ripe apples. When the wagon driver saw how good the apples were, he yearned to "pick" a few juicy ones.

He turned to the elderly "passenger" seated in the wagon—the Chafetz Chaim z"ya—and said: "I will stop the wagon for a few minutes. I want to grab a few precious apples. Keep your eyes open and watch well if anyone is coming who might see what I am doing. When I return, I will give you one of the stolen apples."

The driver jumped down and hurried to the orchard, relying on the "old man" in the wagon to warn him of any approaching danger.

He had barely reached the first tree and begun to gather the apples into his basket when suddenly he heard the cry of the Chafetz Chaim, calling loudly, "M'zeht! M'zeht! Git achtung! [He sees! He sees! Be careful!]"

The driver, terrified, quickly returned to the wagon, but saw no one. He asked the

