

Parashas

Bo

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א' שבט תשפ"ו

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ

רבי גמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

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באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

הכל בידי שמים

טיב המערכת

האיש משה גדול מאד

The man Moshe was very great

A man came to his Rav with a complaint: he had heard the Rav say in his drasha, "Anyone who pursues honor, honor flees from him, and anyone who flees from honor, honor pursues him." Now behold, for a long time he had been fleeing from honor, and he did not see that honor was pursuing him. Why was this so?! The Rav saw that this man did not understand the meaning of "to flee from honor," so he answered him wisely: as long as you flee from honor but you keep turning around to see whether it is chasing after you, it will not chase after you. Only when honor sees that you are not turning around to see whether it is after you, then it will come on its own.

Moshe Rabbeinu performs signs and wonders in Egypt; Pharaoh and the Egyptians are punished through him, and they should hate him. Yet the Torah says (11:3), 'גם האיש משה גדול מאוד בארץ מצרים בעיני עבדי פרעה ובעיני העם' - "Also the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and in the eyes of the people," and this is perplexing: not only do the Egyptians not hate and despise the man who punishes them so much, but he is great and honored in their eyes? The answer to this difficulty is written within the posuk itself: "the man Moshe was very great." It is known that the word "very" alludes to lowliness, as Chazal said (Avos 4:4), "מאד מאד הוי שפל רוח" - "Be very, very humble in spirit." If so, the reason that "the man Moshe was great" is because of the "very," and as the holy Torah testifies about him (Bamidbar 12:3), "והאיש משה עניו מאוד" - "and the man Moshe was exceedingly humble."

Do you want people to honor you? That is fine. Everyone wants to be honored, and the Torah teaches us to honor every person. But we must be careful that honor does not become a "goal." Thus, the Gemara says (Nedarim 62a): "A person should not say: I will read so that they will call me wise; I will study so that they will call me Rabbi; I will review so that I will become an elder and sit in the yeshivah. Rather, learn out of love, and in the end honor will come." And thus we see these matters as they occur in reality: one who wants people to honor him is demeaned in the eyes of others, whereas talmidei chachamim who study Torah for the sake of Heaven and not for the sake of honor are honored in the eyes of others, for "one who flees from honor, honor pursues him," and "in the end honor will come."

Tiv HaTorah - Bo

Everything is in the hands of Heaven

דְּבַרְכָּא בְּאֲזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאַלּוּ אִישׁ מֵאִשׁ מֵאֵת רַעְהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רַעוּתָהּ כְּלִי־כֶסֶף וְכִלֵי זָהָב: וַיִּתֵּן ה' אֶת חֵן הָעָם בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם גַּם הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד בְּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּעֵינֵי עַבְדֵי פְרֹעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי הָעָם: (יא, ב ג)
Please speak in the ears of the people and let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her fellow silver vessels and gold vessels. Hashem granted favor in the eyes of Egypt, moreover, the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people. (11:2-3)

Rashi explains: Please speak – the word נא can only be an expression of request, I request of you Moshe, direct them with regard to this, so that that righteous man Avraham should not say, "He fulfilled in them, 'They will enslave them and afflict them', but He did not fulfill in them, 'And afterwards they will depart with great wealth.'"

Behold, the words of the holy Zohar are well known, that the Torah is not, chas v'shalom, a bundle of stories, and in all its posukim are hinted directives in the service of the Creator. Even those that recount the events that befell our forefathers in Egypt necessarily come to teach something. For although we need them in order to know what occurred in Egypt so as to fulfill the commandment of "סיפור יציאת מצרים" - "the telling of the Exodus from Egypt," they did not need to be an inseparable part of our holy Torah, and they could have been bound as a separate book on their own. Then the Torah would have needed to mention only the command of "והגדת לבנך" - "and you shall tell your son," and they would have fulfilled it through that book in which the posukim speaking of this story were engraved. However, since it is part of the Torah, it is necessary that within their inner dimension are also "bodies of Torah," meaning "paths of life" that the Jewish man must accustom himself to. It follows that when one contemplates posukim that tell some story, one must reflect upon them in order to understand the inner point hidden within them, and this is a great principle in the study of the Written Torah.

And now let us examine the posukim before us and see how we can reveal the inner point that the Torah intended to teach us through them.

At the outset we must reflect on the language of the posuk: why is it said, "Please speak in the ears of the people," in a language of request? After all, there is no difficulty or impediment in this command that would require a language of urging and request. On the contrary, a person desires these things. Rashi explained that it was necessary to urge them so that that righteous one should not say, "And they will enslave them and will afflict them He fulfilled for them," and so on. However, his words still do not fully settle the mind, for since there is no impediment to the fulfillment of the command, there is again no reason to fear that the Children of Israel might not fulfill it.

Additionally, we must understand why the posuk needed to relate the matter of the "favor" that Israel merited, adjacent to that command that they should ask from the Egyptians vessels of silver and gold. Granted that the posuk brings this later on (below 12:36), after it recounts that Israel indeed fulfilled the command (there 12:35), that is so that they will understand what caused the Egyptians to consent to Israel, for Hashem gave the people favor in their eyes. But while Israel is only being commanded regarding this obligation, there is, seemingly, no reason to state it.

It may be said that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to train Israel in understanding and to teach them a chapter in the service of faith. For behold, certainly there were many among Israel who, were it not for the command to ask for vessels of silver and vessels of gold, would not have wanted to derive benefit from the wicked Egyptians. Their hatred of the Egyptians who had afflicted them and humiliated them to the dust was

engraved deep in their hearts, and they did not want at all that those people should do them good, lest this good stand for them as a merit, and lest their giving be considered appeasement. These Israelites did not want there to be forgiveness for the Egyptians for the magnitude of their evil, and they preferred that their sin be engraved upon their bones forever.

On the other hand, there were also those whose line of thought was the opposite. From their perspective they would have been glad if the Egyptians would grant them their request, but they thought that even if they were to ask, the Egyptians would not agree to comply with their request. After all, from days of old they knew that those people hated them with a hatred of death, so why would they now be appeased to satisfy them?!

Accordingly, HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw fit to urge them in the fulfillment of this command and to entreat them with the expression "please," that they should not make any calculations, neither that they do not want to ask, nor that the Egyptians do not want to give. They should compel themselves to ask from the Egyptians. And it is well understood His intention Yisbarach in saying, "lest that righteous one say," and so on. For if the Children of Israel make calculations that they should not ask, the promise that HaKadosh Baruch Hu promised Avraham, "and afterward they shall go out with great wealth," will not be fulfilled.

And so that the Children of Israel would understand why they are being asked to do things that, according to their own calculations or desires, it is not appropriate for them to do, HaKadosh Baruch Hu revealed to them in that very command that

from now on they would merit to find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. This would be for them a sign that the choice to hate them or to love them does not depend on the Egyptians, but only on HaKadosh Baruch Hu. For if the hatred of the Egyptians toward Israel depended on their own personal will, why would their skin be turned to love them after they had suffered harsh and faithful blows because of them?! You are therefore compelled to conclude that their disposition is not in their own hands. HaKadosh Baruch Hu decreed whether Israel would be hated or loved by the Egyptians. And so it is also regarding their sufferings: we must know that the Egyptians were not the true strikers; they were only the instruments for the decree of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He is the One who saw that it was for the benefit of Israel that they be struck and persecuted by the Egyptians, and therefore He would arouse hatred toward Israel within them. But after their rectification had already been completed, HaKadosh Baruch Hu would arouse affection toward Israel within them.

And from now on there is no place for all the calculations that prevented them from fulfilling the will of the Creator. If they know that everything is in the hands of Heaven, and that even "the will of a person" is included, then there is no impediment to asking from the Egyptians vessels of silver and gold. For now there is no reason at all either to hate them or to consider them as enemies and understand this.

This is also knowledge for all generations. When a person is harmed by inanimate matter or by other causes that are not in the hands of man, he understands that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the One who arranged the matters. However, if he was

pained by a person who possesses free choice, he forgets to recognize that this person is a cause from Heaven. Here he blames the person and complains against him for having harmed him: he struck him, he disgraced him.

The truth is that there is a difference between "harm caused by inanimate matter" and "harm caused by a person." The inanimate does not intend at all to cause harm, and in a situation where it nevertheless caused damage, one can easily attribute it to Divine providence and justify the judgment. Whereas the person who causes harm is indeed a "being with free choice," and a claim is aroused against him: Why did he choose to do evil? Why am I hated before him? However, one must know that even the thought of hatred is rolled about by HaKadosh Baruch Hu for good and for atonement. And since this is so, there is no place at all for hatred.

Even one who is indeed on a high level, and at the time he is disgraced by another he believes that 'אלקים אמרו לו קלל' - "G-d said to him, curse," (Shmuel II 16:10) can sometimes err and think that nevertheless the one who cursed him has now become his enemy until further notice. And to the extent that he would need his benefit, he would refrain from asking him, lest his request be in vain. But the true believer knows that no single moment is bound to its fellow. In the first moment he needed atonement, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged that this person would be a cause to merit him with it. And in the next moment, after he has already merited atonement, there is again no reason that the other should provoke and pain him further. It is also possible that the other greatly regrets his actions.

'13 מידות של רחמים' 'traits of mercy 13'

I accompanied a family whose infant suffered very, very much due to a complication of a rare illness that knocked the family off its feet emotionally, physically, and financially, as a result of long hospitalizations and an inability to work and provide for the household as usual.

When they returned home after a period of hospitalization and prolonged treatments, I heard that they needed a short vacation. I could not refuse, and I approved for them to book a getaway for the entire family for Shabbos, with food and comfortable, restorative lodging. The inn called me, and I transferred to them a payment of thirteen thousand shekels (13,000) on behalf of the family that so greatly needed it.

My wife heard me paying the large sum and said: "Fine, for medical needs you give what you have and what you do not have, but since when do you send a family on a vacation?!"

I explained to her that my heart felt that they truly needed this vacation, and I was not capable of saying no!!!!

On Motzai Shabbos I closed a real estate deal that brought me in a sum double the investment, but not merely double, rather thirteen times the investment. I immediately showed my wife, and she reconsidered and accepted it, and announced that she would no longer have comments about my acts of charity!!! Every time I perform acts of kindness I see special Heavenly assistance, but this

time, when it involved activating the attribute of mercy beyond the letter of the law, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sent us thirteenfold, in order to emphasize the measure-for-measure!!!

טיב ההשגרה

מ.ח.מ.

‘ומתלמידי יותר מכולם’

(And from my students more than all of them)

The Creator of the world has merited me to be among those who sit in the beis midrash, and to bring out a work on a subject that is very burning among the public. I exert myself greatly to write in a clear manner and to bring the matters close to practical halacha according to the sources. I was engaged in a certain topic and tried to descend to the understanding of our Rabbis as much as I was able, but I felt that the practical halachic aspect had not become sufficiently clarified for me. A few days afterward, a man called and wanted to meet with me, and the question on his lips was exactly on the topic with which I had already been occupied for several days. I rejoiced with great joy that the matters were fluent in my mouth and that I was able to help him, but more than that I rejoiced over the manner in which he asked the questions; this sharpened my understanding and enabled me to plunge into the depth of the halachah. I felt that HaKadosh Baruch hu had arranged for that man to come to me in order to encourage me and to tell me to continue with my writings!!!

ב.ש.

Rav Menachem Mordechai Eisenbach ז"ל

One of the cherished figures of Karta deShufreya [the beautiful city] was Rav Menachem Mordechai, son of his esteemed father the righteous Rav Shalom Zeev Eisenbach ז"ל, whose yahrzeit occurs on the 9th of Shevat. Within this column, we periodically—with siyatta diShmaya—recall the noble memory of those exalted souls of Yerushalayim shel maalah, whom our master and teacher, knew personally and with whom he was acquainted. We have therefore gathered a few select reminiscences in his honor, drawn from the various talks in which our teacher mentioned him and recounted matters concerning him. These words will surely serve us as ethical instruction, drawn from the pure yiras Shamayim that characterized the people of Yerushalayim, whose entire way of life stands for us as a sign and a model. May this also stand as a merit and an elevation for his soul, Amen.

**”למען תספר באזני בנך ובן בנך את אשר
התעללתי במצרים, ואת אתתי אשר שמתי
בם, וידעתם כי אני ה'“ (י, ב).**

So that you shall tell in the ears of your son and of your son's son what I wrought in Egypt, and My signs that I placed among them, and you shall know that I am Hashem (10:2).

Scripture equates your son and your son's son, placing them side by side, teaching that both are equal with regard to the obligation of recounting the Exodus from Mitzrayim.

Although with respect to the commandment of Torah study it is explicitly ruled in Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 245:3) that one's son takes precedence over one's grandson—and likewise in the Rambam (Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:2)—nevertheless, in the matter of recounting the Exodus from Mitzrayim, it is evident that just as one is commanded with respect to himself, so too is he equally obligated toward his son and toward his son's son. This is unlike the obligation of Torah study, in which one's son precedes one's grandson.

The reason appears to be that the commandment of recounting the Exodus from Mitzrayim is unique, for it stands at the very foundations of the faith and at the root of the belief of the people of Israel. As the pasuk testifies in the very first utterance of the commandment of faith: אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים - I am Hashem your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (20:2). All the miracles that the Borei Yisbarach performed for us in the Exodus were wrought in order to establish the foundation of the Jewish faith, which rests upon perfect emunah, so as to bequeath the heritage of faith to all future generations.

Therefore, with regard to this commandment—recounting the roots of faith—all generations are equal. Its very essence is the establishment of generations grounded in faith, that Israel be believers, the children of believers. In this matter, son and grandson are equal, for its core purpose is the transmission of the foundation of faith from generation to generation.

Included within this faith is also the telling to our children and our children's children about our own generations and about all the generations of Your servants, the seed of Yisrael—so that future generations may know and recognize our forefathers and our teachers, and the elders of Yisrael of past generations who were God-fearing and wholehearted. Through this, the continuity of the generational chain is preserved, and all future generations will recognize what earlier generations prepared for them, through their self-sacrifice for the

preservation of this faith and for the observance of Torah and mitzvos, for the glory and splendor of Beis Yisrael.

The illustrious Eisenbach Dynasty

A great and illustrious household was established in Yerushalayim, the Holy City, by his esteemed father, the renowned righteous Rav Shalom Zeev (Velvel) Eisenbach ז"ל, son of the famous tzaddik Rav Chaim Tzvi (Hersh) Eisenbach ז"ל of Batei Rand, and one of the venerable elders of Jerusalem. Rav Shalom Zeev left behind numerous descendants, all for renown and splendor—truly a seed blessed by Hashem. At the time of his passing, at a ripe old age of over one hundred years, he left behind more than two thousand descendants, who continue in the path of their forebears, faithfully preserving the flame of Beis Yisrael in holiness and purity, in accordance with the tradition of the Eisenbach family for many generations.

Many fine and fruitful plantings did Rav Velvel implant in the vineyard Klal Yisrael. By the kindness of Hashem, I too merited to become related to him by marriage, when his son, Rav Asher Anshel Eisenbach ז"ל, became my mechutan. From him I heard much about the amazing Eisenbach family.

One of the most distinguished sons of the venerable Rav Velel Eisenbach was Rav Menachem Mordechai ז"ל. We shall recount, with siyatta diShmaya, not only something of his personal greatness, his awe of Heaven,

his integrity in Torah and yiras Shamayim, but also a glimpse of the elevated atmosphere in which he merited to be raised in his father's great home. In this way, we may gain insight into the roots from which this fine tree grew, and into the righteous figures of earlier generations whom his eyes beheld—figures from whom he learned and received the ways of Torah, yiras Shamayim, and upright and refined character traits, as will become evident to the discerning reader.

In his youth, Rav Menachem Mordechai ז"ל was raised in his father's home, where he became accustomed to—and firmly acquired—all three pillars upon which the world stands. The home was permeated with Torah, Divine service, and acts of kindness.

His righteous father, that great and beloved man, Rav Velvel Eisenbach ז"ל, was among the venerable elders and long-standing residents of Jerusalem, Karta deShofreya, one of the precious remnants

whom Hashem calls—among those God-fearing and wholesome souls of Yerushalayim. He was deeply engaged in the inner wisdom as well, regularly attending the Kabbalistic discourses held in the Beis Midrash Anshei Ma'amad.

Likewise, Rav Menachem Mordechai was accustomed in his father's home to pray all the daily prayers for many years at the Kosel. There, at the place known as the Gate of Heaven, he would pour out his supplications, from where the tefillos of Yisrael ascend on high.

Beyond the fact that all the conduct of this great household revolved constantly around Torah—family members moving from study hall to yeshivah, and Rav Velvel being known among local residents as the masmid of Yerushalayim—the home was also deeply engaged in acts of chesed. This was so despite their consistent effort to conceal these deeds and keep them free of publicity, in keeping with their general manner of living simply and modestly.

Nevertheless, from mouth to ear, the charity administrators of Jerusalem were well aware of the many families who regularly received meaningful support from the Eisenbach household—support that was, for the most part, given in the form of matan b'seser, discreet charity giving. In addition to this, Rav Velvel served a s

a faithful charity trustee, tirelessly going from place to place to solicit funds from the holy people of Yisrael for the many charitable causes under his responsibility.

More than once, his distinguished son Rav Menachem Mordechai merited to serve as a shaliach mitzvah in these matters, bringing light into the homes of fellow Jews. He was particularly skilled in carrying out these missions with wisdom and dignity, so as not to embarrass the recipient. He would present the assistance as though he were merely a messenger sent to deliver a “special stipend” from one of the benefactors whose heart desired to support the livelihood of the holy and pure residents of Jerusalem.

Thus, from his earliest years and throughout his youth, Rav Menachem Mordechai merited to draw deeply from the wellsprings of his father’s home—and from the home of his illustrious grandfather, Rav Chaim Hersh—absorbing abundantly from all three pillars upon which the world stands. Over the course of his life, he too grew in the splendor of Torah and avodas Hashem, and in the beauty of charity intertwined with refined and upright character traits. In this way, he likewise established faithful homes, continuing the sacred lineage—doing what is upright and good in the eyes of Hashem and in the eyes of man.

I heard a fine and instructive incident from one of the members of the illustrious Eisenbach family, one that can help attune our ears to understand the atmosphere in which Rav Menachem Mordechai zt”l, was raised in the home of his father, Rav Velvel zt”l. From this episode we may learn both about the educational path toward pure yiras Shamayim with which the home was suffused, and about the ways of humility and modest conduct with which he educated his sons and household.

Rav Velvel zt”l was among the elder men of clear and refined judgment in Jerusalem. Throughout his life he observed numerous stringencies and venerable customs that he had held fast to from ancient days, from before the advent of the modern machinery of our era.

One such stringency concerned milk. Prior to the era of today’s large dairies, which stand under the constant supervision of the great rabbinic authorities of the Badatz of the Eidah HaChareidis, this elder did not wish to rely on the presumed trustworthiness of milk suppliers of various kinds. Since the halachah requires, in certain circumstances,

that a Jew personally observe the entire process of milking from beginning to end, he adopted a personal refinement not to drink any milk except that whose milking process he had himself witnessed.

Having accustomed himself to this stringency, he continued to observe it throughout all the days of his life—even many years after milk bearing the highest level of kosher certification had already become available. Perhaps this was due to concern for the laws of vows: once he had begun and habituated himself to this noble custom without stipulating that it be without a vow, there was room to be concerned about the prohibition of a vow, as is well known.

Accordingly, he fenced himself off entirely from drinking milk throughout the year. Only in honor of the festival of Shavuot, and in honor of the days of Chanukah—during which there is a custom to partake of dairy foods, as ruled in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 494:3;670:2)—would he himself go out to observe the milking, so that he could fulfill the sacred Jewish custom.

This brings to mind what I heard from the tzaddik Rav Aharon Katzenelbogen zt”l, rosh yeshivah of Torah VeYirah here in the Holy City, who noted a great difference between the stringent practices of our times and those of the previous generation. In our days, many young scholars adopt various stringencies, and therefore devise numerous workarounds so that all these stringencies can be observed without suffering any loss on their account. In the end, they thus manage to eat everything—just not food bearing one particular certification that they consider too lenient, but rather that of another certification deemed more stringent.

By contrast, in the earlier generations, those who were stringent simply refrained, and did not eat at all. Such was the way of Rav Velvel Eisenbach, who never entertained the notion of sending emissaries on his behalf to observe the milking. Rather, he simply refrained—and ate no dairy foods whatsoever.

This stringency as well, which the great father practiced in the home, was initially concealed from the awareness of his older sons. Only later did they realize that before Chanukah and before Shavuot he would need to go out personally to observe and supervise the milking of the milk produced especially for him. This was but one of the stringencies practiced by that righteous man. He likewise observed several stringencies regarding meat, to the point that he would almost never eat meat during the weekdays. In addition, he undertook many fasts and self-imposed afflictions, endeavoring with great wisdom to conceal them—so much so that even his sons and household

members were unaware of them.

Thus was Rav Menachem Mordechai raised and formed in a home filled with holiness and pure fear of Heaven.

In anticipation of the bar mitzvah celebration of his son Rav Menachem Mordechai—[or of one of his brothers]—Rav Velvel traveled with his family, to Maran the holy tzaddik Rav Aharon of Belz zy”a, for the ceremony of laying tefillin. This was, of course, an awe-inspiring and majestic occasion, engraved upon the heart of Rav Menachem Mordechai for his whole life, as the exalted, holy, and pure tzaddik himself personally occupied himself with him—educating him in the mitzvah of tefillin and drawing him beneath the wings of the Shechinah.

Following davening and the laying of the tefillin, it was the custom in the home of the tzaddik to enter his sacred abode, where drink and light refreshments were set upon his table in honor of the joyous occasion. The tzaddik would distribute shirayim [leftovers from the Rebbe’s plate] to all the family members, blessing each and every one with the blessing of le’chaim.

When the family’s turn arrived, they all entered together before the tzaddik, placing upon his holy table the special cake prepared for the celebration, along with a bottle of drink. The tzaddik blessed them and began distributing to all from the food before him. First, he gave shirayim to the bar mitzvah boy himself, and afterward he distributed to several distinguished guests who were present at that gathering.

Rav Velvel, who stood nearby, noticed that the Rebbe was distributing exceedingly small portions—mere tiny crumbs, held delicately between his holy fingers. Thus he gave each of those present a portion the size of a small bean—reminiscent of what we find regarding the distribution of the lechem hapanim in the Beis Hamikdash (see Yoma 39a; Tosafos there, s.v. higi’ani, and the commentaries).

Rav Velvel reflected inwardly and pondered: is it possible to recite a blessing over so minute a crumb, or would it be preferable to exempt it by reciting a blessing over another piece that constitutes a tangible portion?

And then—suddenly, while he was still immersed in thought—the faithful attendant Rav Hillel Wind zt”l called out his name, summoning him to approach the tzaddik and receive shirayim from his hand. To his great astonishment, the tzaddik altered his manner of distribution, took into his hand a substantial piece, one worthy of honor, and placing it into the outstretched hand of Rav Velvel, said to him with a smile: “Auf dem kenstu sicher bentchen!” —“On this, you can certainly recite a berachah.”

And all those present were astounded at the Rebbe’s ruach hakodesh!
