

Parashas

Eikev

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י"ח אב תשפ"ו

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י"ח ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ

רבי גמליאל הכהן

רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

המערכות טיב

Guard yourselves השמרו לכם

A certain man struggled greatly with earning a livelihood. In his distress, he went to his Rebbe and asked for his blessing. The Rav said to him: "To grant you material abundance is not a problem, but I fear that if you become wealthy you will abandon the holy Torah." However, the man pleaded with the Rebbe and promised that he would never forsake the holy Torah. After he persisted and entreated greatly, the Rebbe gave him a coin and blessed him with success and great wealth.

Indeed, it was not long before the man prospered greatly in his pursuits and became very wealthy. At first, he kept his promise and continued to maintain his study sessions as before. But gradually, he began to miss one session here and another there, until he completely abandoned the study of holiness and immersed himself entirely in his many pursuits.

To our great sorrow, the man continued to distance himself from the path of Torah. He changed his clothing and his behavior until he appeared like a gentile, and he behaved that way as well. Then one day, the Rebbe appeared in his home and said to him: "See what the wealth has caused you." The man began to stammer, but the Rebbe did not delay. He asked him for the coin that he had given him. The man pleaded for his life and promised that he would correct his ways, but the Rebbe was unwilling to listen. He took the coin and departed, and immediately the man's businesses began to collapse, and he descended lower and lower until he returned to being poor as at the beginning.

Every day we read the section of "והיה," where the Torah says (11:16): 'השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים' - "Guard yourselves lest your heart be enticed and you turn away and serve other gods." Rashi HaKadosh explains: "And you turn away — to separate from the Torah, and as a result: and you will serve other gods — for once a person separates from the Torah, he goes and attaches himself to idolatry."

In these days, an atmosphere of release prevails in the world, and even a Jew who observes Torah and mitzvos may think to himself: What will happen if I also rest for a few days, and afterward I will have more strength to return to learning? But in truth, this is the counsel of the yetzer, for reality has proven exactly the opposite. The holy Torah cries out: "If you abandon Me for one day — for two days I will abandon you." And regarding this the Torah warns us: "Guard yourselves lest your heart be enticed" — for once a person separates from the Torah, he goes and attaches himself to idolatry. Therefore, we must be careful not to distance ourselves from the holy Torah, and that not a single day should pass over us without Torah study.

Tiv HaTorah - Eikev

חיזוק מול פיתויי היצר

Strengthening against the temptations of the yetzer

וְנָשַׁל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵל מִפְּנֵיךָ מֵעַט מֵעַט לֹא תוּכַל בְּלָתָם מְהֵרָה
תִּרְבֶּה עָלֶיךָ חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה: (ז, כב)

Hashem, your G-d, will thrust these nations from before you little by little, you will not be able to annihilate them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase upon you. (7:22)

Rashi explains: Lest the beasts of the field increase upon you – But is it not true that if they perform the will of the Omnipresent, they do not have cause to fear beasts, for it says (Iyov 5:23) 'וְחַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה' – 'And the beast of the field will be at peace with you'? But it was revealed before Him that they were destined to sin.

Awesome things we see in these words of Rashi. Rashi explains that the advice of the Torah not to destroy the nations of the Land of Israel all at once is necessary because of the generations that would in the future sin in the Land of Israel, for through this they would cause fear from predatory animals — but not for those generations that would not sin, for they would have no reason to fear the beasts.

From his words we learn that were it not for sin, HaKadosh Baruch Hu would have preferred that they destroy all the nations at once. For we already see in the previous section (above 7:2–4) that the continued dwelling of the nations in the land after the conquest was a terrible spiritual danger for Israel. HaKadosh Baruch Hu was greatly concerned about the closeness that might develop between Israel and the nations if they were to dwell near them, to the point that the Torah needed to warn against intermarriage with them. And if such a terrible decline could result from the nations dwelling near Israel, certainly HaKadosh Baruch Hu would have preferred to expel them all at once — and only because of sin was His instruction changed, not to destroy them all at once, for due to sin this would become a cause of danger.

A great foundation we see from his words: that the obstacles to fulfilling the will of Hashem are caused by sins. From here there is an answer to the yetzer: when it sees that a person is awakening to accept upon himself some "good resolution," it tries to frighten him with all kinds of threats and shows him that mountains of obstacles will come to fight him and his decision. Therefore, it is better, it claims that he retreat from his desire to accept upon himself what he wishes to accept. To this, a person must respond that all the obstacles exist only as long as he has not yet accepted the "good resolution," but afterward the order of the world will change, and all the obstacles will be as if they never were — as we see here, that even predatory animals change their nature before one whose ways are upright and refined.

And Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, already said (Mishlei 16:7): 'בְּרָצוֹת ה' דְּרָכֵי אִישׁ גַּם אוֹיְבָיו יִשְׁלָמוּ אֹתוֹ' - "When Hashem is pleased

with a man's ways, even his enemies will make peace with him." The Vilna Gaon explained in these words: "A person should not say: How can I return from my evil ways, for I have three obstacles — the yetzer, a child, and a woman. That is: the yetzer hara — which prosecutes against me Above; 'a child' — these are the paths in which I have walked from my youth, the animal soul that I have always followed and become accustomed to; and 'a bad woman' — literally, for the animal soul is also called 'a woman,' and when it is accustomed to an evil path it is called 'a bad woman.' And this is: do not fear them, for 'when Hashem is pleased with a man's ways, even his enemies will make peace with him.' And 'even his enemies' refers to the 'bad woman,' 'even his enemies' refers to the accusers, and also the animal soul, etc., and all of them will become for him good and peace," end of his words.

You should also contemplate what is brought in Chazal (Succah 52a): "In the future, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will bring the yetzer hara and slaughter it before the righteous and before the wicked. To the righteous it will appear like a 'high mountain,' and to the wicked it will appear like a 'hair's breadth.' These weep and those weep: the righteous weep and say, 'How were we able to conquer such a high mountain?' and the wicked weep and say, 'How were we not able to conquer this hair's breadth?'"

Anyone who contemplates this statement is immediately struck by the apparent contradiction regarding the nature of the yetzer: if it is indeed a "high mountain," why does it appear to the wicked as

a "hair's breadth"? And if it is only a "hair's breadth," why does it appear to the righteous as a "high mountain"? It is known what the masters of mussar answered: indeed, both of these aspects exist in the yetzer hara. For when a person accepts upon himself the "yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven," the yetzer immediately reveals itself to him as a "high mountain," for it shows him countless obstacles and trials that will be his portion if he accepts upon himself the yoke of Heaven, and it says to him: how can it enter your mind, a "weak" person like you, to conquer a "high mountain" like me?

After the yetzer presents its argument before a person, it usually receives three kinds of responses. The wicked agree with its words; they "understand" its argument and immediately hide away their aspirations. They explain well to themselves and even to others that a person must be "realistic," and if he sees clearly that he is unable to withstand a certain task, he must understand that it is not for him.

But those of inner strength among the righteous do not pay attention to its words at all, and with boldness they speak to it sharply, that they are not impressed by the high mountain, however great it may be. If the Creator Baruch Hu commands them "and you shall choose life," they can surely overcome it.

And there will also be among the righteous those upon whom the fear of the mountain makes an impression, yet nevertheless they will not despair of fulfilling their obligation. For they will

outsmart their yetzer by responding to it that they still do not know whether its claim is true, and perhaps in practice most of the obstacles will not arise. And even if it is correct, this is not a reason to retreat, for even if they cannot conquer a "mountain," a "hair's breadth" they can conquer — that is, to overcome only the obstacles of that day they are able — and with this argument they push it off from day to day.

In light of the above, the words of our Chazal are well understood. The righteous, who from the outset outsmarted it by viewing it as a "hair's breadth" in order to defeat it, will indeed ultimately merit to conquer a "high mountain," for through this counsel they will merit to overthrow that yetzer which initially appeared to them as a high mountain. And in the future, its threat — when it appeared as a mountain — will be recalled before them, and they will rejoice that they were not enticed by it. But the wicked, who from the outset agreed that it was a mountain, will express their wonder at how the righteous succeeded in conquering such a great mountain. And then it will be answered to them that in truth it was a "hair's breadth," and that is what enabled the righteous to fulfill "and you shall choose life" day after day until they completely conquered it. Then the wicked will regret that they did not from the outset choose to view it in that same way. In any case, we see from here that we must not be afraid of the threats of the yetzer, for in the end we can surely overcome it.

'The kindnesses of Hashem' "חסדי ה'

In the middle of an intercity trip, a passenger turned to me and asked that I call his phone from my device because he had some issue with his device that he wanted to check.

The truth is that I did not really feel like it, but nevertheless I made the call for him, and he was happy that his problem was resolved.

The bus reached my stop and I got off.

A few minutes later, I noticed that I had forgotten a valuable bag on the bus.

I remembered the person who had asked for the call, and I called his number. He answered a second before he got off the bus and took the bag with him.

I thought that I had done an act of kindness, and afterward I saw that HaKadosh Baruch Hu had prepared my salvation through that very call...

פ.ר.

Light at the end of the tunnel אור בקצה המנהרה

I was traveling with my friend in a car, and the car in front of us was driving slowly. The driver signaled with flashing high beams that he should move aside and allow us to pass, but they continued driving

slowly.

At the first opportunity, my friend overtook and continued on his way. The overtaken car decided to overtake again and drove slowly. Of course, my friend used his high beams for them to stop bothering us.

It was three in the morning, on a narrow and dark road where there was no shoulder and no possibility to pass. They stopped the car, and four dark-skinned men with wildly grown hair, one of them bald, got out with a clear intention to attack violently.

I looked at them, and although I have some ability in managing fights, nevertheless this was not what I wanted. But I prepared myself, with no choice, for a gift—of soft speech, prayer to Hashem, and battle if necessary.

A moment after the prayer, a car appeared behind us and activated blue police lights. The criminals fled like mice to their hole and cleared the way!!!

Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, for His kindness endures forever!!!

ב.ר.

טיב ההשגרה

The holy sefer Derash Tov (31a), writes in the name of the holy Baal Shem Tov zt"l, that these pesukim are expounded as a roadmap in the service of Hashem: "It states, וְסַרְתָּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים - And you will turn aside and serve other gods—when one deviates even by a hair's breadth to the left, this already borders on idolatry, chas veshalom. וְסַרְתָּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם - Once a person turns aside, immediately the turbulent waters surge forth and seek to engulf him. For they specifically seek to latch onto the slightest misstep, that his learning veer to the 'left,' and then one requires great merit to pass through the sea in peace."

The initial deviation is minute—almost imperceptible—but its consequences can be vast. A slight tilt becomes a current, and the current a flood.

The holy Yid of Peshischa zy"a, reveals, by way of allusion in the opening word of the pasuk, the root cause of such deviation:

"Guard yourselves—פֶּן! The word פֶּן denotes doubt. One must guard himself from doubts, from inner confusion and uncertainty in the service of Hashem. For this is the root and the very beginning of all failure. When one becomes entangled in doubts, questions, and inner turmoil, these weaken both heart and mind, body and soul, and undermine his ability to serve Hashem with simplicity and integrity.

If one does not guard against this פֶּן, it leads to, and you will turn aside. At first only slightly—"like a hair's breadth"—but from there the descent can accelerate until, Rachmana litzlan, וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם - you will serve other gods and bow to them.

Similarly, he expounded the pasuk (Devarim 29:17), לֵאמֹר - פֶּן יִשָּׁבְחֶם וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת ה' - Lest (פֶּן) there be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood.

When there is פֶּן —doubt, hesitation, inner confusion—this itself becomes a root bearing gall and wormwood. A person becomes ensnared in endless internal questioning: perhaps this, perhaps that... and these doubts become the root of suffering, both physical and spiritual. As hinted in the continuation of our parashah, וְהָרָה אִם ה' בָּכֶם וְגו', וְאֶבְדַּתֶּם מִהָרָה וְהָרָה אִם ה' בָּכֶם וְגו' - The anger of Hashem will flare... and you will perish swiftly from the good land —both the spiritual "land" of the soul and the material good of this world.

[And corresponding to this, an allusion is hinted here by way of an acronym: שְׁרֵשׁ פָּרָה - ראש וְלֵעָנָה - שופר (shin-peh-reish-vav — shofar) as is known. For the unique power of the simple blast of the shofar, which penetrates into the innermost chambers of the heart, is to strip away all doubts and to straighten every crookedness, thereby bringing joy to the

טיב והמעשיות

The Subtle Turning—The Root of Deviation

הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם, פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶּם, וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם. וְתָרָה אִם ה' בָּכֶם וְגו', וְאֶבְדַּתֶּם מִהָרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר ה' נָתַן לָכֶם. וְשָׂמַתֶּם אֶת דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים עַל לְבַבְכֶּם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם וְגו'. (יא טו-יז)

Guard yourselves, lest your heart be seduced, and you turn aside and serve other gods and bow to them. And the anger of Hashem will flare against you... and you will perish swiftly from upon the good land that Hashem gives you. And you shall place these words of Mine upon your heart and upon your soul.... (11:16–18)

yishrei lev (the upright of heart).]

During one of the journeys undertaken by the Divrei Chaim zt"l, to collect funds across the towns and villages of Galicia and Poland for the great mitzvah of pidyon shevuyim, he arrived at a certain home. When the lady of the house opened the door, he explained the sacred purpose of his collection—to rescue Jewish captives in distress.

Upon seeing the radiant holiness of the tzaddik and hearing of the lofty cause—"for there is no greater mitzvah than redeeming captives" (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Dei'ah 252:1)—her heart was aflame. She asked what exact sum was required.

Hearing a question born of such pure determination, the Sanzer Rebbe responded with fiery intensity and specified the precise amount needed—an immense and weighty sum.

The woman, filled with simple and complete faith in tzaddikim, immediately produced the entire amount from beginning to end, without hesitation, giving with a generous hand—fulfilling the ruling: "A person never becomes impoverished from charity, nor does any harm result from it" (Yoreh Dei'ah 247:2).

Several hours later, the husband returned home. When he heard what had transpired in his absence, his anger flared—how could the Rebbe have taken such a vast sum?

In his fury, he inquired where the Rebbe had gone next and learned that he had traveled to a nearby town for the night. He resolved to pursue him the next morning and demand the full return of his money.

At midnight, a commotion arose outside. A

grand carriage drawn by a powerful horse halted before the house. From it descended a noble poritz, accompanied by attendants. They knocked forcefully. The startled homeowner opened the door and, seeing the distinguished nobleman, received him with honor, offering food and drink.

The poritz thanked him warmly and explained that he sought lodging for the night. "This house," he remarked, "found favor in my eyes." He hinted generously that this would not be without compensation. Understanding well that one does not argue with a poritz, the man prepared fine accommodations for him and his entourage.

At dawn, the poritz and his servants prepared to depart. Before leaving, he thanked the host and slipped a heavy envelope into his hand—filled with many gold coins—and swiftly departed.

The man stood astonished. Opening the envelope, he counted the coins carefully—one by one—and found the sum to be exactly equal to what had been given to the Rebbe the previous day. Precisely matching, coin for coin.

"Well," he said, "this was a profitable transaction..."

Nevertheless, he proceeded with his original plan and traveled to the nearby town. Upon locating the lodging of the Sanzer Rebbe, he was granted entry. Upon entering, he beheld the radiant figure of the Rebbe seated at the head of the table, immersed in Torah. Overcome with awe, he approached slowly. The Rebbe lifted his eyes and greeted him warmly, asking his purpose.

The man began presenting his complaint—that he was the husband of the woman from whom the Rebbe had taken a large sum.

Before he could finish, the Rebbe responded with a broad smile: "Indeed, it is true—and I have already repaid the entire sum, down to the last coin. That poritz who visited you—he was my messenger, and he has already delivered everything in full. Now return home in peace, rejoice with your righteous wife, and continue in the path of charity and uprightness for blessing and good."

When the Rebbe of Gorlice concluded this account, he explained its lesson: If one seeks to emulate our holy father, it is impossible to imitate him selectively—only in the matter of kepeidah or displays of severity. One must emulate him in all aspects.

Well—who among us can produce such "messengers," such angels bearing gold overnight as our holy master did? Only one who can do so may attempt to follow his other lofty and hidden paths, on behalf of all Klal Yisrael.

There was once a sincere and upright young man who would regularly attend my shiurim, and would often come seeking guidance and encouragement.

To his great distress, he remained unmarried for many years. Numerous proposals came his way, yet none materialized. The root of the difficulty lay not in the proposals themselves, but in the mountains of doubts he constructed around each one. He would analyze, investigate, probe, reconsider—and then begin again. With each round of inquiry, his inner turmoil only deepened, until he became incapable of arriving at any decision. Thus he reached the age of thirty-seven—still alone, his heart heavy and spirit broken.

Day after day, year after year, he wandered in this state, unable to find rest. His inner suffering was immense.

One afternoon he came to consult regarding a particular suggestion. He presented all its facets—and the “facets of its facets”—each layered with doubt upon doubt. No matter how I attempted to clarify or dismiss irrelevant concerns, he remained entangled, like a thread tightening into an ever more complex knot. In desperation he pleaded: his strength was gone; he could no longer bear the burden of doubts.

At that time, it was the fixed hour when the gaon and tzaddik Rav Zundel Kroizer zt”l, author of Ohr Ha’chamah, would come daily to learn with me. I asked the young man to wait and seek his counsel.

When Rav Zundel arrived, he received the young man warmly and invited him to present his concerns calmly and in order. The young man did so—thoroughly, meticulously—demonstrating full command of every angle, emphasizing repeatedly that since this concerned a marriage, it was a question affecting “his entire life.”

Suddenly, Rav Zundel grew animated and asked, “Forgive me—but how many years do you intend to live?”

The young man was taken aback. “What do you mean?”

Rav Zundel replied gently, “You are constructing mountains of doubts and justifying them by saying this is a question ‘for your entire life.’ But what is ‘an entire life’? The pasuk testifies (Tehillim 90:10), יְמֵי

סט 'בנין יעקב' על יורה דעה שכשבב"ה את עולם הכוללים
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מליחה סימן ע' חלק א
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שנותינו בהם שבעים שנה ואם בגבורת שמונים שנה - The days of our years are seventy, and with strength, eighty. You are approaching forty... so this 'lifelong question'—is it so overwhelming for forty more years? Why overturn worlds with endless doubts? This world is but like a fleeting dream. Why are you getting excited over something which you claim is 'for your entire life'? One might understand such an expression from an eighteen-year-old—but not at your stage in life."

These words, issuing from a sincere and expansive heart, penetrated deeply. In a moment, the fog lifted. The young man grasped the rebuke, and all his doubts dissipated. He recognized the proposal for what it was—a suitable and worthy match. Before long, the engagement was finalized, and the marriage took place in good time and with blessing. The couple merited to build a faithful and upright home, and to see blessed generations.

On one of the Shabbasos when I merited to accompany my revered father, the gaon and tzaddik Rav Levi Hakohen Rabinowitz zt”l, in the early morning hours of Shabbos to the ancient Ungarisher Shul in the Me'ah She'arim neighborhood for the vasikin minyan [before sunrise], my father utilized the brief interval between Kerias haTorah and Mussaf to step out for his personal needs.

However, when he hastened to return, he saw

to his dismay that the shaliach tzibbur had already begun escorting the Sefer Torah back to the aron kodesh. He quickly took hold of a siddur and joined in the recitation of the chapter (Tehillim 29), 'מָמֹר לְדָוִד הָבֹהֶלָה' as is customary during the return of the Sefer Torah in the Mussaf service of Shabbos, and afterward during its placement in the aron with reciting 'וּבְנֵהָהּ יֵאָמֵר'. But to his distress, he had “missed” the entire פירקן prayer while he had been outside.

The heart of Rav Levi the tzaddik was pained—both over the פירקן that had eluded him, and over the Mi Sheberach that the Geonim instituted immediately afterward.

“Any loss can be made up,” Rav Levi reflected—even after davening is over.

And although that Shabbos a joyous kiddusha rabba had been arranged in honor of the birth of his granddaughter, and the congregation had already gathered to partake in the celebration, Rav Levi—whose demeanor was refined and composed—did not rush. He calmly took his seat, reopened his siddur, and began to recite, with a settled and tranquil mind, the prayer of פירקן: both the first passage instituted by the Geonim—חֲבִירָתָא קְדִישָׁתָא—“for our masters and for our sages, the holy alliances ...” and the second passage established לְכָל קְהֵלָא—“for this entire congregation, adults with children,” together with the Mi Sheberach that follows for הקדוש כל הקהל והזה - “this entire holy congregation.”

He recited everything pleasantly and deliberately, like one counting coins. Upon concluding, he closed the siddur and kissed it with affection. Only afterward did he proceed to join the joy of the kiddush and the Shabbos meal.

From the refined conduct of this tzaddik and chassid we learn a pattern of life: measured composure, inner calm, and clarity of mind—free of confusion and agitation that disrupt thought, heart, and soul. Rather, everything was conducted with lucidity, humility, patience, and inner steadiness, qualities that constantly guided his way of life.

He stood for us as a living embodiment of the words of the Ramban zt”l, in his Iggeres:

“Accustom yourself always to speak all your words gently to every person and at all times, and through this you will be saved from anger... and through these traits you will rejoice in your portion. And when you conduct yourself with humility... then the spirit of the Shechinah and the radiance of its glory will rest upon you, and [you will merit] the life of the World to Come.” — Amen.