

Parashas
Beha'aloscha

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י"ח סיון תשפ"ה
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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

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טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

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Torah is better with acts of kindness

טיב המערכת

ועינו בעין הבדלח

Its color was like the color of crystal

The Mishnah says (Avos 1:12): "Be among the disciples of Aharon – loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to Torah." Chazal ask (Avos D'Rebbe Nosson): "And what was the character trait of Aharon that such was said about him?" Our Rabbis said: When two people had a quarrel with each other, Aharon would go to one of them and say, "I saw your friend so-and-so, his heart torn within him, and he is weeping bitterly and saying, 'Woe to me for what I said to my friend. How can I lift my eyes to face him and see him? I am ashamed and also humiliated, for I am the one who wronged him.'" And Aharon would speak to his heart until he would remove the jealousy and anger from his heart. Afterwards, Aharon would go and sit with the second person and likewise speak to his heart until he would remove the jealousy from his heart. In time, they would meet one another, kiss each other, and make peace between them.

Our parasha tells of what occurred in the desert against Moshe Rabeinu. What was the protest about? About the manna! They did not want to eat only manna; they wanted cucumbers, watermelons, onions, and so forth. 'והמן כזרע. 'ועתה נפשנו יבשה...בלתי אל המן עינינו, 'גד הוא ועינו כעין הבדולח - "And now our soul is dry... there is nothing at all, besides the manna before our eyes," "And the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance was like the appearance of crystal." (11:6-7) Rashi explains: "The one who said this did not say that." Israel says, "there is nothing at all, besides the manna before our eyes," and HaKadosh Baruch Hu dictated in the Torah, "And the manna was like coriander seed," etc., meaning: Let the people of the world see what My children are complaining about – and yet, the manna is so significant.

From contemplating Rashi's words, we discover something wondrous: Despite all the ingratitude of Israel, still HaKadosh Baruch Hu calls them "My children." This teaches us the greatness of His love for us. And in this matter, each of us can be among the disciples of Aharon HaKohen, for a Jew may think: After all that I have sinned and transgressed, *chas v'shalom*, HaKadosh Baruch hu hates me and no longer wants my tefillah or my Torah. But it has already been decided in halacha according to the view of Rabbi Meir, who said (Kiddushin 36a): "You are children to Hashem, your G-d – whether so or so, you are called children," meaning even when they do not fulfill the will of the Omnipresent. And if we remind ourselves and others of this, we act like Aharon HaKohen, and we awaken the love of HaKadosh Baruch hu in our hearts, and we draw Israel, including ourselves, closer to our Father in Heaven.

- Tiv HaTorah – Beha'aloscha

(ויען יהושע בן נון משרת משה מבחריו ויאמר אדני משה כלאם: (יא, כח

Yehoshua bin Nun, the attendant of Moshe since his youth, spoke up and said, "My lord Moshe, make an end of them!" (11:28)

Rashi explains: Put upon them the needs of the community, and they will be ended by themselves.

Indeed, we often follow in the footsteps of the Zohar HaKadosh, which taught us that when delving into the stories of the Torah, one must examine their details in order to understand what the Torah intended to convey to us through them. For it is impossible that the Torah—whose purpose is to instruct a person in how to act—would recount events merely for the sake of storytelling. (See the words of the Zohar on this matter in Part III, page 152.)

Thus, when we come to this story, when we see Yehoshua's suggestion to impose communal responsibilities on Eldad and Medad, we must draw from it two points. The first is itself the principle that the Torah's stories are not told merely as tales, for this is a story that is not graspable by those of physical substance. What wrongdoing did these two righteous men commit, that for it they should deserve punishment? After all, HaKadosh Baruch Hu rewarded them in the merit of their good deeds and their humility. It is necessary to conclude that the entire story is something lofty beyond our comprehension, and hidden secrets of Torah are embedded in it. It was not, *challah*, written merely as a tale.

Yet, alongside our understanding that we cannot grasp the depths of the matter, we are still obligated to understand that the Torah wants us to learn from these matters even according to our limited comprehension, with the intention that we extract from it ways of life. For the lessons for people of our stature depend certainly on understanding that is relevant to us.

Therefore, even if we do not understand why Yehoshua thought it was necessary to silence the prophecy of Eldad and Medad, we are obligated to learn from this that communal responsibilities lower a person from his spiritual level. Indeed, Chazal told us the opposite—they listed among the forty-eight qualities by which Torah is acquired also "one who bears the burden with his fellow" (Avos 6:6). And indeed, all

the great ones of Israel throughout the generations greatly occupied themselves with communal needs and cared for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of their brothers among the Jewish people.

However, this is only when it is done with boundaries and safeguards, because otherwise, all of a person's time will necessarily be consumed by these matters, and he will not merit Torah at all.

On the other hand, we must also know that the primary greatness of Torah is only when it is accompanied by acts of kindness, and those who involve themselves only in Torah do not merit to see blessing in their toil. This is also stated precisely in the words of our Chazal (Bava Kamma 17a), and here is their language: "Rebbe Yochanan said in the name of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai: What is the meaning of the *posuk* *Yeshaya 32:20*, **אֲשֶׁר יִכְתֹּב זֶרְעִי עַל כָּל מִים מִשְׁלַח יִרְגַל הַשּׁוֹר וְהַחֲמֹר** - 'Fortunate are those who sow beside all waters, who send forth the feet of the ox and the donkey'? - Anyone who engages in Torah and acts of kindness merits the inheritance of two tribes... His enemies fall before him like Yosef, as it is written (Devorim 33:17), **בְּהֵם עֲמִים יִגַּח יַחְדּוֹ**, 'With them he shall gore the nations together, to the ends of the earth.' And he merits understanding like Yissachar, as it is written (Divrei Hayamim I 12:33), **וּמִבְנֵי יִשְׁשַׁכַּר יֹדְעֵי בִינָה לַעֲתִים**, 'And of the sons of Yissachar, those who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do.'"

This statement, aside from bearing witness to the good that awaits those who engage in Torah and acts of kindness, also reveals to us that the primary value of Torah study is when it is coupled with acts of kindness. And it is true that Torah study on its own is also a great virtue.

Chazal already said (Succah 52b) that Torah study itself gives one the strength to overcome the *yetzer*, as they said: "If that wicked one encounters you, drag him to the study hall. If he is a stone, he will dissolve; if he is iron, he will shatter." But the primary excellence of Torah is when it is joined with acts of kindness. And therefore, aside from the reward that "his enemies fall beneath him"—that is, the *yetzer*, which is a person's main enemy, falls beneath him—he also merits the ultimate goal of Torah study, which is *understanding*. That is, he is elevated and gains wisdom through it. For we have learned (Vayikra Rabbah, Parasha 2, section 1): "A thousand enter to learn halacha, and one emerges fit to rule," which means not all who study merit to become Torah scholars. This requires merit. And here, Chazal revealed to us that this merit comes when Torah is combined with acts of kindness.

It is told of the gaon Rebbe Chaim Palagi who was the Rav of a great city of G-d—namely, the city of Izmir in Turkey—and as a result was greatly burdened with all the matters of the city. For in earlier generations, the Rav of the city was responsible for all those in need within the city; he was the one who extended his hand to support and assist them. And in addition to those seeking the word of Hashem—that is, halacha—all the broken-hearted would gather at his door to share their troubles with him. And after dedicating much of his time to hearing their pleas, he was also required to walk about and knock on the doors of the generous among the people to collect for the benefit of those in need. All of this took many hours of his time. And nevertheless, he astonished all who saw him when he succeeded in publishing one hundred and ten works.

When he was asked how he managed to publish so many works,

he answered and said: The art of success is not in driving away the widow who comes to share her sorrow; the art is in training the hand to begin writing immediately as soon as the widow rises from the chair and has not yet left the house.

In any case, one sees from this very fact that it was precisely he who combined Torah with acts of kindness who saw success in his Torah.

Certainly, such success also requires an intense desire for Torah and using every free moment for Torah, but when he sees that his help is needed in the matter of an act of kindness, he is obligated to involve himself in this mitzvah as well. Chazal already said (Yevamos 109b): "Whoever says, 'I have only Torah'—even Torah he does not have."

Even in more recent generations, we merited to see an illustration of this. For who is greater than our master, the Raavad of the Holy City of Yerushalayim, the gaon Rebbe Yisrael Yaakov Fisher? The expression "his mouth did not cease from learning" truly fit his image and is not at all an exaggeration. And this great one, despite his immense toil in Torah, also made acts of kindness a major priority, and indeed his rulings and halachic decisions were accepted throughout the Jewish world.

The Raavad himself testified that his success in Torah was dependent upon his concern for others. This was when he was asked why he rose above his peers, and he replied: The truth is that I had other friends who also studied eighteen hours a day, just as I did. But they studied eighteen hours and did not help their wives with household chores, and I also studied eighteen hours and also helped my wife. And apparently, this is what brought me immense Divine assistance [*Siyata D'Shemaya*].

דואר אוויר • 'Air Mail'

My son, a child in a preparatory class, asked me several times to get him a pump to inflate his bicycle tires, as they were lacking air. That morning, I already felt uncomfortable. I promised him that I would come to pick him up from the preparatory program and we would go together to my brother-in-law's house to ask him for the pump to inflate the tire, even though my time was tight. Indeed, I came to pick up my son, and I happened to meet my brother-in-law who had come to pick up his son. I asked him if we could accompany him to his home to borrow the pump. In a completely surprising response, he handed me a bag with a pump for inflating the tire inside. I was in total shock. He said: "Just now someone returned to me the pump he borrowed from me two and a half months ago!!!"

ל.

כל תפילה יהלום

'Every prayer is a pearl'

After spending two weeks in the hospital, I came home for Shabbos and very much wanted to go to shul to daven Shacharis and thank Hashem. In the morning, I took two rings from the jewelry box—one in each hand—and a necklace set with stones in the other, and in that way, I fastened the necklace and continued getting ready to go out. Suddenly I noticed that the diamond ring had disappeared. I began to search and could not find it. I asked my daughter to help me search, but we did not find it. I said to my daughter: "I do not want to miss Shacharis because of the ring, so I will go out and continue the search afterward."

I went to shul, but my heart and thoughts were with the diamond ring that my late husband bought for me with great expense, and it is the ring dearest to me. I shared my sorrow with my Creator and said to Him: "Master of the Universe [Ribono shel olam], You know how dear this ring is to my heart, and I do not want to lose the ring because of davening in shul! Please arrange for me to find the ring!"

I had barely finished my request when I felt something rolling along my back. I reached my hand, and into my hand slid a sparkling and especially shiny diamond ring. I was particularly moved by the fact that a person prays and HaKadosh Baruch Hu answers on the spot! It is not always seen, but here it happened. It turned out that when I put on the necklace, I did not feel that the ring slipped from my hand into my clothing, and the ring could have easily slipped away and disappeared without me sensing anything. And Hashem did a kindness with me and answered my prayer and returned to me the item most precious to me, which cannot be replaced by another!

ה.

A Loving Approach to Bringing Others Closer

קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהרם אתם (ח:ו)

Take the Levites from among Bnei Yisrael and purify them (8:6).

Rashi *zt"l* explains: "Take them with words—fortunate are you that you merit to serve as attendants to the Omnipresent."

The Maharal, in his commentary *Gur Aryeh* (10), explains why Rashi interprets "take" (קח) as referring to words. One cannot literally "take" a person, as every individual remains in his own domain. Even if one resides with another, the term *kicha*—taking—does not apply to him. Therefore, Rashi clarifies that it means "take them with words," for a person's essence is his intellect. Through pleasant speech, encouragement, and words of endearment, one can influence another, thereby bringing him into his domain. From this mitzvah, in which Hashem commanded Moshe to bring the Levites to their service through a *loving approach*, we learn the proper method of drawing Jews closer to the service of Hashem—through kindness and affectionate words, not through coercion or a sense of subjugation.

This is the duty of a leader of *Klal Yisrael*—to instill this loving approach within the hearts of those who heed his teachings and among the congregation under his guidance: "Fortunate are you who study Torah and engage in the service of Hashem."

In our times, when we no longer have the *Beis HaMikdash*, any Jew who draws closer to Hashem can, in a sense, be considered a "Levite," a term derived from להחלוה—to accompany. Likewise, every person can attain a level akin to a *kohen* offering sacrifices, as *Chazal* teach (*Menachos* 110a): "One who engages in the study of the laws of the burnt-offering is considered as if he has offered it." Similarly, in *Sotah* (5a), it states: "One who humbles himself is considered as if he has offered all the sacrifices."

Indeed, we are well aware of the words of the Rambam at the conclusion of *Hilchos Shemittah VeYovel* (13:13), where he writes:

"Not only the tribe of Levi, but any individual from all of humanity whose spirit moves him and whose intellect compels him to set himself apart, to stand before Hashem, to serve Him, to know Him, and to walk upright as Hashem created him—removing from his neck the burdens of worldly calculations that preoccupy people—such a person is sanctified as the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (Holy of Holies). Hashem will be his portion and inheritance for eternity, and He will provide for him in this world what is sufficient for his needs, just as He does for the Kohanim and Levites."

I witnessed a wondrous practice from one of the great Sages of Yerushalayim—twice, Heaven granted me the opportunity to see this approach in action:

The first instance was at a wedding, where this esteemed rav officiated the *chuppah* and *kiddushin* according to halachah. Among the distinguished guests were some family members who were not observant. It is not uncommon for Jewish celebrations to include relatives from various backgrounds.

The wedding began with the traditional and uplifting *Kabbalas Panim* reception. The groom, hesitant yet radiant with holiness, entered the hall and ascended the platform, where he was seated between his parents, grandparents, and other dignitaries. The guests—relatives, friends, and associates—gathered around, including those secular family members who watched the proceedings with a mix of curiosity and emotion. This scene was utterly unlike any wedding they had ever attended. The reverence and sanctity enveloping the event deeply moved them. Feeling a connection to the family and sensing the grandeur of the Divine presence, their hearts stirred.

As the orchestra began to play ancient, stirring melodies, the groom took out his *Tehillim* and immersed himself in fervent prayers. Tears streamed down his face as he pleaded with the Almighty to grant him a home founded upon Torah and holiness.

At the moment of the *chuppah*, the esteemed rav entered the hall, and in his honor, all rose to their feet. The hosts hurried to greet him, escorting him to his place beside the groom.

As the rav walked toward the stage, guests approached him with warm handshakes, receiving his blessings. The sacred atmosphere—permeated with awe and love—touched even the secular relatives, drawing them closer. They too wished to receive a

blessing from the rav.

One of these family members, overwhelmed by emotion, wanted to approach and shake the rav's hand. However, he realized, to his dismay, that unlike the others, he had no *kippah*. While he had carefully chosen his finest attire for the occasion, he had not considered bringing a head covering.

The rav, noticing his hesitation, turned to his attendant and inquired why this man stood bareheaded when even his secular relatives had donned a *kippah*. Embarrassed, the man shrank back, realizing his oversight.

To the astonishment of all, the rav immediately removed his own *kippah* from beneath his hat and extended it to him, saying warmly, "Here, take this—a fine, distinguished *kippah*!"

The man was utterly overwhelmed. He had never imagined that the rav himself would remove his own *kippah* for him. Tears welled in his eyes as he placed it on his head and declared: "Rabbi, I promise you with all my heart—from this day forward, I will never remove this *kippah*!"

The crowd was visibly moved, and the rav blessed him with all his heart that he should return to his Jewish roots completely. He then gave him the *kippah* as a permanent gift.

It is well known that the *kippah* instills reverence for Heaven, as the Sages teach (*Shabbat* 156b): "Cover your head so that the fear of Heaven may be upon you." How much more so when the *kippah* comes from the head of a righteous man! This man's transformation was immediate—he became one of the rav's devoted students, engaging in Torah study and service of Hashem.

...

The second time I witnessed this was when the rav visited a prison to deliver an inspirational lecture.

One of the inmates, overwhelmed by the rav's presence, approached him humbly, covering his head with his hand, and asked if he had a *kippah* to spare.

Without hesitation, just as before, the rav removed his own *kippah* and handed it to him. However, in this instance, the rav had no hat, as he had traveled to the lecture wearing only his large *kippah*.

Realizing the importance of this moment, he recalled an episode from his youth, when he had seen the saintly Rav Yudale Horowitz of Dzikov *zt"l* wearing a white cloth on his head instead of a *kippah*. Inspired by that memory, the rav took his own white handkerchief, tied it securely on his head, and continued the lecture as if nothing was amiss.

The prisoner, deeply moved, pledged never to remove the *kippah*. Indeed, this moment

marked the beginning of his journey back to his faith.

At that same opportunity, that great Torah scholar recounted to his close associates the source from which he had learned this approach to conduct—namely, from a wondrous story that was publicized about the holy Rebbe of Sanz-Klausenburg *zt"l*, the author of *Shefa Chaim*.

After the Holocaust, while in one of the Displaced Persons camps in Germany, he encountered a young Jewish survivor who was walking around the camp without stockings. Since it is well known that he took upon himself the burden of restoring the dignity of Judaism from the ashes of the crematoria and cared for every Jewish man and woman, both physically and spiritually, he approached her gently and asked with sensitivity why she was not wearing stockings, as befitting the tradition of modest and virtuous Jewish daughters. The girl, sobbing, responded that she simply had no stockings to wear.

What did that holy and righteous man do? Unable to find rest for his soul upon hearing the cries of a lonely, pure, and innocent soul, he stood right there in the middle of the camp, removed his own black socks—the only pair he possessed—took them off his feet, and gave them to the unfortunate girl, remaining barefoot himself. He explained to her that for a man to be barefoot posed no concern of modesty, but a holy and pure Jewish daughter is bound by *das Yehudis* (the traditional standards of modesty for Jewish women) to cover her feet in modesty and holiness. He paid no heed to his own dignity and rabbinic stature, but continued on his way as a well-known Rebbe and *Admor*, barefoot and without socks—all for the sake of saving a Jewish soul!

Throughout her entire life, that young girl kept those socks and drew strength from them, for they brought her a measure of solace and healing to her wounded soul. Seeing them reminded her that she was not alone in the world, that she was not abandoned—there was a Jew, a true lover of Israel, who cared for her and her soul. Through this act of love and warmth, she was

drawn closer to her Father in Heaven and to His righteous servants.

And during the *shiva* mourning period following the passing of that holy Rebbe in Kiryat Sanz, in the city of Netanya (may it be established and firmly built), that same woman—though by then elderly and frail—exerted herself to come and console the grieving family. With tears streaming down her face, she recounted this story to them. They had never seen her before and knew nothing of it, but she showed them those very socks that had strengthened her and warmed her heart throughout her entire life.

From this, that great Torah scholar drew a lesson, reasoning *kal vachomer* within himself: If one must forgo even socks—something worn on the feet—for the sake of bringing a Jewish soul closer to Hashem, even if it means remaining barefoot oneself, how much more so when it comes to the sacred *kippah* worn on the head, which instills the fear of Heaven! If this can serve as a replacement for a head covering such as a kerchief and can be a means of drawing Jews closer through love and reverence for Heaven, then certainly one must use it to bring people back and save them from sin!

Furthermore, from this one learns that no story told about tzaddikim should be dismissed lightly. For we see that from the truth of this story, another righteous man learned his path in life. Every such story contains within it a moral lesson that a person can apply to their own actions.

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