

Parashas  
Devorim

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ח' אב תשפ"ה

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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

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

כוחה של תפילה

The power of prayer

טיב המערכות

וישב בה עד...

...He shall dwell in it until

The Rav of Ponovezh, HaGaon Rebbe Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman recounted that he was once with the *Chafetz Chaim* zt"l during the days of *Bein HaMetzarim* (The Three Weeks), and he needed to travel to another city. When he went to take leave of the *Chafetz Chaim*, the *Chafetz Chaim* asked him to kindly remain in his presence for another three days. So he did, and since he stayed there, it happened that he merited to observe up close the greatness of the *Chafetz Chaim's* divine service during the days of *Bein HaMetzarim*, as the *Chafetz Chaim* would walk about the entire day, weeping without pause, groaning and sighing, saying: "The Beis HaMikdash, the Beis HaMikdash..." and he resembled a man who had lost one of his seven close relatives – and even worse than that.

We now stand at the height of the days of *Bein HaMetzarim*, when immediately after Shabbos comes the bitter day of Tisha B'Av, and to our sorrow, nowadays we do not know how to mourn as they did in previous generations, and we do not even feel the pain of the destruction. Perhaps the only pain (almost) that we are capable of feeling is due to the restrictions and mourning customs practiced during these days. In truth, we are mostly waiting for it to be over and to pass, so that we can return already to the routine of eating, washing, clothing, and all the other things we have grown accustomed to.

Nevertheless, there is some pestering fly that buzzes at the back of our minds — *Bein HaMetzarim*... Tisha B'Av... destruction of the Beis HaMikdash... we are supposed to mourn, perhaps to cry, but it is so distant from us. And we comfort ourselves with the fact that we are keeping the halachos and afflicting ourselves — it is the least we can do — but is it enough? For deep inside, we are already waiting for the day after...

Moreinu HaRav shlita recounted that he was once in Meron, and a young man approached him and told him in distress that his brother, *lo aleinu*, had strayed from the path. The Rav said to him: "Enter to Rabbi Shimon and pour out tears like water in prayer for your brother." The young man said, "I am not capable of crying. Ever since I was a baby, I have not cried." The Rav said to him, "Take a knife and cut your hand, and when it hurts, you will cry..." And he entered — and cried, oh, how he cried!

So they are not demanding of us to cut our hands, but at the very least, when we feel pain due to the halachic restrictions, let us take that pain, and the suffering of Tisha B'Av, and truly feel anguish over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash — without thinking about the day after!

Tiv HaNechama

ובמדבר אשר ראית אשר נשאך ה' אלקיך כאשר ישא איש את בנו בכל הדרך אשר הלכתם עד באכם עד המקום הזה: ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלקיכם: (א, לא לב)

And in the wilderness, as you have seen, that Hashem, your G-d, carried you, as a man carries his son, on the entire way that you traveled, until you arrived at this place. Yet in this matter you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d. (1:31-32)

One may say by way of allusion that this is what Moshe said to Israel: "*Uvamidbar*" – in the sense of *dibur* (speech). And he meant to say that through the *power of prayer*, which comes through *speech*, "*asher re'isa*" – you have seen in the past how great its power is, "*asher*" – through it "Hashem your G-d carried you as a man carries his son," for when you were in the desert, you were several times in distress without water and food, and I then turned to Hashem Yisbarach to plead for mercy on your behalf and I was answered in the merit of my prayer, for Hashem provided for you a well and *manna*. Likewise, He provided for you everything you needed, like a man who carries his son and takes care of everything he needs. And He continued with these kindnesses "in all the way that you walked until you came to this place." If so, you must continue to strengthen yourselves in the service of prayer and supplication, and you will continue to see wonders through it.

Indeed, all the holy *seforim* are filled with teachings about the power of prayer, that through it one can merit to nullify many harsh and evil decrees, and to draw down abundance of blessing and salvations.

And when we see at times that a person's prayer makes no impact, the reason for this is the lack of faith in the power of prayer. It is true that even such a person studies Torah and sees that Moshe's prayer made an impact, but he does not attribute this to the prayer itself, but rather to the one who prays. That is, his mind tends to think that only the prayer of the righteous, like that of Moshe, is accepted, but there is no proof from this regarding the prayer of an ordinary person.

This is what the *posuk* continues: "*U'vadavar hazeh*" – in this very thing, namely the power of *speech*, which is prayer – "*einchem ma'aminim*" – you do not believe. You do not believe that this is what benefits you, for in your view, everything depends solely on the decree of "Hashem your G-d," and sometimes indeed He changes His decree – that is, when a righteous person pleads before Him. And since this is your belief, you do not value your own prayer, and you do not approach the service of prayer properly, and your request is not uttered before your Creator from the depths of the heart. But one who truly believes in the power of prayer and knows that Hashem listens to his prayer and desires to bestow goodness upon him – such a person indeed prays with seriousness and from the depth of the heart, and merits to see blessing in the labor of prayer.

And I will copy for you a passage from the holy *sefer Tiferes Shmuel* (Parashas Ki Savo), which speaks of the power of prayer specifically when it stems from faith and recognition of its lofty value, and these are his words: "Prayer is a matter of faith, for if not – why does one pray? As the *Baal HaAkeidah* wrote, and other holy *seforim* as well, the matter of prayer is a positive commandment from the Torah, as it says (11:13): 'ולעבדו בכל לבבכם' - 'And to serve Him with all your heart.' And is it not merely a request for one's needs? How can this be called a commandment? The explanation is: certainly prayer is a positive commandment, for one believes and trusts in Hashem Yisbarach that He hears his prayer and will help him with abundant goodness. For if not, why would he pray and to whom is he praying? Thus, the essential aspect of prayer is to reach faith and trust, and therefore it is a positive commandment."

And not only this, but even a great *tzaddik*, who is on the level of "the righteous decrees and HaKadosh Baruch Hu fulfills," if he does not believe in the power of his own prayer – that it can have an effect in Heaven – then in truth, he does not accomplish anything with his prayer.

As this matter is explained at length with good reasoning and wisdom by HaRav HaKadosh of Zlotchov, one of the great disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch, in his *sefer Orach LeChaim* (Parashas Haazinu), and these are his words: "There are *tzaddikim* who are in a state of humility, and they do not believe in themselves or in their good deeds. All their good deeds and prayers and acts of charity are not considered anything in their eyes, and therefore they do not believe in their own prayers and good deeds that they could have an effect through their prayers. And the reason for this is that when a person truly serves Hashem Yisbarach he is filled after the service and prayer with awe and humility, for he sees the Divine in this service, and he perceives in his mind that he is lacking in the service. Therefore, he is filled with awe and lowliness, and the more he ascends in spiritual level, the more he sees his own lowliness and deficiency in service. But even so, he must

believe in his prayer and his deed – that it has an effect Above. And if it appears to him that he is lacking in service, let him fix what he can fix, and what he cannot fix, let him ask for mercy over that known deficiency. But he should not, because of this, cease to believe in his prayer and in his deed. For if he does not believe that he can accomplish Above through his prayer and his speech – then in truth, he does not accomplish. For just as a person stirs below, so does he effect Above. And he should consider himself a small world, and all the worlds of the highest levels are included in him. Therefore, when he examines his deeds and regrets them, he can effect change in the supernal worlds up to the root of his soul. And he can transform the attribute of judgment into the attribute of mercy, and give strength and might Above, as it is said (Tehillim 68:35): 'תנו עוז' - 'Give strength to G-d.' And if, *chas v'shalom*, he does not believe in his good deeds and in his prayer, about him it is said (32:18): 'צור ילדך תשי ותשכח א'ל מחוללך' - 'The Rock who birthed you, you weakened; you forgot G-d who brought you forth' – that is to say, you forgot that G-d brought you forth from supernal worlds of the highest levels, and that you can effect Above through your prayer and your deeds." End quote.

In light of his words, it is incumbent upon every person to know that his prayer always makes an impression in the heavens, and draws forth abundance of salvations, and nullifies evil decrees and harmful events. And when he believes in this, indeed his prayer will be with proper intention, and will have the power to bring about wonders. And the Gemara is explicit (Rosh Hashanah 18a) that the efficacy of prayer depends on *kavanah* (intent), and this is its wording: "It was taught: Rebbe Meir would say – two people who ascended to the bed (sickbed), and their illness was the same; and two who went up to the execution platform to be judged, and their judgment was the same – one comes down [alive] and the other does not, one is saved and the other is not. Why is it that this one comes down and the other does not, this one is saved and the other is not? This one prayed and was answered, this one prayed and was not answered. Why was this one answered and the other not answered? This one prayed a *complete prayer* – he was answered; the other did not pray a complete prayer – he was not answered." Rashi explained: a complete prayer means that he had proper intention in the prayer.

However, sometimes, even if his prayer has the power to perform wonders, the salvation is delayed from arriving. For sometimes, a person's request cannot be fulfilled unless he prays a certain, fixed number of prayers. Therefore, if he indeed prayed from the depth of his heart and still sees that his request has not been fulfilled, he must not despair, but rather should add more and more prayers. And when the measure of his prayers is complete, he will see blessing in his efforts.

As we find that Moshe Rabbeinu prayed that he should enter the Land of Israel, and had he prayed one more prayer, he would have merited to enter, even though it had already been decreed that he would not. And so said Chazal (Devarim Rabbah 2:12): "Rabbi Chiyya Rabbah said: It is written (Tehillim 27:14): 'קוה אל ה' - 'Hope to Hashem, strengthen and fortify your heart, and hope to Hashem.' Pray – and return to pray – and there is a time when they will give to you."

הספד שכבש את ה'שולחן השבת'  
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## ‘Close to sunset’ לקראת שקיעה

For the purpose of purchasing an apartment in a rare opportunity, I sold the car in order to add to the initial funding. All this was after I turned to a lawyer to check that everything was in order, and after I hired the services of a mortgage advisor who began obtaining what was needed for the financing of the apartment.

With joy and excitement, I thanked Hashem for the good deal He brought to my hands. The next day, I received a phone call from the broker that the deal was off the table. I called the owner of the apartment, who said that it had nothing to do with him, but with his wife, and he does not intervene in the matter. I called the woman, and she responded sharply that this is the situation, and the apartment is not for sale. I explained to her that I had sold the car quickly for thousands of shekels below market price, and I hired the services of the mortgage advisor who already received payment and will not return my money, because he had already done the work. But she held her position: “I did not tell you to hire a mortgage advisor, and I did not tell you to sell your car. That is your problem, and I am not selling!!!” And at that point she slammed the receiver.

There is no need to explain what a terrible feeling that was — beyond the excitement over finding the apartment that was now lost, there was disregard and financial loss. I poured my frustration out before the Creator of the world. As someone who is careful to study Shaar HaBitachon daily, I tried to bless over the bad just as over the good and to repeat to myself that everything is for the best, and indeed I merited to thank Hashem calmly and with understanding that everything is for the best. But still, deep in my heart, I very much wanted to know — what good was there here?!

A week after the incident, I turned to another broker in the area to search for a different apartment. In passing, I shared with him about the apartment I had almost purchased. When the broker heard the location of the apartment, he became emotional and said, “Blessed is the One who saved you from that apartment!!!” When I asked why he was saying that Hashem saved me, he replied: “That is the worst area in this city. The ground is sinking, and the surrounding buildings are being evacuated because of the sinking. Go and look — the neighboring buildings are empty of people and entry is forbidden!!!”

Then I understood the kindness that the Creator of the world had done with me when He broke the deal in order to save me from that apartment. It is true that I lost a few shekels, but one must always remember — even in difficult moments — that everything Hashem does, He does for our good, with calculations that only He, may He be blessed, knows and performs.

n.7.

## The Rectification of Baseless Hatred

**Chazal teach us (Yoma 9b): “Why was the Second Beis Hamikdash — during whose era they were engaged in Torah study, mitzvos, and acts of kindness — destroyed? Because there was baseless hatred among them. This teaches us that baseless hatred is equivalent to the three [cardinal] sins.”**

*The natural order is such that when a person becomes ill, chas veshalom, and consults a doctor to determine the appropriate course of action, the first step the doctor takes is to investigate the causes of the illness. The doctor inquires about the patient’s diet, activities, and recent habits. Only after forming a clear picture can the doctor provide a proper diagnosis, understand the origin and nature of the illness, and prescribe an appropriate remedy. This principle applies universally to all healing and rectification: one cannot address or heal a problem without first understanding its nature and cause.*

*The destruction of our Beis Hamikdash and its glory is a profound and enduring affliction. Every Jew who yearns for its healing must first understand what they must do to facilitate its repair. Therefore, it is imperative to thoroughly investigate the underlying causes of this calamity so that we may determine the appropriate remedy.*

*Chazal explicitly taught us that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed due to the sin of sinas chinam—baseless hatred. Consequently, it follows that the fitting remedy to rebuild the Beis Hamikdash is ahavas Yisrael—love for one’s fellow Jew. This is what the Almighty seeks from us. When we rectify this failing, we bring the redemption closer.*

*The beginning of rectifying ahavas Yisrael starts within a person’s own home. Unfortunately, many stumble in this regard. A person might appear outwardly kind, upright, and pleasant to others, but within the confines of their home, they may transform into someone entirely different. There, their true character is revealed: whether they can yield and restrain themselves, whether they receive their family with a pleasant demeanor, or whether they manage their household with peace, joy, and patience. This is the essence of rectifying baseless hate. Through this internal work, we can address the root of the sin that caused the Beis Hamikdash’s destruction, and may we soon merit witnessing the rebuilding of our Beis Hamikdash and the consolation of Tzion and Yerushalayim in our days. Amen.*

*The holy Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael of Gur, zt”l, once heard people praising a Jew, saying he was a man of kindness, good-heartedness, and fine character traits. The Beis Yisrael responded: “To determine whether someone truly possesses good middos, one must ask his wife. She alone knows the secret of his character.”*

*Indeed, it is specifically within the home that a person’s inner essence is revealed. Outside, in the presence of strangers, it is easy to present a facade of kindness and virtue. The true test lies in one’s conduct with his spouse and household.*

*In the shul of the holy Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, author of Chazon Yechezkel, a Torah reader once approached the bimah to read from the Torah. However, his reading was evidently unprepared, resulting in numerous mistakes. The kehillah, as was customary, followed along and corrected him at every turn, pointing out error after error, causing frequent interruptions as the reader repeatedly had to revise his reading.*

*Throughout this episode, Rav Abramsky stood quietly to the side. He did not comment on the reader’s mistakes nor did he join the kehillah in correcting him. After davening, someone asked him why he had remained silent. Surely he too noticed the multitude of errors in the Torah reading—why had he refrained from correcting them?*

*Rav Abramsky responded with wisdom: “The Almighty has granted me the merit to author some twenty-five sefarim, including the Chazon Yechezkel series on the Tosefta. I have also been privileged to serve as a Rav and head of a beis din in London and here in the Holy Land as the head of the Slabodka Yeshivah. Would it be proper to forfeit all of this—everything I have achieved in my lifetime—just to humiliate and embarrass the Torah reader? After all, one who publicly shames their fellow has no share in the World to Come!” (Sanhedrin 107a).*

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*At a family celebration, an unfortunate incident occurred. Two brothers-in-law who had a deep-seated conflict met at the event. The old quarrel reignited, a spark of contention was lit, and*

soon the fire of discord blazed. In the heat of this minor war, one brother-in-law struck the other forcefully on the cheek. Remarkably, the offended party restrained himself, remained silent, and did not respond to the affront.

My father zt"l, who was also present at the celebration, approached the insulted brother-in-law afterward, bowed his head before him, and asked for a berachah. He explained that someone who "foregoes his dignity" (ma'avir al middosav) has the power to bestow a meaningful and effective berachah!

During Minchah on Shabbos in the Satmar beis midrash in the Holy City, a man with a soft voice served as the shaliach tzibbur. He attempted to raise his voice to the best of his ability, but his prayer still could not be heard clearly throughout the room.

Afterward, a congregant approached him and began reprimanding him harshly, shouting angrily and frustrated. He accused the shaliach tzibbur of rendering his berachos invalid due to their inaudibility and claimed he had wronged the kehillah by leading prayers that were not heard properly. He berated and humiliated him in front of the assembled crowd.

The shaliach tzibbur was deeply hurt by these rebukes. After all, he had only stepped up to the role reluctantly, seeing no one else willing to serve as shaliach tzibbur, fulfilling the dictum, "In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man" (Avos 2:5). Now, he was being criticized harshly for his voluntary act of service.

Yet, he restrained himself. He remained silent and accepted the insults with dignity, without responding. Internally, he prayed to Hashem, asking that the merit of his forbearance stand for him. The man was a sofer and had struggled for years to sell about 80 mezuzos that he had painstakingly prepared. Despite his efforts, they remained unsold.

As he endured the tirade of criticism, he whispered a heartfelt prayer to Hashem, asking that his restraint and humility serve as a merit to help him sell the mezuzos. Astonishingly, the very next day, a distinguished individual contacted him. This person had just completed a newly renovated institutional building and urgently needed 80 mezuzos to install at its many doorways. He offered to purchase them at full price without hesitation.

The man then understood the immense power of the well-known segulah of silence and forbearance in the face of insult. He realized there is no more auspicious time to present one's heartfelt prayers to Hashem

than at such moments.

A young man from a prominent family in Yerushalayim reached marriageable age, yet an appropriate match eluded him. The years passed quickly, and the young man grew older, becoming one of the senior unmarried members of the yeshivah. Still, no match was found.

Meanwhile, his younger sister, who had also reached marriageable age, waited patiently. Though several excellent proposals came her way, their parents refused to skip over the older brother. They instructed the shadchanim that she must wait until her brother was married first.

However, as more years passed and the sister also began to be considered "older," her parents worried they might lose the good proposals coming her way. They wondered how much longer she would have to wait and decided to consult a Torah authority for guidance.

One evening, the entire family visited a great rav in Yerushalayim to present their dilemma. They asked whether the sister must continue to wait indefinitely for her brother to marry or if they could pursue a match for her first.

The rav inquired if there was currently a match proposed for the daughter. They confirmed there was. The rav ruled that they should proceed with the daughter's match. He explained that it is inappropriate to delay a good match, referencing the discussion in Mo'ed Katan (18b), which permits eirusin even during Chol Hamoed out of concern that another might precede them.

At this point, the older brother interjected. Tearfully, he pleaded that his sister should not bypass him, lamenting how difficult it was for him to wait so long.

The rav turned to the older brother and spoke compassionately: "I understand your pain and difficulty. It is no small matter to attend your younger sister's wedding while you yourself remain unmarried. But consider this: perhaps in your current situation, a special act of greatness is being demanded of you. Sometimes, one must break through the barriers holding them back. Who knows? Perhaps this very act—allowing your sister to marry first and rejoicing in her happiness despite your pain—will open the gates of salvation for you."

The young man wept and hesitated, clearly grappling with the profound challenge. Yet he ultimately agreed, despite the hardship and the label of being an older unmarried man.

The young man's tears and cries deeply moved the righteous rav, who empathized with his

pain and anguish. Yet, the situation of his sister could not be indefinitely delayed. The rav spoke words of encouragement and strength to the young man, and then offered him a powerful berachah: "If you overcome this challenge and willingly concede to your sister, I promise you faithfully that you will find your true match, and with Hashem's help, you will become engaged even before your sister's wedding."

Hearing the clear promise from the mouth of the righteous rav, the young man immediately agreed, surrendering his claim in favor of his sister. Indeed, a week later, his sister's engagement was celebrated. To the family's surprise, just two days before the sister's wedding, the older brother announced his engagement, fulfilling the rav's explicit promise—every word of which came true.

When the young man, now a chasan, visited the rav with the joyous news, his face shining with happiness, he thanked the Rav for his promise, which had been entirely fulfilled. The rav opened a Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 17a):

"Rava said: Anyone who forgoes their rights (ma'avir al middosav) has all his transgressions removed, as it is written (Michah 7:18), נָשָׂא עֲוֹן וְיָסַח עַל פִּשְׁעוֹ - He forgives iniquity and overlooks transgression. To whom does He forgive iniquity? To the one who overlooks transgression. Rabbi Huna, son of Rabbi Yehoshua, fell ill. Rabbi Papa went to visit him and saw that Rabbi Huna was near death. Rabbi Papa instructed his household to prepare burial shrouds. Later, Rabbi Huna recovered. Rabbi Papa was embarrassed to face him. They asked Rabbi Huna, 'What did you see during your illness?' He replied, 'Indeed, I had been sentenced to die, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to the heavenly court: Since he does not stand on his rights, you shall not stand against him either. As it is states, He forgives iniquity and overlooks transgression.'

The rav concluded, "We learn from this explicit passage that by relinquishing one's claims, a person can annul even a clear heavenly decree. As Chazal taught (Pirkei Avos 2:4), 'Nullify your will before His will, so that He will nullify the will of others before your will.'"

The rav added a teaching he often quoted from his late father: "Notice the Gemara's precise language: "...has all transgressions removed." This includes even intentional sins committed out of defiance, chalilah. They are forgiven to one who forgoes his rights."

He concluded with practical advice: "The best remedy to avoid any heavenly decree, including the decree of delayed marriage, is to practice forbearance within the home, to yield and speak gently. It is well known that when there is no shouting below, there is no shouting above. In the merit of yielding and forgoing, may we all merit salvation, Amen."