

פרשת ויצא

תשפ"ו

שנה ד' - גליון ו'

An English version of the
gilyon

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Collected Thoughts on the
Weekly Parshah From Rabbi
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In simple words

On The Parshah

No one looks at your Sephardic tzitzit!

Moshe: I'm already eager to know what you're going to write this week...

Chaim: I can't tell you what I'm going to write, but one thing I *can* tell you – it's really meant for you.

Moshe: You're making me curious now, can I know what you'll write?

Chaim: I'll tell you, but first – may I ask

you a personal question?

Moshe: Yes, you can!

Chaim: I've been observing you, and I noticed that you need attention.

Moshe: What do you mean? How do you see that?

Chaim: You ask how I saw it? I ask – how could I *not* see it? Look at your **ציצית**... your pants... your shirt... your bekeshes... the way you put on your shawl... in short, it says by itself: "I need attention!"

Moshe: Who says I'm doing this for attention? Maybe I just want to be orderly?

Chaim: Honestly, I wouldn't have needed to explain why I think you need attention... but since I know you mean it seriously, that you want to improve – I'll just tell you one small point... let's take your **ציצית**... are you perhaps Sephardi?

Moshe: What do you mean by asking that?

Chaim: I noticed that you recently bought wool tzitzit without the black stripes... The **ש"ה הק'** brings down (Kitzur Shlah, Chullin, Hilchot Tzitzit) in the name of the Eliyah Rabbah (Siman 9, se'if 5), that one should wear a blue garment for **ציצית**, as a remembrance of the mitzvah of **תכלת**. In practice, this custom wasn't accepted, because there's an idea to wear a white garment. Therefore, the **פרי מגדים** (writes, and the Mishnah Berurah brings it down (s.k. 16), that one should make at the end of the garment a bit of blue, as a remembrance of **תכלת**. And this is not at all a contradiction to the requirement that the tallit be white, because a little blue is no problem... but for certain reasons, over the years it changed to black.

But among the Sephardim, they don't go with the black stripes, because they are strict that it should be entirely white. So, if you're going entirely white – it looks like you're Sephardi!

Moshe: I can't believe what I just heard... it's embarrassing... I didn't know this whole reasoning at all...

Moshe: What was I thinking? And I must admit – the reason I bought the white **ציצית** was simply for attention... but what does that have to do with the weekly **פרשה**?

Chaim: The **פרשה** begins, **ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע**, *And Jacob left Be'er Sheva* and **ויילך חרנה**, *went to Charan...* **רש"י** says the reason it is written " **ויצא יעקב** And Jacob left" is because " **when a צדיק leaves a place, it makes an impression.**" At first glance, there's a simple question: is this the first time a **צדיק** left a city? Both **אברהם** and **יצחק** already left their places, and nowhere does it say " *the departure of a tzaddik makes an impression.*" Why is it said specifically here?

Moshe: I must say, the question is so simple and good – I don't understand why I never asked it myself! So what is the answer?

Chaim: The answer is very... simple... and very... very... very important. The answer is: of course **אברהם** left an impression, because he had an inn where anyone could come in and receive food and drink. He converted people, he had an entire community of converts. So certainly when he left – he left an impression. **יצחק** also converted people, so certainly when he left – he left an impression.

But **יעקב**, "He simply sat and learned without any publicity." One might have thought – who even knows about him? Therefore the **פסוק** tells you: even a person who sits quietly in his corner and learns Torah – leaves an impression.

Moshe: I hear the answer, but I don't understand – why do you say this is such an important principle?

Chaim: To help you understand, I want to ask you another question. The **פסוק** says **ויקח מאבני המקום וישם מראשותיו** and placed them around his head. Did that really help him to put stones around his head? Do you think wild animals can't walk on stones???

Chaim: The explanation is – because everything depends on thought, on the mind!!!

Moshe: Can you explain what you mean? And what does this have to do with our whole discussion???

Chaim: I'll answer you ... but first – a story.

מעשה שהיה כך היה

One of the grandchildren of the great gaon, the posek of the generation, Rabbi Shmuel Vosner zt"l (*the Shevet HaLevi*), related that once he was organizing his grandfather's writings, and he found that on several documents his grandfather had signed "Av Beit Din of Lodz."

The grandson was very surprised, because as far as he knew, his grandfather had never been a rabbi in Lodz. He gathered courage and asked:

"Zaidy, why does it say next to your name 'Av Beit Din of Lodz'?"

Rabbi Vosner said..... "It's well known that he didn't have such a strong head... When it came to take the entrance exam for Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin, he didn't succeed in the test, and the gaon Rabbi Meir Shapiro zt"l didn't accept him. The plan was that he would go home. But there were still a few hours until the train would leave, so he went into the Beit Midrash of the yeshiva and sat down to learn.

When Rabbi Meir Shapiro entered the Beit Midrash and saw him learning, at first he thought he hadn't realized that he wasn't accepted. He said to him: 'Young man, you weren't accepted...' he replied: 'I know.' He asked him: 'If so, why are you still here?' he answered: 'Since the train only leaves later at night, it would be a shame to waste the time – so I'm sitting and learning for a few more hours...'

Rabbi Meir Shapiro was deeply impressed. A boy who had just received such a blow, that he wasn't accepted – and yet simply sat down to learn... He said to me: 'You're staying here in the yeshiva!'

Up to here is the well-known part. But from here onward – it's less known.

Rabbi Vosner said

Even after I was accepted, I struggled greatly to keep up. I went from one to another asking for help in learning. That went on for some time.

In every yeshiva there are some "Purim shticks," and there too. The shtick was that they made a big sign, and on it they wrote the names of the boys, and next to each name – where he would be a rabbi. Next to an excellent boy they wrote an important city, and next to a weaker boy – a smaller town. The sign was hung in the dining hall.

In the first year that Rabbi Vosner zt"l learned there, the day came when they hung the sign. He entered the dining hall and saw the boys standing around the sign. He too went to look, and searched for his name. As soon as he saw it – he blushed deeply. It said: "Shmuel HaLevi Vosner – shoemaker of Lodz."

Immediately he ran to his room, and cried... and cried... and cried... for a very long time. After crying well, he decided that he would not allow himself to be trampled by the boys, but would do the opposite – he would truly become "the rabbi of Lodz." And to feel it genuinely – during that period he signed "Av Beit Din of Lodz."

In practice, he did not become "Av Beit Din of Lodz," but rather "Av Beit Din of all **כלל ישראל**!!!"

Moshe: The story is wondrous and amazing... but what's the connection to the stones Jacob placed around his head???

Chaim: Very simple – everything depends on how a person looks at things. Rabbi Vosner could have been broken, thinking: "Look, I'm really not one of the best boys in the yeshiva... the boys write that I'll grow up to be a shoemaker – so why should I even try?" But he didn't break. He knew that everything depends on how one thinks. Therefore he decided he was the Av Beit Din of Lodz, and in the end he grew into what he became.

Moshe: I hear what you're saying – that everything depends on the way a person thinks... but what's the connection to **ויצא יעקב**...?

Chaim: The answer is – there's a boy who asks strong questions, and he feels good about himself. But there's a boy who suffers and thinks: "No one looks at me..." And what happens then? Everyone wants to feel that people look up to them. If not in learning – they try in other ways: shirt... pants... glasses... tzitzit... shoes... shawl...

It screams one word: "I... want... attention!"

Please look at me... if not in learning – then at least in other things...

Moshe: I hear. You're saying that the reason I dress like this is because I want attention? Fine, I agree. But in practice I *do* get it... so why should I care how?

Chaim: I really enjoy your question, because now I arrive at the point...

Your white tzitzit brought exactly the opposite of what you wanted!

Moshe: Can you explain what you mean?

Chaim: Of course. But you won't get upset if I tell you the truth?

Moshe: No, of course not.

Chaim: Are you sure?

Moshe: Yes, I'm sure.

Chaim: Fine. I was in "Mefoar," and I saw a father buying for the family... and the young boy wanted to buy wool tzitzit without stripes. The father asked him why, and he said it's simply more beautiful. The father told him: "It's not normal for a regular Chassidish boy to go like that." The boy answered that he knows normal Chassidish boys who do go like that, and he listed names... and you were one of them. Do you know what his father and brothers said?

"Poor guy... he's one of those weak boys who think that this way people will look at him..."

If you had heard what they say about the things you wear, you would have changed long ago.

All these things bring exactly the opposite.

I'll bring you a very good proof: I was, unfortunately, at several tragedies, Heaven forbid, of boys who were among the best. And no one spoke about their strange clothing. Rather, about one they said he never missed a minyan, and about another they said he never missed being **מעביר סדרה** and so on. But about none of them did people speak about all those "beautiful" things they thought would bring them something. Why? Because no one looks at that.

Therefore this is a very important principle, especially in our times! When all the advertisements scream that if you want people to look up to you – dress this way or that way... the truth is that it's not true at all. What *does* matter? Every point of truth – that's what people look at. And it's very important to put this into your head: you need to place the stones around your head, not to let your mind be confused, but to remember – that *'when a righteous person leaves a place, it makes an impression.'*

What does this mean? That your friends... people on the street... don't look up to you if you dress nicely, if your wool tzitzit look like Sephardic ones... but exactly the opposite – it shows that your vitality comes from foolish things. But if you have within you points of truth – that makes a very strong impression.

Do you want attention? Do the things that will make people truly look up to you