

Parashas  
Ki Seitzei

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י"ג אלול תשפ"ה

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ  
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# טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

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למען ייטב לך

*So that it will be good for you*

A man once came to the Gaon Rebbe Chaim Kanievsky zt"l and wept bitterly that his wife was very ill. Rebbe Chaim zt"l said to him: "I have good advice for you. Accept upon yourself to learn the entire *mesechta* Bava Basra until you know it thoroughly, with all the Tosafos, by heart." The man was very astonished: What connection is there between *mesechta Bava Basra* and the illness of his wife, and how would his salvation come through this? The Steipler explained to him: "Do you not understand? In order for a Jew to be able to know *Bava Basra* by heart, he needs a calm mind, and consequently he must have his wife healthy, and he must have livelihood without worries, and all his needs must be arranged so that he will be free to learn the entire *mesechta*."

In our parasha we see two cases whose outcomes are similar, even though they are opposite from one another. At the beginning of the parasha the Torah says (21:11): 'וראית בשביה אשת יפת תואר וחשקת בה' - "And you will see among the captives a woman of beautiful form, and you will desire her." Rashi says: "The Torah spoke only against the *yetzer hara*, for if HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not permit her, he would take her in prohibition. But if he married her, in the end he will come to hate her, as it says afterwards: 'כי תהיין לאיש וכו' - 'If a man will have..., and in the end he will father from her a wayward and rebellious son. Therefore, these passages were placed next to one another." And later in the parasha, in the mitzvah of sending away the mother bird, the Torah says (22:7): 'שלח תשלח את האם ואת הבנים תקח' - "You shall surely send away the mother, and the young you shall take for yourself, in order that it will be good for you." And immediately afterwards: 'כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגגך' - "When you build a new house you shall make a guardrail for your roof." Rashi explains: "If you fulfilled the mitzvah of sending away the mother, in the end you will build a new house and fulfill the mitzvah of a guardrail, for one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah, and you will come to have a vineyard, and a field, and fine garments. Therefore, these passages were placed next to one another."

In both cases we see something wondrous: the actions of a person affect both his material life and his spiritual life, for good and for bad. Although in both cases we are dealing with things permitted by the Torah, nevertheless, if a person did not succeed in conquering his *yetzer* and he took for himself the woman of beautiful form, as a result, troubles come upon him one after another and he pays dearly. But with the mitzvah of sending away the mother bird, about which Rashi says that it is "a light mitzvah, with no financial loss," the results are: great success in spirituality and also immense material abundance. And this we must always remember: sin drags along another sin, but a mitzvah drags along another mitzvah, and with it also comes great abundance in the material realm.

Tiv HaTorah – Ki Seitzei

*On the paths of education*

ואמר אבי הנער אל הזקנים את בתי נתתי לאיש הזה לאשה וישנאה: (כב, טז)  
The father of the girl should say to the elders, "I gave my daughter to this man as a wife, and he hated her. (22:16)

Rashi explains: The father of the girl should say – this teaches that the woman has no permission to speak in the presence of the man (her husband).

In order to grasp the opinion and intention of Rashi, let us first explain his words. Behold, the Torah spoke here of one who slandered his wife immediately after their marriage and thereby caused great pain both to his wife and to her parents. The Torah commanded (*posuk* 15) that both of her parents are to demand justice for the insult of their daughter. And the two of them must bring her case before the elders. However, once the two of them appear before the elders, the Torah does not give the right of speech to both of them. Rather, the words of the claim must be spoken before the elders specifically by "the father of the young woman," as is the language of the verse: "And the father of the young woman shall say to the elders." Even though the mother of the young woman also serves as a claimant, nevertheless, after the words of her husband, when it is necessary to complete the claim and prove that her husband's words are true, she too is obligated to take part in the matter, as it says (*posuk* 17): 'ופרשו השמלה לפני' - "And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city."

And this is what was difficult for Rashi: why not also give her the right to voice her complaint, as is the law of every claimant? From this Rashi concluded that the reason is that a woman does not have permission to speak before the man.

However, one can still raise an objection to his words. From where did he know that this verse comes to teach us something of modesty? For there is room to say that this is a "*gezeras Hakasuv*," [decree of the Torah] that the Torah decreed that in such a case it will be the father of the young woman who shall speak. For if you do not say so, what answer would you have to the section of the "wayward and rebellious son" [*ben doreir umoreih*] (above 21:20–21)? There too the Torah commanded that both the father and the mother should appear before the elders of the city in order to speak of the disgrace of their son, and there the duty of speech falls also upon the mother, as it

says (21:20): 'ואמרו אל זקני עירו בנינו זה סורר ומורה איננו שומע בקולנו זולל וסובא' - "And they shall say to the elders of his city: This our son is wayward and rebellious, he does not hearken to our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard." And if you say that the "silence of the mother" in the section of "slanderer" is for a reason that is understandable to us, you must also say so regarding the "speech of the mother" in the section of the "wayward and rebellious son." And since you do not know the reason for the speech, who told you that you do know the reason for the silence?

But in truth this is not a refutation. It is true that we do not know the reason of every mitzvah. Nevertheless, when we see in one mitzvah a particular detail that can be connected in its reason to another mitzvah, it is proper to connect them, especially when this will cause contentment to our Creator. And behold, further on in our portion (23:15) the Torah commanded us concerning the obligation of modesty, saying: 'ולא יראה בך ערות דבר' - "And there shall not be seen in you a shameful thing." In its simple sense the reference is only to things dependent on sight. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the will of our Creator is that we be scrupulous in every matter related to modesty. Therefore, when we are able to find support in the Torah also for other details of modesty, and thereby add safeguards of holiness, it is proper that we do so. Since this is so, it is well understood Rashi's intention in saying that the Torah's emphasis here, that the father of the young woman is the one who shall speak before the elders, is for the reason of modesty. In this way we have another safeguard and boundary in holiness. For the very fact that a woman equates herself with a man and equates her rights with his, diminishes thereby the quality of modesty. For according to the ways of modesty, a woman is obligated to nullify her opinion before her husband and to give him the right of speech.

And come and see the words of the Rambam (Ishus, chapter 15, halacha 20), who speaks of this obligation.

Here is his language: "Chazal commanded concerning the woman that she should honor her husband exceedingly, and that there should be awe of him upon her, and that she should do all her deeds according to his word, and that he should be in her eyes as a prince or a king, that she walk according to his desires and distance herself from all that he hates. And this is the way of the daughters of Israel and of the holy and pure sons of Israel in their marriages. And in these ways their dwelling will be pleasant and praiseworthy." End of quote. Thus, you have from his words that among the ways of modesty is that the woman be nullified before her husband.

And now that you have come to this, we can say that for this very reason the Torah placed the duty of speech upon the mother of the wayward and rebellious son. Behold, the Rambam mentioned above, who spoke of the ways of modesty, concluded and said: "And in these ways their dwelling will be pleasant and praiseworthy." From his words we may learn that if the woman conducts herself with modesty and with those manners that he enumerated, the parents will merit that their children and descendants will grow up in the upright and desirable path. For only when the children grow up in splendor can it be said that "their dwelling is pleasant and praiseworthy."

According to this we may say that when parents come before the court with their wayward son, this fact proves that the mother did not conduct herself according to the ways of modesty mentioned, and to some degree equated her right with that of her husband and demanded that her husband honor her opinions and desires. By doing so she served as an example to her son, that he too demands to be considered "a person in every respect," and that he too demand that his wishes be honored. In this way she caused that this son became a "wayward and rebellious son," *Rachmana litzlan*. Therefore, the Torah desired that when she

comes before the court she also say what her husband says, in order to show that to the extent that women equate their rights with those of their husbands, and also speak before their husbands, they thereby cause their sons to go astray, *Rachmana litzlan*.

But the situation is different in our case. In truth it concerns a proper daughter of Israel, who *chalilah* did not sin, and it was only false accusations. Since she was proper, surely her mother was careful in the rules of modesty, and she too was an example to her daughter to be careful in matters of modesty. Therefore, also when they came before the court, it was fitting that she conduct herself in that proper measure and not speak before her husband. Thus, we may indeed learn from here that this is the way of a modest woman.

And thus, you find yourself saying that from these two sections the Torah revealed to us that the principal education [*chinuch*] of the children depends on the conduct of the parents. Therefore, the deeds of the wayward and rebellious son are to be attributed to his sinful parents, and the deeds of the modest young woman to her parents who also conducted themselves with modesty. And indeed, common sense testifies that this is the way: children follow after the deeds of their parents, and these become their inheritance.

This is what Maran the Chazon Ish *zy"ta* spoke when he was once asked: From when is the father obligated to educate his children? He answered with wit: From the time that the father reaches the years of youth! And when the listeners wondered, since then he has as yet no children to educate, he replied: If the father accustoms himself, while still young, to Torah, to mitzvos, and to good traits, [*Torah, mitzvos and midos tovos*] he will merit that even when he grows and becomes a man after his marriage, his good habits will not depart from him. Then he will be able to serve as a positive example to his sons and descendants, and he will surely succeed in their *chinuch* [education].



## 'An apartment for transfer'

All my life they ask in my home: What will be? How will we marry off the children? And I answer that we have a third partner, and this is His concern. I work and I learn Torah and I do what is within my ability. Of course, if I had the possibility to put something aside, I would do so, but life did not allow me to.

And it came to pass one day that an uncle decided to purchase an apartment for my youngest daughter, who found favor in his eyes. The aunt found a project that seemed suitable to her and signed a contract. I was asked to assist with the procedures and to represent them with the real estate agent in all the paperwork involved in purchasing an apartment. The very suggestion and willingness of the uncle caused us absolute astonishment.

On one of the days, the uncle received a phone call from the sales office to inform him that that day was the final day to pay the voucher we had received. The uncle called to notify me, and I did not know what to do, for this was not something I was familiar with, and there had been a misunderstanding between the sales office and the uncle regarding the initial payment. I finished learning in my regular seder despite the mental tension, and I went to the bank in my city of residence in order to pay the voucher. But then I encountered a problem. The uncle could not pay for my daughter, who is not an immediate relative. I had not yet had time to be frustrated when a pleasant man approached me and asked if I had the voucher in hand and my bank card. I answered in the affirmative, and then he surprised me and explained that through the machine it was possible to deposit and pay the voucher without any of the legal delays of the bank. He helped me fill in what was needed and even assisted me in paying at the ATM. I was astounded at the goodness of the hashgacha. HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged for me a man who, it turned out, was a senior mortgage advisor, who happened to be at the bank for a client, and Hashem placed it in his heart to help me with a smile...

It was an instructive lesson, that one who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of worldly burdens is removed from him, in the most literal sense. Without that pleasant advisor, I would not have succeeded in paying that very day, which would have incurred penalties. And here I had a not-easy test to complete my learning seder before turning to mundane matters, and I saw the blessing with my very own eyes. ג.ב.

ובערת הרע מקרבך (כא:כא, כב-כד, כד:ז) - ובערת הרע מישראל (כב:כב)

**And you shall remove the evil from your midst (21:21, 22:21, 24:7), and You shall remove the evil from Yisrael (22:22).**

**All the parashiyos read during the sacred month of Elul are deeply connected to the avodah of this month, as explained in the holy sefarim, just as every parashah is uniquely aligned with the time and situation the Jewish people find themselves in, both collectively and individually.**

In our Torah *parashah*, as well as in the other *parashiyos* of Elul, Hashem calls to us during these days of repentance, *And you shall remove the evil from your midst!* And, *You shall remove the evil from Yisrael!*

The commentators explain the difference in language between *מִקְרִיבךָ* - *from your midst* and *מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל* - *from Yisrael*. When the evil stems from *your midst*, indicating that you are connected to that evil or that it originates from you, the Torah says *from your midst*. But when the evil is distant from you, and you have no direct involvement in it, the Torah says, *And you shall remove the evil from Yisrael*, because all of Yisrael are responsible for one another.

Thus, in the case of the *wayward and rebellious son*, whose evil stems from his household and upbringing—as the phrase “a son is the extension (lit.leg) of the father” suggests (*Sukkah* 56b), and as Rashi (*Devarim* 21:11) notes, “The child reflects the speech of the father and mother”—the Torah says, *ובערת הרע מקרבך* - *And you shall remove the evil from your midst*, to uproot the evil from its initial source, *your midst*.

Similarly, regarding a betrothed maiden, the term *מִקְרִיבךָ* - *from your midst* is used, as she resides in her father's house, and her evil stems from her upbringing, as Rashi (*Devarim* 22:21) comments, *אֶל פֶּתַח בֵּית אָבִיהָ* - *At the entrance of her father's house*—let all see the consequences of what you raised.”

In contrast, regarding an adulterous married woman, whose evil is her own doing, the Torah states (*Devarim* 22:22), *כִּי יִמָּצָא אִישׁ שֹׁכֵב, ובערת הרע מישראל ...* - *If a man is found lying... and you shall remove the evil from Yisrael*. This refers to an external violator whose evil does not originate specifically from *your midst*. Hence, the Torah attributes the responsibility to the collective and says *from Yisrael*.

This principle clarifies the variations in language found throughout these passages. For example, in the case of someone who kidnaps a fellow Jew, the thief is described as, *כִּי יִמָּצָא* - *if he is found*, indicating that his evil stems from himself. However, because the kidnapped individual was under your responsibility, it reveals a deficiency in you—how could such a severe crime occur within your community? Therefore, the Torah commands, *And you shall remove the evil from your midst*, because when evil emerges *from your midst*, it is your duty to eliminate it.

As we stand during these days of favor and mercy—days of repentance, drawing close to Hashem sat a time of, *אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי* - *am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine*—the hearts open, and the soul shines, yearning to return to its Creator and walk the straight and good path. Thus, our *parashah* proclaims: *And you shall remove the evil from your midst!* (individually) and *You shall remove the evil from Yisrael!* (collectively). – May our Father bring us back to His Torah, draw us close to His *avodah*, and return us in complete repentance before Him, *Amen*.

It is well known in the Jewish world the extent to which the Vilna Gaon zt”l valued every single moment of his holy and pure life, ensuring it was never wasted, *chas veshalom*, and that it was utilized to its fullest, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to fulfill the will of his Creator.

It was exceedingly difficult to divert him from engaging in his holy Torah study, even for important matters. Only when it was absolutely necessary, with a clear justification, would he step away from his Torah, and then only for the exact amount of time required, not a moment longer! This stemmed from his fear of the severe sin of *bittul Torah*.

Every evening, he meticulously accounted to ensure no single moment had been wasted. He kept a special ledger in which he recorded moments requiring scrutiny to determine whether they had been fully utilized (according to his lofty level). At the end of each day, he would reflect deeply to assess whether any of those moments contained even a hint of deficiency. If he found that a specific period was marred by any element of *bittul Torah*, he immediately engaged in complete repentance and made up for the time by deducting it from his already minimal sleep hours. He would not allow himself to rest until he had rectified that time, according to his holy judgment.

The Vilna Gaon's profound appreciation of time is illustrated by a well-known incident that became widely known in Vilna and beyond.

During the Gaon's era, a renowned scholar and scientist had made remarkable discoveries in the natural sciences. His inventions and innovations quickly spread across the world, creating significant advancements. Many scientists and experts sought his guidance, and he trained numerous *talmidim* who later became prominent professors and lecturers.

Over time, this scientist encountered several challenging questions in astronomy and the celestial spheres. He could not resolve these issues despite his extensive knowledge and detailed research.

He consulted with renowned colleagues, professors, and leading scientists, but no one could answer satisfactorily.

One day, he met a Jewish acquaintance and shared his frustration over his inability to solve these mysteries. Upon hearing this, the Jew mentioned that in Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, there was a famous brilliant and holy man, one the great sages of Yisrael, whose wisdom was celebrated worldwide. The Jew asked the scientist, "Have you tried presenting your difficult questions to the Vilna Gaon?"

"To whom?" the scientist responded, puzzled. "Who is this Gaon of Vilna? I am familiar with most of the world's great geniuses (*chalilah* for such a comparison), but I have never heard of a particular *gaon* in Vilna."

"This *gaon* is of an entirely different caliber," the Jew explained. "His wisdom and greatness are not derived from the external wisdoms and sciences that you study, but stem entirely from the holy Torah. It is said that nothing is hidden from him due to his immense wisdom. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to present your difficult questions to him; in his Divine wisdom, he will undoubtedly provide the correct answers."

When the scientist heard this was about a Jewish sage, he laughed. "What would a Jewish sage know about science, which he has never studied? I have spent decades studying astrology and the workings of the heavens and conducting extensive research on subjects he surely has no understanding of."

However, the Jew, who had already heard much about the wondrous wisdom of the holy Vilna Gaon, persisted. "Even so," he told the scientist, "I think it's worth presenting your questions to him. People say incredible things about him! After all, you've consulted professors in many places and haven't found answers. Try your luck in Vilna—perhaps the mystery will be solved there."

"Fine," replied the scientist. "Let us go to Vilna and see if your words prove true."

When they arrived at the home of the Vilna Gaon, the Jew approached the Gaon's family and close associates, briefly explaining that he had brought a world-renowned scientist with difficult questions that no one else could answer. He requested permission to enter the Gaon's study to present the questions to him. However, when the Gaon heard the request, he immediately dismissed it. "This is simply *bittul Torah*," he said, promptly returning to his learning.

Meanwhile, word spread throughout Vilna that the great world-renowned scientist had arrived to present questions to the Gaon—questions that the finest experts worldwide had failed to resolve. Everyone waited eagerly to see how events would unfold.

When the *talmidim* realized that the news had spread, they again approached the Gaon and pleaded with him to receive the scientist. They explained that this was a matter of *kiddush Hashem*. "When the non-Jews see

and recognize the wisdom of the holy Torah, it will fulfill the *pasuk* (Devarim 4:6), וְעַשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא חֻמַּתְכֶּם וּבִינְתֶכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם חָכְם וְנָבוֹן יִשְׁמְעוּן - For this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these statutes and say: Only a wise and understanding people is this great nation. "Very well," replied the righteous Gaon. "If, as you say, this is a matter of *kiddush Hashem*, then Torah's *bittul* is its fulfillment. I am prepared to meet the scientist for ten minutes and hear his questions."

When the scientist heard that the Gaon had agreed to meet with him for only ten minutes, he again laughed and said to the Jew who had arranged the meeting, "Even if we assume this man is indeed a genius familiar with this field, I would need at least several hours to present my deep questions properly. First, I would need to provide essential foundational explanations and lay a detailed chart of the celestial system before him, which took me years to prepare. I would need to explain all the secrets of this intricate chart before I could even begin presenting my analytical questions. Furthermore, I would likely need to debate with him over any proposed answers. In just ten minutes, nothing will be achieved!" When the Gaon heard this response, he said, "I cannot devote more than ten minutes to the scientist. I suggest that he come to the meeting fully prepared with his questions. He should bring his chart, but need not teach me its contents. Let him write his pressing questions briefly. With Hashem's help, we hope ten minutes will suffice to resolve the complex doubts."

Reluctantly, the scientist agreed to these conditions, though he had already given up hope of finding answers. He told the Jew who had brought him, "There is no chance I will receive answers here. But since we have already traveled to Vilna, I will try meeting with the Gaon for ten minutes. If it doesn't help, it won't harm."

At the appointed time, the esteemed scientist arrived with the Jew and his assistants. The large chart and the paper of questions were prepared in advance, and the *talmidim* ushered him into the sacred study of the Vilna Gaon.

Upon entering, the scientist was momentarily shaken by the radiance of the Gaon's holy visage. Immediately, he felt that Divine wisdom rested upon the Gaon. The Gaon closed his sacred *Gemara* briefly, welcomed the scientist warmly, and honored him with a seat beside him.

The great astrologer knew his time was strictly limited to ten minutes and immediately went to the heart of the matter. He opened the large chart depicting the entire celestial system and said, "I will try to explain the method of constructing this chart so we can proceed to the questions."

"There is no need for explanations!" the Gaon interrupted him abruptly. "Hand me the chart,

and I will see what it is all about."

The scientist spread out the large map on the table. The Gaon examined the map for several minutes, scrutinizing its diagrams, turning it lengthwise and widthwise, and studying the entire system. He then requested to see the list of questions.

The scientist was astounded. He hadn't explained anything about the construction of this intricate map, nor had he presented any of the necessary preliminary concepts. How could the Gaon jump straight to the complex questions themselves?

But precious minutes were ticking by, and the *talmidim* signaled to the scientist not to hesitate and to hand over the list of questions.

With a heart full of doubt and hesitation, the scientist submitted the list of immense questions that had baffled the greatest minds of the world, who had deliberated over them for countless hours and unanimously declared them in need of extensive further study.

The Gaon took the paper without saying a word. He delved deeply into its contents, concentrating intently. He neither asked for explanations nor posed any questions. Instead, he studied the paper alongside the large map spread before him.

Suddenly, after a few minutes of contemplation, his eyes lit up. Turning to the scientist with kindness, he pointed to one tiny corner of the map and declared, "Here is the error!"

"Impossible," the scientist exclaimed. "This map represents years of work. Leading experts reviewed it multiple times, and no error was found!"

Yet the Gaon, with clear and concise reasoning, demonstrated the error—a minute and nearly imperceptible flaw in the drawing of one of the lines. He then picked up the list of questions and reviewed them with the scientist. It became apparent that correcting this small error had already resolved some of the questions. With additional brief and precise explanations, the Gaon systematically resolved all the remaining questions, providing clear, structured, and well-founded answers, leaving nothing unresolved.

The stunned scientist stood in disbelief, unable to grasp what had happened. A glance at the clock showed that he still had one minute remaining of the ten minutes allotted. He asked permission to use this final minute for one more question.

"Go ahead," the Gaon replied calmly and serenely. "After all, you still have a full minute remaining."

The scientist asked, "I want to know: How did the Rav acquire such profound knowledge and the ability to resolve world-shaking questions in just a few minutes?"

"That is your question?" the Gaon smiled. "The answer is explicitly derived from the Rambam in *Hilchos Kiddush HaChodesh*!" (This section is renowned for its detailed and precise study of the celestial systems and the moon's phases as part of the laws of sanctifying the new month—see there). He then blessed the scientist and sent him off, just as the ten minutes ended—a ten-minute encounter that had caused a tremendous upheaval in the world of astronomy.

This event became widely known and led to a great *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of God's name), showcasing the holy wisdom of the Torah and the extraordinary intellect of Chazal.