

Parashas  
Matos-Masei

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א' אב תשפ"ה  
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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ  
רבי גמליאל הכהן  
רבינוביץ שליט"א

# טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

**טיב הפרשה**

בוטה של דיבור

*The power of prayer*

**טיב המערכת**

וישב בה עד...

*...He shall dwell in it until*

A certain man told that he had been sent to prison for many long years of incarceration, and he had been there for several years, until one day new testimony arrived that cleared him of all guilt, and immediately on that very day he was released to his home, to life and to peace. When he was asked by his friends: What sustained you? How did you endure during all those years that you sat in prison for no wrongdoing on your part? He answered them: I knew that there was one person who knew that I was innocent and he desired my good, and I knew with certainty that the moment he would be able, he would appear and testify, and then they would know that I was innocent, and every day I thought that today this could happen, it could be that today I will go free, and that thought is what gave me the strength to endure.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu commands to build six cities of refuge—three in the Land of Israel and three across the Jordan—and Moshe Rabbeinu immediately hastened to build the three cities across the Jordan. Nevertheless, according to the words of the Gemara as brought by Rashi (Makkos 9b): “Even though Moshe designated three cities in his lifetime on the far side of the Jordan, they did not offer refuge until the three in the Land of Canaan were also designated,” and we must understand, why do the cities not provide refuge until the cities in the Land of Canaan are built? After all, the entire purpose is to save the one who killed unintentionally, and especially in light of the words of the Gemara: “For in Gilead there were many murderers,” meaning that in Gilead there were more murderers, then why not use immediately the cities that Moshe Rabbeinu prepared?

HaKadosh Baruch Hu in His abundant mercy, created the world in a manner of “He has set an end to darkness,” meaning every difficult thing has an end. So too with the city of refuge: “וישב בה עד מות הכהן הגדול” (35:25)—the one who killed unintentionally sits in the city of refuge with the knowledge that he has hope to leave (35:28): “ואחרי מות הכהן הגדול ישוב הרוצח אל” - “And after the death of the Kohen Gadol the murderer shall return to the land of his possession.” And that knowledge is what sustains him in the meantime. But during those fourteen years, that hope did not exist, because everyone knew that Elazar the Kohen would live until the war ended, as we read last week (27:21): “על פיו יצאו ועל פיו יבואו” - “By his word they shall go out and by his word they shall come in.” If so, a murderer who would enter the city of refuge during those years would have no hope, and that is not the will of HaKadosh Baruch hu. This is also what sustains us throughout the length of exile: “אף על פי שיתמהמה עם כל” - “And even though he may delay, with all of this I wait for him every day that he will come.”

Tiv HaTorah - Masei

וְאִשָּׁה כִּי תִדְרֹךְ לָהּ וְאָסְרָה אֶסֶר בְּבֵית אָבִיהָ בְּנַעֲרֶיהָ: (ל, ד)

And if a woman will take a vow to Hashem or prohibit a prohibition in her father's house in her youth. (30:4)

Rashi explains: In her youth – but not a minor, nor one who is mature, for with regard to the minor, her vow is not a vow, and as for the one who is mature, she is not under the authority of her father to nullify her vows. And who is a minor? Our Rabbis have said: A girl who is at least eleven years and one day old, her vows are examined. If she realizes for Whose sake she is vowing, or for Whose sake she is consecrating, her vow is a vow. A girl who is twelve years and one day old does not need to be examined.

The words of Rashi come from an explicit Mishnah (Niddah 45b): “A girl of eleven years and one day—her vows are examined; a girl of twelve years and one day—her vows are valid; and we examine throughout her twelfth year. A boy of twelve years and one day—his vows are examined. A boy of thirteen years and one day—his vows are valid; and we examine throughout his thirteenth year.”

We thus learn from their words that a young boy of about twelve years of age already has significance to his speech, and we already must examine whether he knows on behalf of Whom he made a vow or a consecration. For if he knows, it is considered a valid vow. And similarly, a girl of eleven who vowed a vow—must be examined to determine whether she knew for Whom she vowed or to Whom she consecrated.

Therefore, there is a sacred obligation upon fathers and mothers to educate and supervise their children from the age of twelve for boys, and eleven for girls, so that they do not make vows, and to explain to them the severity of this prohibition. For if they know to Whom they are vowing, and they then violate it, they are stumbling in the severe transgression of vows and oaths.

And ideally, it is preferable to educate them even before they reach that age, to ensure that by the time they reach it, they already know to be careful with the words of their mouth. It is also proper to train them that any good commitment they accept upon themselves, they should say “bli neder” (“without a vow”), because if they do not say “bli neder,” even before bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, they would require annulment of the vow. [And there exists a written responsum from my master and father, of blessed memory, in which he wrote that a boy of twelve already needs to perform *hataras nedarim* (annulment of vows) on Erev Rosh Hashanah.]

They must also be trained not to accept upon themselves *good commitments* that are too difficult, for any commitment a person accepts upon himself is considered a vow. As the Gemara says (Nedarim 8a): “Rav Gidel said in the name of Rav: One who says ‘I will rise early and study this chapter’ or ‘I will study this tractate’—a great vow he has vowed to the G-d of Israel.” This is also ruled in the *Shulchan Aruch* (Orach Chaim, Siman 238, Se’if 2): “If one has a fixed schedule to learn such-and-such every day, and he was busy one day and did not complete it, he must complete it that same night.” And the *Mishnah Berurah* writes on this: “This is considered a vow, as we say: ‘One who says I will study this chapter—he has made a great vow to the G-d of Israel.’ And in Yoreh De’ah, Siman 214, Se’if 1, it says that if one has accustomed himself to do a good thing and his intent was to do so always, it is a vow. And it is good that he stipulates at the outset that this should not be considered a vow, lest there be an instance when he will not be able to fulfill it.” End quote.

This is also an opportunity for parents to explain to their children how much impact speech can have—that with a single utterance, a person changes his status and brings upon himself severe obligations. And at the same time that they are taught that through their speech they can alter their own status, they should also be taught that their speech can determine the situation of others—for good or for bad. And just as they must be careful with words concerning themselves, they are also obligated to be careful with words **directed toward others**.

Many times, we hear people testify about themselves that they were already standing at a crossroads in life, and had it not been for a kind word spoken to them at that moment by a loyal friend, they do not know which path they would have chosen... And it was that one kind word that set them on the right path—and all of

their Judaism, and the Judaism of their descendants, is credited to that one friend.

On the other hand, the well-known statement of the Gaon, the *Beis HaLevi* of Brisk, may his merit protect us, is that sometimes he would examine the potential of individuals and would see that if they had applied themselves properly to their studies, they could have been counted among the giants of Torah in the generation. But instead of being like a *walking Sefer Torah*, they had become like a *walking grave*, and it would be fitting to carve upon their foreheads a memorial epitaph for their genius with the following inscription: *Here lies buried the righteous genius so-and-so, murdered by lowly men with the swords of their tongues...*

I see—explained the Gaon—that there was no inherent reason to prevent these talented ones from rising to greatness in Torah. Only one factor can I identify: that at the beginning of their path, their peers mocked them for their diligence and for their other good deeds, and those words pierced them like the stabs of a sword. As a result, their hands were weakened

from Torah and service of Hashem. And that was the cause of their downfall—that they did not take advantage of their noble talents to rise in Torah and divine service.

That person who sought to rebuke his fellow for his “excessive piety” has no idea to what extent his words reached. Who knows what good gift the Jewish people lost due to a few careless words? Sometimes, we are dealing with a very talented person, who—had he flourished—could have become a towering tree of Torah, providing great benefit to the entire generation. And sometimes, whole generations were buried under those few words—for had the father continued to grow, he would have also imparted his path to his children after him, and they too would have grown and been counted among the great ones of Israel. But it was only their father’s lack of spiritual ascent that prevented them from rising...

Therefore, a person must be exceedingly careful in guarding his mouth, that it not be like a goring horn, *chalilah*. He must know that the human soul is deeply pained by words of disgrace, and even if this is not outwardly visible, it causes devastation within his soul. A disgraced person may walk for days among the masses, and his soul will be mourning within him, though the matter is not externally noticeable. And were it a physical wound, onlookers would refer him to a medic, who would treat him until he was healed from his pain. But since this pain is invisible, no one pays attention or considers that he needs a *doctor of souls*. And even if he himself comes to that understanding, nevertheless the pain of humiliation is many times greater than the pain of a blow, and it is not easily healed.

And rightly did those interpret with wit the verse (Bereishis 49:6): ‘כי באפו הרגו’ — “*For in their anger they slew a man*”—that by a mere twisting of the nose (a gesture of scorn), a person can kill his fellow.

Therefore, be exceedingly careful with your words.

הסט המיוחד על התורה, ועל פירוש רש"י,  
אשר בו צרור פזונים מתוקים, ולקחי מוסר ופלאים

**סניב התורה**  
עם סניב חרש"י

ממשנתו של הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רבינוביץ שליט"א

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חומש דברים  
ב' כינים

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**‘כשיש קשרים מי צריך פרוטקציה’  
When there are connections,  
‘who needs favors**

For ten years now I have merited to give a weekly *Parashas HaShavua* class with the commentary of the *Or HaChaim HaKadosh*. For six years, the class was held in my home, and since the class grew very much, we moved it four years ago to the shul. Every year, on the *yahrzeit* of the *Or HaChaim*, I rent a kosher driver and travel with my wife—who gives of herself with *mesirus nefesh* for the class by preparing sweet delicacies and treats in honor of the learners—and we travel together to the *Or HaChaim HaKadosh’s* gravesite in the early morning, concluding with *Shacharis* at the *Kosel* at sunrise, and from there we return home joyfully, filled with salvations.

This year we arrived in the early morning, as usual. Already from Sha’ar Shechem we were unable to proceed. It turned out that since the *yahrzeit* fell on a Friday and there would not be a full day following it, all the people visiting the grave had come during the night. I wanted to walk a great distance by foot, but just then, my wife’s leg was hurting. Despite the pain, she insisted on trying to walk slowly, step by step. We got out of the car, and just then I saw an old friend, and I asked him innocently: why is it not possible to reach the gravesite normally—why is everything blocked by barriers? He asked me where the car was. I told him I had let the driver go, having no choice. He told me to call him quickly and have him come back. I did as he said. The driver returned, and to our surprise, my friend gave approval to open the barriers, and we drove all the way to the *Or HaChaim HaKadosh’s* gravesite like one of the prominent Rebbes!!!

From there we continued to the *Kosel* as usual, Baruch Hashem.

When I spoke with my friend, I did not dream that he had connections with the ability to do me a favor. I understood that it was the *Or HaChaim HaKadosh* himself who decides who will come all the way to the grave with a personal invitation. A woman who gives of herself with *mesirus nefesh* for the class, and whose leg is in pain, and who even last night—before her arrival—prepared a festive meal in honor of the tzaddik for about eighty people, I am certain that it was for her sake that this sign was shown to us!!!

י.ה.

**Safeguarding Ancestral Traditions**

...למטוב בעיניהם תהיינה לנשים אך למשפחת מטה אביהם תהיינה לנשים: ולא-תפס נחלה לבני ישראל ממטה אל-מטה כי איש בנחלת מטה אבתיו ידבקו בני ישראל... ותהיינה מוחלות תרצה וחגלה ומלכה ונעה בנות צלפחד לבני דויהן לנשים: (לוי-יא)

**Let them be wives to whoever is good in their eyes, but they must marry into a clan of their father’s tribe so that the inheritance of Bnei Yisrael will not pass over from one tribe to another... for each one of Bnei Yisrael shall adhere to the inheritance of their fathers’ tribe. Machlah, Tirzah, Choglah, Milkah, and No’ah, the daughters of Tzelafechad, married their cousins. (36:6–11)**

*Machlah, Tirzah, etc.*—Here they are listed according to their age, as they married» :Rashi comments in the order of their birth. However, throughout the *pesukim*, they are listed according to their “wisdom, teaching us that they were equal in virtue

This *parashah* offers significant lessons in the art of *shidduchim*, as derived from the narrative of the :daughters of Tzelafechad

ancestral) First, we learn the importance of arranging matches that preserve *messores avos* (1 tradition). The Torah commanded the daughters of Tzelofechad to marry within their father’s tribe to ensure the inheritance would not transfer between tribes: ... *for each one of Bnei Yisrael shall adhere to the inheritance of their fathers’ tribe*

This logic applies even more strongly to spiritual heritage. If the Torah is so particular about land remaining within a tribe, how much more so should we strive to preserve spiritual legacy and continuity. Matches should be made to maintain the traditions of one’s family—whether in customs, dress, language, or other inherited practices—ensuring these values are transmitted to future generations, as it says, *for each one of Bnei Yisrael shall adhere to the inheritance of their fathers’ tribe*

This is reminiscent of how Avraham instructed Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak from his family, .emphasizing the importance of remaining within the spiritual framework of his ancestral house

It is well known that when matches deviate from familial *messores*—whether in dress, customs, or practices—the next generation is often entirely disconnected from the ways of their forebears, .tragically losing their spiritual heritage

One story illustrating this involves Rav Shmuel Gafner zt”l, father of Rav Mendel Gafner zt”l. When Rav Shmuel immigrated to Yerushalayim and saw the varied dress styles reflecting different .communities, he requested to have a good photograph taken of himself

He explained that this was so his grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have a clear image of how their grandfather looked and dressed according to the ancestral *messores* of their family. He wanted to ensure that future generations would maintain these practices and not deviate from their .heritage

From Rashi’s commentary, we also learn the proper order of matchmaking: children should ideally (2 be married in the order of their ages. As Rashi notes, the daughters of Tzelofechad married “in the order of their birth.” If there is a compelling reason to marry off a younger sibling before an elder .one, guidance should be sought from *daas Torah*, presenting the situation for their direction

Additionally, we learn from this episode that although the daughters are elsewhere listed (3 according to their wisdom, here they are listed according to birth, emphasizing that they were equal .in righteousness, good deeds, and virtuous qualities

This teaches us that when seeking a match, the primary focus should be on the good deeds and *middos* of the prospective match rather than their intellectual achievements. Building a faithful .Jewish home depends primarily on good character and upright deeds, with *chen* and pleasantness

Rav Avraham Shenker zt”l, father-in-law of the great Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt”l, was known for his remarkable family lineage. The illustrious *talmidei chachamim* of the Kopschitz family are all .descendants of Rav Avraham and Rav Yosef Chaim

The elders of Yerushalayim explained that Rav Avraham merited such an exceptional lineage of Torah giants because his own marriage was born out of self-sacrifice for a mitzvah and a deep commitment .to avoid shaming a Jewish woman

Here is the story: At a wedding held in those days, it was common for the bride and groom not to meet until the wedding ceremony, often due to the distance between their communities. To fulfill the halachic requirement that the *chasan* see the *kallah* before the marriage (*Kiddushin* 41a), the .groom would typically see his bride-to-be briefly before the *chuppah*

At one such wedding, the groom first saw the bride moments before the *chuppah*. The bride, adorned in her wedding gown and fully prepared for her big moment, sat in her royal bridal chair. However, when the groom noticed that she had a slight limp, he immediately declared it a *mekach ta'us* (an erroneous transaction) and refused to marry her. He and his family left the venue in shame, leaving the bride humiliated and in tears.

The *kallah's* heartbreaking cries and the chaos caused by the incident deeply moved one of the guests, the young Rav Avraham Shenker. Stricken by her pain, he immediately offered to marry her so she would not be left in disgrace.

The families quickly arranged the details, knowing each other well, and the match was pleasing to all parties. The wedding took place right then and there, with the proper blessings and sanctifications. Rav Avraham thus saved the bride's honor and that of her family, turning a moment of shame into a joyous occasion.

The elders of Yerushalayim often remarked that it was no wonder such an extraordinary lineage of Torah greatness emerged from such a marriage, born out of selfless commitment to a mitzvah and the honor of a Jewish daughter.

Many parents come to me while finding matches for their children, requesting assistance while emphasizing their child's uniqueness. They describe their son or daughter as special—a bit beyond the norm—remarkable in their sensitivity, refinement, and various *middos*. Thus, they insist on finding a match that truly matches this exceptional standard. Privately, I reflect on how much of a "curse" lies within this supposed "blessing" of inflating their self-perception or their children's uniqueness.

A wise man from Yerushalayim once shared with me that when his children reached the age of *shidduchim*, he would often say: "My children are not extraordinary, and I am not seeking the best and most exceptional matches for them."

When a matchmaker praised a suggestion as being top-tier—the finest family pedigree, descendants of great Rabbinic dynasties, and the like—he would reply: "Such an elevated and special match, please, with all due respect, offer it to my esteemed neighbor. It's not for me. I'm not seeking the best. A suitable and modest match is sufficient for us."

Once, a man approached Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, with a *shidduch* query. He described the proposed match as seemingly good in all respects based on his inquiries, yet confessed that, for some reason, it didn't "pull" him.

Rav Shlomo Zalman responded with his characteristic smile: "The concept of 'pulling' is mentioned in the Gemara (*Kiddushin* (משיכה) 25b) regarding the acquisition of livestock—'a small animal is acquired through pulling.' When

buying livestock, if you don't feel a pull, it's a sign that it might not be a good deal. But when it comes to betrothing a woman, the acquisition of 'pulling' has no relevance. There, what matters is a careful evaluation of the proposal itself."

A remarkable incident occurred regarding the *shidduch* of Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss zt"l, the Gaavad of the Eidah Chareidis and author of *Minchas Yitzchak*.

In the days before telephones, emails, faxes, or other modern communication methods, discussions about *shidduchim* in Europe were often limited in their ability to verify and investigate proposals thoroughly. A matchmaker would arrive from another town and present his suggestions based on his perspective, and people were often forced to rely on the matchmaker's credibility to some extent. (שדכן) "However, as the saying goes, *"shadchan He speaks"* שקר דובר בסף בוטל, is an acronym for "lies and takes money."

When Rav Weiss reached marriageable age, a matchmaker from Grosswardein proposed a match. The match was presented as excellent—a daughter from a distinguished rabbinic family, with the bride's father being one of Grosswardein's esteemed *rabbanim*.

After conducting what investigation they could, the Weiss family decided to proceed with the match. They informed the other side of their agreement and set a date for the groom and his family to travel to the bride's town to finalize the match.

Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss, accompanied by his parents and family, embarked on the long journey. After several days of travel, they arrived in Grosswardein, settled into comfortable accommodations, and began the customary series of meetings before concluding the engagement.

The bride's father, a distinguished *talmid chacham*, met with Rav Weiss and was deeply impressed by his brilliance, refinement, and exceptional character traits.

However, when it was time for Rav Weiss's mother to meet the prospective *kallah*, disappointment awaited. Upon returning from her meeting with the young woman, she was visibly agitated and upset. To her dismay, she had noticed that the bride had a small hump on her back and appeared slightly hunched.

The mother was furious with the matchmaker for concealing such a significant detail, failing to mention even a word about it. She immediately unequivocally declared that they would pack their belongings and leave at once—the match was off.

However, here, the mother encountered an unexpected surprise. The young man himself was not so quick to agree to cancel the match. He fervently argued that he could not shame a Jewish girl publicly and humiliate her in front of

everyone. The news had already spread throughout the city that this match was about to be finalized joyfully. Everyone knew the purpose of the visit by the renowned young *talmid chacham* to their town. He insisted that if they were to return home, the reason for the match's cancellation would inevitably become known, leading to immense disgrace for the young woman. Who could say if she would ever find another match? How great would her anguish be, and how devastating her prospects for the future?

The young man was unmoved by his mother's explanation that there would certainly be no shortage of suitable matches for someone of his caliber. He steadfastly maintained that this was a superficial matter, merely a matter of physical appearance, and that the true essence lay within—the inner *middos*. He reasoned that if Heaven had guided them to this match, then surely, *From Hashem the matter emerged*. In the end, after much pleading, the mother relented to her righteous son's insistence. She agreed that external appearances should not be overly concerning, recalling the teaching of Chazal (*Avos* 4:20): "Do not look at the vessel, but at what it contains." The young woman found favor in their eyes as someone wise, filled with pure fear of Heaven, and possessing upright and noble character traits. They decided to proceed with the match despite the external imperfection to not shame her.

The match was concluded successfully, and the couple married in good time. They were blessed with a single son.

Years into their marriage, World War II broke out with great ferocity. By miraculous means that defy belief, they were saved from the horrific inferno of the Holocaust. (Rav Weiss documented these miracles in a special pamphlet titled "Pirumei Nisa," which is appended to the first volume of his responsa, *Shut Minchas Yitzchak*.)

The Rav attributed his salvation, in part, to the self-sacrifice he had displayed in finalizing this match to avoid shaming a worthy Jewish woman—likening it to the selflessness of Rachel Imeinu, who revealed signs to prevent her sister from being embarrassed.

What's more, despite the trials he endured and being married three times in his life, the only lasting progeny he had resulted from this match—a single son, Rav Berish Weiss zt"l, one of the prominent *rabbanim* in Manchester, England. From him, an illustrious family of upright descendants continues to grow, a shining legacy for Beis Yisrael.

The righteous Rav Weiss often attributed all this merit to that great mitzvah of not shaming a Jewish daughter in any way.

This teaches us how essential it is to guard the honor of the Jewish people and how immense the reward for this is, especially in matters of matchmaking. As Chazal teach, it was in the merit of Rachel's mitzvah that the future redemption will come. As recorded in the Midrash (*Eichah Rabbah*, Introduction 24), at the time of the destruction, the *Avos*, *Imahos*, and the seven Shepherds all pleaded on behalf of Klal Yisrael but were unsuccessful. Only Rachel's merit prevailed, ensuring future salvation.