



From the desk of  
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## TORAT

## Parashat Tetzaveh

## HAMELECH

### The Wise-Hearted Seeks Wisdom and Supports Torah

In *Parashat Tetzaveh* the *pasuk* states (28:3), "And speak to all the wise-hearted people [*chachmei lev*] whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, and they should make the clothing of Aharon, to sanctify him to minister to Me." In *Parashat Ki Tisa* (31:6) it states, "And I have appointed with him Ohaliav son of Achisamach from the Tribe of Dan, and in the heart of every wise-hearted person [*chacham lev*] I have placed wisdom, and they shall do all that I have commanded you." In *Parashat Vayakhel* (36:1-2) it states, "And Betzalel and Ohaliav and every wise-hearted person [*chacham lev*] within whom Hashem has placed wisdom and understanding in these things, to know how to do all of the work for the service in the Sanctuary – everything that Hashem had commanded; Moshe called Betzalel, Ohaliav, and every wise-hearted person (*chacham lev*) into whose heart Hashem put wisdom, everyone whose heart inspired him, to approach the work to do it." In *Mishlei* (10:8), Shlomo HaMelech states, "The wise-hearted takes mitzvot but the foolish one's lips will become weary."

In *Masechet Berachot* (55a) R' Yochanan teaches, "Hashem gives wisdom only to one who has wisdom. This is as the *pasuk* states (*Daniel* 2), 'He gives wisdom to the wise ...' R' Tachlifa bar Maarava heard this and said it before R' Avahu. He said to him, 'You derive this from there; we derive it from here, as it states (*Shemot* 31), 'And in the heart of every wise-hearted person I have placed wisdom.'"

### Questions on the *Parasha*

- 1 – Shouldn't Hashem give wisdom to the foolish and not to the wise?
- 2 – Why do the *pesukim* refer to a wise man as a *chacham lev*, connoting that wisdom is in the heart? Is wisdom not found in man's brain?
- 3 – It states in *Pirkei Avot*, "Who is the wise man? He who learns from every man." Should it not be the opposite, that the wise man teaches others, but he himself does not need to learn from every man?

### The Wise-Hearted Man Understands the Hearts of the Benefactors

In his commentary on *Parashat Vayakhel*, the *Agra De'kalah* writes that the *pasuk* should seemingly have stated, "*ve'chol chacham lev she'bachem*, every wise-hearted person **from amongst you**," as is normally written. Why does it only state "*ve'chol chacham lev bachem [in you]*?" He writes that this is to hint that a wise man is able to recognize the intention of one who donated money to *tzedakah*. This is why the *pasuk* states, "*ve'chol chacham lev bachem*." In other words, those wise-hearted men who can understand what is going on inside of you [*bachem*], these are the ones you should bring ... For when they see a donation that has an unfavorable aspect, they will not want it for Hashem and will not utilize it for a holy purpose. This, then, is the intention of the *pasuk*: the wise individuals who have the wisdom to understand your hearts and recognize the hidden intention of each donation,



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they are the ones that Hashem wants to come, for they will see that the vessels that are fashioned with each donation are according to the merit of the one who gave it.

### Wisdom that Perpetuates

In *Divrei Sofrim* (15) R' Tzadok HaKohen writes that the main wisdom is the one that is absorbed by the heart. This is as our Sages state regarding the wicked Doeg (*Sanhedrin* 106b), that his wisdom was in his lips and outwards, but not in his heart. However, "Hashem wants the heart," as our Sages teach. He wants that wisdom should be ingrained in the heart, and that the heart should be drawn after his knowledge and wisdom. Such an individual is called a *chacham lev*, as the *pasuk* states (*Shemot* 31:6), "and in the heart of every *chacham lev* I have placed wisdom." This is as our Sages teach in *Perek Haro'eh* (*Berachot* 55a), that Hashem only gives wisdom to the wise.

### The *Emek Davar* Explains that the Intention of the *pasuk* is *Yirat Shamayim*

On the aforementioned *pasuk*, "and in the heart of every wise-hearted person I have placed wisdom," the *Emek Davar* writes that the expression, "every wise-hearted person" is difficult, for the power of the intellect is not in the heart; rather, it is in the brain. He therefore explains that *chacham lev* has two meanings: the first is that it refers to fear of G-d, as the *pasuk* states, "*Reishit chachmah yirat Hashem*, The beginning of wisdom is fear of G-d." This form of wisdom is in the heart.

### The World's Perspective

Furthermore, let us discuss the world's outlook on wisdom. If you ask anybody, "Who is considered wise?" they will answer that it is someone who has a high IQ and possesses great intellectual capabilities. This is because they think that the main expression of wisdom is a broad knowledge that one amasses. They also believe that one who is intellectually superior teaches others but does not learn from anyone else. All the more so, does he not learn from young children. Such an individual's wisdom rests in the intellect but not in the heart. However, our holy Torah teaches us differently. It teaches us that wisdom is in the heart and not in the brain, and this is why a wise man is referred to as a *chacham lev*, a wise-hearted man. This has two implications: 1- It is impossible to be a *chacham lev* without a *lev tov*, a good heart. This is because our Sages teach us that "*derech erez kadmah le'Torah*, refined behavior preceded the Torah." Without refined character traits, an individual will never be a *Gadol be'Torah*. He may amass Torah knowledge like a computer, but it is not the holy Torah which elevates an individual and transforms him into a noble and refined personality, straightening his path as well as his interaction with others. The second implication is that the source of all desires is the heart. The source of attaining Torah wisdom is possessing a desire to study Torah. One who frees his heart from other desires and desires Torah is a *chacham lev*.



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### The First Explanation – *Derech Eretz Kadmah le'Torah*

Now we will explain the various implications in the *pesukim*: 1 – Torah study is predicated upon having refined character traits. Therefore, every *chacham* must be a *chacham lev*. This means that an individual must possess a *lev tov*, and only then will he merit becoming a *chacham*. This is because the heart is the source of all the character traits, and one who does not have refined character traits will not merit having the Torah either. He may amass some Torah knowledge, but it is likely that it will be full of mistakes. For there is no Torah without *derech eretz*; on the contrary, *derech eretz* precedes the Torah. This is because only when an individual possesses *derech eretz* is he transformed into a receptacle to receive the Torah and merit Divine Assistance. Without *derech eretz*, however, he will not merit the Torah. Shlomo HaMelech has stated (*Mishlei* 2:6), "For Hashem gives wisdom from His mouth, knowledge and understanding." If an individual possesses negative character traits, he does not find favor in the eyes of Hashem – how then will he receive the illumination of Torah wisdom? *Maran HaRav Shach zt"l* was once asked about a certain individual who was great in Torah but lacked *middot tovo*t. R' Shach responded that it is impossible to be a *Gadol be'Torah* with bad *middot*. The most such a person could be is a computer filled with facts but not with Torah. This is something to which experience testifies.

### The Second Explanation – One Who Only Desires Wisdom

Secondly, I believe we can say that the Torah is teaching us that to merit Torah wisdom, one must yearn for it. The matter is dependent upon man's heart, which is the source of all of his desires, lusts, and wants. By nature, the heart is drawn towards worldly pleasures. However, the *chacham* frees his heart of other desires so that it should contain only love and desire for the Torah; he is therefore called a *chacham lev*. By doing so, he merits that Hashem fills him with wisdom. This is the intention of the aforementioned *pasuk*, "everyone whose heart inspired him," in other words, everyone whose hearts inspired them to grow spiritually. Later, I found that this was also written by R' Chayim Shmulevitz *zt"l*. Additionally, those who support Torah are referred to as *chachmei lev*, for they display their love of Torah and will merit the Torah in the World to Come. I found that this was also written by R' Tzadok HaKohen in *Machshavot Charutz* (20). He writes that having *chachmah* in this world implies desiring to acquire *chachmah*. Once he desires it, "Hashem will give wisdom to the wise," as was stated by the Gemara *Berachot* mentioned above. In other words, Hashem gives *chachmah* to those who possess the beginning of *chachmah*, which is the yearning for *chachmah*. This was the greatness of Shlomo's *chachmah*; for it was in accordance with his desire for *chachmah*, which was the greatest and most perfect desire for wisdom that is possible for man to possess. [See *Melachim* 1 3:4-13, which relates Shlomo's request to



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Hashem for wisdom, and Hashem's approval of Shlomo's request.] This was the main aspect of Shlomo HaMelech, his desire and longing, and that is what remains forever. Indeed, this is as we find that Shlomo's wisdom endures forever, in the three *sefarim* that he authored. This is the beginning of wisdom in the heart, as the Gemara in *Berachot* (55a) derived from the *pasuk*, "In the heart of every wise-hearted person I have placed wisdom." Man's primary wisdom is in the intellect, but his desire for the wisdom is in his heart. *Chachmah* is primarily gained through the desire of one's heart; a heart that possesses *yirat Shamayim*. This is the main heart of a Jew. However, about one whose heart is void of *yirat Shamayim*, the *pasuk* asks (*Mishlei* 17:16), "Why is there money in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, but he does not have a heart?"

### The Rambam's Description of Love for Torah

This is also explained by the Rambam in *Hilchos Rotzeach ve'Shmirat Hanefesh* (7:1). He writes that a *talmid chacham* loves Torah to the extent that he has no life without it. Says the Rambam, "A student who is exiled to a city of refuge, his teacher is exiled along with him. This is as the *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 19:5, 4:42), 'And live [- in the city of refuge]' – give him the ability to live. And without Torah study, the life of those who possess and seek wisdom is comparable to death. Also if a *rav* is exiled, his yeshiva is exiled together with him." The Rambam stresses the words, "seek wisdom," for a *talmid chacham* yearns for Torah.

### Seeking a *Chatan*

The Torah genius, R' Eizel Charif *zt"l* was in search for a *chatan* for his daughter. He said that anyone who could answer a difficult question in a particular Torah topic would be his *chatan*. Indeed, he asked a difficult question that none of the students were able to answer. He therefore went on his way. However, as R' Eizel was traveling, he noticed one of the students chasing him, until he eventually caught up with him. R' Eizel asked him if he had an answer. The student replied that that even though he did not have an answer and was undeserving to be a match for his daughter, yet he at least wished to hear the answer to this tremendous question. R' Eizel told him that not only would he tell him the answer, but the young man would also merit being his *chatan*. For a student who so yearns to understand the Torah, is destined for Torah greatness.

### Story About R' Chayim Shmulevitz

R' Chayim once related to his students that in his youth, he studied in the Grodno Yeshiva. He said that he once traveled to rest for a number of days in the Navardok Yeshiva, headed by his uncle R' Avraham Yaffen *zt"l*. One day, he approached his uncle and requested that he show him the most outstanding *bachur* in the yeshiva. The *Rosh Yeshiva* pointed to one *bachur* and said, "This *bachur* learns Torah with greater depth than all the other *bachurim* in the yeshiva." Afterwards, he showed him another *bachur* and said, "He is the most diligent *bachur* in the yeshiva." He went on to point out several other *bachurim*, each one excelling in a different area. One excelled in his





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Heavenly fear, the other in his broad Torah knowledge, and so on. R' Chayim then asked him, "So ultimately, who is the most outstanding *bachur* in the yeshiva?" R' Avraham took him to one of the corners of the *beit midrash* and pointed at a specific *bachur* and said, "This is the finest *bachur* in the yeshiva." R' Chayim was perplexed and asked, "But when you pointed out all the other *bachurim*, you did not mention this one at all." "True," answered R' Avraham, "this *bachur's* outstanding quality is different from the other qualities that I pointed out. This *bachur* is the greatest *mevakeish* in the yeshiva, his **yearning** is the greatest. All of his yearning is only for Torah and *avodat Hashem*." This *bachur* who R' Avraham said excelled in yearning, toiled in Torah continuously day and night. Throughout the years, he yearned for Hashem until he merited the crown of the Torah. He was the great light of our generation, *Maran HaGaon* R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the Steipler *zt"l*.

### Words of Mussar

We have learned that Torah wisdom is unlike other wisdoms. To merit the wisdom and holiness of the Torah it is dependent upon two things: the first is rectifying one's character traits and developing a *lev tov*, a good heart. A *lev tov* incorporates all good *middot*, whether it be distancing oneself from arrogance and anger. It includes showing one's fellow a pleasant countenance and considering his welfare. Possessing an evil eye or an eye that looks favorably upon others is also entirely dependent on man's heart. To the extent that man refines his *middot* *bein adam le'chavero*, between him and

his fellow man, so too, will he merit Torah wisdom. However, much to our sorrow, there are many who study Torah that stumble in this area. While they are meticulous in *mitzvot* *bein adam le'Makom*, between man and Hashem, looking for every stringency and *hiddur* possible, in *bein adam le'chavero* they trample, injure, denigrate, and damage others. They are truly desecrators of Hashem's Name, and there is no doubt that such individuals do not merit acquiring Torah wisdom and its holiness. They may attain some knowledge here and there, like a small, pocket-sized computer and the like, or as the *sefarim* put it, like a donkey carrying *sefarim*. Secondly, only one who desires Torah, and clears his heart of desires other than that for Torah study, seeing Torah as his duty in life, will merit Divine assistance. He will be granted wisdom like Shlomo HaMelech. Similarly all those who help support Torah, who are ready to give their beloved money which they toiled for, for the sake of those who study Torah, display their yearning for Torah. In the World to Come they will merit learning all of the Torah from the mouth of the *Shechina*. Hashem should help all of us merit correcting our *middot* and increasing our love for our fellow man and being careful with his honor. Furthermore, all of our yearning should be to attain Torah wisdom and to be supporters of the Torah and of those who study it. By doing so, we will merit seeing *nachat* from all of our offspring. *Amen ve'amen*.

**Shabbat Shalom,  
 and Purim Sameach  
 Rav Mordechai Malka**