



From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim
Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit" a

Parashat Shemini - #323

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On the Parashah Fulfilling Mitzvot when it is Difficult

From where do we learn that it is occasionally difficult to fulfill Mitzvot? From the Mitzvah of Brit Milah, in which we circumsize an eight-day-old newborn and he cries.

If Hashem wanted us to have a Brit Milah, why didn't he create an easier way without pain? For example, we could have been born already circumsize, or the cutting could be painless like cutting fingernails or getting a haircut.

The reason is to teach us from the youngest age that fulfilling Mitzvot is occasionally difficult, but it is worth it!

But it is important not to overemphasize the difficult aspect. After a Brit Milah, the baby calms down after a short time. A French author wrote many years ago that a Christian baby cries for a lot longer after being sprinkled with cold water during a Baptism. Furthermore, a baby suffers a lot more when he gets soap in his eyes in the bath, and yet we don't stop giving him baths.

We must therefore understand that fulfilling Mitzvot is occasionally difficult. We must gird ourselves with strength and courage since we will come to understand that it is worthwhile!

Rav Aviner on...

Ode of Praise to Charedi Jewry

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Tzav 5774 – translated by R. Blumberg]

A lot of hostile verbiage has been uttered recently against the Charedim. We therefore must, in honor of Purim, fulfill Esther's call for unity: "Go gather up all the Jews" (Esther 4:16).

We must remember that we are brothers. We must remember that what we have in common is infinitely greater than that which separates us. We must remember that all the different hues within our Nation are nevertheless parts of the Nation, and that every hue needn't occupy itself with criticizing others, but rather with examining itself. My point is not to teach the Charedim what they should be doing. That we leave to their Rabbis. My point is for us to clarify for ourselves, what we, the Jewish Nation, must learn from them. Be it a little or a lot, we mustn't learn what they lack, but rather, what virtues that they possess, and these are they:

1. **Faithfulness to the word of G-d:** "Hear the word of Hashem, you who tremble at His word" (Yeshayahu 66:5). Once we were all Charedim, the entire Nation. Yet the Reformers changed things and said that one should adapt the Mitzvot to the spirit of the times. The Chatam Sofer proclaimed, "Everything new is forbidden by the Torah" (Shut Chatam Sofer Vol. 1 Orach Chaim 28, 148, 181. Vol. 2 Yoreh Deah 19). As a safeguard against inroads by the Reformers, the Charedim came and built a high wall to stop the changes.

2. **Belief.** Absolute, steadfast belief in the Written Torah's being from heaven, and in the Oral Torah's being from heaven.

3. **Fear of G-d.** The ideal for every person is to be a Torah scholar, and the duty of every person is to keep the light Mitzvot just as steadfastly as the weighty Mitzvot, and to set fixed times for Torah study.

4. **Torah study surpassing all else.** One must devote all his energies to Torah learning, even if one lives in penury.

5. **Pristine Jewish Education.** Pristine, pure education for one's children in preschool, in elementary school, in yeshiva high school, in post-high-school yeshiva. There should be as much Torah learning as possible, along with the teaching of good character, the fear of G-d and the importance of keeping the light Mitzvot as steadfastly as the weighty ones. Such is the ideal: to be a Yeshiva person, learned, with sterling character.

And the girls should be provided with the appropriate parallel education, even at the cost of living in poverty.

6. **Respect for Torah scholars.** Respect, as well as reverence, and love. And above all, obedience before the great Torah luminaries of the generation.

7. **Caution.** Internet only with the strictest safeguards against corruption, and, if possible, not at all. And the same applies as far as the cell phone. Rejection of social events that are not entirely appropriate. Study of a profession in appropriate institutions. Charedi dress that preserves one from evil influences. By the way, Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook, and Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, dressed this way as well, as did many other Zionist Rabbis.

8. **Modesty.** Modesty in female garb. Modesty in male garb. Each distancing themselves from the other, in accordance with Jewish law. Separate-gender education for children. Avoidance by women of prominent positions in society. Avoidance by couples of public displays of affection.

9. **Free-loans.** Many free-loan societies. 46 percent of Charedim volunteer many hours of their time with free-loan societies. This also provides an internal insurance for poor families.

10. **Healthy families.** A very high marriage rate. A very low divorce rate. Families blessed with many children.



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