

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Chukas 5778 year 8 #342

פרקי אבות פרק ה פרשת חקת תשע"ח

Why was Hashem angry at the complaint of no water?

וַיִּדְבֹר הָעָם בְּאַלְקִים וּבַמֹּשֶׁה לְמַה הֵעֲלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָמוּת בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי אֵין לָחֶם וְאֵין מַיִם וַנִּפְשְׁנוּ קִצָּה בְּלֶחֶם הַקֶּלָקֵל: (כא ה)

The people spoke against Hashem and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this desert, for there is no bread and no water, and we are disgusted with this insubstantial food" (21:5) In the latest token of their endless complaints against Hashem, here the Yidden protest against their food and water supply. In reality they were terrified as the Posuk 1-2 relates "The entire congregation of the children of Israel arrived at the desert of Zin in the first month, and the people settled in Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there. The congregation had no water; so they assembled against Moses and Aharon. However we must remember, though, that they still had the same Manna and water from Miriam's well which they had been consuming for almost forty years in the dessert. What were they complaining about now? And if it had not been good for the forty years, why didn't they complain earlier? The Gemara (Taanis 9a) teaches us: Three good sustainers rose up for the Jewish people during the exodus from Egypt, and they are: Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. And three good gifts were given from Heaven through their agency, and these are they: The well of water באר, the pillar of cloud ענן, and the manna מן. The well was given to the Yidden in the zchus of Miriam; the pillar of cloud was in the zchus of Aaron; and the manna in the zchus of Moshe. When Miriam died the well disappeared, as it is stated: "And Miriam died there" (Numbers 20:1), and it says thereafter in the next verse: "And there was no water for the congregation" (Numbers 20:2). But the well returned in the zchus of Moshe and Aharon, hence why the complaint? The answer is: Since Chazal teach us that one was able to discern any taste of food he wanted in the Mon; similarly, water from Miriam's well imparted the taste of any beverage one desired. However, this fruitful delicate state persisted only as long as Miriam and Aharon and Moshe were alive. After Aharon and Miriam's passing, the physical manna and well water continued, but absent the miraculous taste. Hence it was now a case of complaining for no good cause 'we are disgusted with this insubstantial food.' They wanted zesty foods! (שפתי צדיק פיליץ)

Who gets to eat or drink first, the person or the animal?

קח את־המִטָּה וְהִקְתַּל אֶת־הַעֲדָה וְגו' וּדְבַרְתָּם אֶל־הַסֹּלֶעַ לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיָּמִינוּ וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מַיִם מִן־הַסֹּלֶעַ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת־הָעֲדָה וְאֶת־בְּעִירָם: (כ ה)

"Take the staff and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aharon, and speak to the rock in their presence so that it will give forth its water. You shall bring forth water for them from the rock and give the congregation and their livestock to drink". (20:8) Rashi comments on the Posuk "and their livestock": From here we learn that the Holy One, blessed is He, has regard for the property of Israel. -the livestock—

The Torah continues: וַיִּרָם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַסֹּלֶעַ בְּמַטְהוֹ פַּעַמַּיִם: וַיִּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשְׁתְּ הָעֲדָה וּבְעִירָם: Moshe raised his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, when an abundance of water gushed forth, and the congregation and their livestock drank. It is interesting to note here that the Torah states that the people drank before the animals. And it is emphasized twice! This is to teach that when the life of a person is in danger, he is first to be saved before his animals as chazal teach us חייך קודמין. In sefer Bereishis (24: 14-16) Rivka first brought water to Eliezer and then to his camels the Torah states. וְהִיא תֹאמַר שְׂתֵה וְגַם לְמִלְכֵי אֲשָׁאֵב עַד אִם־כִּלְוִי: "Drink, and I will also water your camels, and she will say, 'Drink, my lord.'" And she hastened and lowered her pitcher to her hand, and she gave him to drink. וְהִיא תֹאמַר שְׂתֵה וְגַם לְמִלְכֵי אֲשָׁאֵב עַד אִם־כִּלְוִי: And she finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they will have finished drinking." Hence we see that in certain situations the people are before the animals. Yet we say in Shma everyday וְנִתְתִּי עֶשֶׂב וְנִתְתִּי אֶת־הָעֵשֶׂב לְבְהֵמָתְךָ, וְאָכְלָה וּשְׂבְעָה: "And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and you will be satisfied." Here Hashem gives precedence to the animal. This is also the Halacha as brought down in (Mishna Berurah chapter 167:40). In order there should not be a contradiction in the verses, Hagaon Rab Tzvi Pesach Frank states in his sefer (Har Tzvi, Orach Hachaim 90): Being thirsty is much more difficult than being hungry, and therefore a person does not have to delay drinking before he gives his animal water. therefore by our posuk and by Rivka the topic is giving to drink, then the person is before the animal. Whereas in Shma we are talking about food, then the animal is first. The second reason is given by Rav Frank that if the owner is allowed to eat first, then they may begin their meal and forget to feed the animal! Which by drinking is not the case. Note that if the owner only plans on eating a quick snack, then the Shulchan Aruch Harav allows them to eat first (167:9). (Yehuda Z. Klitnick based on Ohr Hachaim and others)

פרקי אבות פרק ה- עין רעה... מתלמידיו של בלעם הרשע

Those who have an evil eye... are the disciples of the wicked Bilaam. (5:21) The Rambam and Rabbeinu Yonah explain that one who has an uncontrollable appetite for wealth, tends to be jealous and begrudges others any success. Rashi interprets "evil eye" עין רעה as "negative vision," as the intolerant and jealous way in which Bilaam perceived the Yidden. He saw Bnei Yisroel's superb order of life, how the tribes maintained their separate identities and arranged their tents so that their entrances did not face each other, to protect their privacy. Bilaam could not tolerate the innate beauty of Bnei Yisroel and therefore sought to damage them with his evil and jealous eye. The mishnah therefore teaches us that people who are jealous, dissatisfied, and desire things beyond their means are numbered among the disciples of Bilaam. [What is to be yours will be yours without jealousy, Have Emunah!] (Pirkei Avos Treasury)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**** *The Shinava and Bobover Rebbes coordinate to save a Yid's parnassah* ****

Near the city of Bobov in Galicia was the town of Plowinka, where there lived Reb Shaya Planter, a wealthy and devoted chasid of Rav Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam of Shinava, זצוק"ל the eldest son of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz. Shaya's business was in real estate, trading in houses and properties. In addition, he brokered deals for the local poritz, the gentile landowner Dabrowski of Siplawinka. The poritz would often seek his counsel in important matters. After that poritz's death, his son inherited his wealth and continued the warm relationship with Shaya.

One day a letter arrived from the Heiliger Shinava Rav who wrote about a poor Yid from Yaroslaw, who had been operating a small shop as a tenant of the local poritz named Zabitka, but who was now intending to evict him and give the business to a gentile. The Rebbe begged Shaya to use whatever influence he enjoyed with the local poritz to help his fellow Jew, for which he promised great benefits in This World and the Next. Although always more than ready to help another Yid in any way possible, Shaya was at loss with this request. He had never been to Yaroslaw, and never met the poritz named Zabitka, and didn't see any way to be of assistance. He showed the letter to Rav Shlomo, the first Bobover Rebbe and pleaded for an "eitza"/concrete advice as to what he should do. The Rebbe's response: "To me, it seems obvious. You are very close to the Dabrowski family. Ask the new young poritz there if he has any business contacts and influence with Zabitka."

Shaya lost no time in going to the Dabrowski house, where he entered casually through a side door. The old matriarch, widow of the previous poritz, received him joyfully. "You can't believe how glad I am to see you, Shaya. Truth is, we need your help and I was just about ready to send a wagon to bring you and here you come walking into the house by yourself! In any case, listen to our problem. My son had what we thought was a good business relationship with a poritz named Zabitka, from the Yaroslaw area. We recently bought a large estate with many acres of lumber in a village near Yaroslaw from him. Things turned sour when we found out after the fact that the forests were subject to flooding, which rendered the lumber from them too soft to use. We tried to back out of the deal, but Zabitka would have none of it. He countered that some of the properties we had sold him had not turned out to be as advertised, and yet he never canceled any deals with us. The dispute has been heating up of late and

Zabitka is threatening to haul my son into court, where he will reveal some damaging information. I'm actually afraid they damage the good name of all of us. I suggested to my son that we submit the dispute to binding arbitration -- with you as the arbitrator! We will accept whatever decision you reach. Zabitka is on board with the suggestion. Can you help us?" Shaya was amazed and inspired by the clear *ruach hakodesh* of the two tzaddikim! Here was his chance to encounter Zabitka and help a Yid save his parnassah, and incidentally to help make peace between two warring business partners -- which could only yield good fruits for the future. Shaya knew well that there was a risk that he would be caught between the two poritzim, whom could pour their wrath on him. Still, he told the widow that he was willing to try to help resolve the dispute and she informed her son about the solution she had brokered. He endorsed the idea. Each feared that if things imploded, both could sit in jail, so they welcomed Shaya's intervention to keep things discrete.

A meeting was arranged and Shaya promised to render a fair decision, but adjured both sides to accept the outcome amicably. The case had several twists and turns and Shaya called a recess in order to analyze the situation more deeply, and in private. In due course, he revealed his findings, which was brilliancy as King Solomon. Yes, Zabitka had sold a defective package of forests and fields, but from his side, Dabrowski had peddled some shady properties also. The only course was to strike a compromise, which Shaya laid out in detail on the table. Both sides, at the end of the day, were shrewd businessmen and were wise enough to see that the compromise was the only way forward for them. They shook hands and peace was restored between them.

There was only one unsettled matter: how to compensate Reb Shaya for his excellent arbitration services? Shaya refused any payment, saying he was not a professional and accredited judge. He asked only one favour from Zabitka. "Honourable Mr. Zabitka, I have a relative who rents a shop from you and it has come to my attention that you intend to evict him in favour of a new tenant. I beg you to allow him to remain in the store. That's the only consideration I would ask from you." "Done!" shouted the poritz. "It was a mistake to look for a new tenant. After all, the man pays his rent on time. What more do I need?" The Shineva Tzaddik's request was fulfilled, and Reb Shaya directed in his will that the Rebbe's letter be buried with him after his demise, as a good reference for the Next World.

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