

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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שבת מברכין אלו

פרשת עקב תשע"ח

Being kind as Hashem expects will strengthen Klal Yisrael

ושמר ה' אלקיך לך את-הברית ואת-החסד אשר נשבע לאבותיך:

Hashem... will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness. (7:12) This can be understood by applying the verse, "Love Hashem with all your heart," which our Sages explain to mean that one must love Hashem with both the good and evil inclinations. But why is it necessary to command us to love Hashem with our good inclination, when by its nature it seeks to do only good? Our trait of kindness can be used against Hashem's will, such as in the case of having sympathy for a wicked murderer and refraining from punishing him – which would thus endanger the lives of others. Thus we have been commanded that although we are innately good natured and kind, we may not act on these traits on our own initiative, as doing so might be contrary to Hashem's Will and to the concept of mercy itself. The Torah therefore instructs us to guard the attribute of kindness, which will ensure that what we perceive as kindness will in fact truly be kindness. (Hagaon R' Moshe Feinstein) We can add to this insight what the Gemarra Baba Basra 10b states: צדקה תרומם גוי אלו ישראל דבתיב ומי בעמך: כל צדקה בישראל גוי אחד בארץ: (שמואל ב ז כג) וחסד לאמים הטאת: כל צדקה וחסד שאומות עובדי כוכבים עושין הטא הוא להן שאינם עושין אלא "Righteousness exalts a nation"; these are the people of Israel, as it is written: "And who is like your people Israel, one nation on the earth" (Shmuel 2 7:23). "But the kindness of the peoples is sin," meaning that all the acts of charity and kindness that the nations of the world perform is counted as a sin for them, since they perform them only to elevate themselves in prestige. The proper way of chesed is to sanctify the name of Hashem. Then Hashem proclaims "Righteousness exalts a nation And who is like your people Israel, one nation on the earth". (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

Use your talents the right way

השמר לך פן-תשכח את ה' אלקיך וכתים טובים תבנה וישכח... וחסד וחסד ירבה-לך... ויום לבדך וישכחת את ה' אלקיך: (ד' י"א - י"ז)

Beware that you do not forget Hashem, your G-d, by not keeping His commandments, ordinances, and statutes, which I command you this day,... you'll build nice houses... have much gold and silver...and your heart will grow haughty, you'll forget Hashem... (8:11-17) Moshe Rabeinu is warning here about the pitfalls of wealth and other worldly achievement. Rav Dessler זצ"ל writes that the Gemarah (Brachos 33b) teaches הכל בידי שמים, All is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven. There are two worlds in this context, spiritual and physical. In the spiritual world we, and only we, determine who we are and who we will become. In the physical, materialistic world, it is not our personal strength that

actually accomplishes anything. We are obligated to make the effort, but ultimate achievement or failure in that realm is not in our hands. Hashem calls the shots for each of us.

This is what the Torah is warning us: *From the comfort of your wealth, remember Hashem, because He is the One who gave you the strength/ability...* (8:18) The Targum's translation is that He gave you the counsel and advice to amass that wealth. We then must take this a step further and realize why Hashem gave us this ability. All of our personal strengths and abilities must be harnessed for spiritual ends. For instance, a person blessed with a social personality must use it to influence and draw others to Hashem. He must recognize the source of this gift and use it suitably. A person blessed with any talent must use it to benefit others, in the full realization that this is why Hashem gave him that talent. וזכרת את ה' אלקיך כי הוא נתן לך כח לעשות חיל Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it is He Who gave you strength to be successful. (8:18) Then and only then can you hope that Hashem will allow you to enjoy, exploit and broaden the scope of your unique, personal gifts. (Michtav MeEliyahu)

Similar to above topic of wealth Enjoy your wealth

איזהו עשיר? השמח בחלקו שגא' (תהלים קכח) יגיע בפיו כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך: אשריך בעולם הזה וטוב לך לעולם הבא: (אבות פרק ד מ"א)

"Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot, as it says, 'When you eat from the labor of your hands, you are praiseworthy and all is well with you' (Tehillim 128:2). You are praiseworthy – in this world; and all is well with you – in the World to Come." (Avos4:1) There is some difficulty here as the Mishna is bringing proof from the posuk that *Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot*. Yet where do we see proof from the posuk that one who is happy with his lot is rich? The heilige Baal Shem Tov when he gave a bracha for wealth: that the person should also enjoy his wealth. This can mean being well and enjoying the wealth. It also means to enjoy literally. Many people have lived a stingy and poor life yet when they passed away, it was revealed that they had a fortune of money. Those people were never happy even though they had money as they never enjoyed it and didn't share their wealth with anyone, neither spending it either on himself or on mitzvos and charity. The truly wealthy person is content and happy with his portion; he uses it both for his own enjoyment in this world, and uses his wealth as a tool to produce merits that will provide him a share in the World to Come. This is the what we learn from the words in Tehillim: who is really rich? "If you eat the fruits of your labors, enjoy it and share, instead of leaving your wealth for others, after you pass on, you will attain happiness in this world by making other people happy and by making wise spiritual investments with big merits / zchusim, you will benefit in the World to Come."

STORY OF THE WEEK (by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*****The Husyatiner Rebbe ascends to Shomayim to defend a Yid before the Heavenly Court*****

In the city of Kiev there lived a prominent and very pious Yid, R' Yechiel. Before his passing, he left a will. In the will he stipulated that his only son R' Yaakov bury him with the brand new tallis that was lying in his cabinet. After he was niftar the will was read. R' Yaakov went to check in the cabinet and found the new tallis, and he packed it up for the Chevra Kadisha. Meanwhile, word spread about this unique wish of being buried with a new tallis. Why would anyone purchase a new tallis, made of the finest wool for the sole purpose of being buried in it? As the preparations for the Levaya were going on, there was a knock on the door. A young fellow introduced himself as a choson who had no money to buy a tallis. Word of the interesting will had reached his ears. He said, "the Mitzvah of Hachnasas Kallah would be a big zechus for the Niftar. I hereby offer to wear Reb Yechiel's unused tallis for his merit."

R' Yaakov was in a dilemma: which took precedence -- his father's wish, or performing a great Mitzvah? He discussed it with the Chevra Kadisha. They deliberated long and hard and reached the conclusion that since the old tallis was full of holy sweat from years of davening in it and the great mitzvah of Hachnasas Kallah would be a merit to Reb Yechiel, it made sense for him to be buried with his old tallis, with the new tallis given *takeh* to the choson. R' Yaakov did as advised and went to his father's room, retrieved the old tallis and gave it to the Chevra Kadisha, who duly used it for the burial.

After the Shiva, R' Yaakov's father appeared to him in a dream, very angry that his son hadn't executed his Will. Now he was very embarrassed, since all the Neshamas had new talleisim, while he had to make do with his old, yellowed tallis! R' Yaakov woke up, didn't know what to make of the dream and so he basically disregarded it. The dream didn't recur, so life went on as usual for Yaakov.

However a, short time later R' Yaakov became ill and his state worsened until he felt that his time had come to leave this world. He fell asleep and dreamt that he died and the angels took his Neshama through a long dark tunnel and afterwards into a place of overwhelming light. He heard his name being called in summons to the Heavenly Bais Din. He was terrified as he stood before the Bais Din, who indicted him with violating the Mitzvah of *Kibud Av* -honoring one's parents-inasmuch as he violated his father's will. The prosecution demanded punishment for this offense. The Bais Din asked if there were to be any defense for R' Yaakov. All of a sudden, an angel, adorned in a flowered beketcha robe, took the podium. He argued that R' Yaakov's intentions were noble and upright and that the mitzvah of *Hachnasas Kallah* would benefit his father's eternal merit. Secondly, the old tallis was full of sweat from the toil that R' Yechiel had poured into his davening over the years, and as such was more elevated in Kedusha than any

new tallis could ever be. The Bais Din heard both sides and deliberated. The verdict handed down was "not guilty" and R' Yaakov was permitted to return to life in this world.

The entire episode shook apart R' Yaakov. He had experienced a reality which is given to few -- that of standing before the Heavenly Bais Din and returning to our world to tell about it. In response, he firmly resolved to become closer to Hashem and to seek a Rebbe to teach him the right Yiddishe path in life. But since he lived in Kiev and no Rebbe lived there, he threw himself into affairs of livelihood and family life, which hindered his search for Truth. One day a true friend told him that the son of the Heiliger Rizhiner Rebbe, Reb Mordechai Shraga, Rebbe in Husyatin, served as a Rebbe in Shomayim as well as in this physical world. This ignited a fire in R' Yaakov and he lost no time in traveling to Husyatin.

When he came to Husyatin he entered the shul, brimming with the warmth of Torah and chassidus, where young and old were immersed in Torah learning and avodas Hashem. He felt that this was his destined place. He yearned to have some private time with the Rebbe. However, he was told that the Rebbe's door was closed and it could take sometimes a week or more till the Rebbe would see people. R' Yaakov felt that it was worth the wait. Finally, one day the Rebbe's door was opened and R' Yaakov prepared a kvittel to take and lay before the Rebbe.

When R' Yaakov entered the room and beheld the Rebbe he was dumbfounded --- and fainted straight away. The gabbai dragged him from the room and revived him. When R' Yaakov came to himself the gabbai asked why he thought he fainted. R' Yaakov told the gabbai the story of standing before the Heavenly Court, with the Defending Angel having a glowing look and wearing a coloured, flowered robe. R' Yaakov choked back tears and exclaimed: "I know you won't believe me. The Husyatin Rebbe was the one who defended me! That same face and exactly the same robe!" The gabbai replied matter-of-factly: "Calm down, my good brother. It is a normal event for the Rebbe to ascend to Shomayim to help a Yid. But now I see even more greatness of the Rebbe: genuine *Ruach Hakodesh*! The Rebbe told me this morning to bring him his flowered robe to wear when he receives visitors. I was wondering why the Rebbe wanted this robe specifically, since he generally wears his black robe! But now it's all clear. The Rebbe saw with *Ruach Hakodesh* that you were coming and donned his flowered robe for the obvious purpose of inspiring you and drawing you closer." R' Yaakov understood now that the Rebbe was to be his true guide to serving Hashem. R' Yaakov worked hard to cultivate a close bond with the Rebbe, which eventually bore fruit until he attained the highest echelon among the chassidim.

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