

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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פרק ה'

פרשת עקב תשע"ז

Meaning of "will you say in your heart" insight based on Kedushas Levi
 כי תאמר בלבבך רבים הגוים האלה ממני איכה אוכל להורישם: לא תירא מהם וזכר תזכר את אשר עשה ה' אליך לפרעה: (ו יז-יח)
 Will you say to yourself [in your heart], "These nations are more numerous than I; how will I be able to drive them out"? You shall not fear them. You shall surely remember what the Lord, your God, did to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt: (7:17-18) There is a difficulty in this phrase: Why does it say the word בלבבך to yourself, It would be suffice to say כי תאמר, רבים הגוים האלה, כי תאמר, Will you say "These nations are more numerous than I"? Another question is, why does Hashem have to say לא תירא מהם You shall not fear them. It should only say: You shall surely remember what Hashem did?

We can understand this phrase based on a beautiful insight from Rav Levi Yitzchok of Bardichev in his sefer Kedushas Levi, Parshas Shlach when Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu (במדבר ז כ) "And Hashem said, 'I have forgiven, according to your words.'" (Bamidbar 14:20) And Rashi explains according to your words as referring to what Moshe had said earlier, והמתה את העם הזה כאיש אחד ואמרו הגוים, אשר שמעו את שמעך לאמר: מבלתי יכלת ה' להביא את העם הזה and if You kill this nation like one man, the nations who have heard of Your reputation will say as follows: 'Since the Lord lacked the ability to bring this nation to the Land which He swore to them, He slaughtered them in the desert.'

At first glance, it is difficult to understand what Rashi is teaching us. But, upon deeper reflection, it seems that Rashi's intention is: Moshe prayed to Hashem, for the sake of Yisroel with the argument that a *Chilul Hashem*/

desecration of Hashem's Name, G-d forbid, be avoided, as it says in the verse ואמרו הגוים *the nations will say*. But this argument is difficult to understand, because all the thoughts of men are under the control of the Hashem Who can change the paths that people should follow. If so, He could turn the thoughts of the nations such that they would not say, "Because HaShem lacked the ability..." and there would not occur, G-d forbid, a desecration of Hashem's Name!

But the fact of the matter is that the word of the righteous makes an impression Above and below, as it is written in Iyov (22:28), "You shall also make a decree..." ותגור אמר ויקם, (The posuk in Iyov (22:28) continues "...and they will be fulfilled...") And if so, since Moshe alluded to the fact in his prayer that there would, G-d forbid, be a desecration of G-d's Name if Yisroel were to be destroyed, then certainly there would, G-d forbid, be a desecration of G-d's Name. And this is what Rashi meant when he explained כדברך, according "to your words" as referring to "Lest they say..." Your words made an impression, and because of your words, they would certainly say! But if not for your words "lest they say," the nations would not say those things. But since you, Moshe, said that they would, they will certainly say those things, in accordance with Scripture Iyuv, "You shall also make a decree..." With these heilige words we can now understand our verse: Hashem is stressing to Moshe, since you said your decree בלבבך in your heart, and not in words, it is not a decree and Hashem can change the minds of the people, therefore Hashem tells Klal Yisrael לא תירא מהם *You shall not fear them*. (תפוחי חיים פאנעט אב"ד דעעש קארלסבורג)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

In the zchus of doing a Mitzvah he went straight to Gan Eden

In a village not far from Berditchev there lived a wealthy Yid who gave substantial sums to the poor people. His dream was to move to Eretz Yisroel. And when his wife passed away, he felt there was no longer any reason to delay his journey. Now was his opportunity to spend his final days in Eretz Yisroel, and made the arrangements for his journey. On the day of his departure, all the villagers came to bid him farewell and escort him to the village limits. Four months later, he returned to the village. The people in the village were extremely bewildered. Why had he come back? No matter how much they pressed him, he refused to give a substantive answer. The man planned to return to Eretz Yisroel when he felt stronger, but as the days and weeks passed, he felt progressively weaker. The doctors could not do anything for him, and he realized that he was facing the end of his life. As he lay on his deathbed, he felt that his soul was on the verge of departing, and he summoned the

chevrah kadisha, the community burial society, to come immediately. He had something very important to tell them. "What can we do for you?" said the man. "We understand that you have something important for us to know." "I'm sorry," said the man. "I cannot talk now. I apologize for putting you to such trouble." This scenario repeated many times when finally he said: "This time I am ready to talk to you," said the man. "I was only allowed to speak to you just before my death. Yesterday and the day before, I had felt faint and thought I was about to die, but when you came, I felt a little better, and so I could not talk to you. But now, there is no doubt. He proceeded to tell the most amazing story that had taken place a number of years before.

"I would always make sure to visit Rav Levi Yitzchok's shul to watch the tzaddik's devotions with reverence and to ask for his advice and blessings. One time, while Rav Levi Yitzchok was

still wearing his tallis and tefillin, a group of people burst into the shul and approached him. "This man has robbed us, Rebbe," said an irate fellow who was clearly a merchant.

"That's not true," shouted the accused. "Calm down," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Why don't you tell me the story?" "Thank you. I'm a money changer. That's how I earn my living. But I have no working capital of my own. So I have to take on some of the local merchants as investors. They know I'm good at what I do and that I can turn a nice profit for them. But then a terrible thing happened. I came into my strong-room and found that the strongbox had been broken open and three hundred rubles were missing. I was robbed, and now I am ruined." "He robbed himself," said the merchant. "He took the money for himself, and now he claims it was stolen." "Why would I do that?" said the money changer. "I've lost my livelihood. No one will want to do business with me after this disaster. Why would I ruin my own life?"

"Is there anyone you suspect?" said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Can you think of anyone who might have had the opportunity to take the money?" The money changer shook his head. "The only one I can think of is the maid, a young Jewish girl from a poor family." "Send for her," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. A short while later, the maid arrived accompanied by her parents. The maid protested her innocence, and her parents cried and wrung their hands. "Two things are clear to me," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "One, the girl is blameless. Two, a robbery really did take place. The money was stolen. But what can I do? I don't know where the money is, so how can I help you in this situation?"

Rav Levi Yitzchok closed his eyes and let his chin sink to his chest. He remained in that position, lost in thought, for a long time. Finally, he sighed and looked up. "This Jew has lost three hundred rubles," he declared. "His business will go under unless the money is replaced. I promise whoever provides the necessary funds for this Jew that he will have a portion in Gan Eden right next to mine." As the chevrah kadisha listened to this fascinating story, the dying man related that he had been present in the shul at that time, and he had been intrigued by Rav Levi Yitzchok's offer. "I'm a businessman, Rebbe," he said to Rav Levi Yitzchok, "and this seems like a pretty good investment to me." "Then you will do it?" said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "I want to," said the man, "but as I said, I'm a businessman. I need it in writing." "Of course," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "We will take care of that after everyone leaves." I handed the money to Rav Levi Yitzchok, and Rav Levi Yitzchok gave it to the money changer. "May this money bring you success and good fortune," Rav Levi Yitzchok said to the money changer, "and may you never suffer a loss again." Then he turned to the young maid. "As for you, because you have been humiliated undeservedly, may the Almighty bless you with a good marriage full of happiness and joy." The merchants, the money changer and the maid and her parents all

thanked Rav Levi Yitzchok and left. Only I who had given the money remained. Rav Levi Yitzchok called for pen and paper. He wrote a few words on a small scrap of paper, folded it over several times and handed it to me. "Do not ever open this note," he said. "At the end of your life, when you feel your soul is about to leave your body, give this note to the chevrah kadisha and tell them to place it in your hand when they bury you." I was overjoyed. I took the note home to my village and placed it inside an old Siddur, where it remained for years.

When I decided to move to Eretz Yisroel, I first went to Berditchev to ask Rav Levi Yitzchok for his blessing. "I have good news for you," Rav Levi Yitzchok. "The thief who took the three hundred rubles was discovered, and the money was returned. He was impressed by your willingness to help the money changer, and he had a change of heart. He gave back the money and asked me to help him do teshuvah. I can now return your money to you, and you can give me back my note." I shook my head. "I don't want the money back. I'm a businessman, and I believe I made a very good deal. I do not want to undo it. The money can be given to the maid as a dowry or for any other purpose as the rebbe sees fit." Rav Levi Yitzchok nodded. "Very well, it will be as you say." I then returned home and proceeded with the distribution of my belongings and the preparations for the journey. When I arrived in Eretz Yisroel, I was shocked to discover that I couldn't find the note. It was not in my Siddur. I then recalled that I had put it into an older Siddur, one that I had donated to the Beis Medrash in the village before leaving on my journey. I was in a dilemma and didn't know what to do. Should I go back home to get the note? Should I send for it? "I found no rest," he said to the man from chevra kadisha. "I couldn't eat, and I couldn't sleep until I finally decided to come back for the note. I returned to my village and went to the Beis Medrash to look for my old Siddur. It was there, and so was the note. I was gratified and thanked Hashem. I took the precious note and put it in a safe place. People were curious about why I had returned, but I said nothing to anyone. Instead, I began to make preparations for returning to Eretz Yisroel. But unfortunately it was not to be. My condition deteriorated, and I found myself on my deathbed. Two days ago, I thought the end was near, and I called for you to come. But when you came, I felt better, so I said nothing. The same happened yesterday. Today, however, I feel that my life is hanging on a thread, that only my need to talk to you is keeping me alive. Please forgive me." "There is nothing to forgive." With a trembling hand, the man handed a tiny piece of folded paper to the man from the chevrah kadisha. Then he closed his eyes and passed away. Later, as the chevrah kadisha prepared the body for interment, as one of the men reached for the note, it fell to the ground and unfolded. The words written there were clear for all to see. "Open for him the gates of Gan Eden. Signed, Levi Yitzchok ben Sarah Sosha." The great sacrifice got him a free pass into Gan Eden.

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