

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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פרשת לך לך תשע"ט

Wealth isn't always a blessing

ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והנה ברכה: (י"ב ב-ג)

And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will glorify your name, and you shall be blessed. [Rashi comments that traveling causes three things: 1) it diminishes procreation, 2) it diminishes money, and 3) it diminishes one's reputation; therefore, he required these three blessings, namely that Hashem should bless him with children, *גוי גדול*, money, *money*, and fame. There is a great difficulty here. First, what is the connection of Avraham being blessed to the posuk which follows *"I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you"*? Second, what should it make a difference to Avraham what would happen to other people after he already received his guarantee of a bracha from Hashem? The answer can be, that the nature of many people is to be jealous of a rich person. This jealousy leads to hatred, which eventually leads to cursing, which are terrible sins. Avraham after he received his blessing and became a rich person, would then have the heartache of all his new enemies and people cursing him. Could this be a true blessing? Of course not! Therefore, Hashem promised Avraham that people who blessed him would also become blessed with wealth. Therefore they would not become jealous of Avraham as they too would have wealth. These people will not become his enemy or curse him and the blessing would be a true blessing. This is the connection of the psukim.

(Yehuda Z. Klitnick from ס' שלמי שמחה – הר"ר אטלס)

One more point on this issue:

Rashi comments: "I will bless you [with wealth] and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing." The great Gaon, Rav Aharon Levin the Rav of Reisha Hy"d in his sefer HaDrash V'Ha'Iyun explains: When people become rich and famous, they often forget their less fortunate family and friends. They begin to feel that helping others is beneath their dignity. Consequently, they may acquire many enemies as a result of their newfound fame and wealth. Hashem promised Avraham, therefore, that riches and fame would not bring him enemies; rather, "you shall be a blessing," blessed by all who come in contact with you. [The simple reason why Avraham would not have enemies, is that he never forgot the less fortunate]. (HaDrash V'Ha'Iyun)

The true motive in the tests of Avraham

ויאמר ה' אל-אברהם לך-לך מארצך ומבית-אביך: (יב א)

And Hashem said to Avram, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house... (12:1) Rashi explains that with these words Hashem made the implied promise to Avram that his departure from his homeland

would be "for your pleasure and your benefit." Yet this going away from his homeland constituted one of the ten trials with which Avram was tested. In Ethics of the Fathers we learn: With ten trials our father Avraham was tested and he withstood them all--in order to make known how great was our father Avraham's love. (Pirkei Avot 5:3) *עשרה נסיונות נתנסה אברהם אבינו עליו השלום ועמד בכלם, להודיע כמה חבתו של אברהם אבינו עליו השלום:* (אבות פרק ה משנה ג) How, then, could this be considered a trial, if Avram was promised that he would derive pleasure and benefit from his leaving? The answer, explains the Baal Hafla'ah, can be found in a subsequent verse *וילך אברהם כאשר דבר אליו ה': (י"ב ד)* Avram went just as Hashem told him to. (12:4) "So Avram went as Hashem had spoken to him." These words state clearly that Avram's one and only motive for leaving was his wish to fulfill Hashem's command. He was tested to ascertain the true motive for leaving his homeland. Would Avram leave with the intention of claiming the promised reward, or would he do so for the purely spiritual purpose of obeying Hashem's command? His passing this first trial proved that Avram's motive was the latter. (Panim Yafos on Torah)

The connection of the Jews to stars

הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך:

Look now toward the heavens and count the stars...and He said so will be your descendants. (15:5) We need to understand what is the connection of Klal Yisrael to stars? When we look at the stars from our vantage point on earth, they appear to be rather small. In reality, stars are enormous. This is the message that Hashem related to Avraham in the above pasuk: In this world, Avraham, your children are going to be considered small and insignificant among the nations of the world. However, "So will be your descendants" – in Heaven they are considered far more important than any of the nations! (Divrei Chaim of Sanz)

The fasting of Behab after Yom Tov

There exists a custom to fast on three separate days following Pesach and Sukkot. The fast is observed on a Monday, Thursday, and again on a Monday. It is called the "Behab" fast, its name being taken from combining the letters ב, ה, and ב, which refer to Monday, Thursday, and Monday, respectively. The fast is not observed immediately following Pesach and Sukkot, but rather, it is pushed off to the month which follows the holiday, being observed in Iyar and Cheshvan, respectively. There are a number of reasons why the Behab fast was established. Foremost, it serves to atone for any extensive overeating which is prevalent on Yom Tov and is also considered to be a sin which warrants having to fast Behab. It also serves to atone for any forbidden work which one may have performed on Chol Ha'moed. The

Behab fast is also an opportunity to pray that God bless the crops (appropriate following Pesach) and the rains (following Sukkot). Fasting Behab also atones for the severe sin of chillul Hashem which one might have unintentionally caused at some time. It is observed on Mondays and Thursdays as these are days which are

traditionally associated with both judgment and Divine favor. It was on a Monday that Moshe ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Torah and he later descended from it on a Thursday. See Orach Chaim 492 and the mefarshim.

STORY OF THE WEEK (by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**** *In Zchus of Pidyon Shvuyim The Young Butcher became a Parnes Hakehila* ****

The Rebbe Reb Moshe Leib from Sassov worked diligently to free people from prison known as פדיון שבויים. He once found out that a Yid had been jailed for no reason, and the Rebbe worked hard to have him freed, and raised a substantial amount to redeem the prisoner but even money didn't help! The Rebbe had to think hard and long to come up with a solution. Then something flashed through his mind. He sent his Gabbai to Brod to summon a young butcher. The Gabbai returned with the youngster, who was strong and very brave. The Rebbe told the youngster he wanted him to free the Yid from jail and that he would be rewarded nicely. The youngster agreed, but insisted he wanted no money for the task. He wanted the Rebbe to give his Olam Haboh to him. The Rebbe agreed! A contract was drawn up and signed, and they drank Lechaim. The youngster promised to free the Yid from jail. As he walked out, he called to the Rebbe: "I want to renege on the agreement. I thought it over: Olam Habah will not work for me, as I have never learned Torah and I will feel out of place"! "What, then, do you want?" asked the Rebbe. The youngster answered: "I want the Rebbe to guarantee me a prominent shidduch and that I will have children and sons in law who are Talmidei Chachamim." The Rebbe answered: "That won't be a problem." Another contract was drawn up, they drank Lechaim and the youngster left.

He went to an acquaintance and bought an exquisite and expensive whiskey, which was good and old. Then he headed to the jail, met with the guard, and told him: "I just purchased the most expensive whisky, and I want to give you the honor of opening the bottle and tasting it first. The guard was flabbergasted at the idea and fell for it. He opened the bottle, took a sip and said: "this is really tasty." The youngster poured him a full cup: the guard loved the taste, and after a few cups he was fast asleep. The youngster took the keys, headed to the cell and quietly opened the door and let the Yid out. The youngster returned the keys and they both headed out of the jail, where a waiting wagon took them across the border to freedom. When the guard woke up, he understood what had happened, but he couldn't say anything or else he would be in trouble for drinking while on duty.

Meanwhile, the youngster came to Reb Moshe Leib with

the good news. The Rebbe was elated and promised the youngster again that he would get a good shidduch and have children Talmidei Chachamim. The youngster, a plain and simple person, had great Emunah in the Rebbe. He was confident that the Rebbe's words would come true. But how? Hashem has his ways in Hashgacha Pratis!

The Graf -mayor and chief- of Brod was not a well man and he had to eat calf's meat. One time there was no calf's meat to be obtained anywhere, and the Graf let out the word that he will reward anyone who would bring him calf's meat. The youngster now thought this is his opportunity! He had, in a nearby city a friend who owned a calf. He traveled there and purchased the calf. He went to the Graf, and when the Graf saw the youngster with the calf, he was very excited and asked him "How did you find a calf?" The youngster answered, shrewdly: "I love the Graf so dearly, I traveled many miles to locate a calf for your wellbeing." The Graf was flabbergasted, and said "I see you are my true friend. I want to pay you nicely. How much do I owe you?" The youngster answered: "I will not ask the Graf for payment as it is my duty to help the kind Graf."

The Graf was overwhelmed by these kind words and exclaimed: "I will never accept something for nothing!" He headed to his vault, took out a bag of gold coins and handed it to the youngster, saying: "Leave your job as a butcher, and take this money and do some business. Also, since you are my friend, I need a broker to help me in my business dealings, and want you to be my broker."

The youngster agreed and started dealing in business, and also became the broker for the Graf. He was very successful, and slowly rose in the ranks of the Kehilah until he became the treasurer of the Kehilah, a "Parnes Ha'ir". He had a strong influence upon Kehilah and began to learn Torah. Being very smart, he quickly gained knowledge of Torah.

Soon after, a prominent Talmid Chacham in Brod offered him his daughter. The shidduch was made, and the youngster saw the bracha of the Rebbe at work. As the years went by, he had children and sons in law Talmidei Chachamim.

Now he was glad he had chosen the right Bracha: the best thing in life is having children Talmidei Chachamim.

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