

→ > Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick 😂 →

Parshas Reah year 9 #349

ראש חודש אלול

פרשת ראה תשע"ח

Either a Mitzvah or an Aveira

ַרְאֵה אֱנֹכֵי נֹתֵן לְפְנֵיכֶם הַיָּוֹם בְּרָכָה וּקְלָלֶה: (י״א כ״ו)

Behold that I am presenting both a blessing and a curse before you today. (11:26) The Seforno teaches, based on our posuk: The Torah admits no middle ground – everything is either a blessing or a curse. Either one climbs upwards spiritually, or he slides downwards. One cannot remain static. The Chovas Halevavos extends this to say that the concept of "Reshus"/ voluntary, optional action is alien to us: I may do something, but then again I might not. Everything one does is classed as either a Mitzvah or an Aveira ייה. Therefore, according to this view, if one's act cannot be classified as a Mitzvah, then it is perforce an Aveira. This can be the lesson in our posuk: Behold that I am presenting both a blessing and a curse before you today. And the pasuk continues directly "The blessing, that you will heed the commandments of the Lord your G-d, which I command you today; and the curse, if you will not heed the commandments of the Lord your G-d," The blessing lies in heeding the Mitzvos and the curse in not heeding the Mitzvas. This is the only conceptual model for serving Hashem. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick according to the Chovas Halevavos and the Yesod Veshoresh HaAvodah) The same insight can be extracted from another Posuk in this Parsha רברים יב יו) The verse states, לְאַרֶּל לְאֲבֶל לְאַבֶּל לְאַבֶּל הַשְּעָרֵיך In your cities you may not eat." (12:17) The Torah prohibits a Jew from eating various tithes and offerings outside of the place designated by Hashem. The words לא תובל translate literally as "you cannot" rather than as "you may not." The latter implies a lack of permission, while the former indicates a lack of ability. A Jew must always feel that actions prohibited by the Torah are not only impermissible, but are actually out of reach. We are simply unable to perform these acts, since they run contrary to Hashem's Will. When a person is told to jump off a roof and replies, "I can't do it," it is a false statement. He certainly can do it, however, he does not want to do it, since doing so will endanger his life. One must view his allegiance to the Torah as something that cannot be compromised. Hence the same idea as above. Either an act is a Mitzvah or an Aveira, there is no in between.

Your ego is a blessing or....

ראַה אַנֹכֵי נֹתֵן לִפְנֵיכֶם הַיָּוֹם בְּרָכָה וּקְלָלֶה: (י״א כ״ו)

See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse. (11:26) The word מובי can mean "our ego," I am something! The Torah is teaching us that an ego can either be a blessing or a curse. The ego that impels us to persevere in the face of adverse spiritual challenges, is the catalyst for the enormous spiritual growth. The ego thriving to reach higher levels in serving Hashem will persevere. However when ego is used for false pride or arrogance, it is a most destructive force. Thus, Hashem says to us: Your "I" is presented

before you today. It can become a blessing or a curse depending on how you develop it. (Me'or V'Shemesh) This same insight is quoted by the Tzaddikim explaining another Posuk (אָנֹבִי עֹמֵּד בֵין ה׳ וּבֵינֵיכֶם (דברים ה ה) The Gemarra (Sota 5a) states כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, אמר הקב"ה אין אני והוא יכולין the Hashem, said: He and I cannot dwell together in the world, 'שנא' as it is stated:תהלים קא, ה) מָלָשָׁנִי לא אוּכָל. "He בַּסֶתֵר רֻעָהוּ אוֹתוֹ אַצְּמִית נְבַהּ עֵינַיִם וּרְחַב לֵבָב אֹתוֹ לא who slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy; he who is haughty of eye and proud of heart, him will I not suffer" (Psalms 101:5-6). אַל אָרָא אָתוֹ לֹא אוּכַל These verses should be understood as follows: Do not read the verse as: אותו "I cannot do anything to him"; rather, it as: אָתוֹ with him, I cannot bear to dwell. Here to is the same insight: אָנבי "our ego," any person who has arrogance within him, any person who has arrogance within him, שֹבֶּיר will be a barrier, between Hashem and that person, as Hashem will not dwell on him.(Seforim)

The urge and opening to serve Hashem is from you לְשָׁכְנִוֹ תְדְרְשָׁוּ וּבַאת, שֵׁכָה: (יב ה)

You shall seek out His Presence and you shall come there. (12:5) The posuk appears to be in reverse order. It would be more correct to say that הַבְּאֹתְ שֶׁכְה "you shall come there" לְּשֶׁכְנִּי in order to search for the Divine Presence, rather than the other way around. The answer is that the search itself is the key to success. If one earnestly seeks to find Hashem, his efforts will be met with success and he will "come there." The mere fact that one searches for truth allows him to achieve his goal. The Midrash (Shir Hashirim 5:2) states: פַּתְרוּג לִי בַּתְרוּ עֵּל הַשׁוֹכְה בְּתְרָה שֶׁל מַתִם, וַאָּנִי פּוֹתַה 5:2) states:

לֶבֶם בְּתְחִים שֶּירְיוּ נְנְלְּוֹת וּכְרְוֹנִיוֹת נְבְנְסוֹת בּוּ Hashem requires you to open a hole the size of a needle and then Hashem will open an enormous door. The urge and beginning must come from the person. (Based on the Chasam Sofer)

Give charity for the sake of charity not pity נְתָוֹן תָתֵן לוֹ וְלֹא־יֵרֵע לְבָבְךָּ בְתִרְךָּ לְוֹ: (טו י)

You shall surely give him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him. (15:10) A poor person came to R' Mendel of Rimanov to pour out his heart about his difficult financial situation. The Rebbe gave the man a substantial sum of money. As the man turned to leave, the Rebbe presented him with yet another coin. R' Mendel's family later asked him why he had given the man tzedakah twice. He explained: The first time, I gave him out of sympathy for the severity of his predicament. The second time

was purely for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah. We find an allusion to this in the Torah. When we are commanded to give tzedakah, the Torah uses a repetitive expression – יָלָהְ בָּתְּלוֹן הַתְּלוֹ לֵּלוֹי – you shall surely give." This is to teach us that we should give and give again. יְלִבְּבָּדָ בְּתָּתְּלָּ

The first time we should give so that "your heart not feel bad." We must learn to feel compassion in our hearts; then Heaven will have compassion toward us. The second time we give, however, we should do so purely for the mitzvah of giving – "when you give him."

STORY OF THE WEEK (by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*****Rav Meir from Premishlan helps a Yid do Teshuva*****

Rav Nachum was from the Town of Yalkovitz in Western Galicia. He was a big Talmid Chacham and a very wealthy person. He owned a large and very successful inn. Every Yid found a temporary home by Reb Nachum for a week or longer, with hospitality and warmth, and when the time came to depart Reb Nachum gave each a nice donation.

One day, a Yid came to Reb Nachum's inn wearing torn clothing and looked as a doomed person. At first glance Reb Nachum saw an ordinary poor person looking for a good meal and a place to rest. However, this Yid didn't ask for anything and only when Reb Nachum offered him to eat did he oblige. When the meal was finished the Yid said to Reb Nachum "I must leave now I'm in a rush." Reb Nachum begged him to stay overnight, buy to no avail. He insisted he must leave now! Reb Nachum took out a coin to give to the Yid, but he refused to accept it. Reb Nachum thought maybe the coin was too small for the Yid, therefore he took out a larger coin to give. The Yid still refused it and added, "I'm a very rich person!" Reb Nachum started to wonder maybe this Yid was insane or a fantasizer. The Yid understood what Reb Nachum was thinking and stated "I'll tell you my story: I come from Budapest where I own lots of real estate, as well as many stores which sell fruits and wine. I employ hundreds of workers too. One day I had taken home a large sum of money and it was taken from me. I had a young Jewish girl, an orphan whom I had recently hired and did not know very well and I accused her of taking the money. She swore and cried to me that she didn't take the money. I lost my calm at the thought of losing such a great sum of money and I got the police involved. They tried to get a confession from her but to no avail. All the torture and threats to her caused her to get sick and she died shortly after.

A few weeks later, the money was returned to me from a worker who confessed to me, after I promised not to punish him. Now I was in a dilemma. I had caused a innocent Jewish girl to die for nothing. I could not find peace in me. My life was in shatters. I decided to go to Reb Meir from Premishlan. I told him what I did and he got very intense and stated pacing back and forth till he finally said: "I have three solutions for your Teshuva and Tikkun, but you must choose one of them. The first choice is to die this year. The death

will be an atonement. The second choice is to live, however you will become very sick and suffer much pain for 3 years. The third choice is to go into exile for three years. It will be a very difficult three years as you will not be allowed to sleep over in one place two nights in a row. You will not be allowed to ask for food even if you feel you are about to die. You must not accept money from anyone. Also you must only travel by foot and never accept a ride from anyone. At the end of every year you are to come to me to see how you are progressing with the teshuva.

I was full of fear and told the Rebbe. I'll answer him in a few days. Meanwhile I went back to work and forgot about my promise to the Rebbe. One day, I woke up with a headache and thought it would go away. Day by day it got worse and I reminded myself what the Rebbe had spoken to me. Now I realized that the Rebbe had chosen for me the first choice. I was devastated and sent a messenger to the Rebbe apologizing that I forgot about my promise. However if the Rebbe will forgive me and let me become well I will come to the Rebbe with my decision. The Rebbe agreed and I started feeling better and then I came to the Rebbe. I again apologized and told the Rebbe I choose to go in exile. The Rebbe said "Ok, you must remove your aristocrat clothing now and don clothing of a poor wanderer. Your exile will start now!" Now the Yid concluded: "It is now the end of two years of exile and I went to Premishlan and heard that the Rebbe was Niftar. I was devastated and full on uncertainty what to do now. I met a Talmid Chacham and I shared my dilemma with him. He told me to travel to Sanz to visit Rav Chaim the Sanzer Rav, The Divrei Chaim, who was close to Rav Meir. Now from here it is a long walk to Sanz and I have no tranquility till I hear from the Sanzer Rav about my situation. Therefore I'm in a rush!" Reb Nachum wished the Yid success and he departed. The Yid listened to that Talmid Chacham and traveled to Sanz, and as soon as he entered the room of the Rebbe, The Rebbe told him "Not to worry. The two years of exile was enough and the Teshuva was accepted by Hashem." The Yid thanked the Rebbe and after leaving the Rebbe, he felt as if a stone was removed from his heart and felt calm. The Yid traveled to his home where he was welcomed to a happy group of people.