

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Reah 5776 [year 6] 271

שבת ראש חודש אלול פרשת ראה תשע"ו

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום בְּרַבָּה וּקְלָהָ: (י"א כ"ו)

Hashem is saying to Klal Yisroel: "See, that I present before you today, a blessing and a curse." All the seforim ask on this Posuk- Why does Hashem have to say which I present before you "TODAY" it seems that the word -"היום"- *Hayom* is coming to teach us a lesson, which leaves us puzzled as to what is the purpose?

The answer can be: We generally read Parshas Reah either before or on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*. The custom is that we blow the *Shofar* the whole month of *Elul* to awaken Klal Yisrael to do *Teshuva* - repent- as we fear the upcoming Day of Judgment. We also find a simmilar Posuk where the Torah stresses the word *TODAY*- "היום"- that is אתם נצבים "היום" בולכם. The *Zohar* explains the word היום, -a particular day- to refer to Rosh Hashanah, in which we say in *Mussaf* עולם היום הרת עולם. There the Parsha is usually also read before Rosh Hashanah, the ultimate time to do *Teshuva*. Therefore we see the connection of the word "היום" to a time when Hashem is reminding His beloved children to do *Teshuva*. Hence, Parshas Reah which commences at the start of Chodesh Elul and Parshas *Netzavim* which is read near Rosh Hashanah, are utilizing the word "היום" reminding Klal Yisroel to do *Teshuva*, and by doing *Teshuva*, Hashem will Bless us with Bracha, a good year.

Now that the heilige seforim have answered the phrase of "היום" that by doing *Teshuva* you will have a *Bracha*, then the question can be asked, what is the meaning Hashem is giving you *Today* a "קְלָהָ" curse? We can answer this as follows: When a person decides to do *Teshuva*, he is confronted by the *Yetzer Hara* -Evil Inclination- who tells him, "you have done so many sins in the past, even if you do *Teshuva* these sins will come and haunt you". Now even when the person embarks on the path to *Teshuva*, the *Yetzer Harah* will still challenge the person by telling him to look ahead to the uphill battle and try to discourage that person from continuing on the path to a complete *Teshuva*." Therefore the Hashem is teaching us: - "היום" means Today - to take to *Teshuva* one day at a time -. The *Kotzker Rebbe* once asked one of the *Chassidim* of *Rav Moshe Kobrin*, a *Talmid* of *Reb Mordechai of Lechovitch*, in what phase was his *Rebbe* great at? The *chassid* answered, "My *Rebbe* is great at with whatever he is doing at that moment." Every hour is a new hour, every minute is a new minute and what has happened in the past is already done. We can only change what we have in our hands and what we have is now- this hour, this minute. Right now, we can take the minute we are facing and choose to do good with it. Hence we see that even when one decides to really do *Teshuva*, the *Yetzer Harah* will discourage him, by posing the difficulty of the long path to *Teshuva*! Therefore Hashem says "Today"

think of the present minute and hour, which will be a bracha and do not listen to the *Yetzer Hara* who wants to bring you a קְלָהָ to look ahead to the uphill battle. (by *Yehuda Z. Klitnick*)

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום בְּרַבָּה: (י"א כ"ו)

"See, that I present before you today." The question is, what is the meaning לפניכם "before you?" Another question is asked: we know from the *Gemarra* (*Kiddushim* 39a) שכר מצוה בהאי שכר מצוה ליכא that all rewards for *Mitzvahs* are given in the World to come, and not in this world, yet here the reward for doing the *Mitzvah* is promised in this physical world? However the *Kedushas Yom Tov* [father of *Rabbi Yoel of Satmar*] brings from the *Yismach Moshe* that the reward for the actual *Mitzvah* is given only in the World to come. But for the הכנה, the preparations for doing a *Mitzvah*, there is a reward in this physical world. He derives this from what transpired by *Yaakov Aveinu*. When he sent angels to *Esav* the Torah says: וישלח לב ד) וישלח יעקב מלאכים לְפָנָיו, "What is the meaning לְפָנָיו" when it should have been suffice to state וישלח יעקב מלאכים? However the answer is based on a difficult question, How was *Yaakov* allowed to utilize his good angels to see what his brother *Eisav* was up to? Yet if these angels were created from his *Mitzvos*, then in essence *Yaakov* was reaping a reward from his *Mitzvah*, and we have just learnt that there is no reward in this world? Therefore the Torah is teaching us, that these angels were created from the *Hachana*, the preparation of doing *Mitzvos*, and from here we derive that one gets rewarded for this in this world. Hence *Yaakov* was able to send these angels for his benefit and he was able to use his reward for this. According to this insight, we can answer what is the meaning of word לפניכם "before you". The posuk is teaching us "See, that I present before you today." ראה אנכי: the word לפניכם" is alluding to the preparation one does before doing a *Mitzvah*. For this, there is a reward בְּרַבָּה in this world. That is why the posuk concludes: for the preparation of a *Mitzvah* you will get a bracha, and be rewarded in this world.

With this approach we can understand another posuk וידקה תהיה לנו כִּי־נִשְׁמֵר לְעֲשׂוֹת ... לְפָנָי ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוֵּנוּ: (דברים ו כה) "And it will be for our merit that we keep to observe all these commandments before Hashem, our God, as He has commanded us." *Devarim* 6:25. Here to the obvious question can be asked: How is it that Hashem will give us merit by observing the *Mitzvahs*, when the merit is only in the world to come? Yet here the Torah uses the phrase לפני "before" which alludes to the preparation before a *Mitzvah*, and for that we have learnt from *Yaakov Aveinu* that there is a merit in this world. Hence the reason "And it will be for our merit that we keep to observe all these commandments". (תורת יפה בעסערמין)

STORY OF THE WEEK (Written by Yehuda Z. Klitnick and edited by David Pinchus Rose)

*****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' Yecheil, whose avodas Hashem was prodigious. 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 procure a spanking-new tallis, made of the finest wool (called "Turkish") for the express 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 local *cause célèbre* 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 Yecheil's unused tallis for his merit."

R' Yaakov now had a singular dilemma: which took precedence -- his father's express wish, or performing a great Mitzvah? He discussed it with the Chevra Kadisha, who, not surprisingly, had never confronted a thorny shaila like this. 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 Yecheil, 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 vividly in a dream, very angry that his son hadn't faithfully 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 took grievously 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. [In Jewish wills and estates, there is a principle of *מצוה לקיים דברי המת* (Taanis 21a), "it is a mitzvah to fulfill the deceased's words" which seems to have been violated *prima facie* in this case. [DPR]] 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 with an awesome and shimmering countenance, adorned in a flowered beketcha robe, took the podium. He argued persuasively that R' Yaakov's intentions were noble and upright and that the cardinal mitzvah of *Hachnasas Kallah* would redound to his father's eternal merit. Secondly, the old tallis was full of sweat from the toil that R' Yecheil 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 defending angel carried the day. The verdict handed down was "not guilty" and R' Yaakov was permitted to return to life in this world. R' Yaakov was relieved beyond words, and felt a strange sense of being lowered until he awakened.

The entire episode shook R' Yaakov from head to toe, inside and out. He had experienced a reality which is given to few mortals -- 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 Husyatyn, 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 Husyatyn.

When he came to Husyatyn 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 kvitel 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 visage and wearing a coloured, flowered robe. R' Yaakov choked back tears and exclaimed: "I know you won't believe me -- I barely believe myself. The Husyatyn 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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