

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Shemos 5778

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פרשת שמות תשע"ח

What lesson do we learn from Moshe being a sheppard

(ש"ד) וַיִּגְדֹּל מֹשֶׁה רֹעֵה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ... וַיִּגְדֹּל אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר: (ג נ)
 “Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro,... he guided the sheep far into the wilderness...” The Torah is telling us that Klal Yisroel were enslaved in Mitzrayim. Klal Yisroel’s freedom from slavery of Mitzriyim was about to begin. Hakodosh Boruch Hu was about to reveal Himself to Moshe Rabbeinu, who would lead Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim. The Torah tells us that Moshe was shepherding his father-in-law’s sheep. The question is: Why does the Torah tell us that Moshe was a shepherd of his father-in-law’s sheep? Additionally, why does the Torah tell us that Moshe took the sheep far into the wilderness? The Targum Unkeles explains that Moshe went to find good pasture out in the Midbar. The question is what was bothering the Targum? The Haksav VeKaballah answers: Generally, the desert is a place that is desolate and is not appropriate to take sheep to graze. Therefore, Onkelos explains that Moshe searched out that hard-to-find place in the desert, a place that is appropriate to take sheep to graze. Moshe did this so that the sheep would not come to graze in land that was not permitted, therefore it kept them away from theft. Based on this insight we can add: Everything the Torah states is a lesson for us. We see that Avraham was angry at the sheperd’s of Lot that were grazing in doubtful places. This was an act of stealing. The Gemara Taanis 25:a brings: Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa had some goats. His neighbors said to him: Your goats are damaging our property by eating in our fields. He said to them: If they are causing damage, let them be eaten by bears. But if they are not eating your property, let each of them, this evening, bring a bear impaled between its horns. That evening, each one brought in a bear impaled between its horns. Accordingly, Moshe acted in the most proper avenue, and a lesson that we must also adhere to this behavior. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

another insight: The Medrash says that once a sheep strayed from the rest of the flock. Moshe ran after it and carried it back on his shoulders. How did Moshe chase after one solitary sheep, while leaving the rest of the flock behind? Unless someone was watching the rest of the flock, it would seem irresponsible to act in this manner. In fact, there was no one else watching the flock. Moshe knew that the unity among the rest of the flock would protect them from danger. The lost sheep was alone, and was in danger for it was isolated from the rest. In addition, the loss of even one sheep could potentially create dissention within the entire flock. On top of all of this, Moshe knew that it was not the poor sheep’s fault that it had wandered off; it was the shepherd’s fault. Unity amongst Yidin protects all of Klal Yisroel. When a Yid leaves the pack, his Ruchniyos is in great jeopardy. Every effort must be made to reunite him with his flock. At the same time, the loss of one Yid, undermines the strength of the entire Klal Yisroel. And a true leader of Klal Yisroel takes responsibility for all Neshomos who are lost, for it is his responsibility. (Sefas Emes Gur) This brings to mind the Gemara Makos 11:a A certain elder - Tosfos: Eliyahu Hanavu- said: I heard in the lecture delivered by Rava that the Kohen/High Priests share the blame, as they should have pleaded for mercy for their generation and they did not plead. Consequently, they required the exiles to pray on their own behalf. The Gemara illustrates the concept of the responsibility held by the spiritual leadership: This is like in this incident where a certain man was eaten by a lion at a distance of three parasangs from the place of residence of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, and Eliyahu Hanavi did not speak with him for three days because of his failure to pray that an incident of this kind would not transpire in his place of residence. From this we see the obligation of leaders to pray for and help Klal Yisrael. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**** The Barditchaver Rav is a broker between Hashem and Klal Yisrael ****

Two litigants came to Rav Levi Yitzchok’s Bais Din. “State the case,” the Rav said. The plaintiff began. “My opponent here is a noted broker who specializes in big deals, while I am a humble broker who is happy to make a small commission so that I can go home and feed my family. I thought of a deal that would bring a very substantial commission. I noticed a stall overflowing with merchandise on one of the streets. I examined the merchandise and saw that it was of good quality. On another street I noticed a similar situation. There I saw a stall overflowing with a

different kind of merchandise, also of good quality, yet there were no customers. “After a brief investigation, I came to the conclusion that both merchants were trying to sell the wrong merchandise to the customers in their locations. If somehow they exchanged merchandise they would both be able to sell it quickly. So here was a golden opportunity. If I could broker this exchange I would make a beautiful commission from both merchants. “There was a problem, however. These were important merchants, and the merchandise was expensive. Merchants of this caliber wouldn’t speak with a

humble broker like me. I needed to do this deal together with a big broker, with had a fancier reputation. I approached my opponent here and suggested that we make a partnership of my idea and his presentation. He agreed to a full partnership and an equal division of the brokerage commission, and we shook hands on it. "The deal worked out as I had planned. The merchants exchanged merchandise and sold it quickly, and they paid my opponent here the commission as agreed. But when I came to collect my half, he was singing a different song. He was willing to pay me the amount I normally earned after a day's work, but refused to pay me half the commission. He claimed that I didn't deserve it. I demand that he pay me my full share."

"And what do you say?" asked Rav Levi Yitzchok to the defendant. "I say that I offered him more than he deserved," said the defendant. "He had the idea. What are ideas? Taking an idea and carrying it through is what counts. That is how you earn your money." "Did you agree on a full partnership?" asked the Rav. "I may have said something of the sort, but it's not that simple. When it comes right down to it, the work is what earns the money." "But you do admit," Rav Levi Yitzchok persisted, "that you agreed to give him half the commission, isn't that so?" "Look, Rav," said the defendant, "business is not like a page of the Gemara. Perhaps the Rav doesn't understand how the brokerage business works. I know better."

Rav Levi Yitzchok stated: "Do you have anything more to say in your defense?" "I've said all I have to say." "Fine," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Then we on the Bais Din are ready to deliberate." The Bais Din did not need more than a few minutes to arrive at a ruling. "We have reached a unanimous decision," The Rav concluded. "Since you agreed to give him a full partnership in the commission, that is what you must do. Even if you did the actual work, you cannot change the conditions of the agreement without your partner's consent. You have to pay him half the commission."

The defendant grew red in the face. "I absolutely will not," he shouted. "This is ridiculous, I'm going home!" He stormed out of the room and slammed the door behind him. "He's not going to pay. And if he doesn't pay me, how will I feed my family? What will I do? You have to help me, Rebbe." "Don't worry," said the Rav. "We will not allow him to ignore our ruling." He sent a messenger to the defendant's house to summon him back to the Bais Din. A short while later, the defendant reentered the room; he was not so brazen as to disregard a summons from Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Come into my private study, we have to talk." They went into the study and sat at the table. the Rav began, "Let me tell you, I am actually a broker, just like you. But I don't do my brokerage in the marketplace. I broker deals

between Hashem and the Jewish people. I am the advocate of the Jewish people before the Heavenly Court, and it is my responsibility to negotiate the most advantageous arrangements for them. Do you understand?" The man nodded slowly. "I also make exchanges. Hashem has a commodity that the Jewish people want. That commodity is forgiveness. And in return for that commodity I persuade the Jewish people to give away their sins. This is not easy, because people invest a lot of time, effort and money in their sinful activities, but I can usually persuade them to give up their sinful activities in return for forgiveness. I go back and forth between the parties, negotiating and wheedling, until I can close the deal, usually on Yom Kippur. And when the deal is about to be closed, I ask Hashem to throw in a commodity that is stocked in Heaven in abundant measure. It is children, life and livelihood. I told Hashem that the Jewish people insisted on this additional merchandise to close the deal, and He agreed. Then He asked me what I wanted as my brokerage commission, and I said I would accept without question whatever He offered. And He replied that my reward was that these blessings would be entrusted to me to distribute as I see fit. So that is the end of the story of my business experience." Now I will make it perfectly clear," said The Rav. "Our Bais Din issued a ruling, and you are obligated to abide by it. If you continue to defy the Bais Din, you are risking losing the blessing of life. Do you understand now?" The man rose to his feet. "It is not fair that I should pay that fellow half of the commission for which I worked so hard. I simply refuse to do it." He went home and asked his wife. "Should I give away my hard-earned money?" "I don't know! Are you certain that what you are doing is safe?" she asked. Suddenly, he doubled over in pain. "What happened?" his wife cried in alarm. "Nothing," he said. "I'll be fine in the morning. But as the night wore on, the man's condition deteriorated rapidly. His whole body was wracked with pain, and his fever rose. His wife ran in the middle of the night to call a doctor, but they couldn't do anything to alleviate his suffering. She then ran to the Rav's house and knocked on his door and wailed. "My husband is terribly ill. I'm afraid he's going to die." "He has to accept the ruling of the Bais Din. Bring me the money tonight," said the Rav. "All right, he will." She ran home and pleaded with her husband to give up his stubborn resistance. Finally, he relented and gave her the money. She ran back to the Rav and handed him the money." "Here's the money, Rebbe," she cried. "Please don't let him die." "Don't worry," he replied. "He is already starting to improve." She went home and found her husband sitting in a chair, feeling better. By the morning, he was completely cured.

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