

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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פרקי אבות א

פרשת שופטים תשע"ח

Knowing how to rebuke can overcome disputes

כי השחד יעור עיני חכמים ויסלף דברי צדיקים: (טז יט)

for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise and make just words crooked. (16:19) There is an interesting notation here that the Torah refers to the corrupting influence of taking bribes by the judges as blinding the eyes of the wise "יעור".

Yet in an earlier reference to the corrupting influence of bribery, the Torah (Shemos 23:8) states: כי

for a bribe will blind the clear sighted and corrupt words that are right. There the Torah speaks of it as blinding the eyes of the shrewd and clear sighted, while here it states that it will blind the wise?

The Vilna Gaon explains: Whenever a judge rules on a case, he must combine two talents. First, he must have mastered all the halachos that might apply to the case at hand. Secondly, he must be shrewd and possess sufficient practical knowledge to be able to understand the nuances of the case. He must be both a חכם wise in Torah knowledge, and a פקח, one wise in the ways of the world. Bribery can blind a person so thoroughly that not only does he lose the ability to recall his Torah knowledge, but even his native shrewdness and practical experience as well.

An addendum to the above

The Targum Yonoson Ben Uziel says דגרים "כי השחד יעור" that taking bribery causes the Judge to be stupid and foolish. The Sefer Moznei Tzedek - Rav Mendel the Rav of Drigmeresh Hungary- says an interesting twist: the Torah states posuk 18 וישפוט את העם משפט צדק; and they shall judge the people [with] righteous judgment. The word וישפוט when it is reversed is ויפשוט stupidity and foolishness. The taking of a bribe causes the Judge to lose both traits that the Vilna Gaon says is required of the Judge: a חכם wise in Torah knowledge, and a פקח one wise in the ways of the world.

The Yetzer Hara acts like a brother

לא תוכל לתת עליך איש נכרי אשר לא אחיד הוא: (יז טו)

You may not place over yourself a foreign man, who is not your brother. (17:15) The pasuk is referring to the appointment of a Jewish king over Klal Yisrael. Figuratively speaking, the "foreigner" is the evil inclination. He presents himself as a person's best friend, his loving brother who wishes only to give him the best life has to offer. In truth, however, he is a foreigner, whose only interest is to draw man into self destructive sin. Do not place over yourself a stranger who is in truth no brother to you. (R' Mordechai of Nadvorna)

Two inner Sifrei Torah

והיה בשבתו על כסא ממלכתו וכתב לו את משנה התורה הזאת: (י"ז י"ח) And it will be, when he sits upon his royal throne, that he shall write for himself a [double] copy of this Torah on a scroll from before the Kohanim, the Levites. (17:18)

The Torah commands a king to write two Sifrei Torah. Rashi explains: the king was to keep one Torah inside his palace treasury, and to carry the second one when venturing forth in public. To better understand this Rashi, we can offer an insight based on the Gemara (Shabbos 128a)

כל ישראל בני מלכים all the Jewish people are considered princes. In this light, when Rashi is referring to the king he is also referring, to each individual Jew. Each one of us should have two symbolic Sifrei Torah. One Torah is for when we are at home, בחדרי חדרים ("in rooms hidden within rooms"), when no one can see our actions. We still must conduct ourselves according to the Torah as the Navi says so pointedly: אם יסתר איש כמסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאם ה'. (ירמיהו כג כד) Can a man hide in secret places that I should not see him? says Hashem. (Yirmiyahu 23:24) We hold fast to our second Sefer Torah when interacting with the public; here we are also bound to act according to the Torah, but in this context, the focus is on the Halachos of Derech Eretz and middos tovos, as taught in our holy Sifrei Mussar. (אמרי חיים וויניץ)

2 HASHGACHA PRATIS STORIES OF THE WEEK

(by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*** Hashem shows he is the leader years later ***

The world turns to save his lost son years later

Mr. Honig, a young man living in a small town, contracted a fatal disease and needed a bone marrow transplant to survive. Complicating the search for a match was his extremely rare blood type of AB. Finally, after an arduous search, an appropriate donor named Mr. Robbins was found and contacted. He agreed to help save Mr. Honig's life, and a date was set to meet at the hospital to take care of the preliminary arrangements. The night before the meeting, the Honigs received a call from the hospital informing them that Mr.

Robbins was backing out. Despondent and desperate, Mr. Honig's father phoned Mr. Robbins to plead with him to have a change of heart. "I'm actually willing to do it," Mr. Robbins told him, "but my father absolutely forbids me." Finally, with no other choice, Mr. Honig Sr. drove over to the Robbins' to confront the obstinate man face to face. "How dare you?!" bellowed Mr. Robbins Sr. the instant he opened the door. "You don't remember me, but I remember you well. I was in the (concentration) camp with my son Lulik. My wife and daughters were already dead. You were a rotten kapo. One

day, I managed to find a hiding place for my Lulik in the rafters and began planning his escape. The details were falling into place, and two days remained until he'd get out and join the partisans. And then you, you miserable animal, you walked in late at night with two Nazi guards and told them where my Lulik was hiding. They pulled him down and started leading him away to be shot. I begged for his life to be spared, and you refused, you cold-hearted beast. When I saw it was hopeless, I asked to hug him one last time. You laughed in my face!! I cried, and you laughed. And now you want me to help save your son's life? Never!! There is a G-d in this world and He's brought about justice at last." Mr. Robbins Sr. collapsed into heart-wrenching sobs. His son firmly told Mr. Honig that he had better leave. "Please let me say one thing," Mr. Honig pleaded. "Make it quick," said Robbins Jr. Mr. Honig began: "I was forced to be a kapo. I did as much as I could to help those whom I seemed to hurt. Having the Nazis think I was against my brothers allowed me to do what otherwise wouldn't have been possible. I rescued Lulik from the Nazis and hid him in the forest. By the time I had a chance to return him to you, you had been transferred to another camp. **I raised him all these years, and now he's sick and needs you to save his life!"**

Reunited with lost son many years later in a Shul

It was the name on the non-kosher meal of his seat-mate that caught Moshe's attention. "Weinstein" was a thoroughly Jewish name, no question about that. Moshe politely but cautiously mentioned to the somewhat elderly man that there were kosher meals available on the flight. Mr. Weinstein gave him a long, penetrating stare and said, "I don't eat kosher." When Moshe questioned why, Mr. Weinstein replied, "I don't eat kosher because G-d said we should, and anything that G-d tells me to do, I do the complete opposite." Feeling a bit warm just then, Mr. Weinstein unbuttoned and rolled up his sleeves, allowing Moshe to catch a glimpse of the number tattooed onto his arm. But even that sight left Moshe somewhat perplexed, as the man's anger at G-d seemed to be quite intense. Sensing Moshe's confusion, Mr. Weinstein began to explain: "It was my son. That was the final straw. It wasn't all the other brutalities inflicted by the Nazis which I witnessed; I was able to get past all of that somehow. But it was my son. I constantly envisioned that one day I would see liberation together with my wife and son, Menachem, our only child who was still alive. He was our link to the future, and I was sure he would survive. But one day, the Nazis marched all of us ghetto residents to a nearby forest and commanded us to dig deep holes in the ground. Once the work was completed, the Nazis began to machine gun all of us, as we fell into the hole to our deaths. My son, who had

been holding onto my hand for dear life, suddenly let go. I saw my wife lying on top of my son in the hole. There was a stampede of people trying to flee from the gunfire, I somehow escaped and survived the war, leaving a part of my heart buried in that mass grave forever." Mr. Weinstein brushed away a tear, as he continued, "G-d said 'Have children.' I did, and they were taken away. So now whatever G-d tells me to do, I do the exact opposite." Moshe was at a loss for words. So he said nothing. He just engaged Mr. Weinstein in friendly conversation until they landed at their destination, when they went their separate ways. Four years later, Moshe took his family to Eretz Yisrael for the Yomim Noraim. On Yom Kippur, Moshe chose to daven at the same shul in which his father always davened when visiting Eretz Yisrael. Before Mussaf, Moshe felt a need to get a breath of fresh air. He walked outside onto Meah She'arim Street. Something very unusual caught his eye. An elderly man was sitting on the bench of a bus stop and smoking. At a bus stop in Meah She'arim on Yom Kippur, and smoking! Getting a bit closer, Moshe was even more surprised to see that it was his old seat-mate, Mr. Weinstein! Moshe approached him and reconnected. As they chatted, Moshe told him how he remembered vividly the story he had told him about his son, Menachem. Moshe gently suggested that Mr. Weinstein should join him in shul to say Yizkor for his son. Mr. Weinstein's eyes filled with tears, as he said, "Do you know how long it's been since I was in a shul? I wouldn't even know what to do." Moshe assured him that he would escort him and show him exactly what to do. Mr. Weinstein slowly let the cigarette slip from his hands, stopping himself at the last moment from stepping on it to extinguish it. Moshe clasped his arm, and led Mr. Weinstein into the shul, and up to the chazzan. They approached and Moshe asked if the chazzan would say a special Keil Malei Rachamim at the end of the Torah reading for Mr. Weinstein's son, who had died sanctifying G-d's Name. The chazzan agreed, and Mr. Weinstein whispered into his ear, "His name was Menachem ben Yechezkel Shraga." The chazzan's face turned a chalky white, and beads of sweat broke out on his forehead. He reached out toward Mr. Weinstein and cried, "Tatte!" before he fainted. Moshe was dumbfounded. When Menachem finally came to, Mr. Weinstein hovered over him, with tears in his eyes, and asked, "How can it be that you're still alive? I myself saw them shoot you. What happened?" Menachem replied, "They did shoot us, and we fell into the pit. But Mamma fell on top of me. She shielded me from the bullets. It was Mamma who saved my life! She was a mother until the end." **Moshe was at a complete loss for words, marveling at the workings of Hashgacha Pratis.**

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