

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Shoftim 5777 year 8 #306

פרק א'

פרשת שופטים תשע"ז

*Judge people righteously and Hashem will do the same to you* (שופטים וְשֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֶּן לָךְ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ... וְשֹׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפָּט־צֶדֶק; (טו יח)  
 “Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities...and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment” (Devorim 16:18). The Holy One, blessed is He, judges the Congregation of Yisrael when the Day of Judgment arrives on Rosh Hashana, with the greatness of His mercy and kindness. But an arousal from below is necessary to arouse the characteristic of mercy above, The application of the moral principle of *מדה כנגד מדה* / “measure for measure” is the benchmark determining how one’s own actions will be judged by Heaven. By what means is that characteristic of kindness aroused? That occurs only when we behave here below with kindness and justify the actions of every Jew so that they may be judged as innocent, then this kindness is also aroused above, and his actions are viewed in a positive light as well as the actions of all of the seed of Yisrael are viewed in the same positive light, and if so, it is possible for one person to arouse by an act here on earth the gates of Heaven, *שְׁעָרֶיךָ* means gates, and to open the gates of kindness to pour down blessing on the entire people of Yisrael.

And that is why the pasuk before us speaks in terms of honest and moral judges in *שְׁעָרֶיךָ* “...all your cities” because it is by following principles of righteous judgment here on earth, that we can arouse the result of our whole people being judged above with righteous judgment, because of the moral principle of “In the manner in which a person measures out to his fellow human beings, is justice measured out to him by Heaven”. Hence the phrase *וְשֹׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפָּט־צֶדֶק* and *they shall judge the people with righteous judgment*, is referring to us on this world to judge righteously our fellow friends. (Kedushas Levi Barditchov)

**By learning to accept insults you will reap great benefits**  
*שופטים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֶּן לָךְ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ; (ט"ז י"ח)*  
*Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your "cities" which Hashem gives you.* The word *שער* can also mean a gateway. Our possuk adjures us to post a guard over all our “openings” -- the gateways to our souls. The openings in Hashem’s marvelous creations -- our bodies -- are intended solely to serve Hashem by fulfilling Mitzvohs and abstain from aveiros. (*Shela Hakadosh and others*) Based on this insight we can better understand *אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ; "what Hashem gives you".* When someone embarrasses or insults you, the “natural” tendency is to retort in kind, even with “interest,” - right on the spot, in the heat of passion. However, heilige seforim teach that the proper course is to tolerate the insult, even if it is on the

level of outright verbal abuse, and not to rebut, refute, or retort. The Bais Aharon of Karlin states in his sefer that the reward for this approach will be far greater than any fleeting satisfaction of returning the insult. He goes a step deeper: This act of tolerating insults, prevents even the harshest of decrees. (*Yehuda Z. Klitnick*)

**Two episodes from Gedolim embellish our point.**

1. One day, Reb Meir of Premishlan entered a Shul and a Yid took to publicly berating him, yet he endured the insult and didn't say a word. The next day Reb Meir approached that Yid, brought him a nice gift and thanked him for the embarrassment! The Yid was, to put it mildly, shocked! Not only had he insulted the Rebbe but he got a present and a thank you in the bargain! The Rebbe explained: It sometimes happens that there is a decree in Shomayim that a person must pass away from this world or suffer from grievous illness. His forebears in Heaven learn about the decree and then intercede for him that it be nullified by substituting shame and embarrassment for the agony of that decree. Reb Meir revealed his first-hand knowledge of events in Shomayim: “This actually happened to me. It was decreed on high that I was to be niftar now; but when you hurled insults at me, the decree was overturned and my life was spared! So it’s only right that I thank you and show appreciation for what you did.”

2. Harav Michael Nimni זצ"ל -was niftar this year 21 days in Tamuz- who was very close to the Baba Sali זצ"ל, the great Moroccan tzaddik, told this story. A Rosh Yeshiva came to visit the Baba Sali. The Baba Sali ordered his gabbayim not to admit this Rosh Yeshiva for an audience. All efforts by the Rosh Yeshiva were of no avail. After two days of waiting, he left Netivot, where the Rebbe lived in his last years. On the way home his car overturned in an accident and the Rav miraculously walked away without a scratch. As any ehrliche yid would do, he bentched Gomer and sponsored a *Seudas hoda'ah* - סעודת הודאה. One day word came that Baba Sali was asking to see him. Still shaken from the accident, he traveled back to Netivot. The moment he entered the room, the tzaddik said: ברוך פודה ומציל “Blessed be Hashem who redeems and saves.” The Baba Sali explained to the Rosh Yeshiva: He was privy to a death sentence facing the man and sought to overturn it by substituting in its stead the embarrassment of being spurned in the waiting room for two entire days. In this way, the Rav was spared from certain death. This is what the posuk is saying: *אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ; ... which Hashem is giving you.* Realize that Hashem is giving you a golden opportunity to suppress a response-in-kind to an insult or provocation. Be wise enough to realize that a fate far worse than agonizing embarrassment may be forestalled by so doing. (*Yehuda Z. Klitnick*)

## STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

### *Rav Tzodok HaKohen Rabinowitz of Lublin, The Pri Tzaddik 9 days in Elul*

One of the great lights of Chassidic thought in our generation and arguably its most prolific author was not born a Chassid. Rav Tzodok HaKohen was born the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Shevat 5583/1823. to his father, Rav Yaakov, the Av Bais Din of Kreisberg, in Lithuania and his mother was Rebbetzin Yuta, a descendant of the Shela HaKodosh. His grandfather, Rav Zalman Mireles, was the Rav of the three prestigious communities of Altuna- Hamburg-Wansbeck in Germany and was the son-in-law of the Chacham Tzvi. Rav Tzodok was a child prodigy. From his earliest years people predicted that he was destined for greatness. At age two, he davened from a siddur. By age three and a half, he was learning Gemora with Tosfos. At a very young age he studied Gemarrah intensely, at times under the light of the moon, since his parents could not afford candles. When he was six years old his father was niftar. He moved into the home of his father's brother, Rav Yosef, mechaber of Kapos Zohov, and when his uncle became Rav in Krinik, near Bialystok, the young Tzodok went with him. He was known later on as "the *iluy*/genius of Krinik". At age twelve, before his bar mitzva, he was already writing *Shailos U'Tshuvos* / responsa in Halacha. He delivered four deroshos at his bar mitzva, which were printed in the sefer Meishiv Tzedek. At fifteen he became the son-in-law of a wealthy wine merchant, in whose home he continued to serve Hashem with growing fervor. In 5600/1840, when he was seventeen, he completed Shas, as he mentioned in a letter. He wrote a number of seforim in those years: Otzar HaMelech on Rambam, Meishiv HaTa'ana on *ibur hashana*/leap years and Sefer HaZichronos. His success brought down upon him the fury of some of the townspeople, who disseminated vicious, unfounded rumors about his household. He was a rising star in the Litvishe world.

The turning point came after his first marriage came to a premature end. Rav Tzodok was forced to leave the home of his father-in-law but his wife would not accept a divorce. He wandered among the Gedolim to secure a Heter Mea Rabbonim to enable him to remarry. During this difficult period and sad reality, he had to travel extensively and seek a Heter Meah Rabbonim- an alternative to a divorce- and thus met many Rabbonim and Admorim. He met with the Shoel U'Meishiv (Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lublin), Rav Tzvi Hirsch Chayos, Rav Shlomo Kluger and others. He also met with great Chassidic Rebbes, including Rav Sholom of Belz, the Divrei Chaim, the Chiddushei HaRim, Rav Meir Premishlan and others. Due to his extensive travels and close meetings with Admorim, Reb Tzodok was drawn closer to

Chassidus and eventually became a close talmid of Rav Mordechai Yosef Leiner of *Ishbitze*, the author of *Bais Yaakov*. The *Ishbitze* also wrote a classic sefer: *Mei Hashiloach* however this sefer was met with controversy and some burned copies of the work. The *Ishbitze* brought out to his students the strong belief in Hashgacha Pratis in all ways of life. Despair and surrender / *Yiush* are the ultimate denial of Hashem.

After the petira of Rav Mordechai Yosef in 5614/1854, many Chassidim went to his son, while others chose Rav Yehuda Leib Eiger of Lublin as their Rebbe. Rav Tzodok became a devoted follower of Rav Leibele, traveling to him in Lublin. During that period Rav Tzodok lived in seclusion, devoting himself entirely to Avodas Hashem. In 5648/1888, after the petira of Rav Leibele, Rav Tzodok was chosen by many Chassidim as their Rebbe. At one point Rav Tzodok was offered the Rabbonus of Lublin, but he refused it. He devoted his life to writing his seforim and serving Hashem. Rav Tzodok eventually remarried and raised his Rebbetzin's children. He eschewed all worldly pleasures, conducting himself with humility and kedusha. He would barely eat; in fact, he only ate at the daily siyum that he conducted. He did not accept any money from Chassidim other than that given to him at a Pidyon HaBen, which was rightfully his by Torah law, since he was a Kohen. Chassidim said that on Shabbos he looked entirely different from during the week, and that on Motzei Shabbos he would have to be revived as he parted from his Neshoma Yeseira (additional soul that a Jew receives for Shabbos). Rav Tzodok led his Chassidim for nearly thirteen years. In 5660/1900 he became considerably weakened. As he never had any children of his own, he asked his step children to print his seforim. He was niftar on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Elul and was buried in the ohel of his beloved Rebbe, Rav Yehuda Leib of Lublin. Although he did not leave behind any of own children, he left the world with his vast writings which have made a profound impact on Jewish thinking moving forward. His seforim include Pri Tzaddik (Chumash), Divrei Sofrim, Otzar HaMelech (Rambam), Yisrael Kedoshim, Tzidkas HaTzaddik, Resisei Laila, Takanas HaShovim, Kuntras Divrei Chalomos, and many others. In his seforim he records many chiddushim that were revealed to him in dreams. Many of his manuscripts remain unpublished. Rav Tzodok's seforim are a precious legacy to Yidden from all walks of life who seek closeness to Hashem, since in them he covers the gamut of revealed and hidden aspects of the Torah.

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