

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Teruma 5778

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פרשת תרומה תשע"ח

Tzedaka uplifts a Yid

ויקחתי לי תרומה: (כ"ה ב)

And let them take for Me, a portion. (25:1) The root of the word Terumah is "rom", to uplift. Terom would be to uplift oneself. Of course when a Yid performs a Mitzvah he is uplifted and closer to Hashem. Yet we do not encounter the word Teruma by other Mitzvos. The question is: Why is this Mitzvah different then other Mitzvos that the Torah considers this an uplifting? The heilige seforim say: the mitzvah of giving tzedakah, charity, and doing gemilos chasadim, performing acts of loving kindness, is different from all other mitzvohs in the sense that performance of any other mitzvah is a response to a Heavenly command. To observe the mitzvah of tzedakah, however, is more than a response to the Heavenly command; it is an act of helping Hashem. It is an opportunity to serve as Hashem's Shaliach-emissary, to help Him in carrying out acts of chesed and compassion. Hashem is always seeking agents to help Him distribute help to the poor and the needy, Hashem is their protector, We are only His agent. Therefore, by giving Terumah, we are uplifting ourselves by becoming an agent for Hashem. Hence the uplifting that is stressed by Teruma.

The Connection of accepting the Torah and Tzedakka

ויקחתי לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי: (כ"ה ב)

"and have them take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering." The תנא דבי אליהו states that after Bnei Yisroel

said נעשה ונשמע "All that the Lord spoke we will do and we will hear." (24:7) Hashem commanded them with the mitzvah of ויקחתי לי תרומה. To understand this midrash, What is the connection of these two verses! We shall bring a pshat that the holy Tzadik of Rhuzin explains on the Posuk: "קדש-לי כל-בכור פטר כל-רחם בבני ישראל באדם ובבהמה לי הוא" "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, every one that opens the womb among the children of Israel among man and among animals; it is Mine." (Shemos 13:2) This Posuk is coming to teach us the right way to be an Ehrliche Yid. One of the traits of a Yid is רחמנות - to have compassion or mercy- on another person. The Rebbe explains, this is the first middah that a person should work on and should make it to be a part of his nature. This means קדש when a person wants to become Holy, then פטר כל the first thing (פטר means the first) he should work on, is רחם To have Rachmanus on other Yidden. According to this pshat, we can also explain the words of the תנא דבי אליהו. After Bnei Yisroel accepted the Torah, נעשה ונשמע. Hashem gave them the mitzvah of ויקחתי לי תרומה, which is the act of Tzedakah and Rachmanus, to teach Klal Yisrael that this is the first Middah that a Yid must to work on. The Gemarrah Yevamos 78:b שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו הרחמנים והביישנים וגומלי חסדים רחמנים David Hamelech said: There are three distinguishing marks of this nation, the Jewish people. They are merciful, they are shamefaced, and they perform acts of kindness. (זכר חיים ווישאוו)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*** Mysterious grass - from Gan Eden?- heals the Rebbetzin's foot. ***

Harav Yisochor Ber ben Reb Yitzchok of Radoshitz was known as the Saba Kadisha. It happened that his wife once had a illness on her foot. It began as a simple infection but then it began to spread and the doctors said they would have to amputate her foot before it spread to her whole body. The Saba Kadisha of Radoshitz would not agree to such a drastic measure. He sent two messengers to Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard of Piotrkow –who lived in Petrikov, a nearby town. [He was a Rebbe and Physician. In his youth, Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard was far from Yiddishkeit, living his life much like a Polish nobleman. In fact he was the personal physician of King Wilhelm II of Prussia, and everyone knew him as Doctor Bernhard. On account of a medical miracle that he witnessed, however, Doctor Bernhard did teshuvah. One of his patients, who suffered from an incurable disease (which the physicians of the time deemed fatal), went to see the tzaddik Rabbi David of Lelov for a bracha, after which he completely recovered.

When he returned to Doctor Bernhard, he examined him and was amazed to discover that he was in perfect health. He therefore decided to go and see this rabbi from Lelov for himself. Rabbi David spoke in private with the doctor for several hours, and at the end of their conversation he said to the doctor, "When you return to Yiddishkeit, you will bring happiness to your Father in Heaven." In fact Doctor Bernhard became another man – Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard – for he was determined on completely returning to Hashem. When he came back home, he broke all his dishes and purchased new ones, becoming a G-d-fearing Jew. In fact he became such a chassid of Rabbi David of Lelov that he eventually became one of the tzaddikim of the generation, having many disciples of his own. Near the end of his life, the Rebbe of Radomsk, the Tiferet Shlomo, visited him and said: "The former days be void" (Numbers 6:12). To this Rabbi Chaim David replied, "When we do teshuvah out of love, deliberate sins are transformed into merits. Therefore even the 'former days' are mitzvot." On

Shevat 20, 5618, Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard departed from this world and was buried in the Piotrkow cemetery in Poland. He was also known as "der heilige doctor".]

This famous doctor charged a minimum of 10 gold coins and a maximum of 25 gold coins to visit a patient, but for the Rebbe he said he would only charge 10 gold coins. Even so, it was an exorbitant sum and the messengers told the doctor they couldn't afford to pay a fee like that. The doctor was adamant and said that without the 10 gold coins, he would not visit the Rebbetzin. The chassidim had no choice but to go collecting hand to hand to obtain the coins for the doctor. The doctor traveled to Radoshitz and when he examined the already-infected foot he said that he agreed with the other doctors that the foot would have to be amputated, r"l. However he said he could perform the surgery right there in the house without needing to go to the hospital. The doctor said he would return to Pietrikov to get his instruments and the necessary medications and return to treat the Rebbetzin. The Rebbe having no choice agreed to this plan.

Meanwhile the Rebbe had a close chosid, Reb Yisrael Halevi, who held strong opinions and was not afraid to air them. He was shocked when he heard that the Rebbe agreed to the operation, and blurted out, "Holy Rebbe, you can help the whole world but for your own wife you do nothing! I will not allow the Rebbe to daven until he promises that the Rebbetzin will have a refuah without this extreme operation." The Rebbe ignored him and proceeded to his davening. Reb Yisroel was totally determined to save the Rebbetzin at any cost and brazenly blocked the Rebbe's way. The Rebbe saw that he would not prevail and said: "If you let me daven, I promise that the Rebbetzin will have a complete Refuah and will not need any operation." Reb Yisroel said "Fine. The Rebbe can daven now."

The Rebbe said since it was getting close to nightfall he would daven Mincha and Maariv, and after Maariv he would tell Reb Yisroel what to do in order to heal the Rebbetzin's foot. The Rebbe immersed himself in tefilla with Reb Yisroel anxiously waiting until he finished. When the Rebbe finished, he called over Reb Yisroel and gave him the knife that he used for cutting the Shabbos chalah. Then he said cryptically: "Go to the cemetery now and right next to the grave of so-and-so there is some grass that you are to cut with this knife. From that grass I will prepare a medicine to heal the Rebbetzin's foot." Reb Yisrael was stunned and exclaimed, "Rebbe, it's dangerous to go alone to the cemetery at night. Also, how can I possibly find one particular grave when I don't know the layout of the place?" The Rebbe told Reb Yisroel, "Here is my cane; take it with you and you need have no fear. It will guide you to the grave

and the grass." Reb Yisrael was used to the wondrous miracles that the Rebbe routinely performed and did as the Rebbe directed. He entered the cemetery, closed his eyes and felt as if he were in a different world. Upon opening his eyes, he found himself at the grave and the grass. He went over and cut some of that special vegetation. Reb Yisrael returned to the Rebbe who was happy that he fulfilled his mission. The Rebbe took the special grass, repaired to his private room, and prepared to heal the Rebbetzin. When the Rebbe emerged, he asked that the grass be put on the ailing foot and then bandaged up. As soon as the bandage was applied, the Rebbetzin began to feel better. By morning, amazingly, the wound was almost healed, but in order to counter an evil eye, the Rebbe directed to let the bandage stay in place with the Rebbetzin staying in bed.

Meanwhile, the doctor returned with his paraphernalia, ready to make the operation and when he unbandaged the foot, he didn't believe what he saw! The Rebbe must have practiced witchcraft here. There was no known medicine in the world for a gangrenous wound! Meanwhile the Rebbe gave some wine to the Rebbetzin and told her to climb out of bed. She did so and began to walk around without any pain, good as new. Reb Yisrael told the doctor the whole story of the cemetery grass and the Rebbe's applying it to the foot with a bandage, and the subsequent rapid healing. The doctor asked Reb Yisroel if he could show him where the grass grew since he could use it professionally. He gave him a few gold coins to entice him to show it. They went together to the grave but there was no sign of any grass – supernatural or otherwise! The Doctor said: "This is an outright miracle. The Rebbe must have taken the grass from Gan Eden. If so, then the Radoshitzer Rebbe is the Tzaddik I have been looking for. Let me stay here for Shabbos and see if I can accept him as my Rebbe."

At the Tish Friday night the Rebbe sat the doctor right next to him. In the middle of the seuda when the soup was served, the doctor took up the soup spoon and without warning, his hand became paralyzed while still holding the spoon in the bowl. When everyone had finished their soup, the doctor exclaimed: "Heilige Rebbe! What did I do that you have punished me like this?" The Rebbe answered, "You extorted an exorbitant fee of 10 gold coins from my messengers. Return them to me, and your hand will return to normal." "But today is Shabbos!" "Then give me your gold watch as collateral." The doctor took off his watch and gave it to the Rebbe, and his hand came back to normal. It's not hard to see why the doctor became a staunch chassid of the Radoshitzer Rebbe.

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