

Pardes Yehuda

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פרשת ואתחנן תשע"ז שבת נחמו

Why only half of Moshe's wishes were granted

ואתחנן אליה... אעברה נא ואראה אתהארץ הטובה אשר בעבר הירדן הנהר הטוב הזה והלבקני... ואמר ה' אלי רביך אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה... עלה ראש הפסגה ושא עיניך... וראה בעיניך כי לא תעבר אתהירדן הנה: כי לא I entreated the Lord at that time, saying,..... Pray let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon.", and the Lord said to me, "It is enough for you;. Go up to the top of the hill and lift up your eyes ... and see with your eyes, for you shall not cross this Jordan. Moshe is reporting the debate that ensued between himself and the Oibershter [a debate that could only have taken place with someone on Moshe's level. Only Avraham Avinu, in the debate about S'dom could compare. [DPR]] HaGaon Rav Yosef Pressburger, the ba'al Tiferes Yosef, sheds light on this exchange by bringing a Medrash Rabbah to bear (Vayikra 10 5) ממי דאמר תפלה עשתה מחצה ממי (דברים ט) ובאהרן התאנף ה' מאד להשמידו... אין השמדה אלא כילו בנים... כיון שהתפלל משה עליו נמנעה ממנו חצי הגזירה מתו שנים ונשתיירו שנים הה"ד (ויקרא ח) קח את אהרן ואת בניו אתו תפלה דאמר תפלה עשתה מחצה ממי (דברים ט) ובאהרן התאנף ה' מאד (Devorim 9:20) ובאהרן התאנף ה' מאד with Aaron, Hashem was very furious, to destroy him; so I prayed also for Aaron at that time.., Now "destroying" means destruction of children. Of Aharon's four sons, two -- one half -- perished, but two were saved, attributed to Moshe's entreaties. קח את "Take Aharon and his sons with him" (8:2) points to the surviving sons, Eluzar and Isamar. In our posuk, Moshe appealed for two favours for himself from Hashem: 1) to cross the Jordan, (אעברה נא) and 2) to view the Holy Land (ואראה את הארץ). By allowing him only to ascend the mountain for a long-distance view, Hashem granted one of his two petitions -- the "half-petition" which our Medrash explains is the general case stemming from tefillah/prayer. (בית ישראל השלם אדמו"ר ממאטטערסדארף)

Yehoshua's status paralleled that of Eretz Yisroel; hence he entered there leading Klal Yisroel
 רביך אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה: וצו את יהושע וגו' כי הוא יעבר לפני רביך אל תוסף דבר... והעם הזה (גי ב"ז - כ"ח) "It is enough for you; speak to Me no more regarding this matter. ... But command Joshua and strengthen him and encourage him, for he will cross over before this people, (3:26-28) How does saying "You have had enough" signal that Moshe was not to enter the Promised Land? And why was this the juncture for Hashem to stress that Yehoshua WOULD make the crossing? The Chida reveals the key in his sefer Nachal Kedomin (Beha'aloscha), following Arizal, in line with Toras Nistar, that Moshe Rabbeinu embodied aspects of the sun, while Eretz Yisroel

was on the level of the moon. This conforms well with the Gemara (Bava Basra 75a) פני משה כפני חמה פני יהושע כפני לבנה "The face of Moses was like the sun, the face of Yehoshua is like the moon" [in that Yehoshua's greatness was only a reflection of Moses'. (Artscroll ad loc.) This was Hashem's message to Moshe: רביך [It is sufficient for you to realize] that you are on the level of the sun, while Eretz Yisroel is on the lower level of the moon. Yehoshua, who also embodies a lunar aspect, is the appropriate leader for the Yidden to enter the Land." (ולבש הכהן - חיים יהושע חמצי, איזמיר תרמ"ט)

Real tzedaka implies Torah and Mitzvos

ויצדקה תדנה לנו כי נשמר לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת: (ו' כ"ה) And it will be for our merit that we keep to observe all these commandments (6:25) It is all too tempting for some donors of tzedaka to delude themselves with the thought that "since I am donating generously, that's the main thing" and then slacken off in Torah learning and in mitzvah fulfillment in an ideal way. The Torah tells us explicitly in our posuk, that the merit of bona fide tzedaka is in our hand when -- and only when -- it is inextricably intertwined with diligence in learning Torah and fulfilling all Mitzvos completely, in all their manifold aspects. (ר' אליהו חיים מייזל אב"ד לאדו)

Mitzvos appear differently when you consider their source

ושמרת את המצוה ואת התקנים ואת המשפטים אשר אנכי מצוה היום ואת המצוה והתקנים והמשפטים אשר אנכי מצוה היום (ו' י"א) You shall therefore, observe the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day to do.(7:11) There is a glaring shift in grammatical number here. "The commandment" is singular, whereas "the statutes and ordinances" which Hashem commands us is plural. The Gaon Rav Mordechai Banet points us to the widely-known Mishna in Pirkei Avos (2:1): כבחמורה קלה כבחמורה שאין הוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה קלה Be as careful with a minor mitzvah as with a major one, for you do not know the relative rewards of the mitzvot. His insight hinges on a novel way of vocalising and hence understanding the focal-point word from our posuk -- as "המצוה" -- an actor, described by His activity! One needs to consider "the One who is commanding", namely the Creator. With this twist on the key word, the posuk is enjoining us to closely contemplate who "the Commander" is, and thereby not distinguish in any way between His statutes and the ordinances, in exact parallel with eschewing a distinction between "minor" and "major" mitzvos. (תורת בר נש ר' כלב שלישינער תלמיד כתב סופר) For sale rare sefer Hespel on Chafetz Chaim in Hungary \$500. Handwritten Tzedaka ledger of Rav Henkin 1924, all rabbanim worldwide., price is \$7000. 2 Kesuvos filled in by Reb Moshe Feinstein Zt"l \$500 many more items for sale. Letter from reb Elchonon Wasserman describing Elul in Radin with Chafetz Chaim \$7500. Many more for sale.

The "Yunger Rebbe", Rav Asher of Stolín, upholds the honour of Chassidim -- even after davening late

Rav Asher Perlow זצוק"ל the "Yunger Rebbe" (as he is known among Stoliner Chassidim, since he was Rebbe while his father Reb Aharon, the Beis Aharon was still alive) was once traveling from Stolín with his attendant. Although it was already the afternoon, the Rebbe had not davened shacharis yet, since his daily mikva immersion was a protracted avoda. They happened to be near Bialystok, which was a hotbed of misnagdim/opponents to Chassidus, and it might have been considered risky to saunter into town in the afternoon, hoping to find a shul where one could daven shacharis, since that would have been taken by the local denizens as a sure provocation -- such were the relations between Chassidim and Misnagdim in that time and place. The Rebbe intrepidly told his gabbai that Bialystok was where they would daven shacharis. The devoted gabbai was quick to advise: "Rebbe, if we try to daven shacharis in a "mishnagdish" shul at this late hour, we might have to echo Moshe Rabbeinu's words about the mutinous Yidden in the Midbar "עוד מעט וסקלוננו" ("they're almost ready to stone me".) Who's to say that we will remain unharmed? There's a little village not far down the road, where no one will take notice of us. Why not try davening there?" "No," the Rebbe said. "It's Bialystok for us." It was decided. They found the main shul with no problem, but there was a large crowd milling around outside. The gabbai found out without much trouble that the Rosh HaKahal/President of the Congregation was making a bris that day and all of the prominent householders were assembling to participate in the simcha. The gabbai forged ahead and lead the Rebbe to a suitable place at the Eastern Wall, put down the Rebbe's tallis and tefilin, and proceeded to find a secluded corner for his own devotions. The Rebbe made his preparations for tefilla and made the brocho on his tallis loud and clear, expecting to hear a proper "omein" from the many men in attendance. It did not resound, to put it mildly, even though the shul was filled to capacity. The Rebbe's donning his tallis at that time of day caused a commotion in shul, until someone surmised that "This must be a Chassidic Rebbe of some kind. So where's his gabbai?" They discovered the gabbai in his corner, immersed in prayer, and interrupted him. "Who is this Rebbe who dares to come in here to daven shacharis at this late hour -- well, well after the *sof zman tefilla*/the last permissible time?" The gabbai identified his master as the Rebbe of Stolín who was traveling and needed a secure place to daven. This in no way placated the crowd, which started to morph into a mini-mob of sorts, and called for the Rosh HaKahal to put a stop to the gross infraction of their time-honoured minhag -- and to interdict the impending shacharis. Their righteous indignation knew no bounds. The Rosh HaKahal stepped up to do his duty, as his members had egged him on to do. "See here, Rabbi," he said with at least an initial modicum of respect. "As Rosh HaKahal, I cannot allow a breach in the minhagim of our shul. No, there will be no shacharis now -- not by you or anyone else." This was met by total and stony silence from the Rebbe, and the exchange was repeated. Now this gentleman the Rosh HaKahal happened to be a talmid chacham, and delivered regular Gemara shiurim for the

congregants. Out of exasperation, he blurted out for all to hear: "If these Chasidic so-called 'Rebbes' and their followers could at least learn Torah respectably alongside their strange practices, maybe we could overlook the illegal shacharis. But as everyone knows, they don't know how to learn! Case closed! So they neither daven nor learn properly!" Seething with emotion by now, he as much as laid down an audacious dare in the Rebbe's face. "Rabbi, or "Stoliner Rebbe" as they call you, we were struggling with a difficult passage of Gemara this morning. If you can resolve the issues we were wrestling with, to everyone's satisfaction, I will honour you with being Sandek at my son's bris!" "All right. Let's hear what the problem was," replied the Rebbe, undaunted. "We were bothered by an alternate *girsas*/textual variant in the famous Gemara (Shabbos 118b) **אלמלי משמרין ישראל** "If all Yisroel observed two Shabbosos, they would be redeemed", and this is the teaching when **אלמלי** is spelled with a Yud. However, there is an alternative reading spelled with an aleph, **אלמלא**, which changes the meaning completely: "If Yidden fail to observe two Shabbosos then they will be redeemed." How could we derive the opposite meaning just by changing one letter in the text?. The listeners were keenly poised to see how a Chassidic Rebbe whom they were convinced could not learn Torah would answer this challenging question from the Gemara. The Rebbe had a captive audience when he delivered his wondrous resolution. Without breaking stride, the Rebbe expounded: *We have four occasions throughout the year which are signposts pointing to teshuva/repentance. The first, and most propitious, is before closing our eyes to sleep for the night -- before the soul has ascended to Shomayim, where the day's sins can be recounted. The next most favorable opportunity is Friday afternoon, Erev Shabbos, when one can do teshuva for sins from the preceding week. Similarly, although not as efficacious, Erev Rosh Chodesh is the chance to do teshuva for the entire month just past. Regrettably, most people rely on, and wait for the last of the four times for real teshuva, and that is Yom Kippur., which the Torah terms, **שבת שבתון**, "a Sabbath of Sabbaths"-- our 'two shabbosos', in a different sense. Now look back at that Gemara with the aleph-spelling you asked about, **אלמלא**, Building on that version of the text, Chazal teach that if Yidden did not postpone their teshuva until those "two Shabbosos" (Yom Kippur) but would do so every night, or every Friday, or at least every Erev Rosh Chodesh, then they would have long ago been redeemed!" (The word **משמרין** can mean "wait, delay" as well as "observe", as we see from Yaakov Avinu, **אתה דבר, שומר את דרכי**)* The audience was dumbstruck by the Rebbe's novel and brilliant explanation. His marvelous drasha was enough to spur the people on to do teshuva on the spot. What's more, the Rebbe was honoured with being Sandek for the bris -- by acclamation of the congregants, with not a dissenting voice. This episode [according to the chassid and gaon Reb Hersh Leib Asia z"l] lead directly to the establishment of a major Stoliner shtibel in Bialystok which numbered over five hundred mispallelim before the War. The Rebbe was niftar זיע"א תרל"ג.

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