

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Vayeira 5778 year 8 #312

פרשת וירא תשע"ח

The connection of a little water and the bread

יְקַח־נָא מֵעֵט־מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַחַת הָעֵץ: וְאָקַחְהָ פַת־לֶחֶם וְסִעְדוּ לְבָבְכֶם אַחֲרַי תֵּעָבְרוּ: (יח-ד-ה)

Let a little water, I beseech you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and you comfort your hearts; after that you shall pass on; (18:4-5) The question is what is the connection between "a little water" and "a morsel of bread" which is not obvious at first glance. We cannot answer that the bit of water was connected with foot-washing, for if that were the reason, it would have sufficed to say simply "wash your feet". So for what other purpose could the water have had? We find in Chazal (Yoma 28:b) the Gemara cites that Rav said: Abraham our Patriarch fulfilled the entire Torah before it was given, as it is stated: "Because [ekev] Abraham hearkened to My voice and kept My charge, My mitzvot, My statutes and My Torahs" (Genesis 26:5). Avraham was also a preacher and taught his many guests the laws of the Torah. When the angels came to him and Avraham gave them a little water it was his mission to teach a halacha in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 174:7 where there is a difference of opinion as to whether or not one makes a *shehakol* over water drunk in the course of a meal. The advice given by the Shulchan Aruch is to drink some water before washing, in the location of the meal, intending thereby to exempt any water drunk later. Central to our discussion, the Be'er Hetev (סעיף ט) advises drinking, but only a small amount, less than a *revi'is*, to avoid the issue of an after-brocho. This halachic exchange illuminates Avraham's conduct. Avraham, who was scrupulous in mitzvah details, wanted his guests to drink only a small amount of water, before the meal they were about to have, the *אָקַחְהָ פַת־לֶחֶם וְסִעְדוּ לְבָבְכֶם*, so as to avoid uncertainty about a brocho rishona on water during the meal as well as a brocho achrona on water before the meal. [This small event brings light to a halachic argument see Rama ibid, who disputes the above. YZK] (Ohr Moshe)

Hashem said, "shall I conceal from Avraham what I do?..for I have loved him because he commands his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of Hashem."

The question is asked: Avraham had reached the level of a prophet. If so, why did Hashem need to tell him what was about to occur? Why wasn't he able to see himself? The Chasam Sofer answers that to use Prophecy takes time. One must be able to think, reflect, and analyze a situation. Avraham Avinu was very busy using every minute to reach out and teach others the ways of the Torah; he didn't have time to use his prophetic abilities. That is why Hashem said, "shall I conceal from Avraham what I do, etc.?"

(Chasam Sofer)

With this insight we can answer a difficult question: We find in Parshas Lech Lecha, that Hashem tells Avraham "you will have a son and you shall name him Yitzchok". Why then did Hashem have to send a *Malach* to tell Sarah that she would have a son? Sarah was a prophetess, and could have known this from prophecy. The same question can be asked regarding Avraham. He was also a prophet, and so why did Hashem have to personally tell him that he will have a son, and not just tell him through prophecy? However, with the words of the Chasam Sofer we can understand the second difficulty: since Avraham was always busy with his *Mitzvos*, he had no time for prophecy. Hence, Hashem came personally to tell him about the impending birth, just as he did in regard to Sodom. Now, since Avraham wasn't notified by prophecy, it wouldn't be a honor to Avraham that his wife Sarah was notified by prophecy. Therefore, for the honor of Avraham, Hashem sent the *Malach* to notify Sarah.

(Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

This lesson from Avraham Avinu can be applied to our everyday lives. One may think he doesn't have time to reach out to others and teach because one is too busy with their own work. We see that Avraham was willing to put aside his special gifts of prophecy in order to reach out. Certainly, we too can put aside some of our time to reach out and help others. If we do, we can be sure that Hashem will take care that we don't lose out. The Tanya writes that just one act of Gemilas Chesed brings upon a person thousands of Brachos.

A daily lesson we can learn from Avraham

וְהוֹ אָמַר הַמַּכְסֵּה אֲנִי מֵאֲבָרְהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה: כִּי יִדְעֲתִיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוָה אֶת־בְּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו: (י"ח י"ז-י"ט)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

****The Rebbe saved a Yid from a libel through a train ride****

In a village near Tchartkov there lived a Yid, Reb Moshe -- a man of lofty character who for many years owned a successful inn which served many people from near and far. Reb Moshe was held in esteem by the peasants, but the priest and the Judge in the village were always conspiring to evict

Reb Moshe from the inn and take it for themselves. They hatched a plan. They found out when the inn's barrel of whiskey was about to empty out in advance of the gentile holidays. They knew that Reb Moshe would go to the city to purchase a large barrel and would store it outdoors until

someone could help him bring it inside. They paid a peasant to hang around the inn and when Reb Moshe returned with the barrel, to offer to help bring in the barrel and when no one was looking, surreptitiously pour a bottle of potent poison into the barrel. They pulled off the evil plan without a hitch.

The following day the evil conspirators waited until the barrel was to be opened and offered to treat a peasant with some good drink. The poor wretch keeled over dead in a few minutes. The local constabulary were summoned and the judge ordered them to seal the barrel. A chemist arrived to test the whiskey and confirmed that it contained a deadly poison. The judge promptly remanded Reb Moshe for criminal prosecution. The hearing was to be in the city of Zlotschov, and Reb Moshe hired a top-notch lawyer who arranged his bail. The lawyer also requested that an impartial, expert judge from a different city be called to hear the case, since it was widely known that the judges in Zlotschov were very cozy with the priest and judge of the village. This too was agreed upon.

The court date was fast approaching and Reb Moshe became sorely worried and shared his troubles with friends who were chassidim of Reb David Moshe of Tchortkov, the son of the heiliger Rizhiner, Harav Yisrael Freidman. They urged him to turn to the Rebbe who was known to work open miracles. Reb Moshe was not a chassid, but, felt he had nothing to lose by going and he went to visit the Rebbe. The Rebbe listened to his whole sorry story from beginning to end and asked if he had any idea who would have poisoned the whiskey. He answered most probably the priest and judge had a hand in it. Then the Rebbe asked when and where the court case would be. Moshe answered "In Zlotschov in two days." He added that the case would be heard by a high-ranking judge from a different city.

The Rebbe then entered into a state of elevated consciousness, appearing to be dozing. After a spell, the Rebbe returned to a normal state and smiled. "I advise you to take a train to Zlotschov, but make sure it's on a second-class ticket." "But Rebbe I have a well-equipped horse and wagon to take me anywhere I want to go! I haven't been on a train in years." The Rebbe insisted that if he wanted a Yeshua, he'd best listen and take that train trip. The Rebbe sent him off with a bracha.

Reb Moshe sent his wagon back to his home and went to the train station to catch the Zlotschov train, but it had already departed and the next train was not until 12 hours later. Reb Moshe checked in to the nearest inn to catch some sleep and the next day returned to the station and purchased a ticket in second class, as the Rebbe had instructed. Reb Moshe remained puzzled as to why the Rebbe had sent him by train, and in second class to boot, but his consternation only increased when he entered the second class carriage and

found it empty, except for one fellow passenger sitting in the front seat. As the train got underway, the two passengers started to chat. The man had all the signs of a prominent gentleman and Reb Moshe felt comfortable relating his worries and his story. The gentleman asked specific questions and Reb Moshe answered everything exactly. Then Reb Moshe told him that a judge was coming from a different city. At the end of the conversation the gentleman said he had no need to worry, as he was sure the judge would render a just and fair verdict.

The next morning Reb Moshe reported to the courthouse and the proceedings began, with the prosecutor accusing Reb Moshe of deliberately poisoning the whiskey to kill the gentile peasants. The judges listened to the accusation when the guest judge rose and asked to give his opinion. Everyone became quiet and he began. "As I see it, this accusation does not hold water. If the defendant told his workers about his plan, he risked their going to the police. If on the other hand he didn't share his plan with them, then he risked that his workers, not knowing there was poison, would drink and die and that would really land him in hot water. Aside from this simple logic, the defendant has always been close to the peasants and respected by them and there is no reason to think that he had a motive to poison his customers and lose his business and probably his freedom."

The prosecutor then retorted, "We have a signed letter from the priest and the judge of the village that they personally witnessed the defendant pouring poison into the barrel!" The judge then said sternly, "A letter is not evidentiary in a capital case. Send the court officers right now to bring the priest and judge to the court to testify in person." When they arrived in court the judge asked them to testify. When the Judge asked them the questions based on the logic he had outlined, they mumbled and fumbled, and under sustained cross examination from Moshe's lawyer, they confessed to their own central role in the poisoning. The judge ruled that Reb Moshe was innocent and promptly set a court date for the evil priest and judge. Reb Moshe approached the judge to thank him and for the first time recognized him as the prominent personage he had met in second class.

Now Reb Moshe understood that the Tchortkover Rebbe foresaw this entire drama and had effected one of the *mofsim*/miracles for which he was famous. Reb Moshe returned to the Rebbe to brief and thank him and contributed a nice sum of money to the Rebbe as a *pidyon nefesh*. When Reb Moshe described the miracle, the Rebbe demurred and said, "This was no big deal. I sent you in second class merely because I wanted you to have peace of mind to gather all your thoughts for the trial." Reb Moshe knew otherwise and told the chassidim of the Rebbe's Ruach Hakodesh. The story spread far and wide among the chassidim and produced a massive kiddush Hashem.

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