

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick
 Edited and Revised By Duvid Pinchas Rose

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שבת מברכין

פרשת עקב תשע"ו

Make no mistake: Teshuva will precede Moshiach's coming

וְהָיָה עֲקֵב תְּשׁוּבָתְךָ אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמַרְתָּם וְעָשִׂיתָם אִתָּם וְשָׁמַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת-הַבְּרִית וְאֶת-הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתָּחָדָי: (ז יב)

And it will be, because you will heed these ordinances and keep them and perform, that Hashem, your G-d, will keep for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.

(7:12) The word -- עֲקֵב which names our Parsha -- can have several meanings: *because* (Ramban), *the reward* (Onkelos and Rav Saadya), (and see Rashi, two toyrehs below) *but also the end of times, before Moshiach comes*. Every Yid will have to perform a complete teshuva/repentance, leaving no stone unturned before the advent of Moshiach. At that time, תְּשׁוּבָתְךָ will apply, and Yidden will adhere to all Mitzvos scrupulously. Hashem *kaviyochol* will ask "Why would you think of waiting, and delaying?" in response to an apparent וְשָׁמַרְתָּם. (As we saw in last week's Pardes Yehuda Vaeschanan, the grammatical root וְשָׁמַרְתָּם can denote "waiting", as in the case of Yaakov "וְשָׁמַרְתָּם" "Don't wait," continues Hashem *kaviyochol*. "Far better be it to be driven NOW by וְשָׁמַרְתָּם --you should observe and guard all of the Mitzvos totally, so that the Geulah and Moshiach should come quickly without delay." (אוהב ישראל - אפטא)

Interpersonal righteousness brings reward for mitzvos in the here-and-now

וְהָיָה עֲקֵב תְּשׁוּבָתְךָ אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְגו' וְאֶתְּרַבְּךָ וְהִרְבֵּיתְךָ וְהִרְבֵּיתְךָ וְהִרְבֵּיתְךָ And it will be, because you will heed these ordinances ... And He will love you and bless you and multiply you... (7:12-13) The commentators strive, as they typically do, to establish a linkage between the end of Parshas Vaeschanan and the opening of Parshas Eikev. [By studying the linkages, one comes to appreciate the continuity of the Torah HaKedoshah as a unified, flowing whole. [DPR]] We should also try to understand why our opening posuk mentions only "mishpatim" from among the classes of mitzvos, since "chukim" and mishpatim" are so often mentioned in tandem (e.g. וּמִן גֹּיִם נָדוּל אֲשֶׁר-לֹ "הַקִּיּוֹם וּמִשְׁפָּטִים" צִדִּיקִים... (דברים א טז), and numerous other places.) There is yet perhaps a more momentous question that seems to emerge from our posuk. A well-known general principle holds that there is no reward in This World for performing mitzvos. (Source: Gemara (קידושין דף לט.) We note that Vaeschanan ends with הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם "I command you today, to perform them", on which another Gemara (עו"ז דף ג:) הַיּוֹם expands "today to perform them, while not receiving reward until 'tomorrow', i.e. the Next World". And yet, in the face of all this, we see the Oibershter in our posuk explicitly promising reward -- HERE AND NOW! -- for faithfully observing His mitzvos. -- ? -- The Mishna (Peah 1:1) [which we review in davening every morning] teaches that making

peace between a man and his fellow yields fruits, and reward in This World, and "mishpat" (the focus of our posuk) refers to interpersonal matters, as this other posuk in Devarim proves: וְשָׁמַע בֵּין-אֲחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפָטְתֶם צֶדֶק בֵּין-אִישׁ וּבֵין-אָחִיו וּבֵין גֵּרוֹ (דברים א טז) And I commanded your judges at that time, saying, "Hear [disputes] between your brothers and judge justly between a man and his brother, and between his litigant.(1:16) The Gemara (Sanhedrin 7b) learns from here that peace emerges from righteous litigation and judgment (e.g. between two heirs living on different floors.) So evidently the basic meaning of our posuk is (drawing on the end of the previous Vaeschanan, that the ultimate reward for Mitzvos is not found in This World): If you heed and carry out "these mishpatim" -- the precepts governing interpersonal relations -- then there will indeed be reward, "payback", in This World, and the promised mundane ("this worldly") brochos will ensue. So here the linkage of concepts between our just-ended and our now-begun parshiyos comes into focus: the terms for this-worldly recompense (success in fulfilling interpersonal mitzvos) are as stated ("He will love you ...) and only "mishpatim" is mentioned, as a refinement, as it were, for that points squarely to peace between a man and his fellow-Jew, which calls forth worthy reward both in This World and the Next. (אוהב ברוך -הה"צ ר' ברוך גרינפעלד תלמיד ערוגת הבושם)

A prescription for mentschlichkeit.

וְהָיָה עֲקֵב תְּשׁוּבָתְךָ: (ז יב)
 Rashi's classic explanation of עֲקֵב (literally, "heel") is that it refers to the seemingly "minor" mitzvos which a person could come to trample with his heel, in disregard of their importance. Middos/personality traits are included in this picture, and we can call the sum total of them "mentschlichkeit." The author of the sefer *Noam Siach* (the Tzaddik of Hadas) relates how he once encountered Rav Yonoson Steiff who asked where he was coming from. "From visiting a sick man," was the answer. Rav Steiff asked for the full name of the sick person, since the main point of bikur cholim is to actually daven for his recovery. When the Hadas Rav arrived at the Shabbos Tisch of the Satmar Rebbe, the Divrei Yoel, he would call out "Git Shabbos", which, out of awe for the Rebbe, was not typical. Before the Rebbe ate, he would wish "With a good appetite!" which brought a smile to the Rebbe's face. On receiving *shirayim*/leftovers from the Rebbe's plate, he said "Thank you, Rebbe." In other words, the Rav sought to display good "manners" any time possible. The Tzaddik Rav Elya Roth זצוק"ל saw *Simchas Choson ve Kallah*/Gladdening Bride and Groom as requiring one to go beyond acting joyfully in their presence, but also to pray that all should unfold favourably for the new couple. Rebbe Yochanon of Stolin prescribed: "First be *mentschen*; then you can worry about becoming *chassidim*." These few examples of *mentschlichkeit* are examples of what we can derive from Rashi's commentary on עֲקֵב. (שמח זבולין)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick and translated by David Pinchas Rose)

**** *The Radoshitzer Rebbe זצ"ק heals a paralyzed boy by defeating Evil Forces* ****

HaRav HaKodosh Reb Yissochor Dov Ber ben Yitzchak of Radoshitz was known as a ba'al moyfes, a miracle worker, when the occasion demanded it. This held true not only during his lifetime, but after his passing as well, his Holy resting place becoming a place of pilgrimage for people in need of special salvation. To this day, there are Yidden the world over who kindle a candle for the elevation of his neshomo, while mentioning his full name -- and bring reports of being helped in their worldly affairs. Here is a story attesting to these facts. Reb Nuta Vladover was a loyal chossid of the Heilige Rebbe Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, the Chozeh of Lublin. While at the Rebbe's tisch, he would often become a bit tipsy and loved to entertain the chassidim with his frolicking. His nickname of affection became "*Nuta Shikker*", or "*Nuta the Drunkard*." After the passing of the Chozeh, Reb Nuta refused to switch his allegiance to any other Chassidic Rebbe or tzaddik, since for him, the Chozeh would always remain unsurpassed in hoiness and leadership. Nuta faced a personal crisis when his son contracted a dread disease which left him paralyzed and totally unable to speak. He ran from doctor to doctor, all of whom prescribed remedies which proved useless. But when his spirits were at a nadir, Nuta remembered something that his Rebbe the Chozeh had once told him: "Someone's closest and most devoted friend can help him just as his own Rebbe can." This thought changed his entire outlook. He remembered that he had a close and faithful comrade, named Leibish Reb Aharon's [*this was a customary way of referring to someone by name and patronymic; in other circles, "Leibish ben Aharon" would have been used. [DPR]*]. This yedid ne'eman lived in Ozerov, where Nuta headed, with his son and his entire sorry tale of the illness and the fruitless search for a cure, ready to tell anyone who would listen. His friend Leibish told him: "Yedidi, I don't see any way I personally can help you other than to refer you to a great tzaddik who regularly helps Yidden in need, both physically and spiritually. I'm talking about Rav Yisochoer Dov Ber of Radoshitz." Nuta took the advice seriously and set out immediately for Radoshitz. But the trip did not go smoothly. At first, it was an axle from the wagon which broke, forcing a delay for a field-expedient repair. As Nuta proceeded, it seemed that every so often another component of the wagon would require his attention. Nuta was forced to conclude that strange forces were at work preventing him to travel smoothly to Radoshitz -- for reasons that were altogether hidden from him. Yet his desire to make the journey persisted, and he hitched a ride for himself and his son with a kindly wagoner. He arrived in Radoshitz, and at the Rebbe's office, but his heart sank when he beheld what appeared to be dozens of people who had been waiting day after day for an audience. He despaired of ever gaining admittance. Suddenly, he heard his name being called and before he knew it, he was standing in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe greeted him with a hearty "Is that you, Nuta Shikker?" "I am the one, and none other!" "If so, start drinking your *L'Chaim's!*" Before Nuta could lay forth his problems, the Rebbe described an episode from the Holy Mezritcher Maggid. The Maggid had an ailment in his legs

which prevented him from walking. Doctors were of no help, so he turned to the Ba'al Shem HaKodosh for advice. The Ba'al Shem asked, "Would you rather be healed by prayers or by segulos?" (*known, attested remedies or charms based on verbal formulas or symbolic actions or objects, e.g. intending Kiddush Levana to help relieve toothache [DPR]*) Said Nuta, "I can pray for myself as well as anyone can, but I certainly don't know how to perform any segulos." So the Ba'al Shem prescribed a certain symbolic course of action to effect a remedy. The Radoshitzer Rebbe posed the same choice to Nuta: prayer or segula? Out of sheer exasperation, Nuta blurted out, "It makes no difference to me how the Rebbe will direct a cure for my son. We just need a salvation urgently!" The Rebbe focused his attention on the task at hand. He went over to the sick boy and placed his hand on his forehead and directed that a bottle of oil be brought. He smeared a bit of that oil (exactly what kind of oil it was has not come down to us) and the boy immediately seemed less agitated. The Rebbe gave these specific directions: "Take the lad home and put a handful of this oil on his head twice a day until the bottle is used up. Keep the closed bottle under your son's pillow at night during this time and he should have a complete recovery *be'ezras Hashem yisborach!* And one more crucially important thing: Make sure the windows and door to the room are closed tightly at night. Don't open them to a soul, even if somebody knocks pitifully and begs to be let in. You must not open that door! The whole cure depends on these details." Nuta took his leave, his head spinning from the encounter, yet full of optimism when just a short time before his son's plight looked dire beyond hope.

At home, after the first night, the family was awakened by a furious knocking on the door with a plaintive wail, "Have pity on me! Let me in! I need to warm myself up and have something to eat!" The lady of the house made a move to unlatch the door, but her husband stopped her. "Not a chance! We're following the Rebbe's orders! That door is staying locked if I have anything to say about it!" This scene was repeated for several nights until the bottle of healing oil ran out. Wonder of wonders, the boy's paralysis was gone and he began to speak normally. Not only that, but the worrisome nocturnal knockings ceased entirely. Nuta returned to the Rebbe of Radoshitz and gave him a full account of what had happened pursuant to his brochos. The Rebbe's response was: "You have done well, my son. Had you opened that door even a crack, the mazikin/evil forces would have barged in and harmed your entire family."

After this life-changing episode, Nuta had found the new tzaddik to whom he bound himself. His good friend Leibush's advice was borne out fully when he realized the salvation he had attained *beruchmiyus* and *begashmiyus* through the intercession of the Holy Radoshitzer Rebbe. [*Having reviewed the entire story, one might think that the Evil Forces that sought to derail the healing were the same ones that caused wagon problems during the journey to Radoshitz. Evidently, they failed to reckon with the insuperable power of the Radoshitzer Rebbe's brochos! [DPR]*] (נפלאות הטב"ק)

Our editor and translator Mr. Rose ז"ל (תשואת חן חן לו) is reachable at davidrose10@gmail.com, and is available for anglo-Judaica editorial assignments. A publication of *Seforim World*. 1000's of seforim: new and old: 4403 16 Ave. Brooklyn N.Y. 11204 U.S.A. 718 438 8414 718 633 5500 For subscribing - pardesyehuda1@gmail.com - hours 11-7:30. This Gilyon is available by email or on Ladaat, or www.parshasheets.com or www.seforimworld.com.