

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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שבת חזק אבות פרק ד

פרשת בהר בחקתי תשפ"ז

When We Rise Above Nature, Hashem Responds Above Nature

אם בחקתי תלכו ואת מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם ונתתה הארץ יבולה ועץ השדה יתן פרי: (כו ג)

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, I will give your rains in their time, the land will yield its produce, and the trees of the field will give their fruit." (26:3-4) The Sifra teaches: אם בחקתי תלכו "If you walk in My statutes" — this teaches that Hashem desires that the Jewish people toil in Torah. Hashem longs for us to labor in Torah.

The Sifra continues: Dovid HaMelech says לו עמי שמע לי ישראל בדרבני יהלכו במעט אויביהם אכניע ועל צריהם אשיב יד: (Tehillim 81:14-15): "If only My people would listen to Me... I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their oppressors." Meaning: If the Jewish people toil in Torah, Hashem will subdue their enemies. We see that Yeshayahu Hanavi says לוא הקשבת למצותי ויהי כחול ירעד וצאצאי מעיד כמעתי בנהר שלום וצדקתך כגלי הים ויהי לא יכרת ולא ישמר שמו מלפני (ישעיהו מח, יח). "If only you had listened to My commandments — your peace would flow like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your children would be like the sand... their name would never be cut off." (48:18-19): By keeping the mitzvos, one merits peace and good children.

Similarly, the Torah says (דברים ה, כו) מי יתן ויהי לבכם יה להם ליראה אתי ולשמר את כל מצותי כל הימים למען ייטב להם ולבניהם (Devarim 5:26): "If only their hearts would remain to fear Me and keep all My commandments always — so that it would be good for them and for their children forever." The Sifra concludes from these Psukim: Hashem desires that we toil in Torah.

Rashi writes: "If you walk in My statutes" — that you should labor in Torah. It is interesting that the Midrash connects בחקתי תלכו "Walk in My statutes" toil in Torah, "Keep My commandments" observing mitzvos. The Posuk describes the blessings that follow.

To understand the connection of Torah and Mitzvos with the blessings. Toiling in Torah is not simply studying — it is taking on the yoke of Torah, immersing oneself with effort.

The Mishnah (Avos 3:5) says: כל המקבל עליו על תורה, מעבירין Whoever accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly burdens." The Bartenura explains: "Worldly burdens" = the toil and strain of earning a livelihood. Meaning: One who truly

carries the yoke of Torah will not need to struggle for parnassah — his work will be blessed. The Tiferes Yisrael adds: Since he lives above nature through his Torah effort, Hashem treats him above nature, with miracles.

Now the posuk shines with new light: If you toil in Torah and keep the mitzvos, then "I will give your rains in their time... the land will yield its produce... the trees will give fruit." Everything becomes easy — even supernaturally easy.

This also answers a famous question:

The Gemarra (Kiddushin 39b) says: "But isn't there no reward for mitzvos in this world?" If so why does the Torah allow a reward for learning Torah? The answer is obvious. That is true when mitzvos are done in the normal way. But when one serves Hashem above nature, with an extra effort and toil, Hashem responds above nature, and that reward can come immediately. When we take one step towards Hashem, He takes a thousand steps toward us, a tremendous bonus!

We can connect to another Posuk and answer the above difficulty. It says: ואכלתם ישן נושן וישן מפני חדש תוציאו: (כו י) "You will eat old grain long stored, and you will clear out the old to make room for the new." (Vayikra 26:10) It is well known that the Gemara says: "There is no reward for mitzvos in this world." The Bechor Shor -a commentary from the Rishonim- explains: Hashem is not "delaying payment," because the commandments of mitzvos was given through a shaliach — Moshe Rabbeinu. When a boss hires a worker through an agent, he is not guilty of withholding wages. The Chasam Sofer adds: This applies to the 611 mitzvos given through Moshe. But the first two commandments — אנכי ולא יהיה לך "I am Hashem" and "You shall have no other gods" — were heard directly from Hashem.

Therefore, for these two mitzvos, there is reward in this world. Thus the Posuk hints: ואכלתם "You will eat" — you will receive reward in this world ישן נושן "old grain" — referring to the two ancient commandments given even to the descendants of Noach וישן מפני חדש תוציאו "and the old, because of the new, you will bring out" — they were given again at Mount Sinai, directly from Hashem. Therefore: "You will eat" — there is reward in this world for these two commandments. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

****The Ziditcover Rebbe sacrificed material riches for a spiritual life****

The Rebbe Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditshov, known as the Sar Beis HaZohar, author of Ateres Tzvi and more, was a disciple of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk and the Chozeh of Lublin. Before the Ziditshover became famous as a Rebbe, he was extremely poor. His home had no food, no firewood, and his children shivered from cold. His wife, a righteous woman, constantly begged her holy husband to pray that Hashem have mercy on them and take them out of such crushing poverty. But Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch always calmed her, strengthening her with the words: "Better times will come. We must accept everything with love and thank Hashem for all."

It was the beginning of winter. There was nothing to eat, and certainly no money to buy firewood. The house was freezing, and the children had no warm clothing. But none of this disturbed the tzaddik, whose mind was always in higher worlds. To him, this world was only a corridor which leads to the main world to come; he felt like a soldier serving on the front lines, and worldly matters did not interest him.

He sat learning Gemara with sweetness. Meanwhile, his wife entered the room. Her compassion for the children was great, and she suffered more than he did in the cold house. With a sigh she said: "It's good for you — you sit and learn, and the holy Zohar warms your bones. But what should I do? I walk around the house and the children are shaking from cold. If at least we had a bit of warm food to heat them up — but we don't even have that. What can I tell the children? What can we do?" The holy man answered her: "Should I tear money off a tree? I am sure that Hashem will send us soon a proper salvation!"

After saying these words, the Ziditshover closed his Gemara, took his tallis and tefillin, and went to shul to daven. Walking through the mud, a piece of glass got stuck in his shoe. So that it shouldn't injure someone else, he bent down, picked it up, and put it in his pocket, planning to throw it away later. When he returned home, he remembered the glass in his pocket. Taking it out, he noticed it was shining — it was not ordinary broken glass. One didn't need to be an expert to see it was a precious stone, a diamond. But how much it was worth required a real expert. He decided to tell no one. On his way to Mincha-Maariv, he passed a jeweler and placed the stone on the table. Its brilliance flashed in the jeweler's eyes.

"What do you estimate this stone is worth?" asked the Ziditshover.

The jeweler, astonished, unable to take his eyes off the diamond, said: "I cannot estimate such a wondrous stone. I have never held anything like it. I doubt anyone in this whole region could give an exact value. To say it's worth tens of thousands of guilden is only a guess. To know its true price, one must take it to Lemberg, or even better, to Vienna near the imperial court — there you will find a buyer." Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch thanked him, put the stone back in his pocket, and went to daven. On the way, he realized this was a test from Heaven. Since he had expressed hope for a "proper salvation," Heaven had thrown this into his hands to test him with wealth.

On the other hand, he thought: Hashem does not perform miracles for nothing. Perhaps Heaven truly wants his wife and children to be relieved from poverty. Should he not accept the miracle with love? He decided to bring the matter before a שאלת חלום — a heavenly dream-question — to know the purpose of this sudden wealth.

He prayed with tears that Heaven answer him clearly that night. The answer came: "Two paths lie before you. You may use this wealth and live your whole life in comfort, without worry for yourself or your children. Or you may give it up and instead receive an open mind and spiritual greatness." Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch answered in the dream: "I give up physical wealth. I prefer a simple life and choose spiritual attainment." Heaven replied: "If so, go outside and throw the precious stone upward toward Heaven." Before dawn, before anyone in the house awoke, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch went outside and threw the stone high into the air. He never saw it again. His joy was indescribable. This was a true sign that the answer he received in the dream was real! Later, when the jeweler publicized that he had seen such a diamond worth tens of thousands, the story spread.

Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch had no choice to reveal the truth when confronted by wealthy merchants. However, through this sacrifice, the world recognized his greatness and spiritual wealth. Though he never became materially rich, his home no longer suffered from lack of food or heat, as thousands of chassidim poured to him for brachos and that ensured he lacked nothing. His Yahrzeit is 11 Tammuz, 5591 (1831).

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