

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Shoftim 5786 Year 17 #687

פרשת שופטים תשפ"ז

Why is the word "Justice" (Tzedek) written twice?

צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדָּף לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה: (ט"ז כ')

"Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live" (16:20) The Gemarra (Shabbos 156b) brings two stories:

1. The Story of Shmuel and Avlet שְׁמוּאֵל וְאַבְלֵט

Shmuel and Avlet, a non-Jewish astrologer, were sitting together and saw a person walking toward a river. Avlet said to Shmuel: "That man is walking away, but he will not return. A snake will bite him, and he will die." Shmuel replied: "If he is a Jew, he will return!" And indeed, the man returned. Avlet took down the bundle the Jew was carrying and found a dead snake inside. Shmuel asked the man: "What good deed did you do?" The man replied: "Every day, we pool our bread together and share it. One day, one of our friends had no bread to contribute. I offered to go around and collect the bread myself, and I pretended to take bread from him so that he would not be embarrassed." Shmuel said: "You have performed a great mitzvah!" Shmuel went out and expounded the Posuk: וְצִדְקָה תִּצִּיל מִמָּוֶת: (Mishlei 10:2) "And charity saves from death"—not just from an unnatural death, but death itself

2. The Story of Rabbi Akiva's Daughter ר' אִיבָּה בַּת ר' אֶקִיבָּה

The Talmud further relates that astrologers told Rabbi Akiva that on the day of his daughter's wedding, a snake would bite her and she would die. Rabbi Akiva was worried all day. On her wedding night, the daughter took her golden hairpin and stuck it into a crevice in the wall. Unknowingly, the needle of the pin pierced the eye of a snake and killed it. In the morning, when she pulled her pin out of the wall, the dead snake came dragging out with it! When Rabbi Akiva saw this, he asked his daughter: "What good deed did you do?" She told him: "In the morning, a poor man came and knocked at the door. Everyone was busy preparing for the wedding, so no one opened the door for him. I opened the door and gave him the meal that had been prepared for me." Rabbi Akiva said to her: "You have performed a great mitzvah!" Rabbi Akiva went out and expounded: וְצִדְקָה תִּצִּיל מִמָּוֶת: "And charity saves from death—not just from an unnatural death, but death itself."

From this we learn that prayer is a great thing; however, when a person performs an extraordinary act of tzedakah, that is when charity saves from death." The proof of this is that they were not asked, "Did you pray?" Instead, they were asked, "What deed did you perform?"—meaning, through what merit were you saved? This explains the

repetition in the verse: צֶדֶק צֶדֶק—an extraordinary act of charity תִּרְדָּף shall you pursue. In that merit, it will be: לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה "that you will live." (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

The Subtle Blindness of Bribery

וְלֹא תִקַּח שֹׁחַד כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יְעוֹרֵר עֵינֵי חֲכָמִים וְיִסְלַף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקִים: "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous" (16:19). The Mahar'am asks: Why do we need a special explanation to learn that taking a bribe is forbidden even to judge truthfully? The Torah explicitly states that bribery causes blindness! Yet the Talmud in Kesuvos (105b) suggests that "blinds the eyes" refers to a future punishment where the judge eventually loses his spiritual sight, not necessarily the current judgment. The answer can be, that pshat, "twists the words of the righteous" applies to truly righteous individuals who have no intention of slanting justice. This is illustrated by the story of Rav Anan (Ketuvos 105b). After unknowingly receiving a elusive benefit from a litigant, Rav Anan honorably recused himself. He sent a note to Rav Nachman stating: "Please judge this man, for I, Anan, am disqualified from judging him." Hearing this specific phrasing, Rav Nachman assumed the litigant was Rav Anan's relative and moved his trial to the front of the line, ahead of an orphans' case. Had Rav Anan been more precise and simply said, "I am unable to judge this case," Rav Nachman would not have misunderstood, and the orphans' trial would not have been delayed. This reveals the hidden power of bribery. It does not merely tempt a judge to commit conscious fraud; it subtly impairs the precision of his mind and speech. Even for complete tzaddikim, the slightest contact with bribery causes an unconscious slip of the tongue that leads to an unfair outcome.

In tribute

The Gilyon is לעי"נ my grandfather **Reb Yitzchok Klitnick** א' אלול ה'ר' יצחק בן ר' יהודה זבולון הלוי קליטניק ע"ה ז"ל. He arrived in America 1914 as a lone bachur, to attend the wedding of a friend, when world war 1 broke out and he was stranded, leaving his parents back home in Telechany, Belarus. He found refuge in the East Side in NYC in the Stoliner Shul at 48 Orchard St. A life of Mesiras Nefesh for Shemiras Shabbos and Kashrus, reaped him a reward of generations Bnei Torah.

The heilige Tzaddik, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov author of the Sefer Ateres Tzvi and more, taught that true faith, Emunah requires us to pursue our livelihood with complete integrity and kindness—never stepping on another person's toes to gain an extra dollar. The following miracle story illustrates how Hashem protects those who place their trust in Him, while reminding us that a livelihood taken unfairly will never hold water.

The Miraculous Well of the Ziditchover Rebbe

A humble Chosid once came to his Rebbe, the heilige Ateres Tzvi of Ziditchov, seeking advice. The local nobleman, poritz, is offering to lease me an inn at a very cheap price. The problem is that there is no water source anywhere near the property, so travelers never stop there, and it brings in no business." The Rebbe advised him: "Go and lease the inn from the nobleman. Dig a deep hole in the courtyard, and then come spend the heilige Shabbos here with me in Ziditchov."

The Chosid followed the Rebbe's instructions to the letter. He leased the property, dug the hole, and traveled to Ziditchov for Shabbos. When he went in to the Rebbe to receive a bracha, the Rebbe took a small note and wrote upon it the Posuk: וַיִּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי יִצְחָק בְּנֵהָל וַיִּמְצְאוּ שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם וַיִּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי יִצְחָק בְּנֵהָל וַיִּמְצְאוּ שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם "And Yitzchok's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of living water." (Bereishis 26:19)* "Take this note," instructed the Rebbe, "and toss it into the hole you dug." The Chosid traveled home and threw the holy note into the dry pit. Instantly, fresh, living spring water began to gush from the earth! Travelers began stopping by the inn to drink and rest, and the Chosid's business flourished.

Not far away, a rival Jewish innkeeper saw his own business slowing down as travelers flocked to the new inn. Driven by jealousy, he devised a scheme. He went to the nobleman and offered to pay a significantly higher price for the lease if the nobleman would evict the first Chosid and hand both inns over to him.

Greedy for profit, the nobleman called the Chosid and ordered him to vacate the premises immediately. The Chosid begged for mercy, explaining that this was his sole source of livelihood, but the heartless nobleman refused to listen. Forced out, the Chosid left, while the envious innkeeper celebrated his victory, eager to double his profits. Dismayed, the Chosid rushed back to Ziditchov

and recounted the entire painful story to his Rebbe.

The Rebbe calmed him: "Do not worry; the Almighty will help you." The Ateres Tzvi took another piece of paper and wrote a second Posuk upon it: וְכָל הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר הִפְרוּ עַבְדֵי אֱלֹהֵי בִמְיָ אֲבֹתָהֶם אָבְיוּ סְתָמִים פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּמְלְאוּם עֹפָר: "And all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped them up and filled them with earth." (ibid 26:15) "Take this note," said the Rebbe, "and toss it into the water pit." The Chosid thanked the Rebbe, returned to the inn, and threw the note into the well. Almost overnight, the spring vanished, and the well completely dried up!

The Restoration of Justice

Seeing that the well had run dry and travelers were no longer stopping, the envious innkeeper realized the second inn was worthless. He returned to the nobleman and canceled the lease. Panicked that he was losing money, the nobleman sent for the first Chosid and begged him to take the inn back. The Chosid replied: "I must first consult my Rebbe."

When he asked the Ateres Tzvi, the Rebbe said: "You may accept it—but only on two conditions. First, the nobleman must give it back to you at your original low price. Second, he must sign an agreement that if the water returns, he can never evict you again."

The nobleman eagerly agreed to the terms. The Chosid returned to his Rebbe, who now wrote a third and final note containing the Posuk: וַיֵּצֵאק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחפֹּר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וְלֹא רָבוּ עֲלֵיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֹבוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי עָתָה הִרְחִיב ה' לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ: "And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rechovos, saying, "For now Hashem has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." (ibid 26:22) The Rebbe told him: "Now, dig a new hole in the courtyard, drop this note inside, and Hashem will send His salvation." The Chosid dug a new pit and threw the note inside. Once again, pure water burst forth in abundance, bringing a divine blessing to his business.

When the rival Jewish innkeeper offered to pay a significantly higher price for the lease if the nobleman would evict the first Chosid, the poritz showed him the door! The Chosid lived there in peace and prosperity for many years, sustained by Hashem's righteous hand.

לעֵינֵי חֲמוּתֵי מֶרֶת שְׂרָה בַת ר' חַיִּים אַהֲרֹן וְנִיטֵל הָיִיד לְבֵית כֶּזַּר בִּי אֱלוֹהִים

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