

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

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פרשת וירא תשפ"ב

Mesiras Nefesh from Avraham paved the way for all future generations to do so

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּצְלַקִּים נֶפֶשׁ אֶת אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּנִּי:

And it came to pass after these things, that Hashem tested Avraham, and He said to him, "Avraham," and he said, "Here I am." (22:1) Hashem continues וַיֹּאמֶר קַח נָא אֶת בְּנֶךְךָ אֶת יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ לְךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ מֹרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה וְאָמַר אֱלֹהִים: And He said, "Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchok, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you." Rashi explains the words קַח נָא Please take: is only an expression of a request. Hashem said to him, "I beg of you, pass this test for Me, so that people will not say that the first tests had no substance." Many commentaries ask: Why is this test attributed to Avraham, when in fact Yitzchok was an adult of 37 years old and was able to fend off his father from becoming a sacrifice, עֲקִידַת יִצְחָק, yet he went willingly to sanctify the name of Hashem. If so, the test is greater to Yitzchok, and should have been called the test of Yitzchok also? Secondly, why did Hashem have to beg Avraham to pass this test? The Sefer Aperiion from Rav Shlome Ganzfried, the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, who brings a Drashos Ha-Ran by Rabbi Nissim ben Reuven of Gerona (1320 - 1380) who was born in Barcelona, that brings out a powerful point: the credit of a test is attributed to the first time the test was initiated and passed. After the first person undergoes the trial, it becomes easier for the person who follows. With this in mind, the Aperiion comments that Yitzchak's test, and his

willingness to give up his life for Hashem, was not novel. He inherited his devotion from his father, who was thrown into a fiery furnace and who risked his life in battle to save his nephew, Lot. Avraham, on the other hand, was undergoing a trial that had not been previously experienced. Never had an individual been asked to slaughter his son for the sake of Hashem. This was the supreme test. Avraham had no one from whom to learn. Based on this insight, we can understand why Hashem had to beg Avraham to pass this test, since the ten tests of Avraham was for the sake of future generations. By Avraham paving the way in his ordeals, this made it easier for later generations to do the same. Therefore, we end the Bracha by Shmone Esrei, Magen Avraham, since his doings benefit merits for all generations.

The same idea we find that Hashem gave a test to Iyuv, that he lost his wealth, and he and his children became very sick, yet Iyuv accepted his fate and didn't utter a bad word on Hashem. The commentaries ask: How did Iyuv gather this strength? The answer is, we find two children of Aharon's נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא, Nadav and Avihu, each took his pan, put fire in them, and placed incense upon it, and they brought before Hashem foreign fire, which He had not commanded them. And fire went forth from before Hashem, and consumed them, and they died before Hashem. The Torah attests that וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן: (יג) And Aharon was silent. Here too, the first test was passed by Aharon, and that enabled Iyuv in later time, to pass his test. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick) (Revised and edited by Duvid Pinchas Rose)

***** **Rav Zishe helped Reb Yosef: but which one did he have in mind?** *****

Two tzadikim, each named Naftali, once partnered in a large city to amass funds to assist the needy. They were Reb Naftali ben Reb Eluzar of Lizhensk (a grandson of the legendary Rav Elimelech) and Reb Naftali of Ropshitz, author of sefer, the Zera Kodesh. House to house they trudged, gleaning only the most meager of donations, literally pennies. The Lizhensker Naftali became despondent at the slow pace of their campaign. "Naftali my brother, we are just not making progress. At this rate, no Yid in need will have anything to show for our efforts. I'm tired of just getting pennies." The Ropshitzer replied: "Be confident in Hashem's help, my brother. I feel our salvation is close at hand." At that very moment, they caught sight of the richly-appointed horse-drawn carriage belonging to a certain Reb Yosef,

known for his ready willingness to open his purse wide for any worthy cause. The wagon came to a halt in front of the partners and the owner, Reb Yosef himself, strode out with a warm Sholom Aleichem on his lips. He held out his hefty purse, saying "Here, gentlemen, take out what you need for your worthy cause." The pair of tzadikim could scarcely have hoped for greater gift and yet Naftali of Lizhensk had qualms about accepting an open-ended grant without any limitations. "A man is required to separate a tenth of his wealth for tzedaka under the category of "maaser." Optionally he may exceed that up to a fifth, called "chomesh." But Halacha forbids one to "squander" his entire fortune on tzedakah, no matter how worthy. Naftali if we empty out this man's purse, it would not be kosher

money since it would contravene halacha.” “Gentlemen, gentlemen, let me reassure you. Don't think that what I happen to have in this purse now is my entire fortune. Far from it. It is just a tiny fraction of the resources I command. All of my wealth stems from 100% kosher sources and I acquired all of it, bechasdei Hashem, down to the last kopeck, by business dealings totally according to the Shulchan Aruch. My fortune is untainted by theft, oppression or deceit. When you learn how I came into money you will understand. I separate maaser scrupulously before any money comes into this pouch, so you can take the whole lot of it without the slightest misgivings”. Now why don't you ride with me in the wagon and take a look at the fields and forests which comprise my estates. I think you should hear about my personal history.”

“I have not always been wealthy -- just the opposite. I was known as Yosef the Bagel Man. My wife baked them, and I sold them in the streets, earning barely enough to rub two copper coins together. I tried to find better businesses, but nothing worked out. One bitter winter, my wife and I had only one winter coat between us, which we shared, one wearing it outside while the other huddled indoors at home.”

“Even in the face of bitter poverty we remained steadfast in our bitachon in the Oibershter. We knew that He would help us in the time and in the way He deemed fit. One day we heard that the holy Reb Zisha was passing through our town. People urged us to go to him, but I had a narrow point of view, I'm ashamed to say. Reb Zisha could hardly help us with any money, so I thought, since he himself was a confirmed pauper. But my wife set me straight. ‘A brocho from a Tzadik like Reb Zisha is worth more than any money, for who knows where it could lead?’”

“I set out for the Rebbe's lodgings, but my eyes glazed over when I saw a crowd of dozens, all clamoring and striving to be admitted to the Tzadik. I have circulation problems in my feet and it's hard for me to stand for a long time, much less to push and shove in a crowd. I stood off to the side waiting for the crowd to thin out, but the people kept streaming. I was on the verge of returning home empty-handed when word came out from the gatekeeper that the Rebbe was calling for “Reb Yosef” from the crowd to be admitted. The Rebbe couldn't possibly mean me, I thought to myself, so I stayed on the sidelines. One “Yosef” after another made their way inside (it is, after all, a common name) but the Rebbe's reception was the same for each, citing the line from Tehillim 115:14 (part of Hallel) ה' עֲלֵינוּ Hashem

should increase your standing... but you're not the Yosef I summoned. After each hapless “Yosef” came and went, the gabbai called to the outside: ‘Is there anyone else named Yosef still around?’ I was the only one left, so I seized my chance. I shouted out, “Over here, Sir. I am Yosef. A path opened for me to get into the inner sanctum.

“To my surprise Reb Zisha seemed happy to see me and after a hearty Shalom Aleichem, asked me what my parnassa situation was. What could I tell him other than that I was destitute, that no business venture ever panned out, and that my good wife and I were on the verge of starvation.”

“The Rebbe told his attendant to bring over a bottle of honey wine (called “mehd”) and poured out two cups to the brim. He told me to quaff one cup to the bottom while he sipped from the other cup and wished me “lechaim.” The rebbe asked me if I had anything at home where I could keep money, and after thinking that nothing like that was left over after we



sold all our possessions, I remembered that yes, there was probably a small leather purse with a drawstring that could be used, although at the time I had nothing to put into it!”

“The Rebbe took three silver coins from a drawer and gave them to me with these wondrous words. ‘Put these coins in the pouch and they will trigger an endless flow of bounty for you for the rest of your life. Whenever you put your hand into the purse, it will yield just the amount of money you need at that time and will never run empty.’ And that has been my story ever since. Rabbosai, you see before you the former Yosef the Bagel Man, who now can contribute generously to your tzedaka cause and you may accept it with a clear conscience, now that you know that its source is pure and unsullied -- the precious brocho from the holy tzadik Reb Zisha.

Notes in retrospect: [DPR]

1 Chasidim understand that marveling at a “moyfes”/miracle from the Rebbe Reb Zishe is, in and of itself, a springboard to yiras shomayim. (Heard from YZK)

2 It is notable that two tzadikim encountered a man who himself was “neheneh”/ benefited from another famed tzadik, Rebbe Reb Zishe – and went on to help their cause The activities of tzadikim intersected from afar.

3The story is an example of a towering “moyfes” aimed at a specific, selected Yid for reasons known only to the Tzaddik who performed it. הַנְּסֻתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ “The hidden things belong to Hashem, our G-d.” A person's rise from “rags to riches” can be meteoric if a Tzadik is driving his fate.

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