



The Joy of Torah - For Life

Parshas Ha'azinu - The Kindness of Avrohom - The 1st Ushpizin!

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There's a Midrash about a theoretical conversation between Avrohom and Moshe. Avrohom said - "I am greater than you. I fed travelers." Moshe said - "No, I'm greater. You fed uncircumcised people while I circumcised people (meaning Jewish people)."

The Anaf Yosef explains that the Manna was given to the Jews in Moshe's merit, so it counts as him feeding them. Then he asks, didn't Avrohom know that Moshe had this over him? Why did he think his feeding was better than Moshe's feeding? Also there's a Yalkut that asks - "What Tzedakah did Moshe do to the Jews? It taught them the mitzvah of giving tzedakah." But why did it have to say that? Moshe's merit caused the manna to fall! That's the tzedakah that Moshe did!

The Anaf Yosef answers both questions with one answer. Avrohom thought his kindness was better, and the Yalkut doesn't count this as tzedakah, because Moshe was the one who brought them out of Mitzrayim into the desert in the first place, so he was obligated to feed them. But how could it not count as tzedakah anymore? Obviously Moshe loved the Jews and wanted to help them, just like anyone else that gives tzedakah! Why does the fact that he was obligated make it less of a tzedakah and kindness?

Another question that can be asked is if the the ענין יוסף answer was only that משה was obligated to feed כלל ישראל why did he need to create the התחייבות from the fact that משה brought them to the desert? Why couldn't he have simply proved it from the fact that משה was commanded by Hashem to be their leader and take care of them and that's why he was obligated? The answer is that צדקה is always an obligation from Hashem not just in the case of משה but in every case of צדקה or חסד, however, here lies the difference, when we do the act of kindness it should be done solely to help another fellow Yid because that's what Hashem wants from us. The ענין יוסף answered that in משה's situation this system would not have worked since משה had a personal responsibility towards the כלל ישראל directly, therefore, that changed the dynamics from being a pure selfless act of kindness to also fulfilling a direct חוב to them, because he placed them in the desert, that created a חוב directly to the party on the receiving end. You may ask; why is fulfilling a חוב different from all acts of kindness that start out as an obligation from Hashem. In particular you can ask that this חוב originated from the fact that Hashem made משה the leader which in itself would not have diminished the act from being pure צדקה וחסד as we see from the ענין יוסף himself?

It seems that when one has a direct חוב to someone even if it originated from pure חסד which is the essence of being a good Gd fearing leader; if a direct חוב develops as in the case of משה רבינו one must do the act with הרגשה of fulfilling a חוב also and it's not honest to fulfill it as only an act of חסד וחסד.

We also see how pure a true feeling of kindness needs to be that even a correct הרגשה of fulfilling a חוב even when it originated from משה accepting to do to do kindness to the כלל ישראל was not considered the ultimate act of צדקה.

We also see that with all of אברהם's infinite understanding of HaShem and the importance of חסד as we say "חסד לאברהם", he could not fathom how awesome it is to do kindness to another Jew and that the חסד רבינו משה was even greater even while it was fulfilling a חוב because it was done to Jews.

To think that even אברהם אבינו the paradigm of חסד didn't fully understand the greatness of חסד certainly shows us how far we are from truly appreciating the importance and what a privilege it is to perform צדקה and general acts of kindness.

May we be זוכה to fully appreciate the "חסד לאברהם" as was invite אברהם אבינו into our Sukkah tonight.