

Parshas Toldos 5762

1. Sometimes you see an idea that's so beautiful it makes you catch your breath. I saw this week in Beis Yishai, by R' Shlomo Fisher, an idea that evoked that reaction in me.

2. ויתן לך אלוקים - Why the vov? Rashi: יתן ויחזור ויתן. Q: What is the ברכה in that; wouldn't it be better to give everything at once.

3. Furthermore, the מדרש explains that the ברכות here are referring to Torah: מטל השמים, זה מקרא. ומשמני הארץ, זה משנה. ורוב דגן, זה תלמוד. ותירוש, אלו הגדות. So what is the significance in the context of Torah of יתן ויחזור ויתן?

4. Rashi's source is a Midrash, and there the דרשה appears somewhat amplified: The first ברכות is the ברכות themselves; the second ברכות is the ability to contain the ברכות. Q: What does that mean? And furthermore, how does that correspond with what Rashi says: יתן ויחזור ויתן, which implies an endless cycle of giving?

5. Parable: A king wanted to grant a boon to someone who had done him a great favor. "Ask whatever you wish", he said. The man said: "I would like that whenever I come to the king's treasure house with bags, the king's servants should fill those bags up with pieces of fabric". The king was non-plussed, but agreed.

The next day the man appears with two bags, which they fill with fabric. He goes home and sews the fabric into new bags. The next day he comes with tens of bags. They are all filled with fabric. He goes home and sews them into bags. He comes back with hundreds of bags. And the next day with waggons filled with thousands of bags. And eventually there wasn't enough money in the king's treasury to buy enough fabric to fill his bags. And he became fantastically wealthy as the fabric king.

6. The secret of his success? A bag is a container to hold the bounty; a כלי to hold the ברכה. He transformed the ברכה into a כלי to hold ever more ברכה.

7. That is the secret of growth in Torah. When a child enters school, he learns the אל"ף בי"ת. That, for him, is Torah. He can make a ברכת התורה on learning אל"ף בי"ת. That is the ברכה that he receives.

But once he knows the אל"ף בי"ת, he can use that knowledge to learn something new: How to read סידור. So the ברכה has been transformed into a כלי with which to receive a greater ברכה - the ability to read.

8. And once the child knows how to read, that ברכה becomes a כלי with which to receive new ברכה, because with that knowledge he can begin to learn חומש.

9. And this process continues. Because with each new acquisition in Torah, the

person has a greater כלי with which to receive even more Torah.

10. And that is the secret of the ברכה of ויתן לך, which, as we have seen, refers to Torah. Each נתינה, each bounty of Torah, in turn becomes the כלי to receive another נתינה.

11. That is the power of Torah study. When we study Torah, we don't simply acquire more knowledge; important though that is. We acquire more than the ברכה of Torah itself; we acquire greater כלים with which to absorb even more Torah.

12. ארוכה מארץ מידה ורחבה מני ים has an infinitude of Torah to give; הקבייה. What daunts us is our knowledge of our own limitations; we know that we are capable of receiving & absorbing only so much. And so we don't aim very high. But what we don't realize is that Torah is not only a ברכה; it is also the כלי with which to receive more ברכה. The more Torah we learn, the more we can learn. ויתן לך אלוקים - יתן, ויחזור ויתן.