

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ואחרי כן קבר אברהם את שרה אשתו אל מערת שרה והכפלה על פני מטרא הוא הברון בארץ כנען ... (בג-ט)

Before one of his overseas trips, a woman asked **Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein**, a lecturer in *Aish HaTorah's* Discovery Program, if he could take a suitcase to *Eretz Yisroel* for her. Reb Yerachmiel was happy to do the favor and she was appreciative of his graciousness. R' Yerachmiel made it to the airport in time. After take-off, he prepared for some of his upcoming meetings at *Aish HaTorah*, and then sat back and reflected on the possibility of visiting his grandmother's *kever*.

R' Yerachmiel's grandmother, Rebbetzin Fayga Gnat *a"h*, was the daughter of **R' Yerachmiel Yaakov Gnat ז"ל**. Being able to visit her *kever* in Cholon held special significance for R' Yerachmiel, who was named after his great-grandfather. He had been unable to travel to Cholon on his last few trips to *Eretz Yisroel*, which made him all the more eager to do so now.

On the third day of his trip, R' Yerachmiel was planning his visit to the cemetery when the doorbell rang. It was Chaim Stern, who came to pick up the suitcase his sister-in-law had sent with R' Yerachmiel. Chaim and Yerachmiel had never met but they quickly got acquainted. "So what are your plans for today?" Chaim asked. "I'm hoping to take care of a few things near the Tel Aviv area," was the reply. "No kidding? That's exactly where I'm headed now. My taxi is waiting for me outside. Maybe you'd like to come along? I would enjoy a companion and there's a place on the way where you could get off and catch a bus." R' Yerachmiel always liked to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. "Sure," he said. "Just let me grab my hat."

About twenty minutes outside of Jerusalem, after a short pit stop to buy a drink, R' Yerachmiel reached for his wallet. Suddenly, his stomach bottomed out in the free-fall panic known by anyone who has ever forgotten his wallet at home. R' Yerachmiel helplessly pictured his wallet sitting on the night table in his bedroom in *Har Nof*. He didn't even have any small change in his pocket. He was penniless. He reviewed his options quickly. He could ask Chaim to take him back to Jerusalem. But that would delay Chaim by almost an hour. He could borrow some money from him but Yerachmiel would need enough for bus fares around Tel Aviv and Cholon and back to Jerusalem in the evening. He couldn't bring himself to ask someone he barely knew for that much money. Getting back to Jerusalem wasn't his biggest concern - what really upset him was that there was no way he could visit his grandmother's *kever* in Cholon. As this was the only free day of his trip, it meant he would have to forfeit this most meaningful item on his agenda. And who knows how long it would be until he'd be back in *Eretz Yisroel* again? Waves of disappointment washed over R' Yerachmiel as he hid his shame and despair behind a false smile.

And then came the question R' Yerachmiel was dreading, "So, what are you planning to do today in Tel Aviv?" "Well, uh, I, uh, was planning to... visit my grandmother's *kever* in Cholon." R' Yerachmiel's voice trailed off as he thought about the visit which he obviously would not be making now. Chaim sat up abruptly, as if the taxi had stopped short. "You are going to your grandmother's *kever*?" he echoed in a whisper. R' Yerachmiel nodded, puzzled at Chaim's response. "You're going to *daven* at your bubbly's *kever*," Chaim repeated slowly, almost to himself. He turned his face towards the window.

A few moments later he turned back to R' Yerachmiel with reddened eyes. "Look, would you please do me a tremendous favor?" Chaim begged. Suddenly, he took out his wallet and quickly removed a few bills. He urgently pressed them into R' Yerachmiel's palm. "Here's three hundred *shekels*. I know you don't need the money. But please, let me sponsor your trip to the *kever*. Take taxis wherever you have to go today... on me." R' Yerachmiel was shocked. Chaim swallowed and continued. "My grandparents were all killed in the Holocaust. My parents' entire families were wiped out without a trace. How I envy you that you even know where your grandparents are buried!" Tears filled his eyes. "I will never have the *zechus* to *daven* at my grandparents' *kevarim*. If you will accept this money from me, then I might have a small share in the great *mitzvah* that you are doing today. Please, I realize you hardly know me. But it would mean so much to me if you would accept this money."

R' Yerachmiel was speechless. He barely managed to nod his head in agreement. "Thank you," Chaim said. "Thank you so much." R' Yerachmiel's *tefillos* that day at his grandmother's *kever* held even more significance than usual. (Wikler's Classics)

והמלך דוד וכן בא בימים ... (מלכים א' א-א)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Just as the *Torah* describes *Avraham Avinu* in this week's *parsha* as one who had become "old and coming to his days," the *Haftorah* details how *Dovid Hamelech* had also reached the end of his life. However, the question begs to be asked: is it not the way of the world for one to grow old and then pass on? What is the major significance and connection between *Avraham Avinu* and *Dovid Hamelech's* old age?

R' Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sedilkov ז"ל (Degel Machane Ephraim) explains that while general knowledge is the greatest tool a person can have in life, and indeed, many have died trying to attain it, *Chazal* maintain that the experience one gets just from living a long life is by far the best kind of knowledge one can acquire. This is because a

person's character and mindset are shaped by his life's ups and downs, and it is imperative for him to learn to simply weather all the "storms of life" just to remain afloat. Furthermore, knowledge has the ability to "buy" what one is missing in life, thus making his life more robust and fulfilling.

The *Torah* specifically mentions that *Avraham Avinu* was an old man since it connotes the incredible life-experience -knowledge (aside from the knowledge he gleaned from learning *Torah*) that he possessed and was eager to pass along to the next generation – specifically his son *Yitzchok Avinu*. *Dovid Hamelech* too had a rich plethora of life experiences which he wished to impart to his children and so the *Navi* adopted the same wording (זקן בא בימים) as by *Avraham Avinu*.

ויצא יצחק לשרה בשדה לפנות ערב וישא עיניו וירא והנה גמלים באים וגו' (כג-ט)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

Chazal derive from this *posuk* that *Yitzchok Avinu* introduced the *tefillah* of *Mincha*. As **Rashi** notes, the word "לשוח" is associated with *davening*, as it says in *Tehillim*, "ולפני ה' יטפח שרחו". In fact, the *Medrash* lists שוח as one of the expressions of *tefilla*. However, the word שוח has a slightly mundane implication; a conversation. Wouldn't something like *tefillah*, such a lofty, sacred *avodah*, have a more befitting title, such as "ורנ" another expression, which expresses an exalted and uplifting feeling?

I believe the following short story, which I once heard from my father *shlit'a*, belies the deeper *machshava* here. There was once a Polish gentile who served as a janitor in a *shul*. He was once observed praying to *Hashem* on a *Motzei Yom Kippur*. When asked to explain his actions, he replied that he was inspired when he watched a guest *daven*. They pressed him further and asked, "You've been here for years and seen countless people *davening*, what changed?" He gave a simple yet piercing observation. "Yes, I've seen many people *praying* to G-d, but this time I saw a man *speaking* with G-d. I then realized if someone can *converse* with G-d, I would like to also." *Yitzchok Avinu's* relationship with *Hashem* was so real that his "mundane" שיחה was with *Hashem*. He realized how close *Hashem* is to us and how much He wants to hear our voices.

R' Shloime Wolbe ז"ל, adds a point that complements this. The *Mishna* in *Avos* says, "בן תשעים לשוח" (some pronounce it as a "shin" others as a "sin"). An older man, detached from the many physical encumbrances and distractions of this world, can connect to *Hashem* and maintain a real "שיחה" with Him. *Yitzchok* was younger, not quite a 90-year-old man, but yet, he amassed that knowhow to connect to *Hashem* always, to constantly ask, beseech and just talk to *Hashem*. In these uncertain times, we are in need of so many *yeshuos*. Let us connect more, talk to Him more, and have real conversation with *Hashem*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ואתה אדני המלך דוד עיני כל ישראל עליך להגיד להם (מלכים א' א:ב)

With the *petirah* of the *Posek Hador*, **HaGaon R' Dovid Feinstein ז"ל**, the world has lost a leader in *Torah*, *avodah* and *chessed*. R' Dovid, in his uniquely quiet and unassuming manner, always looked out for others. He was a big "Tehillim *zuger*" (*Tehillim* sayer) and once told someone, "I don't know why people today don't say *Tehillim* like they used to in the past."

Recently, one of Rav Dovid's grandsons showed him a picture of **R' Chaim Kanievsky שליטא**, *davening* for R' Dovid with a full size poster in front of him with the words clearly printed: "רפואה שלמה להרה"ג רב דוד בן שימא שליט"א"

When R' Dovid saw it, he began to smile. His grandson looked surprised and asked him, "*Zaidy*, why do you smile? What's so funny about this picture?"

After a little pressure, R' Dovid pulled out an envelope

ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים שני חיי שרה ... (בג-ט)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

The *Torah* uses numerous words to describe the years of *Sara Imeinu*. **Rashi** explains the reason is because all of her days and years were EQUALLY GOOD! How can that be? Does that mean that the day she was kidnapped by Pharaoh or by Avimelech, was equally as good as the day she gave birth to *Yitzchok*? Is that possible? The answer is yes. In the eyes of Sarah they were all good because Sarah lived with *Hashem* and everything *Hashem* does is GOOD! The reason why we have BAD days and experiences in life is because we don't understand the definition of GOOD and BAD. We define good as comfortable, enjoyable, what makes ME feel happy. We define bad as uncomfortable, unenjoyable, what makes ME not feel happy! The problem is that these definitions are completely wrong and it throws off our entire perception of life.

R' Yitzchok Kirzner ז"ל explains that the definition of GOOD is anything that brings me closer to my goal and purpose in life - which is to have *kirvas Elokim*, to come closer to *Hashem* at all times. It may not be comfortable or enjoyable but often the hard and most difficult things we go through in our lives are the BEST things that could have happened to us, because they bring us closer to our goal! When someone says they had a BAD day, that might be the furthest thing from the truth. Perhaps they had a frustrating, difficult, painful or challenging day, but it was certainly not BAD! *Hashem* doesn't make BAD days! Often the days we call GOOD, days that are filled with leisure, fun, physical pleasure or honor, are really not so good after all. In fact, they are bad for us because they remove us from the purpose of our lives.

Sara Imeinu lived with *Hashem*. Her entire existence revolved around *kirvas Hashem*. She knew that everything *Hashem* did is good, so whether it was comfortable or enjoyable for her or not, it really didn't matter, it was all GOOD! Every day was EQUALLY GOOD because Sarah truly understood the definition of GOOD and her true purpose in life!