

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך ... (בה-לה)

The *Torah* commands us to treat our poor and impoverished brethren with dignity and respect. The **Alshich Hakadosh ז"ל** explains that if one sees that his friend or neighbor has become impoverished, he must consider that person as “*your brother*,” literally as your family member, because the whole reason why there are poor people in the world is just so the wealthy can gain merit through them by giving *tzedakah* and supporting them. If not for the poor, these wealthy people would have less *zechusim*. Thus, the *Torah* states: “*You must support him ... so that he shall live.*” In other words, support him while he is still considered “alive” and he has not fallen into total indigence and destitution, when he is considered as if he were dead. The wealth and riches that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* doles out to those who are fortunate to receive Heavenly bounty are meant to give life to our brothers. That is the purpose of wealth.

A married man who studied in the *yeshivah* in Radin, by the **Chofetz Chaim, R’ Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ז"ל**, was an extremely diligent scholar who suffered from dire poverty. He continued to learn *Torah* but he often had no food to put on his table. This distressed him greatly and every so often, he would turn to the *Chofetz Chaim* and complain about his predicament. “*Rebbi*,” he would say, “why must I be so poor? If only *Hashem* would shower me with wealth, I would give generously to *tzedakah*!” The *Chofetz Chaim* would listen with empathy but did not respond.

Shortly thereafter the man started a small business and was blessed with success. At first, the success was quite modest and he continued to learn in the *yeshivah*. However, in a short period of time, he actually became an extraordinarily wealthy individual. He moved away from Radin and his business flourished. He lived in a large house and and life was good for him. Unfortunately, he forgot all about the promise that he had made to the *Chofetz Chaim* years earlier, and not only did he not give *tzedakah*, but he became a full-fledged miser as well. He developed a terrible reputation that the money-collectors should not even bother coming, since they would get nothing from him for their efforts.

Several years later, the *Chofetz Chaim* happened to visit the wealthy man’s city, and his former *talmid* came out to welcome him. The *Chofetz Chaim* greeted him warmly and asked if he gave charity as he once said he would.

“*Rebbi*,” said the wealthy man, “I have been stricken with the trait of miserliness. It is as if my hand is sealed shut with both lock and bolt, and I am unable to give any *tzedakah* at all. What should I do?”

“I will tell you a *marshal* (parable),” replied the *Chofetz Chaim*. “A farmer from a village approached a storeowner in town and asked to purchase a ruble’s worth of flour. ‘Go ahead and fill your sack with flour,’ the storeowner told the villager.

“When the farmer heard that he could take the flour on his own, he quickly rushed over and took a large sack, which he then filled up with flour. When the sack was totally filled to capacity, he went over to the storeowner and handed him a ruble. The storeowner looked at him and then at the sack filled with fine flour. He shook his head. ‘My friend,’ exclaimed the storeowner in surprise, ‘You have filled up such an enormous sack with flour and yet you pay me only one ruble?’

“But the farmer did not understand the question. ‘Yes, that is correct,’ responded the farmer. ‘I told you I wanted a ruble’s worth of flour, and you told me to fill up my sack. So that is what I did. But I still only wish to pay you one ruble.’

“‘True,’ replied the storeowner. ‘I told you to fill up your sack, but when I saw the huge sack that you brought, I figured that you had changed your mind and wished to buy a larger quantity of flour. Many merchants do that as well. As you placed more flour in your sack, the weights on the scale grew heavier and heavier - now the cost is much more than one ruble.’”

The *Chofetz Chaim* looked at his *talmid* and shook his head sadly. “What did you expect?” concluded the *Tzaddik*. “Did you really think that you could amass hordes of wealth and ‘fill up your sack’ to the top, and your *yetzer hara* - which persuades you to close your hand to the needy - would remain exactly as it was when you were poor?”

ה' עין ומעין ומנוסר ביום צרה ... (ירמי' מז-יג)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

This week, the terrifying *tochachah* (biblical rebuke) is read, and *Chazal* chose a prophecy from *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* which correctly corresponds to it while also ending with positivity. The *Navi* begins by stating “ה' עני ומעני” – “*Hashem, my strength and my stronghold*,” and while this is a wonderful expression of how *Hashem* cares for *Bnei Yisroel*, why did *Yirmiyahu* choose to use a double expression, and what lesson did he wish to impart to *Bnei Yisroel*?

R’ Dovid Feinstein ז"ל (Kol Dodi) explains that by using such language, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* was highlighting the source of all of *Klal Yisroel’s* strength and security – *Hashem*. For years, secularists have tried to take the divinity out of everything in the world, and they claimed that all of their

successes were attributed to their own strength and ingenuity. However, *Torah* Jews know that none of this is true. Without *Hashem* holding us up every step of the way we would never survive anything, let alone our long and bitter exile.

Following the horrific events in Meron last week, this lesson takes on a greater significance. Though tragic, the 45 *kedoshim* lost their lives in a spirit of *kedusha* while glorifying the life of *Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai* who raised the level of *Torah* in this world to incredible heights, thereby sanctifying *Hashem’s* great name.

So, while security measures should be revisited, it is important to remember that the security of every Jew comes from *Hashem* and not from anywhere else.

וכי תאמרזו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית הז' לא נזרע ולא נאסף את תבואתנו ... (כה-ב)

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

מחשבת הלב

Hashem promises to send an abundance of food during the year of *shmita* enabling the farming folk to have plentiful sustenance for the otherwise trying years. The question is, in *Parshas Bechukosai* the *posuk* says, “ואכלתם לחמכם לשובע” - and **Rashi** explains: one will eat a “*kima*” - a small amount and will feel fully satiated. If so, why was it necessary for such an abundance of produce? I once heard the following answer. The *posuk* in *Parshas Behar* prefaces the *beracha* of abundance with a the following words: “וכי תאמרזו מה נאכל” - “*And if you ask what will we eat ...?*” A person who needs to ask, and is otherwise unsure of his sustenance, requires a promise of plenty. Whereas the one who has full *emunah* in *Hashem*, and doesn’t ask, will be worthy of *beracha* through a very small amount. Which would you choose? The answer is quite obvious.

My *machshava* here is as follows. Throughout life, numerous situations arise that can be difficult and we are faced with myriad challenges. We have two ways of dealing with these issues. Either we could ask *Hashem* why it occurred, or we can trust Him and receive the ultimate *beracha*. The *posuk* says “אם בחקתי תלכו” and then follows with “ונתתי”. Thus, if regarding even the *chukim*, laws that we don’t fully understand, we follow Him blindly, then “ונתתי” - we are *zoche* to all the *berachos*.

In the aftermath of the unfathomable tragedy in Meron last week, let us follow in the ways of *Aharon Hakohen* and maintain a stony silence, not asking why. A father never relishes administering a *potch* to his child, but we must realize that with our limited vision, and inadequate understanding, our singular response is a communal resounding silence. In this *zechus*, we should soon realize the bountiful *beracha* in this week’s *parsha* and finally merit “ואולך אתכם קוממיות”.

May *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* send a *nechama* to the affected families and to all of *Klal Yisroel* who are suffering as well!

משל למה הדבר דומה

ההקדיר הבחן אתה בין טוב ובין רע בערבך הבחן בין ידעה ... (כו-יב)

משל: In *Sefer Likutei Dovid*, the following story is told. **Reb Dovid Garfinkel ז"ל** was a farmer who made a living tilling the land. He milked his own cows and collected eggs from his chicken coop. He was an honest and righteous person and the local farms thought very highly of this Jewish farmer.

A fire once broke out on Reb Dovid Garfinkel’s farm, and consumed all of his chickens. Originally Reb Dovid had purchased six thousand chickens, but it was not known exactly how many were still alive at the time of the fire. Fortunately, he had insurance and was advised to quickly make a claim. A neighbor told him that the insurance adjuster might underestimate the number of chickens who remained alive at the time of the fire and thus, he would not be able to collect his fair share. He was therefore advised to declare that originally he had purchased seven thousand

chickens, so that after the adjuster’s estimate, he would be able to collect his entire loss.

Reb Dovid, however, would not hear of this. He told the adjuster that he had purchased six thousand chickens, but had no knowledge of how many were actually lost through the fire. The adjuster made a full comprehensive report and in the end, out of sheer respect for his reputation for honesty and integrity, the insurance company awarded full payment for six thousand chickens, even though they were well aware that some mortality must have occurred before the fire.

משל: *Sefer Vayikrah* concludes with the *parsha* of *Erchin* and instructs us to precisely evaluate the value of a man, woman, child and even animals. We are given exact numbers for each. *Chazal* explain that when one evaluates an item or product, whether for business or personal gain, he must never lie or exaggerate the value. Honesty and integrity is the true value of a righteous individual.

אם בחקתי תלכו ואת מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם ... (כו-ג)

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

דרגה יתירה

There are two parts to the living a life of *Torah*. The **Nesivos Shalom** explains that we have the *mitzvos*, the actual laws that teach us what we have to do. We also have the *ruach* of *Torah*, the spirit of the law, which is not always clearly defined. The meaning of “*Tailaichu*” is, “You shall go” which means that *Torah* has a “*mehalech*”, a certain “path” that is considered the “*Torah* way”! Very often people ask, where does it say that in the *Torah*? Where does it say that I can or cannot do this or that? The answer is that although it is not written anywhere, it is a *ruach*, a spirit or sensitivity that we must cultivate inside ourselves so that we do not become people who are just following the letter of the law, while at the same time, completely not going in the “way” of the *Torah*. The way to accomplish this is by asking oneself the question: “Am I doing this to serve *Hashem*, or am I doing this to serve myself and somehow trying to fit *Hashem* into the picture?”

When people are more focused on themselves - their needs, desires and wants - then to truly do *ratzon Hashem*, they are following the *Torah* but not going in it’s WAY. “*Im Bechukosai Taylaichu*” means following the letter of the law and not looking for *heterim* to suit my needs. It means that my comfort is not the most important thing and yes, sometimes I can be uncomfortable in order to do a *mitzvah*. For example, feeling the *aveilus* of the 9 days sometimes comes along with being uncomfortable in order to keep the *halacha* properly. Fitting our materialistic lifestyle into *Torah*, does not always follow the true RUACH of *Torah*. One of the blessings in this *week’s parsha* is “ונתתי גשמיתם בעתם” and, says the *Nesivos Shalom*, this means that if we go in the way of *Torah*, with the true spirit of the law, then automatically our *gashmiyus* will come to us in the right time and place, as well as the right amount. If our mindset and *ruach* will be to do what *Hashem* wants of us, then we fulfill in a complete sense, the precept of “*Bechukosai Taylaichu*”, and we will receive all the blessings that it brings.