



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

וישאל את סייסי פרעה אשר אתו במשמר בית אדניו לאמר מדוע פניכם רעים היום ... (12-1)

The home of **R' Yaakov Kamenetsky z"l** in Monsey, NY, was situated across the street from a convent at the intersection of Saddle River Road and Grove Street. One day, Mother Superior of the convent stopped a Jewish passerby.

“Why is it,” she asked, “that all of our Jewish neighbors cross the street or avert their eyes when we pass by? It makes us feel uncomfortable. All, except for one old rabbi - he always has a greeting and a warm smile.”

That rabbi was the great *Rosh Yeshivah*, R' Yaakov Kamenetsky. Making another human being feel comfortable is part of being human. The wisdom of R' Yaakov was not just in his mind - but it was clearly manifested in his actions, as well.

How far can a friendly, greeting travel? A renowned builder in Monsey, Reb Mechel Tauber, relates how he discovered the power of a good morning, many years ago. The story began when his cell phone rang one day.

“Mechel? This is Rabbi Oppenheim from Yeshiva Ohr Yechezkel. We need your help.”

Mechel was a sought-after developer in Monsey. He was a busy man, but if someone needed his help, Mechel would find the time. “What can I do for you?” he offered.

“Well, we’re building a new building, but the township inspectors are giving us a hard time with the plans. We heard that you are friends with Mr. O’Reilly. Do you think you can speak to him for us?”

Mechel sighed. Phil O’Reilly was a chairperson on the Ramapo planning board. Mechel often had business dealings with him when he worked on a project in Ramapo, a neighborhood next to Monsey. “I would really like to help you, but that’s a tall order. I do speak to Phil often, and we get along - on a personal level. But Phil is an Irish Catholic, and he is not fond of the Jewish population around here. Your *yeshivah* is not the only one that has had a hard time with him.”

“Can you at least try?” Rabbi Oppenheim pleaded. “I’ll do my best,” Mechel promised.

That day, Mechel Tauber called Phil’s office, and made an appointment to see him.

“So, Mr. Tauber,” Phil O’Reilly greeted him jovially the next morning, “what are you building today?”

Mechel braced himself for Phil’s red-hot temper. “Well actually. I am not coming for myself today. I wanted to speak to you on behalf of a *Yeshivah*. They are busting out and need to build a building so they asked me ....”

“A *Yeshivah*? Sure! What do you need?”

Mechel was shocked by Phil’s obliging response. He was not so easygoing usually and certainly not this eager to help a *yeshivah*. “I ... I appreciate your readiness to help, but ... Phil, what has gotten into you?”

Phil smiled at Mechel’s confusion. “Let me tell you what happened. My mother lives in a convalescent home for the elderly on a convent campus in the center of Monsey, not far from here. Usually when I go and visit her, she’s in a very foul mood. She never smiles; she’s always depressed and angry. I learned to live with it.

“Not too long ago, it was on the weekend - I get there, and she’s all smiles. My mom was laughing and happy! I asked her, ‘Hey Ma, what happened today that you are in such a good mood?’

“My mom’s face lit up even more. ‘The Rabbi wished me a good morning!’ she tells me. ‘I go out now every morning at the same time so I can see him. He makes my day!’”

Phil O’Reilly was practically laughing into the phone. “Tauber, I am telling you - this Rabbi changed my mother’s life! She is a different person now. So when you say ‘Yeshiva’ I am with you. What can I do for you?” From that day forward, Phil O’Reilly was ready to assist the Jewish schools and organizations whenever there was an issue.

And for his part, Mechel found out that the friendly Rabbi was none other than the great *tzaddik*, R' Yaakov Kamenetsky, who knew the power of a warm smile and a good morning to every person - and how far the ramifications can go.

על מכתם בכמה צדיק ואכיון בעבוד נעלים ... (קמחב-1)

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

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

*Amos HaNavi* reminds *Klal Yisroel* of the infamous sale of *Yosef HaTzadik* and how even the greatest of men - the *shevatim*, erred and sold “an innocent man for money.”

Interestingly, *Chazal* note that despite *Yosef* being a good looking, strapping young lad, he was still sold for the paltry sum of twenty silver coins. Did the brothers truly have such little respect for *Yosef* that they wouldn’t even try to get a more substantial sum based on his worth and true value?

**R' Mordechai HaKohen z"l** of *Tzefas (Sifsei Kohan)* quotes the *Medrash Tanchuma* that when *Yosef* was thrown into the pit with the snakes and scorpions, his face contorted into a horrific shape and lost all color from the sheer terror and fright of the ordeal. His beautiful countenance, which

resembled his father, was lost and with it, his market value dropped as well. The brothers were forced to accept a smaller amount than they knew *Yosef* to be truly worth. However, all this seems hard to believe. Is it true that just because his appearance changed, his value dropped so drastically?

The truth, says the *Sifsei Kohan*, is that when *Chazal* said that the brothers received twenty coins for *Yosef* - the amount of money needed to buy shoes, in reality, each brother received twenty coins of their own bringing the total to two hundred coins, a princely sum. This is alluded to from the description of the sale - “בעבור נעלים” - the word ‘נעלים’ - ‘shoes’ has the numerical value of two hundred, the total amount of money received for the sale.

ויהי ער בכור יהודה רע בעיני ה' וימתו ה' ... (לה-1)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZTL

# מחשבת הלב

*Yehuda* named his first born son ער. The **Tzror Hamor** explains that the root of the word ער means awakening. *Yehuda* was saying that his mind was constantly awake, pondering the plight of his father who was mourning his beloved son, *Yosef*, and also feeling pangs of remorse for the part he played in the *mechira*.

The **Ramban** though, explains the root of this word to be a *lashon of hisorerus*. Seemingly, *Yehuda* had high and great aspirations for his son ער and named him accordingly. The *posuk* later, however, says: ויהי ער רע בעיני ה' וימתו ה'. This son was “bad” in the eyes of *Hashem*, and *Hashem* killed him. The name ער reversed, spells רע. Instead of becoming an inspired *tzadik*, he ignored the available opportunities. Such a person is called רע and is destined to a sad demise.

Perhaps we can connect the two above definitions of ער into one fluid interpretation. In order for a person to have the proper *hisorerus*, he must be awake, he cannot exist in a spiritual slumber. As the oft-quoted **Rambam** states regarding the *Yom Hadin*: “עורו ישנים משנתכם”. The job of the *shofar* is to rouse us, awakening the slumbering masses.

There’s an inspirational anecdote here to add. A *tzaddik* was once standing, looking out of the window with a *talmid*. He pointed to some people walking by, and commented that the world is a “*leibidige bais hakvaros*”. See that fellow there? He could have been a massive *maggid shiur*. That one there, has a huge caring heart, overflowing with warmth, and could be spearheading a huge *chessed* organization. Yet a third has the ability to relate to *bochurim* in a special manner, helping turn them towards *Torah* and *avodas Hashem*. Sadly, none of these individuals utilized their unique potential.

As we go through life, let us all try to pay attention to *Hashem*’s “signals” which can guide us to reach our full potential.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

וידא אדניו כי ה' אתו וכל אשר הוא עשה ה' מצליח בידו ... (לא-1)

**משל**: Chaim was a wealthy and successful diamond dealer. From time to time, he would make trips to the diamond capitals of the world, some of which are located in Africa.

One on particular trip, Chaim did very well. He managed to procure some large and expensive diamonds for quite a good price. At night he checked into the local hotel, planning to continue his return trip on the following day.

Unfortunately, the hotel he found was more like a dormitory, than a hotel. Each room was shared with a roommate, sometimes even more than one. To make matters worse, while checking in, Chaim sensed someone was spying on him. A certain man was keeping a close eye on him and it making him very uneasy.

When he finally came to his room, guess who came in right after him? That very same pair of eyes. They were to be

roommates! Chaim smelled trouble.

Being utterly exhausted, he weighed the situation carefully, then meticulously arranged his possessions. He said *Krias Shema* with much concentration, and soon was fast asleep. He was now in the hands of *Hashem*.

His roommate quickly got to “work” but try as he may, he could not find the loot. When Chaim finally awoke from his slumber, his roommate was staring him in the face, red-eyed and apparently angry. “I’m doing this for twenty years,” he snapped at Chaim, “how did you evade me?!”

Chaim got up and went to his roommate’s closet. He dug his hand into his roommate’s pajama pants pocket and pulled out all of his diamonds. “You spent the entire night looking for this?” he exclaimed, amused.

**נטל**: *Yosef Hatzadik* was stuck in some of the worst places in the world, but was always a success story. The reason is clear: he always placed his unwavering trust in *Hashem*.

וידאו אחיו כי אתו אהב אכיום בכל אחיו וישנאו אתו ולא יכלו דברו לשלם ... (לז-1)

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

## דרגה יתירה

*Yaakov Avinu* spent much time learning with his beloved son *Yosef*. The reason he did so was because he knew that in the future *Yosef* would be challenged in many ways. His life in Egypt would be filled with tests that the other brothers would not be privy to. Therefore, *Yaakov* tried to instill as much *Torah* and *Yiras Shamayim* into *Yosef* as he could in order to give him the necessary strength he would need in the future.

Certainly this caused jealousy in the hearts of his brothers, says **Rabbi Pinchos Hoffman shlita**, but at least we understand why it was necessary. The question is: if *Yaakov* knew that the brothers were jealous and even hated *Yosef*, why did he send him to Shechem to see them? Wasn’t this looking for trouble?

**R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa z"l** says that *Yaakov* was actually attempting to create a positive feeling between the brothers. “ראה את שלום אחיך” - can be understood as, “Go, see the welfare of your brothers.” But it can also be read as, “Go, see their *shlimut*.” *Yaakov* was actually sending *Yosef* on a peacemaking mission! He knew how they felt about him and how he felt about them and he thought it would be best if *Yosef* got to see his brothers up close and how wonderful - how complete and “שלם” - they actually were. If he could appreciate their goodness, they would come to love him as well. *Yaakov* made *Yosef* a “*shaliach mitzvah*” so that no harm should befall him, and followed this with another directive: “והשבני דבר” - bring me back word. This will allow the protection to continue until he got back home. *Yaakov* hoped that this would be a way to bring all his sons together in peace and the eventual outcome did achieve this, although it took many years and many tears until the brothers were reunited in peace.

And as **Rabbi Hoffman** always says, “We cannot ask questions on the *Avinu* family!”