

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

אם מחוץ ועד שרודך נעל ואם אקה מכל אשר לך ולא תאמר אני העשירתי את אברהם וגו' (ד-ב)

The *Rosh Kollole* of the *Medrash Eliyahu Kollole Avreichim* in the city of Elad in Central Israel, is **R' Avraham Pechter *shlit'a***. He is not only a well-known *Talmid Chacham*, but also an accomplished fundraiser, who maintains contact with businessmen and wealthy benefactors all over the world, and often travels to the United States and Europe to raise money.

One of his largest benefactors lives in Miami, and one day a few years ago, Rav Pechter received a phone call from this man. It was during the “Great Recession” of 2007-2008, when the sub-prime mortgage crisis led to the collapse of the United States housing market which contributed to a global financial crisis, and the failure or collapse of many of the United States’ largest financial institutions. Many people’s entire wealth portfolio were wiped out and numerous businesses and businessmen went bankrupt. The benefactor from Miami was struggling mightily at this time and as soon as Rav Pechter picked up the phone, he could hear the anxiety in his voice and worrisome tone of the man on the line.

“Rabbi Pechter,” said the man, “I have a scheduled trip to Israel coming up next week and I plan to travel to *Bnei Brak*, to call **R' Aharon Leib Steinman (*zt"l*)** to a *din Torah!*”

A *din Torah* against R' Aharon Leib? Rav Pechter almost dropped the phone when he heard the man’s request and quickly asked why he wished to take the *Gadol Hador to Beis Din*. The man explained that R' Aharon Leib had given him a *beracha* and it did not come true. “When I was by R' Aharon Leib a few years ago, he gave me a *beracha* that I would merit ‘*ashirus*’ in the *zechus* of the *Tzedaka* I give to you and other *Torah* institutions. With the recession hitting everyone hard, myself especially, I am in dire straits and struggling to make ends meet. So, I feel that the *beracha* I received was in error and therefore, I want you to help arrange with a *Beis Din* there for me to call R' Aharon Leib to a *din Torah.*”

Rav Pechter did not what to say. He tried to reason with the man but the benefactor was insistent. Rav Pechter told him he will see what he could do and hung up the phone. Immediately, he traveled to *Bnei Brak* and went to see R' Aharon Leib, with whom he had a very close connection. When he told R' Aharon Leib what the man wanted, the *Rav* instantly responded, “Tell him to come to me. I will talk to him.” The man from Miami arrived the following week and Rav Pechter escorted him to the tiny two-bedroom apartment of the *Gadol Hador* on *Rechov Chazon Ish*. They sat down and the man began to explain in great detail why he felt he was wronged. He poured out his heart to R' Aharon Leib and concluded that the *Rav’s beracha* obviously did not come true so why must he continue to give such huge amounts to *Tzedaka*?

The room was quiet for a few moments. Finally, R' Aharon Leib asked the man, “In your business, do you work with people who are not *Shomer Shabbos*? Do you have any partners in any of your businesses who do not keep *Shabbos*?”

The man nodded his head. Yes, a number of his partners are not religious, he said. R' Aharon Leib asked again, “And do you have any partners who are not careful with *Ribbis* or other monetary *halachos*? What about *gezel akum*, or other such infractions?” Again, the man responded that his partners are not religious and are therefore, not necessarily careful to keep the *halachos* of *Choshen Mishpat* stringently. They were generally honest businessmen, but they did take some liberties with money and were certainly not scrupulous to the extent that he was.

R' Aharon Leib replied, “If so, you should be happy that you lost all your money! *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* had *rachmanus* on you that you should not come to the *nisayon* of committing an *aveira* or benefiting from ‘*treifena gelt*’ (unkosher money) or *chilul Shabbos* money. He is giving you an opportunity to start anew. All you need to do is accept upon yourself to deal only with kosher money - without any trace of sin or contamination - and you will surely return to your former wealth!”

The man from Miami took these words to heart. He immediately turned over a new leaf and only conducted business with honest people. Rav Pechter reports that the man became wealthy once again and continues to support many *Torah* institutions.

ואתה ישראל ... ודין אברהם אהבי (ישעי' מא-ה)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Yeshaya HaNavi points out that not only did *Avraham Avinu* strictly adhere to the word of *Hashem* because it was correct, but also because, “*he loved Him (Hashem) dearly.*” *Chazal (Sotah 31a)* make an interesting remark. Of course, *Avraham’s* many actions bespoke his deference for *Hashem*, but from where is it derived that *Avraham* acted out of a sense of love for *Hashem* and not out of fear of retribution?

R' Nachman M'Breslov *zt"l* (Likutei Moharan) explains that *Avraham Avinu’s* main character trait was his love for *Hashem* - as *Yeshaya HaNavi* exclaimed, “*Avraham who loved Me (Hashem).*” While love can sometimes be rooted in infatuation, true love transcends everything - including time itself. *Chazal* say (*Sanhedrin 74a*) that a person is required to

sacrifice his life for the sake of Heaven in order not to commit idolatry. Thus, by allowing himself to be thrown into the burning fire for his beliefs, *Avraham Avinu* set the precedent for all future generations, and demonstrated his deep love for the Almighty. As a result, *Hashem* began to call him by the special title of “*אורחבי*” – “my beloved,” which demonstrated the reciprocal love that *Hashem* had for him.

Every generation is faced with its own spiritual perils and it is easy to simply “throw in the towel.” However, as the children of *Avraham Avinu*, it is our duty to step up and continue what *Avraham* started. As part of our sacred inheritance, it is imperative to demonstrate the love we have for *Hashem* and perform His *mitzvos* in the best way possible.

ויאמר אליקים אל אברהם שרי אשתך לא תקרא את שמה שרי כי שרה שמה וגו' (ז-ט)

Rashi explains that the name *Sarai* implies, “A Master to me,” whereas the name *Sarah* means, “A Master to everyone.” *Avraham Avinu’s* name was changed as well, from *Avram* to *Avraham*, adding the letter *Hei*. The *posuk* explains, “*Ki Av Hamon Goyim*, because you became an ‘*Av*’ (father) over all the nations,” not just *Av-Ram*, a father over *Aram*. We learn from here the extent of our *Avos* and *Imahos* impact, and the favorable impression they made which was felt globally.

Chazal teach us: “*חייב אדם לומר מתי גייע מעשי למעשה אבותי*” - A person must strive to make his actions mimic the actions of the *Avos*. Perhaps in this regard as well. A *Yid* has to realize that he/she can and must create everlasting ramifications that will endure across the globe. Aside from the fact that the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* elaborates that a person must visualize that the world is teetering on the scale between good and evil and HIS actions affect the world, a *Yid* must also realize that the *goyim* are constantly looking at him and judging him. We must always strive to maximize the opportunities of making a *Kiddush Hashem* and retain the title “*Av Hamon Goyim*” especially with the ongoing current events nationally.

But I had another *machshava* on the precise timing of the name changing, which seems to be prerequisite to the birth of *Yitzchok*. Why? Perhaps it is because before one becomes a parent, a link in the chain of our *mesorah*, he must realize that he/she is not just “*Sarai*” - a master in the singular form, focusing on his private growth. Rather, to realize that his mastery, his *avadah*, will now have to encompass the lives of his children as well. A parent must now become a master in many other areas and fronts. Master educator, master in *middos*, in learning ... Then, and only then, can a parent ensure the continuity of “*Av Hamon Goyim*” with *Doros Yesharim* who will also become masters in serving *Hashem*. bringing Him much *nachas*. *Kein Yehi Ratzon!*

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך ... (יב-א) **משל**: Under the leadership of **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel *zt"l***, whose *Yahrzeit* is this week (*zechuso yagen aleinu*) the *Mir Yeshivah* expanded rapidly. New buildings were built; another branch was started in *Kiryat Sefer*. One person quipped that R' Nosson Tzvi might as well put a roof over the entire *Beis Yisrael* neighborhood (adjacent to *Meah She'arim*) and call it the *Mir Yeshivah*. Today, over 6,000 students learn in the *Mir’s* many *Batei Medrash*, making it the largest *yeshivah* since the completion of the Talmud.

R' Nosson Tzvi was indefatigable. After a long flight to Los Angeles, a crying stewardess told those who came to the airport to meet him, “How could you do this to this holy man? Make him fly so long in his condition!” When people accused his brothers-in-law of “shlepping him” on grueling trips, they replied, “We don’t shlep him, he shleps us.”

ויצא אתו הרוצה ויאמר הכני נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים ... ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך (טו-ה)

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

דרגה יתירה

After the war with the four kings and the rescue of his nephew *Lot*, *Hashem* appears to *Avraham Avinu* and tells him that he will have children! Not only that, but *Hashem* tells him to walk outside and commands him to look up at the stars and count them. **Rashi** tells us that the Almighty lifted *Avraham* out of the universe! He literally took him into space and showed him the stars from above, informing him, “*So shall be your children.*” Why was this necessary? Couldn’t *Hashem* have shown him the stars from earth and told him that his children will be as numerous as these?

The answer that *Rashi* provides shows a deeper insight into the nature of the Jewish people and our position and potential in the world. *Hashem* was showing *Avraham* that his progeny - *Am Yisroel* - is the only nation that is not bound by nature. We are ABOVE the world which means we have no set fate. No zodiac sign or horoscope can determine our destiny because we are “out of this world” - not bound by any laws of nature. This means that we control our own *Mazel* - Fate! Every person in the world has a set course which is his fate. There are astrologers who can look into the stars and tell us what will transpire in the world. But a Jew can change all of that with repentance, prayer and good deeds. He can change his fate by changing his place or changing his name which is his essence. A Jew can always change!

This is probably one of the most empowering messages that we all need to comprehend! Sometimes in life we feel stuck! We feel powerless to extricate ourselves from painful or harmful situations. We tell ourselves “It is what it is!” - but that is not so! If you are a Jew, a descendant of *Avraham Avinu*, then “It is not what it is, it is what you make it!”

Hashem gives us an incredible gift - the gift of life - and along with it, an incredible opportunity! We can and we must raise ourselves up and beyond the natural. Nothing is beyond the power of a Jew!