



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

אם יקום והתהלך בחזון על משענתו ונקח המכה רק שכתרו יתן ורפא ירפא ... (ש-כא)

A prominent Jewish merchant was once passing through the village of Mezeritch. Having heard of the greatness of the **Mezeritcher Maggid, R' Dov Ber ז"ל**, the merchant, R' Yaakov, decided to visit him, although he was not an adherent of the Chasidic movement. He was eager to engage the *Maggid* in a learned discussion, and he was not disappointed.

As R' Yaakov was about to leave, the *Maggid* suddenly said: "Remember Yaakov, what our Sages of blessed memory said, that *Hashem* sends His cure to a patient through a particular doctor and a particular medicine. Sometimes the One Above sends His cure not through the medication which the doctor prescribes, but through the doctor himself. As you know, a doctor receives his healing powers by authority of the Torah, as it is written, 'And he shall surely cure him.' Therefore, the doctor has a healing angel at his side, and a very great doctor is accompanied by the *Malach Raphael*, himself."

As he traveled back to Vilna, R' Yaakov thought about this strange parting remark, which seemed to come out of the blue. R' Yaakov was, thank G-d, in very good health. He had never needed a doctor before, and he hoped he would not have to consult one in the future. He hadn't asked the *Maggid* for medical advice, so why had the *Maggid* mentioned doctors? Unable to solve this puzzle, he soon dismissed the entire episode from his mind.

Several weeks later R' Yaakov returned home and fell into his normal routine. After a few days, he awoke feeling quite ill. His condition worsened rapidly and although all the best doctors were called in, each offering a different medication, nothing helped. Word of his condition spread quickly. His friends and acquaintances were devastated, for R' Yaakov was a kind and charitable man. Then a ray of hope appeared. The Jews of Vilna heard that the ruler of Lithuania would be arriving in town, and his personal physician, who was a wayward Jew, would be accompanying him. If only they could persuade the ruler's doctor to pay a call on their beloved friend, maybe this great doctor could save his life.

The community leaders dispatched a delegation to the palace and petitioned to allow the royal physician to visit R' Yaakov. The ruler received them graciously and agreed to their request. The hopes of his family and friends soared when the famous doctor entered the sickroom, but were soon dashed. When the doctor looked at R' Yaakov, he said disdainfully, "Am I G-d that you have brought me here to revive a dead man?" To everyone's horror, the doctor turned to leave. Distraught, they begged him to prescribe some medication. "Nothing can help this man," he replied brusquely, casting a parting glance at the dying patient. But something caught his eye and he turned to look again. A slight bit of color could suddenly be seen on the patient's face. The doctor took his note pad and scribbled a prescription. "Run to the pharmacy and bring this medication at once!"

Hope sprang again into the hearts of R' Yaakov's family and friends. The royal physician remained at the man's bedside, his eyes fixed on the sick man. He was amazed to see further signs of improvement. He pulled out his pad and prescribed another medication. But no sooner had he written it out than the patient's eyes began to flicker. The doctor had never seen such a thing in all his experience. Suddenly, the erstwhile dying man sat up in bed and addressed the physician, "I beg you, dear doctor, don't go yet. Stay a while longer, and I'll feel much better. The Angel Raphael must be at your side."

The physician was completely overwhelmed. He stared at the patient in utter disbelief, and although he didn't believe in angels, he could almost believe the patient's words. As if reading the doctor's thoughts, R' Yaakov began to relate his visit to the *Maggid* of *Mezritch* and especially the *Maggid's* puzzling - and prophetic - remark at the end of the visit.

The doctor, who had listened intently to the whole episode, sat engrossed in thought. It occurred to him that, great healer though he believed he was, he needed a lot of healing himself - healing of a spiritual nature. "I would like to meet this saintly man," he finally said. "When you are fully recovered, I would like you to take me to meet him."

Not very long after, the two of them, R' Yaakov and the royal physician, traveled to Mezeritch - R' Yaakov to become a *chasid* and the physician to return to his faith. (Adapted from **Talk & Tales**, by Nissan Mindel)

יָקוּם לְהַחֲיוֹת אֶת מֵתוֹת מִכְרוּ וְרוּם יִחַוּקוּ אֶת בְּרֵךְ הַבַּיִת ... (מלכים ב' יב-ו)

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

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

*Parshas Shekalim* details the institution of the annual *Machatzis HaShekel* collection - a *halachically* permissible manner in which to take a public census, as well as collect funds for the *Bais Hamikdash*. In the *Haftorah*, the young and righteous King Yoash attempted to revive *Klal Yisroel's* passion for *Hashem's* holy house, and he directed the *Kohanim* to use the funds for the necessary repairs.

**Rashi** details that King Yoash instructed the *Kohanim* to take the collected funds for themselves and in return they would make the repairs from their own funds. But as the *Haftorah* continues, after twenty years, the repairs still had not been done. So why did Yoash ever think that such an arrangement was the best approach to fix the problem?

**R' Yosef Tziyon HaLevi ז"ל (Vatomer Tzion)** offers a brilliant insight. He explains that King Yoash identified a deeply rooted problem in *Klal Yisroel* at the time - the fact that Queen Asalya had desensitized the nation to all things "בין אדם למקום" - between the people and *Hashem*. Thus, King Yoash thought that since the *Kohanim* are supported from the *Bais Hamikdash* anyways, by changing the collection from "בין אדם למקום" to "בין אדם לחבירו" he hoped that the nation's feelings for *Hashem* would be reawakened.

Unfortunately, he did not anticipate that the *Kohanim* themselves had lost respect as well and they, in turn, did not feel the urge to complete the repairs. Twenty years later, he changed tactics and eventually raised the necessary funds.

ועברתם את ה' אלוקיכם וכבר את לחמך ואת מימך והסרתי מזלתי מדרךך ... (ד-ה)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ז"ל

# מחשבת הלב

The **Baal Haturim** points out that the *posuk* here seems to change form: It opens in the plural sense - ועברתם - while concluding in the singular form - לחמך. He goes on to explain that the plural form refers to the communal *tefillos* which *Hashem* does not refuse. That is the strength of the *tzibbur*. However, when the *beracha* actually descends, it is tailor-made to fit each individual of that *tzibbur* and his or her personal needs. That is the *Hashgacha Pratisfor* which each and every Yid is worthy of. What a remarkable and insightful lesson to cherish and remember. *Hashem* listens to us as a group, but deals with each of us in that group, as a *ben yachid* - a one and only child! Truly remarkable.

Maybe we can suggest an additional *machshava*. Many of us find ourselves as part of a group, a *kehilla*. Whether we are among neighbors, in our *shul* and *Batei Medrashim*, in *yeshiva*, etc. Or even a mother dealing with her brood - her own personal "kehilla." What happens is we tend to get swept up with following everyone else's lead, being "like the Joneses." The problem is that by doing so, we are essentially missing an opportunity to forge our own unique path and destiny. To create our own light and *derech*. Thus, says the *posuk*, "ועברתם" - true you are serving *Hashem* as a part of something bigger, a *klal*; but I, *Hashem*, want to see you not just as one piece in the communal puzzle. I want you to develop your own character, build your own *mehalech hachaim* - your very own way forward in life. And if you do so, I will bless you, as a *yachid* accordingly.

This week, we also *lain Parshas Shekalim*, in which every *Yid* of a certain age, was required to donate a *machatzis hashekel*, a half-shekel, to the *Mishkan*. Why are we instructed to give only a half of a *shekel*? To teach us the same lesson. Without YOU, your input, your uniqueness, we don't have a *davar sholeim* - completeness. May *Hakadosh Boruch Hu bentsh us with the ultimate beracha by redeeming us so we can finally give the true machatzis hashekel, and not just a zeicher!*

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ויספר לעם את כל דברי ה' ואת כל המשפטים ... (כד-ג)

**משל**: A crowded United Airlines flight was canceled. A single agent was rebooking a long line of inconvenienced travelers. Suddenly, an angry passenger pushed his way to the front. He slapped his ticket on the counter and said, "I MUST be on this flight, and it has to be FIRST CLASS."

The agent replied, "I'm sorry, sir. I'll be happy to try to help you, but I've got to help these folks first. Let me finish with them and then I'm sure we'll be able to work something out for you." The passenger was unimpressed. In an obviously loud voice so that the passengers behind him could hear, he said, "DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM?!"

The agent looked up from her computer screen and smiled sweetly. Then, without hesitating, she grabbed the public address microphone and began to speak. "May I have your

attention, please," she said in a voice heard clearly throughout the terminal. "We have a passenger here at Gate Fourteen WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHO HE IS. If anyone can help him with his identity, please come to Gate Fourteen."

With the folks behind him in line clearly amused, the man glared at the United Airlines agent and gritted his teeth. He was about to raise his voice again and say something nasty, when the agent, still smiling, cut him off and said, "I'm sorry sir, you'll have to get in line for that, too!"

**נמשל**: The *Torah* and its many laws, are our life-line. They direct us in our daily life and in every course of action we do. However, learning *Torah* and following the *mitzvos* should be an enjoyable experience. Anyone who finds themselves confronted with the opposite experience is obviously doing something wrong. This is a lesson for him: Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain....

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם ... (כא-ה)

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

# דרגה יתירה

People sometimes wonder, does *Hashem* really care about all the intricate details of a *mitzvah*? Isn't *Hashem* busy with important things like running the world, making *shidduchim*, healing the sick etc.? Why should He really care if I open my refrigerator on *Shabbos* when the light is on? Why would He want me to have a dark, hungry and cold *Shabbos*?

Allow me to illustrate with a parable. Imagine you are a parent who needs to leave the house for an hour at bedtime. You have three little boys who are busy playing. "I have to go out for an hour," you tell them, "please get ready for bed. I want to see you all in pajamas, teeth brushed, and in bed when I come home!" An hour later you come home and what do you see? One boy is still playing with the same game as when you left. One boy is in his room half undressed, starting to put on his pajamas. And the third son is lying in bed, teeth brushed, in pajamas, saying *shema*! So, how do you feel? You go over to the son in bed and give him a big kiss on his head. His actions are not only an expression of obedience, but they are an expression of love! He shows that he cares about you! The boy who is still playing his game is sending a message that he doesn't care what you say!

When we follow the *mitzvos*, we are expressing our obedience to *Hashem*. But when we do what we don't necessarily want to do but we do it in all its intricate detail, it is an expression of love! We are saying to *Hashem*, we want to do Your will, even when it is not our will, because we know that You know better. You love us and only want what is good for us and by keeping the intricate details of *halacha*, we are expressing our belief and love in *Hashem*, Who truly cares about everything we do.

*V'eileh HaMishpatim* - these are the laws that we shall keep, that we shall embrace and strive to adhere to with the most intricate detail and stringency. Because *Torah* is the greatest present we ever received from *Hashem* Who loves us more than we will ever know. By keeping *mitzvos* properly, we are saying, "Thank you, *Hashem*... I love You, too!"