



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ויעש את הכיבוד נחשת ואת כנו נחשת כמראת הצבאת אשר צבאו פתח אהל מועד ... (לה-ה)

In 1935, the Nazi drive to isolate and demonize the Jewish people was soaring to new heights. A series of decrees known as the Nuremberg Laws made brutal distinctions between Aryans and non-Aryans: Jews, Roma, and Black people. Overnight, German Jews were stripped of their citizenship, forbidden from holding government jobs, and restricted from public spaces lest they “infect” Aryans. A key driver of this pseudo-racial propagand was a magazine called Sonne ins Haus, or “Sunshine in the Home,” which promoted the Nazi myth of Aryan perfection and non-Aryan pollution. In 1935, the magazine ran a contest across Germany to find the perfect Aryan baby. Ten famous portrait photographers were asked to submit ten portraits of beautiful German babies. Joseph Goebbels, chief propagandist of the Nazi party, would judge the winner himself.

Goebbels chose an adorable six-month-old girl as the winner: the ideal Aryan child. Her name, unbeknownst to Goebbels, was Hessa Levenson. Her smiling likeness was plastered on the magazine’s cover as proof of Aryan superiority, becoming a popular propaganda picture, imprinted on postcards and greeting cards across Germany for years to come. There was only one snag: Hessa was, in fact, Jewish. The greatest Nazi example of Aryan perfection was a Jewish baby from a Jewish immigrant family. Hessa’s parents, Jacob and Pauline Levenson, moved to Berlin in 1928 when Jacob landed a coveted spot as a singer in an opera house. He used the stage name Yasha Lenssen to disguise his Jewish name. As anti-semitism increased across Germany, the management found out his real, Jewish-sounding name, and fired him. Life became increasingly difficult for Jacob and Pauline, as for all Jews in Germany. Spurned by musical establishments, neither could find work as singers. Jacob took a traveling salesman job to make ends meet and the couple moved into a tiny studio apartment in Berlin.

In 1934, Pauline gave birth to Hessa. When Hessa was six months old, Pauline and her sister took her to one of Germany’s famous portrait photographers, Hans Ballin. He snapped a picture of the pudgy Hessa wearing a bonnet, with a few brown curls visible underneath. After Ballin developed Hessa’s portrait, Jacob and Pauline kept it displayed on the piano in their tiny flat. As Hans Ballin was one of the photographers tapped to send in ten photos for the contest, he assembled ten baby portraits and then, on a whim, threw in Hessa’s picture too, and sent it off to the magazine. A few months later, the Levensons’ housecleaner was working in their apartment and remarked that she’d seen a magazine with their baby’s photo on the cover. The Levenson’s were horrified. Sonne ins Haus was well-known as a Nazi magazine. They worried what would happen if it came out that the baby gracing the latest cover was discovered to be a Jewish baby.

Pauline rushed to Ballin’s studio and told him there must have been some mistake; Hessa, the winning baby, was Jewish, she explained. Ballin laughed and replied that he knew that and sent in her portrait as an act of defiance. “I wanted to make the Nazis look foolish. I wanted to allow myself the pleasure of this jest. And you see, I was right. Of all the babies, they picked this baby as the perfect Aryan.” Years later, when she was an adult, Hessa was asked what she would say if she could speak to Ballin about his decision to send in her photograph: “I would tell him, good for you for having the courage.”

After Hessa’s father Jacob was briefly arrested by the SS on fabricated charges of tax evasion in 1938, the family realized it was too dangerous to remain in Germany. They fled first to Latvia, then to Paris, where they remained until moving to New York in 1949. Reflecting on her experience as the poster child of supposed Nazi “Aryan” perfection, Hessa noted that the fact that her Jewish face was celebrated throughout Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe seemed to be one small way she could retaliate. “I feel a sense of revenge, good revenge.” However, her greatest triumph was when she donated an original Sonne ins Haus magazine with her picture on the cover to *Yad Vashem*, Israel’s Holocaust museum. She told reporters: “My strongest memory from childhood was running away. My father told me that when there would be a State of Israel, there would be no more running away.” In Jerusalem, donating the Nazi magazine that celebrated a Jewish baby as the ideal child, Hessa was proof that the Jewish people have survived - and thrived - despite all of history’s attempts to wipe us out. (Aish.com)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In this week’s unique *Haftorah*, *Yechezkel HaNavi* mentions the “purifying waters” that *Hashem* will sprinkle upon His Nation with the coming of *Moshiach* - obviously connected to the theme of *Parshas Parah*. *Chazal* (*Yoma 85b*) teach us that *Yom Kippur* atones for transgressions between a man and *Hashem*, but wrongdoings between a man and his fellow man, only *Yom Kippur* will atone once amends are made. But if a person must appease his fellow man before being granted atonement, shouldn’t we need to go through the same preliminary step to appease *Hashem* before *Yom Kippur* absolves us of our sins? The *Maharal zt”l* offers a fascinating *vort* on this. *Hashem* in all His glory is above mankind, and the very concept of sin

is not applicable to Him. It is simply a non-factor to the Almighty. Rabbi Akiva said, “*How fortunate are you, Israel; before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven.*” An amazing statement which sheds light on *Hashem’s* attitude towards *Klal Yisroel*. No matter where or when, a *Yid’s* instinct is to cling to *Hashem*, and when *Klal Yisroel* completely clings to Him, sin - which is not applicable to *Hashem* - is removed from the equation entirely and we are absolved of our sins. This explains why *Yom Kippur* automatically atones for sins without any preliminary appeasement needed. The *Parah Adumah* had the same qualities and once sprinkled with the holy ashes, a person became one with *Hashem* and automatically purified.

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

וורקתי עליכם מים מהורים ומהרתם מכל מלאותיכם ... (הוקאל ל-ב)

# מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZT”L

כל איש ואשה אשר נדב לכם אתם להביא לכל המלאכה אשר צוה ה' לעשות ביד משה ... (לה-ב)  
This *posuk* is seemingly superfluous, as the prior *posukim* already enumerated *Klal Yisroel’s* myriad donations to the construction of the *Mishkan*. What, then, is this verse adding? The **Shach al HaTorah**, a *talmid* of the holy **Arizal zt”l**, explains as follows: Some people were able to give larger donations than others. It is entirely possible that there were some who struggled to offer even a minimal amount.

Thus, their donations were considerably less than those of the wealthy. The poor, who had nothing extra, could barely scrape together the *השקל* but they possessed something that was more precious and valuable: the *ratzon*, the willingness to partake in the *המשכן*. It was for them that this *posuk*, “אשר נדב לכם”, was written. They had the *cheishek*, the heart even if they didn’t have the financial means. And that was so beloved by *Hashem*. More than anything else.

This can also explain a perplexing line in the **Ramban** on *Parshas Terumah* regarding the building of the *הקודש*. The *Torah* there says “ועשוי” - in a plural sense, as opposed to “ועשית” - which is singular. The **Ramban** quotes the *Medrash* which says that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wanted everyone to have a part in contributing to the *Aron*. How is that possible? He says three options. The last one is “ויכוונו לדבר”. They should have *kavana* for its construction. What does this mean? In light of the above, perhaps the answer is simple. Utilizing the above-mentioned *cheishek* - the desire to have a part in the *Aron* - “מעלה עליו הקדוש ברוך הוא כאילו עשהו” - *Hashem* considered it as if they had partaken in its actual construction.

Additionally, from the **Ramban**, it seems that these are all equal and viable options *לכתחילה* and not just *בדיעבד*. This *machshava* should infuse every single one of us with the realization that no matter what we actually do, or do not possess, no one can take away our *ratzon*. And that is ultimately what *Hashem* really treasures!

## משל למה הדבר דומה

קחו מאתכם תרומה לה' כל נדיב לבו יביאה תרומת ה' ... (לה-ה)  
“Living with Honesty” is a title based on the teachings of **Hagoan HaRav Yisroel Belsky zt”l**. Being one of the world’s premier halachic authorities gave R’ Belsky firsthand experiences of the dishonesty and deception many people use to make a buck, to gain an extra dollar, and he used every opportunity to correct this awful trend. The following is one such experience:  
After being involved in a crash that left my car severely damaged, I took it to a body shop. The damage was about \$8,500 covered by insurance, but there was a \$500 deductible. Without consulting with me, the mechanic padded the bill to \$9,000, made the repairs and received \$8,500 from the insurance company. He said that since he had been paid in full, I could “forget about the deductible.”

The next day, something lit up on the dashboard indicating a problem. When I returned to the mechanic, he discovered that the computer on my car had been stolen. The cost of a new computer was \$500, exactly the amount that I had “saved” by not paying the deductible. When I realized what the mechanic had done, I felt very happy that the *Ribono shel Olam* did not allow me to hold onto money that was not mine. I should have paid the \$500 to begin with, and now the tainted money was taken out of my possession.  
**משל:** The *Torah* says, “*Take from your own possession a dedication for Hashem.*” Sometimes a person feels good when he “figured out” a way to gain a couple of bucks, even though it was not entirely genuine. Writes the **Kli Yakar**, to this end, the *Torah* warns: Make sure all your money is authentically yours, otherwise your dedication is worthless, as it is from stolen money!

## הנחמדים מזהב

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה ויום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' ... (לה-ב)  
GOLDEN NUGGETS ON THE PARSHA WITH A FOCUS ON LESSONS HOW TO SERVE HASHEM AND BE A BETTER JEW BY R' YEHOShUA GOLD  
While discussing the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos* in *Parshas Vayakhel*, the *Torah* writes “ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה” implying that the work - *Melacha* - is done on its own. The proper word would be “תעשה מלאכה” - meaning you should do the *melacha*. In his *Sefer Apiryon*, **R’ Shloime Gantzfried zt”l** offers a novel approach to explain this. *Chazal* says that if just two *Shabbosos* were properly kept by *Klal Yisroel*, the *Geulah* would come. Why is one not enough? He quotes the **Yismach Moshe zt”l** who explains that a proper *Shabbos* needs to have a week preceding it, since we are told to work six days and then have a seventh day of *Shabbos*. Since the first *Shabbos* did not have that week of work, a second *Shabbos* after working is needed.

However, the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* says that *Adam HaRishon* was created on Friday so that he could go straight into a *Mitzvah - Shabbos*. If *Shabbos* must come at the end of the week, shouldn’t he have been born at the beginning of the week? **Rav Gantzfried** answers that perhaps *Hashem* did this to teach us a lesson. People have Saturday off as a well-deserved break from a long week of work, but *Shabbos* is more than that. It’s a great day off, but we know it is a day to reconnect with ourselves and the *Ribono Shel Olam*. It is the *Mekor Haberacha*, the source of blessing for the week. *Hashem* created *Adam* on Friday to teach us this *Yesod* of *Shabbos*; even without an ounce of work, it is a day of rest, a day of *Dveikus B’Hashem*.

A person without this understanding will feel that his work and success are solely based on himself and *Shabbos* is a drag - just trying to get through the day before getting back to work. But a person who understands the essence of *Shabbos*, also understands that his *Parnassa* and accomplishments are given to him from on High. Therefore, the *posuk* says “תעשה”, reminding us that *Hashem* controls our work and sees to it that it gets done - not necessarily needing us to do it! The lesson of *Shabbos* and the *Emunah* it contains, is to be the guide for our work week as well, which is why it is so integrated with *Shabbos*.