

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ובאת אל הבהנים הלויים ואל השפט אשר יהיה בימים ההם ודרשת והגידו לך את דבר המשפט ... (ז-ט)

The job of a *Tzaddik* is to elevate the *neshamos* of *Yidden* and bring them ever closer to their Father in Heaven. This role is well illustrated by the following story which was recorded by **R' Tzvi Hirshorn ז"ל Hy"ד** (Rav of Yebrozna in Galicia).

It was *Shabbos Mevorchim* in the vast *shul* of the holy *Rebbe*, **R' Yisroel Friedman ז"ל of Chortkov**. **R' Meir Shapiro ז"ל**, who was then a young man and *Rav* in the town of Sonik, had come to spend *Shabbos* in the company of his *Rebbe*.

After *krias haTorah* had ended, the door of the Chortkover *Rebbe's* private room suddenly opened and there on the threshold stood his radiant form. "I honor R' Meir Shapiro with *Rosh Chodesh bentching* and *Mussaf*," the *Rebbe* declared. In Chortkov it was a very rare event for the *Rebbe* himself to honor anyone with *davening* before the congregation. Normally this was left totally to the *gabbai's* discretion. R' Meir, however, was known not only to be a brilliant *talmid chacham*, but also a genius of the emotion and the heart. His fiery *tefillos* captivated the hearts of all who heard them and his *davening* softened even someone who had a heart of stone. And so with his beautiful and melodious voice R' Meir walked up to the *amud*. He davened *Mussaf* with such emotion that the thousands of listeners were completely caught up with his devotion.

After *davening* the *Rebbe* invited R' Meir into his room, where he remained for some time. When he emerged, R' Meir's face was radiant with joy. Later on, while eating the *Shabbos* meal together with the other *chassidim*, R' Meir related a small snippet from his conversation with the *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* had revealed to him what his mission in this world was to be. Since the *Rebbe* had mentioned R' Meir's gift for *davening*, and his ability to inspire others, R' Meir had asked him, "If my power of *tefillah* is so great, perhaps I should become a regular *chazzan*?"

The *Rebbe* pondered his *chassid's* question and after a few moments of silence, he answered. "I would like to tell you a story about the *Rebbe*, **R' Zishe of Annipoli ז"ל**. R' Zishe was once on his travels, going from town to town. Eventually he reached the town of Zalkova where he made his way to the local *shul*. The *Rav* of the town, who was known as **R' Yuzpah**, was delivering a complicated *shiur* at the time, and thus no one took any notice of R' Zishe as he took a place at the back of the *shul*. Although R' Zishe was dressed in worn-out clothes and had the appearance of a beggar, R' Yuzpah sensed that there was more to him than met the eye. "What is it about you that so special?" R' Yuzpah asked him after the *shiur* concluded.

"I have no special traits," R' Zishe answered. "I hardly know how to learn. The only thing I know is to *daven* a little bit."

"R' Yuzpah wasn't satisfied with the answer. Which *Yid* does not know how to *daven*? Perhaps R' Zishe could show him what he meant that he knows how to *daven* a little bit. The two of them entered a side room and R' Zishe started to instruct his host in the secrets of *tefillah* and the Kabbalistic ideas contained in every word, until R' Yuzpah could not contain his amazement. "You are indeed, a very special person. I can see that I do not yet know how to *daven* properly," R' Yuzpah exclaimed. "Perhaps I should leave my post and follow you, so that I should at least learn how to *daven* properly?"

"R' Zishe, however, refused to allow R' Yuzpah to leave his post. He told him, '*Chazal* have told us that just like no two people look the same, similarly no two people have the same inner mind and attitude. Accordingly, every person has been given a different task to perform in this world, one to which only he is suited according to the way he has been created. Your job is to sit and learn and give *shiurim* and my job is to *daven*.' The Zalkova *Rov* accepted this decision."

The *Chortkover Rebbe* finished his story and, turning to R' Meir Shapiro, he said, "You have the gifts and potential to become a great *Torah* disseminator in the world. You have the ability to establish *yeshivos* and produce fine *talmidim*. This must be your goal! As for *davening* and inspiring *Yidden* to greater *kavanos*, that you can leave to me, that is my job."

"With these words," R' Meir concluded, "the *Rebbe* directed me on my life's mission. He showed me that I had been appointed to educate the younger generation and to spread the *Torah* far and wide." (Rebbes of Chortkov, by R' Y. Friedman, Artsroll publications)

אנכי אנכי הוא מנחמכם מי את ותידאי מאנשי ימות ומבני אדם הציר ינתן ... (שעי' נא-יב)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

The opening words of the *Haftorah* encapsulate *Hashem's* powerful message of comfort for *Klal Yisroel*. *Yeshaya HaNavi* exclaims "אנכי אנכי הוא מנחמכם" - a declaration that only through *Hashem* will the Jewish people discover the true source of comfort, thereby encouraging them to muster the courage to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives and forge ahead. But why is the double expression necessary?

The *Kedushas Levi*, **R' Levi Yitzchak M'Berditchev ז"ל** explains that *Hashem* hinges His own completeness in this world on the worthiness of humankind - and specifically on the Jewish Nation. In fact, *Chazal* (סנהדרין מו:) say that *Hashem* considers human beings to be an extension of Himself and when a person feels personal pain, *Hashem*

"feels" that pain as well. Incredibly, this idea of being a part of the Almighty extends even further, and *Chazal* say that *Hashem* would never impart good or bad in this world if there is no one on earth to receive it. The reasoning is because, as *Hashem's* extension in this world, humans have the ability to ensure that nothing that *Hashem* bestows is unrecognizably changed, thereby ensuring *Hashem's* dominance in this world.

Therefore, the aforementioned double expression was in fact a powerful message reassuring *Klal Yisroel* that despite all the destruction that *Hashem* allowed to happen, He (אנכי) was still Himself (אנכי) - in the sense that he saw the Jewish people as His extension and that nothing would ever change that fact. Thus, there could be no greater comfort than that.

מי האיש אשר בנה בית חדש ולא הנכו ילך וישב לביתו פן ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יחנכנו ... (כ-ה)

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

מחשבת הלב

As *Bnei Yisroel* prepare for war in the *parsha*, the *Kohen Hamashiach* (anointed *Kohen*) is told to announce the military deferments for certain individuals. The first exception is one who built a house and, as **Rashi** explains the words, "ולא הנכו", it refers to one who did not yet live in it. The question that struck me was, why didn't the *Torah* just say "ולא דר בה" which literally means "he did not live there"? Why "ולא הנכו" which seems to connote an *inyan of chinuch*?

Rashi says that a person not living in his brand new house is *עגמת נפש* - a cause for pain and anguish. My *machshava* here is that simply not moving into one's new home should not be a cause for such "anguish." Rather, a person eagerly longs to start a chapter of life in his own new home, based on the *chinuch* and education he has been imbued with in his formative years. To start building his own legacy, with future *doros* perpetuating the way a *Yid* should live. If he perishes in battle before he can accomplish that task ... now that is a cause for deep pain. Hence, the *Torah* doesn't just say "ולא דר בה" but rather, "ולא הנכו" - he wasn't yet *mechanech* his home in his own unique fashion.

There is a fascinating **Targum Yonasan** here. He learns that each person here - the new homeowner, the vineyard owner, or the newly engaged man - each did an *aveira* associated with his respective item. For example, he built his house but he didn't put up a *mezuzah*. The *chossan*, he explains with penetrating insight, did not yet make his wife happy. And that may be sufficient cause for him to die in warfare. Why? Because our wives make our homes the ideal place for *chinuch*, as the *Torah* says, "ואל תטש תורת אמך". They are, therefore, deserving of our everlasting appreciation, even before the *chasuna*! And this concept isn't limited to *shana rishona*. It's never too late to make (keep) them happy by showing our gratitude for their integral part in ensuring that our homes are the ideal places of *chinuch* which will be!" *H* give us *rov nachas*!

משל למה הדבר דומה

לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל ... (ז-י)

משל: When he needed to recite *Kaddish*, a Jewish college professor would *daven* at the Los Angeles *yeshiva* headed by **R' Simcha Wasserman ז"ל**. Once, this academic asked the *Rosh Yeshiva* a question. "We are both teachers," he said. "You impart knowledge and I impart knowledge. What is the essential difference between us? The *Torah* you teach is a stream of wisdom and I teach advanced math, also a stream of wisdom. Why do you consider yourself more fortunate?"

Gently, R' Simcha asked the man how many students he had. He said that he had taught hundreds of students over the years, perhaps thousands. "How many of them have invited you to their wedding?" R' Simcha asked. The professor looked at him in surprise. "To their weddings? Why would they invite me to their weddings? I am their teacher, not their friend."

ולא תקח שחד כי השחד יעורר עיני הכמנים ויסלף דברי צדיקים ... (מז-יג)

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

דרגה יתירה

The *Torah* teaches us that bribery and flattery blind the eyes of even the wisest of men - so you can just imagine how it affects all the rest of us who are not so wise! It is clear from here that regardless of how smart, how intuitive or intelligent any mortal human is, once he is biased he will not be able to see the truth! The **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל** derives a deeper meaning to this *posuk*. He explains that there is no greater bias than every person's desire to see himself in a positive light! We never want to see any faults in ourselves. Our own minds can literally "bribe us" to believe that we are perfect and have nothing to fix. It is amazing that when we see annoying traits in others that we ourselves have, somehow it is less than perfect - by them - not by us! For example, we may see ourselves as IDEALISTIC while others are UNREALISTIC. We see ourselves as open and honest, while others who say the same exact things are "tactless." We might see ourselves as spiritual and lofty while others are "not with the program" or have their "heads in the clouds"! It is astounding when we realize how much our *yetzer hara* can blind us and prevent us from seeing ourselves as we really are.

This famous *posuk* is actually referring to a judge and there is no better time to truly "judge" ourselves than in the month of *Elul*. NOW is the time that we must introspect and judge our actions, words and even thoughts! But how can we be truly honest with ourselves if we are blinded by our own prejudices?

Rabbi Zelig Pliskin שליט"א gives us some practical advice. He says that we must make every effort to view ourselves as if we are reviewing the life of a total stranger, a person about whom we are totally objective. We must make every effort to see ourselves as we are, with all our faults and limitations.

Don't be afraid to see who you really are - it is the only way you can truly grow spiritually and improve your character.