

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

אם במחירת 'מצא הנגב והכה ומת אין לו דמים' .. (כב-א)

During his over thirty years of political activity in the Israeli Knesset, **Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz z"l** served as a member of the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs and other committees, and worked to help *Mosdos HaTorah* and the *Chareidi* community in general. He garnered tremendous respect from fellow MKs, religious and non-religious alike, for his honesty, integrity, conviction and acumen. At the same time, he was respected by the *Gedolei Hador* for his practical intelligence, his dedication, and ability to be *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* in every setting. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion used to enjoy talking with him, and once asked to show him where in the *Torah* there is any hint to an exemption from army service for *yeshivah* students. Rabbi Lorincz promptly showed him the **Rambam's** description of *Shevet Levi* and the Prime Minister was mightily impressed. He was the only person able to report the impressions of the famous meeting between the **Chazon Ish** and Ben Gurion from the perspective of both individuals.

In the early 1950's, there was an incident that took place which landed two Israeli brothers in jail. The two brothers lived out in a farming community and shared a large ranch house. They had a barn and a chicken coop and they lived a simple life, albeit not a very religious one. One night, a man broke into their chicken coop with the intention of stealing their property and causing damage. The brothers were alerted to the break-in and accosted the man, who put up quite a struggle. Together, the two brothers fought back and struck the man a terrible blow that killed him. The authorities arrived and did not believe the brothers' account of how the story went down, and the two brothers were arrested and thrown into an Israeli jail. After a long and showy trial, they were found guilty and sentenced to multiple years in prison for murder.

One day, Rabbi Lorincz received a message in his office from none other than the **Chazon Ish, R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz z"l**. It was not long before the *Tzaddik* passed away, and he asked Rabbi Lorincz to please implore the President of Israel at the time, Yitzchak Ben Tzvi, to wave the remaining years on the sentence of these two brothers, and allow them to go free. Rabbi Lorincz was surprised. He, like most other people, had forgotten about this trial, which was sensationalized over eight months prior in the Israeli press, but had now shifted out of the public's consciousness.

He went to the home of the *Chazon Ish* and found him lying on his bed in a weakened state. He asked the *Tzaddik* why he felt he should go to President Ben Tzvi at this time on behalf of 2 convicted murderers? The *Chazon Ish* replied, "Al pi *halacha*, these two brothers should not have been found guilty of murder and sentenced to such a long imprisonment. It would seem that this appears to be a case of 'רבא במחירת' of which the *Gemara* rules: 'הבא להרוג השכם להרוג' - 'If someone comes to kill you, kill him first.' (*Sanhedrin* 72b) They found someone breaking into their property and did not know what his intentions were, so in order to protect themselves and their possessions, they fought back and he was killed. For this, they should not have to serve such a long sentence." The *Chazon Ish* added that he should tell the president in his name that eight months in prison is long enough, but that they do not need to serve any longer than this. Rabbi Lorincz wasn't sure why the president would listen to him but at the behest of the *Chazon Ish*, he pledged to do all he could to set these men free.

Rabbi Lorincz made an appointment and brought the case to Ben Tzvi. He explained that the *Chazon Ish* feels eight months is enough and they should be set free. The president's face took on an expression of surprise. "I have heard all about the greatness of the *Chazon Ish*, but I never realized to what extent. For him to be so concerned about two brothers whom he does not even know personally, and to even calculate how much of a jail sentence they should serve, that is beyond my comprehension. I will see what I can do on their behalf." Indeed, not long after, the brothers were released from jail.

The two brothers returned to their farm, but now they were changed men. After recognizing the kindness that was shown to them by the *Chazon Ish*, they became serious *Yarei Shamayim* and *Bnei Torah*, and spent much of their days learning.

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

מקץ שבע שנים תשלחו איש את אחיו העבדו אשר ימכר לו ... (ויחיה לו-ד)

Although it is permissible in the *Torah* to own Jewish slaves – albeit with certain restrictions, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* describes the impending punishment that will befall the Jewish people because of their continued employment of Jewish slaves after the allotted six years of service had passed. However, we must understand, why indeed is it a sin to keep a Jewish slave if in fact the slave wishes to stay?

The **Bluzhever Rebbe, R' Tzvi Elimelech Shapira z"l** explains that a deeper analysis into the mindset of a slave is warranted in order to better understand why it is imperative for a Jewish slave to be set free after six years. In the world of servitude, the slave lives and breathes for his master and he continues to do so until the moment he is set free. While

the word "עבד" connotes an image of a fearful servant who runs to do his master's bidding out of sheer fear of his master, when the word "עבדלו" is appended to it, the fear changes to love – for the slave is in servitude on his own volition and free will. So, while a fearful slave will ultimately do his master's bidding, a slave who loves his master will go to the ends of the earth to make his master happy.

As true *Torah* Jews we strive to conflate the two types of slaves in order to better serve *Hashem*, with a combination of profound love and a healthy dose of fear. On the other hand, a Jewish slave who is in the service of a physical master will never be able to meld the two mentalities into one, and so he must be set free as soon as possible.

כי הוא כסותה לבדה הוא שמלתו לערו במה ישכב ויהיה כי יצעק אלי ושמעתי כי תנון אני ... (כב-ב)

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

מחשבת הלב

R' Ezra Altsholer z"l in his *sefer תקנת עזרא* asks: Why does the word "כסותה" appear in the feminine form (כתיב), yet it is read "כסותו", in the masculine form (קרי)? And why does it say שלמת and then change to שמלתו with the *lamed* and *mem* reversed?

He explains, based on the *Gemara (Nedarim 49)* that due to object poverty, Rav Yehuda and his wife shared one garment. **Rashi** and the **Ran** explain that due to the garment's *chashivus* to them, when Rav Yehuda would don the cloak he would make a *bracha*, "ברוך שעטמי מעיל". Although it was a far cry from an expensive item, since it was their only article of clothing it was cherished and given the name מעיל. A "שמלה" refers to a respectable garment whereas "שלמה" is an insignificant piece of clothing.

The *Zaida (Baal Machsheves Halev)* added, "שמלה" can be read "שם - לה" - it has a name. And "שלמה" can be broken down to read "של - מה" - what is it already? The *posuk* is stating the lender's view "אם חבל תחבל שלמת רעך" - you say it's "shel mah" - not worth much, but for the borrower it may be "כסותהו", *both of theirs*, and is essential to them. Therefore, you must return it.

This *machshava* can apply many times in our daily lives. People have the tendency to have fun at another's expense, justifying it by saying, what's the big deal? It's only a joke. It's only a chair, etc ... The other person, however, can be hurt or feel violated, indefinitely. The *Torah* is teaching us to think about 'yenem'. The *posuk* concludes *והיה כי יצעק אלי ושמעתי* "והיה כי יצעק אלי ושמעתי" - "כי תנון אני". Simply understood, the borrower will call out in pain and *Hashem* will listen to his woes. The **דעת וקנים** however, explains the *posuk* conversely: If you do indeed return the collateral, so benevolently, the poor man will call out to *Hashem* in prayer on your behalf! *Hashem* will listen and bestow continued good upon you in return for that kindness!

As we all know, *Klal Yisroel's* kindness is world renowned. In return for all the good that we do for others, may הקב"ה perform the ultimate *chessed with us - the hastening of Moshiach, thereby ending this quagmire we call galus ...*

משל למא הדבר דומה

ואם אסון יהיה ונתתה נפש תחת נפש ... (כא-ב)

משל: Not too long ago, the son of **R' Avigdor Nevenzahl shlit'a**, *talmid muvhak* of **R' Shlomo Zalman Aurbach z"l**, and R"m at *Yeshivat Hakotel* in the Old City of Jerusalem, made a *chasunah*. He was marrying off his son, and the wedding was to take place in *Bnei Brak*.

The morning of the wedding, the father of the *chosson* tested positive for Covid-19, and he was in a quandary. He quickly called his father, a renowned *posek* whose time is very precious. In fact, R' Nevenzahl almost never leaves the Old City of Jerusalem. He spends his days and nights learning and *paskening shailos* for *klal Yisroel*.

His son already knew that his father would likely not be attending the wedding since it was in *Bnei Brak*, and he would rejoice with him from afar. However, he called his

father on the morning of the wedding, asking him what to do.

R' Nevenzahl told him, "My son, you must stay home. You are not allowed to go to the wedding because *chas v'shalom* you can be a *mazik* (damage) others and make people sick. This is your first consideration. Now, of course, we have to think about the *chosson* and the *simcha* he will be without. So, even though you know how I feel about leaving the Old City, I will go to the wedding instead of you."

נמשל: This is how a Jew lives his life, by putting others before oneself to ensure that others do not get hurt. The *Rav* didn't decide what he wanted to do and fit the *Torah* into his own feelings and schedule. Rather, he shaped his own emotions and feelings according to what the *Torah* considers to be the correct way to act and the proper *middos* one must project. The main thing was not to *chas v'shalom* be a *mazik* and cause harm to a fellow Jew.

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

דרגה יתירה

This week, we are introduced to an entire *parsha* delineating many of the laws pertaining to damages. All of the *halachos* that are spelled out for us in this *parsha* are teaching us how careful we must be not to cause harm to a fellow Jew.

The words, "ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם" teach us that the laws of the *Torah* must be set out very clearly, very carefully. **Rashi** says they must be, "Like a seuda that is set out in front of a person." This is how *Torah* should be taught: with clarity and understanding, leaving no room for misinterpretation. A story is related by **R' Yitzchok Zilberstein shlit'a** in his *sefer Chashukei Chemed (Pesachim 42 a)* about a man who once visited a small town in the United States, just as they were in the middle of a funeral. The man was quite surprised to see how the community members removed all the *Sifrei Torah* from the *Aron Kodesh* and, with much singing and dancing, began to make *hakafos* around the coffin. Surprised, the man asked someone what was going on? Is this a funeral, or is it *Simchas Torah* today? An old-timer of this small town very proudly answered that many years ago, a big *Talmid Chacham* came to their out-of-town community and remained there for a *Shabbos*. He was invited to give a *drasha* in *shul*, and he mentioned that there is a *minhag* in *Yerushalayim* to make *hakafos* around the *niftar* at his *levaya*. The community felt that this was a beautiful custom that they wished to adopt. With lots of good will and very little knowledge, they adopted this unique "custom" and made *Simchas Torah hakafos* at every *levaya* in their town!

Hashem tells Moshe, "THESE are the laws that you should set before them." *Torah* law must be very clear, especially when it comes to how we are supposed to treat other people. There must never be ambiguity. Unfortunately, people are often blinded by their own sense of self-righteousness, which does not allow them to see things clearly. Often when people are hurt by others, all of the "laws" of *Bein Adam L'chaveiro* go right out the window. We must work to treat each Jew with care and kindness.