

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויאמר יעקב לאחיו לקחו אבנים ויקחו אבנים ויעשו גל ואבדו שם על הגל ... (לא-מ)

In order to make a covenant with Lavan, Yaakov told “his brothers” to take stones. Yaakov had only one brother, Esav, who was not with him at the moment. The *Medrash* cited by **Rashi** points out that his “brothers” refer to Yaakov’s sons, whom he called brothers. The question is, what are the *Medrash* and Rashi teaching us here? Why does the *Torah* refer to Yaakov’s sons as his brothers? Let the *Torah* call them his sons. **R’ Shlomo Wolbe ז”ל** explains that part of *chinuch* is to have your children become your partners. If a child feels that he is a partner in his parent’s *mitzvah* and *chessed* activities, he does not feel that he is being forced to do something, or that his parents are providing for someone else rather than attending to the child’s needs. Quite the contrary, he feels honored by the responsibility (*Zeriyah U’vinyan Bechinuch, page 27*).

A veteran *Mashgiach* once spoke at a *chinuch* convention about responding to a case of severe misconduct. He told the following story: “I used to be the *Mashgiach* in a *yeshivah* where many of the boys came from weaker homes and were making their way in *Yiddishkeit*. Once, in the middle of a *shiur*, I noticed one boy resting his feet on a pile of *Chumashim* that were on the chair in front of him, with a slightly defiant look on his face. My instinctive feeling was to unleash a good tongue-lashing. *Boruch Hashem*, I caught myself in time. Yes, he was being a wise-guy, but it wasn’t much more than that. Considering where this boy came from, the behavior wasn’t shocking. He hadn’t been raised to treat *seforim* with reverence, so it was natural enough for him to do what he did without really appreciating its severity. In addition, he was a very sensitive boy, and coming under attack would likely have caused him serious harm. On the other hand, I couldn’t ignore it.

“As I hesitated, other boys noticed, and they motioned to him to take his feet off. The boys looked at me apprehensively, to see how I’d react. By not reacting, I would cause them to take the matter lightly. I closed my eyes as I tried to think of a solution. There was a tense silence. Everyone was waiting for me to respond, and I simply didn’t know how. Then, I had a brainstorm, B”H. I opened my eyes and said, ‘I cannot continue this *shiur*. I don’t think I’m qualified to do so. I see that I’ve been on the wrong track in my *chinuch* approach. I have to correct my errors, and I’m going to do it right now.’ The boys were in shock. They stared at me with wide eyes and bated breath. The boy himself also looked very tense.

“I continued to speak. ‘This is my fault. The boy who did this isn’t aware of how severe it is. But I should have taught him about this. Instead of speaking about lofty ideas, I should have first taught the basics of the lifestyle and behavior of a *ben Torah*. So I am stopping this *shiur*, and I am committing, *bli neder*, to fast for a day in order to atone for what happened.’ I closed the *sefer* I was reading from and began heading out. The *Rosh Yeshivah*, who had been sitting on the side watching, also stood up and said, ‘I share the responsibility. I am also going to fast for a day, *bli neder*.’

“Never before did I fast with such an inner sense of joy. The impact this had on the boys was wonderful. It was the talk of the *yeshivah*, and the boys clearly took it very much to heart. But even more special was the effect that this “punishment” had on the boy who had done it. He tried to assume the guilt himself and convince me not to fast. I rejected his arguments, but he persisted, saying that even if it was my fault, he also shared the blame, so I need to also provide him with some form of atonement. Knowing how sensitive this boy was, I was nervous about causing him to feel guilty.

“However, I did believe that, since he had initiated the request, he could handle it. So I accepted his argument, and suggested that he undertake to be very careful about the honor of the *Beis Medrash*. From that day, we no longer needed hired help to keep the *Beis Medrash* in order. This boy’s dedication to his new job was amazing. The *Beis Medrash* always stayed clean and neat all day, every day. Even years later, when I was already teaching somewhere else and returned to visit the *yeshivah*, I found the *Beis Medrash* very neat and clean. It had turned into something of a tradition that keeping the *Beis Medrash* clean was a position of prestige.” (Adapted Excerpt from “Spare the Child” by Rabbi Yechiel Yaakovson)

ויברח יעקב שדה ארם ויעבר ישראל באשה ובאשה שומר ... (וישע יב-י)

With his brother Esav threatening to kill him, “*Yaakov fled from the fields of Aram*.” Interestingly, the *Navi* relates that while in Charan, *Yaakov Avinu* “worked for a woman and he guarded (sheep) for a woman.” Aside from the fact that this seems to be an arbitrary set of events in contrast to the harsh reality that Yaakov was forced to flee his home, why did the *Navi* deem it important enough to mention not just once but twice in his words, that Yaakov did work to be permitted to marry a woman?

R’ Dovid Feinstein ז”ל (Kol Dodi) explains that the *Navi* was in fact referencing the seven years of work Yaakov first did in order to be permitted to marry Rachel, as well as the second set of seven years of work he completed after it was

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

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revealed that Lavan had tricked him. Instead of marrying Rachel, he married Leah. Lavan knew he could trick Yaakov and since Yaakov very much wanted to marry Rachel, he promised to work another seven years for her.

Says R’ Dovid, *Hoshea HaNavi* specifically worded it this way to impart a profound lesson to *Klal Yisroel*. Oftentimes, one tends to hinge success on nature and the natural way things run in the world. The assumption is that when one thing is accomplished, success will automatically follow it. However, *Hoshea*’s lesson here is that *Yaakov Avinu* did indeed follow the natural way of things when he worked for Rachel for seven years, yet he still needed to work another seven years afterwards to achieve his goal.

ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך הרנה ויפגע במקום וילך שם בן בא השמש ... (כה-יא)

Rashi cites *Chazal* who explain why the *Torah* stresses the word “*Vayeitzei*” and not just “*Vayeilech Charana*”? The reason is that the departure of a *tzaddik* from a city - like in the case of *Yaakov Avinu* - leaves an impression, a void. There is, though, an oft asked question: Why didn’t *Chazal* allude to this concept when *Avraham Avinu* departed from a city?

The **Chasam Sofer ז”ל** answers that the city must have inhabitants who are capable of recognizing their loss. When Yaakov left *Be’er Sheva* to go to Charan, his departing presence was felt keenly by *Yitzchok* and *Rivka*. Whereas when *Avraham Avinu* departed, there were no *Tzaddikim* to appreciate his presence, nor the lack thereof.

Perhaps we can add a *machshava* here. The *posuk* continues: “*Vayifgah b’makom*.” **Rashi** says that the word “*Vayifgah*” can mean *tefillah*, as Yaakov inaugurated *Tefillas Maariv*. What about the next word “*b’makom*”? It’s possible to suggest two explanations. First, “*b’makom*” as we find in “*HaMakom Yenachem*” or “*HaMakom Yerachem*.” *Tefillah* cannot be a mundane task that one must get over and done with. Rather, it’s a meeting, an opportunity to have a relationship, a *kesher*, with *HaMakom, Hashem Yisborach*. Secondly, we must appreciate the presence of *Talmidei Chachamim, Tzaddikim*, and *Rabbanim*. They worry and care for the *tzibbur* at large. Thus, says the *posuk*, “*Vayifgah b’makom*” - Yaakov *davened* on behalf of his place, his city, his townspeople. Hence, his absence and the love he demonstrated were sorely missed.

In the past few weeks, *Klal Yisroel* has lost several great individuals and *Tzaddikim*. People who truly cared and worried for the *Klal*. Their absence is surely felt. Let us *daven* for them and all our *Tzaddikim yblc”t*, that they merit *arichas yamim v’shanim*, and that we should all be *zoche* to be reunited with the coming of *Moshiach, bimheira b’yameinu, Amein!*

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאמר לדם יעקב אדן מאין אתם ויאמר מדרך אנהנו ... (כג-ד)

משל: One thing that bothered the *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Yeshivat Porat Yosef, Chacham Rav Moshe Yosef Ades ז”ל*, was when his students came late to his *shiur*. It was well known that you didn’t want to walk in late, and the students hurried to always be seated before the *Chacham* walked in.

On one occasion, three students were running late. Literally. As Rav Ades was about to begin the *shiur*, they could be seen running from a distance to try to make it into the *shiur* room before their *Rebbi*, but he arrived first. He showed disappointment on his face and he began to pace back and forth, until they walked in. As they took their places, Rav Ades suddenly called out in an anguished voice, “אחי מאין אתם. ויאמרו מחרן אנהנו”. It was the week of *Parshas Vayeitzai* and these words cut sharply.

Rav Ades explained. “The word אחר is the first letters of

ויקחו יעקב משנתו ויאמר אבן יש ה במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי ... (כה-מז)

There was once a kindergarten teacher who asked her students to each draw a picture of their house. She then asked them to draw what is inside their house. One drew a table and chairs, another drew a refrigerator, and a third child drew a bed and some toys. One little girl did not draw anything inside the shell of her house, and the teacher asked her why. She answered that her house is full, but you just can’t see what is inside. The teacher was puzzled. What is your house full of that you cannot see? The little girl smiled, and with total sincerity, she said, “My house is filled with *Hashem*.”

The greatest gift we can give our children is the feeling that *Hashem* is here, *Hashem* is real, and *Hashem* is guiding our every move, every minute of the day. The *posuk* tells us that when *Yaakov Avinu* woke up from his slumber, he said, “*There is G-dliness in this place, and I did not know*.” If you have something, but you do not know that you have it, then it is really not yours. You cannot truly benefit from it or utilize it in any way because you do not know that you have it. This *posuk* is coming to teach us all a great lesson. We are often asleep, going through our daily routines, often too busy to think about what we are doing. Like *Yaakov Avinu*, we must all wake up. When we wake up, we will realize, “Oh my. There is G-dliness in this place, and I didn’t even know!” Of course, there is G-dliness in every place, and that is what we are doing here in this world. We are all undercover agents working to discover the great spiritual potential in every moment of life, no matter where we are.

This is really what *chinuch* is all about. It is OUR job to bring *Hashem* into our homes and into the hearts of our children. How do we do this? By making *Hashem* real. Talking about *Hashem*, talking to *Hashem* in the most natural way will infuse our children with real *emunah*, bringing holiness into our homes by infusing our homes with joy and love for *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Our example is not what we say but what we are - that is the greatest *chinuch* we could ever possibly give our children.

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

מחשבת הלב

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

דרגה יתירה