

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

הפלא ה' את מכתך ואת מצות ורעך מצות גדלה ונאמנות ודלים רעים ונאמנים ... (כה-נב)

A young *Rosh Yeshivah* from *Eretz Yisroel* had his world turned upside down when his six-year-old daughter fell ill with a rare and unknown disease. Doctors in Israel were perplexed and could not provide a diagnosis. They advised the *Rav* to seek medical advice in America, specifically at a renowned medical center in New York. The *Rav* and his wife made the difficult decision to travel to New York in search of answers. It was a daunting journey to an unfamiliar place, but they held onto the belief that they would find a solution for their daughter's illness. When they arrived, the doctors at the Medical Center conducted various tests and evaluations until they were finally able to identify the disease afflicting their daughter. Though the diagnosis brought relief, it was accompanied by a bittersweet revelation. Their daughter's illness was treatable but would require a six-month course of treatment, including a risky but necessary operation.

The news hit them hard. They had planned to return to Israel right away and now it seemed to would have to remain in a foreign country for an extended period of time. With all their children accompanying them on the trip, they faced the challenge of finding a place to stay, enrolling their children in school, and coping with the uncertainty of their situation. Overwhelmed, the young *Rosh Yeshivah* spoke to his parents who lived in Brooklyn, explaining their predicament. Without hesitation, his parents offered their support and invited the entire family to spend the first *Shabbos* with them.

Friday afternoon, the *Rav* and his family embarked on the journey from the hospital to Brooklyn. However, their plans took an unexpected turn when heavy snowfall blanketed the area. Traffic came to a standstill, and they found themselves stranded on the highway. With the sun setting and *Shabbos* quickly approaching, it became clear that they would not reach Brooklyn in time. A sense of despair washed over them as they contemplated their situation. Stuck in a foreign country, their lives turned upside down, and now, stranded on a snowy highway, the *Rav* wondered what else could go wrong. Frustration and desperation consumed him. He quickly pulled the car off the highway, realizing he couldn't continue driving if he wished to make *Shabbos*. Gathering his family, he resolved to find shelter and seek refuge in a home displaying a *mezuzah* on its door. Together, they trudged through the snow, searching for a house where they could find solace. After a relentless search, they stumbled upon a home adorned with a *mezuzah*. Bracing themselves, they mustered the courage to knock on the door. To their astonishment, the door swung open, revealing the *shamash* from the renowned MTJ *Yeshivah* in the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Welcomed with open arms, they were invited inside to spend *Shabbos*. The hospitality they received was overwhelming. The *Rav* and his family found comfort, warmth, and a sense of belonging in the midst of their challenging journey. The *Shabbos* they shared with the *shamash* and his family was a source of upliftment and inspiration.

During their stay, the young *Rosh Yeshivah* and his wife shared their daughter's illness and the journey they had undertaken with their hosts. Deeply moved, the man arranged for them to meet with the great *Rosh Yeshivah* of MTJ, **R' Moshe Feinstein ז"ל**. In R' Moshe's presence, the *Rav* and his wife poured out their hearts, recounting the trials they had faced and the miracles they had witnessed. R' Moshe, with his wisdom and compassion, listened intently. He offered words of encouragement, and then gave the young girl a heartfelt blessing, assuring her that everything would be alright.

With newfound strength and optimism, the young family returned to the hospital the following week for their daughter's operation and treatment. However, as the doctors examined her, they were astounded. It was as if a miracle had occurred. The mysterious disease that had plagued their daughter had vanished without the need for the anticipated operation.

Filled with gratitude and a renewed sense of faith, the *Rosh Yeshivah* and his family returned to Israel. They shared their story, emphasizing the importance of unwavering belief, even in the face of adversity. Their journey became a clear testament to the power of a *Tzaddik's* blessing, in the face of life's most challenging moments. (Adapted from *Stories to Inspire* 718-400-7145. Call & Be Inspired!)

כי הנה החשך יכסה ארץ ... ועליו יורה ה' ... (ישעי' כג-ב)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

While *Yeshaya HaNavi* proclaims that the light has dawned and the presence of *Hashem* has finally returned to *Klal Yisroel*, his very next words depict a gloomy picture, saying, “Behold! Darkness shall cover the earth ...” It is noted that prior to the coming of *Moshiach*, great darkness will descend on the earth covering *Klal Yisroel* - and by extension the nations of the world. However, from that darkness, “Upon you [*Klal Yisroel*] *Hashem* will shine, and *Hashem's* presence will be seen...” The question is, why indeed is this the way it will be? Surely light emanating from light will have a profound impact as well?

R' Ahron HaDarshan ז"ל (Bigdei Ahron) explains that from the words of the *Mekubalim* when we say מפני אור

light and darkness are intrinsically tied to each other, and just as there is no light when there is darkness, there is no darkness when there is light. This is the way of the world - sadly, when one element has completed its task and another takes its place, the first element is quickly forgotten.

He explains that right before sunset the sky is filled with a bright light after which the world is plunged into darkness - dispelling the foolish notion that He Who creates light cannot create darkness. Thus, while *Yeshaya's* message notes a great surge of light followed by darkness, as soon as the moment of redemption is reached, the light will once again take the place of darkness - proving to all that *Hashem* pulls the levers, and light can shine just as darkness descends.

אלה יעמדו לברך את העם על הר גריזים ... ואלה יעמדו על הקללה בחד עיבל ... (כו-כז)

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

מחשבת הלב

Moshe Rabbeinu separated the Jewish Nation into two groups atop the mountains of *Gerizim* and *Eival* to hear the *berachos* and *klalos*, blessings and curses. *Har Gerizim* for *berachos* and *Har Eival* for the *klalos*.

The **Chasam Sofer ז"ל** raises the following difficulty. There's a **Tosfos** in *Chulin* (6a) which cites a *Medrash* in *Parshas Vayishlach* that *Yaakov Avinu* took the idols that his children had seized from the surrounding *goyim* and buried them on *Har Gerizim*. *Har Eival*, the *posukim* tell us, was where the *Yidden* built an altar, and mounted the stones upon which they had written the *Torah*. It would seem that *Har Eival* should be better suited for *berachos* than *Har Gerizim*.

There's a fascinating observation that can help resolve this concern. Geographically, these two mountains are near each other - yet are very uniquely different. *Har Gerizim* is a luscious fertile green mountain while *Har Eival* is on the north and is bare and bleak. So it may very well be that they were chosen based on their physical characteristics.

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ז"ל makes this observation, and from it derives a powerful lesson. How can it be that these two mountain ranges, so close to one another geographically, each receiving the same amount of sun, rain, and wind, develop so differently? He explains that apparently the secret of blessing or its opposite - *klalos* - isn't based on external traits, but rather on the inner character of the recipient. Accordingly, we can see that although *Har Gerizim* contained those idols it was still able to attain *beracha*.

This concept can apply as well to us in this month of *Elul*. Even if throughout the year we might become a bit sullied with the grime of sin, we mustn't give up. Through *teshuva*, real introspection and with proper guidance from our *Gedolim* and our predecessors, we can get close to *Hashem* again and be *zoche* to a year of *beracha*!

משל למה הדבר דומה

והיה ביום אשר תעברו את הירדן אל הארץ ... (כו-כז)

משל: In this week's *parsha*, *Hashem* relates what shall be done on the day the Jewish Nation will enter *Eretz Yisroel*.

The *Gemara* (*Sota* 36a) elaborates as follows (according to the **Vilna Gaon ז"ל**): Come and see how many miracles were performed on the day the Jews entered the Holy Land: The Jewish people crossed the Jordan river and reached all the way until *Har Gerizim* and *Har Eival*, which are more than sixty *mil* (about 35 miles) from the river. As they crossed through all this land, no entity was able to stand before them and anyone who tried to attack, was instantly struck. We are taught, that hornets stood on the banks of the river and threw their venom at the inhabitants of the land.

When they arrived at the two mountains, the entire ceremony of blessings and cursing described in the *parsha*

took place. Then, they took untampered stones and built an altar on *Har Eival*, plastered it over and wrote the entire *Torah* in seventy languages on the stones. They then sacrificed burnt offerings (עולות) and peace-offerings (שלמים) with joyous celebration. When it was finished, they took the stones with them and went back to *Gilgal*, where they slept the night.

משל: It is quite amazing to know that the entire landscape described in the *Gemara* is clearly visible until this very day! If one takes a trip to the Shomron (West Bank), next to the relatively large *Yishuv* called *Eilon Moreh*, one can see a stretch of land stretching between mountains from the Jordan river until Shechem, which are situated between *Har Gerizim* and *Har Eival* in the center of modern-day Israel. Incredibly, this is the same place *Avraham Avinu* trekked (in *Parshas Lech Lecha*), as well as *Yaakov Avinu* and his sons; and many others throughout *Tanach*!

אם לא תשמר לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת הכתבים בספר הזה ייראה את השם ... (כז-כח)

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

דרגה יתירה

Elul is a time to THINK and contemplate the love we have for *Hashem* and the love He has for us. *Elul* is not a scary, intimidating time. Of course we have fear, but our *yirah* should stem from the fact that I don't want to do anything wrong because I don't want to ruin the relationship that I have with *Hashem*. It is not a fear of being punished, it is a fear that I have something so special and so awesome, that I don't want to mess up. It is a fear that comes from love and not the other way around.

Let us make this easy to remember. We will call it the **A B C** and **D** of creating a real bond with *Hashem*. **A** stands for Appreciation. Probably, the greatest way to love *Hashem* is by thinking about all the million acts of kindness He does for you every day and appreciate them. By not thinking about and taking for granted all the good in our lives, we are depriving ourselves of the greatest gift of all, true Happiness. **B** stands for BE HAPPY. This is a sure fire way to love *Hashem*. Focus on the positive. See the good in others. Point out the beauty in nature. Find things to be happy about and you will love *Hashem*. Surely there are things in your life that make you unhappy, but that is not an excuse not to notice and celebrate all the good.

C stands for *Cheshbon Nefesh*. Yes, we all must make an accounting at this time. The **Chovos HaLevavos** writes that the introspection one needs to make is to think about how much they take for granted, and how much they need to think about all those things that we never think about and thank *Hashem* for. And last but not least, **D** stands for DAVEN. My friends, if you wish to have a real, deep, meaningful and loving relationship with another, you must communicate. You must talk with them, confide in them, share your innermost feelings and dreams. *Davening* is our way of communicating with *Hashem*. By pouring out your heart and knowing that He hears every word you say, you are building a real *kesher* with the Master of the World.

So, remember the **A B C** and **D** of *Elul* and you will have the recipe for the greatest achievement in life.