

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ארור האיש אשר יעשה פסל ומסכה תועבת ה' מעשה ידי הרש ושם בכתר וענו כל העם ואמרו אמן ... (כז-טו)

Parshas Ki Savo outlines a series of blessings and curses linked to our behavior. Idolatry, degrading parents, engaging in numerous forbidden acts, to name a few, will incur curses and punishment. After we list them individually in the *Torah*, we say *Amen* to each and every curse. The *Meforshim* explain that reciting a united *Amen* to these curses enables us as a community to take responsibility for our actions, not only for the blessings in our lives, but for the curses as well.

There was once a man in his early forties who suffered from a severe illness, causing grave concern for his wife and children. The doctor expressed hesitation in performing the necessary operation, fearing the man's potential demise on the operating table. He advised the wife to seek approval from a higher authority, such as a renowned doctor from a prestigious hospital, to take responsibility for the procedure. Pondering who the "highest authority" she knew could be, she recalled her husband's past association with the great *Gaon* and *Posek*, **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l**, during his time at *Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim*. With determination, she decided to approach R' Moshe and seek his guidance.

A few days later, the doctor called and inquired if she had consulted any other specialists or someone of a higher authority. Calmly, she replied that she had an appointment the next day with such an authority. Perplexed, the doctor questioned which doctor she was referring to, to which she clarified that she intended to consult a great rabbi.

The doctor was incredulous, unable to fathom seeking a rabbi's opinion on a medical procedure. He argued that a rabbi lacked the necessary medical background to make such a decision. Unfazed, the woman asserted that the rabbi was the highest authority she recognized, as per the doctor's request for a second opinion. She was doing as he asked.

Astounded and curious, the doctor requested to accompany her to meet this big rabbi, as he wanted to witness the situation firsthand. She agreed, and the following day, the woman accompanied by the doctor, traveled to the lower east side of New York where they visited R' Moshe at his residence on FDR Drive. R' Moshe warmly welcomed them both in and inquired about the severity of the illness and the details of the operation.

As the conversation progressed, R' Moshe mentioned that he was trying to recall her husband from his *yeshivah* days twenty years ago. The wife, eager to assist his memory, presented a picture of her husband during his time at the *yeshivah*. Now, as she described him from years ago, R' Moshe remembered the young man and was instantly moved to tears.

Witnessing R' Moshe's genuine care and concern for a former student from decades ago, the doctor turned to the wife and remarked that he now understood why a rabbi such as this one could make such a decision. He believed that someone who could empathize and shed tears over another person's illness would be guided to the right decision from Heaven.

R' Moshe then shared a profound insight that he said has the potential to transform lives. He advised the doctor and the woman to proceed with the operation but with an additional commitment from the sick man himself. He was to undertake that from this point forward, every blessing that he would recite, whether during *davening* or on something simple like a food item, should be said out loud and clear, allowing others to hear and respond with "*Amen*."

R' Moshe explained the significance by highlighting the numerical value of the word "*Amen*" which is 91. Remarkably, the Hebrew word for angel - *Malach* - also holds the same numerical value of 91. Thus, whenever a person recites a blessing and another person responds with *Amen*, he creates an angel who serves as his protector.

Armed with this newfound understanding, the man underwent the operation while adhering to the commitment of reciting blessings aloud. He also encouraged others to do the same, enabling him to answer *Amen* to their blessings. The operation was a resounding success, and the man had the privilege of living for many years following the procedure, **diligently reciting blessings aloud and responding Amen to others.** (Adapted from *Stories to Inspire* - 718-400-7145 - Call Now & Be Inspired!)

In this week's *Haftorah*, *Yeshaya HaNavi* proclaims that in the times of *Moshiach*, *Klal Yisroel* will all gather in the holy city of *Yerushalayim*, where, "*Your sons shall be brought from afar, and your daughters will be waited on at their side.*" The question is why the *Navi* splits up the men and women. In fact, right before these words, *Yeshaya* states; "*They will all [Klal Yisroel] gather and come to you [Hashem]...*" So, if all of *Klal Yisroel* will come before *Hashem*, then there shouldn't be a need for the *Navi* to specify again that men and women will come.

The **Ben Ish Chai, Chacham Rav Yosef Chayim of Baghdad zt"l** quotes the *Medrash* which tells the story of *Shlomo HaMelech* who once had a conversation with a bird,

who insisted that there are more women in the world than men. The king disagreed and after acknowledging that he was right, the bird explained that although physically there might not be more women than men, when a woman rules over a man telling him exactly what to do and how to do it, the man becomes akin to a woman and is thus counted as one.

The *Ben Ish Chai* explains that men and women have their own purposes and responsibilities in life, and a man cannot fulfill a woman's responsibilities and vice-a-versa. So, although *Yeshaya HaNavi* already stated that all of *Klal Yisroel* will gather before *Hashem*, it was still important for him to stress that each gender will arrive with their own purpose and characteristic in their service to the Almighty.

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

שאי סביב עיניך ... בניך מרחוק יבאו ובנתיד על צד האמנה ... (ישעי' ס"ד)

את ה' האמרת היום להיות לך לאלקים וללכת בדרכיו ולשמר חקיו ומצוותיו ומשפטיהם ולשמע בקולו ... (כז-יז)

After the *posuk* enumerates the many ways that *Klal Yisroel* follow *Hashem's* ways and *mitzvos*, "ללכת בדרכיו ולשמר חקיו" - all the proverbial "bases" should be covered. If so, wonder the *Meforshim*, the last two words of the *posuk* - "ולשמע בקולו" - would seem to be superfluous. That, obviously, cannot be. So what is the *psbat*?

The **Rambam** explains that it is coming to include *mitzvos* and commandments that at a future time, *Klal Yisroel* will receive via the prophets. The **Ohr HaChayim Hakadosh** explains that it refers to *Limud HaTorah*. Even if a person knows and performs all the *mitzvos*, there is yet another obligation to learn *Torah*, solely and simply for the sake of learning.

The **Seforno**, however, writes just two words which give us insight into the expectations for a true *Yid*, an *eved Hashem*. He writes: "ולשמע בקולו - כראוי לעבדיו". What does this mean?

R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Darash Moshe), independent of the above *meforshim*, explains the words "ולשמע בקולו" to mean doing the will of *Hashem* not by rote but rather to abide by His laws and *mitzvos* through love and *simcha*. That emotion makes the whole service so much more elevated and real.

With R' Moshe's words, perhaps we can add on and clarify the deeper meaning of the *Seforno* as follows: Although many *mitzvos* follow a regimen which is "black and white" so to speak, however, in our *avodas Hashem* there are numerous "gray areas" that we must consider. In these "areas" a person may tend to be laidback and easygoing, not following through to the letter of the law. But really, we should ask ourselves: what does my Father really want? That barometer will help us navigate **through life with the outlook of a true eved Hashem.** "כראוי לעבדיו" and **will no doubt help us find favor by Him this year!**

משל למת הדבר דומה

אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה ה' את משה לכת את בני' (כח-טט)

משל: The *tefillos* and beseeching of the great *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, **R' Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l**, were legendary. He was known to tell people that for a *tefillah* to be truly effective, it must stem from the depth of one's heart. If one does not truly feel pain over what he is asking, his prayer is less likely to be answered. R' Chaim would advise that before praying for a sick person's recovery, first visit the sick person and see what he is undergoing. This will help you feel his pain and enable your prayers to be heard.

R' Chaim would often pray with great fervor at the site of *Yad Avshalom*, the exotic tombstone of Avshalom, the son of King David, located in the Kidron Valley near Jerusalem. One of R' Chaim's *talmidim* once asked him about this practice. After all, Avshalom was known to be a wicked *rasha*. He instigated a tremendous rebellion in *Klal Yisroel*

לעלמי נשמח אבנו מורנו הרבנו הרב חיים יוסף בן ר' ישראל אברהם קויפמאן זצ"ל

מחשבת הל"ב

and caused his father a great deal of trouble! What reason could R' Chaim have for praying there with such intensity?

"Avshalom did indeed rebel against his father," R' Chaim explained, "but when Dovid heard about his death, he wept bitterly and *davened* that Avshalom merit entry into *Gan Eden*. From Dovid and Avshalom, we learn that a father's love for his son is unconditional. Even when a son behaves improperly and irrationally - even when he humiliates and tortures his father - his father will still forgive him."

נטל: *Moshe Rabbeinu* gave us a ferocious speech, warning *Bnei Yisroel* that if we rebel against our Father in Heaven, terrible calamities and disasters will befall us. That, however, doesn't take away from the fact that *Hashem* is still our Father in Heaven, always looking out for the best for us. We can repent and ask for forgiveness. For this reason, the *tochacha*, the admonitions, is always read prior to *Rosh Hashanah*, the great Day of Judgment.

ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה אשר תביא מארצך אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך (כז-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

There is an interesting phenomenon in *Yiddishkeit*. When a Jew wishes to forge a relationship with another human being, the "secret formula" is to give - not to take. The more you give another person - the more you will love that person. This idea can be seen clearly in the relationship between parents and children. Logically, one might think that children should love their parents more; after all, they are the constant recipients of their parents' kindness. However, as we know and are told by professionals and non-professionals alike, this is really not proven to be true. In fact, parents love their children more - and the reason is because they are constantly GIVING to them. Giving is loving!

In our relationship with *Hashem*, however, the opposite is true. Yes, *Hashem* is our Father and of course we love Him but in order to become truly close to *Hashem*, it is not necessary for us to give, because in essence there is nothing that we CAN give to Him. Rather we are commanded "ולקחת" - to take! Yes to take! By taking all the good that *Hashem* gives us, we form a relationship with Him! It is quite an amazing twist! But there is a catch. If we simply take, without acknowledging and appreciating all the good in our lives, our relationship will be a shallow one - not on *Hashem's* part - but on our part! The more we appreciate and thank *Hashem* - the more we will love Him and become close to Him.

In these last few weeks before *Rosh Hashana*, we are all searching for ways to do *Teshuva* - to return to *Hashem*, to become closer to *Hashem*. One of the greatest ways to accomplish this is through *Hakaras Hatov*, fully appreciating and thanking *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* for every kindness, big and small, that He does for us. In this way, we will be able to reach our goal of "ולקחת" - taking all that goodness and הטבה that *Hashem* so very much wants to give us. As the *posuk* states: "ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך" - "*And you shall rejoice in all the good that Hashem has given you.*"