

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ולא יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל הנצנים עליו ... ויתן את קלו בכבי וישמעו מצרים וישמע בית פרעה (מה-א.ב)

The **Chazon Ish ז"ל** is quoted as saying: “The generation that became non-religious from parents who were religious. These religious parents saw what was happening with their children but, for whatever reason, could not stop them. They cried lonely, bitter tears, they prayed, they fasted, but it was too late to stem the tide. But *Hashem* does not forget a Jewish tear. If those tears of sincerity did not help to save their own children, they have helped for the grandchildren and in some cases, great-grandchildren. That’s the reason why these children come back to *Yiddishkeit* today - because *Hashem* doesn’t forget Jewish tears.” Sometimes tears have a delayed reaction for the person they were addressed to. Even though, at the beginning they don’t seem to have an effect, years later these very tears can ultimately reach their mark.

The following story is about a fellow who made a *Siyum Mishnayos* on *Shas* for his father’s *yahrzeit* on the hundredth year of his father coming to America. At the *siyum*, he retold the trials and tribulations that his father went through. He explained how the “*Goldene Medina*” (Golden Land - a name ascribed to America) made his family into gentiles. He was the youngest of nine children. The other eight had already severed their ties with *Yiddishkeit*. His father’s last hope was his youngest son Mordechai, who was being pressed by his father to enroll in *Yeshivah* College. Hopefully, this would keep him religious.

Finally, on the morning of his sixteenth birthday, Mordechai mustered up the courage and approached his father before *davening*. “Papa,” he said, a bit timidly at first, “I’m not going to *Yeshivah* College. I’m not going to lay *tefillin* anymore. I’m not going to *shul* on *Shabbos*, and I am going to be just like my brothers and my sisters, and my friends.”

The fellow looked at those assembled at the *siyum hashas* and continued, “The courage dropped from my hands as I lifted them up to protect myself from the expected slap. My father’s eyes blazed, and he stepped toward me. Suddenly, he stopped and began to plead. ‘*Motke, du bist die letzte*’ - Mordechai, you’re the last one. My last hope. You are not like the others. Don’t say what you said. *Hashem* will forgive you, don’t mean what you said.’ His words came out in a jumble.

I was shocked to hear my father beg. Begging was not his way to deal with the family. I realized that he must be deeply wounded if he didn’t attempt to hit me. I couldn’t bear to see his hurt. I truly loved him.

“Papa, please don’t make me learn to be a rabbi. I just want to be like my friends and everyone else in the family.”
“So don’t be a rabbi. You can still be a good Jew, put on *Tefillin*, eat kosher, keep *Shabbos*. But don’t become a *goy* like the others. It’s enough that I raised eight *goyishe* children. I don’t need nine. Motke, Motke, it’s enough already.”

Papa burst into tears. I had never seen my father cry like that. He was a stoic man and tears was not his normal way. I, too, burst into tears and with great emotion, I threw my arms around him. “Papa, Papa, please don’t cry. I don’t want to hurt you. It makes no sense for me to be *frum* (religious), but I’ll try, I’ll try.”

For this sixteen-year old, the tears were soon forgotten. I barely tried, knowing all along that I would not keep to my word. It did not take long for me to go the way of my brothers and sisters, and all the other Jews charmed by America.

My father eventually passed on, never having the *nachas* of seeing his children light a *Chanukah menorah*, or learn a *daf* of *Gemara*. He never saw his kids wearing *Tzitzis* or a *Yarmulke*. But those tears, the tears he shed when confronted with his ninth and final child, were not in vain. Later in life, though, I remembered the tears and they changed me - utterly, completely. When my son, Shlomo Michael, who is named after my father, wrote to tell me that he was studying at *Yeshivah Ohr Somayach* in Jerusalem to learn what it means to be a Jew, I immediately flew to Jerusalem to talk him out of his *nareshkeit* (foolishness). Then I remembered my father’s tears. And I realized that *Yiddishkeit* is not *nareshkeit*!

“So on this centennial of my father coming to America and on his *Yahrzeit*, I want this *siyum* to tell America: ‘America you beat us Jews bad, but you didn’t win.’ And to tell my father, ‘Papa, you were beaten badly, but you didn’t lose!’”

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN
ובתב עיניו ליהודה ולבני ישראל ... ובתוב עליו ליוסף ... וכל בית ישראל ... (החוקא לו-בז) Yechezkel HaNavi compares *Klal Yisroel* to dry bones. The *Navi* divides *Klal Yisroel* into two parts - “Yehuda” and “Yosef” - and discusses the eventual reunification of *Malchus Yehuda* and the rest of ten tribes. The **Levush** connects the *Haftorah* and *Parsha* by noting how Yehuda and Yosef were the main “players” involved in *Klal Yisroel*’s descent into Egypt. But why should those who sent us into exile be the ones to reign as kings over the nation?

R’ Tzvi Shloime Mizranolader shlitā explains that when one is faced with an adverse situation, he can respond in one of two ways. He can buckle under pressure, or he can rise to the occasion and answer accordingly. Although all the brothers were responsible for the *Mechiras Yosef*, Yehuda

bore the most responsibility since it was his idea. *Chazal* note that in the immediate aftermath, Yehuda realized the folly of his ways, and without shirking the blame onto his brothers, he rose to the occasion and led the family in the search for Yosef.

Additionally, *Yosef HaTzaddik* was called “*Tzaddik*” because he stayed true to his upbringing and did not buckle under the constant pressure of Egyptian society. Also, upon ascending to the position of viceroy and seeing his brothers before him, Yosef took responsibility for their well-being on his shoulders and made sure they had what they needed.

Ultimately, despite Yehuda’s error and Yosef’s adverse conditions, the two of them became kings in *Klal Yisroel* due to their sense of responsibility for their brethren.

ויאמר ישראל רב עוד יוסף בני חי אלכה ואראנו כמרם אמות ... (מה-כה)

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

מחשבת הלב

There is a famous question that is asked: Assuming that Yosef knew that his father Yaakov was in a state of mourning for his missing son, and must have been distraught, why did Yosef not send some sort of message to him that he was alive and well? As a son who cares for his grieving father, relieving his pain should be uppermost in his mind. Prior to becoming Egypt’s viceroy it was impossible to send such a message, but after he rose to power why then did he still not initiate contact?

One answer given is based on the well known *Medrash* that at the time of *Mechiras Yosef*, the brothers made a deal that whoever would tell their father what happened to Yosef would be excommunicated, put into *cherem*. They even included *Hashem* in this exclusive pact. Even though *Yitzchok Avinu* knew the facts, he too, didn’t reveal the truth. *Yosef Hatzadik* himself grasped the Master Plan and was unable to leak the secret. From this we learn that when we clearly see *yad Hashem* at work, we mustn’t get involved, so as not to *chas v’shalom* interfere with His plans.

There are many other answers offered, but I’ll mention one more I saw this year, that can serve as a lesson for all times. **R’ Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ז"ל** writes as follows: Yosef knew that Yaakov was devastated by the loss of his son. He also knew that if Yaakov were to come to the realization that it was caused by *kinah* and *sinah*, it would have been that much worse. Because a father would rather think one son is lost, than to live with the knowledge that his progeny “hates” one another to such an extent. Yosef, therefore, waited until the point of reconciliation; until harmony was restored.

This can serve as a life lesson. Our Father in Heaven is also pained when His children are living in discord and disunity amongst themselves. If we wish to bring *Hashem*, Our Father, true *nachas*, all ill-will and fighting must immediately cease.

May we be *zoche* to hear the words: **במהרה בימינו אמן משיח** *b'karov* with the hastening of *Moshiach*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים ... (מה-ה) משל: There are times when we are wronged and cheated, and we may find it difficult to forgive the wrongdoer for his deed and move past it. To help overcome these feelings, **Harav Yisroel Belsky ז"ל** would tell the following parable:

The New York City Marathon is an annual city-wide event that courses through the five boroughs of New York City, with tens of thousands of participants from dozens of countries. It is considered the largest marathon in the world.

One year on the day of the marathon, Reuven met his friend Shimon getting ready to participate in the marathon. He was “jogging” in place, wearing his spandex and all. Suddenly, an idea stuck in his head. “As you know, *Pesach* is approaching,” Reuven said to Shimon. “I promised my grandmother in Staten Island, that I would bring to her the necessary potatoes that she needs for *Yom Tov*. It’ll be a lot quicker and save me valuable time if you can bring it to her. If it’s not too big of a deal, and since you’re going to be passing in that direction anyways, would you be able to take some potatoes - just a 50-pound bag - for my grandma?”

“As much as I’d like to help out,” said Shimon, “I simply cannot. When I run, I can’t have extra weight on myself!”

נמשל: When a person can’t find it in his heart to forgive someone, he is in essence walking around with a heavy sack of potatoes on his shoulders. A person must train himself to look past offenses committed against him and raise himself above life’s challenges. If we can live our lives in this manner, it will be a more pleasurable life and we’ll find it easier to forgive when we’re slighted. A person with such attributes will be able to “run” through life light as a feather, free as a bird. This is the extraordinary attribute Yosef exemplified!

When Yaakov came down to *Mitzrayim*, the *Torah* tells us that Yosef fell on his father’s neck and cried there for a while. The **Maharal M’Prague ז"ל** explains that the emotion of love that Yaakov felt at this moment was so powerful that he chose to take the intensity of his love and direct it towards *Hashem*. This was quite different from earlier when Yosef cried on his brother’s neck. *Chazal* teach us a very important lesson regarding the incident when Yosef and Binyomin cried on each other’s shoulders: Each one felt the other’s pain - נושא בעול עם חברו - sharing the burden and pain of the other. Yosef cried over the destruction of the two מקדש בתי situated in the portion of Binyomin, while Binyomin cried for the loss of *Mishkan Shilo* in Yosef’s portion. This was not just brotherly love; this is the way every Jew must feel towards his fellow Jew.

Chessed can be done by many people on many different levels. Sometimes we help others because we feel sorry for them, sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves - there are many ulterior motives. The *middah* of נושא בעול עם חברו, however, can only be achieved with complete sincerity. **R’ Yeruchem Levovitz ז"ל** says that it is not enough to see or hear someone’s pain; to truly help another, we must feel and understand their pain! When someone understands another’s pain, it automatically becomes relieved somewhat, just as when a person feels another’s joy, the happiness is automatically heightened. One cannot singlehandedly solve other people’s problem, but by simply taking the time to listen, to recognize the issues that the other faces, a kind word, an act of sincere kindness - one cannot imagine how much he has helped!

This *middah* is called **נשא בעול עם חברו** as opposed to **בחבירו** to signify that a Jew is not expected to carry the full burden of others. Rather, we are supposed to share the burden, by relating to others as true friends - with concern, love and sincerity. Its not enough to be just a חבירו - friend; we must be **נשא בעול עם חברו** - compassionate **with** our friends at all times!