



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויקה עומים את יוכנב דרתו לו לאשה ותלד לו את אהרן ואת משה ... (ו-ב)

Moshe is sent by *Hashem* to inflict *makkos* - plagues, upon the Egyptians for refusing to let His people go. Time and time again, Moshe warns Pharaoh that he is about to be afflicted, yet Pharaoh stands firm in his refusal. *Chazal* tell us that eventually Pharaoh lost his free will to correct his ways and heed *Hashem's* command. The **Rambam** tells us that if someone takes a wrong path in life and sins severely without repentance, his punishment is that eventually he will lose the power to choose otherwise. But if one chooses a life of *chessed* and *Torah* this will eventually bring him the greatest of rewards.

The **Chazon Ish ז"ל** took a walk for his health every morning. Usually, he was accompanied by students or family. When **R' Ben Tzion Fullman שליט"א** was young, he used to accompany him often, using the time to ask questions.

One time Ben Tzion asked the *tzaddik* about *kibbud av v'eim*. His father's mother moved in with his family when she grew old. His grandmother enjoyed the children and had a strong connection with them. When she was hospitalized, the family made sure that someone was always with her, to help her as she convalesced.

At that time, Ben Tzion was learning in *yeshivah*. He visited his grandmother from time to time, to see how she was, and to make her happy. Then he immediately returned to his *Gemara*. His grandmother, who enjoyed these visits from her special grandson, asked him over and over if he could come more often, and stay longer.

Ben Tzion didn't know what to do. One the one hand, he was quite the *masmid*, he really wanted to learn all the time, which he couldn't do while he was visiting his grandmother. On the other hand, perhaps this was his *mitzvah* of the moment, to speed along her recovery by making her happy; it was a *mitzvah* that no one else could do instead of him. And yet, he wasn't the only grandchild who visited. There was always a member of the family with her, so was it really a *mitzvah* that no one could do instead of him? Still, she'd asked him to come. He was in a quandary.

The *Chazon Ish* listened to the whole question, giving it his full attention. He didn't just listen. He asked questions about all the details. "Why does she want you especially? Is she not happy when other grandchildren are with her?"

Once he had a full picture, he walked in silence for a few moments as he thought and weighed the various options. Then he said, "Go visit and stay with her for as long as she wants you to be there, and keep in mind that you are not only fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *chessed* and *bikkur cholim*, but also the *mitzvah* of *Talmud Torah*. Every moment that you spend with her, you are fulfilling the *mitzvah* of learning *Torah*."

"How is it learning *Torah*?" Ben Tzion asked.

"I know that you learn as much as possible and work hard at it. Why do you work so hard? To make it yours, to get to the point that it's 'in your guts.' How can a person acquire *Torah*? The *Torah* is *ruchniyus*, and people are *gashmi* creations - how can the two connect? The truth is, the *Torah* cannot stick to a person unless he has a *nefesh adinah*, a sensitive nature. To make *Torah* part of you, you have to make yourself into a sensitive person. Only a sensitive person can be a vessel that 'holds' *Torah*. How does one become sensitive? By doing *chessed*, by giving in, and by developing good *middos*. When a person gives up what he desires for the sake of doing what someone else desires, he becomes sensitive - he becomes a person with whom the *Torah* can bond. Now you have a chance to close your *Gemara* to do *chessed* without having to look for it. You're being handed an opportunity to do *chessed* and to nullify your own desires. This is your chance to acquire a sensitive *nefesh* and become a vessel that can 'hold' *Torah*. Every moment you spend with your grandmother because she prefers your company to all other company, every pill you hand her, every time you check to make sure she's taking her medicine correctly, is an act of acquiring *Torah*. You're acquiring the sensitivity required by *Torah* if it is going to cling to your *nefesh*. You're not just keeping the *mitzvah* of *chessed*; you're keeping the *mitzvah* of *Talmud Torah*."

**תורת הצבי על הפטרות** **A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN** **בן אדם שים פניו על פתיקה מלך מצרים והנבא עליו ועל מצרים כלה (יחזקאל כג-ב)**

The *Haftorah* opens with *Yechezkel HaNavi* telling *Clal Yisroel* how *Hashem* will mete out punishment to their enemies. *Yechezkel* predicts that the Babylonians will conquer Egypt in Pharaoh Chofra's time and Egypt will never again rise as a world power. Obviously, Pharaoh and the Egyptians deserved a tough punishment for torturing the Jewish Nation, but did they deserve such a harsh punishment?

The **Dubno Maggid, R' Yaakov Kranz ז"ל** answers with a parable. Imagine a servant in a palace boasting to a foreign guest that he is the owner of the palace while the king and the true owner of the palace appears and warns him that he should quit bragging about false things, for he was his master, and the servant must always surrender under his rule.

Says the *Dubno Maggid*, aside from the terrible atrocities Pharaoh and the Egyptians committed, Pharaoh's biggest shortcoming was undoubtedly his arrogance which led him to believe that he was a deity. But worst of all is that he began to firmly believe that not only was he a deity, but that he was the only superior power in the world, and there was no other entity in existence greater than him. This was an affront to *Hashem* who deemed it the greatest disrespect a human being can have to his Creator. The arrogant and unrepentant Egyptians and their leader were therefore subjected to a humbling like no other - the loss of their influence on the world stage, which was supposed to lead them to realization that there is no greater entity in the world other than *Hashem*.

ואלה שמות בני לוי לתולדתם ... ושני חי' לוי ... ושני חי' קרת (ו-ב)

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

# מחשבת הלב

The *Torah* discusses the familial lineage up until *Shevet Levi*, teaching us the importance of maintaining the links to our *mesorah*. Only by keeping true to that *mesorah*, were we redeemed via such distinguished leaders. (*b'zchus shelo shinu...*) Why must the *Torah* enumerate how long Levi and Kehos lived? (See **Rashi**)

**Targum Yonason ben Uziel** explains that Levi remained alive until he was certain that *Clal Yisroel* was in good hands. He saw those good hands in Moshe and Aharon. Kehos was likewise satisfied with Pinchos.

The **Peirush Yonasan** asks as follows: Chronologically, it cannot be that Levi actually saw Moshe and Aharon. That Kehos saw Pinchos is also somewhat of a stretch. How then can the *Targum* be explained? Perhaps we can say the following *machshava*. Most certainly, Levi didn't actually live to see Moshe, nor did Kehos see Pinchos. But they were *mechanech* their progeny so that producing a Moshe, Aharon, or Pinchos was easily foreseeable.

I believe the following has been attributed to **Hagaon R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach ז"ל**. As he grew older, more frail and less active, he once commented, "If I can't learn or achieve productively anymore, surely there must still be a purpose to my existence." Someone in attendance at the time, voiced a response which consoled the *gadol*. He told him that as long as the *Zaida* sits, as the patriarch, at the head of the table, the young ones see you, and act differently. Thus Levi and Kehos left such an impact, inculcating the future *doros* with *ahavas* and *avodas Hashem*, culminating in producing a Moshe and Aharon. We too, should realize that what we have is in the *zechus* of our forebears, who paved the path for us to follow. May we, as well as our children and *einiklech*, always continue in the ways of our *avos* and forebears.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל אהרן נמה את ירך כמטף על הנחת (ה-א) **משל**: The *Mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Chevron, R' Meir Chodosh ז"ל, was once hospitalized due to a serious illness. When a young intern entered R' Meir's room to draw blood from his arm, R' Meir asked all his visitors to leave the room. This was most unusual, for R' Meir generally appreciated when his family was present during doctors' visits. Surprised as they were, though, his family and visitors complied with his wishes and waited outside until the procedure was finished.*

As the visitors filed back into his room, R' Meir explained. "Drawing blood can be a tricky procedure, even for an experienced doctor. It isn't always easy to find a vein, especially in the arm of an elderly person. I knew the young intern must be feeling nervous and under pressure, and I figured the last thing he wanted was a crowd of people

watching him and scrutinizing every action and procedure he did to their grandfather. Imagine how flustered he would have grown had it been necessary for him to make several attempts to pierce my vein, and with an audience yet! That is why I asked you to leave."

**משל**: When it came to the first three *makkos*, *Moshe Rabbeinu* instructed Aharon to hit the water/earth instead of doing it himself. *Chazal* tell us the reason was because the water/earth had "saved" Moshe, and it wasn't proper for Moshe to hit them. This is a powerful lesson in sensitivity. Although water and earth were created to serve mankind, that didn't change the fact that Moshe was saved through them.

Often, we expect certain things from people. We pay them for their work or their service, like doctors, staff members and employees. We expect them to do the intended work. While this is true, it does not change the fact that in the end, we were helped. Thus, they deserve to be acknowledged.

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

## דרגה יתירה

What is anger? How does a person come to rage? When does one reach the level of fury and wrath? Well, as many have come to find out, anger is a *middah* which blinds a person so severely that he cannot see the havoc and chaos that he is actually wreaking. *Chazal* teach us: "כל הכועס כל מיני גיהנום שולטין בו" - When a person becomes angry, he is not in control - in fact "all types of Gehinnom" - negative and harmful forces grab hold of a person and do not let go.

Case in point: When Aharon, the brother of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, was told by *Hashem* to stretch his stick out over the water to bring on the Plague of Frogs (צפרדע), the *Medrash* tells us that one giant frog emerged from the swamp and headed toward Pharaoh's palace. The terrified Egyptian guards tried to halt its progress with stones and arrows but this did not help. Finally, one guard stepped forward and dealt the huge creature a mighty blow. Instead of being mortally wounded, little frogs began jumping out of its mouth! Inexplicably, the Egyptians seized on this and continued to pound on the giant frog and more frogs came forth until they swamped the land. Why didn't the guard just stop hitting it? ANGER!

Now anger isn't always bad. The *Torah* says: "ויחר אף ה'" - even *Hashem* gets angry. How can this be? The word "אף" is a strange expression. "אף" means nose. However, these words can be understood as: "*Hashem's Nose flared*." In other words, the anger of *Hashem* was shown on His face. He wasn't really ANGRY - it just appeared that way.

This is a lesson for every parent, teacher - for everyone. Sometimes, rather than actually becoming mad and losing control, we must "show" anger, as a deterrent to doing wrong. One is forbidden to hit a child out of anger. *Chinuch* is about controlling one's temper and instructing a child properly. We must work on ourselves to follow the example set by *Hashem* Himself, by only "showing an angry face" (external anger) as a necessary tool of instruction.