

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ולא תביא תועבה אל ביתך והיית חרם כמוו שקין תשקננו ותעב התעבנו כי חרם הוא ... (ו-ז)

In the summer of 5746 (1986) when the whole of *Eretz Yisroel* was in an uproar against immodest advertisements of the crudest nature which swept all neighborhoods, the Orthodox camp of G-d-fearing Jews reacted with bitter resentment and protest. They put up a vehement struggle against this ugly phenomenon, to the point of self-sacrifice. One day, a few *bachurim* from the *Chevron Yeshivah* went to a nearby bus stop that was plastered with such ads and sprayed them with black paint. The *Rosh Yeshivah*, **R' Simcha Zissel Broide ז"ל**, was very upset when he heard about what they had done. Although the *bachurim* may have believed that they were sanctifying the Name of Heaven by taking this action, R' Simcha Zissel felt quite the opposite. He held that a *ben yeshivah* ought to be completely submerged in *Torah* learning and not become involved in any other concern, however important it might be. Moreover, he said that acts of this nature were harmful to their *middos*, and that no young man whose mind was really engaged in the *Torah* could get involved in them.

When the authorities became even more antagonistic, **R' Elazar Menachem Shach ז"ל**, **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ז"ל**, and **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ז"ל**, wrote an open letter of protest and stated that people were obligated to do their utmost to stop this evil. R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach went out of his way to write a letter, which was published in the newspapers, in which he announced that he was personally going to go out in the streets and remove the shameful pictures with his own hands, even if he was to be arrested and put in jail. So harmful and destructive those ugly ads were!

The authorities, on the other hand, in whose power it was to curb the circulation of those abominable pictures, displayed heartless indifference and, on the contrary, expanded the dispersion of the lewd pictures all over the country, accompanied by powerful propaganda and an unprecedented venomous smear-campaign against what they called "Orthodox violence." The courts were harsh, meting out steep fines or even prison sentences to anyone brought in on charges of tampering with the ads.

But the more adamant and obstinate the authorities' attitude became, the more relentless and vehement the public struggle grew. The list of selfless, strong-willed Orthodox activists who took to the streets at the risk of being thrown into prison to remove the lewd ads from the walls and the city buses, was growing longer every day. When the authorities realized they were facing such a strong and angry opposition from the observant public, they retreated. All at once the crude advertisements were removed from the walls of every city and settlement, even the most secular *kibbutzim*, all over the country.

Seeing that they had lost the battle, the authorities poured out their anger and frustration on two gallant young men who had been the first to step out openly against the nationwide wave of depravity and paved the way for the public struggle that took place afterwards. These two young men had been severely beaten and humiliated by the police, and then they were sentenced to exaggerated prison terms, to be served in horrible conditions. The more the public struggle intensified, the worse their treatment in prison grew. At the peak of the anti-immorality campaign, a large group of *Chevron Yeshivah bachurim* decided on their own initiative to write an open letter expressing their solidarity and offering moral support to the two young heroes who were rotting away in jail. The letter was signed by three hundred *bonei yeshivah* on Thursday, the 27th of *Iyar* and that same evening it was forwarded to the Ramle prison by special messenger.

When R' Simcha Zissel heard about the letter, his response was different. "With regard to identification with the public struggle, it is incumbent upon every *ben Torah*, to be personally pained and to lament the degradation of *Torah*, because it is not any other Jew's trouble more than his own. A *ben Torah* who displays an indifferent attitude and is not pained by the humiliation of the *Torah* shows that he does not fully belong to the holy camp of Israel. A *ben Torah* must not get actively involved, but at the same time, if he feels totally indifferent and it doesn't hurt him to see the degradation of *Torah*, it betrays his own dissociation from it. I was quite pleased when I read that letter - when I saw that in this time of moral degradation and deterioration of values, the *bonei yeshivah* feel personally involved and pained by it." (adapted from "Prince of the Kingdom" Feldheim Publishers)

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

כי עתה תצרי מושב ורחוק מבלעדיך ... נשה לי ואשבה ... (ישעי' חמ"ב-חמ"ג)
Yeshaya HaNavi describes the feeling of hopelessness and abandonment felt by *Klal Yisroel* in the aftermath of the devastating *Churban*, and how the land was resettled by outsiders leaving no room for the *Bnei Yisroel* - as it says in the *posukim*: "Your land laid waste ... crowded with settlers ... too crowded for me ..." (*Yeshaya* 49:19-20).

However, *Chazal* repeatedly tell us that even in exile the land of *Eretz Yisroel* is called "*Eretz Tzvi*" since just like a deer's skin is stretched tight to fit over its frame, the land of Israel expands to accommodate those who dwell in it. So, how is it that there is no room left for *Klal Yisroel* to return?

R' Shimon Schwab ז"ל quotes **R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ז"ל** who explains that the underlying reason for the

Churban and the *golus* that *Klal Yisroel* was subjected to, was baseless hatred and a lack of care and concern for one Jew to another. This created a rift and distance that was palpable between fellow Jews. He therefore explains that the words of the *Navi*, "גשה לי ואשבה," seem to imply that when *Klal Yisroel* will come to *Eretz Yisroel*, there will be no place left for them to resettle. However, the words "גשה לי" - "draw close to me" can be understood separately from the rest of the *posuk* - underscoring the importance of *Klal Yisroel's* return to *Hashem*. For if the Jewish people turn back from their sinful ways and "Return to Me [*Hashem*]," then *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will enable their return by telling the Land of Israel to expand and allow them in.

ועתה ישראל מה ה' אליךך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אליךך ... (י-יב)

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

מחשבת הלב

Sefer Maharam Brisk says a nice *remez* on this oft-quoted *posuk*. He writes that there are 45 days from *באב ט"ו* until *ראש השנה* (this *parsha* coincides with that timetable). Thus, says the *posuk*, "מה" has the numerical value of 45. What does *Hashem* want from us in this 45-day period? "ליראה את ה'" - to work on our *שמים* יראת. And as the *posuk* continues, to go in His ways, love Him and serve Him with all your heart and soul.

I would be remiss if I neglected to mention the *Gemara* which extrapolates from this *posuk* the *halacha* of saying *מאה* *ברכות* each day. *אל תקרי מה אלא מאה*. What's the reason that *Chazal* felt the need to change the reading of the word from *מה* to *מאה*? The *Medrash (Bamidbar Rabba 18)* relates that in the time of *Dovid HaMelech* there was a plague where one hundred people died every day. To stop the plague, *Dovid HaMelech* instituted that the Jewish people should recite 100 *berachos* daily, and the plague ended. The *machshava* is that when a person doesn't just say the *beracha* by rote, but focuses rather on its meaning and is filled with true gratitude to *Hashem*, that is what enables a person to increase the fear of *Hashem* that our referenced *posuk* alludes to. That *יראה* is what prevents illness and epidemics.

There is another area which at this time of year begs improvement. That is our *Ahavas Yisroel*. The *posuk* in the *Hafarah* says "קרוב מצדיקי מי יריב אתי נעמדה יחד". *Hashem* is close to me, so anyone that wishes to wage war is welcome to try. I am confident in His protection. The same *sefer* quoted above explains this *דרוש* יחד. The *Aibishter* is telling us, that the success of your *Tishrei* judgment, is conditional on one thing: נעמדה יחד - your standing together in unity as one.

May we all *chap arein* these last few weeks of the summer to focus on these areas of *Avodas Hashem* and *Ahavas Chaveirim*, ushering in *chodesh Elul*. הבא עלינו לטובה.

משל למה הדבר דומה

והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם (ו-ז)
In the little Polish town of Radin, there lived a pharmacist who worked hard providing people with their prescriptions and remedies for their ailments and sicknesses. One day, the **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל** came in to his store to pick up some medication, and as he was leaving, he went over to the pharmacist and gave him a warm handshake.

"I envy you," the *Chofetz Chaim* said out loud to him. "Me?" the pharmacist exclaimed. "I'm just a simple person, and I'm not even observant. Why would you envy me?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* told him, "Don't you realize that with every prescription you fill you are saving a life. *Chazal* say that 'One who saves a *neshamah* is considered as if he saved an entire world,' and therefore you're saving entire worlds with your work every day!"

This was the only conversation the pharmacist ever had with the *Chofetz Chaim*, yet it changed his entire life. Although he was a man who was devoid of anything Jewish in his life and his heart, he was aroused by the warm words of the great *Torah Sage*. From then on, he began valuing the job that he had, as he began to realize that every prescription he filled was another *mitzvah*. This led to him keeping other *mitzvos* until he became fully observant.

נמשל: The *parsha* begins by telling us that if even the lesser commandments which a person sometimes treads on with his heels (דש בעקב) and overlooks you will heed, then you will be rewarded greatly. In our day-to-day lives, there are many situations, which if conducted properly with pure intentions, such as helping others and sanctifying the Almighty, great rewards await us. It is amazing to think how one can turn mundane actions into a citadel of *mitzvos*!

ועתה ישראל מה ה' אליךך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אליךך ... (י-יב)

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

דרגה יתירה

The **Chovos HaLevavos** explains that *Hashem* created you for one reason - to give to YOU. *Hashem* is magnanimous, loving and kind. *Hashem* wants to share of His good. *Hashem* made you - not because you were worthy, not because of anything that you did, nor because of anything that you will do. *Hashem* made you for one reason: to give to YOU.

But what does *Hashem* want from YOU? What does He really desire from YOU? He gave you 613 laws, plenty of holidays and thousands of customs, but what is the purpose of it all? What is the *raison d'être* of a Jew?

The answer is three words: "כי אם ליראה" - TO FEAR HIM, and serve Him with all your heart and soul. In essence, all of our material accomplishments are meaningless, and in the world of truth we will not even be given credit for how much money we've made, because in truth, these are not OUR accomplishments. *Hashem* makes them happen through us. As **R' Emmanuel Tehilla שליטא** verbalized so profoundly, "What we HAVE is *Hashem's* gift to us; what we BECOME is our gift to *Hashem*!" The only REAL accomplishment in life, and truthfully the entire purpose of our lives is Fear of Heaven, as *Chazal* teach: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for Fear of Heaven."

Moshe Rabbeinu told the Jewish people to fear *Hashem*, making it sound like a simple matter because he himself had reached such a high level in this area that it was natural for him (ברכות לג). However, for the rest of us, it is no simple matter. Fear is the natural instinct of a person when there is danger involved. But fearing *Hashem* is foreign to the human psyche and requires continuous reminders and exercises to work on. The 613 *mitzvos* and thousands of *minhagim*, are all aids so that we may apply our intellect to understand what we are doing in order to be imbued with *Yiras Hashem* through performing His will. This is the goal of all the *mitzvos*, and if we succeed in this area we have achieved the purpose of life!