

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם ... (כב-לב)

What is true heroism? How does one make a real *Kiddush Hashem* in this world? There are many stories of people who acted admirably during the Holocaust to rescue others and help the survivors. This is the story of the *Tzaddik, R' Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson zt"l Hy"d*, one of Warsaw's oldest *Rabbanim*, a member of its *Vaad HaRabbanim* and author of *Sefer Tirosh V'yitzhar*, who at the age of 79, became one of the 700,000 Jews killed in the death camp of Treblinka.

Early in 1942 the Germans first began their systematic raids on the Warsaw ghetto, snatching Jewish men, women and children from the warrens in which they had been "resettled" and transporting them to the extermination camps. In the very first of these raids the Germans, aided by Ukrainian soldiers, surrounded the house in which R' Tzvi Michelson lived, and shouted through their megaphones that all those inside were to come out into the courtyard at once.

All the Jews in the building obeyed the German command, except for R' Michelson, who refused to budge. Those who would remain in their rooms, he reasoned, would soon be rooted out by the German soldiers. Their travail would not last long; they would be gunned down on the spot, and their bodies would be flung out into the street. There, chances were that other Jews would find them, pile them upon the carts that creaked through the ghetto alleys to collect the dead, and bury them in accordance with Jewish law. Those who would go to the Germans in the courtyard, on the other hand, would be loaded by the storm troopers onto trucks and taken to the death camps. There they would die, too, but not without suffering. Even worse, from what the rabbi had heard, they would not be buried at all but cremated, in violation of the *Torah*.

And so R' Michelson prepared himself to meet death as befitted a man of his age and tradition. He put on his *Tefillin*, draped his *tallis* around his spare body, bolted the door of his room and sat down to learn, waiting for the Germans to come.

But things did not happen the way the he had expected. Yes, the Germans, accompanied by a Jewish ghetto policeman, kicked open the door and burst into R' Michelson's room. But when the storm troopers saw the venerable old man with his long, flowing white beard standing upright before them, stern of countenance and draped from shoulder to foot in his snow-white *tallis* with the imposing silver *atara*, they were immobilized by an awe, indeed a fear, such as they probably had never known before. Years later, the ghetto policeman, who survived the war, was to tell the end of the story. "He looked like the prophet Moses himself!" the policeman heard one of the Germans mutter. With that, the German silently turned and led his comrades out of the room, slamming the door and leaving R' Michelson untouched.

Alone in his little room, the rabbi could hear the babble of the crowd in the courtyard below, mingled with the raucous shouts of the German stormtroopers. From his tiny window, he could see the others from his house being shoved onto huge German army trucks. And a thought far more frightening than death came to him. True, he had been granted a miraculous reprieve. But for how long? When the Germans would recover from their surprise, they would return and shoot him. That is how he would die, and he would die alone. In effect, by refusing to leave his room he had run away like a coward; he had deserted his brethren. Which, he asked himself, was the proper alternative: to die alone, with the unlikely chance that he alone might be found by some Jewish survivors outside and given a proper Jewish burial, or to go out to his brethren and be with them on their final journey? Which was the proper way for him to die?

It did not take R' Michelson more than a moment to make his decision. He turned from the window, adjusted his *tallis*, and strode from the room. With firm steps, he descended the stairs and marched into the courtyard where he joined the others on their way to the Umschlagplatz, the assembly point from where they all were taken to Treblinka. He remained a source of comfort and inspiration to his brethren, and when the end came, he shared in their fate. He is among the millions who have no grave, but he has a lasting memorial in the annals of Jewish valor. (Excerpt from "The Unconquerable Spirit" - Zachor Institute)

והבהנים הלוים בני צדוק ... (יהוהאל-מז-טו)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Chazal teach us that the *Kohanim* maintain a special status in *Klal Yisroel* and must always be meticulous in their service, their personal care, appearance, priestly garments, the people they can marry, their calling as teachers and spiritual leaders, and their special purity requirements. In his prophecy about the third *Bais HaMikdash*, *Yechezkel HaNavi* details the particulars of a *Kohen's* lifestyle and declares, "And the *Kohanim*, the *Leviim*, sons of *Tzadok*." Interestingly, *Yechezkel* seems to make no distinction between a *Kohen* or a *Levi*. The question is why?

The **Ariza'i** explains that *Kohanim* have the ability to bring down a fleeting inspiration from heaven. However, the moment it wears off, the people often revert back to their old

ways. A *Levi's* inspiration lasts. His singing and music create a yearning which the people use to get closer to *Hashem*.

Indeed, notes **Rabbi Y. Hurwitz shlit"a**, the *avodah* of a *Kohen* is completely devoted to lofty spiritual deeds. The *Korbanos* and sprinklings he performs, do not provide physical pleasure and thus, the inspiration he creates tends to dissipate rather quickly. *Leviim*, on the other hand, draw their inspiration from music and song, and their inspiration (although not as strong) tends to linger longer. Perhaps the *avoda* of the *Kohanim* is more powerful, but without the emotional attachment of the *Levi's* musical inspiration, one will find it difficult to hold onto that lofty stimulation. Thus, *Kohanim* and *Leviim* must work in tandem to bring about true inspiration.

כל איש אשר בו מום מודע אחריו הכהן לא יגש להקריב את אשיו ה' מום בו ... (יב-יז)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

The *Torah* prohibits a *kohen* with a blemish, a בעל מום, from performing the *avodah* in the *Bais Hamikdash*. However, in the midst of this *parsha*, we encounter another *posuk* in which the *Torah* gives the same בעל מום an allowance to partake and eat from the *korbanos*. At first glance one would think it would have been more appropriate to list all the prohibitions, and then afterwards, mention the leniencies. And yet it seems that the leniency is found right in the middle of the stringencies.

Perhaps the *Torah* is conveying to us an invaluable message. When we have no choice but to rebuke another individual, it must be wrapped in soft wrapping paper. It must be cushioned, in order to mitigate the harsh blow. That may be why the *posuk* doesn't lay out all the *issurim* all at once. Instead, it affords the *kohen* in question the possibility to join his fellow *kohanim* in their festivities while eating from the *korbanos*. This way, the בעל מום will have an easier time accepting his fate.

Rashi states that the reason a בעל מום is not permitted to join his fellow *kohanim* in performing the *avodah* is based on the words in *Malachi*: "וקריבו נא לפתוך" - Only beautiful adornings may be used. **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l** writes that the *Torah* doesn't always give a reason for its prohibitions, yet, here when dealing with a person who is restricted, an explanation is necessary. When speaking once to a group of *menahelim*, R' Moshe explained: "Before reprimanding a student, and certainly before suspending him, a teacher must communicate the reason for his action." Based on the above, he must also cushion the blow with ample compliments, otherwise the damage can *ch"v* be irreparable. This *mehalech* should apply to all our interactions - an employer, a parent, and even a spouse. As we inch closer to *Matan Torah*, when *Klal Yisroel* were united as one, we too, must ensure that even those on the fringe remain with us by drawing them closer and closer. *b'ezras Hashem*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ושמת אותם שתיים מערכות שש המערכת על השלוחן המהר (כד-ו) **משל**: A young *kollel* family was having trouble making ends meet. The *yungerman* wanted very badly to continue studying *Torah* in *kollel* undisturbed and his wife, the *eishes chayil* that she was, wished to support his choice and find a job that would earn them a living. The problem was, try as she might, she simply could not find one. She was talented and capable, and tried sending her resume to numerous job offerings she thought might be for her, but nothing came of it.

Frustrated in their current situation, they came to the conclusion that they had done their *hishtadlus*, all that they could, and now it was up to *Hashem* for the rest.

One day, the woman was in a store when a young girl asked to borrow her cellphone to make a local call. When no one answered, the girl handed back the phone, thanked her and walked off. A few minutes later, the phone rang. "Hello,

someone called my number. Were you trying to reach me?"

The woman, completely forgetting that someone had borrowed her phone a bit earlier, answered with hesitation. "Umm ... it is possible that I contacted you regarding my resume," was all she could think of to say. The pleasant man on the other line asked her about her job description and resume, and then happily referred her to a friend who was looking to fill the position. *Boruch Hashem*, she got the job! **משל**: The *shulchan* in the *Bais Hamikdash* and the *lechem hapanim* which was constantly upon it, reminds us that all livelihood comes from *Hashem*. The **Imrei Emes of Ger** explains the words "לרם הפנים" based on *Chazal* who interpret it as the "bread of many faces." The way one shows his face to *Hashem* is the way *Hashem* will show his face back to him. "כמים פנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם". Hence, a happy trusting face towards *Hashem* will receive the trusting Face of *Hashem* in return, and all the blessings that comes with it.

ביבות ספירת העומר שספרתי יתקן מה שפגמתי בספירה נצח שבנצח ... (סדר ספירת העומר)

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

דרגה יתירה

Towards the end of *Krias Shema* we say, "*L'maan yirbu yemeichem ... kimei shamayim al Haaretz*." This means that our days should be HEAVENLY days upon the earth. Every *yid* is supposed to live with a heavenly spiritual perspective on life. There really are two ways of looking at everything in this world. We can see the here and now, and become angry and upset when things are not the way we think they are supposed to be. OR, we can see the bigger picture. We can attach ourselves to *Hashem's* world of eternity, where past, present and future are one. It is the world of *Malchus Hashem* where we believe that everything happens exactly the way it is supposed to. There are no mistakes. There is a plan and purpose, meaning and value in every situation and every single second of life. What we perceive as the worst thing in the world can instantly be flipped over to become the greatest ideal in the world just by perceiving the situation through NETZACH glasses.

What is an insult? It can be viewed as a mean, nasty hurtful comment that deserves retaliation. That is the way an insult is viewed if you are wearing your "Olam Haze" glasses. But an insult can be perceived as the greatest opportunity to have all of your sins forgiven. All you have to do is keep your mouth shut. Do not answer back and you have instantly become a perfect *tzaddik*. Wow. What wouldn't we do for such an awesome opportunity? But the only way to actually pull this off is if you are wearing your NETZACH glasses. The *midda* of *Netzach* is the *midda* of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, the most humble man who ever lived. Humility is the prerequisite for *Netzach*. When a person feels entitled and believes that he deserves to be treated a certain way by others, it is hard to connect to something bigger. By working on this *midda*, we can change the physical into the spiritual, the mundane into the uplifted, and the most negative reactions into holy and meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth. Victory is called NITZACHON, because the way to truly be a winner and conquer the *yetzer hara* is with the *midda* of *Netzach*.