



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

עין לא האמתם בני להקדישני לעיני בני ישראל לכן לא תביאו את הקהל הזה אל הארץ אשר נתתי להם ... (כ-יב)

In this weeks *parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu* is punished for failing to sanctify *Hashem's* name. According to the **Ramban**, when *Hashem* told Moshe to draw water from the rock, instead of speaking to it he struck it with his stick. This was his failure. As much as hitting the rock was a *Kiddush Hashem*, talking to the rock would have been far greater. *Kiddush Hashem* is the essence of the Jewish people, thus its not measured by what we do - it is measured by what we are capable of doing.

It was an exciting day at Camp *Chayos Hakodesh*, a summer day camp in Denver, CO. The head staff arranged a day-trip to the local courthouse, where the campers would have the opportunity to watch an actual criminal trial. Some kids thought it was “lame” but the counselors were instructed to make it “exciting” and by the time the trip began, all the campers were buzzing.

When they arrived at the courthouse, a police officer explained the workings of the court, and then the campers settled down to watch the show. The trial was very exciting for the children. A foreign woman with a veil covering her face was brought into the court by a policeman, and it was announced that she was accused of stealing items from a local store. The attorneys for the prosecution and the defense made their cases, and each side brought a witness to testify and be cross-examined. After fifteen minutes, it became clear that each of the two witnesses had given a different description of the accused; one claimed that she was dark-skinned, while the other maintained that she had a fair complexion. It was as if they were talking about two entirely different people. The judge ordered her to remove her veil, and she shook her head to indicate her refusal.

The judge explained that the only she can prove her innocence is by removing her veil. A police officer approached the woman and pulled the veil off her head. The campers gasped in shock, as the “defendant” turned out to be not a “foreign” woman at all, but one of their counselors, with his face painted blue and green. “Color War!” the counselor shouted, surprising and delighting the children. The judge, the attorneys, and the police officers, all of whom were real, had graciously agreed to stage a mock trial for the boys as part of the color war breakout plan. Apparently, it wasn’t a busy day in the courthouse!

“Order in the court!” the judge called, banging his gavel, as he produced a new sheaf of papers. The head counselor had provided him with a short speech to read on the topic of “סוד מרע” and “עשה טוב” - the names of the color war teams, representing these two concepts, and the campers were charged with learning about each of them and understanding the need for both. “It isn’t enough to stay away from evil,” the judge read aloud. “One must also contribute to goodness.”

The police officers later complimented the counselors on the campers’ excellent behavior during the mock trial, offering to repeat the performance in a future summer. But perhaps the most fascinating reaction was that of the judge himself. When the head counselor thanked the judge for his involvement, the judge replied, “I should be the one to thank you for asking me to do this, because I really learned a lot from it. When I was explaining the themes and speaking about how a person must constantly evaluate his actions, making sure to avoid evil and constantly do good things, it caused me to realize that I should be examining my own life in the same way. I never thought about life in this sense, and I thank you for enlightening me.”

A week later, Rabbi Chaim Sher, the owner of Camp *Chayos Hakodesh*, received a surprising call from a non-Jewish woman. The caller explained that her son had been caught shoplifting, and the judge had sentenced him to sixteen hours of community service. The judge, who was the same judge who had presided over the color war breakout, suggested that the boy’s community work should be done for Camp *Chayos Hakodesh*. He explained that he is familiar with this particular camp, it’s a Jewish religious camp where the children are taught and practice high standards of behavior. He told the mother that perhaps the campers of this wonderful camp would exert a positive influence on him. The mother asked Rabbi Sher, with a hint of desperation in her voice, if the camp had any work that her son could perform and he said he would look into it. Rabbi Sher was awed by the impact that the camp had on this non-Jewish judge. (Email LivingKiddushHashem@gmail.com for a free file of sefer Mekadshai Shemecha)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

**Balak**, King of Moav, recruited the infamous prophet, Bilaam, to help ensnare the Jewish Nation to sin through immoral activity. Ironically, when recalling the events, *Micha HaNavi* states, “From Shittim to Gilgal, may you recognize the righteous deeds of Hashem.” Until this point, Shittim is only mentioned in conjunction with the illicit activity of the *Bnos Moav*, surely not a place that brings the Nation to “recognize the righteous deeds of Hashem.”

**R’ Shimon Schwab zt”l (Ma’ayan Beis Ha’Shoeva)** explains that prior to entering *Eretz Yisroel*, *Yehoshua Bin Nun* sent spies to scout the best entry points, and although Shittim was not situated on the border, *Yehoshua* specifically sent off the spies from there. Furthermore, upon entering the

land, the spies went straight to the home of *Rachav* who was known for her immoral activity. Why did they go there?

The spies understood that leaving from Shittim denoted another aspect of their mission in *Eretz Yisroel* - the rectification of *Klal Yisroel's* sin with the *Bnos Moav* in Shittim. Thus, by starting the holy conquest of the land from Shittim, the sin would be uprooted and *Klal Yisroel* would have additional protection from further sins of the kind. Additionally, by acting with holiness in *Rachav's* home, the spies managed to not only stop her nefarious activity, but she converted to Judaism thereby beginning the process of rectifying *Klal Yisroel's* previous sins while removing the means for such sins to reoccur when they enter the new land.

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

וראמר ה' אל משה עשה לך שרף ושנים אתו על נם וזהו כל הנשדך וראה אתו וד ... (מג-ו)

לעלמי נשמח אבינו מורינו רבינו הרב חיים יוסף בן ר' ישראל אברהם קויפמאן זצ"ל

# מחשבת הלב

The oft-quoted *mishnah* in *Rosh Hashanah* states: “וכי נחש ממת או נחש מחיה?” - Does (looking at) the snake give life and revive one’s soul? Certainly not. Rather when one looks up and gazes at the serpent, he will be reminded of the “הקב”ה. He will then cling to *Hashem* and be “משעבד לבם” to *Avinu Shebashamayim* - and with that, he will become healed.

The **Sefas Emes** asks a penetrating question: Why not just skip the “middleman” and have the smitten person just *daven* directly to *Hashem*? Why must he look at a snake in order to come to the realization that *Hashem* is healing him? He answers as follows: The *Rishonim* write that based on the laws of medicine, if one is bitten by a rabid animal and then stares at said animal, or conjures up an image of that animal, it can be fatal. Yet, here *Hashem* orchestrated a miracle that the culprit itself - the snake - should serve as the catalyst for the *refuah*. Why? Because *Hashem* wants to teach us a vital lesson. Even when dealing with a “*gashmiusdike*” *refuah*, one must remember who is really in charge. It is a test to see if we yearn to break free from the constraints of *הסתר פנים*, the pitfalls of *teva* and nature and realize that, in reality, it all comes from the One Above. This, adds the *Sefas Emes*, is what the *Torah* refers to when it says, “עשה לך שרף”. In other words, create for yourself a burning passion. The “*bren*” of a *Yid*. That will enable you to experience life, not as a collection of occurrences, but rather of seeing the *Yad Hashem* in everything. *נש* too is a *נש*!

Perhaps that is the deeper meaning of the next words, “ושם אורו על נש” - place this “*bren*”, this fire, on top of “*nes*” - miracles. Because seeing *Hashem* in darkness is much more difficult to achieve than recognizing the Almighty when it is totally bright and clear. May our lives be filled with this awareness and closeness as we serve *Hashem* with this *bren*!

## משל למת הדבר דומה

לא אוכל לעבר את פי ה' אלמך לעשות קמנה או גדולה ... (כב-ה) **R' Yisroel Belsky zt”l** related the following story: I once met a citizen of the former Soviet Union who worked in a factory and held the lofty position of “politruk” a type of political commissar. His job was to ensure that all of the factory the workers were firm believers in the ideals of Communism. The biggest “sin” in the Soviet Union was to be a private capitalistic businessman, to buy and sell goods and distribute them outside the government controlled system. However, this died-in-the-wool Communist, was himself a successful black-market businessman.

Being an innocent American, I asked how a person could live such a double life. He laughed and said, “Everyone in Russia is more than one person. It’s not easy in our country. You must practice splitting yourself into many different people, depending on the circumstances. All these people

you see in this factory live in the same body, but remain completely separate.” In fact, this politruk was a genuine individual, and although he was aware of the contradiction, it did not affect his day-to-day life. When Stalin died, he sat on the floor the whole day and cried, yet the next night he continued with his thriving capitalist enterprise.

**נמשל**: Bilaam managed to maintain two separate personas. He was a living contradiction. Despite being a despicable human being; envious, haughty, and greedy, he succeeded in maintaining another personality characterized by a sterling character, gracious, humble, and satisfied. Though it does not seem to make sense, many of us unfortunately do this very thing all the time. Although we may not like to admit it, many of us have resigned ourselves to exhibit certain faults of character in particular situations that are entirely inconsistent with what we generally expect of ourselves. To a greater or lesser degree, this is an aspect of Bilaam’s malady.

## דרגה יתירה

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHELOMO  
Regarding the death of *Miriam*, the *Torah* is quite explicit: “*Miriam died THERE and THERE she was buried.*” Why the redundancy in the word “there”? **R’ Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt”l** says something quite beautiful and explains that the *Torah* is providing us with an insight into the life of a great woman, a Matriarch of the Jewish people. *Miriam Haneviah* had completed her mission on earth. She had watched over and protected her people, just as she had watched over and protected her younger brother in Egypt. She was buried “THERE” - in a grave in *Kadesh* in order to show future generations that she did not leave this world until the next generation was ready and fully prepared to enter into the future that had been promised to them.

Indeed, during *Klal Yisroel's* long wanderings, filled with so many sad and negative experiences, it was consistently the women who were least implicated in the frequent incidents of defection born of despair. It was the women who did the most to preserve serene trust and persevering devotion to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. This, according to the *Medrash* was the reason why the women were not included in the decree under which the entire old generation had to die out before the nation could enter the Holy Land. As a result, the women, as grandmothers and mothers, were able to go with the new generation as they entered *Eretz Yisroel* to begin their new future, and to bring with them into that new future, their personal recollections of the past in Egypt and of the momentous events they had witnessed in the wilderness under the protection and guidance of *Hashem*.

Thus the *נשים צדקניות* - *righteous women*, were given the opportunity to inspire their children and children’s children with the spirit of the revealing experiences that they themselves had witnessed. The fact that these Jewish women were so deeply and thoroughly imbued with *ruchniyos* and the holy Jewish spirit may be ascribed in no small part to *Miriam*, who set them a shining example as a prophetess. May we all learn from the experiences of previous generations for the betterment of future ones.