

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויקרא משה ליהושע ויאמר אליו ... חזק ואמץ כי אתה תבוא את העם הזה אל הארץ אשר נשבע ה' לאבתם לתת להם (לא-1)

On the final day of his life, Moshe called *Yehoshua Bin Nun* and infused him with energy and strength to fulfill the mission to lead the Jewish people into *Eretz Yisroel*. He told him, “*Chazak V'ematz*” - Be strong and courageous, for you will be the one to bring the Nation into the Holy Land. **Rashi** quotes the *Gemara in Sanhedrin 8a* as follows: “*By the statement “You shall go (תבוא) with the people” (as one of them), Moshe Rabbeinu said in effect to Yehoshua: The elders of the generation will be with you, everything has to be done according to their opinion and their advice. In contrast, however, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Yehoshua, “For you shall bring (תביא) the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them,” in other words, you (Yehoshua) shall bring them even against their will - everything depends on you alone. If necessary take a stick and beat them over the head - there can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation.*” Even amongst *Bnei Yisroel*, there will be those who rise up against the word of *Hashem* and Yehoshua was ordered to deal with them forcefully in order to convince them of the Divine purpose of the mission.

From the moment of the State of Israel’s birth, the army has occupied a central role in society. In 1948, with the country in the throes of its War of Independence, the interim government ordered the establishment of one unified military that was called *Tzvah Hagannah L’Yisrael* - abbreviated to *Tzahal* - Hebrew for “Israel Defense Forces.” Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, urged by *Torah* leaders of the generation and motivated by a desire to avoid political conflict with the ultra-orthodox, as well as to help revive the *Charedi* community which were decimated by Holocaust, agreed to an exemption of military service and the draft, for those who learn *Torah* and study in *yeshivah* full-time. Unfortunately, this has been a constant point of contention between secular and religious Israelis.

In 1968, the Israeli government under Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, appointed a commission to reconsider the draft exemption provided to *yeshivah* students. It was immediately after the Six-Day war and many Israelis, including quite a few government officials, were of the opinion that the original exemption agreed upon by Ben-Gurion, should not be continued. As a result, they pushed with considerable pressure and influence to see this matter reconsidered. Numerous meetings were held and, like most issues in the Knesset, a contentious debate erupted.

R’ Yechezkel Abramsky ז”ל, as president of the “*Va’ad HaYeshivos*” was invited to address the commission.

Midway through his speech, one of the government ministers stood up and rudely interrupted R’ Abramsky. “Rabbi, let me ask you a question. Doesn’t your honor agree that actively defending the country of Israel, is more important and serves more of a purpose than just sitting around in a room and studying the *Torah*?”

R’ Yechezkel was unruffled and immediately answered the brazen minister. “The words in the beginning of *Sefer Yehoshua* prove the supremacy of *Torah*,” R’ Yechezkel responded. “We read that *Hashem* gave Yehoshua two commandments: to conquer the land and to study and keep the *Torah*. Regarding the first, *Hashem* said, אתה חזק ואמץ כי אתה” “*Be strong and courageous for you will inherit the Nation and take over the land.*” Regarding the latter, however, *Hashem* added a word to his missive. “חזק ואמץ מאד לשמור לעשות ככל התורה אשר צדקמשה עבדו” - *Be very strong and courageous in order to keep the whole Torah which My servant Moshe commanded you.*”

R’ Abramsky looked hard at the minister and then swept his gaze around the room. “Note,” concluded R’ Yechezkel, “in which case *Hashem* added the emphasis ‘מאד’ - ‘very’. It is by the express commandment to protect the integrity of the *Torah*, to study it and to keep its *mitzvos*. Obviously, the lesson is clear: It is more important in the eyes of G-d to defend the *Torah* and those who learn and fulfill it, for by doing so, we are in fact exhibiting the greatest defense of the Nation and the Land of Israel!” R’ Yechezkel’s heartfelt words made their mark on all those present and the motion was shelved.

שובה ישראל עד ה' אלךך ... (השעך ד-ב)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

“*Shuva Yisroel!*” The immortal words of *Hoshea HaNavi* and the opening words of the *Haftorah* of *Shabbos Shuva*. The *Navi* implores *Bnei Yisroel* to see the folly of their ways and repent wholeheartedly. Interestingly, while the *Haftorah* opens with the words “שובה ישראל עד ה' אלךך”, the *Navi* seems to repeat himself immediately thereafter, with the words, “קרו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה'”. Why does he do that?

R’ Yaakov Kamenetzky ז”ל (Emes L’Yaakov) explains that both statements are indeed needed since there is a major difference between the two. During the *Yamim Noraim* season, many people focus on their personal repentance, yet it is interesting to note that the *Tefillos* are mostly geared towards *Klal Yisroel* as a Nation. This dichotomy illustrates

that while self-introspection is undoubtedly important, it is also important to focus on ways that *Klal Yisroel*, the entire Nation as a whole, can become better.

In his opening statement, *Hoshea HaNavi* stated the words, “שובה ישראל עד ה'” in the singular form, as a reference to the individual Jew who must work on his own personal return to the Almighty. However, the *Navi* then continues and states, “שובו אל ה'” in the plural form, denoting the repentance and return to *Hashem* of the Jewish people as a Nation.

In these days of awe, it’s important to remember that each individual is still a big part of the *Klal, Klal Yisroel*, and we must all do our part to ensure that the Jewish people all over the world have a *G’mar Chasima Tovah*.

וילך משה וידבר את הדברים האלה אל כל ישראל ... (ב-1)

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

מחשבת הלב

Countless commentaries suggest explanations on the word “וילך”. Exactly where did *Moshe Rabbeinu* go? Perhaps we can offer a *machshava* as well, but first let’s present a *pshat* which will lead to this thought. The *Medrash on Nitzavim* comments: “הרבה פעמים” - *Many times, one delays and doesn’t daven right away; either because he is busy working or traveling. So until when can he daven?* (בדיעבד) *Shacharis - until chatzot. Mincha - until sundown.* What connection does this have to the parsha?

The *Medrash* is teaching us a vital lesson for our everyday life. We wake up in the morning and get busy with our day. We go about our business and casually forget the One who allowed us to rise, the One who is constantly helping us. The *Torah* is reminding us: Do you know how to begin to face the day? Stand up - *Nitzavim!* But first & foremost, start your day off right, by *davening* to *Hashem*, thanking Him. Then, and only then, comes *Vayeilech* - may you proceed, *going* about your day!

Moshe Rabbeinu - the quintessential educator - imparted an eternal lesson through his actions on his last day. “וילך משה” - Moshe went. He never stopped. Never ceasing to serve *Hashem*. Inspiring, encouraging and teaching *Klal Yisroel* our precious heritage and *Torah*. Because even on his last day on earth, Moshe showed us that time is racing - every precious moment counts. *Vayeilech!* And to the service of *Hashem* we are *going!* And there is nothing else as important. Even then.

On *Yom Kippur* we will recite the *viduy* numerous times. In it we say “תענינו” - we are lost and have gone astray. On *Yom Kippur*, we have the clarity to realize that our engines must be cleaned and our GPS reset to a new and even higher destination than the previous year. This is the time of “*Nitzavim* and then *Vayeilech*.” To a destination that will enable us to “*stand*” in front of *Hashem*, and then “*go*” higher in His service. On *Yom Kippur* we are given the unique opportunity that no matter how far we may have strayed, we can always find the road back. May we be *zoche* that the *אבות* accept our *teshuva*, and we should *daven* for all the lost souls to return and “go back” onto the right track. *פתח לנו שער בעת נעילת שער, גמר חתימה טובה.*

משל למה הדבר דומה

הרשענו פשענו לכן לא נושענו ותן בלבנו לעוב דרך רשע (מלכות) **משל**: Many have become a *Baal Teshuva* because they realized hypocritical behavior within themselves. A number of years ago, in Los Angeles, a secular Jew was enjoying a night out on the town with some non-Jewish friends. They were planning to see a concert and they were running late. However, at one local intersection, it was taking a very long time for traffic to move. As they creeped closer, they saw a crossing guard directing traffic. When the crossing guard at the traffic light consistently allowed people to cross the street while they waited at the traffic light for seemingly an endless amount of time, although he had a green light, he finally complained. He rolled down his window and said to the guard, “Hey, how come you are letting all those people cross when I have a green light?”

The guard told him he was instructed, that when he saw any Jewish people walking towards the traffic light, he

should halt traffic and allow them to cross the street first since today is their holiday of *Yom Kippur*, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. It would be disrespectful to make them wait on their way to the synagogue.

The man driving the car paused and the words had an impact on him. Indeed, it is disrespectful to ignore *Yom Kippur*, the holiest day of the year, and attend a concert instead. He decided right then and there to cancel his concert plans and go to a synagogue for *Yom Kippur* services. Through the din of complaints from his fellow passengers, he turned around and drove his friends home. Then, he put on a suit and went to a local synagogue.

Today, he is the father of a religious family in addition to being the *Gabbai* of the *shul*.

משל: Life takes its funny little turns and travails, and we must be cognizant of every aspect of our lives, to see the message it is sending us. *Teshuva* is a very powerful message and it comes to us in numerous ways. Look for it and you will find it.

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (סדר קריאת שמע)

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

דרגה יתירה

The *Medrash Rabbah (Parshas Vaeschanan 2:36)* states: “*Why do (Bnei) Yisroel not recite ‘Boruch Shem Kvod Malchuso...’ aloud? Rav Assi says: This can be compared to a person who stole a piece of jewelry from the king’s palace, gave it to his wife, and said to her, ‘Do not adorn yourself with it in public, only within your house.’ But on Yom Kippur, when we are as pure as angels, we say it publicly.*” What is deeper understanding of this *Medrash*?

The declaration of “*Baruch Shem*” represents the greatest state of perfection that a human being can reach; it is made by those who reveal *Hashem’s* honor and Kingship to the entire world. A Jew’s mission in life is to become a *tzelem Elokim* and thereby fill the world with His honor. If we were to do this properly, we would be considered like the QUEEN, who is married to the king and brings honor to him throughout His kingdom. But instead of doing this, we have remained enslaved by our physical drives and material pursuits, like the wife of the thief in the parable, who was deprived of her royal status. For us to utter ‘*Boruch Shem Kvod Malchuso...’* aloud would be a dishonor to *Hashem*, for we are not currently worthy of presenting ourselves as the bearers of His honor. Throughout the year, it is but a whisper of longing for that exalted state, a whisper of yearning for *Klal Yisroel* to be the QUEEN of the King of the universe, *Hashem* Himself. It is only on *Yom Kippur*, the day on which we rise to the level of *malachim* by completely detaching ourselves from the physical world, that we are permitted to make this declaration aloud. We have arrived at the level of our deepest yearning.