

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

והדר סיני עשן בלול מפני אשר ירד עליו ה' באש ויעל עשנו בעשן הכבשן ויחרר כל החר מאד ... (יש-ה)

“*Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua, Yehoshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the Anshei Knesses HaGedola - Men of the Great Assembly.*” (Avos 1-1) This is a basic tenet of our faith and an immutable fact. Moshe received *Torah Shebichsav* (Written *Torah*) as well as *Torah Shebal Peh* (Oral *Torah*), and there is an unbroken chain connecting the Sages and Rabbis of every generation with the revelation at Mount Sinai. Therefore the Oral *Torah*, observed and studied during the time of the *Mishna* and *Gemara* (and in subsequent generations as well), is not the creation of human beings, but is actually as divine in origin as is the written *Torah*. This an extremely significant foundation, says **Rabbi Dr. Avraham J. Twerski zt”l**, about which many *seforim* have been written, and indeed fierce battles were fought (such as with the Sadducees and Pharisees, and especially with the Karaites).

The Karaites (קראים) do not believe in *Torah Shebal Peh*. The word “Karaites” itself comes from the Hebrew words “*Bnei Mikra*” (“followers of scripture”). They distort the words of *Torah* to fit into their narrow interpretation and totally dismiss the teachings of *Chazal*. As a result, they cut themselves off from the rest of Judaism. For example, Karaites believe that all food must be prepared before *Shabbos* and no enjoyment may be derived from fire on *Shabbos*. *Chazal* rule that it is possible to continue heating food under certain conditions. To emphasize the mistake of the Karaites, it is especially prescribed in *halacha* that one should eat *cholent* (which slow cooks overnight) on *Shabbos* day. In fact, it says that someone who doesn’t eat *cholent* (רמין) is suspected of being a Karaite. (Sh”A O”C 257:8; Mateh Moshe 470)

Rabbi Twerski would tell over the following story regarding the supremacy of *Torah*-true Jews. During the days when the Karaite movement established itself amongst the Jewish people with their perverted use of the text of the *Torah*, and somehow managed to attain a sizable following, the reigning ruler of one particular region decided to settle the issue once and for all time. He called together representatives of the *Torah*-true community and that of the Karaites to a debate, with the intention of establishing which of their beliefs was the true and original one.

After a round of haggling, a date was set and the ruler looked forward to the spectacle of Jew against Jew, with no tangible reward to the victor. The Karaites were to be spoken for by their elder representative, a man known for his sagacious and wise pronouncements, whereas the true congregation of *Klal Yisroel*, as has been repeated from time to time throughout our history, would be sending one of the lesser luminaries from among the community, to be their statesman.

The delegations arrived on the appointed day to the palace and at the prescribed hour, the two speakers were ushered into the ruler’s inner chamber. Upon entering his inner sanctum, the Jewish speaker immediately bent down, removed his shoes from his feet, and put them under his arm. The ruler and his advisors were aghast. “Respect your leader!” he thundered angrily, to the glee of the Karaite. “How dare you disrespect me in my own palace!”

“Your exaltedness,” the simple Jew said, “It is the Jewish tradition that when one approaches our G-d, we remove our shoes, as was told to Moshe, our teacher, by the burning bush. Removing our shoes is our greatest sign of reverence.”

The ruler, placated a bit, insisted, “Well and good, but then, why are you holding the shoes under your arm?”

“Because,” the Jew replied wily, “When G-d gave us the *Torah* at Mount Sinai and we were instructed to remove our shoes and approach the sacred site, we found, upon our return, that the Karaite thieves collected all of our shoes and discarded them. At our spiritual peak, they had the audacity to steal our shoes! This time, I’m not taking any chances!”

The Karaite elder interrupted in anger. “Ridiculous and absurd!” he bellowed. “No such thing occurred. Your Majesty,” he continued soothingly, “I can assure you that no Karaite stole a thing since there were not even any Karaites yet at Sinai!”

The *Torah*-Jew bowed before the ruler. “I rest my case, your excellency,” he said with a sly smile stealing over his face. “As you can see, the Karaites have just conceded our primacy!” And indeed, the Karaite was forced to admit defeat!

בשנת מות המלך עזריה ואראה את אדני ישיב על כסא רם וגשם ... (ישעי' א-1)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Yeshaya HaNavi’s vision of the holy *Merkava* (chariot) was akin to how *Klal Yisroel* stood at the foot of *Har Sinai* while receiving the *Torah* from *Hashem*. Even though it is important to always place things in its proper context, what significance is there that the *Navi* felt it was so important to open his awe-inspiring prophesy by mentioning that it took place in the year that King *Uziyahu* of *Malchus Yehuda* died?

The *Navi* explains that King *Uziyahu* was a righteous king who was scrupulous in his observance of the *Torah* while also displaying great courage and strategic expertise which led to astonishing success in his military campaigns. Unfortunately, success went to his head and he sinned by entering the *Bais Hamikdash* to sacrifice incense on the

Mizbeach, something reserved only for the *Kohanim*. *Hashem* punished him with a bad case of leprosy which is akin to death, and the *Kohanim* evicted him from the *Bais Hamikdash*.

Chacham Rabbeinu Avraham Ibn Ezra zt”l explains that witnessing King *Uziyahu* being “touched by the Hand of *Hashem*” made an indelible impression on *Yeshaya HaNavi*, and he therefore chose to mention it when opening his prophesy about how he “saw” the image of *Hashem*.

As believing Jews we know that *Hashem’s* Hand is in everything a person does, every second of every day. However, it is our choice to want to see it and more importantly, use that experience to further our spiritual growth and become better and stronger in our *Avodas Hashem*.

ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי ... ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלקי אבי בעזרי וכו' (יה-בג)

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

מחשבת הלב

Moshe Rabbeinu named his two sons and then proceeded to explain the essence of each one. There is a discrepancy though between the *posukim*. The first *posuk* says, “כי אמר גר הייתי”, The second verse omits “אמר” and just says “... כי אלקי ...”. I heard a nice *machshava* from **Reb Yanky Goldberg**, a respected *marbitz Torah* in Lakewood. The feeling of being a *ger*, a foreigner, is both relative and dependant on a person’s perception. Thus, Moshe said “כי אמר” *כי*, my feelings are such. However, when it came to *Eliezer*, “אלקי אבי בעזרי”, *Hashem* is my savior, and it was in no way subjective to Moshe’s perception.

Perhaps we could add another two points. Being that *Gershom* is respectful, whereas *Eliezer* is ironclad, there exists an intrinsic difference for all eternity. *Gershom’s* name reflected Moshe’s feeling. Another person can name *Gershom* for another reason entirely. *Eliezer’s* name though represents the essence of that name. Because the help of *Hashem* is critical - critical in the *chinuch* of our children, and crucial in every other facet of our lives. Additionally, the word “אבי” in the above-quoted *posuk*, seems not to be reflected in the actual name *Eli-Ezer*. The reason may be that the G-d of my father, Who helped me through thick and thin, and Whose help continues to guide me in my *chinuch habonim* till today - that help ONLY works through the *mesiras nefesh* and *mesorah* of “אבי”, the *Zaidas* and the *Bubbas*. Thus, “אלקי” is, by definition, “אלקי אבי”.

Rabbosai, we sent to *shamayim* two *korbanos tzibbur*. Two *Gedolei Yisroel*. Each of them is a *gadol* in his own right. As the *Zaida* would always say, “שם האחד גרשם ושם האחד אליעזר”, It should have said “שם השני”. *Zaida* said, each child is a *yachid* - each an individual unto himself. Here too, we didn’t lose one and then a second *gadol*. We lost a *gadol* and a *gadol*. Each respective and respected tower representing their unique *Torah* and *mesorah*. May *Hashem* accept these *olos temimos* and let us see only יחד שחר... לששון ולשמחה, לישועה ולחממה. והאמר אמן. as we bench the *chodesh* this week and are *mispallel*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

כבר את אביך ואת אמך למען יאריכוך יימך ולמען ייטב לך (ב-יב) **משל**: Years ago, the religious population of Eastern Europe knew America as a place where Jews threw off the yoke of *Torah* observance. It was the “*goldene medina*” because the streets were “paved with gold,” according to some wide-eyed idealists. But it was also considered the “*treifena medina*” because there was little in the way of religious observance on the streets of the new world. Since higher education in Europe was closed to Jews, however, and there were so many restrictions on doing business, many young people emigrated to America to improve their lot in life. Grieving parents considered them lost to the faith forever.

One man consulted with the **Gerrer Rebbe zt”l**, stating that his son who had emigrated to America, had become successful in business of late, and had begun sending him money. He was certain that the boy was not observing

Shabbos or other *mitzvos* and his question was whether he was permitted to accept the *treifa* (non-kosher) funds or must he tell his son to stop sending them?

The *Rebbe* could see real pain in the man’s eyes and he was careful to blend his advice with a good measure of solace. “You are concerned that your child has cast aside his heritage. However, there is one *mitzvah* that he is still observing, which is to show respect for his parents - *Kibbud Av V’em*. Now you wish to deprive him of that also?”

משל: The lesson is an important one, especially for parents, to help them cope and deal with difficult circumstances regarding their children. In a more objective sense, before we do anything to reject someone, especially a wayward child who we feel is not acting the way we would want him or her to, we would be wise to give serious consideration as to what the consequences of such rejection might be. The worst thing we can do is push away a child even further.

ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו במדבר ויהן שם ישראל נגד הדר ... (יש-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

Imagine experiencing all of the miracles in Egypt, watching the *Yam Suf* split, and arriving at *Har Sinai* in order to receive the *Torah*. You are camped at a distance from the holy mountain, surrounded by your fellow Jews, and the feeling in your heart is one of complete love. You live a supernatural existence, a spiritual high, and complete love and acceptance of your fellow Jews. Suddenly a *Bas Kol* rings out. The world has changed! You will not be receiving the *Torah* anymore! It simply is not necessary anymore! What is your reaction? You say, “That is just fine.” In fact, we all say this every *Pesach*. ה' אלו קרבנו לפני ה' - If *Hashem* would have brought us all the way to *Har Sinai* and not given us the *Torah*, it would be enough for us! Why would that be enough for us? What would be the purpose of coming all the way to *Har Sinai* and not getting the *Torah*? Wasn’t everything we went through until that point to be *zoche* to get the *Torah*? So why do we say *Dayeinu*?

R’ Avraham Pam zt”l explains that the incredibly exalted level we reached in our *Ahavas Yisroel* at that point achieved the purpose and goal of *Torah*. We GOT the *Torah* without actually GETTING the *Torah*! We were like one person with one heart, “*K’ish echad b’lev echad.*” We so completely loved one another that we accomplished the purpose of *Torah*. We achieved the pinnacle of creation. Like when the *ger* asked *Hillel* to teach him the entire *Torah* on one foot, *Hillel* said, “What is hateful to you, don’t do to your friend.” This can be turned around to mean, “Love your fellow like yourself.” This, explained *Hillel*, is the entire *Torah*, the rest is commentary. If you go into a perfume store, even if you don’t buy anything, you come out smelling good. Similarly, did we, *Klal Yisroel* come to *Har Sinai* with the greatest merit imaginable, the purpose of *Torah* itself. Without even receiving the *Torah*, we already “smelled good” by achieving the great level of “*K’ish echad B’lev echad.*”