

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

כי ביום השלשי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם על הר סיני ... (ב-א)

The unique moment of Divine revelation at *Har Sinai thousands of years ago*, connects every Jew to *Hashem* and to the *Torah*. By virtue of this incredible revelation, no Jew is a stranger to any other. Every Jew is linked. We are all one family with one family lineage. A family tree, by identifying links in the chain stretching back to *Har Sinai*, intensifies a Jew's sense of connection to the original revelation of the *Torah* and, by extension, to every other Jew.

Rabbi Hillel Goldberg, in his book "The Unexpected Road" recounts the following incident which displays this poignant manifestation: In January 2006, our eldest son, who lives in Israel, arrives at Ben Gurion Airport, only to become very frustrated. The ticket agents tells him that he has been given a faulty ticket by his travel agent, in fact, it wasn't a ticket at all. Instead of flying to the United States for an upcoming family wedding, he finds himself taking a taxi back to Jerusalem at 1 a.m., disappointed and urging his travel agent to straighten things out for another flight.

Sharing the neshar taxi with him is a *Chassidish Yid* from Belgium. Navigating between Hebrew, Yiddish and English, he and our son strike up a nice conversation. By the end of the trip they are friends and our son asks, "What is your name?"

"Yitzchak Zev Marcus," replies the *chassid*. Our son paused for a moment, pensive.

"You mean, Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Marcus!" My son reveals to this total stranger his Levite tribal ancestry! The *chassid* from Belgium is stunned. What is this? Am I sitting next to a prophet? A psychic? He asks, "How did you know that?"

"Because we're cousins!" replied my son, excitedly. "How?" asked the *chassid*.

"Well, you tell me!" said our son. The *chassid* thinks a few moments and then ventures that our son must be related to someone with my wife's mother's maiden name, Marcus, which is his name.

My son nods. He had remembered the name, Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Marcus, his great-great-grandfather, from the family tree I had given him as a present the previous *Chanukah*. The *chassid* also did some quick thinking, remembering a distant branch of the family. A missed flight brought together two total strangers in a taxi, traveling to Jerusalem, related to each other because their ancestors had once upon a time stood together at *Har Sinai*.

Well, the story goes on. At the family wedding a week later (which our son managed to attend via another flight after his travel agent straightened things out), we learned that the person sitting across from us at the table is a distant cousin, none other than the Belgian *chassid's* father. Unbeknownst to us, the *chassid's* father has also heard of the poignant encounter in the taxi. Now we all put the pieces together. A short while later at the wedding, the Belgian *chassid's* brother comes up to us with pictures from old cemeteries in Hungary, which he is active in restoring. We have never met him, but he has been in contact with us over the past year, encouraging us to support his worthy project of restoring neglected Jewish cemeteries of pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe. We never had the chance to see what he actually does. As the wedding music in the background signals the joy of a new link in the chain from Sinai, the Belgian *chassid's* brother shows us some pictures of the old links, the old tombstones badly damaged by the Nazis, weather, and neglect.

In one case he shows us "before" and "after" pictures. The first picture is a gravestone, badly deteriorated. None of the writing is clear. The stone appears as a blank slab, its engravings unreadable. A sad testament to an anonymous, long forgotten Eastern European Jew, undeserving of this fate. The "after" picture shows the same gravestone, but completely different! His organization has restored it to its deserved dignity. Its engravings are now visible and perfectly clear.

As he shows us the "after" picture, we read in stunned admiration, the following engraving: *Yitzchak Zev HaLevi. Died in 1920, remembered and reconnected more than 85 years later, Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Marcus is alive through his descendants, who, like him and his own ancestors before him, celebrate, day by day, the revelation at Har Sinai.* ("Saw You at Sinai" by R' Hillel Goldberg)

בשנת מות המלך עזריה ואריאה את
אדני ישב על כסא רם ונשא ... (ישעי' א-א)

In the *Haftorah*, *Yeshaya HaNavi* beholds a vision of *Hashem* seated atop His lofty throne, the holy *Merkava* (chariot). *Chazal* remark how King Menashe once asked *Yeshaya HaNavi* that if *Moshe Rabbeinu* said in the name of *Hashem*, "But you cannot see My face, for a human being may not see Me and live," how could *Yeshaya* claim to have seen the face of the Almighty?

The **Maharal M'Prague, R' Yehuda Loewy ז"ל (Derech Chaim)** explains that when prophesying, a *Navi* would experience a vision of *Hashem* based on his own spiritual level. Thus, there was a fundamental difference between the prophecies of *Moshe Rabbeinu* and those of all the other prophets throughout the ages. *Moshe Rabbeinu*,

who was the greatest prophet to have ever lived, saw the holy *shechina* "באספקלריא המאירה" - in its purest sense without even the slightest hint of physicality at all. It was as if he was seeing the essence of the holy *shechina* in vivid detail, open and before him. On the other hand, *Yeshaya HaNavi* and all the other prophets, had an entirely different experience. While they were indeed holy men and women, they were definitely on a lesser level of prophecy than *Moshe Rabbeinu* was. Therefore, during their prophecies they envisioned a physical image of the holy *shechina*, replete with royal clothing and a royal presence. It was as though *Yeshaya* and the other prophets saw the *shechina* "באספקלריא שאינה המאירה" - in a manner befitting their personal spiritual status.

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY
HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה' מכל האלילים
כי ברבב אשר ירו עליהם ... (ה-ה)

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

מחשבת הלב

Rashi comments here: Yisro was not saying "Now I know," as if to insinuate that prior to this I did not know. Rather, "I already knew but now it has become clearer." How did **Rashi** know this was his thought process? (See **Sifsei Chachamim**)

There is a well-known story: There was once a wonder child born in *Eretz Yisroel* who had the unique ability to spout deep knowledge of the *Torah* and Kabbalistic mysticisms, etc. It was said that perhaps the *malach* who taught *Torah* in the womb "forgot" to make the baby forget. **R' Chatzkel Levenstein ז"ל** was asked if he wanted to go and witness this wondrous phenomenon first-hand, proving that the *Torah* is real. He responded that if he needs to see it to believe it, that would diminish his foundations of *emunah*. "I believe the person who told me and don't need to see it myself," he said. A *yid* does not need to observe miracles to believe in *Hashem*. Hence, Rashi knew that Yisro meant something else. What was that something else?

Perhaps we can suggest the following *machshava*. The first *posuk* of the *sedrah* uses both names of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* - ה' and אלוקים. To explain the use of both *sheimos*, we can say that Yisro initially thought that only אלוקים, the *Shem* representing *midas hadin*, was being utilized to mete out Pharaoh's punishment. However, after Moshe detailed the events and the *midah kneged midah* that took place in *Mitzrayim*, Yisro saw and understood that it was *Hashem*, the attribute of mercy, which both allowed the Egyptians a chance to repent and demonstrated the love *Hashem* has for His children who were harmed. Hence, Yisro had clarity at this point that it was the *midas harachamim* throughout these events. Similarly, we too, *bnai maaminim*, sometimes require this reminder. Which is why perhaps, the opening words of the *Aseres Hadibros* are אמני "ה' אלוקיך". *Hashem* is saying, "Although at times it may seem tough and even painful, it is I, the G-d of complete and total *rachamim*, who orchestrates everything." May we see the fruition of the *posuk* "ממה ה' אלוקים דמעה מעל כל פנים" very soon!

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויבא יתרו חתן משה וכו' אל המדבר אשר הוא חונה שם ... (ה-ה)
משל: An Airbus 380 airplane is making its way peacefully across the Atlantic Ocean. It is flying consistently at 800 km/h, an altitude of 30,000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter Jet with a Tempo Mach 2 appears alongside it. The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight, isn't it? Now have a look here!"

In one smooth maneuver, he rolls his jet on its back, accelerates sharply, breaks through the sound barrier, rises rapidly to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breathtaking dive. What an incredible display of aeronautic aptitude and skill. He loops back next to the Airbus and smirks. "Well, how was that?" he asked.

"Very impressive," the Airbus pilot answers, "but watch

this!" The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens.

It continues to fly straight at the same speed. Five minutes ... ten minutes ... nothing happens. Finally, after fifteen minutes, the Airbus pilot radios, "Well, how was that?"

Confused, the jet pilot asks, "Huh, what did you do?"

The Airbus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry..."

נמשל: When a person is young, speed and adrenaline seems to be great. But Yisro tried all these joys of life, and nothing satisfied him. As he got older and wiser, he realized that truth and peace are the most important things in life. Only that could bring him full satisfaction in life, but that can only be accomplished by serving and placing his full trust in *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. For this he was willing to give up everything and go live out in the desert.

ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו
במדבר ירחן שם ישראל נגד ההר ... (יב-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

When *Klal Yisroel* stood at *Har Sinai*, **Rashi** tells us they were, "like one man with one heart." We were so unified that 600,000 people were like one person. We all know that Jews are called "am kshei oref", a stiff necked people, strong and stubborn in our opinions. As they say, "two Jews with three opinions!" So, how was it possible that we were like one man with one heart? The answer lies in the word "Heart". Rashi does not say we were like one man with one mind, or one opinion. No. That is not the Jewish way. We are headstrong in our ideas and thoughts. But here is the secret to getting along with people. You don't have to always agree with someone - you can choose to love someone in your heart, even if you are worlds apart in your views.

If you found out that you had a long lost sister or brother that you have not seen in 40 years, what wouldn't you do to meet them? And what would you do when you would finally meet? You would shower that sibling with love. You would embrace him or her and truly feel like you are one. Certainly they will be very different than you. They had a different upbringing and were raised with different ideas. But it doesn't matter. He is your brother. You come from the same source. As much as you don't have in common, there is so much that you do. You choose to focus on the positive, because this is your flesh and blood.

R' Noach Weinberg ז"ל used to explain what love is. He would say, "Love is the pleasure you feel when you appreciate the goodness in another person." The *Torah* commands us to love our fellow Jews as much as we love ourselves. That seems impossible. But the *Torah* does not ask from us things that are impossible. The *Torah* does not say that we must agree with all Jews. The fact that I don't see eye to eye with you does not mean I cannot love you. We must choose to focus on the goodness in our fellow Jews and ignore the different opinions that divide us. We must go back to that special moment in time when we were one, and recreate that oneness to bring about our ultimate redemption, which will finally come in the merit of our *achdus*.