

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר יבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי ... (כה-ב)

There are certain people who give *Tzedaka* because they feel it is a calling in life. Others give because they are pressured to donate, or to show the world just how generous they are. Some people like to see their money being put to immediate use and are happy to donate to poor people or organizations that assist the indigent. Others prefer to give to big institutions where they know that their money is used for a higher purpose and they can go and visit the *yeshivah*, or school, or campus, that they donated to and feel a sense of satisfaction about their good deed. There are some benefactors who are exclusive and will absolutely not give to poor people, or absolutely not give to a *yeshivah*. In those cases, it is almost impossible to change the giver's mind about where to give the money to and that's usually the end of the story.

But not always. With the right sales pitch, a man's mind can be changed. In fact, the famed *Gabbai Tzedaka*, **R' Yehoshua Rosenblatt z"l** had a knack for knowing just how to get wealthy people to give charity, even to places that they weren't planning on giving to. Reb Yehoshua, it was said, could literally squeeze water out of a stone.

On one occasion, he was traveling in the United States on behalf of a poor family that could not make ends meet. He was told of a wealthy and generous man, who loved to give *Tzedaka* - but only to *yeshivos* and never to private collectors. "Don't waste your time," he was told, by a friend who was collecting for a large and well-known *yeshivah*. "He never gives to private individuals." But Reb Yehoshua was adamant and pleaded with his friend to allow him to come along.

The man relented and the two entered the rich man's home. The friend was welcomed in warmly and a large check was soon forthcoming. When it was Reb Yehoshua's turn, the man was totally uninterested in his cause and no matter what he said, it didn't make any impression whatsoever. When the man finally stood up to escort his guests to the door, Reb Yehoshua decided on one last-ditch attempt. He turned to the man and said, "Look, here's the bottom line: I need to raise \$10,000 for this desperate family in *Bnei Brak*. Normally, I take one third of the donation for my fee. So, the money that goes to the family comes out to \$7,777, which you can pay in a check or money order, made out to the family. However, my share - \$3,333 - I really need the money in cash. So, if you don't mind, please give me the cash and send them the check."

The rich man stopped walking and his smile faded instantly. He turned red and started screaming in anger. "How dare you? What a *chutzpah!* You call yourself a *Gabbai Tzedaka*? Get out of my house right now! And don't ever come back!"

Reb Yehoshua quickly left the house and his friend was shocked as well. How could someone be so brazen as to say such a thing? The man was obviously not giving him a penny and then to say to give the poor family a check while he needed his hefty share in cash? The man demanded an answer but Reb Yehoshua just smiled the whole way home.

The very next day, Reb Yehoshua received a phone call from the head of the *Tzedakah* organization to which he was associated back in *Bnei Brak*, and to which he directed all charity checks to be made out to. The man on the line was in shock. "How did you get money out of this *gvir*?" he asked incredulously. "We have tried many times to get money from him for needy causes and he always says no. He only gives to *yeshivos* and large institutions! But early this morning, which must have been late at night in America, we received a phone call from this man, authorizing a wire transfer of \$7,777 to our *mosad* on behalf of this poor family. The man sounded angry when he called and he made it very clear that he was only sending this amount of money and not one penny more for the horrible man who came to him yesterday!"

Reb Yehoshua laughed out loud. "Don't you see? This man has a good heart and really wants to give *Tzedaka*. But he is afraid that money collectors are trying to take advantage of him. That's why he only gives to well-known institutions. But I gave him a way out! He right away saw that the money collector who came to him yesterday was clearly trying to rip him off. **But he is too smart for that. He won't get ripped off. He'll give to the poor family and not one penny for me!**"

There is a stark contrast between the magnificent *Bais Hamikdash* built by *Shlomo Hamelech* and the modest *Mishkan* built by *Betzalel Ben Uri*. Ironically, while the *Torah* goes into great detail describing the enthusiasm of *Bnei Yisroel* during the construction process of the *Mishkan*, that same enthusiasm is nowhere to be found during the construction of the glorious *Bais Hamikdash*. Why is that?

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch z"l explains that the difference stems from the very mindset of the Jewish people during those respective times. We must remember that when the *Mishkan* was being built, *Bnei Yisroel* had just recently been released from their bitter *golus* in Egypt, and it is no wonder that they were all eager to join in the construction

process. In fact, this eagerness stemmed from being accustomed to harsh labor and they were more than happy to put their skills to good use in the service of *Hashem*. However, during *Shlomo's* times *Klal Yisroel* was in a much more comfortable mindset, and they had no deep desire to physically get involved in the construction process. This frame of mind bred the feeling of overvaluing of splendor and ostentation in general which carried over to the building of *Hashem's* house.

While it certainly was important for the *Bais Hamikdash* to be magnificent, *Hashem* warned *Shlomo* against overvaluing the outer appearance of the building, again reminding him that *Malchus Bais Dovid* was in no way dependent on a display of pomp and power, but on him keeping the *Torah* and *mitzvos*.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

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

ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל ולא יקצבו את עמי ישראל ... (מלכים א' ו-ג)

וערת אילם מאדמים וערת תחשים ועצי שטים (כה-ה)

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

מחשבת הלב

Rashi explains that *Yaakov Avinu* foresaw the future need for the wood of mighty trees and planted them in *Mitzrayim*. He then instructed his children to take them along when leaving Egypt. Why was this wood so essential for the construction of the *Mishkan*? The *Gemara (Yoma 75b)* says that they were able to buy things in the desert (food) from non-Jewish passing merchants. So why did they have to *shlep* the cedar trees with them? Why not buy wood from passing wood merchants?

The answer is that any edifice being built, whether it is a mighty skyscraper or a small house, must sit on a solid underpinning. When we build our families, our homes, our values, they too must sit on the solid foundation that was created by our forefathers. If we want them to properly grow, we have to realize that we alone are not the sole structural support of the home. Its integral support is drawn from the strong roots that were valiantly planted by our predecessors.

The *Aron*, *Shulchan* and *Mizbeach* were items in the *Mishkan* that were all built from this cedar wood planted by *Yaakov Avinu*, and then covered with gold. They teach us that in all aspects of our lives - *Torah*, *parnassa* and even *malchus*, we must follow the pathways and *mesorah* set forth by our forebearers. We have so much to be thankful for. And while the bountiful gifts that *Hashem* showers us with are meant to be enjoyed, that enjoyment must be governed by "their" outlook.

The *Aron* in the *Kodesh HaKadoshim* very clearly brings out this *machshava*. On it stand the *Cheruvim* which resembled children - our future. Yet they were formed as one with the actual *Aron*. They stood on the "platform" of *atzei shitim*; on the shoulders of *Yaakov Avinu*, so to speak. Because to continue our legacy and rich heritage, especially in a generation like ours, **we can only be successful if we hold hands and connect ourselves to our elders, linking our future and present with the past.**

משל למת הדבר דומה

כבר זהב מיוחד יקשה אתה את כל הכלים האלה ... (כה-ג)

משל: One of the great *Chassidish Rebbes* of yesteryear, once announced to his inner circle of devoted followers: "There is currently a special *עת רצון* in *shamayim*, to *daven* for whatever you need. Whoever will ask anything of *Hashem* now, I will tell them what *Hashem* answers!"

A great commotion immediately ensued; this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. One *chasid* notified the *Rebbe* that he put in a special request to *Hashem*, and instantly, the *Rebbe* began to relate what transpired in heaven.

"You asked of *Hashem*. Dear Almighty, you know that all I want to do is serve You and do Your will. However, I barely eke out a living. My health could use improvement, so many things hold me back from serving You properly! Now I have a proposal: if You, *Hashem*, will send me a steady income of 10,000 ruble per month, as well as happiness for

me and my family, here is what I'll do for You. I'll wake up an hour before sunrise, say *Tehillim*, go to the *mikva* and even say *korbanos* before *davening*! I will then stay in *shul* the entire day learning *Torah*!" The *Rebbe* looked for confirmation.

Stunned and shocked, the *chasid* exclaimed, "Exactly, holy *Rebbe*, that's exactly what I said! Almost word for word! So ... *nu*, what did *Hashem* answer?"

"*Hashem* said, no thanks! He doesn't need your favors! An angel lives in a perfect world. A human being lives in an imperfect world, but precisely for that reason. We are tasked to work through the challenges that our materialistic world presents and prevail. It's not handed to us on a silver platter!"

נמשל: The *Mishkan*, which was the dwelling place for *Hashem* Himself, was created from our materialistic world. On a basic level, we too, have the power to take the materialism of this world and be *mekadesh* it, make it holy. That includes making ourselves holy too.

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם ... (כה-ה)

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

דרגה יתירה

Chazal tell us that *Sarah Imeinu* had a unique relationship with *Hashem*. Sarah had a special blessing in her *gashmiyus*, as well as her *ruchniyus*. Sarah uplifted everything mundane and made it holy. She raised up all the *gashmiyus* in her life by bringing *Hashem* into the picture. Whatever she did, she did for *Hashem*. When she ate, it was to have energy to serve *Hashem*. When she slept, it was so that she could properly serve *Hashem*. She lived for *Hashem* in everything that she did. Whether it was physical or spiritual, it was always with a good measure of spiritual because it was all for *Hashem*.

The **Ramban** tells us that when *Hashem* asked *Klal Yisroel* to build Him a *Mishkan*, it was because He missed the tent of Sarah. He longed for that special relationship that He had with *Sarah Imeinu*, and He wished to recreate that special bond with His children through the *Mishkan*. He actually modeled the *Mishkan* after the tent of Sarah. *Hashem* said that the *Mishkan* should have a *Ner Tamid*, just as Sarah's candles never went out. He commanded that the *Mishkan* have *Lechem HaPanim* just as Sarah had a special blessing in her dough. And He rested His *Shechina* in the *Mishkan* just as Sarah had a cloud of glory hovering above her tent. *Hashem* hoped to recreate that special relationship with *Klal Yisroel* that He had with *Sarah Imeinu*.

So, now that we are left without an *Ohel Sarah*, or *Mishkan*, and no *Bais HaMikdash* in our midst, what should we do? We must build a *Mishkan* in our own homes! Women are given three special *mitzvos* that correspond to *Sarah Imeinu's* three special miracles and their job as wives and mothers is to bring the *Shechina* into their homes. With joy for *mitzvos*, *tefillos* and *chinuch*, they fulfill this *mitzvah* of "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם" - "*Build for Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell among you.*"

The *nashim tzidkaniyos* have the ability to bring the *Shechina* into their homes, and can recreate that special relationship that Sarah had with *Hashem*. By doing so, they can raise up themselves and their families in private miniature sanctuaries.