

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההיא לאמר ... (ג-ב)

To the thousands of people who were fortunate to know and learn from the renowned *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Shor Yoshuv*, **R' Shlomo Freifeld ז"ל**, he was the quintessential teacher of *Yiddishkeit*. No matter the background, he saw and understood each individual as a human being created by *Hashem* Almighty, possessing unlimited potential for spiritual growth. Combining his keen perception and the power of his *Torah*, he taught with his incomparable speaking style, the skills of harnessing one's individuality to fulfill each person's unique divine personal mission.

R' Shlomo lived with *cheshbon hanefesh*, putting thought into every aspect of life. Whether it was in *Tefillah*, *Torah* learning or just mundane day-to-day life, he accounted for every action at every moment. His daughter recounts that one summer, in the aftermath of a horrific incident in which an elderly Jewish couple, Holocaust survivors, were brutally murdered in their bungalow, everyone was profoundly shocked and saddened by the news of this sweet, simple couple, who had undergone so much only to meet such a tragic ending.

Late one night, one of R' Shlomo's daughters called him, sounding distressed. "Abba, I am simply too depressed, too saddened by the tragedy to enjoy this summer."

"Mein kind," said R' Shlomo in a soft tone, "a person has to have pockets in their heart. In one pocket, you should keep this incident and mourn for that poor couple. But you must also reach into a different pocket and find joy in the rest of your life. Reach into that pocket and take your children to the pool tomorrow ... and on your way, stop and smell the flowers!"

A close *talmid* of the *Rosh Yeshivah* taught in an elementary school and was constantly introducing innovative new programs for the boys. He once came to visit his *rebbei*, R' Shlomo, and told him how he taught the boys in his class the meaning and beauty of the *tefillah*, *Brich Shmei*, which is recited when the *Sefer Torah* is taken out of the *Aron Kodesh* before *laining*. It is a prayer laden with kabbalistic undertones, but even the simple *pshat* is penetrating and thrilling. This *talmid* had taken the initiative and wrote out the entire *tefillah* with its English translation on the blackboard and encouraged the boys to copy it over into their notebooks. Then he had given them a test on the entire *tefillah* but allowed them to use their notes, thus ensuring that they would know it and do well on the test.

R' Shlomo complimented him warmly on his initiative.

Two weeks later, this *talmid* again came to visit his *rebbei*. R' Shlomo welcomed him, eagerly telling him, "I have to tell you something. I have a *kabbalah* from my *Rebbeim* that when *Hashem* wants to tell a person something, to give him a message that he needs to hear, He will let the person hear it, either through a *sefer* that he is learning from or in a conversation with a friend. A discerning person has to know how to hear those messages intended for him.

"As you know, I am very weak and it isn't easy for me to *daven Shacharis* in *Yeshivah* each morning. I do it anyway, because it's important to be part of the *tzibbur*, but it sure takes a lot out of me. When I get to *yeshivah*, I am already exhausted, but then I have to *daven* and I often struggle to *daven* with the proper *kavanah*. On days that there is *laining*, I work to concentrate on the *laining* as well. Though I cannot get out of my wheelchair to stand by *laining* like I used to when I was younger, I try to focus on the words. Inevitably, the only chance that I get to rest in preparation for *laining* is by the *tefillah* of *Brich Shmei*, which is when I allow myself a moment's break."

R' Shlomo smiled warmly as he concluded his words, "But thanks to the message that you brought me the last time you were here, I know now that what I was doing wasn't correct. How can one not focus on such a magnificent *tefillah*?"

"I want to thank you," the *Rosh Yeshivah* said softly to his awed *talmid*. "My most exciting moments are right after I make a spiritual reckoning, a *cheshbon hanefesh*" (Adapted from *Reb Shlomo: The life and legacy of Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld*, by Yisroel Besser)

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אליכם ... (ישעי' ב-א)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In the *Haftorah* of *Shabbos Nachamu*, *Yeshaya HaNavi* declares "נחמו נחמו עמי" – "[be] comforted, [be] comforted, My Nation" in which *Hashem* offers us his greatest *nechama* in the aftermath of the terrible *churban*. Being that every word in *Tanach* is measured, it is quite interesting that the *Navi* – and by extension *Hashem* Himself – seemingly used the same word "נחמו" twice to bring home the same point.

The **Maharitz, R' Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky ז"ל** offers a frightening yet sobering insight into this. He explains that we often see the world in a sort of black and white fashion. *Hashem* has "two modes" – *Midas HaRachamim* (merciful) and *Midas HaDin* (judgmental), and He runs the world on either of these two resulting in us experiencing either good or

harsh times. However, the truth is that *Hashem* may even utilize a combination of them for both good and harsh times.

At the time of the *churban* the essence of the world had sunk to such a low point that the forces of evil managed to "convince" *Hashem* to garner not only the power of judgment against *Klal Yisroel*, but to also utilize the power of mercy against them. As such, the devastation was compounded on itself, doubled in tenacity, resulting in the horrific tragedies depicted in *Megillas Eicha* and the *Kinno*s.

Thus says the *Maharitz*, the double expression of "נחמו נחמו עמי" depicts the Almighty's usage of the power of judgment and mercy - *Din* and *Rachamim* - once again, in order to bring about the ultimate comfort to the Jewish people.

או יבדיל משה שלש עדים בעבר הורדן מזרח שמש ... (ד-מא)

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

מחשבת הלב

This *posuk* seems to be out of place, sandwiched here between the *posukim* introducing *Matan Torah* and that awesome revelation, and the actual listing of the *Aseres Hadibros*. Where do these words come in?

The *Gemara* in *Brachos* which says, "Tachlis Torah Teshuva Umaasim Tovim," comes to mind. If the purpose of the *Torah* is repentance and to do good deeds, what better task did *Moshe Rabbeinu* see fit other than establishing the cities of refuge, the *arei miklat*, a place to reflect and repent, benefitting his fellow *Yidden*. Hence, right here, in the middle of *Maamad Har Sinai*, we are taught this lesson of what the *Torah* is all about.

Another possible *machshava* may be as follows. *Bnei Yisroel* attained tremendously high levels of *Ruchnius* at *Har Sinai*. But a person may think: what if I fall, sin and lose my *madreigos*? A person may come to the terrible feelings of *ארא*, hopelessness and feeling all alone. *Hashem*, therefore, commanded *Moshe* to establish a sanctuary which would protect the person and enable him to return to *Teshuva* and not lose his footage. Additionally, he would have the opportunity to bask in the vicinity of the *Leviim*, learning from their ways and connecting to them. The *Gemara* in *Makos* states that upon the death of the *Kohen Gadol*, the fugitive is released from the *ir miklat*, and returns to his position or job. This teaches us that even though a person committed a terrible deed, albeit by accident, he is not lost and through proper repentance he can retain his dignity. One must never be *m'yaesh*. This is certainly fitting for this unique *Shabbos Nachamu*. We as a Nation sinned and are in *Galus*, yet *Hashem* says I will comfort you, I am with you, don't give up!

May we all be *zoche* to a complete *Nechama* from *Hashem B'karov Mammash!*

משל למה הדבר דומה

כי הוא חכמתכם וביתכם לעיני העמים ... (ד-י)

משל: When the Communists took over White Russia, Jewish children were required to attend public schools where the teachers tried to indoctrinate them with the "religion" of the state - atheism. One female secondary school teacher in Luban became infuriated when the children under her charge countered her virulent attacks on religion by quoting their "Rabbiner," their rabbi who eventually became the renowned *Gadol Hador*, **HaGaon R' Moshe Feinstein ז"ל**.

The teacher began to denigrate R' Moshe, poking fun at the ignorant "Rabbiner" who couldn't even do simple mathematics like a proper Soviet citizen. In order to cast doubt on R' Moshe's reputation for brilliance, the teacher sent him a calculus problem that she had obtained from her university professor, a problem deemed far too difficult for someone who had studied elementary mathematics.

When the young children presented R' Moshe with the calculus problem, he asked one of the youngsters for his textbook. The *Tzaddik* sat down for a few minutes and read through the textbook. Then, he wrote a solution to the question posed. The teacher was astounded and sent a second problem which R' Moshe solved within minutes, asking the students to return it immediately so that the teacher would know he had not sought help from anyone else.

The teacher insisted on meeting the rabbi and soon became his protector. As the laws against the rabbinate became more and more severe, she would tell the local Communist officials that these laws did not apply to this Rabbiner, who was a great scholar in mathematics and not a "useless parasite."

נימשל: The *Torah* tells us that through it's diligent study and observance, it will serve as "proof" of our wisdom and discernment to other nations, who will say, "Surely, that great Nation is a wise and discerning people!"

בבך את אביך ואת אמך כאשר צוך ה' אליך למען יאריכון ימך ולמען יימב לך ... (ה-ז)

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

דרגה יתירה

If you were to buy your child a fancy phone with many apps and gizmos that he learns very quickly how to use, would you be happy? You probably would. You love your child. You want to give him everything. But if he takes that phone and abuses it, starts listening into your private calls and causes you much aggravation by interfering in things that are not his business, what would you do? You would take away the phone from him. He cannot keep such a valuable gift. And that would be a good thing. He did not appreciate the gift you gave him, and so he needs to be taught what appreciation is all about. If he learns his lesson well, then he can get his present back. But if he doesn't absorb the message, then are you being a good parent by giving him something that he abuses? No, you are being a good parent by taking it away!

And so, our beloved Father in Heaven Who only does good for us and the world, took away *Gan Eden*, He took away the *Luchos*, He took away *Eretz Yisroel* for 40 years, He took away our *Bais HaMikdash*. Why? Because He is our Beloved Father who only does good and He wants to teach us, His beloved and chosen Nation, the *middah* of *Hakaras Hatov*. This is the way we will be *zoche* to all the wonderful things that *Hashem* wants so badly to give us, but He can't.

So, what should we do? We should stop complaining and start thanking! Of course, there is the one thing that you wish you had. You think that if only you had this one thing, then you would have no problems. Think of the one thing that you feel is missing in your life and say, *Hashem*, THANK YOU that I don't have that one thing. You have given me everything I need and if I don't have it - I don't need it. I can be happy without it! And then spend your days being happy. Count your blessings. Think of the million things that you have to be grateful for. And in the merit of true *Hakaras Hatov*, may we be comforted by our beloved Father, who can finally give us all the good that He has been waiting to bestow upon us for so long.