

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כי ימוך אחיך ומכר מאחותו וכא נאלו הקרב אליו ונאל את ממכר אחיו ... (כה-בה)

Five times during the *Parsha* we are told that we should take care of our brother (אחיך) in his time of need. Even when he must enter into indentured servitude, we still must look after him and make sure that we can redeem him when possible. **Sefer HaChinuch** tells us that one of the reasons for the *mitzvah* of *shemita*, is that by abandoning our fields and the livelihood which they produce, we are reminded of the need to care for our fellow human beings. As the land is *hefker*, anyone can come and take. Not only is *shemita* a year of rest from work, but it is a *mitzvah* that reminds us and gives strength to the fundamentals of Jewish life. *Emunah* and *bitachon* in *Hashem*, caring for *Eretz Yisroel*, the Holy Land, which *Hashem* gave us, caring for our fellow man and accepting that there is more to our life than material success.

Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel is an organization founded in the late 1970's for the purpose of restoring traditional Jewish life and culture in the countries formerly part of the Soviet Union. Originally, the *Vaad* conducted clandestine missions all over the communist empire, which brought about the refusenik movement. Today, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the *Vaad* is committed to the establishment of an infrastructure in many Jewish communities in these countries, to revive Jewish life by operating schools, kindergartens, *kollels*, *shuls*, *mikvaos*, provide kosher food, senior citizen centers, recreational centers and summer camps. To this end, the *Vaad* also conducts a series of seminars and lectures on Jewish topics, delivered by international educators. One of those educators, **R' Yechiel Michel Chill *shlit'a***, the long-time 11th-grade *Rebbi* in Breuers (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch High School for Boys), was sent by the *Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel* to the Former Soviet Union (FSU) on numerous occasions, to serve as their emissary.

One one of his trips to Moscow, Rabbi Chill met a Russian student named Moshe and spent many hours talking to him about the basics of Judaism. As they parted warmly, Rabbi Chill told Moshe to call him if he was ever in the States.

About six months later, Rabbi Chill received a call from Moshe, who told him that he had been granted an exit visa and was now an exchange student at Cornell University in upstate Ithaca, N.Y. Moshe sadly related how his *Tefillin* had been confiscated by a vindictive border guard as he left the FSU, and additionally, he was without any kosher food in Ithaca and had no clue where to find some. R' Yechiel Michel called his friend Rabbi Tzvi Goodman and together they purchased a new set of *Tefillin* for Moshe, a Russian-language *siddur* and other pertinent reading material, and loaded up a car with enough kosher food for a month, before embarking on the four-hour drive to Ithaca. After two hours of seeing what they could do to help orient Moshe, the two men traveled back to Monsey, where Rabbi Chill lived, arriving late at night.

The next morning, R' Yechiel Michel told his students in Breuers about his exhausting trip to Ithaca the previous day, in the hope that his story might one day serve as an example to his students as to how far one should go to help a fellow Jew.

A year later, a student by the name of Jeremy Strauss, who had been in Rabbi Chill's class the preceding year, rushed into the classroom on a Sunday morning and told him the following incredible anecdote. The Strauss family lives in Engelwood and on *Shabbos*, he and his father had noticed an unfamiliar young man sitting in the back. They invited him home for the *Shabbos* meal. At the meal, he told them he was a recent *baal teshuva*, beginning his journey towards religious observance just a few weeks ago. When they asked him what had triggered his sudden interest in *Yiddishkeit*, he explained that he was a student at Cornell University and at the end of the previous spring semester, he had been given a newly arrived Russian roommate for two nights. The new roommate, named Moshe, had seemed totally lost and out of place.

"Suddenly," said the *baal teshuva*, "two important looking rabbis showed up loaded with food and books for Moshe. I kept thinking all night that I had never seen anything like this. I must find out more about a religion that creates such love for a fellow Jew. I began looking into what Judaism is all about and that's where my road to being observant began!"

קנה לך את שדי אשר בענתות כי לך משפט הנאלה לקנות ... (רמי' לב-)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In this week's *Haftorah*, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* echoes the sentiment mentioned in the *Parsha* of how it is crucial for a Jew to try to keep the land of *Eretz Yisroel* in Jewish hands, and to make every effort to redeem land once owned by a relative. What is perplexing is the fact that this directive came as the *Churban* was in full motion, so why indeed was it so pertinent for *Yirmiyahu* to redeem land when it was almost guaranteed to be lost soon thereafter to the invaders?

R' Avraham HaKohen Pam *zt"l* (Chazon Avraham) explains that *Hashem's* directive and *Yirmiyahu's* actions bespoke an unbelievable attitude that lies at the core of Jewish life. The Jewish people are from the most despised and detested Nations and all throughout world history, the

the Jews have always borne the brunt of civilization's woes. We have been enslaved, beaten, forcibly converted, and even murdered, purely for the "crime" of being Jewish, however as we rise from the ashes of history and rebuild ourselves time and again, we are a testament to the fact that despite what the naysayers say, we, the Jewish people, are the Chosen Nation and will endure forever. This strength and resilience in the face of impossible odds is what makes us special.

Given his directive for *Klal Yisroel*, *Yirmiyahu* was tasked with showing the Nation that even when the odds are stacked against us, we must still forge on and continue following the *Torah* - even redeeming property and land when an invading army is on the cusp of eradicating everything.

לא תעשו לכם אילים ופסל ומצבה לא תקימו לכם ... את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני ה' (כו-א.ב.)

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

מחשבת הלב

The association of these *posukim* seems perplexing. What is the connection between idol-worship, *Shabbos* and *Mikdash*? The **Seforno** gives us some insight to help understand this issue. The previous *posukim* discuss a person who was sold to a non-Jew as an *eved*, a slave. Says the *Seforno*, even if a *Yid* is under the thumb of an idol-worshipper, he must not follow their ways. Many Jews fall prey to this trap during *golus*, rationalizing; "עבד שמכרו רבו ואשה שגרשה בעלה כלום יש לזה על זה כלום". In other words, our relationship with *Hashem* seems to have been terminated, so what's the use? That, though, is a mistake.

Based on this, perhaps we can explain the connection of these *posukim*. *Shabbos* is an intimate present to *Klal Yisroel* from *Hashem*, as *Chazal* tell us: "מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גני ושבת שמה" - I have a special present in my treasury that I want to give to you, my children, *Klal Yisroel*. It is a day to spend quality time with *Hashem*, free of the myriad worries of the week. *Hashem* never took it away; we still have that present, that relationship! The "Husband" just went away for a bit. He didn't give us a *get*, He is not seeking a divorce from us. Additionally, we have many *shuls*, *Batei Knessios U'Medrashos*, in lieu of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Those are places where we can still find *Hashem*. Our own homes too, have the potential to reach such exalted levels. So even though *golus* can, at times, make us feel like we are floundering through the sea of life alone, we must realize that our Father is with us - always. That being said, *Avoda zarah* doesn't necessarily mean idolatry in its literal sense. It can refer to one following his base instincts and, albeit temporarily, abandoning his principles and *ruchmiyus*.

Thus, the *Torah* commands us not to forget about *Shabbos*, *shuls* or *yeshivos*. They will serve to ensure that '*Ani Hashem*' - *Hashem* will always be with you, and will finally reveal Himself with the coming of *Moshiach*, *bimheira biyameinu!*

משל למה הדבר דומה

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו ... (כה-לה)

משל: There was once a great king who ruled over many lands. As the king was getting older, he realized that his son, the heir to his throne, was ignorant in the laws of the land. He felt it was necessary to hire a wise sage to teach the lad. A few months went by, and one day, the sage announced that he had finished teaching the prince. The king tested his son and was very pleased with the results. He called in the wise sage to his palace to thank and pay him, and added many gifts. Grateful, the wise sage thanked the king, but before he left, he said he had one more vital lesson to teach the prince.

The next day when the prince arrived at the home of the sage, he was greeted by a vicious man who, at the direction of the sage, tied him up and beat him mercilessly. When the king heard about what had happened, he was furious and warned the sage to either provide a satisfactory explanation

for his actions, or he will be hung for crimes against the king!

"Your majesty," began the sage, "the prince will one day ascend your throne and be in a position to punish those who disobey him. However, no matter how smart he may be, he cannot properly punish a subject without understanding the pain that person may endure. This is the final lesson he was needed to be taught!" Amazed by his deep and profound understanding, the king doubled his gifts and sent him home.

משל: The *posuk* says: "וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו" – "If your brother becomes impoverished, and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him." The **Ben Ish Chai** points out that the *posuk* seems to imply that the latter will falter in your proximity. The *Torah* is teaching us that the more "fortunate" must understand and recognize his "unfortunate" fellow Jew. By sharing in his suffering and being in his "proximity," he will better be able to assist him and help him get back on his feet.

כי תבאו אל הארץ אשר אני נתן לכם ושבתה הארץ שבת לה' ... (כה-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

Parshas Behar begins with the *mitzvah* of *Shmittah*. "Ma inyan *shmittah aitzel Har Sinai*?" I had the privilege of visiting a *shmittah* farm recently and both received *chizuk* and gave *chizuk* to the farmers and their families, who showed us the *dunams* of land laying fallow, stretching for many many miles. Everything was *hefker*, except their water and electric bills! They still had to pay without receiving any income from their property. To wake up each morning and see the land resting takes incredible courage and *Emunah*. As the farmer's wife explained, they see the *Yad Hashem* so closely in their lives. They don't just see a land growing wild, but the *zechus* they have to do something holy! "I see *Shabbos* every day of the week!"

In truth, nobody and nothing in this world is simple or mundane. People are complex. Some people are easy to get along with because they are easygoing and laidback. Some people are exactly the opposite. Every little thing is an issue - they make "issues out of tissues" - any simple thing becomes complicated. No matter whether you are or married to the easier type, or involved in the more difficult kind, remember one thing: It is not what's on the exterior - it is what you choose to see inside. It is what you choose to bring out from the other person that will make your relationship successful or the opposite.

This is this week's *middah* of HOD, to be "*Ohev shalom, v'rodef shalom*," to love peace. Who doesn't love peace? We all love peace. That is not what made Aharon special. You have to PURSUE peace. Sometimes you have to dig deep down into a person's soul and bring out the *heilege neshama* down there. It is one of the hardest things to do but it is in our hands. All *Yidden*, no matter what they say, act, how they dress, what words they choose to use, who they associate with - deep down, they all have a pure, beautiful *neshama* that is ready to be uncovered and shine! We can do this for ourselves and for others, and when we do this for others, we are really doing it for ourselves. We are becoming great people who possess the *middah* of HOD.