



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

לקח את ספר התורה הזה ושמתם אותו מצד ארון ברית ה' אלקיכם והיה שם כך לעד ... (לא-ב)

About a year before the Iranian Revolution, two emissaries of *Chabad* came to Iran in order to print the *Sefer Tanya* in Tehran, the capital city of Iran. The **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ז"ל**, initiated a campaign to print the *Tanya*, the seminal work of *Chabad* Chassidic thought, in cities around the globe. The *sefer* was sent to be printed, but there were delays and it took a long time to get started. In the meantime, in February 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini led a religious revolution which overthrew the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the reigning leader of Iran, and the Jewish community recognized the danger of the new radical regime. Rabbi Yehuda Ezechian, who was responsible for the Jewish community's spiritual needs, arranged to remove all copies of the *Tanya* from the printer in order to bring them to the community's library. There, in the large hall of the library, they were stored temporarily, in uneven piles.

The new government announced a law, called "cleansing," which stated that every Iranian citizen and all public organizations had thirty days in which to burn all documents, papers, and books that had the Shah's royal emblem or anything connected to his reign, on them. It ominously stated that after thirty days, anybody who possessed anything with these symbols would be severely punished. And if it was determined that he purposely did not destroy them, he would be executed.

Rabbi Ezechian relates: "We faced a serious problem in that we had archives over a hundred years old, and most of the documents and books had the royal emblem on them, as well as the name of the Shah and his government. We also had a collection of special gold coins that the community produced in 1967 in honor of the Shah's coronation and in celebration of 2500 years since the coronation of Koresh. On one side of the coin was a *Menorah* and on the other was either the Shah's royal emblem, the name Koresh, or a crown. As Jews, it was very hard for us to accept the 'cleansing' of the entire library and huge archive of our traditions, but we had no choice. Still, there was no way we could comply with the law in such short time.

"When the month ended, we had not managed to complete the job, as expected. We hadn't really started either. A day or two later, the secretary came into my office and said that two government inspectors had shown up to inspect the entire building, in order to see whether we had followed the cleansing law. I was terrified. I understood that I was doomed and that the entire Jewish community was in great danger. I said *Vidui* (Confession) and *Shema Yisroel*, and prepared myself for what I knew was coming. When the inspectors entered my office, I was able to outwardly remain calm. They asked to see some Jewish books. For some reason, and still to this day, I can't explain why, it occurred to me to take them first to the library.

They immediately noticed the piles of books that were strewn all over. One of the inspectors bent over and picked one up. It was a *Tanya*! He asked me what it was, and I told him first about the author, about the *Baal HaTanya*, then about the *Chabad* movement, the **Baal Shem Tov ז"ל** and *Chassidus*. I also said that this book was one of the primary texts of the movement.

"He opened it at random and asked me to explain to him what it said on the page he had opened to. It was the first page of Book Two, *Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmuna*. I read the words and then translated into Persian and explained the entire page. When I was done, the inspector closed it, kissed it, and said, 'In a place with books like these, and with such a person in charge of a place like this, there is no need for any additional inspections!'

We were stunned. When I recovered from this unexpected but very pleasant shock, I said to the Iranian government inspector that the Jewish community would be extremely happy if he would do us the honor of signing our guestbook before he left. He agreed with a smile, and wrote: 'On such and such a day, I visited the offices of the Jewish community, and inspected and ascertained that all was as it should be.'

The following *Shabbat*, in *shul*, the entire Tehran Jewish community celebrated with Rabbi Ezechian the miracle that took place in the merit of the *Tanya*. (Adapted from Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles interview with Rabbi Yehuda Ezechian printed in Kfar Chabad Magazine)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

**שוש אשיש בה' תגל נפשי בחלקי**  
**כי הלבישני בגדי ישוע ... (ישעי' א-ב)**  
In this week's *Haftorah*, *Yeshaya HaNavi* proclaims "ושוש אשיש בה' – *I greatly rejoice in Hashem ... for He has clothed me with garments of triumph.*" The question is, why does the *Navi* use a double expression to describe his joy?

**Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher ז"ל (Kad HaKemach)** explains that *Chazal* (*Berachos 24a*) teach us: "A person is required to give a blessing on the bad as he would on the good." It is easy for a person to bless *Hashem* when he is relaxed, happy and content. It's a whole other thing when he is stressed and overwhelmed due to bad tidings. But every human being deals with adversity in a different way. Some take it in stride, while others collapse under the pressure. And then there are those who fall somewhere in between.

לעמלו נשמתו אביו מוריו רבינו הרב חיים  
וסוף בו ר' ישראל אברהם קויפמאן זצ"ל

At the end of *Parshas Ki Savo*, **Rashi** quotes a *Medrash* that when the *Yidden* saw Moshe giving the *Torah* to *Shevet Levi* and the elders, they vehemently protested. They claimed that they had equal rights to it. Moshe was elated that they showed a deep concern in not wanting to part from it. What was the reason for his initial intention to give it to Levi for safekeeping?

There is a beautiful **Meshech Chochma** that explains this, based on a **Yerushalmi**. The *Yerushalmi* says about *Reb Elazar Ben Azaria*, that it was distinctly evident that he was a tenth generation descendant of *Ezra Hasofer*, and even his eyes resembled those of Ezra. What's the link between these two *Torah* giants? He explains that Ezra instituted a major change in the *mesorah* (with *Hashem's haskama*). He translated the *Torah* into Aramaic, thus making it easily accessible to the masses. Until that point, the *Torah* was limited to the sages and scholars. Those who would want to learn had to turn to the elders and study under their tutelage. That system had obvious advantages, but many drawbacks as well. Ezra's innovation enabled everyone to learn; even the laymen. Similarly, *Reb Elazar Ben Azaria* added benches to the *Beis Medrash* and removed the requirement that one must be תורמו כבודו to enter (see *Gemara Brachos*). By doing so, he availed the *Torah* to many more of the *klal*.

To introduce such change, one must have a special eye - "עייני העדה". Hence, *Reb Elazar Ben Azaria's* eyes resembled *Ezra Hasofer's*, since they each had eyes that perceived the needs of their people, and through that forward-seeing vision, extended the *Torah* to all. Moshe initially wanted to preserve the *Mesoras HaTorah* by giving it to *Shevet Levi*, who would, no doubt, protect its purity. Yet, when he saw the love for the *Torah* demonstrated by all of *Klal Yisroel*, he realized that they too would properly guard it. Let us realize כיהם חיינו - the *Torah* is our very life, it's available to all, and will greatly enhance our lives!

## משל למת הדבר דומה

ולא מקבר לים הוא לאמר מי יקבר לנו אל קבר הים ... (ל-ג)

**R' Yaakov Yosef Herman ז"ל**, emigrated from Vilna to New York City with his parents as a child and was left on his own a few years later after the family returned to Europe. He is legendary for being one of the pioneers that upheld *Torah* Jewry in America. He took a strong stance behind righteous individuals and fought a long and hard battle to uphold the laws of the *Torah* in America.

One year before the *Yamim Noraim*, a visitor came by. "I have a surprise, Rabbi," he said. "Do you recall Shmeril Burkes of Vilna? Well, just now I passed a synagogue where I saw that he was advertised as the *Chazzan* (cantor) of the congregation. We know that he is not skilled in the art; I wonder how he became a *Chazzan*?"

"I'm not surprised," answered R' Yaakov Yosef, "Crossing the ocean did him so much good that it made a *Chazzan* out

of him. This is not the first time this has happened."

The visitor looked surprised, "Really? When did such a thing happen before? It's not in the *Torah*," he declared.

R' Yaakov Yosef explained with a twinkle in his eye. "Actually it is. When *Hashem* told Moshe, 'Come and I will send you to Pharaoh to bring My people out of Egypt,' Moshe answered, 'I am not a man of words.' However, after Moshe crossed the Red Sea, it is written; 'Then Moshe sang'. Thus, we see that we have a precedent even for this!"

**נמשל**: The *Torah* tell us that there is a certain *mitzvah* that it is not across an ocean that you will have to traverse to get it. *Chazal* explain that if this *mitzvah* would demand such strenuous dedication, we would be required to do so. Whatever that *mitzvah* is (*Torah* or *Teshuvah*), we learn from here how much dedication a person must exercise in his *avodas Hashem*. What a profound insight to ponder as we approach the great day of *Rosh Hashana*!

## דרגה יתירה

**EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHELOMO**  
On the final day of *Moshe Rabbeinu's* life, he announced to the Jewish people, "*I can no longer go and come; Hashem has told me that I will not cross this Jordan.*" **Rashi** explains that Moshe was not weak, nor were his internal organs failing. In what way was he unable to "go and come"? *Hashem* had taken away His "authority" to live any longer.

The "Toldos," **R' Yaakov Yosef of Polnoa ז"ל** offers a remarkably insightful observation. A righteous *Tzaddik* is not one to sit back and allow himself to "coast" in his performance of *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Rather, every day of his life is devoted to growth and spiritual improvement - (תהלים פד-ח) - "ילכו מחיל אל חיל" - "*he moves from station to station.*" Of course, this was the way Moshe lived his entire life, right up until his final day. However, the moment Moshe felt that *Hashem* had "*removed His authority*" from him - in other words, the Almighty Himself was indicating that he had reached his pinnacle and there was no place left for him to rise - at that precise moment Moshe knew that his day of death had arrived. Thus, he said, "*I can no longer go and come*" - I have no power to continue to improve and therefore it is quite obvious that I will die this very day and *Yehoshua bin Nun* will take my place as the nation's leader.

The lesson that each and every one of us can take from here is quite obvious. We are not on the level of *Moshe Rabbeinu* and thus it is impossible that we will ever "peak" in our spiritual growth, to the point that we have no further to go. But we can surely TRY! We can work extra hard on our level of *Torah* study; on our actions between Man and G-d, as well as between Man and our fellow Man. Taking our performance of *mitzvos* to the next level is not something that we should consider, or look upon positively, but rather an action that we CAN, and we MUST do! Especially in these final few days before the great Day of Judgment, let us rise to a new station in life and strive to emulate Moshe on his final day.