

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויהי ממחרת ויבא משה אל אהרן הקהן ויהנה פרה ממה אהרן לבית לוי ויצא פרה ויצין ציין ויגמל שקדים ... (ז-ב)

The Staff of Aharon, which sprouted fruit and developed nuts (almonds) proving once and for all that *Aharon Hakohen* and *Shevet Levi* were indeed the chosen tribe to serve in the *Mishkan*, was a miraculous stick. *Chazal* learn that in fact, the *Mateh Aharon* was one of the marvels that *Hashem* created on the first *Erev Shabbos* of Creation, during השמשת בין (twilight) and it was later concealed away. Ultimately it will be found in the hand of *Moshiach*, as he arrives to liberate the Jewish people. *Hashem* purposely created this staff in advance, to eventually be a source of *Kiddush Hashem* at a later time.

Living in a ghetto under the threat of Aktions, disease, deportations and starvation was a constant way of life for millions of Jews during the tragic years of the second world war. Finding enough food to feed mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters was essentially a race to see who can locate and provide nourishment before the other. One young boy lived together with his mother and sole surviving sister in the ghetto and his life revolved around seeing to it that they had enough to eat during those bitter days. He would go out daily foraging until he could bring home his prize and his devotion to his mother and sister knew no bounds. He was prepared to risk his life for them. In fact, he did just that.

One day as he was returning home from a fruitful day of scrounging, a strange silence hung on the streets - the silence that followed death and Aktions. Running into his room, he discovered that it had been broken into, looted, and his sister, his one and only most precious sister was gone! She had been taken by the Gestapo, explained a neighbor quietly.

Without thinking, he tore out of the room and ran straight to the Gestapo headquarters! Bursting into the bustling office, he was met at the desk by a young clerk who was amused at the wild-eyed look of the teenage Jew. “What do you want here, Jew?” he asked. “To be shot on the spot? No problem.” He unhooked his revolver.

“You took my sister,” spat out the boy in an accusing voice which surprised even the Nazi.

“Really? Who’s your sister?” obliged the clerk who obviously felt used to responding to orders when they were made in a demanding voice. At this point, he motioned to another S.S. officer to come into the room and join him.

“My sister is the dark-haired girl you just brought in today,” replied the brother impatiently. “I want her back!”

The second German burst into laughter. “You want her back? What strange ideas Jews have these days. You know that when Jews come in here, they don’t usually go out!” The clerk now joined him in laughing as the boy stood there defiantly.

Once again, however, he shouted, “Give me back my sister!” This time, the second German, obviously a senior officer, stopped laughing and looked menacingly at the boy. “So, you want your sister back? Well, I’ll tell you what,” he said with a sneer, “when you will grow hair on the palm of your hand - I’ll let your sister go!” He continued to stare intimidatingly.

Unthinking, the boy opened his hand. Together, they all looked at the boy’s palm - which was covered with a tangle of black hair! The Nazi began screaming, “You Jewish devil! Satan! Take your sister and get out of here before I machine-gun you both!” Hysterical, he ran into the next room and brought out the girl. Instantly, the boy grabbed her hand and together they ran out of the Gestapo building, out of the ghetto and deep into the forest, where they hid from the Nazis for the duration.

How did such a thing occur? Was it a miracle? Much later, this Holocaust survivor recounted the amazing circumstances. “When I was a small child, I would help out in a factory in my hometown. One day, my hand got caught in a machine - it was a terrible accident. Somehow, the doctors managed to save my shattered hand and today I have full use and power of it. Apparently, though, the skin that was grafted onto my palm came from a hairy part of my body and in my teens, hair actually began to grow on the palm of my hand. Doctors tell me today that this is impossible, but the palm of my hand did not go to medical school!” Obviously, *Hashem* destined this young boy to protect and save his sister in a most miraculous fashion and he prepared the remedy even before the calamity. (Adapted and excerpted from “Heroes of Spirit”)

את שור מי לקחתי ... ומיד מי לקחתי כבר וכו' (שמואל א' יב-ג)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

This week’s *Hafiorah* details the speech given by *Shmuel HaNavi* in which he declared: “*Whose ox have I taken ... whom have I defrauded ... from whom have I taken a bribe...?*” *Chazal* note that *Shmuel* was a descendant of *Korach* and his declaration of not taking money that didn’t belong to him was a rectification of *Korach*’s blunder. How so?

Chacham R’ Dovid Chananya Pinto *shliu”a* (Pachad Dovid) explains that *Korach* was fabulously wealthy. Why did *Hashem* grant him such wealth; from where did he obtain his fortune? The answer lies in an unknown fact. *Chazal* say that in Egypt, *Yosef Hatzaddik* became extremely wealthy and he hid his treasure in three hiding places - one of which was later revealed to *Korach*, who became fabulously wealthy from it

והנה פרה ממה אהרן לבית לוי ויצא פרה ויצין ציין ויגמל שקדים ... (ז-ב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT”L

מחשבת הלב

The simple reading of the *posukim* seems to imply that the blossoms, bud and fruit remained intact as *Moshe Rabbeinu* removed the *mateh* from the *Mishkan*. Usually a fruit tree blossoms, then it produces buds which fall off, and finally the fruit emerges. So why did these flowers remain attached forever? What is the added significance of this detail?

I once heard in the name of **R’ Moshe Feinstein *z”l*** that the *Torah* wants to teach us here an invaluable lesson. Although in mundane matters only the end product, the final result - the fruit - is what counts, when discussing spiritual matters though, we are credited for the effort invested, even if those efforts do not “bear fruit”! Hence, these buds and blossoms remained, conveying the message that even these buds - the efforts - are beloved and cherished by *Hashem*.

In a similar vein, I saw another *psbat* from **R’ Simcha Shepps *z”l***, which is slightly different. He says that, *l’havdil*, in secular studies, all the required prerequisites are just as they sound - steps on the way to a final Masters degree. Yet, in *ruchniyus*, every *nisayon* that is passed, every achievement that is reached, is an elevation in and of itself, regardless of the next step ever being realized. A person gets credit for simply making the effort in *Torah* learning and *mitzvah* matters and these *Gedolim* are teaching us with their words, how to approach the proper outlook on life. Service of *Hashem* isn’t only for the elite. Each individual, on his or her own level, can bring *nachas ruach* to Him when they try.

The *Gemara (Pesachim 54A)* writes that the staff of Aharon with its *shkaidim u’perachim*, was one of the ten items created that first *Erev Shabbos*, *bein hashmashos*. This shows us how significant this lesson is: from creation’s very outset, *Hashem* wanted us to know and internalize this *machshava*, and realize how much He cherishes all of our efforts to do His bidding!

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאמר משה אל קרה שמעון נא בני לוי ... (וי-ה)

משל: There was once a very pious *tzaddik* who was admired by his followers for his open frankness in admonishing any sinner or wrongdoer whenever an occasion called for it. As much as they feared his rebuke, however, they knew that he meant it only for their good and they appreciated that quality.

One day a young man came to him and he very candidly reprimanded the man for certain faults that he observed in him. At the conclusion of his remarks, he paused and eyed the young man severely for a moment. He was not satisfied.

“Young man,” he said finally, “I beg your pardon for saying to you what I have said.”

“I don’t think there is any reason to ask for my pardon,” responded the young man, a bit surprised and rather embarrassed at the *tzaddik*’s sudden change of tone, “I know you are saying this only for my good.”

ויקהל עליהם קרח את כל העדה אל פתח אהל מועד וירא כבוד ה’ אל כל העדה ... (ד-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

“*Chochmas Nashim Bansah Baysah*.” What incredible power a woman has over her husband. She can literally stand him on his feet and put light in his eyes, or completely destroy him. We know that man was created from the earth, but woman was created from man. Because of this, a man is very protective of his wife. She is actually a part of him and there is nothing that he wants more in the world than to make her happy, even if he doesn’t always show it. The flip side is that because a woman was created from the rib of Adam, she feels a deep need to be loved and cherished by her husband. She can have many other things going on in her life that give her pleasure and satisfaction, but if she feels that her husband doesn’t love her, her world is shattered.

It is interesting to note that the **Steipler *z”l***, delineates the important things to look for in a *shidduch*. One of the things a girl should look for in a boy is *middos tovos*. But when he writes what a boy should look for in a girl, he doesn’t say *middos tovos* in general. He says only one *middah*, MERUTZAH! A girl that is happy and satisfied with whatever she has. The most important *middah* for a girl to have in marriage is this. A man deeply wants to make his wife happy, but if nothing is ever good enough for her, she will never be happy and neither will he. Happiness does not depend on how much one has, as we see so clearly from the wife of *Korach*. No matter what she had, it never satisfied her, she was always jealous of others. This is the opposite of a *merutzah*. *Korach* was one of the carriers of the *Aron*, a very respected and honorable job. And yet, his wife would say, “Look what a shlepper you are!” When all the *Leviim* were shaved by *Moshe*, she would say, “Look at what *Moshe* did to you. How humiliating and disrespectful!” Even though all the *Leviim* were shaved, including *Moshe* himself, she chose to see only the negative and break her husband, rather than build him. The fact that she only saw what she did NOT have and would turn a wonderful situation into a complaint, was the catalyst for the downfall of her husband and his entire gathering.