

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויחי שם עם ה' ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה לחם לא אכל ומים לא שתה ויכתב על הלוח את דברי הברית ... (לד-כה)

The Torah tells us that Moshe went up to the mountain and “was there with Hashem for forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water.” The **Ibn Ezra** calls this accomplishment a “great and unprecedented wonder.”

There was once a young man who excelled in his learning and was known as a *Talmid Chacham*, with a great deal of Torah knowledge under his belt. On one occasion, while the young scholar was engrossed in his learning, he came across an idea found in the *seforim hakedoshim* that if a person fasts for forty consecutive days, he will attain the highest form of spirituality and merit *Ruach Hakodesh* (Divine Inspiration), just as *Moshe Rabbeinu* did, when he was on *Har Sinai*.

Excited about the prospect of attaining such an elevated plateau and confident that he was worthy of this lofty achievement, that very day he began his quest and refrained from eating for the next forty days straight. He was weak and haggard, however, when he completed the allotted time, no matter how hard he tried, he could not feel any inspiration, divine or otherwise, and he was thoroughly disappointed. He decided to go to his local *Rebbe* and discuss the matter.

The *Rebbe*, seeing the seriousness and earnestness of his young *chasid*, listened fastidiously as the man put forth his complaint that he had pushed himself and fasted for forty consecutive days, and according to the reading he had done, this should have merited him divine inspiration. However, he felt no different than before. How can this be so?

The *Rebbe* stroked his beard thoughtfully and then began to illustrate the *chasid's* pitiful error. “It is well-known that the holy **Baal Shem Tov ז”ל** traveled at miraculous speeds. A trip that should have taken days was completed in hours or even minutes. This was due to the greatness of the *Baal Shem Tov* who experienced what only the greatest men in our history achieved: *Kefuzas Haderech* - the ground literally folding underneath his wagon to make the trip go faster.

“Now, as we all know, it is the practice of people who travel by horse and buggy to stop at every inn to feed and water the horses. This is extremely necessary in order that the horses will not tire out during the trip and in order to care for and maintain the wagon. I imagine that when the *Baal Shem Tov's* horses flew by the first inn at great speed, they were surprised and thought to themselves, ‘Horses need to take a break to rest. We didn’t do so, so maybe we are not really horses after all! Maybe we are really human beings, who only stop to eat every few hours.’ Indeed, a horse’s logic!”

The *Rebbe* gazed at the frail young man and smiled. “As they continued to pass more and more inns at breakneck speed, without stopping for food and water, these thoughts escalated. ‘Well, even human beings would have stopped to eat by now. Since we are still not being fed at all, maybe we horses are actually angels, who require no food and water at all!’ These were, after all, the horses of the *Baal Shem Tov*,” said the *Rebbe* to the wide-eyed *chasid* with a wink. “Of course, one would expect them to be smarter and more spiritual than the average mare.” The *chasid* nodded in agreement.

“Now, when the *Baal Shem Tov* finally arrived at his destination, the horses instinctively pounced on the hay that they were given with animal relish. They traveled a great distance and hadn’t eaten in some time. At that point, all their wild thoughts of being human or angels vanished as they realized, ‘In the end, we must be horses after all.’”

Looking at the young *chasid* pitifully, the master concluded his words instructively. “Forty days of fasting cannot earn you divine inspiration if after all that you’ve done, you go back to eating like a horse - with the same level of indulgence you maintained before. The idea of attaining *Ruach Hakodesh* is that you must work tirelessly and never stop working. Never stop attempting to reach the unattainable.” The *Rebbe* took the young man’s hand in his own and concluded, “I do not know if you’ll ever reach that lofty height, but I do know that unless you strive ceaselessly and never stop working toward your ultimate goal, you will not reach the pinnacle that you so strive for, and the inspiration you seek to attain. Fasting for forty days and nights and then going back to your normal routine is the not the way to gain *Ruach Hakodesh*.”

וַיִּמְצְאוּ אוֹתָהּ בְּדַרְכָּם וּבְעַלְלֵי־חֹמֶת כַּמְּצֹאת הַנְּהַר הַזֶּה וְהָרֵם לִפְנֵי ... (הוֹקֵל לז-יז)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Parah, Yechezkel HaNavi* tells *Klal Yisroel* that because they have defiled the holy land with their idol-worship and immoral ways, they would suffer the pain of exile. However, *Hashem* still promised that despite it all they would ultimately be purified with “purifying waters” in a similar fashion to the way the *Parah Adumah* (Red Heifer) purified those who had become unclean.

Interestingly, when speaking of the land, *Yechezkel* stated that *Klal Yisroel* had defiled it “בדרכם ובעלילותם” - through their ways and misdeeds. However, when describing the defilement of the essence of the Nation in comparison to a woman who is a *niddah*, he ended the statement by only mentioning “דרכם” - their ways. Why is that so?

R’ Moshe Tzvi Aryeh Bik ז”ל (Chayei Moshe) explains that the word “עלילה” is used to connote one’s actions while the word “דרך” is used when describing one’s innermost thoughts. When speaking of the defilement of *Eretz Yisroel*, *Yechezkel* correctly described *Klal Yisroel's* actions as worthy of exile, but the silver lining is that they were still only actions which are reversible and forgivable. However, as soon as those actions began to penetrate into the essence of *Klal Yisroel* and became part of their approach to life and thought process, their return was no longer able to be guaranteed blindly.

Although we’ve suffered tremendously, it is important to note that *Klal Yisroel* nevertheless survived. This is because we never lost focus on our essence and purpose in the world.

וידא את העגל ומחלת ויחד אף משה וישלך מידו את הלוחת וישבר אתם תחת החד ... (לב-יג)

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

מחשבת הלב

The *Zaida* would often discuss this *posuk* and ask, “Why didn’t Moshe break the *luchos* right away? In *Shamayim, Hashem* had already related to him what had transpired. Why did Moshe have to see it for himself prior to breaking them?”

He answered based on the words of the **Seforno**. Moshe realized the catastrophic consequences that the *Yidden* would now face. However, when one sins, there is always the hope that he will do *teshuva*. So what *Hashem* told Moshe about the *eigel* wasn’t sufficient reason to shatter the *luchos*. But when Moshe saw them frivolously dancing around their sin, he realized that they had sunken to a much lower level that required a rude “awakening” through the loss of the *luchos*. Yes, people succumb to their *yetzer hara* occasionally, but a *Yid* must be distraught and exhibit contrition about having done an *aveira*.

In *Megillas Esther*, Queen Esther invites Haman to a second royal banquet. Why? I heard from my father *shlita*, the following *machshava*. The *posuk* says, “ויצא המן ביום ההוא שמח וטוב לב”. Esther knew that when someone is *b’simcha* it is difficult to harm him. So she waited. With *Hashem's* help, the next day, Haman returned “אכל וחפץ ראש” - dirty and in mourning. The time was now ripe for his demise. To be *mechaper* for the sin of the *Eigel*, we too, must utilize the *middah* of *simcha*, not for *aveiros* but rather for our entire *avodas Hashem*. We must live *b’simcha* and show our children how *geshmak* and enjoyable it is to be a *Yid*. How fortunate we are to serve Him; to have the warmth of a *Shabbos*; experience the joy of a *Yom Tov*; to have the opportunity to speak with *Hashem* through *tefillah*; to delightfully delve into a *blatt gemara*, etc.

We must envelop them with happiness, with a *freilichkeit* that shows in all their endeavors. Our homes must be a happy and safe island for them. If we are *b’simcha* with Him, then that will serve as a catalyst for *kaparas avonos* and will protect us from harm. May the *simcha* of *Chodesh Adar* continue, heralding our ultimate *geulah* in *Chodesh Nisan*! **ביטחו נא, וביטחו עתידן לינאל!**

משל למה הדבר דומה

ה' ה' א-ל-הרום והנזן אך אפים ורב חסד ואמת ... (לד-י)

משל: When *Yeshivas Kol Torah* in Jerusalem was looking to hire a new *Rosh Yeshivah*, they considered **R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ז”ל** as a good candidate and offered him to come give a *shiur* and try out for the job.

At the time, R’ Shlomo Zalman was still relatively young in age and was in the process of completing a new *sefer* he hoped to publish and was tempted to turn the offer, but in the end, he accepted the opportunity because he felt it was far more important to teach *talmidim* directly than to publish a *sefer* to be read by the masses.

During the “test” *shiur*, someone posed a question, which caused R’ Shlomo Zalman to stop in mid-sentence and say, “I believe I made a mistake.” Later, when his wife asked him how it went, he answered “not so well” because someone had asked a question which he wasn’t able to

ויתן אל משה ככלתו לדבר אתו בחד סיני שני לוחת הקודת לוח אבן כתבים ... (לא-יה)

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

דרגה יתירה

When Moshe went up to *Shamayim* to receive the *Torah*, the *posuk* tells us, “וינתן אל משה ככלתו” and **Rashi** interprets the word “*Kikalaso*” as “like his *kallah*,” to indicate that the *Torah* was given to Moshe as a gift, just as a *kallah* is given to a *chassan*. **R’ Shimon Schwab ז”ל** explains that from this *Rashi*, we must learn that a *kallah* is a gift. In fact, a husband must see his wife and a wife must see her husband, as the greatest gift in the world. But what happens? Often that new fresh excitement of a *chassan* and a *kallah* wears off. We see each other in all kinds of situations and as humans, we don’t always act in the most respectable way. If we always see each other as a *chassan* and *kallah*, then somehow, things would be different.

Imagine two scenes. In the first scene, a man and woman are walking down the street when suddenly the man trips on the sidewalk. The woman, in a very concerned voice, says, “Are you all right? Did you get hurt? Are you sure you didn’t sprain your ankle? *Nebach*, you poor thing, you really must have hurt yourself. You look like you can’t walk.” And he says, “No, no, I am fine. I really did not get hurt.” Unconvinced, she says, “Let’s sit down so you can relax and hopefully feel better.”

In the second scene, a man and woman are walking down the street, when suddenly the man trips on the sidewalk. With wide eyes and a very disapproving look, the woman says, “Why can’t you look where you are going? Every time we go out, you trip. You gotta watch where you’re going!” What is the difference between these two scenarios? About three years. The care and concern that a *kallah* shows to her *chassan*, unfortunately, can get lost in the routine of life. It is something that we must continuously work on. May we truly appreciate the greatest blessings in our lives and not take them for granted, or complain about them. May we spread the joy from *Purim* throughout the year by focusing on our true blessings every day of our lives.