

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

נתון תתן לו ולא ידע לבבך בתתך לו כי בגלל הדבר הזה יבירך ה' אלקיך ככל מעשך וככל משלח ידך ... (טו-ו)

The famed **Bnei Yissaschar, R' Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov ז"ל** used to say: “Why don’t we make a blessing before we give *tzedaka*, the way we make blessings on everything else? Because, had we been commanded to make such a *beracha*, the poor person could have very well starved to death by the time we finished making our blessing! If the *baal habayis* is a *chasid*, he would first have to go to the *mikvah*, then he would have to recite a lengthy *l’shem yichud*. If he was a *litvak*, he would undoubtedly learn up the *sugya* in order to do the *mitzvah mehadrin min hamehadrin!* By the time he got through all the preliminaries, the poor fellow would most probably have dropped dead!”

Most of the time, we are privy to hearing terrible stories of poverty and impoverishment, and how the indigent struggle to make ends meet, or *mosdos* and organizations struggle to raise money to pay their *Rebbeim* and cover their budgets. It isn’t always common to hear a story from the opposite perspective. Indeed, the rich also face many tests in giving. The following story was related by a well-known *baal chessed*, who shared this story.

The rich man, whom we shall call Reb Shaya, would travel to *Eretz Yisroel* quite often for *Yamim Tovim* or business, and he usually took precautions to ensure that his trip would go smoothly. As an experienced traveler, he knew what papers he needed, what forms must be filled out in advance and what luggage and other accoutrements he should pack with him. On one occasion, he flew to *Eretz Yisroel* for a friend’s wedding together with his thirteen-year-old son. When they arrived at Ben Gurion airport, they were greeted by a scene of pandemonium: an entire group of individuals representing numerous charitable institutions and *yeshivos* came to meet him and lay out the red carpet. They expected him to shell out big money and each wanted to be first in line when he arrived. Anyone might have anticipated what would happen when they all converged on the traveler at the same time. The moment he emerged into the airport waiting area, the entire gaggle of collectors began to fight for the privilege of taking the man and his son to *Yerushalayim*. Of course, a huge ruckus ensued. There was jostling and pushing and the rich man tried to be courteous to each and every person but it was getting increasingly difficult to maintain his composure as the commotion spilled over from the terminal out to the pickup area and then into the parking garage. Not to mention his young son who was almost entirely forgotten and received the back-end of all the pushing and shoving, while trying to wheel his, and his father’s, luggage.

As such things often go, the end result was that one suitcase was left behind. It wasn’t noticed until much later, but of all the suitcases, that bag contained most of his important stuff. “That single suitcase held my best clothing,” said Reb Shaya later, as he was discussing his trip. “I had come for a wedding, and I had also planned to visit some of the *Roshei Yeshivah* and *Tzaddikim* in *Yerushalayim* and *Bnei Brak*, so I had packed my very best things: my good suits, my favorite cuff links, expensive shoes that were brand-new. What’s worse, when I stopped in New York, on my way to Israel, I met a friend who took me shopping. This friend convinced me to buy some expensive shirts, and the suitcase also contained some of my favorite (actually irreplaceable) ties. Not only that, but all of my son’s best clothing and shoes were in the suitcase, too.” He had to spend the entire following day shopping with his thirteen-year-old son.

“I know it might sound trivial, but I felt pretty bad about what happened,” he continued. “But in the end, I really learned the meaning of the advice of *Chazal* about running away from honor. I have gone to *Eretz Yisroel* so many times, and I have never lost a single suitcase. My trips are generally in and out, and they run pretty smoothly. Yet this time, when all these people came out to honor me and I was basking in the glow of their adulation in full view of hundreds of onlookers and bystanders (and I accepted the ride to *Yerushalayim*), I lost all of my precious belongings!”

The rich man had learned his lesson, and it was the last time he would accept any such honor. (Collector’s Collection, by R’ C. Orange)

ענייה סערה לא נחמה ... (ישעי' נד-יא)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

As the third of the seven *HafTORos* of Consolation, *Yeshaya HaNavi* exhorts *Klal Yisroel* to heed the words of the *Torah* and draw much needed comfort from its holy words. Nevertheless, *Klal Yisroel* felt tempestuous and refused to be consoled. But why, indeed, did they refuse the comfort?

R’ Yonason Eibeshutz ז"ל (Ahavas Yonason) explains that following the *Churban*, the feeling in the air was one of sadness and despair. *Klal Yisroel* felt beaten and unworthy, and not only did they feel unclean and tainted with sin, but they felt as though their multitude of sins was so deep-rooted that they would never be cleansed of them – like a deep stain that stays embedded in cloth no matter how many times one washes it. Of course, this feeling was

completely baseless and untrue since a sin – any sin – whether big or small, can surely be repented for and forgiven by *Hashem*. As such, *Yeshaya* sought to remind the nation that despite whatever they did in the past, all *Hashem* wants is sincere repentance and a solemn promise to correct one’s mistakes for the future.

Unfortunately, many people have bought into this school of thought and think that it is pointless to try and do something new and good since one’s previous failures would surely stymie his future growth. This is exceedingly far from the truth, and one should always remember that *Hashem* only cares about what lies deep inside a person’s heart and not about what is merely perceived by others.

כּי ירחק מִמֶּךָּ הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם שְׂמוֹ שָׁם וּבִבְחַת מִבְּקֶרֶד וּבְצִאָנְךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה' לָךְ ... (ב-כא)

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

מחשבת הלב

In a homiletical approach to this *posuk*, I was thinking perhaps to put forth the following interpretation. A person may sometimes feel that traversing life’s road is just too difficult, and he cannot carry the load. The *Torah* then reveals the root cause of such feelings of despondency. It may be because “כי ירחק ממך המקום”. *Hashem*, is far from you. Either, because of one’s actions which can cause *Hashem* to distance Himself, or the person’s lack of *emunah* and *bitachon* which causes that feeling of being alone. On the other hand, when a person lives with *Hashem*’s constant presence, he is never alone. The road of life seems paved with only a few minor potholes.

Alternatively, when a person is far from the *Beis Medrash*, the “place” to be, far from the oasis of *Torah* life, these feelings of gloom arise. Because the *Torah* is our guiding light and it illuminates the road.

R’ Shimshon Pincus ז"ל says the following *vort* on the *HafTORah* which beautifully complements this *machshava* and is very timely. The *posuk* states: “וכל בניך למודי ה' ורב שלום בניך” - “*All your children shall be disciples of Hashem, and your children’s peace shall increase.*” He explains that *Torah* is our *shemira*, our protection, and without it we are left vulnerable. In the summer months, when our children - young and old - are not necessarily surrounded by the protective walls of our *Yeshivos* and *Bais Yaakovs*, that protection is somewhat lessened and we all become a bit exposed. We, as parents must be extra vigilant to continue, even in a minimal and non-pressurized manner, to perpetuate that *shemiras haTorah*. This, then, is the meaning of the *posuk*: “וכל בניך למודי ה'”, when our children are learning, “ורב שלום בניך”, they will then be exceedingly protected. May *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* watch over all of us as we prepare our children to re-enter the protective walls of the *yeshivos*, and utilize the upcoming *Chodesh Elul* to get closer to “*Hamakom*”!

משל למה הדבר דומה

לא תאכל עליו הזמן שבעת ימים ... (מד-ג)

משל: The esteemed *Rav* of Elizabeth, N.J., and leader of the *Tzafnas Paneach* Committee, **R’ Pinchos Teitz ז"ל**, who in his youth was a *ben bayis* by the **Rogatchover Gaon, R’ Yosef Rosen ז"ל**, testified that he saw with his own eyes how within one hour and sixteen minutes, the *Gaon* managed to answer twenty-two *teshuvos* in sixteen letters.

“His mouth literally did not stop speaking in learning,” writes another *talmid* **R’ Shachne Zohn ז"ל**, “this is not an exaggeration.” In fact, it was said that the reason why the *Rogatchover* never cut his hair and it grew wild, was because he didn’t want to sit bareheaded while it was being cut and then he would have to stop learning. Once, when he was in Rogatchov, he himself told people that while sitting on a train traveling from Dvinsk, he recited half of *Shas* by heart

and on his way back, he finished the other half ...

The **Rogatchover** once gave a *shiur* to a group of *talmidim* in which he brought amazing proofs that *chametz* is permitted to be eaten on *Pesach*. He then asked his students, all brilliant minds themselves, to refute his proofs. They tried in vain to do so. The *talmidim* were truly astounded. Finally, when they gave up, the *Rogatchover* opened a *Chumash* and read the words, “לא תאכל עליו חמץ” - “*Do not eat chametz.*” That, he said, is the only refutation necessary. All the intellectual gymnastics in the world cannot alter one sentence in the *Torah*. **משל:** A *Yiddishe kop* is trained to think deeply and understand important aspects from different angles. This is why *Bnei Yisroel* are the “*am hanivchar*” chosen above all other nations for our faith, loyalty, and intellect. But, nothing can change a single word in the *Torah*. No amount of intellect can alter one single word of *Hashem’s Torah*.

וישבתם בארץ אשר ה' אלקיכם מנחיל אתכם והניח לכם מכל איביכם מסביב וישבתם במנוח ... (ב-כ)

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

דרגה יתירה

The foundation of *Yiddishkeit* is belief in *Hashem*. The **Rambam** composed the thirteen “*Ani Maamins*” that are recited every day to attest to this fact. We teach our children from the day they are born to say the words “*Shema Yisroel*” before going to sleep and “*Modeh Ani...*” upon awakening. Our entire education is based on the belief that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* is the One - and Only One - Who created and is in control of everything. We trust that all He does is good - and for this we thank Him. As we walk outside on a sunny day holding our child’s hand, we often remark to him or her, “Look at the sky - see how blue it is? Do you know Who made it so beautiful?” And of course the child knows to answer: *Hashem*.

R’ Avigdor Miller ז"ל asks a question. When *Hashem* created the world - the Heaven and the Earth - the first thing He made was light, as it says, “*ויאמר אלקים יהי אור ויהי אור*” - “*And Hashem created the light and there was light.*” Later, on the fourth day of Creation, *Hashem* created the sun. Why did *Hashem* need the sun if there already was light in the world? What did the sun add to the light that was already there?

The answer is quite illuminating! We say every day in *Shacharis*, “המאיר לארץ ולדרים עליה” - “*(Hashem) is the One who lights up the earth and all those who live upon it.*” The sun doesn’t light up the world; it is merely *Hashem’s* way of making His light seem natural! *Hashem* created light and lit up the world on the first day of Creation, but on the fourth day, He hid Himself in the form of the sun. All of nature is meant to hide *Hashem*. And all of us are meant to seek Him out and find Him.

The Master Creator of the World is *mechanech* us to seek Him out and find *yeshuah* and *hatzlacha* even when they are hidden from view. So, too, must we be educate ourselves and our children to find *Hashem* in the sun and the sky and in every seemingly natural occurrence.