

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ונמלתם את בשר ערלתכם והיה לאות ברית ביני וביניכם ... (ז'-א)

For over forty-five years, the *Satmar* community in Jerusalem was led by one of the great *Torah* leaders of the previous generation, **Hagaon R' Moshe Aryeh Freund zt"l**, who also served as the *Ga'avad* and head of the *Eidah Chareidis* for close to twenty years, after the *petirah* of the **Satmar Rebbe zt"l**. R' Moshe Aryeh was a familiar figure on the streets of the holy city and was well known not only for his *Torah* knowledge and *chassidus*, but also for his caring heart and *chessed* that he performed, often quietly and unobtrusively, to members of his *kehillah* and *Yidden* from others as well.

As is the practice by many *Rebbes*, *Rabbanim* and *Roshei Yeshivah*, on any given day, they would often be honored at a *Bris Milah*, with the *kibbud* of *Sandek* (holding the baby while the *mohel* performs the *bris*). In some cases, they would serve in this capacity more than once a day for multiple babies from different families. In these instances, the *bris* would generally take place at the *Rebbe* or Rabbi's home or *shul*, so as not to inconvenience him, but on other occasions, they would travel to another *Beis Medrash* - or even another city - to accept the honor.

In his later years and due to health complications, R' Moshe Aryeh rarely traveled outside of Jerusalem and although he was often honored with various *kibbudim* at weddings, *bar mitzvahs* and *brissim* in neighboring cities and outlying neighborhoods, for the most part, he would usually not accept. However, on one unique occasion, he did accept the honor of *Sandek*, at a *bris* to take place in a distant city outside of Jerusalem. The father of the baby was a *mechanech* in a *yeshivah* there and was extremely poor. The family made due on whatever they had, but there was no such thing as luxuries in their home and they lived on a shoestring budget. When the father came to inform the *Ga'avad* that his wife had a boy and he would like to honor him with *Sandek*, to everyone's surprise, R' Moshe Aryeh accepted. He felt that coming to this *chasid's simcha* would give him a great deal of *chizuk* and allow him to keep going in his *avodas hakodesh*.

A few short days before the *bris*, a relative of the father called up and asked if he can serve as *Sandek* at the *bris*. He was willing to pay \$3,000 for the honor! The father was shocked. \$3,000 was a tremendous amount of money and could help his family in so many ways. On the other hand, he had already honored R' Moshe Aryeh with this *kibbud* and how could he take it back now? Thinking rationally, he assumed that if he went to the *Ga'avad's* house and explained the whole situation to him, out of sheer humility, R' Moshe Aryeh would tell him to give his relative the *kibbud*. How shocked he was, when he arrived in Jerusalem and told the *Ga'avad* about his relatives request to serve as *Sandek*, who was willing to pay \$3,000 for the right to do so - and R' Moshe Aryeh flatly turned him down! "You already honored me with *Sandek*. It is my *mitzvah*. You can't take away my *mitzvah* and give it to someone else!" The father turned red with embarrassment and his tongue clung to his mouth. He didn't know what to say. With no choice, he left and went back home.

On the day of the *bris*, R' Moshe Aryeh made the arduous trip from Jerusalem and served as *Sandek*. It was a huge deal and the father forgot about his relative's offer. His *simcha* at having the *Ga'avad* attend his son's *bris* was overwhelming and when he spoke at the *seudah*, he continuously thanked the *Rav* for coming so far from home to attend his *simcha*.

The next day, a messenger arrived and handed the father a thick envelope. In it was \$5,000 in cash, from R' Moshe Aryeh Freund, the *Ga'avad* of Jerusalem! Immediately, the man traveled back to Jerusalem to ask the *Rav* about the money. His relative was willing to pay \$3,000 for *Sandek*. Why did the *Ga'avad* send him \$5,000?

With a big smile, R' Moshe Aryeh replied, "Your relative was willing to pay this amount just for the sake of the *mitzvah*. Well, that makes sense as it is a big *mitzvah*. But since he asked for it, there is no real honor to go along with the *mitzvah*. I, on the other hand, was asked to accept this honor and by serving as *Sandek*, I experienced a great deal of *kavod* along with the *mitzvah*." Grinning widely, he asked, "You don't think such *kavod* is worth an extra \$2,000?"

וקי' ה' יהליו' כח ... (ישעי' מ-לא)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Chazal (Kiddushin 82a) tell us that *Avraham Avinu* fulfilled the entire *Torah* even before it was given, and as a result, *Hashem* blessed him with success in all his endeavors. To that end, *Yeshaya HaNavi* says, "But those who put their hope in *Hashem* shall renew their vigor..." and he attributes all personal strength and success in the world to the level of one's belief in *Hashem*. However, how was it possible for *Avraham* to "fulfill" commandments of the *Torah* at a time when the *Torah* had not been revealed yet?

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zt"l (Kedushas Levi) gives a fascinating explanation here, as well as a deeper understanding into the way a Jew ought to serve *Hashem*. Although it is true that the *Torah* was not yet given at the

time that *Avraham Avinu* "practiced it", the essence of the *Torah* as well as each *mitzvah* had already been created and anyone could have tapped into that essence to "learn the *Torah*" and "fulfill" the *mitzvos* properly. All it took was for someone to try hard to divine what was pleasing to *Hashem*, and his eyes would have become opened to the world of *Torah* and *mitzvos*.

Avraham Avinu was the first individual to do this when he recognized *Hashem* and His ubiquitous presence in the world, and by constantly seeking to understand nature's inherent inconsistencies hoping to get a deeper glimpse into *Hashem's* wondrous ways, *Avraham* set the gold standard for all subsequent generations on how to properly serve the Almighty.

אמרי נא אחתי את למען ייטב לי
בעבורך וחיתה נפשי בגללך ... (ב-י)

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

מחשבת הלב

Avraham Avinu told his wife Sarah, as they made their way down to Egypt, that if she tells the Egyptian authorities that she is his sister, they would be safe. Buy why does he use two redundant statements: "למען ייטב לי" - they should do good for me, and "וחיתה נפשי" - they will keep me alive? Also, why the added word "נפשי"? What is the deeper message?

Perhaps we can offer two *machshavos*. 1. Later on in the *parsha*, we read about the התברים *Hashem* tells *Avraham*, "וגם את הגוי אשר יעבדו דן אנכי ואחרי כן יצאו ברכש גדול". The *Rishonim* tell us that *Avraham* agreed to take reparations from Pharaoh because מעשה אבות סימן לבנים. In other words, by taking money now, it would enable *Yidden* in the future, to leave *Mitzrayim* loaded with riches. Thus, *Avraham* told Sarah, I'll accept money now "למען ייטב לי" and additionally "וחיתה נפשי" - when I'm no longer here, my *nefesh* will also gain, as our descendants will empty *Mitzrayim* of their riches too.

2. At this junction, *Avraham Avinu* feared he will lose his wife. He justified his actions to Sarah saying how much she meant to him because of what a woman does for her man - "וחיתה נפשי בגללך" - my soul has life - *chiyus* - from you because a wife is the backbone of a man. She completes him, she becomes his better half, keeping him from sin and aiding him in his *Avodas Hashem*. She also carries and raises his children with him. Thus, even when I pass on, said *Avraham* to his wife, my *nefesh* will be able to attain elevation through my offspring's actions and *maasim tovim*. As the *Zaida*, the **Machsheves Halev**, would often say, "A wife is called 'שאר' because she leaves him over something - his descendants."

Let us, therefore show the proper appreciation to our wives and children who help us out in more ways than they know! If we realize how much they improve our lives in this world and the next, it will surely better our relationships.

משל למה הדבר דומה

אל נא תדה מריבה בנינו ובינתך ובני רעי ובין רעך כי אדם אהבתי (ג-ה)
משל: A newly married man once approached the **Rebbe Maharash, R' Shmuel Schneersohn zt"l**, the third *Rebbe* of *Chabad*, to ask for some advice. This young man was quite the *Torah* scholar and had studied in *yeshivah* for many years. Now, he was about to begin a business career. His question was simply: "*Rebbe*, with what does one go?"

The *Maharash* was a very wise and patient man and answered him as follows: "The position of the holy **Baal Shem Tov zy"a** regarding Divine Providence is that *Hashem* causes circumstances to arise that will place particular people in particular places for particular reasons. Nothing is by chance - everything is by Divine decree. It is important that everyone must be a teacher from whom others can learn. Take this as a general principle. Be aware

that faults that you see in others are almost always in you as well. Good things that you see in others should be incorporated into yourself. If one lives his life in this manner and truly sees good in others and learns to being that good into himself and his business, it will undoubtedly make him into a successful person."

Years later, this man did succeed and was quite wealthy. He would always say that this advice "put me on my feet." **משל:** *Hashem* tested *Avraham Avinu* ten times and placed him in circumstances that required him to overcome any and all tribulations. When He and his nephew Lot parted ways, *Avraham* made it clear that he cannot coexist with his nephew as they run their households and business practices in entirely different ways. This was but one small example of how *Avraham* used this particular circumstance to grow and elevate the spiritual nature of himself and his household.

ויאמרו ה' אל אברהם לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך ... (ב-א)

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

דרגה יתירה

Hashem told *Avraham Avinu*, "*Lech Lecha*" - Go to yourself. Go achieve your greatest potential. **Rashi** says, "For your good and for your pleasure." Often what we think is the worst thing in the world turns out to be the best thing. We often look back at difficulties and say, "I would never be the person I am today if I had not gone through this specific *nisayon*."

So why every morning in our *davening* do we ask *Hashem*, "*Lo lidei nisayon, vlo lidei bizayon*"? Why do we ask *Hashem* not to test us if tests are the way that we reach our greatest potential? The answer is that we should never ask for a test, because we don't really know where we are holding. *Hashem*, in His Infinite wisdom, knows exactly how much we can handle and tests us according to our ability. When *Dovid HaMelech* asked *Hashem* to test him, He said, "*Chaneini V'naseini*." *Hashem*, You can test me, I will pass it. But this time *Dovid* failed, and for the rest of his life he was doing *teshuvah* for his sin. *Hashem* will never give us something that we cannot handle unless we ask for it without really knowing what we are capable of.

Our job in this world is to be prepared at any time for a TEST. We need to know that our tests are tailor-made for us and not become angry or resentful when we find ourselves in a situation that seems unfair. Look at *Avraham*. He spent his whole life opening up his home to people that were wandering or in need of a place to eat or sleep. His home was the safe, secure abode where anybody could come and learn that there is a *Hashem* in this world. And after all this dedication, *Hashem* tells him to get up, leave his home, his land, everything that he had built up to be *Mekadesh shem Shomayim*. Why would *Hashem* tell him to leave behind his haven of holiness and hospitality to become a wanderer himself? Doesn't this test seem "unfair"?

No, it wasn't unfair. It was exactly what *Avraham* needed. Some tests are small, and some are huge. Some seem unjust and others seem insurmountable. We have to always remember - whenever we feel like we cannot handle it anymore - it is only a test sent by *Hashem* Who knows us better than we know ourselves and only does what is for our good and ultimately for our pleasure.