



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

אם על תודה יקריבנו והקריב על זבח התודה חלות מצות בלולת בשמן ודקיקי מצות משהים בשמן ... (א-י)

In the early 1990's, a group of real estate developers purchased land in the heart of Tel Aviv with the intention of constructing a massive development project, replete with office buildings, malls and shops. It was to become known as the Azrieli Center. Many sharp-eyed investors recognized the opportunity and invested huge sums of money, some purchasing entire floors of the towers, plucking down large sums of money even before the building plans were drawn up.

One young Israeli developer was building his portfolio and was a success story at a young age. He lived in a bachelor pad in a trendy part of Tel Aviv, enjoyed the local night life and was far, far away from a *Torah* or even religious lifestyle. He really didn't have many friends but that was okay as his life was all about making money and it was all he cared and thought about on a daily basis. He inquired into the new Azrieli Center project and learned that if he acted quickly, he could purchase the entire 17th floor of one of the towers at a bargain discount price. It was an amazing deal and just before he could pull the trigger on the deal, another investment deal came across his desk. This one sounded even more attractive. A huge parcel of land in one of the most up and coming cities in Romania became available and he could have it for less money than the Israeli project. The potential return was huge as the land was so much more voluminous and he grabbed the Romanian deal.

Well, wouldn't you know it? The Romania deal collapsed. The Israeli investor had pumped all he had into it and now, it seemed that he had lost everything! He was devastated. He did not know where his next dollar would come from. He was left totally broke! Meanwhile the Azrieli Center was built and became an instant success. Investors who had the good fortune to put their money in the project did remarkably well and this young Israeli entrepreneur could only watch and eat his heart out.

One day, with no money and no business to speak of, the Israeli man decided that he had no choice but to take a loan. But as no conventional bank would touch him, he found that he could only get a "Black Market" loan in cash. He needed to go to a certain office on the 17th floor of the Azrieli Center, where it could be arranged. As he rode the elevator up to the same floor that he had almost purchased years ago, he couldn't help but wonder at the turn of events that led him to this place at this time. Thankfully, he was able to procure the loan and walked out with an envelope full of cash. He decided to take a quick look around and rode the elevator up to the top floor of the tower. There, he walked out onto the roof to get a panoramic view of Tel Aviv. Suddenly, and without warning, the roof door slammed shut and he was stuck on the roof! He banged and shouted but no one heard him. He looked down and could see people walking on the street 49 floors below, but there was no way anyone could see him.

He thought for a moment and realized that the only way people might notice him is if he tossed something down from the roof. But what? All he had on him was an envelope of cash. That's it! People will stop for cash. So, he took a few bills, rolled them up and tossed them down 49 floors. He watched as people saw the money hit the ground, grab it up and run off. He did it again and again, but nobody looked up. All they did was grab the heaven-sent cash and run off to celebrate their good fortune.

The man was crushed. For the first time in his life, he looked up to Heaven and said, "G-d, please hear my call. Save me. I have nowhere else to turn!" He really truly meant his words and he prayed with a broken heart. Suddenly, he noticed a pile of stones on the roof. With newfound resolve, he picked up the stones and threw them down one by one. This time, people looked up to see who was throwing rocks from the roof. They alerted a security guard who ran up to the roof and found the man throwing rocks. He was arrested and it took quite a bit of explaining as to why he was on the roof and what he was doing.

Eventually, the guard was convinced and let the man go. But this singular event changed his way of thinking. When he threw money down from the roof, nobody looked up. But when he threw rocks, it made an impression. The same goes for him. When life was good, and *Hashem* was "throwing money" down on him from Heaven, he never gave it a second thought. He never said thanks and didn't bother with G-d. But when *Hashem* was "throwing rocks" at him and his life was a disaster, suddenly he took notice. Suddenly, he was praying and the Good Lord heard his plea. The man became a *Baal Teshuva* and his life took on new meaning. And within a few months he got a call that the Romania deal had turned to gold - he was rich!

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

הנה אנכי שלח לכם אליה הנביא לפני כוא יום ה' הגדול (מלאכי ג-ב)

In the times of *Malachi HaNavi*, a frightening shift in the nation's attitude took place. *Hashem* was giving them many chances to repent but instead of righting their wrongs, the people felt emboldened to sin further, and their understanding of the concept of divine reward and punishment became skewed. *Malachi* adamantly pointed out that the redemption was imminent, thus giving the people a strong incentive to repent before the day comes when *Hashem* will mete out appropriate punishments and rewards for everyone.

**R' Chanoch Ehrentreu ז"ל (Kometz HaMincha)** quotes *Chazal* that *Shabbos HaGadol* is called as such because of

the "great" way *Hashem* grants clemency to those who show remorse for their sins. However, what is the connection between *Teshuva* and *Shabbos HaGadol*?

The answer lies in a tradition passed down the generations that the year the Jews left Egypt, the tenth of *Nisan* fell out on *Shabbos*. That day, the Jews made the conscious decision to fully serve *Hashem* and eradicate all idols, and the day was aptly dubbed *Shabbos HaGadol* as a commemoration.

Although we no longer have actual idols to destroy, *Chazal* say that one who is haughty, gets angry, or shames another is considered as if he serves idols. Thus, each year on *Shabbos HaGadol*, we get another chance to hit the reset button, show remorse and *Hashem* will mercifully grant us forgiveness.

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הררים את הדשן אשר תאכל האש את העולה על המזבח ושמו אצל המזבח (א-ב)

# מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZTL

The *Torah* mandates that the *Kohen* clean the *mizbeach* of the ashes of the previous day's leftover offerings every morning. There are 2 *mitzvos* which seem to instruct the *kohanim* to perform a most menial chore, to "take out the trash." The first, the *mitzvah* of *Terumas Hadeshen*, instructs the *kohen* to separate the ashes from the fire that had been burning on the *mizbeach* during the night. Each and every day, the *kohen* was to begin his day by taking a shovelful of these ashes and moving them to the floor of the *chatzer*, the outer courtyard or ramp, to the altar. The second, *Hotza'as Hadeshen*, called for a more thorough removal of the ashes, requiring the *kohen* to change into his "work clothes" (less glittering *bigdei kehunah*) and clear away the larger pile of ashes that had accumulated on the ramp and carry them outside the camp of *Bnei Yisroel*. Why did this *avodah* take place daily as one of the first services? I once heard a beautiful explanation in the name of **R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ז"ל**. The ashes symbolize the previous day's work - the past. Says the *Torah*, if you weren't happy with the past or had a rough day, worry not. Put it aside and focus on the next day's work for it is the future that counts. Thus, this symbolizes that *avodah* is crucial to the onset of the day. As *Zaida's (Baal Machsheves Halev)* first *yahrzeit* just passed, I believe that this quality was one that drove him, along with יבלתו, his *aishes chayil*, and the entire generation of survivors. They had the unique ability to shelve the past (not to forget it) and direct their herculean efforts into rebuilding and shaping the new generation. They succeeded *Boruch Hashem* - and how!

The *parsha* concludes: "ומפתח אהל מועד לא תצארו". We too find ourselves, at this time, in the confines of our homes. Let us put our efforts into our future and *daven* for the *nissim* that *Shabbos Hagadol* can bring forth for all of *Klal Yisroel* בעהש"ת.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר זאת תורת העולה ... (א-ב)

**משל**: During the mid-1920's the previous **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson ז"ל** lived in Soviet Russia and was branded a counter-revolutionary by the Communists. Any action, especially a trip to a major city, was grounds for his arrest, imprisonment or worse. But he always seemed calm and when he was asked how, he replied, that he had heard from his father that there is a concept called "success in time." One cannot increase the amount of time allotted to a given day. But within the time one does have, one can have greater success if he manages it wisely. One has to be careful that when he does something, there should be nothing that he did earlier or that he needs to do later bothering him in any way. Nothing else exists besides the matter currently at hand. This gives an individual the ability to utilize the present to its fullest. That is called "success in time."

Then he related a story: The Sage known as the **Rashba**,

## דרגה יתירה

אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה ... (א-ב)

This *posuk* is referring to the fire that burned constantly upon the *mizbeach* (altar) in the *Mishkan*. The **Rambam** indicates that this is a positive commandment for a fire to be continuously burning on the altar, including *Shabbos*. Even though fire would descend from Heaven to consume the sacrifices, we are commanded to bring our own "hedyot" common flame. Explains the **Shlah Hakadosh, R' Yeshaya Halevi Hurwitz ז"ל**, these words are a very important message for every Jew. A *shulchan*, a table, is compared to a *mizbeach*. In every Jewish home, it is around the *shulchan* that much time is spent during *Shabbosos*, *Yomim Tovim* and other opportunities to eat together. At every single gathering around the family "altar" a fire must burn. What type of fire are we referring to? The fire of *Torah* should always burn at every meal! When people get together and talk about politics, or even worse, talk *Lashon Hara* about other people, and not a single *Torah* thought is said, it is deemed "a gathering of fools" and a wasted opportunity to uplift physicality to meaningful and spiritual heights.

In this world, people can get so involved in day to day physical activities like working, eating, running errands, shopping, exercising and sleeping. People can get so bogged-down in the less important areas of life and completely forget about the main thing: *Torah! Torah! Torah!* This includes, *Torah* thoughts, *Torah* ideals, and a *Torah* outlook which must envelope every aspect of life. In fact, it is every aspect of life that should be illuminated with the light of *Torah*.

Especially at this time of year, when we are all busy preparing for *Pesach*, let us not forget the purpose and goal of all our preparations. *Pesach* is not about cleaning or clothing, and it's not about food. It is about passing over the true *Torah hashkafa* to the next generation. The only way we can give *Torah* to our children, is if it is constantly burning within us!

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO