

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

כי כל העושר אשר הציל אלקים מאבינו לנו הוא ולבנינו וכו' (לא-טז)

An interesting story is told about the *tzaddik*, **R' Yitzchok Friedman ZT"l**, upon his move to the Romanian town of Bohush. When R' Yitzchok made known his wish to come and live in Bohush, all the *Yidden* of the area were overjoyed that a great *tzaddik*, a grandson of the famed **Rizhiner Rebbe**, and a miracle worker in his own right, was planning to establish his *chassidic* court in their midst. One snag, however, stood in the way. The local *poritz*, Pan Moldavsky, was known as a violent anti-semitic who delighted in making the lives of the Jews a misery whenever he could. He would never permit them to build a *shul* or house for the *Rebbe* and could even prevent him from settling in Bohush.

The fear of the Jews of Bohush were indeed realized. When the *poritz* heard of R' Yitzchok's wish to move to Bohush, he forbade him to even enter the town. All pleas fell on deaf ears; the last thing the *poritz* wanted was for Bohush to become a major *chassidic* center. R' Yitzchok, however, wasn't surprised by the news and stated quite simply: "I don't want to live together with the *poritz* just as much as he doesn't want to live with me!"

A few days later the *chassidim* convened to try to work out a course of action, how to make the *poritz* change his mind. Suddenly, in the middle of the meeting the door opened and R' Yitzchok walked in.

"Is there anyone here who knows the *poritz* personally?" he asked. One of the *chassidim* who was well-acquainted with the *poritz* affirmed that he did. "I would like to know about the *poritz*'s pastimes," R' Yitzchok told him. "Does he enjoy hunting?" The man thought for a moment and said he did not. "Well, does he smoke? Perhaps he is fond of drinking?" R' Yitzchok persisted. Again the man replied negatively, "No, I don't think he smokes or drinks either."

The *chassidim* who were following this unusual conversation were intrigued by the *tzaddik*'s questions. Obviously, there was some higher purpose in all this. R' Yitzchok continued, "Does the *poritz* gamble? Does he play cards?"

Finally, the *chasid* nodded affirmatively, "Yes, he does play cards and in fact he is quite an avid player." Having at last received the information he needed, R' Yitzchok nodded, stood up and left the room just as abruptly as he had arrived.

The *poritz* had a friend by the name of Yevtushenko, a kind-hearted man who was a mirror opposite of the *poritz*. The two of them would spend much time together engaging in various sports and pastimes. The next time Yevtushenko came to Bohush, the *poritz* asked him if he would like to play a game of cards. "I really would love to play but I am exhausted from the journey," Yevtushenko answered. "Perhaps later when I have more strength."

"No, no! Let's play now, later on you can rest as much as you like," the *poritz* insisted, and would not take no for an answer. Seeing his host so determined, Yevtushenko didn't have the heart to refuse his friend and the game began.

Luck was against the *poritz* from the start. He lost round after round with the stakes running high. But instead of stopping and cutting his losses, the *poritz* continued on and on, as if oblivious to the sums of money he was losing. On the contrary, every loss increased his inexplicable desire to continue to play and wait for fortune to shine on him.

It took but a few short hours until the *poritz* had no money left to put on the table, but he still wouldn't stop.

"I must play a little longer, my luck will turn." He put up his property for stakes, his fields, gardens, mansion, furniture and servants, everything was sacrificed. The game only came to an end when the *poritz* had nothing left to gamble with, and was left without a penny to his name. The evil *poritz* was evicted from his house, his job and soon the town of Bohush, a broken and penniless man. Yevtushenko became the new *poritz* of Bohush. Known as a fine and kind man, he immediately granted permission for the building of the *shul* and for R' Yitzchok to settle in Bohush.

משל' למה הדבר דומה

אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגר ללבש וגו' (כח-ט)

משל: Not long ago, there was a Shabbaton sponsored by Camp Simcha - Chai Lifeline (a camp for children with cancer). The Shabbaton was for the campers as well as their siblings, parents, and family members. There were sessions with rabbis and psychologists to help the attendees deal with their often desperate situations.

One counselor found himself sitting with a man who has a daughter with cancer, רח"ל. She was undergoing chemotherapy and had lost all her hair. The counselor mentioned that he was looking for a position in Jewish education and

the father tried to convince him to move to his community.

"The people are friendly, rents are reasonable," he began. He went on and on describing the community. Finally he said, "There is only one problem with our community. It is a one-shul town and people tend to talk during davening."

The counselor told him, "Well, that's the way it is in some places. In that sense, your community is not unique."

The father looked down at his daughter and then sighed, "I guess some people have nothing to daven for. That is why they can talk during davening!"

ויאמר הן עוד היום גדול לא עת האסף המקנה השקו הצאן ולכו רעו וגו' (כט-ז)

Yaakov came to *Har Hamoriya*, site of the *Makom Hamikdosh*, and the *Medrash* relates that he prophetically saw the *Bais Hamikdosh* in its ruined state. **R' Nosson Adler ZT"l** explains that when the *posuk* says about Yaakov, "*he encountered the place*," and not that he encountered "*the mountain*," as Avrohom had called it when he said, "*on the mountain Hashem will be seen*," *Chazal* derive that he saw it in its destroyed form. This is also alluded to when the *posuk* continues, "*for the sun had set*." *Chazal* say that it was the sun setting early that day which caused him to spend the night there. This unnatural setting of the sun alludes to the destruction of the Temple, which also occurred earlier than it should have, two years before its scheduled time. This was so that the measure of sin would not have been even greater, condemning the Jews to complete destruction. *Hashem* brought forward the time of the destruction so as to save *Klal Yisroel*.

The premature setting of the sun was felt all over the world. When the shepherds gathered at the well, Yaakov told them that they had gathered too early: "*The day is still long, it is not yet time to bring the livestock in; water the flock and go on grazing*." Why did Yaakov have to inform them of this? Surely they knew that it was still early.

The answer is that it was precisely because of the miraculous setting of the sun the previous day. Because it was unexpected, the shepherds were forced to water their flocks in the dark. Therefore, on the next day, they gathered earlier than usual because they were worried it would happen again. However, Yaakov knew the real reason why it set earlier, and reassured them that on this day it would set normally and they could carry on their grazing without fear. (**Avnei Shoham**)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

הדרת חסוד

The *Torah* tells us that, "*Rochel was jealous of her sister*." Rochel was jealous? Rochel, the matriarch, whose spiritual qualities enabled her to give up her husband and indeed, part of her life, for her sister; Rochel, whose *tefillos* will be heard in Heaven above those of the *Avos*, when *Moshiach* will arrive, should now be labeled with arguably one of THE most destructive attributes that any person can ever have! JEALOUSY? ROCHEL? What are we missing from this picture??

Jealousy is bad, but jealousy can also be good. When one is jealous of another's spiritual achievement and this spurs him onto greater efforts in attaining that lofty goal-this is known as "קנאת סופרים" - and is most precious and beloved to *Hashem*.

After Leah gave birth to her fourth child, she named him Yehudah and announced, "*This time, I give thanks to Hashem*." Leah recognized that she was given more than her equal share of the *Shevatim* and she was overcome with gratitude and *Hakaras Hatov* to *Hashem*. She reached such a tremendous level of appreciation, that her sister Rochel was jealous! She, too, wished to feel that same closeness to *Hashem*, that same awesome spiritual sphere of *Hakaras Hatov*! But she knew that without the gift of child-bearing, she would never feel that way! Yes, she was jealous! Jealous of her sister's holiness!

What a lesson! Appreciation is the trademark of a Jew. In fact, it is inherent in our name! We are not known as "*Reuvainim*" or "*Shimonim*" but rather "*Yehudim*" - for we must constantly recall that our purpose in this world is to achieve an ever-closer connection to *Hashem* through *Hakaras Hatov*, by appreciating His unlimited goodness to us!

TORAH GEMS

והשמע את דברי בני לבן לאמר לקח יעקב את כל אשר לאבינו ... עשה כל הכבוד הזה וגו' (לא-א)

The *middah* of Yaakov Avinu, the main attribute for which he is renowned throughout the generations, is *Emes* - truth. It is with the purity and sincerity of "אמת ליעקב" that he served *Hashem* and this integrity was what enabled him to transmit the legacy of *Bnei Yisroel* to his children.

Yet, on the surface, it would appear not like this. Yaakov "tricked" Esav out of his *bechorah*, he "outsmarted" Lavan into paying his wages, and his family "fooled" the citizens of Shechem before annihilating them. This sounds like anything but *Emes* - honesty, integrity and truth!

R' Azaryah Figo ZT"l (Binah L'itim) provides us with a clear understanding based on the words of Lavan's sons. When Yaakov collected his wages from the herds of Lavan, in the form of all speckled goats and brown sheep, he amassed a tremendous sum which made him instantly wealthy and prosperous. Lavan's sons saw what he had done and proclaimed, "*Yaakov has taken all that belongs to our father*." Now, although Yaakov became wealthy, Lavan still retained many of his herds and had not nearly lost his enormous wealth. How then, could they claim that Yaakov had taken all that belonged to their father?

What the sons of Lavan were referring to was not their father's possessions, but rather their father's character. Lavan, the king of the swindlers, was outsmarted by a seeming novice. Until then, he had been the embodiment of deception and cheating. But now, Yaakov had beaten him at his own game and had "taken all that belonged to Lavan" - the essence of what Lavan was was taken from him. Yaakov, however, never allowed his actions to become a part of him. He did what was necessary, but his inner persona remained pure. This unusual and unique ability was his ultimate personification of the true meaning of *Emes*.

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

ותרא רחל כי לא ילדה ליעקב ותקנא רחל באחותה וכו' (ל-א)