

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה אשר נתתה לי ה' והנחתו לפני ה' אלקיך וכו' (כו-)

One of the first and most successful *kiruv* organizations in the U.S. is Hineni, founded by the dynamic **Rebbeztzin Esther Jungreis a”h** in the 1970’s. The organization was an instant success and the *Rebbeztzin* was asked to speak and engage with people at many events all over the world. She recalls one very special event that she was asked to speak at.

One day, she received a call from Shlomo Levin, the Israeli consul in New York. He said, “*Rebbeztzin*, I heard you speak at Madison Square Garden in NYC, and I think that our troops in Israel would greatly benefit from your message.” Shlomo had sent a publicity shot of Rebbeztzin Jungreis, mike in hand, taken at Madison Square Garden, to the Israeli Army Entertainment Corps, and they mistakenly thought that she was a singer. Some weeks later, she received a call from army headquarters in Tel Aviv asking how many performances she was prepared to do. She was so moved by the fact that they had invited her to speak - or so she thought - that she had difficulty finding words, and in a voice choked with tears, she accepted.

Well, it took some clearing up before the army agreed to do a half hour of music before she gave a speech to the troops. With great *Siyata D’shmaya*, she found a band from Miami willing to play for free for a half-hour, and although she didn’t know how they played, she trusted that all would be well. In fact, it went even better then expected and the band was great.

She became an overnight success in Israel. Invitations began pouring in from army bases as well as from the municipalities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa. Her plan had called for a ten-day tour, but the pressure was on to extend her visit. There was just one problem: the musicians from Miami had to return to the States, and there was no one to replace them.

“Don’t worry,” her husband **R’ Meshulem Jungreis ז”ל**, told her, “*Hashem* will send you someone!” And He did!

That Friday eve, as she sat in the dining room of her hotel in Jerusalem, the maitre d’ came over to inform her that there were some *yeshiva* boys in the lobby who wanted to speak to her. “*Rebbeztzin*,” one of the older boys said, “we are *yeshiva* students and we have our own band. We came to welcome you to Jerusalem and to offer our services.”

“That’s wonderful,” she said. “How did you know I needed a band?” “Well, actually, we didn’t know. We just wanted to participate and help.” He looked at the *Rebbeztzin* and continued, “But there is another reason as well. A few years ago, I lived in New York. I was totally assimilated. I had no understanding of Judaism. My life was music, and I was on my way to Paris to continue my musical studies. I was walking on Kings Highway in Brooklyn when suddenly I heard a crash and the screech of brakes. I looked up, and there in the street, covered with blood, was a rabbi who had been run over by a car. I rushed to his side and tried to talk to him, but he didn’t respond, so I stayed with him and held his hand until the police and an ambulance arrived.

“As he was lifted onto a stretcher, I noticed that his lips were moving. It seemed like he wanted to tell me something. I leaned down and bent my ear close to his lips to hear him. *Rebbeztzin*, you’ll never believe what the rabbi said to me.”

For a moment, the young man paused. Then he swallowed hard and continued his story. “‘Are you Jewish?’ the rabbi asked me in broken English. ‘Yes,’ I answered. ‘I am Jewish.’ The rabbi whispered again, although it was obvious that it was very painful and difficult for him to talk. He mustered all his strength and said, ‘You must go to Jerusalem and study *Torah!*’”

“Can you imagine? Here was a rabbi, suffering from multiple fractures, his body bloody and bruised, and in his pain what does he say? He tells me to go to Jerusalem and study *Torah!* That experience changed my life. I realized I had met a saint, a man who was so committed to his faith that he was able to overcome his suffering to reach out to me. So now you know why I’m here. That rabbi was your father, **R’ Avraham Jungreis ז”ל**! The rabbi saved my life, and I want to give back.”

Rebbeztzin Jungreis was stunned. She knew the story of her father’s car accident. When he recovered from that accident, he told her of the incident and asked her to try to find the young man and thank him for his kindness in staying with him until the ambulance came. She had never located him - until now, years later, in Jerusalem - this assimilated boy turned *yeshiva student came to thank her and offer his services in gratitude, and she was able to thank him in the name of her father.*

אשר בחר בנביאים טובים ...

כי הנה החשך יכסה ארץ וערפל לאמים ועליך יורה ה' ... (ישעי' ס-ב)

In the sixth *Haftorah* of the שבועה ד'רמיתא, *Yeshaya HaNavi* details what life will be like prior to and following the arrival of *Moshiach*. In those times, the world will be locked in warfare and clouded in darkness, however, it will be out of this darkness that the Jewish Nation will be seen as a light unto the world. No longer will Jews be despised and derided, no longer will they be subject to violence and mourning, and *Hashem* will shine His everlasting light on His people.

The contrast is startling! How will the nations of the world, who have forever hated the Jewish people, suddenly change their feelings and begin to like them?

R’ Gamliel Rabinowitz שלי”א explains that good and

bad is based on a person’s personal perception. If a person’s outlook on life is positive, *Hashem* will make his perception a reality. However, if a person sees the world negatively, *Hashem* will turn his life into a misery.

The nations of the world are plagued with terrible anti-Semitism which translates into a reality for them in the form of murder, torture and self-hatred. They destroy themselves and along the way vent their hatred on the Jewish people.

In the time of *Moshiach*, *Hashem* plans to release a great surge of peace in the world which will not only change the gentile’s outlook on life in general but change his perception on the Jewish nation as well.

מחשבת הלב

והיה אם לא תשמע בקול ה' אלקיך ... ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה והשגור (כח-טו)

Although the *parsha* of the *Tochacha* is replete with terrifying *klalos* (curses), the **Zohar Hakadosh** expounds that each *klala* has within it a *beracha* as well. **R’ Meir Premlishaner ז”ל** says that this idea is hinted in our *parsha* as well. The *Tochacha* has 676 words. To counteract these words of *klala*, the *Shem Havaya* (numerical value of 26), known as the *Shem of Rachmanus*, is mentioned 26 times: 26 x 26 is also 676, equivalent to the amount of words of *klala*, symbolizing that everything was and is orchestrated through the *Yad Hashem*, our quintessential *Av Harachamim*.

This *machshava* aptly explains the following anecdote. The son of one of the great *Rebbes* once fainted while listening to the harsh words of the *Tochacha* being read. When revived, he was asked why he fainted this year more as opposed to any previous one. He responded, “The past years, my father, the *Rebbe lained*. When he *lained*, I only heard words of *beracha*. This year, in his absence, a different *baal korei lained*. Now I heard curses and that is precisely why I passed out.”

With this idea, we can understand why on *Pesach* during *Maggid* we recite the *posukim* of *bikkurim* from *Parshas Ki Savo* regarding our ordeals in *Mitzrayim* and not the *posukim* from *Shemos* that talk about *Geulas Mitzrayim*. Only after the *geula* can we look back and realize that even during the rough times, we were always under the ever-protective watch of *Hashem*. And ultimately when *Moshiach* comes, we will realize the same. May all of our lives be filled with *shirah to Hashem Yisbarach* for all that He does, and may we revel in His goodness, as we read in this week’s *parsha*, ושמחת בכל הטוב, ושמחת בכל הטוב, as we read in this week’s parsha.

משל למא הדבר דומה

וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו כבוד ... (כח-י)

משל: The advent of violence, hatred and incitement against Jews living in *Eretz Yisroel* did not begin with the State of Israel in 1948. For many years before, the Arabs had been fomenting acts of violence against the small Jewish population of Palestine who lived in a few select cities.

After the massacre of 1929, **R’ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ז”ל**, chief rabbi of the old *Yishuv* in Jerusalem, issued a touching appeal to the Arab population to live in peace with the Jewish community, assuring them that the Jewish people had no secret plans to take their mosques or any other Arab properties. On one occasion, R’ Yosef Chaim was walking to the *Kosel Hamaaravi* accompanied by another Jew. An Arab storekeeper noticed them, and threw a rotten orange at them.

R’ Yosef Chaim turned to the Arab and exclaimed, “*Todah Rabba!*” The Arab did not understand what he had shouted, and chased after them to find out. The person accompanying him told the Arab that the rabbi had said “Thank you.”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF ... השתדלות

Our *Parsha* speaks about when the Jewish people will come into the Land of Israel and will perform the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim*, the *mitzvah* of bringing the first fruits that grow in one’s field up to the *Bais HaMikdash* as an expression of gratitude to *Hashem*. The *Sifri* tells us that the merit of entering the land was a reward for *Bikkurim*. The obvious question is: They didn’t do the *mitzvah* until after they came into the Holy Land? How can they get the reward if they did not yet do the *mitzvah*?

The answer is that before they entered the land, while they were still in the desert, they were so willing and excited to perform the *mitzvos* pertaining to *Eretz Yisroel*! They accepted them upon themselves so wholeheartedly that *Hashem* counted it as if they already did the *mitzvah*, and in that merit they entered and conquered the land. What a tremendous lesson for us, especially at this time of year. Yes, it is true that we must go out and do many good deeds to tip the scales in our favor on the *Yom HaDin*, but *Hashem* is so kind and so Merciful that even a sincere good thought is counted as a deed! If a person has in his mind to perform a *mitzvah* and makes every effort to do so, but is prevented from carrying it out, *Hashem* counts it as if he did it!

In the secular world, the main focus is the final product. If you don’t produce, all your effort is worthless. In the *Torah* world, when it comes to spiritual things like learning *Torah* and doing *mitzvos*, it is the exact opposite. *Hashem* wants our heart! He is interested in our thoughts, intentions, *kavanos* and not necessarily in the final product. In the physical world, we honor and respect people who do big and great things. In the spiritual world, the *Olam Haemes*, *Hashem* will honor the people who tried their best even if in the eyes of the world they did not succeed. We must learn to redefine “success” according to the *Torah* and know that *Hashem* wants our heart and our sincere effort. **R’ Yisroel Salanter ז”ל** would say, in this world “*M’ darf tun nisht of tun.*” In this world you have to do the best you can. The success of your accomplishment is up to *Hashem*.

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