



# מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

לא תבקרו אש בכל משבותיכם ביום השבת וגו' (לה-ג)

After the United States entered World War II, an amended Selective Service Act, signed by President Roosevelt, required that all men between the ages of 18 and 64 register for the draft. Leizer Cohen, a Chicago native who was born and grew up in the midwest, was thirty-six years old, married with three children. As prescribed by law, he had registered for the draft years earlier, but he was never selected. Leizer didn't even consider the possibility that he would be needed to serve.

But when Leizer received an official-looking letter from the U.S. Armed Forces, he read it and his face slowly lost its color until it matched the white paper in his hand. Indeed - it was a draft notice! Leizer was overage, much older than the usual recruits, and had a full family, but apparently the Army was understaffed. Leizer read the letter with dismay: He was to report to the downtown Chicago induction center the following Saturday morning at 08:00 hours. An ominous line at the end of the letter, made him blanch: "Anyone who fails to respond to this summons will be arrested and prosecuted."

"On *Shabbos*?" Leizer whispered to himself. "What will I do there? Even if I arrive Friday eve before nightfall, how will I daven with a *minyan*? There are no Jews downtown!" But there was no getting out of it. He knew how serious this matter was and if he was selected, he would summarily be inducted to serve in any one of the theaters of war. And this was just the beginning! How would he keep *Shabbos* as well as observe all the *mitzvos*, if he was drafted into the army?

Despite his misgivings, Leizer had no choice but to gather his belongings on Friday afternoon and prepare to spend *Shabbos* in a downtown Chicago hotel. He brought along *Shabbos* provisions; candles, wine, *challah*, a *siddur* and a *chumash*. As the sun set over the Chicago skyline, Leizer found himself chanting the Friday night prayers - slowly, meaningfully, but in total solitude. After his lonely Friday night meal, Leizer took out his *chumash* to review the weekly *Torah* portion, *Parshas Vayakhel*. He was tired from the long week. He reached the *posuk*, "*Do not kindle a fire in all your dwellings on the Shabbos day.*" He read the words over and over, but sleep quickly overtook him and he fell asleep.

Leizer awoke the next morning, his heart heavy with dread. After davening in his hotel room, he joined thousands of people at the induction center waiting to be examined by the Army doctors. Late in the afternoon, Leizer was seated opposite an Jewish psychiatrist, named Schwartz. After some routine questioning, Leizer voiced his misgivings about joining the Army but the doctor just shrugged, unmoved. Leizer watched him reach into his pocket to pull out a cigarette. As the match flared in the doctor's hand, the words of the *chumash* from the night before flashed before his eyes: "*Do not kindle a fire...*"

"Hey, doctor, you are Jewish, right? Why are you smoking on *Shabbos*?" Leizer admonished him. The doctor stopped writing in mid-sentence. Then, he looked up slowly and rolled his eyes. "Listen, it's been a long day. Will you give me a break?" But Leizer did not give him a break. He continued to expound on the prohibition of lighting a fire on *Shabbos*, that it was absolutely forbidden, and how could a Jew dare do such a thing?

As Leizer ranted on, the doctor furiously scribbled a few notes on the file in front of him. "Here," he said, interrupting Leizer mid-sentence. "Take this to the doctor in the next room."

Another Jewish doctor. Leizer handed him the file and sat down. The doctor looked down at the note, then peered up at the man standing before him. "What is your name?" he began. Leizer responded dutifully to each question until suddenly, this doctor, too, took out a cigarette and lit up. The *posuk* again flashed again in Leizer's mind, "*Do not kindle a fire...*"

Leizer couldn't hold himself back. "Doctor, you look Jewish. Why do you smoke on *Shabbos*? Surely you know it's forbidden for a Jew to light a fire on the *Shabbos*, the holiest day of the week?"

The doctor shook his head in disbelief. "Oh, boy! You're too nervous for the United States Armed Forces. We don't need guys like you. Go home." Relieved, Leizer left the army induction center. He was so excited to be exempt that he ran - practically danced - all the way home, where he told everyone about the great redemption he had experienced.

## משל למת הדבר דומה

החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה וגו' (שמות יב-ב - שייר לפרשת החודש)

**משל**: One morning, before **R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"L** left his house to daven, sounds of a loud argument were heard from a nearby house in *Batei Machse*. R' Yosef Chaim, asked his daughter-in-law, who was living in his home, to go see what was the issue. She came back and told him that one of the women of *Batei Machse* had hired a Yemenite Jewish woman to be her washerwoman for the day. (A laborious job that involved rubbing laundry in a barrel of warm water from dawn till dusk.) But when the poor woman arrived for work, the woman of the house told

her she had forgotten it was *Rosh Chodesh*, and the custom is for women not to do any work. The Yemenite woman cried that if she did not work today, she would not have anything to feed her little children, for her husband was sick in bed and she was the sole source of support for the family.

When R' Yosef Chaim heard the story, he told his daughter -in-law, "Go quickly and hire that Yemenite woman to do your laundry. Causing pain to a poor Jewish woman with small children is worse than breaking a custom!"

After the washerwoman had sat down to work at R' Yosef

ויקחו מלפני משה את כל התרומה אשר הביאו בנ' ... והם הביאו אליו עוד נדבה בבקר בבקר (לו-ג)

Finally, the actual construction of the *Mishkan* begins! It took three and half *parshiyos* filled with commandments and detailed instructions - what materials must be used; how the vessels should be fashioned; who will carry out the work - until the actual moment when, "*they took from Moshe all the donations that Bnei Yisroel brought*" - and the work began!

The *posuk* seems unclear. First it says that Betzalel and his helpers took all the donations from Moshe; then it immediately adds: "*And they brought him extra donations every morning.*" The questions abound: Who brought extra donations? Why "every morning"? If these people took the donations to begin the work, why did they bring more now?

A deep and inspiring explanation is provided by **R' Boruch Frankel-Tumim ZT"L (Boruch Taam)**, who cites the *halacha* (ח"מ שח) that a hired worker is permitted to take a break in the middle of the work-day, to go out and eat, and his wages may not be diminished by his employer. Although it is perfectly acceptable for employees to follow this practice, the workers who built the *Mishkan* in the desert did no such thing. They understood the importance of their work and refused to halt their exalted mission during the day for even a minute. However, a person must eat at some point during the day, and these men were no different. What did they do? They awoke earlier than usual and put in extra time, so as to make up for the "lost time" during the day when they felt the need to eat.

Thus, the *Torah* describes how Betzalel, Oholiev and the holy workers who built the *Mishkan* gave "extra donations" - in the form of extra time that they spent "every morning" waking up earlier than they normally would, to devote every second of their day to the building of the *Mishkan*. Each and every Jew can take a lesson from these holy men and decide to devote every moment of our lives to *Avodas Hashem* - even if we have to wake up earlier than usual to do it!

## EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ... אהדות

If the *Torah* tells us that every generous heart of the Jewish people donated to the *Mishkan*, why is it necessary to repeat in the same *posuk*, that "*Bnei Yisroel brought it*"? Obviously, this *posuk* is giving us a glimpse into the tremendous outpouring of love - in the form of donations to the *Mishkan* - that *Bnei Yisroel* had. In fact, there was such a great overflow, that Moshe had to actually tell the people to stop bringing donations! The nation responded generously, to their great credit.

**R' Avraham Pam ZT"L** elaborates on this idea and says that the individual Jews who brought their gifts to the *Mishkan*, did not do so for any specific honor or reward. It wasn't as if the Jewish people needed to boast or brag about their donations. Not at all. Every single person was giving for the sake of the *Klal* (the entire group) and to sanctify the Name of *Hashem*. For this reason, the *posuk* concludes with the words, "הביאו בני ישראל" - to teach us that it was all brought for the goal of being a great and unified *Klal* in the service of *Hashem*. We, too can truly accomplish the greatest achievements when we see ourselves as all parts of one "whole" rather than many different and opposing parts that create "holes" in the fabric of our people.

In the *mitzvah* of "ואהבת לרעך כמוך" - we must love one another as we love ourselves - the word "רעי" means friend, but it also means a tiny broken sliver, as in the word "תרועה" - the sound of the *shofar* that comes out like tiny, broken sobs. The truth is that individually, we are all tiny broken shards, hewn out of one giant and mighty stone. Only when we see ourselves as a united and equal entity, do we have the power of "רעים אהובים" - the invincible force known as *Klal Yisroel*.

# TORAH GEMS

ויביאו את המשכן אל משה את האהל ואת כל כליו קדשו קרשיו ברידיו ועמודיו וארניו וגו' (לז-ג)

The *Medrash* states that Moshe had no hand in the preparation and building of the *Mishkan*. All the materials were donated by the people and the work was carried out by Betzalel, Oholiav, and the "*wise-hearted men.*" Moshe lamented this fact and was grieved, until *Hashem* told him, "None of them will erect it - only you, and the *Mishkan's* construction will be associated with your name only." Thus, the *posuk* states: "*And Moshe erected the Mishkan.*" Why indeed did Moshe not participate? Who prevented him? Why did he not make a donation like the rest of *Bnei Yisroel*?

**R' Dovid Kviat ZT"L (Succas Dovid)** answers that *Moshe Rabbeinu* was under the impression that the construction of the *Mishkan* must be carried out in its entirety by the children of Israel, to allow them to attain a complete atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. Just as they themselves had made the Golden Calf, so would they construct the *Mishkan* in its entirety, and thereby find complete atonement for the enormity of that terrible sin. Moshe agreed to give up the merit he would have acquired by participating in the *Mishkan's* construction if doing so would be beneficial for the people, for Moshe's most primary concern was the welfare and benefit of his people

Nevertheless, he did lament, for though his intentions were certainly altruistic, at the end of the day, he will be lacking the merit of participating in the construction of the *Mishkan*. Therefore, Heaven reserved for him the task of erecting the *Mishkan*. With this task the project came to an end, and it was more important than all the building that had preceded it.

The **Medrash Tanchuma** concludes: "*It was a very great accomplishment to draw the Shechinah down to earth, a material, impure place. Only Moshe Rabbeinu was able to do so. By erecting the Mishkan and bringing the Shechinah down (השקטת השכינה), he accomplished the ultimate goal for which the Mishkan had initially been constructed.*"

## FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

כל איש ואשה אשר נדב לבם ... הביאו בני ישראל נדבה לה' .... (לה-ב)