

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

The renowned **Kabbalist R’ Asher Zelig Margulies זט”ל** writes in his *sefer*, “*Hilulah D’Rashbi*” the following story: I personally witnessed a miraculous and wondrous event in Meron, *Lag Ba’Omer* 5683 (1923). That year *Lag B’Omer* fell on a Thursday night. Many of the celebrants elected to stay for *Shabbos*, knowing that the holy day in the presence of the *Tanna, Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai*, would be an extraordinarily exalted occasion. Friday evening everyone prayed together, and the holiness and joy of the *Shabbos* spirit was palpable. Early *Shabbos* morning, as soon as the first streaks of light infiltrated the sky, the people returned to the tomb site for the sunrise *minyan*. Afterwards, the happy singing of the earlier arrivals left no doubt that the spirit of *Shabbos* joy was continuing to expand with each passing moment.

But then, a loud bitter wail shattered the shimmering atmosphere of *Shabbos* joy. A little boy, who had come with his mother for his first haircut, had unaccountably fallen sick and stopped breathing. Aid was given, but to no avail. He was dead, and his broken mother was screaming uncontrollably. All the women around her were crying too. The word spread quickly. Almost instantaneously, the singing stopped, the dancers froze; the mother’s loud cries pierced every heart.

Before they could recover from their shock, a further development struck. The British Mandate police assigned to keep order around the holy gravesite of Rebbe Shimon, suddenly and without any warning, locked the gates of the courtyard. They announced that they were forced to take this precaution because maybe the disease that had struck down the hapless child was highly contagious, and they were obligated to do everything possible to prevent it from proliferating.

Pandemonium spread. Many families were divided by the padlocked gate; numerous little children were cut off from their parents. Masses of Jews were being prevented from reaching Rebbe Shimon on the day of his celebration.

The stunned Jews still inside pushed closer to the tomb site, to express their crushed hearts in fervent prayer. Suddenly the crowd rippled, and like at the Splitting of the Red Sea, a clear path miraculously opened. The grieving mother was staggering determinedly towards the place of Rebbe Shimon, carrying her lifeless son in her arms. The distraught mother came up to the tomb. She placed her son on the ground. In a quivering voice she spoke out through her tears, “Tzadik! I, your humble maidservant, came here to honor you. Only you know that in bringing my son here to you, I was fulfilling the vow I made on this spot four years ago, before I merited to be a mother for the first time. Yesterday, we inaugurated him with joy and song in the *mitzvah* of leaving *peyos*. And now, woe is me! How can I go home without my son?”

The mother stopped crying. She straightened up and took a deep breath. In a firm clear voice, she pronounced: “Rebbe Shimon! I have laid my son on the ground next to you, dead. Please do not disappoint me. Return my son to me alive and healthy as he was when I brought him here to you. ‘*Yisgadal V’yiskadash Shmei Rabbah*’ ... everyone knows that you are holy and our G-d, is holy. Please give me back my son!” She stopped speaking, and exited the structure built around the tomb. Everyone present followed her out. They closed the door after them, leaving the deceased child behind, unattended.

A few minutes passed. From inside, behind the closed doors, a weak voice was heard. “Mommy, water. I’m so thirsty.” Everyone stood as if paralyzed, trembling with conflicting emotions of fear and disbelief, of shock and delight. The mother burst through the doors and swept up her child into her arms. Everyone ran in and surrounded them, and spontaneously burst out with overflowing hearts, “ברוך מרחיח מתים” - “*Blessed is He who enlivens the dead!*”

The bewildered British quickly reopened the courtyard gates. The throngs of Jews impatiently standing outside streamed back in. When they heard about the great miracle that had just taken place, the thanksgiving and celebration multiplied sevenfold. The sound of their enthusiastic singing of the revered song “*Bar Yochai*” (composed by the **Kabbalist, Chacham Rabbi Shimon Lavia זט”ל** approximately 450 years ago) could be heard for miles around - and, no doubt, penetrated to the highest heavens, including the celestial abode of Rebbe Shimon himself. (**Kupat Tzidkat Rashbi**)

... אשר בחר בנביאים טובים ... עוד יקנו בתים ושדות וכרמים בארץ הזאת (דמיון לז-כז)

As the glorious First Temple era drew to a close, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* was incarcerated for predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of *Am Yisroel*. The *Navi* received a command from *Hashem* to purchase his ancestral lands from his cousin, Chanamel. Although the timing was strange, he did as he was told and explained to the Jewish people that, “*homes, fields and vineyards will be purchased again in this land,*” thus conveying a message of hope even on the eve of destruction and exile, that the Jews will return to the land.

R’ Mordechai Yosef Leiner זט”ל (Izhbitzer Rebbe) quotes the *halacha* that a person retains his claim to a lost

object only if he was never *מיאש* - he never gave up hope of ever retrieving it. Hope alone retains a person’s connection to his possessions, but once he gives up hope, he forfeits his right to that object and the one who finds it is entitled to keep it.

Although *Yerushalayim* was on the verge of being destroyed, *Hashem* was laying the groundwork for the Nation’s eventual return. Writes the *Izhbitzer Rebbe*, losing hope is so destructive that even when *Hashem* was angry with the Jewish people, he still taught them the lesson of never giving up hope. Whatever the situation, as long as one keeps his hopes alive, his potential redemption, cure or salvation remains alive as well. One must maintain hope in order to have a chance to see that salvation come to fruition.

Join in and listen to a 5 minute daily shiur in Kedushas Einyim. Call 718-450-9990. Your eyes are precious - Turning one's eyes away from evil is the ultimate goal

וקדשתם את שנת החמישים שנה וקראתם דרור בארץ לכל יושביה ויכל הוא תודה לכם וכו' (כה-)
The *Torah* tells us that the fiftieth year is called “*Yovel*” - the Jubilee year. It is when there is a “*call a freedom to all her inhabitants.*” **Rashi** explains that in the year of *Yovel* all “עבדים עבריים” - Hebrew slaves, would go free, even one who had previously chosen to remain with his master after being permitted to go free at the end of six years and who had his ear bored; or a slave for whom his six-year period since having been sold has not yet elapsed. Everyone goes free.

The **Pnei Yehoshua, R’ Yaakov Yehoshua Falk זט”ל**, asks: The population of slaves was surely only a fraction and a minute percentage of the Jewish Nation. Why, then, does the *Torah* write “לכל יושביה” - it applies to everyone? What freedom does a regular layman attain? He answers based on the oft quoted *Mishna* in *Avos*: “אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק” - a truly free man is only the one who toils in *Torah*. During the *Yovel* year, all work is prohibited. Therefore, all workmen return to a *kollel* lifestyle and fill the *Beis Medrash* with learning. They experience and become *Bnei Chorin*. Hence says the *Torah*, “וקראתם דרור בארץ” - call freedom - “לכל יושביה” - to everyone. Because everyone is learning now!

How beautiful! Such an amazing thought! My *machshava* is to take this *pshat* a step further. We all have our “Yovels” - the downtime, the period when we are not toiling, working, over the course of our day, night or lives. Our job is to take that downtime and transform it into uptime, a time of *aliya*. A long Friday afternoon to help our wives or parents for *Shabbos*, or to help another family in need. Likewise, a long *Shabbos* afternoon or Sunday to start a new *chavrusa* with a friend or child. A summer to spend quality time with our spouses and children. It’s our job not to squander these times, but rather to utilize these opportunities for *ruchniyus*, thereby making our lives that much more meaningful.

משל למה הדביר דומה ונתנה הארץ פריה ואכלתם לשבע וישבתם לבטח עליה ... (כה-יז)
משל: One day, a woman came home to find her non-Jewish cleaning lady waiting for her anxiously. “I must leave right away,” said the non-Jew. “An emergency has come up in my family and I must go back to my country immediately.”

The woman was surprised. This cleaning lady had been with the family for a few years and she was quite good. She tried to inquire how she can possibly help out but the non-Jew was adamant. “I must leave right now,” she declared.

The woman took pity on her worker and asked, “Can I at least give you something to eat, something to take along for the trip? How about a fruit?” She picked up an apple that was sitting nearby and handed it to the cleaning lady. The lady looked miserable, grabbed the apple and ran outside.

A few minutes later, the woman’s husband came home and she told him about the strange and hasty departure of their

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF ... **דרגה יתירה** **קרבת ה'** כי גרים ותושבים אתם עמדי ... (כה-ג)

Hakadosh Boruch Hu makes a deal with His beloved *Yidden*. He puts us into this world and hopes that we successfully fulfill our mission. We are meant to remember that the purpose of life is to connect with *Hashem*. Our goals should be to grow spiritually, even if we need to be involved in physical matters. The point is not to get sidetracked, and to keep our eye on the goal.

Hashem tells us, “I will be a *Ger*, a stranger and a *Toshav* (permanent resident) with you.” What does this mean? Either you are a stranger or a permanent resident - you can’t be both! Perhaps we can understand this as a reminder of what life is about. *Hashem* is telling us that us that if we make ourselves into a stranger in this world, i.e., we don’t get too comfortable here and lose sight of the purpose, then *Hashem* says, “I will be a *Toshav* - a permanent resident - WITH YOU! I will be close to you, I will give you Heavenly assistance, and most importantly, you will feel My presence in your life. But if not, if you make yourself a permanent resident of THIS world; you are busy all day with the goals and pleasures of *Olam Hazeh*, then I will be with you as a *Ger*, as a stranger to you. You will not feel My presence in your life.”

This message is so important for all Jews, on all levels. Unfortunately there are so many unaffiliated Jews who are so far from *Hashem* because they are so busy trying to make money, become rich and gain importance in other’s eyes. People are busy on their gadgets (*Tchotchkes*) connecting to everyone around them, while at the same time, disconnecting themselves from what is truly important - their relationship with the One Above. There are also many affiliated Jews who get caught up in the “rat race” and although they are in *shul* 3 times a day, and keep *Shabbos* and eat from the very best *hechsher*, they are still “strangers” with *Hashem*, because they are truly living in the world of *Gashmius*. This *posuk* should wake us up and remind us of what we are living for. Be a GER in this temporary world, so that *Hashem* will be a permanent TOSHAV with you.

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

מחשבת הלב