

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ושמר בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת לדורתם ברית עולם וגו' (לא-טז)

Chazal say that one who keeps *Shabbos* will see no loss in his worldly affairs. Once a Jew realizes that he is not just keeping *Shabbos* but in truth, *Shabbos* is “keeping him,” he will embrace it wholeheartedly and with pleasure.

Among the many other functions that he was involved in as a leading layman of American Jewry during much of the twentieth century, **Irving Bunim Z”L** championed the cause of *Chinuch Atzmai*, Israel’s *Torah*-observant day school system. As a close confidante and disciple of the great Lakewood *Rosh Yeshivah*, **R’ Aharon Kotler ZT”L**, who founded and provided direction for *Chinuch Atzmai*, Irving Bunim worked tirelessly to further this worthy cause.

Bunim would travel to Israel on occasion to assist the fledgling organization and raise money. His devotion to *Chinuch Atzmai* would grow dramatically after observing first-hand what it was accomplishing. On one trip in the late 1950’s, Irving met a Sephardic girl in Ashkelon. She came from a non-observant family, but, after attending a *Chinuch Atzmai* school, she had turned to religious observance and become a *Ba’alas Teshuvah*. Her family, however, was not so eager to follow her lead. Her father was in the retail chandelier business, and business was tough. As a result, he was loath to hire outside help for the store and each of his children was required to work one day a week in the store. As it turned out, this girl’s turn fell out on *Shabbos*.

Before she had accepted religious observance, she hadn’t known better. But now, she was torn between her family and *Shabbos*, not knowing which to honor. Finally, she decided that she would honor her father - but in her own way - without causing any dishonor to the holy day. Every *Shabbos* morning, she walked to the store and politely stood behind the counter waiting for customers. When one did come in and would ask how much an item cost, she quoted prices so preposterously exorbitant that the customers immediately walked out. The girl thought she had figured it out; she obeyed her father, but never made a single sale and so was never forced to violate *Shabbos*.

After three weeks, however, her father began to wonder why he was doing no business on Saturdays. He decided to spy on his daughter. Just then a man entered and inquired about a \$180 chandelier.

“That chandelier is very special,” the girl said. “That chandelier costs \$1,000.”

The man said the price was too high and he left.

The girl was relieved until she saw her enraged father coming toward her. “Why did you do that?” he bellowed. “Do you know how much money you’ve lost me?”

The girl was too terrified to respond. She couldn’t simply tell her father the reason why she quoted such a high price; he was not too keen on her religious observance in the first place. This would most assuredly cement his staunch opposition against it. She remained silent while her father vented his anger out at her.

The next day, her father was surprised to see the man walk back into the store. “I realize that \$1,000 is a lot of money,” he said, pointing to the \$180 chandelier, “but I really had my heart set on it. I looked all over the city for one like it, and found nothing else. So here,” he added, reaching for his checkbook, “I’ll give you \$1,000 for it, all right?”

Stunned, the shopkeeper sold him the chandelier, but only at its proper cost. He then turned to his daughter and softly announced that they had witnessed a supernatural event, It came from *Shamayim* (Heaven), he said, and it imparted a profound message.

“From this day onward,” he added, “the whole family will be *Shomer Shabbos*, like you.”

משל' למה הדבר דומה

ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת וגו' (לב-לב)

משל' There was once a young man who was a habitual lawbreaker and found himself in trouble time after time. It just so happened that he was also the nephew of the Prime Minister and he used this relationship to his advantage. Whenever he got caught by the authorities, he would tell them who he was. Then, his uncle would have to intercede on the young man’s behalf and beg the king’s pardon.

One time, however, his crime was so offensive that the Prime Minister was ashamed to approach the king and plead for leniency. Yet, he loved his nephew and wanted

to save him from the severe punishment that awaited him.

Finally, he went to the king and said: “Your Majesty, it is true that my nephew has done many terrible things against the crown. But it is important to recognize that he does this because he relies on me to intercede for him. But I have an idea. If he knew that I could no longer serve as his go-between, he would stop behaving so objectionably. Thus, for the sake of my family and for the good of the crown, I hereby request that the king remove me from my position so that my nephew shall halt his mischief!”

וידבר ה' אל משה לך רד כי שחת עמך
אשר העלית מארץ מצרים וגו' (לב-ז)

When the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf, *Hashem* declared to Moshe: “*Go down (from Heaven), for your nation which you brought out of Egypt has become corrupt.*” Our sages explain that *Hashem* criticized Moshe because he accepted many Egyptians who wanted to convert to Judaism when they saw the miracles which the Almighty had wrought for the Jews. These converts - known as the “*Erev Rav*” - were nothing more than opportunists who did not sincerely believe in *Hashem* and who had not abandoned their pagan beliefs. It was they who influenced the Jews to fashion the Golden Calf.

The **Vilna Gaon ZT”L** reveals that all heretics and wicked Jews throughout the ages are the descendants of this group, the *Erev Rav* (mixed multitude), and they will proliferate and rise to power in the era preceding the future redemption of *Moshiach*, causing tremendous harm to the righteous *tzaddikim* of that generation.

The **Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar ZT”L** adds that in the future, during the imminent days immediately prior to the revelation of *Klal Yisroel*’s final redemption, the Jewish People will be prosperous and respectable. Indeed, many prospective converts will be attracted to join the folds of Judaism by worldly, and not spiritual, considerations. It is then that *Moshe Rabbeinu* will right the wrong that he was criticized by *Hashem* for. Since *Moshe Rabbeinu* will once again lead the people during the Messianic Era, he will scrupulously reject any insincere converts and turn away all those who attempt to jump onto the Jewish “bandwagon.” Like *Chazal* teach: “*Proselytes will not be accepted in the days of Moshiach.*” (יבמות כד:) Thus, Moshe will make amends for those he accepted during the Exodus from Egypt.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

עצבות

R’ Chaim Shmuelevitz ZT”L says a remarkable thing: *Klal Yisroel*’s precipitous fall from the celestial heights of *Har Sinai* to the depths and depravity of the Golden Calf, is due to “עצבות” - “*depression.*” When Moshe was in Heaven, the *Satan* displayed an image of a dead *Moshe Rabbeinu* to the people and they became sad and depressed. They lost hope. This was the moment, the *yetzer hara* was waiting for. At such a time, he can make a person do ANYTHING!!

The **Karliner Rebbe ZT”L** said: “Being depressed is not in itself a sin. But it is a state of mind which is most conducive to allow a person to commit a sin!” How far the Jews that received the *Torah* fell due to this insidious plan of the *Satan*.

In the morning prayers, right after “*Shema*” we say the words, “אמת ויציב” - our relationship with *Hashem* is TRUE and STURDY. At night, however, when the world is dark and scary, we say, “אמת ואמונה” - It is TRUE and we BELIEVE in Him! For even when life is difficult and the Hand of *Hashem* is not clearly visible, we must never lose faith or hope. We must never become depressed or sad; rather, we must retain a positive attitude by believing in the truth and goodness of *Hashem*. If we allow the *yetzer hara* to make us depressed, he has us in his clutches and the very worst sins can ensue.

In *Adar* we are “מרבים בשמחה” - “*increasing happiness,*” while in *Av* we are “מעטים בשמחה” - “*decreasing happiness.*” Either way, we must have happiness; sometimes we lower it, other times we raise it. But it is our foundation. For if we are caught up in depression, we can make disastrous decisions - like the Jews in the desert. This is no way to serve *Hashem*!

TORAH GEMS

פסל לך שני לוחות אבנים כראשונים וכתבתיו
על הלחת את הדברים אשר היו וכו' (ד-א)

In a spate of fury and indignation, Moshe had shattered the original *Luchos*, Tablets of the Covenant. *Hashem* then told him to prepare a second set of *Luchos*, similar to the first ones, and to ascend the mountain with these stones. The *Medrash Tanchumah* draws a parallel between the implications of the *Luchos Shniyos* (second Tablets), to those regarding the first *Luchos*. The *Medrash* points out that the first *Luchos* were given before the entire nation amidst thunder, lightning and smoke. As a result, because the first *Luchos* were given with great publicity, they were affected by an “עין הרע” - “*evil eye*” and thus had no permanence. Something which is affected negatively by outside influences can not remain nor succeed. The lesson culled by the *Medrash* is that nothing - not even the holy *Luchos* themselves - can have lasting success other than that which is done through modesty and privacy.

The **Kotzker Rebbe, R’ Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT”L**, understands the message of this powerful *Medrash* on a deeper level. The first *Luchos* had been given with such great publicity and fanfare and had acquired its holiness much more from *Hashem* than from the people. The second *Luchos*, on the other hand, were given modestly and had to be sought out by the people for it was they who wanted them. We see that only that which is acquired by a person’s desires combined with his efforts, can attain permanence. That which comes easily and without effort, has much less chance of continuity.

This is precisely what the *Navi* was telling the people when he said: “*And what does the Hashem require of you?*” והצנע לכת עם אלקיך - *to walk modestly with your G-d.*” (מיכה ו-ח) The requirement is upon you; your efforts must be expended in order to achieve that goal of modesty.

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

ורא העם כי בשט משה לרדת מן ההר ויקהל העם על אהרן וכו' (לב-א)