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(1) רמ"א יו"ד רמ"ד (2) ש"ך שם רמ"ד

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויענו כל העם יחדו ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה וישב משה את דברי העם אל ה' וגו' (יז-ח)

Our Sages teach us that the *Kabollas HaTorah* of our forefathers, thousands of years ago, was not an isolated incident. In fact, in every generation, we revisit this “Kaballah” - this unique acceptance of *Torah* primacy in our lives, and in return, the *Torah* uplifts us, guides us and protects us. With our great leaders showing us the way, each and every Jew, from the most simple to the most scholarly, can have an impact on the world, not only for himself and his family, but with the power of his “*Kabollas HaTorah*” on any level, he can affect the lives of others in a great and meaningful way.

A couple living abroad (*Chutz L'aretz*) was married for over twenty years but unfortunately, they were not blessed with children. They went to doctors for treatment and prayed at holy sites, year after year, to no avail. Someone suggested that they should move to the Holy Land, for *Chazal* tell us that settling in *Eretz Yisroel* is a *segulah* for children. They followed this advice and uprooted their lives, but three years later, however, there was still no change in their situation.

One day, they bumped into an old friend, a neighbor from their former city. He inquired how they were faring and when he heard that they were still waiting for children, he tried to console them. “Please, don’t be sad,” he said to them. “If after twenty-three years nothing has changed, you have no reason to keep hoping for children. There are many couples without children, and it’s not the end of the world; there are many other *mitzvos* in the *Torah* that you can fulfill.” This man did not mean any harm, he was simply ignorant. He saw the sadness on their faces, and he thought that he was comforting them, helping them face their disappointment, and giving them strength to carry on with their lives.

When this man returned to his home abroad, he told his wife that he met the couple and what he had said. She scolded him harshly, “How can you say such a thing? Why did you have to mix into other people’s business?”

The man tried to defend himself. “They looked so sad, if you would have seen their miserable faces, you would have tried to console them as well,” he replied to his wife. But she wouldn’t hear of it.

“How do you know they’ll never have children? Even after all this time, how can you be so sure?” she asked.

The man thought for a moment. “You know what?” he finally said, “If they do have children, after twenty-three years, I will sell my entire business, move to *Eretz Yisroel*, and become a *kollel yungerman*! How would you like that?”

She agreed to his off-hand proposition, and the subject didn’t come up for another two years, until they heard the miraculous news: Amazingly, after two years of tearful *davening* and hopeful treatments, the couple was blessed with twins, a girl and a boy! It was the talk of the town. Everyone was elated. Everyone, except for one man who had opened his mouth foolishly, and now he began to panic. He took the first flight to Israel, and drove straight to *Bnei Brak* to **R’ Chaim Kanievsky *shlit’a***. As soon as he was admitted, he told him the whole story. He wanted to know what should he do?

“What’s the question?” asked R’ Chaim, dismissively. “Keep your word!”

The man began to panic again. “Can’t I do *hataras nedarim* (nullify my vow)?” he asked with great urgency.

“No! Your *neder* was in the category of a *neder mitzvah*, which cannot be annulled,” replied R’ Chaim.

Practically hyperventilating, the man tried one last time. “Maybe I can appoint a *shaliach* (emissary) who will learn instead of me in *kollel*? I will support him and provide him with all his needs. He will lack for nothing!”

R’ Chaim looked at him and smiled. “That’s actually a good idea, to appoint a *shaliach*. But you should do it in the opposite direction. You learn in *kollel*, and the *shaliach* will run the business!” R’ Chaim was quiet for a moment and then with a piercing glance, he added, “Maybe they had children in the merit of your *neder* to learn in *kollel*!”

R’ Shlomo Levenstein *shlit’a* who told this story, comments: “Amazing! This *Yid* hadn’t begun learning yet. All he did was make a *neder* to start and already, in the *zechus* of his *kaballah*, a barren woman had children! Is it not clear to everyone that *Torah* study is oxygen! It provides vitality for the entire world. It causes barren woman to have children; it heals all illnesses. Nothing is greater!”

משל למה הדבר דומה

ועתה אם שמעו תשמעו בקלי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי כגולה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ וגו' (יז-ח)

משל: On November 3, 1957, the Soviet Union sent a spacecraft (Sputnik 2) into orbit around the earth, with a dog named Laika inside. The dog was a stray taken off a Moscow street and strapped to a flight harness. The whole world held its breath in captivated amazement over the fabulous accomplishment of a living and breathing being circling the earth. It was the early days of the “Space Race.”

The Sputnik and its canine passenger were the talk of town. Even in the local synagogues, this amazing journey was discussed. When one of the prominent *Chassidim* in Russia in those days heard about the feat, he commented: “I

hope that we don’t behave like that dog in the spacecraft.”

The others looked at him oddly and he explained his words. “The dog is sitting there inside the Sputnik rocket eating, drinking and doing nothing. He doesn’t know how to fly a spacecraft. He has no idea whatsoever about what is going on around him. He is not aware of the fact that millions of people are following the orbit of his spacecraft with bated breath. Neither does he understand that he is sent as a messenger fulfilling a vital task. In actual fact, every Jew has been given an incomparable greater mission than that dog. We are constantly being watched from Heaven in

ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו במדבר ויהן שם ישראל נגד הדר (יז-ב)

When *Bnei Yisroel* reached *Har Sinai*, the *posuk* says, “ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר”. Rashi notes the odd use of the singular “ויחן” when referring to the entire nation rather than the plural “ויחננו”. He explains by quoting the famous *Medrash*: “כאיש אחד אחד בלב אחד” - *Klal Yisroel* was totally unified, like one man with one heart. In last week’s *parsha*, however, we find a similar expression, but in reverse. When describing the Egyptians’ pursuit of *Bnei Yisroel*, the *Torah* writes, “והנה מצרים, ויסע אחריהם” and Rashi explains that instead of using the word “ורסעים” (plural) it uses the singular verb of “ורסע”. Again, Rashi explains that the Egyptians traveled, “בלב אחד כאיש אחד” - with one heart like one man. When we read both these Rashis, we hardly notice that they are written in the reverse order, but the **Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov ז”ל** not only takes note of the discrepancy, he offers a beautiful explanation of how a minor difference can present a totally divergent meaning.

In *Avos*, the *Mishna* states: “*Any love that depends on a specific cause (אהבה התלויה בדבר) is lost when the cause is gone.*” When two people marry each other because they are enamored with the other person’s money, prestige or beauty, their love for each other will inevitably disappear, as soon as the original cause for their “love” fades. My *machshava* here is, that *achdus* and unity can come in different varieties. Families are united because each member loves the other, and they share not only a common ancestor, but also a united vision and purpose. The Egyptians never loved each other but they were united in their goal to recapture their former slaves. This is what caused their unity. Rashi expresses this by saying, they had one heart, one goal, which made them into an “*Ish Echad*.” Here, at the foot of Har Sinai, *Bnei Yisroel* became united as one family and their love for one another was not based on any common goal. It was pure love, plain and simple. This led them to be “כאיש אחד בלב אחד” and when *Klal Yisroel* joins together this way, *Hashem* joins them as well.

DRUSH V'CHIDDUSH

ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי ... (יז-ג)

When Yisro arrived in the desert, he brought Moshe’s two sons with him. The *Torah* specifically points out their names: “*Gershom, because he (Moshe) said, ‘I was a stranger in a foreign land. And Eliezer, because he said, ‘The G-d of my father came to my aid and rescued me from Pharaoh’s sword.’*” Why does the *Torah* recount this now? What is so timely and important about these names?

R’ Simche Zissel Broide ז”ל (*Rosh Yeshivah* of Chevron/Jerusalem) provides us with a great lesson. *Moshe Rabbeinu* had just witnessed - and even personally participated in - miracles the likes of which the world had never seen. The *Makkos*, *Krias Yam Suf* and its many accompanying miracles, the war against *Amalek* and the *Mann*. Yet, *Moshe Rabbeinu* did not forget the “smaller” miracles that he personally experienced in his own lifetime;

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF התלהבות

When *Hashem* gave us the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos*, He said, “זכור ושמור בדיבור אחד” - “Zachor” and “Shamor” were spoken simultaneously! Why? Because *Hashem* wanted us to understand that *Shabbos* is more than just something we **remember** to do, and more than a bunch of laws that we must **keep**. *Shabbos* is a combination of both. The idea of *Zachor* is that *Shabbos* must always remain at the forefront of our minds. It is a *mitzvah* to think about and plan for all week long. Since *Shabbos* is the source of all blessing, the way to bring that blessing into our lives is by connecting whatever we do to preparing for *Shabbos*. If you buy food or something new, REMEMBER to also buy something for *Shabbos* and put it aside so the blessing of *Shabbos* will influence everything. The idea of *Shamor* is to be excited and anticipate the arrival of *Shabbos*, like the *posuk* says, “ואביו, *Zachor* and *Shamor* together teach us that *Shabbos* is something we need to think about and plan for all week long with an enthusiasm and excitement that is palpable! We need to make *Shabbos* the focus of our week and get the entire family involved with the preparations. We need to give everyone special *Shabbos* jobs and we need to start early in the week! We must make sure that there is a feeling of *simcha* in the home as we bring in the *Shabbos*, and throughout this holy day.

Perhaps says **R’ Ephraim Shapiro *shlit’a***, this is what *Chazal* meant when they told us the three things that everyone must ask themselves on *Erev Shabbos*: “עשרתם? ערבתם? הדליקו את הנר?” - “*Issartem*” means did you tithe? Did you put aside enough time to properly prepare for *Shabbos*? “*Aravtem*” - did you include everyone in the *Shabbos* preparations? If you made sure to prepare adequately and everyone is involved, then “*Hadliku*” - go light the candles! Bring the light of *Shabbos* into your home. Let *Shabbos* be the day we all look forward to and let the special *beracha* called “Shabbos” spill over to every area of your life!

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

whether it was having a child, staying alive in *golus*, or being rescued from Pharaoh’s executioner. One’s personal miracles, one’s daily survival, is something that should not be overshadowed, even by something as powerful as the *Geulah* - the ultimate redemption - itself!

When we say “*Modim Anachnu Lach*,” three times a day, and we give thanks to *Hashem*, “על נסדך שבכל יום עמנו” - “*for the miracles that are with us daily*,” we recognize that life itself is a miracle. A big miracle. We eat, sleep and breathe, because *Hashem* allows us to. We survive in this harsh *golus* because it is the will of *Hashem*. But at the same time, we should try to name - or at least think about - some of the smaller miracles that pertain to our personal lives, just as Moshe named his sons to remind him of the “small” miracles. Then, we will realize that we are thanking *Hashem* for these gifts forever, even after we witness the ultimate miracles of the *Geulah Shelaima*, speedily and in our days!

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ... (כ-ה)

דרגה יתירה

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