

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

מי האיש אשר בנה בית חדש ולא הנכו ילך וישב לביתו פן ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יתנכנו וגו' (ב-ה)

The following story occurred a number of years ago and it demonstrates to what lengths a Jew will go to help his fellow Jew. In Jerusalem, lived a man who became a master plumber and worked for himself. He was good, so good in fact, that it wasn't long before he developed a reputation as an expert in all matters related to plumbing. On numerous occasions, he was brought in to figure out how to expertly handle a delicate situation or to correct someone else's mistake. He was creative and had "hands of gold" and whatever he worked on, he managed to bring to a successful conclusion. He became prosperous.

One day, he was called to an apartment where he found a complete and utter mess. This was no small sink installation or pipe connection - this was a massive project which would require hours of labor, considerable expense and ingenuity. The man spoke to the lady of the house and it soon became clear to him that she was a widow with many small children and very little money. She asked him if he could fix the problem and he told her he would, but now, he was wondering how he could do this massive project for a woman with no money. Well, he figured, I will do this job for free and earn some points in Heaven. Problem was, how to tell the widow in an honorable fashion. He pondered this question the entire day as he worked.

Late into the day, he completed the massive job and the thankful woman approached him and asked how much she owed him. "Nothing," he said, with a grin. "How is that possible?" she asked, "You worked here all day."

The man concocted a story that for these types of jobs, the local municipality reimburses him for his time and labor since he is improving the quality of the city's pipes, the property values go up, and they are happy to cover the cost. She was pleasantly surprised and very grateful to him, and he walked away with the satisfaction that he had done a really good deed.

The man ran his successful business for many years and when he got older, he purchased a vacant lot in a fine section of Ramat Gan, where he intended to build himself a luxurious house. As an expert craftsman, he was involved in every stage of the planning and construction of his dream home. He worked with the architects and contractors and helped map out the entire structure, including the layout, electricity, plumbing, air-conditioning and concrete walls. He applied for all the necessary permits and had them expedited. He even took on the task of pricing out the various supplies that would be needed and through his many contacts in the industry, he was able to get many items at excellent prices.

In the process of purchasing his construction materials, he went to one of the largest suppliers of building goods and materials, a company named "Itzik and Zuri Commerce" located on *Hamacabim* Street in *Bnei Brak*. He spent considerable time there pricing out hundreds of items that would be needed once the construction began. He didn't make any purchases yet as he still wished to price out other supply companies in order to get the best deal.

How shocked he was to show up one morning and find trucks unloading all the building material he would need for his home. It was all top quality stuff - but he knew he had never ordered it. He ran over to the driver and yelled, "What is this? What is going on? I never ordered this stuff!" The driver just shrugged and showed him the purchase order where it listed quite clearly all the items being unloaded and a stamp in the middle, "Paid in Full."

The man spluttered angrily. The driver said, "Look, I am just the driver. Take it up with the main office."

In seconds, he was in his car driving to *Bnei Brak* and the "Itzik and Zuri Commerce" showroom. He stormed in and demanded answers. He never ordered these supplies - he was just pricing them out - and he certainly never paid for them.

A kind man behind a desk told him to calm down. "My name is Zuri and no one ever said you paid for them," he said with a grin. Well then, who paid for them came the question. "Actually, I believe the municipality paid for them!"

Zuri stood up and took the older man's hand in his. "Many years ago, you came to my mother's apartment and you worked on a massive plumbing project for free. I know it was free even though you told her that the municipality was reimbursing you. I never forgot that act of kindness and now, it is my pleasure to actually reimburse you for that great act of *chessed*!"

אשר בחר בנביאים טובים ...

אנכי אנכי הוא מנחמכם ... (ישעי' נא-יב)

While the "שבעה ד'נחמתי" seem to all have the same theme, each week's individual *Haftorah* has a unique twist to it.

Deep in the bitter exile, the Jewish people longed for times bygone. *Yeshaya HaNavi* received *Hashem's* message of comfort for the nation: "*It is I, I am He Who consoles you.*" At first glance one would think that *Hashem's* words are redundant. Why repeat the word "אנכי"?

The **Baal Shem Tov זי"ע** explains that when the *Torah* speaks about not serving foreign idols, a similar style of wording is used to emphasize the point: "*See now that it is I! I am the One, and there is no G-d like Me!*"(*Devarim*

32:39). The double wording is a show of both authority and compassion. Just like a father stands off to the side and maintains his authority while giving his child space to vent his frustration, *Hashem*, too, "gives the Jewish people space" before stepping in. Yet, as the child calms down, he realizes that although his rampage was a wild one, his father would've never allowed him to go too far.

G-d-fearing Jews live and breathe with the thought that all is orchestrated by *Hashem*, but in times of tragedy and despair, one can easily forget all of that. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to remember that *Hashem* was the one Who put us into exile in the first place and only He alone can bring about a true "*Nechama*" and take us out.

שום תשים עליך מלך אשר יכרז ה' אלדך
בו מקרב אחד תשים עליך מלך וכו' (ד-טז)

The *Torah* gives us the *mitzvah* of appointing a king to rule over *Klal Yisroel* once they enter the Land of Israel. Wouldn't it then have been more appropriate to use the plural pronoun "עליכם" (over you) rather than "עליך" which is singular? Perhaps we may suggest the following *machshava*: There is a deeper meaning here to this *posuk*. *Hashem* is commanding "מלך, each and every one of you, singularly; we must appoint OURSELVES to be a ruler, who is constantly in control of ourselves and not surrender to the *Yetzer Hara* in the crucial battle of *milchemes hayetzer*!

To better grasp this message we must understand the true meaning of a ruler. In the animal kingdom the lion is considered the undisputed king. Yet, scientifically it has been proven that if you were to pit a lion against a tiger in battle, the tiger would vanquish the lion the majority of times. The tiger is quicker and generally, tigers are larger in size than lions. Yet, the tiger isn't known as King of the Jungle. The lion, although perhaps not the mightiest, was awarded the title. Why? The answer is that the tiger is, at times, afraid whereas the lion is always fearless! That, my friends, is MALCHUS!

In our personal spiritual war which we wage daily against the forces of the *yetzer*, the *Torah* tells us to be a *melech*, be fearless! Don't be intimidated by the limitless devious tactics foisted upon you by the evil inclination as he tries to thwart you in your *avodas Hashem*. If you are a true *melech* - a true king over yourself - you will be victorious in the end.

As we move further into *Chodesh Elul*, we must be aware that we are the soldiers of *Hashem* in the battle of life, while at the same time, we are the *Mamleches Kohanim*, a nation of fearless kings. And together with "אני לדודי ודודי לי", the endless love *Hashem* has for us, may this *Elul* bring us closer to Him and closer to winning this lengthy battle called *galus*, א'בב.

משל למה הדבר דומה

לא תמה משפט לא תכיר פנים ולא תקח שחד ... (דב'-טז)

משל: Two Jews, one observant and one not, came to **R' Chaim Rottenburg זי"ע**, *Rav* of Stavisk, to settle a complex business matter. After hearing both sides, the *rav* ruled in favor of the non-religious Jew. The religious Jew refused to accept the verdict and would not pay the amount he had been assessed. Furthermore, he was incensed that the *rav* ruled in favor of a person who did not keep the *mitzvos*, over one who did. Upon hearing this declaration, R' Chaim Leib told the non-religious Jew, "As I see that I was unable to have my verdict enforced, I hereby give you permission to file your complaint in the secular courts, something generally forbidden by *halacha*. Furthermore, should this case go to court, I am prepared to appear as a witness on your behalf."

When the case was finally called, it was scheduled for *Shavuos*. R' Chaim stated that he would even stay in the town where the case was to be heard, so that he could appear

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON
THE MIDDAH OF ... דן לכף זכות

דרגה יתירה

שפתים ושמרים תתן לך בבל שעריך ... (דב'-יח)

R' Levi Yitzchok M'Berditchev זי"ע explains that "*she'arecha*" - your gates, refer to the *shaarei shamayim* that every human will have to pass through after 120. There will be judges and policemen standing by the "pearly gates" and escorting every person to his place in the next world. Every single moment of a person's life is replayed and he is judged for all of his actions. It is a terrifying and overwhelming experience to say the least, but the *Berditchever* tells us that the end of the *posuk* is the simple way to be successful in this moment of strict justice: "*V'asisa mishpat tzedek*" - YOU shall judge favorably.

This is the key to succeed in all situations and in all relationships. If a person judges favorably, then measure for measure *Hashem* will judge him favorably. If a person is easygoing with others, doesn't bear a grudge, looks away, then *Hashem* will do the same for him in *Shamayaim*. But if a person is strict and exacting with others; he gets insulted and always needs to get even; he sees people in a negative light and judges them unfavorably - then measure for measure, *Hashem* will do the same to him on his *Yom HaDin*! So my friends, if there is anything that we should be working on, especially now before *Rosh Hashana*, it is the *middah* of "*Dan L'Kaf Zechus*" - seeing only the good in others and judging them positively.

The word "*kaf*" means a spoon. What is the connection between a spoon and judging favorably? The answer is that when you pick something up with a spoon, you pick up everything along with it. As opposed to a fork or a knife, which you only grab a small part of the item. This is the way to judge people. Look at the whole picture, don't just focus on this negative aspect or that unbecoming trait. Look at the whole person including background, personality, upbringing, etc. and all that makes him/her into who they are. This will help us to judge them favorably. Remember: Think good and it will be good! In this world and the next!

מחשבת הלב

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