

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ונצקק אל ה' וישמע קלנו וישלח מלאך ויצאנו ממצרים ... (כ-מ)

The following true story occurred in recent times. As a young adult, Nachman was looking for the *yeshivah* just right for him. Ultimately, he traveled to *Eretz Yisroel* and found “the place” - a *yeshivah* that was “his type.” He quickly settled in the *yeshivah*, made some “awesome friends” and formed a close connection with its devoted *Rosh Yeshivah*. Despite his positive spirit, Nachman carried a deep and quiet loss: his beloved father had passed away years earlier.

When the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos* arrived, Nachman faced a dilemma. Unsure of the proper protocol for a student from the Diaspora studying in Israel, he asked his *Rosh Yeshivah* when he should recite *Yizkor*, the unique memorial prayer for a deceased relative. Should he say it on the first day of the holiday or the second?

The *Rosh Yeshivah* advised him, “Say it on the first day, as everyone does. Then, if the opportunity arises, you can recite it again on the second day.”

Following the tradition, Nachman and his friends stayed up the entire first night studying *Torah*. After a good day’s sleep, they decided to push through and stay awake the entire second night as well. By the time dawn approached on the second day, the boys were utterly exhausted. They decided to do a “quick” *Vasikin minyan* (the morning service precisely at sunrise) before finally going to sleep.

When the moment for *Yizkor* arrived, Nachman told his exhausted friends, “Don’t worry guys, it usually only takes about minute.” The guys would wait outside. However, they were in for a surprise. An older guest had joined the *minyan* and his *Yizkor* was deeply immersed in prayer - taking far longer than “a minute.”

Nachman’s friends, struggling to keep their eyes open, peeked through the window and gestured to him, making Nachman a bit uncomfortable. He had promised his friends it would be short, not this long. Being alone in the quiet *Beis Medrash*, it suddenly dawned on Nachman that he had a moment to reflect on his life. He thought about his journey since he was a little boy and the years he had spent growing up without his father. Overwhelmed by the stillness of the morning and the weight of his thoughts, he looked upward and spoke from his heart.

“Daddy,” he whispered, “I’ve been doing this for so many years already. If you are really listening to me, show me a sign.”

Barely seconds after those words left his lips, the older man, who had apparently just finished his prayers, walked up to Nachman and gently tapped him on the shoulders.

“Hey boy, what’s your name?” he asked. A bit startled by the unexpected tap, Nachman mumbled his name.

The man’s eyes lit up with sudden recognition. “Oh,” he said, “so you’re Moshe’s son!”

The moment the older man uttered these words, all the blood drained from Nachman’s face; goosebumps covered his body. He felt his father loud and clear. In the span of a single breath, his father had answered him!

When Nachman’s friends saw his ghost white face, they inquired worryingly if everything was ok. Still in shock, Nachman shared the incredible moment with them, moving them deeply. Later, when he recounted the entire story to his mother, she made the connection. This older fellow was the head of the *Chevra Kadisha* (Jewish burial society) and had been reciting the names of many deceased who didn’t merit leaving behind anyone to recite *Yizkor* for them.

Nachman’s mother eventually reached out to the man’s wife to share the profound impact of that *Shavuos* morning. Because of the solemn and difficult nature of the man’s life’s work, he practically never showed emotion. Yet, when his wife relayed the story to him, revealing to him that he had unknowingly acted as a direct messenger from a father in Heaven to his son on Earth, the man’s emotions swelled, bringing him to tears. Now every time he sees Nachman, the man recounts the entire story in his stolid way. “You boy ...” is all he needs to say and they both tear up. (Heard from the Baal Maaseh himself)

והכרת עיר ארצך והרסת כל מבצריך ... (מיכה ה-)

DEEP, PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Micha HaNavi describes what will happen in the times of *Moshiach*, and how a reckoning will come to those who serve foreign idols. The *Navi* states, “*I will destroy the cities of your land and demolish all your fortresses*” (*Micha 5:10*). These words from the Almighty Himself seem strange. In the previous *posukim* and those immediately following this one, *Hashem* says that He will cleanse the land from all Jewish enemies, and he will eradicate idol worship from the land. With a clean and pure land, why would *Hashem* have the need to then destroy the cities and fortresses?

R’ Yaakov Ashkenazi ז”ל (Tze’enah Ure’enah) explains that this promise was in fact a true declaration of love from the Almighty. When a person feels threatened for

his life, he goes out and hires protection. This obviously affords him a sense of security which allows him to go about his life. However, the very thing that is protecting him now becomes a restraint. No longer can he go where he pleases. He now has to ensure that his security detail is available and ready to head out with him. So too with the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisroel*. Those living in the holy land always live by the Almighty’s protection, but it is still displayed in the form of restrictive physical fortifications. However, in the times of *Moshiach*, *Hashem* will remove those fortifications and the protective walls surrounding the Jewish cities will no longer be needed because *Hashem’s* protection will be open and apparent to all - not administered through a hidden hand.

מה מבו אהליך יעקב משכנתך ישראל ... (כד-ה)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPMAN ZT”L

מחשבת הלב

Many times, when we are lucky to *lain* two *parshiyos* on one *Shabbos*, it is difficult to select from the many available *posukim* and topics what to write on. Presumably, expounding on a *posuk* that’s recited by all daily, can be relevant to everyone.

Chazal have myriad *derashos* on the above *posuk*. **Rashi** quotes the *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (60a) that lauds *Klal Yisroel*: How beautiful their houses are, because their windows are positioned not to be aligned with those of their neighbors; thus respecting proper privacy and *tznius* boundaries. **Targum Yonason** says that this *posuk* refers to their מדרש, as the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (105b) indicates that Bilaam desired to curse our *shuls* and *yeshivos*. Although there’s no *mitzvah* to reconcile two differing *pshatim*, as אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים, and words often have varied explanations, perhaps we can suggest the following *machshava* the **Zaida**, **Baal Machsheves Halev**, would appreciate.

There’s another *diyuk* in these words. The *posuk* begins with "מה טבו אהליך יעקב" - starting with Yaakov; but closes with "משכנתך ישראל". In *Parshas Yisro*, Rashi tells us "בית יעקב" refers to the נשים - the women, of *Klal Yisroel*. This may be the key to uniting the two *Maamarei Chazal*. True, our *shuls* and בתי מדרש are beautiful, incredible institutions; bastions of spiritual growth. They are so, ONLY due to the ‘*Yaakov*’ portion of *Klal Yisroel*; the women, who ensure that our *batim*, our homes, are places worthy of the השראת השכינה. When our homes are permeated with *kedusha*, *sholom bayis*, and *Torahdike hashkafos*, then those values will spread to our *shuls* and *yeshivos*, enabling them to be a spiritual oasis amidst today’s prevalent sea of decadence, where every *Yid*, be it a *baal habayis*, a *yeshivah bochur*, or a *Bais Yaakov* girl can continue growing.

Yehi Ratzon ... that our homes reflect the homes of old, built with the same מסירת נפש of our forebears, so that our homes’ influence will extend to our מקומות הקדושים as well.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויען ראמר הלא את אשר ישים ה' בפי אתו אשמך לדבר ... (בג-יב)

R’ Yehudah Neischloss ז”ל and **R’ Chaim Brim ז”ל** were walking through the streets of Jerusalem when a haggard woman approached them. Excitement radiated from her as she announced that her daughter was finally engaged to a fine young man. R’ Chaim responded with immense joy, showering her with warm praises declaring that her future son-in-law was one of the finest young men around, comparing the young groom to legendary *Torah* scholars like the **Chofetz Chaim** and **R’ Akiva Eiger** in their generation.

Overwhelmed, tears of sheer joy streamed down the woman’s face. She wondered aloud if she merited such a blessing due to her ancestors’ prayers. R’ Chaim gently assured her that it was entirely in the merit of her own prayers.

ואת התורה אדם בני ימות כאהל כל הנא אל האהל וכל אשר כאהל ינבא שבעת ימים ... (ש-ד)

INSIGHTFUL TORAH THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRA TO LEARN AND TO ENJOY BY R’ MOSHE GELB

זינפש ...

As we progress through *Chodesh Tammuz*, several themes compete for our attention. On the one hand, *Shiva-Asar B’Tammuz* and the *tekufah* of the Three Weeks approaches, with its *avodah* of *aveilus* for *Yerushalayim*. On the other hand, the *kadmonim* expound the name *Tammuz* (תמוז) as *roshei teivos* for "זמן תשובה ממשמש ובא" as an allusion that the season of *teshuvah* approaches, the awesome *Yamim Noraim*. It would appear that these two *avodahs* are closely related.

The **Rambam** in *Hilchos Aveilus*, delineates two distinct aspects of mourning. One, is the *nihugei aveilus*, the practices emphasizing the pain and sorrow of one’s loss, for example, sitting *Shiva*, of shaving or bathing throughout, and the like. The other aspect of *aveilus* is the introspection and *teshuvah* that follows. Now, as we mourn *Yerushalayim* and the *churban habayis*, we must also do *teshuvah* for the sin that brought the *churban* upon us in the first place. For if we do not strive to fix the root of our exile, any show of mourning is hollow and without real meaning. For what do we gain from mourning the *churban* if we do not try to fix the reason for it in the first place?

Both the *sefer Maalos HaTorah* and the **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh**, citing the **Zohar**, write that the *churban* is due to the *bitul Torah* of *Klal Yisroel*, "על עיבם את תורתך". Thus, it would appear that this time of *aveilus* for the *churban* is indeed a time of *teshuvah*, when we must begin the process of repentance for the *bitul Torah* that caused it. We say by *Nacheim* on *Tisha B’Av*, "באש הצתה ובאש אתה עתיד לבנותה". *Hashem* destroyed the *Bais HaMikdash* with fire and *Hashem* will *middah k’neged middah* build it with fire. According to the above, this means that just as *Hashem* destroyed the *Bais HaMikdash* due to the lack of *limud haTorah*, of the התורה - so will He build it with the fire of our *Torah*.

Rabbosai! Let us be *mischazeik* during this fateful *tekufah*, to learn with a fire, with a *geshmak!* And *b’zchus* our *chizuk* in *Torah*, may we *taka* be *zocheh* to the building of the *Bais HaMikdash bekarov!*