

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ולקחו את כל כלי השרת אשר ישרתו בם בקדש ונתנו אל בנך תכלת וככו אותם במכסה עור תחש ... (ד-ב)

When the *Torah* describes how the holiest *keilim* of the *Mishkan* had to be carefully covered before *Bnei K'has* could approach them, it reveals a profound truth about human nature. Even those entrusted with carrying the *Aron* and *Menorah* needed protective layers so they wouldn't come too close and endanger themselves. Holiness demands boundaries. If the *Levi'im*, righteous and sanctified, required safeguards to avoid missteps, how much more must we build protective fences in our own lives. Boundaries don't restrict us; they preserve us, allowing us to carry holiness without falling under its weight.

R' Yitzchok Zilberstein *shlita* once related a remarkable incident that occurred a number of years ago. A poor widow had approached **R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz *z"l*** with a heavy heart. She had several children at home who were of marriageable age, and she had no means to marry them off. Her situation was well known in her neighborhood: a home filled with good children, each one waiting for their turn to get married and build a Jewish home, and a mother who simply did not have the resources to help them take that step. Seeing her distress, R' Michel Yehuda took up her cause. He wrote a heartfelt letter of recommendation on her behalf, describing her situation and urging generous Jews to assist her.

Once the letter was written, he handed it to a *meshulach* he knew who would travel abroad to collect funds for worthy causes. This emissary took the letter with him on his next trip. When he arrived in Jewish communities overseas, he presented the letter, and the response was overwhelming. Jews opened their hearts and gave generously. Through the funds collected with that letter, the widow succeeded, with *Hashem's* help, in marrying off one child after another. In time, five children were married - each wedding made possible through the power of that single letter written by R' Michel Yehuda.

Years passed. R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz eventually left this world. After his passing, a dispute suddenly arose between the widow and the *meshulach* regarding the ownership of the letter. The *meshulach* claimed that since the letter had been entrusted to him for the purpose of fundraising, it belonged to him. The widow argued that since the letter had been written for her benefit, it was rightfully hers. Each one held the letter and insisted, "It is mine."

Ordinarily, such a disagreement might have been resolved through standard *halachic* principles. But this case had a unique complication. Although the letter had already completed its function - the widow had married off all her children - it now possessed a new kind of value. R' Michel Yehuda's handwriting, after his passing, had become extremely valuable as *Judaica*. Collectors would pay significant sums for even a small handwritten note from such a revered *Torah* sage. The letter, therefore, was no longer merely a fundraising tool; it had become a valuable item in its own right.

Faced with this unusual situation, R' Zilberstein turned to his father-in-law, the great *posek*, **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv *z"l***. He presented the question: two people were holding the letter, each claiming full ownership. How should the matter be ruled?

R' Elyashiv's response was immediate and unequivocal. "There is no question here," he said. "The letter does not belong to either this one or that one. It is forbidden to leave it with either the *meshulach* or the widow. Rather, it must be burned."

R' Elyashiv explained his reasoning. Although the letter had already fulfilled its purpose, its continued existence posed a danger. Because R' Michel Yehuda's handwriting was now worth a fortune, the letter could easily become an obstacle in the future. Someone might use it to collect money unlawfully, presenting it as a legitimate fundraising document even though its purpose had long since ended. The temptation would be too great, the opportunity too inviting. By destroying the letter, they would fulfill the *Torah's* command, "*U'biarta hara mikirbecha*" - remove the potential for wrongdoing from your midst.

In R' Elyashiv's view, the letter, though precious, had the capacity to become a stumbling block. Eliminating it was the only way to ensure that no one could ever misuse it. The letter that had once brought blessing to a struggling widow and her children was respectfully destroyed out of deep concern for the integrity of the community and the avoidance of future sin.

יאמר לו יהונתן מחר הריש ונפקדת כי יפקד מושבך ... (שמיאל א' כ-ד)
In the *Haftorah* of *Machar Chodesh* this week, *Dovid HaMelech* and *Yonason* discuss the impact his absence from the royal table on *Rosh Chodesh* would have after *Dovid* suspected *Shaul HaMelech* of nefarious intentions toward him. *Dovid* and *Yonason* then devised a plan of action and discussed their brotherly love for one another. The *Navi* tells us, "and you [*Dovid*] will be missed when your seat remains vacant." Why would *Dovid's* seat remain empty, and why would it matter at all?

Rashi says that *Yonason's* message was two-fold, and it serves to clarify a long-believed assumption regarding *Shaul HaMelech*. By saying that *Dovid* would be missed, and *Shaul* would ask about him because his seat would be empty,

תורת הצבי על הפטרות
Chazal were hinting at the extraordinary respect that the royal court held for *Dovid* despite *Shaul's* attitude towards him. In fact, by stressing the words, "*because your seat will be empty*," *Yonason* assumed that out of respect for *Dovid*, no one would occupy his seat.

This serves to prove the fact that despite the appearance of animosity from *Shaul* to *Dovid*, it was really only a momentary illness, and everyone knew that. They knew and understood that *Shaul* loved *Dovid* like a son, and all the hunting and attempts at *Dovid's* life were merely the results of an external source pushing the agenda. It was this deep-seated belief that eventually helped ingratiate *Dovid* with the nation when his time came to serve as king.

ולא יבאו לראות כבלע את הקדש ומתו ... (ד-ב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZT"l

מחשבת הלב

The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (81b) states that if a person steals a vessel from the *Bais HaMikdash*, "קטאין פגעין בו". Righteous zealots have the right to kill him. Why is this theft deserving of such a harsh punishment?

R' Chaim Kaufman *z"l* in his *Sefer Mishchas Shemen* says the following *vort* which explains the depth of this statement of *Chazal*: When something or someone is designated for a certain *avoda* and gets robbed of that opportunity, that is tantamount to *רציחה* - murder, of sorts. Thus, the perpetrator can receive the death penalty.

He mentions a story that complements this idea. A *Yid* once tunneled into his non-Jewish neighbor's basement, and stole a fortune. The *goy* realized what had transpired, and proceeded to report his suspicions to the town's *Rov*. The *Rov*, in turn, wishing to make a *Kiddush Hashem*, while saving the *Yid* from a lengthy prison sentence, contrived a brilliant plan. He summoned the *Yid* and told him that he had it from reliable sources that the *Yid* had come into a large sum of counterfeit currency. The punishment for this is certain jail. The *Yid* began to tremble, and broke down, admitting that indeed, he had this money in his possession. The *Rov* told him that if he brings all the money to him post-haste, he will do whatever he can to ensure that no harm befalls him. Needless to say, as soon as the "counterfeit" funds were in the *Rov's* hands, every penny was returned to the very grateful *goy*, who went on to praise the Rabbi's brilliance. The *Rov* then called in the *Yid* and revealed what had really transpired; since the money didn't rightfully belong to you it was considered counterfeit.

Each person is endowed with his own personal strengths to help navigate life. Using them correctly is life. Not using them is, *chas v'shalom*, the opposite. *Sefer Bamidbar*, also known as "Numbers", conveys this message that each person is their own unique number and persona. *Yehi ratzon* that we each utilize our potential to the fullest!

משל למה הדבר דומה

שאו את ראש כל עדה בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבתם ... (א-ב)
משל: In the town of Radin, a local *Yid* passed away and the *talmidim* of the **Chofetz Chaim *z"l***, wishing to spare him unnecessary distress, decided to withhold the sad news, reasoning that since the deceased was merely a "simple Jew," there was no need to trouble the great *Rav* with the misfortune.

Time passed, and the *Chofetz Chaim* eventually noticed the man's absence in *shul*. When he asked about this, the students finally revealed that the man had died some time ago. The *tzaddik* was visibly bothered by their silence and asked why they had kept it a secret. The students explained their rationale: they hadn't wanted to burden him, assuming a simple fellow wouldn't be of great significance to him.

The *Chofetz Chaim's* response completely reframed their

perspective on life and challenges. Gently reprimanding them, he explained how we don't know who is great in the Next World. Only *Hashem* knows who is truly great. While earthly status might deceive us, suffering purifies a soul. Because this man had endured many hardships, he was cleansed of his sins and rightfully earned the title of a *tzaddik*, a righteous person.

The *Chofetz Chaim* continued to express deep regret, insisting that it would have been an honor for him to attend the funeral of such a hidden, righteous individual.

משל: *Parshas Bamidbar* begins with a census, counting every individual by name to demonstrate that each Jew is precious to *Hashem*. While some carry an exalted reputation, others may possess hidden greatness and a "simple" man," as reflected in the *parsha*, may not be so simple after all. Every Jewish soul is a vital, irreplaceable part of the nation.

שאו את ראש כל עדה בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות ... (א-ב)

GOLDEN NUGGETS ON THE PARSHA WITH A FOCUS ON LESSONS HOW TO SERVE HASHEM AND BE A BETTER JEW BY R' YEHOShUA GOLD

הנחמדים מזהב

Sefer Bamidbar begins with *Moshe Rabbeinu* counting *Klal Yisroel*. Yet, in his waning days, *Dovid HaMelech* instructed his life-long general, *Yoav*, to take a census and the result was a devastating plague. *Meforshim* ponder the integral difference.

The **Malbim** explains that in *Tanach* there are several terms used for counting, each with a distinct interpretation. "מספר" is a simple numerical count; one, two, three. "פקד" refers to tallying an amount in general numbers, used for organizational purposes, such as assigning a number of soldiers to a single general. "מנה" means counting to ensure nothing is missing from a total number. And finally, the word "נשא", which literally translates "*to lift up*", to elevate and recognize the importance of each individual, is also an expression of counting. When *Hashem* commands *Moshe* to count *Klal Yisroel*, the *Torah* says, "שאו את ראש כל עדת ישראל". This was not just a census. It was an expression of love and greatness. *Hashem* was telling the *Yidden*, that after all your travels and challenges in the *Midbar*, every single one of you remains precious and accounted for. *Chazal* say, the name "ישראל" is a mnemonic for "יש ששים רבוא אותיות לתורה" - every Jew is essential to the *Torah*. The world depends on *Torah*, and the *Torah* is complete only when every member of our nation is present and accounted for.

Comparatively, *Dovid's* count was described very differently. He started with "לך מנה את ישראל" and he then instructed *Yoav* "ויפקדו את העם". After concluding his mission, the *posuk* states "ויצו את מספר מפקד העם". Three terms are used, but "נשא" is conspicuously absent. Why? because following *Avshalom's* rebellion, *Dovid* was uncertain of *Klal Yisroel's* loyalty. In earlier years, people willingly rallied with him. But now he felt the nation had lost devotion to *Malchus Bais Dovid* and subsequently to the *Ribono Shel Olam*. As such, he felt compelled to determine how many soldiers he had as military assets. But his count didn't include the inherent holiness and immeasurable value of every *Yid*. This omission was the root of such a tragedy. A proper counting is one of a collective group, each person a cherished individual, part of a larger nation serving *Hashem*.