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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ולקחת סלת ואפית אתה שתיים עשרה חלות ביום השבת יערכנו לפני ה' המיד וכו' (בר-הח)

There was once a *chasid* of the **Alter Rebbe, R' Schneur Zalman of Liadi ZT”L (Baal HaTanya)**, who was a peddler of goods and made a living traveling from town to town selling his wares. Whenever he was in Liadi, he would visit his *Rebbe* and spend some private moments with him. One time, by a *yechidus* (private meeting), the *Rebbe* asked him about his travels and after hearing the man’s response, R’ Schneur Zalman advised him to always carry with him three *challos*. The *chasid* did not understand why the *Rebbe* would give him such a strange instruction, but as a good *chasid*, he did exactly as his *Rebbe* instructed, trusting that one day he would understand why he received such unusual advice.

One week, as the *chasid* was traveling through a wooded forest, he lost his way. *Shabbos* was soon approaching and he realized that he needed to find a place to stay. On Friday afternoon, he saw a house in the distance. He knocked on the front door and the owner came out with a friendly smile. They exchanged greetings and the *chasid* explained to the gentile that he needed a place to stay for the next 24 hours. The man seemed kind enough and invited him in. He led him to an extra bedroom in the back of the house and opened the door, motioning for the *chasid* to go in first. As soon as the *chasid* walked inside the room, the gentile quickly slammed the door shut and bolted it from the outside. When the *chasid* looked again, he now beheld a huge growling dog, a beast the likes of which he had never seen before. Even without growling, the menacing canine looked like it could tear him apart. He froze in fear and shock and he realized that this was not going to end well for him, especially as he heard the voice of the gentile laughing, “In this room, people go in but they don’t come out.”

The *chasid* became very afraid. Being in a room with such a creature meant that he did not have long to live. He started praying to *Hashem* and saying *vidui* (confession). All this time, he kept glancing over and realized that the big mutt had not moved and was just sitting in a corner. It was almost *Shabbos* so the *chasid* began davening *Mincha*. Still, the dog was quiet. He then davened *Kabbolas Shabbos* and *Maariv*. The *chasid* remembered that he had three *challos* in his sack so, under the dog’s ever-watchful eyes, he made *kiddush* on the bread. The dog listened to *kiddush* and then stood up and wagged its tail. It was clear that it wanted some *challah*. The *chasid* ate a small piece of the roll and then gave the rest to the dog. He then *bentched* and spent a restless night with his “roommate” praying to *Hashem* to keep him safe. Morning eventually came and the *chasid* davened *shacharis* and the same scene repeated itself with the *challah* by the daytime meal.

The *chasid* had relaxed to a degree and waited out the entire day of *Shabbos* with the massive creature staring at him all throughout. The moment it got dark, he heard the lock being opened and saw the gentile standing in the doorway. He was carrying a broom and a bucket expecting to clean up the bones of the man. Instead, though, he found the *chasid* sitting in one corner and the dog in the other. He was shocked. “Get that Jew; attack him!” he screamed at the dog but instead of going after the *chasid*, the snarling beast took out its viciousness on the gentile, pouncing on him and tearing him to shreds.

The terrified *chasid* just sat there, frozen. He didn’t know what to do. Suddenly, the big beast locked his jaws on the man’s coat hem and began pulling him outside. The *chasid* followed the dog into the forest, where it led him to a ditch. He cleared away the brush and found a chest filled with gold coins. This was the money the gentile had stolen from all his poor victims. The *chasid* was shocked - and when he turned to look at the dog, he saw it lying on the ground - dead.

The *chasid* collected the coins and made his way home but not before stopping by the *Alter Rebbe* in Liadi to tell him what had transpired. The *Baal HaTanya* explained that this dog was a *gilgul* (reincarnation) of a Jew who did not properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of eating *seudas Shabbos*. He was punished by being sent down to this world in the form of a dog. When the *chasid* made *kiddush* and gave him *challah*, he found his *tikkun* (rectification). The *Rebbe* told the *chasid* that he should open a business with the gold coins which the *chasid* did and became a very successful man.

Needless to say, the *chasid* realized why the *Rebbe* gave him the seemingly strange instruction to carry the three *challos* with him at all times.

משל למח הדבר דומה

כי כל איש אשר בו מום לא יקרב איש קוד או פסח או חרם או שרוע וגו' (בא-ח)

משל: A story is told about the great escape artist, Harry Houdini (a Jew whose real name was Erik Weisz). An illusionist and stunt performer, noted for his sensational escape acts, he first attracted the public’s notice by challenging police forces to keep him locked up. Soon he extended his repertoire to include chains, ropes slung from skyscrapers and straightjackets under water. He had the ability to escape from the most confining locks and cells.

Once a prison warden boasted that he had a cell that even the “Great Houdini” couldn’t unlock. Houdini promptly

accepted the challenge. A large crowd came to watch as Houdini was placed inside a heavily chained and locked cell. The moment he was left alone, Houdini went to work opening each lock and chain. However, to his astonishment, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t throw open the bolt to the door of the cell. He concentrated on the mechanism and worked more carefully, but still without success. Finally, in his exhaustion, he leaned against the door, which swung right open. It was never even locked! Even the “Great Houdini” couldn’t open a lock - if it wasn’t locked!

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV
FROM R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את
עמר התנופה שבוע שבתות תמימות תדרינה (בג-ט)

The *mitzvah* of *Sefiras HaOmer* is unique in that it must be “תמימות” - lasting a whole and complete seven weeks. The *Medrash* asks: “אימתי הם תמימות?” - “*When (precisely) are these weeks considered to be whole?*” On this, the *Medrash* answers itself and says: “בזמן שישראל עושים רצונו של מקום” - “*At a time when Bnei Yisroel are doing the will of Hashem.*” I don’t understand: What is the question and what is the answer? What is this cryptic *Medrash* trying to tell us?

The answer is as follows: Our lives on this world are temporary in nature. The most transient item we have is time. Every moment that slides by can never be recovered. However, I believe there is a very simple way to alter time - from temporary to eternal. If a person spends his time learning *Torah* and doing *mitzvos*, it makes his time last forever and it stays with him into *Olam Haba*. *Chazal* say that the seven weeks of *Sefira* represent seventy years of a person’s life. The *Medrash*, therefore, asks: “אימתי הם תמימות?” - when can one eternalize the time spent and make it “*Temimos*” - lasting forever? “בזמן שישראל עושים רצונו ושל מקום” - when a Jew does *mitzvos*, his time literally goes on with him forever!

A wise man once said: “Throughout your lifetime don’t just count your time - make your time count!” Before *Avraham Avinu* left this world, the *Torah* tells us that he was “בא בימים” - “*came with his days.*” Homilectically, how does one “*come with his days*” to *Olam Haba*? Someone can live 70-80 years, but how many days can he remember filling wisely without wasting time? *Avraham Avinu* lived his entire life “All for the Boss” - *Hashem Yisbarach* - and so his days became “נצחיות” - everlasting. May we all be *zocheh* בתורה ובמצות ועוסקים בנים, ובני בנים, and may our lives be lives of eternity.

DRUSH V'CHIDDUSH

ובקצרכם את קציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שורך בקצרך ... (בג-בב)

Parshas Emor contains the rules and laws pertaining to the Festivals. One entire section, from beginning to end, deals with these festivals. There is one exception: following the laws of *Shavuos*, there is one specific *posuk* that states: “*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not remove completely the corners of your field you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them; I am Hashem, your G-d.*”

These agricultural laws have apparently nothing to do with anything else mentioned in the entire section on the *Moadim*. **R’ Meir Simcha Hakohen ZT”L (Meshech Chochma)** offers a wonderful explanation. Everything other than a Divinely inspired law, as logical as it may seem, will not last. It is obvious to us that we need the *Torah* to tell us which animals are kosher and which are not, since this is something which we could never have figured out on our own

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF זוליות

“*Say to the Kohanim, sons of Aharon, and say to them.*” Why the double expression? Rashi explains: “*To warn the adults regarding the children.*” **R’ Moshe Feinstein ZT”L** comments that everyone in the world, no matter what stage of life they are in, is a role model to someone else. Even a 5-year-old child sets the tone for a 2-year-old, who copies his behavior. Surely, then, older, wiser people cast a great influence on the people around them.

We are all role models. But we all need to know HOW to be role models, and positively influence others. This is hinted to in the word “להזהיר” which normally means “to warn.” Why warn? Are they doing something wrong? Another understanding is that the root of “להזהיר” is “ZOHAR” - illumination. If you want to have a positive influence on others you need to “Light them up!” Create excitement and enthusiasm - and they will catch on to whatever you are trying to impart! **Rebbitzin Ebstein**, a *chashuve* educator from Telzstone said: “Good *middos* are CAUGHT not TAUGHT!” If *gedolim* - adults - wish to affect *ketanim* - children - we must stop reprimanding and demanding, and start giving by living the ideals we wish to impart!

There is another concept here worth exploring. “להזהיר גדולים על קטנים” represents the “ups” and “downs” of a person’s life. Sometimes we are on top of the world. We feel full, happy, with so much to give. Other times, we feel small, low, empty, inconsequential. “להזהיר גדולים על קטנים” is a message of *chizuk*! One should allow the “highs” to influence his “lows.” When you are feeling small - think and remember the times you felt great. Let the big moments of your life illuminate the dark times when you feel worthless! We are all *gedolim*! We are all role models to others - even if the “others” is really ourselves! Focus on the highs, fill yourself up with light, live with enthusiasm and you will be surprised how many other lives you will enrich.

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם (בא-א)

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