

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

החשב עם קנדרו והיה בסף ממכדו במספר שנים כימי שכר יהיה עמו וגו' (כה-ג)

A story is told of a wealthy man from Poland whose wife needed to travel to a faraway land for medical therapy and procedures to treat a protracted and debilitating illness. A journey like this, centuries ago, was no small undertaking and the man gave his wife a large sum of money to tide her over. Unfortunately, her money ran out before she completed her therapy and she wrote a letter to her husband asking him to send another 50,000 ruble. The rich man received the letter and was eager to send his wife the money. There was just one problem: how would he get the funds to her?

In the olden days, before the advent of electronic banking, if one wanted to send money overseas or to a foreign country, he needed to find a messenger who would carry the cash in a protected sack and hand deliver the money. Of course, a number of requirements were necessary for this to work. One, the messenger must be a reliable person who won't just take the money and run away, never to be heard from again. Two, he must "insure" that the money would arrive where, when and to whom it was supposed to. Three, due to the extreme nature of the business, the messenger could charge an exorbitant fee to carry the funds from place to place, incurring the risk, danger and tribulations of travel. All in all, finding the right messenger willing to do all this was not an easy task. Fortunately for the rich man, he located a person who was deemed honest, reliable and responsible, who just so happened to be traveling to the exact city where his wife was located.

The messenger and the rich man met and the negotiations began. The man asked for an enormous sum; the rich man countered with a more measured amount. Neither side was willing to concede and it looked as if the entire deal was falling apart. Finally, the rich man threw up his hands and said, "I'll tell you what. I will give you the full amount of 50,000 ruble and you give my wife whatever you want!" The messenger smiled. Now we're talking, he thought. How could he possibly ask for a better deal than that? They shook hands and a contract was hastily drawn up. In it, it declared that the messenger would be transporting 50,000 ruble to this particular city, and upon the safe completion of his mission, he was to give the man's wife whatever he wanted!

The very next day, the man set out and his journey lasted a number of weeks, but eventually he arrived and went straight to the address he was given. Once there, he met the man's wife and informed her that he had brought 50,000 ruble from her husband. She was delighted but her smile faded when he told her, "As per my agreement with your husband, I will be giving you 2,000 ruble and I will keep the remaining 48,000!" She could hear the gloating in his tone of voice.

She could not understand why her husband would do something like this. First of all, he was a smart businessman and such a deal made no sense. On top of that, she actually needed 48,000 ruble - what good would a measly 2,000 ruble accomplish?

She tried to argue but the messenger pulled out his contract and showed her what it said. She read and reread the words and saw her husband's signature and she knew it was a real document. The man laughed heartily as he peeled off 2,000 ruble and handed it to her with a flourish. "Pleasure doing business with you," he said, but she stopped him and insisted that she wished to take the matter before the local Rabbi and have him determine what to do. The messenger was none too happy with this idea, but he did not object as he knew he had a signed and sealed contract and his case was airtight.

That very day, the woman and the messenger appeared before the local Rabbi and she explained the case. The Rabbi examined the contract and determined that it was in fact a valid document. He listened carefully as both sides presented their claims and he asked many questions, especially of the messenger. After a while, the Rabbi himself was puzzled. Why, indeed, would a smart businessman like her husband make such a deal? It made no sense. He asked for one night to mull it over.

The next morning, both claimants returned to the Rabbi and he asked to look at the contract one more time. Then, he smiled as he announced, "It seems that this woman's husband was not so stupid after all. He told the messenger to give his wife whatever he wants. Well, this messenger made it very clear what he wants. He wants 48,000 ruble! So, my ruling is that he must give the 48,000 ruble that he wants to this woman and he may keep the remaining 2,000!" (Tiv Hamaasiyos)

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

ברוך הנבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו ... (ירמ' ח-ז)

In the *Haftorah*, *Yirmiyahu* addresses many topics including the themes of *Shmitta*, *Berachos* (heavenly blessings) and *Klalos* (divine curses for disobedience). Though *Yirmiyahu's* prophecy seems harsh on the people, the *Navi* states, "*Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem; Hashem shall be his trust.*" Even though it is a beautiful sentiment, shouldn't *Hashem's* trust in mere humans be more dependant on their good deeds than just on their basic trust in him?

R' Yosef Yozel Horowitz zt"l (Alter from Novardok) explains that deeds and actions are important, however, the mere fact that we trust in *Hashem* is already an enormous

blessing. The nature of people is to try to control their own environment, thus, when a person abandons his feelings of invincibility and manages to place his complete trust in *Hashem*, his soul automatically draws closer to *Hashem*.

Amazingly, *Hashem* just wants a person to take that very first step – and when he does *Hashem* will lovingly draw him in. Even when a person *davens* hard and doesn't receive what he had hoped for, to the undiscerning eye it may seem like he failed completely; still he will draw closer to the Almighty because he has attained a greater level of faith in *Hashem*.

But those who abandon *Hashem* completely and put their trust in other people are cursed even if they get their wishes, because they no longer dwell in *Hashem's* midst.

ואיש כי לא ידעה לו גאל והשיגה ידו ומצא כד' גאלתו וגו' (כה-ב)

Rashi quotes the *Gemara (Kiddushin 21a)* which asks, how can it be that a person has no relatives? The *Gemara* explains that he really does have a relative, but this person is not in any financial position to help. **R' Moshe Feinstein z"l** asks:if indeed there is a relative, why does the *Torah* write "*ki lo yih'yeh lo goel*" - he has no redeemer? Shouldn't it have said, "*im lo yigael hakarov*" - he has no relative, or the like? After all, one cannot say that he has no relative in this case?

R' Moshe offers a penetrating thought. The *Torah* is teaching us what defines a relative. A relative is someone with whom one has a common interest. There is generally a mutual affection between relatives. A relative is one who comes to your aid in a time of need. Someone you can count on. However, if this relative didn't come to your aid in your time of need, then he is not worthy of being called a relative. Thus, says the *Torah*, "*ki lo yih'yeh lo goel*" - indeed, there is no relative.

The *posuk* continues: "*v'heseega yado*" - He himself will find money to redeem his own property. What's the connection of the beginning of the *posuk* and the end, and why is it a given that he will redeem it himself?

I saw a beautiful *machshava*. When a person realizes that he has no one to help him out and he's all alone, then he turns to *Hashem* with a sincere heart. He realizes that there is no one else but *Hashem*. When a person comes to that realization, he can be assured that the salvation is on its way. It's as clear as day that only *Hashem* could have brought this virus about. This world-wide catastrophic event is not something that a human could have created on his own and infected the entire world. It is surely a divine act. Thus, if we choose to act as relatives to our extended families and turn only to *Hashem*, we can hope that we will soon see *refuos*, *veshuos*, and much needed *nechomos* for all of our *Acheinu Bnei Yisroel*.

משל למח הדבר דומה

אם נחקתי תלבו ואת מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם ... (כו-ג)

משל: From the time **R' Chaim Kanievsky shlit'a** was a tiny baby in his crib, his father was constantly guiding him in the ways of *Torah*. Instead of the usual lullabies that parents sing to their children, his father, the **Steipler Gaon z"l**, used to chant the names of the *masechtos* of the Talmud. The Steipler would play a game with his children: he would call out names of chapters in the *Mishna*, and they would have to tell him which *masechta* it was in. Once the **Chazon Ish z"l** happened to hear his young nephew reciting the names of all the *masechtos*, and he remarked metaphorically, "*Er ken shoin gantz shas!*" (He already knows the whole Talmud!)

When the Steipler would give a *shiur*, he would bring his young son with him to the *Beis Medrash*. The *bochurim* noticed the boy seated at a table, pen in hand, writing earnestly. They watched with curiosity as he wrote page after page.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE MIDDAH OF ...

הוד כבודת ספירת העומר יתכן מה שפגמתי בספירה הוד שבהוד

In *Avos*, we are taught that a "*Lev Tov*" (good heart) is the goal for which we strive. Our journey in life, is parallel to the 49 day journey of *Sefiras HaOmer*. "*Lev*" in *gematria* is 32 and "*Tov*" is 17. This equals 49. Our journey is divided in two. The mid-point is the 33rd day of the *Omer*, the day of tremendous revelation and appreciation of *Torah* and how much a person can accomplish in this world. The first part of our journey was focused on the *Lev*, the heart. The *middos* of *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes* and *Netzach* are all about the way we think, act, and feel as *Yidden*. The *middah* of *Hod* reflects all the good qualities we have been working on until this point. The *Hod* of a person is the shine and splendor, the *hadras panim* that comes from a deep appreciation of oneself and all the goodness that *Hashem* bestows upon one constantly. It is the "*Hodaya*" (confession) that a person is just a *tzinor*, a pipeline, through which *Hashem* can shine His greatness unto the world. The greatest revelation of this *middah - Hod SheB'Hod* - is on the great day that *Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai* lit up the world with his *sisrei Torah*.

Now begins the second part of our journey. The last 17 days of *Sefira* are called "*Tov*" and we know that "*Ayn tov ela Torah.*" Whereas the first 32 days of *Sefira* receive their tremendous power of growth from *Pesach* with its *shefa* of *Emuna* and *cheirus*, the last 17 days receive their power from *Shavuos* and the awesome *koach* of *Torah*. The *middah* of *Hod* propels us into this elevated period because *Hod* is the fifth *middah*, when we appreciate things on a deeper level, especially things that are hidden. On the 5th day of creation, *Hashem* made the birds and the fish, because these are aspects of *Hashem's* glory that are hidden. Fish live under the water and birds fly in the heavens, not always apparent to our vision. The message of *Hod* is to look deeper than what meets the eye. Appreciate the beauty inside yourself, inside others, and inside the *Torah*. We should be *zoche* to reveal the hidden lights in our lives so that we shine with the splendor of *Hod*. (Heard from *Rabbi Wachsmann shlit'a*)

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