

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כי יגנב איש שור או שׂה ומכרו או מכרו חמשה בקר ישלם תחת השור וארבע צאן תחת השׂה ... (בא-ל)

If a man steals an ox and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the animal’s owner five times its worth. However, if he steals a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he must repay the owner only four times its worth. Why does he pay less for the sheep? **Rashi** quotes the answer from the *Gemara*. It is somewhat degrading to the thief when he carries the sheep away on his shoulders. The *Torah* considers this embarrassment as a partial compensation for the theft. Therefore, the thief pays a reduced fine.

In the city of Jerusalem, many years ago, lived a woman who had an unusual nickname. She was known throughout the city as “*Yentele the Meshugene*” - Yentele, the crazy one. It wasn’t for naught that she earned this dubious distinction. In fact, she worked quite diligently to acquire such a reputation all throughout the city. It was customary to find Yentele standing in the middle of the street yelling at passers-by as they walked. She didn’t just say the same nasty things to everyone - no, she was kind enough to tailor her loud and colorful comments to each person individually. To one person she would comment about his family; to a *Melamed*, she would mimic what the children said about him; to a *Rosh Kollel*, she would divulge what the *yungerleit* “really” felt. No one was safe from her harsh and blistering observations.

During the War of Independence in 1948, as Arab shells rained down on the hapless residents of Jerusalem, people ran for cover in the local bomb shelters. Even *Yentele the Meshugene* was forced to find a *miklat* (shelter) for protection, and the one she managed to hide herself in had the distinction of also hosting the **Rebbe of Zvill, R’ Gedalya Moshe Goldman ז”ל**.

Interestingly, as the bombs rained down and the noise outside was ear-splitting, Yentele remained unusually silent. However, the moment the racket subsided, it was then that she began to bomb away! The people in the shelter were frazzled as it was and now with all these extra barbs coming from the relentless mouth of Yentele, they just about had it. It was decided that Yentele had to leave the shelter and find another place to go. Why must they suffer alone - let other people enjoy her spirited words as well! However, before any decision was made, it was agreed to discuss the matter with the *Zviller Rebbe*, and ask him if it was permitted. A few people went over and asked if it was okay to remove Yentele and switch her to a different shelter? Her sharp and embarrassing words had everyone on edge and people could not take it any longer.

R’ Gedalya Moshe nodded and said, “Yes, you are permitted to remove her. But before you do I want to tell you a story about my own father, the holy **R’ Shloimke of Zvill ז”ל**. When we lived in Europe, I had a sister who became sick. For many weeks she lay in bed and at one point, her fever spiked to the point that it was dangerously high. Nothing my mother or father tried was able to bring down her fever and the doctors were hastily called in to see if they could help. After a careful examination, even the doctors had no answer and they told my parents that they didn’t think my sister was going to live much longer.

“My father, without saying a word, grabbed his hat and coat and ran outside. My mother was surprised to see him go and called after him saying, ‘Where are you going right now?’ ‘I am going to search for *bizyonos* (embarrassment),’ my father answered. And off he went. My father was in charge of the *schar limud* (tuition) in the local *cheder* and he knew who had paid and who had not. Without wasting a second, my father ran to a certain house and knocked on the door. The woman of the house opened the door and my father said something to her, presumably that her tuition was still unpaid. Instantly, she became enraged and started yelling at my father with very harsh and venomous words. My father slowly walked away and she followed him out into the street, just yelling and shouting words of shame that would make anybody cringe and turn beet red. A crowd of people followed behind to see what all the commotion was about. This went on for a few minutes until finally my father turned and ran home.

“This time as he walked into the house, he smiled and announced, ‘*Boruch Hashem*, nothing is going to happen to her! She will be fine!’ And so it was - my sister’s fever went down and in a short while she was out of danger.”

R’ Gedalya Moshe turned to the people in the shelter and said, “Yes, you may remove this woman from the shelter if she is embarrassing people. But consider the fact that *Hashem* sent her specifically to this shelter as a gift to us. The embarrassment that she so generously doles out is what saves us from death. Do we want to give up on such a wonderful gift?”

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

ויקח יהואש הישר בעיני ה' כל ימיו אשר הדרו יחידע (מלכים ב' י-ג)

During the first *Bais Hamikdash*, Queen Asalya sought to eradicate the Davidic dynasty by practically wiping out the entire royal family. *Yehoyada Kohen Gadol* found the young prince Yoash and hid him until eventually Yoash was brought out and reinstalled as the rightful king.

The *Haftorah* of *Parshas Shekalim* relates the story of King Yoash’s campaign to collect funds for the rededication of the *Bais Hamikdash*. Although he was deemed a righteous king, *Chazal* say that his righteousness was solely out of his reverence and adherence to his teacher, Yehoyada. Since most people are affected by those surrounding him how is it

that none of Yehoyada’s teachings took root in Yoash and affected him in a positive manner?

The **Rambam** explains that when a person’s *Rebbi* passes away it is both a sad and a crucial time for the *Talmid*. He is sad because he no longer has his *Rebbi* to guide him, but it is crucial for him to grab the reins and start to take his *Rebbi’s* teachings to the next level. Until Yehoyada’s passing, Yoash had clear instructions on how to lead his life and the kingdom. His problems began after his *Rebbi* passed on and he chose to forge his own path without using Yehoyada’s direction. Having a spiritual guide is crucial to a person’s growth, however, it is how a person uses the knowledge he learned once his guide is no longer around that sets him apart.

מחשבת הלב

ואנשי קדש תהיון לי ובשר בשדה מרפה לא תאכלו לבלב תשלוכו אתו וגו' (כב-ל)

Rashi cites *Chazal* who explain that by virtue of the dogs not barking during *Makkas Bechoros* they were eternally rewarded to receive the *treifos* - non-kosher scraps. This teaches us the concept of *hakaras hatov* and just how far reaching it is.

I once heard from **R’ Fishel Schachter שליט’א**, who expounded on the *Daas Z’keinim* who has a totally different approach than Rashi. People in those days kept guard dogs to ensure the safety of their sheep from the roving packs of wolves. Although this watchdog may fail one time to properly ward off all the marauders and one might lose a sheep, the owner mustn’t forget the countless times that his guard dog successfully protected the herd. Therefore, the *Torah* says to give the dog the *treifos*, showing him (and others) that we are *makir tov* and appreciate how he keeps the flock safe all the other times.

This idea extends to all of us. How many times do we get upset at a friend, associate, worker or even a spouse for “messing up”? We trusted them and they “blew it”! We should instead, recognize and remember all the times that person came through for us and tell them him or her how much their efforts are valued, and that we sincerely cherish all that they do on our behalf.

There was once a professor who drew a black dot on a paper and proceeded to ask his students what they saw. They all said they saw a black dot. One student though, responded that he saw a lot of white all around and a small black dot in middle. The professor said - you will go far in life! This student had the ability to see the mostly white whole picture and not just zero in on the negligible insignificant black spec. This *machshava* is so pertinent in our world which is so full of cynicism. When someone doesn’t perform to our expectations, like children for example, don’t dwell on the negative. Rather, give credit for the positive he does and he will feel so good about himself that he will strive even harder to give us the *Yiddishe nachas* we yearn for.

משל למח הדבר דומה

רק שנתו יתן ורפא ירפא ... (בא-י)

משל: The *yeshivah* in Slabodka, under the leadership of the famed **Alter, R’ Nosson Tzvi Finkel ז”ל**, stressed the need for *mussar*, polishing the character traits of the students so that they would aspire to become *Gedolim* in all areas of both scholarship, and personal ethics. The *Alter’s* motto was summed up in the words “*Gadlus HaAdam*” (Greatness of Man). He focused on the goodness of people and the need for neatness and cleanliness. He did not want the image of the poor, tattered, down-trodden *yeshivah bochur* to be associated with his *yeshivah* or his *talmidim*.

When R’ Nosson Tzvi became ill, his family gave his name to the *Tzadikim* of the generation so they should *daven* for him. The *Alter* himself had one further request. He asked that the pharmacist in town, also be asked to pray for him.

When his family expressed surprise at this unusual request, he explained: *Chazal* say that the *tefillos* of a *baal chessed*,

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF ...

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

Do you want to know the secret of how to come close to *Hashem*? **R’ Meir M’Premishlan ז”ל** tells us that we learn it out from the posuk, “*V’nikrav Baal HaBayis el HaElokim*.” If a person wants to come close to *Hashem*, “*Im lo shalach yado b’meleches rayahu*” - he can do so only if he does not get involved in “*meleches rayahu*” - another person’s affairs! If a person causes harm to others, whether it is with negative thoughts, *lashon hara* or hurtful actions, THIS obstructs his *kirvas Hashem*.

Often people are extremely diligent in their quest to be connected to the One Above. They *daven* long *tefillos* and engage in many activities to heighten their level of *bein adam laMakom*. However, they don’t realize that the way to *HaMakom* is through CHAVEIRO! The best way to get on a father’s good side is by being especially nice to His kids! The greatest way to connect to *Hashem* is by going out of our way to benefit our fellow Jews and *chas v’shalom* not to harm anyone in any way.

The great message that *Hashem* wishes to impart to us, in our careers as *ovdei Hashem*, is this: Your closeness to *Hashem* is dependant on the way you treat others. One cannot become a big *tzaddik* if he is only concerned about Himself. In life, people often feel that if only they didn’t have difficult people making them crazy, then they would have the ability to serve *Hashem* better. People say, “My husband, my mother-in-law, my child saps me of all my time and energy. I wish I could serve *Hashem* better but they get in the way!” Well, just know that this is a grave mistake. People are not “in the way” of our spiritual growth. They ARE the way that we come close to *Hashem*! We must always remember this great principle of Judaism. *Bein adam laMakom* and *bein adam lachaveiro* are intertwined! They are not separate entities - they are dependent on one another.

If you want to know how much *Hashem* loves you, think about how much you love your fellow Jew. That’s your answer!

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