

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ובל שרין העוף ממה הוא לכם לא יאכלו ... בי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלקך וכו' (ד-יטבא)

The famed *Mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov*, **R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l**, author of **Alei Shur**, always spoke in a calm and collected manner. He taught and guided his *talmidim* in such a way that decades later, many can still recall how he talked to them - whether it was words of rebuke, censure, or *divrei Torah* - always calm and softly, in a way that the *talmid* appreciated and accepted them. And he almost never raised his voice - save for two instances when he was delivering a *sichah* (*mussar* talk) and he did indeed speak loudly. The first time, was when the *Mashgiach* spoke about the need to train oneself to think in *Torah*. This was a constant refrain in his *sichos* and *shiurim*. He repeated again and again that even when walking down the street or doing mundane things, one's mind should be preoccupied with a *Torah*-related thought. He mentioned the *Gemara* (*Sotah 21a*) where *Tosfos* writes how *talmidei chachamim* constantly think *Torah* thoughts, not walking four *amos* without *Torah*. He then quoted those who say they can only learn *Torah* when they have a *sefer* open in front of them. At which point he said out loud, “Where are their minds? Why can't they use them to think?!”

Another time, R' Shlomo related a conversation that he had with another student. A *bochur* had told him that he must eat out once a week in a restaurant, not because he disliked the *yeshivah* food or needed to get out and have a change of pace. The student was a large boy and he told the *Mashgiach* (apparently unabashedly) that he simply needs to gorge himself on food! The *Mashgiach* related this story and then with his whole body shaking, cried out, “This is what *Chazal* meant when they said, ‘*Naval b'reshus haTorah* - despicability within the confines of the Law!’” (This means that a person acts without common decency, while defending himself that his obnoxious action is not clearly prohibited by *Torah* law.)

In a similar vein, the following story is told over by a *talmid* of the *Mashgiach*, an alumnus of *Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov*. At the end of his *sichos*, the *Mashgiach* would often discuss issues pertaining to the *yeshivah*, rules and regulations that needed to be abided by and what may or may not be done at any given time. At one point, there arose a situation in the *yeshivah* where there had been a number of complaints of there not being enough *cholent* on *Shabbos* morning, and the *Mashgiach* made an appeal to the *bochurim* asking them not to eat any of the *yeshivah's cholent* on Friday night.

That Friday night, no one dared enter the kitchen to taste the *cholent* - something that was taken for granted - save for one brave soul who found himself some excuse why he could take a bowl. He barely made it to his room with the bowl of hot *cholent* before he was caught red-handed by one of the *yeshivah* staff, who immediately went to the *Mashgiach* to report the culprit. The *bochur* figured he was in for it. Who knew? Maybe he would be asked to leave the *yeshivah*! That being the case, at least he should enjoy the *cholent*. And lo and behold, when he opened the portion, he found it swarming with bugs!

The *Mashgiach* called him in. (Often, the *Mashgiach* wouldn't rebuke someone on the spot, but perhaps out of respect for the staff member who denounced the *bochur*, he felt he had to say something right away.) When the *Mashgiach* asked him what exactly he was doing in the kitchen on Friday night, he told the *Mashgiach*, “The *cholent* is full of bugs!” He hoped to get off the hook by saving the *yeshivah* from the grave *issur* of eating insects (as by the next morning they wouldn't have been noticeable). The *Mashgiach* asked to see the bowl of *cholent* himself to verify the truth of the story.

Sure enough, the *bochur's* report was correct. He sent the *bochur* back to his room without a word of censure. In the next *sichah*, the *Mashgiach* mentioned his previous request of not taking *cholent* Friday night. “However,” he continued, “due to the keen perception of a certain *talmid* (whom he mentioned by name), the *yeshivah* was saved from a definite *issur*. Therefore, the *yeshivah* will henceforth prepare a special *cholent* every *Shabbos*, specifically for Friday night.”

He felt good and was proud that the *Mashgiach* mentioned him by name and how he saved the *yeshivah*. But later on, the same *bochur* claims that he received his just desserts. From that time on, after his name was publicly announced, he could never bring himself to eat cholent Friday night, even though it was officially sanctioned and served by the yeshivah!

אשר בחר בנביאים טובים ...

שמעו שמוע אל' ואכלו טוב ותתעננו בדרך נפשכם ... (ישע' נה-ב)

Depressed and forlorn, the Jewish people felt as though their exile would never end. *Hashem* promised that just as *Dovid Hamelech* became a King even though he was but a commoner, so shall the people be lifted out of their grim situation if only they would return to Him. He unequivocally declared, “*Listen! Give heed to Me, and you shall eat choice food and enjoy the richest dishes.*” Why the double wording?

R' Mordechai Gifter zt"l explains with a story from his youth in Telshe. It was *Shavuos* morning and he and his *Chavrusa* were out on a walk after a long night of learning. One of the city laymen spotted them and berated them for not

learning on the day of *Shavuos*. They responded that they had already spent the whole night learning, but the laymen shot back, “Have you ever seen a drunkard say I had enough?!” Taking it to heart, R' Gifter would add that just as food satisfies the stomach, *Torah* satisfies the soul.

The double wording of *Hashem's* promise is in reference to both the physical world of pleasure (עולם הזה) and the world of spirituality (עולם הבא). Although they seem to contradict each other completely, they are still intrinsically tied together. For a lax in spirituality automatically affects the physical world negatively. True, a Jew should focus his attention on spiritual growth, but nevertheless, we still live in the physical world and it is therefore our duty to uphold its existence.

למען ייטב לך ולבנך אחרך עד עולם כי תעשה רעוב ודשיר בעיני ה' אלקך (כ-ה)

A few *posukim* earlier, it states, “למען ייטב לך ולבנך אחרך כי תעשה הישר בעיני ה'”. In our *posuk*, it adds the words “עד עולם” and “הטוב”. My *machshava* here is that earlier (כ-ה), the *Torah* is discussing the *issur* of eating blood. Whereas here (כח), the *posuk* focuses on the positive *mitzvah* of bringing *korbanos*. **Rashi** explains the words “הטוב והישר” to mean “הטוב” - good in the eyes of *Hashem*, “והישר” - proper in the eyes of people. In other words, if we focus on teaching our children the idea of *korbanos*, living our lives and being “*makriv*” ourselves for *Hashem*; if our daily emphasis is on living our lives epitomizing the “טוב וישר” for *Hashem* and improving our *bein adam l'chaveiro*, then we have a better shot at ensuring that not only our children (בנך) will follow in *Hashem's* ways, but they will do so “עד עולם” - forever and ever!

In the wake of two tragic episodes which left two beautiful families bereft of a father and husband, and entire communities in mourning, I see nothing more fitting than to dedicate this week's *Machsheves Halev* to their memory, perhaps learning from the *klal's* loss a lesson that can help us improve our lives. **Reb Reuven Bauman z"l** and **Reb Dovid Traube z"l** were both living embodiments of these ideals, inspiring all they encountered with their *ne'eemas hachaim* in the capacity of *mechanchim* when their pure *neshamos* were taken. Both were *moser nefesh* for their children - Rabbi Bauman as a *Rebbi* and Reb Dovid as a father - by jumping into the water. This is clearly *Hashem* sending us a message. We, as parents and *Rebbeim*, must do more for our children, for His children. We too must be *moser nefesh* and invest more effort in ensuring that they follow the *Torah's* ways. As we know, the *Torah* is likened to water - and there are so many children drowning in the ocean of life.

In the *zechus* of our increased efforts with regard to our precious cargo, may HKB”H grant a *nechama* to the grieving families, communities, and to the *klal*, and finally say “*I'tzaroseinu dai*” with the hastening of *Moshiach* speedily in our days!

משל למח הדבר דומה

פתח תפתח את דך לאחך לעניך ולאבינך בארץ ... (כו-יא)

משל: The following is a true story told by **Rabbi Yossy Gordon** of Miami Beach. “I received a telephone call from a dear friend whose uncle was in his 90's and gravely ill. The doctors thought he only had a slight chance to recover and lead any semblance of a qualitative life. So the man's son was considering instructing the hospital to refrain from resuscitating his father in case he went into cardiac arrest. In hospital lingo, it is called DNR for Do Not Resuscitate.

“My friend was trying to find a way to convince his cousin to give his father a chance to live. I called an experienced rabbi for some advice and this is what he told me: ‘Tell your friend to go to the man's hospital bed and bring with him a *tzedaka* box and a coin. Ask him to put the coin into his uncle's hand and help him drop it into the *tzedaka* box. Once a person's soul leaves the body, he can no longer perform a *mitzvah*, which have been given only to live people. Life is

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דריגה יתירה

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברבא וקללה (יא-כו)

As we approach *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, we are all hoping to be *zoche* to feel that special closeness to *Hashem* which is unique at this time of year. We all hope for it, but how do we go about doing it? Well, the first thing we have to ask ourselves is this: Do we truly understand what is important in life? We want to make life meaningful, but in order to do so we need to really know what life is all about. The *Torah* tells us, “יחיה האדם פי ה' יחיה האדם”, which can include anything associated with bread, such as all materialistic pursuits - “*but by the word of Hashem does man live.*” **Targum Onkelos** on the word “יחיה” translates it as “מתקים”, which means “sustained.” This gives a new meaning to the *posuk*: “*Not through bread alone will man be sustained, but through the word of Hashem (Torah) man will be sustained.*”

However, in some older versions of *Targum Onkelos*, we find a different expression for the second “יחיה” in the *posuk*, the one referring to *Torah*. He uses two words: “חיא אנשא” - Man will LIVE - Man will have *חיות*; he will be imbued with life, with action, with a sense of accomplishment. In this interpretation, says **R' Yankel Rosengarten shlit'a**, man is not just “מתקים” - sustaining and existing on a day-to-day level. No! The *Torah* gives a person life, purpose and meaning.

So, the first thing we must do now, this week - *Parshas Re'eh* - which is the command to SEE - is to open our eyes and truly see not only what sustains life but what actually increases life. Let us stop being busy with nonsense and make *Torah* our number one priority in life, so that we do not simply go through the motions of life, but truly LIVE LIFE!

מחשבת הלב

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