

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויען לבן ובתואל ויאמרו מה' יצא הדבר לא נוכל דבר אליך רע או טוב ... (כד-ג)

In the twilight years of the *Gerrer Rebbe*, the **Lev Simcha, R’ Simcha Bunim Alter זי”ל**, a devoted *chasid* found himself at a crossroads. He had a son in *shidduchim* and when a girl from a fine family was put forth, he sent a *shaliach* to the *Lev Simcha* to inquire about the potential match for his son, hoping for a clear and favorable response. But the answer that came back was not what he had hoped for - in fact, it was negative. Doubt crept into his heart. Was this truly the *Rebbe’s* answer? Had it been conveyed accurately? Wrestling with uncertainty, he turned to a renowned *Mekubal* and asked him the same question, hoping for a different perspective. The Kabbalist, with conviction and mystical insight, strongly encouraged the match.

Now the *chasid* was torn. On one hand, the *Rebbe’s* answer seemed to close the door on this match. On the other, he had the enthusiastic endorsement of a *Mekubal*, someone revered for his spiritual vision. Unsure of how to proceed, he went to the home of the **Pnei Menachem, R’ Pinchos Menachem Alter זי”ל**, another figure of *Gerrer* leadership, to seek clarity.

He laid out his dilemma: “I sent someone to ask the *Rebbe*, and they brought me such and such an answer. I don’t know if the *Rebbe* actually said this explicitly. But I also asked a certain *Mekubal*, and he urged me to take the match. What should I do?”

The *Pnei Menachem* responded with wisdom born of years of experience. “Those Kabbalists,” he said, “even when they see something, they only see what is good for the present moment. Their vision is limited to the immediate. But the *Rebbe* - his answers are for your benefit not just now, but in the future as well. I believe the *Rebbe* sees generations ahead. He sees what is good for each *neshama*, not only in this life, but according to its *maasim* in previous incarnations as well.”

He then shared a story from the days of the **Imrei Emes, R’ Avraham Mordechai Alter זי”ל**, the father of the *Pnei Menachem*. A *chasid* once came to the *Imrei Emes* and begged for a blessing to become wealthy. The *Rebbe* refused. The *chasid* persisted, returning again and again, until finally, the *Imrei Emes* relented and gave him a blessing. The man’s fortunes changed dramatically - he soon became very rich, respected, and influential. He also had one son, a boy of exceptional virtue and character. But before the boy reached marriageable age, tragedy struck. He was involved in a terrible accident, and his leg had to be amputated. The father, now wealthy and prominent, faced a new challenge: finding a suitable match for his crippled son. His newly elevated status made it difficult to find a family on his level willing to marry into a situation involving disability. Eventually, he had to lower his expectations and agreed to a match with the daughter of the town’s tailor.

When the *Imrei Emes* heard of this, he said to the father, “See, it was decreed from heaven that this was your son’s match. Had you remained in your previous position, you would have been pleased to hear of a match with the daughter of the tailor. But now, after you became rich and respected, you would not have considered it. So it was arranged from above that your son would suffer this accident, so that you would be willing to accept the match that was destined for him.”

The *Pnei Menachem* stressed this point to the *chasid* who came to him about the *shidduch*. “It is not always wise to beg for what Heaven does not grant. Sometimes, in our desperation to shape our own destiny, we seek blessings that are not meant for us, and in doing so, we may unknowingly invite hardship. The *Rebbe’s* refusal was not a denial; it was protection. His answer encompassed not just the immediate desires of the *chasid*, but the arc of his life and the spiritual needs of his soul and family.

“Furthermore,” explained the *Pnei Menachem*, “a *Rebbe’s* guidance is not merely practical - it is a *‘shlickel nevuah’* - prophetic in many ways. It is rooted in a deep understanding of the *neshama’s* journey, of divine timing, and of the intricate tapestry of human destiny. The *Mekubal* may see the present clearly, but the *Rebbe* sees the future with clarity and compassion.”

The *chasid* nodded with a renewed sense of trust. He understood that the *Rebbe’s* answer, though hard to accept, was rooted in a vision far deeper than his own. He now recognized that in matters of great consequence, such as marriage, livelihood, and spiritual direction, it is tempting to seek multiple opinions, especially when the first answer is difficult to accept. But true spiritual leadership is not about confirming our desires. It is about guiding us toward what is truly good, even if it is hidden from our view.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים ... (מלכים א’ א-א) **A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALED HISTORIAN**

Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon was once in a town anonymously, where a member of the community recognized that he was not an ordinary person, but rather a true *talmid chacham*. He invited him home and treated him with tremendous respect.

During their conversation, the host discovered the true identity of his illustrious guest and fell to the ground begging the great *Gaon* for forgiveness. However, Rabbeinu Saadia could not understand; he had been treated with great respect. Why was there a need to ask for forgiveness?

His host responded that in truth, he had treated him with respect, but had he known that his guest was Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon, he would have treated him with even greater respect. Rabbeinu Saadia later explained, that with each passing day,

a true *tzaddik* expands his spiritual growth, thus each day he constantly does *teshuva* for the fact that the previous day’s actions were not on the same level as the present day.

The **Zohar HaKadosh** writes that both *Avraham Avinu* in the *parsha* and *Dovid Hamelech* in the *Haftorah* were elderly men who had “*come to their days*.” At the time of their deaths, they had both reached a point of near perfection, but since a *tzaddik* never feels content in his spiritual achievements and is always striving for more, one would think that they left the world with an unfinished agenda. Therefore, the *Torah* tells us that Avraham and Dovid “*came to their days*,” alluding to the fact that they both were *tzaddikim* to the fullest meaning of the word, and had completed their purpose in life.

ויאמר ה' אליך אדני אברהם ... (בר-יב)
ואמר ה' אליך אדני אברהם ... (בר-טז)

Rashi, on פסוק מ"ב, quotes the famous words of *Chazal*, who comment on *Avraham Avinu’s* servant, Eliezer, and his repetitive dialogue. He says as follows: שהרי פרשה של אליעזר, יפה שיחתו של עבדי אבות לפני המקום מתורתן של בנים, שיהיה פירוש של אליעזר: “אמר רב אחא, יפה שיחתו של עבדי אבות לפני המקום מתורתן של בנים, שיהיה פירוש של אליעזר: What was so beautiful in this conversation that necessitated such attention? A few *machshavos* come to mind that the last *pshat* would have been one that the *Zaida, Baal Machsheves Halev זי”ל*, could have said.

Firstly, the dedication and conviction that Eliezer displayed for his master was exemplary. His opening words to Besuel and Lavan were “עבד אברהם אנכי”. That encapsulates everything.

Additionally, as we know, Eliezer had a daughter whom he hoped would marry Yitzchok. Yet, he put his own dreams aside for the sake of fulfilling the wishes of his master. That is the paradigm of a true עבד. Perhaps the *Torah* repeats the entire storyline again so that we may glean a life’s lesson of what it means to be an עבד ה'.

A small *ha’ara* first. Why does Rashi quote this *Chazal* on פסוק מ"ב, and not when Eliezer begins speaking with the future *mechutan*? Maybe we can translate Rashi’s words a bit differently. The word “שיחה” can relate to *tefillah*. Thus, Rashi’s saying, “יפה שיחתו של עבדי אבות”, “יפה שיחתו של עבדי אבות”, The *tefillah* that Eliezer *davened* was so beautiful. *Posuk* מ"ב describes that prayer. In it, Eliezer begs for your benefit, not in his own merit, but in the *zechus* of *Avraham Avinu*. That is so precious. In fact, the *trop* on “ויאמר” in the first *posuk* is a שלשלת. Why? Perhaps we can learn that the power of *tefillah* lies in the power of a chain, a שלשלת, reaching and invoking the *zechus avos a”h*. This lesson is so powerful that the *Torah* repeats it twice.

ישועות לנו ולכל ישראל. May the *zechus* of our predecessors enable our *tefillos* to pierce the heavens, bringing

משל למה הדבר דומה

ולקחת אשה לבני משם ... (בר-י)

משל: At the joyous event of his daughter’s *sheva berachos*, the *kallah’s* father stood up to speak, and he eloquently weaved the joyous occasion in with *Torah*-related topics, as well as praises of his daughter - and the *chosson*. The *chosson*? Yes! After all, he himself handpicked the *chosson*.

At the end of his lengthy discourse, he announced that he would like to reveal what it was that made him want this *chosson* to marry his daughter. There was a hush in the crowd, something exciting after the prolonged speech:

“Not long ago,” he began “this boy was driving me all the way from Jerusalem to *Bnei Brak*. It was a Friday and there was heavy traffic. As a back seat driver, I was agitated, but then I observed the driver. I couldn’t help but notice how he did not honk the horn even once! This takes extraordinary

ואקד ואשתחזה לה' ואברך את ה' אליך אדני
אברהם אשר הנחני בדרך זאת ... (בר-טז)

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

Eliezer went to find a *shidduch* for Yitzchok, seeking a *siman* by which he would identify the correct girl. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* answered his *tefillos*, and he later recounted the events in detail to Lavan and Besuel, demonstrating the remarkable *Hashgacha Pratis* he had witnessed. The **Netziv זי”ל** explains that the details were so compelling, it was as if they heard the Almighty Himself declaring “This is the *shidduch!*” and indeed they acknowledged, “מה' יצא הדבר”, However, Eliezer mentioned a detail that seems unnecessary. Upon seeing the Heavenly sign, Eliezer bowed down: “ואקד ואשתחזה לה' ואברך את ה'” This expression of gratitude was his personal obligation, not part of the Divine intervention itself. Why did he feel compelled to share this information with Rivkah’s family?

Meforshim explain the *posuk*, “הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו”, that if someone thanks *Hashem*, He will continue performing kindness for him, “לעולם חסדו”. The **Ben Ish Chai** quotes a *segulah* from **Rav Yehuda HaChassid** that one who needs a *yeshuah* should commit to reciting “נשמתי” upon receiving that salvation. Recognizing that everything comes from *Hashem* is itself a means of receiving His help. When one commits to praising Him, that commitment alone is reason enough for *Hashem* to answer him. This explains why Eliezer described his bowing. The *Hoda’ah* is part of the *hashgacha*. He was saying, “These events happened because I am someone who recognizes *Hashem*.” Living with *Hashem* is a different way of life, and when one has a clear recognition of His Creator, that becomes a reason for *Hashem* to grant him even greater *hashgacha pratis*.

A brokenhearted woman once came to **R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זי”ל**. Her husband was sick and she spent her days reciting *Tehilim*, yet the doctors had given up all hope. The *Rav* advised her to thank *Hashem* for the days her husband was comfortable, for the excellent staff, and her personal strength. “After *Tehilim* say *Nishmas*,” he said. Miraculously, her husband recovered. R’ Shlomo Zalman simply explained, “When you open the gates of gratitude, *Hashem* opens the gates of *chessed*.”

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE
FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPMAN זי"ל

מחשבת הלב

הנחמדים מזהב