



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר ... וביום השמיני ימול בשר קרלתו וגו' (יב-ב.ג.)

The words of *Chazal* are inviolable. Every *Torah*-Jew knows that we cannot live our daily lives without following the words of our rabbinic traditions. The *mitzvah* of *bris milah* is a *Torah* commandment, however, every detail of the *mitzvah* - how it is performed, what is removed, how to handle illness, *Shabbos*, or premature infants - derives entirely from *Chazal*. Just as the laws of *nega'im* in *Parshas Tazria* are impossible to understand without *Torah Sheb'al Peh* (Oral Law), *bris milah* itself can only exist through the *mesorah* of *Chazal* whose rulings define the *mitzvah* in practice and cannot be set aside.

Many people will say that the words of *Chazal* are sacred, however, **R' Dovid Feinstein ז"ל** saw every single word of *Chazal* as living reality, and the way he responded to *shailos* and questions that were asked of him often reflected that. To him, it was a reality that *Chodesh Adar* is a time of *mazel* for court cases or business deals, because *Chazal* say that it is. Likewise, a person who recites *Havdalah* over a cup of wine will in fact have baby boys. *Chazal* said so (*Shevuos 18b*).

A *talmid* in his *yeshivah* had the merit of attending the *meshgiach*, **R' Michel Barenbaum ז"ל**, and at times, he had to miss *sefer* or *shiur* in order to drive the *meshgiach* home. He asked Reb Dovid if he should find someone else to help the *meshgiach* during times meant for learning. Reb Dovid encouraged him to cherish the *zechus* he had been given, quoting the words of *Chazal*: "*Gedolah shimushah yoser milimudah*, Greater is the service of *Torah* than the learning of *Torah*."

"I don't know exactly what this means," Reb Dovid said, "but if *Chazal* say that this is the reality, then it is the reality. Maybe it means there is special *beracha* in the learning you do if you are also *meshamesh talmidei chachamim*, if you serve, honor and attend to the needs of *Torah* scholars - but one thing I can tell you - you will certainly not lose out!"

On another occasion, someone came to honor him to serve as *sandek* at their son's *bris*, and they made a joke referencing the well-known dictum that being *sandek* is a *segulah* for *ashirus*, wealth. Quoted by the **Rema** (*Yoreh Deah 265:11*), the **Maharil**, a leading German halachic authority in the early 13th century and authority on *Ashkenazic minhagim*, writes that a *sandek* is compared to the *Kohen* who brought *ketores*, which is considered a *segulah* for wealth according to *Chazal*.

Reb Dovid told him a story. Several years earlier, the *yeshivah* secretary told the *Rosh Yeshivah* that a certain Mrs. Klein had called the *yeshivah* office several times, looking for him. Reb Dovid returned the call and Mrs. Klein asked if he was David Feinstein, the son of **Rabbi Moshe Feinstein ז"ל**, the renowned Orthodox rabbi. He said that he was.

She explained her sad situation. Her only daughter had given birth to a baby boy, but the daughter and her husband were not religious and had no interest in arranging a *bris milah* for the child. On the other hand, she was religious, and when she protested, they told her that if she wanted to take care of the *bris* they would not object.

Mrs. Klein said would be making a *bris* in her home in Long Island and she did not have anyone to honor as *sandek*. She had heard about Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, and learned that he had a son who had taken over the *yeshivah*. She had looked up the number in the phone book, and now wanted to invite him to come serve as *sandek* at the *bris* of her grandson.

Reb Dovid accepted, and on the day of the *bris*, he traveled to Long Island. There was a sparse crowd on hand, and he did not know any of the people there, but when Mrs. Klein asked him to stay for the *seudah*, he agreed. She asked him to share a few words, and again, he agreed. When it was over, he wished the family well and returned to the Lower East Side.

Several years passed, and one day, Reb Dovid received a phone call from a lawyer he didn't know. Once Reb Dovid identified himself, the lawyer informed him that he had been named as a beneficiary in the will of Mrs. Klein in Long Island, who had passed away and left \$100,000 to Rabbi David Feinstein. Reb Dovid smiled as he completed the story. "I did not accept the money for myself, giving it to the *yeshivah*, but the point is, if the Maharil says that *sandaka'us* is a *segulah* for *ashirus*, then it means precisely that, whether we see it or not. It's a reality." (Excerpted from "Reb Dovid" by Yisroel Besser, Artscroll)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

On *Shabbos Rosh Chodesh*, the *Haftorah* is taken from the concluding *perek* of *Sefer Yeshaya*, in which *Yeshaya HaNavi* speaks of the honor given to *Hashem* on *Rosh Chodesh* and *Shabbos*. *Yeshaya* states, "*And it shall be that, at every New Moon and on every Shabbos, all mankind will come to prostrate themselves before Me, says Hashem.*"

**R' Avraham HaKohen Pam ז"ל** (**Chazon Avraham on Haftoros**) quotes the words of the **Yalkut Shimoni** regarding this statement and writes that in truth, *Hashem* desires to be recognized by all of mankind, and the medium to accomplish this is through *Klal Yisroel*. When the Jewish people interact with all facets of mankind, fellow Jews and non-Jews alike, in a fair, honest, and respectful manner, it

causes a universal sanctification of *Hashem's* Name and achieves the highest goals of Creation. This underscores the centrality of the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* and the fearful sin of *Chillul Hashem* in the life of a Jew.

In today's crazy world where news is instantly peddled to millions of people, we tend to think that the parameters of *Chillul Hashem* is when a Jew does something wrong and his misconduct is splashed across the headlines of a news outlet. While it is certainly true that such a thing is in fact a *Chillul Hashem*, the true definition as defined by the **Sefer Yereim**, is when one causes a weakening of belief in *Hashem* and observance of *Torah* and *mitzvos* by not acting in accordance with behavior expected of a *Torah*-loyal Jew.

הויכח אל אהרן דבוק אי אל אחד מבניו דבנים ... (יג-ב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZT"L

# מחשבת הלב

**Rashi** quotes a *Chazal*: It is a גאירת הכתוב that all matters related to *tzara'as* must be brought to the *Kohen*. The **Sifsei Chachamim** explains that even if the *Kohen* himself is unlearned and others tell him that the affected individual is טמא, the verdict must still be proclaimed by the *Kohen*. In ערשת מצורע on the *posuk* ל"י "כנגע נראה ל"י", **Rashi** states that even if the מצורע himself is a תלמיד חכם and understands the *halachos* and applicable *dinim*, he cannot declare himself טמא but must wait for the *Kohen's* pronouncement. The question is why? Why can't a person who is not a *Kohen* do the proclamation? What is the possible message being conveyed by this?

There are two common themes running through the many reasons given for *tzara'as*. A lack of sensitivity exhibited towards others and a dearth of טובות. One of the main steps to be taken to properly rectify these faults is the realization that you are not the only person in the world. (This is NOT what *Chazal* meant by "בשבילי נברא העולם".) Therefore, to show us that we must deal with others, the *Torah* requires the entire נגע process to go through another person (specifically *Kohanim* who are known to be שלום רר.)

Later in the *parsha* (יג, יב) on the *posuk*, "לכל מראה עיני הכהן", **Rashi** says that a blind *Kohen* is invalidated to decide the status of the מצורע. The question arises: why can't someone with vision tell him and he'll then be able to make the proclamation of טמא? Why is it any different than a *Kohen* who is an *am ha'aretz*?

Perhaps the *machshava* is to further this lesson. In life, it's not about our perspective through a one-sided lens. We all have to see one another, and judge the other individual favorably without passing judgement.

With much *seyata d'shmaya*, let us work on our interpersonal relationships, especially during these days of *Sefiras Haomer*.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ושלח את הצפר הדחה על פני השרדה ... (יד-י)

**משל**: A man in a small village had a habit of speaking poorly of others. One day, he spread a particularly nasty, baseless rumor about the town rabbi. Eventually, the man realized the terrible damage his words had caused, and he was filled with remorse. He went to the rabbi, crying, and begged for forgiveness. "I will do anything to fix this," he pleaded.

The rabbi looked at him and said, "Okay, if you'll do as I say. Take a feather pillow, go to the top of the highest hill on a windy day, cut the pillow open, and shake out all the feathers. When you are done, come back to me."

The man was relieved. He ran home, grabbed a pillow, climbed the hill, and let the wind carry the countless feathers across the valley. He returned to the rabbi and said, "I did it!"

Am I forgiven?" The Rabbi smiled, "There is one last step. Now, go back out and gather up every single feather."

The man stared in shock. "That's impossible! The wind has scattered them everywhere. I could never find them all."

The Rabbi nodded gently. "Just like those feathers, your words are scattered by the wind. You can never take them back, and you can never know how far the damage has spread."

**משל**: *Parshas Metzora* offers us a beautiful, hopeful response to the *baal lashon hara*. To be purified, the *metzora* must take a living bird and set it free into the open field. This teaches us that while we cannot "un-say" our past mistakes, we have the power to release words of kindness and encouragement into the world. Just like that living bird, our positive words will take flight, soaring across the community and bringing healing to places we never even imagined.

אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת ... (יג-ב)

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

## הנחמדים מזהב

The **Vilna Gaon ז"ל** writes powerfully about the importance of restraining oneself from speaking *lashon hara*. He explains that until a person's final day in this world, one must self-train in spiritual discipline, not through fasting or physical affliction, but through restraint in both desire and speech. He expresses that true *teshuva* is achieved through רסן פ"ו ורסן "רסן", limiting one's mouth and one's desires. Every moment a person holds back from speaking improperly, he merits an "אור הנגה", a hidden light so great that even angels are not granted access to it. The *Vilna Gaon* concludes that this is one of the primary paths through which a person merits *Olam Haba*, "זוהו יותר מכל התורה".

**R' Moshe Shmuel Shapiro ז"ל** would illustrate this idea with the following story. In Petersburg, there were two wealthy individuals. One, was known as a great *Tzaddik* and *Yarei Shamayim*, a respected leader in the community, named Ginzburg. The other was an *am ha'aretz*, rarely seen in *shul* or the *Bais Medrash* throughout the year. Once a year, however, on *Yom Kippur*, he would appear and each year, Ginzburg would purchase the honor of *Pesichah* for *Kol Nidrei*. One year, the other wealthy man decided that, regardless of cost, he would outbid Ginzburg and acquire the honor for himself. The bidding went higher and higher until finally the *gabbai* declared, "*Zacha lo*" - he had won. Ironically, almost comically, the man had to ask the *Gabbai*, "Please explain simply and practically what exactly I just bought and how it is done?"

The *Gabbai* explained, "You open the curtain, open the doors of the *Aron Kodesh*, take out the *Sefer Torah* and hand it to the rabbi." He then asked, "But tell me, why did you spend such a handsome sum on something you don't even know how to do?"

The *gvir* answered "I know that if it's important to Ginzburg, it must be a good business deal."

R' Shapiro would conclude, if the *Gaon* and *Dovid HaMelech* teach us the immense value of guarding one's speech, "מי האיש החפץ חיים", then we can be certain that its worth is beyond our comprehension.