

לעילוי נשמת ר' אברהם יוסף שמואל אלטר בן ר' טובי ז"ל ורעייתו רישא רחל בת ר' אברהם שלמה ע"ה

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שבת קודש פרשת יתרו – כ"ב שבט תשע"ז

Shabbos Parshas Yisro - February 18, 2017

טיב התבלין

מאת הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רבינובין שליט"א ר"י שער השמים מירושלים עה"ק

עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה' מכל האלקים כי בדבר אשר ודו עליהם. ויקח יתרו חתן משה עולה ויובאים לאלקים (יה-יא:יב) - בנתיבות האמונה

החומר הוא ענין ההסתרה והעדר האמונה, כי עצם היות העולם מורכב מן החומר היא המעכב את אדורי ית', וכל עוד שהאדם לחוט אחר עניני החומר אתו הוא כי אין אמונתו זכה ובהירה, אך ככל שמזכך ומנער עצמו מן החומר מגלה הוא הניצוץ האלוקי שבו, וממלא מתעורר לאמונה בהש"ת. וענין זה ראים אצל פרעה כי מאדור והיה שקוע מאדור בעניני חומר 'ערות מצרים' לכן לא היה שייך שיאמין שיש מציאות של מנהיג העולם עד שודגיש כי הוא עצמו בעל היכולת ואמר 'לי יאורי ואני עשיתי' והיינו שתלה הכל בחומר, הלאו במו עיניו לא ראה כי אם הכוחות החומריים ובהם דרק בהם היה מאמין, וכיון שהוא עצמו שקוע היה בחומר לכן תלה הכל בכוחו ובורעו, עד שתמה ואמר 'מי ה' אשר אשמע בקולו' אין שום מציאות של כח אלקי הממציא את הכל, וכיון שלא ידעתי את השם' לכן 'גם את ישראל לא אשלח' ותוכחה הקב"ה להפליא בו מכות נאמנות להראות לו כי הכל תלוי בכוח העליון, עד שהוכרח להודות בכך. אך זה האיש המזכך עצמו מעניני חומר, ואף ההכרח לו מאלו הענינים אינו עושה כי אם לשם שמים זה האיש משיג אור האמונה, ובכח אמונתו הבהירה עומד הוא בגבורה מול כל הפיתויים והנסיונות. ענין זה לימד משה רבינו ליתרו חותנו, כי בראותו כי עדיין אין הוא שלם באמונה תמימה ביקש ללמדו ענין יסוד החומר, כי ידע משה שהיא, דרק היא אשר יקבה את יתרו בבחירות האמונה, ועל כן כשראה יתרו לנכון לנבוח עולה חבחים להשי"ת הלך הוא אליו עם כל ישראל לאכול לחם 'לפני האלקים' ולהראותו האך מוטל על האדם לקדש עצמו במותר לו, ולא לאכול כי אם לשם שמים בלבד. וכן לעשות גם שאר הענינים הנרמזים בלח"ו רק לשם שמים כי כאמור על ידי זה שמתגור האדם מן החומדיות וזכה לבהירות האמונה.

דא"כ מילת 'ועתה למה לי כאן, אלא שהתנאי של 'אם' קאי על מה שעתה תיכף תקבל עליך עול המצוות, ועל כן סמך רש"י את מילת 'אם' למילת 'ועתה'.

ואילו ה'גור אריה' (אותו "א"ה) הסביר את רש"י באופן אור, "אם עתה תקבלו - פירושו, שמה שדוצרך הכתוב לומר 'ועתה', והל"ך רק 'אם שמוע תשמעו', ה"פ שאם עתה תקבלו עליכם עול המצוות, ואצ"ל שהוא כבד עליכם יערב לכם מכאן ואילך, שכל התחלות קשות, ואין 'אם שמוע תשמעו' דבר הקב"ה שמבטיח אותם שיערב להם מכאן ואילך, אלא הכל נרמז בלשוך 'ועתה', שפירושו, שהכל תולה בזמן עתה, שאם תקבלו עתה, יערב לכם מכאן ואילך, ואח"כ הוא אומר 'אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים' - מילתא בפני עצמו, ומכפל הלשוך - 'שמוע תשמעו' דרשו במכילתא 'שאם שמע אדם מצוה אחת, משמיעין אותו מצוות הרבה, וכן לגבי מה שדרשו מהכתוב 'והיה אם שכח תשכח, שאם שכח מצוה אחת, משכחין אותו מצוות הרבה', ועי"ד משכת' רש"י (שם) 'וכן 'אם שכח תשכח, אם התחלת לשכות, סופך שתשכח כולה', (ולפ"ו, המילה התנאית-אם' היא על קבלת המצוות, ופירושו, אם תקבלו, ולא כמו שכתב המדור' בדעת רש"י, שהיא מורה על הזמן, ופירושו, שאם עתה בזמן ההווה עול התורה, יערב לכם בעתיד, דהיינו מכאן ולהבא, וי"ש לדוסיף, שמהרה"ש של רש"י 'ועתה' יש להוכיח כדבריו שכונת רש"י 'לפרש רק את תמלתי 'ועתה', שהרי לפי דברי המדור' שכונת רש"י לפרש גם את המילים 'אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי, הל"ל גם אותן כדבריו המתחיל'.

As soon as Yisro heard about all the great miracles that *Bnei Yisroel* experienced, he immediately thanked *Hashem* and recognized Him as the One true G-d. Not only that, but *Chazal* tell us that Yisro's outpouring of thanks for a miracle he only heard about and did not even see, was greater than all the gratitude of Moshe and *Klal Yisroel*. As the *Gemara* states: "It was a disgrace to Moshe and the 600,000 (*Jews*) who did not say ברוך' (blessed) until Yisro came along and said ברוך ה' - 'Blessed is Hashem.'" Gratitude must be put into words - and it must come straight from the heart!

מאת מנה"ר ברוך הירשפלך שליט"א ראש כולל עטרת חיים ברוך קליבלנד הייטס

Mussar into his daily learning (6). This also includes the dictum of the *Gemara Yoma* (7) that sin stops up the power of a Jewish heart (מטמטם את הלב), which refers to being able to contain true wisdom, as Rashi there explains. **Avoiding Anger.** The *Gemara* (8) writes that becoming angry causes a person to forget his learning. In another *Gemara* (9), a different wording is used which possibly implies that it will also shrink one's ability to continue learning. **Sefer Chasidim** (10) adds that at the face of an angry person for a prolonged period of time, also causes one to forget his learning. **Kissing the Sefer.** The **Kaf Hachayim** brings (11) from an early *Kabbalist* that kissing a *sefer* when one opens and closes it helps to remember learning. (Students of **R' Mordechai Gifter ז"ל** fondly recall that his *shiur* was not considered over till he kissed and closed the *Gemara*.) Presumably, this is in merit of honoring the *Torah*, which brings us to ponder whether kissing a *Sefer Torah*, or honoring *seforim* in other ways is the same. **Tefillah Text.** We mentioned previously, sources for *tefillas* that one can say so that he does not forget his learning. One can use the phrase of *Asniel ben Knaz* (12) or his own words. There is another phrase which is brought down (13) that can be said: "May it be Your will that I do not forget any of my learning forever."

(1) עירובין נד. (2) הל' ת"ת גיב (3) יו"ד רמב"א (4) פריק אבות ג"ט (5) שבת ל. (6) מ"ב א"ב, תרגום (7) יומא לט. (8) נדרים כב. (9) פסחים סה. (10) תתשכ"ז (11) כף החיים תקע"ב בשם ס' אור צדיקים כב"ו (12) תמורה טו. (13) ע"פ מדרש תלפית-זכירה

Chacham Rabbeinu Yehudah Birdogo ז"ל (Mayim Amukim) would say: "Chazal tell us that at *Har Sinai*, *Moshe Rabbeinu* was instructed to teach the men separately from the women, as the *posuk* states, 'So shall you say to the House of Yaakov' - referring to the women - 'and you shall tell to Bnei Yisroel' referring to the men. Why did the women precede the men in this context? Because the *posuk* clearly states: 'And Yisroel encamped there across from the mountain,' which refers only to the males. The women, in keeping with the proper observance of *tznius* (modesty) stood a bit further away. To emphasize that their distance was not a demonstration of disrespect towards the women, but rather in keeping with standards of modesty, they were instructed first, to show that this is the proper path of service of *Hashem*, by separating the genders."

Kotzker Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ז"ל (Noam Siach) would say: "The *people saw and trembled; so they stood from afar*.' The *posuk* is alluding to the way a person *davens*. if a person only looks at how other people *shuckle* and shake during *Shemona Esrai*, and he does it the same way just to look like them, or so they should think he's a 'groisa tzaddik' - 'אז' מען שאקילט זיך ווייל מענטשען זעהען, מ'שטייט נאך ווייט' - his entire *Amidah* is far from the way it should be!

A Wise Man would say: "If you want to know how rich you are, count all the things you have that money can't buy."

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This week's issue is sponsored in honor of the birth of a baby boy to Mr. & Mrs. Shmuly Lang.

ז"ה הקטן גדול יהיה .. וכשם שנגשג לברית כן ינגשג לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים"

Mazel Tov to the Fuchs and Jaroslawicz families on the marriage of their children, Shmuli and Rina. May they build a Bayis Neeman B' Yisroel and bring much nchas.

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

והזרתה אתם את החקים ואת התורת והדעת להם את הדרך ולבו בה ואת המעשה אשר יעשון וגו' (ח-ב)

The town of Ferndale, N.Y. is home to the oldest and most famous camp in the Catskill Mountains, Camp Agudah. Each and every summer, there are well over a thousand people on the camp grounds itself, including campers, counselors, and staff, aside from the surrounding bungalow colonies and other camps that populate the area. One of the greatest advantages that Camp Agudah held for many decades was that it was also host to the great *Rosh Hayeshiva* and *Posek Hador*, **R' Chaim Yisroel Halevi Belsky זי"ל**, who attended the camp faithfully each summer from the time he was a small boy until the final year of his life. He served as the *Morah D'asra* of the camp for many years, and was truly beloved by one and all.

Camp Agudah has a senior division known as Camp Machane Efraim, where well over one hundred high-school age boys (and older) from many different *yeshivos* and backgrounds would join together to spend a summer of continuous *Torah* learning, basking in the presence of one of the generation's *Torah* luminaries. But Rav Belsky wasn't there just as a rabbinical presence on vacation; he was actually the "hands-on" leader of the program, who not only saw to it that each and every boy was enjoying an uplifting summer, both in *ruchnius* and *gashmius*, but he also kept up with the boys, inquiring about their well-being and caring for their health, thus creating a tremendous bond between *Rebbi* and *talmid* which quite often lasted a lifetime. Many stories have been told about Rav Belsky and his relationship with his Camp Agudah *talmidim* - his love and passion for them (which in no way minimized his tremendous *Ahavas Yisroel* for every fellow Jew), and the *middos tovos* he taught them through his daily actions. This week, the 18th of *Shevat*, was the first *Yahrzeit* of R' Chaim Yisroel Halevi Belsky זי"ל. The following is a story that occurred a number of years ago in Camp Agudah.

One summer's morning, during *Krias HaTorah*, a *talmid* by the name of Yitzchok Hoffman noticed that the seam of the *Sefer Torah* was coming apart. If it wasn't fixed soon, it could could cause the entire *Sefer Torah* to become *pasul* (invalid). He quickly notified Rav Belsky who felt that it was best to wait until Friday afternoon, when the typically crowded *Beis Medrash* was empty, and they wouldn't disturb anyone's learning, to do the repairs.

On Friday, Yitzchok brought the *Sefer Torah* to Rav Belsky's office where he did a close examination of the seam. It wasn't as bad as it looked, he said, and it did not need to be given in to a professional to fix. Instead, simply gluing the parchment together would suffice, saving them the trouble of sewing the two pieces of parchments together.

Rav Belsky searched his drawers but could not find the right kind of glue needed. It was Friday afternoon, and it would not be easy to procure this item at this time. After a moment, Yitzchok offered to run to the Arts n' Crafts shack to see if they had any glue and Rav Belsky nodded his assent. However, when he returned a short time later with a big smile and a bottle of glue in his hand, Rav Belsky was less than enthusiastic about his prize. He took one look at the big white bottle and told Yitzchok in his usual calm and soft voice, "That's Elmer's glue. That's not going to work for a *Sefer Torah*."

Still breathing heavily from his "glue-run" Yitzchok said, "No problem. I'll run back and ask the Arts n' Crafts instructor for the better quality glue." The instructor, another long-time Camp Agudah member and a prominent *mechanech* during the year, is a friendly and gregarious man who would have been happy to oblige the *Rov*, but Rav Belsky wouldn't hear of it. "What about his feelings?" said Rav Belsky to Yitzchok. "Think about how he will feel when he realizes he gave you Elmers glue for a *Sefer Torah*!" Rav Belsky was adamant and would not permit him to go back.

Rebbi and *talmid* sat down to repair the *Sefer Torah* by hand. It was late Friday afternoon and Rav Belsky's hands were a bit shaky (due to his final illness). The holes were tiny and the work was tedious, but Rav Belsky would not relent in the performance of this *mitzvah*. With his beloved *Rebbi* looking on and offering step-by-step instruction, Yitzchok managed to sew up the seam until it was just right. The task that would have taken a minute with the right glue, turned into a tedious, difficult and time-consuming task. But for Rav Belsky, as long as it didn't make another person feel bad, it was all worth it!

משל למא הדבר דומה

ויאמר יתרו ברוך ה' אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים ומיד פרעה אשר הציל את העם מתחת יד מצרים וגו' (פז-כז)

משל: In *Sivan* 5771 (June 2011), **HaGaon R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv זי"ל** underwent surgery to repair an artery near his heart. The surgery was performed at *Shaarei Tzedek* Medical Center in Jerusalem by Dr. Daniel Clair, Chairman of the Department of Vascular Surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, who was flown in especially for the complicated surgery.

The day after the operation, which was deemed a success, Rav Elyashiv was seen holding a *Gemara*, learning at every possible moment. At one point, Rav Elyashiv asked one of his close confidants how to say "Thank you" in English. He wished to personally thank Dr. Clair for his exceptional

work. That very day, Rav Elyashiv took the doctor's hand and said in English, "Thank you!" Dr. Clair was visibly moved.

Later, he was asked why he needed to say these words in English, when someone could have translated it for him. Rav Elyashiv replied, "Although in *davening* we have a *shaliach tzibbur* who repeats the *Shemona Esrai* out loud, when it comes to '*Modim D'Rabbanan*' each person is obligated to say it himself. Why? Because an inner feeling of gratitude is not something one can give over to a *shaliach* (messenger). A person must give thanks in his own words. I am extremely grateful to the good doctor and I wanted to tell him myself!"

ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכרית. ושם האחד אליעזר ... (ח-ג)

Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that according to proper *dikduk*, the *posuk* should say, "*The name of the first (son) was Gershom ... and the second (השני) was Eliezer.*" Why does it say "שם האחד" by both sons? He answers that since they had such tremendous *achdus* with one another, they were considered "אחד" - "*like one.*" My *machshava* here that Moshe was teaching us a lesson in raising children. Two brothers who grow up together should always be considered equal, on the same standard, without one being singled out over the other, just as the *Torah* equates Moshe and Aharon in *Parshas Vaera*. Thus, it says "שם" "אחד" by each child to reinforce this notion that there isn't a "first" and "second", but rather each one is individualized.

This lesson applies to the *mitzvah* of *Kibud Av V'em* as well. Children must respect both parents and not disregard one over the other. The *Torah* could have written, "כבד את אביך ואמך," "*Honor your father and mother.*" However, it says, "ואת אמך" - with the extra word, placing both father and mother on the same pedestal, for they both must be honored, they both must be individually respected. And if parents, as they age, want their children to show them the proper respect, they must realize that each child is like a growing tree which not only needs water and nurturing but also needs the proper care, attention, love and respect.

True, we are all busy today - working, learning, *simchos*, *chessed* - and many times we lose sight of finding time for our children. A story is told of a young girl who stole the *afikoman* at the *Pesach Seder* and before *bentching* her father turned to her and asked, "Rochel, what do you want in return for the *afikoman*?" With tears in her eyes she said, "Tatty, all I want is a five-minute conversation and a good-night kiss once in a while." This is something that money, gifts and trips cannot buy.

If we treat each child like an "אחד", it will be returned to us in our old age with their "אחד" and our *beracha* of ימים ארוכים תמים. Remember: the best present a parent can give their children is their presence, which will be returned to them in their old age.

DRUSH V'CHIDDUSH

אנכי ה' אליקד אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים ... (כ-ב)

The *Medrash*, commenting on the first of the Ten Commandments, explains that *Hashem* took *Bnei Yisroel* out of Egypt on condition that they would listen to Him. The existence, identity and future of the people of Israel is inextricably bound up with the *mitzvos* of the *Torah*. We became a nation in the desert. Before living in our own land, we were unified into a people with our own unique character. It is impossible that a secular national approach could work, for the people of Israel owes its existence only to its acceptance and adherence to *Torah* and *mitzvos*.

In fact, writes **Rabbi Z.S. Suchard שליט'א** (B'darchei **Maysharim**), there is hardly a nation which still retains its original character. The various nations are composed of ever-changing conglomerations of races due to conquests and cross-migrations. *Klal Yisroel* alone has managed to remain pure, to retain its original form. Why? Because the essence

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF התחזקות

When Yisro arrives in the desert and sees how *Moshe Rabbeinu* is standing from morning until night, answering the queries of *Am Yisroel*, he is appalled. He tells Moshe, "*What are you doing to the nation?*" Actually, he should have said, "What are you doing to yourself? There is no way one person can do all this!" Yisro was focused on the people, not on Moshe.

The **Cheishev Sofer זי"ל** explains that Yisro was teaching Moshe a fundamental principle about being a *manhig*: A leader must preserve his strength! Don't think that you are being selfish and uncaring toward the people. NO! The greatest way that you can show your people that you care about them is by making sure that YOU are strong and healthy, physically, spiritually and emotionally! A leader has a responsibility to the *klal* to take care of himself, because by taking care of himself, he shows that he truly cares about others. This applies to ANYONE who is responsible for the welfare of others. Parents, *Rebbeim* and teachers all fall into the category of "*Manhig*" and have an extra responsibility to take care of themselves! Sometimes the greatest thing a mother can do for her children is take a nap! So too, the **Rema paskens** (י"ד רמ"ה) that a *Rebbi* is forbidden to stay up too late at night, deprive himself of food and drink, or eat excessively because it will hinder his ability to teach properly.

A story is told about a poor woman who had ten children and desperately tried to make ends meet so that they would not go hungry. She was once given a single egg. She took the egg, cooked it and went into a different room and closed the door. The poor, starving woman sat on the floor and ate the egg herself! When her children knocked on the door and asked what she was doing she answered, "I am making you a mother!" Taking care of oneself is sometimes the greatest gift we can give to others.

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

ואמר מה הדיבר הזה אשר אתה עשה לעם ... (ח-ד)

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO