

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים ... (יג-ה)

A number of years ago, while speaking at an educational conference in Eretz Yisroel, the renowned *Mashgiach of Knesses Chizkiyahu* in *Kfar Chasidim*, **R' Dov Yaffe ז"ל**, publicly stated that *yeshivos* must be careful not to “clip the wings” of *bochurim* who have an original approach to learning. Often a student finds “his way” by learning things outside the *yeshivah* curriculum and this is not to be discouraged. As an example, he pointed to two *Gedolei Hador* who may have been lost had they not been allowed to follow their own paths. One was the *Rosh Av Beis Din*, **R' Nissim Karelitz ז"ל**, whom the **Ponevezher Rav ז"ל** left to his own devices as he methodically learned through *Shas* and *Poskim* together with the **Chazon Ish ז"ל**. The second was none other than **R' Chaim Kanievsky ז"ל**, who already began his taxing schedule of learning through massive quantities of material while still a *bochur* in *Petach Tikvah's Lomza Yeshivah*.

R' Yonasan Aber shlita, a well-known *mechanech* in Eretz Yisroel, and son-in-law of R' Dov Yaffe, relays an interesting story that happened many years ago when he was newly married at his father-in-law's *Shabbos* table. He had gone to *shul* on *Shabbos* morning and started *davening Pesukai D'zimrah* in a side room, intending to proceed to the main *shul* thereafter. While he was there, two very young children sat down and were pretending to learn. They had taken out *Gemaras*, although they were too young to read and certainly to understand the *Gemara* language. Their discussion went like this: The first one questioned his friend, “*Assur?*” The other nodded vigorously and responded, “*Assur!*”

The first requested, “*Assur? Assur?*” The other affirmed with even more vigor, “*Assur! Assur! Assur!*”

For several minutes, this was how their dialogue continued, each time an assurance coming that whatever the first was asking about was definitely “*Assur!*” It was adorable to watch these two young boys *shuckling* back and forth, pretending to be locked in a heated scholarly debate. People who walked by smiled and patted their heads.

After *davening*, R' Yonason returned to his in-laws' home for the *Shabbos seudah*. As they were waiting to begin, he mentioned to his father-in-law what he had observed about the boys he overheard before *davening*. R' Dov became full of trepidation and was greatly disturbed. He asked his son-in-law for the names of the boys. “I need to speak with their parents immediately! *The seudah* will have to wait.” With that, he headed for the door.

His family tried to dissuade him, but he was very determined. “This is a matter that cannot wait. I must resolve this right now.” His wife, though, convinced him that the family he wished to speak with wouldn't take his words too kindly if he would address the issue with such forceful urgency, so he agreed to wait until after the *seudah* to go.

Immediately after the *seudah* had concluded, his son-in-law asked R' Dov why he was so persistent about this. Why was he willing to postpone the start of the *seudah* for it? Was it a matter of *pikuach nefesh*?

The *Mashgiach* responded with a heavy sigh, “With a child who hears ‘*assur*,’ ‘*assur*,’ and more ‘*assur*,’ the prediction for such a child is that he won't continue serving *Hashem*. If everything in *Yiddishkeit* is only ‘I can't do this’ and ‘I can't do that,’ his future is at stake. That makes it a very critical matter.

“Serving *Hashem* is the most enjoyable thing, and if it's not presented in this fashion, children are at great risk. It's so fundamental that it's worth the entire *seudah* being postponed so that they won't have this wrong impression.” R' Dov shook his head with emphasis. “Children must see and feel that serving *Hashem* is the ‘best thing’ in their lives - the only thing that brings true, intrinsic happiness. By planting this idea in this manner, over time they will mature to truly feel that and continue serving *Hashem*. Not by pretending to learn and deeming everything ‘*assur!*’”

The sad ending of this story is that the father didn't take the *Mashgiach's* words to heart and didn't do enough to change his children's mindset (or his own). Sadly, over the years, neither of those boys continued on the proper *derech*.

כי כתבור בדרים וככרמל
ביום יבוא ... (ידי' מ-ה)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY
HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

Parshas Bo speaks of the fall of Egypt due to the plagues *Hashem* inflicted upon it. The *Haftorah* takes place about 800 years later, when *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* foretells Egypt's downfall at the hands of Nevuchadnezzar, King of Bavel. Interestingly, the *Navi* says, “*Like Tavor among the mountains and Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.*” But what does this have to do with the downfall of Egypt?

R' Avraham Pam ז"ל explains that *Chazal (Megillah 29a)* tell us how in their desire to participate in *Matan Torah*, these two mountains, *Har Tavor* and *Har HaCarmel* (or, according to the **Maharsha**, their ministering angels), uprooted themselves from their locations outside of *Eretz Yisroel* and transplanted themselves in the Sinai Desert to

participate in *Matan Torah*. Because of their efforts, *Hashem* allowed them to remain there in the Holy Land.

Chazal famously tell us that in the future all *shuls* and *Batei Medrashimin* the Diaspora will be transported to *Eretz Yisroel*. This is because when Jews *daven* and learn *Torah* in a structure made of brick, stone, wood, or the like, the building itself becomes imbued with holiness, which will give it the merit to be transplanted into the holy soil of the Holy Land.

Conversely, Egypt was famous for being a land of pure immorality. The very land became infused with tremendous impurity, even dragging *Klal Yisroel* down almost to a level of no return. How careful must we be to always treat every place of *Torah* and *Tefillah* with the proper respect.

והיה לאות על ידכה ולמופת בין עיניך
כי בחוק יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים ... (יג-יז)

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

מחשבת הלב

Chazal draw attention to the spelling of the word “ידכה” pointing out that it's not only unique, but also different than its spelling in 'פסוק ט'. They extrapolate from this the *halacha* that the *tefillin* must be worn on the weaker hand, the יד כחה. Perhaps, *al pi drush*, we can offer the following explanation: While enslaved and tortured, the *Bnei Yisroel* were on a spiritually low level at that juncture. They had stooped to the 49th level of impurity. Nevertheless, *Hashem*, in His infinite kindness and wisdom, took us out of the *shibud* of *Mitzrayim*. That is a sure sign that during future exiles, *Hashem* will again redeem us, even if and when we aren't worthy. Thus, the *tefillin shel yad*, representing *HKB”H's* outstretched arm, is a sign that even when we are weak - יד כחה - we can and will be redeemed.

The *Gemara* in *Brachos* (6a) tells us that *Hashem* too dons *tefillin* daily. Inside those Divine *batim*, the *parshiyos* speak of the tremendous love *Hashem* has for us. The *tefillin shel rosh* corresponds to the mind, the thought process and *hashgacha*. There are 4 compartments in the *shel rosh*, representing 4 different classes and levels of *Yidden*. *Hashem's* “mind”, so to speak, His *hashgacha*, varies depending on the level of each *Yid*. The *shel yad*, however, contains just one compartment. This symbolizes that the *shel yad*, which is placed opposite the heart, can encompass all types of individuals, in all walks of life. *Hashem's* heart, His love for each and every one of us, doesn't discriminate. He loves us all equally and endlessly. Perhaps this is another *pshat* to explain that just as then - in *Mitzrayim* - He showed His love for us disregarding our lowly state of *tumah*, so too now, the *shel yad* will be that sign that even the יד כחה of *Yidden* - the weaker ones - are so beloved by *Hashem*.

Let us too be *meshabeid* our *lev* to Him showing our absolute love for *Hashem*, and to each and every Jew unconditionally! **And in that *zechus* may we merit the *geula shelaima b'karov mamash!***

משל למה הדבר דומה

החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם ... (יב-ב)

משל: The following story is told over by **R' Shlomo Farhi:** “One day, I got a call from a Holocaust survivor who was interested in putting on *tefillin* each day. However, he did not have the money to buy himself a pair, so I informed the people in my community about this special *tzedakah* opportunity. An unusual number of people responded to this particular request. Many people wanted to partake in this rare *mitzvah*, and I received far more money than what was needed. We bought the *tefillin*, made a respectable spread for the occasion, and he started wearing them.

“One week later, I received a call from an individual requesting to participate in buying the *tefillin* for the man who didn't have. To his disappointment, I told him that everything had been paid for already. The man on the phone

asked if he could be put in contact with one of the donors who might agree to sell their share in the *mitzvah*, saying that it would mean so much to him to just be able to take part.

“I gave him two numbers, but to my surprise, neither of them agreed! He offered large sums for just a small piece of the *mitzvah*, but neither were willing to relinquish any part.

“Later, when I asked one of the donors who were contacted why he refused, he told me something amazing. ‘I wasn't initially going to say no,’ he said. ‘But when I saw how he was willing to pay all the money in the world for the *zechus*, I started to feel how important it was. The more he talked, the more it instilled in me the value of the *mitzvah!*’”

נימל: The first *mitzvah* in the *Torah* is mentioned in this week's *parsha* (see first **Rashi** in *Bereishis*). Now is a good time for us to reflect on the value of each and every *mitzvah* that will be discussed throughout the *Torah* from here on.

ראמר ה' אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני
הכברתי את לבו ואת לב עבדיו ... (א-י)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM
THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

The first *posuk* in the *parsha* tells us: *Hashem* says to Moshe, “*Bo el Pharaoh - Come to Pharaoh.*” Why did *Hashem* say, “Come” to Pharaoh rather than “Go” to Pharaoh, which would have been more grammatically correct? If *Hashem* is commanding *Moshe Rabbeinu* to go somewhere, wouldn't it make sense for him to “Go” there?

The **Bechor Shor** explains that *Hashem* was telling Moshe to “come with Him” and He will go with Moshe to Pharaoh. It was as if *Hashem* was holding out His hand and saying to Moshe, “Come with Me, I will go with you to Pharaoh. Don't worry about a thing because I will be with you the whole time! There is absolutely nothing for you to worry about!”

We all need to be reminded that we are never alone. *Hashem* is always at our side. *Hashem* is always with us and especially during the hard and scary times, *Hashem* is right there with us, truly holding our hand.

There is a famous *meshal* that *Dovid HaMelech* writes about in *Tehillim*. He describes himself as a baby in his mother's arms. Secure and comfortable. That is how he feels. *Hashem* is like the mother who is holding him tight and will never let him go. Think about it. A baby that is in its mother's arms really has no worries in the world. The mother can be busy, running around from place to place, even from city to city, taking care of a great many things. But at the end of the day, if you were to ask this baby, “Where were you today?” All he would say is, “I was in my mother's arms.” It really doesn't matter to him where he went. He was safe and secure and that is all that counts.

May we all be *zoche* to picture this imagery and try to feel the great gift that we have of being held constantly by *Hashem*. May we always try to remember how much *Hashem* loves us and how fortunate we are to be carried by Him every step of our lives. Remember, you have nothing to worry about: *Hashem* will either catch you when you fall, or teach you how to fly!