



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה ... (1-1)

*Parshas Tzav* begins with a command that a constant fire must burn upon the *Mizbeach* and may not be extinguished. This teaches us that not only is there a technical requirement to keep the fire going, but also that even when the camp traveled, the flame of the *korban olah* remained lit and was always carried with them. In other words, the *korban olah* represents a steady, unwavering commitment - an *Aish Tamid* - that accompanies a Jew wherever life takes them. This week is also *Shabbos HaGadol*, when our ancestors in *Mitzrayim* publicly set aside the *Korban Pesach* and took their first courageous step toward redemption. These two ideas connect. The inner constancy symbolized by the *olah* and the public courage of *Shabbos HaGadol* together remind us that both quiet dedication and bold action are essential parts of our journey toward *geulah*.

A number of years ago, in the quiet hum of a kosher restaurant in Southern Florida, Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu sat with his wife and daughter when the atmosphere of the dining room was suddenly shattered by a harsh commotion. Four young women, visitors from a foreign country, were relentlessly lambasting their waiter. They shouted over trivialities - the temperature of their drinks and the quality of the cheese. Their words were sharp, public, and demeaning, aimed at a young man in his early twenties who stood defenseless against the verbal onslaught. The waiter, a man by the name of Shoam, stood paralyzed. He didn't fight back; he didn't offer a sharp retort. Instead, he absorbed the humiliation in silence.

Rabbi Eliyahu watched the scene with a mix of indignation and hesitation. He felt he should intervene, perhaps even ask the women to leave the establishment for their reprehensible behavior, but he found himself frozen in place. It was his wife who broke the spell. She reminded him of the words of *Chazal* that when a person is publicly shamed and chooses to suffer his humiliation in silence, they are granted a rare and potent spiritual power to bestow a *beracha* upon others.

"Call the waiter over," she urged her husband. "Ask him for a *beracha*."

Reluctant but trusting, the Rabbi called Shoam to their table. He asked the young man his name and his age. Shoam, still reeling from the public lashing, looked at the Rabbi with confusion, wondering if this was just another part of the joke. "I am a Rabbi in this community," he said with absolute sincerity. "You were just humiliated, and you stayed silent. You have the power to give a blessing right now, and I want one for my family." Moved by this sudden pivot from cruelty to profound respect, Shoam mumbled a blessing of sorts, but as he walked away, the tears he had been holding back finally came crashing down.

Five minutes later, Shoam returned to the table, his face transformed. He asked to speak with the Rabbi and shared a story that had been buried for nearly two decades. Shoam had been raised religious (*dati*) in Israel, studying *Mishnayos* with his father. But the connection began to fray. By twelve, he had drifted away. By seventeen, he had left Israel for America, entirely disconnected from his heritage. He was living a completely secular life. He married a non-religious woman from Argentina and they were building a life in North Miami Beach, far removed from the world of the *yeshiva*.

"Rabbi," Shoam said, his voice thick with emotion, "it has been sixteen years since I felt I had any relationship with my family or my faith. But if you could care about me - a total stranger, a mere waiter in a small food establishment - and if you believe that I have the power to give a blessing, then I am ready to come back into the fold. I am ready to be religious again."

The rabbi and his family were shocked at first, and then delighted with his decision. The recognition of Shoam's inherent *kedusha* even in his moment of lowest humiliation was the spark. Shoam began the journey of becoming a real *baal teshuva*.

Rabbi Eliyahu helped him find a study partner to begin learning *Torah* again. Over the next few years, the transformation was total. Shoam's non-religious wife joined him on this path of return. They traveled to Israel to reaffirm their marriage in a religious ceremony. A year later, Shoam called Rabbi Eliyahu to invite him to the *bris* of his newborn son.

Today, Shoam and his wife are among the most dedicated members of their community in North Miami Beach. They are true pillars of faith, all because a stranger chose to see the power of his soul instead of the stains on his apron.

אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה ... (1-1)

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

# מחשבת הלב

The *Mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* (5-5) says that one of the ten miracles which occurred in the *Bais HaMikdash* was that the rain didn't extinguish the fire on the *מזבח*. R' Chaim Volozhiner ז"ל in his classic *Ruach Chaim* on *Avos* asks two questions. Firstly, *Hashem* could've easily orchestrated that no rain should fall at all. What was the point of this great *nes*? Additionally, he makes a *diyuk* in the *Mishna*. It says "עשרה ניסים" - ten miracles, occurred "לאבותינו" to our fathers, in the *mikdash*. Why is the word "לאבותינו" necessary? He explains with the following insight. Each of these miracles was a lesson in *avodas Hashem* for all generations to come. This particular *nes* teaches us that even if things crop up that could deter a person from his respective service, he mustn't give in. Rather the fire and passion should continue to vigorously burn bright in him.

R' Chaim further expounds that rain symbolizes *parmassah*. The strain of *parmassah* sometimes presents a major challenge and deterrent to our learning and *davening*, but a person must persevere and forge ahead, keeping up his *תורה* לְתוֹרָה. Thus, *Hashem* specifically let the rain descend on the fire to impart this critical lesson. In fact, even when the nation traveled, the fire remained burning; albeit only on a simmer. Perhaps this teaches us that even while we may be on our "down-time", we must never forget about our commitments and our service to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

There is a cute anecdote that complements this thought. Someone once bumped into a street peddler who was shouting out his wares. "Excuses for sale! Excuses for sale!" He went over and in wonder exclaimed, "You're still selling excuses?! You've been at it now for over thirty years!" To which the peddler wisely responded, "You don't get rich selling excuses!"

Yes. Obstacles and excuses will come our way - the key to success is how we react to them!

## משל למה הדבר דומה

צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר ... (1-1)

**משל**: A wealthy merchant hired two workers for his estate. One was tasked with shoveling coal into the furnace, while the other was hired to cut and polish rare diamonds.

The merchant handed the coal shoveler a spade and left him completely alone for the day. However, he stood constantly over the diamond polisher, repeatedly urging him: "Pay close attention! Be meticulous! Don't lose focus for a second!"

Eventually, the diamond polisher grew frustrated. "Why do you constantly badger me," he asked, "while you leave the coal worker completely alone?"

The merchant replied, "If the coal worker gets distracted and drops a lump of coal, it's just coal. No real harm is done. But you are holding a fortune in your hands. If you lose focus and make even a millimeter of a mistake, the loss is

catastrophic. That is why I must constantly urge you on."

**נמשל**: The very first verse of the *Parsha* says: "Command (*Tzav*) Aaron and his sons..." **Rashi** asks: Why use the harsh word *Tzav* (command) here, instead of the usual *Emor* (speak) or *Daber* (tell)? **Rashi** explains that *Tzav* implies *zerizus* - an urgent, meticulous encouragement, specifically required when a task involves a high cost or potential loss. The **Dubno Maggid ז"ל** explains: The *Kohanim* were not just performing another ordinary ritual; they were handling the spiritual "diamonds" of the Jewish people. They were facilitating the connection between *Hashem* and the nation. Because the spiritual stakes were so incredibly high, because as we know a single incorrect thought or an action could completely invalidate a sacrifice, *Hashem* used the word *Tzav*. He was telling Aharon and his sons: "You hold a fortune in your hands. Be exact. Be alert."

את תורת העולה הוא העלה על מוקדה על המזבח ... ואש המזבח תוקד בו (1-1)

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

## הנתמדים מזהב

*Medrash Tanchuma* writes: "The *Bais HaMikdash* and *Tziyon* will not be rebuilt until a *Korban Olah* is brought." This is difficult to understand; how can a *Korban* be brought if there is no *Mizbeach*? R' Yoel Teitelbaum ז"ל, the **Divrei Yoel**, brings another interesting *Chazal*. R' Yosi Ben Kisma's students asked him when *Moshiach* would come. He answered simply, "את תורת העולה". What is the meaning of this response, and what is unique about the *Olah* that it is singled out?

The *Gemara* in *Zevachim* teaches (90b) that a person who is obligated in both a *Chatas* and an *Olah*, brings the *Chatas* first. Regarding a source that implies the *Olah* precedes, the *Gemara* concludes: "למקראה הקדימה הכתוב", in the order of reading, the *Olah* comes first. **Rashi** explains that in the *סדר הקריאה*, the *parsha* of the *Olah* is taught before that of the *Chatas*. **Tosfos** raises a difficulty with this and leaves it unresolved. The **Satmar Rav** offers a penetrating explanation to this question and says that the *Olah* atones for improper thoughts, failures of the heart and mind, while the *Chatas* addresses sinful actions. But how can one know that his *Chatas* offering is accompanied by actual and genuine remorse? The answer is that before one brings the *Chatas*, he must first learn and internalize the message of the *Olah*. Even if the *Olah* is offered second in practice, its *parsha* must be absorbed first, ensuring true inner *Teshuva*.

In *Galus*, this idea becomes foundational. A person's focus should be on the pain of the *Shechinah*. How then, did *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* institute so many personal *bakashos* in *tefillah*? Because these requests are meant to be a means through which we can better serve *Hashem* and ultimately bring the *Geulah*. This is the message of "את תורת העולה". When a person refines not only his actions but his thoughts and intentions, aligning his *פנימיות* with a sincere yearning for redemption, he creates the conditions for *Moshiach*. In this sense, learning the *Parshas Olah* becomes the prerequisite to the final redemption and is equivalent to bringing a *korban* itself. As *Pesach* approaches, let us truly desire to do the *Mitzvos* with the *Beis Hamikdash*.

הזו כל דרים וכל עשה רשעה קיש ... (מלאכי-1)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALED HISTORIAN

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In the *HafTORah* of *Shabbos HaGadol*, *Malachi HaNavi* describes the callous skepticism that the Jewish people felt regarding divine reward and punishment and how despite their poor behavior they still achieved wealth and prosperity. *Malachi* describes their day of reckoning and how "all the arrogant and all the doers of evil shall be straw." Why straw? What is the comparison?

R' Chanoch Zundel Ben Yosef ז"ל (Etz Yosef) explains that straw is something that is used to house the wheat kernel inside, and once the wheat is harvested, the straw is discarded and used for fertilizer. Nevertheless, straw can also be used to make a fire. Thus, says *Malachi*, although *Bnei Yisroel* saw moments of wealth and prosperity despite

their sinful ways - like the discarded straw being used to make a fire, the truth is that their sinful actions make them no better than the basic use of discarded straw - as dirty fertilizer that is thrown on the ground. This ought to awaken even the most ardent skeptic to once again believe that there are always consequences for one's actions.

As we enter this unique period on the Jewish calendar, the *Zman Cheiruseinu*, and we remember the great miracles *Hashem* performed for our forefathers all those years ago, as well as the vast wealth we accumulated in the aftermath of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, it is important to not lose sight of our ultimate purpose - namely to bring honor to the great name of *Hashem* and to do His *mitzvos* and learn His *Torah*.