

מוקדש לעי"צ קנז' ר' אהרן יוסף שמואל אלטער בן ר' טוביה קורץ ז"ל - יאהרצייט ב"ט"ז סיון - ותאז נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים
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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ונקה האיש מעון והאשה ההיא תשא את עונה וגו' (ה-לא)

The *parsha* of *Sota* contains numerous implications that affect the fabric of family life and the *Sholom Bayis* that is misplaced between a husband and wife, not the least of which is the deep-rooted feelings of guilt the husband may feel later at having caused his family to go through such a trying episode and bringing his wife - although in the end it was proven that she rightfully deserved it - to an ignominious and painful death. The **Baal HaTurim** specifically addresses the husband's emotional spirit, by rendering from the words of the *posuk*, “*the man is innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman shall bear her sin*,” that the husband is not to feel as if he caused his wife's death, for the guilt is hers to bear alone.

A painful episode took place during the second world war, after the Nazi beasts conducted yet another “*Kinder-Aktion*” - a heart-wrenching roundup of young Jewish children from the ghetto, who were brought to a concentration camp for internment. As was their practice, the Germans would “select” the healthier and stronger children for child labor, while the weaker and more feeble children would be taken away to a place where their young and innocent lives were snuffed out by inhuman monsters. As children were perhaps harder to control in a typical “selektion” process, the Nazi doctors would enter the barracks late at night where the children were sleeping, and examine each child one-by-one. Then, they would “mark” each child as follows: to the healthy children who were slated to live, they would place a cap on his head; the weaker children who were to be liquidated would remain bare-headed, and even if they had a cap, it would be taken off their heads. Of course, the children did not know about this formula and had no way to protect themselves beforehand.

On the fateful night of the German examination, the night that would determine who would live the next day and who would not, a child awoke and needed to relieve himself. As he stood up to walk to the back of the barracks, he could not find his cap anywhere. He looked all about, but it simply was gone. This child came from a religious home and would not think to walk around without a yarmulke or another such head-covering. So, as he couldn't find his own cap, he decided to “borrow” a cap from the child sleeping right next to him, who obviously didn't need it at that very moment, as he lay in a deep sleep with a blanket half covering his head. Taking the other boy's cap, he went to the toilet area and came right back afterward. He recited the blessing of “*Asher Yatzar*” as he had been taught, and without thinking further, he let the waves of exhaustion overtake him and within seconds had fallen back into a deep sleep - with his friend's cap still on his head!

The next morning brought the chilling screams and shouts of the S.S. guards as they methodically separated the children in the barracks and marched away any child they found without a cap on his head. The boy who had taken the cap off his friend's head watched in fear and horror, as his friend was led away, never to be seen or heard from again.

It was not much later that the remaining boys learned of the diabolical scheme of the Nazi beasts, and how all those who were taken away had had their caps and head coverings removed the night before. When this young boy learned that because he had taken his friend's cap off his head in the middle of the night, he had unwittingly saved himself at the expense of his friend's terrible fate, he broke down in tears and an overpowering feeling of guilt. This guilt stayed with him throughout the war, and it wasn't until later, after he had survived the years of torture and starvation, that he was finally able to approach a venerable rabbi, **R' Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlit'a**, and ask for some sort of absolution.

R' Zilberstein explained to the boy that at the time, he had admirably followed the *halacha* of not walking four *amos* without a head covering. And just as in the ruling in **Mishna Berura** (א-ב) that if one wakes up and does not have water to wash *Netilas Yadayim*, he may use his friend's prepared water, so long as he replaces that water with new water before his friend arises, so too, he was within his rights to borrow his friend's cap. How could he have known what was to happen?

Although deep down, the boy was racked with guilt, he was relieved to learn that halachically he is not considered responsible or requiring atonement.

משל למח הדבר דומה

כל הבא לעבד עבודה עבודה ומשא באהל מועד וגו' (ד-מז)

משל: The renowned Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius, was a prominent figure in the early 1900's who played an important role in the formation of the Finnish national identity. His mastery of the orchestra and his symphonic talents have been described as “prodigious.”

Sibelius was once hosting a party at which many of those in attendance were businessmen. A close friend approached him and wondered aloud, “Why in the world would you invite so many businessmen to your party? You're a musician. What in the world could you possibly

have in common to talk to businessmen about?”

Sibelius shook his head in wonder. “I don't understand. I talk to them about music!”

His friend was shocked. “Music? What do businessmen know about music? If you want to talk about music, why don't you invite musicians to your party?”

Sibelius laughed, “Musicians? I can't stand talking to musicians! All they ever want to talk about is money!”

נמשל: The *Torah* clearly defines the role of the *Leviim* in the *Mishkan* and later in the Temple sanctuaries. Their

כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמוד להם. יברכך ה' וישמרך (ו-נגד)

The Priestly Blessings are uplifting and enlightening, but none more so than the first words: “ברכך ה' וישמרך” - as Rashi translates: “*May Hashem bless you that your possessions should be blessed.*” To whom do these blessings apply? Rashi further quotes two disparate explanations in the **Sifri**; one says that the blessings are from the *Kohanim* to *Bnei Yisroel*. The other is *Hashem's* blessing to the *Kohanim*.

According to the second understanding, one may ask: Do the *Kohanim* require a special blessing for their possessions? Haven't we learned that the *Kohanim* are on a higher spiritual plane than the rest of the nation, and therefore they are to be supported solely by the people through *Terumos*, *Maasros* (tithes) and the priestly gifts? If so, why do they need a special blessing for their possessions?

The answer may be found in *Sefer Taamei Haminhagim*, which tells of a righteous man by the name of **R' Akiva Kohen ZT”L**, who lived in the city of Prague over 150 years ago. He merited to marry a true *Eishes Chayil* who bore him twelve sons and thirteen daughters. He maintained a thriving business and disseminated *Torah* through the many *shiurim* he gave. Of his thirteen daughters, twelve married *kohanim* like himself, while the thirteenth married a *Levi*, who became the father of the renowned **Shla'h Hakadosh, R' Yeshaya Halevi Hurvitz ZT”L**.

R' Akiva, the righteous *kohen* of Prague, was blessed with bountiful possessions - both materially and through the *nachas* he received from his large family. Additionally, his possessions were blessed and thrived exponentially. On *Yomim Tovim*, when R' Akiva would get up to “*duchen*” - to administer the Priestly Blessings, he would be accompanied by twenty-four of his sons and sons-in-law and he would quip, “This is the ultimate meaning of the words in the *posuk*, ‘כה תברכו’ - With ‘כה’ (25) we have been blessed!”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

שלום בית

In order to affirm the innocence of a woman suspected of adultery, she is brought to the *Bais HaMikdash* and given the *מי סוטה* - the special water in which the ineffable Name of *Hashem* is dissolved to drink. If she is guilty, she suffers a gruesome death. If she is innocent, she is showered with special blessings and returns to her husband with a renewed feeling of *shalom bayis*. This restored relationship is so crucial and beloved to *Hashem* that He allows His holy Name to be erased for this purpose.

There are many vital tools that are necessities in building a Jewish home. Four of these may be learned out from the word “אהבה” which means love. The first fundamental foundation in achieving domestic peace is “אמונה” which begins with an “א”. When one gets married, he must believe that his spouse is tailor-made by *Hashem* just for him. Everything *Hashem* does is perfect and fair and only with this belief in *Hashem* can one move on to the letter “ה” which stands for “הב” which means to give. A good marriage is based on how much I can give, rather than how much can I get! **R' E. Dessler ZT”L** teaches that the entire purpose of marriage is to go from being a taker to a giver! This leads us to the third letter which is “ב” and stands for בית (home). One can only achieve true harmony at home if he is focused on the home! If one expends the majority of his time and thoughts on other pursuits, his marriage will be lost. The last ingredient to *shalom bayis* is again the “ח” which stands for the will of *Hashem*. When a person asks himself, “What does *Hashem* want me to do in this situation?” - if it involves *shalom bayis*, the answer is ANYTHING, even erase His holy Name , so that a Jewish home be filled with real AHAVA and true *shalom bayis*.

נשיא אחד ליום נשיא אחד ליום יקריבו את קרבנם לחנכת המזבח וגו' (ו-יא)

The second half of *Parshas Naso*, a full eighty-nine *posukim*, describes the *Torah's* lengthy and detailed account of the sacrifices offered by the *Nesiim* (princes). As all the *Nesiim* brought the same exact *korban*, many seek to understand the reason why the *Torah* repeats the content of each offering individually. The **Ramban** explains that rather than simply relating the details of the *korban* with regard to one prince, implying that he is of more importance than all the others, the *Torah* reports it twelve individual times to grant each *Nasi* his properly accorded respect. The *Torah* thus devotes an entire chapter's worth to extend to us this idea that a person must be aware and sensitive to another's feelings and always show him respect, for “*Middos* makes the man.”

The **Ramchal** writes that portraying good *middos* is a prerequisite to keeping the *Torah*; it actually precedes the *mitzvos*. *Chazal* tell us: “*It is better to be called a fool all one's days than be wicked (unethical) for even one moment.*” (עדות ה-ו) And yet, we know that if one is popular among people (רוח הבריות נוטה הימנו), he finds favor in the eyes of *Hashem* since public opinion is indeed of great significance.

R' Pesach Stein ZT”L, the *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Telshe*, sees no contradiction here, for when discussing a *mitzvah* בין אדם למקום (between man and G-d), surely nothing can deter a person from fulfilling the *mitzvah*, and its impression on his social surroundings is irrelevant. However, with regard to בין אדם לחבירו (between man and man) - a person's interpersonal relationship with his friend - there is almost no limit to the extent one must deal with sensitivity and treat another with respect. For by acting properly with others, this will make him pleasing in the eyes of *Hashem*. Indeed the term “מידות” literally means “measurements.” Our goal and purpose is to measure our actions and interactions properly and effectively so that our lives are pleasant to the Almighty and to mankind.

דרגה יתירה

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