

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

כל ימי נדר נודו תערך לא יקבר על ראשו עד מלאת הימים אשר יזיר לה' קדש יהיה גדל פרע שער ראשו ... (ו-ה)

In the city of Pozna, long before his greatness became known to the world, lived the holy **Maharsha, R' Shmuel Eliezer Halevi Eidels z"l**. In those early years, he was not recognized as a towering *Torah* scholar. In fact, many people regarded him with suspicion and even degradation. The reason was simple and, to them, inexplicable: he looked like a *nazir* and grew his hair long. His unusual appearance made him seem strange in the eyes of the townspeople, and they whispered about him, wondering why a man who appeared so ordinary - and perhaps even odd - would choose to look that way.

Only his wife knew the truth, and she guarded the secret faithfully. The *Maharsha's* diligence in *Torah* study knew no limits. Night after night, he sat alone, writing his commentary on the entire *Shas*. He feared that sleep might steal precious moments from his learning, and so he devised a method to keep himself awake. He tied his long hair to a rope fastened to the ceiling. If exhaustion overcame him and his head began to fall toward the table, the sudden pull of the rope would wake him instantly. In this way, he ensured that he would not sleep through the night until his work was complete. Only during the day would he allow himself a brief rest - no more than three hours at a time - before returning to his sacred labor.

In the same *shul* where the *Maharsha davened*, another hidden *tzaddik* served quietly as the *shamash*. No one suspected the depth of his devotion. Every midnight, he would enter the *shul*, lock the door behind him, and begin to recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim*. When he finished one of the five sections, he would walk in a circle, making a *hakafah* around the *bimah* and then continue on, until he had completed the entire *Tehillim*. This was his nightly practice, carried out in silence and secrecy.

One night, fatigue overtook him and he fell asleep inside the locked synagogue. Suddenly, he felt a hand shaking him awake. Standing before him was a tall man dressed in royal garments, his bearing noble and imposing. "Excuse me," the stranger asked, "where does the *Maharsha* live?" Still groggy, the *shamash* rose and led him through the quiet streets to the *Maharsha's* home. When he returned to the synagogue, he discovered that the door was still locked exactly as he had left it. Confused, he told himself he must have imagined the whole thing, for he was still tired, and resumed his recitation.

But again he fell asleep. And again he was awakened - this time by a handsome man with red hair, also dressed in royal clothing. The stranger asked him the same question: "Where does the *Maharsha* live?" The *shamash*, bewildered but obedient, led him as well. Returning once more, he locked the door tightly, checked the windows, and continued saying *Tehillim*.

A third time he drifted into sleep. And a third time he was awakened, now by a man dressed in leather garments and a breastplate. The stranger repeated the same question. This time the *shamash* could not contain his astonishment. "Who are you?" he demanded. "And how did you enter the synagogue when the door was locked?" The stranger looked at him gravely. "I will tell you who we are," he said, "but know that if you reveal this before the proper time, you will die."

The *shamash* nodded, trembling. "The first man you saw," the stranger said, "the tall one in royal clothing, was *Shaul Hamelech*, as it is written, 'From his shoulders and upward he was taller than all people.' The second, handsome and ruddy, was *Dovid Hamelech*. And I," he continued, placing a hand upon his breastplate, "am *Eliyahu Hanavi*. We are going to the *Maharsha* because in the heavenly court they did not know how to rule in the matter of *Shaul* persecuting *Dovid*. I come as a witness, and they come as the litigants. In Heaven it was decided that only the *Maharsha* can judge between them." And then, he vanished.

The next day, the *shamash* gathered the sages of the community and told them everything he had seen. When he finished, he added, "Know that the *Maharsha* is a hidden *Tzaddik*. And know also that, as *Eliyahu* told me, I will die. But I die with joy - for the holiness of *Hashem* and for the sake of the *Tzaddik*, so that no one will ever again cause him pain or despise him."

Within moments, the *shamash* passed away. From that day forward, the *Maharsha* was no longer regarded as strange. Word spread of the heavenly visitors who had sought his judgment, and his greatness became known throughout the land. Students flocked to him, eager to learn from the man whose *Torah* was cherished not only on earth, but in the courts of Heaven. (לוחות בנעם ה')

מה נעשה לנוער היולד ... (שופטים י-ה)

Shimshon HaGibbor was arguably one of the greatest *Nazirim* in history, and the story of his birth is filled with lessons for the Jewish people forever. An angel informed *Shimshon's* mother that after years of childlessness, she will finally bear a child. This child was to be a lifetime *Nazir* and both her and her child must abstain from all foods forbidden to a *Nazir*. *Manoach*, her husband, wasn't there at the time but asked that the "messenger" return and repeat the instructions for him to hear personally. Interestingly, the angel did indeed return but did not repeat anything new. Why then did the angel return at all?

R' Yitzchock Zev HaLevi Soloveitzik z"l (Brisker Rav – Chiddushei HaGriz) explains that *Manoach* had no

idea how to care for such a child. He was rather annoyed that a strange "messenger" met his wife and promised her a child on condition that she fulfill a rather vague set of rules.

The *Torah* teaches that a *Nazir* needs to actively decide to accept this status upon himself. In this case, that did not happen and as a result, *Manoach* needed clarity on how to initiate a *Nezirus* from birth and requested that the "messenger" return so he can ask him "what to do with the *lad that will be born?*"

The angel said nothing new about the *Nezirus* because nothing was required to start such a *Nezirus*. Sometimes, we scurry about frantically hoping to accomplish while really silence and patience is required to accomplish our goal.

DEEP, PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

ויהי ביום כלות משה להקים את המשכן וימשה אתו ויקדש אתו ואת כל כליו ... (א-ו)

Chazal say that the word "כלות" is written with a *pasach* under the "כ", and not the expected *sh'va*. It hints to the word "כלה" - a bride. Upon the culmination of the building of the *Mishkan*, *Klal Yisroel* was likened to a *kallah* going to her *chuppah*. Yet, obviously, this wasn't the end. Rather it was just the beginning of the עבודת הקרבנות.

R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach z"l, by a *yid* there's no such thing as an end. Life is one continuous project of *avodas Hashem*. And that is exactly the connection to the *kallah*. Just as a *kallah* "ends" her childhood years as she stands under the *chuppah*; that end is but a stepping stone to the next level of her growth. So too was the *Mishkan* the stepping stone to our next level in עבודת ה'. For a *yid*, every seeming conclusion is really *Hashem* opening the door to a higher, deeper, and more refined stage of serving Him.

R' Yeruchem Levovitz z"l, the famed *Mashgiach* of pre-war Mir, would cringe when he heard a *chosson* exclaim, "Now I'm starting my life anew." He would say: woe is to such a life that can just end like that. It might be a new chapter or page in your life but essentially it's one continuous life as an *eved Hashem*.

Each *Shabbos* we proclaim "ויכל אלקים ... ויכלו השמים" - *Hashem* completed the creation of the world. But obviously that was not the end. It was the beginning of the world! The universe, in its entirety. That was a timeless lesson for all.

We just completed counting *Sefiras Ha'omer*, culminating with the *Yom Tov of Shavuos*, when we received the *Torah*. But we must realize that the "תמימות" of that *mitzvah* didn't end anything! Rather we began the next chapter as *avdei Hashem*, being a מצווה ועושה; becoming truly committed *bnei Torah*.

This *machshava* should *bezras Hashem* accompany us as we navigate our way through life.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויקריבו נשיא ישראל ראשי בית אבתם הם נשיא המטת ... (ב-ו)

משל: Baron Shimon Zev Rothschild was a generous and steady supporter of the **Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva** in Radin. After being impressed by the *Chofetz Chaim's* integrity regarding the pricing of his *seforim*, the Baron began sending an annual contribution of 5000 marks to be distributed among *Torah* scholars. However, when the Baron passed away, his heirs ceased this practice, leaving everyone disappointed that his noble support had come to an end. Many people wondered why a man who was such a friend to *Torah* scholars did not leave some of his vast wealth to the *yeshivos* in his will.

The *Chofetz Chaim* understood the true reason behind this. He noted that such overwhelming generosity is actually prevented by Heaven. *Hashem* wants every single Jew to have

the opportunity to buy a share in *Torah*. If a millionaire who appreciates *Torah* is permitted to do as he wished, he would purchase the entire merit of *Torah* support with his fortune.

The *Chofetz Chaim* concluded by asking, "How then would the poor cobbler or tailor have a chance to merit anything?"

נמשל: *Parshas Naso* details the gifts brought by the 12 *Nesi'im* (princes) for the *Mishkan's* dedication, meticulously repeating the exact same list of items for each prince. There are two lessons we learn from this repetition. First, *Hashem* deeply cherishes every individual's contribution, recording each as a unique, precious act. Second, by ensuring every prince gave the exact same amount, the *Torah* prevents any single group from monopolizing the dedication. *Hashem* desires collective participation, ensuring that every individual, regardless of status, has an equal opportunity to build and support holiness.

נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם לבית אבתם למשפחתם ... (ד-בב)

INSIGHTFUL TORAH THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRA TO LEARN AND TO ENJOY BY R' MOSHE GELB

וינפש

The *Levi'im* were split into three groups: *Kehos*, *Gershon* and *Merari*. As the Jewish nation traveled through the wilderness, the *bnei Kehos* were to carry the holy *keilim* of the *Mishkan*, the *bnei Gershon* were to carry its various curtains and partitions, while the *bnei Merari* were responsible for transporting the heavy beams of the *Mishkan*. When counting the *bnei Gershon*, the *pasuk* uses a strange expression - "נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם" that we should also count the *bnei Gershon*. What is the *posuk* coming to emphasize with the phrase "גם הם"?

It is a well-known, though unfortunate phenomenon in classrooms that the *Rebbi* or *Morah* gives attention mainly to the highest tier of the class who shine and excel, and the lowest tier, who need constant *chizuk* and encouragement. The ones stuck in the middle, though, usually fall through the cracks. These are the quiet, well behaved students who don't do well enough to warrant especial consideration but also don't rock the boat enough to attract the teacher's ire, and in an environment where the teacher's attention is split among a multitude of students, they are often lost among the crowd and are not given the focus and attention they deserve. Now, if *Kehos* is the "top of the class" as it were, *Gershon* is this middling group. Thus, the *Torah* exports us: When you are "נושא ראשי בני קהת" - when you lift up and shower the "*Kehos-niks*" with attention and praise, don't forget the "*bnei Gershon*"! "נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם" - lift them up as well; don't let them fall between the cracks! They, too need and deserve our praise and recognition, even if their accomplishment are not as dazzling as their better peers.

In these days leading up to *Tammuz* and the Three Weeks, let us be *mechazek* ourselves in seeking the good in every *yid*, no matter how plain he may seem to us, and injecting him with the warmth and encouragement he or she needs to grow. Aside from being an important exercise in *ahavas yisroel* in its own right, what they eventually become - perhaps due to your short words of *chizuk* - may just surprise you.