

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ומי האיש אשר ארש אשה ולא לקחה ילך וישב לביתו פן ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יקחנה ... (ז-כ)

The year was 1973, and news from Israel was bleak. The *Yom Kippur War* had left many dead and wounded in its wake. The State of Israel suffered between 2,521 and 2,800 killed in action. An additional 7,250 to 8,800 soldiers were wounded. Some 293 Israelis were captured and many Israeli prisoners of war taken by Syria and Egypt were tortured or killed.

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis a”h and her *Hineni Kiruv* organization was in its inception. In those days, all kinds of trinkets ornamented with logos and slogans were in vogue. She had Hineni buttons, bumper stickers, T-shirts, and even a Hineni medallion in the shape of a flame spelling out the word Hineni in Hebrew. It occurred to the *Rebbetzin* how wonderful it would be if she could present the many wounded soldiers in the hospitals with such medallions. No sooner did she conceive of this idea than she met a man who was a jeweler. Upon hearing of her plan, he offered to make up the medallions in silver.

And so she set out to visit the hospitals and recuperation centers of Israel accompanied by her daughter Chaya Sora, and her assistant Barbara. A heartbreaking scene awaited them - men and boys without limbs, boys who had lost their eyesight, their brokenhearted wives, children, and mothers hovering over them - the terrible price of war.

When making these visits, they wanted to create an atmosphere of good cheer and hope, so they engaged some musicians to accompany them and also took trays of refreshments along. The soldiers were brought into the solarium - some in wheelchairs and some in their hospital beds. The musicians played while Chaya Sora distributed refreshments. Then Rebbetzin Jungreis would speak and she shared with them teachings from the *Torah*, trying to bring them a message of hope and faith. Following the program, she distributed the medallions.

There were a number of wounded who were too ill to be brought into the solarium, and the head nurse asked if they would like to visit them in their rooms. They entered a room in which the light had been dimmed. The patient lay immobile in his bed, wrapped in bandages like a mummy. “*Shalom* to you. My name is Esther Jungreis. We came from the United States to bring you greetings and blessings.” There was no answer. “What is your name?” the *Rebbetzin* asked. Still the boy did not respond.

The nurse explained that he had been badly burned in a tank battle on the Golan. “I am so sorry,” said the *Rebbetzin*. “I know it sounds hollow but please know that we mean it. We have brought you a little token, a symbol of blessing.”

She held up the medallion. For the first time, the young man spoke, “Take your medallion. It’s of no use to me!”

“I understand that you are hurting, but I will leave it on your night table anyway. You might just need it one day.”

“For what?” came the angry, bitter answer. The *Rebbetzin* smiled sweetly. “For an engagement gift,” she said.

He let out a bitter laugh. “Who will marry me? I am a vegetable. No one will ever marry me.”

“Listen to me,” said the *Rebbetzin*. “It will happen. We are never allowed to give up hope. You will see that in time you will meet a girl, and when you do, you must tell her that a *Rebbetzin* from the United States visited you and told you that you have special merit before *Hashem*, that you are ready to transmit that merit to her, and this medallion is a symbol of that.”

“*Rebbetzin*, if I said that to any girl, she’d think I am crazy.”

“You’re wrong. Someplace, somewhere, there’s a girl who will understand. You need only one.” With that, they left his room.

A year later, the *Hineni* organization found themselves once again in Israel. This time, their first stop was an army recuperation center near Haifa. It is a tradition in Israel to present guest speakers and artists with a bouquet of flowers. At the conclusion of the *Rebbetzin*’s program, a soldier in a wheelchair was brought onstage to make the presentation.

“Do you recognize me, *Rebbetzin*?” he asked. “You look familiar. Please help me out,” she said.

He smiled and pointed to the nurse standing behind his wheelchair. “I would like you to meet my wife.” Rebbetzin Jungreis looked at the smiling face of a young Yemenite woman, and there, around her neck, was the Hineni medallion from last year.

אנכי אניכי הוא מנהמכם ...
כי את ותריא ... (שעי' נא-יב)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY
HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

After *Hashem* declares: “*I, I am the one who comforts you,*” *Yeshaya HaNavi* continues to ask “מי את ותריא” – “*What ails you that you fear?*” The question, while directed at *Klal Yisroel*, is nonetheless asked in לשון נקבה - the feminist linguistic, as opposed to the masculine style. Why is that?

R’ Binyamin HaKohen Vitali zt”l (Gevul Binyamin) explains that *Chazal* teach us that all *Shiros* are done in לשון נקבה except for the final *Shira* in the times of *Moshiach*. This is because in the aftermath of each exile, the Jewish people created a new life for themselves. True, they may have become more righteous in the immediate aftermath, but that inspiration always seemed to wear off eventually. So, just like the female which has the ability to give birth to a new

entity which may stay pure or choose to falter, so too, the *Shiros* sung by *Klal Yisroel* in the aftermath of their salvations was sung in לשון נקבה since their newfound spiritual awakening could last a while only to falter eventually. However, when *Moshiach* arrives, the *Shira* will be sung in לשון זכר to emphasize that the inspiration would last for eternity.

While *Hashem* comforted *Klal Yisroel* in the aftermath of the *Churban*, *Yeshaya HaNavi* knew all too well that *Bnei Yisroel*’s newfound closeness would probably be short-lived and so he chose to ask his question in לשון נקבה as a way of hinting to *Klal Yisroel* to hold onto that burst of inspiration for as long as they could.

וזה כשכתו על כסא ממלכתו וכתב לו את משנה
התורה הזאת על ספר מלפני הכהנים הלויים ... (ח-ק)

The *Torah* commands *Klal Yisroel* with a unique *mitzvah*: to appoint a king, a ruler, to see to the needs of the people. The king has a number of requirements, including writing a *Sefer Torah* “מלפני הכהנים הלויים”, that he will read from exclusively. What is the meaning of these last words of the *posuk*? *Chazal* deduce from here (see *Yerushalmi Sanhedrin* and *Rambam*) that the king must transcribe his *Torah* from the one that was in the עזרה while under the scrutiny of the *Sanhedrin* of 71. Why was this crucial? The simple understanding would be that the validity and correctness of that scroll was impeccable and could be relied on for its accuracy.

R’ Moshe Shternbuch *shlita* explains this idea on a deeper level. A king has the power to influence the masses. Sinister people from other factions of *Klal Yisroel*, with ulterior motives may, *chas v’shalom*, seek to alter some of the *Torah*’s wording, thereby changing the word of *Hashem* to fit their agenda. They will try to convince the king, who in turn will influence the rest of the nation negatively. Thus, the *Torah* commanded that his special *Sefer Torah* must be written “מלפני הכהנים”, according to the original unadulterated text, not deviating even one iota.

In fact, years later, wicked people hid the *Sifrei Torah* and *Klal Yisroel* precipitously spiraled downward spiritually. Until *Yoshiyahu Hamelech* located an old *Sefer Torah* in his palace. When found, it was inexplicably open to the *tochacha*. The shock of that heavenly message spurred him on to effect a positive transformation in *Klal Yisroel*.

This *machshava* reminds us that there are no reasons to “reinvent the wheel” looking for new unexplored avenues in *Yiddishkeit*. Each person should adhere to the *mesora* that his forbears persevered against all odds, and by following that legacy we will be *matzliach* not only in our עבודת ה', but in having our very own progeny follow suit.

משל למת הדבר דומה

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך ... (ח-יג)

משל: During the time when **R’ Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt”l**, (**Maharil Diskin**), was the *Rav* of Brisk, there was an unfortunate bout of *Chillul Shabbos* proliferating in the city. The residents of the city went out one *Shabbos* night to hold a large *hafganah*, a rally of protest. However, since their *hafganah* had not been approved by the authorities, the police quickly moved in and dissipated the crowd, arrested the leader, and brought him to the precinct.

The leader of the *hafganah* was led to a dark, enclosed room, and he sat there on *Shabbos* with no wine, *challah*, or any part of his regular *Shabbos* meal. Not only that, but his thoughts were soured from worrying about what charges and punishments he would face in court.

But his sorrow didn’t last too long. After a number of

צדק צדק תרדף למען תחיה וירשת את
הארץ אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך ... (זכ-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

How appropriate is it that we begin the month of *Elul* with *Parshas Shoftim*? *Shoftim* means judges, but it does not only refer to the judges in a courtroom. The preparation for the Day of Judgment is to learn how to be a good judge. *Chazal* teach us, “One who judges his friend favorably will be judged favorably in Heaven.” Judging others favorably is truly the greatest gift we have to ensure ourselves a year of good health, happiness and *simcha*. In *Pirkei Avos*, we are taught not to judge another person until you are in his place. “In his place” means that you have his personality, his upbringing, his exact challenge and are completely in his place. This is impossible. Even identical twins, who are born and raised in the same family are not allowed to judge each other because nobody in the world can ever truly be in another person's place.

Sometimes we are so sure that we understand the person we are judging and we give ourselves a license to condemn, criticize and be judgmental. This leads to *lashon hara* and *sinas chinam*. In fact, the very foundation of *bein adam lechavero* begins in your mind, not in the actions of other people. If we judge people positively, we will have no issue getting along with others.

In *Pirkei Avos*, we also learn, “*Hevei dan es kol HAADAM l’kaf zechus*.” Judge the whole man favorably. Why does it say the “whole man”? The answer is that very often people make an assumption based on one action, one word, or even one facial expression that someone makes. They discount the WHOLE man because of one thing he did or said. The *Mishnah* is teaching us how to judge favorably by not being closed minded or short sighted. Don’t see the person in a negative light because of what they are wearing or what they did. Be smart. Understand that there is a WHOLE person, and a person is a WHOLE world.

Train yourself to say, “I am sure there is a reason for his action but I don’t know what it is.” Learn to NOT be judgmental of others, and you will receive the greatest gift in the world. *Hashem* will see only good in you and judge you favorably.