

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויאמר לו אם נא מצאתי הן בעניןך שים נא ירך תחת ירכי ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת (מז-בט)

The following story is recorded in *Sippurei Chassidim*: Every night, **R' Yisroel Hager ז"ל of Vizhnitz (Ahavas Yisroel)**, would go for a half-hour walk with his *gabbai*. It was a time when the *Rebbe* would breathe in the fresh village air and exercise his wary body. Once, during his walk, he reached the home of a certain wealthy man who worked as the manager at the local bank. This man was one of the town's "enlightened" Jews, and was certainly not a *Vizhnitzer chassid*. The *gabbai* was therefore very surprised to see the *Rebbe* climbing the steps to this man's house and knocking on his door.

The man's servant answered the door and the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* asked to meet the man of the house. The servant hurried to inform his employer that there was a distinguished visitor waiting for him. When the man came to the door, he was taken aback to see the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* standing in his doorway and he hastened to invite him inside.

The *Rebbe* came in and sat down on the chair that the man pulled up for him. The man waited expectantly but the *Rebbe* did not say anything. Puzzled, his host turned to the *gabbai* and asked him in a whisper what the purpose of the *Rebbe's* visit was. The *gabbai* looked at the rich man and responded that he had no clue. The *Rebbe's* unusual silence continued, until finally the man turned to him and asked, "Why did I merit this visit?" But the *Rebbe* did not answer.

After sitting in the house for almost a quarter of an hour, with all of the man's family members watching him in bewilderment, the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* stood up, nodded, and walked to the door. Confused, his host accompanied him out of the house, hoping that the *Rebbe* would reveal the reason for his visit. He accompanied R' Yisroel all the way to the *Rebbe's* house, respectfully not speaking until spoken to, but the *Rebbe* still did not say one word to him.

When they finally reached the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe's* house and the rich man saw that the *Rebbe* was about to take leave of him without speaking a single word, he could not hold himself back. His face contorted in anguish, he cried, "What did I do? Why won't the *Rebbe* speak to me?" He begged R' Yisroel to please explain his unusual behavior.

This time, the *Rebbe* looked at him and spoke. "I came to your house to fulfill a *mitzvah*," said R' Yisroel cryptically, "and *baruch Hashem* I fulfilled it." When the man asked what *mitzvah* he had fulfilled, the *Rebbe* replied, "Just as it is a *mitzvah* to say something that will be heeded, it is a *mitzvah* not to say something that will not be heeded."

Then he explained, "If I would have been sitting in my house, and you would have been sitting in your house, I could not have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of not saying something that would not be listened to. But by coming to you, and not saying anything, I actually fulfilled the *mitzvah*." The bewildering look on the man's face was pitiful.

"The *Rebbe* should forgive me," said the man, "but please tell me what this is all about! Maybe I will heed his words!"

"No," the *Rebbe* said with finality. "I am certain that you will not heed what I have to say."

The more R' Yisroel refused to tell him what he wished to say, the more curious the man became. He prevailed upon the *Rebbe* to reveal the secret to him, until finally the *Rebbe* relented. "There is a poverty-stricken widow who owes a lot of money to your bank," he explained. "The widow's home is mortgaged to the bank, and the bank is planning to foreclose on the house and offer it for sale. The widow will then be left out on the street. I wanted to ask your honor to forgive the widow's loan, but I did not verbalize my request because of the *mitzvah* not to say something that would not be heeded."

"But how can I forgive the widow's loan?" the man sputtered. "It's not a private loan to me - it's money owed to the bank! I'm just the manager of the bank; I don't own it! Besides, she owes a very large sum of money, and"

"Exactly as I said," the *Rebbe* interrupted him. "I knew that you wouldn't listen!" The *Rebbe* ended the conversation and entered his house, and the man returned home as well. But the *Rebbe's* words had pierced his heart, and he could find no rest. Finally, he decided to pay the widow's debts out of his own pocket, and the woman was allowed to remain in her home!

אנכי הלא בדרך כל הארץ חוקת
הדיית לאיש ... (מלכים א' ב-ב)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY
HAFTARAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

As *Dovid Hamelech* lay on his deathbed, he asked for his son Shlomo to come before him. *Dovid* bade him to remain steadfast in his belief in *Hashem*, in order to ensure his own successes as well as the continuation of *Malchus Bais Dovid*. *Dovid* also extolled Shlomo's wisdom and encouraged him to "be strong and be a man." It is interesting that *Dovid* specifically chose the word "איש" which has the spiritual connotation of a person's emotional side - his heart - as opposed to the word "אדם" which refers to the intellectual aspect of a person, his mind. Isn't it more important that a king be supremely intelligent rather than highly emotional?

Though he was referring to an unrelated topic, the **Yismach Moshe, R' Moshe Teitelbaum ז"ל** explains that *Avraham*

Avinu recognized *Hashem's* true existence based on a logical calculation in his mind. However, his burning desire to serve *Hashem* was fueled by his emotional connection to the Almighty. Thus, while true service to *Hashem* requires an intellectual decision in a person's mind, one's passion stems from his feelings in the deepest recesses of his heart.

Therefore, *Dovid Hamelech* used the word "איש" to remind Shlomo that while his superior intellect would definitely help him "find" *Hashem*, only his passion for *Hashem*, His *Torah*, and *mitzvos*, would help keep him on the proper path.

In a world dictated by "logical calculations," true *Torah* Jews must remember that our passion for *Hashem* is what kept our ancestors - and keeps us going in the darkest times.

ויברך את יוסף ויאמר ... המלאך הנאל אתי מבול
רע יברך את הנעורים ויקרא בהם שמי ... (מז-טו)

Yaakov Avinu wished to bestow a *beracha* on Yosef's children. He called them close and Yosef arranged them in formation

- Menashe the *bechor* on Yaakov's right and Ephraim on his left. As we all know, Yaakov had other intentions and reversed the order by placing his right hand on the head of Ephraim instead. The aforementioned *posuk* continues, "ויברך את יוסף" - "And he blessed Yosef," but there is no discernible *beracha* given to Yosef. The *meforshim* grapple with this issue.

Before I present my *machshava* on this point, allow me to digress a moment. A common question is asked: The *beracha* that we bestow on our children each Friday night and *erev Yom Kippur*, is that they grow up to be like Ephraim and Menashe. Why are these two sons of Yosef chosen as the pair to whom we want our sons to aspire? Why not, for example, the special relationship between Yissachar and Zevulun? Or any other *tzaddik*? My *Zaida* would say in the name of the *meforshim* that the *shevatim*, on their level, were jealous of the special attention Yosef received. However, Menashe, the *bechor*, didn't flinch as his *Zaida Yaakov* placed Ephraim before him. That is precisely the *beracha* we wish to bestow upon our children.

And now we can understand my *machshava*. As Yaakov realized what had transpired between the two sons of Yosef, how jealousy played no part in their relationship, his heart overflowed with joy and he now wished to *bentch* Yosef, their father. For Yosef and his *aishes chayil* must have done something right. But Yaakov knew that the ultimate *beracha* a parent desires, is for the children to follow in his footsteps. He therefore proceeded to bless Ephraim and Menashe. For a *beracha* to one's children is ultimately a *beracha* to one's parents as well. (see **Ramban, Rashbam, and Or Hachaim**) *Yehi Ratzon* that our children should follow in the ways of *Yisroel Saba, Ephraim and Menashe, giving us rov nachas ad meah v'esrim shana.*

משל למה הדבר דומה

פקד יפקד אלקים אתכם והעלתם את עצמתי מזה ... (ג-ב) (ה)

משל: On a business trip to a far-flung city in the U.S., a man from *Bnei Brak* happened to come across a Christian cemetery that had a single Jewish woman buried there. He inquired and learned the story. When she was sixteen years old, a young Jewish girl was involved in an accident and was left a paraplegic for the rest of her life. Her parents could not afford the amenities necessary to care for their daughter who was in a vegetative state, so they placed her in a local convent where the sister nurses cared for her. Eventually, the parents passed away and even the nurses who had looked out for the girl died over time. Meanwhile, the girl lived till she was eighty-years old. When she finally passed away, the nuns took her out back and buried her in the convent cemetery.

The man from *Bnei Brak* was excited to do this *chessed shel emes*, and he managed to get permission to have her body removed and brought to Israel, where he learned that in

וישאו אתו בניו ארצה כנען ויקברו אתו
במערת שדה המכפלה ... (ג-ג)

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

דרגה יתירה

As the entire entourage carrying the bier of *Yaakov Avinu* to his final resting place solemnly approached the *Mearas Hamachpela* to perform a final act of kindness for their holy Patriarch, the scene was suddenly interrupted. Esav, Yaakov's nefarious twin brother, showed up and insisted that the burial plot belonged to him! He refused to let his nephews bury their father. The children of Yaakov began arguing with Esav until it was decided to send Naftali, who was swift as a deer, to run down on foot to Egypt and procure the necessary documents proving that Yaakov was indeed entitled to this auspicious plot next to his wife Leah. *Chazal* relate that throughout this entire argument, one person - Chushim the only son of Dan - became extremely agitated at the tremendous lack of respect, even disgrace, that was afforded his holy *Zaida Yaakov*. Chushim was deaf, and it took him some time to understand what was going on. But when he finally did, he took matters into his own hands. Literally! He grabbed a club, hit Esav over the head, and killed him on the spot. GAME OVER!

Why was Chushim, the deaf son of Dan, the only one to stand up for the honor of *Yaakov Avinu*? **R' Henoch Leibowitz ז"ל** answers that often in life people lose sight of the עיקר because they get wrapped up in the טפל! Families or friends will argue about something small and insignificant, but the intensity of the fight causes them to lose sight of what is really important. Sometimes a family fight will continue for years, ר"ו, becoming a "Yerusha" for the next generation who isn't even sure what the fight is all about! R' Henoch says that in these kind of situations one has to make himself DEAF to simply ignore the nasty, hurtful or sarcastic remarks thrown about in anger, so as not to lose perspective and make the "טפל" into the "עיקר".

This is the message of Chushim, the deaf son of Dan: At times, we must "play deaf" in our relationships with others.