

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

בר יוחאי נאדרת בנבונה ובמלחמת אש דת השקרה וזרוב הוצאת מתערה שלפת נגד צורריך ... (פיוט בר יוחאי)

Every year on *Lag Ba'omer*, hundreds of thousands of Jews flock to Meron, to the *kever* of the holy *Tanna*, *Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai* to witness the ceremonial lighting of the massive bonfires on the roof of the grave. Amidst an avalanche of singing, dancing and rejoicing, being in Meron on this day is an event to remember for a lifetime.

R' Avraham Yehoshua Freund ז"ל (Av Beis Din Nasaud, Hungary) tells over an incredible story in his *Sefer Gedulas Yehoshua*. One year in the early 20th century, an extremely wealthy Jew paid an exorbitant amount of money to receive the honor of kindling the fire. The celebration in Meron is not a new event; for hundreds of years, *Yidden* have been coming on this special day. When *Lag Ba'omer* arrived, the man was brought to the gravesite of *Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai* with great fanfare, where he was directed to the prepared bonfire on the roof. As he stood there waiting for the signal to begin lighting the fire, the massive crowd began to dance and sing with great fervor. Swept up in the euphoric atmosphere, more and more people climbed up to the roof to join, and the already tight space became impossibly overcrowded.

The wealthy man was smiling and enjoying himself and didn't mind the large crowds packing in around him, but as the excitement reached a crescendo, he was suddenly pushed inadvertently from behind. Losing his balance, the man fell off the roof down to the courtyard below, breaking both his legs in the fall. He screamed in pain hoping to catch the attention of the crowds on the roof, but his shouts were drowned out by the deafening noise of excited dancing and singing. The pain was excruciating, and he lay on the ground writhing in pain until someone finally walked into the courtyard and saw his mangled figure. Quickly, he lifted the injured man onto his shoulders and carried him into one of the adjacent rooms.

It immediately became apparent that a doctor would be needed to set his broken and mangled legs, however, there were no doctors or medical experts in *Meron* at the time. The only option was to travel a number of hours by horse and wagon to the neighboring village and bring a doctor from there. The kind man agreed to go.

Leaving the wealthy man in the room, the man immediately set out for the village. He found a doctor and the two drove back returning well into the night. Upon entering the room where the wealthy man had been lying, the man and the doctor were startled to see it totally empty. The two exchanged bewildered looks wondering where the patient could have possibly gone – after all, both of his legs had been broken only a few hours earlier.

They fanned out only to find him, to their utter amazement, dancing enthusiastically in the middle of the crowd. His legs looked fine and he wasn't even limping. How could that be? It was impossible. Shaking their heads, they pulled him over to the side and asked him what was going on. How is it that he is dancing as though nothing had happened earlier?

The man smiled and said, "After you left, I was laying on the floor unable to move. I was distraught at my broken legs but even more than that, at my lost opportunity to kindle the flame in honor of the great *Tanna*. And then, I suddenly looked up. and to my utter disbelief, the holy *Tanna*, *Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai*, himself, was standing there in the doorway. I just knew it was him. At first, I rubbed my eyes in disbelief. I was sure that I had passed away from the pain and was already up in heaven. But then I realized that I was indeed alive.

"I was in utter shock and couldn't say a word, but *Rabban Shimon* opened his mouth and began to speak to me. He said, 'Great happiness came about through you today in my honor; therefore, it is my obligation to make you happy and heal you.' He then placed his holy hands on my broken legs and immediately I was totally healed. I quickly jumped up to my feet and ran out of the room, petrified. I was still trembling from fright when someone from the crowd saw me and pulled me into the circle where I began to dance and sing." Having finished his incredible story, the wealthy man grabbed his new friend and they began to dance and sing honoring the life of the holy *Tanna*, *Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai*. (Excerpted from *Torah Tavlin Moadim Ketanim*)

הבהננים הלוים בני צדוק אשר שמרו את משמרת מקדשי ... (הויקאל מר-טו)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Yechezkel HaNavi commends the *Bnei Tzadok* who throughout the ages never wavered from their commitment to serving *Hashem*. In fact, *Chazal* say that in the times of *Moshiach*, the world will see *Hashem's* glory and might, and the *Kohanim* – specifically the *Bnei Tzadok* – will be greatly honored since they will be the most visible agents of *Hashem* who will perform the *avodah*. Of course, unwavering commitment to *Hashem* is supremely important, but what is it about the *Bnei Tzadok* that they merited to receive such an incredible reward?

R' Aharon Kotler ז"ל explains that at times when *Klal Yisroel* does the will of the Creator and the gentiles of the world also practice moral lifestyles, it is not so difficult for

someone with heretic thoughts to pull himself together and remain a good Jew. During such a time, the reward for adhering to the *Torah* and *mitzvos* might not be so great since it is just "the thing to do." However, at times when the world is an immoral place and the Jewish people live their lives indecently, *Hashem* sees it as a full-scale rebellion and the few who cling to the truth will not only grow closer to *Hashem*, but will also merit to see great rewards.

So, the true greatness of the *Bnei Tzadok* was their unwavering commitment to *Hashem*, despite the pressure and influences from the outside world. It is because of their fierce dedication to the *Torah* that they will merit to be the representatives of *Hashem* in the times of *Moshiach*.

ובקצרכם את קציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שדך בקצורך ולקט קצורך לא תלקט ... (בב-כב)

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

מחשבת הלב

Rashi on this *posuk* cites a *Toras Kohanim* which comments on the order of *posukim* here: "Why does the *Torah* place this [*posuk*] in the middle of the Festivals ...? To teach you that whoever gives לקט - gleanings, שפחה - forgotten sheaves, and פאה - corners, to the poor in the correct manner, is deemed as if he had built the Holy Temple and offered up his *korbonos* in it."

While **Rashi** gives one explanation, perhaps we can offer another *machshava*. The precise placement of this *posuk* is between *Shavuos* and the *Yomim Noraim*. My thought is as follows: Although every day of the year one must be scrupulous in his *matnas aniyim* and his entire *bein adam l'chaveiro*, certain times are more critical for the provider, perhaps even more so than the recipient. In preparation for the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*, *Matan Torah*, we must know that it's not only about *Torah* learning. Rather our "Nosei B'ol" - caring for other people, is a most crucial prerequisite for *Kabolas HaTorah* as well.

Lag Baomer signifies the end of *aveilus* for the *talmidei Rabbi Akiva* who weren't showing the proper *kavod* for one another. Hence, says the *Torah*, on *Shavuos*, remember the destitute and don't just focus on yourself. The *seforim* teach us that a *segula* for a favorable judgment on *Rosh Hashana* is to make yourself needed by people. Even if you're not worthy of a good year on your own merits, the fact that people need you will entice *Hashem* to inscribe you in the *Sefer Hachaim*.

In last week's *parsha*, the *Kohen Gadol* brought the *ketores* (spices), ground extra fine - "dak min hadak." Although the *ketores* which was brought all year, and which signifies good and righteous deeds, smelled nice, during the *Yamim Noraim* they must be even finer, more *mehudar*. Perhaps this is another *pshat* why this *posuk* is between *Shavuos* and *Yamim Noraim*.

Let us focus on helping people around us by acting "K'ISH ECHAD" and be *mekabel* the *Torah* with *simcha* and *achdus!*

משל למה הדבר דומה

ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם וגו' (בב-לב)

משל: In the city of *Slonim*, there was a wealthy man who was known to be extremely tight-fisted and stingy, giving very little to *tzedakah*. As a result, the man was unanimously disliked in the community. However, this never stopped him from trying to impose himself as the *chazan* during *davening* and the *gabbaim* had to find all manner of original ways to rebuff his incessant requests. In addition to his miserliness, he also had a raspy voice which was truly irritating. People would complain that their level of *davening* suffered when he would approach the *amud* and after a while they took their complaints to the *Rov*, **R' Eizel Slonimer ז"ל**.

When he heard the story, **R' Eizel** suddenly jumped to his feet and replied in mock astonishment, "Why, this man is equivalent to the קודש הקדשים - *Holy of Holies!*"

To the bewildered petitioners, **R' Eizel** smiled and said,

ויצא בן אשה ישראלית והוא בן איש מצר בתוך בני ישראל וינצו במחנה ... (בד-י)

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

דרגה יתירה

The word "*Vayeitzei*" - "he went out," is referring to the *parsha* before, which speaks about the *mitzvah* of *Lechem HaPanim*. As **Rashi** explains: "*Rabbi Berechiah* says: 'He went out' of the above *posuk*. He mocked and said, 'The *Torah* says, 'Each ... *Shabbos* day, he shall set it up.' But surely it is the practice of kings to eat warm [fresh] bread every day! Is it possible to give Him cold bread, nine days old?' he said in astonishment." This "Ben Isha Yisraelis" made fun of the special *challot*, the *Lechem Hapanim*, which remained warm and fresh all week long in the *Mishkan*, and therefore he ended up being the one who cursed *Hashem*. He saw the *challot* on the *Shulchan* and said with great *chutzpah*, "Is this a befitting present for a King? You give him old bread?" This is what brought him to eventually curse the Name of *Hashem*.

The **Imrei Emes** comments on this **Rashi** that the *Gemara* in *Menachos* (29a) brings down that when the Jewish people were *Oleh Regel*, the pilgrimage up to the *Bais HaMikdash* three times a year, the *Kohanim* would remove the *Lechem HaPanim* and show them to the people, with the miraculous steam that arose from these breads all week long, as if they were freshly removed from the oven. Everyone saw and felt the warmth according to how warm they felt inside. Since this "Ben Isha Yisraelis" had no *varmkeit* towards this beautiful display of *Hashem's* miracles, in fact he made fun and acted with "coolness" towards something that was inspiring, therefore, he wound up falling so low and cursing *Hashem*.

So too, explains the *Imrei Emes*, this is why the *Lechem HaPanim* are called "Showbreads," because "*Kamayim Panim el Panim, kein lev Haadam L'adam!*" The way he looked at these breads, showed the way he felt inside about the wonders of *Hashem*. This applies to all areas of *Avodas Hashem*. The more *cheishek*, love and warmth we develop in ourselves towards *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, the more we will see and feel the warmth and love that *Hashem* is always reflecting to us.