

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ודיתה אם נטמאה ותמעל מעל באישה ... ודיתה האשה לאלה בקרב עמה וגו' (ה-כז)

A woman entered a bank in *Bnei Brak* and waited on line to withdraw some money. When her turn came, she asked the teller for 300 *shekels* from her account. The teller punched in her account number and politely explained that he couldn't give her the money because she was already over her limit. The woman insisted that she needed the money, and the teller remained calm but firm, explaining that he was not authorized to withdraw any more funds until she deposited money into her account.

The customer was distraught, and without seeming to realize it, she raised her voice so that everyone could hear. "Why are you making such a big deal out of this?" she started shouting. "It's only three hundred *shekels*, and I need it to purchase basic groceries. Please! Right now, I know that we're in a bad situation, but we'll pull out of it sooner or later, and in the meantime, I don't have money for food! I really need the money!" But the bank teller was not having it. He lost his patience and snapped back at her, "This is not a charity organization. This is a bank, and we have rules and policies that I'm not authorized to violate. The bank has been very generous until now, and we've sent you numerous letters and reminders that were ignored. There is no way that I can withdraw another *shekel* from your account!" All eyes in the bank were fixed on them now.

The woman was mortified and stood still with shock and embarrassment. Suddenly, she walked past the teller and straight into the manager's office. Looking at the surprised manager, she burst into tears. "How could you employ such a hard-hearted man? What did I ask for? 300 *shekels*? I'm not asking for luxuries, but the basics to pay the grocery store. Why did he have to shout at me in front of everyone? What gave him the right to tell everyone my story and humiliate me in public?"

The manager was horrified at the teller's conduct. He told the woman that she was right and apologized profusely on behalf of the bank and the teller, while explaining that regardless of their genuine sympathy for her plight, they were still bound by the bank's policies. The woman was not placated, and she jumped up from her seat and stormed out of the office in tears.

The manager called out for her to wait and he opened his wallet and took out three hundred *shekels* to give to her, but she shook her head and refused to accept it. She ran out of the bank and never returned.

The manager walked wearily back into his office and as he passed his associate's desk, another employee of the bank, he saw the man wiping tears from his eyes. This was strange thought the manager, he'd never seen his co-worker cry.

"What happened?" he asked in concern. The man blew his nose and finally replied, "In my life, there's one trauma from my youth that I never got over, and this image still haunts me forty years later. I was a little boy, around eight or nine, and my mother took me to the grocery store. We didn't have money, and my mother was always very careful about what she put in her shopping basket - bread, milk, a little cheese, a few vegetables - and then she asked the grocer to put it on her account.

"Your account?" the grocer answered with a grimace. 'Lady, you're way past that. Do you have any idea how much money you owe already? You haven't paid your bill in months. I'm not going to put another thing on credit. Either pay for the food now or put everything back on the shelves. I'm not a bank, and I can't afford to let customers take food for free!'

"My mother pleaded anxiously. 'Right now, things are tight, but everything will work out in the end, you'll see! Look, it's not like I took anything expensive, just the very basics. Bread, milk, and cheese.' Her tone was so pathetically imploring that I remember cringing. But the grocer refused to listen and began taking the items out of her cart and placing them on the counter. 'Pay for it, or leave.' With her pockets empty and her heart shattered, my mother took me by the hand and left the store. As soon as we were outside, she burst into tears, unable to hold back any longer, and hurried home with me.

The bank associate paused to a moment. "I've never forgotten the scene. It was seared into my heart with the agony and helplessness that only a child can feel watching his mother - his rock and security - crumble. But today, when I saw the same scene unfold right before my very eyes, I suddenly recognized the woman. That grocer was her father. Do you understand? Forty years after that man shamed my mother, his own daughter doesn't have money for the basics...." (Generations of Tears, by Tzvi Nakar)

ויקם וילך אודרי אשתו ... (שפטים יג-א)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Manoach and Tzelponis were informed that they would have a child who would become the next leader of the Jewish people - *Shimshon HaGibor*. Ironically, even though he was the father of Shimshon, *Chazal* say that Manoach was but a simple man who was ignorant in the study of *Torah*. And yet, in many other places, *Chazal* extol the many virtues of Manoach and praise him tremendously for his righteousness. How are these two characterizations not contradictory?

R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler ז"ל (Michtav M'Eliyahu) explains that the two are not conflated at all. In fact, **Rabbeinu Yonah ז"ל** asserts that an ignoramus cannot be a חסיד – a Jew who is meticulous in his service to *Hashem*, because it takes a tremendous amount of *Torah* study to know

the intricacies of each *mitzvah*. However, an ignoramus can indeed be a צדיק – a righteous Jew since it requires basic faith which anyone can achieve. Manoach may not have been proficient in *Torah* study, but he understood faith in *Hashem* and *Chazal* not only laud him for that, but they also attribute Shimshon's faith in humanity to his father's basic faith.

In our conceited and highly egocentric world, the Jews with a basic, simple belief in *Hashem's* Presence are sometimes overlooked in order to make room for those with seemingly greater ideals or aspirations. However, it is important to remember that just like Manoach who fathered *Shimshon HaGibor*, those "simple" people of basic faith can sometimes be the very conduit needed to connect to *Hashem*.

ויקריבו הנשאים את הנכת המזכה כיום המשח אתו ויקריבו הנשיאים את קרבנם לפני המוכח ... (ו-י)

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

מחשבת הלב

The *Medrash Tanchuma* says that Rav Meir and Rav Yehoshua Ben Korcha would *darshan* the names of the *Nesi'im*. For example, the *Nasi* of *Shevet Menashe* was *Gamliel Ben Pidatzur*. The *Medrash* explains it to mean that *Yosef Hatzaddik* commented: "*Gamal Keil*" - *Hashem* paid me back and performed many *chasadim* with me. The *Medrash*, though, does not expound on the other *Nesi'im's* names, from numbers 9-12. Perhaps, we now have license to attempt to do so.

Let us be *makdim* with another *pshat* on the name *Gamliel Ben Pidatzur*. *Yosef Hatzaddik*, who performed all the *mitzvos* and withstood countless *nisyonos* in the impure land of *Mitzrayim*, was imparting a life lesson for a *Yid*. When we do a *mitzvah*, any *mitzvah*, we give *nachas ruach* not only to *Hashem*, but also "strength" to *shamayim*, the higher spheres. As it says in the *posuk*, "נתנו עוז לאלקים". Thus, *Yosef* said "*Gam l'Keil*" - doing *mitzvos* and living as a *Yid* is a *chesed* to *Hashem*.

The next names are: **#9 Avidan Ben Gid'oni**, "Avi" - my heavenly father, "*Dan*" - judges me kindly and gives me what I need in this world if ... **#10 Achi-Ezer Ben Amishaday** - I help my brother in need. If, however, I don't help him, and instead, do him harm, then *ch"ts*, the opposite will occur and not only will I not receive a reward, but I will be punished harshly, וי". Thus, says the *posuk*: **#11 Pagiel Ben Achran**. "*Pagi*" - I received a *pegah*, a punishment, "*Keil*" - from *Hashem* because ... **#12 Achi-ra Ben Aynun** - I was bad to my brother. I did not assist him when he needed it and now I suffer the consequences.

The names of the *Nesi'im* have much to teach us and we must delve into their meanings. We can learn from the above names how careful we must be with our דברים dealings, and the effects they can have on us, in the way *Hashem* deals with us. May we be *zoche* to see the *kiyum* of the *posuk*. "*Ach tov vochesed yirdefuni kol yimei chayav...*"

משל למה הדבר דומה

כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמור להם ... (ו-כג)

משל: Just before his wife's *levaya*, **R' Chaim Stein ז"ל**, *Rosh HaYeshivah* of Telshe in Wickliffe, Ohio, was walking with one of his grandsons. The *Rosh Yeshivah* excused himself and stepped into the bathroom for a moment. When he came out, his grandson noticed that R' Chaim was mumbling something to himself and it appeared as if he was saying "*Asher Yatzar*." However, since it was before the burial, close relatives such as the *Rebbeitzin's* husband and children had the halachic status of an "*Onein*" - one who is prohibited from saying *berachos* and *davening*.

Confused and thinking that perhaps that his grandfather had forgotten, R' Chaim's grandson asked him about his conduct and if he was making a *beracha*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* assured him that he knew the *halacha*, but explained that at his age (R' Chaim was in his 90's at the

time), it is a tremendous gift from *Hashem* when his body still functions properly.

"How then," he asked, "could I not thank the *Ribono shel Olam* for this special blessing? Of course, I know that I cannot make the actual *beracha* since I am an *onein*, so I said it without saying *Hashem's* name!"

When the *Rosh Yeshivah* made a *beracha* to bless *Hashem*, he understood that he was talking directly to his Creator and thanking Him for each and every small gift.

משל: The *parsha* of *Birchas Kohanim* begins with the words, "*So shall you bless the children of Israel*." It is a *mitzvah* for *Kohanim* to bless the Jewish people, but it is also a lesson for all Jewish people to recognize and appreciate what it means to be blessed. *Hashem* instilled in His Creation a mechanism whereby a Jew can be blessed at all times. We must appreciate all that He does for us and bless Him in return. That is the measure of a true *beracha*.

נשא את ראש בני גושן גם הם לבית אבתם למשפחתם ... (ד-כב)

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

דרגה יתירה

Here in *Eretz Yisroel* it seems that we keep falling down. Physically, emotionally and spiritually, we have been through so much in the last couple of weeks. We are still reeling from the tragedy that took place in Meron. Our brothers and sisters all over the country are running into bomb shelters throughout the day and the night. Hundreds of missiles are flying above our heads. There is a war going on. And just as we ushered in the holy *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*, we heard dozens of ambulances racing to ...we did not know where, but we knew something terrible had happened. When the *Hatzala* members came back home, we found out that another tragedy occurred in *Karlin Stoln* in *Givat Ze'ev* and 2 people were killed, with many others injured. We are shocked and devastated. It seems like every time Jews come together to rejoice, instead of going up, we go down.

As we know, the *parsha* of the week is *Hashem* talking to us with the message we need to hear at this time. How appropriate that we read *Parshas Naso* now. We feel so low, so dejected, so uncertain about ourselves and what *Hashem* wants from us. So, *Hashem* is telling us, "Elevate yourselves! Lift yourselves up and keep going. Don't let all of these tragedies pull you down and away from Me!" We can only imagine how the world out there is looking down at all these religious Jews in Israel who are trying to serve their Creator - and keep falling down. But we must not see ourselves the way the world sees us. We need to hold onto our faith in *Hashem* and believe with perfect faith that this is all from *Hashem*, and everything *Hashem* does is good.

We need to raise our heads up with pride and never forget that we are *Hashem's* beloved and chosen people. We need to hold on tight to our *emunah* and not become cynical, angry, doubtful or downtrodden. Let us all take this week's *parsha* as a personal message from *Hashem* to each and every one of us. "*Naso es rosh*" - *Klal Yisroel*, Lift up your heads, and hang in there. Know that *Hashem* has a plan and *daven* that we are *zoche* to see it revealed in all it's majesty very soon.