

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויאמר הנה חלמתי הלום עוד והנה השמש והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים משתחיים לו ... (ל-ל)

One cold winter's day, an elderly stranger wearing an expensive-looking fur coat entered the court of the holy **Rhizhiner Rebbe, R' Yisroel Friedman zt"l**. When he asked to speak privately with the *Rebbe* for a few minutes, the *Rebbe's shamashim* escorted him in without asking any questions. "Please, *Rebbe*, I apologize for taking so much of your valuable time, but may I tell you an interesting story?" The *Rebbe* was intrigued and nodded his assent.

The man began. "I am a prosperous businessman, *B"H*. I gained most of my wealth through buying and selling large amounts of merchandise at the annual fair at Leipzig. However, when I became older, the physical ordeals of the long journey each way took a large toll on my health. As I had a capable assistant who worked for me for many years and had earned my complete faith in him, I decided to entrust him with the burden of conducting my annual affairs at Leipzig. Each year, I gave him a significant sum of money to invest, merchandise to sell, and a list of detailed instructions.

"For a number of years things went smoothly. Then, suddenly, this year my man did not return from Leipzig together with the other merchants of our town who had been there. They told me not to worry, for they had brought a message from him. It turned out that he had been so successful in his dealings that he finished all of our affairs there two days early, and he decided to utilize the time to visit some relatives in the region. He asked them to tell me that he would arrive in a few days.

"I wasn't worried. I trusted him implicitly. Even when a few days went by and then a week without a sign of him, I didn't waver, although I was aware that people in town were suggesting that he had absconded with the money. But when a week turned into two, and then into a month, I began to have my doubts which made me quite nervous. A few nights later, when my feelings had become even more acute, I had a dream. In it, my agent appeared to me and told me what had happened.

"When I went to visit my relatives, I became seriously ill. The doctor's treatment did not help at all, and I realized my time had come. I requested to speak to the rabbi of the town and when he came I entrusted into his possession, all of your money, gems, as well as documents of sale and purchase that I was carrying. I described you to him and also told him other signs by which he may recognize you. I hope that now you will consider that my mission had been faithfully completed."

"I was frantic as my dream began to fade. 'But ... tell me ... where are you?' I asked, 'Where are you telling me this from?'"

"His face took on a look of pain as he answered with a degree of reluctance. 'When I arrived at the Divine Court, I was deemed not pure enough for the bliss of Heaven. I was assigned to the other place - for a full year. A few weeks passed. Then, there was a surprising commotion. I asked what was going on and was told that it was *Yud-Tes Kislev* (19th day of the month of *Kislev*), which is the *yahrzeit* of the holy **Mezeritcher Maggid, R' Dov Ber zt"l**, successor to the **Baal Shem Tov zt"l** himself, and that the *Maggid's neshama* has the *zechus* to rescue any soul from *Gehinnom*, that is connected to him.

"I was among those souls designated to be released! I could not understand why and I addressed the *Maggid's neshama* saying what is my connection to you? I was only a child when you left the world. The *Maggid* responded, 'You were born through my blessing to your parents.' I was elated, but since my business with you was unfinished, even though I did all that I possibly could to get you back your money, I was held back from leaving. Since, you were in considerable anxiety as a result of not knowing what happened, I was given permission to appear to you and give you the information you need to recover your assets. Now I must hurry. I fear that I may miss my 'ride' to the better place!"

The man paused and looked at the *Rhizhiner Rebbe*. "Right before he departed, he told me that there is one *tzaddik* on this earth who has the same merit to be able to release souls connected to him from *Gehinnom*. 'I am told that such a *tzaddik* is R' Yisroel in Rhizhin, the great-grandson of the *Maggid*.' Then, he left and my dream faded entirely."

The elderly Jew concluded that he had just come from collecting his money from the rabbi of the town where his man had died. "I am here because I desire to be connected to you. I hope you will accept me as your *chasid*!" (R' Y. Tilles, *Ascent of Tzefat*)

על מרבם בכמה צדיק ואביון בעבודת נעלים ... (קמ"ב-ב)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In this week's *HafTORah*, *Amos HaNavi* highlights the severity of injustice and how the infamous sale of *Yosef HaTzadik* epitomizes this idea perfectly. It is interesting to note that by stating that the brothers sold "an innocent man for money," Amos inferred that although the sale itself was indeed horrific, it wasn't the sale itself that *Hashem* held them responsible for. Rather, *Hashem's* wrath became aroused due to the indignity shown to *Yosef* and the insensitivity towards his feelings by being sold for an inexpensive pair of shoes. Why did they do that?

R' Ovadiah Ben Yaakov zt"l, the *Seforno* explains that after closely following *Yosef's* actions and anticipating the outcome of what they believed was his inexcusable attitude

and behavior, the brothers found it necessary to protect themselves from his inevitable attack on them. Borne out of this fallacious thought process, they then deemed it extremely necessary to not only discredit *Yosef* but to also reduce his standing so that their authority would not be challenged. This degradation and belittlement of *Yosef* was inexcusable, and *Hashem's* wrath was kindled as a result of this.

There is a common misconception that so long as a person does not physically harm another, the idea "no harm no fowl" applies. This is far from the truth since we must always be cognizant of all aspects of our actions and reactions, and always remember that just because one person may not think it is a big deal, it may indeed be a big deal for someone else.

ותסר בגדי אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותעלף ותשב כפתח עינים אשר על דרך תבניתה ... (לז-ד)

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

מחשבת הלב

The unusual story of *Yehuda* and *Tamar* affords us many lessons that we would not otherwise have recognized. The *posuk* says that *Tamar* took off her widow's garb and covered her face with a veil, before sitting down at a crossroads. The *Rishonim* offer two meanings to the word "ותעלף". Either that she covered her face, or that she beautified herself.

There is another definition of the word, found in *Tanach* and in *Shas*. "עילוף" can also mean to faint (see *Yonah* and *Chulin Daf 3b*). It is possible to apply that connotation here as well. *Tamar* excelled in the *middah* of *tznius* to such an extent that the *Gemara* in *Megillah (10b)* states that *Yehuda* was unable to recognize her. The concept of *znus* was so antithetical to her and against her very essence. Therefore, although *Ruach Hakodesh* obligated her to act, acting in this manner still caused her to faint. (If anyone can find a source to support this *pshat*, please let us know.) There are certain *middos* that are embedded in the very nature of a *Yid* and acting against that nature should cause powerful feelings of discomfiture.

I recently saw an anecdote about a woman suffering from dementia. When asked her name, she drew a blank. But then she smiled, and said, "I don't know who I am but I know whose I am." Such are the sentiments of a Jew.

Perhaps, from this *yesod*, we can extrapolate another *machshava*. At times, we too, are asked to go out of our "comfort zone" and do things we would normally shy away from doing, *L'maan Hashem v'Toraso*. Some occasions are easier than others. But we must exert ourselves and make the effort. *Tamar* knew that what she had to do was the will of *Hashem*. She therefore acted in a way that was diametrically opposed to her lofty ideals. Ultimately, *Tamar's* actions facilitated the lineage of *Dovid Hamelech* and *Mashiach* being born. We can never underestimate the power of doing the right thing.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויכיה ויאמר כתנת בני הזה רעה אכלתו מרף מרף יוסף ... (לז-ג)

משל: Once, when **R' Naftali Hurwitz zt"l**, of *Ropshitz* visited *Warsaw*, he went to a local *shul* to *daven*. He noticed a young man learning there with great intensity, and initiated a discussion with him on the *sugya* he was studying. **R' Naftali** was impressed with the young man, *Asher*, and discreet inquiry revealed that he was the son of the local tailor.

Wishing to speak with *Asher's* father without revealing to the boy that he was considering him a potential son-in-law, **R' Naftali** asked *Asher* to bring him to his father's shop so that he could have repaired his torn *bekeshe* (frock).

Upon their arrival at the tailor shop, **R' Naftali** showed *Asher's* father his torn frock, then urged the young man to return to his studies. Once alone with the tailor, he broached the subject of *shidduchim* and suggested that his daughter would be a fitting match for his son *Asher*.

ויהי ה' את יוסף ויהי איש מצליח ויהי בבית אדניו המצרי ... (לז-ב)

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

דרגה יתירה

The great miracle of *Chanukah* revolves around one tiny flask of oil, the only one tiny flask that was found in the *Bais HaMikdash* with the special seal of the *Kohen Gadol*. This was such a tremendous celebration that we continue to rejoice every single year at this time. What was a single flask of *shemen zayis* during regular times, when the *Mikdash* stood in all its glory and pure olive oil was made in abundance? No one thought twice of such a tiny flask. It was taken for granted because we had plenty of it. Only when the Greeks defiled our *Mikdash*, and there was no pure oil to be found except this one tiny flask, do we make a holiday out of it. It is the same holy oil whether there is a little or a lot, but when there is a lot, it is under appreciated.

R' Avraham Pam zt"l says that when *Yosef* interpreted *Pharaoh's* dreams of a tremendous abundance of food for seven years, followed by a famine for another seven years, he could not remain silent. Although it is not so appropriate to give the King advice, after all, he was only asked to interpret the dreams, he still felt that it was worth the risk to tell the King what to do. Had *Yosef* remained silent, all the food during the seven years of plenty would have been squandered. Therefore, he gave his brilliant advice to appreciate the great abundance and put away some of the plenty for when it would be needed.

The tiny flask of oil that was so appreciated because of the tremendous lack of any oil at all teaches us a great lesson about appreciation. *Chanukah* is a time to thank *Hashem* and to praise Him as well. *L'Hodos* - to thank *Hashem* is a great level which often comes when we realize that we just received a gift. *L'Hallel* means to constantly sing our Creator's praises. If we could only heighten our recognition of all the *shefa bracha* that we experience in our lives daily, and if we would put away some of those feelings for when we are going through a more difficult period in our lives, we could internalize the lesson of *Chanukah* and spend our entire lives thanking and praising *Hashem*, and truly appreciating everything He gives us.