



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

לא איש דברים אנכי גם מתמול גם משלשם גם מאז דברך אל עבדך כי כבוד פה וכבוד לשון אנכי ... (ד-)

There was once a terrible epidemic in the city of Ostroh, Ukraine, with many people dying before their time. Everyone gathered in the city's main *beis medrash* for a day of fasting, introspection, and *tefillah*. The *Rav*, **R' Shmuel Eidels זר"ל**, known as the **Maharsha**, stood in front of the community and proclaimed, "This epidemic has come to us because of our sins – but we don't know which sin. If someone knows of a sin taking place in this city, either by an individual or by the public, please come forward to tell me and the *beis din*, as we have to figure out which *aveirah* is causing the plague."

Two people came forward, thinking that they might know the source of the plague. There was a person who used to *daven* with them every day, and for a while now, this man stopped coming to the *beis medrash*. On top of that, there were a number of unusual acts they noticed in the man's behavior which aroused their suspicions and they decided to trail him to see where he goes and what he does. At midnight, they saw him leave his home carrying a lantern. They followed him and watched him leave the city, walking into the thick forest. They didn't follow him further, rather they reported to the *Rav* what they saw.

The *Rav* said, "Tonight, when you see him leaving for the forest, call me. The three of us will follow him. We are doing this to benefit the entire city, to find out who is committing serious *aveiros* that have brought on the epidemic. Don't be afraid."

That night, the two men and the *Maharsha* followed him into the forest. They could see the man sit down in the forest and heard him recite *Tikkun Chatzos* accompanied by bitter tears and anguish. And then, they heard another voice, crying and wailing together with him, but they didn't see anyone besides him. They wondered who that voice belonged to.

Upon completing *Tikkun Chatzos*, as the man began heading out of the forest, the *Maharsha* revealed himself. "We followed you in an attempt to figure out who is sinning in our city, but now we know you are a true *tzaddik*. Please forgive us for suspecting you, and please tell us, who is the second voice we heard? Who cried along with you in the forest?"

The man replied, "Every night at midnight, I cry over the *Churban Beis HaMikdash*, and Heaven gave me a gift: *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* comes to say *Tikkun Chatzos* together with me." The man continued, "I will ask *Yirmiyahu HaNavi*, and tomorrow morning, I will come to the *beis medrash* and tell you what *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* answered." The *Maharsha* returned to the city and announced that everyone should come for *Shacharis* the following morning, to hear the cause of the epidemic.

A large crowd came for *Shacharis*. It was time to *daven*, but the hidden *tzaddik* hadn't arrived yet. The *Rav* said that they should begin *davening*. Soon afterward, the *tzaddik* arrived donned in his *tallis and tefillin*, and his face shone with a very saintly and ethereal appearance. Everyone became afraid when they looked at him, and some people even fainted.

After *Shacharis*, in front of the entire congregation, the *Maharsha* asked the hidden *tzaddik* why his presence caused so much fear. The *tzaddik* replied that it was because of his *tefillin*. As *Chazal (Brachos 6)* say, wearing *tefillin* causes people to be afraid. The *Rav* then asked, "But we all wear *tefillin*, and yet it doesn't cast fear. What is special about yours?"

The *tzaddik* replied, "I am extremely careful and I never speak idle talk when I wear my *tefillin*. I am cautious with its holiness, therefore my *tefillin* have this *segulah* that it casts a holy fear on all who gaze at it." The *tzaddik* then added, "Idle talk is also the root of the epidemic. *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* told me that people in this town were speaking during *tefillah*, which aroused *Hashem's* anger. I stopped coming to this *beis medrash* long ago because I couldn't stand all the talking."

The community was duly chastised and accepted upon themselves to not talk in the *beis medrash* during *tefillah*, and the plague stopped immediately. They wrote this story on a plaque on one of the walls of the *beis medrash*, so that it should never be forgotten. When visitors came to the *beis medrash* and weren't aware of how strict they were about not speaking during the *tefillah*, congregants would bring them over to the plaque and have them read it. They did this without saying a word, and the newcomers learned to be silent during the *tefillah*. We should all learn a lesson from this and remain silent during *tefillah*.

הבאים ישרש יקרב יציין ופרח ישראל (ישעי' ב:ו)

The journey of *Yaakov Avinu* and his family from *Eretz Canaan* to Egypt, was one fraught with numerous trials and tribulations. Nevertheless, *Yeshaya HaNavi* relates that "Those who *Yaakov* caused to take root and came (to Egypt), have flourished and blossomed." *Chazal* note that this observation from *Yeshaya* is a reference to the scholars of *Bavel* who excelled in their pursuit of *Hashem's Torah* while in exile, and from them sprouted the foundation of *Torah* study for all time. But what indeed is the connection and how is the reference deduced from a seemingly simple *posuk*?

**R' Yitzchok Sorotzkin shlitā (Rinas Yitzchok)** explains that *Chazal's* deduction is based on the time-tested adage of how true *Torah* Jews live. Oftentimes when people attempt

to achieve a goal, they wish to skip to the end without having to put in the requisite work and effort. Not only won't the person achieve whatever the intended goal was, but in many instances many more problems will crop up along the way further complicating the matter entirely. However, true *Torah* Jews understand the danger associated with this fallacious thought process and they know that only through persistence and perseverance in *Avodas Hashem* will a person achieve his goal.

This ideology and foundation for *Torah* study was set by *Yaakov Avinu*, when he sent *Yehuda* ahead to establish a *Yeshiva* in Egypt prior to his arrival, and the scholars in *Bavel* further cemented that ideology when they established their *Yeshivos* and turned the ignorant exiles into *Torah* scholars.

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

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

וידי כי יראו המולדת את האלקים ויעש להם בתים ... (א-ב)

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

## מחשבת הלב

The *Meforshim* offer different explanations regarding the *seder hapasuk* - what is the connection between the beginning and the end? Additionally, what was the *middah kneged midda* here, between the fact that they feared *Hashem* and they received houses? **Rashi** learns that "batim" refer to the houses of *Kehuna* and *Malchus*. The **Beis Halevi** explains that since the Egyptians sought to kill the Jewish boys, the pure lineage of *Klal Yisroel* would've been eradicated. Thus, as a reward for saving the children, the Jewish midwives were rewarded with *Kehuna* and *Malchus*, which are dependent on lineage.

Perhaps we can offer another *pshat*. In *Tehillim*, the *posuk* says: "ברך את בית ישראל יברך את בית אהרן יברך יראי ה'". *Hashem* blesses the houses of *Yisroel* and *Aharon*, however, when it comes to *Yirei Hashem*, the *posuk* omits the word "bais." Why?

I heard an explanation as follows. In reference to *Yidden*, there is a *bayis* - a given. If the father is a *Yisroel*, the son is as well. With regard to a *Kohen* or a *Levi*, the same holds true. However, just because one's father is a *y'rei shamayim*, it doesn't mean that the children are de facto *yirei shomayim*. *Yiras shamayim* does not travel *b'yerusha*. Thus, the word "bais" is omitted. When *Hashem* saw to what degree the midwives feared only Him, and not Pharaoh, "יעש להם בתים" - *Hashem* made a supernatural miracle and created houses of *yirei shamayim*! They had every excuse in the world, yet they lived with the premise of "שויתי ה' לגדי תמידי" in the fullest sense of the words. Not only Moshe, Aharon and Miriam had this "bayis" bequeathed to them, but even the next generation. Chur, Miriam's son, was able to stand up to *Klal Yisrael* and was *moser nefesh* at the time of *eigel*. The "bayis" of *yirei shamayim* that Miriam received served her grandchildren well.

The *machshava* here is that if a person lives his life being *moser nefesh* for *Torah* and *mitzvos*, without looking for loopholes, then BY EXAMPLE, *yiras shamayim* should automatically be transferred to his progeny, בסיעתא דשמיא.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאנהו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויועקו ותעל שיעותם אל האלקים (ב-ג) משל: There were twin boys whose parents loved to dress them in matching outfits all the time. The boys were good friends and would play together for hours in the field and the park, returning home in matching uniforms, just as they left.

One day, as they were heading to the park, a cyclist tripped in front of them and his load, a vat of colored dye, spilled on both outfits. The one closer to the cyclist saw that his clothes were totally ruined and he was quite upset. The other, who had some of the dye speckle his clothes was also upset - not as much at the predicament but rather at his brother's pain.

Secretly he was happy that whatever happened did not happen to him or his clothes. Lo and behold, when they returned home, the father saw how upset the first brother was and how ruined his clothes were, and went out and got him

a set of brand new clothing. As he was leaving with that son to go to the store, he reminded the other son to carefully scrub his clothing to see if the dye would come out.

"The small damage," the father argued, "was not going to be enough reason to buy you new clothing too."

**נמשל:** The **Ben Ish Chai** notes that it was the distress of the first son that served as the basis of his new clothes. The sense of distress brought the sense of urgency from the father. The same can be said about the Jews in *Mitzrayim* as well. While the Jews were comfortable and did not seek out a *yeshuah*, they did not merit it. But when they cried out and remembered *Hashem*, He then put the *Geula* process in motion.

We do not need to be in dire straits in order to cry out to *Hashem* and ask him to fulfill his promise of *V'shavu Banim L'Gevulam*. We merely have to remember to seek out the opportunities and then remember to ask.

ותדר בת פריה לרחץ על היאר ... ותרא את התנה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה (ב-ה)

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

## דרגה יתירה

A story is told that **R' Meir Shapiro זר"ל** was once leading a meeting of a group of *askanim* discussing matters of *pikuach nefesh*. Some of the people told R' Meir that his suggestions were absolutely impossible. R' Meir looked at the group and asked them, "Tell me, why did *Basya bas Pharaoh* stick out her arm in the direction of the baby floating in the river? Didn't she realize it was impossible for her to reach baby Moshe? The **Kotzker Rebbe זר"ל** explains that a person must do anything and everything in his power to save another person even if he thinks his efforts have no possibility of succeeding. If your efforts are sincere, you will be surprised to see that you can accomplish way more than you ever imagined. *Basya's* arm became elongated and somehow she retrieved the basket with the baby inside. This applies to us," concluded R' Meir. "We must do everything we can even if we do not really believe that we will be successful. *Hashem* helps and then anything is possible."

**Rabbi Nochum Stilerman shlitā** once came to **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel זר"ל** and asked him what he should take upon himself to learn after he retires? The *Rosh Yeshivah* told him to go home and make a comprehensive plan. So, Rabbi Stilerman decided to humor the *Rosh Yeshivah* and printed out a 2000 page plan to finish *kol haTorah kulah*. He brought it to the *Rosh Yeshivah* (it was three large volumes) and presented it to him. R' Nosson Tzvi loved it. "Now that's a plan." Rabbi Stilerman looked at him and said, "But this is impossible. *Hashem* should give me a long life, but this plan goes on well into my nineties."

The *Rosh Yeshivah* looked at him and said, "Nochum, look at the *Mir Yeshiva*. Who built it? Me? Could I do such a thing? I am half a cripple." Then, he took out a paper from his desk with a giant plan to knock down all the stores and shops in the area, and take it over and build the *Mir Yeshivah* into a giant campus. He said, "Who do you think is going to do this? Me? Of course, it is impossible, but we just have to start. We have to dream, and we have to plan because, in the end, it is all up to *Hashem*."