

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

וספר לו ... וכבבם כגדו ורהין בשרו כמים חיים ומדר ... (פז-י)

This story originally appeared in the *Gilyon* “*Noam Siach*” of **Rav Shlomo Zalman Friedman *shlita***, *Rov* of *Khal Zichron Elazar Santov*, in Lakewood, New Jersey. A number of years ago, the dedicated *gabbai* of the *kehilla*, **Reb Shia Halevi Weinfeld**, had an *aliyah*. This was not uncommon. What was unusual was that during the *Mi Shebeirach* he made after the *aliya*, he pledged to buy new towels for the *mikvah* of the *Santov Beis Medrash*. The *mikvah* was used extensively and there were always enough towels, but Reb Shia felt that an infusion of new stock was in order.

That very same week, the well-known *askan*, Reb Shmuel Ungar, suddenly came to the *Beis Medrash*, and put down a few boxes of towels. He explained that the donor, Reb Shia Weinfeld, had tried to arrange for the company that regularly took care of his errands to bring the towels. But they were not available, and therefore Reb Shia paid him to bring them here today, so that they should be in the *Beis Medrash* and available before *Shabbos*.

Then Reb Shmuel said, “And now, I want to tell you a remarkable story that happened today!”

This is what he related: When I came to the towel store, and said that I had come to get the towels for the Santov *mikvah*, they brought out the boxes of towels that had been preordered. Then they gave me a paper to sign, affirming that I had taken 120 towels. I told the proprietor that I could not sign the form, because I did not know how many towels were there. The proprietor looked at me and wondered if I was just trying to cause some trouble. He said to me, “I don’t understand what’s the problem? Look! Each box has a number noting how many towels are inside. Figure out all the numbers on the boxes and you’ll see that they add up to 120.”

Indeed, that did seem logical, but I could not be sure. I told him that although I see what the boxes say on the outside, I still could not sign if I didn’t know what was inside. How was I to know that the number affixed there was accurate?

“*Reb Yid*, I cannot give you the towels without a signature affirming that you took it,” the seller said to me.

I replied that I can only sign that I took the boxes, and I that I saw what each box is marked with, but not more than that!

The seller insisted, saying “You have to sign that you took 120 towels.” I told him I could not do that...

When the proprietor heard this he got very annoyed. He opened one box and took out a plastic package with six towels. He showed me that there were five such plastic inner packs in the box. So five packages times six towels equals thirty towels. So if this box has 30 towels, and so do all the other boxes, then all together you have 120 towels.

But I continued to insist that I hadn’t seen that there are six towels in each inner pack. I said to him, “*Reb Yid*, you are telling me that there are 120 towels here, but I did not see that with my own eyes, and therefore, I cannot sign this form.”

Indignant and resigned, the proprietor sighed, “Alright, go ahead and count all the towels ...”

Reb Shmuel continued: I immediately began counting the towels; I went one by one. I counted all the packages of towels, one after the other. The first one had six towels. I took the second plastic pack, and there were six towels. Another six and another. Suddenly I saw that there were only five towels in one of the packs! I counted again, but as I had seen, there were only five towels. I showed it to the seller. He counted, and saw, to his surprise, that indeed there were only five towels in the pack. I told him to count again, and still, there were only five towels. He could not believe what was happening. Finally, I finished counting all the towels, and indeed, there were only 119 towels!

The seller saw this, and stood with his head lowered and tears in his eyes. In a choked voice, he said to me, “I have *mazel* that it was you who came and insisted on not taking the towels without counting them. At first I was annoyed but now I see that Your *middas haemes* saved me - I could have gone through my whole life without knowing that I had stolen something from another person, and by the time I would have found out about it, it would have been too late”

וכרו תורת משה עבדו ... (מלאכי ג-כב)

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

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

This *Shabbos* is better known as “*Shabbos HaGadol*” - called as such in remembrance of *Bnei Yisroel’s* adherence to the strict word of *Moshe Rabbeinu* (and by extension *Hashem*) who instructed the Jews to defy the Egyptians and tie a sheep to their bedposts in preparation for the upcoming *Yom Tov* and slaughter of the *Korban Pesach*.

In the *Haftorah*, *Malachi HaNavi* exhorts *Klal Yisroel* to once again to “remember the *Torah of Moshe My servant...*” and constantly strive to adhere to all its laws and customs. *Chazal* say that there is a tradition handed down through the generations that the letter “v” in the word “זכרו” has special significance and much can be expounded upon that letter. So, what indeed is that letter meant to teach us?

R’ Hersh Domaluk *shlita* explains that *Chazal* often say that although a Jew has the right to defend himself when attacked, physical weaponry and violence is not to be a Jew’s first response. Rather, when confronted with hardship, the Jewish people possess and are always meant to employ the greatest weapon of all – the *Torah*.

In *Lashon HaKodesh* the words used to describe conventional weaponry is “כלי זיין” and as such it is possible to say that while exhorting *Klal Yisroel* to “remember the *Torah of Moshe*,” *Malachi* was inferring that when faced with adversity a Jew should employ the power of the “v” from the word “זיכרו”, the holy *Torah*, which can be used as a “כלי זיין” – a weapon, to “fight” on our behalf.

ושב הכהן ביום השביעי וראה והנה פשה הנגע בקירת הבית ... (ד-לג)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT”L

מחשבת הלב

The *Netziv*, in his classic work *Haamek Davar*, notes an interesting difference between the *posukim*. The *posuk* discussing the *tzaraas* of the body and clothing uses a *lashon* of “אם פשה” or “כי פשה” connoting the possibility of it not spreading. Whereas by the house, it says “והנה” implying that it will spread. Why? He quotes the **Zohar Hakadosh** who illuminates why new stones had to be brought, and it wouldn’t suffice to simply scrub the old ones clean. The *Zohar* writes that the foundation of a home must be pure, and must be based on *Torah* and *kedushah*. It would seem that this particular house, plagued by *tzaraas*, was flawed at its very core. Hence, new stones had to be prepared to rectify its *yesod*. Therefore, says the *Netziv*, when *tzaraas habayis* crops up, the chance of it spreading is much greater. Thus, the *posuk* wrote “והנה” and not just “אם”.

However, even after the owner sees a נגע, all is not lost and he should not be מייאש. For that, one must take a look at an inspiring **Seforno**. The *Torah* says “ופנו את הבית בטרם יבא הכהן” and the *Seforno* writes that the *kohen* should not come earlier than the proscribed time, in order to give the owner time to do *teshuvah*, and for he and the *kohen* to *daven*. In other words, although all seems lost and the foundation of his home is lacking “stability,” through a few moments of introspection and heartfelt *tefillah*, he can transform his home into a bastion of purity. The *Seforno* cites a *medrash* which points out that destroying and remodeling the house is a hint to the *churban* of the *Batei Mikdash*. And, he concludes, the purification of the house symbolizes the rebuilding of the third *Bais HaMikdash*, *sheyibaneh v’sichonein bimheira biyameinu*.

Shabbos Hagadol is the perfect time to reinforce our own homes with *Torah*, *teshuva*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*, solidifying and purifying our foundation, the *yesod* upon which we all build, so that we may merit אב”ב הפסחים ומן הזבחים וכן הפסחים ב”ב.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם ... (ד-לד)

משל: IDT Corporation is a large company in the telecom business. In the year 2000, it completed the purchase of Winstar Communications, another huge telecommunication company in the industry, in the fervent hope of using a portion of their up-to-date technology to improve the way their phone service is transmitted.

However, things did not go as planned and as the years went by, the first generation of cell phone service was announced, rendering IDT’s technology virtually useless. To make matters worse, this company held one of the largest portfolios of wireless spectrum licenses. According to the FCC, valuable spectrum that is not used within a timely manner, is subject to a fine. Tens of millions in fines!

Frustrating months went by with the executives at IDT trying desperately to figure out a way to make use of the

valuable licenses that they possessed.

Meanwhile, the 5G network was announced and a bidding war ensued to acquire IDT’s spectrum. After months of negotiating, AT&T settled for a bid of an exorbitant \$1.25 billion - only to be outbid by Verizon for a staggering \$3.1 billion. It was amazing! IDT’s perceived loss became their biggest gain, by a long shot.

משל: When the Jewish people entered *Eretz Yisroel*, they were told that some houses would be inflicted with *tzaraas* but they would find treasures when dismantling the house.

R’ Moshe Feinstein ז”ל explains this paradox as follows: A person whose home was inflicted with *tzaraas* was indeed deserving of both the punishment and the benefit. *Hashem* would have provided him the money in a more pleasant fashion but apparently, he also sinned. Therefore, while rejoicing in the newfound riches, he must try to repent and not allow himself to be distracted by the good tidings.

הנה אנכי שלח את אליה הנביא לפני כוה יום ה' הגדול והנורא ... (הפטרות לשבת הגדול)

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

דרגה יתירה

There is a controversy in the *Gemara* when the world was created. In *Tishrei* or in *Nissan*? The problem is resolved by explaining that both are true. The world was created in *Tishrei* in thought, and the world was created in *Nissan* in action. In *Tishrei* we come close to *Hashem* through *yirah*. The days of *Tishrei* are called *Yamim Noraim* and we spend a lot of time doing *Teshuva* and making a *Cheshbon Hanefesh*. It is a time of great *machshava*. The world and every individual is recreated in thought. *Nissan*, however, is a time of action. The world of nature is reborn and the world is blossoming.

We, too, have this power to renew ourselves through action. The physical activity in *Nissan* stimulates great change in ourselves to become better Jews. It is not so much our thoughts, but rather the actions that we do that change us into true *ovdei Hashem*. And of course, deep down in our hearts, we know that all the scrubbing and the exaggerated cleaning is because on *Pesach* even a crumb of *chometz* is forbidden. During the year we have concepts of “*batul b’shishim*” and “*batul b’rov*” but on *Pesach* we follow extra stringencies in *halacha* because even one tiny crumb of *chometz* is *assur*. Why are we so *makpid*?

Because all this “activity” is really a battle against the *Satan*. How do we fight? By cleaning and scrubbing and getting rid of every morsel of *chometz* in our homes. If *Tishrei* is the time of *machshava* when we come to *Hashem* with *yiras shomayim*, *Nissan* is the time of action, when we come close to *Hashem* with love. In order to express our *ahava* to *Hashem*, we don’t just think about it. We act upon it. We renew ourselves, we re“JEW”venate our relationship with *Hashem* through our actions!

Chazal say: “*Adam nifal kfi peulosav*” a person is created through his actions. It is our vigorous cleaning of every nook and cranny in our homes that defines our essence as a Jew who is willing to work hard to do the will of *Hashem*. It is all the physical activity that has an effect on who we really are and transforms us into Jews who wish to serve *Hashem* with love.