

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם איש כי תשמה אשתו ומעלה בו מעל ... (ה-יב)

In the annals of historical Galician *Rabbanim*, one name stands out as a symbol of great scholarship and leadership. A *mechaber* (author) of close to ten *seforim*, each one a masterpiece itself, **R' Yosef Teumim ז"ל**, otherwise known throughout the *Torah* world as the **Pri Megadim**, merited to write his commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* and have it accepted on all levels. While still a young man, he succeeded his father as a *maggid shiur* in the *Lemberg Yeshivah*, eventually becoming *Rosh Yeshivah* and *Rav* in Lemberg. But his life wasn't easy, and poverty reigned supreme in his household.

Even before he took over his father's position, he earned a meager income as a *melamed*, teaching a small group of boys in his home. The money earned was minimal and his wife suffered from their lack of income. She would complain to him that they could not properly clothe and feed their children and she was usually in a general state of discontent. R' Yosef, on the other hand, never lost his *emunah* and *bitachon*, and subsided on whatever he managed to earn from teaching his charges.

One day, his wife had had enough. Her lot was bitter and she could not continue managing this way. As R' Yosef sat in the back room swaying over his *sefer* as he taught his small group of children, she suddenly burst into the room and began yelling on the top of her lungs, "My father married me off to a top *bochur* named Yosef. He believed that this *bochur* would take care and support his daughter. But he never fathomed that his daughter would become the wife of a *cheder rebbi*, a pauper like you, who cannot even put a slice of bread on the table to feed his family!" With that, she stared at her husband accusingly for a few extra seconds, finally storming out of the room and slamming the door.

The young children looked down at the floor, unsure of how to act, not fully comprehending what had just transpired. R' Yosef, for his part, never uttered a word in reply. He would never dare argue with his wife nor contradict her for he knew that she was right. He just sat there and accepted her harangue with a bowed head. Softly, he muttered that *Hashem* will surely see to their needs and they will have food and sustenance in due time. But his wife had already stormed out and could not hear his words of consolation. Either way, she didn't appear to be open to listening to him at this time.

With a sigh, he stood up and said to his *talmidim*, with a smile, "Everything has a purpose. Now, I can finally understand the meaning of the *Tosefta* in the second *perek* of *Maseches Kiddushin*." The children looked on respectfully as their *rebbe* explained, "The *Tosefta* cites a case there whereby a man says to a woman, '*Harei at mekudeshes li* - You are consecrated to me on the condition that I am Yosef,' and it turns out that his name is Yosef Shimon, they are not consecrated in marriage. Many of the commentators are puzzled by this: what is wrong with what he said? After all, his name really is Yosef, so why should they not be *mekudeshes*? This is a deep and intricate *sugya* in *shas* and not something to be understood readily.

"However, after what my wife just said when she came in here before, I think I might have a new understanding. When she agreed to marry me, she was under the impression that she was marrying a 'top *bochur* Yosef.' This brings to mind *Yosef Hatzaddik* and all the blessings that *Yaakov Avinu* heaped upon him and his children. Yosef was also the second in command under Pharaoh, the *Torah* calls him '*Mashbir*' - the one who was so wealthy that he supported most of the world at the time. Apparently, she married me with a different impression in mind...

"On the other hand, *Chazal* tell us that *Shevet Shimon* served as the *melamdim* - the grade school teachers who educated the youth of *Bnei Yisroel*. Additionally, *Shevet Shimon* was exceedingly poor, they were by far the most indigent of all the tribes. Therefore, what the *Tosefta* is teaching us is similar to what my wife was saying. If a woman is supposed to marry a 'Yosef' - a man who is blessed with so many qualities and riches, but in the end, he is nothing more than a 'Shimon' - a poor and downtrodden teacher, she had every right to be upset with the *shidduch*." In his humility and brilliance, the *Pri Megadim* was able to learn up the "*sugya*" of his marriage, taking full responsibility for his lack of supporting his wife and children.

ועתה אל תשתין יין ושכר ואל תאכלי כל ממהא כי נזיר אלקים יהיה הנזיר ... (שופטים יג-י)
A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

The concept of a *Nazir* is one of abstinence. In this week's *Haftorah* the birth of *Shimshon HaGibbor* is discussed. **R' Shimshon Pincus ז"ל** says that in world history there were a handful of people who saw their calling in life as a way of "קיום העולם" - keeping the world in a perpetual state of existence, and while they were given extra divine strength to achieve their lofty goals, they were still privy to the one impediment that applies to all of humankind – the trait of desire. Nevertheless, *Chazal* state that there is but one way to neutralize the power of desire, and that is through the study of *Torah* which gives the world its purpose and is the most important foundational principle of all.

R' Shimshon explains that *Shimshon HaGibbor* was one of

those special people, but by some measure which we cannot understand, he lacked the protection of the *Torah* due to his "not expounding on a piece of the *Torah* properly." While this is left cloaked in ambiguity, it brings to light an important concept: regardless of one's extra spiritual ambitions, one must never forget that what *Hashem* wants the most from us is to study and follow His holy *Torah* properly.

Correction: In our last issue, it was mistakenly written that *Chavakuk HaNavi* was directed by *Hashem* to marry a harlot. We apologize for this oversight and misinformation and hope to set the record straight, for while this did not occur with *Chavakuk*, it did indeed transpire with *Hoshea HaNavi* and is mentioned in the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Bamidbar*.

ויקריבו נשיאי ישראל ראשי בית אבתם הם נשיאי המטות הם העומדים על הפקדים ... (ב-ו)

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

מחשבת הלב

The words "הם נשיאי המטות" seem rather superfluous. Do we not already know the job description of the *nesi'im*, the princes of *Bnei Yisroel*? They were already outlined in the previous *parsha*. What is the reason for the *Torah* defining them again?

Rashi is perhaps bothered by this question too, and explains as follows: In *Mitzrayim*, these *nesi'im* bore the brunt of the Egyptians' wrath. They accepted the blows of the wicked taskmasters, being hit themselves with sticks, מטות, rather than them allowing their brethren to be hit. They were, as a result, rewarded, and chosen to lead their respective *shevatim*. A fine *middah* indeed, but why is this the introduction to these *nesi'im* bringing their *korbanos*?

Based on the following point of the **Seforno**, we can better understand this. He writes that because of their leadership position, the *nesi'im* felt the responsibility to ensure that their *shevatim* attain forgiveness via the *korbanos*. In other words, they assumed the role of leadership which entails taking care of the needs of the masses. Hence, says the *posuk*, this unbelievable sense of mission and empathy was a long-standing trait of theirs going back to their days in *Mitzrayim*. There too, they shielded the people by receiving punishment themselves. Accordingly, we might suggest an alternative *p'shat* for the words, "הם נשיאי המטות". They, as leaders, "carry" the people - the *matos*. Throughout the millennium, *Klal Yisroel's* leaders have faithfully shouldered the burden of their flock. A number of articles have recently been published regarding *petiros* of several such worthy *Torah* luminaries. Though they were representative of a wide spectrum of world Jewry, there was also a common thread shared amongst them. They were *Torah* giants of humility and responsibility, יהי זכרם ברוך.

May all of us aspire to follow in their footsteps, acting as נשיאי המטות - constantly looking to help others carry their burden.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ועבר עליו רוח קנאה וקנא את אשתו ... (ה-ד)

משל: **R' Reuven Elbaz שליט'א**, *Rosh Yeshivas Ohr Hachayim in Yerushlayim*, once told over a fascinating story. Two old bed-ridden patients were laying in a hospital room together. To pass the time, they would tell each other stories and reminisce on their past life. One morning, realizing there was a window in the room, the patient further away requested of his newfound friend to tell him what's going on outside. "Must be wonderful to see everything," he added.

"Indeed" replied the other, "it's a beautiful, sunny day. The hustle and bustle of business is in full swing. You can practically feel the energy that's being generated."

The afternoon scenario was similar. "Now the parks are overrun with energy, with young playful children and big kids on their bicycles." At night the show played its final act with mothers bringing their children inside and the picture-

perfect sunset. This happened every day.

After a while, the other patient was burning with jealousy. How he wished he could also see everything. Then one day the fellow near the window began to choke and turned blue. With waning energy, he attempted to reach for his button to call a nurse, but he wasn't able. Seeing a chance to finally move to the window, the man in the next bed watched him pass away instead of pressing his own button.

When he finally got moved to the window, however, he was in for a horrifying shock. There was a big brick wall opposite the window! Apparently, his friend had created a series of entertaining stories for his own good - to help keep his imagination stimulated.

נמשל: The story of a *sotah* is a story of jealous character. This is why she must bring a מנחת קנאות - a jealousy offering. If only she would realize that what she has is the best for her, she would never get herself into such terrible trouble.

ואיש את קרשני לו יהיו איש אשר יתן לכהן לו ידה ... (ה-ה)

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

דרגה יתירה

Rashi tells us the connection between the *mitzvah* of giving the *kohen* his 24 priestly gifts (מתנת כהונה) and the *parsha* of *Sotah*: "If a man refrains from bringing the special gifts to the *kohen*, in the end he will wind up bringing his wife to the *kohen* as a *sotah*." What is the message here? Does the punishment truly fit the crime?

R' Avraham Pam ז"ל explains that if we do not give the *rabbanim*, teachers and *morahs* of our children the respect and honor they deserve, in the end WE will suffer. Our own children will lose their faith in *Torah* leaders. When children hear their parents speak negatively about *Gedolim*, *Roshei Yeshivos*, and any *Torah* figure, it automatically sends a negative message to their brains and they say: "If I don't have to listen to THEM, then I don't have to listen to YOU!" You are in fact doing yourself in by not giving *Torah* leaders and teachers their due respect. When children *r"l* throw off the yoke of *Torah* and *mitzvos*, it is because a tiny negative seed was planted in their minds which grew and developed into a giant tree of doubt and confusion.

Perhaps the removal of the head-covering of the *sotah* is the equivalent of one who removes his connection to *Torah* and *mitzvos*. This can happen from not giving the *Kohanim* their rightful gifts! The *kohanim*, the holiest among the Jewish people, must not be marginalized. Our children's *Rebbis* and *Morahs* should be spoken about and to with the greatest respect. This is the most wonderful gift we can give them. It is also a gift we give our children and the most important gift we give ourselves. Because the day might come that you will need to bring your son or daughter to a *Torah* authority to help make an important decision in life, and if you have spoken against the *Rav* or *Rebbeitzin*, you can be sure they will have no influence on your child.

Dear parents, we have just accepted the *Torah* with the famous words "*Na'aseh v'Nishma*." Let us accept our *Gedolim*, leaders and those who teach *Torah* with the same devotion, commitment and faith.