

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

כי יהיה בך אביון מאחד אחיך ... לא תאמין את לבבך ולא תקפין את ירך מאחד האביון וגו' (טו-ו)

A beggar once came to the door of a young Jewish couple, who were recently married. Just minutes before, the husband and wife had sat down to their noonday meal. The husband, a wealthy merchant, closed his business every day at noon and returned home for a sumptuous lunch. Prepared with love and care, his wife always tried to make his lunch break as pleasant as possible before he returned to work. The couple had not been married long, and in truth, they did not know much about each other's past. The husband hadn't been born into a wealthy home, but he was a modest and kindly man. All the wife knew for sure was that her husband had once been a poor man, but the wheel of fortune had turned and he was now the proprietor of a successful business. Yet despite his newfound riches, the husband had continued to lead a simple life. Generous and giving, the memory of his own misfortune drove him to dispense *Tzedakah* liberally to anyone who asked for help.

The knock on the door that day had been nothing out of the ordinary. Poor people were always coming to ask for a donation, and those collecting money for a good cause knew they would be well received. But this time, the voice on the other side of the door had been especially pitiful. "Please, please have pity on a poor Jew," the pauper had pleaded desperately. "It's been days since I've had anything to eat. Please give me a crust of bread. I ask for nothing more."

The sound of that tormented voice had immediately reminded the husband of his own past suffering, and his appetite had fled. Without hesitation, he told his wife to invite the beggar in and give him his entire plate of food. Happily surprised, the beggar ran straight to the table and quickly devoured the meal, the whole time thanking and blessing his benefactors.

After the man had left their home, the husband was surprised to see how agitated his wife had become. But why was she so upset? He knew she was a generous soul, so it couldn't be the food that he had given away.

In response to his gentle questioning the wife broke down. "I'm sorry," she apologized, "but I was suddenly reminded of my former life in Cairo, Egypt, before I was married to you. Like you, my first husband was a very rich man, and I also used to cook for him the most delicious meals. He, too, would close his store and come home for lunch.

"Hashem blessed my husband with great wealth, and his business dealings were very successful. Unfortunately, my husband had one bad character trait that ruined his life: he was extremely stingy. He was so unwilling to help the poor that he forbade me to give them food or drink if they came to the door. It bothered me very much, but I wanted to preserve peace in the home and obeyed his wishes. Eventually we earned a reputation for being miserly. Beggars would cross the street rather than knock on our door. It pained me greatly, but what could I do? I was trying to please my husband." She stifled a cry.

"One day at lunchtime there was a knock on the door. I can still see my husband, having just taken his first bite of bread. 'Who's there?' he called out. 'I am a poor Jew,' was the answer. 'Please help me. I haven't eaten in many days, and I am about to expire from hunger.' This did not soften his heart. My husband had only become angry. 'Go away!' he shouted at the intruder who dared to interrupt his meal. 'These impudent beggars won't even let a person eat in peace...' He then slammed the door in the poor man's face. I burst into tears." The wife looked stricken as she recalled the incident. "From that day on my husband's business began to falter. One loss followed another until all the money was gone. Even the house was lost to creditors, and we were left with nothing. At that point my husband insisted that we divorce, and we each went our separate ways."

The husband rushed to console his wife. But she insisted on finishing her story and explaining why she became so agitated. "It was rumored that he had become a pauper and a beggar. I never saw my first husband again. That is, until today," the woman said. "Do you know who that poor man was who just left our house? It was my first husband!"

The husband's eyes filled with tears. He too was moved to the depths of his soul. "As a matter of fact, my dear," he replied, "I recognized him. And I myself was the beggar he turned away from the door that fateful day..." (Adapted from L'Chayim Weekly Publication)

Since *Shabbos* falls out on *Rosh Chodesh*, the *Haftorah* from the *Haftorah* is suspended and the *Haftorah* of *Shabbos Rosh Chodesh* is read instead. In it, *Yeshaya HaNavi* declares: "It will then come to pass that every *Rosh Chodesh* and every *Shabbos* all mankind will come to bow before Me, says Hashem." But is it possible to say that every single *Shabbos* and *Rosh Chodesh* each and every person would come to the *Bais HaMikdash* to bow before Hashem?

R' Avraham ben Meir, Ibn Ezra ז"ל explains that when stating the above, *Yeshaya HaNavi* specifically used the words "מדי חדש בחדשי" since the word "מדד" has nearly the same meaning as the words "בכל עת" which means whenever. The Ibn Ezra brings a proof to his point by quoting the words

of the *Navi* which describes *Elisha HaNavi's* frequent trips to the city of Shunam by stating: "... *and whenever he passed by*" (*Melachim II 4:8*). By *Elisha* the word "מדד" meant whenever and as such it is plausible to say that *Yeshaya's* statement had the same connotation.

R' Chaim Kanievsky ז"ל therefore explains that *Yeshaya HaNavi* surely meant that in the future when *Mashiach* comes and the *Bais HaMikdash* will once again be the epicenter of the world, all of *Klal Yisroel* who will be living in *Eretz Yisroel* and close to *Yerushalayim*, will make the trip to the holy temple on *Shabbos* and *Rosh Chodesh* as often as they can to bow before Hashem.

May he come speedily and in our days.

את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת תאכלו ... (ד-ט)

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

מחשבת הלב

I saw a beautiful *vort* in the name of **Hagaon Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ז"ל**. The *Gemara (Kiddushin 29a)* says that a father is obligated to teach his son *Torah*, as well as a profession, and some say he must also teach him how to swim. The question arises: why is it imperative to teach one's son aquatic skills more than teaching him to defend himself against attackers and bandits who may roam the streets? Isn't this lesson just as important as knowing how to swim?

Rav Elyashiv explained that the term "swimming" connotes more than just floating. Even a log can stay afloat. Yet, it will still get swept away by the current and tossed to and fro. Swimming, on the other hand, entails going against the tide. The *Gemara* is teaching us a deeper meaning in a father's obligations to his child. A father must instill in his child the *keilim*, the tools, needed not to just merely exist in life going, with the flow. Children must also be imbued with confidence and the perseverance needed, not to succumb to peer pressure, but rather to swim against the current towards his correct and proper destination in life, even if it means "swimming" against the popular and pervasive societal norms.

Klal Yisroel is likened to fish. "וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ" - Kosher fish must have both fins and scales. Scales are its outer protection, like the *Torah* is a protection to us and it is always protecting us. Fins are the limbs needed to enable a fish to swim in any direction it chooses, even if it must do so against the current. Whereas a fish that has no fins and scales and just exists, floating along with no clear direction, moves to wherever the current sends it. That fish is deemed non-kosher.

May we all internalize this lesson, ensuring that our "fins and scales" are secure and intact, so that both we and our children can, *b'siyata d'shmaya*, safely navigate today's tidal waves at sea that are constantly threatening to engulf us.

משל למה הדבר דומה

נתון תתן לו ולא ידע לבבך בתתך לו ... (טו-ו)

משל: Two families, the Horowitzs and Itzkowitzs, made a *shidduch* with their children and the local townspeople could hardly wait for the wedding. As the two wealthiest families in town, this was sure to be an event you didn't want to miss!

Two weeks before the wedding, Mr. Horowitz receives an urgent message that Mr. Itzkowitz's factory just burned down, and all his money was gone. Now he is not exactly the richest man in town anymore - to say the least. Shocked, Mr. Horowitz didn't waste a moment and hurried to the Rabbi's home. "The wedding is off," he cried, "If Mr. Itzkowitz can't pay his share of the deal, I can't do such a *shidduch*!"

The Rabbi thought for a moment. "Okay, not a problem," he replied, "but now is *erev Shabbos*. Come back after *Shabbos* and we'll discuss." Well, if the Rabbi said it's not a problem, then he has nothing to worry about. *Shabbos* was relaxed.

Immediately after *Shabbos*, Mr. Horowitz hurried to the Rabbi's home together with Mr. Itzkowitz to discuss the details. After hearing both sides, the Rabbi declared: "Mr. Horowitz should pay for both sides of the wedding!" Mr. Horowitz was stumped. What kind of deal was this?

"Yes," explained the Rabbi, with a great deal of patience. "You have good luck - your factory didn't burn down. Now you should show some gratitude to Hashem that you can afford the expenses and pay for the entire wedding!"

נטל: The world is a cycle, explains the **Kli Yakar**. Some people get rich while others remain poor; and then the tide turns. Money disappears from wealthy families while the more needy get rich. This is to stand as a constant reminder for us that this world is only temporary - nothing lasts forever. For this reason the *Torah* tells us that one should give readily to charity and in return, Hashem will bless him and his children. The tide will keep turning in his benefit.

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה (א-כו)

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

דרגה יתירה

Moshe Rabbeinu tells *Klal Yisroel*, "Look, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse." Every moment of life is an opportunity. The same situation can be a blessing or it can be a curse! It all depends on what you choose to see. It is your attitude in life that will determine your altitude in life!

The **Pele Yoetz** gives us a fascinating understanding here. He explains that the "blessing" and the "curse" are located inside of us! We are all made up of two parts. The body is the curse since it is pulling us in the wrong direction. The body only wants physical pleasure and material gain. It wants comfort and pleasure and those who are governed by their bodies are really living a life of "curse." They are missing the whole purpose of real LIFE! The body, however, is the only possible casement for the *neshama*. The *neshama* can only thrive in a body and a body can only function with a *neshama*. They need each other! And we need them both - in order to test us. So that we can get *schar* and reward in this world for making the right choice. Every moment can be utilized for *beracha* or *chas v'shalom*, for *klala* - a curse. It all depends on what we choose to LIVE for.

R' Noach Weinberg ז"ל would often say that the way to determine if we are making the right choice is by viewing every situation as one of comfort vs. growth. When I am confronted with a dilemma, should I go or should I stay? Should I say it or not? What should I do? Whenever you find yourself asking this question, stop for a minute and ask yourself a different question: Is this the comfortable choice or not? Am I just doing what is easy for me or is it really a benefit? If not, then that is the wrong choice. It is the more difficult decision that will eventually lead you to growth.

Growth is *beracha*! We have all come here for the purpose of growing and becoming closer to Hashem. The only way that will happen, however, is with hard work. By taking the easy way out, we will achieve the opposite of true blessing, *r'l*.