

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

עתה שמע בקלי איעצך ויהי אלקים עמך היה אתה לעם מול האלקים והבאת אתה את הדברים אל האלקים ... (ה-ה) (ט)

R' Meir Premishlaner ז"ל once commented, "I had a dream, and in it I was waiting for entry to the World to Come. As I waited, a man came and asked to be admitted. He was asked why he should be admitted and replied: 'I spent all my life studying *Torah*, and acquired a great deal of *Torah* knowledge.' He was told, 'Wait until we evaluate whether your *Torah* study was done out of pure intentions.' Along came another man, and he said: 'I spent my time praying with great *kavanah*.' He was told, 'Wait until we see whether your prayers were made with the proper intentions.' Then a simple man came along and told them: 'I spent my time helping others in need.' He was admitted immediately into *Gan Eden*. After all, whatever his intentions, those in need had been helped. And that was when I decided to devote my life to help others in need," he concluded.

A poor man once came to R' Meir and said to him, "*Rebbe*, I have three daughters of marriageable age, but I have absolutely no money to pay for their dowries, and without a dowry no man will be willing to marry them. I cannot stand the idea of them growing old without marrying. I've reached the end of my rope. I will not budge until you help me."

R' Meir looked at the heart-broken individual and asked him what he did for a living. The man said, "I make a small amount of money by going to different farms, buying pig bristles, and reselling them in the city."

"And how much merchandise do you have right now?" asked R' Meir. "About twenty rubles worth," answered the man.

"Take all your merchandise, and go to Lvov," R' Meir instructed him. "Sell all the bristles, and with that money I want you to buy the first thing that is offered to you." The man did as told, and sold his merchandise for forty rubles. Now he looked around for something to buy, but as he was dressed in rags, all the merchants simply ignored him.

Finally, as nightfall approached, he found himself outside the store window of a wealthy merchant. He stared at the fancily decorated window, not knowing what to do. As he stood there, the merchant was closing up. He came outside and saw the poor man staring at his pricey display and knew he could not afford anything. The merchant decided to have a bit of fun.

"Do you want to buy from me?" he asked. "Yes," replied the poor man, "I'm willing to buy anything you offer to sell me."

The merchant couldn't resist the temptation and told the man, "I've got a great deal for you. Give me all your money, and I'll sell you my place in the World to Come." Remembering the *Rebbe's* words, the poor man agreed to the sale. He handed over the forty rubles, and in return received a note from the merchant selling him his place in the World to Come. As soon as the poor man left, the merchant and his workers all had a good laugh, as they divided up the spoils among them.

Soon enough, the story spread, and the merchant was told, "You are going to kill your business if this deal remains intact. If, indeed, as you believe, there is no World to Come, by your actions you cheated a poor man out of his money, and are an untrustworthy person with whom no one will do business. If, on the other hand, there is a World to Come, you sold your share in it for a pittance and are a very poor businessman - why would anyone want to do business with a poor businessman?"

Later, when the merchant returned home, he found that the door to his home had been locked by his wife, a pious person who had been taken aback tremendously by her husband's actions. "You have two choices," she told him. "Either you bring me the document of sale you gave the poor man, or you give me a *get* - a bill of divorce."

Realizing the trouble he had gotten himself into, the merchant started looking for the poor man. He found him and offered double and then triple what he had paid, but the poor man refused to sell the note back. He was told by R' Meir to buy the first thing offered to him, and this was the first thing. Seeing that the poor man was unbending, the merchant suggested that they return to R' Meir and hear his verdict. R' Meir heard the entire story and then ruled, "The poor man has an absolute right to the document you gave him of your own free will, and for which you were paid. He has three daughters who need dowries. Offer him the cost of the three dowries, and I'm sure he'll accept." The rich man had no option other than to pay the dowries.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

The *Haftorah* details how *Yeshaya HaNavi* beheld a vision of *Hashem* seated atop a lofty throne, the holy *Merkava* (chariot), in the year of the death of King *Uziyahu* of *Malchus Yehuda*. While the vision is awe-inspiring, what does it have to do with the death of King *Uziyahu*?

R' Eliyahu Evron ז"ל (Yosef Ometz) says that *Chazal* note how the *Shoftim* who led *Klal Yisroel* were often less than desirable. Some were boorish with no *Torah* knowledge. Others had limited *Torah* knowledge but were hardened warriors who glorified war and fighting over spirituality. *Chazal* explain that when *Klal Yisroel* is doing the *mitzvos* and learning *Torah* properly, they will merit leaders befitting their elevated status. But when *Klal Yisroel* falters, their leaders

will reflect this level as well. However, *Chazal* note that a leader, even one not considered the loftiest, nevertheless has the ability to lead his generation to *Torah* and *mitzvos*, and if he manages to uplift himself and his people, *Hashem's* joy will be immense, and the merit is that much greater.

King *Uziyahu* was a unique *tzaddik* who reigned in tumultuous times. Nevertheless, he managed to create one of the greatest restorations of holiness, second only to King *Yoshiyahu*, throughout *Eretz Yisroel* and *Klal Yisroel* prospered tremendously. Thus, the fact that *Yeshaya HaNavi* merited to experience such a vision of *Hashem* was primarily due to the righteousness of King *Uziyahu*. For this reason, the *Navi* added a seemingly innocuous fact at the beginning of the *Haftorah*.

ויקרא אליו ה' מן ההר לאמר כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל ... (ב-ב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZTL

מחשבת הלב

There's a well-known **Rashi** on this *posuk* which says that *Hashem* instructed *Moshe Rabbeinu* to speak to the women softly, תגיד - בלשון קשה, and only afterwards, to the men in stronger terms, the women be spoken to first. The **Beis Halevi ז"ל** explains the reason based on a concept from the *Gemara*. There are times when a transaction, a sale, can be legally voided if the seller, a married woman, says I didn't really mean it. The only reason I sold is because of "נחת רוח עשיתי לבעלי" - I only did it to please my husband. Thus, *Moshe* spoke to the women first. Had *Moshe* gone to the women after the men, the fact that they said "Yes" wouldn't be binding. For at a later date they could excuse themselves by saying "נחת רוח עשיתי לבעלי", thus nullifying the sale.

I saw another explanation from the **Sefer Har Tzvi** by **R' Tzvi Pesach Frank ז"ל**. He brings down a question from **Rabbeinu Bachya** who asks as follows: Why does the *Torah* write "ותגיד" with a *yud*, and not "ותגד"? Another question he asks is, why does the *Torah* conclude with the words, "אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל בני ישראל"?

He answers that an *אשה* has the power to influence her husband to reach greater heights. On the flip side, she could possibly have a negative effect on him. *Moshe Rabbeinu* knew that these women will propel their families to spiritually soar. He told them first and then said, "You go now and tell your husbands about the imminent *Kabbolas HaTorah*. When they see how passionate you are about it, they will vigorously agree and forge on." This is the power of our *Kabbolas HaTorah* - a unified commitment, a mutual agreement - by men and women alike. Each committed to helping one another. The *posuk* therefore states: *Hashem* tells *Moshe* "כה תאמר לבית יעקב" - Tell the women. And afterwards, "ותגיד" - they, the women, should go ahead and tell the men. Only after that was *Moshe* to instruct the men. "אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל בני ישראל".

משל למה הדבר דומה

ואשם אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואבא אתכם אלי ... (ז-ד)

משל: The eagle took off from her nest on a cliff's edge as she begins her flight. She spreads her graceful wings as she soars above the land. The houses and buildings become smaller; the marketplaces and eventually even the skyscrapers became mere pinpricks. She watches the hustle and bustle fade to nothing as she peacefully flies on her way.

However, she too, must find food to survive. Her peaceful flight is not a pleasure trip; it is a hunt for survival. She scouts every corner of civilization from her vantage point up high for food to feed herself and her young ones.

At last, she sees something! Her mind races at warp speed as she ponders the best course of action. Swiftly, she swoops down between trees, back to the buildings and eventually between the people. Hoping nobody is paying attention to

her, she reaches out and grabs the few morsels of delicacies lying on the ground. Success! Her act went unnoticed!

Glancing in both directions, she again spreads out her graceful wings and gives a flap ... she is back in-flight. She soars above the land and back to her fledglings. She feeds them and cares for them, as she watches them with pride. Now it's time to take a nap. The eagle has landed!

נמשל: When a person walks out of the *Beis Medrash* and sees the hustle and bustle of mankind, he may wonder what he is accomplishing by sitting in the *Beis Medrash*. He's not making money or amassing wealth. His accomplishments seem so small compared to the successful entrepreneurs of the big world. The answer is that he is the eagle. He accomplishes far greater tasks by soaring peacefully above the busy world. One day he will be shown his nest - with much more provisions than all the businessmen in the world!

וישמע יתרו כהן מדין דתן משה את כל אשר עשה אלקים למשה ול ישראל עמו ... (ח-א)

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

דרגה יתירה

What was it that caused *Yisro* to pick himself up and join the Jewish people? *Yisro* had been searching for the truth for years. **Rashi** tells us that two incidents were the straws that broke the camel's back: *Krias Yam Suf* and *Milchemes Amalek*.

The *seforim* tell us that after *Krias Yam Suf*, *Yisro* had already come to the truth. He had already decided in his mind that *Hashem* is the One and only G-d and *Torah* is the only truth. But he remained in his land of Midian, serving *Hashem* from there. However, when he heard that *Amalek* attacked the Jewish people, he was aghast. He said to himself, if the entire world experienced the miracle of *Krias Yam Suf*, then *Amalek* was not an exception. If they could attack the Jewish people after experiencing such an open expression of *Hashem's* love and protection for His people, then I better not rely on my own inspiration. Who knows, maybe I too will lose the incredible feeling I have, maybe the *yetzer hara* will get to me and I will lose all the truth I have discovered. I cannot do this ALONE. I need to be among the Jewish people. I need to have a teacher to guide me. I need constant learning and growing so that I will always be inspired to serve *Hashem* properly.

So *Yisro* picked himself up and joined the Jewish people. He made *Moshe* his *Rebbi* and was determined to *shteig* in learning and truly be the best Jew he could be. And this is how he turned his inspiration into reality. He understood that if he just stays where he is physically, he will not grow spiritually. So he picked himself up both physically and spiritually and was ready and willing to work hard, to change and grow so that he would truly be a full-fledged member of *Klal Yisroel*. He would not rely on himself to be strong in his beliefs. He was ready to do ANYTHING so that his inspiration would not only remain, but burst into a roaring and passionate real *avodas Hashem*. *Yisro* was *zoche* to have a *parsha* in the *Torah* named after him, the *parsha* of *Matan Torah* no less, not because of his inspiration but rather because of what he did with that Divine inspiration!