

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

לא תלך רכיל בעמך לא תעמד על דם רעך אני ה' ... (ש-טז)

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair *shlita* tells over the following story: In the bustling streets of Brooklyn during the 1970's, there lived a young couple who longed to have children. Their hearts ached as they witnessed their friends joyously celebrating their own growing families, but year after year, they remained childless. Desperate for a glimmer of hope, they sought the guidance of the **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson *zt"l***, seeking his blessings. With hopeful hearts, the couple came to the *Rebbe* in private, anticipation hanging in the air. However, the blessing they received was not what they had expected. Time passed, yet their prayers remained unanswered, and their pain deepened with every celebration they attended. Undeterred, the couple once again returned to the *Rebbe*, hoping for a breakthrough. This time, the *Rebbe's* words offered solace for every aspect of their lives, except for the one thing that meant the most to them - a child of their own. Determined to find answers, they asked for yet another private meeting with the *Rebbe* to help them understand.

As they entered the room, the weight of their struggle and unfulfilled longing bore down on them. Overwhelmed with emotion, the wife's tears flowed freely as she implored the *Rebbe* to explain to her why *Hashem* seemed to withhold the very thing they cherished and yearned for. She begged for guidance, a way to remove the burden they carried. The *Rebbe* paused, deep in thought, and then revealed that long ago, one of them had probably caused great pain to another person who had never forgiven them. To merit the blessings they sought, they would need to seek out this person and beg for his forgiveness.

Leaving the *Rebbe's* presence, the couple racked their minds, desperately trying to recall any incident that might have caused such harm. Suddenly, a memory flooded the husband's thoughts from his time as a young *yeshivah* student. Many years ago, during a bus trip, a devout young man who always kept a *nagel vasser* cup by his side had fallen asleep with it placed in a bowl on the seat next to him. The husband, in his youthful recklessness, thought the act of placing a *nagel vasser* on an empty seat was excessive. Seizing the opportunity for amusement, he hid the *nagel vasser*, oblivious to the anguish it would cause. Hours later, when the bus made a stop, the young man awoke and realized his *nagel vasser* was missing. Distraught, he pleaded with the other boys on the bus to return it to him, banging on the window in frustration. Laughter filled the air until the bus driver intervened, reminding them of kindness and instructing the perpetrator to return the *nagel vasser*. However, consumed by anger and hurt, the young man adamantly refused to forgive the other youth, declaring that he would never be *mochel* him, neither in this world nor the next.

Deeply remorseful and determined to make amends, the husband embarked on a search for the man he had wronged. It took a bit of time but he eventually located him in Brooklyn, still harboring the pain caused by the thoughtless act on the bus. Knocking on the man's door, the husband reached out to him, asking if he remembered the incident. Recognizing him, the man acknowledged the memory and affirmed his unwillingness to forgive. The pain was still too great and he could never forget the hurt he felt on that day. The husband explained their heartfelt desire for a child, pleading with the man to extend mercy, not for his sake but for the sake of his wife. However, the man remained unmoved by his pleas.

In a final attempt, the husband revealed that the *Lubavitcher Rebbe* himself had sent him. If not for the *Rebbe*, he explained, he would not be here now. These words carried great weight and significance. The offended man's hardened heart softened, and he uttered the words the couple longed to hear: "Yes, I will forgive you because of the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*."

A year later, their prayers were finally answered, and the couple welcomed their long-awaited child into the world. The joyous arrival served as a profound reminder of the importance of sensitivity and responsibility towards others' feelings. The couple understood the weight of their actions and the need to be mindful and considerate in every interaction, knowing that **even the smallest deeds can have far-reaching consequences.** (Adapted from *Stories to Inspire* - 718-400-7145 - Call Now & Be Inspired!)

תורת הצבי על הפטרות **A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAPTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN** **ואתה בן אדם התשפת את עיר הדמים ודוועתה את כל תועבותיה ... (הקלל כב-ב)**

Yechezkel HaNavi transmits *Hashem's* message, reminding *Klal Yisroel* how they forsook *Hashem* and served idols and transgressed the holy *Shabbos*. When listing a slew of capital sins committed by the Jewish people *Yechezkel* focused primarily on the sin of shedding innocent blood. Why is this?

Rabbeinu Bechaya *zt"l* explains that there are basically two categories of sin: crimes committed against *Hashem*, and crimes committed against fellow human beings. While the first category is indeed terrible since the sinner is sinning against *Hashem*, nevertheless, the Almighty judges a person harsher for the second category since crimes against another person is seen as an erosion of society, the very society that had been created by *Hashem*. In essence, the sinner in the

second category is also committing a crime against *Hashem*.

This, says *Chazal (Medrash Rabbah, Vayikra 33:3)*, is why the crime of robbery and murder is such a severe crime, for if a person is guilty of a whole cadre of sins, those which demand the most justice from *Hashem* are the crimes of robbery and murder. In fact, *Hashem's* decree to wipe out the *Dor HaMabul* was on account of their being guilty of robbery and indiscriminate lack of respect for other people's property.

Thus, even though *Yechezkel* listed a whole slew of crimes that *Klal Yisroel* were indeed guilty of, he nevertheless focused primarily on the sin of shedding blood since it is indicative of the complete erosion of society, and the sin *Hashem* was most angry about.

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה' ... (ש-טז)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPMAN *zt"l*

מחשבת הלב

There's a famous anecdote in the *Gemara (Shabbos 31a)* regarding a non-Jew who came to the Hillel wanting to convert to Judaism, on the condition that the Sage teach him the entire *Torah* "while I stand on one foot." Hillel, with his trademark patience and humility, responded; "דעלך סני, לחברך לא תעביד" - what you dislike others doing to you, do not do unto your friend. He continued, "זו היא כל התורה כולה" - this is actually the entire *Torah* you requested to be taught to you "ואידך פירושא זיל גומר" - the rest is commentary so go study it.

Numerous commentaries offer enlightenment as to this dialogue. The **Dvar Avraham *zt"l*** explains as follows: *Chazal* tell us that at *Matan Torah, Hashem* first asked each of the nations if they would accept the *Torah*. They each asked "מה בה" - what does it say therein? *Hashem* told each of them a commandment which runs contrary to that particular nation's DNA, and, of course, each declined its acceptance. The common thread in those commandments was - they were all directives. That was something that extended beyond their natural tendencies. Hence, when this prospective convert asked for the *Torah*, Hillel wisely responded with the classic representation of interpersonal *mitzvos* - "ואהבת לרעך כמוך". If, unlike his predecessors, he would be agreeable to that, he then stood a chance for *geirus*.

The question arises, what about the portion of the *Torah*? Why didn't Hillel discuss that aspect of *Avodas Hashem*? The following elucidation is quoted in the name of the **Chazon Ish *zt"l***. If one is able to overcome his nature and be *mevater* (relinquish his will) for another human being, then he will also be able to be *mevater* and live on a higher level with respect to *Hashem* as well. Thus the *בין אדם לחברו* is actually a litmus test for the *בין אדם למקום*.

May we all be *zoche* to succeed on both fronts with regard to *Avodas Hashem*, and bring Him *nachas* in these trying times.

משל למה הדבר דומה

והנפש אשר תפנה אל האבת ואל הדענים לונת אחריהם ... (כ-ז)
משל: Of the many leading rabbinic authorities today whom have warned the public against issues like "energy healing," **R' Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*** stood out as a forerunner, as is detailed in his acclaimed book on Alternative Medicine. In it, he relates the following episode:

"One practitioner told me the story of how he cured a child who had some kind of allergy, by pasting a piece of paper with a Japanese word on the milk bottle that the child had drank from. The Japanese word - who knows what it means - had an effect on the milk which, he alleged, carried with it the '*kishuf*' of the word, and actually healed the child of the allergy. 'It's true,' the practitioner affirmed. 'This is what happened, and I saw it myself!'

"I didn't believe one word he said. I told him, '*Reb Yid,*

whether your story is true or not, I don't know. But one thing, I do know: If my child was cured by having this Japanese *avodah zara* incantation inserted into his system, then what you did was take out the allergy and replace it with something a thousand times more harmful. You replaced it with something that's there to destroy his *neshama*! The child could live with an allergy, but once his soul is polluted with this terrible *avodah zara*, the harm you did to him is infinitely worse than the harm the allergy could have done."

משל: In today's day and age, it is hard to fathom the idea of reaching out to a higher "force." We seem to be too educated for that. However, with the resurgence of "energy forces," people suffering from acute problems that the medical world doesn't have a clear answer for can easily get attracted to it. This can lead a person down a path that the *Torah* clearly delineated that we as the chosen nation, should stay clear of.

דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת להם קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' ... (ש-טז)

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

דרגה יתירה

The famous **Rashi** on these words explain that "*Kedoshim Tihyu*" means "*Prushim min Ha'arayos*," separate from immoral acts. We must remain separate, entirely different from the rest of the world. We must realize we are separate and not try to copy the *goyim*. "*Min Ha'arayos*" means from immoral acts. Immoral acts come from selfishness. When a person is focused on their own base desires and tries to fulfill them. It is the egotistical and selfish acts of a person that take them away from holiness.

"*Anochi HaMavdil Baini Ubainachem*." It is the ANOCHI, the ego, the "I" that gets between us and *Hashem*. We often think of holiness as lofty and extremely spiritual acts of *bein adam lamakom*. We connect holiness with someone who *davens* with great *dveikus*, or someone who learns *Torah* with tremendous *hasmada*. We think holiness means dressing with many layers or shaking a *lulav* and *esrog* with lofty intentions. "*Kedoshim Tihyu*" means stop thinking about yourself and start thinking about others. Being holy means separating yourself from your SELF! Focusing on the needs and feelings of other people is step one to holiness. *Parshas Kedoshim* is filled with *mitzvos* that are between man and his fellow man. Honoring parents, not cheating, not stealing, not putting a stumbling block before a blind man, not hating your brother in your heart. Do not bear a grudge and do not take revenge, and show respect to an older person. And, of course, Love your fellow man as yourself! Every human being is starving for love and attention. We all want to be noticed, acknowledged and validated. When a person can rise above their own needs and focus on the feelings and inner desires of someone else, that is *Kedusha* - holiness.

Hashem Himself is constantly giving to us. He supplies the entire world with all of its needs and continues to bestow kindness upon us whether we deserve it or not. *Hashem's* kindness is not dependent on any condition. It is unconditional love. This is true *chessed* and when we act with unconditional love and kindness to others, we are truly emulating *Hashem*.