



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אם יקום ורתתלך בחיזו' על משענתו ונקח המכה רק שבתו יתן ורפא ירפא ... (כא-ט)

The following story took place just a few years ago and demonstrates the power of *Emunah* and *Chessed*, over the power of doctors and medicine. A dynamic *yungerman* lives in Lakewood today and learns in a number of *kollelim* throughout the day. For a few years, he was asked to deliver a *shiur* once a week to a small group of men in Brunswick, New Jersey, and he developed a warm bond with many of the *shiur's* participants. He encouraged them to draw closer to *Torah* and *mitzvos* and not only was he successful with many of the families, they trusted him and would often speak to him to gain *Torah* wisdom and advice. Unfortunately, when Covid-19 broke out in early 2020, and the world as we knew it shut down for all intents and purposes, the weekly *shiur* was neglected and the *maggid shiur* stopped driving out to the small community where he gave it. Some of the participants stayed in touch but many did not.

Over nine months later, the *yungerman* stopped by a local *sofer* and happened to run into one of his former Brunswick *shiur* participants. They hadn't seen each other for close to a year and the reunion was sincere and heartfelt.

“What brings you to Lakewood?” asked the *maggid shiur*, and the man's face instantly turned from a smile into a frown. He explained that just a few weeks ago, he had experienced unusual symptoms and when he went to the doctor for a checkup, the doctor confirmed that a huge cancerous mass was lodged in his brain and the prognosis was dire. The doctor gave him a maximum of six months to live and the man had gone home to his family crestfallen. He had so much to live for and was not prepared to die. He remembered that if a person is undergoing tribulations in his life, he should check his *mezuzos* and hopefully that might alleviate his problems. This is why he was currently at the *sofer* in Lakewood.

The *maggid shiur* had tears in his eyes; he could feel the man's pain. Suddenly, he stood up straight and said, “My friend, never give up! Let us go to a big *Tzaddik* and get a *beracha*. My *rebbe*, **R' Yitzchok Sorotzkin *shlita***, lives here in Lakewood and I want you to talk to him. He will give you *chizuk* and a blessing that all will be okay.” The man was eager to comply and right then and there, they got into the *maggid shiur's* car and drove to the home of Rav Sorotzkin.

Fortunately, R' Yitzchok was home and he received the visitors graciously. The *talmid* explained the situation in great detail and the *rebbe* listened quietly, stroking his long beard. Then, he looked at the man and asked him, “Tell me, what do you do for a living?” The man replied that he is a dentist. R' Yitzchok narrowed his eyes and asked, “As a dentist, do you work only to get paid and make money, or do you use your talents and abilities to help others, to do *cheded*?”

The man paused for a moment and then replied, “I actually do a lot of pro-bono work to help people in the community. Of course, I have to make a living, but I always look out to help others in need, whether dental or otherwise.”

R' Yitzchok smiled and asked, “I have one more question. Do you pray in a *shul* that tolerates talking during *davening* or is it a synagogue that is quiet? What about you? Do you talk during *davening* or do you remain silent?”

The man nodded his head and assured Rav Sorotzkin that his synagogue is actually quite *makpid* not to talk during *davening*, and he is as well. R' Yitzchok closed his eyes and recited the words of *Tanna Dvei Eliyahu* found in the *Gemara* (*Bava Kama 85a*): 'ורפא ירפא, מכאן שנינה רשות לרופא לרפוא' - *'From here [we learn] that permission is granted to the doctor to heal.'*” Then, he opened his eyes and announced, “The doctors have no right to kill you! Don't believe what they say! My friend, you are not sick and you are not going to live for only six months! Don't believe what they say!”

The very next day, the man went back to his doctor for a scheduled appointment and they took another series of scans. The doctors were shocked when the results came in: there was nothing there, no mass, no cancer, just an infection that would need to be treated. It took six months of further treatment but *Boruch Hashem* today, this man is alive and well. A valuable lesson was learned: doctors have permission from the Ultimate Doctor to heal - but not to kill!

אם לא בריתי יומם וליילה חקות  
שמים וארץ לא שבתו ... (רמ"ג-לג-כה)

As *Klal Yisroel* continued to maintain Jewish slaves in their homes, despite *Hashem's* repeated warnings to the contrary, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* berates the people and predicts the eventual downfall of *Yerushalayim*. Nevertheless, *Hashem* maintained that, “*If I hadn't established a covenant with the day and night, I wouldn't have set the laws and ways of the world.*” *Chazal* expound on these words and say that this is referring to the covenant of the *Torah* and *Bris Milah*, to derive from here that because of these all-important *mitzvos*, heaven and earth were created. But while we know that learning *Torah* is a requirement for every Jew, both by day and at night, the *mitzvah* of circumcision is a one that is only performed by day. What then is the comparison?

**R' Akiva Eiger ז"ל** explains that *Torah* and *Bris Milah* do indeed have a lot in common with one another, for by cutting off the foreskin externally, the internal "ערלת הלב" becomes severed as well. This is essential for a child's spiritual growth since not only does it relieve the soul of “excess” weight, but it also leads to an opening in the child's heart which allows the study of *Torah* to surge inside. This gateway is the only way for a person to succeed in *Torah* study and is crucial for a child's development in the world.

Thus, while it may seem to only apply by day, the *mitzvah* of *Bris Milah* is in fact intrinsically tied to *Torah* study and is applicable not only by day but also at night as well. Truly, an integral component of heaven and earth.

וכי מכר איש את בתו לאמה  
לא תצא כצאת העבדים ... (כא-ז)

*Parshas Mishpatim* contains a wide variety of *mitzvos*, *dinim* and subjects, touching on many *masechtos* in *Shas*. Starting with *Kiddushin*, *Bava Kama*, *Sanhedrin*, *Bava Metzia*, *Kesubos*, etc. Hence, the name *Mishpatim*. Why, if so many halachic subjects are discussed, was *עבד עברי* chosen to be the first one? Perhaps there are some lessons to be learned about the essence of the true *עבד* and its relevance to us as servants of *Hashem*. There are several ways an *עבד עברי*, who is sold for six years, exits his servitude. One of the options is if the אדון, his master, writes a שטר שחרור. **Rashi** in *Kiddushin 16a* says the source of this is a comparison to an *עבד כנעני* who also goes free with a שטר. The **Avnei Nezer ז"ל** points out a flaw in the logic of this comparison. Maybe only an *עבד כנעני* has the option of שטר, just like he has other options that an *עבד עברי* doesn't. For instance, an *עבד כנעני* goes free with ראשי איברים. If the master accidentally knocks out his eye or tooth, he goes free. An *עבד עברי* on the other hand, does not; as the above-quoted *posuk* says, "לא תצא כצאת העבדים". (Neither a male or a female *עבד עברי* goes out like an *עבד כנעני*) So how can Rashi extrapolate from a *עבד כנעני* to an *עבד עברי* in regard to שטר?

The **Shem Mishmuel ז"ל** answers with an insightful *machshava*. The main focus of an *עבד כנעני* in life is his physical existence, the need and ability to stay alive. Thus, when he is physically damaged, his essence is adversely affected. מה שאין כך the main focus of an *עבד עברי*, even as a slave, is his *ruchniyus*, his innate spirituality. Therefore, an injury to his body doesn't impact his main function, his *neshama*, and his continued service to *Hashem*; the rational to be set free simply does not exist. (See **Kli Yakar** here who explains this *posuk* so beautifully.)

This *vort* sets the tone for our main purpose in life. Our *ruchniyus*. Our constant striving to improve in our *avodas Hashem*. And of course, our efforts expended to ensure that all of our future generations will follow suit.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ושחד לא תקח כי השחד יעור פקחים ויסלף דברי צדיקים ... (ג-ה)  
**משל**: In the city of Chabarivka (Ukraine) lived a *dayan*, a judge, who was afflicted with deafness. The entire town was in an uproar when it was reported that the *dayan* would accept bribes; this, they assumed, was punishment for his actions.

When a *tzaddik* by the name of **Rav Shlomke** in a neighboring town heard about this, he dispatched someone to find out if this rumor was indeed true. For if it wasn't true, he would put a quick end to the terrible slanderer that was going around about the *dayan*.

Unfortunately, however, the messenger found that there was, in fact, grounds for the accusation. But this begged an explanation. “How is it that the *dayan* is not blind instead of deaf?” someone asked Rav Shlomke. “Doesn't it say in the *Torah* that *‘bribery will blind the eyes of the wise’*?”

ויקח ספר הברית ויקרא באזני העם ויאמרו  
כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע ... (כד-ז)

*Klal Yisroel* accepted the *Torah* with the words “*Naaseh v'Nishma*.” A host of *Malachim* then came down and placed two crowns on each Jew's head representing this *Kaballah*. Just a few *posukim* earlier (כד-ג) the *Yidden* already said *כל הדברים* "כל הדברים" only they did not say the word “*Nishma*” yet. Why did they not receive the “*Naaseh*” crown earlier and just add the “*Nishma*” crown after, when they said the word? Why did they receive both crowns at once?

During World War II, the Allies bombed locations all throughout Germany. One location that was hit was a road that the Nazis had forced Jewish prisoners to build during the war. The Nazis devised a cruel game. Jews were ordered to jump over the craters created by the bomb. **R' Yisroel Spira ז"ל**, the **Bluzhever Rebbe**, was among the Jews in line to jump. There was also a *Yid* there who had lost his faith, who was certain he was about to fall to his death. When it was the *Rebbe's* turn, he leapt across the abyss. He was not young, yet miraculously he landed on the other side. A moment later, the other man landed next to him.

“*Rebbi*,” he said excitedly, “I am young and barely made it across. How did you do it?” The *Rebbe* replied, “As I jumped, I stretched out my arms and suddenly I saw my father and my *Zeides* standing on the other side with outstretched arms. I grabbed their arms and they pulled me over. But my friend, how did you get over?” The man replied, “I held onto you!”

**R' Moshe Feinstein ז"ל** explains that saying *Naaseh* just means “We will do.” We will translate and explain the *Torah* any way we want to and we may totally distort the *Mitzvos* and their understanding. *Nishma*, however, means “We will listen” to our *Mesorah*, to our parents and our *Rabbeim*, and learn how they properly explain the *Torah*. The *Nishma* is a prerequisite for the *Naaseh* because first we need to understand the proper explanation of the *Torah* and then we can properly keep its laws. Our *Mesorah* is our lifeline because it is only through that connection that we may keep the *Torah* and *Mitzvos* properly.

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

# מחשבת הלב

Rav Shlomke answered, “If you knew the people of Chabarivka, you would not ask that question.”

“Why not?” he was asked. “Well, because the people of Chabarivka only agree to pay bribes, but they do not actually pay those bribes. If the *dayan* had actually received cash as a bribe, doubtless he would have become blind, like the *Torah* says. But as it was, he only listened to the propositions, in the hope of receiving bribes, but in the end, he never actually received them. For this he became deaf, not blind!”

**משל**: *Chazal* describe the intense persuasion “bribery” can have on a person. **R' Zalman Sorotzkin ז"ל (Oznaim L'Torah)**, explains the meaning of the verse “*For bribery... will distort the words of the righteous*” to mean, that even after the *dayan* gives his honest verdict - a bribe is so powerful that it can still have an effect and distort the righteous words of the *dayan*, long after the ruling.

## הנחמדים מזהב

GOLDEN NUGGETS ON THE PARSHA WITH A  
FOCUS ON LESSONS HOW TO SERVE HASHEM  
AND BE A BETTER JEW BY R' YEHOSEUA GOLD