

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם ... (כג-ל)

Standing on the train platform, a group of *Nadvorna Chassidim* heard a loud commotion. A gentile woman began screaming and wailing. Police rushed in and a large crowd gathered around. It seems that someone had stolen her wallet from her purse and now she was left without money or tickets for the train. Back in the late 1800's, it was usually best for Jews to keep out of gentile affairs, especially when the authorities were looking for a suspect. So it was surprising when the **Nadvorna Rebbe, R' Mordechai Leifer ז"ל**, suddenly motioned to one of his younger *chassidim* and told him to run to the ticket office, buy a ticket for the woman, give her some traveling money and not say a word about where it all came from. Of course, the *chasid* did as he was told. He bought the ticket and gave it to the bewildered woman, who was literally speechless with gratitude.

Fifteen years passed. The *chasid* married, had children, the holy *Nadvorna Rebbe* had passed away, and the incident was almost completely forgotten. But the anti-Semitism didn't change. Early one morning, the *chasid*, who had since become a successful businessman, received a subpoena to appear in court; he was charged with swindling the government. The charges were transparently false, the witnesses had obviously been paid, but it didn't matter. The *chasid* thought he had connections but no matter whom he turned to for assistance, he soon realized that no one was willing to help him. He got himself a lawyer, prayed for a miracle, and appeared at the courthouse. The pre-trial hearing took less than an hour. He was found guilty of all charges, sentenced a million ruble fine, life imprisonment, and incarceration until the trial. It couldn't have gone worse.

He was so desperate and broken. He posted bail for himself and then decided to travel to Budapest to speak to the judge presiding at his trial to see if he will believe him. Maybe he could convince him of his innocence. But in Budapest he was in for another bitter surprise. This particular judge happened to be a rabid Jew hater. There was no chance that he would even look at, no less talk to, and certainly not have mercy on any Jew in the world. The *chasid* was despondent.

He next walked around the city talking to people until he formulated a plan of action. He found out that the judge's wife had a weakness for embroidered items, especially tablecloths. He would buy the most expensive tablecloth he could find and appear at her doorstep as a salesman. Then, if he could get her interested, he would offer it to her as a gift and beg her to try to influence her husband for him. It was a dangerous plan, even a bit foolish. She could easily just take the tablecloth for herself and then report him to the police; she would have the tablecloth and he probably would not live out the night in jail. But he could not think of any other possible solution. He located the most expensive embroidery in Budapest and spent a small fortune on a truly elegant masterpiece of a tablecloth with matching napkins. He walked quickly to the Judge's home trying to remain as calm as possible. A cold sweat covered his body as he walked up the stairs, closed his eyes, said a prayer, and knocked on the door.

The judge's wife opened the door and looked at him strangely. He did his best to smile as he held out the tablecloth and tried to begin his sales pitch but the words simply didn't come out. He was too frightened. He stood there trembling, frozen with fear. Suddenly, she let out a scream and fainted! His first impulse was to run. If he just stood there they would certainly accuse him of something. But if he ran and they caught him it would certainly be worse; they would kill him on the spot.

Her husband, the judge, heard the commotion and came running. When he saw the *chasid* near his unconscious wife, he was shocked and enraged. He bent down to his wife and began talking to her, "Are you all right Greta? What happened?"

She opened her eyes, looked around and pointed at the Jew. "Do you remember I told you that fifteen years ago at the train station in Niridihous, I lost my tickets and money, and an angel came and saved me? Well, this Jew - he is the angel! It's him!"

When the Judge realized that this was the man who saved his wife, his attitude changed completely. He invited the *chasid* into his home and offered him a reward. When he heard the reason for his visit, he promised him not only a fair trial but that from then on his attitude toward Jews would be completely different. Needless to say the *chasid* was acquitted of all charges. (Ascentofsafed.com)

דבתיכם הדלים בני צדוק אשר שמרו את משמרת מקדשי ... והם יקרבו אלי לשרתני

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAPTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In referring to the holy *Kohanim*, *Hashem* says, "And the *Kohanim* from the tribe of *Levi* ... they shall come near and serve Me ..." *Yechezkel HaNavi* then describes the priestly service for the third *Bais Hamikdash*, instructing the *Kohanim* in their unique laws. But why does the *Navi* infer that only the *Kohanim* will come near *Hashem* and serve Him – surely there will be others?

The **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל** explains that indeed this does apply to all of *Klal Yisroel*, however, the *Kohanim* are singled out since they as a whole, cling to the divine service. He elaborates on this saying that when living in challenging times, it is especially important for *Torah* Jews to vigorously promote *Torah* study and the observance of *mitzvos*, and in

doing so, our concomitant reward is immeasurably greater than in former times when living life as a Jew was easier.

In Egypt, not a single *Kohen/Levi* resorted to idol worship, and they were the only ones who circumcised their children. In the *Midbar*, they stayed away from the *Egel* debacle and always conducted themselves befitting the priesthood. Thus, they served as the model for the rest of *Klal Yisroel*.

However, says the Chofetz Chaim, Jews who promote the knowledge and practice of *Torah* laws that are commonly neglected due to ignorance - such as keeping *Shabbos* and *Taharos HaMishpacha*, will surely be counted among the Almighty's "friends" in the future, and they will be privileged to serve Him in the front ranks, similar to the *Kohanim*.

דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם מועדי ה' אשר תקראו אתם מקראי' קדש אלה הם מועדי ... (כג-ב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ז"ל

מחשבת הלב

These words - "דבר אל בני ישראל" - appear by the introduction to all the *Yamim Tovim* except *Shavuos* and *Yom Kippur* (See the **Ramban** for his explanation). Perhaps we can offer another thought. As is well known, the word "דבר" connotes a harsher tone than "ויאמר" which suggests a softer one. (Parenthetically, the **Zaida [Baal Machsheves Halev]** would expound on the *posuk* "שאל אביך ויגדך וקינך ויאמרו לך" saying that if you ask your father what to do, he will instruct you. But if you ask your *Zaida*, he can tell you even without your asking, and he will do it softly (בלשון אמירה). A parent must, at times, talk harshly to their children in order to make a point in *chinuch* - "ויגדך" - whereas a *Zaida* talks softly - "ויאמרו לך".

Chag Shavuos, the *Yom Tov* of קבלת התורה, is likened to a *chasunah* between *Hashem* and *Klal Yisroel*. There's only love - no strings attached. The extreme "אהבה" between *Hashem* and His chosen people is palpable. The *posuk* therefore omits the word "דבר" in the preface to this *Yom Tov* as there is no harshness at this time. The **Vilna Gaon ז"ל** adds that when we *daven* every day for understanding in *Torah*, we use the terminology of "אב" - Father, as we say, "... אבינו את הרחמן ...". Because the *Torah* is learned/taught באהבה - with extreme love, and it is bequeathed unto us as a gift, as a father gifts his son.

On *Yom Kippur*, we receive *mechila* and atonement for our sins. And as the *Mishna* in *Maseches Yoma* tells us clearly, "אשריכם ישראל ... אף הקב"ה מטהר את ישראל" the stain of sin lingering above us. Atonement, too, is a gift of love. Thus, the *Torah* again omits the word "דבר".

Parshas Emor, the *parsha* of *moadim*, can serve as a prelude, to glean a perspective for the upcoming *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*. May we feel His loving embrace as we prepare ourselves, marching toward the glorious day of קבלת התורה.

משל למה הדבר דומה

והגתם אתו הן לה' שנעת ימים בשנה ... (כג-טא)

משל: Many years ago in ancient *Yerushalayim*, lived a *tzaddik* by the name of **R' Nota Zenwirth ז"ל**. Many stories are told of his extreme piety and unwavering commitment to do the will of *Hashem*. Once, he entered his *Beis Medrash* holding a broom. This was very uncharacteristic of him, and he received many quirky looks for it. Well aware of his actions, he nevertheless began circling the *Beis Medrash*. It took a few minutes but finally someone approached him and asked him why he was bringing a broom into *Beis Medrash*.

"I'm not," he replied. "I am holding a *lulav*." (Brooms in those days were made from a palm tree branch.) By now everyone in the room was watching. With everyone's full attention, he explained: "On *Sukkos* I took a *lulav* and performed the important *mitzvah* of shaking a *lulav*, because

that was the will of *Hashem* at that time. Now, however, it is the will of *Hashem* that I take a broom and clean up this *Beis Medrash*. Just look at the *Beis Medrash* you are all in," said R' Nota in an anguished tone, "it's impossible to *daven* here with the mess on the floor right now!"

נמשל: This week's *parsha* discusses many of the exciting *mitzvos* we perform on *Yom Tov*. While much attention is given to these commandments, many other *mitzvos* - no less important - unfortunately get left by the wayside. Indeed, many people go to great lengths to insure they perform the "high-end" commandments correctly, while losing sight of the less stimulating *mitzvos*. But this must not be the case. The *mitzvos* we perform on *Yom Tov* with much fanfare, should really be a catalyst for the greatly outnumbered *mitzvos* we perform during the year with far less fanfare. This is the ultimate *nachas* we can bring the *Ribbono shel Olam*.

וכפרתם לכם ממזרת השבת ... שבוע שבתות תמימת תהיינה ... (כג-טז)

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

דרגה יתירה

Everywhere you look in *Eretz Yisroel*, there are huge signs that say, YACHAD NENATZAIACH - Together we will win! The war is lasting way longer than anyone imagined and the message of *Achdus* we see all over is definitely *mechazek* us.

This week, during *Sefirah*, we begin the *Middah* of *Netzach*, eternity, which is the same word as "*L'natzaiach*" which means "to win." YACHAD NENATZAIACH, Together, *Hashem* and I will win. If it is just ME against the *yetzer hara*, I cannot overcome him. But if I bring *Hashem* into the picture, then I can win all the challenges that are caused by people.

We know that on the first night of *Pesach*, we were all given a great gift of spirituality. We were lifted up in our *Emunah* and *Dveikus* in *Hashem* as a Divine present. Our *neshamos* were truly on a high! But then, the very next morning, *Hashem* seemingly takes it all away. He tells us in this week's *Parsha*, "*Usfartem Lachem*" - You should count the next 49 days, "*Temimos Tehiyena*" and YOU shall become perfect! You will acquire that great lofty level of *ruchniyus* that you received on *Pesach* night, but this time it will be YOURS. You will work for it and you will achieve it. So what do we have to do when we count these days? We need to work on our *Middos*. We need to work on our *bein adam lechavero*.

The question begs to be answered. If we wish to return to the level of *Emunah* and *Dveikus* that we received on *Pesach*, why are we working on our relationships with people? We should be working on our relationship with *Hashem*? The answer is ... these monumental words plastered all over Israel - YACHAD NENATZAIACH! Only if we bring *Hashem* into the picture can we truly get along with people. If we have *Emunah* that everything that happens and everyone that harms us is really from Him, that is the only way that we can overlook and not harbor ill feelings towards others. It was not him! It was *Hashem*. Bring *Hashem* into the picture and together we can win over the *yetzer hara* that is trying to create *sinas chinam* between Jews.