

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

לרב תרבה נחלתו ולמעט המעטים נחלתו איש לפי פקדיו יתן נחלתו ... (כו-ג)

The rabbi of the “*Arugas Habosem*” old age home in *Bnei Brak* had a custom to visit the rooms of the elderly to see how they were doing, to sit and talk with them, calming them when needed and giving them the pleasant feeling of a listening ear. One day, he entered a room and found an old man sitting and crying in deep anguish, heavy tears rolling down his cheeks. The rabbi asked him what had happened and tried to comfort the old man, but the man was completely lost in his tears. When the rabbi tried again and again, the old man answered weakly, “And what good will it do? The matter is already hopeless.”

The rabbi did not let up. He told him, “‘*Let the heart of another man be concerned*’, for you never know where salvation will come from.” After much effort, he managed to get the story out of the weeping old man. He told the rabbi how he had immigrated to Israel about fifty years ago with two children. The Jewish Agency settled him in one of the *moshavim* (cooperative farming villages) and gave him a small plot of land. All was well, except he noticed that his neighbor, a man who lived without children, had received a larger plot of land than his! Suddenly, he was filled with intense jealousy and when jealousy takes hold of an individual, bad things follow. One late night, he woke up in the middle of the night and went outside to his small plot. Quickly, he moved the boundary stone between his land and his neighbors by just ten centimeters.

The next morning, when he saw that his neighbor didn’t realize anything was amiss, his courage grew. In this way, every night he moved the stone by another ten centimeters, until finally, he had moved the boundary by one and a half meters. Now his yard was equal to his neighbor’s yard, and with this, he calmed down. He was not jealous anymore. The stone remained in that same place for decades. They lived with one and a half meters of stolen land along the entire boundary of the courtyard.

Years later, he left the *moshav* and had no more contact with the place. But now, as an elderly man with his strength gone in his old age, he began to contemplate the end of his life. Suddenly, he was overcome by a tremendous fear of what would happen to him on the great and terrible Day of Judgment. He desperately wanted to correct the wrong, but he did not know how. Due to his advanced age, he had forgotten the name of the place and the name of his neighbor that he had stolen from. And so he cried, wondering how he could ever right this wrong before standing in judgment before his Father in Heaven.

The rabbi listened with sympathy but did not know what to say to comfort the old man. He tried to strengthen his spirit with words: “You will come out of this. After all, He is the Creator of the world. You must pray to the Creator from the bottom of your heart, that He may give you the light and the possibility to meet the neighbor and straighten the twisted path.”

Less than two weeks passed, and suddenly there was a knock on the old man’s door. To his great surprise, he saw the very same neighbor standing in front of him at his full height. Thrilled, he hugged his neighbor. “How did you find me?”

The neighbor answered him simply: “I happened to be in the area today for a family *simcha* at one of the local event halls. I was sitting at a random table where a few young had people sat down and their conversation didn’t really interest me. But suddenly, I heard one of the diners turn to a distinguished young man and call him by name. I recognized the name. The conversation continued but I kept hearing his last name over and over and remembered that it was actually your name, my old neighbor in the *moshav*. I asked the young man if he had any connection to a certain man who lived in our old neighborhood. He confirmed to me that he was indeed your son! I told him that I hadn’t seen you for many years and wondered if you were up for a visit. Your son told me where to go and I decided to come visit you. Here I am now standing before you.”

When the old man heard this, his eyes lit up. “You don’t know how happy I am to see you!” he wept. He confessed to his old friend what he had done fifty years ago, and with tears streaming down his face, begged for his full and total forgiveness. His old friend was deeply moved and of course, forgave him wholeheartedly. Here, the power of a prayer that came from the depths of the heart was revealed - an immediate answer to a soul seeking salvation. (Adapted from “L’hisaden B’ahavasecha”)

כּוּמֵרִים אֲצִוֶּדֶךָ אֲצִוֶּדֶךָ
בְּכַמּוֹן יִדְעֶתֶךָ ... (ירמ' א-ה)

Yirmiyahu HaNavi discusses a prophecy he received and his response to the Almighty. *Hashem* told him that he was destined to be a prophet, “*Before I created you in the womb, I selected you. before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations.*”

R’ Menashe ben Yisroel ז”ל, a Spanish *Kabbalist* from Amsterdam wrote in his Spanish-written *sefer* regarding *Techiyas HaMeisim*, that two important conclusions can be drawn from the words of the *Navi*. First, that *Hashem* is the one who forms a child in the mother’s womb and not biology - a matter of major discussion prior to advanced imaging technology. Also, souls are not conceived along with their bodies. Rather, *Hashem* grants the soul life and immortality

תּוֹרַת הַצְּבִי עַל הַפְּטוּרוֹת
DEEP, PENETRATING ANALYSIS
OF THE WEEKLY HAFTARAH

and when it is paired with a body it can then choose to retain that immortality or lose it through sin. He explains, in the name of the **Zohar HaKadosh ז”ל**, that as such, the father provides the matrix of the body, the mother the flesh, and *Hashem* provides the soul.

Thus, it is true that the parents form a unity to create a human body, but the actual process of formation is not physical. Rather it requires the soul to nourish it and give it the ability to become an entity. *Hashem’s* comment to *Yirmiyahu* underscores the known truth of conception. When a child is conceived, he already possesses all three components of life – the bones from the father, flesh from the mother, and a living soul from the Almighty Himself.

בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת קִנְאוֹתַי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְלֹא כְלִיתִי
אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹתַי ... (כה-א)

In *sefer Toras Moshe* the **Chasam Sofer** offers an explanation as to why the *Torah* uses the word “בקנאו” which seems superfluous, based on the **Chovos Halevavos**. He mentions the following story and its takeaway lesson. There was a sinner, who at one point, repented. He was *zoche* to do a *teshuva shleima*. When asked what prompted this sudden change, he responded, “I came to the realization that if I were to take all the efforts, passion, and zeal that I utilize for my *aveiros* and channel them instead, towards *mitzvos* then surely I’ll be able to reach high levels.” That was the impetus for my makeover.

Explains the סופר, when Pinchos saw what transpired “בתוכם”, the fervor with which Zimri sinned, he decided to use the same level of קנאות for the sake of *Hashem*. **R’ Chaim Kaufman ז”ל** quotes from *sefer Har Sinai* who further explains that in light of this, we can understand why the *Torah* wrote “בקנאו את קנאותי” and not “בנקמו את נקמתי” because Pinchos was “jealous” of Zimri’s enthusiasm and replicated it; but he used it ל”ש. This concept, says the **Chofetz Chaim**, is a well-known *posuk* in *Tehillim* מאיובי תרחמי. He explains that from the ways of my enemies I gleaned wisdom how to better serve *Hashem*.

On that note perhaps we can apply this to what’s going on today. In last week’s *parsha* the *posuk* says “מה טבו אהליך יעקב”. Bilam sought to blaspheme the source of our strength - our תפילה and learning. מאיובי תרחמי - we must realize how potent and precious they are. In ארץ ישראל there’s a terrible calamity taking place! Our own people are seeking to eradicate our *ruchniyus* - our *limud haTorah!* Don’t they understand that our survival is dependent on our *bnei Torah* not the soldiers. Do we? We must learn from the ways of קנאות and fight it with our entire essence as if our lives depend on it - because it does!

Let us support them and *daven* for the continuity of כלל ישראל at this critical juncture. Let us follow in the ways of Pinchos הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום - and *iy”H* be *zoche* to the fruition of שלום.

משל למה הדבר דומה

לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום ... (כה-ב)

משל: One year, as the joyous holiday of *Sukkos* approached, the devoted students of the **Vilna Gaon ז”ל** faced a terrible dilemma. Despite their desperate efforts, they were unable to find a *lulav* and *esrog* for their revered teacher. Eventually, they located a wealthy man who had one. The students offered to purchase it at a very high price, but the man refused the money. Instead, he offered a strange deal. He would agree only if the *Gaon* gave away his reward in the World to Come for that year’s *mitzvah* of *lulav* and *esrog*.

The students deliberated among themselves about whether it was legitimate to agree to such a bargain on behalf of their rav. Finally, they decided to go through with it. With a certain amount of trepidation, they approached the holy *Gaon*

with the *lulav* and *esrog* and told him of the deal they had made, giving away his share in the World to Come for the *mitzvah*. They held their breath ... but then the *Gaon* let out a cry of joy, he was enraptured, “Finally,” he exclaimed, “I will be able to do a *mitzvah* without any ulterior motive, even that of gaining a spiritual reward in the World to Come!”

נמשל: Pinchos achieved one of the greatest spiritual heights any human has ever reached. Perhaps something we can take out of his “cosmic” achievement is that Pinchos’ greatness was that his act was 100% *lishmah*; purely for the sake of Heaven, with zero thought of himself or any potential reward. Performing a *mitzvah* with absolute, unadulterated purity - completely *lishmah* - exemplifies the ultimate level of serving *Hashem* purely out of love and devotion. This is something we can - on some level - achieve.

וְכֵן אָמַר אֲדָר אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל הַקְּבָה וְיִדְרֹךְ אֶת שְׂנֵימֹם
אֶת אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאִשָּׁה אֶל קִבְתָּהּ ... (כה-ה)

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

הנחמדים מזהב

Pinchos is credited with making a public *Kiddush Hashem* by impaling Zimri and Cuzbi. Although the act itself took place inside a private tent, it became a public event after Pinchos carried them throughout the camp. **Targum Yehonasan** lists this as one of twelve miracles that occurred. Another *neis* enumerated was that they did not die until leaving the tent, ensuring that Pinchos did not become *tamei*. However, Pinchos was not yet a *kohen*, so why was this necessary?

At three months old, *Moshe Rabbeinu* was placed in a basket and set afloat on the Nile. Basya found him and ultimately sent Miriam to bring a Jewish woman to nurse him. Yocheved, Moshe’s own mother, was then paid to care for her son. The *Medrash* highlights the reward of *tzaddikim*: “*Not only are their lost objects returned, they even get paid for it!*”

The *Medrash’s* comment seems puzzling. After tearfully parting from her infant, Yocheved, against all odds, was reunited with him. One can only imagine her relief and overwhelming joy. At that moment, would she really care about being paid a few dollars to nurse her own son? **R’ Chaim Shmuelevitz ז”ל** explains with a parable. Imagine an entire family searching frantically for a missing diamond ring. When one of the children finally finds it, everyone rejoices, yet the father gives a special kiss to the finder. The ring belongs to the whole family, and everyone benefits from its return, but the kiss is a personal expression of the father’s love and appreciation. So too, Moshe was destined to become the redeemer and leader of *Klal Yisroel*. His rescue benefited the entire nation. But the payment Yocheved received was *Hashem’s* personal expression of His love and appreciation for her. The same is true with Pinchos. While most of the miracles were necessary to restore *Hashem’s* honor before the entire nation, the miracle that prevented Pinchos from becoming *tamei* was a personal gift for him. It was *Hashem’s* way of showing that, beyond the public *Kiddush Hashem*, He cared about Pinchos himself.

We too should recognize the personal “kisses”, individual acts of *hashgacha*, that remind us of *Hashem’s* personal love.