



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

לא נשוב אל בתינו עד התנהל בני ישראל איש נהלוו ... (לב-ה)

In *Parshas Matos*, the tribes of Reuven and Gad famously pledge to forego their immediate comfort and settlement, vowing to cross the *Yarden* river and fight on the front lines alongside their brethren until the entire nation is secure in *Eretz Yisroel*, a testament to an unbreakable national bond. This spirit carries directly into *Parshas Masei*, which charts the grueling journeys of *Bnei Yisroel* through the wilderness, reminding us that the ultimate destination is only reached when we look out for one another through every hardship. This timeless devotion - putting the sanctuary of a brother's peace ahead of one's own hard-earned rest is not just ancient history; it lives dynamically in the hills outside Jerusalem today.

A woman by the name of Devorah lives in a quiet, outlying community nestled in the hills just outside Jerusalem. It is most definitely not the safe, bustling middle of the city; out there, she must frequently drive through vulnerable, tense areas surrounded by "others" just to reach her front door. Yet, her home remains a sanctuary of faith. *Baruch Hashem*, she has been blessed with a house full of tall, grown sons - no daughters - and every single one of them is currently serving in the IDF. They are all married and have built beautiful families of their own, yet they remain a fiercely cohesive, tightly knit unit.

After October 7, with the sudden eruption of the current war, every one of Devorah's sons was immediately called up for emergency reserve duty. Because they are all deployed in elite combat units, a blanket of operational security has fallen over their existence. They are strictly forbidden from disclosing where they are stationed or what missions they are executing. To prevent tracking by the enemy, they cannot use their cell phones at all. It is a profoundly nerve-wracking reality for a mother, and she can always be found pouring out her heart in *tefillah, davening* for their safety alongside the rest of *Klal Yisroel*.

One *motzei Shabbos*, Devorah called a close friend. Despite the exhaustion in her voice, there was a distinct spark of maternal pride when she asked, "You want to hear a story about my boys?" Naturally, the friend eagerly told her she wanted to hear it. Devorah explained that one of her sons had been stuck on the front lines without a single break for over three consecutive weeks, enduring sleepless nights and the relentless pressure of active combat. The prolonged separation had taken an immense emotional toll on him, his wife, and his young children, who were crying for their father at home.

By a rare twist of military bureaucracy, this son happened to be operating in a larger tactical sector that temporarily overlapped with the area of another one of Devorah's boys. This was highly unusual, as the brothers serve in completely different units and rarely cross paths in active zones. The second brother, who carries his own deep scars from being severely injured in a terrorist attack when he was just a teenager and knows intimately what it means to suffer and sacrifice, had just been granted a coveted leave to return home. As Devorah initially recounted the tale, this second son looked at the deep exhaustion etched into his brother's face, recognized the acute ache of a young family separated for nearly a month, and made a radical decision. He quietly approached his commanding officer, bypassed his own burning desire to see his own family, and requested that his hard-earned leave be transferred entirely to his brother instead.

After hearing the story, her friend was left in absolute awe, her eyes tearing up at the sheer magnitude of the gesture. Getting to go home to sleep in a real bed, and hug one's children is worth more than gold to a soldier living in the dirt under constant threat. To willingly hand that gift over to someone else is extraordinary. She went to sleep that night marveling at the spiritual stamina of these brothers, feeling a profound sense of gratitude that such people exist. But the story didn't end there.

Mid-morning on Sunday, her phone rang again, shattering the quiet routine of my day. It was Devorah, sounding breathless, emotional, and urgent. "I was wrong, I was wrong!" she told her, eager to correct the record and ensure the truth was known. "Here's what really happened! I talked to them again, and my other son was not given just a meager 24 hours to go home. He had actually been granted THREE full days and nights of leave. It was seventy-two hours of civilian comfort, hot food, safety, and family warmth that he looked at, bundled up, and gave away so his brother could have it instead!"

כה אמר ה'מה מצאו אבותיכם כי עול כי רחקו מעלי וילכו אחרי ההבל והבלו ... (וימי"ג-ה)

DEEP, PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

This week's *Haftorah* marks the second of the three weeks of calamities in which *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* castigates the nation for having transgressed the cardinal sin of idol worship. Interestingly, *Hashem* lamented how the nation "distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile." But is it not obvious that one will become futile if he chases after futility?

R' Mendel Hirsch z"l (*Seder Haftoros*) explains that practicing idolatry was not a rational decision made on a person's part, rather it was prompted by one's evil inclination which harassed him relentlessly into submission. On the whole, Jews eschew idol worship and find greater pleasure in serving the Almighty due to their deep spiritual connection to

to *Hashem* and His *Torah*. While everything in the world was created for and is meant to be used in the service of the Almighty - as dictated by the *Torah*, if it should ever be used for idolatry, it will lose its meaning and become a futile object with no purpose in the world.

Thus, a Jew who just stops living an observant *Torah* life is simply lost and the hope is that eventually he will find his inner spark, reignite his passion for *Torah* and *mitzvos* and redirect him back to the more fulfilling life of a G-d-fearing Jew. However, a Jew who defects from a *Torah* lifestyle and adopts other cultures or beliefs will find himself leading a tragically futile life with no end in sight. This reflects a deep commitment to the eternal value of divine service.

וידר אף ה' ... אם יראו האנשים ... בלתי כלב ... ויהושע בן נון ... (לב-י"ב)

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

# מחשבת הלב

*Hashem* was "angered" and swore that due to the sin of the spies, none of the men between ages 20 and 60 would enter *Eretz Yisroel*. R' Shimon Schwab z"l asks: The **Rambam** in **Moreh Nevuchim** writes that when speaking of הקב"ה, the *lashon* of "חרון אף" is only used in connection with "עבודה זרה". So why, here, by the מרגלים does the *posuk* use it?

He answers based on the *Chazal* who say "כל הדר בחוץ לארץ כאילו עובד עבודה זרה". Since the מרגלים sadly disparaged the land, and wished not to enter *Eretz Yisroel*, it was tantamount to idolatry. Thus, the *Torah* used the *lashon* of "ויחר אף ה'".

Perhaps we can offer another *machshava*. In the first *kapitel* of *Kabbolas Shabbos*, we say as follows: ארבעים שנה אקוט "בדור... אשר נשבעתי באפי" *Hashem* "in His anger" swore that the *Yidden* wouldn't enter *Eretz Yisroel*. But then he adds a few words that provide insight and may resolve our original question: "עם תועי לבב" - a nation who erred and got lost; a nation who doesn't know *Hashem's* ways. Meaning they questioned and didn't believe in *Hashem's* master plan, thinking, maybe it's not in our best interest. Maybe we know better. That is synonymous with *עבודה זרה*. Hence, the *posuk* aptly uses, here and in *Tehillim*, an expression usually reserved for idol worship. In life, even if we cannot comprehend things happening to us we mustn't question. We must have total *emunah* that כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד.

In *Parshas Masei*, we recount all the various stops *Klal Yisroel* made as they traversed the desert. Some were for a longer period, while some lasted only a few hours. But they all shared one common theme. They were all על פיהו.

The same holds true with all of life's trials and tribulations. If we exercise this concept of living lives of total subservience to and trust in *Hashem*, life's roads will be that much smoother. **ובסייעתא דשמיא!**

## משל למה הדבר דומה

האדיכם יכאו למלחמה ואתם תשבו פה ... (לב-ו)

**משל**: It was a Friday night, and a special gathering had been organized to offer *chizuk* and inspiration to a group of young boys serving in the IDF. The organizer, Rabbi Yitzchok Guttman, had invited the esteemed *Mashpia*, R' Gamliel Rabinowitz *shlita*, to speak to the soldiers.

R' Gamliel's background as a *Yerushalmi*, known for its strict, anti-Zionist ideology, made his attendance remarkable. Yet, R' Gamliel arrived with his usual radiant, welcoming smile. He stood before the young soldiers and delivered a deeply moving, elevated speech. He poured his heart out, offering them inspiration, spiritual warmth, and love.

When he finished his remarks, he walked out of the room, leaving the boys uplifted. But a minute later, the door swung

open again. R' Gamliel stepped back inside and called out to the group: "Boys, you should know that I am from the *Neturei Karta* (anti-Zionist group)!" With that declaration he turned around and left the building. The organizer stood there in amazement, suddenly grasping what had just occurred.

R' Gamliel belonged to a group fiercely opposed to the ideology of the army these boys were serving in. He did not hide his identity, nor did he compromise his own deeply held beliefs. Yet, he still came to uplift them. He taught them a monumental lesson: At the end of the day, we are all *Yidden!*

**משל**: The Jewish nation traveled (*Masei*) and belong to different camps (*Matos*), yet as a whole, we share one soul. Moshe reminded Gad and Reuven that although they may want to "do their own thing," ultimately, we are one nation that joins each other - no matter the differences between us!

ידבר משה אל ראשי המנות לבני ישראל לאמר זה הדיבר אשר צוה ה' ... (לב-ג)

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

## הנחמדים מזהב

**Rashi** highlights a fundamental distinction between *Moshe Rabbeinu's* prophecy and that of all other *Nevi'im*. While every other *Navi* conveyed *Hashem's* word with the expression of "כה אמר ה'", Moshe spoke with "זה הדבר". What is the significance of these two terminologies? Furthermore, why is it emphasized here, next to the *Parsha* of *Nedarim* only at the end of ספר במדבר?

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin 89a*) teaches that no two true prophets relay *Hashem's* message in precisely the same words. This is because a *Navi* receives a divine message through a prophetic vision, which they then interpret and communicate to the people. Every person comprehends and expresses things differently, for example, one person's definition of a "rich man" depends on his own finances, and someone who naturally exaggerates may describe a well-to-do person as a billionaire. Accordingly, the *Navi's* given message would reflect his particular understanding and manner of speech. Therefore, if two *Nevi'im* speak precisely the same words, it indicates that they are false prophets. The sole exception to this rule was *Moshe Rabbeinu*. Unlike all other prophets, *Hashem* spoke through Moshe's throat, and the words that emerged were transmitted exactly as they were spoken from the Almighty, without being filtered or interfered through Moshe's own interpretation.

R' Yaakov Kamenetsky points out a remarkable insight from the laws of *Nedarim*. When a person takes a *Neder* to perform or refrain from a particular act, the commitment becomes a *Torah* obligation. Likewise, when someone declares an animal to be a *Korbon*, it immediately assumes the *Halachic* status of *Hekdesh*. In other words, *Hashem* granted human beings the power to create *Torah*-binding *Halachos* through the power of our speech. After learning these laws, one may err and assume that the same principle applies to the *Torah* written by *Moshe Rabbeinu*, that his own expressions were imparted in all the *Mitzvos* in the *Torah*. Thus, here the *Torah* reveals that his *Nevuah* was of a different caliber, given to him with "זה הדבר", conveyed exactly as if *Hashem* spoke it. Our *Torah* is true, and the power given to us mortals by its Writer, is humbling.