

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

השלך משמים ארץ תפארת ישראל ולא זכר היום רגליו ביום אפן ... שפך כאש חמתו וגו' (איכה ב-ד.)

The bitter *Galus* of the *Shechinah* was a constant, throbbing wound to the holy **Yismach Moshe** of **Ujhel, R' Moshe Teitelbaum ז"ל**. To live in his presence was to live in a state of acute anticipation, where the physical absence of the *Bais HaMikdash* was felt as a daily, personal bereavement. On the day before *Tisha B'Av*, as he sat at his heavy wooden table, his face etched with the lines of a lifetime spent in tearful *tefillah* and unbroken devotion to the *Torah*, his beloved grandson, Yekusiel Yehuda - the future *Chassidic* Master and *Rebbe*, the **Yeitav Lev** of **Sighet** - sat across from him observing his holy *Zaida*. On this day, the *Yismach Moshe's* eyes were unusually dim, clouded by a dark, suffocating sorrow.

“My heart is broken within me, my son,” the old *Tzaddik* groaned, his voice trembling with raw, piercing grief as he looked into the boy's bright eyes. “I am utterly crushed by the terrifying words of *Chazal* in the *Yerushalmi*, who state: ‘Every generation in which the Temple is not rebuilt in its days, it is considered as if it were destroyed in its days.’ Woe unto us, for what is our meager existence if the Sanctuary of the King still lies in ruins in our lifetime? If we have not found the merit to bring about the *Geulah*, then we are actively watching it burn to the ground. It is as if the fire is consuming the *Kodesh HaKadoshim* this very second under our watch, because our sins have prevented its rebuilding. אי נה לנו כי חטאנו - woe to us, for we have surely sinned!” A heavy, aching silence settled over the room, the pain of thousands of years of *Galus* pressing down.

Yekusiel Yehuda, though still a mere youth, possessed a *neshama* of rare spiritual elevation and a heart already attuned to the deepest currents of *rachamei shamayim* - divine mercy; refusing to let despair conquer the study, he began to search for the hidden spark of *Chassidus* - the precise point where absolute judgment is sweetened into profound, life-giving compassion.

“*Heilige Zaida*, my holy grandfather,” the boy began, his voice soft but ringing with precocious authority. “Forgive my boldness, but perhaps the teaching of the *Yerushalmi* does not have to be read as a decree of bitter condemnation. Perhaps it is actually a comforting message of love from the Almighty to His children.” The *Yismach Moshe* slowly raised his head, his tear-filled eyes searching the face of his young grandson. “Comfort? How can it be a source of comfort to a weeping nation?”

The future leader of the Jewish people, his eyes shining with a sudden, radiant light, explained. “Consider the words of our Sages in *Medrash Eichah*. They asked why the *Navi Yirmiyahu* sang a song of praise even as the Temple burned, and they answered that Yirmiyahu praised *Hashem* because He poured out His anger upon wood and stone, rather than utterly consuming the holy souls of the Jewish people. The physical building acted as a loving shield, taking the blow of divine judgment so that *Klal Yisroel* could survive. Now, if every generation that does not see the *Bais HaMikdash* rebuilt is considered to have destroyed it, it means that the spiritual reality of the *Bais HaMikdash* is present, standing in our midst, in every single generation. If it were not so, *heilige Zaida*, what would we do when we stumble and sin? In this bitter exile, we have no *mizbeach* upon which to bring sacrifices, and no *Kohen Gadol* to achieve atonement for our souls. If the Temple did not exist in our generation, the divine judgment would fall directly upon us, G-d forbid. Thus, the Almighty allows the spiritual Temple of our day to be ‘destroyed’ anew, absorbing the harsh decrees of our generation so that the souls of the Jewish nation can emerge unscathed. The lack of a physical building is not a sign that He has abandoned us; it is the ultimate proof that He is constantly sacrificing the *Mikdash* to save His children. This is the deep comfort hidden within the sorrow.”

A profound stillness enveloped the study. The heavy, suffocating cloud of grief that had hung over the room began to dissolve, replaced by a warm, luminous glow of love. The *Yismach Moshe* stared at his grandson, his face transforming as the brilliant, merciful *Torah* of the youth succeeded in sweetening the harsh judgments back into their source of infinite love.

A tear of pure, ecstatic joy slipped down the old *Rebbe's* cheek, and he reached out, pulling the young Yekusiel Yehuda to his chest in a fierce, emotional embrace. “*Nichamanti! Nichamanti!*” the holy *Yismach Moshe* cried out, his voice shaking with the exquisite relief of a *neshama* restored to hope. “You have given me comfort, my son. You have truly comforted me!”

כי תבאו לראות פני מי בקש זאת מידכם רמס חצירי ... (ישעי' א'-יב)

As the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdash* loomed closer, one of the sins that *Yeshaya HaNavi* chose to admonish the nation for, was their lack of adherence to the great *mitzvah* of *Oleh Regel* (the pilgrimage to the *Bais HaMikdash* every *Sukkos*, *Pesach*, and *Shavuot*) and said: “*When you come to appear before Me ... to trample My courtyards.*”

Interestingly, although *Malchus Yisroel* did not go up due to a ban from *Yeravem ben Nevat*, *Malchus Yehuda* had no such restrictions and they did indeed go up. Why then does the *Navi* admonish all of *Klal Yisroel* for not keeping this *mitzvah* when in fact there were many who did?

R' Avraham Pam ז"ל explains that even though *Malchus Yehuda* did keep to the holy pilgrimage three times a year,

DEEP, PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH

Oleh Regel was an opportunity for spiritual elevation which needs to be harnessed. The people of *Malchus Yehuda* would bring their sacrifice as an empty ritual, devoid of any meaning, which devalued the *mitzvah* so much that it ultimately became “a nuisance” to *Hashem* rather than a real and actual pleasure.

One of the biggest pitfalls a Jew encounters in his daily life is falling into a monotonous observance of *mitzvos*. While it is hard to maintain an excitement day in day out, it is imperative to remember that if each person on their own individual level figures out a way to renew their commitment and enthusiasm to *Hashem* and His *mitzvos*, *Hashem* will reciprocate their zeal and ultimately bring *Mashiach*.

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן ... (א-א)

Sefer Devarim, detailing the last chapter of Moshe's leadership, contains his parting words to *Klal Yisroel*, replete with *mussar*, love and instruction. Yet the very first **Rashi** sets the tone and conveys a timeless message of how to express reprimand. Rashi explains that because it contains sharp rebuke, the *Torah* expresses it ברמיה hinting at it, so that only those to whom it pertains will understand and internalize its message. In a whole different context, in *Parshas Yisro* (יט – ו), we find the very same two words - “אלה הדברים”. But there Rashi comments, “לא פחות ולא יותר”. Do not add an extra word.

We can learn from these two Rashi's how to give *mussar*. Granted, at times reproof is necessary, but it must be tempered with רחמים - the understanding of “not more” than necessary. Don't add into that rebuke all the troubling history that may exist. The potent power of words cannot be underestimated, and we must exercise caution not to overdo it. As we find ourselves in the nine days, and unfortunately, still in the *golus* caused by שטאת חסם, it would behoove us to improve in all aspects of our interpersonal dealings.

There is a cute anecdote which shows us the impact of one word. A rambunctious girl was once summoned to the principal's office. Expecting a dressing down, she was confused when the principal told her “You have character.” She asked her mother to explain what that meant. From then on whenever she wanted to act out she recalled her principal's message. Needless to say, she went on to excel, becoming a great *mechaneches* in her own right. When speaking once in public, she recounted this story. The principal's daughter approached and revealed to her; “I was in the office at that time. You should know, Mommy really meant to say ‘you *are* a character’, not you *have* character!” A difference of night and day! *Boruch Hashem* she didn't!

Oh, the impact our words have! Let us use them appropriately. ציון במשפט תפדה, ושביה בצדקה

משל למח הדבר דומה

ותרגנו באהליכם ותאמרו בשנאת ה' אתנו הוציאנו ממצרים... (א-בז)

משל: A poor soldier in Czar Nicholai's Russian army struggled with a severe drinking addiction. One evening, desperate for a drink, he begged an innkeeper for a drink on credit. The innkeeper refused unless provided with collateral. With nothing else to give, the soldier offered his military-issued weapon, promising to redeem it later. To conceal his missing gun, the soldier stuffed his carrying bag with straw.

Shortly thereafter, Czar Nicholai arrived for a surprise inspection of the military base. The Czar observed the troops, most of whom carried their weapons in similar bags. While the Czar was generally pleased with the camp's discipline, he abruptly pointed to the drunken soldier and demanded he open his bag. Terrified, the soldier complied, revealing the

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן ... (א-א)

INSIGHTFUL TORAH THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRA TO LEARN AND TO ENJOY BY R' MOSHE GELB

Parshas Chazon always falls out on *Parshas Devarim*, and the preceding weeks of תמצרים fall out on *Parshas Pinchas* and *Matos/Masei*. What is the significance of these *parshiyos* vis-a-vis the Three Weeks? The **Nesivos Shalom** explains that *Parshas Pinchas* is due to the *Parshas HaMusafin* at the end of the *parsha*, as we yearn for the rebuilding of the *Bais HaMikdash* and the reinstatement of the *korbanos*. But what connection do *Matos/Masei* have to the mourning of *Yerushalayim*?

The opening theme of *Parshas Matos* is the subject of *Nedarim*, vows. **Tosafos** in *Avodah Zarah (5b)* states that even a non-Jew is obligated to keep his word. The *Rosh Yeshivah* of Passaic, **Hagaon R' Meir Stern שליטא** explains that although a non-Jew is not bound by the *mitzvah* of “לא יחל דבר”, the **Rambam** (beginning of *Hilchos Nedarim*) and **Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 30)** both imply that a *neder* comes into force regardless of the *lav* of “לא יחל”; rather, the actual דיבור of the person making the vow is what makes it work - that is the כח of a person's speech. Now, this same כח of speech is what destroyed the *Bais HaMikdash*, as the **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל** writes in the introduction to his *sefer*, that the *Bais HaMikdash* was destroyed because of *lashon hara*, a misuse of speech. And it is the *tikkun* of that faculty that will rebuild the *Bais HaMikdash*, as the **Maalos HaTorah** brings down from the **Zohar HaKadosh**, that the Final Redemption will be in the merit of the *Torah*.

This is also the lesson of *Parshas Masei*. No less than 42 מסעות (journeys) the *Yidden* traveled through the desert until they reached *Eretz Yisroel*, all because of one sin - the *lashon hara* of the *meraglim*. And in making them travel 42 *masaos* the *Aibishter* hinted to their *tikkun* - “דברת בים” (42), to speak in *Torah* and not *lashon hara* (see *Yoma 19b*).

And this is hinted to in the name of our *Parsha, Devarim*, as well. The *geulah* will come in the *zechus* of fixing and refining our דברים, our power of speech, by using it for *Torah* and not for other things. Let us be *mischazek* in our *limud haTorah*, and we will then be *zoche, bezras Hashem* to ימים לים מכסים דעה הארץ

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

מחשבת הלב

זינפש