



Adapted from the sefer **תנא דבי אליהו** a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Kedoshim 5766

Tonight, we were **מסיים** the sefer **תנא דבי אליהו**, concluding with divrei Torah about Avrohom Avinu. Our parsha also connects to Avrohom Avinu. "**מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן**". The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that these words contain a **רמז**, a hint, that refers to Avrohom Avinu. In Breishis Rabba, (**סה"ט**), we find that Avrohom Avinu davened for **שיבה**, the physical phenomena that typify old age. This would enable younger people to identify the elderly and honor them. The Midrash says that Hakadosh Boruch Hu approved of his request and told Avrohom Avinu that he would be the first **זקן**. The word **זקן** first appears in the Torah in the description **ואברהם זקן**.

Therefore, whenever we fulfill the mitzva of **מפני שיבה תקום**, we also fulfill **והדרת פני זקן**, honoring Avrohom Avinu, the first **זקן**, who asked Hashem to bring **שיבה** to the world.

Avrohom Avinu personifies the mida of Ahavas Yisroel. He was, and still is, **moser nefesh** for Am Yisroel. The Medrash, (**בר"ר מ"ח, ח**), and the Gemara (**עירובין י"ט**) tell us that Avrohom Avinu sits by the gates of Gehinom, saving any Jew with a **bris milah** from descending to Gehinom. Even though the Beis Din Shel Maala sent those **neshamos** to Gehinom, Avrohom Avinu pulls them out and cares for them.

Eliyahu Hanavi also followed this path of Ahavas Yisroel. We find the following story in Maseches Kesuvos. "Eliyahu Hanavi came regularly to learn with Rav Anan, who recorded what he learned in the sefer **Tana D'vei Eliyahu**. Once, a man asked Rav Anan to serve as a **dayan** in his case, and then proceeded to offer him a bribe. When Rav Anan saw the



bribe, he immediately recused himself from the case, and sent the man to Rav Nachman. Rav Nachman thought that Rav Anan didn't take the case because the litigant was his relative. In order to honor Rav Anan, he cancelled the din Torah that was previously scheduled, and immediately prioritized the case of Rav Anan's "relative".

When the other litigant saw how Rav Nachman honored his unscrupulous opponent, he lost confidence. This prevented him from effectively presenting his side of the case, so the Beis Din ruled against him. Since Rav Anan caused (albeit inadvertently), the corruption of judgement in that case, Eliyahu Hanavi ceased to learn with him.

We also find in Maseches Makos (י"א.), that Eliyahu Hanavi regularly appeared to R. Yehoshua ben Levi, and suddenly stopped. He explained that a man had been killed by a lion in a location three parsas away from R. Yehoshua ben Levi. Since R. Yehoshua ben Levi did not protect this Jew with his זכויות, Eliyahu Hanavi stopped learning with him.

Ahavas Yisroel is also one of the three fundamental principles of Chasidus as established by my ancestor, the Baal Shem Tov זי"ע. The sefer **בוצינא דנהורא**, relates, "People asked the Baal Shem Tov, 'What should be the primary focus of our avoda? We know that our forefathers who were מעשה would fast from Shabbos to Shabbos. However, you discontinued that form of avoda, teaching us (based on the Gemara י"א. תענית), that one who fasts is called a טוטא for torturing his נפש. Which aspect of Avodas Hashem do you want us to emphasize?' The Baal Shem Tov answered, 'In my opinion, one should devote himself to three principles, Ahavas Hashem Yisborach, Ahavas Yisroel, and Ahavas Torah. There is no need to torture yourself.'"

It is certainly true that before the light of the Baal Shem Tov came into the world, Am Yisroel was blessed with many great talmidei chachomim who were tznuim and ovdei Hashem. However, the Baal Shem Tov revealed that even the neshama of the simplest Jew shines with a precious light and has great value. This is why the Baal Shem Tov went



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down "מן ההר אל העם", from the mountain to the people, to teach even the most ignorant Jews. The fundamental goal of Chasidus, from its inception, was to ensure that each Jew who learns Torah would love and value every Jewish neshama, no matter what.

This was the way of my ancestor, הרה"ק רבינו דוד זיע"א, whose yahrzeit approaches. His burning Ahavas Yisroel led him to invest so much time and effort into helping every downtrodden Jew, including those suffering from mental illness. His gabbaim knew that even when great Rabbonim were waiting to meet with R. Dovid, if a Jewish soldier serving in the Czar's army arrived, he was to be sent in before all others.

He performed the avoda of "לאוקמי שכינתא מעפרא", (raising the שכינה from the dust), by elevating fallen neshamos to the highest levels. My grandfather הרה"ק רבי דוד מרדכי זיע"א, told me in the name of his father זיע"א, the reason that, at the end of R. Dovid's life, he suddenly left Tolna and moved to Galicia for a year and a half. His motivation for taking that mysterious journey, was to save some precious Jewish souls who had fallen and become submerged in טומאה.

Eliyahu Hanavi's decision to conclude the Tana D'vei Eliyahu with divrei Torah about Avrohom Avinu, sends a message to the final generations before the Geula. We must internalize the Ahavas Yisroel of Avrohom Avinu, who saved even those sentenced to Gehinom. We must follow the path of Chasidus, treasuring the neshamos of all Jews, no matter what they have done, and doing all we can to love them and draw them close.

The אור החיים הקדוש teaches us, that one who stands up for the elderly, also honors Avrohom Avinu. It follows, that one who increases Ahavas Yisrael, certainly follows in the path of Avrohom Avinu and honors him.

Everyone has to approach their students and children with the ימין מקרבת, the right hand that draws close. This is especially vital in our generation. More and more educators now realize that the approach of שמאל דוחה, the left hand that pushes away, has driven away so many



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neshamos. That left hand of rejection causes us to lose, not only the rejected children, but also others who follow them in their abandonment of Yiddishkeit.

אם ירצה השם, when we try to love and draw close those neshamos that need our love, admiration, and attention, we will be זוכה to Hakadosh Boruch Hu drawing us closer with his right hand, וינהג עמנו במידת החסד של אברהם אבינו ויוציאנו מן הגלות הזו, אכי"ר



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