

A True Anonymous Letter

Two of Aharon's sons died while transgressing the Divine commandments in the Temple service. Losing a son, either spiritually or physically is a most painful traumatic process as the following letter illustrates.

Until a few years ago, I didn't take anything very seriously. I had graduated from a Yeshiva high school, and unlike most of my class, I didn't feel I had what it took to be “a learner”. I didn't want to go to college right away, and I thought I would get a job and have a good time before I settled down. My parents were not very pleased with these decisions, but at that point in my life, what my parents wanted, was not terribly important to me.

Regrettably, during this time I fell in with a group of friends who were not observant. At first I told myself that I would not be influenced by them, but this turned out to be very far from the truth. In a very short period of time, I became exactly like them, and maybe worse as I should have known better. Shabbat meant nothing, Kashrut meant nothing and my life was spent in a haze which even today I have trouble remembering.

My parents were devastated. Maybe they didn't expect me to be the best of the best, but they certainly didn't expect this. As well as having destroyed my own life, I was on my way to destroying my family as well. Because of the bad influence I was having on my younger brothers, my father asked me to leave the house. When I moved out, I said some really cruel and spiteful things to my father. I can remember him standing silently at the door, with my mother crying at his side.

I realize now that what I had seen in them as a weakness was actually enormous strength. I had no contact with anyone in my family for almost a year. Deep inside I missed them very much, but I foolishly thought that I would be seen as weak, if I contacted them.

One morning, I was shocked to find my father waiting for me outside of the apartment building I lived in. He looked at me with tired worn eyes and asked if we could talk. Stubborn to the core, I only nodded and we walked to a corner coffee shop where we sat down. He told me how much everyone missed me and how I had been in their minds and hearts every second that I had been gone. He told me how my mother agonized over what had happened, blaming herself for

not having been there for me. While he was talking, tears began rushing from his eyes. He told me that he wasn't here to lecture me. He just had one request. He wanted me to drive with him that afternoon to Monsey, NY, and say one chapter of Tehillim at the grave of a certain Tzadik . As far removed as I was from Judaism, I was still moved by his request.

I told him that I couldn't go that day, but that I would go with him any other time. In truth, I had plans to go with some friends to Atlantic City that evening, and didn't want to break them. When I told him that I couldn't go that day, he reached across the table and took my hand in his and just looked at me with his tear streaked sad face. I felt my own eyes begin to water, and rather than have him see me cry I just agreed to meet him later that day.

I made the necessary apologies to my friends, and later that day I met my father. We didn't talk much during the trip up. I remember getting out of the car with him, and walking over to one of the graves. He put some rocks on top of the grave and gave me a Tehillim. We must have looked quite strange; my father in his long black coat and me with my leather bomber jacket and jeans. We didn't stay long. Ten minutes after we had arrived, we were on our way back. The return trip was as quiet as the trip there. My father let me off in front of my apartment building. I still recall the words he said to me as I got out of the car. He told me that no matter what may have happened between us and no matter what may happen, I was always going to be his son and that he would always love me. I was emotionally moved by his words, but I was not experiencing the spiritual inspiration he may have been hoping for. I shook my head at his words and we parted company.

The next morning I woke up to some shocking news. On the way back from Atlantic City, my friends were involved in a head on collision with a tractor trailer. There were no survivors.

As I write this letter, I am overcome with emotion. I made a brit today for my first child. My father was Sandek and as he held my son on his lap, his eyes met mine and we smiled. It was as if we had finally reached the end of a long journey.

We had never talked to each other about that trip to Monsey, nor had I ever told him about the death of my friends. I just walked back into their home that evening, and was taken back with open arms and no questions asked. I don't think I will ever understand what happened that day. I just know, that sitting

here late at night with my son in my arms, that I will try and be the father to him, that my father was to me. (

Fortunately, we all have such a “father”, He is, Avinu Sheh Bashamayim. He is “HaShem, HaShem, Keil Rachum VeChanun”.

“You shall be holy, for holy am I, HaShem, your GD” (Kedoshim 19:2)

This month of IYAR, is spelt Alef, Yud, Yud, Resh,- stands for “Ani HaShem, Rofeicha”- I am HaShem your Healer. What better father could we ask for ??

QUESTIONS ON THE PARASHA

- 1- If we see a person is in danger, but instead of helping or calling for help, we ignore the situation and just walk away. What Lo-Taaseh Mitzvah , in this weeks parasha have we violated??
- 2- The Torah juxtaposes A. “Do not withhold your workers salary over night”(19:13). B. “Do not curse another person” and C. “Before a blind person do not place an obstacle (19:14).
What is the connection between these three???

FAMOUS WORDS: “INTELLECTUALS SOLVE PROBLEMS,
GENIUSES PREVENT THEM.
WHO SAID THOSE WORDS??
CLUE: his initials are: A.E.