



The Blind Who Saw Perfectly
Parshas Behar

I first met Shimon 40 years ago. He had come to visit Migdal Ohr and was immediately liked by all who had met him. Shimon was blind, and despite his inability to see, he felt a warm embrace surrounding him.

Shimon had managed to memorize the entire Bible, and people came to him with complex questions.

He was severely injured and scarred in a fire during his childhood that left him blind, but this did not diminish his great spirits or cheerful personality.

One day he shared with me that he was seeking to establish a family. I felt bad for him and tried to help him, but the years passed and he was unsuccessful in finding a spouse.

After several years of trying, he decided to travel abroad and seek a bride there. I accompanied him throughout his travels and made sure he was well taken care of.

Shimon learned of the 40-day prayer marathon at the Kotel and decided to do it. He came to Israel and spent 40 days praying at the Kotel hoping to find his intended.

On the 40th Day his prayers were answered. As he was praying, he heard a familiar voice praying next to him. He turned to greet his childhood friend, who was blind like him. They hugged after having not met for many years.

His friend told him about the kidney transplant he had recently undergone, and about a generous female American doctor who donated the kidney to him. As they were speaking, the friend offered Shimon to introduce him to the doctor.

After many years of searching, he finally was successful in establishing a household. The couple purchased a home in the center of the country and had a son.

In our weekly Parsha we learn about the power of belief regarding the Shmita, the Torah says: "And if you should say, 'what will we eat in the seventh year? We will not sow, and we will not gather in our produce!'"¹

Rabbi Zusha of Anapoly would quote his brother Rabbi Elimelech's famous saying.

Why does the Torah give such long description here about the farmer's question when the Torah is usually terse?

Rabbi Zusha explains that the nature of good is to bestow good upon others, and that G-d bestows His good on the world at every moment.

The Torah says that when the farmer asks what he will eat, he is essentially displaying a lack of belief and is asking questions about the future, and therefore requires a special commandment to ensure that the blessing happens.

"I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce for three years," the Torah answers the farmer.

Following this approach - whenever Zusha wished to eat he would turn to G-d and say "Master of the Universe, Zusha needs to eat," or "Master of the Universe, Zusha needs money for Shabbos."

Once, his community decided to test him. They decided not to give him food, and a fancy carriage stopped at the entrance to the synagogue and a stranger gave him a feast.

When a person acts in belief he merits receiving abundance from above.

"Be wholehearted with the Lord, your G-d,"² the Torah says. Rashi explains that this means "Conduct yourself with Him with simplicity and depend on Him, and do not inquire of the future; rather, accept whatever happens to you with simplicity and then, you will be with Him and His portion."

It is not enough to act with simplicity, honesty and with innocence. One must not inquire about the future. The righteous used to say that he who worries about tomorrow is not worthy to be considered a believing Jew.

When a Jew believes he is redeemed by God immediately.

Shimon passed away last week while being treated in a Los Angeles hospital. His soul ascended to the Heavens satiated with Torah and Mitzvos. He never worried about tomorrow and lived his life with simple belief.

His family asked me to find him a grave at the Yahud cemetery, and the local council head obliged the request. I asked that he be buried among worthy righteous individuals. The council head explained that the only empty plot in the cemetery was among people who were had not been observant. However, he added, there is permission from famous rabbis to place a space between him and the plots surrounding him. I thanked him with all my heart.

I knew Shimon deserved more. After a few minutes I received a phone call from someone with a question about Shimon's obituary. I told him about my predicament and he told me that a year ago he had buried a friend, who like Shimon was blind, at a special plot in the cemetery. He gave me the phone number of the undertaker.

I called the person and told him the details, and I asked him to do all he could to ensure that this righteous person receives a worthy place for his final rest. After an hour he called me back and told me that they found one last plot in the entire section. I thanked him and ran to participate in the funeral.

As his body was lowered into the grave I looked at the plot beside Shimon's. Yes, it was his friend's grave, the same friend he met at the Kotel and who had helped him start his new life. They did not separate in life nor in death.

¹ Vayikra 25:20.

² Dvarim 18:13.