

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כי אש יצאה מחשבון להבה מקריית סיחון אכלה ער מואב בעלי במות אינן ... (כא-כה)

First put into service in 2011, Israel's Iron Dome air defense missile system is designed to stop short-range rockets and artillery like those fired from Gaza. It relies on a system of radar and analysis to determine whether an incoming rocket is a threat, firing an interceptor only if the incoming rocket risks hitting a populated area or important infrastructure. The interceptors are designed to detonate the incoming rocket in the air, producing the explosions in the sky that have come to accompany warning sirens during numerous recent Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

Before 2011, however, things were much different. Palestinian terrorists and Lebanese militia were shooting rockets into Israel but it took a system of air-raid sirens and human interface to alert civilians of the oncoming danger. Many of the people who worked in these underground bunkers were responsible for saving many lives and their stories are no less dramatic or poignant than the more recent accounts of the Iron Dome and how it saves lives.

The second Lebanon War was a 34-day military conflict in Lebanon and Northern Israel. The conflict started on July 12, 2006, and formally ended on September 8, 2006, when Israel lifted its naval blockade of Lebanon. It affected many people's lives in Israel. One Israeli soldier recalls how during the war, her job was to alert civilians where missiles were heading and even precisely where they were going to fall, so they could get to safety. One morning during her shift, there was a heavy bombardment and she could see 12 missiles being launched from Lebanon toward the major Israeli city of Haifa. Her heart skipped a bit since Haifa was where her family lived and where she grew up. The city always remained close to her heart. She followed the trajectory of the incoming missiles and hurriedly sounded the air-raid sirens to alert the immediate area.

She knew that she had only approximately 10 to 15 seconds before the missiles hit the ground so she quickly opened up a separate screen on her monitor where she can see the actual missile hitting in real-time. She randomly chose one of the arching missiles and opened the window to see where it was heading. She recoiled in shock as, clear as day, she saw her apartment building where her family lived. Thoughts ran through her mind - she could see her home, the place where she was born, where she grew up, where she and her cousins played almost every single day after school. And the image was so clear and accurate, she could actually see the playground, the outer facade of the building - and before she had a chance to process the whole picture, the image suddenly went black. The missile had hit its target.

She was numb. She knew it hit the street but she hoped it wasn't a direct hit on the building. But she didn't have a chance to dwell on it since another missile was coming and another after that. For the next three hours, so many missiles were landing all over the place that she she had no choice but to put aside her terrible thoughts and focus on her job at hand. The instant her shift was over, she ran out of the bunker and turned on her phone. She had seven missed calls from her father. She knew that was not a good sign because her father knew that as a soldier with the country at war, she was unable to answer her phone. He knew that and would not be calling for no reason. The fact that he called even though she couldn't pick up the phone got her really nervous because she knew exactly how many missiles had hit Haifa and her whole family was there.

She quickly dialed his number and he picked up on the first ring. "Abba, is everything okay?" she practically yelled into her phone. Really calmly, he responded, "Matuk, everything is okay right now. I just called to thank you."

She asked him, "Thank me? For what?" And he said, "Well I was in the street at the time the sirens were activated. There was no time to get to the shelter so everyone in our neighborhood ran into the stairwell and waited for impact. Ten seconds later the missile hit the building right next to ours and the entire building collapsed. From what I know, no one got hurt."

He paused for a moment and said, "Thank you for alerting us and saving so many people's lives." She felt relieved but scared at the same time. It was too close for comfort. We must appreciate what so many people do to help other Jews.

כי לקח ישראל את ארצו בעלותו ממצרים ... וענתה השיבה אתו בשלום (שפטים א-ג)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTARAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

During the tenure of *Yiftach HaGiladi*, the Nation of Ammon oppressed *Klal Yisroel* relentlessly. Yiftach sought a diplomatic solution only to be rebuffed by the king of Ammon with the baseless claim that the land captured by the Jewish people from Sichon, King of the Emori, 300 years prior, had once belonged to them and Moav, and they now wanted it back. Yiftach's arguments were indeed sound, so why did the king of Ammon not even want to hear them?

The answer lies in the psyche of the human mind. **R' Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama ז"ל (Akeidas Yitzchak)** explains that when a person is in a warlike frame of mind, not only will he concentrate on hating and killing his enemy, but the values that are paramount during times of peace, tend

to become perverted. Cruelty and murder occur even amongst brothers in arms, friends, members of the same side, and actions which are unavoidable in war, have a way of developing into independent virtues in wartime, corrupting all normal norms. The king of Ammon was already in a belligerent mood prior to Yiftach's diplomatic overtures, and no amount of sound reasoning was going to change that.

The **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל** imparts a great lesson here. Peace is a two-way street which requires both sides of the equation to be willing to engage in it. Once peace is achieved, sound reasoning will return, and Fear of Heaven will be returned, giving both sides the ability to literally open their eyes and finally see and appreciate the other side's claims.

ותמת שם מרים ותקבר שם. ולא היה מים לעדה ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן ... (כ-כא)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

The *Gemara* in *Taanis* (9a) states that *Klal Yisroel* was *zoche* to receive the *Mann* in the *zechus* of Moshe, the *ענני הכבוד* in the *zechus* of Aharon and the *באר* (well) in the *zechus* of Miriam. Therefore, when she died they were lacking water. Thus, the *Torah* juxtaposes her death with the *parsha* of the *מריבה*. The *Gemara* continues and says that the well came back *b'zechus* Moshe and Aharon. The *meforshim* ask, if Moshe and Aaron had merit to "sponsor" the *be'er* on their own, why did it come in Miriam's merit in the first place? To answer this question we must understand the significance of why the water came specifically in the *zechus* of Miriam to begin with. I would like to suggest the following *machshava*.

Chazal say "אם אין קמח אין תורה". *Moshe Rabbeinu*, the emissary of *Hashem* to deliver *Toras Moshe*, brought the *Mann*, the bread. How is bread made? Only through the water it is mixed with. The *nashim tzidkaniyos* are the ones who supply the nutrients needed to create growth in *Torah*, *avodah* and *Yiras Hashem*. They create the atmosphere in the home that is conducive for such growth. Miriam, the "*manhigah*" of the women, by personifying this ingredient, brought the *be'er* to *Klal Yisroel*.

Perhaps, by creating the slight time lapse between Miriam's *petirah* and Moshe's actions to reinstate the *be'er*, the *Torah* is showing us that what a mother provides for her offspring comes naturally; for a father, that same action requires a miracle, in this case, the miracle of *Moshe Rabbeinu* hitting the rock and bringing forth water. The lesson that is imparted to us is to appreciate what our mothers, wives, and last but not least, our *shviggers* do, and continue to do, for us and our children.

Together as complete family units, may we see only *nachas* from our "watered" plants, our *doros yeshorim u'mevorachim*, as they continue to blossom and grow taller and stronger in *avodas Hashem*. *b'siyata dishmaya*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

או ישיר ישראל את השירה הזאת עלי באר ענו לה ... (כא-כ)

משל: There was once a miller in a little village, who visited the nearby town, where he saw a varied display of clocks in the window of a clock-maker's shop. One clock particularly aroused his fancy; it was an alarm clock that played a fine tune to arouse its owner from his sleep. He liked the clock and went into the shop to buy it. The clock maker asked him where he was from and he answered that he was a villager and owned a mill. "What do you need an alarm clock for?" asked the surprised clock maker. "You have huge wheels and millstones churning and turning in your mill. Don't they make enough noise to wake you up? And of what help will this little clock be as it only plays such a quiet tune?"

"You don't understand human nature," answered the villager. "It is well known that when a person is accustomed to a certain noise, the person barely notices its existence and

it makes no impression on him. I am so used to the noise of my mill that I barely hear it, and I certainly don't wake up from it. On the other hand, this clock has a nice tune, and no matter how quiet it is, it will surely wake me up."

במשל: *Klal Yisroel* were saved from their enemies and sang a special *shirah*, a song of praise to *Hashem*. The special quality of their *shirah*, similar to the *Shiras Hayam* they sang after *Krias Yam Suf*, brought them to a unique level of *Ruach Hakodesh* and appreciation of *Hashem*. The **Divrei Yisroel** of **Modzhitz ז"ל** says that *Shirah* arouses a person to repentance, raises his soul and brings the heart of a Jew closer to his Father in Heaven. This is the power of song. *Seforim* on *mussar* and *Yiras Hashem* are wonderful, but since people read from them all the time, sometimes they do not make enough of an impression on a person; song is something unique and different, and therefore it has the power to make a strong impression and arouse a person to *teshuva*.

זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר וכו' ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה (יב-כ)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

R' Yitzchok of Vorki ז"ל writes that the essence of the "*Parah Aduma*" which calls upon the *Kohen* to be come impure to purify others, is the idea of "ואהבת לרעך כמוך" - Loving your friend as you love yourself! His grandson, **R' Mendel of Vorki ז"ל** explains that this *mitzvah* depicts the highest level of love, because it must be performed with tremendous self-sacrifice! When a person loses out in order to help another - that is the ultimate fulfillment of loving a fellow man.

To GIVE to others is a beautiful *middah*, but often giving is really taking, and people give for their own ulterior motives. GIVING IN is even harder as it means one must go out of his/her comfort zone in order to do something for another person. But GIVING UP is certainly the highest and greatest form of love. When we give away our money, our time, our sleep, or our pride in order to benefit others, that is called real sacrifice and that is true kindness.

The word for sacrifice is "הקרבה" which means "to bring close" because this truly is the outcome of sacrificing for others. People who find it difficult to give of themselves or to make sacrifices for others, reflect an inability to truly love. Often people think to themselves, why should I put myself out for him? Why should I give away my hard-earned money or precious time for her? Do they really appreciate it? Would they do the same for me? It makes NO SENSE for me to sacrifice myself for another!

Thus, the *Torah* tells us, "זאת חוקת התורה" - this is a "*Chok*"! It doesn't have to make sense to you, but just remember that this is the most important principle of the *Torah*: "ואהבת לרעך כמוך - זה כלל גדול בתורה". *Parah Aduma* comes to teach us this most valuable lesson: We MUST love others as we love ourselves! We must sacrifice for others whether it makes sense to us or not! This is a *Chok* - we might not understand why, but we still must do it! This is a most important message as we just entered the month of *Tammuz* and the "בין המצרים" are upon us. Let us rebuild the *Bais HaMikdash* with true אהבה and הקרבה for others.