

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ואסף איש מהור את אפר הפרה והניח מהוין למחנה במקום מהור והיתה לעדת בני ישראל למשמרת ... (ט-ז)

During the latter half of the 19th century, a group of *Chassidim* immigrated to the mystical city of Tzefas and established the *Sanz Beis Medrash* in 1870 under the direction of **R' Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam ז"ל, Shineva Rov**. The synagogue was named "*Divrei Chaim*" in honor of his father, the **Sanzer Rov, R' Chaim Halberstam ז"ל**. R' Chaim had wanted to travel to the Land of Israel but was unable to undertake the journey and so he asked his eldest son, R' Yechezkel Shraga, to oversee the establishment of the *Beis Medrash* and *kehilla* in Tzefas for the *Sanzer Chassidim* who had moved to the city.

The trip from Jerusalem to Tzefas was expected to take two days, with a stopover near Tiberius overnight. The *Chassidim* eagerly awaited the *Shineva Rov's* arrival and estimated that he should reach the city around 2:00 in the afternoon. The entire population, not just the *Chassidim*, came out to honor the great *Rebbe* from Poland, and even the Chief Rabbi, **R' Shmuel Heller ז"ל**, stood at the city gates in great anticipation. However, they were forced to stand under the hot Mediterranean sun for quite some time, and only a few short minutes before nightfall, did the caravan with the holy *Rebbe* make its appearance on the horizon. Amidst the belated grand welcoming ceremony, a few locals were determined to find out what happened to the *Rebbe's* caravan and why they arrived so many hours later than scheduled. They were told that in the middle of the journey, the *Shineva Rov* suddenly asked to get out of the wagon. He walked off the main road for some distance and stood in pensive contemplation and deep prayer, rooted to a specific spot in the desert sand. Nobody understood why he stood in that spot, but nobody wanted to rush the distinguished guest. For this reason, they arrived so many hours later than planned.

When R' Shmuel Heller heard the story, he asked the members of the caravan for a few more identifying details, including exactly where the *Rebbe* stood and between which mountains they were located. Then, he shuddered with great awe and trepidation as he recounted the following story that he had heard when he was much younger from the elders of Tzefas:

There was once an Arab farmer who was plowing an empty field when he suddenly struck gold - literally. His plough hit a metal object made of gold, and in it, he found a fine powdery sand resembling ashes. Ecstatic with his find, he brought the golden jug home and was planning to sell it and live off the riches. That night, the Arab had a dream. A Jew with a long beard came to him and warned him, "Return the jug with the ashes to its original place - if you do not, you will come to a bitter end!"

The Arab awoke and instead of taking the dream to heart, he shrugged it off, thinking it was nothing to worry about. Over the course of the next few nights, he continued to see the distinguished looking Jew with the long beard, who repeatedly told him to replace the jug with ashes back where he had found it, or he will face dire consequences. The Arab just laughed it off.

A week later, his oldest son came down with a mysterious illness and shortly thereafter passed away. The same thing happened a few days later to his second son, and then again to his third son. Now, the Arab took notice and reasoned that the ashes must be quite important, so he poured them into an earthen vessel, traveled out to the desert, and placed it in the spot where he had found them. He kept the golden jug for himself. That night, he saw the old Jew who shook his head and threatened him, "You must return the ashes to the golden jug and bury them both where you found them, for if you do not, your end will be very bitter!"

The Arab waited cautiously to see what would happen, and a few days later, he started to have trouble breathing. He realized that he was probably dying and his days were numbered. Hastily, he took the golden jug and traced his steps back to the spot in the desert where he had buried the earthen vessel. He then put the ashes back into the golden jug and buried it in the exact spot where he had found it. By that evening, he was already feeling better and he knew he would live.

"According to the elders of Tzefas," concluded R' Shmuel Heller, "that Arab had found the ashes of the *Parah Adumah* that the Almighty had prepared and concealed for the coming of *Moshiach*. Obviously, the holy *Shineva Rov* was passing that spot and was able to feel the pull of the *kedusha*. Thus, he got out and spent long hours in *tefillah* on that exact spot..." (Sefer Ohel Kedoshim)

ידיו כאשר נלחמו בני עמון עם ישראל וילכו זקני גלעד לקחת את יפתח ... (שופטים י"ה)
Yiftach HaGiladi is called upon by the elders of *Klal Yisroel* to lead the Nation into battle against the attacking Ammonites. This is comparable to the battle against the Ammonites described in this week's parsha as *Klal Yisroel* began their journey into *Eretz Yisroel*. *Chazal* note that wars are fought both on the physical world as well as on the spiritual world. Therefore, with the Nation's viability at stake, why did the elders approach Yiftach to lead them? After all, he was born from promiscuity, and led a low lifestyle – definitely not a man of spiritual highs who would be able to tap into the spiritual merits needed to win a battle.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ז"ל explains that while both aspects of battle - physical and spiritual - are deeply necessary

in their own right to win a war, a military victory shifts the pieces on the chessboard of history while a spiritual victory changes lives. A military victory is almost always short-lived. Either the enemy attacks again or a new and more dangerous opponent appears. But spiritual victories can last forever. Yet, both are inherently important and throughout history many heroes managed to tap into both concepts simultaneously.

Yiftach was an enigma. He was a hard crusted warrior, but he had no spiritual affiliation to make him worthy of being a leader. Nevertheless, the elders saw the potential for *Klal Yisroel* to pull themselves back up spiritually through a fleeting military victory. It was for this reason (amongst others) that they approached Yiftach to be their leader.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

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

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L
אז ישיר ישראל את השירה הזאת ... באר הפרוה שרם כרה נדיבי העם במחזק במשענתם (כא-ז"ה)

The simple explanation for this "song" was that *Klal Yisroel* sang it to thank *Hashem* for the miracle of having been saved from the wicked *Emorim* who were lying in ambush, waiting to destroy us. *Hashem* moved the mountains together thereby crushing them. However, the *Gemara (Nedarim 55a)* says that these *posukim* are referring to *Torah* learning.

Accordingly, we could posit that the entire *shira* was not only a show of appreciation for the aforementioned miracle but also a song of thanks to *Hashem* for gifting us with the *Torah*. The *Gemara* explains the words, "חפרוה שרים כרה נדיבי העם" as a reference to the leaders of *Klal Yisroel* who toil in *Torah* with utmost diligence and resolve "במחזק במשענתם". This is the layman's introduction to the *shira* because we realize the supreme importance of our Jewish leaders. It is their singular dedication to guiding us and passing on the proper *mesorah* from generation to generation. Nevertheless, the opening words here are the key. "אז ישיר ישראל" - every single *yid* expressed their sincere *hakaras hatov* for having received the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*. Every single one of us has a portion in the *Torah* and we realize how very crucial it is to have in our lives.

Lastly, the *Torah* here is called a "*Shira*." Why? We may toil in secular studies and ponder other topics, but we do so only when we must and we are not occupied with anything else. On the other hand, a song can be sung or hummed anywhere and even while one is busy doing something else. The *Torah* is very much the same - accompanying us, illuminating our lives, anywhere and everywhere. As the *Torah* envelops us in its protective shade, let us become more committed and serious in our *Torah* learning and *mitzvah* observance, enabling us to find solace and attain both a *shemira* and a *kirvah* to *Hashem*.

אחת שאלתי מאת ה' אותה אבקש שבתי בבית ה' כל ימי חיי לחיות בנעם ה' ולבקר בהיכלו

משל למה הדבר דומה

על כן יאמרו המשלים באו השבון תבנה עיר סוחן (כא-ב)
משל: Reb Yossel, as he was called, was the quintessential *yungerman*. Every morning he got up early, *davened*, and then grabbed something to eat before going to learn in *kollel*. Year after year his reputation grew as an upstanding *talmid chacham*, admired and respected by his younger peers.

One morning, his wife woke up to find him in an upright position, staring blankly at the wall. "Is everything alright?" she exclaimed alarmed to see him this way.

"My dream," he blurted out, visibly shaken. "I had a frightening dream," he added in a trembling voice.

"I dreamt that I was standing in the heavenly courtyard. Clouds of the brightest colors shrouded the room, flanked by ethereal angels of all statures. The atmosphere was truly awe-inspiring. I was frightened and looked all about. Straight ahead, I saw none other than the "Heavenly Throne" with the

Shechinah in its place. And then, I spoke to the Master of the Universe. Imagine ... I spoke to *Hashem* Himself!"

"But you do that three times a day," his wife interrupted.

"Correct, but last night, the concept of talking to *Hashem* took on a new meaning. My feet were locked with fear and my brain was in full concentration mode. Every word I said was with precise calculation, exact intonation, and I didn't dare allow for any disturbances. After all, *Hashem* Himself was right there in front of me - listening to me!"

נמשל: **Rashi** brings the famous words of *Chazal* that interpret the *posuk* "יאמרו המשלים באו חשבון" - that those who rule over their inclination, make proper calculations to balance right from wrong. This *drasha* however is unusual here, as the *posuk* isn't talking about this topic at all. Perhaps the lesson is, that we must never serve *Hashem* by rote. Constant calculation of our actions is the only effective way to help us perceive our faults and reach loftier levels.

דרגה יתירה

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO
The greatest achievement in life is to completely accept *Hashem's* will without question and without understanding how it makes sense to us. "*Zos Chukas HaTorah*" means that when there is a paradox between what is happening and what we want to happen, we make a choice to see the positive. The *Parah Adumah* teaches us that very often in life, we don't understand *Hashem's* ways, but we always have a choice to see the purity, the *chessed* of *Hashem*, in every situation. The point of a *chok* is to test us. If we choose to think with our own human minds, we may look at a *chok* and say, "That is crazy, it makes no sense. How can the same thing purify and contaminate at the same time?" But if we choose to raise ourselves up, we say, "*Hashem* is good and all that He does is good, so this too must be good. It has nothing to do with MY limited comprehension."

The truth is that every time something happens in our lives that we don't particularly like or understand, it is a *chok*. It is a test to see what we will choose. It is all a matter of training. Some people hear an ambulance and they think, "Oh no, someone is about to die." Another person hears the same ambulance and thinks, "*Baruch Hashem*, a baby is about to be born." One can get upset when their husband or wife leaves shoes in the middle of the room, or they can choose to remain calm and say, "Thank you *Hashem* that I have a spouse." One can go to a restaurant and complain about the lousy service or be grateful not to have to cook or clean up!

In millions of situations in life, two people can experience the same thing and one can see the good and become purified and one can see the negative and become impure. How different life could have turned out for the *Meraglim* had they chosen to see the good in *Eretz Yisroel*. How wonderful life could have been for Korach had he held his tongue and accepted his position as a *chok*. How tragic are the repercussions of one who chooses to see the impurity in any situation and then chooses to complain. Even the most wonderful blessings in life can become tremendous sources of pain and aggravation when we choose to see the negative.