Bnos 5784 · תשפ"ד

Parshas

Vayigash

אַחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּתוּנִים בַּצָּרָה וּבַשִּׁבְיָה הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בַּיָּם וּבֵין בַּיַּבָּשָׁה הַמָּקוֹם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לִרְוָחָה וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה וּמִשִּׁעְבּוּד לִגְאֻלָּה הַשְׁתָּא בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

Story A SCOOPFUL

In 1976, Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson was campaigning for the upcoming Presidential elections.
While Senator Jackson was not Jewish, his dedication and respect for the Jewish people were remarkable. He was very active in Jewish organizations and backed many projects that were set up to benefit Israel.

R’ Moshe Londinski, who at that time was a rabbi in Seattle, Washington, was a big admirer of Senator Jackson. He helped with fundraising and often spoke to help gain the Senator support in his quest for the Presidency. One Sunday afternoon in early June, R’ Moshe received a phone call from the gabbai of the Skulener Rebbe, R’ Eliezer Zisha Portugal zt”l (1896-1982).

“I’m calling on behalf of the Rebbe,” the man informed him. “The Rebbe must see Senator Jackson tomorrow at nine o’clock AM. Can you arrange an appointment?” “Tomorrow? Well, I don’t know, it’s not so simple. The Senator is in the middle of his campaign, and he’s traveling all over the country. In fact, I don’t even know where he is right now! I don’t think it will be possible.”

The gabbai was very insistent. “It’s important that the Rebbe speak to the Senator tomorrow at nine.”

R’ Moshe heard the urgency in the man’s voice. “All right,” he said, “I’ll see what I can do.” The first step was a call to Stan Golub, one of the Senator’s main campaign managers. “Stan, this is Rabbi Londinski. I have to ask you for a favor. I need to speak to the Senator immediately.” “Look, Rabbi, the Senator is in Arizona now. There’s no way to get him on the phone there.”

“It’s important, Stan. I’ve never asked you for a favor before, but it’s urgent that I speak to him right away.” “I’ll do what I can, Rabbi, but I’m not guaranteeing anything.” R’ Moshe thanked Stan and put down the phone. It rang three minutes later.

“Scoop here! What seems to be the problem? Stan said it was urgent.”

R’ Moshe was momentarily at a loss for words. He hadn’t dreamed that he would get such a quick response! He quickly pulled himself together.

“I just got a call from a saintly chassidic rabbi from New York. He says that he must see you tomorrow morning. He’s willing to go wherever you are. Will you be able to see him?”

“Let’s see, I’m taking the red-eye back to Washington tonight. My schedule is tight, but I’ll fit him in first thing in the morning. I’ll make sure the rabbi has enough time to tell me what he needs to say.”

R’ Moshe thanked the Senator and called the gabbai back with the good news. The gabbai asked R’ Moshe to hold on while he relayed the news to the Rebbe. There was a short pause, and then the gabbai got back on the phone.

“The Rebbe has one more request. Since the Rebbe only speaks Yiddish, he would like you to be there as an interpreter.”
“Me? The Rebbe wants me to come? I’m in Seattle! That’s over three thousand miles from Washington. I’d have to leave immediately and travel overnight if I wanted to get there in time.”
The gabbai heard R’ Moshe out, but simply repeated, “The Rebbe wants you to be there!”
“All right,” R’ Moshe surrendered. “If it’s that important, I’ll be there.”
The next morning found R’ Moshe in Senator Jackson’s office in Washington D.C. The Senator was already in his office, busy rearranging his schedule so he would have time to speak with the Rebbe.
The Rebbe arrived with his gabboim. They met R’ Moshe in the outer office, and they entered the inner sanctum together. Senator Jackson’s inner office was very impressive, complete with magnificent paneled walls and a rich oak mahogany desk. The Senator was, after all, the head of the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee, and a very powerful man.
The Senator greeted his guests and sat down behind his desk, ready to begin the meeting.
But instead of speaking to the Senator, the Rebbe whispered something to his gababi, who in turn whispered something to R’ Moshe.
R’ Moshe turned pale. He looked helplessly at Senator Jackson.
“What is the problem?” the Senator asked curiously.
“Well, ah ...” R’ Moshe took a deep breath. “It seems that the Rebbe has not had a chance to say his morning prayers. He needs a place where he can concentrate. Would he be able to use your office for a little while?”
“Of course, no problem!”
The Senator immediately stood up and walked with R’ Moshe out of the inner office. The two of them stood in the hall, waiting for the Rebbe to finish.
Twenty minutes went by. By this time, both men were pacing the hall. R’ Moshe didn’t know what to say to the Senator. After all, it was his office! Fortunately, the office door opened just then, and the Rebbe himself beckoned them back inside.
Senator Jackson once again seated himself behind his desk. “Now,” he said with a smile,
“what can I do for you?”
R’ Moshe stood next to the Rebbe, ready to interpret every word. The Rebbe opened his mouth to speak. But he said just two short words and then burst into tears.
“What’s wrong?” the Senator asked in concern.
“I don’t know,” R’ Moshe said in bewilderment.
The Rebbe was trying to speak through his tears, but R’ Moshe couldn’t understand a single word. He stood, waiting for the crying to stop, but the tears continued to pour down the Rebbe’s face.
Senator Jackson beckoned R’ Moshe over. “Tell the rabbi that I know what he wants,” he said abruptly.
“You do?” R’ Moshe said, startled. “How?”
“Just ask the rabbi what he wants me to do about it,” the Senator told him.
R’ Moshe stared at the Senator for a moment, but then he obediently turned to the Rebbe and relayed the Senator’s statement. The Rebbe stopped crying.
“I want it stopped immediately,” he told R’ Moshe.
R’ Moshe translated the Rebbe’s statement.
“How does he want me to stop it?” the Senator asked.
Again R’ Moshe relayed the question to the Rebbe.

“The Senator knows which buttons to press,” the Rebbe replied.
The Senator reached for the phone, punched in a number and began to speak. And, as R’ Moshe listened, the story slowly became clearer to him. It seemed that a few days before, the Romanian government had arrested twenty Jews and falsely accused them of currency speculation. They were imprisoned and due to be executed in a few days. The whole situation was a ploy by the Romanian government to pressure the United States into giving them “most favored nation” status – which would give the country favorable trade conditions with the United States. The Senator, as the head of the Foreign Relations Committee, was also very involved with Soviet Jewry, and he knew of this action by the Romanian government. He had immediately understood what the Rebbe had come for.
The Senator was speaking to the Romanian ambassador. “As head of the Foreign Relations Committee, I strongly suggest that you immediately call the Prime Minister. Tell him that if those twenty prisoners are not released within forty-eight hours, I guarantee that Romania will never see a cent of American aid. Hair will grow on the palm of their hands before they ever receive America’s ‘most favored nation’ status.”
The Senator put the phone down and looked up at R’ Moshe. “Tell the rabbi that it has been taken care of.”
The Rebbe smiled and warmly shook the Senator’s hand.
Within forty-eight hours, all twenty prisoners had been released and brought to Eretz Yisroel.
Once again, R’ Moshe had seen Senator Jackson’s concern for the Jewish people. R’ Moshe was curious about this, and one time he took the opportunity to ask the Senator why he cared so much about the Jews.
Senator Jackson smiled. “Three reasons. One, I was a prosecutor during the Nuremberg trials. I saw how much the Jews had suffered in the concentration camps, and I resolved to do whatever I could to help them. “Two, my mother, a widow, was a housekeeper for a Jewish family in Evret, Washington.
They treated her very well. They gave her extra food and money during the Depression years to help her raise her family. In her will, my mother asked that her children should always be good to the Jews.
“And, finally, when I was a young boy, there were a few Jews I would always help out on Saturday. They always treated me nicely and gave me tips after their Shabbos was over.”
The Jewish people, by practicing their Torah-true middos, had instilled a feeling of mutual respect into a man who later rose to a position of power, and was able to reciprocate their kindness.

(Visions of Greatness by Rabbi Yosef Weiss CIS Publishers)

Parsha Quiz

See how much you know!

1. Which brother approached Yosef in defense of Binyomin?
2. What was Yehudah's reason for wanting Yosef to allow Binyomin to return home?
3. Was any Mitzri present when Yosef announced his identity to his brothers?
4. Were his brothers ashamed of what they did?
5. What did Yosef request of his brothers?
6. How many years of hunger remained?
7. Was Yosef angry at his brothers for having sold him?
8. Why wasn't Yosef angry at his brothers?
9. In which part of Mitzrayim would Yosef's family live?
10. Who cried over each others' shoulders?
11. What did Hashem tell Yaakov?
12. Who were the three sons of Levi?
13. How many members of Yaakov's family arrived in Mitzrayim?
14. Who was born as they arrived?
15. Whom did Yaakov send ahead to Goshen?
16. For what purpose was Yehudah sent ahead of the family to Goshen?
17. Who went to meet Yaakov when he arrived in Goshen?
18. When Yosef introduced his brothers to Pharaoh, what did he say about their occupation?
19. In what land did Yaakov settle?
20. How old was Yaakov when he stood before Pharaoh?
21. What did the Egyptians give to Yosef in exchange for food?
22. Was the land of Goshen a good place for the Jews to live in?

Recipe

S’mores Bars

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine

3/4 cup sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon Gefen Vanilla Sugar

1 and 1/3 cups Glicks Flour

6 graham crackers, crushed

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 (8-ounce) bag mini marshmallows

8 ounces Geneve Baking Chocolate, cut into chunks

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Whip margarine, sugar, and egg, then add vanilla sugar, flour, graham crackers, baking powder, and salt. Mix to combine.

3. Press half of the dough into the bottom of a 9×13-inch pan and bake for 17 minutes.

4. Top with marshmallows and chocolate chunks, and then remaining dough. Bake for another 15 minutes.

Tips: Drizzle with extra chocolate for a pretty touch.

Middah of the Week

Ahavas Yisroel

We want to hear from you!!

Questions, comments, or suggestions?
Email us at bnos@agudah.org.