

תשפ"ד · Bnos 5784

Parshas

Shelach

אחינו כל בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה המקום ירחם עליהם ויציאם מצרה לרוחה ומאפלה לאורה ומשעבוד לגאלה השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ונאמר אמן:



Story

THE TELEGRAM THAT BUILT THE PONOVEZH YESHIVA

It was mid-morning, and the talmidim of the famed Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak were already deeply immersed in their learning. Not a single one lifted his head from his sefer to gaze out the window to the street below, where a small funeral procession was slowly passing by.

But the moment when it passed by the front door of the Bais Medrash, something stirred in the heart of the rosh yeshiva, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman. Rav Kahaneman quickly went outside and asked one of the onlookers if he knew the name of the deceased person.

Rav Kahaneman could hardly believe his ears when he heard the reply. He ran back into the yeshiva and ordered all the talmidim to immediately stop their learning and come outside.

“We must all pay honor to this man,” were the only words that Rav Kahaneman said to his surprised talmidim. The Rav joined the procession, with his students following behind him, and together they accompanied the deceased man all the way to the cemetery.

After Rav Kahaneman and the students had returned to the yeshiva, the seder continued as if it had never been interrupted. But because of the morning’s events, many of the bachurim were unable to concentrate.

Who was that man, they wondered. And what had he done in his lifetime to merit such an honor from the Rav?

None of the students wanted to be the one to approach the Rav directly and ask the reason for his actions. But finally, curiosity got the better of one of the talmidim, and he mustered up the courage to pose the question that was on everyone’s mind.

Before replying, Rav Kahaneman took a moment to gaze around the Bais Medrash. His eyes rested upon each of the talmidim in turn, and then took in every bench, every window and every wall of the room.

“It happened many years ago,” Rav Kahaneman began, “during the terrible days of World War II, when Egypt welcomed the German army with open arms. Every Jew knew what they intended to do if they succeeded in conquering Eretz Yisroel.”

Rav Kahaneman paused for a moment. There was no reason for him to elaborate on the extent of the Nazi barbarity that was perpetrated against the Jewish people during that dark time. What was perhaps not so well known was the reaction of the Arabs to the Nazi threat.

“The Arabs were already in a jubilant mood,” the Rav continued. “Some were even strolling through Jewish neighborhoods and laying claims to Jewish houses. ‘This one is going to be mine,’ they would say with a laugh, sending a shudder through the hearts of the Jews who sat trembling inside.”

Rav Kahaneman went on to explain that at this stage of the war, things were going badly for the Allies in Europe, and most Jews in Eretz Yisroel had little faith in the ability of the British to defeat the mighty Germans. With the specter of almost certain death haunting both their waking and sleeping hours, many Jews were desperately trying to get themselves, and their money, out of the country.

Rav Kahaneman, however, was not one of them. While the rest of the world raged with war and destruction, he was engaged in a project of building and renewing Yiddishkeit in Eretz Yisroel.

To be sure, what would one day be the famed Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak was still just an idea in his head. But it was an idea that gave him no rest. It filled his days and his nights, and there was only one thing that kept him from beginning construction on the proposed new building – he had no money.

But although Rav Kahaneman was penniless in Eretz Yisroel, the yeshiva did own some property in South Africa. After considering all his options, the Rav decided that now was the time to sell this property. A supporter of the yeshiva happened to live in South Africa. The Rav decided that he would send him a telegram instructing him to sell the property and wire the Rav the money. With this money in hand, Rav Kahaneman would be able to start building the new yeshiva. Rav Kahaneman was a happy man as he made his way to the telegram office on Allenby Street in Tel Aviv. But his joy was short-lived. When he inquired about the cost of sending a telegram to South Africa, he discovered that he lacked the funds for even this simple transaction.

He left the telegram office and wearily sat down on a bench. All that stood between him and the funds to build the yeshiva was the cost of a telegram. Surely Hakodosh Boruch Hu would not abandon him in his hour of need.

The Rav was so lost in thought that he didn’t notice that a passerby had stopped and was standing beside him.

“Rabbi, why are you so sad?” the man asked. The Rav explained his predicament to the stranger. “You must be completely out of your mind,” the stranger exclaimed. “Why?” asked Rav Kahaneman.

“Don’t you know?” the man replied. “The Germans could invade any day. Everyone is desperate to get their money out of the country, and you want to bring money in? And for what? To build a yeshiva? You’re out of your mind!”

Rav Kahaneman looked intently at the man standing before him. “Have you ever heard of the Chofetz Chaim?” the Rav asked.

The man gestured as if to say, of course, everyone has heard of him.

“The Chofetz Chaim foresaw,” said Rav Kahaneman, “that in Tzion would be the salvation. In Tzion would be our shelter, our refuge. And it would be holy. I tell you now that I believe, with emunah shleimah that just as the Chofetz Chaim foresaw the footsteps of the enemy will not tread here in this land, and that our greatest obligation at this time is to increase kedusha in Eretz Yisroel, I intended to do this by building a yeshiva.”

As he spoke these words, Rav Kahaneman pounded on the table and the sound reverberated throughout the Bais Medrash. The talmidim were jolted back to the present, but now they were filled with new awe for their beloved rosh yeshiva, who had demonstrated such complete emunah during that difficult time.

“Now do you understand?” the Rav asked his students. “That man who stood before me on Allenby Street so many years ago, he is the man whose levayah passed by our yeshiva today. After hearing those words of the Chofetz Chaim, he reached into his pocket and gave me the money I needed to send the telegram to South Africa. It is thanks to him that our yeshiva was built and that we are learning here today.”

(Reprinted from Yated Ne’eman)

Parsha Quiz

**See how much
you know!**

1. Translate Meraglim.
2. How many Meraglim did Moshe send?
3. Where were they sent?
4. Why were the Meraglim sent?
5. Who was the representative of Shevet Efrayim?
6. Who was the representative of Shevet Yehudah?
7. What was Yehoshua's original name?
8. Translate "Anakim".
9. What land is called the land that flows with milk and honey?
10. Who spoke out against Eretz Yisroel?
11. Who said that they should enter Eretz Yisroel?
12. On what day of the year did the sin of the Meraglim take place?
13. How many times did the Jews disobey Hashem in the desert?
14. Who were the only Jews who left Egypt to enter Eretz Yisroel?
15. Those who were ___ years or older when they entered the desert died.
16. Did the Jews try to enter Eretz Yisroel after the sin of the Meraglim?
17. To whom was Challah given?
18. What punishment was given to the Mekoshesh Eitzim on Shabbos?
19. Translate Tzitzis.
20. How many times is the word Tzitzis mentioned?
21. Where are the Tzitzis placed?
22. What do the Tzitzis remind us of?
23. What does the color of Techeiles look like?

Recipe

S'mores with a Twist

Ingredients:

15–18 cinnamon graham crackers

16 ounces (450 grams) marshmallow fluff

1/2 cup margarine

1 cup light brown sugar

12 ounces (340 grams) sliced, unpeeled almonds

7 ounces (200 grams) semi-sweet dark chocolate, melted, for drizzling

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (175 degrees Celsius). Line a baking sheet with Gefen Parchment Paper.

2. Place the graham crackers on the baking sheet. Place the marshmallow fluff in the microwave for 30 seconds, then immediately spread onto the graham crackers. To make this a bit easier, spray the spatula or icing-spreader with cooking spray.

3. Place the margarine and brown sugar in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for one minute, then mix, making sure that the margarine is fully melted and combined with the brown sugar. Spread this mixture over the marshmallow fluff. Sprinkle almonds all over the top.

4. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool fully. Once cooled, drizzle with melted chocolate. When chocolate has hardened, cut the s'mores into squares.

Yields 35 s'mores

Middah of the Week

Hakaras Hatov

We want to hear from you!!

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