

מאת הגאון מ"ר הרב ברוך הייטפלד שליט"א,
ראש טלל עטרת חיים ברוך, קליבלנד הייטס

A SERIES IN HALACHA LIVING A “TORAH” DAY

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ועבר לבנם כל הלוי את הירדן לפני ה' עַד הורישו את איביו מפניו ... (לב-כא)

Ask Yossi Ben Chanan whether he believes miracles are possible, and he may well go back, in his mind’s eye to the long night he spent on Tel Shams in October 1973. Having been wounded already in the head, he nonetheless rejoined his men and his commander, Yanosh Ben Gal, for the drive towards Damascus. A week after the disastrous surprise Syrian attack on the Golan, Israeli troops had repulsed the invaders and were fighting the retreating Syrian Armored Corps along the highway to Damascus, when they encountered opposition in the form of the well entrenched and fortified hilltop at Tel Shams. Tel Shams is another of the volcanic mounds, or hills on the Syrian plateau. Every inch of that hill was fortified by the Syrians, and all of the bunkers and gun positions faced west, towards Israel. All of the entrances to the bunkers faced north-east, towards Damascus. Imagine a cross section of an anthill, with its various connecting tunnels and storage areas and you kind of get the idea. The Israelis, determined to send a message to Syria that would make them think twice before ever crossing the border again were set on reaching the outskirts of Damascus, which could not be accomplished as long as the Syrians controlled the road from their vantage high atop Tel Shams.

After a failed frontal assault, a closer look at the aerial recon photos revealed a weak spot in the Syrian defenses; there was a shepherd’s path that might be approachable from the rear, so Yossi Ben Chanan, later a Major General who served as Commander of the IDF Armored Corps, volunteered to take his seven tanks up on what amounted to an almost impossible approach in order to surprise the Syrians from the valley behind them. Although his plan succeeded, his tank was hit in the battle and he was thrown nearly twenty feet in the air from his burning tank, breaking his leg in three places. What was left of his unit pulled back, having succeeded in their mission to disable the tanks and guns on top of Tel Shams.

Ben Chanan’s tank driver, Tzvika, also on foot having escaped after the tank was destroyed, risked his life to jump back into the burning tank and remove the radio, enabling them to get word to Ben Gal’s unit that they were alone and wounded, behind enemy lines. In the middle of what he would later describe as the longest and loneliest night of his life, Yossi Ben Chanan recalled being able to hear Arab voices walking along the hilltop and being sure his life would end that night. It probably would have - with no troops to send, and no armor to back them up, not to mention all the other places what few forces remained were needed - there was no hope that Yossi Ben Chanan would make it through the night, let alone survive the Syrians who would obviously find him once dawn broke.

Commander Yanosh Ben Gal was sure he was saying goodbye to his closest friend, because after all, there are no such things as miracles. At least he thought there weren’t, until Yoni Netanyahu (he who would later be of Entebbe fame) arrived at their position, and walked into the radio room. A Captain in the Matkal recon unit, the most elite unit in the Israeli army, he immediately volunteered to bring Yossi and his soldier out. Anyone watching this would have seen all the arched eyebrows and realized this was not just an impossible mission, it was a suicidal one. But someone forgot to tell that to Yoni, who had been at Yossi side only a few months earlier.

With no real backup, and no vehicles capable of getting them up to Tel Shams, they came up the same rear approach to the hilltop ... on foot! When they finally found Yossi Ben Chanan with dawn about to break, they realized they would never be able to get him down off the hill; his legs were too badly broken, and first light was approaching. Again, they were all doomed, but, for whatever the reason, *Hashem* seemed to have different plans for them.

Inexplicably, Ben Gal found, in the middle of the battlefield ... a helicopter! Commandeering it himself, they flew in, picked Yossi and his soldier out from the heart of the enemy position, and brought them back to base. (Yoni and his men, for whom there was no room in the small helicopter, simply turned and walked back down the mountain!)

כה אמר ה' מה מצאו אבותיכם כי עול כי רחוק מעול וילכו אחרי ההבל וההבל (יח"ב ב-ה)

This week’s *Haftorah* marks the second of the three weeks of calamities in which *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* castigates the nation for having transgressed the cardinal sin of idol worship. Interestingly, *Hashem* lamented how the nation “*distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile.*” But is it not obvious that one will become futile if he chases after futility?

R’ Mendel Hirsch ז”ל (Seder Haftoros) explains that practicing idolatry was not a rational decision made on a person’s part, rather it was prompted by one’s evil inclination which harassed him relentlessly into submission. On the whole, Jews eschew idol worship and find greater pleasure in serving the Almighty due to their deep spiritual connection to

Hashem and His *Torah*. While everything in the world was created for and is meant to be used in the service of the Almighty, as dictated by the *Torah*, if it should ever be used for idolatry, it will lose its meaning and become a futile object with no purpose in the world.

As a result, a Jew who just stops living an observant *Torah* life, *rachmana litzlan*, is simply lost and the hope is that eventually he will find his inner spark which will reignite his passion for *Torah* and *Mitzvos* and redirect him back to the more fulfilling life of a G-d-fearing *Torah* Jew. However, a Jew who defects from a *Torah* lifestyle and adopts other cultures or beliefs will find himself leading a tragically futile life with no end in sight.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

ויעל אהרן הכהן אל הר ההר ... וימת שם בשנת הארבעים ... בחדש החמישי באחד לחדש ... (לג-לה)

Why is the exact date of Aharon’s *petira* mentioned? We don’t find this by other people? Secondly, why, when saying Aharon’s name this time, does the *Torah* add “*Hakohen*” The **Terumas Hadeshen** addresses the first question and says that right after Aharon’s *petira*, the *Torah* says, “וישמע הכנעני”. They heard of our tragedy of losing Aharon and waged war against the *Yidden*. Why *davka* at that specific time did they attack? The answer is because they realized then that the month of Av is one in which the *mazel* of *Klal Yisroel* is not good. As *Chazal* teach us, one should postpone a court case scheduled for this month until after Av. They, therefore, struck *Klal Yisroel* at that time, with the date playing a pivotal role in the sequence of events.

Rabbeinu Bechaye in his **Sefer Kad Hakemach** offers another thought. The *Torah* wanted to teach us the concept of “ישקולה מיתתן של צדיקים כשריפת בית אלוקינו”. Hence, מיתת אהרן coincided with *Rosh Chodesh Av*, the month of the *churban*.

The **Pardes Yosef** adds that this is why the *Torah* only wrote the date in this *parsha* and not in *Parshas Chukas* where Aharon’s *petira* is also cited.

Because *Chodesh Av* commences this week, we will offer one more *machshava*. Aharon was the exemplar of אהבה וירדף שלום, the quintessential promoter of *achdus*. It is no small wonder that with his passing in the month of Av, there was a weakening of unity among us, and the *aveira* of *sinas chinam* was able to rear its ugly head. Maybe that is why it says Aharon *Hakohen*. The very reason he became the *Kohen Gadol* was because of his special *middah* of having a *lev tov* and “*farginning*” *yenem*. And as the **Sefas Emes** writes: Aharon’s *zechus* should stand by us at this time of year, and in his merit, we should be *zoche* to the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash b’karov*!

משל למה הדבר דומה

וההיינה מודה תרצה והגלה ומלכה ונקה בנות צלפחד ... (לז-א)

משל: The *Gemara (Shabbos 150b)* relates the following story: There was once a very pious man who was taking a *Shabbos* afternoon stroll around his property and realized that part of his fence was broken. He immediately stopped, assessed the damage and analyzed what was necessary to fix it. Then it hit him, “Today is *Shabbos*, how can I think of fixing a fence on *Shabbos*?!”

Right then and there he decided to punish himself for his improper thoughts and he undertook not to touch the fence for the rest of his life.

Due to his pious actions, a miracle occurred and a “צלף” (caper) bush grew out of the fence. From this bush he was able to support himself and his entire family!

נמשל: *Sefer Bamidbar* ends with the story of how the daughters of *Tzelafchad* married and had fruitful lives. There

is an important lesson to learn from *Tzelafchad*. The *Gemara (Shabbos 96b)* tells us that *Tzelafchad* was killed because he desecrated shabbos by gathering woods (according to some *Meforshim*). However, **Tosfos (Bava Basra 119b)** explains that *Tzelafchad*’s actions were pure. His intention was so that everyone should see and learn what happens to one who desecrates *Shabbos* in order that no one will come to replicate his actions. The **Arizal** writes that the pious man mentioned above was a *gilgal* of *Tzelafchad* and came to this world to rectify his actions. He transgressed a sin with impure intentions and rectified it with real pure intentions. A miracle then occurred and a fast-growing bush - צלף - identical to his name, *Tzelafchad*, then grew out of his fence.

R’ Chaim Volozhiner ז”ל, explains that pure intentions are only as good as the action they are present in. *Hashem* counts our actions, and then the intentions therein, not one’s intentions with improper actions.

לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה ... (לז-ג)

INSIGHTFUL TORAH THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRA TO LEARN AND TO ENJOY BY R’ MOSHE GELB

A son was born to a *talmid* of the *Mir Rosh Yeshivah*, **HaGaon R’ Nosson Tzvi Finkel ז”ל**, and the thrilled father asked his beloved *Rebbi* if he would honor him with *sandaka* at the *bris*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* expressed his excitement at the news and told him that he would be delighted to attend the *bris*. However, although he would be honored to serve as *sandek*, practically speaking, he hadn’t been feeling well recently and would have no way of knowing if he would have enough strength to do so until the actual day of the *bris*. Indeed, on the day of the *bris*, the *Rosh Yeshivah*’s family sent a message that unfortunately, the *Rosh Yeshivah* was feeling very weak and unwell and would not be able to serve as *sandek* at the *bris*. The *talmid* was disappointed, but without any choice in the matter, he gave the *kibbud* to someone else.

As the *bris* was about to begin, a small commotion arose at the entrance to the hall. The word went out: R’ Nosson Tzvi was outside! As quickly as he could, the father ran out to the car where the *Rosh Yeshivah* was sitting, looking pale and weak.

“*Rebbi*! I don’t understand!” the *talmid* said. “The *Rosh Yeshivah* said he was unwell ...” R’ Nosson Tzvi smiled, and replied, “To be *sandek*, I do not have the *koach*, but I said I would come to the *bris* - and a *yid* must always keep his word!”

Rabbosai, we are now entering the *tekufah* known as the “Nine Days” leading up to *Tishah B’av*. As is known, the *Bais HaMikdash* was destroyed through *sinas chinam*. But the **Chofetz Chaim ז”ל** explains that this does not refer to *sinah* - hatred per-se, but to the *lashon hara* it engendered. How careful we must be with what comes out of our mouths!

Indeed, **Sefer Maalos HaTorah** states that if *lashon hara* destroyed the *Bais HaMikdash*, our words of *ameilus baTorah* will rebuild it. Let us now be *mischazek* - both in speaking words of *Torah*, and in keeping the words that emanate from our lips. *Torah* is *emes* and our words must be *emes* and with that we will be *zocheh* to the *geulah sheleimah b’karov*!

מחשבת הלב

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

הנפש