

מוקדש לעילוי נשמת הר"ד אהרן
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תהא נשמתו צדורה בצרור החיים

מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

והיית משוגע ממראה עיניך אשר תראה וגו' (כה-לד)

For Jews, the Warsaw Ghetto was unbearable; illness, starvation, forced labor and overcrowding was the norm. To German industrialists, the Warsaw Ghetto represented an opportunity to make great profit employing Jews as slave laborers and becoming sensationally rich. Fritz Schultz was just such a German industrialist who appropriated a group of factories in the ghetto that provided various staples and supplies to the German army. One of the factories manufactured shoes and Fritz Schultz was wise enough to retain the previous owner of the factory, a *Gerrer chassid* by the name of Avraham Hendel, as the manager and foreman, to run his entire operation.

Avraham Hendel was not a typical factory manager. This once wealthy man saved some of Polish Orthodoxy's greatest Jewish leaders by assigning them to positions in the factory he once owned. He hid rabbis and supported the underground, aiding every suffering Jew he could. The **Aleksander, Sosnowiecer** and **Piaseczner Rebbe's ZT"L**, among others, were allowed to learn in peace in his factory, only performing perfunctory tasks for the benefit of German inspectors. With the help of his non-Jewish employer, the German Fritz Schultz, Hendel could warn Jews of upcoming selections and raids and through a combination of business acumen and hard work, Avraham Hendel successfully filled his production quotas.

An eye-witness, Hillel Seidman, writes in his Warsaw Ghetto Diary: "Now, I am in the Schultz factory; I have come at the time when people are both hammering in nails and reciting *Hoshana* prayers. Here are gathered, thanks to one of the directors, Mr. Avraham Hendel, the elite of the Orthodox community; Chassidic masters, Rabbis, scholars, religious community organizers, well-known *Chassidim*. Sitting behind the anvil for shoe repair is the **Koziglover Rav, Yehuda Aryeh Frimer ZT"L**, once Dean of *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*. He is sitting here but his spirit is sailing in other worlds. He continues his studies from memory, without interruption, his lips moving constantly. From time to time he addresses a word to the **Piaseczner Rebbe**, the author of *Chovos HaTalmidim*, who is sitting opposite him, and a subdued discussion on a *Torah* topic ensues. Talmudic and Rabbinic quotations fly back and forth; soon there appears on the anvil - or, to be precise, on the minds and lips of these brilliant scholars - the words of the Rambam and Ravad, the author of the Tur, Rama, earlier and later authorities. The atmosphere in the factory is filled with the opinions of eminent scholars, so who cares about the S.S., the German overseers, the hunger, suffering, persecution and fear of death? They are really sailing in the upper worlds; they're not sitting in a factory on Nowolopie 46, but rather in the Hall of the *Sanhedrin*."

In 1943, Avraham Hendel escaped the ghetto and became "Yozef Tulczak" - a Catholic monk, who was considered "insane" and a person to stay away from. As the ghetto was burning down, the Piaseczner Rebbe called Hendel and ordered him to leave. The day had come for him to use the Aryan identity papers he held ready for a long time. The *Rebbe* gave him his blessing. **R' Moshe Betzalel Alter ZT"L** (brother of *Gerrer Rebbe*), too, took his hand and blessed him with great emotion.

By literally dodging shells, explosives and the constant rain of bullets in the air, Avraham worked his way through the streets of the ghetto, and eventually beyond the walls. Immediately, he took up residence in a different part of town, and became known as Yozef Tulczak. He wore the clothes of a Catholic clergyman, and he was visible to all in his distinct clothing and mannerism. When a number of Poles in Warsaw rose up against the German occupation and attempted to fight back, Avraham Hendel was among them and he was captured and consigned to the Dachau Concentration Camp where he earned a nickname from one of the other rebel prisoners. He was sarcastically called "the mad priest" because his lips never stopped whispering prayers, though no one could hear the words. And in fact, Avraham was constantly whispering prayers, *Torah*, and pages of *Gemara* that he knew by heart. It was lucky for him that the nickname "the mad priest" stuck to him, because he regularly expressed sympathy for the Jewish prisoners and even showed willingness to help them, which to the Germans and Poles, alike, was insanity. Avraham Hendel survived the war and settled in Tel Aviv.

משל למת הדבר דומה

ובכתבת על האנשים את כל דברי התורה הזאת באר היטב וגו' (כו-ה)

משל: A man who had written a commentary on the *Torah* brought his manuscript to a prominent *Rav* for a *haskama* (endorsement). As the rabbi read the commentary, he noted that it was a very poor work, which totally distorted the meaning of the Scriptures. He continued to leaf through the *sefer*, pausing at various passages and each time remarking, "How brilliant of you to think of this!" or "This is a great idea." The author smiled from ear to ear, assuming that the rabbi's comments indicated approval of his works. He was therefore taken aback when, after completion of the review,

the rabbi refused to endorse the book. "But I heard you say that my ideas were great and brilliant," he protested.

"They certainly were," the rabbi confirmed. "What you did was indeed marvelous. You see, you printed your book with the text of the *Torah* at the top of the page and your commentary at the bottom. Had you just printed your comments in a *sefer* by themselves, anyone reading your absurd distortions would undoubtedly have cast it aside. Now that you have the *Torah* text on each page, the book must be treated with respect, and it cannot be thrown away!"

ארמי אחד אבי וידד מצרימה ויגר שם במתי מעט וידד שם לגוי גדול עצום ורב וגו' (כו-ה)

The *parsha* opens by discussing the *Bikkurim* declaration that Jewish farmers were to proclaim upon bringing, the first-ripened fruits of the year to the Temple. In it, one mentions the suffering that *Yaakov Avinu*, our forefather, experienced from his uncle Lavan, and how the wicked uncle attempted to eradicate his nephew and fiendishly stymie the creation of the Jewish nation. What is interesting to note is that only Lavan is mentioned here and not the troubles that Yaakov suffered from his brother Esav, which were greater both in number and in intensity. One must understand, why is one mentioned while the other omitted?

The answer suggested by the **Brisker Rav, R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"L**, is that the purpose of the *Bikkurim* declaration is to give thanks to *Hashem* for His goodness, through which our possession of the Holy Land of Israel and the harvesting of its crops have become possible. Thus, the declaration focuses on the precarious state of our beginnings as a nation, to the extent that our forefather Yaakov was almost destroyed by his enemy Lavan, and then we proceed to thank the Almighty for ultimately delivering us from these and other perils and enabling us to possess the land and cultivate it. The incident of Lavan is wholly appropriate to this theme, because it is an example of a near disaster from which *Hashem* delivered us. The troubles that Yaakov had, and indeed, the Jewish people continue to have with Esav (Edom), have never been brought to a final conclusion. Our deliverance from the hands of Esav will not be complete until the advent of the era of *Moshiach*, as the *Navi Ovadiah* says (א-כא): "*Saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the Mountain of Esav, and the kingdom will be Hashem's.*" It is thus not appropriate to mention this particular episode of Jewish history when giving thanks to *Hashem* for enabling us to bring the *Bikkurim* to the Temple.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

דברת הטוב

If there is a *mitzvah* in the *Torah* to be happy, why are so many people depressed? What is the cause of so much unhappiness in the world today and how can we combat this miserable phenomenon which does not allow us to serve *Hashem* properly? The **Steipler Gaon ZT"L** gives the following explanation. He says that years ago people grew up with less. Children did not get EVERYTHING they want. People knew how to tolerate hunger, hardship and even suffering. Nowadays, children from a very early age expect their parents to give them everything they want. And if they don't get it, they feel deprived because everyone else's parents are giving their kids whatever they want. Even when people are blessed with so much, it does not make them happy because this abundance is taken for granted. When all one's needs are met, that is the norm. When one thing goes wrong, it is a catastrophe, because it's "not supposed to be like that." Although parents think that they are doing the right thing by giving their kids everything, they are neglecting their "spiritual training" - to APPRECIATE all that they have.

Perhaps the end of our *posuk* tells us how to achieve the first part. If you want to rejoice - "ושמחת בכל הטוב" - with all the good that you have, you must remember "אלקיד" - it is all from *Hashem* and He knows exactly what you need!

Try this simple but effective Joy Increasing Formula! When you make a *beracha*, don't just rattle off the words. Close your eyes for a second and say, "Thank you *Hashem* for the coffee, the delicious food, or the proper function of my body." If you want to be miserable, the formula is ... take everything for granted! If you want to be happy ... appreciate everything you have!

TORAH GEMS

והפלא ה' את מכתך ואת מכות ודעך מכות גדלות ונאמנות ודלים רעים ונאמנים וגו' (כה-נט)

In the *Medrash* (איכה רבה א) it states as follows: "*Behold, we find that the passing of great Tzaddikim are more painful before the Holy One blessed be He, than the ninety-eight curses found in Mishne Torah (Sefer Devarim) and even the destruction of the holy Temples. By the curses, it says, 'And Hashem will make your plagues wondrous' (והפלא) and by the Temple's destruction it states: 'And you will go down in wonder.' (פלאים) However, by the death of the righteous, it states: 'Behold, I will again do a wonder among this people, a wondrous wonder. (הפלא ופלא) And why? Because, 'the wisdom of their wise men shall perish; the prudence of their prudent men shall be hidden.'*"

How can this be, since *Chazal* have taught us (ר"ה יח): "*The death of the righteous is equal (שקולה) to the burning of the Lord's house.*" Thus, it is not greater; it is equal.

R' Moshe Sternbuch Shlit'a (Taam V'Daas) explains that when the *Gemara* teaches that the two are "equal" it is referring to a *Tzaddik* who leaves over progeny or disciples worthy enough to take his place. When the Temples were destroyed and the *Avodah* that was performed there was nullified, our Sages understood that we have the ability to replicate this service today through our prayers and requests - "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו". The same is true, when a *Tzaddik* dies and another replaces him and continues to instruct the nation and promulgate his teachings and ideologies. Thus, the pain emanating from both occurrences is equally bad.

However, what the *Medrash* is referring to is a circumstance that is so terrible, that the curses of the *Tochacha*, as well as the *Churban Bais Hamikdash*, pale in comparison. When the Jewish nation has reached a stage where we lose our *Gedolim* and we have nobody left to replace them, that is the ultimate catastrophe! *Hashem* should have mercy on us that we never reach such a low level, for who will be left to carry on the prominence of the *Torah*?

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOM

ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך ... (כו-יא)

דרגת יציצה

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