



# מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

יזקח משה את עצמות יוסף עמו כי השבע השביע את בני ישראל ... והעליתם את עצמתי מזה אתכם וגו' (וג-ט)

A *Shadar* (שד"ר) is a rabbinic emissary, who is sent by the *rabbanim* of poor communities to raise much needed funds on their behalf. One of the most famous emissaries, as well as one of the greatest Sephardic sages of his time, was the holy **Chida, Chacham Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai ZT”L**. He was born and raised in Jerusalem, but spent more than fifty years of his life traveling abroad on various missions. In 1753 (5413), at the age of 29, he traveled to Europe as an emissary of the communities of *Eretz Yisroel* and again in 1772 on behalf of the city of Chevron. Each trip lasted in excess of five years. He completed his second trip in Livorno, Italy, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Despite the honor he was accorded abroad, he always yearned to return to the Holy Land. His reasons for remaining in Livorno until his death are unclear. It is believed that he was worried that the Jews in *Eretz Yisroel* wanted to appoint him to the position of Sephardic chief rabbi, which, in his humility, he did not want to accept.

The Chida, who suffered from many ailments throughout his life, passed away on the 11th of Adar, 5466 (1806), at the age of 83. His death was mourned by Jews all over the world. In Livorno, *hespedim* were delivered by the Italian *Gaonim*, **R’ Yaakov d’Medina ZT”L** and **R’ Chaim Shlomo Abulafia ZT”L**. Additional *hespedim* were given by the greatest sages of the generation in Turkey, North Africa, Germany, Poland, Tunisia, France, Syria and *Eretz Yisroel*.

More than a century and a half after the Chida was buried in Livorno, plans were made to exhume his remains and bring them to the Land of Israel, where he was to be reburied on *Har Hamenuchos*. In 1960, arrangements were made by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi **Chacham Yitzchak Nissim ZT”L** to transfer the Chida’s coffin to *Eretz Yisroel* and re-inter his remains in a new plot in a different cemetery, because the local Italian authorities in Livorno planned to convert the cemetery in which he was buried into a public park, with a nearby highway passing directly through it.

With great care and as delicately as possible, members of the agency charged with exhuming the holy Chida’s mortal remains had them brought from the cemetery and loaded onto a plane headed for Israel. It was not an uneventful flight as turbulence caused the plane to shake violently, dipping and climbing steeply on a number of occasions. When the plane bearing the *aron* finally landed in Lod international airport, the *rabbanim* who had come to escort it to Jerusalem learned that during the flight, the coffin had fallen twice and, each time it was picked up, it was turned upside down.

One of the rabbinic escorts meeting the plane was **Chacham Mordechai Eliyahu ZT”L**, who later served as Israel’s Sephardic chief rabbi. After the necessary arrangements for bringing the *aron* to Jerusalem were made, R’ Eliyahu told them to wait. “The bones must be in terrible disarray,” he said. “We must open it up and properly arrange the Chida’s remains.”

The other *rabbanim* were unsure, however, R’ Mordechai insisted that it wasn’t respectable to bury the Chida in such a state. Then, fearfully yet courageously, he lifted the coffin’s lid slightly and said, “*Rabbeinu HaChida*, please forgive me if in any way I am not fulfilling this *mitzvah* properly.” He reached inside and began to rearrange the contents.

After a few moments though, he trembled and closed his eyes. Whispering in a broken voice that he did not possess the ability to complete the task, he asked pleadingly, “*Rabbeinu*, please do this task by yourself, lest I err.”

Immediately, a powerful, almost explosive sound was heard; the *aron* began to shake, and a terrifying rattling caused by the *Tzaddik’s* bones striking the inner walls of the coffin was heard. All the other rabbis fainted on the spot. R’ Eliyahu did not faint, explaining afterwards that his absorption in the *mitzvah* helped him remain conscious. It was beyond belief! The banging and shaking continued until, bone by bone, the entire skeleton rearranged itself perfectly.

From Lod, the *aron* was brought to Jerusalem. There it was met by tens of thousands of Jews, who escorted it to *Har Hamenuchos* where *hespedim* were conducted before the reburial. The Chida had finally come home.

## משל למה הדבר דומה

והיה ביום הששי והכינו את אשר יביאו וכו' (טז-ה)

**משל**: One Friday, while his mother was pre-occupied with her *erev Shabbos* preparations, a young boy sneaked into the kitchen and snatched a large piece of fish from the pot.

He devoured the piece hungrily but eventually he was caught. When the deed was discovered, the boy’s father chastised him. “Why did you take fish without asking?” he scolded. “Is that the right way to behave?”

“But father,” protested the sly and ingenious boy, “do we not recite in davening each *Shabbos*, ‘טועמיה חיים וכו', *those who taste it merit life*.’ From here we see that it is a *mitzvah*

to taste food cooked in honor of *Shabbos* on *erev Shabbos*.”

“Yes, my son, this is true. But a small bite would have been sufficient to fulfill the *mitzvah*,” replied the boy’s father. “Why did you take such a large portion?”

The child’s eyes sparkled with intelligence. “Why, father, look how the *tefillah* continues: גדולה בחרו' (Lit. *‘And also those who love....have chosen greatness*.’). This means that one who ‘loves’ to do the *mitzvah* of *erev Shabbos*, should choose a greater (גדולה בחרו') piece!”

**גמסל**: **Rabbeinu Ovadia Seforno ZT”L** writes that the

והזקתי את לב פרעה ורדף אחריהם ....  
ידעו מצרים כי אני ה' ויעשו כן וגו' (יד-ד)

The young fledgling nation of Israel had emerged from years of slavery, chased out of Egypt and into the unknown wilderness. The waters of the Red Sea loomed before them while the war chariots of Pharaoh pursued them from behind. Moshe ordered them to back up and encamp, effectively boxing them in. Turmoil and chaos was everywhere; men, women and children with what seemed like no chance. What was going through their minds at this time? Rashi quotes the words of the **Mechilta**: “(*The Torah*) *expresses praise that they listened to the voice of Moshe and did not say, ‘Why are we moving closer to our pursuers? We must run away from them!’ Rather, they announced, ‘All we have (to believe in) is the words of the son of Amram!’*”

True *Emunas Chachamim* (trust in our wise men) is what our ancestors taught us, right up until the present day. The son-in-law of the **Steipler Gaon, R’ Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky ZT”L**, once found his father-in-law in an unhappy state of mind. When asked what was bothering him, the Steipler responded, “I was just talking to the **Chazon Ish ZT”L** (his brother-in-law) and he asked me a question. I told him that the answer is found in a responsa of the **Chasam Sofer** which I had recently read. However, the Chazon Ish emphatically disagreed with me saying that there is no such responsa (תשובה) from the Chasam Sofer.”

The Steipler was visibly upset. “I know I saw it with my own eyes in a *sefer*! But if the Chazon Ish said that such a responsa does not exist, then it surely doesn’t and the *sefer* must be a forgery with false statements. I am afraid that I have transgressed bringing evil content into my home!”

The next day, the Steipler was in a much better mood. He explained, “The holy Chazon Ish just called me to say that I was right about that Chasam Sofer. If so, then the *sefer* is in fact correct and I have not transgressed in this at all!”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS  
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

תפילה

As the Jewish people stood facing the sea, surrounded on all sides by the enemy and the elements, with nowhere to go and nowhere to turn, they grabbed onto the special craft of their forefathers (תפשו אומנות אבותם) and they prayed (Rashi). The culmination of all the *avoda* in Mitzrayim was this *Tefillah* - עבודה שבכל - of *Bnei Yisroel*. Similarly, says **R’ Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlit’a**, the moment that we turn to *Hashem* in prayer is the high point of all of our *avodas Hashem*.

There are many different jobs that require much time and effort in the raising of crops. One must plant, sow, water, plow etc. However, the most exciting and rewarding aspect of the work is the harvesting. Likewise, says the **Baal HaTurim**, with respect to prayer. A wonderful feeling of satisfaction can be attained by man through attaching himself to *Hashem* in prayer. The tremendous thrill and spiritual high of a *gevaldige shemona esrai* that was said with intention and deep emotion. You feel like you never want to move your feet from that place because you are truly connected to your source. This is the greatest pleasure that one can feel in the entire universe. And it is truly the greatest wealth that one can acquire in this world.

True, when our prayers are answered and *Hashem* fulfills our requests, it is easy to recognize the value of prayer. But *tefillah* has another benefit. It fills one with great joy and satisfaction as the one who harvests his crop after much toil. We are here to attach ourselves to *Hashem*. Prayer does exactly that. It allows us to attach ourselves in this lowly physical earth to the Master and Creator of the world. It is the culmination of all that we do and it has the power to bring us the greatest joy imaginable.

# TORAH GEMS

ובני ישראל אכלו את המן ארבעים שנה עד באם אל ארץ נשבת ... אל קצה ארץ כנען וגו' (טז-ה)

The purpose of the *mann* that fell in the desert for forty years is a bit perplexing. Were the Jewish people short on food? Did they not bring multitudes of cattle, sheep and other animals out with them as they left Egypt, animals which could have easily provided them with enough meat and dairy products to feed the entire nation for years to come? Were they not exceedingly wealthy from the בית הים - the spoils left over by their Egyptian attackers after they were wiped out in one fell swoop at the sea - to enable them to purchase any agricultural products they might want from the local populace? Why did *Hashem* feel the need to introduce an other-worldly miracle - the *mann* - to feed His nation?

The great **Moroccan Gaon, Chacham Yosef Massous ZT”L** quotes the *gemara* (ב"מ טא): “*For I am Hashem Who has brought you up from the Land of Egypt*.” (ויקרא יא-מה) The word "המעלה" - “*Who has brought you up*,” refers to elevation and purification. The Almighty said, “*If I brought Israel up from Egypt only for this matter, that they do not become defiled through (eating) insects, that would have been enough!*” The importance of refraining from all forms of forbidden food is such that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* based the entire redemption from *Golus Mitzrayim* on it! While in Egypt, *Bnei Yisroel* were unable to fully keep this *mitzvah* which led to a nationwide טמטום הלב (spiritual poisoning). Just as a physical plague can destroy the human body, a spiritual disease can uproot all vestiges of sanctity, holiness, good *middos* and *hashkafa*. If one is afflicted with such a disease, it is necessary to purge one’s system entirely before he can start again and rejuvenate his thirsting soul.

For this reason, *Hashem* insisted on dispatching the *mann*, heavenly vitamins which would cleanse and energize the soul of the Jewish people, before they would be suitable and conducive to accepting *Hashem’s* prized treasure - the *Torah*!

## דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF  
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וידאו מאד וצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' וגו' (יד-ד)

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