

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

וימת אהרן שם בראש החר וירד משה ואלעזר בן החר ... (ב-ה)

The sacred gravesite of *Aharon Hakohen* is known to both Arabs and Jews. Indeed, one of the benefits of Israel's peace treaty with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the ability and accessibility of Jordanian tourist sites, most notably the ancient city of Petra, site of the burial place of *Aharon Hakohen*. Petra, for a bit of historical perspective, was the capital of the Nabateans about 2000 years ago. A 13th century shrine, built by a Mamluk Sultan to commemorate the death of Aharon, can be seen on top of Mount Aharon in the Sharah range.

For seven centuries, Petra's existence was a guarded secret known only to the local Bedouins and Arab tradesmen. Finally, in 1812, a young Swiss explorer heard locals speaking of a "lost city" hidden in the mountains of Wadi Mousa (Valley of Moshe, named after *Moshe Rabbeinu* himself. The local Arabs believe it to be the place where Moshe hit the rock which gave water to the Jewish people in the desert.) In order to find the site without arousing local suspicion, the young Swiss disguised himself as a pilgrim seeking to make an offering at the tomb of Aharon, a mission which would provide him a glimpse of the legendary city. He managed to successfully bluff his way through, and the secret of Petra was revealed to the Western world.

One of the most incredible journeys in recent memory to the tomb of *Aharon Hakohen* took place in 1998. A most unusual meeting occurred in Jordan involving the great **Chacham Yitzchak Kaduri ז"ל**, and the sovereign ruler of Jordan, King Hussein. Although King Hussein had been a virulent enemy of the Jews, a man who called upon the destruction of Israel, severely desecrated the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives and whose troops destroyed every single synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem before 1967, he later softened his stance. Perhaps he was warmed by an incident that occurred in 1985 when the king was admitted to the Cleveland Clinic to undergo treatment for a terrible illness. A group of Jewish activists and Israeli sympathizers decided to make a point. Rather than protest the monarch's anti-Israel policies outside his hotel, they organized a blood drive at the nearby clinic which was to the benefit of the king. Their main purpose was not to protest but rather to show the world that Jews can do good even for an Arab who was a sworn enemy of Israel.

Of course, a little humor wouldn't hurt anyone and so, when the blood drive was complete, one of the organizers asked if he could include a personal note to the King from the members of his group. The wish was granted. On the note, the man wrote in big bold letters, "Your Excellency, enjoy this gift! This is the only Jewish blood you'll ever get!"

After that, King Hussein displayed a measure of friendship and even signed a peace treaty with the State of Israel. On July 25, 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin and King Hussein appeared at the White House and signed the Washington declaration, which announced the "end of the state of belligerency" between the nations of Israel and Jordan.

In 1998, King Hussein flew Chacham Yitzchak Kaduri to Jordan as his own personal guest. The interaction between the Jordanian leader and the *Chacham* started years earlier when the *Chacham* sent a message calling upon the King to work towards peace in the world. Many wondered if Rabbeinu Yitzchak was a peace envoy on behalf of the Israeli Government. But before the meeting, Chacham Kaduri's son clarified that his father would not be visiting Amman on an official visit. He stated that the purpose of the trip was only to pray at the gravesite of *Aharon Hakohen*.

An entourage accompanied Chacham Yitzchak on the flight and when they landed in Amman, the capital city of Jordan, he was chauffeured in a vehicle provided by the King. However, as was pre-arranged, the *Chacham*, who by most accounts was 104 years old at the time, did not join the rest of the delegation on a specially prepared car ride up to the mountains. Instead he was flown in a helicopter - piloted by none other than King Hussein himself! As a sign of respect and deference, the King of Jordan personally flew the great Jewish *Chacham* up to the burial location of Aharon the *Kohen Gadol*, brother of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, buried on Mount Hor Hahor, atop the lost city of Petra. It was there that they both prayed for eternal peace.

ויפתח הגלעדי היה נבוך
הדל ... (שופטים י"א-א)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY
HAPTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Yiftach HaGiladi was the *Shofet* called upon by the elders of *Klal Yisroel* to lead the Nation into battle against the attacking Ammonites, and while it is somewhat similar to the storyline in this week's *parsha*, one may wonder why Yiftach - of all the warriors in *Klal Yisroel* - was the man chosen.

R' Meir Shalom Cohen שליטא (Meshech HaParsha) offers an interesting perspective. He writes that although at certain times, Jewish kings waged war in order to expand the holy land of *Eretz Yisroel*, by and large, the Jewish Nation is not an expansionist one. Throughout history, most of the wars fought by *Klal Yisroel* were defensive ones - as was often the case when an enemy would rise up and attack the Jewish people forcing them to take up arms in their defense.

Yiftach was the downtrodden son of Gilad, who was thrown out his house for something he had no control over. But Yiftach grew into an able warrior with a unique ability to lead. He gained a following and people clung to him due to his sensitive nature. The amazing thing is that even though he was a strong warrior, when tasked with confronting the Ammonites, Yiftach initially engaged in diplomacy. He tried to reason with them and convince them that *Klal Yisroel* had no interest in waging war against them. Only after they refused to talk did Yiftach lead the Jews into battle.

What an amazing lesson we can take from *Yiftach HaGiladi* regarding how a person should always attempt to stay away from a fight and only engage when it is absolutely necessary.

ויאמר אליו אדום לא תעבר בי פן
כורב אצא לקראתך ... (כ-ה)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE
FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ז"ל

מחשבת הלב

Klal Yisroel requested permission to pass through the Land of Edom enroute to *Eretz Yisroel*. The King of Edom flatly refused and threatened warfare if they entered his territory. But it seems as if he didn't threaten forcefully. Why does he use the words "פן כורב אצא"? Maybe I'll come out; as if he was uncertain of his actions?

In *Lashon Kodesh* there are two ways to express the word "maybe" - אולי and פן. The **Vilna Gaon ז"ל** famously explains that אולי is used if you want something to happen, while פן is used if you want that "maybe" does not actually take place. There are many examples in *Tanach* of both. Perhaps we can say that ideally, Edom would have relished the opportunity to annihilate the Jewish Nation, as we know, עשו שונא ליעקב. However, they were deathly afraid of the battle and its outcome. They, therefore, said with hesitation - פן - meaning if we must wage war, we will, but would certainly prefer not to.

The **Sefer Har Sinai** offers another *psbat*. **Rashi** on this *posuk* says that Edom sent back the following message. You Jews proudly boast of your power of *tefillah*. We too were blessed by Yitzchok, "והידים ידי עש", and we won't hesitate to use it. But they were in a quandary. Because *Yitzchok Avinu* said that Esav is powerless if "הקול קול יעקב", if the *Yidden* are learning and living the *Torah* life. They, therefore, said since we cannot know for sure what the situation is, it's only "פן" until we can ascertain your status. When Edom saw that the *Yidden* continued to beg for permission, they assumed it meant a spiritual downturn. Hence the next *posuk* continues, "וצא אדום לקראתו בעם כבד". They then marched toward the *Yidden* with conviction, prepared for battle.

This timeless lesson of "במין שהקול קול יעקב אין הדיים ידי עש" cannot be more applicable than today, as the future of *Torah* lives of the *Bnei HaYeshiva* in *Eretz Yisroel* are in serious jeopardy.

Let us all help them continue learning and *davening* so that our enemies (both within and without) will be powerless. בעז"ה

משל למת הדבר דומה

על כן יאמרו המשלים באו השבון ... (כא-ב)

משל: It is said over that when **R' Avraham ben Avraham ז"ל Hy"d**, famously known as the "*Ger Tzedek*" was taken from his prison cell to be burned at the stake, his guard said to him, "Here in this world we are punishing you, but in the next world you'll have your chance to avenge us."

The *Ger Tzedek* turned to his oppressor and said, "I'll tell you a story. When I was a young boy, I used to play with the children of the serfs on my father's estate. One day, after hours of work, I had shaped clay into men-shaped figurines and had placed them around the garden. As the farmer's children came through with their thick boots, they trampled and destroyed these figurines. In a fit of rage, I ran to my father demanding that he severely punish these boys. Not only didn't my father get angry at the boys, but he chastised

me for taking such nonsense so seriously. I thought to myself, 'Now I'm young and not in a position to punish them for their crime, but once I get older and have some power, I'll make them regret what they did.' However, once I got older and was in power, do you think that I seriously considered punishing them? What did they do - smash figures made of clay?"

The *Ger Tzedek* now raised his voice. "Do you think that once I've obtained true clarity of the next world, I'll want to take revenge against you? What are you going to do to me? Smash my body? You're just a figure of clay..."

משל: The *Gemara* interprets the above *posuk* as follows: "Come let us calculate the account [*cheshbono*] of the world; the financial loss incurred by fulfilling a mitzvah in contrast to its reward, and the pleasure and gain from committing a transgression, in contrast to the loss it entails." This *Gemara* in its simplest form needs no explanation!

ואת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל
בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה ... (טז-ב)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM
THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

Zos Chukas HaTorah is referring to the *Parah Aduma*. A *Chok* is something we cannot comprehend because we have limited brain power. How is it possible that ashes that purify one can cause another to become impure? It doesn't make sense to us. We live in a physical world and we judge situations from a physical perspective. But there is a spiritual world that is right here in our physical world, but we cannot see it, because we are physical people. If we would be able to see the spiritual ramifications of the things that happen around us, everything would be different. We would understand how things that look so bad are really good and what we think is really good, might not be so. Take for example, the terrible plague of deathly snakes that was set upon the Jewish people. *Moshe Rabbeinu* lifted up a copper snake and all they had to do was look up at the snake, and they would be saved. What was the point? Why would Moshe use an image of a snake, to remove the snakes? Is the snake a good thing or a bad thing? It seems like a contradiction!

Zos Chukas HaTorah! This is the message of *Torah!* We often think that things do not make sense and we would do things differently! How could *Hashem* do such a thing? When we find ourselves asking such questions or wondering about the ways of *Hashem*, we have to remember that this is the *Chok* of *Torah*, it is the knowledge that we simply cannot understand the perfectly good ways of *Hashem*. By recognizing and understanding that *Hashem* is running the world and everything He does is good, even if it seems like a paradox to our miniscule brains, it is still GOOD. There is a hidden, spiritual story in every thing that happens in the world, collectively and individually. We just have to remember that everything is under control - just not our control! And everything that happens makes perfect sense, just not to our limited comprehension. Our job is to be guided by the *Torah*, and to trust that every contradiction is truly non-fiction and very soon His plan will be revealed in all its glory.