

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

הנרות הללו אנו מוליקים על הנסים ועל הנפלאות ... שעשת לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה ... (סדר הדלקה)

Daniel and Neriya Sharabi attended the Nova Festival on October 7, together with a group of friends, and soon after enjoying a beautiful sunrise, the missiles started falling and everyone started running. Daniel was a trained IDF medic and kept stopping to help wounded people along the way, but after watching an RPG blow up a car behind which his best friend Yosef and some others were hiding, he simply dropped everything and ran, together with Neriya, for their lives. Terrorists were everywhere, spraying machine gun fire, and young people were dropping like flies. It was nothing short of heartbreaking.

Suddenly, they saw an abandoned Israeli tank and climbed inside. A dead soldier was slumped forward and they searched every inch of the tank looking for a weapon. It was empty, though, and the two brothers began to play with the controls to see if they could get it moving, in order to drive it away. Neither had any training in tank controls and the tank would not budge.

They held their breath hoping the terrorists would not attack an abandoned tank, but this too, was shortlived. The tank came under heavy fire and Daniel thought their end was near. Just then, he hears his brother Neriya shouting, praying: "Hashem, I don't pretend to understand why this is happening, but I do know that there is a dead soldier who was fighting for You, for Your people, and we want to fight too. Now it is Your turn - give me a weapon! I don't care how - just give me weapon!" The second he finished shouting, Neriya looked down and noticed something shiny under the soldier's foot. It was the strap of a rifle.

With thanks on his lips, Neriya picked up the rifle and grinned. Now they had something to fight back with. Daniel opened the tank's turret and hastily climbed out. Neriya threw him the rifle and climbed out himself. To their shock, they found 30 young men and women hiding under the tracks of the tank. Had they managed to get it started, an even bigger calamity might have unfolded. Daniel, the medic, went to help the wounded, while Neriya opened the rifle's chamber to see how much ammunition they had. To his chagrin, the chamber was full of sand. It wouldn't work no matter how much ammo was inside.

Daniel remembered that quite often, girls bring jars of vaseline to these festivals in the desert because their lips get dry from the wind. He grabbed the rifle and called out if anyone has vaseline. One girl came forward and handed him a small jar. He quickly greased the rifle's chamber - and what do you know - the ammunition slid right in. Just like in the Chanukah story, the Jews had the miracle of the jar of oil - On October 7, they had their own miracle - the miracle of the jar of vaseline!

Neriya took the rifle and began returning fire. Daniel called a number of fellow members of his Givati Brigade to come help them, but the army didn't show up for hours. He finally called Yoni, his deputy commander, and asked him what to do. Yoni told them to shoot into the bushes where the terrorists were taking cover, one bullet every 60 seconds, so the terrorists knew that they were armed. Yoni stayed on the phone for 5 hours, directing the battle from Tel Aviv. Five whole hours!

Meanwhile, one of the men who had been hiding under the tank climbed up and managed to dislodge the heavy MAG gun that was mounted on top. This was a more serious weapon. With him on the MAG, Neriya with the M-16 rifle, and Daniel on the phone with Yoni directing the battle using the tank for cover, the little band of Maccabim held off waves of terrorists.

An RPG exploded nearby and everyone was hit with shrapnel. The group of girls still hiding under the tank began to shriek and scream. Daniel yelled at them: "Quiet, everyone, quiet! Some of us are wounded and some are fighting. Everyone else - daven!" And that is exactly what they did! They started praying, a group of non-religious boys and girls began screaming, "Shema Yisroel ..." reciting chapters from Tehillim. It was otherworldly - Daniel said he will never forget that moment the rest of his life!

Suddenly, the MAG jammed and a little more miracle vaseline was used to get it working. The small group held off bands of terrorists for hours and even captured a few, along with their weapons. The army finally arrived and took the injured men and women away. They also took the captured terrorists with them, but not before Daniel gave one murderer a strong kick that knocked him to the ground. The kick did not change anything - but it made Daniel think that the only way to fight evil is by doing good, by being good, wherever he went. The way to take revenge is by being a shining light. That is the true victory.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

In the Haftorah of Shabbos Chanukah, Zecharia HaNavi speaks to a moment far beyond the second Bais Hamikdash. In fact, he speaks to the third and final Bais Hamikdash whose foundation stone was laid by the second Temple. Still, the Navi's led to a vision in which he is shown the seven-armed Menorah of the Bais Hamikdash and how each of its lights is fed with the oil through seven separate tubes. But what is the meaning of this wondrous menorah?

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l explains that the Navi tells us how this Menorah bears the very tree on which the oil-yielding olives grow and ripen. In essence, it is a Menorah that bears and maintains everything that is required for giving light. This is a proclamation by Hashem, for Zerubavel, the

leader of the Jewish people during the second Temple era, explaining that the foundation stone that was being laid for the second Bais Hamikdash, and for whose ideal completion all the coming generations are called upon to work, should know, that "not by force of arms, nor by physical strength will it be accomplished, but only by Hashem's Spirit." It is a lesson for all human society to know - every individual person, even the seemingly weakest and smallest - that as soon as he is imbued with the holy spirit of Hashem nothing can stop him. With such strength he possesses the strength of giants to accomplish his work and Hashem will help him.

On Chanukah, in the dead of the dark winter, the Menorah serves to lighten our way and teach us this profound lesson.

וידבר שר המשקים את פרעה לאמר את המאי אני מוכיר היום ... (כא-ב)

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

מחשבת הלב

Last week we read about the encounter between Yosef Hatzddik and Pharaoh's two ministers, when he interpreted their respective dreams. Although Yosef gave an accurate and positive prediction for שר המשקים and asked for a relatively small favor in return (to bring Yosef's plight to Pharaoh's attention), the man acted like an ingrate and neglected to do so. The question is, why did Yosef offer a good tiding for שר המשקים and not the baker?

The Bas Ayin, R' Avraham Dov Ber Auerbach of Avritch z"l (whose recent yahrtzeit was reverently remembered worldwide), answered as follows: Yosef, after being sold, realized that his brothers exhibited a sinah, a certain hatred towards him (obviously it is in our limited capacity to understand this.) He knew that he had to work on achdus. In mikvaos, there's a halacha that rain water in the adjacent pit must touch, every so often, the water in the actual mikvah. This idea is called השקה. The word משקים shares that root. Whereas אפים implies anger, אף, Yosef Hatzddik, homiletically, associated that middah of hashaka - achdus - with life, and the middah of אף - anger and discord - with death. Hence their respective dream interpretations. Once he had internalized that idea, the path was paved for the next step in the master plan and he was freed.

We find a stark contrast between the neiros of Chanukah and the havdala candle. A havdala candle must be comprised of a few wicks resembling an אבוקה, a torch, while the נר חנוכה must be a single wick. The reasoning is that several intertwined wicks, forming one singular but stout wick, teaches us the concept that we, as people, must possess the middah of achdus - unity. But on Chanukah, which is a time of הלל והודאה, we must recognize and appreciate those who have contributed to the whole unit. Hence, it's just one wick. On this very Chanukah, may Hakadosh Boruch Hu bring us all the many needed yeshuos and nissim to Klal Yisroel the world over, as we gather together, as one, to celebrate ור אש ובינו. A Freilichen Chanukah.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאמרו איש אל אחיו אבל אשמים אנהנו על אחינו ... (כב-כא)

משל: An incredible story is told about a woman who had gone through Auschwitz and rebuilt her life in the French city of Bay. One Erev Shabbos, she prepared her Shabbos food and left a pot on the fire while she went out to the market to buy something. While she was out, the wooden cabinet in the kitchen caught fire, and in a short time, the fire destroyed almost her entire house and all of its contents.

Her neighbors did not know how this unfortunate woman would hold herself together in the face of the great damage, as they knew she barely managed to recover from the devastation that had already ravaged her life. They rushed to the residence of the illustrious R' Mottel Pogromansky z"l, who lived nearby, to ask his advice on how to tell this lady who still didn't know that her home was destroyed.

R' Mottel sank into his thoughts, and then said, "Wait for her nearby, and before she enters her home and sees what happened, tell her that the house went up in flames and add, that if she accepts the situation with love and joy, not even expressing one sigh from her mouth, Mottel Pogromansky promises her that she will be blessed with the children she has yet to give birth to above the natural way."

They hurried to the house and when she returned, told her everything that R' Mottel had said. With supernatural courage she accepted her fate, and didn't emit one sigh from her lips. The following year she had a daughter, and later she had another, and eventually a third child, a son!

נמשל: Great reward awaits those who accept the will of Hashem, even in the most challenging times. This was most often the catalyst for great moments in history. Especially on Chanukah, may we all merit such blessings.

מסרת גבורים ביד הלשם ורכים ביד מעמים וממאים ביד מהורים ... (על הנסים)

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

דרגה יתירה

It is interesting that the root of the word "שמן" - "oil" is the same as the word "שמונה" - "eight." Is it a coincidence, then, that we celebrate eight days of Chanukah due to the little oil that lasted eight days? Of course not! The number 8 has a much greater significance. It is considered "למעלה מן הטבע" - higher than the normal physical world, supernatural if you will. Seven symbolizes nature - the world was created in 7 days; Eight is greater, more spiritual, elevated above nature.

A baby boy receives his Bris on the eighth day because he becomes more than a typical physical human, he becomes a holy and lofty Jew! The פך שמן was much more than a simple container of oil. It was a container of hope, a tiny spark of Kedusha, meant to reignite the pure spirituality of Klal Yisroel, in order to overcome the dark, impure and defiled world that the Greeks imposed. When the Jews found one little container of pure oil, they saw that there was still hope for Ruchnius, for Kedusha. But when the oil lasted for eight full days, they heard the message loud and clear: Even with one tiny spark of Kedusha, Yiddishkeit will thrive! All one needs is a spark to rebuild and replace all that was lost!

In "Al Hanisim" we say: "רבים ביד מעטים" - "The many (given into) the hands of the few." The "many" refers to the mentality of Greece. More and more materialism, non-stop pleasure, a life full of endless amusement and immorality. On Chanukah, this was conquered by the "few"; the Torah mentality of being "מסתפק במועט" - "Satisfied with less." We, too, must focus less on our Gashmius, and more on our Neshamos, our Ruchnius - on becoming "heiligen" spiritual Jews!

Hashem is educating us through the miracles of Chanukah to seek Him out and find yeshuah and hatzlacha - salvation and success - even when they are hidden from view; in the sun, the sky, the trees - every "natural" occurrence. Chanukah stands for "הנחתך" - the education of the recognition of Hashem as the only One to Whom it is justified Lehodos u'lehallel.