

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל יצא צבא בישראל תפקדו אתם לצבאתם אתה ואהרן ... (א-ה)

In August 1919, the Polish–Soviet war erupted in the aftermath of World War I. The root causes were twofold: a territorial dispute dating back to Polish–Russian wars in the 17–18th centuries and a clash of ideology due to the Soviet goal of spreading communist rule further west, to Europe. At that time, both countries had just undergone transition: in 1918, Poland reclaimed independence after 123 years of partitions. In 1917, the October Revolution replaced the liberal, democratic Provisional Government, that had previously displaced the Czar in Russia, with Soviet rule. Backed by Western powers - primarily France and England - Poland was intent on stopping the spread of Communism beyond Russia’s borders. A general mobilization was put into effect and all able-bodied men were expected to report for military duty. While Christian divinity seminaries were granted deferments on religious grounds, the anti-Semitic Polish Government refused to defer students of the *Lomza Yeshivah*, the only such *yeshivah* in all Poland at the time.

The *Lomza Rosh Yeshivah*, **R’ Yechiel Mordechai Gordon ז”ל** went to Warsaw to attempt to intervene. He approached the dean of the Jewish members of the Sejm (the Polish parliament), Dr. Noach Prilucki, an old *maskil*. Prilucki would only offer deferment to the *yeshivah* students if the *yeshivah* would incorporate some secular studies in the curriculum.

“A decision such as this,” replied R’ Yechiel Mordechai, “I cannot take upon myself. I must seek advice.”

“Really? Even though in the meantime your boys are being drafted and sent to the battlefield?” asked Dr. Prilucki.

“Yes, even at that price,” replied the *Rosh Yeshivah*. “I am required to consult with *daas Torah* on such a matter.”

Back in his hotel room, he fell asleep and dreamed of the *posuk*: “*All leaven or honey you shall not burn as an offering to Hashem*” (*Vayikrah 2-11*). Foreign elements - neither sour nor sweet - can ever be mixed before *Hashem*. The message was clear, but R’ Yechiel Mordechai would not rely on a dream to close a *yeshivah*. Under normal circumstances, the he would have consulted with *Gedolei Hador* all over Poland and Lithuania, however, the war made communicating with the **Chofetz Chaim ז”ל** in Radin, or **R’ Chaim Ozer Grodzenski ז”ל** in Vilna, all but impossible, so R’ Yechiel Mordechai returned to Lomza to seek the advice of the saintly *Mashgiach*, **R’ Moshe Rosenstain ז”ל**.

After much consideration, the *Mashgiach* responded. “It is clear that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* requires *mesiras nefesh* from us for *Torah*. We are not obligated to display *mesiras nefesh* for secular studies, however. We cannot mix the two - *kodesh* and *chol* - the sacred and the profane cannot dwell together.”

“But boys are being drafted,” protested the *Rosh Yeshivah*. The *Mashgiach* was a firm believer in the **Vilna Gaon’s** “*Gorel*,” a lottery that indicated a decision through selection of a *posuk*. The *Gorel HaGra* was done and a quotation from a *posuk* was selected. It turned out to be a Divine command to Moshe, in *Parshas Bamidbar*, which read: “*From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: you shall number them by their hosts, you and Aharon.*”

His own name was Moshe, so with a student by the name of Aaron (Zlotowitz), he set out to solve their dilemma, in accordance with the command in the *posuk*. They established contact with the chairman of the local draft board. He agreed to free all the *Bnei Torah* for a set amount of American dollars (he refused to accept Polish Zloty). It was illegal to possess dollars, but these were his terms. The *Mashgiach* justified this “illegal” approach, for *Bnei Torah* should have been deferred as were Christian divinity students, except for Polish anti-Semitism that denied them their legal rights. If Poland was anti-Semitic, the army was tenfold worse. Honoring *Shabbos* and *kashrus* here was practically impossible.

Hence, *Bnei Torah* from all *yeshivos* threatened by military conscription arrived in Lomza finding a place to learn, with room and board, thus establishing residency there. With the necessary funds in American currency, they were safe. For the next twenty years, as long as Poland was independent, Lomza served as a haven for such *Bnei Torah*.

תורת הצבי על הפטרות A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

In the *haftorah* of “*Machar Chodesh*,” **Dovid Hamelech** and **Yonason ben Shaul** drew up a plan to ascertain Shaul’s feelings for Dovid. **Rashi** explains that it was an understood obligation that on *Rosh Chodesh*, all members of the royal family dined at the king’s table, and since Dovid was Shaul’s son-in-law, he was expected to attend. Therefore, the plan called for Dovid to not attend and based on Shaul’s reaction to this seemingly minor infraction, they would then know Shaul’s real feelings for Dovid as a whole.

Interestingly, *Chazal* derive from the words, “*and you shall come to the place where you hid on the day of work...*” to mean that unlike the day before *Rosh Chodesh*, the first day of the new month was a day people refrained from doing

any work. The question is, why is that so?

Rabbeinu Ovadia Seforno ז”ל explains that just like as moon gets its source of light and strength from the sun, so too *Klal Yisroel’s* accomplishments and glowing countenance, stems solely from *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. The first day of the new month is a day reserved for *Klal Yisroel* and so much can be accomplished on that day. Therefore, while other days of the month are meant to toil in hard labor, the day of *Rosh Chodesh*, when we emulate the moon’s characteristics and refrain from work, we set the tone for the rest of the month’s accomplishments. This emulation brings out the special relationship we as a Nation maintain with our Creator, and further solidifies *Hashem’s* deep love for His children.

לגד אליהם בן דעוואל ... (א-ד) ומצא נד ונשיא לבני נד אליהם בן דעוואל ... (ב-ד)

לעילוי נשמת אביו מוריטו הרבני הרב חיים יוסף בן ר' ישראל אברהם קויפמאן זצ"ל

מחשבת הל"ב

The *Torah* enumerates the names of the ראשי המטות - the נשיאים here - and again later in the *parsha*. Here, the name for *Shevet Gad’s* נשיא is רעואל, but, however, later on his father’s name is רעואל. Why does the *Torah* differentiate?

The **Chida**, **Chacham Rabeinu Chayim Yosef Dovid Azulai ז”ל**, quotes from **Sefer Imrei Noam** as follows: We know that *Moshe Rabbeinu* was buried in Gad’s *cheilek*, the portion of *Eretz Yisroel* that belonged to *Shevet Gad*. He says the reason is because Dan, who was Bilha’s *bechor*, his *shevet* was given one of the four large *degalim*. *Shevet Gad* could have complained to Moshe that they should also have one, as Gad too was a *bechor*, born to Zilpa. Yet, he chose not to, and was duly rewarded with the *zechus* of having Moshe buried in his portion of the land. It became the final resting place of Moshe, “*Hashem’s Friend*.” Hence, the name רעואל denoting friendship. Therefore, says the *Chida*, specifically in the *parsha* of the *degalim* did the *Torah* change the name, calling him רעואל בן רעואל.

Perhaps we can add the following *machshava*. For a person not to be jealous of another, it requires complete *emunah* in *Hashem*. If we truly realize that everything is from *Hashem*, and is part of His Master Plan, it is virtually impossible to be jealous of anyone. Since *Elyasaf* was רעואל בן דעוואל (*lashon* דעת) and knew all was from *Hashem*, he was *zoche* for his name to become רעואל בן רעואל (*lashon* רעי) a friend to *Hashem*, developing *emunah* and a bond with Him.

This reminds me of a thought that the *Zaida* once said. He asked: Why is “לא תחמד” the last of the עשרת הדברות and not one of the earlier ones? He answered that the two “bookends” of the עשרת הדברות are “אנכי” and “לא תחמד”. Both, are cornerstones of our אמונה בה'. For when a person believes that all is divinely bequeathed to him, jealousy has no place to roost.

משל למת הדבר דומת

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם ... (א-ב)

משל: There was a simple *Yid* who worked as the handyman in the *yeshivah* of **R’ Moshe Klier ז”ל** in *Teveria*. One day, the handyman’s son became engaged. Although it was a very joyous occasion for himself and his family, he didn’t expect that anyone at the *yeshivah* would be particularly interested in his personal news. He happened to mention his *simcha* to the *Rosh Yeshivah*, R’ Moshe, in a passing conversation and very nonchalantly. The *Rosh Yeshivah* smiled warmly and gave him congratulations, wishing him a hearty *Mazel Tov* and *beracha*. Then he continued on to the *Bais Medrash*.

But really, R’ Moshe wasn’t finished just yet. He understood how much this joyous occasion meant to anyone, and so much more to this simple handyman who wasn’t exactly a social bird. He probably didn’t have too many friends and as many congratulating remarks as possible

would no doubt go along way with the simply man.

R’ Moshe went to the entrance of the *yeshivah* and stopped each and every boy before entering the building, informing him that the handyman’s son had become a *chosson* and how much it would mean to him if he was congratulated on this occasion. The boys understood. Every single student approached the handyman and wished him a warm and hearty *Mazel Tov*. The handyman glowed with joy. “You illuminated my life!” he exclaimed to the *Rosh Yeshivah*.

נמשל: *Parshas Bamidbar* is primarily about counting. Each and every *Yid* is counted and accounted for, as each and every *Yid* is special in his and her own unique way. Taking interest in a fellow Jew means realizing that from him too there is what to learn and what to glean inspiration. For this reason, the *Torah* begins the *parsha* by saying “*Lift up the head of every individual in Klal Yisroel*,” for every *Yid* who is accounted for is uplifted and elevated.

בא הבקוק והעמידן על אהת שנאמר וצדיק באמונתו יחיה (מכות בד.)

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

דרגה יתירה

The most important part of a human being is his *neshamah*. It is his foundation, without which there could be no life. *Hashem* is surely the foundation of everything. It is He who is holding up the world. The *midda* of *Yesod* is the ability to live a spiritual life in this physical world. It is the act of bringing holiness into the mundane. One who does this is called a *Tzaddik*. *Tzaddik Yesod Olam*, a *Tzaddik* is the foundation of the world because he sees *Hashem* even though He is hidden. He sees the *neshamah* of a person rather than just his body. He is able to live in this world, with his feet on the ground, but his head in the heavens.

Such a person doesn’t sweat the small stuff. He is big. He is beyond the nitty gritty and the petty nonsense of life. He doesn’t let people or things bother him, because he knows that *Hashem* is here and He is running the show. This is what Chavakuk meant when he said, “*Tzaddik b’emunaso yichye*.” A *Tzaddik* lives with *Emunah*. He believes that whatever happens comes from *Hashem* and everything *Hashem* does is for the good.

The epitome of a *Tzaddik* is *Yosef HaTzaddik*. *Yesod* is the *midda* that he exemplifies. After Yosef was sold by his brothers, he eventually became the viceroy of Egypt and saved the entire world from famine. When his brothers finally realized that this was their brother, Yosef, they were afraid that he would take revenge on them. He was now in such a powerful position and they were mortified at what they had done to him. But Yosef treated them royally. He said, “You may have had evil intentions, but *Hashem* made this all happen for the good. It was all part of *Hashem’s* plan. *Chas V’shalom* that I should harm you.” Yosef spoke like a *tzaddik*. A *tzaddik* lives with *Emunah*. When something does not go the way he wants, he accepts this as part of the Divine plan. This is the *midda* of *Yesod*, when we focus on the things that we cannot see, but are most important. When we can live a spiritual life in a physical world and truly be a *tzaddik yesod olam*, this is the greatest accomplishment of man.