

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ותקח מרים הנביאה אחות אהרן את התוף בידה ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה בתפים ובמחלות. ותען להם מרים ... (שם-כא)

After the Jewish people sang *Shiras Hayam*, the *Torah* tells us that the women, led by Miriam, also sang their own song. The **Me'am Lo'ez** notes that in truth, Miriam and the women used musical instruments, whereas Moshe and the men did not. He explains that the instruments were intended to drown out the sound of their voices so the men would not hear. The **Chida**, however, disagrees. He suggests that the men and women sang together and the men heard the women. However, because the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) rested on all of them at that time, there was no prohibition for the men to listen to the women singing. The **Vilna Gaon** is quoted as suggesting that the reason the *Torah* uses the words "ותען להם מרים" is because Miriam and the women did not sing at all. They intentionally refrained from singing because men are prohibited from hearing them.

The following story took place recently and was related by the renowned *Maggid* and *Mashpia*, **R' Elimelech Biderman *shlit'a***. In one of the larger cities in Poland, there exists a kosher restaurant which serves the many *Yidden* who come to *daven* at the *Kivrei Tzaddikim*. The non-Jewish cook who works in the kitchen, bustles about and prepares the kosher dishes. She enjoys cooking for the Jews who come to Poland and she is accustomed to the constant presence of R' Shimon, the restaurant's *mashgiach*. As she ministers to the oversized pots of stew bubbling on the stove, she likes to hum some of her favorite Polish folk songs contentedly. She loves her job and is happy. R' Shimon, who travels from *Eretz Yisroel* to Poland several times a year to supervise the kitchen, would sit on a chair in the corner and take care of bills and inventory.

One day, the Polish cook was in the kitchen as usual when she suddenly froze. Abruptly, she stopped humming and stepped closer to where the *mashgiach* sat, slumped over in his chair. She waved her dripping ladle at the strangely still man, frantically yelling in an effort to rouse him. Seeing no reaction, she grabbed the phone off the countertop and shakily dialed the local emergency line. Medical personnel soon arrived and shooed the frantic woman aside. They tried to resuscitate the unconscious *mashgiach*, the Jewish man from Israel. But after nearly thirty minutes of unsuccessful CPR, they looked at each other and then at the tearful cook, and admitted defeat. They had tried their best to save R' Shimon's life, but to no avail. They would have to transfer him to a hospital to confirm his death. In those tense moments, the cook's determination spilled beyond her cooking abilities as she tearfully begged the paramedics to continue trying to save the man's life. She described to them his life in Israel and his wife and children who were anxiously awaiting his return, hoping to encourage their efforts. At first they hesitated, but eventually the first responders agreed to try CPR again. Unbelievably, after another few tries, a miracle happened! They got a heartbeat! R' Shimon's heart awoke, as though from a deep sleep, and began to beat on its own!

All of those present were in awe as the patient was transported to a local Polish hospital for further care. Eventually, R' Shimon was well enough to be transferred to *Tel Hashomer* Hospital in Israel, where he merited a full recovery.

It was only later that someone thought to ask the non-Jewish cook how she had discovered that R' Shimon was unconscious on that fateful day. After all, the cook and the *mashgiach* generally had little interaction, and she usually ignored the *mashgiach's* presence completely, immersed as she was in her work. The cook, overcome with emotion at the memory of that day, revealed the true sequence of events. "I love to sing as I cook, letting the melody join the flavors of my mouth-watering dishes. But when R' Shimon comes to visit, I cannot sing." She described the *mashgiach's* meticulousness in the *halachos* of *Kol Isha*, and how he would immediately quiet her songs with his soft yet steady "shushing" sounds. This would happen regularly – the cook couldn't help but start to sing, and R' Shimon quickly responded with "shhhh."

On the day R' Shimon collapsed, the cook had, as usual, begun humming to herself as she stirred her pots. It was only after a few moments, when she realized that her melody was going unnoticed and un-hushed. Right away, she grew alarmed - and immediately went to check on the *mashgiach*. If she wouldn't have noticed him then, and only realized later what had happened, he would have had very little chance to survive. His stringency in the issur of *Kol Isha* ultimately saved his life!

ותשר דבורה וברק בן אבינעם
ביום ההוא לאמר ... (שופטים ה-א)

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

Shiras Devorah details the battle between the Jewish people (led by *Barak ben Avinoam* and the tribes of Naftali and Zevulun) and the army of the Canaanite General, Sisera. The Jews were victorious, and Sisera - who was forced to flee the battlefield - sought shelter in the tent of *Chever HaKeini*. Weary and caught off-guard, Sisera fell asleep and Chever's wife, Yael, seized the moment and killed him with the peg of the tent. *Chazal* (*Sanhedrin 96b*) note that despite his wickedness and cruelty, Sisera's descendants converted to Judaism and studied *Torah* in *Yerushalayim*. But what merit did Sisera have to deserve this?

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky *zt"l* (**Emes L'Yaakov**) explains that *Hashem* works in mysterious ways and even though

things may appear to be black and white to us mere mortals – in that we believe a person deserves punishment for an act he had committed - *Hashem* sometimes feel otherwise.

He explains that just as *Chazal* say that we are required to feel gratitude to the Egyptian people for allowing us to live in their midst for 210 years even though we suffered greatly at their hands, so too we are supposed to have feelings of gratitude towards Sisera. The reason is because despite his cruelty, Sisera managed to evoke deep feelings of *teshuva* amongst the Jewish people which ultimately brought us closer to *Hashem*. The Almighty then showed His gratitude to Sisera by giving his descendants a chance to enter the coveted folds of *Klal Yisroel*.

והיה כאשר דים משה דוד וגבר ישראל וכאשר יניח ידו
וגבר עמלק ... ויהי דודו אמונה עד כא ה'משש (ז-א-ג)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN *zt"l*

מחשבת הלב

As the infamous infidels from *Amalek* attacked the *Yidden* in the *midbar*, Moshe proceeded to wage war. With *Hashem's* help, Yehoshua, his foremost disciple, vanquished *Amalek's* army. The *posuk* elaborates exactly how it went down. When Moshe's hands were raised, the Nation headed toward victory, and as his hands lowered, the tides of battle reversed. When Moshe's hands grew tired, Aharon and Chur came to assist him and keep them aloft. Firstly, why does the *Torah* offer all these detailed minutiae? Secondly, it should have said Moshe lifted, 'hairim' and not 'yarim' - future tense?

The **Chofetz Chaim *zt"l*** explains the second question as follows. The war against Amalek wasn't a one-time affair and it is far from over. It's an endless, continuous war being fought until the arrival of *Moshiach, b'karov*. Therefore, the *posuk* uses the future tense; when Moshe - the euphemism for *Klal Yisroel* - will lift his hands in *Torah* and supplication - when *Klal Yisroel l'netzach* will be strong in their commitment to *Torah* - we will succeed in overpowering this diabolical enemy.

Perhaps the *Torah's* intricate detailing of the events is to teach us about the weapons at our disposal that we must use to beat Amalek. תורה, עבודה, גמילות חסדים. Moshe lifted his hands in *tefillah - avodah*. Yet, that wasn't enough. As they weakened, he needed the help of fellow Jews - that's *achdus*. His brethren, *Aharon v'Chur*, coming to help - was *gemilas chasadim*. The *posuk* says, "מזה אחד ומזה אחד" one on each side. We find in *Chazal* "מזה ומזה" refers to the *Torah* (*Megillah 15a*). However, sometimes even these weapons don't seem to do the trick. So the *posuk* concludes, "ויהי דיו אמונה," as the *Gemara* (*Makos 24*) says "בא תבוקק והעמדיק על אחת צדיק באמונתו יחי". Only with blind faith both in ourselves, and of course in *Hashem*, can we make it to the finish line in triumph, as our enemies don't give up trying to instill terror. Let us be *mischazek* ourselves in all areas, sharpening our three above-enumerated weapons and together, *b'emuna shleimo*, await *Hashem's* imminent salvation!

משל למה הדבר דומה

שם שם לו חק ומשפט ושם נסחו ... (שם-כה)

משל: The *yeshivah* of the holy **Chofetz Chaim *zt"l***, in Radin, was in dire financial straits. The *bochurim* were starving and something needed to be done. The *Chofetz Chaim* traveled to visit one of Russia's wealthiest Jews at the time to ask for assistance. This man owned a number of large factories, some of which operated on *Shabbos*.

The *Chofetz Chaim* presented his case, and the wealthy man was extremely moved by the *tzaddik's* impassioned appeal. Immediately, he gave a very large donation to the *yeshivah*. However, when R' Yisroel Meir saw the huge sum that the man had contributed, he burst into tears.

The wealthy man was taken aback. "Rabbi," he said, "Is this not enough? I'll give you more money - as much as you ask - just please stop. Why are you crying?"

עני וזמרת י-ה ויהי לי לישועה זה ק-לי
ואנהו אלקי אבי וארממנתו ... (שם-כ)

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

דרגה יתירה

There are moments in life that are surreal, when we feel *Hashem* right there in front of us! We can see Him, we can feel Him, and we often go back to those moments in our minds in order to remind ourselves of the power and reality of *Hashem* in the world. I can remember one such moment when my oldest daughter was getting engaged! I truly felt as if I was at the sea, watching the *Yam Suf* split, and pointing with my finger, "*Zeh Kaili V'anveihu*." It was so clear to me, more than any other moment in my life, that I am experiencing a true divine revelation of the Almighty. That day, for me, was the beginning of a new and heightened level of *Emunah* in *Hashem*. I now understood a new meaning of the words, "*Kashe zivugo shel adam k'krias Yam Suf - It is as difficult to make a shidduch as it is to split the sea*." When you are in the *parsha* of *shidduchim*, it seems so hard. For many, it drags on and looks as if there is no end in sight. But then, it suddenly happens, out of the blue! It feels so supernatural, and it is obvious that it had nothing to do with me - it is totally *Hashem*!

We need to make our *hishadlus*, but we must not believe it is our doing. We must put all our hope, faith and trust in the only One who is *mezaveig zivugim*. This is the hard part of *shidduchim*. Just as splitting the sea was not difficult for *Hashem*, neither is making a *shidduch*. The hardship is standing and looking out at the vast sea, knowing how many fish are in the sea! Knowing how many animals are on all sides, and not knowing where the salvation will come from. In fact, there is no solution in sight. There is going to have to be a miracle. And we have to know that every *shidduch* is just that, an open miracle!

Anyone in *shidduchim* needs to calm down and know that you are in good hands. As someone said to me at the *L'chaim*, "*Men darf nar nisht farshtern di Aibishter*." You don't have to understand Him, you just have to not disturb *Hashem* from His holy work. Don't try to take charge. Don't tell *Hashem* what you want Him to do. Listen carefully to what *Hashem* wants for you!