

ohr SHABBOS

PARSHAS MATOS MASEI

By R' Aaron Kutnowski

Yehuda son of Tema said: Be bold like a leopard ... to do the will of our Father in Heaven. (Pirkei Avos, 5: 23)

After their great victory over Midian, the Bnei Yisroel brought back many spoils of war. Instructed by Hashem, Moshe allotted the spoils to the Bnei Yisroel including Elazar HaKohen and Shevet Levi. Usually Kohanim and Leviim do not receive a portion from the spoils of war. What, then, made the war against Midian different so that Elazar HaKohen and Shevet Levi received portions?

The Medrash Tanchuma states that after Pinchos zealously speared Zimri, the Bnei Yisroel were very upset. They protested, saying: "Have you seen the son of [Yisro] whose mother's father fattened calves for idol worship? He killed a Nasi from a Shevet in Yisroel!" Therefore, the Possuk (Bamidbar, 26: 9) delineated Pinchos' ancestry back to Aharon HaKohen to teach us that Pinchos' motives were in line with the values and purity of his holy grandfather; "Pinchos, son of Elazar of Aharon HaKohen, turned back My wrath from upon the Bnei Yisroel..."

We must understand how the war waged against Midian was an extension of this earlier episode with Pinchos. We must remember that Balak followed the counsel of Bilaam and conspired to make the Bnei Yisroel commit egregious sins. Midian was sadly successful. This war was, as Hashem said to Moshe, "...vengeance for the Bnei Yisroel against Midian... (Bamidbar 31:2)", and a continuation of Pinchos' previously performed zealous act.

The Lutsker Rebbe suggests that this is the key to understanding why Elazar HaKohen and the Levi'im received a portion of the plunder. This episode with Pinchos was not the only act of zealousness from Shevet Levi. On the contrary, throughout the entire time the Jews were in the Midbar, Shevet Levi continuously responded to the call of "מי לה' אלהי". The Bnei Yisroel felt that their zealousness was not properly actualized. Therefore, Elazar HaKohen and Shevet Levi received Terumas Hashem to illustrate to the rest of the Jewish people that the Levi'im were acting L'Shem Shamayim.

We too get caught up in what others might think about us or a particular action, but we must nevertheless "[...] be bold like a leopard [...] to do the will of our Father in Heaven".

THE REST OF THE STORY:

By R' Yosef Dovid Rothbart

The Torah relates how Moshe assembled 1,000 men from each of the Shevatim and sent them out into battle against Midian. The Torah repeats this three times (Possukim 4-5) to teach us that although only 1,000 warriors fought the battle, 3,000 men from every Shevet were selected to partake in this battle. Two thousand were needed to fight the war and guard the supplies, and 1,000 were to daven for the soldiers who were out in the battlefield.

Moshe chose so few soldiers to demonstrate to the Jewish people the terrible consequences of sin. He told the nation, "You have seen how, without lifting a weapon, Zimri killed 24,000 Jews. To atone for this sin, you will defeat the Midianites with an army of only 12,000 men. Not only that, but from the Jewish army no one will be killed. This great miracle will happen because you go out to sanctify Hashem's name."

Unlike other soldiers whose weapons are carried on their bodies, the armour of these 12,000 soldiers was inside their hearts, and their weapons were the Torah they learnt, the Mitzvos they performed, and the prayers of the other 12,000 soldiers.

The one who was to lead these troops into battle was Pinchos. Why did Moshe delegate this task to Pinchos if he was told personally by Hashem, "Take revenge for the Jewish people against the Midianites"?

When Hashem told Moshe to "take revenge," He did not intend that Moshe should participate in the actual fighting, but rather that he should first subdue the Sar, or angelic protector of the nation of Midian. Only then could they be defeated.

Accordingly Hashem told Moshe, "Take revenge (נקום ונקמת) for the Jewish nation." The doubling of the verb is significant in that נקום is a commandment to Moshe, which he himself must fulfill - strike the Sar of Midian. Hashem told Moshe, "First you must daven for the downfall of the Sar, for only after he falls will the Jewish people be able to take revenge against the Midianites themselves."

(Based on Yalkut Me'am Loez and Medrash Tanchuma)

Although the Halachos of vows pertain to the entire nation, the Parsha was addressed to the leaders. To be elected, one usually makes promises. The Torah reminds him that after his appointment he must fulfill his promises. (Oznajim LaTorah)

HALACHA

Hilchos Av

The Rabbis established the first nine days of the month of Av, known as the Nine Days, as a period of time to mourn the destruction of the two Temples. To make us feel the loss, there are certain activities which are prohibited during this period. One of these activities is shopping for new things.

There are two types of items which we are forbidden to buy during the Nine Days: 1) Items which the consumer buys to give him pleasure or joy (as opposed to items which the consumer needs for daily living). 2) Apparel (clothing). As each group has its own rules and regulations, we will discuss here the Halachos of buying an item that brings happiness or pleasure.

In order to diminish the level of Simcha during this sad time, the

Rabbis forbade buying items that mainly serve to give the owner joy or pleasure. Thus it is forbidden, for example, to purchase silver dishes, jewelry, fancy china, or a car that is used mainly for pleasure travel(O.C. 551:1). However, it is permitted to buy items that don't bring happiness, but are standard household items. Even to buy a major item such as an air conditioner, a set of dishes, a cell phone, a health-related

appliance, or a car that is used mainly for business or every-day household needs, would be allowed. [If the business item being bought would normally require the recital of Shehecheyanu, the Shehecheyanu is said after Tishah b'Av.]

All this is true as regards purchasing an item which brings joy. However, to shop without buying is permitted. Window or comparison shopping is permitted. Returns are permitted. Exchanges may be prohibited.

If delaying the purchase will cause a monetary loss, or if the item will not be available for purchase after Tishah b'Av, it is permitted to buy the item during the Nine Days (ibid, Mishna Berura 11). If possible, it is recommended to put down merely a deposit and take delivery of the item after Tishah b'Av.

It is permitted to buy items for the purpose of performing a Mitzvah, e.g., buying Tephilin or Seforim that are needed at the time. Similarly, one who is getting married after Tishah b'Av may shop during the Nine Days if need be.

As always, one should consult his Rav.

REFLECTIONS

BY R' MEIR HILLEL GREEN

Attaining Humility

Most of us have a secret tune playing inside us. In our heart of hearts, we secretly believe that we have a unique 'something' that makes us superior to others. Yes, sometimes we make mistakes; but those mistakes are inconsequential. (The other tune that goes, "I'm inferior to everybody else," is the basis for a different article.) In a personal anecdote, Rav Chaim Shmulewits candidly describes just how insidious and universal the drive for Kavod can be. He relates that as a youth he learned in the Yeshiva of R. Shimon Shkop. R. Shimon would often quote his Rebbi, R. Chaim Soloveitchik. Upon hearing R. Shimon mention something he learned from R. Chaim Soloveitchik, young Chaim Shmulewits would secretly hope the students would think R.

Shimon was referring to him. If the great R. Chaim Shmuelevits, Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, used to think these thoughts, what does that say about the power of Kavod?

When we hear that 'superiority' tune playing, how should we answer it? We know a Jew is supposed to be humble, and yet...what is true humility? Rav Shimon Schwab explains that humility is based on the

knowledge that the entire world is filled with G-d's presence, and that there is no corner of the world empty of His presence. When faced with His presence, one cannot help but shrink into a tiny molecule, nothing more than a speck of dust, temporarily granted life by the grace of G-d. All one's possessions, accomplishments, talents and successes are gifts from Hashem. A person's sense of ego, individual ambitions, personality and sense of 'self' are merely endowments from G-d, granted to a person for a little while. It is only because of G-d's "Anochi- I am," that one too can whisper "I am." Where is there room for conceit, ga'avah, in this picture? Even if a person has become ten times better, greater, etc. than his fellow, what difference does it make when measured on the scale of eternity? Rav Schwab says, "Does a worm twenty inches long, really feel superior over his fellow-worm who is only two inches long? After all they are only still worms." In this world view there is no room for looking down on others; compared to G-d, we all pale into mere shadows. Think of a worm gloating over his fellow worms next time the 'superiority tune' starts playing. It's pretty effective.

*It is only because of G-d's
"Anochi- I am," that one
too can whisper "I am."*

Shabbos table discussions by R' Eliyahu Goldwasser

- Should one visit a sick person if it will embarrass the patient's family but will be good for the patient?
- If someone is concerned about thieves, can he hang a sign saying "Beware of dog" if he doesn't truly own one?

Shabbos STORY

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

By R' Yossi Bergman

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was born on 23 Tammuz, 5660. He was the first child to be born in the neighbourhood founded by his maternal grandfather, Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush, the son of Rav Naftali Tzvi Porush.

His paternal grandfather was Rav Avrohom Dov Auerbach, the Rav of Chelmenik. His father was Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach, author of Chacham Lev and Rosh Yeshiva of Shaar Hashamayim. His mother was Tzivia Porush.

Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach's devotion to Torah was legendary. He maintained an ever-growing Yeshiva, feeding its students and attending to all their needs, and also providing his married students with monthly stipends. When the financial situation of the Yeshiva became desperate, his wife, Tzivia, urged him to sell all of the family's personal belongings to prevent the Yeshiva from closing.

Rebbetzin Tzivia's Mesiras Nefesh knew no bounds. As she grew older and her sons had to attend to her needs, she would cry that she was causing them to neglect their Torah studies. "Your father and I built a Beis HaMikdash and now I am destroying it."

How did she and her husband build that Beis HaMikdash? Her son, Rav Avrohom Dov, relates: "On erev Yom Kippur, we would approach our father for a Bracha. As he said, 'Yesimcha Elokim Ke'Efraim Ve'chi'Menasha,' he would weep uncontrollably. My mother would stand in the hallway at that time, weeping and beseeching Hashem to bless her with children who would excel in Torah and Yiras Shamayim."

At Rav Shlomo Zalman's Levaya, his oldest son, Rav Shmuel, Rosh Yeshiva of Maalos HaTorah, cried out: "When the doctors told us that blood was spurting from my father's lungs, I reflected that this is the blood of Torah, the blood of Ahavas Torah."

"When one learns Torah in his youth, its words become ingrained in his blood. This is especially so when one has no food, for then the Torah becomes his food. In my father's home there was no food, and he consumed Divrei Torah. They were the components of his blood during his childhood."

As a child, Shlomo Zalman asked to be left back a year in the Etz Chaim Yeshiva. His Rebbe at that time was the Gidalei Shmuel, Rav Gedalya Shmuel Neiman.

Shlomo Zalman, who was the top student in his class, told his parents and teachers, "Rav Shmuel Neiman knows how to bring out the Geshmak in the Or Same'ach, and I want to spend another year with him."

The Rabbanim of Etz Chaim realized that a Gadol B'Torah was blossoming in their midst and tried to dissuade him. His father feared that repeating a year in cheder would be detrimental to Shlomo Zalman's development. But Shlomo Zalman's will prevailed.

Rav Shlomo Zalman's brother-in-law, Rav Shalom Schwadron, relates another episode that illustrates Rav Shlomo Zalman's love of Torah as a child:

"Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib was very insistent that Shlomo Zalman go to bed on time, so that he would have strength to study in the morning. But Shlomo Zalman would sneak out of the house at night, in order to study in the local Beis

Medrash.

"How did he accomplish that feat? Climbing on top of the windowsill in his room, he would jump out, and then run to the shul, where he and his chavrusa would study with gusto until late at night.

"When he finished studying, he would kiss his Gemara and place it back on the shelf. Then he would race through the winding alleys of Shaarei Chessed and, upon reaching his house, crawl back into his room."

However, when he became a Rosh Yeshiva, he would tell his students: "Eat well, sleep well and be happy."

As a child, he was fortunate if he had a piece of bread for supper. One day, though, an entire piece of bread actually remained on the table after dinner.

"Ah, I won't have to go hungry to Cheder tomorrow," he told himself as he wrapped the treasure in a bag and placed it in the cupboard, saving it for the morning. However, his famished younger brothers spied it, and split it among themselves.

Shlomo Zalman rose in the morning and discovered that the treasure was gone. He knew that his younger brothers had eaten it, but did not reproach them. He quietly left for Cheder on an empty stomach, resolving to fill his empty belly with sustenance from the Torah.

It is no wonder that at his Levaya, his brothers referred to him as "Zeisse Bruder," "sweet brother."

(Excerpted from a Yated article)

RIDDLE

By R' Naftali Spiegel

Apart from Yom Tov, it is possible to read a date in the Torah on that same date. Which Parsha is that?

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In his Hespel for Rav Shlomo Zalman, his son-in-law, Rav Yitzchok Yerucham Borodiansky, illustrated just what marriage by the Shulchan Aruch meant to his father-in-law.

"On one occasion, Rav Shlomo Zalman's sister asked him about a possible shidduch for her daughter, in the presence of Rav Shlomo Zalman's wife. Rav Shlomo Zalman replied: 'He's a fine boy.'

"When his sister was ready to leave, Rav Shlomo Zalman suggested she visit their other sister who lived in the same neighborhood. She agreed. After she was done visiting their sister, she was astonished to see Rav Shlomo Zalman waiting outside for her. Immediately he approached her and said, 'You asked about a certain young man. But you should have asked your question in private!'

"'But who was in the room?' she asked.

"'The Rebbetzin was there, and why should she have to hear Lashon Hara?'

"He then told her, 'Don't go ahead with the match. He's not for your daughter.'

"That is called living according to the Shulchan Aruch," Rav Borodiansky continued. "He was required to report the negative opinion to his sister. But to a neutral party like the Rebbetzin, it would be considered Lashon Hara. Note the remarkable delicacy in which Rav Shlomo Zalman behaved. He didn't want to tell the Rebbetzin to leave the room. But he also didn't want her to hear Lashon Hara. Therefore he devised a well-thought-out plan which entailed sending his sister to his other sister's house and waiting for her there."

During the three weeks we mourn the loss of the Beis HaMikdash. The Chafetz Chaim writes that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of the sin of Lashon Hara. Every day we are presented with situations where we must choose whether or not to say Lashon Hara. It may be very hard at times to refuse. In these situations, let us remember Rav Shlomo Zalman, the Chafetz Chaim, and other great people who were very careful with what they said and be inspired to make the right decision.

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riddle

Bilaam was killed by a sword. Where did this sword come from?

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