



Buried Treasure

Rabbi Yosef Dovid Rothbart, Rabbinic Administrator

מי מנה עפר יעקב (פרק כג פסוק ז)

“War brings out the worst and the best in people. Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” For some soldiers it is their courage or bravery; for others their loyalty and friendship; for the woman I read about recently, it was her Jewish *neshama* that had been buried deep within her.

It was during Operation Protective Edge in 2014 and Givati, Golani and other divisions were searching for secret tunnels and weapon caches throughout Gaza. One unit was given the mission to clear out a mosque which is notorious for being used as a place to dig tunnels and conceal weaponry. The soldiers cautiously entered the building and started to systematically search the various rooms. As they carefully advanced into the Muslim house of worship, a door slowly opened and an intruder stepped into the room disrupting their mission.

In an instant their guns were pointed at the female wearing a belt of explosives staring back at them with eyes radiating intense emotion. But despite their advanced guns, they knew that they were no match for the suicide bomber facing them and had mere seconds to live. Instinctively, one of the soldiers screamed “*Shema Yisrael*”.

The female bomber hesitated and suddenly began to tremble. This was enough. The soldiers were able to subdue her and disable the device. She was turned over to the counter-intelligence unit where she was interrogated.

They discovered that she was a Jewish girl who had married an Arab and had been smuggled into Gaza against her will. During her time in captivity her *neshama* was suppressed and buried by years of indoctrination. But although

it lay hidden away in a state of dormancy, it was never destroyed. And when the scream of *Shema Yisrael* pushed through all the dirt, it stirred the invincible Jewish *neshama* that is ever-present in every Jew, enabling her to rejoin the people she was dragged away from so many years prior.

Bila’am referenced such a Jew as he stood on a mountain overlooking the Jewish camp. Rav Gedalyahu M’linitz in his *Sefer Teshuos Chen* explains that even the most estranged Jew is never lost. Even the Jew who seems to have nothing spiritual growing in his field, whose entire spiritual landscape consists of dirt or mud, even that Jew cannot be counted. מי מנה עפר יעקב – Who has the ability to count or quantify even the most simple Jew; the estranged Jew who does not even identify himself as Jewish and his entire contribution is a muddy field.

For just as a muddy field if nurtured properly, although not pleasant in its present state, has the ability to produce beautiful orchards and lush vineyards from the nutrients buried inside of it, so too in every Jew there is limitless potential regardless of his present appearance. Inside every Jew a *neshama* is hidden waiting to be stirred, hoping that someone will find the right words to penetrate the mud and draw it out.

Perhaps this is the meaning of what we say during *Tachanun* and *Avinu Malkeinu* – זכור כי. Although we have not produced much and there are weeds growing in the plot of ground we were given to cultivate, still we are asking *Hashem* to look beyond our present state. See the limitless potential that is inside every one of us. Remember us and call out with those words which will pierce through the thick mud stirring our *neshamos*, enabling us to actualize our potential.

Praying for Success

Finally, after many years of hard work, Kalfon slowly saw the wheels of success turning in his favour. He had started out with very little but day after day he invested whatever money he had until he became recognized as a successful merchant. People started to lend him money and sell to him on credit. And from that point on it was only a short while before he became wealthy. His store grew and grew until his customers boasted of the wealthiest people in Tunisia including the royal family. His material success though, had an inverse relationship with his spiritual advancements. Managing his store and investments involved most of his day and he no longer had the luxury to sit in *shul* after *davening* to learn *Gemara* or recite *Tehilim*.

Soon, staying until the end of *davening* was also not an option and *Aleinu* was recited while he opened his store. But this was not kept up for very long and he began to *daven* privately in the back of his store until the day came when even that took up too much time.

Kalfon's wife recognized what was happening and was very unhappy. She was not inclined to trade spiritual accomplishments for material achievements and she attempted to talk to her husband. She begged him to redefine success. But her husband had no time to listen. Couldn't his wife understand how he was helping out the family? Did she not remember what it meant not to have expensive meats and wines for *Shabbos*? Cutting out hours was not an option. How would they continue to live the lifestyle that they were enjoying currently if he did not work the hours necessary to support this? He could not change his schedule. And that was final.

Kalfon was convinced that his wife would one day thank him. His wife, although she realized that it would not help to push her husband, she did not agree with him and tried to come up with

another plan. One day a thought came to her and she decided on a different tact.

Kalfon was blessed with a prestigious neighbour, Rav Chai Tayeb who was one of the great *tzaddikim* of Tunisia. (After his passing, the *rabbonim* of Tunisia wrote about him that Rav Chai Tayeb "was very sharp, with perfect aim. It is said that he performed wonders like the Ba'al Shem Tov".) Kalfon's wife decided that this great rav was to help her.

So while her husband was spending another long day at work, she went to her neighbour's house and stood under a window and waited until he passed by. After some time she heard the rav approaching the window and she prepared herself. The moment Rav Chai was in front of the window a bitter sigh erupted from her heart: "Oh, Master of the Universe!"

Immediately, Rav Tayeb stopped. Without looking up he called out, "What happened? Can I help?" The woman explained that her husband had become wealthy and started neglecting *Torah* learning and *davening*. The rabbi signaled to her that he understood and she should not worry. Everything would be all right.

The next morning there was the sound of knocking at Kalfon's door at 5:45. Kalfon opened the door wondering which person needed to buy something so early in the morning. But to his shock it was not a customer, but his eminent neighbour. "My dear friend," Rav Chai said pleasantly, "Let's go to study *Torah* and *daven* together. I'm waiting for you to get organized." This is not exactly what Kalfon had on his schedule to do just then, but he had respect for *rabbonim*. Left with little choice, he quickly dressed and walked to *shul* with the rav.

To be continued...

How Can H.I.T. Help You?

Did you purchase new electric *kaylim* for the summer or your cottage that are impractical to *toivel*? A possible solution may be to sell the utensil to a non-Jew.

To find out more or to get help in executing such a sale please call (416) 535-8008 or email info@halachainstitute.com



Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

Is it permitted to write *Pesukim* containing *Hashem's* name on a *matzeivah*?

There was an incident which occurred during the *Chasam Sofer's* lifetime. Someone had written the name of *Hashem* on a *matzeivah* and a rav forbade the family to erect it. The family ignored the rav and insisted on putting up the *matzeivah*. While they were doing so the *matzeivah* cracked. Someone sent the story to the *Chasam Sofer* and his response is brought in *chelek* VI, 5. He praises *Hashem* for not allowing the stone to remain intact as it represented the family's lack of respect to their rav. However, *l'halacha* the *Chasam Sofer* disagreed with the rav's *p'sak*. He proves from the *matzeivah* of the *Rif* which has *Hashem's* name written on it three times that it is permitted to write the name of *Hashem* on a *matzeivah*. Accordingly, a person would be permitted to write *Pesukim* containing the name of *Hashem* on a *matzeivah*.

It has happened to me a number of times that I recited the *bracha* on my *tallis* and before I finished the *atifa*, I had a chance to answer *amen* to *kaddish*. Am I supposed to say *amen* or would it be a *hefsek*?

The *Kaf Hachaim* (*Siman* 8, 39) writes that if the *tallis* is already on a person's body but he did not have a chance to wrap it around his head (*atifa*) for the amount of time that it takes to walk four *amos*, he may answer *amen*. The reason for this is that the primary *mitzva* of *tallis* is having it cover one's body and *atifa* is a *chumra*. However, if he did not have a chance to lower the *tallis* over himself at all, answering *amen* would be a *hefsek* and he would be required to recite a second *bracha* according to the *Mishna Berura* (206, 12; 25, 36), *Shoneh Halachos* (206, 5) and *Halichos Shlomo* (22, 13). If the *tallis* was only on his head and not over his entire body then he should not answer. If he did though, he would not need to recite a new *bracha*.

**To have your question answered
call**

**H.I.T. at (416) 535-8008
or email**

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In this week's Parsha we are introduced to Bila'am's donkey. Here are some interesting facts about donkeys.

- Donkeys have an excellent memory and are capable of remembering a place they have been to or other donkeys they met 25 years ago.
- In the UK horses, ponies, donkeys and related animals (including zoo species like zebras) must have a horse passport.
- A donkey has large ears which are capable of hearing another donkey from a distance of 60 miles in proper desert conditions.
- When two zebras starved in the Gaza City Zoo, zookeepers replaced them with donkeys painted with black and white stripes.

RIDDLE



Although the general rule is that when you are unsure whether you recited a rabbinic *bracha* you do not repeat the *bracha* because *safek brachos l'hakel*, there is an exception. What is that case?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: When do we specifically ask someone who is not learned to *pasken a shaila*?

ANSWER: Under certain circumstances, we use a child to ascertain whether a letter or word in a *Sefer Torah* was written properly or not (*Mishna Berura* 143, 25). Another possible answer is that in certain situations a non-Jew could be asked to taste food to determine if there is any meat or dairy discernable in the food (*Yoreh Deah* 98 {*Shach* 29}).

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER: Dovid Kark

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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