



From the desk of  
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## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad \* Batei Hora'ah \* Religious Services \* Marriage Licensing \* Kashrut \* Mikvaot \* Eiruvim

### TORAT

### Parashat Chukat

### HAMELECH

#### Moshe and Og

At the end of the *parashah*, we find Moshe Rabbeinu preparing to meet Og the ogre. Og was humongous, he was a giant. Moshe miraculously toppled him after jumping 20 feet up and hitting him in his ankle! Any normal person would be petrified to be anywhere in his proximity. But that is not why Moshe feared Og. Moshe was scared that Og had some merit which would allow him to be victorious over Yisroel.

What merit is that? Well, some hundreds of years earlier, Og had sort of saved Lot's life when he went to tell Avram that Lot had been taken captive by Kedarla'omer. Now, why did Og do that? Og had a grand plan, a diabolical scheme. Everyone knew that Sorah Imeinu was the prettiest woman around. Og wanted Avram to go fight, turn into dust, leaving his widow up for grabs, and Og would do the grabbing! Sounds terrible, no? Sounds like a lowly plot, no? Borderline murder and adultery, no? Almost.

But Moshe saw the good in it, Moshe knew that Hashem rewards for every good deed, and for every good aspect even of a misdeed. So Moshe was scared. Until Hashem assured him and said, "Do not fear him, for I shall deliver him into your hand etc. and you will do to him as you did to Sichon etc."

For that minute meritorious aspect of salvation, Hashem granted Og longevity. He endured for hundreds of years. But since he wished to see Avram dead, instead he will see hundreds of thousands of Avram's descendants, and fall in their hands.

#### Balak and the 42 *Korbanot*

We also see this idea with Balak (next week's *parashah*), Balak offered up 42 sacrifices in order to get on Hashem's good side, hoping that in that merit he would be successful at cursing the entire Jewish nation. That certainly seems awful. Terrible. To try to curse Hashem's Chosen People. Nonetheless, a mitzvah is a mitzvah, and a korban is a korban. At the end of the day, Balak offered up 42 *korbanot* and deserved to be rewarded for this. What reward did he receive? Quite a good one! Rut Hamo'aviah descended from him! So he had a share in all of Malchut Beit Dovid! Just because he offered up *korbanot*! With the intention of harming the Jewish People!

#### Egyptian Converts

And what about the Mitzrim? They were terrible! They persecuted us! They overworked us with demeaning and demoralizing and backbreaking labor. They were anything but hospitable! Nonetheless, the Torah tells us not to detest a Mitzri because we were strangers in their land. We dwelled on their land for more than 200



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years, so we owe them something. What do we owe them? That if a Mitzri ever converts to Judaism, then after three generations, he may marry in. He and his son or daughter can only marry converts or those of disqualified lineage. But the grandchild of a Mitzri convert can already marry someone of sterling Jewish lineage. How is that for *hakarat hatov*?!

The point the Torah is making here is that no matter how bad the Mitzrim were, we should notice something positive about them and make it our business to appreciate them for that. Overall, we are to learn from here that Hashem does not overlook any detail. He rewards the most minute fraction of a good deed.

### The Black Raven

After the Great Flood, Noach sent the raven on a mission. But Mr. Raven refused to go. Noach wanted to kill him on the spot. Hashem said to keep him around, as his descendant would play an important role in bringing food to Eliyahu Hanavi, approximately 1,500 years later! Here, too, we see that one small (even future) merit is grounds to keep around an entire species.

### Great Deeds

Rav Chaim Vital was the top pupil of the Arizal. He once asked his revered mentor, "How is it that you tell me that my soul is on such a high level? The smallest of earlier generations was so saintly and devout that I cannot reach his heels?!"

The Arizal responded, "Greatness of souls is not dependent upon deeds. It depends on the generation. A small deed in our time is equivalent to great deeds of yesteryear. Why? Because in our days, the forces of evil are very influential etc."

If this was said in the days of the Arizal, how much more so in our times when forces of evil are rampant; each good deed today must be worth so much more than we could fathom.

### More Precious Than Diamonds

Rav Shalom Schwadron told the following story. After World War I, a certain Jew in Russia worked as a diamond dealer. Each day he arrived at work at 8 A.M. One day, he left his house a bit early, so when he was stopped on the street by a man who asked him to complete a *minyan*, he acquiesced. He entered the shul, only to discover that the *minyan* had not arrived. He was far from the tenth man. So he said, "Sorry, I have to get to work."

The man begged, "I have *yahrzeit* today. Please stay. I will find a *minyan* promptly."

So he stayed a bit longer. But the minutes dragged on, and still no *minyan*. The diamond dealer inched his way towards the door. In his business, minutes could mean millions; he had to get to work.

But the man with the *yahrzeit* entreated, "Please! We almost have a *minyan*. Don't leave now! Think of how you would feel if it would be you



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looking for the *minyan* for your father's *yahrzeit*.  
 You would not want me to go!"

Reluctant, he could not argue with that. So he stayed. The *minyan* arrived and the diamond dealer was expecting one *kaddish* and out the door. But, no, this man started *Shacharit* from the beginning! All the while, the diamond dealer glanced at the door, anxiously awaiting Number Eleven to arrive so he could get along his way. But Mr. Eleven never showed up, and Mr. Diamond was there until the very last *kaddish*. The man with the *yahrzeit* thanked everyone for their participation.

Finally, he made his way to the office, more than an hour late. He was a block away, when an acquaintance came running and told him frantically, "Run for your life! The Bolsheviks invaded the diamond business and killed every Jew in sight. Now they're ransacking the goods. Run!"

Mr. Diamond now realized that attending the *minyan*, with all of the delays, saved his life.

### The Almost Tenth Man

Here's another *minyan* story. In Moshav Shores, there is a Guest House. The *mashgiach* *kashrut* tries to arrange a *minyan* for *mincha* daily. One day, they were short one man. The *mashgiach* found a Jew who was not familiar with the concept of a *minyan*. The *mashgiach* explained a bit, and the man agreed to try it out. As they

neared the local *Beit Kneset* and the unlearned tenth man ascended the three stairs just outside the shul, another man appeared. Being that he was no longer needed for the *minyan*, the *mashgiach* thanked him and told him that he could go on his way. So he did.

Some ten years later, the *mashgiach* had a dream. That "tenth" man came to him and told him that he had recently passed away. He said, "You cannot imagine the reward I received for climbing those three steps, prepared to complete a *minyan*. Now, I have a request of you. I have one son in Yerushalayim who knows nothing of Torah and Mitzvot. Please locate him and ask him to say *kaddish* for me."

Just as we have seen that Hashem gives great importance to every last deed and fraction thereof, so too, should we appreciate all of the good in others, especially in our spouses. We should be complimenting freely and praising all the time for all of the good things our husbands and wives do for us and for the home. This creates a positive environment and makes the home a happy place to be. Children who grow up in such a home come out much better, for they have been nurtured to feel good about themselves and those around them. Even when someone seemed to have done something wrong, let's continue to see the good. We will only gain.

**Have a Great Shabbat!**

**Mordechai Malka**