

BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשיות מטות - מקעי תשפ"ו – A Dangerous Game!

אַלֶּף לַמַּטֵּה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֵּה לְכָל מַטֹּת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּשְׁלַח לַצָּבָא
A thousand for each tribe, a thousand for each tribe, from all the tribes of Yisroel you shall send into the army. (Bamidbar 31:4)

The Midrash Rabbah (Matos Parsha 22:3) teaches:
אלף למטה... ג' אלפים מכל שבט ושבט י"ב אלף משמרים את
 3,000 from each tribe were sent; 1,000 to fight, 1,000 to watch their supplies; 1,000 to daven

The Midrash is telling us that every soldier on the battlefield had a "partner" with him whose job it was to daven for his success.

This is a bit puzzling, as the war we are discussing was a *Milchemes Mitzvah* to destroy the Midianites. This was a war mandated by Hashem, and its outcome was foretold by Hashem; the Yidden would have a resounding victory. Why then was an entire battalion of special "daveners" needed?

The answer is that war is a dangerous game!

We are not referring to the dangers of artillery fire, tanks, cannons, missiles and land mines.

That was not an issue here, as Hashem promised them military success.

We are referring to something exponentially more dangerous! We are referring to the possibility - and even the probability - of developing feelings of **כְּחֵי וְעֵצִים יָדֵי עֲשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה**. With every conquest of enemy territory, with every military victory, with every battle win, comes the real and grave danger of the ego convincing the warriors that it was their sharp military prowess and their own strategic moves that led to their being triumphant.

These feelings of invincibility are inherent with every success on the battlefield - and often in other areas of life as well- and lead to forgetting that **לֵה' הַיְשׁוּעָה** - Hashem wins wars, not us.

After the war was over, the commanders reported back to Moshe Rabbeinu, and said (Bamidbar 31: 49):
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדֶיךָ נִשְׂאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁ אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיַדְנוּ וְלֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ - *Your servants counted the soldiers who were in our charge, and not one man was missing.*

The Gemara (Yevamos 61a) records a dispute between the Chachamim and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai as to the meaning of the aforementioned Posuk.
וְרַבֵּנּוּ לֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ וְרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחִי לֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ,
לְעֵבְרָה,

The Chachamim say it means that not even one Jewish soldier fell in the battle, while Rashb"i says it means that no soldier fell due to any sin.

Rabbeinu Bechayei comments on this Posuk:
וְלֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ. זֶה הָיָה פְּלֵא עֲצוֹם וּמַהֲנִסִּים הַגְּדוּלִים שֶׁאִירְעוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אִירְעוּ לָהֶם בְּכַאֵן בְּמִלְחַמַת מִדְּיָן שֶׁהָיוּ עִם רַב כְּחוּל אֲשֶׁר עַל שֵׁפֶת הַיָּם וְהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵהֶם וְשָׁבוּ מֵהֶם אֲלֵפִים וּרְבֻבוֹת וְהִכְתוּב מֵעִיד שֶׁלֹּא חָסַר מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶחָד בְּמִלְחָמָה זֶהוּ שֶׁאִמְרוּ וְלֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּס הַגְּדוּל הַזֶּה לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ שְׁלֵמִים בְּזָכוֹת וְהוּא שֶׁדָּרְשׁוּ רַז"ל וְלֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ לְדַבֵּר עֲבִירָה

This was a most wondrous event and one of the greatest miracles that transpired to Klal Yisroel that they killed and captured tens of thousands of Midianites, yet the Torah testifies that not even one Yid was killed in battle. They merited this miracle because they were replete with merits, as Chazal tell us that not one of the soldiers had any sins.

Rabbeinu Bechayei is combining the 2 opinions (of the Chachamim and Rashb"i) and learns that not even one soldier was killed - and this was due to their being righteous! Not even one soldier succumbed to the Yetzer Hara of thinking or feeling **כְּחֵי ה' אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה**, rather they all went into battle knowing that **לֵה' הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה**

How did every last one of these soldiers manage to remain righteous and focused on Hashem, despite the overwhelming Yetzer Hara of **כְּחֵי וְעֵצִים יָדֵי עֲשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה**?

Because they each had their personal Tefilah partner right there with them on the battlefield! They had a clear and constant reminder that **כִּי הוּא לְבַדּוֹ בַּעַל מְלָחְמוֹת** - Hashem alone wins wars!

Yes, war is a very dangerous game, and in order to come out unscathed, we need the power of Tefilah and Bitachon.

As the Posuk (Tehilim 149:6) states **רוֹמְמוֹת אֵל בְּגִרוֹנָם וְחָרֵב פִּיפְיוֹת בְּיָדָם** - *The praises of Hashem are in their throats and a double-edged sword is in their hands*, and as Rashi explains: **רוֹמְמוֹת אֵל בְּגִרוֹנָם - וְהָם לְחָרֵב פִּיפְיוֹת בִּידָם** - the praising of Hashem - via Tefilah - becomes the weapon by which we win wars!

We need to always remember that in the game of war, and in the game of life, the strength that brings us victory is not our own; it's always and only the strength of Hashem!

The artillery that gives us the strategic edge is our Emunah, our Bitachon and our Tefilos.



Good Shabbos!