



THE LIGHT, LIFE & LEGACY OF R' MICHOEL FORSHLAGER ZT"L



Issue 5

Parshas Devarim

The Light

It is written in the Gemara of Masechetes Taanis that the sun miraculously stood still for three people: Moshe Rabeinu in the war against Sichon, Yehoshuah in the war against the Emorim, and Nakdimon Ben Gurion who provided water for those coming to Yerushalaim. In the case of Yehoshua the Passuk explicitly states the following: “And the sun stood still and did not set as per the daily course. A day like this never happened prior or since where God listened to Man’s command” (Yehoshua 10:13-14). The Gemara shares that by Nakdimon the story has been passed along orally. However, it seems that Moshe’s experience with the aforementioned is not expounded upon and its source is questioned in the Gemara. There are two answers that explain the source: a) it is derived from Yehoshua in a gezeirah shaveh, or b) is hinted at in a verse discussing Moshe.

The Gemara further questions that with the statement made regarding Yehoshua: “and such a day never happened prior and since”, in that case how can it be said that it happened by Moshe or Nakdimon. The Gemara answers that Yehoshua had a unique miracle in that it lasted much longer and/or that unnaturally large hailstones came along with the sun’s departure.

Additionally, the Passuk states that “a day like this...never happened where God listened to Man’s command” which would make it seem as though the miracle was a result of a humans ability to change the course of nature and not the length of the miracle or the hailstones that came along with the suns departure.

The answer shared is that only Yehoshua *commanded* the miracle to happen. Whereas by Moshe, God chose to do it to show his greatness unto the nations and not because Moshe asked for it. And even though Nakdimon did indeed pray for it to happen, God allowed for prayer to be the catalyst for change – even to alter the natural state of the world. It is a natural phenomenon and not ‘Man’s command’.

This can be understood through the words of the Gemara. When the Gemara says that Yehoshua’s miracle was greater because of the longer hours and the large hailstones, it is essentially saying that the miracle happened because of a command. The longer hours prove that the miracle happened beyond the necessary timeframe needed to win the war. (The hailstones also could have won the war on their own.) The reason the sun stood still was simply because Yehoshua wanted this miracle and commanded it to be so.

And this is also why the miracle was only made clear in Yehoshua’s case. Only Yehoshua had the power to command the celestial bodies - the sun and the moon, and change their nature due to the merit of his forefather Yosef for whom the sun, moon, and stars bowed down. When a Tzaddik-a holy person, creates a miracle, the Tzaddik opens a channel for divine energy. Once that channel is open, it is easier for others

to access the channel even if they are unable to achieve that on their own. Yehoshua was given the power to command the sun and once he did so, it was possible for others to follow suit.

The Life

Building on this idea of creating a possibility that others can more easily follow- Rav Forshlager was instrumental in creating the possibility of serious Torah study in America. Coming from Torah steeped Europe, Rav Forshlager continued in those holy ways, even increasing in dedication. When Rav Ruderman came to Baltimore to fundraise for his father-in-laws Torah institution in Cleveland, Rav Forshlager beseeched him to found a European style Yeshiva in Baltimore. Rav Ruderman agreed and thus, Ner Yisrael-one of the premier Yeshivas in America was founded.

R' Mordechai Gifter came to Rav Forshlager before he traveled to Telz in Lithuania to study in the famed Telzer Yeshiva. Rav Forshlager took his hands into his own and warmly told him, "This year you need to travel to Europe to learn serious Torah, next year you will be able to learn it here in America".

A young Rabbi Amram Taub came to Baltimore to establish a shul. As is customary he went to visit the local Rabanim. He came into Rav Forshlager's small but seforim packed home. He wondered aloud, "Does the Rav really use all these seforim?" Rav Forshlager smiled widely and said, "Why don't you take out any sefer and start reading aloud". Intrigued Rabbi Taub started taking out one sefer after the next and no matter how obscure or uncommon a sefer was, Rav Forshlager flawlessly recited the contents by heart.

It is well known that Rav Forshlager was tremendously humble and it was completely out of nature for him to show off his Torah mastery. But Rav Forshlager had a deeper intention, he wanted to impress on a young Rabbi that it is possible to achieve these lofty levels even in this day and age. On a deeper level we can say that he was creating the channel via which future Torah seekers could find it easier to achieve a high level of Torah dedication and mastery.

We can never know exactly how much we can attribute to him the great success that Torah has had here in America. There has almost never been in the history of the Jewish nation such a great level of Torah study. In fact, stadiums get sold out in events honoring Torah study. However, Rav Forshlager certainly had a large part in spiritually paving the way for this to happen. May we continue to bask in the light of his Torah.

The Legacy

The kever of Rav Forshlager has in the last couple of years become an address for people to come and pour their hearts out and receive salvations for their troubles. If you would like to send in a name or have a personal Yeshuah please reach out to RabbiForshlagerFoundation@gmail.com or call Pinny Kreizel 845-263-0781

Toras Michoel al Hatorah on Vayikra, Bamidbar and Devarim is available for sale.

The address to the Kever of Rav Forshlager is:
B'nai Israel cemetery
3701 Southern Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21206

Visit Rabbiforshlager.com for maps

To share a personal story or to donate please email RabbiForshlagerFoundation@gmail.com or call Pinny Kreizel 845-263-0781