

To receive these Divrei Torah: Text the word "PARSHA" to 22828 or email us at jepqueens@gmail.com
Call 718-544-5213 to Sponsor the Parsha in Memory, in Honor, as a Merit

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY 11367



(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

YOU CAN BE THE NEXT SUPER-HERO!

PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI

Our super-hero saw a scene taking place miles away. A man took out a gun and was about to shoot an innocent man. Our super-hero flew at warp-speed, swooped-down and knocked the gun out of the criminal's hand. He saved the day! A boat was sinking in the middle of the ocean. Hundreds of passengers were at risk of drowning. In the blink of an eye, our super-hero came, plugged-up the hole in the boat, and saved all the people. A terrorist's bomb was about to explode in a store crowded with shoppers. Once again, our super-hero came, grabbed the bomb, and threw it into the ocean where it harmlessly exploded.

We can be like this super-hero! We, too, can save lives!

"Cities of Refuge", *arei miklat*, were established, by Hashem's command, in the Land of Israel and across the Jordan river. They afforded protection to one who had killed another person

accidentally. While there, the killer was protected from any angry relatives of the deceased. He remained there until the death of the Kohain Gadol. Then, he was permitted to return home in safety.

What connection did the Kohain Gadol have to the accidental murderer? The **Talmud** (Makos 11A) explains that on some level, the Kohain Gadol was indirectly responsible for the accidental death. The Kohain Gadol should have redoubled the intensity of his prayers, pleading for mercy that there not be any unintentional murders as long as he was the Kohain Gadol. On some level, his prayer was lacking some intensity, thus an unintentional murder had occurred.

The **Talmud** (Makos 11A) compares the Kohain Gadol's "guilt" to a story that occurred to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. A man was once killed in a freak occurrence. He was eaten by a lion a few miles from Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's home. The prophet, Eliyahu, had been accustomed to speak to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. Eliyahu did not speak to him for three days, showing

"... He shall dwell in it [a City of Refuge] until the death of the Kohain Gadol..."
(Bamidbar 35:25)

his disapproval. Eliyahu felt that Rabbi Yehoshua should have prayed with more intensity that such an occurrence should never happen near his home. We see that there is a degree of responsibility for the Torah leader to pray for his generation.

A "yeshiva" boy was once hit by a car near Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, on the east side of Manhattan. That was Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l's yeshiva. Someone ran into the yeshiva to ask Rav Moshe to daven for the boy. Rav Moshe said that it was impossible that this should happen to a Jewish boy, near his yeshiva. Sure enough, it was discovered that the boy was not Jewish. The yarmulka that was found next to him was not his. He had taken it off the head of a Jewish boy.

Rashi (Shmos 21:13) explains what happens based on the following scenario: A man murdered but there were no witnesses. So, he could not be punished by the court. Another man killed unintentionally, but there were no witnesses. So, he did not go to a City of Refuge. Hashem then orchestrated events to bring justice and punish these two murderers. Hashem arranged that they both came to the same inn. The intentional murderer was sitting under a ladder that the unintentional murderer was climbing. The unintentional murderer fell and killed the murderer.

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

Hashem brought justice and the intentional murderer was killed. Witnesses saw what had happened. Now the unintentional murder was sent to an ir miklat. Hashem arranged that justice be done to both murderers.

The **Talmud** (Chullin 7B) quotes Rabbi Chanina who says that a person does not injure his finger unless it was decreed in Heaven that it should happen. There is no such a thing as an “accident” since everything that occurs is predetermined and orchestrated by Hashem.

According to this, the **Talmud** (Makos 11A) is very difficult to understand. How could the Kohain Gadol’s prayer have saved the unintentional murderer from killing? Death had already been decreed on the victim of the accidental killer as well as the man who was eaten by a lion. Hashem even orchestrated events to bring the matter to justice. If so, why was there a grievance against the Kohain Gadol and against Rabbi Yehoshua for not davening as intensely as they could? If the result was already predetermined, even their intense prayers would not have helped!

Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt”l explains that apparently, a heartfelt prayer **can** change that which was already predetermined and decreed to occur! It can change Hashem’s decree! The prayers of the Kohain Gadol or Rabbi Yehoshua could have changed what Hashem had already ordained should occur.

Wow, what an amazing power of prayer our great Torah leaders had! This power of prayer is not limited to the Torah leader. When the evil Lavan caught up to Yaakov, after chasing him and his family, Lavan blessed his daughters. The **Sforno** (Bereishis 32:1) says that this blessing, from the evil Lavan, was effective, because it was said with heartfelt sincerity, with his total being, harnessing the power of his *tzelem Elokim*, image of Hashem.

Even a rasha has this power of prayer! Certainly, we, too, have this power of prayer! Our supplications can make a difference! Our heartfelt prayers can change the course of history! We can change that which has already been decreed that would happen to us, our loved ones, or to the entire Jewish People!

Let’s harness this super-power! Let’s try to increase our heartfelt and sincere prayers to Hashem, harnessing our tzelem Elokim! Let’s make a difference in our own lives and in the world!

Based on a dvar Torah by Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt”l as notated in Pinnacle of Creation by Rabbi Aryeh Striks & Rabbi Shimon Zehnwirth, as well as in Chidushei Lev by Rabbi Binyomin Luban

Sponsored In Memory of: Mindel Adina bat Natan Zvi; Shmuel ben Eliezer Lipa; Shirley Shaindel Yaffa bat Yehuda Shmuel; Hadassah bas Yaakov; Faiga bat Pinchas; Yaakov ben Yeshayahu; Gershon ben Hillel; Gita bat Gershon; Rav Chaim Dov Weissmandl ben Rav Yoseph; Shraga Fayvel Leb ben Shmuel Abraham; Moshe ben Yitzchok; Sarah Vital bas Avrohom Yitzchok; R’ Yisroel ben R’ Yaakov, Zichronam Livracha.

Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

To receive these weekly divrei Torah by email, send a request to jepqueens@gmail.com