

PARSHAT CHUKAT- ROSH CHODESH TAMUZ, 2014, 5744

In 21:33, we read that “Og, (a giant), king of Bashan, came out against them (the Jewish people), he and his entire people, to do battle at Edrei.” In the next pasuk we find HaShem reassuring Moshe by saying “Do not fear him, for into your hand have I given him, his entire people, and his land”.

We know that Og was the last survivor of the mighty giants from the generation of the Mabul (flood) (Devarim 3;11), whose very appearance inspired terror. Does it make sense that Moshe Rabbeinu, who tells Yehoshua his successor not to fear the mighty enemies that will challenge him, would now be afraid of this king of Bashan? Both Rashi and Ramban explain this phenomenon because this Og had at one time displayed a quality of chesed (kindness). In Bereishit (14:13) someone comes to warn Avram (Avraham Avinu) that his nephew Lot had been **kidnapped**. Avram immediately gathers his men to pursue the enemy and successfully rescues Lot. Who was this “someone” that informed Avram? According to Chazal (Gemara Nidah 61a) it was this giant OG.

Imagine that, for that one small good deed that Og did hundreds of years ago Moshe Rabbein is now concerned that a reward is still forthcoming to Og and therefore he was afraid to do battle with him. What great deed did Og do? Nothing major, he simply informed Avram, [he sent him a text or called him] that Lot was in danger. No great effort or time consumption involved, just an act of kindness. That’s what the Gemara (Taanit 11a) means, “Just as the Tzaddikim are paid their reward in the **next world**, even for a minor Mitzvah, so too are the Resha’im (wicked) paid in **this world**, even for a minor good deed that they perform”

It is said that even the greatest rasha (evil person) could have a fleeting moment of chesed in his life. I met a woman in Yerushalayim, a Holocaust survivor. At age 12 she was brought to a German death camp and was on a lineup of girls. Those aged 16 and over who looked well enough to work were signaled to go “right”- to work barracks. Those below 16 were signaled to the “left” for gas chamber and death. This 12 year old was pretty and looked mature. The infamous Dr. Mengele who sent thousands of our people to their death, looked at this girl and somehow was imbued with a moment of chesed spirit and asked her, “How old are you?” She answered truthfully, and said, “Twelve”. “No”, he replied, “You are sixteen!”, and thus, her life was spared.

The Torah and Chazal are teaching us not to wonder and question the way HaShem guides the world. If we encounter “Tzaddik veRah Loh” , a Tzaddik who is severely suffering in this world, and a “Rasha veTov Loh” a rasha who seems to have everything well going for him, remember-The Tzaddik will receive his reward in the world to come, while the rasha is reaping the benefits of something good that was done-even centuries ago.

This parasha is a call to all Arabs and terrorists that if they have any information about the 3 kidnapped boys this is their chance to gain eternal reward, like Og king of Bashan by calling Avram [I.D.F]