

Me and King Menasha

Posted by Moshew - 10 Dec 2009 18:20

There is an amazing (yet little known) *medrash* about King Menasha that I would like to share with the *chevra*:

At about the midpoint of Menasha's reign the Babylonians (or Assyrians depending on the source) kidnapped him and brought him back to Babylon (as stated in *Divrei HaYamim / Chronicles*). They placed him in a giant pot and started cooking him alive. Suddenly as things were heating up, Menasha started calling out to all the pagan deities he worshiped, pleading with them to save him. As things were getting hotter and hotter to the point where he could no longer take it he suddenly remembered that his father once told him "even if a sharp sword is resting on your neck don't give up, the *Ribono Shel Olam* (RS"O) will have mercy". Left with no choice he called out to RS"O **and brazenly said** "if You help me good and if not You are no better than all the other pagan deities I worship". The *medrash* continues that when the Angels heard this they went ballistic, how dare he talk to God that way they said. Quickly they sealed all the doors and windows leading to the RS"O heavenly chamber in an effort to block his prayers. In response our loving father in heaven dug a small tunnel under his *Kisei HaKavod* (Hashem's Holy Throne), allowing Menasha's prayers to come before Him. The Angels were perplexed as to why the RS"O would allow and accept such a brazen attempt of repentance. Hashem explained that if I close the door of repentance before Menasha then I have to close the door of repentance before every single sinner in the future. Suddenly Menasha found himself back in Jerusalem on his throne.

Let us analyze this story if we may. Who was Menasha, *Chaza"l* tell us that Menasha was a mass murderer. He built idols that were so enormous and heavy that it took one thousand people to move them and they were crushed by their weight. He sacrificed his own children to the *Baal*. He placed multiple brazen images in the holy of holies so that regardless of which direction the divine presence faced it would be forced to see the images and get angry. *Chaza"l* further relate that Menasha had relations with his sister for fun (not for pleasure). Basically we are talking about someone who was the worst of the worst, who sinned for fun all the while forcing others to sin. Menasha was so successful in eradicating Torah from the Jewish people that his own grandson Yoshiyahu (Josiah) did not see an actual *safer torah* for the first 20 years of his life.

Looking at Menasha and the way he lived one would think that perhaps he had a difficult childhood, or maybe he came from a broken home, his father was abusive, bad friends etc. Who was Menasha's father? His father was Chezkiah (Hezekiah) the *gemora* states that Chezkiah was among the greatest kings from the house of King David only second to King David himself. He was so great and lofty that the RS"O wanted to make Chezkiah the *Moshiach*. After his passing they placed a *safer torah* on his bier proclaiming "this one fulfilled everything that is written in this one" (and although this is *halachicly* forbidden the commentaries explain that an exception was made for Chezkiah.) Basically Menasha was the worst of the

worst and at the same time the son of the best of the best. Yet the RS"O lovingly accepted his brazen repentance, so much so that he built a special tunnel so that it should come directly before Him.

Why did Hashem do this, the commentaries explain at that moment Menasha was sincere and truly wanted to return to God (even though he was slowly becoming soup). As a matter of fact he spent his remaining years trying to reverse all the atrocities he committed. Sit back and think for a moment we are not Menasha nor have we committed anything close to what he did. Therefore, how much more so will our loving father in heaven accept us and our *teshuvah*? As you are reading this posting He is sitting on his *Kisei HaKavod* looking into that tunnel waiting for us to come home. Please keep in mind that as bad or dark as it gets, even if we fall so deep "into the soup" that we can't crawl out ALWAYS remember Menasha, what he did, and how Hashem took him back.

Good shabbos and *ah freilichen* Chanukah,

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Re: Me and King Menasha
Posted by Kedusha - 10 Dec 2009 18:54

Beautiful, Moshe!

Not to take away from anything you said, but I recall that Chazal say that Menashe has no Cheilek in Olam Habah. But, I believe that's because he was a Chotei u'Machti on an unparalleled scale, which doesn't apply to any of us.

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Re: Me and King Menasha
Posted by Moshew - 10 Dec 2009 19:21

If I remember correctly although the Mishnah says that he does not the Gemora says that he does because he did teshuvah. I will look it up tonight.

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Re: Me and King Menasha

Posted by Moshew - 15 Dec 2009 19:36

I realized that I forgot to mention that the *vort* is based on a lecture I once head from Rabbi Wachsman of Monsey.

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