

Good Shabbos Everyone. Anyone wishing to see proof of the existence of G-d need only look at the Jewish people. We are a nation that by all estimates, should have been destroyed long ago. We are small among the nations. However, after years of persecutions, banishments, burnings, gassings, torturing and exterminations, Am Yisroel is alive and well.

We read about the indestructibility of the Jewish nation in our Torah portion this week Shemos. The Torah tells us about how Moshe Rabeinu (our teacher) saw a prophetic vision in the form of a burning bush. The verse tells us "...behold! The bush was burning in the fire but the bush was not consumed." (Shemos 3:2) The Midrash tells us that the bush symbolizes Yisroel. Although the nations may try to destroy us, we are not consumed... we will never be consumed. (Midrash Rabbah, Shemos [Margolios] 2,14) We are the eternal nation. The following amazing true story illustrates the special character of the Jewish people.

In the 1980's during the height of the Intifada, when Arabs stoned and shot at Israelis without provocation, Gadi Ramat, a member of the IDF (Israeli Defense Force), was driving an army jeep near the Arab town of Ramallah.

It was late afternoon and he was patrolling the perimeter of the city. Suddenly, a sniper's shot rang out and Gadi fell out of the jeep onto the road bleeding profusely. The Arab terrorist was sure he had killed Gadi, so he left him on the road.

Shortly after the shooting, a young Israeli, Shlomo Rimon, happened to be driving by and saw Gadi lying on the ground. He rushed out of his car, picked up the limp soldier and sped off to the nearest Israeli hospital.

As Shlomo drove along the highway, he frantically called ahead to the hospital and told them that he was bringing in a seriously wounded soldier. "I have no idea if he is dead or alive, but please have medics ready when I get there, which will be in about seven minutes," he exclaimed.

The emergency room was ready when Shlomo arrived. Four doctors were waiting to take Gadi from the car and begin treatment. The chief resident, Raffy Tekef, coordinated the rescue effort. He called for units of blood, summoned the trauma and surgical staffs and oversaw all procedures needed to save Gadi's life.

Doctors and nurses acted swiftly and efficiently. In seconds Gadi was hooked up to tubes and monitors. The hospital called the local army office, which was able to procure Gadi's background information. His parents from Ashdod were called and told to rush to the hospital immediately.

As the hospital staff seemed to be getting the situation under control, Shlomo slipped away from the emergency room and drove home. There was no reason for him to wait for the parents. He had no information on how the accident happened and he was not looking for thanks or recognition. He felt that every Jew would have done the same.

Gadi's parents arrived about two hours later. They were told that although Gadi was in critical condition and had lost much blood, chances were good that he would survive. When Mr. and Mrs. Ramat asked who brought Gadi in, no one knew. Everyone was occupied with Gadi and no one had bothered to ask Shlomo his name. After two weeks, Gadi left the hospital to return to his home in Ashdod for convalescence.

At that time Gadi's mother, Mrs. Tamar Ramat, put up signs in her grocery store asking anyone for information about the identity of the young man who saved her son. The Ramats were highly principled, deeply religious people who were beloved by all who knew them. They felt compelled to find the rescuer so they could thank him properly. The sign was up for months but no one had information. Mrs. Ramat kept the sign hanging as a daily reminder of her gratitude to Hashem.

More than a year after the incident, Anat Rimon came to shop at the Makolet (grocery) owned by the Ramat family. She had lived in Ashdod, but moved to Ranana years ago, and was back for a visit with friends. She came into the local makolet to get some items before she returned home. As she entered the store she saw the poster with the headline, "Information Wanted." The poster explained that the owner's son had been saved by an unknown virtuous individual and that the family sought to find him. She read the notice and then read it a second time. Could it be they were talking about her son Shlomo? He had told her about a wounded soldier whom he had brought to a hospital after seeing him lying next to his jeep, but he had made nothing of it. She recalled being so proud that her son sought no accolades or thanks. She went to the counter and asked the lady checking out items whom she could speak to about the poster.

Mrs. Ramat looked up at Mrs. Rimon and said, "Why? Do you have information about it? "Can we talk privately?" Mrs. Rimon asked. Mrs. Ramat got someone to tend the counter and took Mrs. Rimon into a private room in the back. There was a small desk and two chairs surrounded by canned goods, boxes of food products stacked and piled on crowded shelves. Mrs. Rimon began to quiver. "A little more than a year ago," she began, "my son Shlomo came home and told me about a soldier he had brought to the hospital after seeing him lying in the street outside Ramallah. He told me that the doctors saved his life. Could that have been your son?"

The two women began exchanging tidbits of information about the incident and it soon became apparent that indeed it was Shlomo Rimon who saved Gadi Ramat. The women embraced. "I can't believe you are the mother of that soldier." Mrs. Rimon said, "I am so happy for you that your son survived. How old is he by the way?" Mrs. Ramat was surprised at the question because it seemed Mrs. Rimon was getting at something.

"Gadi is now 21," Mrs. Ramat said proudly. Mrs. Rimon tried to hold back the tears. "You don't remember me?" she asked Mrs. Ramat. "Am I supposed to?" asked Mrs. Ramat in return. "Close to 22 years ago," said Mrs. Rimon, "we were both expecting. I was living in Ashdod and already had two children and did not want to have another one. My doctor had told me that he could arrange for my pregnancy to be ended. You overheard me telling my friend about it. You called me and tried hard to convince me not to end my child's life even before it began. At first I didn't want to listen to you, but you didn't give up. Finally, you convinced me. The dear child that I gave birth to was Shlomo."

Mrs. Rimon paused as she caught her breath and uttered the words that Mrs. Ramat will never forget. "You saved my son and now that son saved yours!" (From In the Spirit of the Maggid R. P. Krohn, p. 215) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

In memory of Shusha Malka bas R' Avrohom ob'm

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