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## Rosh Chodesh Mazal - 013 Teves | The Goat

### *The Mazal of Teves - The G'di (Goat)*

The festival of Chanukah, in contrast to all other Biblical and Rabbinical festivals, is unique in that it overlaps two months - Kislev and Teves. The *mazal* of Kislev is *keshes* (the bow), and the *mazal* of Teves is **g'di (goat)**<sup>[1]</sup> - thus Chanukah, which connects together the months of Kislev and Teves, is a union of these two *mazalos* of *keshes*\bow and *g'di*\goat.

The simpler understanding [of the connection on Chanukah between *g'di*\goat and *keshes*\bow] is as follows. The Sages state that the Greeks sent a message to the Jews, "Write for your selves on the horns of a bull that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel."<sup>[2]</sup> *Rashi* explains that the 'bull' was a hint to the sin with the Golden Calf; thus, in turn, Chanukah was a rectification of the sin with the Golden Calf. A hint to this is that the first letters of the words *g'di*\גדי and *keshes*\קשת, which are the letters *gimme*\ג and *ku*\ק are equal in numerical value to the word *eige*\עגל calf.<sup>[3]</sup> Thus, the concepts of *g'di*\goat and *keshes*\bow, are both associated with the rectification of the sin with the Golden Calf.

Here we will delve specifically into the role of the *g'di* (goat) in Chanukah of the spiritual power that it represents.

### *The Greek Nation Is Symbolized By The Leopard*

Concerning the future, it is written, "The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the goat with the leopard."<sup>[4]</sup> In a vision to the prophet Daniel, the Greek nation appeared to him in the form of a leopard. He saw four beasts, parallel to each of the four exiles, and the third beast he saw was a leopard, parallel to the third of the exiles, which is the Greek exile.

A leopard is full of many different spots, which are unique from each other. These many spots that are part of its physical appearance are called *tzuross* (formation), a hint to the many *tzaros* (difficulties) which the Greek exile would cause the Jewish people.

The redemption, where "the leopard will dwell the goat", symbolizes a point in time where the "leopard" (the Greek nation) will be connected with the "goat" (the *mazal* of the month of Teves) - in other words, where the leopard will be 'lowered' [humbled] to the goat. Chanukah, which connects together the 'leopard' with the 'goat', is thus a revelation of a concept of a 'leopard' in the side of holiness (and the leopard is part of the lion family, so it is really a reference to the lion).

Hence, the *mazal* of *g'di*\goat is really a spark of the light of the future, in which the leopard will dwell

with the goat, and the wolf will dwell with the lamb. The evil "leopard" - the Greek nation - was defeated, and thereby lowered to the level of the goat, revealing instead a holy and rectified kind of "leopard", which can dwell with the goat (the leopard's root in holiness is the lion).

The Sages say that in the future, all the festivals will disappear except for Purim[5], and there are those who include Chanukah as well.[6] The understanding of this opinion, that Chanukah will not cease in the future, is linked with the fact that the *mazal* of the month of Teves is *g'd\goat*, which on an inner level is referring to the complete level of *g'di* in the future, where there will be a union of leopard with goat. (The future will also be a revelation of the full level of the "light of Torah" - which is also what Chanukah revealed.)

Let us try to understand more about this *mazal* of *g'd\goat*.

### *G'di and the Tribe of Gad*

The word *g'di* (goat) is rooted in the word "Gad", who was one of the twelve sons of Yaakov Avinu. Gad was named by Leah from the words, "*Ba gad*", lit. "Gad has come".

*Rashi*[7] cites three different meanings of Gad's name. One of the meanings of it is "*Ba gad, ba mazal*" (lit. "Gad has come, good *mazal* has come"). The word "*gad*" is thus synonymous with the very concept of *mazal*. Another reason for Gad's name is because his birth was like a "*begidah*", a "betrayal" - in the sense that he was born from a maidservant, and not directly from her. A third reason for his name is because he was born circumcised, and the word *gad* means to "cut", hinting to the cut of the *bris milah* that he already was born with.

The word "*mazal*" is from the word "*noizel*", to "flow"; the concept of *mazal* is about the continuous flow of all *shefa* (Heavenly sustenance) to the Jewish people. Throughout the 12 months of the year, there are 12 *mazalos*, and the *mazal* of Teves which is *g'd\goat* corresponds to the tribe Gad - who is the root of *mazal*, for Leah said upon the birth of Gad, "*Ba gad, ba mazal*". Thus, the *mazal* of Teves, which is *g'd\goat*, is the root viewpoint of all the other *mazalos* throughout the other months of the year. The *shefa* of all the *mazalos* of the year flows from the *mazal* of Teves, which is *g'd\goat*.

Since the term "Gad" implies different meanings - as explained above - the concept of Gad and the *mazal g'd\goat* therefore contains opposite concepts. This will either mean that the *shefa* of all the *mazalos* stem from Gad's aspect of "discontinuation" (*gid\cut*), or, from Gad's aspect of *begidah\betrayal* - also a form of discontinuation (either of these implies a bad *mazal*), or, the opposite - the *mazalos* may all stem from Gad's aspect of "*ba gad ba mazal*", the fact that Gad implies good *mazal*, a continuation of uninterrupted *shefa*. So Gad, or the *mazal g'di*, can either imply continuation of *shefa*, or it may imply the discontinuation of *shefa*.

Gad's aspect of *gid\cutting\discontinuation* implies limitations, as in the phrase, "Words as tough as '*gidin*' - spears".[8] There are 248 limbs and 365 *gidin* (sinews) in the body; the 248 limbs are parallel to the 248 sins which the Torah enumerates, and the 365 sinews are parallel to the 365 *mitzvos* of the Torah. The Ramban says that the 248 sins of the Torah represent *yirah\*fear of Hashem, which is the idea of staying contracted to boundaries, whereas the 365 *mitzvos* represent *ahavah\*love, which is expansion.

Let us now delve into the roots of these matters.

### *The Power of Goatskins Which Saves Yaakov (the Jewish People) from Esav (Western Society)*

When Yaakov had to take the blessings from Esav, he disguised himself with goatskins. Yitzchok felt the skin on his neck and hands, which was covered in goatskins, and therefore thought he was Esav,

and that is what ultimately secured Yaakov with the blessings (and which also aided him in the spiritual war against his brother Esav). Thus, it was goatskins which saved Yaakov.

The war of Esav against Yaakov was first centered on who would get the blessings. He fought Yaakov to leave the womb first, so that he could become the firstborn and have blessings, and later, he tried getting the blessings for himself, and was subsequently at war with Yaakov for taking the blessings from him. Yaakov was able to defeat Esav and take the blessings, through wearing the goatskins.

But the battle with Esav wasn't yet over. Later, the angel of Esav fought Yaakov when Yaakov went back to retrieve the *pachim ketanim*, the small pots which he had left behind (and the Sages said that these *pachim ketanim* were actually the small jug of oil which would eventually become the same small jug of oil with the signature of a *Kohen Gadol* used in the miracle of the Chanukah story<sup>[9]</sup>). After Yaakov overcame Esav's angel, he received the commandment not to eat the sinew of *gid hanasheh* - also from the word *g'di*. The implication of this is that Esav's angel was trying to attack Yaakov Avinu's power of "*g'di*", by hitting him in the thigh, where the area of *gid hanasheh* is. Essentially, it was trying to turn Yaakov's power of *g'di* into its opposite implication, "*gid*" - which means "cut", or discontinuation.

The prophet says that in the future, Esav will be like straw, and Yosef will be like a fire, which will burn and destroy the 'straw' that is represented by Esav. Esav is also compared to a fire. Esav is the evil kind of fire, whereas Yosef is holy fire, and the holy fire of Yosef will destroy the evil fire of Esav in the future. There is a hint to this from a certain *halachah* pertaining to the laws of Shabbos. The Gemara says that if a fire starts on Shabbos, one should first surround the fire with goatskins, which can cause the fire to die down.<sup>[10]</sup> Thus, the power of the "goat" can overcome fire. This is a hint to the power of the "goat" which Yaakov Avinu was protected with, which has the power to overcome Esav.

This concept is also at the root of the miracle of Chanukah. The Sages compare the Greek exile to "darkness", and the exile of Edom (Esav) to the lowest abysses of the earth (the *tehom*), and that the exile of Edom gets its strength from its predecessor, Yavan (the Greek nation). Thus, the Greek exile continues with the exile of Edom\Esav. We find that in the episode of Yehudah and Tamar, which formed the roots of the Messianic dynasty through their children Peretz and Zerach, that Yehudah gave goatskins to Tamar. Thus, the roots of the Mashiach involved goatskins.

The roots of the Messianic dynasty are these two sons of Yehudah and Tamar: Peretz and Zerach. The word "Peretz" is from the term *poiretz geder*, "to break through fences," the quality associated with royalty, for "a king can break through fences, and no one may protest." It is the power to break through limitations, corresponding to the "*gid*" aspect of Gad (cut\discontinuation\limitation) and, in its place, to reveal the *g'di* aspect of Gad, which is *mazal* - continuation.

Thus, there is an ongoing spiritual "war" between these forces of *g'di* (*mazal*, continuation) and *gid* (cut\discontinuation).

#### *The G'di\Goat - The Connecting Point Between Yehudah and Yosef*

Chazal state that after the sale of Yosef, when Yehudah "descended" to Goshen, it was as a punishment for causing Yosef's descent to Egypt. Furthermore, in the episode of Yehudah and Tamar, Yehudah was proven wrong when she showed him the goatskins, which proved that he had been with her. This was in full measure for having caused pain to Yaakov Avinu when he made him think that Yosef was dead, by showing him goatskins dipped in blood. On a deeper level, the goatskins symbolize all of the wars between Yaakov and Esav, with all the spiritual failures involved, which the Jewish people will go through in the ongoing war with Esav.

In the side of holiness\rectification, the “gid” (discontinuation) aspect becomes g’d\goat\continuation, the *mazal* of Gad, which is completely good *mazal*, in which the *shefa* is continuous – through the power of *g’di* and all that it represents. The power of *g’di* first came to the aid of the Jewish people in the life of Yaakov Avinu, when he was saved by goatskins; and it was continued through Yehudah, who fathered the Messianic dynasty which involved the use of goatskin.

In both of the blessings of Yaakov and Moshe which were given to Gad, the tribe Gad is compared to a young lion. This corresponds to the “leopard” in the side of holiness which Gad corresponds to [which has the power to defeat the Greek exile, the evil leopard].

#### *Gad\G’di – The Power of Bris Milah Where All Mazal and Shefa Comes From*

Thus, we find a connecting point between Yosef and Yehudah. At first, Yosef descended to Egypt through the means of Yehudah (who was mainly responsible for selling him), and afterwards, Yehudah descended to Goshen by means of Yosef (for the brothers shunned him after the sale of Yosef, causing him to descend from his previous royal status).

The inner task of Gad (*g’di*) is to connect together Yosef and Yehudah and to continue this connection [as will be explained].

In the beginning of *Parashas Vayigash*, when Yehudah approaches Yosef, this is symbolic of the future, when Yehudah will become connected to Yosef [via the two Messiahs, Moshiach ben Yosef and Moshiach ben Yehudah]. From the connection between Yosef and Yehudah, comes all *mazal* and *shefa* to the Jewish nation.

From where does all the *shefa* and *mazal* come from? It is all rooted in Gad, the power of the *g’di*, which symbolizes good *mazal* and continuous *shefa* (as explained above at length). We mentioned earlier that the opposite of the “*mazal*” aspect in Gad is his aspect of *gid*\cutting, which symbolizes ‘disconnection’. On a simple level, this appears to mean that there is an aspect in Gad which contains bad *mazal*. However, we can now view this with a deeper meaning: through the cutting of the *gid* (circumcising the foreskin), a Jew gains the holiness of the sign of the *Bris Kodesh* (Holy Covenant) – of which all *shefa* comes from.

Thus, it is precisely the “*gid*” aspect which can bring all *mazal* and *shefa* – this is referring specifically to the “*gid*” aspect in the side of holiness, which is the concept of *Bris Milah*, circumcision of the foreskin. This is also the implication of Gad’s power of being born circumcised. He was born already with the foreskin cut, and this is really a sign of his good *mazal*, for all good *mazal* comes to a Jew from the sign of the *Bris Kodesh*, which is symbolized by the cutting and removal of the foreskin; from *Bris Kodesh*, one receives good *mazal* for his children and for all his continued offspring who descend from him.

Thus, the depth behind Gad is that he causes connection through the act of cutting and separation, which appears to be nothing but separation, but which is in actuality a connecting force. The “cut” foreskin which Gad was born with is the source of his good *mazal*. This is the depth behind Gad’s power of having been born circumcised. In this way, Gad’s aspect of *gid* is not a negative *mazal* for him, but to the contrary, it is synonymous with his aspect of *ba gad, ba mazal* – his good *mazal* – which corresponds to the spiritual power of the “*g’di*”. Through the “cutting” of the *Bris Milah*, which is the *gid*, there is a connecting point between Yosef and Yehudah, and from there, all *shefa* comes.

#### *The Month of Teves – A Difficult Month, Which Contains The Light of Chanukah*

The month of Teves, on one hand, is a troublesome month for the Jewish people. It contains “words as

tough as *gidin* (spears)" – it contains *Asarah B'Teves*, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Teves, where all of the events leading up to the destruction of the Holy Temples began.

But there is also a higher, deeper aspect to the month of Teves. Its *mazal* is *g'd\goat*, from the word Gad, which symbolizes the very concept of *mazal*. We have explained here that the depth of this power of "*g'di*" is due to the power in the Jewish people of *Bris Milah*, circumcision, an act of cutting and separating which leads to connection and a combination of mighty spiritual power, which has the strength to defeat the evil forces of Esav. This is the root of how the month of Teves can contain Chanukah, which is the light of the future.

#### *The Power of Gad's Success At War: When The "Hands" Are Connected To The "Head"*

Part of Gad's blessing is that he is successful when his tribe goes to war with his enemies. In the blessing of Moshe, Gad is compared to a young lion which can tear apart its victims, removing the skull together with the arm in one blow.<sup>[11]</sup> The depth behind this is because Gad can 'connect' together the arm with the head [and all that these two parts of the body symbolize].

In the Chanukah miracle, the "majority fell to the hands of the few". Simply speaking, this meant that although the *Chashmonaim* were outnumbered by the Greek army, the *Chashmonaim* were still able to defeat them. But the depth of this is that the *Chashmonaim* became the majority, through their own spiritual power, making the Greeks into "few", and this was how the Greeks fell into their hands. The Greeks were only more powerful than them in their numbers, size and physical strength - in their "hands". But the *Chashmonaim* were more powerful than the Greeks because they were represented by the "head", which is above the hands.

Thus, the secret of winning against all negative forces is when the Jewish people connect their "hands" with their "head".

#### *"Peretz": The Holy Power of "Peritzas Geder" (Breaking All Limitations) Which Can Defeat The Greeks*

On a deeper level, Gad's success is not because of *mazal* or either because of his power of "cutting", but because he has the power to go to war against his enemies in order to reveal the continuation of all holiness.

The Greek nation fought the Jewish people by forbidding them from *Bris Milah*; the depth of this is that they were fighting the continuation of the Jewish people, for all good *mazal* for the Jewish people stems from *Bris Milah*. This was their intention as well in contaminating all the oils in the *Beis HaMikdash* and in breaking down all of its walls. They were using the power to "cut", *gid*, an evil power of *peritzas geder*, "breaking fences", which aims to break down the holiness of the Jewish people.

But the Jewish people contain a holy ability of *peritzas geder*, symbolized by Peretz, ancestor of the Messianic dynasty and all royalty, which uses this power for holiness. When the Greeks tried breaking through all of the 'fences' of the Jewish people, this was essentially the Greek "darkness" which the Sages attribute them to, but when the *Chashmonaim* prevailed, it was the power of *peritzas geder* which does not bring darkness, but light and illumination.

This is Gad's holy power of "*gid*", which is his ability of *peritzas geder* when used for holiness, where *mazal* is continuous. The Greek nation wanted to weaken this power of the Jewish people and to darken all of their *mazal*. But through the power of *peritzas geder* (breaking fences) in the side of holiness, symbolized by Peretz, Zerach, and Gad, there was spiritual light and illumination which dispelled all of the "darkness" of the Greeks.

Chanukah contains this spiritual power of Peretz, of holy *peritzas geder* (breaking fences). It also contains another spiritual illumination: it must be lit at the entranceway, with the menorah on the right and the *mezuzah* on the left, and this implies that we use the spiritual power of the *mezuzah* to guard our entranceways, fences, and *gedarim* (boundaries). With these two spiritual powers combined - holy *peritzas geder*, and *shemirah* (protecting) our own *gedarim* which guard our holiness - the complete level of *mazal* is revealed, and then we enable the power of the "king can break fences", the root of redemption.

### *Chanukah - The Mitzvah That Is The Light of the Torah*

The light revealed on Chanukah is the power of Gad, who tears apart his enemies like a lion, removing their 'skull' and 'arm' at once. We have Torah and *mitzvos*, and the Torah symbolizes the head, for it is the wisdom (which is contained in the cerebral faculties), whereas the *mitzvos* symbolize the hands, for they are physical actions. Throughout the rest of the year, there is this difference between Torah learning and *mitzvos*. But on Chanukah, we have a *mitzvah* of lighting the menorah, which is a *mitzvah* that contains "Torah" in it, for it is a *mitzvah* which shines the light of the Torah. On Chanukah, we have an act of a *mitzvah* which is entirely the light of Torah! Thus, Chanukah is the connection between the "hands" (*mitzvos*) with the "head" (Torah).

This is precisely the power of Yosef, which can defeat the power of Esav. Yosef's holy "fire", which can burn through Esav, is the concept of combining the "hands" with the "head" - a level where our acts of *mitzvos* contain the light of Torah.

Esav's power is fueled by *asiyah* \action, as alluded to from his name "Esav" which is from the word *maaseh* \action, and symbolized by his power of the "hands" which personifies him. What is the way to defeat Esav's power of action, his "hands"? Through *mitzvos* alone, we cannot defeat Esav, for it will only be action against action. But if our actions of *mitzvos* are fueled by the holy power of thought that is the Torah, our actions combined with the "Torah" in them can then overcome Esav's power.

The *mitzvah* of lighting the Chanukah *menorah* is a unique *mitzvah* act which reveals the spiritual illumination of Torah outward to the rest of the world, from the entranceway of the house where it is lit. It is this power which can overcome Esav. In order to overcome "action" - the power of Esav - we need to combine our own actions (*mitzvos*) with the mind, with the power of holy thought, the Torah. In this way, our "hands" (actions) become empowered with the "head" (mind\Torah).

Thus, the power of Gad is essentially the power to infuse our actions of *mitzvos* with inner, holy thought. This is the depth behind "*Mitzvos* require *kavanah* (concentration)"[\[12\]](#) - on an inner level, it means to combine "Torah" within our actions, to combine the arm\hands\mitzvos with our head\skull\Torah. Then, our Torah and *mitzvos* become unified as one.

All of the festivals will cease in the future, except for Purim and Chanukah. Similarly, the *mitzvos* will cease in the future.[\[13\]](#) These two statements are interconnected. It is because all of the festivals (besides for Chanukah and Purim), and all of the *mitzvos*, represent the "hands" without the head, thus they will cease; whereas Chanukah is the light of the future, in which our hands\actions\mitzvos will become connected with our head\thought\Torah.

This is the light of the future....

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**[1]** Sefer Yetzira 5:14

**[2]** Beraishis Rabbah 2:4, Vayikra Rabbah 13:5

**[3]** לַגּוּל is equal to 103 (גּ is equal to 70, ל is 3, and וּ is 30; for a total of 103. The letters וּ and גּ are 3+100, which is 103.

**[4]** Yeshayahu 11:6

**[5]** Midrash Shochar Tov: Mishlei: 9:1

**[6]** Ateres Zekainim Orach Chaim 676, Sefer HaChaim 3:7, Magid Maisharim parshas Vayakhel, Manos HaLevi: hakdamah

**[7]** Beraishis 30:11, and Rashi ibid

**[8]** Rashi to Shemos 19:3

**[9]** Megaleh Amukos parshas Vayishlach (Beraishis 32:24)

**[10]** Shabbos 120a

**[11]** Devarim 33:20

**[12]** Pesachim 114b

**[13]** Niddah 61b

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