

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כי אם אינך משלה את עמי הנני משליה כך ובעקבירך ובעמך ובבתך את הערב ומלאו בתי מצרים את הערב ... (ח-ה)

Our Sages (*Shabbos 151b*) learn from the *posuk*, "ומוראכם וחתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ" (*Bereishis 9-2*), that lions do not attack human beings when they are in pairs (at least two humans together). The *Gemara* asks, how can this be? We know from experience that this simply is not so - lions do attack two or more people. *Chazal* explain this statement in accordance with *Rami bar Abba* who said: An animal does not overpower a person until he appears to it as an animal, as it says: "But man does not abide in honor, he is like the beasts that perish" (*Tehillim 49:13*). Thus, any human beings who have been attacked by a lion lack the qualities that make up the kind of people who are entitled to enjoy mastery over the beasts. Even though Moshe was called upon to warn, threaten, and rebuke Pharaoh, he was commanded to deliver all of these messages with respect and honor. If a *rasha* like Pharaoh deserved respect, how much more does a *Tzaddik* and *Talmid Chacham* deserve only words of respect? One who defames a *Torah* scholar is not a person that a lion will fear. If someone is harmed for having slighted the honor of a *Torah* scholar, it is a punishment from heaven for having insulted the *Torah* itself.

When **Chacham Rabbeinu Yaakov Abuchatzzeira ז"ל (Abir Yaakov)** visited in the city of Sifro, in Morocco, just a short distance from Fez, all the *Torah* scholars of the city eagerly awaited his arrival, coming out to greet him as he entered the gates. Upon witnessing the dignitaries going out, all the residents of the city left whatever they were doing and joined in the procession in honor of the esteemed guest. A huge throng of people formed; among those waiting was a man who was considered a *Torah* scholar, although in actuality he was not "Tocho K'baro" - not as he appeared on the outside.

As the crowd gathered, all eyes turned expectantly towards the road leading to Sifro from Fez. A non-Jewish resident of the city who passed by this large assembly, approached the hypocritical scholar and asked him whose arrival the crowd was awaiting. The man responded: "We are awaiting the lion that will come and devour everything." He explained what he meant. "Very soon, Rabbeinu Yaakov will arrive in town and take away everyone's money by asking for a substantial donation for his *Yeshiva* or some other charitable cause that he is collecting for on his travels from city to city." When he saw that his statement did not meet with enthusiasm, the disgruntled man walked away.

Rabbeinu Yaakov's carriage was sighted from a distance; at any moment it would pass in the city of Sifro. The *Rav* of the city and head of the *Beit Din*, **R' Avner Tzorfati ז"ל**, went out to see if all of the city's residents were showing the proper respect with their attendance or if some had left due to the long wait. There he was informed of how the man had spoken against the *tzaddik* and that he had left the area. The *Rav* could not believe his ears. He was incensed that someone who learns *Torah* had spoken such despicable words about the holy Rabbeinu Yaakov, noting that such things would not be tolerated. He decided to ask Rabbeinu Yaakov to curse the Jew and the non-Jew who had accompanied him.

After the city residents had given a grand welcome to their esteemed guest, R' Avner asked Rabbeinu Yaakov to curse the man who had spoken ill of the *tzaddik*, for this was typical of his behavior, giving the outward appearance of being a *Torah* scholar and yet denigrating that which is so dear and so holy. Rabbeinu Yaakov refused, claiming that it was not his manner to curse anyone and he did not wish any harm to befall another on his account. R' Avner responded by saying that it was not just disrespect to the *tzaddik*, but denigration of the *Torah* itself. After the *Rav* continued to pressure him and to speak to his heart, Rabbeinu Yaakov agreed to answer "Amen" to the *Rav's* words.

R' Avner nodded and said the following: "May it be the will of *Hashem* that just as he brazenly announced that the lion will come and devour everything, may a lion come and devour him." Rabbeinu Yaakov answered "Amen" and they continued on their way into the city. Only a few hours later word spread that a hungry lion had suddenly appeared at the gates of the city and devoured that Jew and the non-Jew who accompanied him and then immediately fled from the city.

לא תעבור בה תגל אדם והגל בהמה לא תעבור בה ולא תשוב ארבעים שנה ... (הקדולא כג-א)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Just as the Egyptians were humbled through the ten plagues, *Yechezkel HaNavi* prophesied the humbling of the mighty Egyptian empire and its ultimate downfall at the hands of the Babylonians. Interestingly, the *Navi* described what the land of Egypt will look like: "Neither man nor animal shall pass through the land for forty years."

What is the significance of the number forty?

R' Gamliel Rabinowitz shlit"a quotes the *Medrash (B"R 89:9)* that 42 years of famine were decreed in Pharaoh's dream but since *Yosef HaTzaddik* asked *Hashem* to scale back the famine during his lifetime, *Hashem* concurred and *Yosef* interpreted the dream to mean only seven years. In his dream, Pharaoh saw seven bad cows and seven bad ears of

grain, and the dream was told over three times. Thus, the number seven multiplied by the six times it was mentioned in the *Torah*, totals forty-two corresponding to the 42 years of famine. Interestingly, *Chazal* tell us that in actuality, the famine lasted only two years after *Yaakov Avinu* came down to Egypt and blessed Pharaoh with prosperity, and so the remaining forty years were "saved" for a later date.

Thus, the arrogant Egyptians' humbling was pre-decreed thousands of years before by *Hashem* and *Yechezkel's* prophecy of them suffering for 40 long years not only humbled them further, but it also taught *Klal Yisroel* a valuable lesson: *Hashem* never forgets anything and those who need to be punished will be – even the seemingly invincible Egyptians.

לא תאכפו לתת תבן לעם ללבן הלבנים כתמול שלשום הם ילכו וקששו להם תבן (ו-ה)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

The word "V'haivaisi" is also known as the fifth expression of *geula*, after "והצלת, והצלת, וגאלתי, ולקחתי". However, notes the **Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh**, the first four expressions of *geula* came to fruition for the *yotzei mitzrayim* themselves, while the 5th was only fulfilled for the next generation. How can the word of *Hashem* not be perfectly accurate? He posits that the last expression of *geula* was conditional on their accepting "וידעתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם". Because this precept was frequently challenged during their ordeal in the *midbar*, they were deemed unworthy of "v'haivaisi."

I would like to suggest a different approach. At times, we are promised things and eagerly await them. But sometimes, we wait endlessly with anticipation of this great prize, all to no avail. In the end, our children are the beneficiaries. Let us not think though that it is a *b'dieved*, that we did not get anything; rather, when our children follow in our ways, it is as if we ourselves received that promised item. Thus, the next generation after the *yotzei mitzrayim* was the fulfillment of *Hashem's* word. Yet, it is considered as if they were the recipients. Hence, "v'haivaisi" was actually a complete *emes*.

Rashi at the beginning of the *sedra* says, "חבל על דאבדון ולא משתחזין". Literally, woe to the lost ones who cannot be found. This sounds redundant. If they are lost, they're obviously not found. The *Seforim* say that if a deceased person's children follow in the correct path set for them by their parents, then although the parents are now 'avden' - deceased, they are not lost - as they could still be found "living" ... embodied by their children. Homeliterally, there are those who interpret the word "chaval" as "chevel" a rope - "chevel al d'avdin." If you hang onto their legacies, then "lo mishtatchin" - they are never forgotten, as their torch continues to burn brightly; proudly held aloft by their progeny until they are reunited, *bimheira!* אמר!

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויצא משה מעם פרעה ויעתר אל ה' ... (ה-ב)

משל: When a person realizes that his life is not in his control but in control of the Almighty, that is when he becomes truly liberated. Shlomo Dror, a professor of psychology told over the following story that he witnessed first-hand.

One morning, Shlomo was in a bakery in Jerusalem and as he stood on line, he realized that he was standing behind Natan Sharansky. He had heard the stories about Sharansky. In 1986, when Anatoly Sharansky, a human rights activist and survivor of nine years of harsh imprisonment in the Soviet Gulag, was released, he was told to walk straight across the bridge leading to his new life. A congenital rebel, possessing a courage that most of us cannot imagine, he instead walked in zigzags. That corkscrew walk, each twist representing another challenge surmounted, and of course another challenge to his temporarily disarmed antagonists, was heroism put to motion. And it had legs - it was broadcast

around the world, and many of its viewers never forgot it.

Shlomo summoned his courage and introduced himself to Sharansky. He told him that he had just cited Sharansky's book this week in a class on *Sefer Tehillim*. He told his students the inspiring story of how the one-time Russian dissident kept a tiny book of *Tehillim* with him at all times, even when he struggled with authorities to get it back.

Sharansky smiled, reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out that tiny (palm-sized) tattered book of *Tehillim*.

Shlomo asked him, "Do you carry it wherever you go?"

Without a pause, he replied, "Actually, it carries me!"

משל: **Rashi** tells us that "ויעתר" is an expression of *Tefillah*. Moshe entreated the Almighty to remove plague after plague from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and *Hashem* listened to his pleas. *Hashem* tells Moshe time after time, "Take your stick" and go forth to Pharaoh. The *מטה* (staff) was the sign for Moshe to realize that *Hashem* is right there, carrying him and performing wonders, and Moshe was his trusted emissary.

הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר ה' להם הוציא את בני מצרים ... (ו-ב)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

The *Torah* points out: "He is the Aharon and he is the Moshe" that *Hashem* told to go to Pharaoh! Well, isn't this obvious? Do you know any other Aharon and Moshe that the *Torah* could be speaking about? **R' Simcha Sheps ז"ל** has a beautiful explanation. He says that the *Torah* writes, "ויעש כן אהרן" (במדבר ח-ג), and **Rashi** says that Aharon was appreciated for his enthusiasm! He lit the *menorah* the first time and the thousandth time with the same excitement and joy! He was praised for not changing (שלא שינה) and losing his passion and love for this *mitzvah*. So too with Aharon and Moshe here. Ten times they went to Pharaoh to carry out their sacred mission to free the Jews from Egypt. Each time Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let them go. Under normal circumstances, when you do something over and over and it doesn't work, you become disheartened. You lose your *cheshek* to keep trying. From here we see how one must view every *mitzvah* that he does. This is a *shlichus* from *Hashem*! This is MY mission! We should imagine *Hashem* Himself telling us to give *tzedaka* or keep *Shabbos* or eat kosher!

We must live our lives with a passion, because that is the only way to be a true servant of *Hashem*. **R' Avraham Chaim Feuer shlit"a** says that the numerical value of the word "שואל" is 541. The numerical value of "אש" which is fire is 301. If you take the fire out of a Jew, which means you deduct 301 from 541, you are left with 240. 240 is the *gematria* of "נמלק"! In fact, this was exactly what *Amalek* did to us - "אשר קרך בדרך" - means that he cooled us off! He made us cold! He took out the fire that was burning inside us after we experienced the extraordinary miracles of *Kriyas Yam Suf* and *Yetzias Mitzrayim*!

The root of "התלהבות" which means excitement is "לבר" - a flame! If the flame of *Torah* is not ignited within us then we can live as *frum* Jews, but totally miss the point! We must always be filled with a fire of excitement and passion to do the will of *Hashem*.