

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויאמר ה' אל משה וכו' לך אל פרעה בבקר הנה יצא המיטה ונצבת לקראתו על שפת הירד ... (1-17)

R' Meilech Biederman *shlita* shared an incredible message in this week's *parsha*. *Hashem* told Moshe to rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, because that is when he “*goes out to the water.*” **Rashi** provides a well-known explanation from the *Medrash*: Pharaoh wanted people to believe that he was a deity and didn't need to relieve himself. He would secretly go out to the Nile in the morning to address his needs and *Hashem* wanted Moshe to meet him there and show him that he knew he was no god. But there is another *Medrash*, says R' Meilich, that is less known. This *Medrash* details that Pharaoh wished to go out to *daven*, to pray. *Hashem* told Moshe to go out early, before Pharaoh had a chance to pray, because after Pharaoh prays it would be too late! This is said about the wicked Pharaoh, who enslaved and tortured 600,000 Jews! Imagine, Moshe had better get there before he has a chance to pray! This means that even Pharaoh's prayers had power! R' Meilich said, “If a little voice, the *Yetzer Hara*, comes to me and says, ‘Meilech, who do you think you are? You think you can *daven* to *Hashem*?’ I will reply, ‘I know who I am - but I'm definitely not Pharaoh!’” If Pharaoh's prayers could have stopped *Moshe Rabbeinu*, then our own prayers and good deeds have unimaginable power that we cannot truly appreciate.

In a remarkable story of *Tefillah* and compassion that emerged following Emily Damari's release from Hamas captivity this week, details have surfaced about a chance encounter with her mother on a London-bound flight. A well-known *Dayan*, a *Vizhnitzer Chasid* from the Stamford Hill section of London, recounted this story about his son who was in *Eretz Yisroel* and soon after *Sukkos*, was returning to London. The *bochur* boarded his flight from Ben Gurion to Heathrow and upon locating his assigned seat, he realized that it was beside the seat of an Israeli woman. Following his religious ideals but not wishing to create a scene, he gently asked if she might switch seats with another woman, allowing a man to sit next to him.

The woman in the assigned seat would have none of it. She was incensed whenever she witnessed a *Charedi* man “stirring the pot” and demanding to be moved to another seat where he can sit next to a man. All the women on the flight have to be inconvenienced so this man can have his way, she huffed, and absolutely refused to move, humiliating the young man deeply. To his credit, the *bochur* chose not to argue and accepted the situation with unnerving dignity.

A moment later, a non-religious woman approached his seat, touched by his earnestness. She offered to switch seats with him so he could sit beside a man. “His commitment to his religious principles moved me,” she reportedly told the young *bochur*, offering to help arrange the seating swap. But she had one request in return: “I have a daughter who is being held hostage in Gaza. Please pray for her every day until she comes home safe.” Her daughter, Emily Damari, was kidnapped in southern Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023 during its attack that killed 1,200 people, triggering the devastating conflict between Israel and Hamas, the terrorist organization that kidnapped 235 hostages. Emily Damari was at home in *Kfar Aza*, a *kibbutz* near Israel's southern border with Gaza, when Hamas gunmen entered her home, injuring her legs and shooting off two of her fingers during the attack. Her dog Choocha, in an effort to protect its master, was killed by a gunshot to the neck.

Mandy Damari relentlessly lobbied Israeli and UK leaders for her daughter's return. Now, with empathy and compassion to the young *Charedi* boy being harangued and embarrassed in public, she made a request to him to please pray for her daughter, Emily. The *bochur* was moved by her gesture and agreed to honor her request, adding Emily's Hebrew name - *Emily Tehila bas Amanda Francis* - to his daily *tefillos*, which he recited every day for all the hostages. He continued this practice throughout her captivity, until news broke this week of her release alongside fellow hostages Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher.

The story, which has been verified by the *Dayan* in London himself and Emily's family members, offers a glimpse into the countless ways the hostage crisis has united Jews across different religious and cultural backgrounds. It also illustrates the profound spiritual power attributed to those who endure humiliation without responding. It serves as a reminder to harness such moments to *daven* for personal and communal *Yeshuos*, including the safe return of all the hostages to their families.

תפושם בר כבף תרוין ובקעת דום כל בתנא ... (יחזקאל כז-1)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In this week's *Haftorah*, *Yechezkel HaNavi* describes the downfall of a later-day Pharaoh which was similar to the downfall of the biblical Pharaoh who met his defeat at the hands of the Almighty in *Mitzrayim*. While the storyline may seem identical, what is the deeper message that we are meant to understand by comparing the two stories?

R' Avraham HaKohen Pam *z"l* explains that throughout our history many Jewish kings sought military alliances with Egypt only to be disappointed at Egypt's double-crossing and failure to help them in their time of need. This was because the Jewish kings did not depend on *Hashem* and instead chose to turn to Egypt for help. Such a reliance on kingdoms of mere flesh and blood was their undoing and

always seemed to end in disaster, or worse, catastrophe. *Yechezkel* compares this to a support pillar for a home that was made from a reed which can easily break when grasped. As **Rashi** notes, the person grasping the reed not only fails to be helped by it but sustains injury from it as well.

Thus, *Chazal's* message here is that history often repeats itself and when one unfortunately does not learn from his mistakes of the past, he is bound to repeat them - as was the case in the times of *Yechezkel HaNavi*. The Jewish Nation must never depend on flimsy support systems - namely supposed friendly nations of the world - for our survival. For if we do, the foreign nation's support will invariably end, and we will be hurt tremendously in the process.

וידבר משה כן אל בני ישראל ולא שמעו אל משה מקצור רוח ומעבדה קשה ... (1-1)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPMAN ZT"l

מחשבת הלב

The *Aibishter* instructed *Moshe Rabbeinu* to inform His nation about their imminent mass departure from the control of the Egyptians. However, due to their current mental state and heavy workload, they didn't “believe” - wholeheartedly, that it would actually occur. The obvious question is, why then did *Hashem* even tell Moshe to talk to them? *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* knew and understood the level of belief the young fledgling Nation was at. If they were ready, why tell them at all?

Write the **Sefas Emes *זך"א***, that we can glean a significant message for life from this. Even though right now, at this moment in time, those words could not penetrate due to their *matzav*, nevertheless, they were still there, “resting on their hearts” - biding their time, waiting to break through, be accepted, and be appropriately acted upon.

Sometimes we try to impart a *chinuch* idea, a lesson, or some *divrei mussar* to our children or *talmidim*, and we feel that our well-intentioned words are falling on “deaf ears.” The people we are looking to are not ready to listen to us. We mustn't become discouraged because as *Chazal* teach us, it could take even up to 40 years to effect real change.

There's a famous *vort* from the **Kotzker *ז"l*** that complements this *machshava*. The *posuk* in *Krias Shema* tells us: **רחמי** “*רחמי*” (על לבבך) but they do not actually enter into our hearts, what is the point? The point is, he says, the mere fact that we place the words ON our hearts is inestimable, as we don't know the exact moment of their inevitable actual penetration.

In fact this could be the *pshat* in our daily *tefillah*: “אמת אשרי איש שישמע למצותך ותורתך דברך ישים על לבו”. Praiseworthy is the person who (though he may not yet be ready for that full inspiration still) will place the *dvar Hashem* על לבו. Once again, on his heart: Trusting and knowing that ultimately the words will find their mark and drive him to become a better all-around *Yid*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם ... (7-1) **משל**: The **Rebbe of Rizhin, R' Yisroel Friedman *z"l***, once told his *Chassidim* the following story: An ignorant villager traveled to a city for *Rosh Hashana*. Arriving in the *beis medrash*, the villager stood silently and watched everyone pray. During *Shemoneh Esrei*, he noticed many people began crying bitterly. “Why are they crying?” the villager wondered. “It must be because the prayers are taking so long, and they're hungry already.” He began to cry as well.

After *Shemoneh Esrei*, the people stopped crying and the villager wondered why. Then he thought he'd figured it out: Before he had left his accommodations that morning, he had seen that there was a tough piece of meat in the *tzimmes*. The longer the meat cooked, the tastier the *tzimmes* would be, so there was really no reason to be upset that *davening* was

taking so long. He, too, stopped crying.

During *tekias shofar*, the congregation began weeping again. The villager was confounded, until he thought of an explanation: It's true that the longer we wait, the tastier the food will be - but we don't have the strength to wait that long! And now he burst into tears. The *Rizhiner* finished speaking and the *Chassidim* realized that the *Rebbe's* parable alluded to our lengthy, unbearable *galus*.

נמשל: After enduring 210 years of backbreaking labor and endless atrocities, *Bnei Yisroel* could not wait any longer. They finally cried out to *Hashem* desperately, beseeching the almighty to put an end to their seemingly endless predicament. We, too, await *Moshiach* and the final redemption. We know there is a purpose for this all; our sins are being forgiven, but we need to cry out to *Hashem* - we simply don't have strength to wait much longer. Please bring the *geulah* soon!

וידבר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן ויצוהו בני ישראל ואל פרעה מלך מצרים ... (1-1)

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

דרגה יתירה

It is interesting that the *posuk* in this *parsha* that talks about Moshe and Aharon's leadership is *perek 6 posuk 13*, which together is 613! This is what *Torah* is all about! Every one of us is a leader. If you are a husband or a wife, a parent or a teacher, a member of your *shul* or community *askan*, in some way you are a *manhig*, a leader, and you must set an example for others. The **Shlah HaKadosh** sees from this *posuk* a crucial message to everyone in leadership positions. An authority figure must be careful not to scream or get angry at his constituents. There is great reward for a leader who shepherds his flock with patience and love. Moshe learned this in last week's *parsha*, when he was being initiated into his future role as *Manhig Yisroel*.

My son, **R' Yitzchok Guttman *shlita*** pointed out the following: *Hashem* said to Moshe, “What is that in your hand?” Moshe answered, “A stick,” as if to say, “I plan to rule with force, to run a tight ship! This stick will keep the people in line and they will be forced to follow my orders.” To this, *Hashem* responded and said, “Throw down the stick” - throw away this mentality for this is not the way to teach a nation! You must guide My people with patience, love and kindness - not force and strength. This lesson applies to every person, for we are all leaders in one way or another. Some have influence over multitudes, while others have over their friends, neighbors or their own kids.

And yet, the message that *Hashem* gave to the very first leaders of the Jewish people applies to each and every one of us. A leader must be there for the good of his people and not for his own personal power or pleasure. Even if the nation complains, a leader knows that his people need extra amounts of tolerance and love.

A person once came to the **Chazon Ish *z"l*** with an unreasonable request and prefaced his words with, “*Rebbi*, please, don't be angry with me!” The *Chazon Ish*, a true leader and teacher of *Klal Yisroel* replied, “In my store, this product does not exist!”