



# מִשְׁבַּת הַלְּבָן

ונם אני שמעתי את נאקה בני ישראל אשר מארים מעדים אתם ואוכר את בריתך ... (ה-ה)

Chazal tell us that the first stage of *Geulah* is not the fall of Egypt. It's the moment when Hashem turns to His people and says: "I hear you." Before any redemption, there is connection. Hashem doesn't erase *Bnei Yisroel*'s suffering instantly. Instead, He acknowledges it, and begins the slow, compassionate process of lifting them out. Redemption begins with empathy.

There was once a Jewish widower, a quiet and sincere man who lost his beloved wife a few years earlier to the horrid disease. He did his best to move on in life and carried the weight of life's challenges with dignity. After years of raising his only son alone, the day finally arrived when that son was to be married. In keeping with tradition, the father traveled to receive a blessing from the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe shlita* before the wedding. The Rebbe greeted him warmly, offered heartfelt blessings for the young couple, and spoke with him for several minutes. As the man prepared to leave, the Rebbe suddenly paused and said gently, "I would like to ask you for a favor. After the wedding tonight, no matter how late it is, please come back to see me."

The man hesitated. "Rebbe ... the wedding will end very late. Perhaps it would be better if I came tomorrow?"

"No, not tomorrow," said the Rebbe. "Tonight. I will be waiting for you, at any hour." The widower promised to return.

That night, the wedding was beautiful. The hall was filled with music, dancing, and the joyful energy that surrounds a young couple beginning their life together. The father stood proudly, watching his son under the *chuppah*, feeling both the sweetness of the moment and the quiet ache of the one person who was missing - his late wife, who had not lived to see this day.

By the time the last guests departed and the final chairs were stacked, it was well past midnight. Exhausted but faithful to his word, the widower made his way back to home of the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*. He knocked softly, expecting to be told that the Rebbe had gone to sleep. Instead, the door opened immediately, as though someone had been listening for his arrival.

He was ushered in. The Rebbe, still fully awake, motioned for him to sit. "So," the Rebbe began with genuine interest, "tell me - how was the wedding?" The widower blinked in surprise. "The wedding? Rebbe ... it was very nice."

But the Rebbe didn't stop there. He leaned forward, asking question after question: "What time did you leave the house? Who was *mesader kiddushin*? Who came from out of town? How was the food? Who was honored with *bentching*? What songs did the musicians play? Who danced the *mitzvah tantz*? Was there a *badchan*? What did he say? Tell me everything."

The man sat there, astonished. He had expected perhaps a post-*simcha beracha*, or some profound guidance. Instead, the Rebbe wanted to know every minute detail of the wedding, details that seemed trivial, almost mundane. But of course he answered every question, describing the evening from beginning to end. As he spoke, something unexpected happened: the tension in his shoulders eased, his voice grew lighter, and the joy of the wedding began to settle into his heart. He found himself smiling as he recounted the small moments, the laughter, the music, the pride he felt watching his son.

When he finished, the Rebbe clasped his hand warmly, offered a final *beracha*, and wished him a good night.

After the *alman* left, the *gabbaim* of the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*, who had witnessed the entire exchange, could not contain their curiosity. Even at that very late hour, they approached him and asked, "Forgive us, but why did the Rebbe ask him all those questions? Since when is the *heilige Rebbe* concerned with the menu or the musicians at a wedding?"

The Rebbe looked at them with gentle eyes and explained. "When a husband and wife return home after marrying off a child, they sit together and relive the entire wedding. They share every detail, who came, what happened, how the music sounded, how the food tasted. It is part of their joy. But this man - he has no wife waiting for him at home. He has no one to share his *nachas* with. I wanted him to have someone to talk to, someone who would listen with interest, so that he would not walk home alone with his happiness locked inside." The *gabbaim* fell silent, moved by the Rebbe's sensitivity.

For the Rebbe, holiness was not only in grand lessons or miracles. Sometimes it was in noticing the quiet loneliness of a good man on the happiest night of his life - and choosing to sit with him, simply so he would not rejoice alone. (Noam Siach - Shemos)

וַיַּשְׁבוּ עַלְיהָ לְבָטֵחַ וְבָנוּ בָתִים וְגַם  
כְּרָמִים וַיַּשְׁבוּ לְבָטָחָה ... (ז' קואל כה-ה-ה)

**A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN**  
**תורת הツבי על הפטורות**  
Yechezkel HaNavi claims that when Moshiach arrives and Hashem gathers all of *Klal Yisroel* to dwell in *Eretz Yisroel*, "They shall dwell on it in security. They shall build houses and plant vineyards, and dwell on it in security." Why does the Navi say the same thing twice?

**R' Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk zt"l (Meshech Chochma)** explains that hatred between nations comes about because of two things. The first is that one nation may have smarter and more capable citizens. The second is that one nation may be wealthier and have more prestige in the world.

*Klal Yisroel* is a nation of superior knowledge and usually wealthy individuals. As such, the nations of the world tend to hate us more than others. When Moshiach comes, these two

וזכרת את צבאותך את עמי בני ישראל  
שאין מקרים בשפטים נדלים ... (ה-ה)

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

The question is asked: Grammatically speaking, the *posuk* should have said "את צבאות עמי בני ישראל". Why, though, is it broken up, forming two distinct items - "צבא" and also "עמי בני ישראל"?

Before we get to the known *pshat*, let us offer another explanation. There is a **Medrash Seichel Tov** on this *posuk* that says that the word "צבא" in this context refers not to *Klal Yisroel* but rather to *malachim*. These angels descended to Egypt when Hashem went down there to be with His Nation. Thus, the *posuk* here is actually referring to two different things. Hashem will extricate both the *malachim* and the *Yidden* from *Mitzrayim*.

This *Medrash* is truly mind-blowing. *Bishlayma*, the *Yidden* needed a *yeshuah* to be saved from Egypt. But once we were out, wouldn't the *malachim* follow suit? Why would the angels remain there? Perhaps since the impurities of *Mitzrayim* were so powerful, even the angels were affected and needed help from Above to get out.

However, the **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh zt"l** answers as follows: Had the *posuk* said "את צבאות עמי בני ישראל", that would have implied that Hashem has multitudes of armies and battalions, and us *Yidden* are one of the many. Maybe even the elite. But that is not the case. We are the only army and representatives of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. Therefore, the *posuk* clearly says "עמי בני ישראל" - I will take out my army, period. Who is that one and only army? "את עמי בני ישראל".

While this is obviously a compliment, it is also, at the same time, a *moiradik* obligation to live up to. The concept of army connotes war. During wartime, even the infirm and second tier soldiers are conscripted. Thus, even if we feel inferior to the previous generations, we should feel exalted that even little soldiers like us can be a part of the King's army!

closed his eyes and recited the blessing by heart, his voice trembling with awe for the earthly ruler standing before him.

That evening, during *Maariv*, the congregation noticed something startling. R' Shimon was weeping uncontrollably.

His students approached him after *davening*, concerned. R' Shimon looked at them with eyes full of pain. "I am crying because of that paper," he said admittedly. "Today, when I stood before a human king, I was so overcome with fear and awe that my hands failed me. But every day, when I stand before the King of Kings, I hold my *Siddur* with perfect composure. How come I've never been so moved by the presence of Hashem that I dropped my *Siddur*?"

**נמלט**: Pharaoh said, "Who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice?" A person like Pharaoh could not recognize the Almighty G-d. He apparently, only understood power that he could see, touch, and fear physically

## مثال למה הדבר דרבנן

ויאמר פרעה מ' ה' אשר אשמע בקהל לשלוח את ישראל ... (ה-ה)  
**מלך**: In the city of Krakow, word arrived that Franz Joseph I, the Emperor of Austro-Hungary, was visiting. The *Rov* of Krakow, R' Shimon Sofer zt"l (grandson of the *Chasam Sofer*) felt a tremor of trepidation and anticipated the day. According to *halacha*, witnessing a reigning monarch is a rare opportunity to recite a specific blessing.

Because this blessing is said so infrequently, R' Shimon felt compelled to read it from a written text to ensure he said it correctly. He carefully transcribed the words onto a slip of paper and clutched it tightly. But as the royal procession approached, a wave of intense nerves washed over him. The air thick with pomp and the glint of golden medals, R' Shimon's hands shook violently. Suddenly, the slip of paper fluttered from his fingers! Forced to rely on his memory, he

הצטערו אחכם מותחת סבלת  
מצרים הצלת אחכם מעתדים ... (ה-ה)

*Chazal* say that the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt in the merit that they did not change their attire, language and names throughout their sojourn there. Yet we find in *Rashi* (*Shemos* 3:13) that they merited to be redeemed because of their future acceptance of the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*. Which one was it?

The truth is that both these things are one and the same. **R' Shimshon Pincus zt"l** points out that one will not find it written anywhere in *Shulchan Aruch* that it's forbidden to use a non-Jewish name or speak in a gentile tongue, nor will he find it spelled out that it is forbidden to dress in the latest styles. Nevertheless, a *yid* must know that it is not enough for one to keep just the dry letter of the law; rather, one must also be "Jewish" - to speak Jewish, to dress Jewish, and to be called a Jewish name, as only then does he show how his performance of the *mitzvos* is done out of love for Hashem and His people. And it is this *mesiras nefesh* to retain their Jewishness that gave the Jewish people the merit to leave *Mitzrayim*. Indeed, the Rebbe, **R' Henoch of Aleksander zt"l** would explain the *posuk* (*Shemos* 6:6): "הצטערו אחכם מותחת סבלת מעתדים" to mean that Hashem took the Jewish people out from getting used to and being able to tolerate (סובל) all the *tumah* and *shnuta* they found themselves in while in *Mitzrayim*. According to the above, this was measure for measure, a reward for their tenacity in retaining their Jewishness.

Thus, when it says in *Shemos* (3:13) that *Bnei Yisroel* were redeemed in the merit of "תעבדו את האלקים על ההר הזה", it doesn't say outright that they merited redemption because of their accepting the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*, but rather that it will be in the merit of "serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu" on *Har Sinai*. In other words, it is not the *Torah* and *mitzvos* in and of themselves that took them out, but the fact that through them we serve Hashem as His Nation - that was the merit that allowed for *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. And it is our separation from the gentiles and their ways and our identification with the Jewish people that will bring us the final *geulah* as well, א"ב ב"ב!

ריבנשטיין

INSIGHTFUL TORAH THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRA TO LEARN AND TO ENJOY BY R' MOSHE GELB