

A Wise Man would say: “A word to the wise: whatever you do, don’t let your reality check bounce!” Printed By: Mailway Services, Serving Mosdos and Businesses Worldwide Since 1980 (1-888-Mailway)	נתנדב ונתקדש לעילוי נשמת ר' אברהם משה ב"ר אליעזר של אסער ו"ל * תנצב"ה	M Camp Merockdim 26 Parker Blvd. 845.362.0287	לעילוי נשמת זקני הגאון מו"ר הרב יצחק בן הרב פינחס הופמן זצ"ל, נפטר ב' שבט התשס"ט תוא נשמתו צדור בעדור החיים
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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

כה אמר ה' בזאת תדע כי אני ה' הנה אנכי מכה במטה אשר בידך על המים אשר ביאר ונהפכו לדם וגו' (י-יז)

A successful merchant came before the **Sanzer Rav, R' Chaim Halberstam ZT"l**, with a complaint. For years, his store had been bustling with customers and he did quite well in business. Now, however, another Jew came along and opened a competing business right near his. The competitor sold new, fashionable merchandise at lower prices, and literally took over the market. Now, his store is practically empty and his source of livelihood is shattered.

The *Sanzer Rav* blessed him warmly that his livelihood should once again blossom, even more than it had originally. The man, however, was not content. "I want the *Rebbe* to curse my competitor, to '*shmeis*' (smite) him with his mouth!"

"Heaven forbid!" shuddered R' Chaim. "I Should curse another *yid*? That is a strict prohibition, forbidden by the *Torah*!" But the angry businessman persisted: "*Rebbe*, please. At least curse his store, so that customers will avoid it and his merchandise will become undesirable." The *Sanzer Rav* was aghast and refused to do any such thing.

The room became silent. The *Sanzer Rav* sat deep in thought, before he began to speak once again. Now, smiling kindly, he said, "Look, you are a businessman. Tell me how you go about purchasing your merchandise."

The man was thrown off guard by the sudden divergence in the conversation, but he quickly recovered and regained his composure. He explained to the *Rebbe* how he acquired various items from many different vendors. Then, he had them all loaded onto his wagon which he would personally accompany back to his city. He explained that out of concern for theft, he must supervise all transports. The *Sanzer Rav* nodded compassionately as he took in this information.

"Now, tell me. What do you do when your horse gets thirsty?" R' Chaim continued with his questions. The merchant answered that when he would pass a brook, he allows his horse to drink to its heart's content. "And have you ever paid attention to a strange phenomenon?" the rabbi asked. The man shook his head in the negative. "Really? You never noticed that before the horse drinks, it kicks its leg in the water? Only after it kicks the water, will it begin to drink."

"Do you know why the horse does this?" asked the *Rebbe*. The man had no idea. "Allow me to explain," R' Chaim continued. "The horse lowers its head to drink and sees its reflection in the water. Seeing a horse before it, it thinks that there is a competitor who vies for the same water. Just as the horse drinks from this side, the horse underneath plots against it and approaches to drink its water. It therefore kicks hard with its leg and beholds an incredible thing - the horse disappears! In its mind, the 'enemy' has apparently retreated, and now it can enjoy all the water for itself."

The merchant smiled, and the *Rebbe* then concluded his observation. "Obviously, though, the horse is foolish. Even if there was a competitor, there is more than enough water in the stream for both of them. All the more so when we know that this is all just a vision. So what did the horse accomplish by kicking? It just makes the water dirty."

The businessman lowered his head as the reality of the Rebbe's words began to sink in. "You must understand," R' Chaim added, "that a person's resources are allocated at the beginning of each year. Nobody can intrude at all on that which is designated for someone else. We learn this message most powerfully from the plagues of Egypt. *Hashem* exhibited clear and overt supervision, such that each individual Egyptian received what he deserved. The Jew drew water and the Egyptian drew blood. If they placed two straws in the same cup, the Jew would drink water and the Egyptian sipped blood. If the cups were to change hands, the liquid inside of them instantly switched, as well. It has already been explained that the plagues of Egypt were '*signs and wonders to this very day*,' (ירמיהו לב:כ) as they convey an eternal message that is relevant for all times. Just as the frog knew where it must go and where it was forbidden to go - as was the case regarding the vermin, wild beasts, pestilence and boils - so does each individual person's livelihood know where it must go. If one wants to make it grow and prosper, the only way he can do it is to appeal to the Master of the World, Who feeds us and the entire world in His goodness, with grace, kindness and immense compassion!"

משל למא הדבר דומה

וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבירים אתם ואזכר את כריתי וגו' (ב-ב)

משל: R' Shimshon Sherer Shlit'a related that when he was yet a young boy, he longed to cross the big avenue next to his house all by himself. His parents adamantly refused, and lovingly, yet firmly, explained to him that until he reaches a certain age, it was out of the question. Until finally, the big day arrived, and nine-year-old Shimshi could now be trusted to cross the street alone. Proudly, head held high, the young boy crossed the street and truly felt like a "big boy."

Years later, **R' Moshe Sherer ZT"l** asked his son if he still recalled that "big day." Nodding, his son smiled from the

memory. "I want to tell you something," said R' Moshe, holding R' Shimshon's gaze in his. "On that day when you crossed the avenue, I was watching you even more than had I been holding your hand. Many times, when we walked home from *shul* hand in hand, my concentration was elsewhere. Either I was conversing with a colleague or a community activist - but the focus of my thoughts was not with you!

"But the day you crossed that street alone, I stood by the window and never took my gaze off of you! I held my breath until you safely reached the other side of the street. Only then,

ואלה שמות בני לוי לתולדתם ... (ו-יז)

The *Torah* mentions the "*Yichus*" of the first three *shevatim*, but by the first two, it lists them as "בני ראובן, בני שמעון" whereas by the third, it says, "ואלה שמות בני לוי". Additionally, with Levi, his son Kehas, and grandson Amram, the *posuk* states "ושני חיי" - mentioning the amount of years they lived, unlike by any of the other *shevatim*. Why is there a difference?

The **Seferno** writes that although the *shevatim* were great people individually, their grandchildren did not all leave this world with a great reputation. As I said last week, the word "שמות" does not only mean "NAMES" but also refers to "REPUTATION." Perhaps the reason Levi and his children remained holy and righteous until their deaths, is due to the longevity of their lives. **Targum Yonason** tells us that each of them lived over 130 years and was *zocheh* to see their grandchildren and great-grandchildren (such as *Moshe Rabbeinu, Aharon HaKohen, Pinchas ben Elazar*). Since *Shevet Levi* always remained great *Tzaddikim*, and Levi himself lived to see his great-grandchildren grow spiritually, therefore, the *Torah* writes "ואלה שמות" only by Levi and his children because they always maintained their stellar reputation.

The lesson to be learned is that when you have a *Zeida* and *elter Zeida* who are *zocheh* to see "בני בני בני" not only do the *Zeidas* have *nachas*, but even the children of future generations have the *zechus* of growing up with the life-lessons given over to them. On a personal note, this week I was *zocheh* to be *sandek* at the *bris* of an "*ihr einekel*" (great-grandchild) and it reminded me of seeing my own father as *sandek* at the *brissim* of his great-grandchildren. May we all be *zocheh* to such *nachas*, and to be able to dance at the weddings of our own great-grandchildren, *Amen*.

DRUSH V'CHIDDUSH

ויצא משה מעם פרעה את העיר ופרש כפיו אל ה' וכו' (ט-ל)

When Pharaoh demanded that *Moshe Rabbeinu* make the plague of hail stop, Moshe left the city in order to pray to *Hashem* to bring it to a halt. Rashi, quoting the *Medrash*, explains that he did not pray inside the city because it was full of idols. If so, why doesn't the *Torah* tell us that he went out of the city when he prayed for the other plagues - the frogs and the wild beasts - to stop? The **Netziv, R' Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin ZT"l**, answers that obviously, during the other plagues, Moshe prayed indoors, and the idols did not pose a problem. Only during the plague of hail did he pray outdoors, so that the miracle should be clear for all to see, and those hail stones that were still in the air when the plague came to a halt, did not fall to the ground.

A number of years ago, there was a *shul* that was situated next to a church, and members of both congregations were having difficulty finding ample parking. So they decided to

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF

רחמים

יתירה דרגה

The **Daas Sofer, R' Akiva Sofer ZT"l** makes a remarkable comment on the opening words of the *parsha*. *Moshe Rabbeinu* asks *Hashem* an interesting question: "למה הרעתה לעם הזה?" - "*Why are You causing hardship (bad things) to this nation?*" In response: "ידיבר אלקים אל משה ואמר אלו אני ה" - "*The Lord (G-d of strict justice) spoke to Moshe and said to him, I am Hashem (the G-d of MERCY.)*" In other words, *Hashem* is saying, "Even when it appears that I am acting with harsh exactness and strict punishment, it is ALL and ALWAYS mercy. Everything that I do is done out of love and compassion. Even DIN is RACHAMIM!" Moshe did not know that *Hashem* was intensifying the people's workload so that the redemption can come that much quicker! The amount of time that the Jews were destined to be slaves in Egypt was originally 400 years, as told to *Avraham Avinu*. *Hashem*, in His MERCY, practically cut that in half because He increased the workload. *Moshe Rabbeinu* did not recognize this and actually thought that *Hashem* was doing BAD to *Bnei Yisroel*.

How often in life do we perceive things backwards? How often do we think RACHAMIM is DIN, when in fact, it is the other way around? Why? Because all DIN is actually RACHAMIM! Perhaps we are not at the vantage point where we can see it - yet! Come on, we've all been there, where the thing that we thought was the WORST thing that could have happened to us, turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to us! We were just at the wrong vantage point.

Let us remember this all-too-important lesson when we find ourselves uttering the words, "למה הרעותה" - asking *Hashem* why He is causing this BAD thing to happen, and realize that instead, we should be declaring, "אתה הרעתה" from the *lashon* "רעות" - "*friendship*." *Hashem*, Thank You for being my BEST FRIEND and only doing what is truly GOOD for me!

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

מחשבת הלב

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