

Before beginning the next *parsha*, Pharaoh said ‘vay.’ This is וַיִּ. Pharaoh had given up hope of recapturing his slaves and giving up hope of recapturing his full-fledged Jew. Thus, since regarding *tefillin*.”

# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי וכו' (יג-ה)

It was a bright and clear Autumn morning and a young religious Jew was rushing to Boston's Logan International Airport to catch a flight to Los Angeles. This was not a flight he could miss; quite a bit depended on him getting to L.A. today and the business meeting he was scheduled to attend would not wait for him.

Thankfully, he reached the airport in time and was even able to settle down in the terminal for a few minutes while waiting for his final boarding call. Finally, he boarded the plane, watched the doors close, and sat down.

Herummaged around in his carry-on bag and then stopped. Frantic, he suddenly realized that he had left his *tefillin* on the seat next to him in the terminal boarding area. Immediately, he jumped out of his seat and approached a stewardess. He politely explained the situation to her and asked if it would be possible for him to go back and retrieve his *tefillin*. They were on a seat, just a few short feet from the gate. It was, he said, very valuable and very important.

The stewardess, though, did not seem to be impressed. Citing procedure, she told him that once the doors of the plane closed, no one was allowed off the plane. She could notify airport security and they could look for his items in the terminal but she was not in a position to allow anyone off the plane.

After a few moments of arguing, he realized that she was useless. Not about to take this sitting down, he asked if he could speak to the pilot to obtain special permission. Surely the pilot would understand. He caused enough of a ruckus until finally, the pilot was consulted. But he, too, cited procedural rules and refused to comply.

Now, he was at a loss. He knew that he could not trust an airport worker to find his *tefillin* and hold onto them until he got back. He was not about to lose this precious *mitzvah*, or let his holy *tefillin* get lost like that, so, not knowing what else to do, he started yelling at the top of his lungs, "I am going to lose my *tefillin*! They won't let me get my *tefillin*!"

Everyone turned to look at this young man gone crazy. The crew tried to hush him; at first they politely asked him to be quiet and sit down. Soon, their entreaties became more forceful. But he refused to stop making a fuss - a rather loud fuss. He carried on this way for a few more minutes, and even the other passengers began complaining. At that point, the flight crew capitulated and told him that they would let him off the plane, simply because he was a nuisance. He assumed that he could grab his *tefillin* from the terminal and run back onto the plane. The whole ordeal would take less than 90 seconds, but after letting him off the plane, they quickly closed and resealed the door once again and would not let him back on. It was clear that they were not going to wait for him. No matter. He was not about to lose his *tefillin*, even if it caused him great inconvenience or cost his business a loss. He left the plane, never to re-board.

That flight was United Airlines, # 175; the second plane to reach the World Trade Center on the awful morning of September 11, 2001. The plane, and everyone aboard, disintegrated in a fiery ball that killed thousands of people in the worst terrorist attack in history. But one Jew was spared. This young man's devotion to a *mitzvah* saved his life.

The consequence of his actions does not end there. Originally, the terrorists planned for both towers to be struck simultaneously to maximize the explosive carnage. Later it was learned that due to this whole tumult, the takeoff of flight 175 was delayed, causing a space of 18 minutes between the striking of the two towers. The fact of the matter is that this delay made it possible for thousands more people to escape alive from both buildings. Literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, of lives were spared during those 18 minutes because one Jew would not forsake his beloved *tefillin*.

(This true story is documented in the book, "Even in the Darkest Moments" by Zeev Breier.)

## משל' למה הדבר דומה

החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה וגו' (יב-ב)

**משל:** There was once a kind and benevolent king who was beloved by all his constituents. The people served him and paid homage to him each and every day.

But the king was still unsure of the nature of the people. Did they truly love him or was it all an act? He decided to test them and devised a scheme whereby he was able to convince himself of their total allegiance to him. The people passed the test with flying colors and the king was satisfied and happy.

A little while later, the king decided to test the people

once more. This time, though, it wasn't to convince himself of their loyalty to him; this time, he wanted to discern if the people felt the same way about his children as they did about him.

What he found out shocked him! The people hated his children! They spoke cruelly about them and even meant to do them harm. The king wouldn't have it and he punished the people severely until they changed their attitude!

**במשל:** The holy "Sandler", **R' Moshe Yaakov Rabikow ZT"L** explains that in the month of *Tishrei*, *Hashem* waits

ויהי בחצי הלילה וה' הכה כל בכור בכור בארץ מצרים מבכר פרעה הישב על כסאו וכו' (יב-כט)

The Chasam Sofer, R' Moshe Sofer ZT"L writes that as we know, *Hashem* does not allow His Name to be associated with evil or negative actions. By the tenth plague, the killing of the Egyptian firstborn sons, though, the Name of *Hashem* is specifically mentioned a number of times: "וה' הכה כל בכור" "ועבר ה' לנגף את מצרים" - to teach us that killing the wicked people in this world is not only good for the benefit of the world, it is good for the benefit of the wicked person himself! Through his death by the Hand of *Hashem*, the *rasha* is actually bringing about a *Kiddush Hashem*!

There is another reason why *Hashem* Himself killed the firstborn Egyptians and did not send the Angel of Death as He would normally do. The **Michtav Sofer, R' Shimon Sofer ZT"L** relates that the *gemara* (תגארה ד) recounts a fascinating story how one time, the Angel of Death was sent to kill a specific person, but by accident he took the soul of a different person who had the same name! Somehow, the angel made a mistake.

Now, we know that one of the three great merits through which *Bnei Yisroel* was redeemed from Egyptian bondage was because they did not alter their Jewish names (לא שינו את שמם). Had they changed their names and took on those of their Egyptian neighbors, then on the night of the tenth plague, it is conceivable that the Angel of Death could have mixed up the names and instead of killing Egyptians, he might have killed Jews instead. Thus, *Hashem* would have had to do the job Himself. But now that they did not change their names and the Angel of Death would not have made such a mistake, the very fact that *Hashem* did it Himself is a demonstration of His love for His chosen people!

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS  
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

תקון המדות

דרכה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF  
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה ולא אבה לשלחם וגו' (י-כו)

One of the greatest gifts that *Hashem* gave mankind is his conscience. When one acts improperly, the only way to change his ways is by tuning into that little voice inside that is talking to him and making him feel uncomfortable. A conscience is your "*Mashgiach Temidi on premises*"! When a *mashgiach* points out a fault in another person, the first thing that person does is to try to justify himself and his actions. It's just too painful to hear that one has actually made a mistake! That we are not ALWAYS right! If a person will constantly takes a defensive position when his conscience is trying to steer him right, he can destroy his best friend and turn it into his worst enemy!

This is precisely what happened to Pharaoh. He said "NO" to *Moshe Rabbeinu* one too many times that in the end he destroyed his own conscience and as a result, his heart became hardened. The **Ibn Ezra** explains that when the *posuk* states: "*And Hashem hardened his heart,*" - it is because *Hashem* was the One who put this defensive nature into a person and then the person continues to deaden his own conscience and harden his own heart.

**R' Dovid Orlovsky Shlit'a** is known to say: "If you don't know where you are going - any road will take you there!" A person's inner feelings, doubts, misgivings about his own actions - these are the road signs and traffic instructions on the proper paths we must take in our lives. Sometimes we must STOP, other times YIELD, but if we pay careful attention to our inner conscience, it will surely put us on a ONE-WAY route to spiritual success!

והיה לך לאות על ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך למען תהיה תורת ה' בפניך כי ביד חזקה הוציאך ה' (יג-ט)

*Chazal* derive from the words of the *posuk*: "*And it shall be a sign for you upon your hand,*" that the *Tefillin shel Yad* (worn on the hand) must be covered up to a certain extent, for the *Torah* states "לך לאות" - "*to you a sign.*" Consequently, it must be placed high up on the arm, on the part which is usually covered over with one's sleeve.

The second part of the *posuk* - "*And for a memorial between your eyes*" - is coming to teach us that one who sees the *Tefillin shel Rosh* (worn on the head) bound between the eyes, will recall the miracle of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and speak of it. (Rashi).

The question is, why is this differentiation necessary? Why are the *Tefillin* of the hand designated as an "אות" - "*Sign*" solely for the individual wearing it to learn a lesson, whereas the *Tefillin* of the head must serve as a "זכרון" - "*Memorial,*" to all who see it?

**R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L** makes the following observation: It would appear that both the sign for the individual and the memorial for the public is indeed necessary and, in fact, complementing each other. In order to inspire others to remember the miracle of the exodus from Egypt, the person himself must remember this incident and be cognizant of its everlasting significance. One cannot "preach" to others what he does not "practice" himself and hope to be successful. After the person will himself see the "*sign*" of the *tefillin* of the hand and act accordingly, he will then influence others to follow his lead, without having to utter any speeches but rather only by letting other people see his *tefillin* on the head. Every Jew has a responsibility not only to himself but also to others. Of course, he must elevate his own spiritual nature but at the same time he must try to inspire his fellow Jews.