



פרשת וארא

As we learn in the parsha of the first seven Makkos, we are drawn again to our childhood memories of the first time we heard, breathless and in absolute fascination, from our teachers. That was great then, but we all need to learn, to ponder, and try mightily to really understand it as adults. I promise you, dear readers, that EVEN reading through this article will leave us short of the ultimate goal, but hopefully it will be a start.

Many Mefarshim create an equation that, at least for me, opens up a door to allow a mere glimpse into areas that we can only hope one day to be allowed to view the treasures inside. The equation is that the 10 makkos correspond to the 10 Maamaros of בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, the words that Hashem used to create the world, and the Makkos led to the עשרת הדברות, which was the purpose of the entire יציאת מצרים as foretold to משה at the סנה. We imagine this to mean that the world was created to be the platform where there would be גילוי שכינה, a revelation of G-dliness, where וידע known to EVERYONE. The ten Makkos were sent to refresh that אמונה in the world, and we are therefore charged to tell our descendants - בנגך ובן בנגך - every year to accomplish the end goal of ה' to know (שמות י"א) וידעתם כי אני ה' and follow in his דברות - which means directing behavior, being led to serve ה'. These are all lessons in comprehending the שכינה to the best of our abilities. (See Maran Harav Moshe Shapiro

in pg. 159 based on the Maharal in (גבורות ה' פ' נז')

There are also lessons in the כוחות הנפש of man - his weaknesses, his ego, his insolence and his arrogance, amongst others. We, sadly, know them all too well.

Let me share with you something that I never knew until this year. This reminds me that I should also listen to all of the advice that I offer. The Makkah of דם should have been enough to convince Pharaoh to send Klal Yisroel out of מצרים. Every drop of water, even dew, turned to blood and ONLY buying water from a Jew would allow them a drink. Jews made money ממכת דם העשירו - (Shmos Rabbah 9:10) a business taken over by Poland Springs - does anyone remember when we all drank water from the sink? Let's examine the Pesukim; in 7:22 it says ויחזק לב פרעה and then it says (7:23) ויפן פרעה ויבא אל ביתו ולא שת לכו גם לזאת (7:23), Pharaoh turned and came home and he also ignored (or failed to take to heart) this Makka. What happened when he came home? Rav Meir Simcha, (See Darash Mordechai pg. 73 who later found this novel idea in the Medrash Hagadol - 29) says a חידוש: The Makkah of דם did not affect Pharaoh's house - his water remained water - because every Mitzri had to pay for his water, but Pharaoh already paid "his dues" by raising משה in his palace. He had his own anti-bodies to the דם. What a חידוש in the facts, and what an insight into Pharaoh's and man's character. His whole country





is suffering, parched and broke but being that everything is perfect in his own home, he therefore takes nothing to heart. There is a Vort attributed to Rav Mottel Katz, Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, that what impressed Pharaoh about Yosef's interpretation of his dreams, in contrast to the others (seven daughters etc.), was that Yosef understood that a Melech dreams about the welfare of his constituents, the people that rely on him, and not about his own personal well-being. That is the mark of greatness by any leader, any מנהיג; who are your dreams about, as Chazal explain that certain dreams are attributed to your daytime thoughts are. Pharaoh realized that in Yosef, and therefore gave him the position of authority to care for others.

There is another lesson into the essence of man. Pharaoh has the sensitivity to understand the quality of a Melech, to be constantly aware of his dependents' needs. This disappears when his kingdom is threatened by the exodus of millions from his work force, and then, his care becomes self-centered, only directed inwards. I told this Vort to a Chashuveh Yid from Eretz Yisroel, and he wisely added that a part of the ויקם מלך חדש על מצרים who did not know Yosef – was that he did not just to forget the MAN YOSEF but also the lesson and the expertise that YOSEF displayed in his awareness of royalty.

We have another example of this closer to home. The Gemara in Moed Katan (26A) relates that King Yehoyakum had them read the first

draft of איכה מגילת that Yirmiyahu wrote. When they read בודד איכה ישבה בודד, alas, she sits in solitude, Yehoyakums response was אגא מלכא, but I'm still king. When they read "She weeps bitterly in the night", he said but I am still king. He had the same response to גלתה יהודה מעני and "The roads of Zion of mourning" - אגא מלכא. But when they read היו צריה לראש, her adversaries have become her master's - meaning he would lose his throne - that is when he cut out all the names of Hashem and burned them in the fire (See Tosfos סקצר). Certainly not the approach for a Melech of Yisroel.

That level of caring and concern is a responsibility to everyone that is given this task - NOT JUST a מלך, but a father, a mother, a Rebbe, a Menahel, a boss. Really great people have it. They know when to allow their ego to govern and when to shut it down and focus on others. It is a quality we all need to admire and strive for.

May we all be Zoche.

Among those that are מצפה לישועה.

אמני דאנקה
חיים טובים ושלום

