

## Parshas Vaera – Yehoshua Mordechai Cohn

כ"ח טבת תשע"ו – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – שבת פ' וארא

**"ויצעק משה אל ה' על דבר הצפרדעים" (ח', ח')**  
**"And Moshe cried out to Hashem about the frogs"**

The פסוק says that when the פסוק writes regarding the מכה of ערוב it uses the unusual לשון of ויעתר as the פסוק says (ו'ח', ח') ויצא משה מעם פרעה ויעתר אל ה' (ח', ח'). Translation-And Moshe went out from seeing Pharaoh and he **entreated** Hashem.

Why indeed does the פסוק use the word ויעתר to describe תפלה of משה at the time of the plague of ערוב whereas the more common word "ויצעק" is used regarding his תפלה during the course of צפרדע?

The Chassam Sofer answers that the root of ויעתר is עתר, which means a 'pitch fork' that is used to turn over the ground. A צדיק has the power through תפילה to change Hashem's attribute of דין-judgment, to one of רחמים. This was indeed the case during the plague of ערוב. Moshe's prayer resulted in the conclusion of the plague. However with the plague of צפרדע, Moshe's prayer did not effect the same dramatic turnaround. Although the prayer did in fact result in the plague's conclusion, there was not a complete reversal of the situation, as the frogs remained piled up in the streets causing further distress to the Egyptians.

The זוהר relates the following story:

As Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and Rabbi Elazar, his son, walked along the road they suddenly heard the persistent sound of a raven's croaking. As only great Tannaim can, they perceived that something terrible had happened. Rabbi Yossi, the Tannah, had died and there was no one to take care of his burial. Immediately they turned their attention to the burial of the great Rabbi Yossi.

They travelled to his home. As they entered they were stopped by a young boy who was Rabbi Yossi's son. He and his sister stood in front of their father's bed and didn't allow anyone approach his lifeless body. Instead the boy drew close to his lifeless father and began to sob directly above his father's face. His words will go down as one of the most powerful prayers ever uttered saying, "Ribbono shel Olam it says in Your holy Torah - " Shale'ach teshalach es ha'eim vehabanim tikach lach" - send away the mother and the children take for yourself. You have fulfilled the first part of the pasuk as you have taken away our father. So now You must fulfil the second half and take us as well!" And if You say that the pasuk is referring to the mother, and it is my father who has died, then I will respond that You have taken both of them. It was not long ago that You took our mother away from us!"

The holy Tannaim watched in wonder and awe as the young child poured out his heart in tefilla to Hashem. Suddenly a fiery blaze appeared and separated Rabbi Yossi and his children from the others in the room. A few moments passed and a bas kol proclaimed, "Rabbi Yossi will live!"

As the fire continued to blaze a miracle occurred and techiyas hameisim took place. Rabbi Yossi began to breathe. He then said, "Although I am unable to reveal that which I saw in the Olam Haemes, there is one thing that I am permitted to disclose. After I passed away and my son began to pray tearfully to his Father in heaven, such turbulence was caused on High that they were no longer able to resist the power of the heartfelt tefilla that he uttered. It is due to my son's prayer that I am alive now."

Rabbi Yossi merited to live twenty two more years after this incident.

Shemos Raboh explains that while the B'nei Yisroel were suffering under Egyptian rule, they constantly davened to Hashem. However once they left Egypt, they no longer davened as much. Hashem then sent Pharaoh to pursue them. This imminent new danger caused the people to repent and to cry out to Hashem once again.

Reb Yeruchem Levovitz ZT'L (the Mashgiach of Mir) explains that Hashem often sends difficulties to people because He desires them to come close to Him through prayer. The ultimate purpose of the suffering is to benefit us by providing us with the sublime gift of tefilla, an experience which surpasses any physical pleasure, and is an opportunity for direct and meaningful communication with our Maker. The difficulties are no longer necessary when the connection between Hashem and His people has been restored.

May we merit to daven wholeheartedly and with sincerity, thus attaining the close connection to Hashem which enriches our lives so immeasurably.

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