

פרשת נח

" וישלח את-הערב ויצא ושוב עד-יבשת המים מעל הארץ "

"And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth"

" וישלח את היונה מאתו לראות הקלו המים מעל פני האדמה "

"Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;"

Noah had sent the raven out of the ark in order to ascertain whether the ground had dried or not. The raven did not do as he was instructed and instead circled around the ark. Afterwards Noah sent out the dove. The dove did as it was instructed and on its second attempt it brought back an olive leaf in its mouth. This was Noah's sign that the world was dry and the time had come for him to leave the ark.

This episode contains a great lesson for all generations. The Midrash Tanhuma in Parashat Tesaveh says that just as the dove brought light to the world (the good news it gave to Noah that the world was dry brought "light" and happiness to Noah) the Jewish people will also bring light to the world by lighting the Menorah. The Jewish people are compared to the dove as the Pasuk says in Shir Hashirim: "יֹונָתִי בַחֲגוּי הַסֵּלַע" - "my dove in the clefts of the rock". Just as the dove brought light, so do the Jewish people, and just like the dove brought back an olive branch, so too the Jewish people will light the Menorah specifically with olive oil. We see from this Midrash the great ramifications that came about from the dove loyally following Noah's instructions and its returning with the olive branch!

We also see mention of the dove in a Gemarah (Shabbat 49A). The Gemarah writes the story of "אלישע בעל כנפים" - "Elisha who had wings". He was

called so on account of the following incident: the Roman government had issued a decree on the people that banned wearing Tefillin on their heads. Whoever was caught wearing Tefillin would be killed by having their head pierced! Elisha defiantly wore his Tefillin in public. A Roman official had spotted him and began to run after Elisha. When the official was near him, Elisha took off the Tefillin from his head and covered them in his hands. The official asked him "מה זה בידך" - "what is in your hands?" "The wings of a dove"; Elisha answered. Sure enough, when Elisha opened his hands there were wings of a dove inside of them!! This miraculous event is how Elisha earned his name "בעל כנפים". The Gemarah explains further why Elisha specifically had chosen a dove. Why not any other bird? The Gemarah explains that the Jewish people are compared to a dove, since just like a dove has wings to protect it (and Rashi explains that the wings protect it from the cold) so too the Jewish people have the Misvot that protect them.

When we analyze this story there are several points that need clarity. Why did the Romans target specifically the Misvah of Tefillin? There are many other Misvot that they could have chosen? Why did they specifically ban the Tefillin of *the head*? (As it says in the Gemarah Shabbat Daf 130) when it repeats the story: (תפילין על ראשו) What about the Tefillin of the arm? What is the deeper connection between the Misvah of Tefillin and the dove that prompted Elisha to tell the officer he was holding dove's wings??

To answer these questions we need to analyze the deeper message of which the Misvah of Tefillin shel Rosh represents. It says in the Pasuk "והיה לך לאות על ידיך" - "it shall be for you a sign and "totafot" *between your eyes*". The Pasuk in its literal sense is instructing us to put our Tefillin shel Rosh "*between our eyes*" yet as we all know, we wear them on our heads, **not** between our eyes! The reason for this is that the Rabbis explained that what the Torah means is for us to place the Tefillin on our heads, **even though the Torah seems to clearly state otherwise!** This concept is known as "יש כח ביד" "the rabbis have the ability to "uproot" something from the Torah".

The Tefillin shel Rosh is the primary example of the Rabbis ability to explain the Torah as they see fit - even when it seems to conflict with what the Torah

actually says!! The Torah was the blueprint of creation. The Rabbis “control” the Torah and they therefore control the creation and its “nature”.

[For example: the Halacha says that if the virginity of a girl under 3 years old is broken it will grow back. The question arises during a leap year in which there is an extra month added to the calendar and a girl is under 3 only because of the extra month added (for example if a girl's birthday is on the first of Nissan and the month prior to Nissan [Adar] is doubled that the girl is really 36 months old on Rosh Hodesh Adar 2, and when her birthday arrives on Rosh Hodesh Nissan she will be 37 months old). Does her virginity grow back if it is broken during the time just before her birthday? After all, she is already 36 months old and physically the same as a girl in a normal situation in which there is no leap year! Still the Halacha is that if she did not yet have her third birthday her virginity *will* grow back - even though she is older than 36 months. How is this possible?? How could the physical make up of a girl's body change based on if it is a leap year or not?? It is from the Rabbis. When the Rabbis proclaim a leap year they actually change the physical functions of the body.

Another example is from a story of the Chazon Ish. There was once a man who approached the Chazon Ish to get advice on where he should receive a certain medical procedure. The Chazon Ish advised him to do the procedure in Israel and to be careful not to have it done outside of Israel. “Why specifically in Israel?” asked the man. The Chazon Ish explained that his symptom was similar to one that is discussed in Halacha regarding an animal. The Rama and Bet Yosef disagree in a case of an animal with the same disease that this man had. Maran's opinion was that the animal is kosher; since the animal will continue to live (an animal is kosher only if at the time it was slaughtered it was healthy enough to live). The Rama said the animal is not kosher since it has a דין נפל and is due to die. The Chazon Ish explained to the man that since Israel was the city of Bet Yosef (whose opinion was that the animal with a similar problem *would live*). The Rama however, was from outside of Israel and his opinion was that an animal with a similar problem will *not* live. Based on this Machloket, depending on where you are will determine the Halacha, and that will determine the way this man is judged in the heaven!! Therefore the Chazon Ish advised the man to stay in Israel where the Halacha was that he would live!!

We also find that when Moshe came to split the sea for the Jews, the sea refused, stating that since it was older than Moshe it did not have to listen to him, until finally Hashem demanded that it split. There is a story in the Gemarah of Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair who once was traveling and wanted to cross a river so he simply split it and crossed! He subsequently realized that he forgot something, so he split it again! Why is it that Moshe had such a “hard time” splitting the sea but R’ Pinhas did it seemingly with ease? The answer is that Moshe split the sea before Matan Torah, before the Rabbis were given control of the Torah and the nature of the world, but Rabbi Pinhas split the river *after* Matan Torah and by that time the Rabbis had the control over nature so it was “no big deal” to split it several times!

Another example is when Yehoshua was fighting a war and it was getting close to Shabbat he stopped the sun in its place! There are many other examples that illustrate this concept.]

This explains the Pasuk :

"והיה לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך"

“It will be for you a sign for your arm and a remembrance between your eyes so that Hashem’s torah should be in your mouth”.

The Tefillin shel Rosh is the symbol of the Rabbis power through the תורה שבעל פה - the oral Torah, to explain the written Torah as they see fit! This is why it says the Tefillin will cause Hashem’s Torah to be - בפיך “in your mouth”; it will give power to the “Torah of your mouth”- meaning, *the oral Torah!* It will be the primary example of the strength of the oral Torah שבעל פה תורה.

The Torah is comprised entirely of the names of Hashem. Before the world was created the Torah was straight names of Hashem, but when Hashem gave the Torah he rearranged his holy names to spell the words of the Torah as we know it. The Rabbis have “control” over the interpretation of the Torah and the holy names hinted in it. This is what the Pasuk means; "ויבטחו בך יודעי שמך"- “those that *know your name* trust you”. The rabbis “know your name” meaning they know the Torah which is full of Hashem’s names. It also says (in the Birkat Hatorah) "והיה אנחנו... כלנו יודעי שמך" “We should *know your name*”. We pray

that we should know Hashem's name, meaning we should know the Torah which is full Hashem's names.

With this we understand the Gemarah that explains the Pasuk:

"וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך"
ר' אליעזר הגדול אומר אלו תפילין שבראש.

"The nations will see that you are called by the name of Hashem and they will fear you". Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol says: this is referring to the Tefillin Shel Rosh.

They will fear you when they see you are wearing your Tefillin shel Rosh. It is this control of the Torah and the control over nature that the Goyim fear most! As the Pasuk says; they will see "שם ה'"-"the name of Hashem" on you and fear you. They will see the Tefillin shel Rosh that represent the example of the Rabbis control over the Torah (which is referred to as the "names of Hashem") and this therefore represents the rabbi's control over the nature of the entire world, and *that is why* they will be afraid of us!!

We now understand why the Romans targeted the Misvah of Tefillin Shel Rosh. (The Tefillin shel Yad was under the shirt and could not be seen as it says "והיה לך לאות"- "they shall be *for you* a sign") It was only the Tefillin Shel Rosh that represented the Rabbis control of the world. This frightened them and they therefore chose specifically to try and stop the people from fulfilling this Misvah.

Why the dove? What is the unique connection between the Misvah of Tefillin and the dove?

The answer lies in the story of the raven and the dove in our Parasha.

Noah instructed the raven to leave the ark and go check if the earth had dried. The Gemarah Sanhedrin 108b explains that the raven protested saying: "maybe I will get burnt or maybe I will freeze! The world will then be without my species!"

The real concern of the raven was that Hashem had not instructed Noah to send him out. Noah was acting on his own accord. The raven lacked faith in

Noah the Sadik. The raven represents the literalists that only do “what it says in the books”. They understand the Torah literally and they wear their Tefillin *between their eyes*. The raven was concerned because Hashem never instructed Noah to send him, meaning this was something that *Noah*, not Hashem is commanding! The raven therefore refused, it was afraid that since Hashem did not give this command, it would not be protected from the elements! It lacked faith in Noah and therefore represented a lack in אמונת חכמים – “belief in the rabbis”. The Raven did not believe in the concept of יש כח ביד חכמים לעקור – “The rabbis have the ability to “uproot” something from the Torah”.

The dove however, represents the exact opposite. The dove faithfully carried out its mission without questioning Noah. It represents אמונת חכמים, trust in the צדיק, and trust in the power over the Torah that the צדיקים have. This is why Rashi (mentioned above in the Gemarah of the story of Elisha) explains that the wings of the dove protect it “*from the cold*”. The dove represents the opposite of the raven who was afraid “of the cold”.

This explains the Pasuk in Mishlei: "צנים ופחים בדרך עקש שומר נפשו ירחק מהם" “Thorns and traps are in the way of the perverse; he who guards his soul shall be far from them”. צנים ופחים also mean “cold and heat”. The excuses of cold and heat are דרך עקש “way of the crooked”. They are the excuses of the raven that represents the crookedness of the literalists who do not believe in the rabbis and their power.

The Gemarah in Megillah (24b) categorizes anyone who wears Tefillin between their eyes as “Minim” (non believers). Rashi explains that this is because they belittle the words of the rabbis. We see from this Gemarah and Rashi how grave the sin is of straying from the laws of the rabbis represented in the Tefillin Shel Rosh.

The reform and conservative movements both began from the people deviating slightly from the words of the rabbis, and we see how unfortunate the results!

This is why Elisha chose the dove as the bird who he claimed to have in his hand. It was the dove that stood for the אמונת חכמים and that is the same thing that the Tefillin shel Rosh represents.

This also explains the deeper connection between the Jews and the dove. The Midrash said that "just like the dove brought light, so will the Jews light the Menorah". The Menorah stands for the light of the Torah, as it says; "אורה זו תורה". (This is why if someone wants wisdom he should turn slightly to the south when he prays the Amidah, because the Menorah was positioned in the south and the Menorah represents the wisdom of the Torah. If he wants wealth he should turn to the north, because the Shulhan that contained the bread was to the north and bread represents wealth. Hacham Baruch A'h advised to pray Shaharit to the south then Minhah to the north) The Menorah stands for the light and the wisdom of the Torah and the light of the Torah comes from the Rabbis who explain it. This is why the Menorah is connected to the loyal dove which represents the adherence to the Torah of the Rabbis.

The Gemarah says that you need a גוף נקי-"a clean body" when you wear the Tefillin just like Elisha. We now understand the message of the Gemarah. The written Torah is housed by its parchment. The oral Torah is "housed" by the mouth and body. The Gemarah in Eirubin 53b mentions a story about Beruria, the wife of R' Meir, who once witnessed a student studying silently. She berated him based on a Pasuk in שמואל from which we learn one has to learn Torah with his entire body. The Maharasha explains that the way a person learns with his entire body is by learning בקול-with a loud voice. When we learn with a loud voice our entire body gets involved. We see from here that the "home" of the תורה שבעל פה is our bodies! This is why the Gemarah said that for Tefillin one needs a "**clean body**". It is a clean body that is needed to house the oral Torah which the Tefillin and the story of Elisha represent!

This is the meaning of what the Roman officer asked Elisha "מה זה בידך" (literally; what is in your hand)? Meaning; how do you have the courage to don the Tefillin and connect to the תורה שבעל פה, even in the face of our decree?! Elisha responded; "the wings of a dove". It is through the lesson of the dove that we learn the belief in the צדיקים, and the ability to self sacrifice, to fulfill whatever it is that is commanded to us by the Rabbis! It is the implicit belief in the Sadikim and their connection to Hashem, and their ability to dictate the very nature of the world that is integral to our serving Hashem, and connecting to the light of the Torah and this will enable us to earn the title "the nation compared to the dove".

