

# AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*Whoever repeats a thing in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world, as it says, "Esther told the King in the name of Mordechai." (Book of Esther 2:22) (Chapters of the Fathers 6:6)*

Why is it that identifying the source of a statement brings redemption to the world? How does that work?

The student asked his guru, "On what does the world rest?" "On the back of an elephant!" was his reply. The student went to meditate on that thought for fifteen years and returned to ask his teacher the next obvious question. "Wise one, on what does that elephant rest?" "On the back of another elephant!" was the guru's response. Fifteen years elapse and the student returns to find his master ready to leave the world. "Tell me what I need to know before you go, please!" He pleads. With his last breath he reveals the long kept secret "O.K. O.K.... It's elephants all the way!" (As heard from a literature professor at Colgate U. my freshman year)

Normal people find this story humorous. Why?

The Whole community came to meet the holy Rebbe, Reb Zusha when he arrived in town. Immediately they unhitched the horses in order that they should have the privilege of pulling the Tzadik, Reb Zusha to his destination. After a short time it became apparent that nobody was in the carriage. They searched for the Rebbe and found him amongst the people who were pulling the wagon. "What are doing here, Rebbe? You belong inside the carriage!" Reb Zusha answered innocently, "I also want to pull the Tzadik!" (As heard from Rabbi Wein)

Two old sagely seeming men were seated in the back of the study hall contemplating aloud on the smallness of their being in comparison The Almighty, all the while repeating the phrase, "I am nothing! I am absolutely nothing!" A younger black bearded fellow enters and picks up on their theme repeating along with them, "I am nothing!" At that moment one of the two elders says to his friend, "Look at this guy! His first day here and he already thinks he's nothing!" (Anonymous)

The Maharal from Prague explains that when a person presents an important idea that successfully shapes company policy or increases profits, there is a tendency to want to take as much credit as possible. Only if things go awry do we naturally look to share the burden or shift the blame. When we overcome that egoistic instinct and we feel secure enough to share our sources and reveal some of the secrets of our success we open the door for something magical to happen.

Everyone agree that the Megilla of Esther is an amazing story. Who wrote it? I know! Mordechai and Esther! No! They only wrote it down. Who engineered the events? Who designed the plot? Neither Mordechai, Esther, Haman, nor Achashveirosh could predict what tomorrow would bring. In retrospect it was a powerful and meaningful drama authored by Whom?

"The Redemption" can be characterized by a heightened awareness of something that cannot be grasped in an environment where people are competing to upstage one another to grab all the glory. The act and attitude of passing the honors allows room for the most real and profound of human all experiences.

At the end of the play when all is neatly and justly concluded, as we witness in the Purim Story, even while the handsome cast of characters is bowing and bathing in applause, there grows an overpowering need to give credit where ultimate credit is due. The intelligent and attentive audience, perceiving that genius has been invested spontaneously call out for that hidden ingredient, "Author! Author!"

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