

KNOW HASHEM!

by Rabbi Label Lam

(L'maan) In order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and [that you tell of] My signs that I placed in them, and you will know that I am HASHEM." (Shemos 10:2) The word "l'maan" as it is read "in order" helps explain the purpose of the entire exercise of landing blow after blow on Egypt. This is to be such a huge and overt display of might and kindness by HASHEM that we will be talking about it for the next many thousands of years and we have. The ultimate goodness of these dramatic and traumatic events are spelled out in this verse that "you will know that I am HASHEM!" It's all worth it!

However, the word "l'maan" can also be understood to mean "in proportion to" or "to the extent". Therefore the verse reads differently: "To the extent that you tell into the ears of your sons and your son's sons...and you will know that I am HASHEM!" This breathes new meaning into the same sentence and it may help explain the process described in the first explanation. How is it that we have been successful in telling over the Exodus from Egypt for 3325 years? What's the secret?

One great Rebbe once explained that there are four types of people who learn Torah. The first one is so infantile either chronologically or just logically that he cannot grasp easily what he is being told. Many times over the years I have had to deviate from the Haggadah on Pesach night to fulfill my holy obligation of "and you shall relate it to your child on that night". There has almost always been someone so young, that if the conversation is too high or subtle they just might miss the message. Therefore, the Rebbe explains, they must be taught with a Moshol- a parable.

I even made up a cute simple story describing what happened to our family. "We were all in a car driving together and a bad man started to chase us. We drove into quick sand and were about to drown. We cried out, "Police" which sounds also like "Please" and after a short while a helicopter came floating by and a nice Police-Please man came and pulled us out. He got rid of the bad man, and we haven't stopped thanking him and singing ever since, cause we owe that please man-police man everything. Now, who was that bad man? Right! Pharaoh! Who was the family in the car? Right! All Jewish People! Who was that police-please man? Right again! HASHEM! That's why we owe HASHEM everything! Egg salad, I mean excellent!"

The second level of learner is the person who learns but cannot quite repeat what he learned. Kids like this drive their parents crazy when they are asked, "What did you learn today?" and the answer is a flat, "Nothing!" It's not true. They just don't test well or they cannot yet articulate what it is they

gained from a given lesson.

The third level is the one who can repeat word for word what was said. This student does well on exams as long as the teacher does not ask any different style questions. They have succeeded in memorizing but not in actually mastering the concepts. It's an obviously deficient learning style but it may yield some good grades.

The fourth and highest level, the Rebbe said, is the one who can understand well enough to explain in a parable-Moshol for the first. That's perhaps why a Moshol is called a Moshol: A ruler and a parable! One who masters the subject and can rule over it can explain the concept in a new garment or setting. That's a Moshol! Therefore, the father, who by fulfilling his obligation to clarify in the ears of his children's children ultimately becomes the graduate. To that extent, he, the father in each generation who by being forced to articulate the events surrounding Israel's miraculous Exodus from Egypt will come to "**know HASHEM!**" DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.