

FAITH IN MOTION

by Rabbi Naftali Reich

The sages tell us that Torah is compared to honey. As King David writes in Psalms, Torah is sweeter than honey and the dripping of sweet juice. Besides being extremely sweet, honey has another interesting property. Halachically, when a non kosher or impure substance falls into a liquid or solid, it requires 60 measures of kosher material to nullify it. Yet honey is so overpoweringly sweet that any non kosher or impure substance automatically assumes the kosher properties of honey and is deemed kosher.

In a similar vein, says the great sage, the Chafetz Chaim, although we may approach Torah with impurities and character imperfections, the holy Torah purges the negative influences from our being and allows us to assume Heavenly and G-dly characteristics. But this is only true under one condition: that we are willing to submit ourselves to the Torah in order to be molded and shaped by it.

I recently visited with a group of Ohr Somayach boys a fascinating museum in Brooklyn; the Living Torah Museum. Many of the artifacts give us a fresh look and perspective at Biblical and Mishnaic passages. The curator of the museum, a lively and highly learned fellow by the name of Rabbi Deutsch, brings the exhibit to life with fascinating narrative and commentary.

During our visit, Rabbi Deutsch told us that he recently returned from a trip to the Middle East where, together with a group of intrepid explorers from the history channel, they plumbed the depths of the Red Sea to photograph some of the world's greatest treasures beneath the surface.

Even more fascinating than King Tut's rare golden jewelry beneath the Red Sea, archeologists have located the remains of King Paroh's chariots that were drowned, when the waters miraculously parted for the Jewish people but afterwards flooded back over the Egyptian hordes.

To date, they have positively identified 49 of the chariots remains encrusted in 'sekole'. They have even identified the metal rims of the chariots that are still intact. Experts are in the process of determining how to safely extract them from the seabed surface. Rabbi Deutch showed us some fascinating footage of the chariot remains and compared them to an actual Egyptian chariot from that time period, on display at the museum.

It was very inspiring and as we left, our heads were spinning with the dramatic scenes that we had just envisioned. I realized nonetheless that as dazzling as all this corroboration of the Torah is, it cannot serve as absolute proof of the Biblical account of the Exodus. This evidence alone cannot

validate the Torah's narrative, though it can certainly aid in the visualization and realization of the scene. Once we elevate archeological or scientific findings to the level of absolute proof of the Torah's authenticity, we are limited by the parameters of that evidence. Our task, instead, is to surrender our finite mind to the Torah and only then allow archeological excavations and proofs to reinforce our faith.

May we fully absorb the message of Naaseh Venishma and surrender ourselves to His higher authority, thus meriting that the Torah's wisdom permeate every fiber of our being.

Wishing you a wonderful Shabbos

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