

It shall be when many evils and distresses come upon it, then this song shall speak up before it as a witness. (31:21)

The Torah states that when the terrible evils and afflictions, the curses, of which many have taken their toll on us, descend on us, we will (despite the many travails) ultimately be spared. The Torah, which is referred to here as the *shirah*, song (of Torah), will serve as a witness in our defense – a testimony that will help turn the tide in our behalf. Nothing will be held back. We will sin, and we will deserve whatever fate is decreed against us, but we will be spared. Interestingly, the prophecy concerning the evils and distresses that will fall on us begins with the word *v'hayah*, “it shall be.” *Chazal* teach that the word *v'hayah*, is a *lashon simcha*, vernacular which implies joy. What joy can there be in such a prophesy?

Horav Yitzchak Yedidiah Frankel, zl, *Rav* of Tel Aviv (as quoted in *U'masuk Ha'or*) offers an insightful explanation based upon a dialogue which is quoted in the *pesichah*, preface, to *Midrash Eichah*; “Avraham Avinu came before Hashem and asked, ‘Master of the World, why did You exile my children, handing them over into the hands of gentile nations who persecute and kill them in the most heinous manner? You destroyed Your Temple and drove my children from the Land – Why?’ Hashem replied, ‘Your children sinned, transgressing the entire Torah, including the twenty-two Hebrew letters that are included therein.’ Avraham immediately countered, ‘Hashem, who is testifying against them?’ Hashem said, ‘Let the Torah testify against the Jewish People.’ When the Torah came forward, Avraham asked, ‘My daughter, you come to testify against the Jewish People! Are you not ashamed? Do you not remember that Hashem took you from nation to nation, and no one was willing to accept you?’ Only when Hashem brought you to *Har Sinai* and offered you to the Jewish People, did you find a home. They accepted you, when no one else would. Yet, you are willing to testify against them!’ As soon as the Torah heard this admonishment from the Patriarch, it moved to the side and refused to incriminate the Jewish People.

“Hashem then said to Avraham, ‘Let the twenty-two letters of the alphabet come and testify against the Jewish People. Immediately, the letters assembled before the Heavenly Tribunal and were each prepared to take its turn to testify that the Jewish People had transgressed the Torah which is comprised of Hebrew letters. As soon as the *aleph* rose and was about to speak, the Patriarch looked at it with accusing eyes and said, ‘*Aleph*, you stand at the head of the alphabet and, yet you have come to testify against the Jewish People. Perhaps your memory fails you. Do you not remember when Hashem revealed Himself to the Jewish People on *Har Sinai* amid thunder, lightning and smoke? He proclaimed, *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, I am Hashem, Your G-d. *Anochi* begins with the letter *aleph*. No other nation was willing to accede to Hashem – except for the Jews. Yet, you are willing to testify against them.’ When the *aleph* heard this, it quietly moved to the side. It was not going to testify.

“The next letter to come forward was the second letter of the alphabet – the *beis*. Here, too, Avraham Avinu declared, ‘What! The letter which begins the Torah – *Bereishis bara Elokim*, “In the

beginning of G-d's creating". How quickly you have forgotten that it was the Jewish People who stood at *Har Sinai* and accepted the Torah, when every other nation rejected it! The letter *beis* immediately moved to the side. Right is right; the Jewish People did not deserve such treatment.

"Next, the letter *gimel* was called into the witness box. Avraham *Avinu* was relentless in his defense of his descendants. 'What? You are coming to testify against the Jewish People? Is there any other nation that fulfills the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*, concerning whom it is written: *Gedilim taaseh lach*, Fringes you shall make for yourself,' (*Devarim* 22). (*Gedilim* begins with a *gimel*.) Hearing this, the *gimel* also moved aside. It, too, was not prepared to demonstrate ingratitude by testifying against the Jewish People. Once the other letters saw how Avraham quieted the testimony of the first letters, they were too ashamed to get involved. Thus, they all moved aside and did not testify against the Jewish People.

"This," explains Rav Frankel, "is the reason for *v'hayah*, which denotes a sense of joy. We understand that, at the end of the day, it will be the Torah that will attest to the reality that we – only we – were willing to accept it at *Har Sinai*." We have not been perfect over the years, but, after all is said and done, we were there to accept the Torah when every other nation rejected it. Therefore, the *Shiras haTorah*, Song of Torah, will support us when necessary.