

## Please speak in the ears of the People. (11:2)

*Rashi* quotes the *Midrash* which explains the reason that Hashem asked Moshe *Rabbeinu* to make a special effort to convince the Jews to request valuables from the Egyptians. If they would not do so, the *neshamah*, soul, of Avraham *Avinu* would take umbrage, saying that Hashem had carried out His promise that the Jews would be enslaved and persecuted, while he had not carried out the second prophecy, concerning the Jews' exodus amid great wealth. It appears that Hashem's primary concern was regarding what Avraham would say. What about Hashem's word? The Almighty informed Avraham that two things would occur: imminent slavery and persecution, followed by leaving with great material wealth. Is His word not sufficient reason for asking the Jews to borrow from the Egyptians? What does Avraham have to add to the equation?

The commentators, each in his own inimitable manner, offer perspective concerning this question. In his *Sefer Dorash Mordechai*, *Horav Mordechai Druk, Shlita*, quotes an explanation he heard from the *Klausenberger Rebbe, zl*, based upon an incident which took place during the frightening days of the Holocaust. The men were placed on different blocks. The *Rebbe* found his assigned "bed" was next to that of a Jew who had abandoned the faith, someone we refer to as a *yehudi mumar*.

It was late one night when the *mumar* whispered to the *Rebbe*, "You know, despite my rejection of the Jewish faith, I will nevertheless receive a portion in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come."

The *Rebbe* was shocked by this man's statement. "You? How is that possible? You are a *meshumad*, apostate. Why would you deserve *Olam Habba*?" the *Rebbe* asked.

"Let me explain," the man began. "The accursed Hitler sent me to the camps because, after searching back for three generations, he found Jewish blood in my lineage. Apparently, for Hitler, the slightest connection with Judaism is sufficient reason to subject me to persecution, deprivation and death. I figured that if I am 'Jew' enough to suffer with you, I am, therefore, also good enough to enter *Olam Habba*. I do not believe that I will suffer down here and not receive a portion in the World to Come!"

When the *Rebbe* heard this man's logical deduction, he commented, "I thank you for allowing me to answer a question that has been bothering me for some time. I always wondered why Hashem included Avraham's potential grievance as a reason for having the Jewish People leave Egypt with material wealth. Now I have gained a new perspective on the issue. After all, did Hashem owe anything to the Jews? They had descended to the forty-ninth level of spiritual contamination. They worshipped idols in Egypt. Certainly, Hashem owed them nothing.

"However, Hashem had given His word to Avraham that they would be enslaved, and that they would leave wealthy. Can you imagine what our Patriarch Avraham would say? 'Hashem, if they

were Jewish enough to suffer persecution, they must also be worthy of leaving with wealth!"