

Hashem was good to the midwives, and the people increased and became very mighty. (1:20)

The *meyaldos halvrios*, Hebrew midwives, really extended themselves to save the Jewish children, but is that not what being Jewish means? These women stood up to Pharaoh's evil decree, with great risk to their own lives; thus, they were able to save countless Jewish children. The *pasuk's* syntax, however, seems out of order. It begins, "Hashem was good to the midwives, and the people increased and became very mighty. Because the midwives feared Hashem, He gave them houses." *Rashi* explains the meaning of this "good" which Hashem gave the midwives as the Houses of Priesthood that they would be of the *Leviim* and of *Malchus*, royalty. In other words, these women did not receive real estate in return for sacrificing their lives. They became the progenitors of the Houses of *Kehunah*, *Leviah* and *Malchus*, which is an appropriate "return" on their "investment." The problem is that, in order to explain the term, "Hashem was good [to the midwives], *Rashi* skips over to the next *pasuk* and explains that the "good" refers to these Houses. In order to do this, he includes the *pasuk*, "And the people increased and became very mighty," which has little to do with the "good" Hashem did to benefit the midwives.

According to *Rashi*, Hashem's "good," a reference to the houses that He gave them, is interrupted by the statement noting the nation's physical increase in numbers. Would it not have been simpler just to say that Hashem gave the women houses as their reward, immediately after stating that He was good to them? Then, after connecting the "good" and the "houses," the Torah could write that the nation had increased.

In his *Einei Yisrael*, **Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita**, quotes his father, *Reb Berel Belsky, zl*, a *talmid*, student, of the *Chafetz Chaim*, who suggested a fascinating explanation, which I feel is especially practical and characteristic to him. He explained that, throughout the ages, many Jews have performed numerous acts of lovingkindness with selflessness and *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, solely for the purpose of executing Hashem's will. Hashem is surely good to them, rewarding them well. A number of *mitzvos* incur wonderful reward in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come.

What about reward in this world? It is rare for someone to be fortunate enough to witness the fruits of his labor materializing in full force before his eyes. To observe the full impact of one's own benevolence, to be a part of the lives of those whom he has set on the true path to religious observance, is a reward that is both inspirational and encouraging. More often than not, one endeavors and helps those who are in material and spiritual need, but the fruits are reaped much later. He may have to leave this world before his endeavors become successful.

Occasionally, individuals partake from both "tables," who merit to see the results of their endeavors, both in this world and in the next. This was precisely the blessing received by the *meyaldos*. They risked their lives to save the Jewish children, and they lived long enough to see their work bloom, as *Klal Yisrael* turned into a strong, mighty nation. This is what the Torah means

when it says, “G-d was good to the midwives, and the people increased and became very mighty.” An inherent part of the “good” which Hashem granted the midwives was allowing them to see all those babies whom they had saved become the backbone of the mighty nation – *Klal Yisrael*. They lived to experience tremendous *nachas*, satisfaction, by witnessing the incredible growth of the Jewish nation – all as a result of their self-sacrifice.