

Take for yourselves... wagons for your small children and for your wives... and he (Yaakov) saw the wagons that Yosef had sent... the spirit of their father Yaakov revived. (45:19,27)

Chazal wonder what it was about the *agalos*, wagons, that assuaged Yaakov *Avinu's* fear concerning Yosef's moral status. [His son had been separated from him and his pristine spiritual environment for over two decades. During this time Yosef had been ensconced in a country whose moral compass was bankrupt, its culture redefining the nadir of moral profligacy. He worried, but when he saw the *agalos*, he calmed down.] The simple answer is that *agalos*, wagons, allude to *Eglah Arufah* (*agalah*, *eglah*, same letters), the axed heifer, which was the last topic Yaakov had studied with Yosef prior to his disappearance. Yaakov's fears were allayed when he saw that Yosef had not forgotten his learning. [in order to remember, one must review.]

Horav Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer, zl, offers an original explanation that is truly novel. He quotes the above *pasuk* in which Pharaoh instructs Yosef to prepare wagons to transport the men (*lachem*), the women (*nisheichem*), and the young children (*tapchem*). Why was it necessary to delineate the three groups among the travelers? They were all traveling together. He could have simply said, "Take wagons for your family." Obviously, this was by design.

He cites the *Chasam Sofer's* commentary to the opening *pasuk* of *Parashas Nitzavim* (*Devarim* 29:9,10). (On the last day of his life, Moshe *Rabbeinu* gathered together the entire nation to initiate them for the last time in Hashem's *Bris*, covenant. They were instructed in the concept of *arvus*, responsibility for one another.) Moshe emphasized that all the people were standing before Hashem: the men, women, children – all the categories of Jews, regardless of status. The *Talmud Kiddushin* 81a states, *Skava d'shata rigla*, "The wound (vulnerable point) of the year is the Festival." It was a time in which men and women would gather together during these joyous occasions, and this led to sin.) As a result, *Abaya* and *Rava* would arrange various separations (pitchers, reeds) in order to serve as a *mechitzah*. Likewise, explains the *Chasam Sofer*, during *Hakhel*, when the entire nation gathered together, the young children served as a separation and barrier between the men and women.

Yosef HaTzaddik, explains *Rav Yosef Nechemiah*, exemplified the *middah*, attribute, of *gevurah*, strength. He demonstrated this when he did not allow the wife of Potifar to use her wiles to manipulate him into sin. He stood out among his peers as the paradigm of moral strength. Undoubtedly, Pharaoh and the Egyptian populace did not fail to notice Yosef's unique nature. Indeed, in a country steeped in moral turpitude, he was a striking anomaly. As a result, even the simple Egyptian held Yosef in esteem. Pharaoh was no fool. He understood that Yosef's ethical character and moral rectitude were the result of his upbringing. Having been raised in the home of the Patriarch Yaakov left an indelible impression, not only on Yosef, but on his brothers as well. Pharaoh assumed that Yosef's brothers would not want to be exposed to a venue in which men and women mixed freely with one another. Thus, he suggested that wagons be arranged in such a

manner that the children would serve as separation between the male and female adults. When Yaakov saw these wagons with a *mechitzah* made of children, he realized that his son Yosef had adhered to and maintained his moral status. He had not become an Egyptian.

Veritably, it was Pharaoh who sent the wagons, but the mere fact that Pharaoh prepared wagons that were morally correct was an indication that he had been influenced. Yaakov understood that *Od Yosef chai*: the *gevurah*, moral strength, of Yosef was very much alive.