

And Aharon was silent. (10:3)

Ramban explains that Aharon actually did cry. Aharon silently accepted Hashem's decree only after Moshe consoled him by telling him of the enormous *kiddush* Hashem, sanctification of Hashem's Name, which Nadav and Avihu had effected. Aharon's response to the tragic deaths of his two eldest sons serves as a paradigm for those who confront tragedy. He was silent, accepting the decree. Did Aharon exhibit the loftiest form of acquiescence, or is there another -- more exalted -- way of confronting Hashem's decree?

Tiferes Shlomo, the **Admor m'Radomsk, zl**, comments that *Chazal* laud Aharon *Ha'kohen* for his "silent" response to his sons' deaths. In fact, we find that Hashem singled out Aharon, speaking directly to him about the laws concerning *Kohanim* serving in the *Mikdash* after having imbibed intoxicants. There is, however, yet a higher plane of acceptance, one more praiseworthy than silence, one that David *Ha'melech* employed during his most painful and afflicting times. David sang! In *Tehillim 30:10*, where David *Ha'melech* says, "So that my soul might make music to You and not be stilled, Hashem my G-d, forever will I thank You." To be silent, not to criticize what is unmistakably a painful and overwhelming decree, is truly a level that most people cannot attain. To be able to sing praise to Hashem, expressing love and devotion amidst pain and sorrow, reflects an attitude that only David *Ha'melech* exhibited. We must endeavor to understand the difference between Aharon and David. Indeed, *Chazal* seem to characterize Aharon's response as being the most impressive.

We may suggest that the difference lies in the type of tragedy. To lose a child, especially two sons of such remarkable caliber on the most joyous day of one's life, is an unparalleled tragedy. That is not the reason, however, that Aharon kept silent and did not sing. A feeling of guilt accompanies the crushing pain and debilitating sorrow of losing a child. Were the parents in any way responsible? Was it something that they did or did not do that effected this terrible punishment? In most instances, such emotions are ridiculous, but that is human nature. Thus, while Aharon apparently accepted Hashem's decree, his role as a parent might have restrained him from exhibiting a more positive response.

We must always bear in mind that everything that occurs comes directly from Hashem. Consequently, it is only to Him that we can turn for hope and salvation. This writer had occasion recently to visit with **Horav Eliezer Levi, Shlita**, *rebbe* and distinguished member of Telshe Yeshivah's faculty, during his recent illness. Upon entering the room, I encountered *Horav* Levi sleeping. A few minutes later he woke up. After acknowledging my presence he said, "Do you know the meaning of .nthu ezj 's kt vue' "

's kt vueu lck 'Hope to Hashem, strengthen yourself, and He will give you courage; and hope to Hashem'? Why do we repeat the phrase 'Kaveh el Hashem'? The answer is that it is not sufficient to simply say, "'s kt vue" One must infuse "Hope to Hashem" into one's heart and very being, so that he really means it. It must be an expression of the heart. It should strengthen and encourage

someone. Only then does it really have meaning."

What powerful words! How often do we say, "*Got vet helfen*," the *Ribono Shel Olam* will help, simply as a figure of speech, without really believing it in our hearts? The feeling that Hashem is with us at all times and can respond in the blink of an eye must be something more than a statement we make by rote; it must be part of every fiber of our being.

An interesting vignette was heard recently regarding the phrase "*Got vet helfen*": Someone came before **Horav Shraga Feivel Mendelson, zl**, seeking a *brachah*, blessing, for someone who was ill. *Horav* Mendelson responded, "*Got vet helfen*." A distinguished student, himself a great *talmid chacham*, was sitting nearby and said, "*Got vet nisht helfen!*"--"Hashem will not help!" Everyone looked at him puzzled. "What do you mean that Hashem will not help?" The *rav* responded, "Hashem does not help--He does everything --Himself!" We must open up our eyes and see through the maze of ambiguity, so that we realize that it is only to Hashem that we can turn. Perhaps the sooner we acknowledge this fact, the less frequently we will have to be taught this message.