

"And the Egyptians dealt ill with us and afflicted us." (26:6)

Most commentators translate the word *osanu* as *lanu*, to/with us, referring to the harsh treatment to which we were subjected at the hands of the Egyptians. *Horav Mordechai Gifter, Shlita*, suggests that the literal meaning is a more propitious definition. When the Egyptian leadership sought to enslave and ultimately destroy the Jewish people, they realized it would be difficult to convince the average Egyptian citizen to participate in this blatant anti-semitism. They understood that first they must perform a successful campaign of vicious character assassination against the Jewish people. This negative propaganda would veil their virulent hatred of the Jews, while simultaneously inciting the average Egyptian against them.

The Egyptians besmirched our reputation by slandering our character and integrity. They painted us as murderous malcontents, who sought to vanquish the country. This undoubtedly encouraged the Egyptian to accept any harsh decree against the Jews as justifiable.

This is the meaning of the *pasuk* "*they made us bad*". They defamed and slandered us, making us look "bad" before the common man. Indeed, this method of promoting anti-semitic hatred of Jews has been tried and proven throughout history. Prior and during World War II, the Germans used this method as a vehicle for advocating the destruction of our people.