

It shall be that when many evils and distresses come upon it, then this song will speak up before it as a witness. (31: 21)

The word *v'hayah*, it shall be, is used to imply *simchah*, joy. We wonder what the portent of *ra'os rabos v'tzaros*, many evils and distresses, has to do with joy? On the surface, it comes across as a period which clearly does not denote *simchah*. *Horav Yitzchak Yedidyah Frankel*, zl (Rav of Tel Aviv), offers an inspiring explanation for the placement of the term *v'hayah* in connection with *tzaros rabos*. He quotes *Chazal (Pesichta Eichah Rabbah)* who relate a powerful dialogue that ensued between *Avraham Avinu* and "representatives" of the *alef-beis*, Hebrew alphabet.

The *Midrash* relates *Avraham Avinu's* defense of the Jewish People. He asked the Almighty, "Why did You exile my children and deliver them into the hands of the other nations, who have killed them with all sorts of unusual deaths? You destroyed the *Bais Hamikdash*, the place where I offered up my son, *Yitzchak*, as an *olah*, offering, before You?"

Hashem replied, "Your children sinned and have transgressed the entire Torah and all the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet that are in it." *Avraham* countered, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*, who attested to Your children's sinful behavior?" Hashem replied, "Let the Torah come forward to testify against the Jewish people." The Torah came forward and reiterated Hashem's accusation against the people.

Avraham said to the Torah, "My daughter, you come to condemn the Jewish People of transgressing your precepts? Do you not remember the day that all refused to accept you? It was only *Klal Yisrael* who immediately responded with *Naaseh V'Nishmah*, 'We will do and we will listen.' They accepted the commandments unequivocally. Now you come forward during their period of travail. Is this how you reward them for staying by you?" When the Torah heard this, it moved to the side, refusing to testify against the people.

Hashem then called the twenty-two letters of the alphabet to testify against the people. The *aleph* stepped forward to censure the people. *Avraham* said to the *alef*, "You are the first letter and you have come to testify against the Jewish People during their anguish. Do you not remember that auspicious day that Hashem revealed Himself on *Har Sinai* and said, *Anochi Hashem* (with the *aleph* of *Anochi*), and no nation was willing to accept – except for the Jewish People. And you come to testify against them?" The *aleph* moved aside and did not testify.

The *bais* was called up. *Avraham* spoke before the *bais* had a chance to denounce the people. "My daughter, you are coming to testify against the people who are diligent in all of the Five Books of the Torah? You are the first letter of the Torah (*Bais – Bereishis*). [The Jewish people have been committed to you, and you come to testify against them?]" Understandably, the *bais* moved aside. Hashem called the letter *gimmel*, which fared no better. *Avraham* brought up the *mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* which begins with the letter *gimmel*: *Gedillim taaseh lach*, "You shall all make for yourself twisted

threads" (*Devarim* 32:12). The *gimmel* moved aside and did not testify against *Klal Yisrael*. Once this occurred, the other letters of the alphabet followed suit. Hence, the Torah, with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, came out in support of *Klal Yisrael*. This is the reason that the Torah writes, *v'hayah*, a term which denotes joy, because what greater reason to rejoice than to know that we have the Torah's protection?