



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

VAYIGASH

The Sound was Heard

Yosef recognised his brothers but they did not recognise him.

It suited Yosef to leave things like that for a time. But then came the moment for him to reveal his identity, and the news soon spread through the palace, "and it pleased Par'o well, and his servants" (B'reishit 45:16).

The exact Hebrew words of the text are V'HA^KOL NISHMA - literally, "and the sound (of the news) was heard".

Strangely, the word KOL is spelled defectively (KUF-LAMED), without the expected middle letter, VAV.

The Zohar remarks that there are two kinds of sound - the full, audible sound and the weak, almost inaudible sound.

The KOL with the VAV missing indicates the latter kind of sound, like that of Chana's prayer, of which it is written, "but her voice could not be heard" (Sh'muel Alef 1:13).

From this we learn that when a person prays their voice should be subdued: "prayer does not consist in audible voice, nor is the voice prayer...

the prayer which God accepts is that which is performed with earnestness and devotion and proper concentration of the mind".

The lesson for us is that when officiants are raucous and worshippers noisy, the moment, as the Baal Shem Tov used to say, is so full of prayers that God cannot hear.

A second interpretation in the Zohar comes in the name of R. Elazar, who says that the quiet sound implied in the defective spelling of KOL is an allusion to the voice which wept on account of the first and second Temples. This was the voice of Rachel, whose weeping was heard in Rama (Yirmiyahu 31:14).

Rashi, like the Zohar, reads Rama as "on high", where God hears Rachel's lamentation for her children, who have been slain or taken into exile.

The Zohar offers the comfort that when the time comes, "the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise that quiet voice from the dust and join the VAV with it, and all that was lost to them in the time of exile will be restored and they will feast on the supernal radiances that will stream with added brightness from the supernal world" (Zohar Vayigash 209b-210a; Soncino ed., vol. 2, pp. 293-5).

From this too there is a lesson we can learn, that God fulfils His promises when the right time comes, that LO

ALMAN YISRAEL - "Israel is never left bereft"; and that we need not angrily storm the heavens and shout to remind God that we are here. He hears, He knows, He will assuredly act. **-OZ**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH