



Who's in Charge Here?

One day in the office of the president of the Makkos Baked Foods Company . . .

"Ring ring!"

"Hello."

"Hello, Mr. President. My name is Mr. Mosharon. I work for the Secker Polling Company. We evaluate the public's opinion on various products and issues. A poll of 5,000 consumers has chosen your baked goods as the freshest and tastiest on the market. You have won the first prize as 'The Public's Favorite.' We would like to tour the bakery where the award winning breads and cakes are produced, and present you with your prize."

"How flattering! It will be our pleasure to host you. When would you like to come?"

"How about tomorrow at 9:00 am?"

"Fantastic. We'll be waiting for you."

The president quickly calls the production manager and tells him to have the plant thoroughly cleaned and prepared for the special visitors. The workers busy themselves the rest of the day and night with the preparations. By 9:00 the next morning, everything and everyone is sparkling. Mr. Mosharon and his staff arrived on time and are ushered in to the president's office.

"Welcome to the Makkos Baked Foods Company, honored guests. It is a privilege to host you. We hope you enjoy the tour of our factory. Please, have some refreshments. The tour will begin in five minutes."

The guests enjoy fresh cakes and coffee, and are then taken to the dough-mixing department. The president himself conducts the tour.

"Here is where the flour, water, yeast, and spices are mixed for bread dough. Everything is automated. Water comes through the pipe on the right side. I will now turn on the switch and the mixing of the ingredients will begin."

The president presses the button, and liquid begins pouring out of the pipe. It is not the fresh clean water that everyone is expecting, rather it is . . . bright red blood.

"What is that Mr. President?" asks Mr. Mosharon. "Do you always use thick red water like that in your bread?"

The president breaks into a cold sweat. He quickly dials the number of the chief engineer.

"Mr. Chartoum, please come down to the dough mixer immediately! We have a technical problem over here!"

Mr. Chartoum arrives in a few seconds and sees the bright red liquid pouring out of the pipe.

"Yes, I recognize this phenomenon. We can handle it. Everything will be under control in no time. I suggest that the president and the guests move on to the baking ovens."

The president, Mr. Mosharon, and entourage move on to the baking ovens. They see fresh loaves of dough, ready to be baked. Suddenly, there is a deafening noise.

"Croak! Croak! Croak!"

"What is that noise?"

"It sounds like frogs."

Sure enough, frogs begin to make their way out of the dough. Hundreds of them come out of the loaves. The tour group is horrified.

"What is going on here, Mr. President? The consumers will not be very happy when they find out that your bread has frogs in it."

"Gentlemen, I assure you that this has never happened before. I don't know what is going wrong here. Let me call the chief engineer again."

Mr. Chartoum arrives on the scene in seconds.

"Yes, frogs in the batter. I am familiar with this problem. We can handle it. I suggest the group move on."

"Mr. President, you are not making a very favorable impression."

"I realize that Mr. Mosharon. However, I can assure you that this has never happened before in our plant. We are in absolute control of everything in our baking factory."

And so, the group moves on. However, they find another problem – lice. Mr. Chartoum cannot handle the lice. He throws up his hands in desperation, not knowing what to say or do. Mr. Mosharon and his group are very upset.

"Mr. President, I think we have seen enough. Your factory is a total mess. Your quality control is terrible; you are not in control of anything. We are leaving."

"Please, Mr. Mosharon, I can explain everything. Please come to my office for five minutes. I promise you that you will not be disappointed."

"Very well."

The group proceeds to the office. The president opens up his private safe and takes out a document.

"Gentlemen, this is a letter from the builder of this plant, the All Powerful Construction Company. Please allow me to read it to you."

"Go ahead, Mr. President, but please make it quick."

"Dear Makkos Baked Foods Company. We have built this baked goods production plant for you. It contains the latest technology. We have set it up to run like clockwork, producing delicious breads, cakes, cookies and other baked goods. Under normal circumstances, the production schedule will never be disturbed. However, we want you to remember one thing. We built this plant and we retain total and exclusive control of it. At any time, we can change whatever we want. We can change the water to blood, or frogs. We can change the dust to lice. As long as you remember, keep repeating to yourself, and tell others that we are in control, we will keep things running smoothly. However, if you begin to feel that you built this plant and are running it, then we will remind you who made this place and who is really in charge. You should have much success.

The All Powerful Construction Company."

Gentlemen, this is the problem. We who work in this baking factory have forgotten who built it and who continues to run it. We arrogantly think that we are in charge. Therefore, the owner has come to remind us that the factory is his and he is in control. I apologize for your unpleasant experience here. I hope that we have all learned our lesson, and will give the proper respect to the one who is in charge."

Kinderlach . . .

Do you recognize the parable? The factory is the beautiful world that Hashem (the All Powerful Construction Company) created and retains total control of. The president and his workers are like Paroh and the Mitzrim. They completely forgot about Hashem, and thought that they were in control of the world. Therefore, the Almighty needed to send the Makkos Baked Foods Company ten reminders (the ten makkos) to refresh their memory of Who is in charge. Guess what, kinderlach? Hashem is still running the world, and He still wants us to remember this fact, and declare it to ourselves and the world every day. It may appear that He has turned over control of His world to the forces of nature and technology. This is only an illusion. He is the master over "nature" and can change whatever He wants at any time. Therefore, we should use makkos of Mitzrayim as a lesson to remind ourselves Who is in charge here. The Almighty, Creator of the Universe – Hashem.

Parasha Questions:

- Why did the Torah begin to list the heads of the tribes in Chapter 6 verse 14? (Rashi 6:14)
- Whose name is always mentioned first, Moshe or Aharon, and why? (Rashi 6:26)
- What is the meaning of the word "novi"? (Rashi 7:1)