

Torah Tidbits

כ"א כסלו תשפ"ב 21TH DEC 2021 ISSUE 1448

פרשת שמות

PARSHAT SH'MOT

ב"ה

OU
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New: OU Israel
Parenting
Column
see page 48



Probing the Prophets
Rabbi Nachman Winkler
Faculty, OU Israel Center
page 24



Crisis and Faith
Menachem Persoff
Special Projects Consultant,
OU Israel Center
page 52

ומשה היה רעה
את־צאן יתרו
שמות פרק ג', פסוק א'

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT SH'MOT

Candles 4:06PM • Havdala 5:22PM • Rabbeinu Tam 5:59PM

This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo By: Yosef Symonds **Place:** Ramat Beit Shemesh

Meaning: All the Avot were shepherds by profession, literally of sheep but also of the Jewish people. Parshat Sh'mot presents Moshe Rabbeinu for the first time, destined to become not only the greatest of prophets, but also arguably the greatest of shepherds. Living across the road from grazing sheep for many years has given me an extra connection to our heritage.

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Lia Manning // Elish Eisenberg

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat
Dec. 22-Jan 1 / 18-28 Tevet

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:40-5:44
Sunrise	6:35-6:39
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:06 - 9:11
Magen Avraham	8:27-8:32
Sof Zman Tefila	9:57-10:01
<small>(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)</small>	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:37-11:42
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:07-12:12
Plag Mincha	3:33 - 3:38
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:42 - 4:46

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Torah Tidbits and many of the projects of OU Israel are assisted by grants from **THE JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY**



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CANDLES	SH'MOT	HAVDALA	VA'ERA	
			Candles	Havdala
4:06	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	5:22	4:10	5:26
4:24	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	5:25	4:28	5:29
4:24	Beit Shemesh / RBS	5:23	4:29	5:27
4:21	Gush Etzion	5:23	4:26	5:27
4:21	Raanana / Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	5:22	4:25	5:27
4:21	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	5:23	4:26	5:27
4:21	Netanya	5:22	4:25	5:27
4:24	Be'er Sheva	5:25	4:28	5:29
4:22	Rehovot	5:23	4:26	5:28
4:06	Petach Tikva	5:23	4:10	5:27
4:20	Ginot Shomron	5:22	4:25	5:26
4:09	Haifa / Zichron	5:21	4:13	5:25
4:20	Gush Shiloh	5:21	4:24	5:26
4:22	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	5:23	4:26	5:28
4:21	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:22	4:25	5:26
4:22	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:23	4:26	5:27
4:23	Ashkelon	5:25	4:28	5:29
4:22	Yad Binyamin	5:23	4:27	5:28
4:12	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	5:18	4:17	5:23
4:17	Golan	5:19	4:21	5:23

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 5:59PM • next week - 6:04pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities, 40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)



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Website: www.ou.org/torah/tt | www.torahtidbits.com

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel



What makes a nation stay unified throughout history? In this week's Parsha we see the initial seeds that paved the way for Am Yisrael's destiny. Usually, when people form a group, they give themselves a name and must then prove to the world they are who they say they are. But in this week's parsha, Klal Yisrael is called a Nation. But it is not a name we gave ourselves; it is one Paroh gave us when he called us, "Am B'nei Yisrael."

I find this idea to be a special one because it demonstrates both our modesty and the responsibility placed upon us by an outsider, challenging us to rise to the stature of "Am B'nei Yisrael." From the moment we were given our name we became unified in sharing our destiny. Together we survived Mitzrayim, traveled through the desert, arrived and captured Eretz Yisrael in unison.

The last nation-wide persecution and

hardship we faced was Churban Bayit Rishon. Since then, Klal Yisrael spread out around the world, divided into sects, and faced distinct persecutions that were not shared by the global Am. The Jews of Spain faced the inquisition. The Jews from France faced expulsion. Ashkenazi and some Sephardic Jews faced the horrors of the Holocaust and unfortunately the list goes on...

However, throughout the last 2 millennia small numbers of Jews were living in Israel and then even more so when Talmidei HaGra returned to Israel during the Seminal Aliyah. Despite the diversity in hardships, Jews from around the world continue to unify in the building of Eretz Yisrael. It is remarkable to drive through the streets of Israel and see names of Jews from around the world who have contributed to building this Holy Land. You can find their names on Yeshivot, Synagogues, university buildings, community programs, youth clubs, hospitals, city streets,



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just to name a few.

The global phenomena of Achdut that surrounds the building of Eretz Yisrael is something we must cherish. The unified efforts of Jews outside of Israel have made Yishuv Ha'aretz much easier, helping Israel build a spiritual world, a physical world, and a defense system to keep those worlds, and our brethren, safe. With each contribution made, we solidify our destiny in Eretz Yisrael, while finding our way back to one another.

Inspiring the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael is a mission I hold dear, and you can most often find me discussing the work OU Israel does to impact tens of thousands of Jews across the country. With the help of HaShem we've built OU Israel into an established, renowned, and respected institution. I thoroughly enjoy talking about the impact of OU Israel, detailing its plethora of programs for people of all ages, inspiring and empowering teens all over Israel, and our programs which inspire the English-speaking residents of Eretz Yisrael.

What I don't often get to speak about is the impact the OU has on North American Jewry. For Americans, the OU's reputation precedes it. Its fundamental role in laying the foundation for thriving Jewish communities across the United States is widely recognized, with organizations spanning Kashrus, to Yachad, to NCSY, to JLIC and so many more. We might find ourselves taking it for granted.

But this week, joined by OU Senior Vice President Mrs. Esther Williams I was given a unique opportunity to present at the Knesset, at a gathering organized by HaRav



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itzhak Pindrus, an American-born Knesset member of Agudat Yisrael. The topic? How the State of Israel can give strength to Jews of the Diaspora. In attendance were members of Jewish parties in the Knesset, my dear friend Mr. Yaakov Hagoel, Chairman of the Executive of the WZO and of course Nachman Shai, the Minister of Diaspora Affairs.



From Aish, to Chabad, to European Rabbinical delegates, to the OU, we were asked to present our efforts in keeping Jewry thriving outside of Israel's borders. For many of the people in the room, the OU's central role in American Jewry was nothing new. But many of the Israelis were blown away. Among the many notable elements that struck them about the OU, is that all profits from its Kashrus supervision are invested back into the Jewish people, creating more opportunities to connect Jews.

To witness a gathering of Jews in the

The OU Israel family
sends its deepest condolences
to long time Maggid Shiur
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell and family
on the passing of his wife

Shaindy a"h

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Knesset of Israel, living up to its responsibility as an Am B'nei Yisrael, is something I won't soon forget. We may disagree politically with one another, but we remain unified in our mission to keep Am Yisrael thriving. Many challenges were discussed, such as anti-semitism, Jewish education and enabling Jews around the world to keep Halacha. But by the end of the evening, it was clear that we had a shared interest: lower intermarriage rates and helping Jews feel proud, connected and more inspired.

We must continue to ask ourselves how we can inspire our brethren around the world. As always, I look forward to hearing your feedback. As we remain unified in carrying the torch of Am B'nei Yisrael, may we come even closer to one another and welcome a bright future with the coming of Moshiach, B'ezrat HaShem.

Wishing you the most uplifting and inspiring Shabbat possible,



Avi,
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org

P.S. Let me take this opportunity to give you a friendly reminder that we greatly need you to enable TorahTidbits to thrive! Please see page 53 on how to make that happen.

In loving memory of my mother

Karin Fürst

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SH'MOT



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

The Jewish people are in Egypt. A new Paro is concerned with the size of the Jewish people. He decrees hard labor, infanticide and then actively drowning the male babies. Moshe is born, raised in Paro's daughter's home. After seeing the Jews mistreated, he flees to Midian, marries and settles there. At age 80, Moshe encounters the burning bush. G-d instructs him to go to Paro and demand, in G-d's name, to free the Jewish people. Moshe, after attempting to refuse this mission, goes to Paro. Paro increases the burdens. The people complain.



1st Aliya (1:1-17) 70 Bnei Yisrael descend to Egypt. They grow exceedingly numerous, filling the land. A new king who knew not Yosef

arises. Afraid that the Jews would join with enemies of Egypt, he seeks to weaken their numbers. A labor tax is followed by oppressive labor. Then the midwives are instructed to kill the Jewish babies. The midwives fear G-d and do not heed Paro's directive.

The book of Sh'mot, of Exodus is radically different than Bereshit. Bereshit was the story of people: Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah. Then Yosef and his brothers. And overlaid to the story of people is the Divine refrain, "I give to you the land promised to Avraham". It is almost like a song with a chorus; each person is the verse, with the chorus of G-d's promise of the land repeated. Avraham and his life, with G-d's promise repeated. Yitzchak and his family, with G-d's promise repeated. Yaakov and then the Yosef story, with G-d's promise repeated. In Bereshit the people are centre stage, with G-d ever present but of few words; the repeated promise.

In Sh'mot G-d and man switch places. It is the story of Divine control of Jewish destiny. He is the Main Director, the Jewish people the mere stage actors. He no longer lurks, with repeated promises. He acts, dominates, controls, manipulates. He initiates, communicates, commands. Later, at Sinai, He reveals Himself.

But His appearance begins only when we hit bottom.

Paro acts to weaken the Jewish people. Vicious actions, including murder. The midwives fear G-d, refuse to murder. There is no mention of G-d's actions. We have seen this before. G-d's name is absent from the sale of Yosef, as it is here. Spiraling

May the Torah learned from
this issue of Torah Tidbits be
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רחל לאה בת משה עזרא ע"ה
Rachel Kurcfeld a"h
on her 1st yearzeit
כ"א טבת

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downward we can do on our own. Man does a mighty fine job of cruelty all on his own. G-d appears when we hit bottom.



2nd Aliya (1:18-2:10) The mid-wives defend their actions to Paro. Moshe is born, placed in the

water in a basket. Paro's daughter rescues him. Miriam arranges for Moshe's mother to nurse him. He is returned to Paro's daughter and named Moshe.

When Moshe is born his mother "saw that he was good". And he was placed in the water, albeit in a basket. Those 2 elements, water and "it was good", immediately remind us of the first day of creation. In the beginning "the spirit of G-d hovered over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). And when light was created, "G-d saw the light and it was good." Moshe's being placed in the water and his mother "saw that he was good" could be the Torah's way of saying there is a new creation story taking place: with Moshe's birth, a new world dawns for the Jewish people.



3rd Aliya (2:11-25) Moshe matures. He goes out to see the travails of his brothers. He

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defends a Jew by killing his Egyptian aggressor, and then saves a Jew from a Jewish aggressor. He flees for his life to Midian, aids Yitro's daughters, is welcomed by Yitro, marries Zipporah, has a child Gershom. "For I am a stranger in a strange land". G-d sees the suffering of the Jews and remembers his covenant with Avraham, Yitchak and Yaakov.

Moshe names his son Gershom, for "I am a stranger". Which strange land is he referring to? Being a Jew in Egypt? Or being an Egyptian in Midian? Where is Moshe's home?

The story to this point is the story of people; G-d has yet to appear. In a world without G-d's presence, there are good people and bad people. Paro, evil. Midwives, good. Moshe's parents, brave. Paro's daughter, good. Moshe's sister, altruistic. Egyptian slave master, cruel. Jews struggling, violent. Yitro, welcoming.

And Moshe? Goes out. Concerned. Helps those who need help. Feels angst; a stranger.

G-d appears. His name appears 5 times in 3 verses. Everything changes now. Or perhaps not. All the human activity to this point; has He orchestrated it, or is it people doing what people do? Some good, some not? Or mere puppets in the Hand of the Puppeteer?



4th Aliya (3:1-15) Moshe and the burning bush. Moshe, Moshe, Hineni. G-d speaks, Moshe cowers.

G-d tells him: I have seen the suffering of My people. I will save them from Egypt and bring them to the land of milk and honey. I am sending you to go to Paro and he will release my people from Egypt.

Moshe objects: who am I to go to Paro? And the Jewish people will question who sent me. G-d says: tell them the G-d of their forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov sent you.

The entire story of the Torah changes here. G-d moves from the unseen force behind human action to directly dictating human activity. He tells Moshe that He will take the Jewish people out of Egypt and bring them to the land of Israel. Up until now, the Jewish people have been promised the land but have lived only with the promise, not with its fulfillment. They have not seen the Hand of G-d but have rather detected it behind the events. As Yosef said "G-d has brought me to Egypt to save the family." He never heard that. He peered behind the veil and detected it.

Now the veil is drawn. Moshe is told in vivid detail exactly what will transpire. The Jews will be sent out by Paro. The story of the Exodus from Egypt is a pillar of Jewish belief because it is a blatant, direct display of G-d's Hand in our history. It is His Hand in full display, not behind the veil.



5th Aliya (3:16-4:17) G-d continues: Gather the people. Tell them that I will take them to the Land.

They will listen. Go to Paro. I know he will not listen. I will smite the Egyptians. You will be loaded with gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians. Moshe is still convinced that the people will not believe him. G-d gives him signs: staff turns to snake

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on the Bar-Mitzvah of a grandson
and the birth of a great-granddaughter

and then back, hand turns leprous and then back. And water to blood. Moshe objects: I am not a good speaker. G-d says: I give speech to man. I will send Aharon with you. He will speak. Take your staff.

As Moshe hears more details and is given signs to bring to the people, he reluctantly acquiesces to being the human conduit for the Divine Hand. He realizes that his human weaknesses are irrelevant; he is merely the puppet in the hand of the puppeteer. The Exodus from Egypt is not the story of a great, charismatic leader who leads his people from oppression to freedom, displaying the power of human will in the face of injustice. It is the story of the Divine Hand guiding human events through a reluctant leader. This is not Moshe's story. It is the Divine's. Moshe reluctantly agrees to his role in this, the most momentous display of Divine Providence in history.



6th Aliya (4:18-31) Moshe gets Yitro's blessing to return to Egypt.

G-d tells Moshe that those seeking his death have died. G-d tells him to tell Paro: G-d says Israel is my first born. Send out my son, for if you do not, I will slay your first born. Zippora circumcises her son. Aharon greets Moshe. They gather the people. The people believe that G-d will redeem them.

G-d adds one more thing to Moshe; Israel is My first born. As if to say – “Moshe, this is a story of love. I view the Jewish people as my beloved first born.” And. Refusal

by Paro will result in Divine punishment. Our western ethos is uncomfortable with these central principles of Judaism: G-d's Hand in history, G-d's love for the Jewish people, and Divine punishment. As Rabbi Sacks, z"l, said; Radical then. Radical now.



7th Aliya (5:1-6:1) Moshe and Aharon approach Paro, requesting a 3-day journey to the desert

to celebrate. Paro refuses. He increases the workload. Conflict arises between the Jewish workers and the Egyptian supervisors. The Jews criticize Moshe for increasing their burden. Moshe complains to G-d. G-d reassures him that through a strong hand, Paro will send them out.

Moshe encounters the uncomfortable reality of human beings. The unfolding of the Divine plan does not preclude resistance. People don't embrace the Divine plan with open arms. Man meanders as the Divine plan unfolds. But unfold it does.

HAFTORAH SH'MOT

YESHAYAHU 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

This week's haftorah echoes the reading of this week's parsha of Sh'mot on a number of levels.

One of the connections to the parsha is the message of redemption which is stated by the prophet Yeshayahu - “and you shall be gathered one by one, O children of

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Israel.” This sounds very similar to the message of Hashem to Moshe, communicated at the Burning Bush.

Although the haftorah emphasizes the future redemption of Israel it also spotlights certain admonitions concerning the Jew’s wayward behavior and disloyalty to God.

On a positive note the prophet exclaims: And it will come to pass on that day that a great shofar will be sounded, and those lost in land of Assyria and those exiled in the land of Egypt will come, and they will prostrate themselves before the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem,”

The haftorah ends on a soaring note: “Now Jacob will no longer be ashamed, and now his face will not pale. For when he sees his children, the work of my hand, in his midst, who shall sanctify My name...and the God of Israel they will revere.”

STATS

13th of 54 sedras; 1st of 11 in Sh’mot
 Written on 215.2 lines in a Torah (18th)
 7 parshiot; 6 open, 1 closed
 124 p’sukim - 15th (tied with Emor)
 1763 words - 14th (Emor: 22nd)
 6762 letters - 16th (Emor: 23rd)
 2nd in Sh’mot in those three categories

MITZVOT

No mitzvot are counted from Sh’mot. One of 17 sedras without mitzvot.

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IN THE PARSHA

Open Eyes, and an Open Heart

I was always taught of the advantage of simplicity in language. My favorite author during my adolescence was Ernest Hemingway, and I remember reading comments that he made criticizing those who used multi-syllable words when shorter words would suffice.

Then, I went to graduate school in psychology and learned quite the opposite lesson. There I learned that if one could invent a word with multiple syllables to describe a simple phenomenon, he could gain credibility as an expert, even without real expertise.

Take, for example, a word with seven syllables: compartmentalization. Sounds impressive, but what does it mean? The dictionary that I consulted offers two meanings. One, “the act of distributing things into classes or categories of the same type.” A simple definition, but one having nothing to do with psychology.

The second dictionary definition that I discovered is “a mild state of dissociation.”

Of course, to understand this definition, one must know that dissociation is a psychological process by which one splits two sets of perceptions or emotions into two separate inner worlds so that one does not affect the other.

All of us practice compartmentalization in this sense when we turn on the television, see some news events that are especially troubling to us and simply turn off the TV. Many of us did this recently when we witnessed the terrible forest fires in northern Israel and the horrible deaths of more than forty people. Watching the agony of the families whose loved ones were consumed by that fire was, for many of us, too much to bear. And so, perhaps after a minute or so, we turned off the TV to avoid being confronted with such human suffering.

This might be normal human behavior, and perhaps even necessary to avoid being constantly overwhelmed with negative emotions. But it is not the behavior of a true leader. And it was not the behavior of Moses in this week’s Torah portion, *Shemot*.

Rather, “...he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens...” (*Exodus* 2:11). Upon which Rashi comments, “He

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gave his eyes and his heart [in order] to be troubled about them”. Not only did he not avoid the scene of Jewish suffering, but he made sure that he beheld it (“his eyes”), and that it affected him emotionally (“his heart”).

Two very important, albeit very different, early 20th century commentators have much to say about our verse. Rabbi Joseph Hertz, in his sadly neglected commentary, writes, “He went out *to* his brethren. In later ages it must alas be said of many a son of Israel who had become great, that he went away *from* his brethren.” How well this former chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth captures the notion of compartmentalization. It is the process by which we “look away” from upsetting scenes, rather than carefully looking “at them”.

Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv, known as the “Alter” (old man) of Kelm devotes the opening sermon of his remarkable collection of ethical discourses to our verse and to the criticism of the psychological process which we call “compartmentalization”.

The “Alter” points out that Moses was not content simply to hear about the suffering of his brothers while he sat comfortably in the palace. Rather he “went out” to see for himself. Moses wanted to witness the suffering of his brothers personally. Moses knew the secret of the power of direct sensory perception. Moses wanted to have the image of the burdens of slavery impressed

upon his mind’s eye.

For the “Alter”, who was one of the earliest leaders of the Mussar movement, ethical behavior demands the use of imagery to arouse emotions and thus stimulate proper ethical behavior. Moses used his eyes to inspire his heart to motivate his actions. Vision, feeling, behavior: the three essential components of the truly ethical personality.

The lesson for all of us here is that to be a truly ethical person, one must invest in the effort of becoming familiar with the plight of others. One must avoid the temptation of “looking away”. From a psychological perspective, compartmentalization might be a healthy defense mechanism, necessary to avoid being flooded by images of evil. From an ethical perspective, on the other hand, compartmentalization is a seven-syllable word which, in simple terms, means avoidance of one’s responsibilities to another.

How instructive is the Hasidic tale of the Rabbi who met the village drunkard in the town square. The drunkard asked him, “Rabbi, do you love me?” To which the rabbi replied, “Of course I love you. I love all Jews!”

The drunkard then responded, “So tell me then, Rabbi. What hurts me?” The rabbi had no answer, and so the drunkard exclaimed, “If you truly loved me, you would know what hurts me.”

To know what hurts, we must be sure to open our eyes and hearts to see and feel the pain. ■

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On Not Obeying Immoral Orders

The opening chapters of Exodus plunge us into the midst of epic events. Almost at a stroke the Israelites are transformed from protected minority to slaves. Moses passes from prince of Egypt to Midianite shepherd to leader of the Israelites through a history-changing encounter at the Burning Bush. Yet it is one small, often overlooked episode that deserves to be seen as a turning-point in the history of humanity. Its heroines are two remarkable women, Shifra and Puah.

We do not know who they were. The Torah gives us no further information about them other than that they were midwives, instructed by Pharaoh: 'When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live' (Ex. 1:16). The Hebrew description

of the two women as *hameyaldot ha'ivriyot* is ambiguous. It could mean "the Hebrew midwives"; so most translations and commentaries read it. But it could equally mean, "the midwives to the Hebrews," in which case they may have been Egyptian. That is how Josephus,¹ Abarbanel and Samuel David Luzzatto understand it, arguing that it is simply implausible to suppose that Hebrew women would have been party to an act of genocide against their own people.

What we do know, however, is that they refused to carry out the order: "The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the King of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live" (Ex. 1:17). This is the *first recorded instance in history of civil disobedience*: refusing to obey an order, given by the most powerful man in the most powerful empire of the ancient world, simply because it was immoral, unethical, inhuman.

The Torah suggests that they did so without fuss or drama. Summoned by Pharaoh to explain their behaviour, they simply replied: "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive" (Ex. 1:19). To this, Pharaoh had no reply. The matter-of-factness of the entire incident reminds

1 Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, II.9.2.

us of one of the most salient findings about the courage of those who saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust. They had little in common except for the fact that they saw nothing remarkable in what they did.² Often the mark of real moral heroes is that they do not see themselves as moral heroes. They do what they do because that is what a human being is supposed to do. That is probably the meaning of the statement that they “feared God.” It is the Torah’s generic description of those who have a moral sense.³

It took more than three thousand years for what the midwives did to become enshrined in international law. In 1946, the Nazi war criminals on trial at Nuremberg all offered the defence that they were merely obeying orders, given by a duly constituted and democratically elected government. Under the doctrine of national sovereignty every government has the right to issue its own laws and order its own affairs. It took a new legal concept, namely a ‘crime against humanity’, to establish the guilt of the architects and administrators of genocide.

The Nuremberg principle gave legal substance to what the midwives instinctively understood: that there are some orders that should not be obeyed, because they are immoral. Moral law transcends and may override the law of the state. As the Talmud puts it: “If there is a conflict between the words of the Master [God] and the words of a disciple [a human being], the words of the Master must prevail” (Kiddushin 42b).

2 See James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, New York, Free Press, 1993, pp. 35-39, and the literature cited there.

3 See, for example, Gen. 20:11.



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The Nuremberg trials were not the first occasion on which the story of the midwives had a significant impact on history. Throughout the Middle Ages the Church, knowing that knowledge is power and therefore preferring to keep it exclusively in the hands of the priesthood, had forbidden vernacular translations of the Bible. In the course of the sixteenth century, three developments changed this irrevocably. First was the Reformation, with its maxim *Sola scriptura*, “By Scripture alone,” placing the Bible centre-stage in the religious life.

Second was the invention, in the mid-fifteenth century, of printing. Lutherans were convinced that this was Divine Providence. God had sent the printing press so that the doctrines of the Reformed church could be spread worldwide.

Third was the fact that some people, regardless of the ban, had translated the Bible anyway. John Wycliffe and his followers had done so in the fourteenth century, but the most influential rebel was William Tyndale whose translation of the New Testament, begun in 1525, became the first printed Bible in English. He paid for this with his life.

When Queen Mary I took the Church of England back to Catholicism, many English Protestants fled to Calvin’s Geneva, where they produced a new translation, based on Tyndale, called the Geneva Bible. Produced in a small, affordable edition, it was smuggled into England in large numbers. Able to read the Bible by themselves for the first time, people soon discovered that it was, as far as monarchy is concerned, a highly seditious document.

It tells of how God told Samuel that in

seeking to appoint a King, the Israelites were rejecting Him as their only Sovereign. It describes graphically how the Prophets were unafraid to challenge Kings, which they did with the authority of God Himself. And it told the story of the midwives who refused to carry out Pharaoh's order. On this, in a marginal note, the Geneva Bible endorses their refusal, criticising only the fact that, in explaining their behaviour, they told a lie. The note says, "Their disobedience herein was lawful, but their dissembling evil."

King James understood clearly the dire implication of that one sentence. It meant that a King could be disobeyed on the authority of God Himself: a clear and categorical refutation of the idea of the Divine right of Kings.⁴ Eventually, unable to stop the spread of Bibles in translation, King James decided to commission his own version which appeared in 1611. But by then the damage had been done and the seeds of what became the English revolution had been planted. Throughout the seventeenth century, by far the most influential force in English politics was the Hebrew Bible as understood by the Puritans, and it was the Pilgrim Fathers who took this faith with them on their journey to what would eventually become the United States of America.

A century and a half later, it was the work of another English radical, Thomas Paine, that made a decisive impact on the American revolution. His pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was published in America in January 1776 and became an instant best seller,

4 See Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, London: Allen Lane, 1993.



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selling 100,000 copies almost immediately. Its impact was huge, and because of it he became known as “the father of the American Revolution.” Despite the fact that Paine was an atheist, the opening pages of *Common Sense*, justifying rebellion against a tyrannical King, are entirely based on citations from the Hebrew Bible. In the same spirit, that summer Benjamin Franklin drew, as his design for the Great Seal of America, a picture of the Egyptians (i.e. the English) drowning in the Red Sea (i.e. the Atlantic), with the caption, “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.” Thomas Jefferson was so struck by the sentence that he recommended it to be used on the Great Seal of Virginia, and later incorporated it in his personal seal.

The story of the midwives belongs to a larger vision implicit throughout the Torah and Tanach as a whole: that right is sovereign over might, and that even God Himself can be called to account in the name of justice, as He expressly mandates Abraham to do. Sovereignty ultimately belongs to God, so any human act or order that transgresses the will of God is by that fact alone *ultra vires*. These revolutionary ideas are intrinsic to the biblical vision of politics and the use of power.

In the end, though, it was the courage of two remarkable women that created the precedent later taken up by the American writer Thoreau⁵ in his classic essay *Civil Disobedience* (1849) that in turn inspired Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. in the

5 See Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*, Boston: David R. Godine, 1969, first published in 1849.

twentieth century. Their story also ends with a lovely touch. The text says: “So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, He gave them houses” (Ex. 1:20-21).

Luzzatto interpreted this last phrase to mean that He gave them families of their own. Often, he wrote, midwives are women who are unable to have children. In this case, God blessed Shifra and Puah by giving them children, as he had done for Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel.

This too is a not unimportant point. The closest Greek literature comes to the idea of civil disobedience is the story of Antigone who insisted on giving her brother Polynices a burial despite the fact that King Creon had refused to permit it, regarding him as a traitor to Thebes. Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a tragedy: the heroine must die because of her loyalty to her brother and her disobedience to the King. By contrast, the Hebrew Bible is not a tragedy. In fact biblical Hebrew has no word meaning “tragedy” in the Greek sense. Good is rewarded, not punished, because the universe, God’s work of art, is a world in which moral behaviour is blessed and evil, briefly in the ascendant, is ultimately defeated.

Shifra and Puah are two of the great heroines of world literature, the first to teach humanity the moral limits of power. ■

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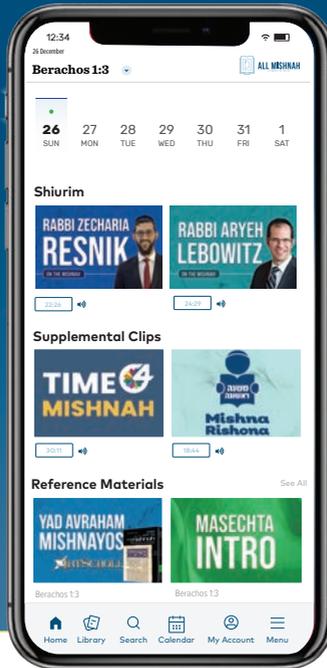


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Finding the connection between the 27th and 28th chapters of Sefer Yishayahu – the source of this week’s haftarah – and the events of the parasha is not simple. Indeed, we have discussed a number of possibilities over the past years including the words of the navi that, although Israel will be punished for her sins, she would, nonetheless, survive and return from her exile – a theme that hearkens back to the Egyptian enslavement when Israel suffered but survived and returned to their land. We also pointed to the prophet’s description of the “infantile” state of understanding among the Jews of the day who had to be taught as a child – slowly, gradually, with small steps, just as Moshe had to teach the Israelites about Hashem and His Mitzvot while they were in Egypt.

Recently, I realized that the very beginning of the haftarah parallels the opening words of the parasha, thereby creating a commonality and a connection between these two readings, something which might

have convinced the early Rabbanim to establish this section of Sefer Yishayahu as haftarah for this parasha. Our parasha begins with the statement Eleh shmot B’nei YISRA’EL HABA’IM Mitzraymah et YA’AKOV.....” and our haftarah opens with the words: “HABA’IM yashresh YA’AKOV yatzitz ufarach YISRA’EL.....” Perhaps these similarities were seen as the tie the haftarah to the parasha.

But we would be remiss were we to focus on the beginning of the haftarah alone and not take time to analyze the closing verse the 27th chapter, a well-known pasuk that ends the navi’s vision of Israel’s return to her land. It begins with the prophecy that tells of that day when “Yitakah b’shofar gadol”, a great shofar will be sounded which will herald the return of the exiles to Eretz Yisra’el.

HaRav Soloveitchik describes this momentous occasion when all men will stand before Hashem; a moment when ALL will be equal, whether refined or vulgar, whether wise or boorish, whether a believer or a heretic. And he states:

“All will feel the splendor of G-d...when confronted with the stirring blast of the shofar....All inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth without exception will

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witness His appearance and will hear His voice speaking to them from eternity and infinity....All will face Him, all hearts will be directed toward Him, all ears alert to His sound. Man will be unable to hide or be distracted; there will be no refuge or escape.”

Upon reading these words, I wonder when would any human being experience such a moment during his/her lifetime. Is there anything close to this? Can we even imagine such a time?

And it is then that I realized that indeed we all do! Or we all can! It is the moment of TEFILLAH. Prayer can be a time when our hearts are directed to Him with no distraction, a moment when we can sense G-d's presence and when we can almost hear His voice answering us. It could be a time when we feel G-d's splendor.

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RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

It's All in the Family

The opening of Sefer Shemos references the 70 offspring of Yaakov that descended to Mitzrayim. Yet, the actual names specifically mentioned are limited to the eleven sons of Yaakov (Yosef was already situated in Mitzrayim). Rather than rename all of the individuals as appears in Parshas Vayechi, the Torah uses the phrase “אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם אֵת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּא:” *“And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt; with Jacob, each man and his household came:”*

The emphasis at this juncture is twofold. One on the “family” unit. Each of the tribes arrived in Egypt with their respective children (households). Second, each tribe had their own family but the common denominator was that they were tied to Yaakov, not only physically, but in the spiritual arena as well.

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains the significance of the family at this time. As we embark on the second book of the Torah, referred to by the Ramban as “*sefer hagalus v’hageula*” (the book of the exile and exodus), the book that relays the story of the creation of the Jewish nation, we must understand that a nation is comprised of not only individuals, but of families.

Tradition is transmitted from parent to child. In order for a nation to survive, family must serve as its foundation. As the tribes entered *galus*, they took with them what they learned from their father Yaakov and transmitted it to their children. Only by combining the strength of each family are we able to build an everlasting nation.

We not only descended to Egypt as families, there is an emphasis on families when we exited as well. The korban Pesach which was sacrificed on the eve of *Yitziyas Mitzrayim*, had to be eaten together with one’s family. The salvation was not merely on an individual level, but for it to be eternal, it had to encompass the family.

It is no coincidence that we refer to a family structure as a “family tree” rather than a family map or chart. A family tree is comprised of many branches – each representing another family unit, yet they are all connected to the same trunk or roots. Essentially, they receive their “nourishment” from the same source, even though they are independent from each other. Each child builds their home based on the *masores*, the morals and principles received from their parents.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains why we compare a chasan and kallah to “*invey hagefen*”, the vines of grapes in a similar manner. Vines, unlike trees cannot stand on their own. They require something upon which to lean. Both the bride

and groom should lean on each other and use the lessons they learned from their parents as a foundation upon which to build their *bayis ne'eam b'yisrael!* We may add that families are referred to as “*mateh*” a stick, perhaps to highlight that they serve as that backbone.

As we begin our journey through *sefer Shemos*, let us utilize this time to fortify our household. To appreciate the unique attributes of each child, while maintaining a cohesive family unit. To avoid the sibling rivalry that permeates the *parshiyos* in *Sefer Bereshis*. To be able to properly convey the beauty of the Torah and our excitement when engaging in the performance of *mitzvos* to our children. By transmitting the *masores* to the next generation, we are ensuring the eternal blossoming of the Jewish nation. ■

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Righteous Reward

We meet two famous midwives in our *parashah*, Shifra and Puah, and are struck by their tremendous courage and determination to save Jewish baby boys. Their reward is forthcoming. “Hashem was good to the midwives” (*Shemot 1:20*). Yet before recording what that good entailed the *pasuk* continues, “and the people increased and became very numerous.” (*ibid.*) It is only in the following *passuk* that we are told, “Because the midwives feared G-d, He made them houses.” (*Shemot 1:21*) Can we say that this “making of houses” was the “good” Hashem bestowed even though there seems to be an interruption between the two statements?

Rav Belsky in *Einei Yisrael* comments that seeing the results of one’s actions is of the greatest benefits a person can

experience. So often we get involved in projects and endeavors, and never know if our efforts have yielded success. Teachers, for example, invest so much in their students, devoting time, concern and feeling but rarely see the full results of their efforts. Although a student may even credit a teacher for changing his life, the teacher won’t know and reap the *nachas*. In this case, the midwives witnessed the proliferation of their people, “and the people increased and became very numerous.” This was the greatest reward imaginable.

Shifra’s and Puah’s main concern was the propagation and continuity of *Am Yisrael*. Therefore, notes Rav Sorotzokin in *Meged Yosef*, this was the goodness they experienced. Since their entire focus was on the welfare of their people and not about themselves, Hashem blessed them with “houses of leadership”, instilling selflessness to guide and lead into our spiritual DNA. Nurturing Jewish women, watching their families prosper and grow, was the

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ultimate goodness possible.

A different approach is offered by the sefer *Vayavinu Bamikra*. When Paroh admonished the midwives for defying his directive, they responded that the Jewish women give birth too quickly on their own and the midwives were powerless to carry out Paroh's orders. The utmost good Hashem could give them was in validating their argument. Thus, we see that our *passuk's* (*Shemot 1:20*) flow is quite accurate. The people "increased and became very strong", a perfect proof that their argument was legitimate. The following *passuk* then describes the reward that Hashem gave the midwives, He "made for them houses", for the *yirat shamayim* they displayed.

Rav Rabinovitz, in *Tiv HaTorah* shares an appropriate message from this incident. The goodness that Hashem did for the midwives was providing them with the opportunity to save Jewish children. Each time we do a mitzvah a declaration rings in Heaven, "so and so merited to perform a mitzvah!" Baruch Hashem doing mitzvot are so much a part of what we do that we forget to realize that simply being able to do a mitzvah is a gift. This *passuk* teaches us that not only does Hashem's goodness and kindness generate our merit to do a mitzvah, but also that such merit is itself a reward. This attitude can change our perspective dramatically. The way we think about doing mitzvot shifts, and we go from, "oh, I have to do a mitzvah", to "what a *zechut* I have to do a mitzvah!" ■



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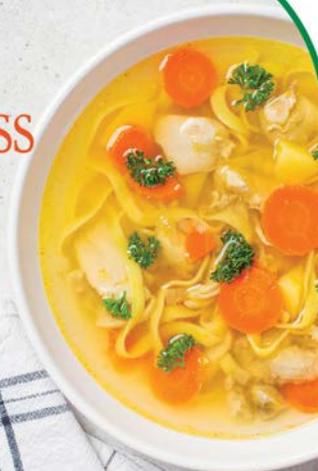
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10:55AM Brunch Break

9:15AM מצוות התלויות בארץ: What, Why, and the Wonderful Opportunity **Mrs. Adina Ellis**

11:10AM Challa Bake and Hafrashat Challah with Kitchen Coach **Rebbetzin Henny Shor**

10:05AM Hands-On Terumot u'Masrot Workshop **Mrs. Shoshan Raiz**, Machon Torah VeHa'aretz

12:10PM The Shemita Update: Q & A with **Rabbi Ezra Friedman**, Director of the OU Israel Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education



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OU Israel Center Shiurim

Register for one-time shiurim (in-person and by Zoom) at www.ouisrael.org/classes

Register for ClassPass package deal for classes by Zoom at www.ouisrael.org/classpass

SUN, DEC 26

9:00 AM

Rabbi David Walk

Tehillim: Divine Poetry

10:15 AM

Rabbi Aharon Adler

The Biblical Abraham
Accords

11:30 AM

**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

Shir haShirim

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,TH

<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

4:30 PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

Men's Gemara B'lyun
S,M,W,Th

<https://zoom.us/j/86466998217>

8:00PM

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Hilchot Shabbat (L'Ayla)

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MON, DEC 27

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Pearl Borow

Divrei Hayamim (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

Thought of Rabbi Soloveitchik

12:15 PM

Dr. Deborah Polster

Jewish History

11:45 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

(Zoom Only)

8:30PM

Rabbi Elyada Goldvicht

The Bais – Semichas Chaver
Program (Men Only)

MISSED A CLASS?

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recording at

[www.ouisrael.org/
video-library](http://www.ouisrael.org/video-library)

TUE, DEC 28

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

9:30 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Minchat Chinuch

10:30 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

Parshat HaShavua

12:15 PM

Dr. Deborah Polster

Jewish History

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

5:00 PM

Rebbetzin Sylvie Schatz

Chazal: Insights Into Our

Times (L'Ayla) <https://zoom.us/j/85177782268>

(Zoom Only)

7:30PM

Rabbi Tzvi Mauner

The Bais- Safrut Course (Men Only)

PLEASE NOTE:

Schedule Subject to
change, please check
website for updates

ouisrael.org/events/

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WED, DEC 29

9:00 AM
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel
Medina and Halacha

10:15 AM
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb
Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa

11:30 AM
Rabbi Alan Kimche
Great Jewish Thinkers

4:30PM
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM
Rabbi Baruch Taub
Halacha (Zoom only)

8:30 PM
Rav Meir Goldwicht
Parshat Hashavua (Hebrew)
[https:// zoom.us/j/2244321902](https://zoom.us/j/2244321902)
Passcode: 18

8:30 PM
Rabbi Aschi Dick
The Bais- Halachic Controversies (Men Only)

Please stay tuned for our updated Winter Semester Schedule and class pass renewal. The Winter Semester will begin Sun. Jan. 9

THURS, DEC 30

9:00 AM
Rabbi Ari Kahn
Parshat HaShavua

9:15AM
Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Sefer Kohelet (L'Ayla)

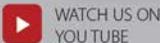
10:15 AM
Rabbi Baruch Taub
Parshat Hashavua

11:30 AM
Rabbi Finkelstein
Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

2:00 PM
Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

4:30PM
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

8:00 PM
Rabbi Daniel Mann
The Bais: Understanding the World of Batei Din (Men Only)



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8:00pm Towards Meaningful Tefilla: Biur Tefilla
Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski,
OU Israel Director of Community Programming

8:30pm Practical Kashrut: **Rabbi Ezra Friedman**, Rav Beit Knesset,
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Wednesday, December 22 - Rabbi Kimchi's shiur is sponsored by Hanna Weil in honor of the Levi Family

Rabbi Goldin's Tuesday Morning shiurim have been sponsored by a **generous donor**

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JAN. 6: Peshara and Din-In Concept and in Practice

JAN 20: Principles of Beit Din that Every Litigant Should Know

JAN. 27: Mock Trial

RABBI DANIEL MANN is a dayan at the Eretz Hemdah Beit Din, a Ram at YU's Gruss Kollel, and author of the "Vebbe Rebbe" column in Torah Tidbits.

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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

Executive Director, Camp HASC

Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Shovavim: Remove Your Shoes

When Rav Yehuda Zev Segal zt'l, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah was visiting Vienna on matters relating to the Jewish community, he unexpectedly requested to be taken to daven at the kever of the Tchortkover Rebbe, Reb Yisrael Friedman, zy'a. Those travelling with the Rosh Yeshivah were taken by surprise. While the heilige Tchortkover, a grandson of the Rhizner Rebbe, was beloved as a great *tzadik* and *talmid chacham*, Rav Segal was a traditional student of Mir, davening at *kivrei tzadikim* was not part of his typical repertoire. Furthermore, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah was known for his constant *hasmada*, singular focus on Torah study and Mussar. Exacting with his time, the Rosh Yeshivah was careful and deliberate with every moment of his day. Of what specific interest was davening by the Tchortkover's *kever*?

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva explained that years earlier, he had heard a *ma'aseh*, a story about the Tchortkover Rebbe by which he was moved and inspired:

One afternoon, the Tchortkover Rebbe was taking a walk with his holy cousin,

Reb Avraham Yaakov, the Sadigerer Rebbe. While the two righteous men strolled through the park discussing lofty ideas in Torah and Avodah, they sat down to rest on a bench. When a non-Jewish woman sat right down next to them, the Sadigerer Rebbe immediately began to stand up, but the Tchortkover Rebbe placed his hand on his cousin's knee and flashed him a look to remain seated. After some time, the Tchortkover Rebbe glanced at his watch and feigned surprise, exclaiming audibly in German, "Oy, would you look at the time... it's getting late! Dear cousin, we have to go."

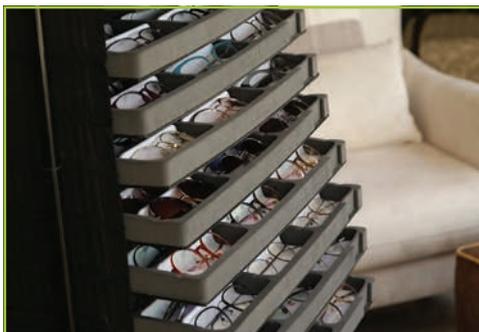
The Rosh Yeshivah said that being in Vienna reminded him of the extraordinary sensitivity of the Rebbe, and desired to daven by his *kever* in order to merit such *midos tovos* in his interactions with others.

Our sedra describes Moshe's sojourn into the desert to tend the sheep belonging to his father in law, Yisro. While shepherding, he takes note of the extraordinary sight of the Burning Bush:

וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי טָר לִרְאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּבֶה...
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-תְּקַרֵּב הֵלֶם שְׁלִי-נַעֲלֶיךָ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדָמַת-קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:

When Hashem saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush; And He said, "Do not come closer. Remove your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground" (*Shemos*, 3:5)

continued on next page...



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Q&A with Moshe Balkind,
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Rebbe Shlomo Ephraim of Lunshitz, also called the K'li Yakar, was the Rav of Prague and successor to the great Maharal. He explains Hashem's request for Moshe to remove his sandals before the *Sneh Bo'er*. Shoes serve as a separation, a protection and buffer between our feet and that which we walk upon. While walking barefoot, we feel even the smallest pebble on the ground and the slightest presence of debris. At the *Sneh Bo'er*, Hashem is summoning Moshe to become "Moshe Rabbeinu", to assume his responsibility and leadership. Asking Moshe to remove that which 'separates' him from feeling every bump and bristle was a way to further instruct Moshe in identifying with and being sensitive to the needs and feelings of the people in his charge.

"*Shovavim Ta't*" is a *roshei teivos*, an acronym for the *parshios* from Shemos through Tetzaveh, and the season in which they are read. According to mystical tradition, the season of *Shovavim* is a time of intensive spiritual inner working and opportunity for *tikun*, specifically related to matters pertaining to sexuality and other errors affecting the Sefirah of Yesod. The word *Shovavim* literally means 'wayward', as in...

Return, O' wayward sons. שׁוּבוּ בְּנִיִּים שׁוֹבְבִים (Yirmiyahu, 3:22)

During these weeks where the Torah traces the transformative process of our Nation from exile and slavery to freedom and creating a dwelling place for the Divine Presence in the Mishkan, we are

רפואה שלמה
שלמה בן אסתר

encouraged to focus on our own struggle for freedom from the *yeitzer ha-ra*. We are empowered to rectify our 'waywardness', to live with purpose and *kedushah*, and make our lives a more sensitive dwelling place for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

As we strive for deeper connectivity with Hashem and within our true selves, it is critical to remain aware of everyone around us.

.....

Rav Avraham Genechovsky zt'l, the Tchebiner Rosh Yeshivah was a great *gaon* in Torah and *midos*. Once travelling on a bus, when a woman came and sat next to him. The physical proximity was uncomfortable and less than ideal. Rav Genechovsky turned to his seatmate and with a tone of concern. "I just want to let you know that I have '*kruspidin*'...it isn't contagious, but I felt I should inform you". Understanding that he was sick, the woman quickly gathered herself, wished the Rav a *refuah sheleimah*, stood up and moved to another seat.

Later, the *talmid* accompanying him asked his Rebbi if not speaking the truth was really permissible in such a situation. Rav Genechovsky smiled: "I said the truth! *Kruspidin* is the Aramaic word used for *tzitzis*. But most importantly, I did not hurt the feelings of the woman who sat down next to me!"

In our pursuit of personal holiness, let us 'remove our shoes' to feel *where we really are*. While we are reaching for higher spiritual standards and intensive inner experience in our *avodah* this season, may we also 'go barefoot' before the 'divine presence' of other people. ■



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GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

The Cloud and the Donkey

Moshe is unsure about accepting the great mission of redeeming the Jewish people. He is simple and stuttering, intimidated by the task of facing down the greatest empire on earth. Additionally, he is perplexed by the challenge of introducing a monotheism to a band of slaves whose imaginations have been shuttered by two centuries of bondage. In addition to these reservations, he also wonders whether the people will actually believe him. Perhaps they will dismiss him as another false Messiah preying upon their hopes and vulnerabilities. How will he convince these jaded slaves that redemption has arrived?

Addressing this concern, Hashem instructs Moshe to gather the elders and convey a 'secret' message. More important than the content of this message are the words Moshe will speak. Somehow, by pronouncing the phrase פקד יפקד, the elders will be swayed and public opinion will rally around Moshe. Something about this encrypted phrase will arouse redemptive trust.

In truth, this mysterious phrase of פקד יפקד has a two-hundred year history. Yosef had already encoded this phrase as the

pass-phrase of Jewish redemption. As he begged his brothers to bury his body in Israel, Yosef informed them that, one day, Hashem would liberate the Jews from Egypt. He described that day as the day of- פקד יפקד אתכם repeating this iconic phrase twice. As Rashi elaborates, Yosef guaranteed his brothers that any person voicing this phrase is a certified agent of redemption. What makes this phrase so iconic and so reverberant with redemptive promise?

The repetitive phrase of פקד יפקד underscores that redemption will not occur immediately, but in stages. There will be an initial פקידה - or redemptive event, followed by a potentially lengthy process, culminating in a second and final פקידה. In between these two redemptive bookends the process can take many different shapes. This iconic double phrase sets a realistic timeline for geula.

Redemption arouses many unrealistic expectations. We often imagine redemption as a complete and total historical overhaul or as an apocalyptic upheaval of human history. By issuing this double-phrased pass-word of redemption, Yosef reminds us of the protracted trajectory of geula. Mentioning this phrase, Moshe demonstrates "realistic" expectations of redemption. It is precisely this more "patient" view of redemption which lends Moshe credibility. Instead of enflaming radical Messianic expectations, Moshe announces פקד יפקד, reminding

redemption-starved slaves of “the process”.

Moshe’s prognostications of a staged redemption ultimately materialize. After his initial arrival and bold demands, Moshe is hooted out of Pharo’s palace disgraced and humiliated. Worse, he is mocked by his own people, whose workload has now been multiplied in response to Moshe’s failed ultimatum. This redemptive process appears to be stalling.

The midrash paints an even gloomier picture: a sullen and dispirited Moshe retreated to his father-in-law’s estate in Midyan, defeated and deflated. He had been publicly humiliated by Pharo and spurned by his own people. To the average bystander witnessing Moshe’s withdrawal, it appeared that the redemptive process had ground to a halt. A few months later, however, the process is jump-started and Moshe returns to Egypt armed with ‘makkot’ designed to bring Pharo to his heels. In twenty-twenty hindsight this brief hiatus in Midyan was merely a blip on the radar. Historical redemption had begun!!

If the pace of the Egyptian liberation was slow and gradual, certainly the pace of our final redemption will not be immediate and uninterrupted. The geulah from Egypt is often characterized as “chipazon”, since it occurred in lightning-fast fashion without time or wherewithal to process the rapidly unfolding events. By contrast, our final geula is described as the antithesis of chipazon. In chapter 52 Yeshaya writes:

חצאון חצאון - כי לא בחפזון חצאון - unlike the Egyptian redemption our final geulah will not be swift. If the “chipazon redemption” from Egypt wasn’t instantaneous we certainly shouldn’t harbor unrealistic expectations

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for our own “non-chipazon” geula. It may take some time.

We have opened the door to the final chapter of history. The phrase **ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו** connotes that we have experienced a pre-redemptive or “preliminary” redemptive event, which has shifted history into its final chapter. However, this process may extend over decades or even centuries. It may also exhibit lags and even regressions. Setbacks to the process or pauses in the process do not signal failure or abortion of the process. Redemption requires patience.

Two events over the past 25 years caused many to question the redemptive nature of our return to our Homeland. The Oslo accords of the mid-90’s and the withdrawal from Azza in the mid 00’s confused those who expected more immediate or unambiguous redemption. Sadly, many even debated the accuracy of the phrase **ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו**. The double password of **פקד יפקד** reminds us that, more often than not, redemption isn’t immediate and electric but staged and plodding.

In his prophecies, Doniel describes Moshiach as arriving on clouds of glory. Perhaps, there is a model of redemption which is as soft and elegant as a cloud.

By contrast, Zechariah describes Moshiach as arriving on a donkey. A donkey is slow and plodding, not light and airy. A donkey ride is bumpy and jerky and sometimes the rider falls off. The final ride of history is more likely to be rocky and bumpy than smooth and level. We may fall off the donkey from time to time. The donkey may reverse its tracks. But steadily we advance toward our destiny. By cloud or by donkey redemption is inevitable. ■

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Purchasing Shemita Trees and Plants

The prohibition of supporting shemita desecrators

The *pasuk* in *Vayikra* 19:14 relates the prohibition against putting a stumbling block before the blind. The practical halacha learned from this is that one may not cause another person to sin, such as giving him non-kosher food to eat. The Biblical prohibition applies only when someone directly causes the other to sin, as in the example regarding non-kosher food. In addition, there is a Rabbinic prohibition against assisting others to sin, even indirectly. For example, the *Mishnah* (*Shevi'it* 5:6) lists different gardening tools that may not be sold during shemita to someone who is likely to desecrate it. The prohibition exists even if the buyer has other stores to purchase from (see *Yechave Da'at* 3:67).

The *Rambam* rules that even providing emotional support, such as complementing another's garden that was tended to during shemita, is prohibited. In his commentary to the *Mishnah* (ibid), the *Rambam* explains that it is forbidden to provide any type of support, whether financial or emotional, which is directly or indirectly causing the

sinner to feel some type of satisfaction or gain.

Purchasing trees

Early authorities rule that it is prohibited to sell a field of trees to someone who won't keep shemita (*Radbaz*, *Shemita Veyovel* 3:11). Some later authorities extend this to selling a house with a garden during shemita (*Chut Shani* 8:6). Regarding purchasing trees grown in the ground, it is clear that if the trees were planted during shemita, they are prohibited to purchase.

As noted above, an obvious reason not to buy such trees is the prohibition of supporting desecrators. With trees there is an even more significant issue. As an expansion to the prohibition of planting during shemita, our Sages decreed that one may not plant trees (neither fruit-bearing nor ornamental) even earlier if it is too close to the onset of shemita. Furthermore, our Sages rule that if someone did so, the tree must be uprooted, even years later. Even if the tree passed through numerous owners, the final owner who realizes the violation must uproot the tree and let it rot (see *Mishpetei Eretz* p.118). If the law is so strict for this Rabbinic prohibition, how much more so if a tree was planted illicitly during the shemita year itself, a clear violation of Biblical law. It is forbidden to own or benefit from such a tree, even years later.

This halacha applies also when receiving a shemita tree as a gift. No matter how



many owners it has passed through, even if it belonged to non-Jews in between, the final Jewish owner must uproot it and let it decay.

Purchasing potted plants

Potted plants, both perforated and sealed, are grown and sold in plant nurseries and stores all over Israel. Since potted plants don't have the same severity as trees which grow directly in the ground, the *halachot* regarding them are somewhat different.

Trees which are grown in **perforated pots** during *shemita* must be uprooted no matter how many owners they have passed through. The same is true if one received such a tree as a gift (*Mishpetei Eretz* 8:15). As opposed to trees, annual or perennial plants, may be received as a gift (*Aruch Hashulchan Ha'atid* 17:3). Nevertheless, it is not proper to purchase any type of plant from a store or distributor that does not abide by the laws of *shemita*. Purchasing from a store that sells trees or plants grown during *shemita* is included in the *Mishnah* and the *Rambam's* ruling against supporting or encouraging those who desecrate *shemita*.

Trees which are grown in **sealed pots** do not need to be uprooted, even if one inadvertently purchased a tree that was planted during *shemita*. If one receives trees or plants in sealed pots as a gift, there is also no halachic concern (Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv as quoted in *Mishpetei Eretz*

p.119). However, according to certain opinions, it is still deemed improper to purchase even sealed plants from an establishment or distributor who desecrates *shemita*.

In Summary:

- It is prohibited to assist a Jew (either directly or indirectly) in the desecration of *shemita*.
- encouraging someone verbally such as commenting on a nice garden planted during *shemita* is also prohibited.
- It is improper to purchase any type of plant or tree from an establishment or distributor who desecrates *shemita*.
- Trees planted during *shemita* may not be purchased, even if received as a gift the tree must be uprooted and left to decay.
- It is prohibited to purchase or receive as a gift trees planted in perforated pots on *shemita*. In such a case the tree must also be uprooted.
- If someone received plants (either annual or perennial) in perforated or non-perforated pots one may receive it as a gift and maintain it. ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Sefer Shemot begins by recalling the names of Yakov Avinu's children who came to live in Egypt, and the passing of that entire generation. The Torah then tells us:

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ עַל-מִצְרָיִם אַשֶּׁר לֹא יָדָע אֶת-יוֹסֵף:

A new king rose over Egypt, who did not know of Yosef.

Our meforshim (commentaries) are struck by this statement, given Yosef's influence and prominence in Egypt, how could it be possible that just a generation later, a new King would come upon Mitzrayim, who did not know of Yosef?

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch zt'l suggests that the language of "A new King rose over Egypt" connotes not a normal legitimate succession to the royal throne, rather some sort of hostile takeover from a foreign power. Had the new ruler been part of the idigineous Egyptian royalty, he surely would have heard of Yosef!

Rashi quoting the gemara in Sotah offers these two keen insights:

וּיְקָם מֶלֶךְ חָדָשׁ — Rav and Shmuel differed in their interpretation of these words. One said that he was really a new king; the other said that it was the same king but he made new decrees. אשר לא ידע — he conducted himself as though he did not know him.

Onkelos interprets the verse as follows:

וְקָם מֶלֶכָא חֲדָתָא עַל מִצְרַיִם דְּלֵא מְקִיָּם גְּזֵרַת יוֹסֵף

-And a new King rose upon Egypt, who did not fulfill the decrees of Yosef.

What decrees or specific decree that Yosef enacted, did this new Paroh, decide to either ignore or do away with?

The Chatam Sofer zt'l offered this brilliant insight .

What was that gezeira which Yosef decreed, that every Egyptian male should be circumcised. The Egyptians interpreted this as being a statement not solely of morality or values, but that somehow this would impact and control the population during the difficult lean years of famine which Yosef predicted.

However, Yosef's true intent was that if circumcision would become the norm within

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Egyptian society, then it would be ensured that the subsequent generations of the Jewish People who would come to live in Egypt, would not feel the pull to assimilate and give up th mitzva of brit mila.

As Paroh came to realize that the Jews were indeed continuing to have many offspring, and that circumcision did not impede fertility in anyway, he realized that he had misinterpreted the intent of Yosef's gezeira, and therefore chose to retract or ignore this decree, and end the mandate that every Egyptian male should be circumcised.

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlop *zt'l* points out that from the time of Yosef's initial meeting with Paroh, when Paroh summoned Yosef to interpret his troubling dream, and Yosef replies that it is Hashem who will offer the answer, Paroh had accepted Yosef's faith and trust in *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. However, with his expressed desire to abandon and reject the decrees and lessons of Yosef *HaTzadik*, Paroh is essentially saying I no longer trust and put my faith in Hashem, I no longer trust you, or your G-d!

This actually comes out in Paroh's later reply to Moshe *Rabbeinu*- I do not know your G-d, and I shall not set the Jewish People free.

Rav Avigdor Nebentzhl, *shlita* astutely points out that we learn from Paroh's changed approach and words a fundamental lesson. When a person forgets or denies the good that another person has

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done for him, in the end this will lead to a denial of the good which Hashem does for each of us.

May each of us be blessed to learn this eternal lesson, to continue to see the good in one another, to see and appreciate the divine spark within one another, and to appreciate the many, many gifts that Hashem provides each of us with day in and day out. ■



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PARENTING COLUMN

OU Israel has recently launched a new parenting center, aimed at helping anglo Olim deal with parenting challenges. Run in partnership with the Jerusalem Municipality, the parenting center offers parenting lectures, panels, and workshops. We are excited to kick-off a new OU Israel parenting column in the Torah Tidbits this week. This column will be authored by a team of mental health professionals with expertise in parenting, and will address parenting questions sent in by readers. Feel free to send in any parenting questions you may have to parenting@ouisrael.org (Details will be changed to preserve anonymity).

Inaugural OU Israel Parenting Center Q & A Column

Why is parenting so hard? If you've wondered this, you are certainly not alone. Enough other people have been curious about the same thing that typing "why is parenting" into the Google search bar returns "so hard" as the top search term. Even after the davening, gratitude lists, self-affirming mantras, and *chizzuk* from family and friends, we sometimes find ourselves feeling overwhelmed by the daily requirements of operating our homes. What is it about raising kids—a practice that people have been involved in for literally the entirety of human history—that remains so puzzling and exhausting?

Certainly, each parent will have her or his own way to describe the biggest challenges to raising children, as each family's circumstances are unique. However, based on my own experience, as well as many conversations I have had with other parents, I think that a main factor contributing to the anxieties of childrearing is the daily struggle to balance competing values and needs. Parents must make countless decisions, big and small, accounting for the diverse interests of each member of their family. Without a clear manual to provide guidance for the process of making these tough decisions, and without prophecy to know how each decision will affect the child's future, even the most thoughtful parents feel unsettled at times in the face of uncertainty.

When should we force our kid to stay home and study, and when should we let

Jonathan Rosenblum, DPM

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him decide for himself how much time he wants to invest in schoolwork?

How should we balance commitment to our own career against spending more time with our children?

A household chore that I value is a constant source of conflict with my child—when I should enforce it, and when should I let it slide?

How do I know if my child is experiencing above normal levels of anxiety or depression?

My child is having an argument with her friend. When should I intervene, and when should I let her figure it out for herself?

My child is showing signs of religious discontent. How do I speak with him about it, and how hard should I push him to be involved religiously?

Or more generally, when should we provide active guidance, and when should we take a step back and foster our child's independence?

These are just some of the types of questions that come up on a weekly, even daily basis in many homes. In addition to these general questions, many families face unique challenges that add to the complexity of parenting, such as the pressures of single parenthood; children with physical, developmental, or cognitive delays; illness in the family; loss in the family; economic strain; or any number of circumstances that can make the hard work of parenting even more vexing.

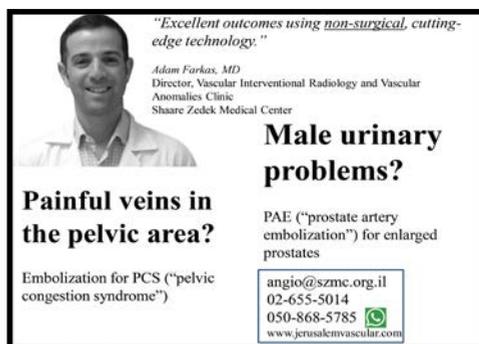
In many cases, parents find helpful support from a network of trusted family and friends. In other cases, however, parents who frequently grapple with these types

of questions are not sure who to ask for support. This may be especially true for *olim*, who may not have a robust network of friends who understand the pressures of *Aliyah*. In recent months, OU Israel, in conjunction with the Jerusalem municipality, has launched the OU Israel Parenting Center, an initiative aimed at supporting Anglo-olim who are looking for parenting resources from experts in the field. Starting next week, Torah Tidbits will include a column that addresses parenting questions sent in by readers, and authored by a team of mental health professionals. This forum will allow parents to receive perspectives on how to manage with specific issues that they confront with their children and families. We encourage you to send in your questions to

parenting@ouisrael.org.

We look forward to receiving your questions, and supporting you in the most important and valuable work of all: raising our next generation! ■

Ethan Eisen received semicha from RIETS, and a PhD in clinical psychology from GWU. He authored the recently published book focusing on Torah and psychology, "Talmud on the Mind."



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... SO I SAID TO HIM, "LOOK, ZERUBAVEL, I DON'T CARE HOW CUTE YOU THINK YOU ARE, YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING IN MY UNDERWEAR DRAWER." AND HE STUCK HIS LONG TAIL UP AT ME AND LEAPT ONTO MY PILLOW INSTEAD! SO I HAD TO TRY CURLING UP IN MY UNDERWEAR DRAWER! HUH! Y'SEE THE KIND OF PEOPLE I HAVE TO DEAL WITH?



Y'KNOW, DUDE, YOU DO TALK A LOT OF...

SENSE? INGENUITY? DOWNRIGHT WORLD-CLASS, INSPIRATIONAL...



BALONEY.

BALONEY?!



BALONEY?!



I LIKES BALONEY, I DOES! GOES WELL WITH A NICE BATH-LOAD OF CHOLENT, AND SEVERAL SWIMMING-POOLS OF BEER! HIC!



OH, AND WINE, YES, GLORIOUS WINE! THAT IRRITATING PROPHET KEEPS SAYING I SHOULD STOP WITH THE WINE, BUT I TELL HIM TO STOP WITH HIS WHINING! GET IT?!



YESHAYAHU?

YES, HELLO, AGAIN. YOU'VE CAUGHT ME IN THE MIDDLE OF ANOTHER PROPHECY, ALTHOUGH I DON'T THINK MY AUDIENCE MINDS THE INTERRUPTION VERY MUCH...



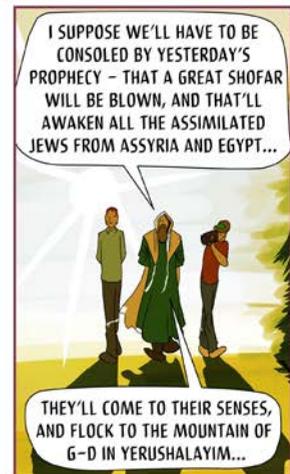
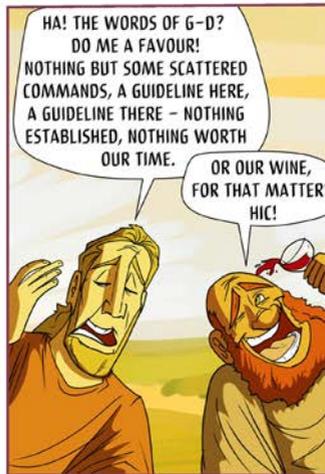
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BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center
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Crisis and Faith

Parshat Shemot introduces us to a new era in the life of Bnei Yisrael. Suddenly, the people are the object of what today we call anti-Semitism; they are a perceived threat to the hegemony of the most powerful nation on earth. Consequently, they are increasingly oppressed by their taskmasters in the classical manner of ruthless governments.

And the question that arises is, “From where will come the people’s salvation?”

The Torah narrative then records (somewhat mysteriously) that an anonymous man and woman from the House of Levi gave birth to a baby boy. Furthermore, the baby is saved from death by no less than the daughter of the arch tyrant Pharaoh. And finally, the infant is given an Egyptian name, grows up in Pharaoh’s palace, and to all intents and purposes is an Egyptian who later gains control of the palace (Midrash).

This sounds somewhat like a comic strip Superman-like story. For the young prince, whose Jewish roots have remained hidden all those years, is inspired to see what has become of his people. Surely, then, like Esther of the Purim story years later, Moshe could have prevailed on the king to reverse his malicious “Jewish policy.”

But no! In a seeming moment of rage

– or as several commentators propose, in a moment of calculated Halachic determination – Moshe risks everything by smiting an Egyptian beating up a Jewish slave (worthy of death for inappropriate behavior with the slave’s wife; see Rashi).

The result: Moshe’s influence with the royal court dissipated entirely. The people were now at the complete mercy of the Egyptian dictator! – But why would Moshe have acted so?

Rabbi M. Miller proposes that Moshe’s actions were by no means brash. Beyond the conception that the Egyptian was worthy of his punishment, Moshe understood that the people should not depend on another human being or worldly power to save them from persecution. With Moshe out of the picture, the slaves would now have to nurture their faith in Hashem. And, indeed, later in the Parsha, we see the flowering of this trust in God.

Perhaps, in our times, we might yet ask if we have the requisite faith that Hashem will extricate us from the morass in which we find ourselves, namely, the loss of the moral compass that pervades society in this so-called enlightened era. ■

Shabbat Shalom! *Menachem Persoff*



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Giving Away *Orla* Fruit

Question: I have a tree in its second year, so that its fruit is *orla*. Can I suggest to my non-Jewish worker to take it?

Answer: It is not only forbidden to eat *orla* fruit but even to benefit from them. The main non-eating benefits discussed regarding *issurei hana'ah* are physical (e.g., using *orla* for paint or fuel – Pesachim 22b), feeding animals (ibid. 22a) and selling.

The Rambam (Ma'achalot Assurot 8:16) forbids giving *issurei hana'ah* to non-Jews as a present. The Kolbo (92) points out that this prohibition is implicit, according to some, in the Torah's formulation of the prohibition of *neveila* (meat of an animal that was not *shechted* properly) – one must not eat it but give it to a non-Jew who enjoys special standing (*ger toshav*) or sell it to another non-Jew (Devarim 14:21). Rav Avahu (Pesachim 21b) learns, according to R. Meir, that **had it been** forbidden to benefit from *neveila*, it would have been

forbidden to give it to a non-Jew.

The logic is that giving presents causes reciprocity in some way/time, making the present a cause of benefit to the giver, and this is expanded to less direct cases. The Rama (Yoreh Deah 294:8) forbids helping a non-Jew pick his *orla* fruit, even for free, because the owner will be grateful. There is more room for leniency when the benefit is indirect. For one, the Avnei Nezer (Orach Chayim 489) posits that if one did not intend to enjoy the recipient's gratefulness, it is permitted to provide him the *orla*. However, it is difficult for one who gives a present to determine he has no intention for beneficial good will, and such a situation can also create other halachic problems (ibid.), which it is unclear how easy it is to overcome (see Beit She'arim, OC 61; Chatam Sofer, Avoda Zara 64b).

The way to do things is not to present the *orla* as a gift, but to make your worker aware of the situation. Explain that you must not benefit from the fruit, that if no one takes them you will throw them out, and therefore you have nothing to lose (and even a little toil to gain) if someone, including him, takes them.

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The following is the main source that allowing people to take *issurei hana'ah*, as opposed to giving a gift, is permitted. The *mishna* (Bava Kama 108b-109a) rules on one whose father used a *neder* to preclude his son from benefit from his property, and then the father died, and the son inherited the property. The son may indeed not benefit from the property, but he can direct it to his relative who may benefit from it. The Ran (Nedarim 47a) asks why this transfer of the property to the person of the son's choice is not forbidden benefit. The Ran answers that the son is not allowed to give it to them regularly. Rather, he is to explain to them that he cannot use it himself, and therefore, from his perspective, they may as well take it. The Shach (YD 223:4) accepts this Ran, including that the son must mention that he has no use for the property. If you do so regarding the *orla*, it should work for you as well.

There are times that one may not give to a non-Jew, an object that is forbidden for Jews out of a concern that it will end up in the hands of Jews who will not realize the object's status (see Avoda Zara 65b). However, this is not a broad concern, at least regarding things that people know need a *kashrut* check. Regarding *orla*, the

gemara (Avoda Zara 21a) and Shulchan Aruch (YD 294:14) allow people, in preparation of their trees producing *orla*, to sell or have a partnership with a non-Jew so that the non-Jew gets the fruit during the years of *orla* and the Jew gets them afterward. Rav Kook (Mishpat Kohen 6) says that such actions are permitted because they were done before the prohibited fruit existed, which would imply that at the stage you refer to, it would be a problem to make such fruit available. However, he discussed transferring an orchard of *orla*, which is meant for commercial use, which may go to Jews, as opposed to your small amount of fruit meant for personal consumption. The fact that you will mention that Jews may not eat it is also helpful. ■

Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join.

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RABBI GIDEON

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Last time we saw the beginning of the Talmudic story (Berachot 10a) of how God sent Yeshayahu to visit Chizkiyahu under the ruse of visiting the sick king. But the real purpose was for the prophet to rebuke Chizkiyahu for not being married and not having any children. “Set your house in order, for you will die and you will not live” (Yeshayahu 38:1). What is the meaning of you will die and you will not live? This repetition means: You will die in this world, and you will not live, you will have no share, in the World-to-Come. Chizkiyahu said to him: What is all of this? Yeshayahu said to him: Because you did not marry and engage in procreation.”

Chizkiyahu was taken aback by the somewhat brutal greeting proffered by Yeshayahu, and, after hearing the explanation, he had his own rationale to offer.

“Chizkiyahu said: I had no children because I envisaged through divine inspiration that the children that emerge from me will not be virtuous. Yeshayahu said to him: Why do you involve yourself with the secrets of the Holy One, Blessed be He? That which you have been commanded, you are required to perform, and that which is God’s responsibility let Him take care of.”

Chizkiyahu had a solid claim to his

conscious decision to desist from having children. He did not want to have undesirable children, as he had seen through Ruach Hakodesh. But Yeshayahu did not accept this justification; man is commanded to perform mitzvot, and the result of such action is out of one’s hands.

The Talmud continues with the story.

“Chizkiyahu said to Yeshayahu: Now give me your daughter as my wife; perhaps my merit and your merit will cause virtuous children to emerge from me.

Yeshayahu said to him: The decree has already been decreed against you.

Chizkiyahu said to him: Son of Amotz, cease your prophecy and leave. I have received a tradition from the house of my father’s father, from King David, even if a sharp sword rests upon a person’s neck, he should not stop praying for mercy.”

This Talmudic tale suggests that having concerns for our children is not sufficient grounds for desisting to procreate and, despite the potentially problematic outcome, we are commanded to have children.

It should be pointed out that Chizkiyahu did subsequently marry and had a son, Menashe, who was to grow up to be one of the worst of all the kings. He was such a sinner, and caused the people to sin, that our Sages taught us (Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:2) that he has no portion in the next world. And still Chizkiyahu was commanded to have children! More on this next time. ■

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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



The Last Section of Shemoneh Esrei

The following story was told about Rav Aharon Lichtenstein by his son-in-law at his Shloshim. One of Rav Lichtenstein's daughters faced life-threatening complications immediately after child birth. The entire family gathered in the hospital, as she entered into emergency surgery. The family joined together in fervent recitation of Tehillim. A short time later, a doctor came out and informed the family that the surgery was successful. With great joy, everyone ran to the operating room....except for Rav Lichtenstein. His son-in-law noticed his father-in-law continuing to say Tehillim as if he hadn't heard the words of the doctor. He tapped his father-in-law and told him that everything was ok and they could go see the mother and baby. Rav Lichtenstein responded as follows, "I'm aware that she's okay, but how can we just close our Tehillim when we don't need Hashem anymore?". The two of them then continued davening,

albeit a different type of Tefilla, illustrating that one shouldn't turn to Hashem only in times of need but also in times of joy. This was a natural outgrowth of Rav Lichtenstein's special connection with Hashem. (This story appears in the book *From the Source with Spirit: Hilchot Tefilla*)

We see from here that it would be inconceivable to end Shemoneh Esrei at the conclusion of the section of the בקשות, our long list of requests. To do so would mean that we completely missed the point of Tefilla.

As we quoted at the start of our study of the Shemoneh Esrei, there is a famous Gemara (Berachot 34a) which explains that the structure of the Shemoneh Esrei must be similar to that of a slave's interaction with his master:

א"ר חנינא- ראשונות דומה לעבד שמסדר שבח לפני רבו, אמצעיות דומה לעבד שמבקש פרס מרבו, אחרונות דומה לעבד שקבל פרס מרבו

Rabbi Hanina said: During the first three blessings, one is like a servant who arranges

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praise before his master; during the middle blessings, one is like a servant who requests a reward from his master; during the final three blessings, one is like a servant who already received a reward from his master and is taking his leave and departing.

We must begin with praise (and we explained that this was not to butter up Hashem but rather to remind *ourselves* before making our requests just how powerful Hashem is and that He has the ability to solve all of our problems), then make our requests, and then “take leave”.

Though the crux of our Shemoneh Esrei is the section of the בקשות, the goal is not the answering of our requests but rather, creating a relationship with Hashem. So we need to end our Shemoneh Esrei not with requests, but with a conclusion that reflects this building of the relationship.

So how do we “take leave” of Hashem in a way which helps to build our relationship with Him? We do so with the last section of Shemoneh Esrei, which we call the section of הודאה. We will see that while only one of the three last brachot (מודים) actually focuses on us thanking Hashem (להודות), all three of them do focus on us recognizing and acknowledging (להודות) our long-standing relationship with Hashem. And while we do find some requests among these brachot, they differ from the brachot in the בקשות

section because they are specifically expressions of a desire to form a deep relationship with Hashem, for both His and our sake.

Below is a summary of the three components of how we “take leave” of Hashem-

1. רצה - We express our hope that we have found favor in Hashem’s eyes, that Hashem enjoyed our conversation as much as we did, and that He took pleasure in connecting with us.

2. מודים – Although we have not yet received everything we asked for just moments ago, we should be confident enough in our Tefillot to feel as if we have been granted our requests and therefore, we must thank Hashem profusely and recognize the source of our salvation.

3. שים שלום – It is time now to “go in peace” - We ask for a continued good relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu, even when we are not in direct conversation with Him. We would like to leave this experience with a renewed relationship of peace and connection.

In the upcoming articles, we will look at these aspects in more detail. But for now, let’s remember the important message that our Shemoneh Esrei is not about beseeching Hashem in times of dire need, but about building a long-lasting and consistent relationship with Him. ■



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Burn or Bond?

Have you ever seen a thorn bush? Would you really think it's the type of lofty place that G-d would pick as His first choice to appear in?

Rav Hirsch's commentary on the episode of the Sneh posits that the Torah is like a burning fire, full of passion and excitement. And yet, a fire is destructive, consuming and dangerous.

Moshe is about to embark on an epic task to demand of Am Israel to recognize Hashem as their G-d. Am Israel is tired and consumed from the harsh slavery in Mitzraim. Religion can be a demanding and draining practice full of self-sacrifice. How can Am Israel exert themselves to do their Creator's will when they have nothing left to give? Hashem heads this worry off with the promise that His G-dly fire is one that warms and strengthens instead of weakening and consuming. It can even take something so lowly as a thorn bush and make it holy.

The Sneh is likened to the fire that came down on Har Sinai during Matan Torah. Then too, Hashem picked a modest and earthly place to make His presence known. Fire needs fuel to burn and whatever it consumes also becomes its dwelling.

Without a place to be and something to nourish it, fire is nothing. The fire of the Sneh was different. It came from the heart of the bush without consuming it. We are the bush, the fuel of the Torah's fire. If we don't learn it, perpetuate it and internalize it, the Torah cannot exist. If we give it a home to dwell in, however, it will warm us from within.

Rav Hirsch explains that the fire was not there to burn the Sneh, but rather to exist within it. So too, the Torah lives within our souls, it is what bonds us without burning us. We are not the object of the consumption, rather the dwelling place of Hashem's representation in this world.

Even when we find ourselves in the lowest of places, Hashem's fire is ready to reignite our souls, if we just let it.



Elish Eisenberg
11th Grade, Neve
Daniel

The Original Anti-Semite

In the beginning of Parshat Shemot the Torah writes:

"ויקם מלך חדש על מצרים אשר לא ידע את יוסף"

But how could it be that Pharaoh didn't know about Yosef? Wasn't Yosef the most famous man in Egypt second only to Pharaoh himself?

I don't think it was that Pharaoh didn't

know of Yosef, everyone knew of Yosef. I think that the new Pharaoh didn't want to be associated with "The Hebrew". Historians believe that there were two classes in ancient Egypt: the nobility and the peasants. When it says a new king arose, it could be understood that there was an uprising or a coup. In other words, there was a change of leadership. When there is a change of leadership, the new leader will want nothing to do with the previous administration.

In addition to distancing himself from Yosef who (back in parashat Miketz) took control of the economy and all the food, Pharaoh started the stereotype that the Jew has control over money and resources. He also started the classic accusation that they aren't loyal to the state and would align with a foreign invader, not Egypt. Because of this fear of Yosef, he enslaved all the Hebrews.

Pharaoh was the first of many to generalize and stereotype the Jewish people. Pharaoh is the original anti-Semite. ■

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Real Life Rescues



A Non-Jew Rescues A Jewish Baby Near The Bank of A River

Afiw Bkreia lives in the Druze town of Peki'in and works as a park ranger in the national park of Nachal Amud in Israel's Galilee. He is married with one son and is a volunteer EMT with United Hatzalah. A few months ago on a Tuesday evening, Afiw was staying late at the park to close up and make sure that all of the visitors had left.

Just after 5:00 p.m., Afiw was finishing up some paperwork in his office when he heard a woman screaming outside. "My baby is dead," the woman shouted.

"When I heard the screams I ran outside and saw a woman holding a baby" Afiw recounted. "She was screaming and running with him. I ran up to her. She told me that her son had choked and was dying. I told her that I was a United Hatzalah EMT and I took the baby from her arms. I saw that his eyes were rolled back in his head and he was turning blue due to a lack of oxygen. Thankfully, he still had a pulse. I put my hand underneath him and I began to administer measured back blows in order to help the baby dislodge the food trapped in his windpipe."

"While I was holding the baby, he began to lose consciousness and his body loosened up. The baby's parents turned away, unable to look at their son dying. I told myself that I would not give up. I turned the baby so that he was facing downwards and I applied a stronger back blow. I opened his mouth and with my finger attempted to dislodge the blockage. I was able to remove a bit of it and on the next back blow, a piece of banana flew out of the baby's mouth. The baby began to breathe again. I held the baby as he was allowing him to take in more breaths and I made sure that his airway stayed open. His color slowly began to return to normal. I asked another person to get below the baby and tell me what he saw happening to the baby's face and he told me that the baby's color was returning to normal."



Afiw took a deep breath of relief. "I heard the baby breathing and it sounded like part of the food was still stuck in his throat. I debated whether or not to lift the baby up because I was worried that he would choke once more. People began to gather around me. I started to activate them and told them to call United Hatzalah's dispatch to send additional help. I needed to keep my cool because everyone around me was hysterical. I heard the mother in the background crying that her baby was dead. I told one of the people standing nearby to bring the mother over and see that her son was still alive. At first, she didn't believe me. I insisted that she come and see that everything was going to be okay. After the baby was breathing normally again, I lifted him up and he succeeded at swallowing the remaining blockage of banana. That is when other responders began to arrive. They took the baby and transferred him to an ambulance so that he could be taken to the hospital and monitored. The family thanked me profusely and the father gave me the biggest hug I had had in a long time."

"I have been present at many emergencies involving CPR, there was even a CPR on an infant in my village and unfortunately, I was not able to help in that situation," Afiw said. "Thankfully in this instance, I was able to help before it became a CPR situation. I want to thank God for giving me this opportunity, and for choosing me to save this baby's life. It fills me with joy to know that I had a hand in it."

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