



TAMARA SABAN
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DIRECTOR

NO RISK, NO REWARD!

We begin the second book of the Torah, **Shemot**, where we read about the Children of Israel multiplying in Egypt and Pharaoh's frustration that they continue to increase in number. In response, he orders the Jewish midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth.

The Torah states (Shemot 1:20–21):

“וַיִּטֹּב אֱלֹקִים לַמִּיֻּלָּדֹת וַיִּרְבַּ הָעָם וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ מְאֹד:
וַיְהִי כִּי־יֵרְאוּ הַמִּיֻּלָּדֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בְּתִים:

“And God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and increased greatly. And God established households for the midwives.”

What does it mean that Hashem “dealt well with the midwives”? What was their reward for saving the Jewish babies?

Rashi comments that the reward for the midwives was that Hashem established households for them. The Or HaChaim, however, points out that if that were the full explanation, there would have been no need to interrupt the sentence with “the people multiplied and increased greatly.”

The pasuk teaches us something deeper: the very increase of the Jewish people was connected to the midwives’ courage and care. By feeding and protecting the newborns, they enabled the growth of the nation. Hashem

“dealt well” with them—not only by establishing their households, but also by providing them with sustenance and the means to continue their life-saving work. Their bravery and willingness to risk their own safety directly contributed to the flourishing of the Jewish people.

From Shifrah and Puah, we learn the sacred value of every single Jewish life. Each of us has a responsibility to help—physically, financially, emotionally, and spiritually—to ensure the safety and well-being of our fellow brothers and sisters. True reward comes not just from personal gain, but from selfless action on behalf of others.

Shabbat Shalom



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FROM YOSEF TO MOSHE: A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

As we begin the book of **Shemot**, we transition from Yosef’s story to Moshe’s story. Moshe was the greatest leader of the Jewish people, so it is interesting that toward the end of the book of **Devarim**, we see Moshe begging Hashem to let him enter the Land of Israel.

Moshe said to Hashem, “Master of the Universe, Yosef’s bones entered the Land, but I did not enter the Land?” Hashem replied, “He who acknowledged his Land is buried in his Land, and he who did not acknowledge his Land is not buried in his Land” (Devarim Rabbah 2:8).

But when did Yosef acknowledge his Land? Yosef acknowledged the Land when his master's wife said, "Look! He brought us a Hebrew man..." and he did not deny it. Rather, he said, "I was stolen away from the Land of the Hebrews." Because of this, Yosef was buried in Israel (Bereshit 39:14). However, in this week's parsha (Shemot 2:19), when Moshe heard Yitro's daughters say, "An Egyptian man saved us from the shepherds," he remained silent. Therefore, he was not buried in Israel, as he did not acknowledge that he was a Hebrew man and not an Egyptian man.

This comparison does not seem to make sense. After all, Yosef grew up in Eretz Yisrael and was truly stolen from there, whereas Moshe had never stepped foot in the Holy Land.

Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtza explains that from the moment Hashem promised the Land to Avraham Avinu, every Jew must see himself as a native of Eretz Yisrael. This means that if a Jew who lives outside of Israel is asked where he is from, he must say, "I am from Eretz Yisrael, but for the time being I find myself in a temporary dwelling place in the Diaspora." That is what Moshe should have said when Yitro's daughters called him Egyptian, because a

Jewish person and the Land of Israel are incomplete without one another. ■

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