

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS SHMOS - 5757

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"ohr@jer1.co.il" "parasha-qa@jer1.co.il" Parsha Q&A - Shmos  
\* PARSHA Q&A \* In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Ohr Somayach's web site: <http://www.ohr.org.il>

Parsha Questions

1. Why did the Egyptians specifically chose water as the means of killing the Jewish children? Give two reasons. 2. "And they will go up out of the land." Who said this and what did he mean? 3. Why was Yocheved called 'Shifrah'? Why was Miriam called 'Puah'? 4. How did Hashem reward the midwives? 5. Who was Yocheved's father? 6. "She saw that he was good" What was 'good' about Moshe that distinguished him from other babies? 7. Moshe killed an Egyptian who was striking a Jew. Who was the Jewish man's wife? 8. Who were the two Hebrew men who were fighting with each other? 9. Why did the Midianites drive Yisro's daughters away from the well? 10. How did Yisro know that Moshe was a descendant

B'S'D' of Yaakov? 11. Why did Moshe go far away to pasture Yisro's sheep? 12. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed? 13. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted Hashem's promise to take them out of Egypt? 14. What was symbolized by the staff turning into a snake? 15. How long did Hashem try to persuade Moshe to go to redeem the Jewish People? 16. Why was Moshe reluctant to assume the role of leader of the Jewish people? 17. "And Hashem was angry with Moshe..." What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger? 18. Concerning which plague was Pharaoh warned first? 19. Who were the: a) nogsim; b) shotrim? 20. Why were the shotrim beaten?  
Bonus QUESTION: Why did Moshe risk the spiritual and physical dangers involved in bringing his wife and children to Egypt?  
I Did Not Know That! When Yisro learned that Moshe had killed an Egyptian, Yisro threw him into a pit. For ten years Tzipora sustained Moshe by bringing him food, until such time as Yisro realized Moshe's righteousness. Targum Yonasan

Recommended Reading List

Ramban 1:10 Politics of Genocide 2:2 Certainty of Moshe's Rescue 3:5 The Burning Bush 3:8 Qualities of Eretz Yisrael 3:12 Moshe's Concerns 3:18 The Code Word for Redemption 4:10 Moshe's Speech Impeding 4:13 Moshe's Humility 4:19 Moshe's Family as Proof Sforno 2:10 Moshe's Name 2:11,13,17 Reactions to Injustice Kli Yakar 2:2 Light and Three Months 2:7 Prophecy of Miriam 2:13 Striking Words

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 1:10 & 22 - Since Hashem promised Noah never to flood the entire world, the Egyptians chose water, hoping to thereby escape Divine retribution. Also, Pharaoh's astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer's downfall would be through water. 2. 1:10 - Pharaoh said it, meaning that the Egyptians would be forced to leave Egypt. 3. 1:15 - Shifrah means she beautified the newborn. Puah means she would coo at the newborn. 4. 1:21 - Their descendants were Kohanim, Levi'im and royalty. 5. 2:1 - Levi. 6. 2:2 - When he was born the house was filled with light. 7. 2:11 - Shelomis bas Divri. 8. 2:13 - Dasan and Aviram. 9. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed upon Yisro for abandoning idol worship. 10. 2:20 - Because the water of the well rose up to Moshe. 11. 3:1 - So that the sheep wouldn't graze in privately owned fields. 12. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so too Moshe would be protected by Hashem if he did as Hashem requested. 13. 3:12 - The merit that they were destined to receive the Torah. 14. 4:3 - Moshe spoke ill of the Jewish people by saying that they would not listen to him, just as original snake sinned through speech. 15. 4:10 - Seven days. 16. 4:10 - He did not want to take a position that would be superior to that of his elder brother, Aaron. 17. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a Kohen. This privilege was transferred to Aharon. 18. 4:23 - Death of the firstborn. 19. 5:6 - a) the Egyptian taskmasters; b) the Jewish officers. 20. 5:14 - They refused to pressure the Jewish People to work harder.

Bonus ANSWER: Moshe wanted to give hope and encouragement to the Jewish People. By bringing his wife and children, he showed them his confidence that Hashem was going to redeem the Jewish People very soon. Meshech Chochma

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Shemos

A New King Arose: They Changed, So His Attitude Changed As Well

The Parsha begins, "And these are the names of the Children of Israel who came to Egypt with Yaakov..." The next few pasukim [verses] go on to list the names of the Tribes and tell us that Yosef and all his brothers died, along with their entire generation. Then the pasuk [verse] tells us that the Jews were fruitful and multiplied and became very mighty, and the land became filled with them. Then we learn, "A new King arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef." [Shemos 1:1-8] According to one interpretation, he was a new King. According to another interpretation, his decrees were new. At any rate, the pasuk describes a time when, all of a sudden, there was a marked change in the relationship between the King to the Jews. "He said to his people..." [1:9] ... let us do something about 'the Jewish problem.' What happened? The pasuk tells us that they all came down to Egypt. Then they all died. Then they became very populous. All of a sudden, Pharaoh's attitude toward the Jews changed. What happened? The pasuk does not give us any hint at what was behind this change in policy. I saw an interesting insight from the Mikdash Mordechai, Rav Mordechai Ilan. He focuses on the expression "And these were the names of the Children of Israel HA'BAIM (literally 'who are coming') to Egypt." Technically, the pasuk should have written the words "ASHER BA'U" (who had come) to Egypt. The pasuk is discussing an event that happened in the past. Why does the pasuk seem to indicate that they are presently coming? Rav Mordechai Ilan suggests that this word tells us something about the mind-set of these initial people that came down to Egypt. They did not view themselves as permanent residents or permanent citizens. They viewed themselves as temporary visitors who were just passing through. If one takes a long trip, driving the whole day and finally spends the night in a motel, would such a person view himself as a resident, for example, of Ashtabula, Ohio? Of course not! He is just passing through. It is not his place! The key to what made the original generation different was that they always viewed themselves as BAIM Mitzrayma -- just now coming to Egypt, but not entirely there yet. Therefore, their whole attitude, their whole hashkafa, toward the Egyptians was entirely different. "This is not my land. These are not my people. This is not my culture. I am just passing through, temporarily." That was the key to their success. When Yosef, his brothers and their entire generation died, what happened? They multiplied, they became many, they became strong. The pasuk says "Va'ya-tzmu b'meod, meod" [They became very very mighty]. The pasuk should actually read "Va'ya-tzmu meod meod." The word 'meod' means very. What does B'meod mean? What is the letter 'Beis' doing at the beginning of the word? The Kli Yakar says that 'meod' also means money, as in, "And you should love your G-d with all your heart and all your soul and ... u'v'chol meodecha (with all your money)" [Devorim 6:5]. Chaza"l tell us that the word 'meod' can mean physical goods and material property. The Kli Yakar says that "Va'ya-tzmu b'meod" is telling us that the second generation in Egypt became very mighty because they became very wealthy and affluent. The second generation felt that 'they made it' and they became part of Egyptian society. They no longer saw themselves as BAIM (now coming) to Egypt. "The land became filled with them." The Yalkut tells us that this means they were to be found in the Theaters and the Cultural Centers -- on Broadway! The first generation rightly viewed themselves as "greenhorns." "This is not our country! We do not want to settle down. This is not our culture! This is foreign to us!" However, that generation died and the second generation became wealthy. They were not satisfied with keeping their money in the bank! One has to "show" his wealth, become "part of society," and "endow" places of art and culture! "The land" (according to the Yalkut, the Theater) "was filled with Jews." Now it makes sense. "A new King arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef." Rav Shlomo Ganzfried adds to this concept, in his work "Aperion." Pharaoh said, "These are not the same people that I knew. These are not Yosef's people! These are not the people that I remember. These are different people. They changed. Therefore, I will change." Their change in themselves brought about the change in the attitude towards them. "They want to become part of us? They want to become part of our culture? We

have to watch out for these 'Jews!'" That is what happened. As long as they were HABAIM (the ones just now coming), Pharaoh respected them. He knew that they were different. He had a derech erez for these type of people. But when the Jew tries to change and become one of 'them,' then the attitude was "We don't want you!"

A Man Thinks, and G-d Laughs [an old Yiddish saying]  
The pasuk says that Pharaoh tried different methods to stem the tide of the Jewish population explosion. His first attempt was his instructions to the Jewish midwives to kill all the boys and save the girls. Pharaoh saw that this did not work, so he invented another idea: "All sons that are born shall be thrown into the river..." [Shemos 1:22] Where did he get this idea from? Isn't there a more effective way than throwing the babies into the Nile? The answer is that Pharaoh wasn't a fool. He wasn't a reactionary. This was based on the advice of his advisers. Chaza"l tell us, based on the Talmud [Sanhedrin 101b] that the astrologers of Pharaoh saw that the savior of Israel would meet his downfall through water. Therefore, Pharaoh, who had this inside 'intelligence', decided to throw the Jewish babies and eventually all boys into the Nile, in order to nip this plague in the bud and preempt and outwit the 'Jewish problem.' The Steipler Rav, zt"l says that this act is a living example of a pasuk: "Many are the thoughts in the heart of man; but G-d's plan will be established" [Mishlei 19:21]. Man has all sorts of ideas, but the only thing that remains is G-d's plan. As the Yiddish expression goes "A mensch tracht un Got lacht." (Man thinks of all his plans, and G-d sits there -- as it were -- and laughs!) How ironic! This plan was supposed to kill the savior of Israel. Not only did this plan, which was implemented on the advice of Pharaoh's expert advisers, not kill the savior of Israel, the plan had the opposite effect. Moshe was put into the river. He was fetched by none other than Pharaoh's daughter who took this Moshe into -- of all places -- Pharaoh's household. He was saved by, and nurtured in, Pharaoh's house. He was supported by Pharaoh's money. He was educated at Pharaoh's expense. He was saved by this very Pharaoh that thought he was going to kill the Jewish savior. "A mensch tracht un G-t lacht." And this is not only true with Pharaoh. We each have our own ideas, plans and calculations. We think we are going to be smart. We think we are going to outwit somebody. Foolishness! "A mensch tracht un G-t lacht!"

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"jr@sco.COM", "mj-ravtorah@shamash.org" Shiur HaRav Soloveichik on  
Parshas Shemos shemos.97

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Shemos  
Shiur Date: 1/3/78

The Midrash comments on the opening verse in Parshas Shemos "Tov Shem Mishemen Tov etc." (A good Shem is far more valuable than the best of oils), The Rav noted that the same sentence of Ayleh Shmos Bnay Yisrael Habaim Mitzrayma is used in Parshas Vayigash as well. Why did the Midrash see fit to use the comment of Tov Shem in Shemos but not in Vayigash?

The Rav noted that in Hebrew, the word Shem is used for 2 things: 1) a name 2) a reputation. In other words, a person acquires a reputation that is linked with his name.

In Parshas Vayigash, the verse Ayleh Shemos is simply stating the names of the children of Yaakov who accompanied him to Egypt. In Parshas Shemos, the Torah mentions the great reputation that these giant personalities carried with them as Shivtei Kah. The Rav asked how we know this. Maybe the verse in Vayigash is referring to their reputations?

Obviously their reputations grew beyond what they were initially on their

arrival in Egypt. The simple proof to this is that they grew in Egypt into true Baalei Teshuva, when they asked Yosef for forgiveness after the death of Yaakov. Had they been completely repentant while Yaakov was alive for their actions towards Yosef, they never would have been fearful of Yosef seeking retribution from them for what they did to him. Their seeking forgiveness from Yosef at that time epitomized their status as true Baalei Teshuva.

There was a span of hundreds of years between the Ayleh Shemos in Parshas Vayigash and that of Parshas Shemos. This period of time was needed to allow Bnay Yisrael to grow into a Goy Gadol, a great nation. As the Midrash comments on the verse of Arami Ovayd Avi... Vayehi Sham Lgoy Gadol, had Bnay Yisrael not gone through their experience in Egypt they would have remained a small clan, but never would have attained the status of a great nation. We have remained a Goy Gadol to this day because of our experiences in Egypt. The Zohar comments that the Rechush Gadol that they were to leave Egypt with was their becoming a Goy Gadol. The Shevatim were able to attain great status in Egypt that they would not have reached had they remained in Canaan.

The Rav explained further how the Shevatim grew in reputation during their stay in Egypt. Before Yaakov passed away he requested that Yosef ensure that Yaakov would be buried in Mearat Hamachpela. Yaakov knew that he could rely on Yosef, the Prime Minister of Egypt to accomplish this task. Before Yosef passed away he also desired that he be buried in Eretz Yisrael. Who did he ask to guarantee this? He did not ask his own children, Menashe and Efrayim. Instead he told all the Shevatim that eventually Hashem will redeem them from Egypt and they should remember to carry his remains with them. Who picked up this responsibility?

Levi and Shimon had conspired to kill Yosef that fateful day when Yosef was sold into slavery. If anyone would have carried animosity towards Yosef all those years, it would have been Levi. Yet Moshe, who was a direct grandson of Levi, from both sides, was the one who took it upon himself to locate Yosef's remains and ensure that they were transported from Egypt through all the years that they wandered in the desert. One could well imagine, that having grown up in the Beis Levi, if anyone from Levi's immediate family felt animosity towards Yosef, they would have planted in Moshe the seeds of hatred towards Yosef. Perhaps Moshe might not have made such a super human effort all those years in the desert in taking upon himself the responsibility of transporting Yosef's remains. He might have left it for someone of Yosef's immediate family to take care of. Apparently, Moshe must have been told by his family about the greatness of Yosef and how he saved so many people in times of crisis. Moshe had the tradition of Pakod Yifkod passed down from Yosef to his brothers and he kept the promise because that was the positive Mesorah about Yosef that he was taught by his parents, both of whom came from Beis Levi.

Levi who was Yosef's greatest enemy, in the end, through Teshuva, became his friend. This was a reflection of their great names and how their reputation grew during their stay in Egypt. That is why the Midrash of Tov Shem Mishemen Tov is used in Shemos and not in Vayigash. By the beginning of Sefer Shemos, their reputations as Baalei Teshuva and Shivtei Kah were well established. The Torah is telling us that "These are the great Shemos, reputations of the Bnay Yaakov who acquired their reputations through their stay in Egypt.

From jr@novell.com Fri Jan 12 09:11:06 1996

Shiur HaRav ZTL on Parshas Shemos [From last year]

'Go and assemble the elders of Bnay Yisrael and say to them "Hashem the Gd of our forefathers appeared to me, and they will heed your voice and you and the elders of Bnay Yisrael shall come to the King of Egypt and say to him, "Hashem the Gd of the Hebrews happened upon us" (Shemos 3:16,18). 'And Moshe and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the children of Israel... And the people believed and they heard that Hashem had remembered Bnay Yisrael' (Shemos 4:29,31).

'And afterwards Moshe and Aaron came to Paroh and said to him "So said Hashem the Gd of Israel send out my people that they may celebrate for me in

the wilderness. Paroh replied "who is Hashem that I shall heed his voice and send out Israel. I do not know Hashem nor will I send out Israel. So they said "the Gd of the Hebrews happened upon us" (Shemos 5:1-3).

The Rav raised 2 questions on the above p'sukim:

1) HKB'H said that Moshe should assemble the elders and come with them to Paroh. However only Moshe and Aaron appeared to Paroh. What happened to the elders? Why didn't Moshe fulfill his obligation and bring them to Paroh with Aaron and himself?

2) HKB'H commanded Moshe to say 'The Gd of the Hebrews happened upon us'. Yet Moshe's first pronouncement to Paroh was 'So says Hashem Gd of Israel...'. After Paroh says 'who is Gd that I shall listen to Him', Moshe says 'The Gd of the Hebrews happened upon us'. Why didn't Moshe initially identify Hashem as Gd of the Hebrews as Hashem commanded him?

The Rav explained the first question based on his interpretation of the Ramban [Note: the Rav did not specify which Ramban he was referring to. It would appear that he was referring to the Ramban 4:1, VaYaan Moshe]: Hashem commanded him to assemble the elders (Lech V'asafta) and to tell them that Hashem has commanded that Moshe, Aaron and the elders appear to Paroh (Uvasa Ata Vzikhay Yisrael). This constituted an obligatory Mitzvah on Moshe, Aaron and the elders. The elders were obligated to listen to Moshe. The Rav noted that the term 'And you shall come' (Uvasa) has the same shape and tense of many of the positive commandments in the Torah (e.g. U'Lkachtem Lachem, V'Shinantam L'Vanecha). The obligation is expressed through the use of the future tense. These positive commandments are related to Bnay Yisrael. They must choose to take the Lulav and Esrog, sit in a Succah, and teach their children Torah of their own volition. Moshe was obligated to charge them with the positive commandment to appear before Paroh together with him and Aaron. [Note: as the Ramban says (ibid): Hashem did not promise Moshe that the elders would listen to him, rather that he must command them to listen, for it is intended that they listen to him]. Their coming with him and Aaron to Paroh had to be of their own free will (Bechira Chofshis).

The Rav explained the second question: The Ramban says (5:3, Pen Yipha'aynu) that at that time, the other nations of the world knew of Hashem the Gd of the Hebrews. That name was understood as referring to the Gd of Avraham Haivri who was well known among the nations of the area and era. "Hashem, the Gd of Bnay Yisrael", which included the first use of the divine name of Hashem connected to the nation of Israel, was first revealed to Moshe at the burning bush. This represented a new name, that combined Hashem with the nation of Israel as a distinct identity. Elokay Haivrim, Avraham Haivri, represented the Gd of Avraham the individual. Hashem Elokay Yisrael connotes the Gd of the NATION of Israel and not the Gd of Jacob, our forefather. When Moshe mentioned it, Paroh did not associate it with the name of Hashem that he was familiar with.

Had the elders accompanied Moshe and Aaron to Paroh, Moshe would not have used the name Hashem the Gd of Bnay Yisrael. This name of Hashem was not revealed to the elders until Bnay Yisrael received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Only at that time were they granted permission to refer to Hashem with that name. Therefore Moshe would not have used that name in the presence of the elders. (Though the new name of Hashem was not revealed to Aaron either, the Rav explained that Moshe and Aaron were extensions of each other and were viewed as one and the same with regard to the use of the name of Hashem.)

When Moshe saw that only he and Aaron were going to appear before Paroh, and that the elders would not fulfill their obligation, he thought that their absence gave him license to use the name of Hashem that was revealed to him at the burning bush, 'Hashem Elokay Yisrael'. Certainly there must have been a purpose for Hashem to reveal that name to him. He figured there now was no longer a reason to refrain from using the new name of Hashem that he had received. When Paroh failed to recognize 'Hashem, Gd of Bnay Yisrael', Moshe realized that the reason Hashem commanded him to use the name of Gd of the Ivrim, was so that Paroh might immediately recognize the name of Hashem. His next reference to Hashem before Paroh was therefore changed to Elokay Haivrim, Gd of the Hebrews.

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WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5757 COPYRIGHT 1996-7

SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS SHEMOS

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

And these are the names of the Children of Israel (Exodus 1:1)

Shnayim Mikrah Ve'echad Targum Each week, we read in shul the weekly Torah portion - parshas hashovua. In conjunction with the public reading of the parsha, our Sages require that every individual study it on his own and be familiar with its basic meaning. To achieve this level of mastery, they instituted a three-tiered review of the parsha: The text itself must be read twice, followed by Onkelos' Sinaitic translation(1). Shnayim Mikrah Ve'echod Targum, "twice the text and once the translation of Onkelos", is the name of this mitzvah. A G-d fearing man should study Rashi's commentary in addition to Targum. If one does not have time for both, however, most poskim agree that Targum takes precedence over Rashi(2).

The origin of this mitzvah is unclear but it harks back to ancient times(3).

The Levush(4) writes that it is hinted at (remez) in the first verse of this week's Parsha. The Hebrew letters of the verse "V'eila Shemos Bnei Yisroel" are an acronym for: V'chayav Adam Likros Haparsha Shnayim Mikra Ve'echod Targum Vze Chayavim Kol Bnei Yisroel". Let us review some of the halachos:

As the wording of the remez proves, Shnayim Mikra Ve'echod Targum is not just good advice; it is a full-fledged obligation. Shulchan Aruch, too, when discussing this halacha, considers it an obligation. Even a Torah scholar who is completely immersed in study must fulfill this obligation, his other studies notwithstanding(5). In addition, a reward of long life is promised to those who are meticulous in performing this mitzvah(6). It seems logical, therefore, that fathers should be mechanech (teach) their sons to observe Shnayim Mikra Ve'echod Targum. Women, though, are exempt(7).

There are four different time slots in which this mitzvah can be fulfilled l'chatchilah. They are listed in order of preference: Reading the parsha completely on erev Shabbos, or beginning it during the week and finishing it on erev Shabbos(8). One may begin reciting the weekly portion immediately after Mincha of the previous Shabbos(9); Completing the parsha before going to shul Shabbos morning(10); Completing the parsha before the Shabbos morning meal(11); Completing the parsha before Shabbos Mincha(12). B'dieved, if one did not finish before Mincha on Shabbos, he may finish it until Tuesday night of the following week. The previous week's parsha should be completed before the new week's portion is begun(13). Other poskim are even more lenient and allow one to make up an incomplete parsha until the next Simchas Torah(14). Since both of these deadlines are "makeup times," they are not to be relied on l'chatchilah(15). There are two basic opinions(16) regarding the correct order of Shnayim Mikrah Ve'echod Targum. Some prefer that each posuk be read twice followed by Targum.. This was the custom of the Chofetz Chaim(17). The custom of the Vilna Gaon, however, was to read a segment (parsha) at a time, read it again, and then follow it up with Targum(18).

No matter which of the methods is followed, one should be careful to say and repeat mikrah first, and then say Targum, although b'dieved one is yotzei even if he said Targum before mikrah(19).

When completing the recitation of Targum, the last verse of mikrah should be repeated (for a third time), since the final verse to be read should always be from mikrah and not from Targum(20). While listening to the Torah reading in shul, one can read the text along with the reader and count it towards one recitation of mikrah. If one listened attentively but did not read along with the reader, he should not rely on listening alone to fulfill his mikrah obligation. B'dieved, there are some poskim who are lenient and consider listening to the

reader as fulfillment of one recitation of mikrah(21).

FOOTNOTES:

1 The basic explanation given by the Levush for this Mitzvah is that we should become fluent in the Torah. He does not, however, explain, why we need to recite the text twice and the Targum once. See Aruch Hashulchan 285:2 and Emes L'yaakov AL Hatorah (Mavo pg. 11) for two original explanations for this Mitzvah. 2 Shaarei Teshuvah 285:2; Biur Halacha 285:2; Aruch Hashulchan 285:12. 3 We do not find a reference to this in the Mishnah. The earliest source is the Talmud in Brachos 8a. See Aruch Hashulchan 285:2 who says that surely this was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu. 4 OC 285. 5 Igros Moshe OC 5:17; Shmiras Shabbos Khilchasa 42:57 quoting Bnai Tzion. 6 Brachos 8b. 7 Since they are not obligated to listen to Krias Hatorah, see Mishnah Berurah 282: and Aruch Hashulchan 282:11, they are also not obligated to prepare for it. 8 Mishnah Berurah 285:8. Either of these options is considered mitzvah min hamuvchar. 9 Mishnah Berurah 285:7. See footnote 13. 10 Mishnah Berura 285:9. 11 OC 285:4. According to some, this time is also considered mitzvah min hamuvchar. 12 OC 285:4. Shmiras Shabbos Khilchasa 42:58 understands it to mean Mincha Gedolah, since from that time and on the reading of the next Parsha can take place. 13 Mahrsham 1:213; Ktzos Hashulchan 73:9. 14 OC 285:4. It must be finished before the reading of Bresihis on Simchat Torah - Kaf Hachayim 285:26. 15 Mishnah Berurah 285:12. 16 Quoted in Mishnah Berurah 285:2. Either view may be followed. 17 Reported in Shu"t Shevet Halevi 7:32 18 Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky ruled that one should compromise between the two views: The first time one should read a segment at a time, the second time he should read each posuk with its Targum (see explanation in Emes L'Yaakov Al Hatorah, Mavo pg. 11). 19 Mishnah Berurah 285:6 and Shaar Hatzion 10. 20 Magen Avraham 285:8; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 72:11; Aruch Hashulchan 285:6. Mishnah Berurah, though does not quote this. 21 Mishnah Berurah 285:2; Aruch Hashulchan 285:3,13.

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Yeshivat har etzion israel koschitzky virtual beit midrash (vbm) student summaries of sichot delivered by the roshei yeshiva parashat shemot  
SICHA OF HARAV AMITAL SHLIT"A

"For I Have Drawn Him From the Water" Summarized by Danny Orenbuch

A person's name is generally meant to tell us something about the essence of his character. Moshe is bequeathed his name by Pharaoh's daughter because, in her words, "from the water I have drawn him (meshitihu)."

The Maharal explains as follows: From an external point of view, material things seem substantial and stable, while spiritual matters seem ephemeral and "up in the air." In truth, though, the situation is exactly the reverse:

Spiritual matters are really fixed and unchanging, while physical, material things - despite their external appearance of strength - transform themselves and change. Water, by nature, represents something physical, material,

unstable. It comes and goes and moves from place to place. The drawing out of Moshe from the water therefore represents the severance from the material, moving towards the spiritual. Even when Moshe is involved with material things, he is not influenced by them. Hence his ability to enter a state of prophecy at any time, as opposed to all other prophets. As the Rambam teaches in his Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah (7:6):

"None of the prophets was able to prophesy at any time that he wished, but this was not the case concerning Moshe Rabbeinu. Any time that he wished - the holy spirit visited him ... therefore he could prophesy at any time, as it is written: 'Stand and I shall announce that which God will command you'...

And we learn that all the (other) prophets, when the spirit of prophecy left them, would return to their tents and continue with their physical lives, like the rest of the nation..." This was also the source of Moshe's unique

ability to determine halakha according to his prophecy, as opposed to the other prophets who were subject to the death penalty if they dared to learn or teach halakha according to their prophecies, for "it is not in heaven." Moshe's name, therefore, hints at his special quality: He is a person who was drawn out of the material world and given over entirely to the spiritual world. As we are taught (in Shemot 4:20), "And he set them to ride upon the donkey (chamor - from the same root as 'chomer,' meaning 'material')" - in other words, Moshe "rides" upon the material; he is elevated above it and guides it. In addition to Moshe Rabbeinu, two other individuals also merit to overcome the material. One is Avraham Avinu, who "saddled" and conquered his material emotions (the Torah teaches that he "saddled his chamor (donkey)" - see explanation above) when he set off to sacrifice his son, and the other is Mashiach who, we are told, will be "a poor man riding on a chamor." Therefore, Rashi (4:20), quoting the midrash, identifies Moshe's chamor with Avraham's and the Mashiach's; the midrash adds that this unique chamor was created on the sixth day of creation, during twilight. The midrash does not mean that this chamor lived thousands of years, but rather that in these three figures spirituality conquers materialism - they "ride the chamor." As opposed to other revolutionaries like Marx, who based his theory on pure materialism, these figures are responsible for revolutions of pure spirit. (It is intriguing that the downfall of Communism was also based on materialistic concerns: people were dissatisfied more with their standard of living than by the lack of spirituality.) Conquest of the material world is a supernatural act; therefore, the midrash describes the chamor as being created during twilight, when all the miraculous phenomena were created. In our lives too, the spirit must rule over and shape the physical, just as water is given shape and confined by its container. We must, as individuals and as a nation, "draw ourselves out of the water" and "ride the chamor."  
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"kornfeld@netmedia.net.il" "parasha-page@jer1.co.il" Parashat Shmot 5757 - "Pakod Pakadti"  
 The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

This week's issue has been dedicated by Yaakov Wollner in memory of his mother, Rochel Chava bas Yitzchok Leib A"H, on her second Yahrzeit (26 Teves) and in memory of the Daniel children's father, Yitzchok Yisroel ben Rephael Noach Yoseph A"H (whose eighth Yahrzeit is on 7 Teves).

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== PARASHAT SHMOT 5757 PAKOD PAKADTI

Gather the Elders of Israel and tell them, "Hashem came to me ... and said, 'I have remembered you' ("\*Pakod Pakadti\* Eschem") and what was done to you in Egypt" (Shmot 3:16)

The Jews were given a sign: if a purported liberator uses the term "Pakod Pakadti," he is a true savior. That is what Yosef meant when he said, "\*Pakod Yifkod\* Elokim Eschem (Hashem will \*remember\* you)" (Bereishit 50:24). As soon as Moshe mentioned these words, he was trusted." (Shmot Rabba 3:8; Targum Yonasan to Bereishit 50:24; cited by Rashi Shmot 3:18)

If it was known to all that the true redeemer would use the words "Pakod Pakadti," what kind of a sign was it? Anybody could easily utter these words and claim the Messianic title! (The Ramban and Maharal [Shmot 3:18] both deal at length with this question. According to Shmot Rabba 5:13, the sign was actually a secret, known only to Serach the daughter of Asher. It is also possible that Moshe was trusted since he fled from Egypt at the age of twelve (Shmot Rabba 5:2 -- see Rashi to Shmot 2:14). He was still too young to have been taught by his father the secrets of the Jewish People. However, the latter is in disagreement with Shmot Rabba 1:27,30, where it is asserted that Moshe was 20 or 40 when he fled, and with Shmot Rabba 15:26, which claims that Moshe was taught by his father the secret of the redemption.)

II To the contrary, suggests Rav Yitzchak of

Volozhin, the sign was especially designed to prove beyond doubt that Moshe was a Divine emissary. The sign involved more than the mere mention of the two words "Pakod Pakadti" -- it entailed the performance of a miracle in association with those words. The Torah tells us that Moshe had a speech impediment (Shmot 4:10, etc.). Yet, the Midrash (Shmot Rabba 3:20) tells us, when Moshe relayed to others the words of Hashem his speech was miraculously perfect and unslurred; "the Shechinah (divine spirit) spoke from Moshe's throat" during his prophecies (see Zohar Pinchas p. 232, Shmot 19:19 with Rashi). The clear pronunciation of the words "Pakod Pakadti" was the surest sign that Moshe was truly G-d-sent! When Moshe wondered to Hashem why he wasn't cured of his slurred speech when he was charged with bringing His word to the people (a question dealt with by Ramban 4:10; Drashot Haran, Drush 3), Hashem replied to him, "Who gave a person a mouth and who can make a person dumb or deaf, able to see or blind? Is it not I, Hashem?" (Shmot 4:11). Moshe's defect served a very important purpose. Without it, he could not have proven through the clear enunciation of the words "Pakod Pakadti" that he was indeed the long-awaited redeemer. (Peh Kakosh, Shmot 4:11)

It may be added that the main element of the phrase "Pakod Pakadti," according to the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 64), was the doubled letter "Peh"; "It was with a double Peh that Israel was redeemed from Egypt, as it says, 'Pakod Pakadti'." Moshe \*lips\* were defective ("Aral sfatayim"), and as such he probably could not pronounce the letters which are produced by the lips: "B" "V" "M" and "P." He would truly have had trouble vocalizing the sign of the redemption. His proper pronunciation of the Peh's of Pakod Pakadti was the harbinger of freedom! When Moshe shirked accepting his mission by saying, "I am imperfect of \*Peh\* (normally, "mouth")" (Shmot 4:10), he meant that he was unable to pronounce the letter Peh -- how could he be the redeemer? Hashem responded, "Who gave a person a mouth and who makes a person dumb or deaf, able to see or blind? Is it not I, Hashem!" When the time comes, Moshe, your speech will be perfect! (Rabbenu Bachya (Shmot 4:10), it should be noted, mentions that Rabbenu Chananel suggests an entirely different list of letters that were hard for Moshe to pronounce -- those that are pronounced with the teeth and the tongue.)

III Along these lines, Asifat Chachamim (Rav Yisrael Iser'l Segal, Opebach 1722, Parashat Shmot), quoting Hagaon Rav Meir Frenkel, asks an interesting question. Why did Moshe ask Hashem, "If they ask me, 'What is His name?' what should I tell them"? Didn't Moshe learn the name of Hashem from his parents? In fact, Rashi (2:14) tells us that Moshe killed the Egyptian taskmaster who was hitting a Jew by "uttering the Holy Name of Hashem!" Rav Frenkel explains that, as we have proposed, Moshe was "Aral \*Sefatayim\*" and therefore could not properly pronounce the letter "V." Moshe was asking Hashem to suggest a Holy Name to use other than the Tetragrammaton, which includes the letter "Vav." (When Moshe killed the Egyptian he only pronounced the first half of the Tetragrammaton, as the Kabbalists inform us, which does not include this letter.)

IV What is the significance of the words "Pakod Pakadti?" (1) The Ba'alei Hatosefot explain that hidden in these words is a hint that instead of waiting the prescribed 400 years (Bereishit 15:13) to release the Jews from Egyptian bondage, Hashem would release the Jews after only 210 years -- \*190\* years earlier than expected. The Gematria (numerical value of Hebrew letters) of "Pakod" is 190 (if it is spelled with a Vav). "Pakadti" can mean "I have caused to be lost, or diminished" (see Bamidbar 31:49, "ve'Lo \*Nifkad\* Mimenu Ish"). "Pakod Pakadti" -- "I have diminished [the Egyptian bondage] by 190 [years]!" (Da'as Zekeinim, end of Bereishit)

(2) The Maharal (Gur Arye to Shmot 3:18; Gevurot Hashem Ch. 26) offers another insight into these words. Every Hebrew letter can be spelled out using two or three Hebrew letters -- for example, the letter Alef can be written out as, Alef Lamed Peh. The letters that follow the first letter when the full name is written out (e.g. the Lamed and Peh of the above example) are referred to as the "hidden letters" of that particular letter of the alphabet, since they are not usually pronounced when that letter is spoken as part of a

word. The hidden letters of the word "Pakod" are the Aleph of the letter Peh, the Vav Peh of the letter Kuf, and the Lamed Tav of the letter Dalet. These hidden letters hint to different aspects of the Jewish nation's Exile in Egypt, from which they were freed by the words "Pakod Pakadti." Tav, Lamed (430) -- the hidden letters of Dalet -- refer to the total years of Exile decreed upon the Jews in Egypt (Shmot 12:41). Vav, Peh (86) -- the hidden letters of Kuf -- refer to the years of forced labor that the Jews suffered in Egypt (Shir Hashirim Rabba 2:11). The Aleph refers to the last and hardest year of the exile, a year in which Jewish babies were slaughtered by the ailing Pharaoh (Rashi 2:23). All of these torments ended with the redemption of "Pakod Pakadti"!

weekly@jer1.co.il" Torah Weekly - Shmos

\* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion

This issue is dedicated in memory of Avraham Yosef ben Shmerel by his daughters Tamar Rachel, Yehudit Esther, Malka, Zisa Sima  
Ohr Somayach's web site: <http://www.ohr.org.il>

Overview With the death of Yosef, the era of the Avos and the Book of Bereishis (Genesis) come to an end. The Book of Shmos (Exodus) now chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov. At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Jews in Egypt, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate continues to increase, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all baby boys. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and places him in a basket in the Nile before anyone can kill him. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts the baby even though she realizes he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's older sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe. She arranges for his mother Yocheved to be his nursemaid and help raise him. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and Moshe kills the Egyptian. When Moshe realizes his life is in danger, he flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yisro approves their subsequent marriage. On Chorev (Mt. Sinai), Moshe witnesses the "burning bush" where Hashem commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael, which Hashem has promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People in Egypt will doubt him being Hashem's agent, and so Hashem helps Moshe perform three miraculous transformations to validate him in the eyes of the people: Changing his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood. When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker Hashem tells him that his brother Aaron will be his spokesman. Aaron greets Moshe on his return to Egypt, and they petition Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that the Jews must produce the same quota of bricks as before, but without being given supplies. The people become dispirited, but Hashem assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Hebrews leave.

#### Insights

CASTLES BUILT ON SAND "The Egyptians started to make the Israelites do labor intended to break their bodies" (1:13) Henry Ford, the famous American industrialist, was once sitting on the verandah of his mansion by the sea. He saw a fisherman on the beach, lying in the sun, without a care in the world. Next to the fisherman was a bucket in which a few fish were swimming lazily to and fro. Ford called to the fisherman, who roused himself from his reverie and ambled over to the mansion. "What are you doing there?" asked Ford. "Relaxing" replied the fisherman. "You know" said Ford "If you worked a little harder, you'd catch more fish." "And then what?" said the fisherman. "And then maybe you'd have enough money to buy a boat." "Uh-huh... And then what?" said the fisherman. "Well, if you had a boat, you'd be able to catch a lot more fish, and if you worked hard, maybe you'd be able to buy a second boat." "And then what?" "Well, with two boats you could catch a lot of fish, and with any luck you might be able to make enough to buy a whole fleet of boats." "And then what?" "Well - with a whole

fleet of boats working for you, you could just take it easy and lie on the beach all day." "But I'm already doing that!" People don't work just to make money. A person needs to have a sense of purpose, of pride in his achievements. The Torah describes the labor that the Jews did in Egypt as Avodas Parech - Work which breaks a person. 'Busy-work.' Nothing diminishes a person so much as seeing his efforts as being futile, as totally without purpose. Thus, Pharaoh instructed that the Jews build Arei Miskenos - literally 'pitiful cities.' These cities were built on sand, and no sooner would they be completed, then they would topple and fall. Then they would have to start to build all over again, only to see the entire process repeated again and again. There once was a prisoner in a Soviet labor camp who was confined to his cell for ten years. Every day was spent turning a large handle that protruded from his cell wall. He was told that the handle turned a flour mill next door to his cell. At the end of ten years, when he was finally released from his cell, he saw that on the other side of the wall there was absolutely nothing. This realization was more crushing than all his long years of imprisonment. The greater the sense of purpose in one's work, the greater is the effort that a person is prepared to invest to achieve it. A Jew works for an eternal life in Olam Haba - the World to Come. "Six days shall you labor (ta'avod) and do all your work (melacha), and the seventh day will be a Sabbath to Your Lord." What transforms a person's menial labor (avoda) into purposeful creative activity (melacha) is Shabbos - the 'taste' of Olam Haba in this world. Adapted from Outlooks and Insights - Rabbi Zev Leff

BELIEVING YOUR OWN PRESS RELEASE "And Moshe grew, and he went out to his brothers...." (2:11) There once was a Hollywood cowboy who had come from a very 'un-cowboyish' background: He was an assistant in a men's clothing store in the mid-West. To beef up his image a bit, the studio publicity machine had concocted a new identity for him. They did a quick face-lift on his life story, which now depicted him being discovered in a Wells Fargo telegraph office in a small cowboy town in Arizona. It happened one day that, at the peak of his fame, the Hollywood cowboy came to that small town. As befitting his fame, he was given a ticker-tape parade down Main (or was it Mane?) Street. As he was riding on the back of his open limousine, his car passed the Wells Fargo office. He leaned across to his press agent - the very same press agent who had re-written his past - and said to him without batting an eyelid: "You see that Wells Fargo station? That's where I was discovered..." One of the dangers of fame is that you can start to believe your own press releases. The Midrash tells us that when Moshe 'grew' he grew 'not like the way of the world.' The way of the world is that when a person grows and becomes celebrated and famous, he forgets (or makes himself forget) his roots, his background and his brothers. He seems to have a kind of amnesia when it comes to their problems and difficulties. Moshe grew up in the palace of Pharaoh with an Egyptian "gold spoon" in his mouth; nevertheless, he grew up 'not like way of the world,' he never forgot the plight of his people. Moshe 'went out to his brothers.' He went out to discover their problems and the ways he could rescue them from oppression. Based on Yalkut HaDrush in Iturei Torah

THE NAME OF FREEDOM "And these are the names of the Children of Israel...." (1:1) This is the opening line of the book of Shmos (Exodus). As it is the first line, it must be hinting something fundamental about the book of Shmos itself. For that which comes first always contains the seeds of all that follows. The book of Shmos describes the exile of the Jewish People in Egypt and their miraculous redemption. Hashem never brings a malady upon His people until the cure is already in place. Even before the doom of slavery falls on the Jewish People, the light of redemption is already glowing, hidden away, waiting for its time. We can see this hinted at in the name of the tribes of Israel who went into the slavery of Egypt. For every name hints to the inevitable redemption. The name Reuven comes from the root 'to see.' As Hashem said "I have indeed seen the affliction of My people" (3:7). Shimon's name comes from 'to hear' - "And G-d heard their moaning..." (2:24) With the exile comes the redemption. Similarly, we find that Tisha B'Av - the day most connected to exile - is the day on which the Mashiach is born. And the Mashiach will bring with him the ultimate liberation.

Haftorah: Yishayahu 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

Yaakov Avinu had two names: `Yaakov' and `Yisrael'. The Jewish People are called by both of these names. The name `Yaakov' depicts the experience of the Jewish People in times of degradation and hardship. Yisrael connotes the Jewish People realizing its potential. The prophet Yishayahu lived in a time of spiritual decay. He begins the Haftorah with the prophecy that the `root' of Yaakov, like all roots, though unseen and trampled on by all, will once again bring forth its luxuriant produce. THE REVOLUTION THAT WENT WRONG "To whom shall one teach knowledge, who can be made to understand a message? Those weaned from (mother's) milk, removed from the breasts!" (28:10) Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, we have witnessed an ever-accelerating development of science and technology. As the Holy Zohar predicted, from the year 5600, the gates of wisdom were opened. If the Jewish People had been worthy, this tremendous outpouring of knowledge would have found its proper home in the wisdom of Torah and holiness. Now, since we were not worthy, this diffusion of higher energy has found its way to the realm of superficial wisdom and precipitated the invention of weapons of mass destruction to humanity's profound loss. >From the day that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, `prophecy was given to fools and infants.' Meaning, that when Yisrael dwelled in the Holy land, celestial energy, both spiritual and material, descended to its correct landing place. However, since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, this spiritual radiance has gone astray - descending on desolate lands and unsuitable people - "fools and infants." This is what the prophet means when he asks whether "those weaned from (mother's) milk" can be "made to understand a message." (Adapted from Ahavas Yonason and Rabbi Simcha Bunem M'Pshische)

Sing, My Soul! Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Yom Zeh Mechubad - "This is the most precious of days..."

Six days you shall do your work And the seventh day shall be for your G-d Shayshes yamim ta'ase m'lachtecha v'yom hashvi'i lalo-hecha

This stanza, based on the words of the Fourth Commandment, suggests a fascinating perspective of Shabbos as an active experience rather than a passive avoidance of activity.

In his commentary on the Torah, Rabbi Chaim ben Attar, author of the "Ohr Hachayim", explains that the use of the connecting "and" in regard to the seventh day communicates the idea that a Jew works seven days a week -- six days in his own activities and on the seventh day in activities of G-dliness. Praying and studying Torah in a manner not available during the other days of the week and even including eating, drinking and sleeping with a special dimension of holiness.

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\*\*\*\* Peninim\*\*\*\*

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Parshas Shemos

Come let us outsmart it lest it become numerous....and it too, may join our enemies. (1:10)

Chazal tell us that Pharaoh had a council composed of three advisors, Bilaam, Iyov, and Yisro. Bilaam was the one who suggested the diabolical scheme to enslave the Jews. Iyov remained silent; he was later punished for his silence with ordeals of terrible pain and anguish. Yisro fled Egypt, rather than acquiesce to the evil advice. He was rewarded with the promise that his descendants would one day sit in the Sanhedrin. This well-known Midrash assumes a new meaning when one considers the

nature of each of the three advisors and the inconsistency of their advice with his own personal character.

Bilaam was as arrogant and egotistical as he was evil. He had the power to curse entire nations. He could cast anyone under his evil spell. Why did he fear the Jews to the point that he initiated the scheme to destroy them?

Iyov, a pacifist, was the symbol of loving-kindness and human decency. He could not tolerate evil; he would never turn his back on oppression. Yet, what did he do when the tragic decree to enslave an entire nation was made? He remained silent! Is that consistent with his nature? Is this the response we would expect from a man of his noble stature? Is silence the type of reaction one would expect from a man whose life was dedicated to humane causes? How could he tolerate the screams of the Jewish infants as they were cast in the river?

Yisro, the great philosopher, epitomized justice and truth. Was he acting in accordance with his nature? A man who had served - and subsequently rejected - every pagan idol, who had fought for integrity and justice, would be expected to decry such an evil decree. He should have protested vehemently, endeavoring to rescind the decree. Yet, what did this paragon of virtue, this noble fighter for justice do when he heard the tragic decree enacted against the poor Jews? He ran away! Is this type of behavior consistent with Yisro's character?

In light of the above, Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, z"l, infers a significant lesson. Hashem told Avraham during the Bris bein Ha'besarim that one day his descendants would go into exile. When Hashem issues a decree, nothing stands in the way of its fulfillment. Hashem's plan functions beyond the realm of the "consistent" and the "typical." Bilaam, who would typically not regard Bnei Yisrael as a national threat, acted strangely and advised Pharaoh to kill the Jewish boys. Iyov, whose essence could not tolerate cruelty, remained silent. Yisro, the fighter for justice, fled the country. Nothing can stand in the way of Hashem's decree. Indeed, the Egyptian exile and ensuing liberation is incongruous with the natural course of events. Once again, Hashem is manifested as the creator of "nature" as we know it.

And they appointed taskmasters over it in order to afflict it with their burdens. (1:11)

By inflicting hard labor upon the Jews, the Egyptians' goal was simply to destroy their dignity, to hurt them emotionally as well as physically. Horav Shimon Schwab, z"l, comments that the purpose of placing taskmasters over the Jews was to degrade and humiliate them, to convey to them that they could not be trusted to perform their job adequately without supervision. They were telling the Jews that they were crude and undignified; their integrity was lacking and their work ethic unsuitable. Is there anything worse than such a loathsome form of emotional abuse? Indeed, the intention of the Egyptians was to debase and degrade the Jews, to destroy their will so that they would become worthless human beings devoid of hope and aspirations. This, suggests Horav Schwab, is the underlying meaning of the pasuk in Sefer Devarim 26:6, ugrhu"

"ohrmnv ub,ut "And the Egyptians did evil to us." "Vayareiu" - "And they made us look bad." They portrayed us as evil people; lazy ne'er do-wells, living off the Egyptians; people who could not be trusted. They maintained that we had no sense of allegiance to the country that admitted us and cared for us. They asserted that we were interested in taking over and dominating the Egyptian populace. When such foolishness is reiterated enough times, people begin to believe what they have heard. We can understand why the Egyptians reacted in such a manner.

They embittered their lives with hard work...All their labors that they performed with them were with crushing harshness. (1:14)

We memorialize the bitterness of Egypt, the harsh labor and persecution, with the marror, bitter herbs, which we eat on Pesach night. Chazal teach us that while there are a number of vegetables that are suitable for the mitzvah of marror, leaf lettuce is preferred. Among the vegetables, leaf lettuce provides the most apt comparison with the type of labor to which the Egyptians subjected the Jewish people. At first, the

Egyptians convinced the Jews to work with them. Later on, they embittered their lives with harsh labor. At first, the lettuce seems almost sweet to the palate, but subsequently, its bitter taste is manifest. This reason for preferring leaf lettuce for marror, is enigmatic. We seek to remember the bitterness of the Egyptian exile. Yet, we eat a vegetable that recalls the "sweet" beginning of our bondage. Is the memory bitter or sweet?

Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, z"l, notes two forms of suffering. One type of suffering is inflicted upon a person by others. This is undoubtedly difficult to bear, but it is more tolerable than the pain and suffering that is self-inflicted when one has become complicitous in creating his own misery. Had the Egyptians originally conscripted the Jews into slave labor without pretext, the Jews might have been able to accept the concept of bondage, as painful as it would have been. The circumstances preceding the Egyptian slavery were different. The Jews had never thought their "good" friends and neighbors would actually enslave them. The sweetness compounded the bitterness, for the Jews had participated in bringing the misery upon themselves.

Perhaps this is the idea behind the custom of dipping the marror into the sweet charoses. We recall the bitterness with which we lived as a result of accepting the Egyptian blandishments. The Egyptians smiled at us, making us feel good. Our own insecurity led to our ultimate torment. If we would only learn a lesson from the message of the marror, it might prevent other tragedies from occurring--even in our own time.

And Pharaoh commanded his entire people saying, "Every son that will be born--into the River shall you throw him." (1:22)

Pharaoh thought that the way to prevent the emergence of a Jewish leader was to drown all baby boys. Indeed, his astrologers had told him that the downfall of the Jewish savior would be effected through water. As a result of this decree, Amram, who was the gadol ha'dor, the spiritual leader of that generation, separated from his wife, Yocheved. Ostensibly, all Jewish men followed suit. Rather than bring boys into the world to be drowned by Pharaoh, they left their wives. Miriam, however, yet a young child, challenged her father Amram's decree. She claimed that his decree to separate was far worse than Pharaoh's, since he was also preventing the birth of girls. Moreover, Pharaoh was a mortal king, whose decrees would not outlast him. Amram was a tzaddik whose good deeds would protect him and his progeny. The piercing words coming from this young child made a powerful impression upon Amram. Consequently, he remarried Yocheved, and Moshe Rabbeinu was born.

Let us take a moment to analyze what happened. One would assume that we are presenting the greatness and influence of a determined, but young, child. After careful perusal, we may note, comments Horav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi, shlita, that the real credit should be attributed to Amram. He truly distinguished himself. The gadol ha'dor, the leader of hundreds of thousands of people, made a decree, and an entire nation accepted his word and followed his example. Along came a little girl, his daughter no less, offering an insightful critique of his edict. What did this great leader do? Did he laugh it off? Did he ignore the little girl? No! He accepted her constructive criticism, annulled the decree, and remarried his wife! This represented true greatness! He did not argue; he did not attempt to present "his side" of the story, his reasoning for issuing the decree. He simply accepted Miriam's reproof. We must question what went through Amram's mind. What originally motivated him to make the decree, and what was it about Miriam's analysis of the circumstances that inspired him to rescind his order?

Let us begin by analyzing Miriam's critique; "Your decree is worse than Pharaoh's." What is the decree to which she is referring? Amram made no decree; he merely responded to Pharaoh's decree to kill the Jewish boys. We must, therefore, say that Miriam addressed an issue that went to the very foundation of Klal Yisrael's existence. It is, in fact, an issue we must confront even today. Amram was about to nullify, or at least put "on hold", a mitzvah of the Torah. The Torah commands us to "Be fruitful and multiply;" it is the first mitzvah of the Torah. To ignore this mitzvah is to

ignore the Torah--the foundation of our existence! Never has Klal Yisrael been without the Torah. We have never abandoned the Torah, despite the cruel pogroms, the persecutions and catastrophes to which we have been subjected as individuals and as a nation. It is the basis of our life! Therefore, how could Amram say, "Separate from your wives"? This was Miriam's critique. Amram was, by example, issuing a statement: If the situation warrants it, if the lives of your children are put in danger, then do not have children. Miriam questioned, "Is this not, however, contrary to the Torah which remains with us during the most trying circumstances?" If the Torah commands us to have children, how could Amram decree, by example, that the situation in Egypt overrides the Torah? Klal Yisrael has undergone so many trying ordeals in their history, but never have they forsaken the Torah. Was Pharaoh's decree any worse than the pogroms, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust that we survived as a nation--because we adhered to the Torah?

This poignant--but compelling--critique prompted Amram to rescind his order to the Jewish men to separate from their wives. We never know when the innocent words of a young child can leave a remarkable impression. Perhaps we do not listen well enough.

Every son that will be born, into the River shall you throw him. (1:24)

Chazal tell us that Pharaoh's astrologers foresaw that the Jewish savior's downfall would occur as a result of water. They were even able to pinpoint the exact day on which Moshe would be born. Pharaoh's own daughter, who found Moshe, took him home and raised him in the royal palace. Following the advice of his astrologers, on the day that Moshe was born, Pharaoh issued an edict to drown all male infants upon birth. The astrologers claimed that the threat of a Jewish savior had been averted. They were, of course, wrong, since Moshe's death was not caused by drowning, but rather by his involvement in the waters of Merivah. We may question the astrologers' actions. Since the sign that they saw actually alluded to another situation, how could they assume that once Moshe was placed in the Nile River, the sign from Heaven had disappeared? Obviously it was still present. Were they so myopic that the sign which they presumably saw yesterday had disappeared today--if it was alluding to something else? How could they say that they did not see the sign when it was apparently still there?

Horav Elyakim Shlesinger, shlita, infers a profound lesson from the astrologers' "myopia." A person can receive a clear vision from Heaven, yet, if his perspective is distorted, he will either not see, or he will misinterpret the message. A person sees what he wants to see. One who wears blue-tinted glasses will always see blue, regardless of the actual color. His vision is tainted by the tint! As far as the astrologers were concerned, the downfall of the Jewish savior would occur with his drowning in the Nile River. Nothing else mattered, and no other sign would change their erroneous interpretation. Myopic vision is very often not related to vision of the eyes!

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Torah Insights for Shabbat Parshat Shemot -

January 4,

1997

According to the Midrash, the Israelites were saved from perpetual servitude in Egypt due to four things, one of which was that they did not change their Hebrew names. Yehuda remained Yehuda and did not become Leon; Reuven stayed Reuven and didn't switch to Rufus.

In light of this inflexibility, one finds it ironic that Moshe Rabbeinu, who was chosen by Hashem to deliver the Jewish nation from Egyptian bondage, apparently had an Egyptian name.

When Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, retrieved a baby from the river, she called him Moshe, "ki min hamayim mishisihu - for I drew him out of the water." The unlikelihood that Pharaoh's daughter was fluent enough in Hebrew to create a Hebrew name for her adopted son has led to various theories as to the origin of the name Moshe.



The Chizkuni gives two explanations. One, there is a tradition that Batya converted and therefore, yes, she did know Hebrew. Two, it is possible that Moshe's mother, Yocheved, named him Moshe and Batya approved. Nevertheless, it appears, from a simple reading of the text, that Moshe was indeed an Egyptian name. This notion is elaborated upon by the Malbim, who quotes Philo's explanation that Moshe is composed of mo, Egyptian for water, and sheh, meaning exiting or escaping in Egyptian. The name Moshe, according to the Malbim, means the same thing in both Hebrew and Egyptian.

The Yalkut Shimoni offers a list of Moshe Rabbeinu's other names: "his father called him Chaver; his mother called him Yekusiel; his sister called him Yered; his brother called him Avi Zandach; his nurse called him Avi Socho; the Israelites called him Shemayah."

Nonetheless, Hashem always called him Moshe, the name that Batya gave him. With all of the various Hebrew alternatives, why did Hashem address Moshe exclusively by this name?

Rav Yehuda Amital gives a novel explanation for this preference. Water, being a liquid, takes on the shape of the container into which it is poured. Having no shape of its own, water constantly adjusts to its surroundings. It represents the ultimate in conformity.

Moshe, as the leader of the Jewish people and as Hashem's agent for rescuing them from Egypt, was, literally, "the one who was drawn out from the water."

He was the "anti-water", a living symbol of the behavior that preserved the Israelites during their decades of bondage in Egypt. By maintaining their beliefs, language, customs and mode of dress in the face of ever-changing surroundings - by not conforming - the Jewish people were redeemed.

Their attitudes and actions serve as a model for Jewish survival always, in various exiles and under various oppressive regimes. By not being bound to outside influences and pressures, by remaining distinct no matter what the surroundings, Jews survive and flourish.

Indeed, the Exodus from Egypt culminates with the entire Jewish nation enacting this idea, as they pass through the waters of Yam Suf to emerge a free and independent people, with the strength and conviction to face whatever challenges may lie ahead.

Rabbi Zvi Ron

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Shabbat-B'Shabbato -- Parshat Shemot No 629: 25 Tevet 5757

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AN INDIVIDUAL AND A NATION

by Rabbi Yehudah Shaviv

Bereishit is a book about individuals, "a history of Adam" [Bereishit 4:1].

After beginning with the creation of man, it continues with prominent individuals of succeeding generations. While the end of Bereishit is concerned with the children of Yaacov as a group, the final chapter is the story of a specific son, Yosef.

On the other hand, Shemot tells the history of a nation. It starts with a description of "the nation of Bnei Yisrael" [Shemot 1:9], and it is concerned with events leading to the formation of a new nation: exile in Egypt, redemption, travel in the desert, receiving the Torah, and the construction and rituals of the Tabernacle.

The way man starts in Bereishit is the opposite of the way the nation begins in Shemot. Man is created in a golden age. He is placed in the best site in the world, in the Garden of Eden, and it seems as if everything has been created for his benefit. On the other hand, the nation begins at the lowest possible level, in sadness and suffering, both in body and in spirit.

There is a well known disagreement about whether the generations of man progress towards higher levels or are continually on a downward path. Should ancient times be seen as a perfect era which is always further and further out of reach, or should we expect a better future as a result of continuous progress towards utopia? Both approaches can find support in

Jewish sources, just as both approaches can be supported by conflicting historical evidence (for example, see Rabbi Cohen's introduction to "Orot Hakodesh," by Rabbi A.Y. Kook).

It would seem that both of the above approaches are correct, depending on whether one is referring to an individual or to a nation.

As far as an individual is concerned, Adam was almost perfect when he was created: whole in spirit and in body. However, when he sinned he fell from his lofty position, setting a precedent of continuous descent: "If the first ones were like angels, then we are mere mortals" [Shabbat 112b]. (This is a general trend, which does not exclude the possibility that some outstanding individuals are at a higher level than people of earlier generations.) The development of the nation was in the opposite direction. Bnei Yisrael started at what would seem to be the lowest possible level, from which there is no alternative but to rise. Succeeding generations follow a rising trend, even if there are temporary setbacks now and then.

At the beginning of Bereishit, a man is in the Garden of Eden, while at the end another man is in a casket in Egypt. At the beginning of Shemot, the people of Yisrael are slaves in Egypt, and at the end they are a free nation, camped around the Tabernacle, which is filled by "the Honor of G-d" [Shemot 40:35].

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"Take your shoes off your feet, because the place upon which you are standing is Holy ground." Å3:5Å

The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael M. Kagan of Radin, offers two insights based upon this verse. Our Sages tell us that one should not say "when I am free, I will learn." The Chofetz Chaim explains that it is our nature to imagine to ourselves that when HaShem gives us a better situation, be that in our financial well-being or personal lives, that then we will study Torah - but not while our circumstances are so challenging.

This, he adds, is why the verse says "the place upon which you are standing is Holy ground." Wherever you are, at whatever time, is "Holy" - meaning that HaShem wants you to deal with exactly that situation. The Medrash promises the person who learns while going through trying times that his reward will be many times greater than that of a person who learns in stress-free circumstances.

The Chofetz Chaim also observes that the obligation is placed upon us to "take our shoes off our feet." Meaning, each of us is required to remove the curtain which separates us from HaShem. By doing that which we shouldn't, we separate ourselves, hanging thick curtains which block out any connection to the Divine. If we don't see HaShem's radiance, it's because we have hung the curtains! If we tear them down, we'll see the light streaming through...

----- WE NEED  
Please pray for the speedy healing of (men) Dov Ber ben Rochel, Meir ben Malka, Alter Moshe ben Shaindel, Menachem ben Rivka, Aharon Avraham ben Rachel, Baruch Yosef ben Adina Batya, Ariel Chaim ben Chasya, Baruch Yekoseal ben Rivka, Hayered Rach Hanolad ben Briynah, Meir ben Golda, Aharon ben Rochel Esther, Refael Pinchas ben Miriam, Mordechai ben Freidka, Chaim Aryeh Leib ben Elka (women) Roiza bas Malka Toltza, Amalya Gitel bas Malka Toltza, Rachel Chana bas Yehudis, Yehudis bas Malka, Yocheved Raiza bas Dvora Chaya, Sarah bat Alta, Blooma Beila bas Yitel, Devorah Rafaella bat Sarah, Gefen Shavit bat Rivka, Elisheva Basi Batia Schuscha bas Chana, Batsheva Rochel bas Malka Gittel, Malka Sarah bat Gittel, Rachel bas Chaya, Esther bat Sarah, Rosa Shoshana bat Rayna, Yael bas Chana Feiga, Nina Nechama Leah bas Rivka, Rachel Chana bas Yehudis, Yehudis bas Malka, Yocheved Raiza bas Dvora Chaya, Leeba Tzirel bas Chaya Gitel, Leah bat Mindel, Yehudit Gila bat Sara, Bracha bas Raatzta, Yaffa bas Sarah, Ruchama Ilana bas Elah, Devorah Rus bas Pesi.  
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From: listserv@lubavitch.chabad.org (W-2 LIST Chabad-Lubavitch)

B"H      The Chassidic Dimension

Shemos

Adaptation of Likutei Sichos      by

Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg      Based on

the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe      Rabbi Menachem M.  
Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion      -----

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"Names" -- A State of Exile, A State of Redemption

The general subject of the Torah portion of Shmos is the descent of the Jewish people into Egyptian servitude.

The actual descent into Egypt is described in the book of Bereishis. The servitude, however, begins in the portion of Shmos, after the demise of Yosef and all his brothers, "for, as long as one of the brothers was still alive, there was no servitude."

Thus, the beginning of the portion deals with the exile, for the verses preceding the passage about the demise of Yosef and his brothers describe how the Jewish people ended up in Egypt when their place was in Eretz Yisrael.

The portion then relates how times became even more difficult, beginning with "The Egyptians started to make the Children of Israel do labor designed to break their bodies," and culminating with Pharaoh's decree that "Every boy who is born must be cast into the Nile...."

And finally, at the conclusion of the portion, Pharaoh decrees: "Do not give the people straw for bricks as before. Let them go and gather their own straw. Meanwhile, you must require them to make the same quota of bricks as before. Do not reduce it."

Indeed, matters became so difficult that Moshe asked G-d: "Why do You mistreat Your people? Why did You send me? As soon as I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he made things worse for these people, and You have done nothing to save them."

Since the entire portion, as we have seen, deals with the exile, why is it called Shmos, "names," after the beginning of the portion: "These are the names of the Children of Israel."

What is the connection between names and the Egyptian exile?

Moreover, the "names of the Children of Israel" are actually related to their redemption -- "It was because of their coming redemption that their names are mentioned here."

Additionally, the Midrash says that the Jews were redeemed from exile "because they did not change their names... they came [to Egypt] as Reuven and Shimon and they departed as Reuven and Shimon."

How is it then that a Torah portion which deals almost entirely with exile should have as its title a word that relates to redemption?

In truth, the concept of "names" relates not only to redemption but to exile as well. Indeed, it is much easier to perceive the superficial connection between names and exile than the more internal connection between names and redemption, as shall presently be explained.

A name possesses two opposite characteristics: On the one hand, a person's name does not tell the average individual anything about him, for we observe that many different people share the same name. On the other hand, we also observe that when some one faints, it is sometimes possible to rouse him by calling his name.

The reason for this is that a person's name does indeed relate to his

essence, serving as the conduit through which his soul's life-force emanates within his body. This is why, when a person faints and his revealed powers are in a state of concealment, calling him by name may arouse the essence of his soul, which will then be drawn down again and revealed within his body.

The connection between the general content of the Torah portion and its title Shmos can be understood accordingly:

The state of exile is characterized by concealment, for, even in exile, no true change comes about, Heaven forbid. Thus, even in exile, the essence of every Jew remains whole; it is merely concealed. And, as mentioned earlier, on a superficial level, names also conceal the essence.

In a deeper sense, exile itself comes about when the essence of the name -- the quintessential aspect of the Jew -- is in a state of concealment. When the true inner content of the name is revealed -- when the essence of the soul is revealed -- then the name ceases to depict a state of exile and instead reflects a state of redemption.

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXVI, pp. 301-305

Redemption -- Who and Why

On the passage in which G-d reveals His name as, "I Will Be Who I Will Be," the Midrash comments that G-d forcefully redeemed the multitude from Egypt, even those individuals who were wicked. However, those who did not want to leave Egypt died during the three days of darkness.

G-d redeemed the Jewish people from Egypt because, as stated in this week's portion of Shmos, they are "His firstborn son." He tells Pharaoh to "send out My son so that he may serve Me."

The redemption of the Jews from Egypt thus came about because all the Jews in Egypt, even the lowliest, were considered by G-d to be His children, and the connection between a father and child is so essential that it is not subject to deterioration or change.

G-d's relationship with every Jew is thus so strong that, in the words of our Sages: "Whatever the case [whether you are good or not], you are called [My] children, [therefore,] exchanging them for another nation is impossible."

This being so, why weren't all the people redeemed from Egypt?

Furthermore, during the Egyptian exile, there were different categories of evil people among the Jews, up to and including idolaters... so much so that there were individuals who left Egypt with their idols in hand! Nevertheless, all the Jews managed to take part in the exodus. Why then were those who did not want to leave Egypt excluded from the redemption? How were they different from the rest?

Consider. According to Rebbe, - Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, the very day of Yom Kippur brings atonement for all sins, even if the sinner himself does not atone. However, Rebbe admits that if a person transgresses the prohibitions of Yom Kippur itself, such as eating and drinking on that day, then Yom Kippur will not atone for these sins.

Since, according to Rebbe, Yom Kippur atones even for the harshest of sins, why does it not ameliorate the sins of Yom Kippur itself?

The Rogatchover Gaon answers: Since these sins pertain to Yom Kippur itself, Yom Kippur serves as a "cause" for them, i.e., the sins came about through the very day of Yom Kippur. It follows that the cause of a sin cannot simultaneously act as its atonement, for "a prosecutor cannot become a defense attorney."

On a more esoteric level, the explanation is as follows: Yom Kippur reveals the essential bond between every Jew and G-d, a bond that transcends iniquity. However, sins relating to Yom Kippur itself block the revelation of this bond with G-d. It is therefore impossible for the bond to serve as a basis of a person's forgiveness for sins committed on Yom Kippur, since these very sins obscure this bond.

The same is true with regard to the Exodus: The arousal from above that brought about the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt was predicated upon the revelation of G-d's bond as Father of His children.

Since this connection is not subject to change, it resulted in the freeing of all the Jews from Egyptian bondage, even those who were wicked, for "Whatever the case, you are called [My] children."

But those Jews who refused to leave Egypt, choosing to remain "slaves to slaves" -- the very antithesis of devotion to G-d, and surely in complete opposition to the relationship implied by the phrase "My firstborn son" -- placed themselves in a different category.

By their refusal to leave, they opposed the very revelation of the essential bond between G-d and all Jews. It was thus impossible for this revelation to serve as the grounds for their redemption, because "a prosecutor cannot become a defense attorney."

Nonetheless, this was only so regarding the redemption from Egypt. Concerning the future Redemption, the Torah assures us that all Jews, without exception, will be redeemed.

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XI, pp. 1-4

PARSHA - Parashat Shemot  
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY  
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PARASHAT HASHAVUA  
In honor of the yahrzeit (27 Tevet) of Shmuel Shlomo ben Aharon Drazin ZT"L.

PARASHAT SHEMOT  
by Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein

"And Moshe agreed to dwell with the man, and he gave Tziphora, his daughter, to Moshe. And she bore a son and he called him Gershom, for he said: 'I have been a stranger in a strange land.' And it came to pass during those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed from the labor and they cried... And Moshe shepherded the flock of Yitro his father-in-law, priest of Midyan, and he led the flock far into the desert..." (Shemot 2:21-3:1)

With these few verses the Torah recounts the story of Moshe Rabbeinu's adult life, from the time he matures and goes out as a young man to see his brethren, to the time he returns to Egypt - at the age of eighty - to present himself and God's demands before Pharaoh. Several decades are squeezed into these three verses. Years and years go by between his frightened flight from Pharaoh's police and his return to his brethren, yet the Torah reveals nothing about his activities during this time. All the spiritual development and character-building that take place during these years is hidden from us. We know nothing of his spiritual trials and tribulations and their effects on his inner stature. Who is the Moshe who flees from Pharaoh and who is he who is called upon at the burning bush to deliver the nation of Israel; what are the changes that occur in him through his efforts to strive continually upwards in the building of his exalted personality? Obviously, we would be eager to learn what happens to him during this time, but the verses, as we have seen, leave out a large portion of his life, jumping from his youth to his fully mature status as God's elected emissary.

We shall focus on this period, attempting to understand what happens to Moshe during those "many days" and the meaning of the Torah's strange silence in this regard. However, before examining this parasha itself, let us first turn our attention to a similar situation regarding another exalted biblical personality - Avraham Avinu - and compare them.

Avraham, too, appears on the biblical scene in all his adult, full-blown spiritual glory, after he has already become "Avraham Ha-ivri," God's chosen. Our first meeting with him occurs after he has accepted the Creator of heaven and earth, firm in his belief, calling out in God's name as he relentlessly lays the foundation of Am Yisrael.

Obviously, we are extremely interested in the process by which the father of our nation arrives at his faith and by the factors and events which influenced him. But here, too, the verses reveal nothing. However, if the verses do not distinguish in this regard between Moshe and Avraham, and the path which leads both of them to prophecy is obscure and unknown, the approach of the Midrash in these two instances is completely different. In the case of Moshe, the Midrash continues the Torah's policy of obscurity, while, when it comes to Avraham, Hazal expound at length on his actions and

adventures in Haran and Ur Kasdim, in an attempt to complete the sketchy picture which arises from the biblical verses.

Why is this so? Why does the Midrash build such a detailed spiritual profile for the young Avraham ben Terah while refraining to do the same for Moshe ben Amram? The answer lies in a basic difference between these two personalities with regard to the nature of the "unknown period" in their respective lives, as is clear from a reading of the Torah narrative itself.

In fact, the Torah's silence with regard to Avraham prior to the command of "lekh-lekha" is not at all similar to its silence in the case of Moshe. Before Avraham's appearance in the Torah as a fully integrated personality confident in his path, we know nothing at all about him. However, from the moment he is introduced to us, there is a continuous and complete description of his deeds and actions. From his departure from Ur Kasdim until his burial in Hevron, from the construction of his first altar when he calls out in God's name until he binds his son on the altar on Mt. Moriah, there is no break in the continuity of the story. There are no periods of obscurity and secrecy in the story of Avraham's life; there is only a division of periods: the period prior to his appearance before us, and the period thereafter. The first period is not a "black hole" in the story of his life; it is rather the period prior to the story's beginning - it is pre-history. For reasons of its own the Torah chooses this division and leaves Avraham's early life out of the narrative. And, as is so often the case, that which the written Torah leaves out, the oral Torah fills in, expounding at length in the Midrash on those episodes where the verses chose brevity.

The same cannot be said of the story of Moshe, however. Here the Torah is silent not prior to his appearance in the verses but rather thereafter. From the time of his birth until his burial, the Torah is with him from cradle to grave. The period enveloped by the Torah's silence is not before or after the time framework of the story, but rather in its very midst. We hear of the birth of the young Levite, we read of his childhood in Pharaoh's palace, and we follow closely his actions as a young man when he goes out to his brothers. This early period is laid out before us in great detail until he suddenly disappears and all there is in the Torah is a long silence, which is not broken until he reappears several decades later.

Thus we are not talking of the period prior to the narrative framework, but rather of a disappearance in mid-narrative. Therefore we must realize that the disappearance is an integral part of the story itself. Moshe's flight to Midyan and the textual silence regarding his doings during that time are located in the midst of the story's time-frame, since they are part of the story. The lack of noteworthy events is itself an event - one of withdrawal and seclusion. Moshe's disappearance and silence following his escape to Midyan tell us that he secluded himself and changed the course of his life. He does not continue in the path he has trodden to date, but rather takes a completely new direction - towards seclusion and isolation. The silence of the text is an expression of the hermetic life of seclusion and isolation which Moshe lives in the desert during these years.

The non-story here is the story, and it is for this reason that the Midrash makes no effort to expound the narrative as it did in the case of Avraham: The story isn't lacking a chapter; it is told in full, but here the technique used is that of silence, expressing Moshe's concealment and seclusion - the essence of his existence during this period.

A close examination of the text reveals that this self-imposed isolation came in the wake of a crisis. Moshe underwent a profound crisis, as a result of which he took off to the desert and enveloped himself in silence. What was this crisis? What caused it and what were its consequences? In order to answer this question, we must review what happened to Moshe just prior to his departure from Egypt and his spiritual character at the time, as revealed to us by the text.

The Torah recounts two stories about Moshe prior to his departure for Midyan. The first describes his encounter with the Egyptian who is beating a Jew, while the second records what happens to him when he sees two Jews striking each other. If we were to sketch a picture of Moshe's personality based on the description offered in these episodes, we would be faced with a youth (or young man) with a very high level of moral

sensitivity, who cannot tolerate any expression of moral injustice. Moshe's spiritual refinement causes him to rise against any act of suppression or effort to trample the rights of others by use of force. A deep-seated moral flame burns deep within him when he sees the Egyptian beating the Jew, and a strong sense of injustice fills him as he watches the two Jews fighting.

However, there is an additional quality which his sensitive nature possesses. Moshe will not be satisfied with the expression of moral indignation alone; he MUST act. Therefore, he reacts by attempting to correct the situation, unwilling to accept the existence of evil as such. He doesn't merely sit and bemoan the situation; he translates his feelings into actions. He is not the type to restrain himself in such a situation. He strikes the Egyptian, and he harshly rebukes his brethren. If there is justice - it must be immediately manifested!

The background, relating to Moshe's action, is worth pointing out. He has spent his life, until now, in Pharaoh's palace, lacking nothing. He has received all his needs throughout life and has never encountered deprivation, discrimination or injustice directed against either himself or his immediate surroundings. The helplessness of the innocent in the face of the tyrant and the sense of cruel Fate are completely foreign to him. He is unfamiliar with the experience of trying to cope with a cruel and unjust regime, or the encounter with the neighborhood bully who strikes fear into the heart of his neighbors. Undoubtedly he knows that Bnei Yisrael were enslaved and forced into hard labor, but only the firsthand encounter with such reality makes him experience and realize the suffering of his brethren.

This encounter between a noble and sensitive soul, inexperienced in the tribulations of life outside of the palace walls, and the obtuse reality of the world, is what gives rise to Moshe's inner crisis. Actually, it is a double crisis: Firstly, the very existence of such a harsh reality gives him no rest, and in addition he is unable to grasp how Bnei Yisrael have come to terms with their bitter fate and are not rebelling against it.

On the first day, upon encountering the Egyptian, whip in hand, Moshe immediately reacts to the injustice. "And he struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand." No questions are asked, no discussion need be had and no second thoughts ensue. He acts on the spot, burning with zealousness for justice and morality. All his feelings of justice and truth are aroused and find immediate expression.

However, the situation is not so simple and straight-forward. Coupled with the description of Moshe's action, the Torah sees fit to point out that before striking, Moshe takes one preliminary precaution: "And he turned this way and that and saw that there was no-one." By taking this necessary precaution, Moshe is already addressing a harsh historical and moral reality: He cannot, as an individual, solve the problem that he has encountered without first ascertaining that no agents of the secret police are in the vicinity. He is thereby forced to recognize the existence of an obtuse reality in which justice and righteousness are powerless to act without first ensuring that the long arm of the tyrant isn't around the corner.

The very recognition of this reality bears the seed of crisis. However, Moshe still believes at this stage, as he deals the Egyptian his due share of punishment, that the situation can be corrected. The full impact of the crisis hits him only the next day. It is only then that he understands the full extent of the problem facing him, and the difficulty of establishing justice upon earth. Prior to his departure from the palace to visit his brethren he had never imagined a reality in which one nation could be so oppressed and humiliated at the hands of cruel enemies. When he becomes aware of this reality, he assumes as self-evident that the oppressed nation will do everything in its power to rise up against its oppressors and fight against its bitter fate. However, upon encountering this socio-historical reality of Bnei Yisrael, he realizes that they have no will or inclination to rise against the situation. Rather he finds apathy and further injustice; apathy in the face of their situation, and injustice in their dealings amongst themselves. Historical reality is not perceived by them as something to be changed; they do not imagine such a possibility. From their point of view, the tyrant and the slavedriver are fixed and unchanging facts of life. History includes injustice, and a strong regime - like a strong animal in nature - will persecute and

trample. If Moshe expected that his action on the first day would awaken his brothers to refuse to accept such a situation and arouse them to act, the second day causes him bitter disappointment. The cruel reality reveals itself to him as being more deeply rooted than he had realized.

The reaction of Bnei Yisrael to his actions, the disdain and scorn which they exhibited towards him, and his own consequent feeling of helplessness, coupled with a sense of the long arm of the tyrannical regime seeking to crush him, all come together to cause a great crisis in his sensitive soul. His despair of possibly influencing the historical sphere and his disappointment in Bnei Yisrael, who - were it not for their weakness - could effect a change, bring him to the brink of depression. He turns his back on the historical effort in general and those pertaining to the Jews in Egypt in particular. The Midrash Rabba (at the beginning of Parashat Va-et'hanan) points out the profound significance of the words uttered by Yitro's daughters: "An EGYPTIAN man saved us from the shepherds", explaining that Moshe is identified in Midyan as an Egyptian and not as a Jewish fugitive. This points to Moshe's feeling of detachment from the historical fate of those who feel no compulsion to act in their own interests.

Moshe is still a youth. If his initial reaction was one of immediate and sharp protest, accompanied by attempts to save the persecuted, the other side of the coin is the crisis and despair he experiences when his efforts meet no success. If justice is not achieved immediately then despair and frustration set in at the inability of historical fulfillment especially in relation to those who do nothing to help themselves. Moshe lacks the character which recognizes the existence of a harsh reality but does not despair of correcting it by means of a stubborn and drawn-out battle which offers no overnight victories. He also is incapable of sensing empathy for the weak and downtrodden, broken in spirit. The same profound moral fervor leads him, in his early years, to a feeling of crisis, despair and detachment, which transforms his flight to Midyan from a journey forced upon him by historical circumstances into a self-imposed seclusion.

However, the story does not end here. Reaching Midyan, Moshe once again reveals kind-heartedness and moral sensitivity in saving Yitro's helpless daughters from the hands of the bullying shepherds. This incident, though, only serves to exacerbate his dejection. When he left Egypt his frustration and despair were directed towards the historical reality on the national level, but he did not harbor the same feelings regarding to human society on its elemental social level. He believed that human fraternity still had its place in society, and he meant to seclude himself only from the historical effort, not from life in human society altogether. "And he dwelt in the land of Midyan and he sat by the well." He chooses the well, the local meeting place, as his dwelling place. However, additional disappointment awaits him. Here, too, the strong oppress the weak, and here too in the social microcosm, morality and justice have no place, devoid though it may be of the pressures which existed in Egypt. The law of survival of the fittest prevails at all levels.

From the depths of his aching soul, Moshe decides to opt for a solipsistic existence. He leaves even the well and focuses on the limited family unit. Ultimately, as time goes on, we find him in an advanced stage of removal from involvement in human society and from any effort to correct the social historical reality of the world - "And he shepherded the sheep far into the desert."

"And he came to the mountain of the Lord, to Horev." His attempt at seclusion in the desert is undertaken in an attempt to find God. Not in the corrupt and aggressive human society will he find God, but in the desert. There will he be able to seek Wisdom and spiritual fulfillment as he directs his attention to communion with God far from the corruption of human society.

Thus time rolls on. Moshe is engaged in seeking the God of truth and serving Him in the desert, as he attempts to scale the peaks of spiritual elevation. Yet, throughout these "many days" Bnei Yisrael are sighing and groaning because of the Egyptian oppression. "And it came to pass during those many days (i.e. during the time that Moshe dwelt in the desert of Midyan - see Rashi and Ramban), the king of Egypt died, and Bnei Yisrael

sighed because of the labor, and they cried out, and their plea reached God because of the labor." Moshe is involved in serving his Creator and in delving into the fundamentals of wisdom; the suffering of his brethren has disappeared from his mind. Throughout these years, in response to the crisis he has undergone, he suppresses the feelings of pity and humane-moral indignation hidden in the depths of his soul.

Moshe though will be commanded to set aside his personal existential concerns and spiritual development in order to plunge into the depths of historical selflessness, with a firm belief in man's ability to change the harsh reality in which he finds himself. God Himself addresses him and calls upon him to act in order to redeem the oppressed nation; even if the nation is powerless to fight against those who enslave it. The whole purpose of the episode of the burning bush is to extract the future master-prophet from his solitary existence in the desert and to return him to the sphere of action on the historical-national level. God's words to him teach him that his personal quest for God is not sufficient so long as it is not accompanied by a recognition of the secret of the transformation from God's name as He is known (the Tetragrammaton) to "Ehyeh" - meaning the God who descends and is active in the midst of the human historical reality (see Rashi). From the heights of God's mountain, man is ordered to descend to the depths of the bush, and just as the God of Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov sees it fit to remove His Shekhinah, as it were, from His Throne of Glory in order to save His nation because He hears their cries and is aware of their suffering, so is it incumbent on His servant of flesh and blood to act likewise.

The entire description of the events at the burning bush revolve on this issue. Furthermore, it will continue to accompany the relationship between Moshe and the nation throughout the story of the enslavement and redemption in Sefer Shemot. However, the treatment of Moshe's recovery from his crisis in the wake of the experience of the burning bush and his subsequent achievement of the epitome of spiritual elevation in Parashat KiTissa, as a result of his concern and supreme altruism for Bnei Yisrael during the crisis of the Egel - and not as a result of a solipsistic existence - require much more space than is allowed us here and therefore we have limited the discussion to the description of the actual crisis and no more.

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Parshas Shmos

DVAR TORAH - PARSHAS SHMOS

by Chaim Ozer Shulman

"And these are the names of the children of Yisroel who are coming to Egypt with Yaakov: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, etc. And all the descendants of Yaakov were 70, and Yosef was in Egypt." (Shmos 1; 1-5)

Several questions arise:

- 1) Why was the counting of the children of Yisroel who descended to Egypt repeated in Parshas Shmos when the 70 who descended were already counted in Parshas Vayigash (Bereishis 46; 8-27)? Rashi says: "They were counted again in their death to show Hashem's love for them." But as the Abarbanel asks on Rashi's interpretation: Since the death of the brothers is only mentioned later in verse 6 after the counting, this implies that the counting in verses 1-5 was in their lifetime?
- 2) Why does the Torah list only the sons of Yaakov here in Parshas Shmos and not the grandchildren and great-grandchildren as it does in Parshas Vayigash?
- 3) Why does the Torah say here "AND these are names of the children of Yisroel" ("VI'EILEH shmos B'nei Yisroel") with the conjunctive "AND" (the "vav mosif al inyan rishon")?
- 4) Why does it say "who ARE COMING to Egypt" ("habaim mitzraimah") in present tense, if the descent to Egypt actually occurred many years before?

5) Why does the Torah in Parshas Shmos say "[the children of Yisroel who came into Egypt] WITH YAAKOV" ("eis Yaakov"), while in Parshas Vayigash it says "[the children of Yisroel who came into Egypt] YAAKOV AND HIS CHILDREN"?

6) Why is "and Yosef was in Egypt" ("vi'Yosef haya bi'Mitzrayim") mentioned here? Rashi quotes a Sifri in Haazinu which asks: "Don't we know that Yosef was in Egypt? The Torah is teaching us the righteousness of Yosef. He was the very same Yosef herding his father's sheep as he was as viceroy in Egypt." This doesn't explain, however, why this important assertion that "Yosef was in Egypt" is placed here and not in the original counting of the 70 who descended to Egypt in Parshas Vayigash?

It appears that the counting of the children of Yisroel in the beginning of Shmos is really an introduction to a central theme of the story of Shmos, that B'nai Yisroel were able to continue and thrive as a nation even as they were enslaved in Egypt. As the Torah says two verses later: "And the Children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and become exceedingly mighty" (1; 7). This second counting of the children of Yisroel in Shmos is done to emphasize that the success of B'nai Yisroel in not assimilating and in not being lost among the Egyptians is directly attributable to the fact that Yaakov's children remained as strong in their faith, their Torah, and their righteousness in Egypt as their forefathers did in Eretz Yisroel. Therefore, their children and grandchildren were able to maintain this tradition and thrive in Egypt. As the Midrash Rabbah states: "It states: 'And these are the names of the children of Yisroel' . . . They were all equated to Yaakov for they were all Tzadikim [righteous]." The Midrash does not explain how we see that the children were all compared to Yaakov. But it is probably from the statement "AND these are the names of the children of Yisroel," with a conjunctive "AND" (Vav Mosif Al Inyan Rishon), to show that the children of Yaakov were as strong in their faith as their forefathers were; and perhaps also from the fact that it says here "WITH Yaakov" ("eis Yaakov") to equate them all to Yaakov.

It was not only Yaakov's children, but also his grandchildren and great-grandchildren who maintained the tradition of their forefathers. The parallel to Yaakov, however, applied primarily to his 12 sons. The sons who lived in Egypt maintained the same righteousness as their father Yaakov did. Therefore just the sons are mentioned in Shmos. This is also perhaps why it says "that are coming" ("habaim") in present tense, to stress that B'nai Yisroel always considered themselves newcomers even many years later.

This also explains why the Pasuk says "and Yosef was in Egypt," particularly in Shmos and not in Vayigash, because in Shmos when discussing how the children of Yaakov retained their faith in Egypt it is appropriate to state that Yosef who herded his father's sheep was the very same Yosef who was viceroy in Egypt. Yosef was the epitome of a Tzadik in Egypt, and Yosef exemplified more than any of the other brothers how one can be in Egypt and still remain steadfast in one's faith and one's righteousness.

It is interesting to note that Yosef Ha'Tzadik is the only person in the Torah referred to by Chazal (the Rabbis) as "Ha'Tzadik" (the righteous). The contemporary Mefarshim (commentators) try to understand why Yosef in particular merited this title. Some point to the fact that Yosef resisted the enticements and threats of the wife of Potiphar. But that doesn't seem to distinguish Yosef from the Forefathers who also withstood many tests. From the above it would appear that Yosef merited the title "Tzadik" because of the fact that he remained firm in his righteousness even as viceroy of Egypt. He remained the very same righteous Yosef of his youth even as viceroy in Egypt.

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DRASHA PARSHAS SHMOS -- BALANCE OF POWER 1/3/97 -- Volume  
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"If nominated I shall not accept, if elected I shall not serve." The words of Civil War general George Tecumseh Sherman ring clear in American history as a tribute to a man's obstinate unwillingness to commit to further service to a shattered country.

It seems that Moshe responds in almost the same manner, not to a nominating committee but to G-d Almighty. When Moshe is approached by Hashem to speak to Pharaoh, he defers. First he ponders, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh?" (Exodus 3:11) After Hashem exhorts him, Moshe tries a different tactic. "I am not a man of words for I am a man heavy of mouth and speech." (Exodus 4:10) Again G-d refutes his extenuation and chides Moshe that, after all, "who makes a mouth for man if not the Almighty?" And once again He urges Moshe to go to Pharaoh, assuring him that "I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:12)

Finally, when Hashem assures Moshe that it is His hand that will guide him, His words that will be spoken and His spirit that will inspire him, Moshe still does not accept. He has one final seemingly lame pretext: "Send the one who You are accustomed to send." (Exodus 4:13)

The scenario is almost incomprehensible. After every one of Moshe's protestations are well refuted by the Almighty, how did Moshe have the audacity to petition G-d to send someone else?

My 2nd grade rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Follman, asked his Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, to officiate at the wedding of his daughter. Reb Yaakov checked his appointment calendar and shook his head slowly. "Unfortunately I have a prior commitment and can not fulfill your request." He wished Reb Chaim and his daughter a heartfelt mazel tov, showered them with blessings, and added that if his schedule would open he would gladly join them at the wedding.

On the day of the wedding, Rav Yaakov was informed that his original appointment was canceled. Immediately, he made plans to attend the wedding. Assuming he would come after the ceremony, he arrived at the hall long after the time that the invitation had announced that the ceremony would commence. Upon entering the wedding hall, Rav Yaakov realized that for one reason or another the chupah (marriage ceremony) had not yet begun. Quickly, Rav Yaakov went downstairs and waited, almost in hiding, near the coat room for nearly 40 minutes until after the ceremony was completed. A few students who noticed the Rosh Yeshiva huddled in a corner reciting Tehillim (Psalms) could not imagine why he was not upstairs and participating in the chupah. They, however, did not approach him until after the ceremony.

Reb Yaakov explained his actions. "Surely Reb Chaim had made arrangements for a different m'sader kidushin (officiating rabbi). Had he known that I was in the wedding hall he would be in a terrible bind --after all, I was his first choice and I am much older than his second choice. Reb Chaim would be put in the terribly uncomfortable position of asking someone to defer his honor for me. Then Reb Chaim would have to placate that rabbi with a different honor, thus displacing someone else. I felt the best thing to do was stay in a corner until the entire ceremony had ended -- sparing everybody from the embarrassment of even the slightest demotion."

Moshe's older brother Ahron had been the prophet of the Jewish nation, guiding them, encouraging them, and supporting them decades before Moshe was asked by Hashem to go to Pharaoh. When Moshe was finally convinced by the Almighty that he was worthy of the designated mission and that his speech impediment was not an inhibiting factor, there was one more issue that

Moshe had to deal with. And that factor was not in Hashem's control. It was a very mortal factor -- his brother Ahron's feelings. Under no circumstance, even if every other qualification were met, would Moshe accept a position that might, in some way, slight his brother Ahron

Only after Moshe was assured of Ahron's overwhelming moral support and willingness to forego his commission did Moshe accept the great task. Sanctity of mission and divinity of assignment end somewhere very sacred: at the tip of someone else's heart. Good Shabbos In memory of Joseph Fertig by Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Fertig

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