

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHMOS - 5758

B'S'D'

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mj-ravtorah@shamash.org January 15, 1998 shemos.98 Shiur HaRav
Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Shemos (Shiur date: 12/30/80)

[Note that the materials that we worked with were incomplete as to the opening question presented in this Shiur. We supplemented it with notes from a hebrew version of this Shiur presented in a sefer entitled Divrei Hashkafa from the Rav.]

Parshas Shemos begins with "These are the names of the sons of Israel HABAIM (that are coming, present tense) to Egypt. We find the almost identical verse in Parshas Vayigash when the Torah first tells of their journey to Egypt at the time of departure from Canaan. The use of the present tense in Vayigash is readily understood, as the Torah was narrating the story as it unfolded, in the present tense, that these were the children of Jacob who accompanied their father to Egypt. However, the events in Parshas Shemos occurred after they had been there for some time. In fact, a few verses later the Torah says that Joseph and his brothers and their entire generation had passed on, and it also says that each son of Israel arrived (past tense) with the members of his house, so clearly the Torah in Parshas Shemos is not talking about the period of their arrival in Egypt. Why didn't the Torah use the past tense in the opening verse, to say that these were the children of Israel ASHER BAU, that arrived in Egypt with their father [years before]?"

The Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 1:4) comments on the words Habaim Mitzraymah that even though they had already been there for some time it still felt to them as if it was their first day in Egypt. Why? Because even though the Jews had been in Egypt already a considerable time (to put it in perspective, longer than the United States has been an independent nation), the Egyptian people still viewed them as if they had just "gotten off the boat". They were always viewed as outsiders, or other-siders (from the term Ivrim) who never were integrated into Egyptian society and thus were always viewed with suspicion. As Paroh said to his people: "Behold the nation of the children of Israel is greater and mightier than we are".

The notion that the Jews were still considered new arrivals even after spending many years in a land is not limited to the exile in Egypt. The same can be seen throughout Jewish History and the various exiles we have gone through. Rabbeinu Gershon Meor Hagolah was a contemporary of Charlemagne of Germany. During the middle ages, Jews lived in the cities and were heavily involved in commerce and trade. Yet they remained separate from the rest of society. In contradistinction, the Slavs instantly assimilated into German society upon their arrival. Had the Jew lost his identity through assimilation hundreds of years earlier, there would have been no holocaust. Likewise, if the Jew had been part of Egyptian society, Paroh never would have decreed that Bnay Yisrael are greater and mightier than the Egyptian people themselves nor would he have had a need to enslave them. For if they were assimilated there would have been no way to distinguish them as a distinct people from the rest of Egyptian society.

Indeed, this is the root of anti-Semitism throughout the ages. We are always looked upon as strangers who maintain some mysterious and mystical tie to a distant homeland. The Jew is always looked at as an Ivri, as someone coming from the other side. The Torah calls the Jewish women Nashim Ivrios who are different than their Egyptian counterparts. We are always in the process of coming, Habaim, that keeps us on the outside and prevents us from assimilating with the surrounding society despite the pressures on us to conform.

Chazal tell us that the Jews were redeemed from Egypt because of four merits. They did not change their names, their language, their dress and they continued to practice Bris Milah. The Midrash puts it beautifully saying that Reuven and Shimon descended to Egypt [and the same] Reuven and Shimon returned from Egypt [unaffected by Egyptian society]. This is the meaning of Habaim. After so many years of living in Egypt, they still maintained

themselves as a separate people, as Bnay Yisrael. Even though the Jew lives in society and participates in it in education, commerce, science and other areas he remains apart from it. This is what Paroh said about the Jewish Nation thousands of years ago. The Jew constantly reasserts his identity every time he studies Torah and keeps Mitzvos, telling the rest of the world that we are still here, unchanged.

The Rav said that during the holocaust period he thought that American Jewry lost the spirit of Habaim. When 500 rabbis organized a rally in Washington before Yom Kippur, FDR refused to grant them an audience. Instead Vice President Wallace met with a delegation of 5 rabbis. The Jewish press of the day even mocked their efforts. There was a fear of rocking the boat, of standing up in protest for Jews as Jews. The American Jew displayed indifference towards his brethren in Europe who were condemned to the gas chambers and crematoria of Treblinka and Auschwitz. They lost the sense of Habaim. However the Rav noted that in modern times there is a discernible change in the air that the American Jew is prepared to stand up for Jewry and Eretz Yisrael. They do not exhibit the same trepidation in dealing with the non-Jewish political world that the East European Jews of the past generation displayed. Though they have not won the battle against assimilation, they have rediscovered a sense of Habaim.

Those that view this separateness of Habaim as a curse do not understand the essence of the Jew. Hashem has a relationship with all of creation, for nothing can exist without Hashem. All mankind enjoys this relationship with Hashem. The Jewish Nation demanded more that this and Hashem agreed with them. There is a special covenant that was entered between the patriarchs and Hashem that binds us to Hashem with a direct link that others do not enjoy. The Jew has common interests with the rest of the world that stem from our joint relationship with Hashem as a part of the cosmos. We participate in medicine, commerce, science. But when society attempts to pull us away from the direct covenant that the Jew enjoys with Hashem, we dig our heels in and no force can compel us to comply. This non-compliance leads many to say that the Jew is a separatist and is not interested in contributing to the welfare of society and in dealing with its problems. This is the same lie that Haman said about the Jews: that they are a separate nation whose customs differ from all others and they refuse to participate to benefit the general society. This is not true. But the Jew will not surrender his identity and retains the spirit of Habaim, as if they first arrived in Egypt today. Habaim says that our identity will continue forever. It also means that we are ready to participate with the society we live in if it is friendly to us, but we will resist a society that attempts to make us conform. In transcendental, metaphysical terms Habaim means that we are distinct but in socio-economic terms we participate.

What kind of Jew lived in Egypt? What was Jewish life like before Mattan Torah? What did they stand for? Apparently there were many Jews who were assimilated, as Rashi points out (Parshas Bshalach, Vachamushim), either 1/5 or 1/50 left Egypt. The rest were comfortable in Egypt, assimilated and disappeared in Egypt. Only a small group understood their destiny and joined Moshe. The Torah only hints to this majority, but is not interested in telling us their story. The Midrash tells us that many Jews in Egypt had scrolls, which probably had Chumash Breishis inscribed on them. On their days of rest they would assemble in homes and read and discuss these Megillos. Yetzias Mitzrayim did not begin with Moshe. Moshe completed the miracle. The Jewish faith in the promise of Hashem was not just incidental. The people cultivated it and sacrificed their lives in order that this identity should continue till Hashem would bring the fulfillment of Pakod Pakaditi. There were many Jews who waited anxiously in anticipation of Pakod Pakaditi. According to the Rav, when the Torah says that "A man from Beis Levi went and took the daughter of Levi" Beis Levi means the tribe of Levi. Beis Levi means the active maintainers of Jewish life and continuity in Egypt. The word Bayis contains the idea of responsibility. We don't mean the biological Bayis but the Bayis that represents responsibility. Amram and Yocheved belonged to this group that resisted Paroh's attempt to assimilate the Jews. The Midrash says that Shevet Levi were the leaders and teachers of the people prior to the arrival of Moshe. They were among

those that knew that they must be careful not to assimilate so that the promise made to Avraham many years before would be fulfilled.

The Torah says that Hashem rewarded the Jewish midwives with Batim. What does Batim mean? The Rav explained that Hashem turned over the leadership of the Jews in Egypt to the midwives. "Vayas Lahem Batim" means Hashem made them leaders and entrusted them with the leadership and authority to lead and teach the masses in Egypt. It is interesting to note that the midwives were women, according to Chazal they were Yocheved and Miriam. We see that they took over the leadership when we examine the role of Miriam. When Paroh decreed that all male Jewish children should be killed and all female should remain alive, Amram divorced his wife, believing it to be futile to have children who would be killed immediately. He was admitting defeat and was committing the equivalent of suicide. Miriam accused him of being more cruel than Paroh because his policy rejected the creation of male and female children. The Midrash says that after the birth of Moshe when he was forced to surrender Moshe, Amram slapped Miriam's face and said "What has become of your prophecy? We had a beautiful child who now we have to surrender, just as I said would happen years ago". Miriam remained around the waters of the Nile to observe what would happen to Moshe because she felt that she had a personal responsibility based on what she said to Amram years before. The Torah tells us, through the events that transpired, that Miriam was correct. After Krias Yam Suf, Miriam's leadership is demonstrated when she led the women in song praising Hashem. She is described as the prophetess, sister of Aharon, If not for her, it is possible that the exodus would not have taken place. Moshe was the leader when they left Egypt. Miriam was the leader in his absence. This leadership was the "Batim" that Hashem rewarded Yocheved and Miriam with, by making them the leaders and the preparers of the people.

Moshe, based on his prior experience with the people years before, said that the people would not believe that he had been sent to redeem them. Hashem answered him that they would believe him, because they are not the same people that he remembers. They have changed over the years and been prepared for redemption under the leadership of Miriam and Yocheved. Amram's leadership was taken away because he did not see the future in the Jewish nation and was given to Yocheved and Miriam who saw that there would be continuity and made every effort to save the lives of the newborn male children.

Why did Paroh command the midwives to kill the male children? Why didn't he issue a decree to his nation ordering the death of the children, as he did later when he decreed that all male children, Jew and Egyptian be murdered? Why did he use the midwives? The method used by the enemies of the Jews throughout the generations was not only to oppress the Jew but to discredit him in the eyes of the world to prove that the Jew is subhuman and immoral being and is undeserving of the sympathy of the rest of the world. The Rav recalled the story of how the Nazis selected Jews and assembled them in the finest halls in Poland. They were instructed to dress nicely, and were provided sumptuous food. They provided an orchestra and instructed the Jews to dance. The Nazi photographers would record this and afterwards these Jews were sent to the crematoria. After the war their motives of the Nazis were discovered, They wanted to discredit the Jew as sub-human and unworthy of pity by showing that they did not care for their brethren. How could they arrange banquets at the time that their brethren were suffering in Treblinka? Paroh wanted to do the same thing and discredit the Jewish midwives, whose job was to help the mothers and children that were dependent on them, as the killers of the Jewish children because they were afraid to incur the wrath of Paroh. Paroh would then claim that the midwives must have done this because they realized that the children were as sub-human as they, the midwives, were. The midwives recognized Paroh's plan and under the penalty of death refused to carry out the order of Paroh.

When the daughter of Paroh opened the box and saw Moshe, the Torah says Vatriryhu Es Hayered (she saw somebody besides the child, see Rashi). Why didn't it say the simpler form, Vatriryh? How did she know that it was a Jewish child? Apparently Paroh had a decent daughter who did not agree

with the decrees of her father. Presumably Paroh decreed that anyone who would aid the Jewish children would be punished by death, yet his daughter had the moral character to revolt against her father and let the child live. Bas Paroh had a talent to identify greatness. Great leaders have the ability to recognize genius and greatness and know how to utilize it. Great leaders like Alexander and Napoleon had this ability. Paroh who appointed Joseph as prime minister had this talent. He was able to recognize that Joseph's interpretation was valid while that of his advisors was not. Then he recognized him as the wisest man in the kingdom and immediately appointed him as prime minister and the second most powerful man in the country. Bas Paroh had this ability. When she opened the box she saw the Shechina with Moshe. She immediately felt the great potential of Moshe that radiated from that box. She immediately questioned her father's motives: how could he condemn this kind of a child to death and call him sub-human? Vatriryhu, and she saw that the Shechina was around him and there was something very special in that box. She realized that this is a Jewish child and rebelled against her father's decree and refused to comply. Immediately she dispatched Miriam to bring her a Jewish nursemaid.

Bas Paroh tells Yocheved to nurse the child and she will be paid for her work. Apparently she was not paid as the Torah does not record any payment to Yocheved when she brought him to the palace years later. When she found Moshe in the Nile, Bas Paroh realized that her father was a cruel tyrant. She realized that this child was special and even if she would raise the child, she would not be considered his mother. She therefore called Yocheved and told her to raise the child as its mother. The Rav noted that during the holocaust, many Jewish children were placed in the care of gentiles for safe keeping. After the war the gentiles refused to return the children to their natural parents and the Jewish parents had difficulties retrieving their children. The gentiles claimed that they raised the children during the war and did not report them to the authorities and wanted to keep them as their own. Bas Paroh realized that she would not be his true mother hence she did not pay Yocheved. She made two supreme sacrifices. The first was when she rebelled against her father in allowing Moshe to live. Her second sacrifice was in allowing Yocheved to be the true mother to this child, who was destined for greatness.

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yhe-parsha.ml@jer1.co.il Shalom, Some important info./ announcements.

1. First of all, the navi series begins this Monday with questions, followed by the introductory shiur. It will be sent out to the tsc-all list and the tsc-navi list. ... you can subscribe directly via listproc@virtual.co.il or via the TSC WEB site [<http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach>

2. For those of you living in the NY area; Rabbi Marc Penner of the **Young Israel of Holliswood, Queens [HJC]** has invited me to spend Shabbat Shira - Parshat B'shalach [Feb 6-7] as scholar in residence. Below is a copy of shul announcement: Young Israel of Holliswood/HJC 86-25 Frances Lewis Boulevard Holliswood NY Shabbat Shira - Parshat B'shalach [Feb 6-7th] Shabbaton With Rav Menachem Leibtag Shiurim on: Leil Shabbat Tish, misc. short topics Shabbat Luncheon - Why did Pharaoh 'change his mind' Shabbat afternoon - When did David first meet Shaul Seudah shlishit - From Rfidim, via Amalek, to Har Sinai MOTZEI SHABBAT - Melava Malka - 8pm Shiur (interactive) - Why David Hamelech was not permitted to build the Beit Hamikdash (followed by food and music/ Cost \$10) This event is co-sponsored by the YIHJC and Yeshivat Har Etzion Alumni (Home hospitality available for Alumni) For more information & reservations call 718-776-8500 or 718-479-7921 or e-mail ampenner@aol.com.

tsc-par-new@virtual.co.il THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [<http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach>] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag SEFER SHMOT - INTRODUCTION

What is Sefer Shmot? Before we talk about "shmot", let's first explain what the word "sefer" implies. In our study CHUMASH [the five 'books'],

our basic assumption is that each "sefer" (book) carries a unique theme. As we study each sefer, we attempt to uncover that theme, which later helps us better understand what each sefer is all about. Just as we used this approach in our study of Sefer Breishit to uncover its primary theme of "bechira", we will use a similar approach to uncover the theme of Sefer Shmot. So what ties Sefer Shmot together? As we will now show, this not an easy question.

A TABLE OF CONTENTS To identify a common theme, it is helpful to first make a list of the major topics of each Sefer in order to find what connects these topics together. Without going into minute detail, I think that everyone would agree with the following table of contents for Sefer Shmot: 1) "Yetziat Mitzraim" (the Exodus/ chaps. 1->17) [including the journey to Har Sinai] 2) "Ma'amad Har Sinai" (the Theophany / chaps. 18->24) [including the mitzvot of Parshat Mishpatim] 3) "Tzivui ha'Mishkan" (the Tabernacle / chaps. 25->31) [God's commandment to build the Mishkan.] 4) "Chet ha'Egel" (the sin of the Golden Calf/ chaps. 32->34) [including the story of the second luchot] 5) "Binyan ha'Mishkan" (its construction/ chaps. 35->40) [concluding with the "shchina dwelling upon it]

Therefore, to identify the overall theme of Sefer Shmot, we must find a theme that connects all of these topics together. Now, it's quite easy to explain why Sefer Shmot begins with the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, for it continues the story which ended in Sefer Breishit. As we explained in our shiur on Parshat Va'yigash, the final stage of the "bechira" process was God's choice of all of Yaakov's children to become His special nation. After the final "hitgalut" in Breishit (46:1-4), where Hashem tells Yaakov that he is going down to Egypt to become a great nation there (as promised in His first "hitgalut" to Avraham in 12:1-3), the Torah lists the SHMOT of all his children who went to Egypt (see 46:8-27). Sefer Shmot now begins with this very same list of names - "v'eyleh shmot" - and explains how Bnei Yisrael indeed became that great nation. Furthermore, the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim (i.e. Bnei Yisrael's enslavement and their redemption from that oppression) describes God's fulfillment of his covenant with Avraham Avinu as promised in Sefer Breishit [see "brit bein ha'tarim" (15:13- 18) and "brit milah" (17:3-8)]. The next topic - "Ma'amad har Sinai" - flows directly from the story of Yetziat Mitzraim, for one of the primary reasons why God took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt was IN ORDER to give them the Torah (see 3:12, Rashi & Ramban). We will also show how Ma'amad Har Sinai serves as an 'enhancement' of "brit milah", for it explains HOW Bnei Yisrael are to become God's nation. However, from this point onwards, the progression of parshiot becomes problematic. Considering that Bnei Yisrael arrive at Har Sinai to receive the entire Torah, we would expect Sefer Shmot to record ALL of the mitzvot which they received at that time. Instead, Sefer Shmot records only SOME those mitzvot (the "dibrot" & Parshat Mishpatim), and then focuses primarily on the mitzvot relating to the Mishkan. The rest of the mitzvot (given at Har Sinai) are recorded in elsewhere in Chumash - in either Vayikra, Bamidbar, or Devarim. Therefore, our definition of the theme of Sefer Shmot must explain why it records only certain mitzvot and why its focus later shifts solely to the Mishkan.

GALUT & GEULAH Ramban, in his short introduction to Sefer Shmot, attempts to tackle these questions. After defining Sefer Breishit as "sefer ha'yetzira" [the creation of the world, and of Am Yisrael (and the patterns of its history)], Ramban explains why Sefer Shmot begins with the story of Yetziat Mitzraim: "... after completing Breishit a special sefer is dedicated to describe the first "galut" (exile) as decreed specifically [in Sefer Breishit, see 15:13-16] and [Bnei Yisrael's] redemption from that GALUT..." [Ramban 1:1]

Next, Ramban must explain the jump in Sefer Shmot from Yetziat Mitzraim to Ma'amad Har Sinai, and then to the Mishkan: "... and the GALUT is not over until they [Bnei Yisrael] return to the level of their forefathers... and even once they achieved their freedom from Egypt, they are not considered redeemed yet, for they still wander in the desert..., but once they arrive at HAR SINAI to receive the Torah and build the MISHKAN, and God's shechina dwells upon them - then they return to the level of their forefathers... and thus are considered totally REDEEMED..." [Note that the first Ramban in each Sefer of Chumash attempts to

identify the primary theme of each Sefer. I recommend that take a quick look at each of these short Rambans as well as his introduction to Chumash. See also Seforno's introduction to Chumash, which reflects a very similar approach.]

Now one could argue with Ramban's conclusions, but it is clear than Ramban's basic assumption is the same as we assumed in our introduction - that we should expect to find a unique theme for each sefer of Chumash. In our study of Sefer Shmot, we will follow a direction similar to Ramban's, showing how Sefer Shmot relates to God's fulfillment of his covenant with the Avot (as described in Sefer Breishit). First, we will show how the process of Yetziat Mitzraim and the events at Ma'amad har Sinai fulfill that covenant. Then we will show how (and why) the Mishkan and the story of the "chet ha'egel" form an integral component of Ma'amad har Sinai.

Our opening shiur (on Parshat Shmot) will discuss the first hitgalut to Moshe Rabeinu at the "sneh", and Moshe's double mission to both Pharaoh and Bnei Yisrael. The shiurim on Parshat Va'eyra & Bo will focus on Moshe's mission to prepare Bnei Yisrael for their redemption. Parshat B'shalach will explain the reason for the various events which taken place between Yetziat Mitzraim and Har Sinai. Yitro & Mishpatim will discuss Ma'amad Har Sinai, and what is special about the mitzvot of Parshat Mishpatim. Finally, our shiurim from Terumah to Pekudei will focus on the connection between the Mishkan, Ma'amad Har Sinai, and "chet ha'egel".

SEFER SHMOT & PARSHAT SHMOT We conclude our introductory shiur with an explanation of how Parshat Shmot 'sets the stage' for the upcoming events in Sefer Shmot. As we saw numerous times in Sefer Breishit, God communicates His message to man via "hitgalut" (revelation). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the primary theme of each Sefer is introduced in a special hitgalut. For example, God's plan of "bechira" [the theme of Breishit] emerged as a primary topic in each "hitgalut" to the Avot. In a similar manner, we find that the primary theme of Sefer Shmot is first introduced in God's opening "hitgalut" to Moshe Rabeinu at the burning bush (3:1-4:17).

THE FIRST HITGALUT IN SEFER SHMOT Even though the God's hitgalut at the "sneh" is only described in chapter three, for the first two chapters of Sefer Shmot could be understood as the background for this "hitgalut". Chapter one explains how Bnei Yisrael indeed became a NATION in the land of Egypt (see 1:1-7) as God had promised Yaakov in the final "hitgalut" of Sefer Breishit (see 46:1-4, 12:1-3 & our shiur on Vayigash), and how their enslavement began (1:8-22) as foreseen in "brit bein ha'tarim" (Br. 15:13-15). Chapter two sets the stage for chapter three by telling us about the life of Moshe Rabeinu, from his birth up until the episode at the "sneh". The following table, organizing Parshat Shmot by its individual 'parshiot', shows the centrality of God's hitgalut to Moshe at the "sneh" [the burning bush] within of first section of Sefer Shmot. [Note how the primary topic becomes Moshe's mission to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt.]

PARSHA TOPIC ----- 1:1-7 Bnei Yisrael's settlement in Egypt (linking Sefer Breishit to Sefer Shmot). 1:8-22 The "shi'abud" (bondage) of Bnei Yisrael 2:1-22 The birth and life of Moshe (until he arrives in Midyan and marries Tzipora). 2:23-25 God hears the cry of Bnei Yisrael ** 3:1-4:17 God's "HITGALUT" TO MOSHE AT THE "SNEH" [Moshe receives his MISSION].

4:18-26 Moshe leaves Midyan to fulfill his mission. 4:27-6:1 Moshe fulfills the first stage of his mission: 4:27-4:31 He informs Bnei Yisrael that God has come to redeem them from Egypt. 5:1-3 He commands Pharaoh to allow Bnei Yisrael to worship their God. 5:4-6:1 The mission appears to backfire.

As we will see in the shiurim which follow, the next set of parshiot (chapters 6->17) describe how Moshe actually completes this mission.

GOD'S MESSAGE AT THE SNEH What was the purpose of this "hitgalut" at the burning bush? As will now show, it was much more than just supplying Moshe Rabeinu with some information. God gives Moshe a mission and explains its purpose. To better appreciate this point, the following outline organizes this entire 'parshia' (3:1-4:17) to show its flow of topic:

I. INTRODUCTION A. 3:1-3 Moshe notices the 'burning bush'
 B. 3:4-6 God identifies Himself to Moshe II. THE MISSION A.
 3:7-9 The PURPOSE of Moshe's mission to fulfill His promise to the
 Avot B. 3:10 The MISSION itself - III. QUESTIONS AND
 CLARIFICATIONS A. 3:11-12 Who am I to go to Pharaoh? B.
 3:13-22 What precisely do I tell Bnei Yisrael? C. 4:1-9 Why (and
 how) should they believe me? D. 4:10-17 How can I, specifically, be
 Your spokesman? Let's explain: First, God identifies Himself to
 Moshe (I) and then explains to him the mission and its purpose (II). At the
 CENTER of this outline lies God's charge to Moshe that he take Bnei Yisrael
 out of Egypt (II-B). Finally, Moshe responds to this assignment by asking
 several questions which clarify how he is to accomplish his mission (III).
 In our shiurim on Parshat Shmot and Va'eyra, we explain what this mission
 is all about and how Moshe actually receives a DOUBLE mission. To
 assist your study, each week there will be a set of questions for preparation
 which are sent out earlier in the week. * The 'shabbos table' questions focus
 on topics of interest for thought and discussion. [These questions do not
 always have a specific answer, and only sometimes are discussed in the
 weekly shiur.] * The questions for 'shiur preparation' provide the basic
 sources (and direction) which will be discussed in the weekly shiur. * The
 questions on Parshanut focus on a typical dispute among the classical
 commentators, usually related to a topic discussed in the weekly shiur.

Even though you should be able to follow the shiur even without
 preparing the questions, nonetheless, you will usually find that preparation
 will make your study more rewarding. As usual, it is expected that you
 follow the shiur with a Tanach Koren (or similar) at hand, and parshanim
 (preferably Torat Chayim or any other version of Mikraot Gedolot) available.

The primary purpose of the shiurim is to promote in depth study of
 "peshuto shel mikra", so I am delighted when readers argue and suggest
 alternate opinions. Feel free to send your comments. I can't always guarantee
 a reply, but they will be shared with other students via the discussion group
 [the TSC-DISC listproc list]. b'hatzlacha,
 menachem

THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [<http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach>]
 In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag PARSHAT SHMOT

Is 'Let My People Go' just a HOAX? Even though this sounds a bit
 preposterous, Rashbam claims that it's "pshat"! He explains that each time
 Moshe commands Pharaoh to 'let My people go', he only requests permission
 to allow Bnei Yisrael a three day journey to worship their God in the desert.
 Yet never do we find that Moshe tells Pharaoh the 'truth', i.e. his real
 intention is to take Bnei Yisrael to Promised Land. Is Moshe 'telling a
 lie'?! In this week's shiur, we uncover the reason for this daring
 interpretation by Rashbam. Nevertheless, we shall arrive at a slightly
 different conclusion.

INTRODUCTION In our introductory shiur we explained how God's
 "hitgalut" to Moshe at the burning bush introduces the primary theme of Sefer
 Shmot - God's fulfillment of His covenant with the Avot. To fulfill His
 promise, God appears to Moshe and charges him with a double mission: 1)
 To tell Bnei Yisrael that their redemption is near: "...I have seen the affliction
 of My people in Egypt... I have come down now to save them and bring them
 to the [Promised] Land..." (see 3:6-9, see also 3:16-17) 2) To
 command Pharaoh to let them leave: "And now go, I have sent you to
 Pharaoh, and TAKE My people Bnei Yisrael from Egypt." (see 3:10)

In next week's shiur, we shall discuss the implications of Moshe's
 mission to Bnei Yisrael. In this week's shiur, we discuss HOW Moshe is to
 accomplish his mission to Pharaoh.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE Moshe Rabeinu's immediate reaction to
 God's commandment (that he go to Pharaoh) is quite understandable.
 Considering that he has been a fugitive from Egypt for many years, why
 should Pharaoh even allow him an audience. Furthermore, Moshe has been
 away from his people for almost his entire life. How could he possibly be
 accepted as their official representative? Therefore, Moshe responds to this

command by asking: "WHO am I that I can go to Pharaoh, - v'chi otzi - and
 [HOW can I] take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt?" (see 3:11)

Now the precise translation of "v'chi otzi" in this pasuk is a bit
 problematic. Even though Moshe appears to be asking HOW he is supposed
 to take Bnei Yisrael out, God's answer to this question does not appear to
 address this issue at all: "And He said: For I will be with you, and this is the
 sign that I have sent you - WHEN you take the Nation out of Egypt, you
 shall worship Elokim on this mountain" (3:12)

How does this answer Moshe's question? Moshe asks HOW he is
 supposed to take them out, and God tells him what to do AFTER he takes
 them out! What Moshe asks - God never answers, and what God answers -
 Moshe never asked! Now there ways to solve this problem. Either we must
 're-interpret' Moshe's question to fit God's answer [see Rashi & Seforno]; or
 we must 're-interpret' God's answer to fit Moshe's question [Rashbam].
 Rashi (3:12) deals with this difficulty by reinterpreting Moshe's question (in
 3:11). Moshe is not asking HOW to take them out, but rather WHY am I
 (and/or Bnei Yisrael) WORTHY of being taken out of Egypt? God
 responds: Because after they go out, they are to worship Me and receive the
 Torah on this mountain. Unlike Rashi, Rashbam is not willing to
 reinterpret the question. Instead, he re-interprets God's answer. To explain
 why, he divides God's answer into two parts, parallel to the two parts of
 God's original command & the two parts of Moshe's original question. The
 following table maps out this parallel structure by showing how the two
 halves of each sentence in 3:10-12 form a very logical progression:

THE FIRST HALF OF EACH SENTENCE	3:10/ COMMAND: Go, I have sent you to Pharaoh!
3:11/ QUESTION: Who am I,	that I can go to Pharaoh?
3:12/ ANSWER: For I will be with	you, and this [the sneh] is the sign that I have SENT you...

THE SECOND HALF OF EACH SENTENCE	3:11/ COMMAND: Take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt!
3:12/ QUESTION: [HOW]	can I take them out of Egypt?
3:12/ ANSWER: [In order to]	take them out of Egypt, [tell Pharaoh that] this nation must worship their God on this mountain.

Rashbam's explanation of 3:12 is very creative. He claims that Moshe
 asks (in 3:11) that even if he is allowed to speak to Pharaoh, HOW can he
 possibly convince Pharaoh to let them free? God answers Moshe by telling
 him to TRICK HIM - "Tell Pharaoh that you must take Bnei Yisrael [for a
 short time] out of Egypt, in order that they can worship their God on this
 mountain". In other words, Rashbam claims that God instructs Moshe to
 deceive Pharaoh - request permission to worship God in the desert, and then,
 once you are allowed to leave, lead them to the Promised Land instead!

There is no doubt that Rashbam is reading into this pasuk much more
 than is written. In fact, Rashbam himself admits this! However, he bases his
 interpretation of 3:12 on an additional pasuk in this "hitgalut" where God
 explains to Moshe more precisely what he is to do when he goes to Pharaoh:
 "... then you and the elders shall go to the King of Egypt and tell him: 'the
 God of the Hebrews had come and told us that we must go for a three day
 journey into the desert [to Har Chorev] to offer sacrifices to our Lord'."
 (3:18)

Rashbam could have brought additional proof from chapter five as
 well, where the Torah records the actual details of this first confrontation
 between Moshe and Pharaoh: "Afterward, Moshe and Aharon came and
 said to Pharaoh: Thus said the God of Israel, let My People go and worship
 Me in the desert. [Pharaoh refuses.] And they answered: the God of the
 Hebrews has called upon us to take a three day journey into the desert in
 order that we may sacrifice to our God, LEST HE STRIKE US WITH
 'DEVVER' (pestilence) OR 'CHERREV' (sword)." (see 5:1-3)

This final phrase: "lest he strike us with DEVVER or CHERREV" is
 key towards understanding God's intention in 3:12. The plan is rather simple.
 Moshe warns Pharaoh that if he does not allow Bnei Yisrael to journey into
 the desert and worship their God, a severe Divine punishment will ensue
 which may not be confined to Bnei Yisrael alone - indeed it might also
 involve the Egyptians as well! Moshe argues that it is in the 'best interest' of
 both Pharaoh and the Egyptian people that they allow Bnei Yisrael a 'short

vacation' so they can worship their God in the desert. To our amazement, it is quite easy to prove that Rashbam's interpretation is correct. If we follow the story of the Ten Plagues from beginning to end, we find that before every plague Moshe asks only for permission to worship God - "let My people go - v'ya'avduni - in order that they can WORSHIP Me" (see 7:16; 7:26; 8:16; 9:1; 9:13; 10:3). Never ever, not even once, does Moshe even hint to Pharaoh that they plan to leave for good. Furthermore, if we follow the various negotiations which take place during the Ten Plagues, we find that they focus ONLY on the issue of a three day journey to worship God, but NEVER on emigration rights.

NEGOTIATIONS & MORE NEGOTIATIONS Let's cite several examples that show the progression of these negotiations. After "makkat arov", Pharaoh initially offers to allow them to sacrifice, however ONLY within the Land of Egypt - not in the desert (see 8:21-23). Eventually, he agrees to short journey into the desert, but not a three day journey: "And Pharaoh said, I will send you out so that you can worship your God in the DESERT, but don't go too far away..." (8:24)

However, once that plague stopped, Pharaoh hardened his heart and went back on his promise (see 8:25-28). Later, after Moshe warns of the locust plague, Pharaoh's servants demand that Pharaoh give in (see 10:7). Pharaoh enters into a new round of negotiations with Moshe, which finally break down over the issue of WHO can leave. Moshe insists that even the women and children come along, while Pharaoh will only allow the men to leave (see 10:7-11). After the 9th plague ["choshech"], Pharaoh enters one last round of negotiations. This time, he is even willing to allow the women & children, but not their sheep and cattle (10:24-25). Note, that at every stage, Moshe consistently rejects any concession, insisting that EVERYONE must go. Still, despite numerous opportunities, Moshe NEVER mentions that they are leaving for good. Likewise, even though it is not clear why Pharaoh is so stubborn, during all these negotiations he NEVER accuses Moshe that Bnei Yisrael have no intention of returning! Even when Pharaoh finally grants permission for Bnei Yisrael to leave after "makkat behorot" (see 12:29-36), believe it or not, it is ONLY in order to worship God in the desert! Let's take a careful look at those psukim in Parshat Bo: "... and he called to Moshe and Aharon at night and said: Get up and get out... and GO WORSHIP God - "k'daberchem" - as you (originally/ in 5:3) requested! Even your sheep and cattle take with you [that's where the last negotiations broke off/ 10:24], as you requested (in 10:26), and BLESS ME ALSO..." (see 12:31- 33)

The tenth plague causes Pharaoh to finally realize that Moshe's original warning that God will bring "devver" or "cherrev" (see 5:3) has actually come true. Not only does he agree to allow Bnei Yisrael a three day journey to offer "korbanot", he even requests that they pray there on his behalf ("u'bay'rachtem gam ot"/12:32). [Note how Pharaoh asks Moshe to make him a "mish'a'beyrach"! He even sends a donation (see 12:35-36)!]

Likewise, the entire Egyptian nation rushes Bnei Yisrael to leave as quickly as possible IN ORDER that Bnei Yisrael can sacrifice to their God and stop this terrible plague see (12:33). This explains why they LEND ["va'yashilu"] Bnei Yisrael their finest wares so that they will leave as quickly as possible (12:35- 36). After all, they assume, Bnei Yisrael will soon return to Egypt and bring back what they 'borrowed'.

A 'NEW SETTLEMENT' Final and conclusive proof of Rashbam's interpretation (that Pharaoh was totally unaware of Moshe's true plan) is Pharaoh's total astonishment when he is told several days after the Exodus that Bnei Yisrael had 'run away': "And it was told to the King of Egypt - ki BARACH ha'am - that the people had RUN AWAY..." (see 14:5)

Now, this pasuk only makes sense if Pharaoh had not granted them total freedom, but only a permit to worship God in the desert. Had he let them free, why would he suddenly say that the people had 'run away'? Furthermore, note what causes Pharaoh to reach his conclusion that Bnei Yisrael had run away. It is because they DON'T go to the desert, as permitted! Instead, Bnei Yisrael do 180 degree maneuver and RETURN toward Egypt after their original departure (see 13:18) in the direction of the desert: "And God told Moshe, tell Bnei Yisrael to TURN AROUND and set

up camp... near the Red Sea..." (see 14:1-4)

Had Bnei Yisrael continued on their journey towards the desert Pharaoh would have had no reason to chase them. It is specifically because they DON'T go to worship God, but instead RETURN TO EGYPT and establish a 'new settlement' by the Red Sea, that Pharaoh reaches the conclusion: "...what have we done [we've been tricked!], for we have set Bnei Yisrael free from their slave labor." (see 14:5)

Because they don't go to the desert, Pharaoh concludes that he has been duped. He fears that Bnei Yisrael will declare their independence within the land of Egypt. Therefore, he immediately declares war on this rebellious nation of slaves (see 14:6-10). [God plots this intentionally to 'set up' "kriyat yam suf", but this is a topic for Parshat B'shalach.]

Therefore, based on a careful analysis of the entire Exodus narrative, Rashbam's explanation that God commands Moshe to employ trickery emerges as simple "pshat". [Note the 'confident' style with which the Rashbam begins AND ENDS his explanation to 3:11-12. He is quite sure that he is indeed correct!]

'NOT SO FAST ...' Despite the charm of Rashbam's explanation, two questions arise which make it quite difficult to accept his conclusion that God commanded Moshe to deceive Pharaoh, i.e. to tell what we call a 'white lie'. First of all, why can't Moshe simply tell Pharaoh the whole truth? Is God not mighty enough to bring plagues that will convince Pharaoh to allow Bnei Yisrael total freedom? Is it better to deceive Pharaoh, rather than tell him the truth? Secondly, is it feasible that Moshe's real plan could be kept secret from the Egyptians? After all, when God commanded Moshe to go to Pharaoh, he also commanded Moshe to gather Bnei Yisrael and inform them of the true plan, i.e. that He is taking them out of Egypt to the Promised Land (see 3:16-17, 4:29-31)! Can it be expected that no one will leak the story? Doesn't Pharaoh have his own CIA [KGB, Shin Bet... take your pick]?

With regard to the first question, Rashbam answers that this was not a lie, but rather - "derech chochmah" - wise counsel. He cites a similar example from Shmuel I 16:2-3, where God tells Shmuel to fabricate a story that he is going to offer sacrifices at the House of Yishai, even though Shmuel's true intention is to anoint David as King of Israel. However, even if this answers our first question, our second question is not even raised, let alone answered, by Rashbam.

To answer both questions, we must take into consideration the realities of Bnei Yisrael's predicament in Egypt. While doing so, we must be careful not allow our 20/20 hindsight to confuse us.

NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE It is commonly assumed that the only obstacle preventing Bnei Yisrael's return to Eretz Canaan was their enslavement to Egypt. However, if we consider their predicament more realistically, even had Bnei Yisrael been free to leave, the very idea that a nation of some two million people [ex-slaves] could migrate en-masse and conquer Eretz Canaan with its walled cities and formidable enemies was ludicrous. Thus, despite the hardships of their enslavement, there was no practical alternative other than staying in Egypt. When Bnei Yisrael cry out for salvation in 2:23-25, it is only in desire for a lighter workload, it is not a yearning for Zion. With this in mind, we can suggest an answer for both questions.

In the "hitgalut" to Moshe at the burning bush, God has no intention to fool Pharaoh. Had Moshe mentioned a plan of an en-masse emigration to Eretz Canaan, Pharaoh most probably would have dismissed him as insane. Moshe would have lost all credibility in the eyes of Pharaoh as a responsible leader of the Hebrew Nation. Instead, God instructs Moshe to make a fairly reasonable request - to allow his afflicted brethren to worship their God. Moshe does not lie to Pharaoh, nor does he deceive him. He simply claims the legitimate right of religious freedom for an oppressed people! Furthermore, God has every intention to actually lead Bnei Yisrael on this journey to worship God at Har Sinai (see 24:5-8, and Ramban & Ibn Ezra on 3:12!). [Basically, God can demand that Pharaoh grant religious freedom to an oppressed people, but He can't expect him to act as an ardent supporter of zionism.]

The realization that Bnei Yisrael have no other practical alternative

other than to remain in Egypt answers our second question as well. Had the Egyptians heard a rumor that some messianic leader was offering to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt to some Promised Land, they would have scoffed at the very thought. Could a multitude of slaves possibly organize themselves into an independent nation? Could they survive the journey through the desert? Could they conquer the kings of Canaan? Is there any neighboring land as good as Egypt? No one was keeping any secrets. Even the majority of Bnei Yisrael felt that this idea would lead to national suicide (see 14:12!). Why should the Egyptians believe this 'rumor' any more than Bnei Yisrael did? Throughout Sefer Shmot and Bamidbar, we find that the people consistently want to return to Egypt. As the "meraglim" (spies) themselves later conclude, it is the only logical alternative (see Bamidbar 14:1-4). [Even though God's promise that He is taking Bnei Yisrael to a land flowing with milk and honey (see 3:8,17) was originally endorsed by the elders (see 4:29-31), only a short while later, after their workload was doubled, these hopes most likely quickly fizzled out (see 5:1-21).] When God presents Moshe his mission at the "sneh", he is instructed to first present Pharaoh with a reasonable request. Even though God will later bring many miracles, the process must begin in a natural manner.

WHY MUST PHARAOH BE INVOLVED? Even though we have managed to answer our two questions by considering the realities of Bnei Yisrael's situation in Egypt, we have neglected one very fundamental question: Why is it necessary at all for Moshe to confront Pharaoh? Let's explain: If the entire purpose of Yetziat Mitzraim is to fulfill "brit Avot" and take Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Canaan, why must Egypt be involved in this process? Surely God could create circumstances whereby Bnei Yisrael could emigrate without official Egyptian authorization. Let God cause a sudden change in Egyptian policy, or make just one miracle where all the Egyptians fall asleep for 48 hours, etc. [See Ramban 3:13] Yet, at the "sneh" we find that God insists that Bnei Yisrael must receive permission to leave specifically from Pharaoh. Note how the psukim even emphasize this point:

"Now go, I have sent you to PHARAOH..." (3:10) Moshe responds: "Who am I that I should go to PHARAOH?..." (3:11)

Furthermore, as Rashi points out, it is God's true intention that Bnei Yisrael offer "korbanot" on Har Chorev and receive the Torah on this mountain. Worshiping God in the desert is not merely an excuse, it is an integral part of Bnei Yisrael's redemption! Hence, the process of Yetziat Mitzraim seems to be a matter between Bnei Yisrael and God. So, why must Pharaoh be involved?

A DOUBLE PURPOSE One could suggest that this confrontation with Egypt is quite significant, and thus intentional. As we explained, God is not telling Moshe to trick Pharaoh, he is lodging a reasonable request. The confrontation between Moshe and Pharaoh focuses on the fundamental right of religious freedom - the basic right of any people, especially an oppressed one, to worship God. The fact that Pharaoh, the king of Egypt - the powerful center of ancient civilization - rejects this request shows that he considers himself above his fellow man. He acts as though he himself is a god. The natural resources of Egypt, especially the mighty Nile river, granted power to the Egyptian people. This power not only allowed their monarch to feel divine, it also led Egypt to believe that they had the right to oppress other nations - to act as though they were gods. God has an important lesson to teach Pharaoh and his nation- v'yadu Mitzraim ki ANI Hashem (see 7:5,9;16,11;9,14:4). Therefore, God's intention, as revealed to Moshe at the burning bush, is that Yetziat Mitzraim serve a double purpose: 1) From a universalistic perspective, its primary goal is that Egypt - the center of ancient civilization - realize that God is above all Man - "v'yadu mitzraim ki ani Hashem". This message to the Egyptian people must be delivered, in God's Name, by Moshe to Pharaoh (as explained in 3:10-12, 18-20). 2) From Am Yisrael's perspective, the purpose of Yitziat Mitzraim is the fulfillment of God's covenant with the Avot to return their descendants to Eretz Canaan. This proclamation must be delivered by Moshe, in God's name, to Bnei Yisrael (see 3:7-9, 13-17). [This dual purpose for Yetziat Mitzrayim introduces the theme of Sefer Shmot and will be discussed in the next few shiurim].

FROM MAKKOT TO DIBROT In conclusion, it is interesting to note the inter-relationship between these two aspects of the Exodus. As we explained in Sefer Breishit, an ultimate goal of the Nation of Israel is to establish a model society which can bring all mankind to the recognition of God. At Yetziat Mitzraim - at the very same time when Israel becomes a nation, Egypt - the center of ancient civilization and the epitome of a society that rejects God - must recognize Him. Initially, this goal is achieved through force, by the TEN Plagues. Ultimately, when Israel becomes a nation in its own land, this very same goal will be achieved through 'peaceful' means - as long as Bnei Yisrael follow the principles of the TEN Commandments given to Moshe on Har Chorev. shabbat shalom. menachem

shabbat-zomet@jer1.co.il Shabbat Newsletter from Machon Zomet

HALF A QUOTE IS NOT ENOUGH by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel Public figures often complain that items quoted in their name were taken out of context. They might say that only part of the message was quoted, in a way that was selective or even slanted. In this way, the message and the true meaning of the words may be distorted, harming not only the ideas but also the speaker himself. The first one who was misquoted in this way may have been Moshe, as described in this week's Torah portion. The exodus from Egypt is recognized throughout the world as a symbol of escape from slavery to freedom. Every fight for redemption from the yoke of strangers during history gained its inspiration from the exodus out of Egypt. This concept began at the time of the redemption itself, when the event which most made an impression on Yitro was that "He rescued [the nation] from Egypt" [Shemot 18:9]. According to Rashi, he was amazed that until this point in time not a single slave had managed to escape from Egypt, and now 600,000 people were freed at once. Every observer saw the events in the same way, as a tremendous historical achievement of escape from bondage, much more than as a transition of a people into nationhood. Starting from Yitro, who saw the exodus as a release from the physical bonds of slavery, the same phenomenon has continued to this very day. For more than 30 years, Jews all over the world cried out, "Let my people go!" [Shemot 5:1], referring to millions of Jews imprisoned behind the iron curtain, who were forbidden to emigrate to Israel or anywhere else. Many people joined the struggle, including some who were not Jews. Songs were written, posters were hung, and stamps were printed, all with the same motto: "Let my people go!" But this is nothing more than a typical example of an incomplete quote from our divine sources, for what Moshe really said was, "Let my people go, so that they will celebrate for me in the desert" [Shemot 5:1], to which he later added, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" [7:16]. The exodus from Egypt is not the final objective, it is nothing more than a vital stage along the path leading to the exalted goal of receiving the Torah and the mitzvot. Physical freedom without a spiritual identity can be compared to a body without a soul. Anyone who accepts the phrase "Let my people go" as sufficient has taken the verse out of context and is helping to spread a flawed concept. That is why the "Modim" prayer progresses by stages: "So shall you give us life and maintain us, and gather our Diaspora to your holy areas" - this is only the means to an end - "in order to observe your laws and perform your will, and to worship you with a complete heart" - this is the real objective. The beginning without the end of a verse is nothing more than a quote taken out of context.

Here is another example from Zionist history: in 1882, the pioneers of the Bilu movement immigrated to Eretz Yisrael. Bilu was a glorious movement which used as its name the initial letters of the verse, "Let us go and walk forward, House of Yaacov" [Yeshayahu 2:5]. However, there is another part to this verse: "by the light of G-d." Let us not indulge in partial quotes, let us not choose selectively because of personal convenience. Let us take care to quote each phrase in its entirety: "Let my people go, that they may serve me," and "Let us go and walk forward, House of Yaacov, by the light of G-d."

Michlelet Torah Viregsh mtv1@netvision.net.il PARSHAT SHEMOT

Michlelet Torah Viregsh has undertaken to publish in English, for the first time (and for much of the material, for the first time anywhere), the ideas, thoughts and selections of Shiurim of Nehama Leibowitz ZTL. By distributing this new material on the internet, we hope to reach as many people as possible each week, and help them gain insight into Parshat Hashavua. One of the main goals of Michlelet Torah Viregsh is to teach its own women students who come for a year of post high school study, the ideas, skills and Derech in learning of Nehama Leibowitz. ... This series is sponsored by Michlelet Torah Viregsh, a post high school women's Seminary for Chutz Laaretz Yeshiva high school graduates ... For information about the school or these Shiurim, please contact the school or Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel, the dean, at 02-571-2021 fax: 02-571-2022 or email mtv1@netmedia.co.il

I. PESHAT, DERASH, and MASHMA' Preface: PESHAT in the Talmud The term PESHAT, in the specific form of PESHUTO SHEL MIKRA (the PESHAT of the verse), appears but three times in the entire Talmud. A brief examination of one such appearance will suffice for our present purpose. The Mishnah (Shabbat 63a) stipulates that a man may not wear weapons into the public domain on Shabbat. Rabbi Eliezer disagrees, arguing that if not utilitarian they are, nevertheless, ornamental. In defense of his argument he cites a verse from Psalms: *ôHero: Gird your sword about your loins, it is your pride and joy.* This interpretation is challenged by Rav Kahana who states that the verse is universally understood--metaphorically--as a reference to scholars and their words of Torah. He is rebuffed by Mar brei d'ERav Huna who states: EIN MIKRA YOTZE MIYEDEI PESHUTO; no verse can be purged of its literal sense. While PESHAT seems to have meant ôliteral senseö in the Talmudic period, it changed over time, and RASHI's use of it is not necessarily the same. [We have already referred (in the Preface to Bereishit) to the critical works of Sarah Kamin and Benjamin Gelles on the RASHI's exegetical terminology.]

Part One: The Sources While we have encountered the terms PESHAT and DERASH on several previous occasions, we have not yet examined the significance of the term MASHMA' which appears prominently in the commentary of RASHI to this week's Parsha. We shall look, here, at RASHI's commentary on three verses in our Parsha and treat them according to Dr. Leibowitz's prescription.

(1) 1:12: *ô...as they were oppressing them, so were they increasing and multiplying...ö RASHI: ôAs they were oppressing:ö To the same extent that they [the Egyptians] deliberately oppressed them so did God deliberately increase and multiply them. ôThey were increasing:ö So did they increase and multiply. According to the MIDRASH: The Holy Spirit said [to the Egyptians]:öSo!ö You said (verse 10) lest they increase, and I say so they shall increase.*

(2) 2:12: *ô[Moshe] looked here and there, saw there was no one, struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.ö RASHI: ôHe looked about:ö He saw what he had done to him at home and what he had done to him in the field. According to the PESHAT --like its MASHMA'.*

(3) 2:14: *ô...Moshe was frightened and said, The affair has become known.ö RASHI: A. ôMoshe was frightened:ö As its PESHAT [indicates]. According to the MIDRASH: He worried because he saw wicked informers among the Jews and he thought that perhaps they weren't worthy of being redeemed. B. ôThe affair has become known:ö As its MASHMA' [indicates]. According to the MIDRASH: I have come to know that which perplexed me, What crime did the Jews commit that of all the seventy nations they were sentenced to savage servitude? I now see that they deserve it. In each of these three verses, RASHI offers two interpretations of the same expression. Several questions present themselves. QUESTION 1: Why is the PESHAT interpretation not labeled in #1, as it is in all the other examples? QUESTION 2: Why doesn't RASHI suffice with one, simple, interpretation instead of citing the MIDRASH each time, as well? QUESTION 3: What is the difference between PESHAT and MASHMA'? We shall try to answer these questions in the course of examining the three comments.*

Part Two: In this corner, the PESHAT... (1) 1:12 -- This verse is what we would call an *ôequational sentence.ö* This means that it could have been formulated: *ôTo the same extent that they oppressed them, so did they increase and multiply.ö* Such a statement cannot be understood as a natural cause and effect and invites a miraculous explanation, a kind of *ôdeus ex machina.ö* This is why RASHI stipulates, *ôSo did GOD deliberately increase and multiply them,ö* emphasizing that He countered the Egyptian intent to limit them by enabling them to increase. As for his second comment, *ôThey were increasing!ö* So did they increase and multiply, *ôRASHI appears to be responding to a linguistic challenge, why are all these verbs conjugated in the imperfect tense?, to which he replies, essentially, by saying that they could just as well have been in the perfect, the meaning is the same. This explanation would also provide ANSWER 1: Since RASHI is not providing an actual interpretation here, but is only issuing a grammatical clarification, there is clearly no need to label it as PESHAT.*

(2-3) 2:11-14 -- Anyone reading these verses understands that when Moshe realized that his killing and burying the Egyptian had become public knowledge he took fright lest he be arrested, or even executed, by the authorities. In fact, the very next verse reads: *ôWhen Pharaoh heard this he attempted to have Moshe killed.ö* This is why RASHI means by: *ôMoshe was frightened: As its PESHAT [indicates],ö and, *ôThe affair has become known: As its MASHMA' [indicates].ö* The MIDRASH, on the other hand, views Moshe and his actions from a completely different perspective and in a different dimension. To see this comprehensively we must go a few verses back and read them, Midrashically, with RASHI's assistance: (verse 11) Moshe went out to his brothers to sympathize with their tribulations. He spotted an Egyptian taskmaster striking a Hebrew man, the husband of Shlomit bat Divri. The Egyptian, having taken a fancy to her, threw her husband out of his house and came back to have his way with her. When the husband, on his return, realized what had happened, the Egyptian set upon him and beat him all day long. (verse 12) When Moshe saw what the Egyptian had been doing to the Hebrew both at home [with his wife] and in the field [beating him], and verified that none of his descendants would be a convert, he slew him... (verse 13) On the morrow he encountered two Hebrews fighting... (verse 14) [One of the Hebrews] said: Are you saying I should be killed... [the use of *ôsayingö*] indicating that he had slain the Egyptian by reciting the sacred name. QUESTION: What important perspective on Moshe Ra'beinu does this somewhat long-winded Midrashic recital provide? ANSWER: He is not a thoughtless, impulsive killer--as a *ôPESHATö* reading alone could imply; he is a man of God who is made privy (by God) to secret contretemps and to future contingencies, and who slays evildoers with *ôthe sacred name,ö**

i.e., not with brute force but with divine power.

Part Three: What Distinguishes PESHAT from MASHMA'? We are left with QUESTION 2: What is the difference between PESHAT and MASHMA'? Nehama illustrates the difference by comparing several appearances of the same word, *ôYADö* (hand): Literally, a hand is a five-fingered extremity with which one grasps or holds things, gives and takes, writes, etc. It has, however, non-literal meanings as well. For instance, Eliezer, Avraham's major *d'Eomo*, is said to have departed for Aram *ôwith all the goods of his master in his hand (BEYADO)ö* (Bereishit 24:10). It is difficult to imagine him doing so literally, as much of his master's goods consisted of *ôsheep, cattle, slaves, and maidservantsö* (12:16), and every Hebrew speaker understands that *ôin his hand,ö* in this instance, means in his possession (compare 31:29). When it comes, however, to: *ô[Yaakov] took whatever came into his hand (BEYADO) as a gift for his brother, Esavö* (32:14), RASHI says: *ôInto his hand, his possession... According to the MIDRASH... this refers to precious stones and pearls which people wrap up and carry by hand.ö* Nehama concludes: Here, the PESHAT doesn't follow the literal sense, whereas the MIDRASH does, since the PESHAT of a verse is its interpretation according to its context and subject, not necessarily according to the literal sense of every one of its words... In other words, in this verse the PESHAT is non-literal whereas the MIDRASH is literal! To appreciate Nehama's point, let us reflect on the literal sense of the word MASHMA'. Derived from the verbal root SH-M- it means *ôaudible,ö* and is used, in Hebrew, along with MAMASH (tangible), MILLULI (vocable), and TZURAH (visible), to designate *ôliteral.ö* QUESTION: What do these four words have in common? ANSWER: They derive from the five senses. QUESTION: What does this imply about the use of MASHMA' as an exegetical term? ANSWER: It signifies that *ôwhat you see (hear, taste, or feel) is what you get;ö* not an imitation (such as a metaphor).

Part Four: Speaking About Hands... Verse 2:5 describes how Pharaoh's daughter took possession of the box (TEIVAH) containing baby Moshe. [Find TEIVAH in a concordance. What do you make of the fact that it appears only here and with Noah?] It says: *ôShe sent forth her AMAH and she took it.ö* The question is: What was her AMAH? RASHI says: *ôHer maid,ö* adds: *ôBut our rabbis treated it homiletically (DARSHU) as a hand,ö* and then notes, disconcertingly, that *ôaccording to Hebrew grammar [were it a hand] the MEM would have a DAGESHö* [and the MEM of AMATAH does not]. QUESTION: Why is RASHI not satisfied with the PESHAT (her maid)? Why does he persist in adding a MIDRASH particularly, as he notes himself, that it is unacceptable grammatically? ANSWER: Assuming, again, that RASHI utilized the AGGADAH only when he finds the PESHAT unsatisfactory, it is possible that his problem with the PESHAT of *ôher maidö* lies in the fact that when the princess's maids are introduced at the beginning of the verse they are called NA' AROT. RASHI may have reasoned: If the princess sent one of her maids after the box, the Torah should have said: *ôShe sent forth her NA' ARAH.ö* The use of AMAH, then, is suspicious and justifies a homily. Moshe Sokolow

II. *ôMAKING HOUSES:ö A MACHLOKET ON MANY LEVELS* Last week in Parshat Vayechi, we discussed *ôIntentional Ambiguous Pronouns in the Torah.ö* This week's Parsha of Shemot contains another example of this concept, with numerous and important ramifications. After the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh and helped keep Jewish babies alive rather than kill them, the verse (Exodus 1:21) states: *ôIt was because the midwives feared God, HE made for them houses (VAYAAS LAHEM BATIM).ö* What are these houses, and who did the making?

Rashi states that the houses were the *ôHouse of Levites and of Priesthoodö* and the *ôHouse of Kingship.ö* Since the midwives were Yocheved and Miriam, we know that from Yocheved came Aaron (Priesthood) and Moshe (Levites), and from Miriam, through her husband Chur, came King David and the Davidic dynasty. Thus, Rashi is stating that the houses in the verse were significant family trees (called houses), and the *ômakerö* of the verb *ôVAYAASö* is clearly God Himself, who did this as a reward to the midwives for *ôsticking their necks outö* and standing up to Pharaoh out of a fear of God. Rashi's grandson, Rashbam, on the other hand, disagrees with his grandfather, and says that the houses were jail houses. They arrested these midwives to prevent them from going to the Jewish women giving birth. If this is the explanation of the word *ôhouseö* in the verse, then it is clear that the maker of these houses, according to Rashbam, is Pharaoh, and not God. Rashi obviously knew of Rashbam's possible explanation and discounted it. Rashbam also read his grandfather's explanation and discounted it. What, then, is the underlying explanation that *ôforcedö* each commentary to adopt his particular explanation?

Nehama understood their Machloket, on one level, as an argument about grammar. Since the pronoun *ôHeö* in *ôHe madeö* is ambiguous and could refer to either Pharaoh or God, Rashi chose to attach the verb to the LAST NOUN MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY, i.e. God (mentioned in the previous verse). Rashbam, however, attached this pronoun to the next person who acted in the next verse: *ôAnd Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son who is born you shall throw into the river, and every daughter you shall let liveö* (Exodus 1:22). Pharaoh is also the LAST male who did an action, as it was Pharaoh who acted in verse 18, and not God, who is merely mentioned in the verse, but did no action. This purely grammatical disagreement about ambiguous pronouns seems to favor Rashi. Since the next verse (22) specifically mentions Pharaoh, this implies that a change in person performing the action. Thus, if Pharaoh only acted in verse 22, it seems that someone other than Pharaoh acted in verse 21.

On another level, Nehama explained their disagreement based upon a general approach to Peshat. Although both Rashi and Rashbam were essentially Peshatists, Rashbam was far more literal in his Torah commentary than Rashi, who often quotes Midrashic explanations. Apparently, here Rashbam could not accept that the word *ôhouseö* in the Torah was to be understood figuratively of kingship (and it is never used again as such in the Torah). Thus, Rashbam preferred the simple understanding of houses as jail house (despite that this would force his explanation of the pronoun to be the more farfetched Pharaoh than Rashi's explanation of God). Rashi, apparently, was not bothered by the figurative explanation of *ôhouse.ö*

But then Nehama went on to explain this underlying disagreement based upon a far more philosophical conflict. Of course, Rashi was aware of Rashbam's approach. But he could not imagine that the Torah was teaching us a moral lesson about heroism -- that if you risk your life for God and to do what is right, the result is punishment and pain. That is not the Jewish or Torah outlook. It is for this reason that Rashi rejected this approach, and explained the reaction in the Torah to heroism as reward, and not punishment. Rashbam would disagree, and say that the Torah is trying to teach us that in the *ôreal world,ö* sometimes the reaction to heroism and sticking one's

neck out is, indeed setback, pain and punishment. Nevertheless, the Torah/Es imperative is to do what is right and fear God, and Judaism demands this type of heroism even knowing that the result may be punishment and going to jail. Thus, the underlying argument about the word *ohoseo* and the pronoun may be based on what Rashi and Rashbam believed was the Torah/Es outlook toward life and toward heroism.

Perhaps, using the dictum *oEILU VE -EILU DIVRAI ELOKIM CHAIM*-Both these and these are words of the Living God *o* (Eruvin 13b), we may reconcile this philosophical argument between Rashi and Rashbam. The Torah may be trying to teach us BOTH lessons at the same time. It is true that the SHORT-TERM reaction to heroism and proper moral action may result in setback and punishment. However, the LONG-TERM reaction to heroism and proper moral action will be the greatest of rewards and recognition, from the High Priests, to King David to the Davidic Messiah himself! N.A.

dafyomi@jer1.co.il Insights into Daf Yomi from Ohr Somayach Shabbos 44-50 By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

A Tale of Two Fires What is the psychological condition of a person who sees something precious to him threatened by a fire on Shabbos? There seem to be two conflicting perspectives. Here Rabbi Yehuda ben Lakish rules that although it is forbidden by rabbinic law to move a corpse on Shabbos in regular fashion because it is considered *muktzeh*, it may be removed from a burning building to the safety of an adjacent courtyard. The reason given is that the Sages feared that a person's anxiety over the likelihood of his dear departed being consumed by fire might motivate him to violate the Shabbos and extinguish the fire. They therefore relaxed their restriction on *muktzeh* in this case. In a later *gemara* (Shabbos 117b), however, we learn that a person whose home is on fire may not rescue from the flames more than the food required for the remaining Shabbos meals. The reason given is that if he is given a free hand to save everything possible he may become so anxious in his rescue effort that he will forget that it is Shabbos and will extinguish the fire. How is it, asks Tosefos, that in one case our concern for his anxiety causes the Sages to take a lenient position in rescuing the corpse from the flames and in the other case our concern for his anxiety moves us to restrict his rescue efforts? The solution, explains Tosefos, lies in the degree of anxiety one has over something threatened by fire. One is not so anxious over the loss of his possessions that he will extinguish a fire on Shabbos to save them. But if he is let loose to save them, his preoccupation with their rescue may cause him to forget the Shabbos and involuntarily violate it by extinguishing the fire. In regard to a dear departed one there is concern that he may become so overcome with panic over the danger of the corpse being burned that he will commit the serious sin of willingly extinguishing the fire to save it. Shabbos 44a

The Mitzvah of Washing When a certain fragrant, non-soap cleansing agent was brought before a group of Sages gathered at a Shabbos meal, the Sage Ameimar and Rabbi Ashi availed themselves of it to wash their hands and faces. When their colleague, the Sage Mar Zutra, refused to do so they assumed it was because he was concerned that it might pull some hairs from his face in violation of Shabbos. Only when they challenged his reluctance, on the basis of a ruling by Rabbi Sheshes that there was no problem as regards Shabbos, did Rabbi Mordechai explain Mar Zutra's behavior in a different manner. This sage would not use such stuff even on the weekdays because he considered such attention to cleanliness effeminate behavior which is improper for a man. The position of the other sages is based on two passages in Mishlei. The one quoted in our *gemara* is "Hashem has made everything for His own purpose" (Mishlei 16:4), which Rashi explains as meaning that since man was created in Hashem's image, he has a responsibility to care for his body. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 34:3) cites another passage: "The merciful man shows kindness to his own being" (Mishlei 11:17) and tells the story of the Sage Hillel who personified this ideal. When Hillel took leave of his disciples and headed for the bathhouse he told them he was about to fulfill a mitzvah. In response to their curiosity about what sort of mitzvah there was in bathing himself, he called their attention to the compensation and honor awarded to the man responsible for regularly washing the statues of the king standing in the theaters and stadiums. If this is how they honor the likeness of an earthly king, he concluded, how much more so must I, who was created in the image of the King of kings, be careful to wash myself! Shabbos 50b

Daf-discuss@shemayisrael.com Shabbos 030b: "Hiding" Mishlei THE DAFYOMI DISCUSSION LIST brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld

Shabbos 30b: "Hiding" Mishlei From: Sidney Gottesman <sidney.gottesman@citicorp.com> What is meant by 'hiding' Kohelet or Mishlei? Who are those that wished to 'hide' it? How can a book have been hidden after it has been written? Is there any merit to my speculation that what is being discussed is the canonization of these sefarim and not their physical literary demise?

The Kollel responds: Very interesting question. The term "genizah" used is the *gemara* can mean that the books should be taken out of circulation. The reason given is the seemingly contradictory passages. We find the term "genizah" used in reference to books that were not holy at all, such as in *pesachim* 56a the hiding of the "sefer refuah" (which was a book that had medical cures). So that could certainly be the discussion here. However Avos d'Rabbi noson" 1:4 says "Originally they said Mishlei, Koheles and Shir Hashirim should be hidden, for they contain mere parables and they are not of the Scriptures. They hid them until the Great Assembly came and explained them." Here the discussion is clearly if these books should be canonized or not. It is unclear if the *gemara* in Shabbos is referring to the same instance. Firstly, it leaves Shir Hashirim off the list of books in question. Secondly, and perhaps more revealing, the reasons given are different. That seems to leave room to speculation that this *gemara* is not discussing the canonization of the books, but rather if they should take them out of circulation although they were already canonized. Prof. Shneur Zalman Leiman (of Kew Gardens Hills) wrote a book on the issue. Be well, Moshe Rosenberg

ravfrand@torah.org Rabbi Frand on Parshas Shemos

External Endangerment Doesn't Justify Sweeping Problems Under The Rug The verse tells us, "And in those days Moshe grew up, and he went out to his brethren and saw their suffering, and he saw an Egyptian man hitting a Hebrew man from his brethren." [Shmos 2:11] Moshe saw that no one was looking and he killed the Egyptian. Then we find "And he went out on the second day and saw two Jews arguing with each other. And he said to the wicked one, 'why are you hitting your brother?'" [Shmos 2:13]. The Medrash comments, "this righteous person went out twice and G-d recorded these two 'goings out' one after the other." The Medrash is obviously telling us that these two "goings out" of Moshe Rabbeinu were significant. But what is the significance? The Shemen HaTov explains the Medrash. On the first day, Moshe went out and saw the terrible danger that the Jews faced externally. They were in mortal danger, surrounded by hostile non-Jews. They were being oppressed. He saw a hostile neighbor attacking a Jew; he rose to the occasion and protected his brethren. On the second day he saw two Jews arguing with one another - and he chastises them for their behavior (gives them mussar). One could have said that this is not the time to make waves and cause internal problems. "We have enough problems with the Egyptians, we can't worry about correcting our own misbehavior." One could have swept the internal problems under the carpet in the face of all the external persecution. The Medrash points out that this was not the way that Moshe Rabbeinu acted. The fact that we are endangered externally should not stop Jewish leaders from saying that which must be said regarding correcting internal faults. The leader -- whoever he may be -- must always be ready to point out our foibles and our own shortcomings. The "need" to "provide a united front" and the argument "let's not start our own bickering" should not be used as an excuse to cover up serious internal problems. When Moshe saw two Jews who needed Mussar, he did not fail to complain and make a tumult and tell them "this is not the way that Jews act".

He Who Neither Slumbers Nor Sleeps Chooses Leaders Who Count Sheep The Medrash says that Moshe was superior to Noach. Noach was first called "a righteous man" [Bereshis 6:9] and later was called "a man of the

earth" [9:20]; Moshe was first called "an Egyptian man" [Shmos 2:19] and later was called "a Man of G-d" [Devorim 33:1]. What was the difference between Moshe and Noach? Noach, personally, was a righteous man, but he failed to have any influence on his generation. This is a terrible indictment for a leader. If a person can remain a Tzadik -- which is an admirable quality -- while his entire generation is wiped out, something is amiss. He had so much potential, he could have had such a great effect, and yet his whole generation was wiped out. Moshe Rabbeinu shows us the opposite approach. He began as "an Egyptian man". However, not only was he able to elevate himself, he elevated an entire nation. He was and is the leader par excellence. What was the power of Moshe that made him have such a strong impact on his people? There is a Medrash that tells us "G-d does not elevate a person to greatness until he first tests him with a minor matter." The Medrash goes on to tell us that prior to elevating Moshe (and other Jewish leaders) to roles of greatness G-d tested them with a small thing -- how did they care for sheep. Why do sheep mark a leader? In order to be a leader of the Jewish people, it is obvious that a person has to have greatness. But that said, this is not what MAKES the leader. What MAKES the leader is his ability to relate to the common man, the ability to see the mundane needs of the people. It goes without saying that G-d needs a leader for His people who has Fear of Heaven and is a Talmid Chochom, but the acid test He gives them is with the sheep. The mark of the true leader is to relate to the small problems of man. Here was a person on the level of an Angel -- he did not eat bread or drink water [Shmos 34:28] -- but what did he have to deal with? When people came to him to adjudicate their disputes, they did not ask for sophisticated theological proofs of G-d's existence. They told him "I have problems with my wife, my children, my business..." This is what the leader gets. If he can't relate to these types of problems, he can't be an effective leader. The Talmud states [Sanhedrin 8a] that a Judge has to suffer with the congregation like a nursemaid carries a baby [Bamidbar 11:12]. This is a very apt analogy. What type of problems does a mother get from her children? "The cereal is not hot enough; The cereal is not cold enough; My nose is running; I skinned my knee; He hurt me; She kicked me..." These are the problems that a mother gets. Whatever problems Moshe Rabbeinu heard, it is clear that on his level, they were no more significant, no less petty, than a runny nose. Did it make a difference to Moshe Rabbeinu that this person's cow wasn't giving any milk? But that is what a leader has to be. He has to have that concern, that love, that ability to feel that when Reuvain's cow isn't giving milk -- that is a problem. When Shimeon's business isn't going well -- that is a problem. Those problems are what make a leader. That is what Moshe Rabbeinu was. Not only was he the Master of all prophets, the Teacher of all Israel - but he was a trusted shepherd. He ran to pick up the little sheep. He had compassion for the smallest of problems. In the final analysis, that is the criteria for a Jewish leader.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.org
 Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@clark.net
 Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org

weekly@jer1.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Shmos Insights

_____ Kvelling _____ "And these are the names of the children of Yisrael" (1:1) Imagine a grandmother sitting with a stack of photos of her grandchildren. She takes out the pictures after breakfast and leafs through them, reciting the names of each of her beloved treasures one by one. After lunch she has a nap, and then she takes out her photos again and recites their names over again. And last thing at night, out come the pictures for a last time, kissing them and calling each of them by name. The name of the book of Exodus in Hebrew is "Shemos" -- "The Book of Names." It starts with a list of the names of the children of Yaakov. Even though the Torah had already detailed the names of Yaakov's children in their lifetimes, the Torah lists their names again after their passing to show how dear they are to Hashem. Something that is dear and highly-prized is repeated and re-examined many times. Like the photos of a doting granny. The children

of Israel are likened to the stars: Just as Hashem counts the stars and calls them by name when they come out, and again when they pass from the world and are gathered in, so too he counts the children of Israel, both when they enter this world and when they are gathered in. We should remember that since we are compared to the stars, we must emulate the stars. Just as the purpose of the stars is to radiate light to the darkest and most distant corners of the universe, so too it is the job of the Jewish People to radiate spiritual light to the most benighted and spiritually desolate corners of the world.

_____ Being It _____ Pharaoh said to his people: "Come, let us outsmart it, lest it become numerous and if a war will occur, it too may join our enemies and wage war against us" (1:9-10) "The Germans did not have DDT. Their general-purpose pesticide, which was used whether the pests were rats, lice, or whatever, was a commercial product named Zyklon B. Its active ingredient was hydrogen cyanide. Zyklon B consisted of solid disks that would give off hydrogen cyanide gas when exposed to air. Large amounts of Zyklon B were found in the Nazi camps. But there is a non-criminal explanation for this that is well documented. In the camps there were outbreaks of typhus fever, which was carried by lice. Zyklon B was the agent supposedly used to kill Jews in mass in the alleged gas chambers." (from an anti-Semitic `revisionist' version of the Holocaust) In the Pesach Haggadah we read: "The Egyptians mistreated and afflicted us." (Devarim 26:6) If you examine the Hebrew phrase closely, you will see that it actually says "The Egyptians made us bad." How do you unite an entire nation in the persecution of a minority? You "make them bad." You conduct a smear campaign to demonize them. You turn them from people into a sub-species; into an affliction, a disease. You turn them from a "them" into an "it." The Torah gives us a chilling vision of the future in the above verse. Pharaoh refers to the Jewish People with a masculine singular pronoun -- "hoo." You can read "hoo" as "him." But you can also read "hoo" as "it." When people become an "it," when they become in your eyes no more than an alien organism, then you treat them as any sensible person behaves when faced with a germ. You kill it. You "disinfect" yourself. You carry out a medical program of bacteriological genocide. It's all so chillingly logical.

_____ Believing Your Own Press Release _____ "And Moshe grew, and he went out to his brothers" (2:1) 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 Detroit. To beef up his image a bit, the studio publicity machine 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 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 release. 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 his roots, his background and his brothers. He seems to have a kind of insidious 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.

_____ The Prince of Prophets _____ "And a man from the House of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi" (2:1) When writing about the union of Moshe's parents, why didn't the Torah just say "And Amram went and married Yocheved"? In his lifetime, Moshe achieved a closeness to Hashem unequalled by any other human being. He alone ascended to heaven and received the Torah for Israel. He alone spoke to Hashem face to face,

with crystal clarity, unlike all the other prophets. There was a concern that in the course of time someone might say that Moshe came from heaven, and make Moshe into a god. For this reason, the Torah stresses that his origin was as normal and earthly as anyone. "A man from the House of Levi married a daughter of Levi." Although Moshe was the prince of prophets, his parents were regular flesh and blood.

Sources: o Kvelling - Rashi, Gur Arieh, Sfas Emes

o Believing Your Own Press Release - Yalkut HaDrush in Iturei Torah

o The Prince of Prophets - Kehillas Yitzhak in Iturei Torah

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor:

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