

BS"D



To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com  
From: crshulman@aol.com

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SHMOS - 5765

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Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR  
OVERVIEW

With the death of Yosef, the Book of Bereishet (Genesis) comes to an end. The Book of Shmot (Exodus) 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, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate increases, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all newborn males. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and hides him in the reeds by the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts him, although she knows he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe's sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe and arranges for his mother Yocheved to fulfill that role. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and Moshe kills the Egyptian. Realizing his life is in danger, Moshe flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yitro approves their subsequent marriage. On Chorev (Mt. Sinai) Moshe witnesses the burning bush where G-d commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael, the land promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People will doubt his being G-d's agent, so G-d enables Moshe to perform three miraculous transformations to validate himself in the people's eyes: transforming 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 G-d tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman. Aharon 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 G-d assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

### INSIGHTS

#### The Big League

"Moshe replied to G-d, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Children of Yisrael out of Egypt?'" (3:11)

The lights of Chanuka have faded into darkness. The dreidel lies motionless in the glass-fronted cabinet in the living-room. What have we taken with us from those Chanuka lights?

Surely one of the most important lessons that we can learn from Chanuka is that we are capable of rising to great heights if we really believe in

what we are doing. Even the might of an empire cannot stand in the way of someone who is prepared to give up his life for what he believes.

About sixty years ago in a dark horse stable in Auschwitz, a handful of girls gathered around some hastily-prepared Chanuka candles. Soon the group grew in size and the light spread over the entire barracks. In a few minutes several hundred Jewish women were singing that immortal song of contempt for all the tyrants of history: "Moaz Tzur Yeshuati..." After they had finished the song they listened quietly to words of Torah filled with trust in the ultimate vindication of G-d's actions.

Who were these girls that organized that Chanuka in hell? They were pupils of a school in Tarnow founded by an unassuming seamstress named Sarah Shenirer.

Sarah Shenirer was born in 1883 in Krakow, Poland, which was then part of the Austrian Empire. At that time there was no formal system of education for Jewish girls and Sarah was educated in a Polish public school. All around her, Sarah saw the ravages of the so-called "Enlightenment" on the Jewish woman. Jewish girls were well-versed in the latest in Polish poetry, but disdained their own traditions and religion. Yiddish was an embarrassment to them. A question in Yiddish would be answered in Polish. Sarah Shenirer saw a terrible lacuna in the education of Jewish girls. Their brothers were shielded by their immersion in Torah but, for the girls, there was little or nothing to fend off the blandishments of secularism.

Meanwhile World War I broke out, and Sarah, together with a stream of refugees, left for Vienna. On Shabbat Chanuka Sarah went to the Shtumper Street Synagogue and heard an address by Rabbi Dr. Plesh that summoned her to her life's task. Rabbi Dr. Plesh spoke of Mattityahu and the Chashmonaim; of Chana and her seven sons; of Yehudit. A history of dedication and self-sacrifice.

She returned to Krakow full of enthusiasm. With nothing more than faith in G-d and a burning desire to serve Him as best she could, Sarah opened a school for little girls. She rented two rooms. One served as a tailor shop where she "sewed clothes for the body," and in the other she set up a new kind of "shop" where she began to "sew clothes for young souls." Sarah knew that much as secular studies might beguile the mind, only Torah and mitzvot could nourish the Jewish soul. She began to imbue a generation of girls with a love of G-d and His holy Torah.

She wrote to her brother, a Belzer Chassid living in Czechoslovakia, about her undertaking. At first he ridiculed her. However, when she insisted that nothing would stop her, he invited her to come to Marienbad. He wrote, "The Belzer Rebbe is here and we shall ask him." She invested her last pennies in the trip. Her brother wrote a note to the Rebbe: "My sister wants to educate B'not Yisrael in the spirit of Judaism and Torah." The Rebbe replied with two very important words: "Beracha v'hatzlachah!" (Blessing and success!) Those two words gave her all the impetus she needed. And one might add that, at the time, the only help she received.

With twenty-five children whom she had prevailed upon her customers to entrust to her, the Beth Jacob Movement was born.

At first, Sarah's school provoked contemptuous dismissal as the "undertaking of the seamstress." However, the educational results of her new school very soon spoke for themselves. The parents of Sarah Shenirer's pupils saw a new spirit in the hearts of their children. Her girls spoke differently from the pupils of the Polish schools. They did not speak with arrogance and defiance. They showed respect to their parents. They wanted to go to shul with their parents. They asked what beracha (blessing) to recite for this or that. They were keen to hear stories about the tzaddikim and the pious.

Sarah Shenirer, almost single-handed, revolutionized the education of a generation. And all this by a seamstress whose formal education ceased at the age of 13. When she passed away, more than 200 schools had been established, attended by some 25,000 students all over Eastern and Central Europe. The Beth Jacob (Beit Yaakov) network of schools has

grown exponentially, and is today the backbone of Torah education for girls.

How often do we hear that little voice in our head that says, "You. You belong in the little league!" "You can't do it." "Who do think you are?" "You're way out of your league!"

Very often we are our own greatest enemies.

In truth, we possess enormous untapped resources. Every one of us is a gold mine that goes down to the depths, but we don't see it. The virtues of others are obvious to us, but because we see ourselves from close up, sometimes we cannot focus on our own virtues.

When G-d told Moshe to take the Jewish People out of Egypt, he said "Who am I?" Rashi explains that Moshe meant "Am I important enough to speak with kings?" The negative drive in our heart says "Who are you? Who are you fooling?"

We must know that if we sincerely desire to do something, then, with the help of G-d, the sky's the limit. Apart from our hidden resources, apart from the qualities that we possess and of which we are ignorant, we should always remember that G-d runs the world. If G-d decides that He wants us to achieve something, however far above our capabilities, we can raise ourselves above not only what we believe we can do, but even what we actually can do.

Only G-d decides who gets into the big league.

Sources: Adapted from Rabbi Azriel Brooks' "Kitvei Reshumot" - words of Torah heard from Rabbi Mordechai Zuckerman, zt"l and "Sarah Schenirer: The Mother of Generations" by Joseph Friedenson ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications Judaiscope Series.

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PARSHAS SHEMOS

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/peninim/>  
PENINIM ON THE TORAH  
RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM  
Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

Yosef died, and all his brothers and that entire generation. (1:6)

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains why the Torah finds it necessary to add that the members of the entire generation, the seventy souls that descended to Egypt with Yaakov Avinu, also died. He says that each and every member of that generation had a certain nobility to himself. As such, they were held in great esteem by the people. As long as they lived there was no slavery, for the Egyptians could not enslave someone whom they respected. Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, notes that as long as one acts in a distinguished manner, if he maintains an elevated sense of self-respect, if his ethical character reflects nobility, he is shielded from falling into the abyss of iniquity. Sin is similar to slavery. In both cases, one is subjugated to a master. In the latter, it is to an earthly master; in the former, it is to the yetzer hora, evil inclination, which takes a chokehold on him.

We find a similar idea expressed by the Sefer HaChinuch in regard to personal hygiene. One who is not clean is more likely to act in a sinful manner. Regarding the prohibition to break a bone of the Korban Pesach, the Sefer HaChinuch remarks that a distinguished person does not act in an undignified manner, such as breaking bones. He does not think thoughts similar to those which fill the mind of a person who is on a lower echelon. Dignity has its demands on a person. Thus, one who appreciates and values his own nobility will not denigrate himself with sin.

The Midrash teaches us that Pharaoh guilefully ensnared the Jews. He did not immediately force them to work for him. He first offered the Jews the opportunity to work with him, to assist in making bricks. He would pay them a small sum for each and every brick. Their desire to earn money drove them to work hard the first day, preparing many bricks. When Pharaoh saw how many bricks the Jews had made the first day - for money, he placed this number as a tax upon them - without pay. Whoever was not able to produce this quota was whipped and humiliated.

The members of the tribe of Levi refused to compromise themselves for money. They knew that one day they would carry the Aron HaKodesh. Therefore, they declined to sell themselves for money. They prepared excuses: illness; an injured leg; a pain in the arm or shoulder. They maintained their dignity and self-respect, not falling into the Egyptian trap. The Egyptians could not enslave the tribe that put honor above money.

What a powerful lesson for us to digest. A positive self-esteem empowers one to fend off the blandishments of the yetzer hora. It protects him from sin. What about gaavah, arrogance? Should one not fear that self-esteem will lead to the sin of haughtiness? He who understands the definition of self-esteem realizes that it is much different from gaavah. Self-esteem is based upon the realization of one's abilities, his potential. Vanity is the sense that one should be admired and exalted for what he has already done. Self-esteem looks to the future; arrogance rests on the laurels of the past. Great people act based upon what they know they can achieve. Arrogant people only talk about their accomplishments. A person with a healthy self-esteem does not feel compelled to talk - or hear - about himself constantly. Indeed, arrogance is an escape for the individual who has negative feelings about himself, and tries to override his inner feelings of worthlessness. As psychologists have noted, however, the baal gaavah is never satisfied. His feelings of incompetence are delusional and, thus, not prone to responding to therapy. He must raise his self-esteem in order to realize his potential. This will be his ultimate cure for gaavah and his greatest protection from sin.

Rav Zilberstein concludes with a plea for Torah Jews to act in a manner commensurate with the nobility they represent. When one acts in a plebeian manner, he denigrates not only himself, but the Torah that he should reflect. This action results in chillul Hashem, a desecration of Hashem's Name. He relates an incident concerning a young Torah student, who was noticed arguing with a taxi driver over a few pennies. The bachur felt he was overpaying; the driver felt he was justified in his charges. The issue is not who was right and who was wrong. The mere fact that a young Torah scholar would argue with a taxi driver over a few pennies was in itself a chillul Hashem. Ultimately, this was regrettably demonstrated when the driver cursed the young man and all the people "like him."

Was it worth a few pennies? Perhaps to some of us it is a matter of principle. We might ask ourselves: Is it principle or stubbornness? Furthermore, is our principle worth a chillul Hashem?

And Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and observed their burdens. (2:11)

Moshe Rabbeinu's empathy served as an example for others to emulate. He could have easily closed his eyes to the anguish of his brethren. He was an adopted Egyptian and could thus have separated himself from them. He did not, however, do that. He went out to his brothers and suffered alongside them. Furthermore, when we consider the translation of "vayigdal Moshe," "and Moshe grew up," we note that shouldering responsibility for another Jew, empathizing with his plight, is a vital component in maturity. Growing up means growing out, thinking and caring beyond oneself. Moshe Rabbeinu led the way for so many who took the initiative and followed him. I recently saw a poignant story

concerning Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, Rosh Hayeshivah par excellence, gadol hador, pre-eminent Torah leader of his generation, who took the time and the effort at his advanced age, when he was physically frail and ill, to spend time with a family of little children.

One of his close talmidim, students, arrived at his apartment to speak in learning. As he walked in, the Rosh Hayeshivah said, "It is good that you came. Help me to prepare for an important visit I have to make." Rav Shach immediately rose from his chair, donned his frock and asked the student to bring him a bag of chocolate from the kitchen cupboard. He then proceeded to the door.

They went to another apartment building, and Rav Shach trudged up three floors to knock on the door of an apartment. Immediately the door opened, and three small children screamed, "The Rosh Hayeshivah is here!" The children were standing with cameras flashing, taking pictures of Rav Shach, as their mother stood there watching - with tears streaming down her face. When the children exhausted their film, Rav Shach opened his bag of chocolate, shared it with the children, and bid them good day - until next week, when he would return.

Understandably, the student was in a state of utter disbelief. On their way home he respectfully asked Rav Shach to explain what had transpired and why. The Rosh Hayeshivah explained that one of the siblings, a twelve-year old child, was gravely ill. The parents had to take the child to the United States for treatment. During their stay in America, the mother had given birth to another child, and returned to Eretz Yisrael, leaving the father in the States to oversee their sick child's treatment. Rav Shach explained that since he was privy to the facts in this situation, he felt that it behooved him to do whatever was in his power to ameliorate some of the stress in the home.

This story was related about an individual who never wasted a minute. Every moment was dedicated to Torah and mitzvah fulfillment. Yet, he made time to pose for pictures, because it would make the children happy. This was true gadlus, greatness. Moshe Rabbeinu, the quintessential leader of our people, led the way. He set the standard for empathizing with another Jew. In fact, as the Yalkut Me'am Loez relates, Moshe was the last one to cross the Red Sea. He determined that if he went in front, possibly only those near the front would be saved. He, therefore, remained at the end of the line to make sure that every Jew crossed over safely. A true leader thinks of himself last.

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[www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm](http://www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm) SALT!! ("Surf A Little Torah")  
RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Motzaei Shabbat, December 25, 2004

Towards the beginning of Parashat Shemot we read of Benei Yisrael's accelerated population growth in Egypt, and the concern this engendered within Pharaoh. Pharaoh is worried that "in the event of war they may join our enemies in fighting against us and will leave the country" (1:10). To avoid this scenario, Pharaoh devises various measures to help curb Benei Yisrael's growth - first slavery, and then an order that all newborn males among Benei Yisrael should be killed.

The final words of the aforementioned verse - "ve-ala min ha-aretz" ("and will leave the country") - has been the subject of considerable debate among the commentators. The straightforward reading of this phrase, which is accepted by Rashi (in his first approach), the Rashbam and - though somewhat ambiguously - Ibn Ezra, indicates that Pharaoh was concerned that Benei Yisrael might leave the country. Other commentators, however, preferred not to adopt this reading of the verse. After all, why wouldn't Pharaoh want Benei Yisrael to leave? If he felt threatened by their population growth, wouldn't he be elated by their en masse departure from his country? (Recall that all this takes place before Benei Yisrael's enslavement; quite obviously, once Egypt enslaved Benei Yisrael, Pharaoh would do anything he can to keep them in his country

and prevent them from leaving, even for a three-day "vacation.") The Rashbam, who, as mentioned, nevertheless accepts the straightforward reading, seems to have anticipated this difficulty. He therefore writes, "'And will leave the country' - to return to the land of their forefathers; and it is not good for us to lose our subjects, for we will be called a 'tiny kingdom'." Thus, Pharaoh on the one hand was interested in his country's continued growth and expansion, but on the other hand, Benei Yisrael's unrestrained expansion might lead them to return to Canaan, which would be to the detriment of the Egyptian monarchy. The Ramban suggests this interpretation, as well, only he adds that Pharaoh feared that Benei Yisrael would return to Canaan with all of Egypt's wealth. According to the Ramban, the concern relates to not the loss of subjects, but rather to the loss of property.

Rashi cites a different approach to this verse from the Gemara (Sota 11a), which explains this term as a euphemistic reference to the Egyptians themselves. Pharaoh's concern was that "we will leave the country" - the combined forces of the enemies and Benei Yisrael will overpower the indigenous Egyptian population and drive them from the land. But rather to even allow for such a notion to cross his lips, Pharaoh expressed this concern in the third person - "they will leave the country" - but in truth he spoke of the Egyptians.

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch suggests that Pharaoh here expresses two different concerns. First, he warns that in the advent of war, "they may join our enemies in fighting against us." And secondly, even without war, Benei Yisrael pose a second threat: "they will leave the country," meaning, the region, where they currently live and spread throughout Egypt. As we know from Parashat Vayigash, Benei Yisrael settled only in the area of Goshen, which lay at one corner of Egypt. Pharaoh feared that should the population growth continue, Goshen will no longer contain the people, and they will be forced to expand into other parts of the country. Pharaoh's racial enmity towards Benei Yisrael led him to take measures to prevent Benei Yisrael's entry into mainstream Egyptian society.

Finally, Seforno claims that "ve-ala min ha-aretz" refers not to Pharaoh's concern, but rather his desire. This phrase, according to Seforno, should be read as a direct continuation of Pharaoh's earlier comments: "Let us deal shrewdly with them... in order that they will leave the country." Pharaoh realized that he will not win Benei Yisrael's loyalty, and they will thus pose a threat during times of war. On the other hand, he cannot kill them or banish them without any reason, as this would tarnish Egypt's reputation. Therefore, Pharaoh decided to encourage Benei Yisrael to leave of their volition, by making their conditions in Egyptians intolerable. ...

Yom Sheni, the fifteenth day of the tenth month of the year [3]316

Monday, 15 Tevet 5765 - December 27, 2004

The Torah tells in Parashat Shemot of Pharaoh's order to the Hebrew midwives that they must kill all newborn males among Benei Yisrael. The midwives brazenly and heroically defy the royal edict: "The midwives feared G-d and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live" (1:17). Curiously, the Torah here emphasizes their quality of "yir'at Elokim" - fear of G-d, and attributes their heroic defiance to specifically this sense of fear. This emphasis repeats itself several verses later: "And because the midwives feared G-d, He established households for them" (1:21). Why does the factor of "yir'at Elokim" play such a prominent role in the midwives' refusal to obey Pharaoh's order? Wouldn't we expect anyone with an elementary sense of ethics and compassion to do whatever he can to avoid murdering newborn infants?

Rav Matis Blum answers by citing an important passage from the Malbim's commentary to Parashat Vayera. Recall that Avraham and Sara settle in the region of Gerar, where Avraham poses as Sara's brother, fearing that otherwise one of the residents will kill him and marry Sara.

The king of Gerar, Avimelekh, indeed abducts Sara, but G-d appears to him in a dream and orders him to return her to Avraham, who is actually her husband. Avimelekh angrily demands from Avraham an explanation as to why he lied about his and Sara's relationship. Avraham replies, "I thought that surely there is no fear of G-d in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife" (Bereishit 20:11). The Malbim explains that the government of Gerar indeed followed a just and fair legal system. However, this system was established and enforced for purely pragmatic – rather than idealistic – reasons, to ensure stability and allow for the healthy functioning of the society. Avraham explained to Avimelekh that he could not fully trust a society whose laws are enacted and enforced without "yir'at Elokim." For without an underlying religious conscience, a perceived practical necessity can justify even the most abhorrent atrocities. If crime is outlawed only for the sake of stability, rather than due to a commitment to G-dliness, then all kinds of crimes will suddenly gain acceptance the moment people become convinced of the importance of these measures with respect to the society's stability. In Avraham's case, he knew that Gerar outlawed murder, but he nevertheless feared for his life. All it would take is somebody to provide some reasonable explanation why Avraham's murder would somehow benefit Gerar – and his death becomes justified.

This analysis of the Malbim might help explain the Torah's emphasis in Parashat Shemot on the midwives' "yir'at Elokim." Ultimately, it was only their religious conscience that prevented them from committing this crime. If not for their fear of G-d, they may have very easily succumbed to the pressure of the royal edict and justified their actions by claiming that they were simply "following orders." Only their keen awareness of divine authority and reverence towards G-d's laws prevented them from carrying out Pharaoh's orders.

Yom Shelishi, the sixteenth day of the tenth month of the year [3]316  
Tuesday, 16 Tevet 5765 – December 28, 2004

Yesterday, we discussed the story told in Parashat Shemot (1:15-21) of Pharaoh's order to the Hebrew midwives to kill all the Israelites' newborn males. The midwives heroically defy Pharaoh's edict, justifying their failure to kill the infants by noting that "the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women: they are vigorous. Before the midwife can come to them, they have given birth" (1:19).

Abarbanel, in his commentary to these verses, adopts a unique approach in explaining several of the terms used in this section. Firstly, he suggests that these midwives were actually Egyptian, not Hebrew. The Torah describes the midwives as "ha-mayeledot ha-Ivriyot," which we generally translate as, "the Hebrew midwives." Abarbanel, however, translates this phrase to mean, "the midwives of the Hebrews." It is inconceivable, Abarbanel claims, that Pharaoh would rely on Hebrew midwives to carry out this gruesome task of killing the Hebrew newborns. Undoubtedly, he argues, these were Egyptian midwives assigned to oversee the Hebrew women's births.

Abarbanel also advances a unique interpretation in identifying Shifra and Pu'a – the two midwives of whom the Torah speaks in this narrative. Several commentators address the difficulty in the Torah's implication that only two midwives handled all the births of such a large nation (see Ibn Ezra, Chizkuni, Seforno). Abarbanel claims that whenever a woman in Egypt gave birth, two midwives, whose jobs were described as "Shifra" and "Pu'a," attended to the birth. The first nurse, "Shifra," worked during labor to successfully deliver the child and care for his physical welfare immediately after delivery. The second woman, "Pu'a," was there to help the mother, offering guidance and encouragement to ease the difficult process of childbirth and assist in the recovery.

A third significant comment of Abarbanel in his commentary to this narrative involves the term "chayot." As cited earlier, the midwives deflected Pharaoh's accusations by claiming that the Hebrew women are "chayot," which we translated as "vigorous." This follows the position of

the Rashbam and others, who interpret this term as a reference to physical strength and vigor, which enabled the Hebrew mothers to deliver quickly and independently. Rashi, however, suggests two other approaches to the term. Firstly, the word "chayot" might mean "midwives," and thus the midwives explain to Pharaoh that the Hebrew women are themselves proficient in the skill of childbirth and thus do not require the services of the professional midwives. Rashi then cites a different approach from the Gemara (Sota 11b), which is the general approach adopted by Abarbanel. According to this explanation, "chayot" means "animals." The midwives explain to Pharaoh that the Hebrew women deliver their infants independently just like animals, and they therefore do not require the services of professional midwives.

If we combine these various comments of Abarbanel, we might arrive at a new overall approach in understanding the significance of this narrative within the context of Parashat Shemot. According to Abarbanel, who identifies "Shifra" and "Pu'a" as all the Egyptian childbirth professionals, we have no reason, necessarily, to understand their description of the Hebrew women as complimentary. To the contrary, they very likely regarded the Hebrews as subhuman, as a lesser creature than the Egyptians: "the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women," for "they are 'chayot'" – animals. Their proficiency in childbirth, the Egyptian midwives concluded, is not evidence of the Hebrew's superiority, but precisely the opposite – this reflected their animal-like quality. They deliver babies independently and freely like animals in the jungle.

If so, then this story becomes a very important part in the developing story of the enslavement and oppression of Benei Yisrael. This process was moved along, in part, by a racial theory propagated by the Egyptians that dehumanized Benei Yisrael, to the point where their enslavement and even the murder of their infants could be justified as necessary for the preservation of the allegedly superior native Egyptian population. Once the Egyptians regarded the Hebrews as "chayot," it is easy to understand how they could assign them a collective, lower status, to the point where their basic rights are denied and they are forced to perform slave labor.

(Based in part on Rabbi Eitan Mayer's "Dehumanization – Then Murder" - [www.yu.edu/riets/torah/enayim/archives/issue16/articles16.htm](http://www.yu.edu/riets/torah/enayim/archives/issue16/articles16.htm))

Yom Revi'i, the seventeenth day of the tenth month of the year [3]316  
Wednesday, 17 Tevet 5765 – December 29, 2004

Parashat Shemot tells of the birth of Moshe during the time of Pharaoh's decree to drown every newborn male among Benei Yisrael. The Torah writes that Moshe's mother "saw that he was 'tov' [literally, 'good'], and she hid him for three months" (2:2). The straightforward reading of this verse indicates that Moshe's mother decided to hide him because "she saw he was 'good.'" Needless to say, this reading requires explanation. Does not every mother look approvingly upon her newborn infant? Wouldn't every woman make attempts to hide her child from the Egyptian authorities who sought to kill him?

This question likely prompted several Tanna'im to offer different explanations for the word "tov" in this verse, as recorded in Masekhet Sota (12a). Two Tanna'im – Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehuda – claim that the verse here refers to the infant's name: either "Tov" or "Tovia." This does not, however, explain why Moshe's mother – more so than other Israelite mothers – attempted to hide her child from the Egyptians. It stands to reason that according to these Tanna'im, the two halves of the verse are not connected by a cause-and-effect relationship. Meaning, the mother's decision to hide her infant was natural and needs no explanation. The clause "she saw that he was 'tov'" stands separate and apart from the verse's concluding clause – "she hid him" – and simply informs us of the name she gave her child.

Other Tanna'im, however, seem to have preferred to find some cause-and-effect relationship between these two clauses, and therefore



interpreted the word "tov" as a reference to some unique quality that indicated to Moshe's mother that he was destined for greatness. Rabbi Nechemya interprets "tov" as a reference to Moshe's being "hagun liv'ut" – qualified for prophecy. The Gemara then cites the view of "Acheirim" ("Others"), who claim that Moshe was born circumcised, a clear indication of some unique spiritual quality. The final view, which Rashi adopts in his commentary, is that of the Chakhamim, who explain that upon Moshe's birth, his parents' home became filled with some type of spiritual light, heralding the light of salvation that he would shine upon his downtrodden people.

The classic commentators offer additional explanations to this verse. Rashbam and Chizkuni suggest that Yokheved (Moshe's mother) delivered her infant prematurely, three months before her due date. Since the Egyptian authorities would come to seize the Hebrew infants around the expected date of delivery, Yokheved had the opportunity to hide her baby for three months. On the other hand, most children born at such an early stage in pregnancy do not survive (at least in ancient times). Therefore, only once she saw "that he was good" – that Moshe was physically developed and healthy despite his premature birth, did she go through the trouble of hiding him from the Egyptian for three months. After that point, she realized that the authorities would come to seize her infant, and she therefore placed him in a basket in the river.

A particularly interesting approach to this verse is taken by Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch, who explains "he was good" to mean that Moshe was what we would call "a good baby." That is, he didn't cry very much, he wasn't too fussy or demanding. This is what allowed Yokheved to hide him; only a baby who could easily be controlled and did not cry excessively had a chance of remaining concealed from the authorities. At three months of age, however, when a baby begins to become interactive and playful, others around him wished to see him and play with him. Therefore, at this point, "she could hide him no longer" (2:3), and had to find another way of saving him from those who sought to kill him.

Some would suggest that this episode is an amazing example of Moshe's modesty. We know that Moshe is called the most modest man to walk the face of the earth (Bamidbar 12:3) and this would be a stunning display as we witness Moshe turning down leadership and honor due to his supreme modesty.

But this suggestion cannot be true. One can be extremely modest, but not when G-d tells you that you are the man for the job! How can you turn down G-d, even if you are very modest? Modesty would never be a valid reason to commit a rebellion against G-d's wishes. You may not believe that you are good enough to be a leader but G-d is telling you that you are and He wants you to do the job. This is not a time when you would be allowed to be modest. We must find another approach to resolve the problem.

We find that at the end of the conversation between G-d and Moshe, G-d gets angry at Moshe (4:14) while telling him once again to go to Egypt, and finally, Moshe does not respond. Moshe then begins his life mission of leading the Jewish nation out of Egypt and beyond.

A few questions. What does it mean that G-d became angry? Did His patience with Moshe suddenly dry up? G-d does not have emotions like humans do. Therefore it is not that after withstanding a week of discussions with Moshe, G-d finally "could not take it anymore." Also, why didn't Moshe argue back? Was it only that Moshe could not face G-d's wrath? If Moshe was able to say "No" to G-d until now, and he believed his arguments to be valid, why would he suddenly abandon them? What happened to Moshe's arguments?

The explanation for all of the questions involving this story must be the following. As we have said, one cannot argue with G-d. If G-d instructs you to do something, there is no room for discussion. It must be that throughout the week-long discussion, G-d never actually commanded Moshe to go to Egypt. He told him that He thinks Moshe should go, that it was a good idea, but G-d made it clear that it was not an obligation.

If it is not an obligation, Moshe felt free to dispute and discuss.

Finally, G-d realized that Moshe would not go voluntarily and so "He became angry with Moshe" (4:14). This means that G-d directly and clearly commanded Moshe that he MUST go to Egypt. That being the case, Moshe knows that he can no longer maintain his arguments. G-d has commanded something and he must listen.

Why did G-d not command Moshe immediately? Why did he want Moshe to accept the mission willingly?

We all know that there is a tremendous difference in the success and effectiveness of our accomplishments if we are naturally motivated to do something versus someone twisting our arm to do it. Some of us may know what it is like to have a job that we really do not enjoy. We may carry out our responsibilities and perform our jobs relatively well, but if our heart is not fully into it, our results usually suffer. In order to carry out a task in the best possible way that will achieve maximum results, we must really want to do it.

It is clear that had Moshe accepted his position of leader willingly, he would have more success as a leader. This is why G-d desperately wanted Moshe to 'volunteer' for the job. This is why G-d spends a week trying to cajole Moshe to accept. After Moshe continues to refuse, G-d still knows that even a forced Moshe is the best man for the leadership of the Jewish People, so He commands him. At that point, Moshe, of course, accepts.

We all go to work every day. Some of us work at home, taking care of families, and others must travel to go to the office. Is our heart in our work? Do we truly want to be where we are? Every job position will have pros and cons but we must be able to fully accept the disadvantages of a job as a result of its positive qualities. At times, the redeeming positive quality may be financial in nature, and that is fine as long as we are able to feel good about that. We must reach a point where we feel like we are almost volunteering for the jobs we do. (I am sure that although Moshe began by being forced, he eventually reached that point as well.) This way we can reach ultimate productivity.



From: Aish.com [newsletterserver@aish.com]  
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Kol Yaakov - Shmot From:  
newsletterserver@aish.com Subject: Kol  
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By RABBI BARUCH LEFF

Parsha Insights based on and inspired by the teachings of Rav Yaakov Weinberg of blessed memory

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/kolyaakov/For\\_the\\_Love\\_of\\_the\\_Game.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/kolyaakov/For_the_Love_of_the_Game.asp)

Shmot (Exodus 1:1-6:1) For the Love of the Game

We have all heard of the concept of making someone an offer that they cannot refuse. More often than not we can refuse the offer, but we cannot refuse the one who is making the offer.

What if the one making the offer is the Infinite Power that has created and continues to sustain all of existence? And what if it's not an offer but a directive? Certainly this would qualify as an offer that would be impossible to refuse. Yet, Moshe does just that.

In Chapter 3 of Exodus, Moshe is tending his sheep and arrives at "the mountain of G-d," the location where the Torah would be later given (see Rashi 3:1). It is here where the famous incident of the Burning Bush takes place. G-d appears to Moshe and tells him that He has heard the pain and cries of the Jewish people and wishes to redeem them from Egypt. G-d wants Moshe to be the leader that will take the Jews out of Egypt.

But, shockingly, Moshe says, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Children of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11). Moshe says "No" to G-d and G-d seems to accept his refusal. How can we understand this?

The next 24 verses of the Torah (which the Midrash says took place over the span of a week, Rashi 4:10) detail a back and forth discussion between G-d and Moshe as to why Moshe should go to Egypt, and Moshe's ongoing rebuttal. What is going on?



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Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the  
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[from 2 years ago]

Shmot The Faith of a Leader

THE SEDRA OF SHEMOT, in a series of finely etched vignettes, paints a portrait of the life of Moses, culminating in the moment at which G-d appears to him in the bush that burns without being consumed. It is a key text of the Torah view of

leadership, and every detail is significant. I want here to focus on just one passage in the long dialogue in which G-d summons Moses to undertake the mission of leading the Israelites to freedom - a challenge which, no less than four times, Moses declines. I am unworthy, he says. I am not a man of words. Send someone else. It is the second refusal, however, which attracted special attention from the sages and led them to formulate one of their most radical interpretations. Moses says this:

Moses replied: "But they will not believe me. They will not listen to me. They will say, 'G-d did not appear to you.'" (4:1)

The sages, ultra-sensitive to nuances in the text, evidently noticed three strange features of this response.

The first is that G-d had already told Moses, "They will listen to you" (3:18). Moses' reply seems to contradict G-d's prior assurance. To be sure, the commentators offered various harmonising interpretations. Ibn Ezra suggests that G-d had told Moses that the elders would listen to him, whereas Moses expressed doubts about the mass of the people. Ramban says that Moses did not doubt that they would believe initially, but he thought that they would lose faith as soon as they saw that Pharaoh would not let them go. There are other explanations, but the fact remains that Moses was not satisfied by G-d's assurance. His own experience of the fickleness of the people (one of them, years earlier, had already said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us?") made him doubt that they would be easy to lead.

The second anomaly is in the signs that G-d gave Moses to authenticate his mission. The first (the staff that turns into a snake) and third (the water that turned into blood) reappear later in the story. They are signs that Moses and Aaron perform not only for the Israelites but also for the Egyptians. The second, however, does not reappear. G-d tells Moses to put his hand in his cloak. When he takes it out he sees that it has become "leprous as snow". What is the significance of this particular sign? The sages recalled that later, Miriam was punished with leprosy for speaking negatively about Moses (Bamidbar 12:10). In general they understood leprosy as a punishment for lashon hara, derogatory speech. Had Moses, perhaps, been guilty of the same sin?

The third detail is that, whereas Moses' other refusals focused on his own sense of inadequacy, here he speaks not about himself but about the people. They will not believe him. Putting these three points together, the sages arrived at the following comment:

Resh Lakish said: He who entertains a suspicion against the innocent will be bodily afflicted, as it is written, Moses replied: But they will not believe me. However, it was known to the Holy One blessed be He, that Israel would believe. He said to Moses: They are believers, the children of believers, but you will ultimately disbelieve. They are believers, as it is written, and the people believed (Ex. 4: 31). The children of believers [as it is written], and he [Abraham] believed in the Lord. But you will ultimately disbelieve, as it is said, [And the Lord said to Moses] Because you did not believe in Me (Num. 20:12). How do we know that he was afflicted? Because it is written, And the Lord said to him, Put your hand inside your cloak . . . (Ex. 4:6). (B.T. Shabbat 97a)

This is an extraordinary passage. Moses, it now becomes clear, was entitled to have doubts about his own worthiness for the task. What he was not entitled to do was to have doubts about the people. In fact, his doubts were amply justified. The people were fractious. Moses calls them a "stiff necked people". Time and again during the wilderness years they complained, sinned, and wanted to return to Egypt. Moses was not wrong in his estimate of their character. Yet G-d reprimanded him; indeed punished him by making his hand leprous. A fundamental principle of Jewish leadership is intimated here for the first time: a leader does not need faith in himself, but he must have faith in the people he is to lead.

**THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT IDEA.** The political philosopher Michael Walzer has written insightfully about social criticism, in particular about two stances the critic may take vis-à-vis those he criticises. On the one hand there is the critic as outsider. At some stage, beginning in ancient Greece:

Detachment was added to defiance in the self-portrait of the hero. The impulse was Platonic; later on it was Stoic and Christian. Now the critical enterprise was said to require that one leave the city, imagined for the sake of the departure as a darkened cave, find one's way, alone, outside, to the illumination of Truth, and only then return to examine and reprove the inhabitants. The critic-who-returns doesn't engage the people as kin; he looks at them with a new objectivity; they are strangers to his new-found Truth.

This is the critic as detached intellectual. The prophets of Israel were quite different. Their message, writes Johannes Lindblom, was "characterized by the principle of solidarity". "They are rooted, for all their anger, in their own societies," writes Walzer. Like the Shunamite woman (Kings 2 4:13), their home is "among their own people". They speak, not from outside, but from within. That is what gives their words power. They identify with those to whom they speak. They share

their history, their fate, their calling, their covenant. Hence the peculiar pathos of the prophetic calling. They are the voice of G-d to the people, but they are also the voice of the people to G-d. That, according to the sages, was what G-d was teaching Moses: What matters is not whether they believe in you, but whether you believe in them. Unless you believe in them, you cannot lead in the way a prophet must lead. You must identify with them and have faith in them, seeing not only their surface faults but also their underlying virtues. Otherwise, you will be no better than a detached intellectual - and that is the beginning of the end. If you do not believe in the people, eventually you will not even believe in G-d. You will think yourself superior to them, and that is a corruption of the soul.

THE CLASSIC TEXT ON THIS THEME is Maimonides' Epistle on Martyrdom. Written in 1165, when Maimonides was thirty years old, it was occasioned by a tragic period in medieval Jewish history when an extremist Muslim sect, the Almohads, forced many Jews to convert to Islam under threat of death. One of the forced converts (they were called anusim; later they became known as marranos) asked a rabbi whether he might gain merit by practising as many of the Torah's commands as he could in secret. The rabbi sent back a dismissive reply. Now that he had forsaken his faith, he wrote, he would achieve nothing by living secretly as a Jew. Any Jewish act he performed would not be a merit but an additional sin.

Maimonides' Epistle is a work of surpassing spiritual beauty. He utterly rejects the rabbi's reply. Those who keep Judaism in secret are to be praised, not blamed. He quotes a whole series of rabbinic passages in which G-d rebukes prophets who criticised the people of Israel, including the one above about Moses. He then writes: If this is the sort of punishment meted out to the pillars of the universe - Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, and the ministering angels - because they briefly criticized the Jewish congregation, can one have an idea of the fate of the least among the worthless [i.e. the rabbi who criticized the forced converts] who let his tongue loose against Jewish communities of sages and their disciples, priests and Levites, and called them sinners, evildoers, gentiles, disqualified to testify, and heretics who deny the Lord G-d of Israel?

The Epistle is a definitive expression of the prophetic task: to speak out of love for one's people; to defend them, see the good in them, and raise them to higher achievements through praise, not condemnation.

Who is a leader? To this, the Jewish answer is, one who identifies with his or her people, mindful of their faults, to be sure, but convinced also of their potential greatness and their preciousness in the sight of G-d. "Those people of whom you have doubts," said G-d to Moses, "are believers, the children of believers. They are My people, and they are your people. Just as you believe in Me, so you must believe in them."



From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Sent: December 16 & 23, 2004 To: koltorah@koltorah.org Subject: Kol Torah Parshat Vayigash & Vayechi

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#### APPLYING COSMETICS ON SHABBAT AND YOM TOV – Part 1 by RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

Introduction In the next three issues, we shall discuss a most sensitive topic, the use of cosmetics on Shabbat and Yom Tov. This topic is particularly sensitive as many women feel that it is a necessity to wear makeup on these days since they appear in public where everyone is dressed formally. On the other hand, there are a myriad of Halachic challenges associated with applying makeup on these occasions. In this article we shall outline some of the major issues involved in the use of makeup on Shabbat and Yom Tov as well as potential solutions approved by some Poskim.

Gemara, Rishonim and Classic Acharonim The Mishna (Shabbat 94b) records a dispute among the Tanna'im whether it is biblically or rabbinically prohibited to color the area around one's eyes blue on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The Chachamim (rabbinic consensus of the Mishnaic era) believe that it is rabbinically prohibited and Rabi Eliezer believes that it is biblically prohibited. The Gemara (Shabbat 95a) explains that Rabi Eliezer defines this act as "Tzovei'ah" (coloring), one of the thirty nine categories of forbidden creative activities on Shabbat. The Rishonim appear to disagree regarding which opinion is accepted as normative. The Beit Yosef (Orach Chaim 303 s.v. V'lo Lichol) writes that the Rambam rules in accordance with the Chachamim. The Minchat Chinuch (32:15) explains that this may be inferred from Hilchot Shabbat 22:23, where the Rambam writes that "it is

forbidden for a woman to put “Serek” (paint) on her face [on Shabbat and Yom Tov] because it is like painting”. The Rambam’s use of the word “like”, writes the Minchat Chinuch, implies that he believes that this is only a rabbinic prohibition. Otherwise, the Rambam would have written “it is painting”. Moreover, observes the Minchat Chinuch, the other acts that the Rambam lists in chapter twenty two are rabbinically prohibited acts. Thus, the context of this Halacha in the Rambam also indicates that the Rambam categorizes applying “Serek” on Shabbat and Yom Tov as a rabbinic prohibition. The Beit Yosef, though, notes that the S’mag (negative prohibitions, number 65) seems to rule in accordance with the opinion of Rabi Eliezer. The Nishmat Adam notes that another Rishon, the Sefer Yerei’im, agrees with the opinion of the S’mag. Nevertheless, the Beit Yosef rules in accordance with the opinion of the Chachamim. This is hardly surprising as the majority opinion is usually accepted as normative. Among the major commentaries to the Shulchan Aruch, the Magen Avraham (303:19) addresses this question and notes that applying Serek is a rabbinic prohibition. Surprisingly, though, the Chayei Adam (Hilchot Shabbat 24:2) cites both the opinion of the Rambam and the S’mag without deciding which opinion is accepted as normative. However, the Mishna Brura (303:79) and the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 303:30) unequivocally rule that it constitutes a rabbinic prohibition, in accordance with the ruling of the Chachamim, Rambam, Beit Yosef, and Magen Avraham.

The Category of “Davar Sh’eino Mitkayeim” The Chachamim, Rambam, Beit Yosef, and Magen Avraham do not explain why this constitutes only a rabbinic prohibition. The Chayei Adam explains that the Rambam believes that applying “Serek” is only a rabbinic prohibition because it is “Eino Mitkayeim” (temporary). In order to appreciate this explanation we must briefly explore the concept of “Eino Mitkayeim”. The Mishna (Shabbat 102b) states a broad rule (in the context of presenting the rules concerning Boneh, building on Shabbat) – “This is the rule, one who performs a creative act (M’lacha) and it has a permanent effect (Mitkayeim), has violated a biblical prohibition”. A M’lacha that has only a temporary effect, by contrast, is only rabbinically prohibited. A M’lacha that is Eino Mitkayeim K’lal (fleeting) is permissible in certain limited situations.

Although the rule is clear its application is not, as it is difficult to precisely define the concept and category of Davar HaMitkayeim. The Tiferet Yisrael (Kallelet HaShabbat, Boneh) cites the Pri Megadim who rules that a Melacha that lasts eight or nine days is defined as Mitkayeim. The Sha’ar HaTziyun (303:68) infers from the Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 9:13) that a Melacha is defined as Mitkayeim if it lasts through Shabbat. However, he writes that Rashi (Shabbat 102b s.v. B’Shabbat) seems to believe that Mitkayeim means that it lasts forever. In the context of the M’lacha of Kosheir (making a knot), the Rama (O.C. 317:1) cites two opinions regarding when a knot is considered to be “lasting” (Shel Kayama). One opinion is that it must last one day and one opinion says it must last seven days in order to be defined as “permanent”. To complicate matters further, it is clear that certain acts are considered Mitkayeim even if their effects are fleeting. For example, Rav Hershel Schachter once noted (in a personal conversation) that striking a match constitutes a biblical violation on Shabbat even though it lasts only momentarily. It is regarded as Mitkayeim since one has accomplished his goal (M’lechet Machshevet; see the Rashba, Shabbat 115b s.v. Ha, who asserts that this is the reason why a Davar She’eino Mitkayeim is not biblically forbidden).

In addition, the Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 12:2) writes that it is biblically prohibited to heat metal on Shabbat until it glows, even though the metal will cool down relatively quickly after it is heated. Rav Dovid Ribbiat (The Thirty Nine Melochos 1:134 in the Hebrew section) explains that the concept of Mitkayeim varies from M’lacha to M’lacha as well as from act to act. A match normally is lit only momentarily and metal is usually heated to a glow only for a brief period and thus these acts are regarded as Mitkayeim. For further discussion of this question, see Rav Mordechai Eliyahu’s essay in Techumin (11:107-112) regarding doctor’s writing on Shabbat and Yom Tov with ink that lasts only until the end of Shabbat.

Accordingly, we can appreciate the Minchat Chinuch criticism of the Chayei Adam’s assertion that a woman putting “Serek” on her face is considered Eino Mitkayeim. The Minchat Chinuch argues that since she has accomplished her goal, then her act should be considered Mitkayeim. Moreover, the K’tzot HaShulchan (number 146, Badei HaShulchan 20) notes that the Rambam in Hilchot Shabbat 22:23 does not state that the Serek on a woman’s face is Eino Mitkayeim, unlike Hilchot Shabbat 9:13, where he writes that Serek placed on iron is classified as Eino Mitkayeim. Thus we find Acharonim offering alternative explanations for the Rambam’s ruling.

Alternative Explanations for the Rambam The Mishna Brura (303:79) explains that applying Serek on a woman’s face is only a rabbinic prohibition, because the biblical level prohibition of Tzoveiah does not apply to coloring human skin. This is a somewhat bold assertion, as it is not clear when a M’lacha does not apply (at least on a biblical level) when the human body is involved. There is no

general rule that M’lachot do not apply to the human body. For example, we find that the M’lacha of Boneh applies to the human body (see Shabbat 95a and K’tubot 6b) and that Koteiv (writing) applies to writing on the human body (see Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 11:16). Rav Ribbiat (The Thirty Nine Melochos p. 820) records a dispute among twentieth century Poskim as to whether the M’lacha of Tofeir (sewing) applies to human skin (this has profound implications regarding the question of sewing stitches on Shabbat). Thus, it is not self-evident that the M’lacha of Tzovei’ah does not apply to the human body. Moreover, the Mishna Brura does not cite a source for his assertion.

Rav Avraham Chaim No’e’h (number 146, Badei HaShulchan number 20; Rav No’e’h is a major mid twentieth century Posek who resided in Jerusalem) combines the Chayei Adam and Mishna Brura’s explanations for the Rambam. He explains that since women normally apply makeup with the intention to remove it in a few hours after application (such as before they go to sleep), applying makeup is considered Tzovei’ah Al M’nat Limchok (coloring with the intention to erase). Thus, a woman’s face is not a surface that is normally painted in a manner that is regarded as Mitkayeim. This is why the biblical level prohibition of Tzovei’ah does not apply to human skin and is considered Eino Mitkayeim.

According to this logic, though, striking a match also should not constitute a biblical prohibition since one intends to extinguish the match almost immediately after lighting it. Thus, Rav No’e’h’s argument seems to lead to an absurd conclusion (this is referred to by logicians as a *reductio ad absurdum*; this type of reasoning is very common in the Gemara and its commentaries). However, one could counter that one person’s “*reductio ad absurdum*” is another’s “*In Hachi Nami*” (a Talmudic phrase meaning “yes, this is indeed correct”). Accordingly, the consensus opinion is that applying Serek constitutes only a rabbinic prohibition. However, the basis for this approach remains somewhat unclear. In addition, significant Rishonim and Acharonim consider or rule in accordance with the view that applying Serek constitutes a biblical prohibition.

Twentieth Century Poskim – the Strict View A straightforward application of the sources we have outlined seems to yield no room for leniency regarding the application of cosmetics on Shabbat. It seems that the only debate is whether applying makeup on Shabbat and Yom Tov constitutes a biblical or rabbinic prohibition. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that many contemporary Poskim oppose applying any colored makeup on Shabbat and Yom Tov. These authorities include Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (see Sh’mirat Shabbat K’hilchata 14:59 footnote 158, where he expresses relatively mild opposition and Tikkunim U’mili’um ibid, where his tone is considerably stricter), Rav Shmuel Wosner (Teshuvot Shevet HaLevi 6:33), Rav Gedalia Felder (Yesodei Yeshurun 4:72-73) and Rav Shimon Schwab (reported by Rav Dovid Heber of the Star-K; Rav Heber relates that Rav Schwab was vehement in his opposition). It is important to note that these authorities forbid even the use of what is called “Shabbos makeup”, special cosmetics that are produced for Shabbat and Yom Tov use that is approved by some Rabbanim). Not surprisingly, the authors of Halachic works geared to a popular audience advocate (with slight variations) the strict approach to this issue. These works include Rav Yehoshua Neuwirth’s Sh’mirat Shabbat K’hilchata (14:58-59), Dayan Yechezkel Posen’s Kitzur Hilchot Shabbat (21:4), Rav Dovid Ribbiat’s The Thirty Nine Melochos (3:743) and Rav Doniel Neustadt’s The Monthly Halachah Discussion (p. 276). Rav J. David Bleich clearly (Contemporary Halachic Problems 4:113-119) indicates his preference for the strict approach to this issue.

Next week, we shall, IY”H and B”N, continue with our discussion and present the lenient approach to his issue.

## Applying Cosmetics on Shabbat and Yom Tov – Part 2 by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction Last week we introduced the sensitive question regarding the permissibility for women to apply cosmetics on Shabbat and Yom Tov. We presented the background in the Gemara and Rishonim as well as the strict approach to this issue that many of the twentieth century Halachic authorities articulate. This week we shall present the lenient approach developed by many prominent twentieth century Poskim.

Twentieth Century Poskim – The Motivations for the Lenient Approach Many major Poskim present a lenient approach to permit (in certain circumstances) women to apply some cosmetics on Shabbat and Yom Tov. These authorities include Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrat Moshe O.C. 1:114 and 5:27), Rav Avraham Chaim No’e’h (K’tzot Hashulchan ad. loc.), and Rav Ovadia Yosef (Teshuvot Yabia Omer 6:O.C.38 and Teshuvot Yechave Da’at 4:28). Rav Yosef Adler reports that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik agrees with the lenient approach to this issue. The point of departure for the lenient approach is that the prohibition to apply Serek (the cosmetic discussed by the Gemara) is only rabbinic in nature. We should note that this is a typical approach of Poskim

who seek to present a lenient approach in case of great need. The first step is to demonstrate (if possible) that there is no possibility of violating a Biblical prohibition. Thus, the first step of the lenient argument regarding cosmetics is to prove that the prohibition to apply Serek is only rabbinic in nature and thus there is more room to be lenient than had it been classified as a biblical prohibition. For examples of this phenomenon, see *Birur Halacha* 364:2 s.v. V'achar (in the context of relying on communal Eruvin) and the Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh Deah 293 (in the context of relying on the lenient opinions regarding Chadash). In this context Rav Ovadia Yosef explicitly states a motivation for adopting a lenient approach to this issue. In *Teshuvot Yabia Omer* he states that his concern is "Shema Titganeh Ishah Al Baalah", that domestic tranquility might be disturbed. The source for this idea is the Gemara (Shabbat 64b), which records that Rabi Akiva permitted wives to wear makeup even when they are Niddot, in order to promote Sh'olom Bayit (domestic tranquility) between husband and wife. We may add that the Gemara (Bava Kama 82a) records that among the ten Takanot enacted by the biblical Ezra was a requirement for salesmen to travel from town to town to supply perfume and fragrances to the women of each community. We see the sensitivity the Torah has towards the needs of women and families regarding these matters.

In *Teshuvot Yechave Da'at*, Rav Ovadia refers to the oft-cited Gemara (Pesachim 66a) that states regarding an area of uncertainty with respect to the Halachot governing Korban Pesach, "leave it to the Jewish People, if they are not prophets then they are the children of prophets". Rashi (ad. loc. s.v. B'nai) adds "and [therefore] observe what they (the Jewish people) do" and that will resolve the uncertainty. Rav Ovadia applies this principle to this situation, as he notes that many women who are meticulously observant rely on the lenient approaches of Rav Moshe and the K'tzot Hashulchan. We should note that this principle of "if they are not prophets then they are the sons of prophets" applies only to an area of uncertainty in Halacha and only to the practices of those who carefully observe Halacha. The sin of the golden calf clearly demonstrates that it is not an all-embracing principle. A third and unstated motivation of those who adopt the lenient approach seems to be the concept of Kavod HaBeriyyot (human dignity). The Gemara (Berachot 19b and see Rav Daniel Feldman's *The Right and the Good* pp. 189-206, for a full discussion of this issue) states that rabbinic prohibitions may be waived in case of a great affront to human dignity. Many women are profoundly uncomfortable to appear at a formal gathering (such as Shul on Shabbat and Yom Tov) without wearing makeup. This might have motivated Poskim to search for a possible lenient approach to this issue.

We should note before we begin our presentation of the lenient view that there are cosmetics that are specially formulated to last throughout Shabbat. Some women who follow the strict view apply this type of makeup before Shabbat. Applying this type of makeup before Shabbat and wearing it the entire Shabbat does not violate the prohibition of Marit Ayin (appearing to have sinned). Rav Yonatan Eiybeshitz (Kreiti U'pleiti 87:8) Mishna Brura (467:33) and the Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh De'ah 298:4) note that Marit Ayin does not apply when it is known that there are permissible ways to perform an action. For example, it is not forbidden to drink red wine even though it appears that he is drinking blood, since people know that many people drink red wine. Similarly, one does not have to be concerned in this case of violating Marit Ayin because people will think that she applied the makeup on Shabbat, since it is known that there is makeup that lasts throughout Shabbat after applying it on Erev Shabbat.

The Lenient Approaches of Rav Moshe, Rav Avraham Chaim No'eh, and Rav Ovadia The K'tzot Hashulchan distinguishes between the "Serek" cosmetic discussed in the Gemara, Rishonim and classic Acharonim and blush that does not adhere to the skin for a significant period of time. He argues that Chazal only prohibit Serek, which does not adhere to the skin. However, Rav No'eh argues that blush that is applied directly to the skin without first applying a cosmetic base ("foundation") does not adhere to the skin and thus is not included in the rabbinic prohibition to apply Serek to one's face. Rav Ovadia, though, clarifies that this leniency applies only to a non-oil based powder that contains no creams. Rav Shlomo Zalman criticizes this approach stating that there is no source for such a leniency (we should note that Rav Shlomo Zalman was an extraordinary expert regarding Hilchot Shabbat and that his assertion is exceptionally authoritative). Moreover, Rav Shlomo Zalman writes that one should be especially cautious about this issue since (as we discussed last week) according to a number of Rishonim, the application of makeup is always biblically prohibited. In fact, Rav Gedalia Felder (*Yesodei Yeshurun* 4:72) notes that the fact that the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 303:25) forbids a woman to spread dough on her face to give it a red appearance, seems to demonstrate that the Halacha forbids coloring the face even in a manner that is fleeting.

Rav Moshe, though, writes in his first (and exceptionally brief and cryptic) responsum on this topic, "white (in the later Teshuva he clarifies that this applies to colored powder as well) powder that does not last at all (Eino

Mitkayem Klal) is not included in the prohibition of Tzovei'ah". We must elucidate the concept of Eino Mitkayem K'lal in order to understand Rav Moshe's ruling. We mentioned last week that in very limited circumstances, a Melacha that lasts for an exceptionally brief period of time is permitted. The fact that we are permitted (see *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 317:1) to tie our shoes (if one ties and unties them daily) is a classic application of this principle. Another example is the lenient ruling of many Poskim (see *Shmirat Shabbat* K'hilchata 15 footnote 250; *Teshuvot Yechave Da'at* 6:24; and Rav Moshe Feinstein, cited in *The Thirty Nine Melochos* 1:137 in the Hebrew section) permitting fastening the adhesive tab in the process of diapering a child on Shabbat, even though causing two objects to adhere to each other is forbidden (under the rubric of Tofei, see *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 340:14).

One can explain Rav Moshe's leniency in a similar manner (I believe that I heard this from Rav Hershel Schachter). Serek is rabbinically prohibited because Chazal classify it as Eino Mitkayem. However, non-oil based cosmetic powder is not even rabbinically forbidden because it is Eino Mitkayem Klal.

However, we should note that applying on Shabbat the cosmetics that are specially formulated to be long lasting might constitute a biblical prohibition. These cosmetics are often created to be applied by women before Shabbat in order to last throughout Shabbat and are sometimes referred to as "Shabbos makeup". Rav Heber points out that this is a serious misnomer and should more properly be labeled as "Erev Shabbos makeup". A woman should be especially careful not to apply such makeup on Shabbat as it might violate a biblical prohibition, as it seems to constitute an act that is Mitkayem according to the Rambam's definition (as presented last week).

Practical Application Rav Moshe (in the later responsum, see also the publication of Rav Moshe's *Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem, L'Torah V'hora'ah* 7:28) clarifies that after extensive testing he has discovered that many of the commercially available cosmetic powders are analogous to Serek since they last for a significant amount of time and are forbidden due to concern of Tzovei'ah. However, he notes that some powders do not last very long and would be permissible. Rav Moshe writes "without experience regarding this matter, one cannot issue a decision about this matter". Rav Dovid Heber of the Star-K reports that, Baruch Hashem, there are Talmidei Chachamim who currently serve as Rabbanim and Poskim who participated in Rav Moshe's thorough investigation and testing of powders. Thus, he writes (in an essay that is available at [www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org)) that one who relies on Rav Moshe's leniency must only use powder that has been tested by a Rav who has specific and proper training to determine that a powder is "temporary" enough to conform with Rav Moshe's standards. Undoubtedly, Rav Moshe's standards are difficult to qualify and the process of making such a determination is more of an "art" than a science. Indeed, Rav Bleich and Rav Neustadt argue that it is nearly impossible to properly implement Rav Moshe's lenient ruling in practice because of this lack of objective standards. On the other hand, there are other areas of Halacha that are nearly impossible to qualify and we rely on the judgment of Rabbanim who are properly trained and experienced in this matter (for example, judging colors in the context of Hilchot Niddah; see *Shulchan Aruch* Yoreh De'ah 188 and *Badei Hashulchan* 188:6).

Postscript Next week, Iy"h and B'n, we shall conclude our discussion of the use of cosmetics on Shabbat and Yom Tov with a review of some of the practical challenges involved in applying makeup on Shabbat and Yom Tov even according to the lenient approach.

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)] Sent: December 30, 2004 1:11 AM To: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org) Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Shmos "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Shmos -  
When You Are Raised As A Prince, You Act Like A Prince  
Pharaoh's daughter rescued baby Moshe from the Nile River. She brought him home to the palace and raised him as an adopted son. On a superficial level, it is a great story. Pharaoh wants to get rid of all the Jewish baby boys, in order to preclude the possibility of a savior being born to them. He orders all Jewish baby boys thrown into the Nile. In the irony of ironies, Pharaoh's own daughter saves the



future savior of Israel from the Nile and brings him into Pharaoh's own palace to raise and nurture him.

Of course, there is more to the sequence of events than just the fact that it "makes a great story." There is a fascinating Ibn Ezra that explains the motivation of hashgacha [Divine Providence] in causing events to turn out this way. The Ibn Ezra speculates that the reason the hashgacha brought Moshe to the palace was to create a future leader of Israel who would be raised in an atmosphere of royalty and power, rather than in an environment of slavery and submission.

In the great controversy of nature versus nurture, the Ibn Ezra lends weight to the point of view that gives great import to nurture in determining what a person eventually becomes. If Moshe Rabbeinu had been raised as a slave, thinking like a slave and acting submissively like a slave, it would have been much more difficult for him to become the leader of two million people.

The Ibn Ezra cites the fact that Moshe killed the Egyptian for an act of injustice that the latter perpetrated. A slave, who is always downtrodden and spat upon, would not have the forcefulness and the gumption to protest injustice and to personally punish the perpetrator. There is no way we could imagine someone with a slave's mentality doing such a thing. On the other hand, someone brought up in the house of the king, believing he is a prince, automatically possesses a certain aura and confidence that allows him to intervene in situations that people with less self-esteem would certainly avoid.

The Ibn Ezra similarly notes Moshe's intervention on behalf of Yisro's daughters during the incident with the Shepherds at the well of Midyan. Moshe was a stranger who had just arrived in town. Who asked him to intervene? Who asked him to get involved? The answer is that someone who grew up in a house of authority and leadership has the courage and the assertiveness to take charge and administer justice wherever justice needs to be administered. These leadership abilities were much more easily nurtured in the palace of the king than in a house of slaves.

The Mir Masgiach, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, comments on this Ibn Ezra that we learn from here the power of nurture. Two genetically identical twins will grow up to be very different individuals if they are exposed to different educations and different atmospheres in their formative years. This underlies the power of chinuch [education], the power of environment, and the power of a nurturing home.

We look around today and unfortunately see the many ills that plague our society. What is happening to society? Why is this happening? Part of the answer is that there is no real home life for a large number of children growing up in our society. It is not the least bit surprising and it does not require a great social scientist to see the cause and effect relationship between how one is raised and how one turns out.

The reverse is true as well. When one takes an individual and showers him with love and with confidence, giving him a sense of self and a sense of presence, chances are high that the individual will grow up to demonstrate far greater leadership capabilities than an equally talented individual who was not given the benefit of such an enlightened upbringing.

The ironic sequence of events at the beginning of Sefer Shmos provided the leadership training necessary for the savior who would eventually take Israel out of Egypt.

And Yet, One Need Not Be a Prince to Rise to Greatness

The marriage of Amram and Yocheved is described with the enigmatic words "And a man from the House of Levi went and he married the daughter of Levi" [Shmos 2:1]. It would seem appropriate as the Torah introduces this very important milestone in the Biblical narrative -- the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu -- that the Torah would at least mention the names of Moshe's parents. Shouldn't we be told explicitly of Moshe's proud "yichus" [ancestry]?

Rav Bergman comments in the Shaarei Orah that this is precisely the point. A person does not need yichus to become Moshe Rabbeinu. Anyone is capable of reaching spiritual heights based on his own merits and his own capabilities. A person does not need to have a distinguished father to lead a distinguished life. It is true that Moshe's father happened to be the Gadol HaDor [greatest man of his generation], but the Torah de-emphasizes that point. Moshe's parents are left anonymous to stress that lineage is not what made Moshe who he was.

The idea is that every child and every human being is capable of reaching great heights despite a humble lineage. The Rambam writes this in Hilchos Teshuvah [5:2]: "Any individual can grow up to be as righteous as Moshe Rabbeinu."

In this week's parsha, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky comments that the Ramo'h rules in Shulchan Aruch that it is preferable, if a mother is incapable of nursing her baby, to have another Jewish woman nurse the child. A non-Jewish woman may only serve in this capacity if there is no alternative. The reason for this is because the non-Jewish nurse eats foods that are not kosher, and the milk then is a byproduct of such foods. This law is derived from the fact that Moshe refused to nurse from the non-Jewish women in Pharaoh's palace. The reason, our Sages tell us, that he

refused to nurse from foreign women is that "the mouth that would eventually directly speak to the Almighty should not begin life by sucking non-Kosher matter." The Ramo'h rules in Shulchan Aruch, based on this incident in Chumash and the reasoning of "the mouth that is destined to speak with the Divine Presence," that if at all possible a Jewish baby should not be given to a non-Jewish wet nurse. We might ask when the last time was that a Jewish baby was born who grew up to engage in personal conversation with the Divine Presence. It is certainly not an everyday occurrence. It has not happened since the days of the Malachi, the last of the prophets.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky says that we learn from here that every Jewish child has to be looked at as a child that may potentially speak with the Divine Presence. Great lineage is not necessary to achieve great potential "An anonymous man from the Tribe of Levi went and married an anonymous daughter of Levi." As the Rambam writes, anyone is capable of reaching such a level.

Some might think that the two thoughts presented herein are contradictory. Upon reflection, one should realize that this is not necessarily the case. "These and these are the words of the Living G-d." [Eruvin 13b]

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 444 - The Deaf Mute In Halacha. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrاند, Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Wednesday, December 29, 2004 7:09 AM To: yhe-parsha@etzion.org.il Subject: PARSHA65 - 13: Parashat Shemot

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua

This parasha series is dedicated in memory of Michael Jotkowitz, z"l.

The htm version of this shiur is available at: <http://vbm-torah.org/archive/parsha65/13-65shemot.htm>

Please pray for a refuah sheleimah for Chaya Chanina bat Marcel.

The entire Yeshiva family wishes a warm Mazal Tov to our esteemed Overseas Program Coordinator Hillel Maizels and Yael Berdugo upon their marriage this Thursday evening in Yerushalayim. May they be zocheh to build a bayit ne'eman be-yisrael and continue to lilmud u-le-lamed lishmor ve-la'asot.

"They were fruitful and increased greatly and multiplied and became mighty"

By RAV YAACOV MEDAN

Translated by Kaeren Fish

#### A. THE LENGTH OF THE EGYPTIAN EXILE

"The sojourning of Benei Yisrael which they dwelled in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (12:40) All the midrashim of the Tannaim, and all the commentators, align themselves with the Septuagint, which contradicts the literal meaning of the verse - i.e., that this period dates back to the descent of Yaakov and his family to Egypt; they maintain that the 430 years began somewhere during the time of Avraham. The author of the Seder Olam, Rashi, and their followers claim that it started at the 'berit bein ha-betarim'; Ramban maintains that it began with the birth of Yitzchak, while Ibn Ezra and others opine that we count this period from Avraham's departure from Ur Kasdim.

All of these opinions "shorten" the Egyptian exile by about two hundred years, fixing its length at 210, 215, 240 years, or the suchlike. All of these commentaries share the same single reason for their forced interpretation of the verse. The succession of generations of Benei Yisrael, from those who descended to Egypt until those who departed from there, makes it impossible to understand the verse literally - that the exile lasted four hundred years or more.

#### B. "THE FOURTH GENERATION WILL RETURN HERE"

The succession of the generations is listed in the Torah through the genealogy of various families, and especially the three families of the Tribe of Yehuda (Divrei ha-Yamim I 2): a. Chetzron was among those who went down to Egypt (Bereishit 46:12) - Ram - Aminadav - Nachshon, who was the prince of Yehuda at the inauguration of the Mishkan (Bamidbar 7:12). b. Chetzron - Kalev - Hur,

one of the leaders of the nation at the time of the Exodus (Shemot 17:12) [1]. c. Chetzron - Seguv - Yair, who conquered the north of Gilad (Bamidbar 32:41).

Such a short list of generations could not conceivably have covered 430 years. Proof of this difficulty may be brought from the list of generations of the tribe of Levi, which appears in next week's parasha (6:16-26) and specifies the lifespan of each of the generations. Rashi quotes this as support for his interpretation: Kehat was among those who went down to Egypt (Bereishit 46:11), he lived 133 years (6:18). His son Amram lived 137 years (6:20), and Moshe was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus. Admittedly, Yehoshua's genealogy is longer (Divrei ha-Yamim I 7:20-27), spreading easily over 430 years: Ephraim - Beri'a - Refach - Telach - Tachan - Ladan - Amihud - Elishama - Nun - Yehoshua, and Yehoshua was among those who left Egypt. Nevertheless, the proof from the generations of the Tribe of Levi appeared to the commentators to be conclusive, and therefore they opted for the approach described above.

C. "THEY WERE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLIED GREATLY" – HOW? We have summarized the view of all the commentaries, but there is a single exception - Shadal's commentary on the Torah. He insists that the Egyptian exile lasted just as the verse says - 430 years [2]. To his view, the list of generations cannot be used as a proof, for it is possible that the Torah leaves out some of them, listing only the important ones. Kehat, for example, is said to have borne Amram - but perhaps there were several generations in between them. An example of this is to be found in the person of Zerubavel, son of Shaltiel (Chaggai 1:12), while in Divrei ha-Yamim I (3:17-19) we discover that he was not his son but rather his grandson [3]. Shadal's argument against the

accepted interpretation seems quite solid. If we assume that the generations of Levi, as they appear in our parasha, are listed in full, then the generation of Kehat - the generation of those who went down to Egypt - included three brothers: Gershon, Kehat and Merari. The generation of Amram, Kehat's son (the generation preceding the Exodus) included Livni, Shim'i, Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron, Uziel, Machli and Mushi - altogether eight. The number of descendants of Levi at the time of the Exodus is 23,000. How is this possible?

Let us formulate our question differently. The Torah expounds on the astonishing reproduction of the exiles in Egypt. But in the number of children listed for the various families, starting from the generation that went down to Egypt, there appears to be no justification for such hyperbole. If, indeed, the Jewish women in Egypt bore "six children at one time," as the Midrash describes, then why do we read of families with only two or three children? And if there were only four generations, how did the nation then reach the astronomical number of six hundred thousand adult males? We are forced to conclude that Benei Yisrael indeed spent four hundred and thirty years in Egypt, not two hundred and ten. D. AS 210 (REISH-DALED-VAV) THEY WENT DOWN (REDU)

In order not to unnecessarily increase the Egyptian exile, and in order to maintain an understanding of the matter that accords with that of the Sages, Rashi, the Ramban and the other early commentators, we must find a way to answer Shadal's most relevant question. I believe that the key to the answer lies in the verse in Sefer Bereishit:

"Now, your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt, before I came to you in Egypt - they are mine; Ephraim and Menashe will be mine like Reuven and Shimon. And whoever is born to you, whom you bear after them, will be yours; they shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance." (Bereishit 38:5-6) It seems to me, according to the literal text, that Yosef had more than two sons. This is what the verse is teaching us when it says, "To Yosef were born two sons BEFORE THE YEARS OF FAMINE BEGAN" (Bereishit 41:50), implying that later on more were born, and it is to these that Yaakov refers when he says, "whom you bear after them." These children are not listed in the genealogy of Yosef's sons, since they join in the inheritance of their brothers, Menashe and Ephraim. Similarly, the Tanakh lists ten sons of King David (six in Chevron - Shmuel II 3:2-5, and four in Jerusalem - Shmuel II 5:14), but Chazal speak of him having four hundred sons; indeed, the verses hint at many more children. Hence the names listed are only the heads of households, with these households numbering not only their sons but also their less important brothers. It is also possible that many of the descendants of the tribes were killed or died all kinds of terrible deaths during the Egyptian subjugation, and their children joined the families of their fathers' brothers, just as the orphaned Lot joined the family of Avraham. According to this approach, too, only the main heads of households are listed, each representing hundreds and thousands of people, just as each person listed among those who returned from Babylon with Zerubavel represented hundreds or even thousands of family members (see Ezra 2). Let us examine one example, which may serve to strengthen our assumption. Yaakov went down to Egypt with seventy

souls. His sons went down, each with an average of four sons, and these sons in turn also had children. These children the only ones mentioned in the census conducted in the fortieth year in the desert (Bamidbar 26), but clearly our assumption cannot be that Yaakov's children stopped bearing children from the time they reached Egypt. When they went down to Egypt they were still young - aged forty or a little more, at their peak (compare to the age at which Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov bore their children). Is it possible that the thirty-nine year old Yosef had no more children? Or Yehuda, aged forty-three? And why should we assume that Peretz, who was a whole generation younger than his father, stopped having children after Chetzron and Chamol, who went down with him to Egypt? But if he did indeed bear more children, why are the families of these other children not listed in the census of those who inherit the Land, in the fortieth year? We are forced to conclude, then, that those born in Egypt are subsumed under the households of their brethren who went down to Egypt, and that they join in their inheritance.

E. SIX AT ONE TIME We have not yet arrived at a satisfactory explanation of the unreasonable rate of reproduction, turning seventy souls who came down to Egypt into 600,000 adult males - meaning millions altogether - at the time of the Exodus. If this natural reproduction took place over the course of only three generations, we must assume that every woman bore several hundred children. Hence, it would seem that the genealogy of Yehoshua should serve as the model for our understanding of the structure of Benei Yisrael in Egypt; this genealogy numbers nine generations. To our view, the Tribe of Levi was exceptional in its much smaller number of generations. The reason for its limited population [4] may have been their custom of marrying late (perhaps wanting to observe the tradition of their forefathers), or because as prophets and Torah scholars (see Shmuel I 2:27 and the midrashim of Chazal) they separated themselves from their wives, and numbered only four generations. Let us return to Ephraim and the other tribes. If we assume, based on the genealogy of Yehoshua, that a generation was twenty-one years, during the course of 190 years (such that the last generation would be in their twenties at the time of the Exodus) there would have been about nine generations - which is as the genealogy describes. Accordingly, we may explain Chazal's teaching that the women used to bear "six at one time" (literally, "six from one belly"). This does not mean that the women used to bear sextets; that would be an altogether unnatural phenomenon. What the teaching means is that every mother ("belly") would bear six children during the course of her life. We may assume that, on average, these six children would be three sons and three daughters - and this accords with the size of the families noted in our parasha (keeping in mind that only the sons are listed).

Let us now attempt to calculate of the numbers of Benei Yisrael: Based on the assumption that the generation that went down to Egypt numbered sixty males who were still of child-bearing age, the next generation would have numbered 180 males; the third generation - 540, the fourth - 1620, the fifth - 4860, the sixth - 14,580, the seventh - 43,760, the eighth - 131,280, and the ninth - some four hundred thousand. Assuming that it was the seventh, eighth and ninth generations that left Egypt, after about 190 years there were six hundred thousand, and after 210 years - all were aged 20. The miracle of the reproductive multiplicity in Egypt was therefore a "hidden" miracle - that despite the hardships of Egyptian subjugation and their persecution, women bore six children, and this average did not waver up until the time of the Exodus. May G-d fulfill for us His promise in the Torah: "Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a community of nations shall emerge from you, and kings will emerge from your loins" (Bereishit 35:11).

NOTES:  
[1] Here I ignore the Midrash which identifies Kalev ben Chetzron as Kalev ben Yefuneh.  
[2] If we add to this his view on the system of historical research regarding the length of the Second Temple period, we find ourselves in the middle of the seventh millenium, which began at the time when Shadal wrote his commentary - some 160 years ago. We shall not elaborate further.  
[3] As to the question arising from the verse, "the fourth generation will return here" - see Rashbam ad loc. [4] In our estimation, there were only about ten thousand Levi'im aged twenty and upwards - about a fifth of the average. We base this on a comparison between the number of those aged one month and upwards, and the number of those aged thirty and upwards. If you have any questions, please write to office@etzion.org.il Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash is on the web at http://www.vbm-torah.org Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash Alon Shevut, Gush Etzion 90433 E-Mail: Yhe@Etzion.Org.II Or Office@Etzion.Org.II Copyright (C) 2004 Yeshivat Har Etzion.