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From: Torah Musings newsletter@torahmusings.com date: Mon, Jan 5, 2015
Freebie: **Rav Soloveitchik on Parashas Shemos**

by Dr. Arnold Lustiger

Many friends have been asking me about the availability of the **Chumash Mesoras Harav on Sefer Shemos**. Here is an update. The Chumash left the bindery in Israel on Tuesday, and is presently available in Israel (Pomeranz on Be'eri in downtown Jerusalem). Most of the Chumashim are arriving in the US by ship, and the Chumash should be widely available in U.S. bookstores and online at OUPress.org between January 18-23.

Vieileh Shemos- And these are the names. The appellations given to the books of the Torah generally reflect the themes within. For example, Bamidbar is not merely the first word of the fourth book; it alludes to the thirty-eight years the children of Israel sojourned in the desert. Every event recounted in the book of Bamidbar took place in the desert, so this choice of name is not merely semantic. Similarly, Devarim is a repetition of "items" (i.e., mitzvos and events) previously discussed in the Torah. Vayikra refers to the appointment between God and Moses in the Ohel Moed.

What is the significance of the name Shemos? A name indicates individuality. The Torah wishes to emphasize that God concluded the covenant not with a nation but with an individual. The covenant was initially made with Abraham alone. Although the community through its sins may lose its right to exist, God is willing to deal with but one person. A name signifies uniqueness. The Ten Commandments were addressed not in the plural but in the singular, to emphasize that God relates not only to the collective but to the individual as well. That is why in Shemos, the names of Jacob's children are repeated and emphasized.

When I visited the Land of Israel, I was taken to a secular kibbutz, where the tour guide introduced me to a cow he called Rachel. Upon hearing this, I instinctively recoiled. When the guide saw my reaction, he asked sarcastically if giving a cow a name was yet another prohibition imposed by the rabbis.

Giving an animal a human name is in fact wrong because the individuality denoted by a name belongs exclusively to humans. Every human death is a loss which cannot be replaced: Reuven is not like Shimon. The Torah introduced the laws of mourning because even if someone of lowly character dies, his death is still a loss, for every individual has been endowed with the divine image.

The preservation of life is a supreme value, even if it necessitates the breaking of the Sabbath. The Torah therefore emphasizes the importance of bikur cholim (visiting the sick) and hachnosas orchim (welcoming guests).

A dog may exhibit great friendship for his master, but a different dog can be substituted which could display an identical friendship. A dog fundamentally has no name; it is merely part of a species. As devoted as a dog may be, there can be no aveilus for it.

That is why halachah is so insistent that the names recorded in a marriage document be written with precision. Abraham was elevated to spiritual greatness by changing his name. Maimonides says that the name Jacob reflected a certain destiny, while Israel reflected a different destiny. The appellation of the book of Shemos signifies that the Exodus would have taken place even if only one individual had been in Egypt.

Rashi cites the phrase, He brings out and counts His heavenly Hosts (Is. 40:26). This phrase refers to the position of the stars within each constellation. Each star is but part of a universe, yet each star is numbered, named and accounted for individually by God. Each has its individual function. Similarly, Knesses Yisrael is one system which is composed of individuals. (Boston, 1980)

Habaim Mitzraima - who came to Egypt. The Torah should more properly have used the past tense, Asher Bau, who came, and not the word Habaim, which more literally would be translated as who are coming. The Children of Jacob were long gone. This phrase refers to events that transpired two hundred and ten years before the Shemos narrative.

The Midrash noted this anomaly and interpreted the intent of the phrase, Habaim Mitzraima, ke'ilu ba'u hayom, as if Bnei Yisrael had come that very day. The term Habaim suggests that the people of Egypt did not consider the Israelite nation as part of their state, society and culture; they looked upon them as if they had just entered Egypt.

How long must one remain in a country to be considered a citizen? The words of Pharaoh to his advisors suggest that he considered Bnei Yisrael as having just arrived. Indeed, the name for the Israelites, Ivri, means completely separated—being on one bank of the river while everyone else is on the other. Even though Bnei Yisrael came many years earlier, Egypt still viewed them as strangers.

This belief in the otherness of the Jew repeats itself through history. Jews lived in Germany even before the Dark Ages. During the Middle Ages, the Jews supported Germany from within; they were an integral part of society. Yet, many centuries after they arrived, these Jews were wiped out in the Holocaust. They were charged with being strangers, not counted among society.

The essence of anti-Semitic doctrine throughout history always depicted the Jew as a stranger. They charge that we are strangers, ivrim. We never assimilate ourselves into any community; we are outsiders.

There is another implication to the use of the present tense. Chazal say: Because of four qualities, Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt: they did not change their names, they did not change their language, they did not change their clothing, and they did not change their God (Shemos Rabbah 1). The Midrash states beautifully: Reuben descended [to Egypt], Reuben came up [from Egypt] (Tanchuma Balak 25). The Jew was conscious of his identity. When the Jews left, they spoke Lashon HaKodesh as fluently as they had when they came to Egypt.

There are certain ideals to which a Jew is committed that can never be forfeited. There is a special relationship between God and Jew as well as a

relationship between God and mankind in general. In certain areas of human endeavor, such as healing and helping each other, the Jew is part of the relationship between God and man, and we participate and are part of society. But whenever society tries to terminate our individual identity, to tell us how to live and to be like the rest of society, we are very stubborn.

Pharaoh charged that the Jew was uninterested in the welfare of the land. Pharaoh was wrong, for Habaim Mitraima has two meanings: we have a special, eternal identity, but nevertheless, we participate in society. When he said that Jews must abandon their identity and join a society whose ideals differ from those that Jacob brought with him to Egypt, the Jews removed themselves from society, as if they had just entered Egypt.

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 176) tells us that many Jews in Egypt had scrolls (probably consisting of Genesis), and every Shabbos, they would read these scrolls. The redemption did not start with Moses. The Jewish belief in the promise of redemption was nurtured by their reading of these scrolls. These scrolls helped maintain their unique identity—the Israelites considered themselves as if they had just entered Egypt. (Aton Holzer Summary)

from: **Chanan Morrison** <ravkooklist@gmail.com> reply-to: rav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com to: **Rav Kook List** <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Wed, Jan 7, 2015 at 3:54 AM

subject: [Rav Kook List] **Shemot: The Leadership of Moses**
When God informed Moses that he was to bring the Jewish people out of Egypt, Moses did not accept the assignment happily. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" (Ex. 3:11)

What was Moses' objection? The Midrash explains with the following parable:

"A king once married off his daughter, and he promised to employ a lady to wait on her. However, the king only provided the daughter with a lowly maidservant. His son-in-law complained, 'Did you not promise to hire a lady to serve her?'" "This is what Moses said to God. 'Master of the universe! When Jacob went down to Egypt, did You not say to him, "I will go down with you to Egypt and I will surely take you out"? But now You say, "I am sending you to Pharaoh!"' (Shemot Rabbah 3:4) According to the Midrash, Moses objected to leading the Israelites because he felt that God had promised to do the job Himself. Did Moses really think that God would lead them out of Egypt without a human emissary?

Also, we need to examine God's response to Moses:

"I will be with you. This will be your sign that I have sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain." (Ex. 3:12) How does serving God on Mount Sinai prove that God Himself will lead the people? How did it allay Moses' fears about his mission?

Two Types of Leaders

In general, we may distinguish between two types of successful leaders. The first category are leaders who excel in organizational skills. The leader himself does not contribute or add to the nation's accomplishments, but he knows how to bring together the various abilities and talents dispersed amongst the people. By marshalling together their diverse strengths, such a leader gently steers the people to their destiny.

The second type of leader is more than just an efficient organizer. He uses his own special gifts to inspire the people to greater aspirations. Such a leader is not merely an instrument of heaven to rule the people; he is a dynamic individual, blessed with extraordinary wisdom and holiness, capable of uplifting the people to a level that they could not reach on the basis of their own merits.

These two types of leaders induce change in different ways. The competent leader gradually leads his people to their national goals, step-by-step. The charismatic leader, on the other hand, inspires the people to attain new heights in a sudden and dramatic fashion.

Moses' Complaint

This distinction allows us to understand Moses' objection. Moses probably recognized that he was destined to lead the Jewish people. His miraculous

rescue as a baby and his extraordinary childhood growing up in Pharaoh's palace indicated that Moses was meant to lead his people.

In his humility, however, Moses placed himself in the first category of leaders - those without any special qualities of their own, just the willingness to organize and govern the people. God, however, had promised a dramatic redemption, a quantum leap in the people's spiritual elevation, when He said "I will surely raise up" (Gen. 46:4). Clearly, God had intended that a charismatic leader would inspire and ennoble the people.

Like the son-in-law in the parable, Moses objected to God's choice of leader. The King had promised a lady of high caliber - a great and inspiring leader. But He had only provided a lowly maid-servant - Moses, a competent but unremarkable public servant.

Therefore, God explained to Moses, "I will be with you." With the sublime powers that I bestow upon you, you will be able to uplift the people to a level beyond their current reach. In this way, I will fulfill My promise to them.

And God continued: the proof that you will be the catalyst for profound change is that the people will stand on Mount Sinai. In order to merit receiving the Torah, the Jewish people will need to be on the highest spiritual level. If that was not the case, the Torah could have been revealed to an earlier generation.

The fact that the Jewish people would stand at Mount Sinai was proof that Moses would in fact be the second type of leader, dramatically readying them for this historic moment.

Ready for the Priesthood and the Kingship

This explanation helps us understand a difficult Midrash. When God first revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush, Moses responded, 'Hineini' - "Here I am," or perhaps, "I am ready."

The Midrash explains that Moses was saying, "I am ready for the priesthood and the kingship." These aspirations, however, were not to be. The priesthood had already been designated to Aaron, and the kingship to David. Nevertheless, Moses temporarily merited both of these high positions. He served as High Priest during the seven days of installment of the priests, and ruled as king during his lifetime (Shemot Rabbah 2:6).

How can we resolve this Midrash - practically a demand for prestige and power - with the self-effacing humility so apparent in the Torah's depiction of Moses?

Furthermore, the Sages taught that "When God bestows greatness on an individual, He gives it to him and his descendants for all generations" (Megilah 13b). Why did Moses only merit these positions temporarily, for himself and not for his descendants?

As we explained earlier, Moses considered himself a suitable candidate to govern the Jewish people. His refusal to bring the Israelites out of Egypt stemmed from his assessment that he was not the great leader who could fulfill God's promise to uplift the nation. As a competent leader, however, Moses felt that he was a suitable candidate to initiate a dynasty of kings or high priests, and thus gradually elevate the people over the generations. In fact, Moses was the revolutionary leader who wrought radical change on the Jewish people. Accordingly, his dynamic leadership was short and dramatic, lasting only during his lifetime.

(Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 281-289)

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Rabbi Mayer Twersky

Inspiration and Redemption

Ramban famously defines Sefer Shemos as the Book of Exile and Redemption. Ma'amad Har Sinai and the construction of the mishkan are included in the Sefer because

the exile did not end until the day [the people] returned to their place and returned to the stature of their forefathers ... when they arrived at Mount

Sinai and built the Tabernacle, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, once again caused His Shechinah to dwell among them at that point they returned to the eminence of their forefathers of whom, "the Counsel of God was over their tents" and, they themselves were the Divine chariot. Then [the people] were considered redeemed. [Introduction to Shemos, Artscroll Translation] Redemption is a spiritual category; it is measured by connection and spiritual proximity to HKB"H. Thus Bnei Yisroel were first considered redeemed when HKB"H caused His Shechinah to dwell amongst them.

This is clearly Ramban's point. So why does he twice emphasize that redemption entails returning to the stature / eminence of their ancestors? Ramban is preemptively addressing the following issue. Granted redemption is to be defined spiritually, not politically or geographically. [Political redemption is instrumentally - not ultimately - significant because subjugation interferes with avodas Hashem. (See Berachos 17a; Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 9:2.) Eretz Yisroel is of paramount spiritual significance because it is "the land of Hashem." (See Ramban Vayikra 18:25)] But the definition of hashro'as haShechinah seems unrealistically high. Ramban's response: what was achieved once can be achieved again. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov were titans whom we revere; but they are also our forefathers. Our genetic material and spiritual capacities derive from them and thus while their example inspires reverence, it also obligates and inspires us. "A person is obligated to say, 'when will my actions match those of my forefathers'" (Tana D'vei Eliyahu.)

A word of reflection and introspection. Spiritual achievement depends on spiritual aspiration. If we shortchange ourselves in our aspirations, willy nilly we will come up short in realizing our potential. The mediocrity of our spiritual aspirations is one of the Achilles' heels of our generation. To transcend the numbing materialism of our times and attain kirvas Elokim we must first aspire to such transcendence. To focus on olam haboh values and eschew olam hazeh values we must first aspire to attaining and maintaining such focus.

Redemption awaits, but inspired aspiration must precede.

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from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Thu, Jan 8, 2015 at 4:05 PM subject: **Rabbi Frand on Parshas Shemos**

The Symbolism of the Thorn Bush

Parshas Shmos can be considered a historic parsha. A seminal event in Jewish history occurred in this week's parsha that has effects until today: This is the parsha in which the Almighty chooses Moshe to lead the Jewish people and it is the first parsha in which the Almighty speaks to the Jewish people through Moshe Rabbeinu.

We are all familiar with the famous incident that inaugurates Moshe's status as a prophet: "An angel of G-d appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a thorn bush. He saw and behold! The bush was burning in the fire but the bush was not consumed." [Shmos 3:2] G-d appeared to Moshe in the guise of a burning bush. We often judge based on first impressions. This is G-d's introduction to the Jewish people. Of all possible symbolisms in which to introduce Himself, the Almighty chooses the symbolism of a burning bush. Why not a fir tree? Why not a mighty oak? Why not a cedar tree?

Rashi explains: As a bush — and not as any other tree -- to indicate, "I am with them in their time of trouble" (Imo Anochi b'Tzarah). The Almighty is making a statement here. He appears as a lowly bush to emphasize that He is with us in our travails. G-d's appearing as a bush on fire was a metaphor that the Jewish people could identify with in their times of tribulation in Egypt. This idea of "Imo Anochi b'Tzarah" is very much akin to another expression often used to indicate sharing the burden with a fellow Jew: "nosei b'ol im chaveiro" (literally – carrying the yoke with his friend).

But even more pronounced is Moshe's reaction: Moshe thought, "Let me turn aside now and see this great sight – why will the bush not be burned?" [Shmos 3:3]. The pasuk says that G-d saw that Moshe's intent was to check

out the phenomenon and immediately thereafter it says that G-d called to Moshe from the midst of the bush and Moshe responded, "Here I am!" Let us pose the following question: Who would not be interested in checking out a bush that was burning without being consumed? People stop to check up on what is happening even if they witness nothing stranger than a house on fire. The fire is consuming the house, but it still draws a crowd of people who are "checking it out". No normal person in his right mind would ignore a miraculous phenomenon such as a flaming bush which is NOT being consumed.

The way the pasukim are presented, they seem to indicate that somehow the very fact that Moshe came closer to check out the phenomenon of the burning bush was what prompted G-d to decide, as it were, "Aha! He's my man!" This is very curious, because anyone would do this.

The Medrash asks this question and answers that the Almighty was not impressed that Moshe checked out the bush. According to the Medrash "And G-d saw that he turned aside to see..." [Shmos 3:4] is not referring to the burning bush at all. It refers rather to Moshe's turning aside to see (when he was still in Egypt) the affliction of the Jewish people. Moshe was in the lap of luxury, a prince in the house of Pharaoh and nevertheless he went out to check up on the welfare of his brethren and he saw their suffering (Va'yare b'vislosam) [Shmos 2:11]. This is the event referred to by "And Hashem saw that he (Moshe) turned aside to see" ("Va'yare Hashem ki sar lir'os"). This is actually an attribute of the Almighty – He descends from His Mighty Abode to check up on the needs and welfare of His nation. This is the metaphor of the Divine Fire in the lowly bush. My "Shalom Aleichem" (personal introduction) to the Jewish people, the Almighty states, is the message that I descend to be amongst them in their time of need. I will pick a leader for them who also carries this same attribute of "Imo anochi b'tzarah" – when you are in pain I am in pain as well!

There is a marvelous comment of the Baal HaTurim in Parshas Miketz on the pasuk "And to Yosef were born two sons before the years of famine came." [Bereshis 41:50]. The Talmud teaches the significance of the fact that Yosef's children were born before the years of famine and derives from here the Halacha that a person is forbidden to engage in marital relations with his wife during a time of famine [Taanis 11a]. The principle is that when people are suffering one should abstain from acts of pleasure. Even though abstaining from pleasurable activities will not in and of itself relieve the suffering of others it demonstrates that one wishes to associate with those who suffer: "Imo anochi b'tzarah" [I am with him together in his time of travail]. Yosef thus, like Moshe, was also one who suffered together with his fellow man.

Listen now to the comment of the Baal HaTurim: Only twice in the Torah do we find the word "u'l'Yosef" [and to Yosef] – one is the above quoted pasuk in Parshas Miketz and the other is in Zos Habracha "And to Yosef it was said: Blessed by Hashem is his land..." [Devorim 33:13]. The Baal HaTurim expounds this homiletically as a type of "Gezeirah Shavah" [linguistic linkage from which lessons may be derived]: Since Yosef abstained from personal pleasure because people were suffering, he merited that G-d blessed his land. Indeed the portion of Yosef was the most abundant and fertile region in the entire Land of Israel. Rashi says this explicitly in Chumash on the above-cited pasuk from Zos Habracha. This was a "measure for measure" reward. One who is a "Nos'ai b'ol im chaveiro" [bears the burden of his fellow's suffering] is deserving of a bonanza.

Rav Matisyahu Solomon has a beautiful insight along these same lines. In the blessing of Yosef in Zos Habracha it is written "and with the delicacies of the land and its fullness; and by the goodwill of He who rests in the thorn bush..." [Devarim 33:16]. This is the only place in the Chumash in which the Almighty is referred to by the title "He who rests in the thorn bush"! Rashi there makes the point that Moshe is blessing Yosef with the thought "May his land be blessed out of the goodwill and contentment of the Holy One, Blessed is He, Who was first revealed to me in the thorn bush."

The Almighty's "Shalom Aleichem" to Klal Yisrael was through the thorn bush to demonstrate that He empathized and associated with their troubles. He picked Moshe, who was another individual who empathized with the troubles of the people. Finally, Moshe blessed Yosef who empathized with the troubles of the people and invoked in his blessing "the One who rests in the thorn bush" because Yosef (like Moshe) demonstrated the attribute that the Almighty appreciates": Nos'ai b'ol im chaveiro."

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. Tapes, CDs, MP3s 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. To Support Project Genesis- Torah.org Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> or email learn@torah.org to get your own free copy of this mailing. Need to change or stop your subscription? Please visit our subscription center, <http://torah.org/subscribe/> -- see the links on that page. Permission is granted to redistribute, but please give proper attribution and copyright to the author and Torah.org. Both the author and Torah.org reserve certain rights. Email copyrights@torah.org for full information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 Baltimore, MD 21208 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> reply-to: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> date: Mon, Jan 5, 2015 at 10:19 AM subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 1/5/2015: 3 new posts Halachically Speaking Volume 10 Issue 12 Authored by Moishe Dovid Lebovits Reviewed by Rabbi Ben-zion Schiffenbauer Shlit"a Piskei Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlit"a Reviewed by Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlit"a

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Conducting Business with Non-Kosher Food

By Moishe Dovid Lebovits on Jan 5, 15 4:30 am in Halachically Speaking Many times one is faced with the question if he is allowed to buy a non-kosher item in order to give it to one's workers, or if one is allowed to sell items which are not permitted to be eaten. In addition some kashrus agencies may give hechsherim to companies which manufacture vegetables that may contain bugs, is this permitted? These issues and many others will be discussed below.

The Prohibition

One may not do business with foods which are forbidden to be eaten m'd'oraisa.1 Although it may be permitted to have enjoyment from such food, it is still forbidden to do business with them2 since one may come to eat from the food.3 Included in this are non-kosher animals, kosher animals which become neveilos,4 chometz on Pesach, and non-kosher wines.5 D'oraisa or D'rabanan?

There is a discussion in the poskim if this issur is d'oraisa or d'rabanan in nature.6 The opinion of most poskim is that the issur is d'oraisa in nature.7 Meant for work Only items which are meant to be eaten are forbidden.8 Accordingly, horses, donkeys, monkeys9 and camels etc. may be sold to goyim since they are used for work.10

Wormy Fruits

A question arises if one is permitted to sell wormy fruits to goyim, since one is not allowed to conduct business with issurim d'oraisa.11 Some say that one is not allowed to sell such produce to a goy.12 However, others say doing so is permitted, since one is not doing business with the worms just with the fruit.13 The custom is to be lenient with this.14

Fish Store

Some poskim do not permit a Jewish person to sell non-kosher fish.15 However, the custom is that a Yid may sell goldfish etc since they are not sold to be eaten.16

Birds – Dogs

Many people have in their homes non-kosher birds. Since one does not eat the bird, many poskim say that this is permitted since it is made to beautify the house.17 The same applies to a dog etc which one keeps in his house.18 Similarly, one is permitted to do business with these kinds of animals.19

Pet Food

Food which is meant for a pet and is not able to be eaten by a human (such as fish food, and dog food) is not called a food item, and one is permitted to buy or sell such items.20

Animal Skins

A Jew is permitted to be in the animal skin business since they are not sold to be eaten.21

Selling Shatnez Garments

We only find an issur to sell things which one may come to eat, therefore, one would be permitted to sell shatnez garments to goyim and we are not concerned that the Yid may come to wear the garment.22

Partnership with Goyim

There are many poskim who maintain that one should not enter into a business venture with a goy who is selling items that the Jew himself may not sell.23 Therefore, one who decides to enter into such a business with a goy should speak with a competent halachic authority before doing so.24 One may rent a house to a goy who will bring in items that are forbidden to do business with. The reason is that the Jew has no dealing with the items he is just renting the house to the goy.25

Feeding Workers

The Rama26 says one is not allowed to buy non-kosher food for his workers. However, many say that doing so is permitted.27 The reason to permit this is because buying lunch for workers is not considered doing "business" with non-kosher food.28 The custom is that doing so is permitted if the food is not being given to them as part of their wages.29

Some say even according to the stringent opinion, one is permitted to tell the workers to take this money and buy the non-kosher food themselves.30

Fish Food

Food which is disgusting may be bought or sold.31 Based on this one is permitted to buy worms in order to feed fish etc.32

Happened Upon it

The Shulchan Aruch33 "who happened"34 to get in his net non-kosher animals, birds, or fish35 may sell them36 together with the kosher animals.37 If he happened to get only non-kosher animals in his net38 he may sell them separately.39 Some say they should be sold immediately without delay.40 Others say there is no reason for an immediate sale.41 and one is permitted to keep the non-kosher meat in a freezer until he finds a buyer.42

Based on the above, a slaughter house which has animals that became non-kosher during the slaughtering process may be sold.43

One who receives a non-kosher food item from a goy is allowed to sell it since it is considered "happened upon."44

Owning a Grocery Store – Selling non-Kosher in a Kosher Store

As discussed above, one may not buy and sell non-kosher food on a steady basis. One who must buy both kosher and non-kosher, is permitted to buy the entire package since the prohibited items are considered to have come to him by chance.45 However, stocking up on these non-kosher items on a steady basis is forbidden even if it will cause one business to fail.46 In the above situations one should first discuss the details with his Rav.

Giving a Present to a Goy

We will not discuss the issur of giving presents to goyim for no reason. However, even if one is giving a present when it is permitted (i.e. for a worker), food items which are forbidden to do business with on a d'oraisa level may not be given to a goy as a present either.47 The reason is because giving a present is like doing business.48 If one sent the gift directly to the goy (without actually acquiring the gift) some say that this may not be considered buying non-kosher.49 There is a discussion in the poskim if one is allowed to accept a non-kosher (neveila or treifa food) and then sell it or give it to a goy. Many poskim say that doing so is permitted because it is considered happened upon.50

Food which is forbidden m'd'rabanan

Food which is only forbidden to eat m'd'rabanan may be sold to goyim and the issur of doing business with forbidden foods does not apply.51 Included in this is the blood of a kosher animal,52 non-food items such as soaps and furs, pas akum, bishul akum,53 cholov akum,54 gevinas akum,55 and non-kosher fat from a kosher animal.56 However, if there is a concern that a goy

will sell it to a Jew to eat then one should not sell it to the goy in the first place.⁵⁷

Can A Jew Purchase Stock in McDonalds?

When one is dealing with stocks he does not see the items that he is dealing with. Therefore, some say one would be able to buy stocks in a company that deals with food

which would be ossur to sell, since there is no concern that he will come to eat the food. The Gilyon Maharsha⁵⁸ says that even if one will not come to eat the food it is forbidden to give a goy money to do business for you in forbidden items. Others say that this only applies if one is doing business, but owning a stock (if he is a limited share-holder or a non-active party) is not viewed as doing business with the non-kosher food. One reason is since the stockholder may have a few shares and he may be considered an investor rather than actually doing business with the items.⁵⁹ In any case one should try to find parnasa in other areas.⁶⁰

Working for a Goy (who sells treif)

There is a big discussion in the poskim if one is allowed to work and cook treif for a goy.⁶¹ (This can be very common when one wants to be a salesman for a company which sells treif).⁶² Some permit doing so if one will not be able to find another means of parnasa.⁶³ Before one accepts this type of job he should discuss it with his Rav. Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l⁶⁴ permitted one to drive a delivery truck with non-kosher meat for various reasons (see footnote).

Selling non-kosher food in a vending machine

One is not allowed to sell non-kosher (treif) food in a vending machine. The reason is because one is not allowed to sell items which are forbidden to do business with.⁶⁵ If the food is permitted to do business with then placing them in the vending machine is permitted even if they may be purchased on Shabbos.⁶⁶

Investment Bankers

A common practice among investment bankers is to receive their compensation in the form of equity. If a company deals with non-kosher items, is the banker permitted to get paid his fee when they do not have cash to pay him?

The Rama⁶⁷ says one is permitted to accept a pig as a debt.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, he has to sell it right away.⁶⁹ Accordingly, it would seem that an investment banker is permitted to take non-kosher equity if he sells it when he gets paid.⁷⁰

Renting a Store to a Goy

There does not seem to be anything wrong with a Yid renting his store to a goy who will be selling non-kosher (treif) food. The products being sold there have nothing to do with the Yid, and it is just a way for the goy to make business.⁷¹

Selling Other Items

One should not sell items which will be a michshal for Yidin. Included in this are books or newspapers⁷² which one should not read⁷³ and clothing which should not be worn.⁷⁴

After word

We have presented many scenarios of doing business with forbidden and permitted items. According to most poskim the issur of doing business with non-kosher items is d'oraisa. Therefore, when one has a question if one should engage himself in business with non-kosher he should talk it over with his Rav.⁷⁵

Footnotes at <http://www.torahmusings.com/2015/01/conducting-business-non-kosher-food/> or <http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/217386/halachically-speaking-conducting-business-with-non-kosher-food.html>

from: Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald <ezbuchwald@njop.org> date: Mon, Jan 5, 2015 at 5:59 PM subject: Weekly Torah Message from Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald Shemot 5775-2015

"Moses--The Mysterious Early Years"

by Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald

In this week's parasha, parashat Shemot, the Torah reports that Moses, the Jewish child who was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter and raised as an Egyptian in Pharaoh's palace, grew up identifying with his Jewish brothers. In Exodus 2:11, scripture records, And it happened in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brethren and observed their burdens. The Torah narrative itself tells little about Moses' formative years. All we know is that he was found by Pharaoh's daughter in the water, given over to his biological mother for several years until he was weaned, and then returned to Pharaoh's palace. There is a difference of opinion among the rabbis of the Midrash as to whether Moses was twenty or forty years old when he finally went out to look at the burdens of his brothers. Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov the extraordinary commentator and compiler, fills in many of the details of Moses' life by gathering Midrashim from many sources, reconciling them and reconstructing the early years of the life of Moses. Rabbi Kitov reports that Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace, where he was accorded great respect and honor, more than any other member of Pharaoh's household. He was more handsome, more brilliant, and braver than anyone else in Egypt. As he was the reputed "son" of the daughter of Pharaoh, he was regarded as the natural heir to the throne. The few "insiders" who were aware of Moses' Hebrew origins kept quiet about his background, for fear of offending Pharaoh and his daughter. Even though Pharaoh at times had second thoughts about Moses, he eventually convinced himself that Moses was the biological child of his daughter and thus his own biological offspring. He therefore offered Moses the authority over whatever he wanted. Moses asked for free reign over the workers of Egypt. Although Moses' true intentions were to help the Hebrew slaves, no one but he and Bitya, Pharaoh's daughter, knew the real reason for his desire to aid the slaves. The true hero of this story is Bitya (see Shemot 5760-1999), Moses' adopted mother who strongly encouraged her son to go out to meet his biological brothers, the Jews, and advised Moses to pay no heed to those Egyptians who insincerely honored and fawned over him. In his role as the supervisor of the workers and slaves, Moses frequently visited the land of Goshen. It was in his role as an overseer that Moses introduced and developed advanced technology that was used by the Egyptian workers. He reportedly built ships and invented machinery for cutting and shaping stones. He developed new types of weapons for battle, and uncovered novel ways of drawing water from underground sources. All the while, Moses kept his distance from his Jewish brothers. Those Jews who knew of Moses' Hebrew origins, resented his seeming indifference to their suffering. But Moses was hardly indifferent to his brothers' travails. Seeing how the Israelites suffered, Moses convinced Pharaoh that by refusing to give the Hebrew slaves a day off and forcing them to perform many forms of unnatural work, Pharaoh was actually damaging the economy of Egypt. Once persuaded that the economy of Egypt needed healthy, strong and well-motivated slaves, Pharaoh relieved the Israelites of work on Shabbat. Moses taught the slaves how to work smartly to avoid injury, and even tended to those who were hurt. No one suspected that Moses was doing this to help the Jews, since they all saw it as an effort to enhance Egypt's economy. G-d, however, saw in Moses' great concern for his brothers, the making of a natural leader for His people. The Midrash says that because of the way that Moses reached out to his brothers, he was rewarded by Heaven with perfect health throughout his long life. He was also rewarded after his passing to be personally buried by the Al-mighty Himself (Deuteronomy 34). Obviously, in the midst of the brutal enslavement and persecution of the Hebrew slaves, for a man like Moses to emerge from a Jewish family to lead the Children of Israel from slavery to freedom, many fortuitous elements had to come together. In light of the sparse information provided by the Torah, Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov's rich analysis and insights add much to our understanding of the man Moses and his emergence as the great leader of his people of Israel. May you be blessed. Hebrew text courtesy of www.mechon-mamre.org Facebook Forward to a Friend twitter Copyright 2014 NJOP www.njop.org

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On Not Obeying Immoral Orders

by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Shmot(Exodus 1:1-6:1)

On Not Obeying Immoral Orders

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

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

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

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

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

They had little in common except for the fact that they saw nothing remarkable in what they did.(2) Often the mark of real moral heroes is that they do not see themselves as moral heroes. They do what they do because that is what a human being is supposed to do. That is probably the meaning of the statement that they "feared God." It is the Torah's generic description of those who have a moral sense.(3)

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

The Nuremberg principle gave legal substance to what the midwives instinctively understood: that there are orders that should not be obeyed, because they are immoral. Moral law transcends and may override the law of the state. As the Talmud puts it: "If there is a conflict between the words of the master (God) and the words of a disciple (a human being), the words of the master must prevail." (4)

The Nuremberg trials were not the first occasion on which the story of the midwives had a significant impact on history. Throughout the Middle Ages the Church, knowing that knowledge is power and therefore best kept in the hands of the priesthood, had forbidden vernacular translations of the Bible. In the course of the sixteenth century, three developments changed this irrevocably. First was the Reformation, with its maxim *Sola scriptura*, "By

Scripture alone," placing the Bible centre-stage in the religious life. Second was the invention, in the mid-fifteenth century, of printing. Lutherans were convinced that this was Divine providence. God had sent the printing press so that the doctrines of the Reformed church could be spread worldwide. Third was the fact that some people, regardless of the ban, had translated the Bible anyway. John Wycliffe and his followers had done so in the fourteenth century, but the most influential was William Tyndale, whose translation of the New Testament, begun in 1525 became the first printed Bible in English. He paid for this with his life. When Mary I took the Church of England back to Catholicism, many English Protestants fled to Calvin's Geneva, where they produced a new translation, based on Tyndale, called the Geneva Bible. Produced in a small, affordable edition, it was smuggled into England in large numbers.

Able to read the Bible by themselves for the first time, people soon discovered that it was, as far as monarchy is concerned, a highly seditious document. It tells of how God told Samuel that in seeking to appoint a king, the Israelites were rejecting Him as their only sovereign. It describes graphically how the prophets were unafraid to challenge kings, which they did with the authority of God himself. And it told the story of the midwives who refused to carry out Pharaoh's order. On this, in a marginal note, the Geneva Bible endorsed their refusal, criticising only the fact that, explaining their behaviour, they told a lie. The note said, "Their disobedience herein was lawful, but their dissembling evil." King James understood clearly the dire implication of that one sentence. It meant that a king could be disobeyed on the authority of God Himself: a clear and categorical refutation of the idea of the Divine right of kings.

Eventually, unable to stop the spread of Bibles in translation, King James decided to commission his own version which appeared in 1611. But by then the damage had been done and the seeds of what became the English revolution had been planted. Throughout the seventeenth century by far the most influential force in English politics was the Hebrew Bible as understood by the Puritans, and it was the Pilgrim Fathers who took this faith with them in their journey to what would eventually become the United States of America.

A century and a half later, it was the work of another English radical, Thomas Paine, that made a decisive impact on the American revolution. His pamphlet *Common Sense* was published in America in January 1776, and became an immediate best seller, selling 100,000 copies almost immediately. Its impact was huge, and because of it he became known as "the father of the American Revolution." Despite the fact that Paine was an atheist, the opening pages of *Common Sense*, justifying rebellion against a tyrannical king, are entirely based on citations from the Hebrew Bible. In the same spirit, that summer Benjamin Franklin drew as his design for the Great Seal of America, a picture of the Egyptians (i.e. the English) drowning in the Red Sea, with the caption, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." Thomas Jefferson was so struck by the sentence that he recommended it to be used on the Great Seal of Virginia and later incorporated it in his personal seal. The story of the midwives belongs to a larger vision implicit throughout the Torah and Tanakh as a whole: that right is sovereign over might, and that even God Himself can be called to account in the name of justice, as he expressly mandates Abraham to do. Sovereignty ultimately belongs to God, so any human act or order that transgresses the will of God is by that fact alone *ultra vires*. These revolutionary ideas are intrinsic to the biblical vision of politics and the use of power.

In the end, though, it was the courage of two remarkable women that created the precedent later taken up by the American writer Thoreau(6) in his classic essay *Civil Disobedience* (1849) that in turn inspired Gandhi and Martin Luther King in the twentieth century. Their story also ends with a lovely touch. The text says: "So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them houses" (Ex. 1:20-21).

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

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

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

NOTES 1. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, II. 9.2. 2. See James Q. Wilson, The Moral Sense, New York, Free Press, 1993, 35-39, and the literature cited there. 3. See, for example, Gen. 20:11. 4. Kiddushin 42b. 5. See Christopher Hill, The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution. London: Allen Lane, 1993. 6. Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience. Boston: David R. Godine, 1969. Published: January 4, 2015

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Jan 8, 2015 at 6:18 PM subject: **Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum** - Parshas Shemos

Yosef died, and all his brothers and that entire generation. (1:6) Sforno comments that, as long as any member of the original generation that had descended with Yaakov Avinu to Egypt was still alive, the present generation was able to maintain the proper spiritual level. Once they were gone, however, the spiritual decline which led to slavery and persecution accelerated. In his commentary to Shemos 6:16, Rashi teaches that, as long as a member of the original group of immigrants was alive, the Jews enjoyed freedom. The slavery commenced with the demise of the last one. This seems inconsistent with Rashi's commentary to the beginning of Parashas Vayechi (Bereishis 47:28), where he describes Vayechi as a parsha setumah, closed parsha. He explains that the lack of the nine-letter spacing that usually divides the previous parsha (Vayigash) from the next one reflects a condition which teaches us something about the Jewish People's mood when the Patriarch died. At that moment their hearts were "closed", in anticipation of the persecution and suffering that would be their lot immediately following his death. If, in fact, the shibud, enslavement, did not begin until everyone had passed on, why were they so overcome by the exile? Indeed, Yaakov sought to reveal to them the source of hope, the end to the exile, but was prevented from doing so by Hashem. Were they enslaved - or not?

Horav Dov Schwartzman, zl, distinguishes between two forms of shibud, enslavement. The Torah teaches us, Vayechi Yaakov b'ereitz Mitzrayim, "And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt." What does "living" in Egypt mean? The Rosh Yeshivah explains that Yaakov Avinu lo meis, "Yaakov did not die." An eternal trait of our Patriarch, Yaakov, transcends the galus, bitter exile. This ability to rise above the exile, to maintain a sense of fidelity to Hashem, to continue hoping for redemption and waiting for it daily, is intrinsic to Vayechi Yaakov. The Patriarch saw beyond the pain, perceived beyond the troubles, because his life source was Hashem. Yaakov's inextricable bond to the Almighty was an enduring quality, which he infused in his descendants throughout the generations. Vayechi Yaakov b'ereitz Mitzrayim is the catchphrase for Jewish transcendence in the diaspora, for the almost daily confrontation with adversity and pain. This emotion comprises our generative force that keeps us strong and committed despite the overwhelming challenges which confront us at every turn.

Rashi alludes to the idea that our parsha is closed due to two factors: The eyes and heart of the people became closed in response to the upcoming enslavement; Yaakov wanted to reveal the end of the exile to his descendants, and his "access" was blocked. If the shibud had not yet commenced, why were the people so "closed"? Apparently, two aspects to the exile/enslavement existed. With Yaakov's passing, an aspect of shibud Mitzrayim began, which may be referred to as timtum ha'lev, "stuffed/oppressed heart." Depression, hopelessness, is a symptom of timtum ha'lev. When Yaakov was alive, the Egyptians had no adverse influence over the Jews. He lived - and infused his family - with life, hope and optimism. Once Yaakov was gone, the Egyptians began to enslave the Jews. This does not mean that there was actual slavery. It is just that the Egyptian mindset took over their lives. They no longer expressed the emotions of hope for the future, and joy of life in the present that had infused them when the Patriarch had been alive.

Shibud malchiyos, enslavement by (gentile) monarchies, is a term which describes the Jew under the influence of the gentile nations; subject to their mindset, culture, habits and lifestyle. The Jew loses his uniqueness, his individuality, his independence, his Jewish selfhood. This is what is meant by the eyes and heart of the Jews were closed due to the troubles of the enslavement.

The second reason that our parsha is designated a parsha setumah is that Yaakov was prevented from revealing the end of the exile. The Rosh Yeshivah explains that it was not simply the end of the Egyptian exile which he wanted to reveal, because this was no secret. Four hundred years, which began with the Bris bein HaBesarim, Covenant Between the Parts, was the timespan allotted for the Egyptian exile. It was the end to all exiles, the Final Redemption, which Yaakov wanted to share with his children, but it was blocked to him.

Revealing the end to our tzaros, troubles, by extension, also indicates to us what is incumbent upon us to do, so that this event takes place in the nearest future. Thus, Yaakov's children would develop an acute understanding of their obligations in this life. What happened? Why did he stop? The Shechinah, Divine Presence, left him. This means that Hashem veiled the means for effecting the Redemption in a cloak of ambiguity. The people knew that the Redemption would occur. How - and when - was not revealed. We will just have to continue acting appropriately by focusing upon our responsibility and obligation to Hashem while we are in this world, never giving up hope and never ceasing from trying to bring about an end to our galus.

And (he) went out to his brethren. And (he) saw their burdens. (2:11) Rashi defines vayar b'sivlosam, "And he saw their burdens: Nasan einav v'libo liheyos metzar aleihem, 'He focused his eyes and heart to be distressed over them.'" Literally, the phrase means that Moshe Rabbeinu "saw into their burdens." He delved into their adversity. Apparently, the word va'yar, or its root raoh, to see, means much more than superficial perception. It demands cognitive application in conjunction with the perception. To see, and not to see beneath the surface, is not reiyah, seeing.

I think that we have just uncovered a deep insight into the concept of "seeing" as evinced by the word reiyah, in its various forms. It means much more than the simple translation we accord it. In order to see, one must engage his mind. To perceive, one must think. Hashem told Avraham Avinu Lech lecha... el ha'aretz asher areka, "Go for yourself... to the Land that I will show you" (Bereishis 12:1). Here, too, the word reiyah is used. I think Hashem was teaching Avraham, I will show you Eretz Yisrael in such a manner that you will perceive what makes it so special, so unique. It is this perception that Avraham transmitted to his descendants. It is this emotion that every Jew carries in his heart, a feeling that courses through him when he experiences that reiyah of the land first hand.

Perhaps this is why Moshe asked to see the Land. He knew that he would not enter it, but seeing it would not be a simple, insignificant perception. His seeing was commensurate with experiencing Eretz Yisrael.

With this idea in mind, we suggest that this is the underlying meaning of yiraas Shomayim, "fear of Heaven," which is normally translated as "fear of awe." One is awestruck with a profound fear of the greatness of Hashem. Yiraah, fear, is related to reiyah, seeing. Only one who has a deep perception of Heaven can truly fear. In order to fear, one must see - with depth. He who is clueless concerning Heaven has not yet achieved the plateau of yiraas Shomayim. Thus, in the process of inculcating students with yiraas Shomayim, we must first open up their minds to what Shomayim represents. They require a deeper understanding of the Almighty. Otherwise, they are unable truly to "fear."

The Talmud Chagigah 2a states: "One who is blind in one eye is excused from the mitzvah of Reiyah" (going down to Yerushalayim during the Shalosh Regalim, Three Festivals, to celebrate in the Bais Hamikdash, to "see" and "be seen"). Horav Elimelech, zl, m'Lishensk, quoted by the Yismach Moshe, explains that a person was created with two eyes; one eye is for seeing his own lowliness, while the other eye is for perceiving the awesome greatness of Hashem. One who is blind in one eye, who is unable to see his own inferiority, is, as a result, unable truly to see and perceive Hashem. To come close to Hashem, to embrace emunah, faith, to be inspired with kedushah, sanctity, one must divest himself of "himself." One must realize that, without Hashem, he is absolutely nothing.

Parashas Re'eh (Sefer Devarim 11:26) begins with an exhortation to distinguish between blessing and curse and to choose blessing. Re'eh anochi nosein lifneichem hayom brachah u'klalah, "See, I place before you today a blessing and a curse. Choose blessing." What is the meaning of "seeing" blessing and "seeing" curse? Does one "see" the difference between blessing and curse, or does one experience the difference?

My Rosh Yeshivah, Horav Boruch Sorotzkin, zl, explained that, before one can distinguish between blessing and curse, it is necessary that he take a close, educated look at the blessing. Is it truly a blessing, or might it be a curse? How often do we choose a path which we feel is blessed, only to discover later on that this was a road to curse? Thus, it is important to have an acute understanding of the true meaning of blessing and curse. Therefore, the Torah underscores the need to "see," to look with understanding, to apply heart and mind, to look beyond the superficial.

With this in mind, we have a deeper understanding of the concept of nosei b'ol im chaveiro, sharing/carrying the yoke/burden together with his friend. In order to do this, one must elevate his level of empathy to the point that he personally identifies with his fellow's needs. This is what Moshe Rabbeinu exemplified. When he "looked" at his brethren, he thought about - and then felt - the burdens which they were experiencing. In order to "feel" the pain, however, one must see with an open mind.

Nosei b'ol im chaveiro is one of the forty-eight qualities through which one acquires Torah. It, therefore, makes sense that the greater one is connected with the Torah, the greater is his understanding of the importance of sharing the burden with those less fortunate than he. All too often we view the gedolei Yisrael, Torah giants, throughout the ages from the perspective of their incredible erudition and devotion to Torah dissemination. They are equally gedolim and gaonim in the area of interpersonal relationships. Every Jew is their brother and sister. They sense the responsibility and feel the obligation to reach out to those members of their wider "family" who are in need.

There is no shortage of stories demonstrating this concept. I chose the following vignette, related by Rabbi Yechiel Spero in his wonderful book, "One Shining Moment." When we think of the Chazon Ish, the first thing that comes to mind is his outstanding scholarship. Commensurate with his consummate greatness in Torah was his unique love for all Jews.

The Chazon Ish lived in Bnei Brak, where Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl, the Ponevezer Rav, had reestablished the Ponevezer Yeshivah. It was during the

war years, and the yeshivah had experienced incredible growth, not only in numbers, but also in the intensity of the learning. Therefore, it was no wonder that, on Simchas Torah, the day that we celebrate with the Torah, the sense of ecstasy and effusive joy emanating from the students was palpable. The dancing was a celebration that went beyond the mundane. Each individual felt spiritually uplifted, as he danced in concert with the other yeshivah students who truly felt a kinship with the Torah. Once a year, the elderly Chazon Ish came to the yeshivah to celebrate Simchas Torah with the students.

It was a sight to behold. The elderly sage danced in a way that was unmatched by those decades his junior. He was neither a part of the yeshivah administration, nor did he hold any official rabbinic position. He just wanted to dance with the bachurim of the yeshivah. Seeing the gadol hador, preeminent Torah giant of the generation, dance with such vigor enlivened the students to dance in kind.

All good things come to an end at the appropriate time. Once the dancing ended, everyone felt the exhaustion of their para-spiritual workout. While the dancing endured, no one felt the physical toll. They were in on a different plane, far removed from the physical. Now it was time to accompany the frail Chazon Ish to his home. The sage also felt the strain. Once the dancing had ended, he realized how old his physical body was. Escorted by the yeshivah students, the elderly sage slowly made his way home.

On the way, they came upon a man dressed in clothes that would not pass as Yom Tov garb even by today's lax standards. The man looked like he just did not belong. He appeared withdrawn, despondent. The Chazon Ish stopped and walked over to the man to ask him what was bothering him. The Chazon Ish himself was exhausted; yet, when he saw another Jew in pain, he felt that man's pain. The man did not need more. He was like a bottle of soda that had been shaken up, waiting to burst through. He began with his dismal tale of woe. "I was born out of the Jewish faith. After years of study and a deep-rooted desire to become a part of the am Hashem, nation of G-d, I converted. Tonight, on the night when Jews all over celebrate their relationship with the Torah, I have nowhere to go. It is like a wedding, only I was not invited! I was alone with nowhere to go. Look at me. I look different, I talk different. I am different. I sat myself down on the street and contemplated my exclusion from the Jewish world that I wanted to join." The man concluded his sad story and hung his head down in defeat.

The Chazon Ish listened to the man's tale of woe, then asked, "Do you know any Jewish songs?" The sage asked the man to pick one of the songs that he knew and begin singing: "You sing, and I will dance. Together, we will celebrate Simchas Torah."

The students were shocked beyond belief. Their Rebbe could hardly walk home. Already advanced in years, he was unusually frail and in poor health. Tonight, he had added the weight of hours of spirited dancing. Yet, if another Jew felt alone and in need, he would gather whatever little reserve he might have and garner it to enliven the life of another Jew. And dance he did.

The man slowly began to sing. Unsure of himself, he commenced with a mumble. Toras Hashem temimah, "The Torah of Hashem is perfect," he sang, picking up speed and pitch as he became emboldened. The Chazon Ish began to dance with a fervor that overshadowed his earlier dancing. As a chassan, bridegroom, dances before his kallah, bride, the elderly sage danced before this man. The man smiled and cried at the same time, as he began to belt out the words of the song. Each stanza brought renewed vigor, matched only by the Chazon Ish's exuberant dancing. Why did he do this? He wanted to make a young man smile. The ger, convert, felt out of place without family and friends on a night that everyone seemed so happy. The gadol hador taught him otherwise. No Jew is left behind. No Jew is left alone.

The students stood there in amazement, as they watched a man, who minutes earlier had hardly been able to trudge home, now dancing gracefully with a joy that apparently transcended this physical world, carrying him aloft to

another dimension - a dimension reserved only for the few, the unique, the worthy.

Sponsored in loving memory of -Aharon ben Moshe- His Neshama should have an aliyah and... We should merit Techiat HaMetim B'mhara, Byameinu. In order to see him again.

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from: Office of Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> date: Wed, Jan 7, 2015 at 4:09 PM subject: Parshat Shemot 5775 - Rabbi Berel Wein In My Opinion

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

We currently find ourselves at the beginning of the month of January, which is the first month of the secular year. January derives its name from the pagan god Janus, who was given two faces, one looking in one direction and the other in the opposite direction. It became the symbol of the past and the future, the old year and the new one, of looking back and looking ahead at the same time. This symbolism was adopted by some of the emperors of Europe – notably, the Hapsburgs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Romanovs of the Russian Empire among others. They employed two headed eagles facing in opposite directions to indicate their seemingly great past and hopefully their even greater future. In fact one could say that all of human life is based on this trait of looking back and looking ahead at one and the same time. The problem always arises as to the emphasis given to looking back or to looking ahead. Without being able to look back, individuals and nations lack the experience and background in dealing with current events. However, without looking ahead one becomes a captive of the past and runs the risk of being completely irrelevant to the actual world and its constant change. This problem, of a proper balance between the past and the future, is especially acute in current Jewish society – particularly in the growing section of Jewish society dedicated to observance of Torah commandments and values. Much of this world lives almost solely in the past while another substantial section of our Jewish society looks only to the future and has little knowledge or concern for our past. One of the many adverse effects of the Holocaust in the Orthodox Jewish world has been the construction of an Eastern European past that is based on romantic fantasy and invention. And it is to this imagined and unrealistic past that the current problems and issues of our society are compared to and measured. It is of little wonder that a great deal of dysfunction, disharmony and radically opposing views and contentious personalities dominate the scene. Those that worry about the future, whether of individuals, families, the Jewish state, or the Jewish people as a whole, are oftentimes accused of lacking faith. Since the future is inscrutable, we need not deal with it. God will somehow help us then as He has in the past. We immerse ourselves in the past... unfortunately in a past that never was. This type of mindset affects all of our educational systems. It creates unreasonable demands upon children and students and imposes an education on the masses meant for the elite and the exceptional. It imagines that somehow everyone in Europe before the war that destroyed Jewish life there attended yeshiva, studied Talmud and was meticulously observant of all of the minutiae of Jewish law. In making the exceptional the norm, which it never was in the past, many problems that now exist in our current society are not only unsolved but in fact are exacerbated. Being fixated on the past, especially on an imaginary past, carries dangers with it. In a fit of rabbinic exegesis, I would suggest the following. We have just completed reading the book of Bereshith in our Shabbat morning services. At the conclusion of this holy book, our father Jacob blesses his two grandchildren, the sons of Joseph, Menashe and Efrayim. He places his right hand on the head of Efrayim and in his blessing he mentions Efrayim first before Menashe. By the very nature of the linguistic derivatives of their names, Efrayim represents the future growth of the Jewish people in Egypt and thereafter. Menashe represents the past with all of the problems,

disappointments and afflictions that the house of Jacob suffered in the land of Canaan. Apparently Jacob wishes us to emphasize the future while at the same time not allowing us to forget the real past that we have experienced and overcome. The Jewish people are big on memorials. We never let go of our past and in fact are constantly reinventing it to fit current political and religious correctness. That is not always a negative thing. But our main emphasis should be on constructing our future. We should be imagining what the Jewish world and the State of Israel will look like a century after us and spend less time on reconstructing what we think the Jewish world looked like a century before us. Knowing our history is essential for vital Jewish life to continue. Nevertheless falling into the trap of being academics of the past and thus disregarding the construction of our future is, in my opinion, futile and dangerous. The trick is to look forwards and backwards – especially forwards - at the same time, without injuring our necks and vision.

Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein